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Costa Rica

**Government Lining Up
Behind Washington's
Anti-Nicaragua Drive**

Sweden

**Crisis Facing
Working Farmers**

UPHEAVAL ON AFRICAN CONTINENT

Upheaval in Africa

By Ernest Harsch

A quarter of a century after most African countries won their formal independence from European colonial rule, the continent is still locked in a bitter struggle to throw off continued imperialist oppression and social injustice.

Those who produce Africa's wealth — the peasants, workers, and livestock herders — are the ones who have suffered the most. The price they have had to pay is measured in the continent's all-pervasive rural poverty, high infant mortality rates, urban squalor, widespread disease and illiteracy, lack of democratic rights, unemployment and low wages, and recurrent famines.

But the peoples of Africa have also gained some ground in their struggle to break free from imperialism's stranglehold. Since the beginning of the independence movements in the 1950s, the continent has witnessed a number of deepgoing anti-imperialist and democratic revolutions. A number stand out in particular: the revolutions in Ethiopia, Angola, and Mozambique.

Upsurges in West Africa

Most recently, there have been two new revolutionary advances, in Ghana and Burkina.

Over the past four months, *Intercontinental Press* has carried a series of articles, as well as interviews and documents, about the struggles in Ghana and Burkina. This extensive coverage was made possible by a visit to those two countries in March.

In Ghana, a former British colony, a group of anti-imperialist junior military officers and civilians overthrew a corrupt, proimperialist regime on Dec. 31, 1981. They set up the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), headed by Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings.

In formerly French-ruled Burkina (then called Upper Volta), a similar regime was toppled on Aug. 4, 1983, by a group of junior officers and civilian activists, who enjoyed massive popular support. They established the National Council of the Revolution (CNR), headed by Capt. Thomas Sankara.

In both cases, these upheavals reflected the masses' anger and opposition to the miserable conditions of life resulting from imperialist oppression and disillusionment in the previous neocolonial regimes that had loyally served foreign banks, traders, and other monied interests.

In Burkina, this anger was directed against the legacy of extreme poverty and social backwardness left behind by nearly a century of French domination. In Ghana, it was in opposition to the more direct exploitation of Ghanaian working people by imperialist corporations and banks.

Large and ongoing popular mobilizations have been unleashed in both countries, sup-

ported and encouraged by their respective governments. They involve broad sectors of the population, especially workers and peasants. New mass organizations have been forged, the most important of which are the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, as they are now called in both Ghana and Burkina.

There are some similarities between the revolutionary processes in the two countries, and the governments have established close political and military ties.

But there are also important differences.

Ghana is one of the countries of Africa where capitalist production and market relations have penetrated the deepest. A large part of agriculture is devoted to commodity production (especially cocoa), while class differentiation in the countryside has led to the emergence of a class of exploiting capitalist farmers.

A large working class relative to many other African countries exists — nearly 1 million urban and rural workers out of a total population of 12 million. A sharp class polarization between the exploited producers and the capitalist exploiters runs right through most of the country's institutions, including the PNDC government. But no independent working-class leadership has arisen to lead the anti-imperialist struggle forward in face of the intense imperialist economic and political pressures bearing down on Ghana.

Nevertheless, over the past three and a half years, working people in Ghana have made important gains. In addition to some progressive social and economic measures that have been initiated, the class relationship of forces in the country has shifted much more in their favor against the capitalists and landlords. They are in a far stronger position than under the previous regime to organize, speak out, and fight to establish a workers' and peasants' government that will defend their interests.

In contrast with Ghana, Burkina is one of the poorest and least economically developed countries on the continent. Capitalist relations have only made limited inroads. Precapitalist and prefeudal social forms and relations still play a significant role. Most peasants and nomadic herders remain engaged in subsistence agriculture and livestock raising. The working class is less than 1 percent of Burkina's population of 7 million.

The revolution in Burkina has sought to tackle this legacy of extreme underdevelopment. Schools, health clinics, and affordable housing have been built and other social measures have been adopted to improve the conditions of the most exploited and oppressed, particularly the peasants. An extensive land reform program has been launched, and new assistance is being provided to peasant producers. The privileges and powers of the traditional village chiefs — the peasants' most di-

rect oppressors — have been drastically curbed.

In face of imperialist and counterrevolutionary threats and attacks, the government has been arming and training a popular militia, run directly by the CDRs.

The goals of the Burkinabè revolution and the government that has emerged from it are to help the country break free from direct imperialist domination and, out of the diverse language and tribal groupings, to establish a unified nation within which the working class and peasants can develop.

This is a deepgoing bourgeois-democratic revolution, with a popular, revolutionary government.

The revolutionary upheavals in Ghana and Burkina, while different in many important regards, each contribute, in their own way and to their own extent, to the advance of the democratic and anti-imperialist revolution on the African continent. In this respect, they are similar to other revolutionary upheavals in Africa over the past decade.

Ethiopia's feudal monarchy toppled

The Ethiopian revolution, which began in 1974, resulted in one of the most momentous social transformations in Africa's history.

Emperor Haile Selassie's regime was among the most retrograde on the entire continent, with close links to U.S. imperialism. It was based on a semifeudal aristocracy of big landlords who wielded virtually absolute powers over the population as a whole. Some of their estates covered millions of acres. Peasants often had to pay rents amounting to between one-half and three-quarters of their crops. Democratic rights were virtually nonexistent. The Amhara-dominated central government enforced the oppression of Ethiopia's many other nationalities, particularly in Eritrea.

Washington helped arm and fund the Ethiopian monarchy, and maintained military facilities in the country.

In February 1974, the urban and rural masses began to rise up on a vast scale against this archaic and oppressive system. Strikes, street demonstrations, soldiers' mutinies, and peasant revolts swept the country. Finally, in September 1974, Selassie was overthrown by a body of military officers and rank-and-file soldiers called the Dergue.

The mobilizations continued throughout the following months, especially in the countryside. This led to one of the most sweeping land reforms in Africa, marking the overthrow of the semifeudal landlord class. All rural land was nationalized, and the exploited peasants were able to work the land of the former estates.

Working people won other gains as well: the separation of church and state, the launching of a literacy campaign, recognition of the language rights of the oppressed nationalities, and the nationalization of most of the imperialist holdings (which were not very extensive). The U.S. military facilities were shut down.

The antifeudal, anti-imperialist revolution had repercussions throughout the region —

and the world. Washington imposed an economic blockade and encouraged the regime of neighboring Somalia to invade in 1977, an invasion that was turned back with the aid of thousands of Cuban internationalist fighters.

The most substantial of the revolution's gains survive today, despite the difficulties Ethiopia faces, especially the immense legacy of poverty and backwardness and recurrent droughts and famines. Washington remains extremely hostile toward the Ethiopian government, as shown by its criminal withholding of food aid at this time of severe famine. Solidarity with the peoples of Ethiopia is still as vital as ever.

Smashing Portuguese colonialism

Around the same time as the revolution in Ethiopia was beginning to unfold, liberation struggles in Portugal's African colonies scored a major victory: the April 1974 downfall of the Portuguese dictatorship. This opened the way for the winning of independence by Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau.

The Portuguese state apparatus in the colonies was smashed. The liberation movements came to power: the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo), and the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC). The governments established by the anticolonial fighters in Angola and Mozambique are still in power today, while the one in Guinea-Bissau was overthrown in a counterrevolutionary military coup in 1980.

In Angola and Mozambique, plantations and businesses abandoned by fleeing Portuguese settlers were taken over by the new governments, which also nationalized some other imperialist holdings.

The MPLA and Frelimo have both relied heavily on mass mobilizations and have encouraged the formation of popular organizations, such as trade unions, women's groups, peasant associations, and other bodies. They have launched progressive social and economic measures, resulting in modest advances in literacy and health care. Agrarian reform programs have brought some benefits to the peasants. Popular militias have been established.

Both governments and revolutions have also come under concerted attack.

Even before it gained its independence in November 1975, Angola was invaded by South African troops, while the U.S. CIA funneled aid to the MPLA's domestic rivals. This invasion was defeated in early 1976 with the help of thousands of Cuban troops. Angola has been repeatedly attacked by South African forces since then, while Washington still channels aid to a local South African-backed counterrevolutionary group.

Mozambique, too, has been a target. Terrorist bands organized and funded by the South African regime have devastated many economic projects and have killed hundreds of villagers. This counterrevolutionary war has become especially serious over the past year.

The anticolonialist and anti-imperialist revolutions in Angola and Mozambique did much to shift the overall relationship of forces in southern Africa more in favor of the workers and peasants and against imperialism.

The Zimbabwean freedom struggle was given a big boost, and in 1980 that country won its independence from Britain with the ouster of the racist Rhodesian settler government. The Namibian independence struggle, which has benefited from direct Angolan assistance, has made important advances.

And within South Africa itself the oppressed Black majority has taken to the streets on an unprecedented scale, beginning with the 1976 Soweto rebellion. Over the past year, the South African apartheid regime has been shaken by sustained workers' strikes, student boycotts, community uprisings, and other

mobilizations, despite brutal police massacres that have claimed more than 500 Black lives.

All these revolutionary struggles reinforce each other. And they are but the most advanced expressions of the tumultuous mass discontent that is spreading throughout Africa, as the continent reels under the blows of the world capitalist economic crisis and the bankruptcy of the neocolonial regimes.

Whether it is these revolutions or the recent upsurge in Sudan that brought down the Nimiery dictatorship, the Western Saharan independence struggle, or the urban revolts that have taken place in a number of countries, the working masses of Africa are mobilizing to confront their insufferable conditions, whose source is imperialism. And they are making advances — advances that benefit working people everywhere. □

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U.S. Army to train Civil Guard

Government lining up behind Washington's anti-Nicaragua campaign

By Steve Craine

In early July, two foreign mercenaries held by Costa Rican authorities since April gave detailed accounts of their collaboration with armed counterrevolutionaries (*contras*) operating on both sides of the Nicaragua-Costa Rica border.

Several organizations of U.S. anticommunists, Cuban exiles, and Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries, they said, had helped them bring some six tons of military supplies from the United States to the *contras*. The two mercenaries also charged that members of the Costa Rican Civil Guard are providing intelligence and directing actions of *contra* bands in southern Nicaragua.

"The Civil Guard is up to their necks in this. They were helping us all along," said Steven Carr, a captured mercenary from the United States. His British partner, Peter Glibbery, added, "They were telling us which bases to attack and where everything was. They gave us all our information."

The Costa Rican government denied knowledge of the mercenaries' activities, although Minister of Public Security Benjamín Piza noted that he could not "guarantee that a couple of our men might not have been involved ... without the knowledge of the ministry."

The government has long proclaimed its neutrality in international and regional affairs. Since 1949 the constitution has banned the establishment of an army. The Civil Guard and Rural Guard are organized more as a national police force than as an army.

This tradition of "neutrality" was further codified by President Alberto Monge Álvarez in November 1983, when he proclaimed the perpetual, active, and unarmed neutrality of Costa Rica in armed conflicts involving other states. The Monge government has turned down several suggestions from Washington that it send troops to participate in joint maneuvers in the region. It has also declined to join the U.S.-sponsored Central American Defense Council (CONDECA), made up of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.

Moving into Washington's orbit

But in recent years, military aid, economic favors, and diplomatic pressure from Washington have pushed Monge's government into a more and more open role in support of Washington's anti-Nicaragua policies.

In addition, the Costa Rican ruling families have their own reasons to oppose the Nicaraguan revolution. The accomplishments of the workers' and farmers' government there are a big inspiration to the oppressed of Costa Rica.

Some Costa Rican capitalists and landowners see a U.S. military presence in the country as a potential source of protection from their own people.

In May, U.S. Green Beret instructors arrived in Costa Rica to train about 700 Civil Guard soldiers in basic military skills and guerrilla warfare techniques. A training camp has been set up on the Santa Elena peninsula, only 15 kilometers from the Nicaraguan border.

The training camp on Costa Rican soil is only the latest of a series of recent steps toward greater military cooperation between the U.S. and Costa Rican governments. Direct military aid was resumed after a lapse of 13 years in 1981. It has since grown from a mere US\$300,000 in 1981 to about \$10 million this year.

In February a group of 34 Costa Rican troops began a training course at the U.S.-run counterinsurgency base at Puerto Castilla in Honduras. The same month, the battleship *Iowa*, the largest in the U.S. Navy, paid a "goodwill" visit to Costa Rica's port of Puerto Limón.

U.S. officials have stated that the goal of their aid program is to arm each Costa Rican soldier with "the same kind of equipment as a United States infantryman." This would include an M-16 rifle for every man plus grenade launchers, 80-millimeter mortars, M-60 machine guns, and other weapons for units stationed near the Nicaraguan border.

Military aid has also paid for paving roads in the northern part of the country and for the purchase of helicopters, small planes, and patrol boats. At the same time, Washington is carrying out a number of nonmilitary projects to beef up its presence in the country. In three years the number of Peace Corps workers in Costa Rica has doubled to 260, and the U.S. propaganda radio station, Voice of America, has just opened a new \$3.5 million, 100,000-watt transmitter in the country.

Nicaraguan Army Intelligence director Julio Ramos Argüello said he believes the objective of these recent U.S. government moves is to set up a base for use in a possible U.S. invasion of Nicaragua. Both U.S. and Costa Rican officials deny this charge. But the process in Costa Rica is so obvious that it is commonly referred to as "Hondurization."

"In terms of dollars, Costa Rica is a bit player in what we are doing in Central America," a U.S. embassy official in San José told the *New York Times*. "But in political terms it is very important."

Washington's political goals in the country were spelled out in a secret 1984 State Depart-

ment report, quoted in the June 1985 issue of *AfricaAsia*, a Paris monthly. The report spoke of increasing military aid to Costa Rica as an opportunity to "push it more explicitly and publicly into the anti-Sandinista camp" and to "prevent any backsliding into neutralism."

"A visible shift in Costa Rica's position," the report continued, "will strengthen our position in Central America." It cautioned, however, that any military buildup in Costa Rica should be made to look like it came in response to unprovoked attacks from Nicaragua. "If managed properly, our provision of assistance and accompanying public and background statements can help focus the spotlight on Costa Rica as the victim of Nicaraguan aggression."

Largest per capita debt in world

The Monge government in San José has been susceptible to this kind of manipulation by Washington largely because of its precarious economic situation.

The country is saddled with a foreign debt of \$4 billion — the highest per capita debt of any country in the world today. As in many other countries oppressed by imperialism, a long-term drop in the prices of its major exports — coffee and bananas — has made it difficult to accumulate enough foreign exchange even to pay the interest on this debt. In Costa Rica, with only 2.3 million people, the debt represents nearly \$2,000 per person.

U.S. economic aid for 1985 will total at least \$220 million — about 5 percent of Costa Rica's gross national product. Only Israel receives more U.S. assistance on a per capita basis than Costa Rica.

As Washington's military and political campaign against Nicaragua has heated up, it has been demanding support from San José in return for this aid.

Some U.S. aid has gone into building up capitalist agricultural operations designed to make quick profits on foreign markets. Cultivation of export crops such as melons, cucumbers, macadamia nuts, and cut flowers has been encouraged by U.S. economic advisers and implemented with Agency for International Development (AID) funds.

Another economic boost from the Reagan administration came earlier this year when it encouraged United Brands to sell its extensive banana plantations on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica to the government at a fraction of its original asking price. United Brands (formerly called United Fruit Company) has a long and notorious history of economic and political influence in Costa Rica and other Central American countries.

The company has no intention of giving up its profitable Atlantic coast banana operations, where it owns no land but monopolizes the processing and transportation of the fruit. But it has been seeking for some time to unload its unprofitable Pacific coast plantations, which amount to some 6,000 acres. On the Pacific coast, United Brands had employed 3,000 Costa Ricans directly, while an estimated 47,000 are indirectly dependent on the banana trade for their livelihoods.

In 1984 banana workers in the Pacific region staged a militant 72-day strike for higher wages. The Monge government was therefore extremely apprehensive about the potential for a social explosion if the pullout of United Brands led to higher unemployment and worse conditions for the workers. By itself, however, it was not in a strong position to bargain with the giant U.S. corporation.

Representatives of the U.S. State Department sat in on the negotiations between United Brands and the Costa Rican government, which began in mid 1983.

By the time the deal was finalized last March, the sale price had fallen from \$15 million to \$1.24 million. The company also agreed to donate a wharf and railroad with eight locomotives and some 200 freight cars. The government plans to convert the plantations and equipment for growing and processing cacao beans.

To further soften the economic impact of dismantling the banana plantations, United Brands agreed to pay its former workers about \$5 million in severance pay and sell them their homes for nominal prices.

The relationship of the Costa Rican government to Washington was well summed up by a senior government official in San José, who remarked to the *New York Times* that President Monge "can only say no to a generous friend so many times." □

El Salvador's air power

The government of El Salvador has the most powerful air force in Central America, recently built up with Washington's assistance. According to U.S. embassy figures, the air force now has 43 combat Hughes UH-1 helicopters, 6 Hughes-500 helicopter gunships, 2 AC-47 gunships, at least 10 O-2 spotter planes that can fire rockets, and 9 A-37 jet bombers.

In 1984, the air force dropped an average of 80 500-pound bombs and 50 750-pound bombs each month as well as a smaller number of 200-pound bombs. In addition, it fired between 500 and 600 2.75-inch rockets each month.

This year El Salvador's air force is dropping an average of 60 500-pound bombs and 75 750-pound bombs each month. The number of 2.75-inch rockets fired has risen to about 975 a month.

The targets of this intensive bombing and strafing are villages suspected of supporting the rebel forces led by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front.

August 5, 1985

Netherlands

Demand rights for Tamil refugees

Government hits victims of Sri Lanka repression

By Arend de Poel

[Government repression against the minority Tamil people of Sri Lanka has led some 300,000 Tamil refugees to seek asylum in western Europe since July 1983. The British and Dutch governments have attempted to exclude Tamil refugees and curtail the rights of those already in Europe.

[In the Netherlands, proposals to expel Tamil refugees have been debated in parliament, creating divisions in both the governing Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) and the opposition Labor Party (PvdA).

[The following article appeared in the June 5 issue of *Klassenstrijd*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Amsterdam by the Socialist Workers Party (SAP), Dutch section of the Fourth International. This translation is taken from the July 15 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly review published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

The West European governments are doing everything possible to restrict the number of Sri Lankan Tamils taking refuge here. Against the background of this attitude on the part of the government, the Wijnaendts parliamentary commission came to the conclusion in four days that the south of Sri Lanka is safe enough for the refugees.

In the meantime, too many newspapers and human rights organizations to list have said that there is no security for the Tamils and that they are fleeing because the slaughter in the Sri Lankan civil war is continuing.

Despite the refutation of the argument that there is no real threat to the Tamils, other bad arguments, some of them racist, continue to muddy the waters. You hear that the Tamils are "economic refugees," whatever that may mean.

In the first place, that is not true, and in the second, if it were, so what? The capitalists keep a free hand for exploiting the underdeveloped countries, and they have set up border police in order to be able to maintain control of the international working class. These are not *our* borders.

You also hear the argument that the economic situation does not permit us to accommodate a large number of refugees. That depends on what you consider important. In West Germany over the years, they have let in a lot of East Europeans. The Vietnamese "boat people" are practically invited to come to Europe. Israel is able to bring in a large number of Africans.

Another argument is that the Tamils could be better "accommodated" in a camp in Sri Lanka or India than in Apeldoorn. That costs

less and "they remain in their own culture." But putting people in a camp is no solution. That is temporary. The problem is to assure a decent life for the refugees, and everyone knows that is nearly impossible in an underdeveloped country.

The government has created a special rule for the Tamil refugees denying them the right to social welfare. This slides over an important point. The law guarantees the right to social assistance to all those who need it. The decision of the minister excludes an ethnic group from benefiting from the social assistance law. Thus, the parliament has opened the way for discrimination against all sorts of groups. This is not only an attack on the right of asylum but a breach in the social security system that we have won.

So, what do the "refugee benefits" the government offers amount to? It does not take long to list them:

- shelter in a residence center where they can sleep, wash, sit, and cook.
- food.
- "pocket money" (20 guilders [about US\$4] a week).
- insurance against the costs of illness and legal liability.
- Payment of special expenses that in the minister's judgment are necessary and cannot be met by other means can be made after the filling out of detailed forms.

What is not permitted by the ruling is visitors to the residence centers. Moreover, instruction in the Dutch language is not considered "a special expense in the opinion of the minister," nor is the cost of telephone calls.

In the view of the minister, the Tamils are an alien element in Dutch society and should remain so, so that they can be expelled. In fact, everything is being done to make it impossible for the Tamils as a group to defend their interests. But this tactic has been only partially successful.

In Apeldoorn, an association of Tamil refugees has been founded. Organizations such as the Vereniging Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland [Refugee Aid Association of the Netherlands], the Tamil Dutch Solidarity Association, and the support committees are playing an important role in building the first contacts with the Dutch people. □

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Farmers demand a living income

Interview with farm family in north describes tightening squeeze

**By Birgitta Isaksson
and Inge Hinnemo**

[The following article is taken from the May 9 issue of *Internationales*, a socialist weekly published in Stockholm by the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International. The translation from Swedish and the footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

LULEÅ — "It started Sunday evening. Some farmers spontaneously called me and said we should block the dairies. So I began calling around to those I know.

"And it was a total response. It spread like wildfire. There was no one who was against the action."

Berndt Johansson is a farmer from Alvik outside of Luleå and one of the spokesmen for the "wild blockade" against milk distribution in Norrbotten¹ that hundreds of farmers carried out for one day last week.

The group behind this action, which attracted considerable attention and was followed by farm protests throughout the entire country, was the "District Action Representatives." Farmers called for a meeting with the government no later than May 9 to present their demands.

Internationales met Berndt Johansson and his wife Berit on their farm outside of Luleå.

Why are they protesting? How do they live? How do they see their work — and that of others? And the solutions?

Internationales had met with Berndt once

1. Norrbotten is the largest and most northerly of Sweden's 24 counties. Luleå is the largest city in the county. The northern region of Sweden is called Norrland.

before — more than four years ago. Then, bankruptcy hung over the farm. The family had to choose between bankruptcy and negotiating a deal. In spite of the bad terms, the Johanssons chose to make a deal.

Problem of making ends meet

Their farm is 71 hectares [175 acres]. Half the acreage was not drained in 1981, and therefore could not be tilled. Today they even have less means with which to finance this costly project.

Berndt said that the farm has 35 milk cows and a forest of 70 hectares, which cannot provide any income for about 20 years.

"We can't make *any* new investments. We have a problem simply keeping up with our current operations."

He related what one day is like for the farmer.

"I get up at five o'clock. Between six and six thirty I go to the barn to do the milking. Previously, Berit, my wife, was with me in the barn, but now she goes to school. She got asthma from the air in the barn.

"Before my daughter goes off to school, she feeds grain by hand; she takes charge of the calves and young animals. If there are no unforeseen incidents, such as a break in the gate and a cow getting loose, I can be free between 11:00 and 12:30.

"If there is time I take a lunch break for an hour. After that, I repair machinery, change the oil, do welding, and such like. Everything that cannot get done in the summer. And we don't have the means to hire out any of the work."

Rest is necessary

We asked about vacations. Berndt laughed.

"Yes, let me see, Berit, . . . we had two days during 1984. Then, we went to Vasa, and Berit's parents came here."

If the children get sick, then what?

"Now our children are big, so things are OK. I can look after them during the day if they should get sick. But for those who have small children it must be hellish.

"Now, we have gotten into a group that can provide substitute help to farmers for up to 24 days per year. We didn't have the means earlier. We don't have them now either," Berndt said. "But I have set priorities. When we started in 1977, it was with immense optimism. I worked around the clock, giving 110 percent.

"But, today, I don't do that. Sometimes a farmer must also rest. That's what I try to do when the substitute comes."

How do you see your relationship to workers?

"I am, of course, my own boss, but I know that I am not really. We are strongly supported by the state — supported by money and drowned in committees and politics.

"I think that farmers work harder, for example, than steelworkers, and we don't have as much security either. One of the things that we farmers talk about is that we should have such freedom as they have."

Both Berndt and Berit chuckled at the word. "What is freedom?" asked Berit.

"Many believe that we can get along since we have everything from the farm — meat, potatoes, milk. But in the end all we have is milk. We buy the rest. The meat we buy is the cheaper cuts, cuts that are difficult to get hold of from the butcher.

"As for milk, we pay a standard rate of 200 kronor [US\$25] a month for what we use on a



Rolf Berqvist/Internationales

Farmers block entrance to dairy in Luleå. Berndt Johansson is fourth from left.

daily basis."

Why is the situation so critical for you?

"It is critical here," Berndt said. "All the agricultural contracts are based on District One, which is called Skåne². These agreements are calculated on Skåne's large harvests, the condition of its land, and so on.

"In Skåne, agriculture is the principal industry. The farms have been developed over generations. The land is the very best.

"In Norrbotten, farming has been a secondary occupation. Outside income has been the most important."

Rationalization

"During the 60s farms were rationalized and a mass of small farmers went under. After that it was discovered that farmers are important. But they should have larger operations, large enough for a family to live from. Technology should be used. Farms were bought and joined together.

"But the land was not in condition to be used with the increased technology. At the same time farmers were supposed to build new barns, as production increased. Animals were brought in . . . but draining the land was put off to later.

"We farm people tried to get along, but the soil gave up. And the entire time production costs went higher and higher. Finally, it came to be called Norrland's silence. We have never been up to the average level. For the entire time, Norrbotten has trailed behind.

"In Swedish agriculture we are unimportant, we Norrland farmers. The deterioration of earnings means that we scarcely have what we

2. Skåne is the southernmost region of Sweden. Its plains are the most densely populated agricultural areas of the country. The growing period is eight months compared with three or four in the north.

need to get along in the face of escalating expenses."

Crushing occupation

"In 1977 the politicians were unanimous that farmers should have the same standards as comparable groups in society. If we were to follow this, assuming top production, we would work 40 hours a week for 72 kroner [\$8.25] an hour to make enough to live on.

"But then we couldn't pay any interest, or maintenance costs or make any new investments."

What can be done about the poor earnings? "Most respond by working even harder, hiring even less help.

"I believe nothing can be so hellish, so cynical as someone being crushed in their occupation. There must be a lack of information between farmers and the government."

But how can you get paid better?

"The consumers must be prepared to pay what it costs to produce. Industry, merchants, and the state take in money from agricultural contracts. The farmer gets four öre per krona [100 öre = 1 krona].

"Removing sales taxes on food is not the Norrland's farmers' problem. It's first effects would only be felt in a year, at the earliest. We must receive hard cash much sooner. Aid for Norrbotten simply must be taken up."

What will happen if aid for Norrland is not taken up?

"If farming goes under, it will cost 600 million kroner [\$70 million] per year to import food. Then the equivalent industrial production must be created. And if times were hard, who is to say that transporting food here would work. And how would the region see the service. . . .

"It is cheaper to concentrate on aid for Norrland." □

Of 142,000 farmers, he described 55,000 as *semiproletarian*. Only between a fourth and a fifth of their income comes from the land.

58,000 farmers described by Seyler are *small farmers*. They are principally distributed on farms of less than 30 hectares [75 acres]. They lack hired help and have lower family incomes than industrial workers. Income from farm production does not cover their full costs.

23,000 are described as *middle farmers*. They work between 30 and 100 hectares [75 to 250 acres]. They use some wage labor, and their production gives a certain surplus.

Above that, we find about 5,000 *big farmers*, about 1,000 of whom are capitalist farmers, including farms that are not owned by individuals but by corporations, etc.

The big mass of farmers can, according to this account, be described as "semiproletarian" or small farmers.

They are hit hard when interest rates on loans increase, loans they are forced to get to invest in new, modern machinery in order not to be beaten out.

They are squeezed all the harder by middlemen and state taxes, which seize the greater part of what we the consumers pay for agricultural products.

They face a growing threat of being forced to leave their farms and soil, in a period when unemployment in industry and the public sector is increasing. Thus they are not afforded any new means of making a living.

At the same time that the food mountain grows — which workers cannot afford to buy — small farmers are all the more pressed nearly to ruin because they do not get paid adequately for their products.

Common interests

Clearly, there are common interests between working people in the cities and the countryside that can be pointed to.

- Increase real wages for workers to increase their buying power and reduce farmers' surplus.

- Abolish taxes on food in order to reduce prices for consumers by 15 to 20 billion [Kroner]. But don't give farmers lower prices.

- Rigid price controls to help both workers and farmers. A sales tax reduction naturally gets used by the merchants to raise profits.

- Lower taxes, cheap credit, and necessary economic compensation to farmers can only be paid through a sharp tax on big capital, on high income and record-profit enterprises.

- The interest robbery of farmers can only be stopped through encroachments on the banks and private market speculation, which drives up rents.

Sweden's workers have no interest in a policy that crushes the middle-sized and small farmers — and only profits large farmers and agribusiness.

Agriculture could give a fine, nonpoisonous livelihood at fair prices if middlemen, banks, and the rich profiteers paid for it.

In this, workers and family farmers have a common interest. □

Thousands join farm protests

'Exploited workers and farmers have common interests'

[The following editorial appeared in the May 9 *Internationales*. The translation from Swedish is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Farm protests! Last week thousands of farmers throughout the entire country demonstrated against their conditions. Tractorcades have popped up again on some roads and in towns. Dairies have been blockaded.

The angry farmers' demands have shifted — from well-known "left" demands like "Remove taxes on food!" to slogans for halting food imports and hands off import duties. Demands like this can scarcely be supported by workers and others.

While Center Party politicians are beaming and doing everything to increase the growth of their party by drawing farm protesters to it, the government, newspaper editors, and some of the union tops rake the farmers over the coals.

"They are engaging in class struggle!" thunders *Aftonbladet* against the farmers — a (Social Democratic) daily that normally speaks grudgingly in favor of the "class struggle" against capitalists and the bourgeoisie.

Many workers and hired hands in the cities go for the propaganda — just as many farmers see industrial workers and the labor movement as opponents.

This is a devastating attitude. The country's workers and working farmers together create the value that our wealth is built on.

Farmers are not a homogeneous class of businessmen who stand in opposition to workers.

Squeezed tighter

Researcher Hans Seyler has surveyed the living conditions of Swedish farmers during the 1970s.

New Nicaragua book well received

Labor and solidarity activists meet to launch distribution campaign

By Pete Clifford

LONDON — "The invasion is on," Francisco D'Escoto, Nicaragua's ambassador to Britain, declared to a meeting for the new book *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution*, published by Pathfinder Press. D'Escoto explained that U.S. troops are ready, "the only thing that is lacking is the word GO."

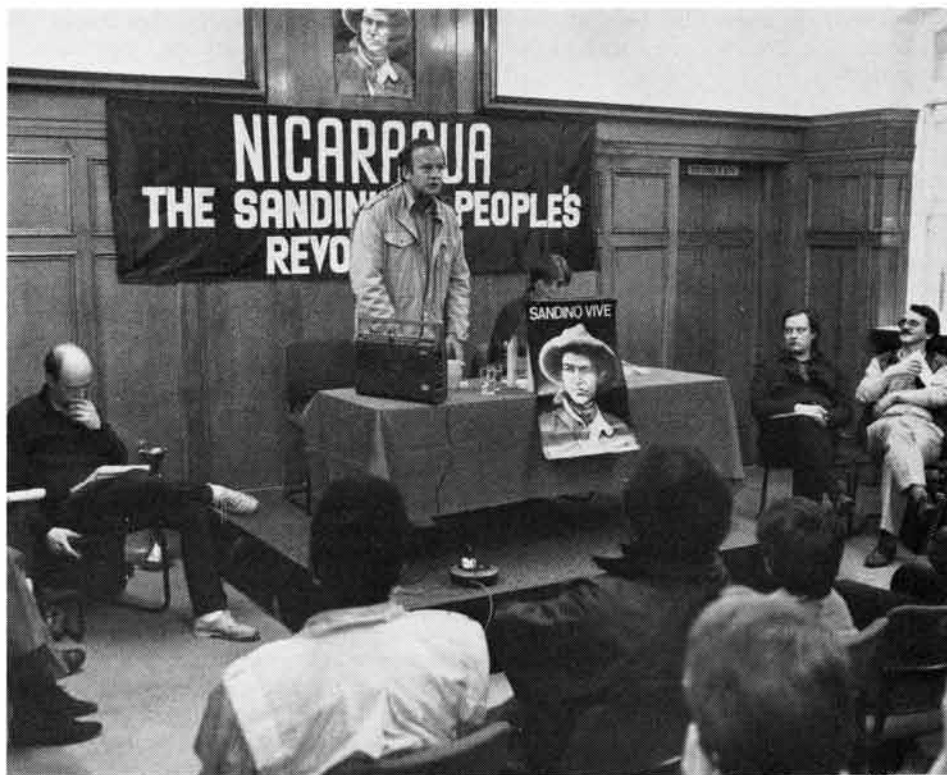
The meeting, held June 21 at the Caribbean Centre here, was attended by 130 people, including many Latin Americans, Grenadians, and activists from the labor movement. The platform reflected the growing unity and determination to build solidarity for the Nicaraguan revolution. Speakers celebrating the book's publication along with the Nicaragua ambassador included Labour Party parliamentary spokesperson for overseas aid, development, and cooperation Stuart Holland; Kent miners' leader Jack Collins; and representatives of the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement, Britain/Cuba Resource Centre, *Socialist Action* newspaper, and Pathfinder Press.

The meeting was supported by a number of prominent people including Member of Parliament Tony Benn, a leader of the left wing in the Labour Party. Benn wrote in endorsing the book and the meeting, "I shall value this book greatly and will be able to use it in speeches and broadcasts. . . . I urge you to attend the June 21 launch meeting."

Opening the meeting, Connie Harris, who chaired the event for Pathfinder Press, explained that "learning the truth and telling it to others is the first step to defend the revolution." It was for this reason, she said, that the book, which includes some 40 speeches by Sandinista leaders, was published and is being actively promoted.

Holland, a Member of Parliament who has visited Nicaragua three times since the 1979 revolution, described "the real popular base" of the Sandinista government. He called attention to one speech in the book by Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) leader Tomás Borge on "Women and the Nicaraguan Revolution." "The involvement of the women is real," Holland said. "It is evident not only in a support role, but in the front line of the militias." While in Nicaragua, Holland visited the Atlantic Coast, and told the meeting how a contribution to the book by Ray Hooker, a leader in that region, helps explain the great difficulties forced on the revolution by years of neglect under the Somoza dictatorship.

Holland's last visit to Nicaragua was during the November 1984 national elections. He reported how "Reagan dismissed them before they took place, and when you realize that



G.M. Cookson

London meeting for new Pathfinder book, "Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution." From left: Andy de la Tour, Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign; Stuart Holland, Labour MP; Connie Harris, Pathfinder; John Ross, editor, "Socialist Action"; Brian Lyons, Pathfinder.

what was actually achieved [by the FSLN] was double the proportion of popular votes cast for Reagan, you can understand the popularity of the Sandinistas."

An important theme in the closing chapters of *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution* is the impact of Washington's war threats on the social and economic gains of the revolution.

Andy de la Tour, representing the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, explained that "approximately 40 percent of Nicaragua's gross national product is now spent on defense." This has meant, he continued, "the Nicaraguan government has had to take away resources from other areas of the economy. It has had to take some drastic measures: it has abandoned food subsidies and effectively stopped building new houses, health centers, schools, and many other things."

In de la Tour's opinion such measures "bear some resemblance to the austerity policies that the IMF ensures its client states in Latin America carry out. In the Dominican Republic, for example," he observed, "such measures could lead to riots against the government. But in

Nicaragua there is increasing support for the government. Why? Because behind these decisions something more fundamental has happened, because in the final analysis the revolution is not about the specific social reforms. The major conquest of the revolution is the conquest of fear. The people know their government won't negotiate that. They have undertaken a historic change and they know it. They have seized destiny into their own hands."

Relating this point to the 1984-85 strike of British coal miners, John Ross, speaking for the *Socialist Action* editorial board, noted that "During the miners' strike the pages of socialism came out of the books onto the streets. What you get from this book about a revolution is the same feeling only raised to a qualitatively far higher level.

"What you have in Nicaragua," Ross added, "is not only a great working-class struggle, but the working class in power. During the strike Arthur Scargill [president of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)] said the miners needed a Labour government as loyal to the working class as Thatcher is to her class. The

difference is that in Nicaragua you've got it — in the FSLN you do have a government that bases itself on the working class and a political state power that rests on the working class."

In response to this revolutionary power, reports coming from the Pentagon indicate the U.S. administration is preoccupied with evaluating the cost in military terms of direct intervention.

That the war threat is real was brought home to the meeting by Tony Jules. Speaking for the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (supporters of the slain prime minister of Grenada), he said, "Reading the book strikes me in terms of the parallels of the events which faced Grenada in terms of destabilization. The chronology of events in it is very important because it reveals in very hard facts — the truth which the Western press likes to keep from us."

That truth is that in the countries surrounding Nicaragua — Honduras, Costa Rica, and Guatemala — everything is in place for an invasion. The U.S. government has vast quantities of arms and supplies in Honduras; air bases in Panama, Puerto Rico, and Honduras; listening posts throughout the region; fleets in the Caribbean and Pacific; and frequent military exercises including mock invasions.

Not surprisingly then, a central message from the meeting was the urgency of solidarity. This same message was developed in one of the selections in the book, a speech by Carlos Fernando Chamorro titled "Without Solidarity It Is Difficult to Talk About Revolution." As Chamorro put it, "Solidarity has a fundamental role to play in isolating the enemy, in neutralizing other enemies, encouraging other forces, and directly supporting the struggles of the people."

There is no better inspiration for that solidarity movement in this country than the miners. A banner decorating the room summed this up in its slogan "NUM — Nicaragua: in the front line."

NUM leader Jack Collins opened his remarks at the London meeting by noting that during the coal miners' strike "we received the fraternal greetings of the Nicaraguan people. It was a message from the heart of a revolutionary people, and we wish them well in their struggle." He argued that the "only crime they are committing is that the road they are following has been lit by the Cubans before them. The Nicaraguan people, like the Cubans, have committed the crime of trying to run their own society; they're guilty of trying to provide education, medical care, and homes for people who have never had them before."

Turning to Reagan's response to the hostage situation in Lebanon and his declarations about refusing to talk with "terrorists," Collins declared that Reagan is organizing terrorists in Central America. "He's arming them and sending them into Nicaragua. That's hypocrisy of the highest order."

"All these things in Nicaragua are a challenge to the United States," said Collins, "to the ideal where money and capital rule supreme and labor is a commodity. Many people believe capital and labor can be reconciled,

Sandinista book sells well in many countries

Sales of *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution* got off to a fast start only days after it came off the press. At the April 20 demonstrations against U.S. intervention in Central America and South Africa, antiwar demonstrators in six U.S. cities bought more than 550 copies of the new book.

Since then the book has been favorably reviewed by Nicaraguan Minister of Culture Ernesto Cardenal and British Labour Party MP Tony Benn (see accompanying article). Testimonials for the collection of speeches have also been received from South African exile poet Dennis Brutus and Black writer Sonia Sanchez. *Barricada Internacional*, the weekly English-language paper of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) printed a review on June 6.

Joseph Collins, author of *Nicaragua: What Difference Could a Revolution Make?*, wrote: "The U.S. mass media never give a serious chance for the Ameri-

can people to know what the Nicaraguan revolution has to say for itself. Now, this book provides a unique opportunity to learn from the key speeches that have shaped and been shaped by the revolution."

Debbie Reuben of the National Network in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People added that "this collection . . . fills a significant void." In the words of Thomas Walker, editor of *Nicaragua in Revolution*, the book "provides a refreshing opportunity to examine numerous complete speeches on a variety of subjects by a cross section of Nicaragua's revolutionary leadership."

Since its publication, some 4,000 copies — more than half the initial printing — have already been sent out to bookstores, distributors, and individuals around the world. The new Pathfinder distribution center for Asia and the Pacific, in Sydney, Australia, has ordered 800 copies. Five hundred have been sent to Britain and another 250 to Nicaragua.

even many in the working class. There can be no reconciliation. There is no difference between those who starve Central American kids and those who starved ours. There is no difference between a freedom fighter in Central America and a miner in Britain."

This solidarity of our common class struggle is summed up by Tomás Borge in a passage in the book. The Nicaraguan interior minister states, "A Sandinista has to be a Sandinista in their own country. Struggling for their own people. Identifying themselves with the interests of the workers in their own countries. And courageously opposing all injustices."

Collins also focused on another force that can play a powerful role in defense of the Nicaraguan revolution. "There is one event which made Cuba possible, and the same event made Nicaragua possible. That event which lit the torch was the successful socialist revolution of October 1917. If it was not for the Soviet Union then, make no mistake, there'd be no Nicaragua or Cuba today."

Above all else the leadership of the FSLN was commended by all the speakers for the path it has taken. What the book clearly illustrates, and tens of thousands in this country began to appreciate during the miners' strike, is what it means to have a leadership that is prepared to stand its ground and fight rather than negotiate away basic principles. As Brian Lyons, speaking for Pathfinder Press, explained, "the book also casts a spotlight on the need for revolutionary theory, revolutionary strategy, and a revolutionary party — weapons of struggle which didn't emerge spontaneously out of Nicaragua, but without which there would have been no Nicaraguan revolution.

"In the first place, of course, these weapons were forged in the crucibles of struggle, in the

national experience and traditions of resistance, embodied in the heroic figure of Sandino. . . . However between Sandino and Carlos Fonseca, the founder of the FSLN, something of great historical significance intervened into its process of political formation. That something was the Cuban revolution. A revolution which lifted the FSLN onto its shoulders and which, in turn, increasingly rested upon the shoulders of the Bolshevik revolution under the leadership of Lenin."

Jessica Datta from the Britain/Cuba Resource Centre, also expressed confidence that the Nicaraguan leadership will meet the challenge of Washington's war threats. She explained how Cuba had resisted for the last 25 years many attacks similar to those Nicaragua is facing today. She argued that central to their defense is "Cuba's internationalism — from troops supporting the defense of Angola against South Africa to their aid to Nicaragua."

The unanimous message from the meeting was the important role this book can play in defending and learning from the Nicaraguan revolution.

The chair, Connie Harris, reported to the meeting that a review of the book appeared in the June 6 issue of *Barricada Internacional*, the English-language paper of the FSLN. Moreover, the Nicaraguan minister of culture, Ernesto Cardenal, has provided Pathfinder Press with an endorsement of the book. "Among the many changes the revolution has made in Nicaragua," he wrote, "is the change in political oratory. Now it is without rhetoric, without demagoguery, and without banality. It is straightforward, direct, simple, and often poetic. Anyone who reads this book will become convinced of this."

At the end of the meeting, Lyons reported for Pathfinder how the book was being pro-

moted. "Reviews are planned not only in a wide range of traditional publications, but in key labor movement journals such as *Labour Weekly* and the *Yorkshire Miner*," he said. "The Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign has taken a substantial order, which will be publicized and made available through the campaign. This will become especially important towards the autumn when there is to be a joint confer-

ence with CND [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament] and a trade union conference on Nicaragua, as well as a major demonstration against the threat of intervention. If the response prior to and at the meeting is any indication, it is going to be widely responded to. At the meeting itself 49 copies of the book were sold, and in a prepublication offer 100 were sold at meetings of *Socialist Action* sup-

porters, on the June 16 march against South African apartheid, and the Yorkshire miners' annual Gala.

Stuart Holland summed up the contribution of *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution* to the battle to defend and learn from the Nicaraguan revolution, saying it provided "ammunition in the sense that the words speak for themselves." □

Canada

Anti-Sandinista figure seeks support

Nicaragua solidarity groups counter with campaign to get out the truth

MONTREAL — In late June and early July, Brooklyn Rivera, the central leader of MISURASATA, an organization of Miskito Indians, toured several cities in Canada. The objective of his tour, sponsored by the Council of Indigenous Peoples, was to win support for his organization's campaign against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. He held public meetings and news conferences and met with many Indian leaders and prominent supporters of the Nicaraguan revolution.

Rivera asserts that Nicaragua's 125,000 indigenous people are oppressed by the revolutionary government. At a news conference here on July 10, he stated, "What we want is self-government. We will continue the armed resistance until we obtain autonomy."

The principal Nicaragua solidarity organizations in Canada conducted a campaign to counter Rivera's assertions. Canadian Action for Nicaragua (CAN), a Toronto-based organization, distributed to the press and to many organizations an information packet on MISURASATA and the situation of indigenous peoples in Nicaragua.

Included in the packet was a June 29 statement issued by CAN. It pointed out that MISURASATA had supported the U.S.-sponsored counterrevolutionary forces for three years beginning in 1981. Then in mid-1984 it publicly broke with the *contras*.

"In September, 1984," the statement said, "the Nicaraguan head of government, Daniel Ortega, publicly announced the willingness of the government to talk with Brooklyn Rivera and for him to return to the country. Taking advantage of the government amnesty, Rivera returned to Nicaragua in late October 1984. . . . He traveled for 10 days in the Atlantic Coast region, fully free to appeal to the indigenous peoples there. At the end of the trip, he agreed to open a dialogue with the government."

Beginning in December, a series of meetings between Rivera and the Nicaraguan government was held in Bogota, Colombia. The government announced the formation of a national commission on autonomy for the Atlantic Coast to prepare a new statute guaranteeing greater rights to the indigenous peoples in the



BROOKLYN RIVERA

country.

Rivera, however, broke off the talks in May when the Sandinista government rejected his demands that it withdraw all its troops from the Atlantic Coast and that the Nicaraguan Catholic Bishops Conference, among others, should serve as mediators in future negotiations.

A government spokesperson stated that withdrawing Nicaraguan troops would lack any sense of "political and military reality" in the context of the contra war. The request that the bishops conference serve as a mediator, CAN pointed out, was a "provocative demand given the parallel policies of the bishops and the US administration."

Following the breakdown in discussions, Rivera created further doubts about his good faith in negotiating with the Sandinistas when, on June 16, he made a pact with Miskito leaders closely linked to the counterrevolutionary Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) based in Honduras.

This agreement was made with elements from MISURA, an alliance of Miskito, Sumo, and Rama Indians associated with the FDN, and with the Southern Indigenous Creole Communities.

The statement issued by this bloc in Miami,

Florida, asserted that the "present heroic resistance that our people are undertaking is part of the traditional historic fight of the Indian peoples of the hemisphere for their survival and liberation against every form of colonialism and neocolonialism of the political and invasion forces."

It characterized the government led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) as "totalitarian from its revolutionary triumph," and charged that it carries out "a racist politics of ethnocidal character against our indigenous peoples denying all recognition of our aboriginal rights and committing every kind of physical and cultural attacks."

The declaration called for "formalization of the coordination of unity already existing in fact of the guerrilla forces of the Indian resistance that operate inside our traditional territory."

The signers of the anti-Sandinista declaration were, in addition to Rivera, Rev. Jenelee Hodgson, of the Southern Indigenous Creole Communities, and Wycliffe Diego, representing MISURA.

In his meetings in Canada, Rivera did not talk about this statement. Instead, he attempted to create the impression that MISURASATA does not favor the *contras*.

Rivera especially concentrated on soliciting support from Indian groups in Canada, attempting to take advantage of a debate taking place among Native American leaders in North America.

American Indian Movement (AIM) leader Russell Means, who is well-known for leading the occupation of the Wounded Knee Reservation in South Dakota in 1973, openly supports the mercenary war in Nicaragua. He has called for AIM members to join the *contras* in the war against the Sandinistas.

However, many other Indian leaders, including prominent members of AIM, do not agree with this position. Last November, Vernon Bellecourt, Antonio González, and Janice Denny, three leaders of AIM and the International Indian Treaties Council, visited Nicaragua to examine the situation there.

Bellecourt, at the conclusion of the visit,

stated that, compared with previous trips, he found "more willingness to defend the Revolution and take the advances it has brought to the Indian people. There have been concrete improvements over recent years in the areas of education and health care, for example. Clearly, much more could have been done if it weren't for U.S.-backed aggressions."

The other AIM representatives made similar statements.

More recently Dennis Banks, another AIM leader, issued a statement saying that "fighting and taking up arms against the Sandinistas" has "never been considered by the National Directorate of A.I.M. This is because the fault for the massive injustices in Nicaragua are directly connected with activities of the C.I.A. and the contras backed by the Reagan administration. It is inconceivable that we would ever join forces with the contras."

As part of their campaign to counter Rivera's views, solidarity and antiwar groups in Canada jointly sponsored a news conference in Montreal and a public meeting of nearly 150 in Toronto for FSLN spokesperson Mirna Cunningham. Cunningham, a doctor of Miskito origin, was kidnapped a few years ago by the contras.

She countered Rivera's attacks on the Sandinista government and described the steps the Sandinistas have taken to recognize and protect the rights of indigenous peoples.

Both Rivera and Cunningham attended the national convention of the New Democratic Party, Canada's labor party. Cunningham was not scheduled to speak, but after it was announced that an observer was present from the FSLN, a motion from the floor was enthusias-

tically carried to allow her to address the 1,200 delegates. She also spoke at a workshop on Nicaragua. Nicaragua solidarity activists distributed information on the Nicaraguan revolution and facts about the government's policies toward the indigenous peoples. □

Warm response for Kanak leader

Susanna Ounei explains freedom struggle to unionists, women

By Michel Dugré

MONTREAL — "As long as one Kanak remains alive, there will be a struggle for Kanak independence and socialism," Susanna Ounei told audiences during a recent tour of Canada.

Ounei is a leader of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS), the organization spearheading the struggle for the independence of New Caledonia from French rule.

While in Canada, Ounei took part in an international women's conference in Halifax and made a speaking tour of Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa.

A century of struggles

New Caledonia, a Pacific island that lies 1,500 kilometers east of Australia, possesses vast mineral wealth, including one-quarter of the world's nickel reserves. The island's geo-

graphic location also gives it great military and strategic importance for French imperialism.

In her presentations, Ounei described the more than one-century-long struggle of the native Kanak people for their liberation from French colonial rule, which began in 1853. "After the 1878 revolt," she explained, "French colonialism murdered several thousand Kanaks. In 1917, they decapitated Chief Noel, who had led a revolt of Kanaks who refused to go to Europe to kill and be killed to defend France" in World War I.

"The Kanaks," she continued, "were penned up on reservations and could not leave except to go and work 'voluntarily' for the whites."

In 1981, Ounei noted, Kanaks "supported the election of [Socialist Party candidate] François Mitterrand" to France's presidency "because we thought this might bring some benefits to French workers.

"But we had no illusions" about Mitterrand, she stressed. "We knew the role that Mitterrand had played against Algeria's liberation when he was minister of the interior. He was the one who recommended that the Algerians give up their struggle."

Following Mitterrand's election, the Kanak leader stated, "nothing changed. Out of 60,000 Kanaks, only 7,000 have jobs. The French government still refuses to give us independence. It is even increasing the number of French troops on the island."

Women's role

Ounei placed special emphasis on the role of women in the Kanak people's struggle. She was the founder of the Group of Kanak and Exploited Women in Struggle (GFKEL). In September 1984, the GFKEL joined with nine other proindependence groups to establish the FLNKS. Ounei is now a member of the FLNKS political committee.

"We women want to fight alongside our brothers," she stressed, "but putting forward our own demands" at the same time. "Kanak women," Ounei stated, "want to participate in the activities in the same way as the men. We want to do it without feeling inferior."

During the discussion that followed her presentation in Montreal, Ounei was asked about Canadian imperialism's role in New Caledonia. She pointed to the role of INCO, the giant Canadian corporation that is the world's largest nickel company.

"INCO," she stressed, "is trying to establish itself in New Caledonia. The only thing mak-

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ing it hesitate is our recent struggles. It is important that Canadians know what their bosses are doing in New Caledonia."

Fruitful tour

In Montreal, some 60 people took part in a June 22 evening of solidarity with the Kanak people at the Negro Community Centre. Leaders of the center had played an important role in Ounei's tour.

In the preceding days, Ounei had attended a meeting of the Metropolitan Montreal Labor Council, which is the Montreal section of Quebec's largest trade union federation, the Quebec Federation of Labor (FTQ).

The following day, she spoke at a meeting of the Montreal Central Council of the Confederation of National Unions (CSN). There delegates adopted a resolution supporting the struggle of the Kanak people and sent a telegram to François Mitterrand, condemning France's role in New Caledonia.

While in Montreal, Ounei also addressed a demonstration organized by the Autonomous Youth Regroupment (RAJ) and a demonstration against apartheid in South Africa, where she compared the situation of Blacks in South Africa and Kanaks in New Caledonia.

Ounei also visited a Montreal clothing factory, where she met workers from Haiti.

In Toronto, Ounei met with a dozen members of the Organization of Grenadian Nationals. This meeting between representatives of two Black peoples from small islands oppressed by imperialism was very warm. The Grenadians presented the Kanak leader with a videotape of Maurice Bishop, the prime minister of Grenada murdered Oct. 19, 1983, just before the U.S. invasion.

The Kanak leader addressed a dinner organized by another Black group in Toronto, the Movement of Minority Electors. She also



Monica Jones/Socialist Voice

Susanna Ounei speaking at June 22 meeting in Montreal.

met with Dan Heap, a member of the federal parliament from the county of Spadina. Heap is a member of the New Democratic Party (NDP), the labor party in English Canada.

In each city, Ounei had the opportunity to meet with representatives of Indian peoples. She visited Kanawake, an Indian village in the Montreal region.

The Kanak leader also was able to speak to organizations of young people and women. In Toronto, for example, she addressed a meeting of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics.

Ounei also met with groups involved in organizing solidarity with oppressed peoples.

Ounei's tour received very broad support in

Montreal and Toronto. Among the participating groups in Montreal were the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), Canadian section of the Fourth International; the Revolutionary Youth Committee (CJR); the RAJ; Socialist Left (GS), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International; and the Socialist Workers Group (GST).

In Toronto the tour was supported by the RWL, Young Socialist Organizing Committee, the Spadina NDP Foreign Policy Committee, the Ontario NDP Women's Committee, the International Women's Day Committee, Canadian Action for Nicaragua, the Socialist Workers Collective, and other groups. □

Two Fourth International leaders speak at Montreal meeting on Nicaragua

By Roger Annis

MONTREAL — Two leaders of the Fourth International were featured speakers at a meeting here July 14 to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution. Speaking were Tom Gustafsson, a leader of the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International, and Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.

The rally was organized by the Revolutionary Workers League, the Canadian section of the Fourth International. Sixty people attended.

Waters, who is also co-editor of *Nouvelle Internationale*, a French-language journal of Marxist theory and politics published in Montreal, spoke first. She had just returned from a short trip to Nicaragua and gave a first-hand account of events there.

Speaking in French to the rally, Waters recounted the vast mobilization for defense that occurred while she was in Nicaragua. "It was when Washington was whipping up a campaign around the taking of hostages in Lebanon," she said. "The Sandinista government, remembering that U.S. troops invaded Grenada in October 1983 in the days following the defeat of U.S. forces in Beirut, had decided to mobilize the entire country for defense.

"The sense of this vast mobilization was captured by one young participant's message to Washington, saying 'You cannot destroy us. You will never make us pull back from our goals.'"

This, she recounted, was the resolve of tens of thousands of Nicaraguans she saw, despite the economic hardship and dislocation imposed on them by the U.S. economic boycott and the mercenary war being financed by Washington.

Recent decisions by the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to step up aid to the mercenary army at war with Nicaragua and to authorize the intervention of U.S. troops mark a further evolution of U.S. policy.

"The rulers in Washington are now unanimous that they cannot live with the revolutionary government in Nicaragua. But at the same

time," she explained, "they are not ready to take the measures necessary for its overthrow — that is, a direct invasion by tens of thousands of U.S. troops.

"A discussion within their ranks is continuing on how best to accomplish their common goals."

There is nothing inevitable about a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua, Waters told the audience. Only the course of events itself will determine the measures the U.S. government employs to try to roll back the revolution.

In this sense, she said, much encouragement can be taken from workers' struggles in the United States and the endorsement by 10 national unions of the large antiwar demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and other cities last April 20.

"We for our part," Waters concluded, "are fighting side by side with Nicaragua for its future and for the future of humanity."

In his talk, Tom Gustafsson affirmed that "today Nicaragua is the decisive battleground in the fight against international reaction." He reported on the solidarity with Nicaragua that is developing throughout Western Europe.

Citing just one example of this, he explained that dockworkers in Sweden and Denmark discussed proposals for a one-day boycott of U.S. shipping following the announcement of an economic boycott of Nicaragua by Washington on May 1. Although the proposals were not carried out, "I'm sure that this proposal will come up again," he said.

He also cited a recent tour to 20 European cities by a leader of the Sandinista youth organization.

Gustafsson went on to explain, "the links are being understood more and more widely between the war in Central America and the war being waged against working people in Europe under the guise of austerity."

The West European peace movement is a part of this process, he said, evolving increasingly toward anti-imperialist political positions.

"A new wave of workers' internationalism is being sparked throughout Europe by the events in Central America." □

'One of best international events'

Castro speaks to Latin American and Caribbean women's conference

[The following speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro was delivered June 7 to the closing session of a conference on the "Situation of Latin American and Caribbean Women Today." The text of the speech is taken from the June 16 issue of the English-language *Granma Weekly Review*, published in Havana by the Cuban Communist Party.]

[The conference, convened by the Continental Front of Women Against Intervention, was held in Havana June 3-7. It was attended by 296 delegates from 27 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.]

[Vilma Espín, president of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), and Sandinista Commander Doris Tijerino from Nicaragua gave speeches at the opening session of the conference. Tijerino is coordinator of the Continental Front.]

[The conference was organized into four working commissions: 1. "Economic situation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean," chaired by Ifigenia Martínez of Mexico; 2. "Integration of women in the political reality of the continent and of their own countries," chaired by Amalia Alonso of Uruguay; 3. "Multiplicity of forms of struggle," chaired by Amalia Bécquer of Bolivia; and 4. "Women, art, and culture on the continent," chaired by Suzy Castor of Haiti.]

[At the final session, the four chairwomen reported on the results of each commission, and the final appeal was adopted. (It is reprinted here, following Castro's speech.)]

[Among those participating in the conference were women commanders of El Salvador's rebel forces, delegates from human rights organizations, trade unionists, peasant leaders, and representatives from governing parties in several countries. There was a sizable delegation from the FMC.]

[The women's conference was one of several international meetings held recently in Havana to discuss the economic and social conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean and the threat of U.S. military intervention in Central America.]

[On June 12-14 representatives of Communist and other workers parties meeting in Cuba took up these questions.]

[On July 15-17, Havana hosted a conference of Latin American and Caribbean trade unionists, who discussed the gigantic foreign debt weighing down on countries in the region.]

[The Latin American Parliament has called a continent-wide conference for October 10-13 in Montevideo, Uruguay, to discuss the foreign debt problem. Cuba was admitted to the Latin American Parliament on June 19 during its 11th regular assembly, in Brasília, Brazil.]

* * *

Latin American Comrades:

Cuban Comrades:

Comrades All:

I had prepared some ideas regarding the conclusion of this event tonight, but after listening carefully to each of the reports by the commissions and the Final Appeal, there is very little left for me to say tonight. So I will make a few comments, exclude some subjects, and see what ideas, what final conclusions we can draw from this event.

I think one of its main features has been its broad-based nature, pluralism, diversity of political, ideological, and social sectors represented. I would say that it is one of the most broad-based events ever held in our country. This event was also characterized by the caliber of the participants. I sincerely feel this is one of the best international events I have witnessed in our country.

I had the opportunity to participate in one of the commissions, Commission No. 1. I visited two other commissions. I was unable to visit the culture commission. I also planned to attend one of its sessions, but that day the culture commission had already concluded its work. However, I think what happened in Commission No. 1 must have happened in the

others, since there is no reason to think that, despite their impressive addresses and comments, the most capable and lucid comrades were all necessarily in Commission No. 1.

Rather, my feeling, through some comrades I know, is that the delegations did a good job of distribution, and it is very possible that in the commission on the forms of struggle or the one on the integration of women into the reality of our continent there were many notable comrades whom I did not have the privilege of hearing. When the final resolutions were read, the quality of the effort made was evident.

This event was also characterized by the fact that each and every one of the delegates was able to speak out and provide information about the current situation and experiences in their countries. There was no pressure of any kind in the commissions or in the drafting of the final documents.

On the contrary, efforts were made to have the final draft reflect the quality of the debates, so that the essence, content, and value of the re-

Who taught the torturers in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Brazil, Nicaragua, Haiti, Guatemala, and El Salvador? Who if not the United States? . . .

marks would not be sacrificed while at the same time reflecting different and diverse criteria, because the most important thing was the spirit of unity which prevailed. It was important to respect the opinions of each of the delegates and in particular the desire prevailed to have their presence at this event represent a positive contribution for the struggle of women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and it was kept in mind that not all of us have the same freedom to express our views.

I know of many cases of comrades with whom I talked and I learned their personal views on some of these issues, but since they represent organizations or parties and in some cases hold important positions in their countries, they were obliged to be careful and respect, as at times it proves necessary, the views of their party or organization on certain questions.

We must keep in mind that we are in a stage of growth and development of awareness on very important issues, and I think this was the fundamental task of this event, whose results will not be measured just in terms of documents, although the documents are excellent.

We're very concerned that none of the participants have any problems because they've attended this meeting.

It was an exceptional opportunity for many outstanding and capable women from Latin America, about 300 gathering here, to listen to the reports, for example, from the Salvadoran comrades, explaining — at times in a dramatic manner, but always with calm and great dignity — the tragedy of the women in their country; the opportunity to hear the comrades from Nicaragua report on the difficult conditions in which their liberation process is developing, under pressure, the economic blockade, and the dirty war imposed by the United States government; the opportunity to hear the Guatemalan comrades tell of the 100,000 lives lost, the tens of thousands of children without parents as a result of that policy of intervention and dirty war.

In 1954 there was a breathing spell, a hope in Guatemala, a government capable of applying or decreeing an agrarian reform law and other measures of social justice. This led to intervention by the United States, also in the form of a dirty war using the CIA, which organized mercenary armies, also in Honduras, to destroy the revolutionary government headed by [Jacobo] Arbenz, and with the same old pretext: that it was a communist or procommunist government, when everybody knows that

Arbenz was a top-ranking army officer who came from within the Guatemalan armed forces, a man of progressive ideas, but not a Communist.

And what has that intervention left the people of Guatemala? One hundred thousand dead, innumerable orphans, the highest number of

A meeting of this kind is an effort to overcome the shame in which we have lived and the time we have lost for nearly two centuries . . .

missing persons in the hemisphere, even greater than the number of missing in Argentina, which is saying a lot.

But at least we have advanced on the basis of these experiences, because in Cuba, they tried to do what they have done in Guatemala: organize a mercenary army, invade the country, and overthrow the revolutionary regime, in keeping with the old guidelines and calculations. But on that occasion the mercenaries didn't even last 72 hours. (APPLAUSE)

And here we are, firm and strong after more than 26 years, in spite of the economic blockade, threats, attempts at subversion and efforts to assassinate the leaders of the Revolution, something known to the whole world, since it was the U.S. Senate which investigated and confirmed some of these assassination plans. Yet here are our Revolution and our people, firm, staunch, and without any fear of the immense power of the empire, conscious of their strength and their capacity to struggle, to defend themselves and victoriously resist imperialist aggression against our country at any price. (APPLAUSE) And the government of the United States knows this.

Things in Nicaragua have also been different. Perhaps they thought that with 1,000, 2,000, 5,000, or 10,000 mercenaries based in Honduras, aided, organized, trained, supplied, and led by the CIA and the Pentagon, they could overthrow the revolutionary government of Nicaragua in a few months. They've already used 5,000, 10,000, and even more than 10,000 mercenaries, and nearly six years after the people's victory they have been unable to overthrow the revolutionary government of Nicaragua. (APPLAUSE)

The Nicaraguan people are well aware, as were the Cuban people, of what the price of a victorious counterrevolution would be, the number of deaths and missing, the crimes and torture that would be committed in that country.

If there were 100,000 after the overthrow of the revolutionary government in Guatemala, what would a victorious counterrevolution have cost in Cuba in 1961? What would a victorious counterrevolution cost in Nicaragua now? The peoples know this.

Then there is the example of the Salvadoran people, where the flood of military resources and money, of instructors and sophisticated technology to combat the revolutionary movement has been unable to crush, nor will it ever be able to crush, the heroic resistance of the people of El Salvador. (APPLAUSE)

We are also able to hear the encouraging words of our Puerto Rican brothers and sisters, who have resisted 87 years of U.S. colonialism without losing their identity, nationality, and culture. (APPLAUSE) Given that this is a small country of less than 9,000 square kilometers held by the largest and richest imperialist power in history, which has done all it could to crush the Puerto Rican national spirit, that is really a great and extraordinary historical feat. (APPLAUSE)

We have mentioned here the invasion of Grenada, the most recent imperialist crime in the Caribbean. We have mentioned the terrible living conditions of the people of Haiti, where a government closely associated with the United States reigns.

We have mentioned events in Chile and Paraguay. The women from those countries reported on the abuses and atrocities that have taken place. They talked of how women had been subjected to special forms of torture, ranging from rape to threats against their loved ones and even the torture of children, because they didn't stop at threats. And we know of cases in Chile itself of mothers whose children were dangled from the sixth, seventh, or tenth story with the threat that they would be dropped

if they did not give real or alleged information, if they did not talk.

Over the past years we have heard horrible things, such as what happened in Argentina, where there were reports of children tortured in front of their mothers, and even of grandmothers who were deprived of the children of their murdered sons or daughters. And there are still many whose whereabouts are unknown; not only did the parents disappear, and at times not just one parent but both, but the children disappeared as well.

It was said here that making human beings disappear is one of the most brutal and cruel practices ever conceived of.

But I ask myself, who taught such practices to those governments? Who taught the torturers in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Brazil, Nicaragua, Haiti, Guatemala, and El Salvador? Who, if not the United States? Who trained the security personnel, who taught them those "scientific" techniques for obtaining information? Who has been the ally of all those governments, without exception? We see the presence of the empire everywhere, its bloodied hands everywhere, in each of the countries mentioned, in those still living under atrociously repressive regimes or those where, fortunately, in recent years, the people were able to shake off oppression and start a democratic opening.

All of those problems, how real they are and their impact on the people, on women in particular, have been covered in depth, have been seen and heard and almost felt at this meeting. All these factors have helped develop an awareness.

But our suffering isn't the only thing which is developing such awareness. In one of the commissions I said that we have lost 175 years since the independence of the peoples of Latin America started in 1810. Not our own, since we were over here, forgotten, having been turned into a sugar and coffee plantation with about 300,000 slaves. We were the last country to gain independence.

The Cubans themselves, or shall we say the dominant Cuban class in our country, which owned the sugar and coffee plantations while the Spaniards monopolized trade and public administration, didn't want to hear any mention of independence, because it feared it would suffer the same fate as in Haiti, where the slaves had broken their chains. We didn't even have the privilege of becoming a supposedly independent nation 175 years ago. We gained our formal independence only 83 years ago and our real independence over 26 years ago with the victory of the Revolution on January 1, 1959.

But I was saying that we have lost 175 years. What else can be said when we hear what has been said here in all the commissions on the economic and social tragedy of our peoples and the total dependency? What else can we say when we hear figures such as those mentioned in the Final Appeal? It tells of 50 million people who go hungry, 50 million!

We would have to know what the population of this hemisphere was in 1810 to see if it was more than 50 million, because I remember that at the end of the last century we, who now number 10 million, were barely a million, a portion of whom heroically battled hundreds of thousands of Spanish soldiers. And now we speak of 50 million going hungry!

But I have my doubts about that figure, with all due respect to those who drafted the document; I'm not trying to criticize them. It is better to

I don't believe we are condemned or doomed by destiny to be eternally oppressed, eternally poor, eternally weak . . .

be conservative with figures; but I'm sure that there are many, many more than 50 million going hungry in Latin America. (APPLAUSE)

We talk of a million children who die every year, but actually we know about this. Not long ago there was a pediatric congress here in Havana attended by more than 1,000 pediatricians from Latin America who explained the situation. The director of UNICEF, the United Nations organization which is concerned with the problem of children's health, was telling me that a million under the age of one died — less than one year old! This does not include those in the 1-5 and the 5-16 age groups. In all, many more than a million children die each year.

We talk of 45 million illiterates and that figure is amazing; but I doubt

that in Latin America — I will explain why later — there are only 45 million illiterates. We would have to see how many children don't go to school. In the slide presentation by the nuns — you know I am referring to the two Colombian comrades; one of them told me she was a lay worker and the other has been ordained, and I was jokingly told that I had ordained her because I called her "sister." (LAUGHTER) Well, she explained how in Bogotá hundreds of thousands of children roam the streets without schools or food.

We would have to see how many children don't go to school in Latin America; not just how many illiterates there are, but rather how the number of illiterates tends to multiply, to increase because of the lack of schools or teachers.

We talk of 52 million unemployed. It is a high figure, very high, but it is possible that counting the unemployed and the underemployed there are many more in Latin America.

How can we avoid asking ourselves what we have done in these 175 years! In one of the commissions I also said that if we had to appear before the founders of the Latin American states, if we had to appear before Bolívar, Morelos, Hidalgo, Sucre, Santander, O'Higgins, San Martín, not to mention the liberators of Haiti; if we had to appear before them and they asked us what we have done in these 175 years and we had to give them the figures mentioned here today, these moderate figures, wouldn't we be really ashamed, wouldn't we feel rebuked if they asked us what the peoples, states, and governments of Latin America had done in nearly two centuries?

What would we say to those who dreamed of uniting our peoples into a real force so they could develop and occupy a place in the world? What would we say? What would we answer them? I think a meeting of this kind is an effort to start overcoming the shame, the period of shame in which we have lived and the time we have lost for nearly two centuries. (APPLAUSE)

In another commission I asked if we were destined to be always oppressed, poor, and hungry, to be without medicine and jobs, to be unable to read and write, to be eternally poor. I said we would have to discuss it with the theologians, and apparently the liberation theologians don't feel that way, when they speak precisely of liberation — that is, a different life for our peoples.

And I don't believe we are condemned or doomed by destiny to be eternally oppressed, eternally poor, eternally weak. Of course, I'm speaking of nearly 200 years, but to those nearly 200 years we must add another nearly 300 years, we mustn't forget that the Europeans came

We Latin Americans, with the blood and sweat of the Indians, with the blood and sweat of the black slaves, with the blood and sweat of the mestizos, financed Europe's capitalist development . . .

here killing with the sword in the one hand and the cross in the other, in order to bless the conquest and extermination.

What happened to those 200,000 peaceful aborigines, the Siboneys and Caribs, who lived in Cuba? They were virtually exterminated in the mines, through hard labor to which they were not accustomed, with diseases of all kinds brought to a people where a virus was deadly because the people had no defenses built up against such viruses.

What did they do in Mexico, in Peru, in Latin America in general? In some places they couldn't exterminate all of them because there were so many or because they were stronger or because they had greater cultural development.

There was mixture. There is a story about one of the first Spanish conquerors who had 300 children with Indian women, and we must almost thank them because at least they mixed with Indians and blacks and they left us Indian and black blood mixed with Spanish and Portuguese blood to form our peoples, because the others, those of the tumultuous and brutal North, did not mix. They exterminated the Indians and spurned black blood. (APPLAUSE)

It's been five centuries — five centuries! — and we spent three of them supplying Europe's treasure chest with gold, silver, copper, and



Jose G. Perez/IP

Fidel Castro

all kinds of precious metals. We Latin Americans, with the blood and sweat of the Indians, with the blood and sweat of the black slaves, with the blood and sweat of the mestizos, financed Europe's capitalist development. Where did all the gold, the silver, and the finances that contributed to Europe's development come from?

They came from the blood and the sweat of our Indians, our blacks, our mestizos, and our peoples. And for another two centuries, almost two more centuries, we have continued to finance them. We financed them in 1983, we financed them in 1984, and we are financing them now in 1985.

And to what extent are we financing them now? With over 70,000 million dollars: almost 40,000 million in interest and profits, 10,000 million through flight of capital, about 5,000 million through overvaluation of the dollar, and over 20,000 million through the low prices paid for our products and the increasingly higher prices they charge us for their industrial products, their equipment, and their junk. Take the cost of aspirin, for example: we all know that an aspirin costs a fraction of a cent, and the transnationals often sell it to us for 10 cents each.

We must realize how much they charge us for an aspirin to relieve a headache! How much they sell it for! We, who produce aspirin here to relieve our headaches, also know how it's made, what its components are, and how much it costs to make. I was figuring out how much our country would spend on public health if we purchased the medicines we need at the prices asked by the transnationals. It would run — and I'll be as conservative as you were in the document — to between 400 and 500 million dollars. Take into account that the price of medicines in Cuba is now half of what it was 26 years ago, at the time of the triumph of the Revolution.

In other words, we have cut down the price of our medicines by 50 percent and we're spending only a few tens of millions of pesos to produce them. The result is that in public health indices Cuba leads the Third World countries and is above many developed countries. (APPLAUSE)

So you see to what extent we're being robbed. Of course, we can produce aspirin, but we can't produce bulldozers, forklifts, sophisticated medical equipment, lathes, machine tools, or other industrial equip-



Mohammed Oliver/IP

February 1984 demonstration in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, against inflation caused by policies of International Monetary Fund.

ment. And regarding these products they deal with us in the same way they do with aspirin!

In the case of aspirin we're paying for the advertising. You can be certain that every time an ad appears in a magazine or on TV pushing a painkiller of some kind or aspirin in its various forms — because sometimes they give it a different color, shape, and name — we pay for all that advertising. Everytime we buy aspirin we're paying not only for the cost of the raw materials but also for the advertising. We're the ones who pay for that, not the transnationals.

How much is spent on advertising in the industrialized countries? Hundreds of thousands of millions. We pay for a part of that and part of

Those 2 million million the United States is going to spend in eight years will do less for the well-being of man than an aspirin that costs a fraction of a cent . . .

it is paid for by people in the industrialized countries. We pay for the profits, we pay for the social security, we pay the unemployment compensation, we pay for the taxes, we pay for the arms buildup. We pay for all of that, our part of it.

And what do they pay us? Who pays for the advertising for our coffee, cacao, sugar, meat, fibers, minerals? They don't pay anything to advertise those products. We're paying technicians and highly skilled workers in those countries with salaries of 1,000, 1,200, 1,500 dollars, on top of everything else. But who pays for social security here? Who pays for our unemployment compensation?

Over there, material and housing conditions are different. Over here, where do our workers, who produce everything we export live? Where do they live in the countryside? Where do they live in the cities? What guarantees do they have? What security do they have? How much do they get paid?

We trade our cacao, our coffee, or our sugar for some kind of medical equipment, maybe an X-ray machine, maybe a more sophisticated piece of surgical equipment, an operating table or any other equipment, or lamps, or whatever is needed in a hospital. And how much do the workers who produce cacao, coffee, or minerals get paid? Sixty dollars? Sometimes less and sometimes 70 or 80. We have seen what the mini-

mum wages in many of those countries are and how much what they sell us is really worth, and everything is ruled by that ominous law of unequal trade, always in effect.

This is seen year after year when we study a series of years, 40 years, 30 years, 20 years. Time after time they pay us less and charge us more, and this is why they become richer as we become poorer. Why? What divine beings drew up this law? Or is it that they have the same pretensions they had when they conquered this hemisphere and do they believe that this, too, is blessed by the divine? This is not exactly what the nuns and the Christian women that have been with us in this meeting think. They don't think that way, that a divine being or Mother Nature or whatever has condemned us to go through this forever. And I believe that the steps we are taking are aimed at putting an end to this eternal situation.

It's being said now, and with good reason, that the current economic crisis is the worst in history. Never before have the products exported by our countries been worth so little. Never! Never before have the beef, coffee, cacao, or beans we export gotten such low prices. Over there, they produce wheat and corn and these products are subsidized and exported to compete with the wheat and corn produced by Argentina and Brazil, and soybeans, and any other beans, and the sugar produced by many Latin American and Caribbean countries.

How much does this cost them? How is sugar production subsidized there? It's subsidized at 15, 20 cents a pound and then exported to the detriment of our countries' prices, our countries' products. Never before has the purchasing power of our products hit such a low level.

Some people talk of the crisis of the '30s. Yes, our people knew what that crisis was like. Our population was not as large as it is now, and they remember it as a part of the period of the Machado regime, as a period of dire hunger. Then our sugar was worth one cent a pound. Ah, but at the price of one cent a pound at that time the purchasing power of our sugar was much greater than it is today, when it's three cents a pound. Today's three cents are equal to half a cent in the '30s.

We can't go by figures or by the current value of money, because if we did almost all of us Latin Americans would be millionaires — and, in fact, we are. I became a millionaire a few days ago. I was presented with an Argentine million-peso bill that was worth 73 cents — that is, if I changed it that same day. (LAUGHTER) I almost took a liking to this business of being a millionaire.

We were in a meeting and Fanny Edelman — an Argentine woman who I know is here; she arrived today and she's a very excellent person (APPLAUSE) — I asked her if she had anything for me, and she

gave me a 1,000-peso bill. Three zeros had already been deleted, because the customary system consists of removing three zeros in order to keep count. I was very happy with my present. It was worth about two and a half dollars. I said "was," because that happened several months ago. Now it's probably worth a dollar and a half, more or less.

As I said, we can't go by figures, because if we did we'd all be millionaires. We're millionaires according to the figures, since the value of money is relative, and this is why I say that now three cents would be worth less than half a cent in the '30s, and I'm thinking of the dollar value in those days.

The present crisis is much worse than that of the '30s. Our population is four times as large as in the '30s, our social problems have multiplied and have accumulated and are incomparably larger than those we had in the '30s. Our population is much more aware; there are more means of communication. More people watch TV and listen to the radio and read magazines and have a better idea of what's happening in the world. They don't live as isolated as they did in the '30s.

On top of that we have a foreign debt of 360,000 million dollars and interest rates higher than they've ever been. And almost all of this debt is in dollars, dollars that cost more than they ever have in comparison to other foreign exchange, artificially inflated dollars designed to put into effect a colossal arms buildup without raising taxes. That is one of Mr. Reagan's miracles; developing the economy, cutting down on unemployment, and carrying on with an arms buildup without levying new taxes. A prodigious feat indeed! This personage will have to be canonized, because no further proof of miracles is needed!

And how did he accomplish this? How did he accomplish it? By getting money from the rest of the world. It wasn't by printing new currency as they did during the Vietnam War. This time it was done by collecting the money and this is the reason for the high interest rates. The debtor countries pay higher interest and all the money in Latin America goes to the United States.

Anybody with a million-peso bill like the one they gave me would exchange it immediately for 73 cents and deposit the money in a U.S. bank. I didn't exchange the bill that made me a millionaire for the first time in my life because I wanted to keep it as a souvenir, (LAUGHTER) but as a rule they hasten to exchange it because the following day it may be worth only 72 cents.

So the money is deposited to yield interest and the million pesos begin to multiply, because it's yielding interest in a U.S. bank. Through dirty, unfair, and piratical maneuvers the U.S. government has collected the world's money: from Latins, Africans, Spaniards, Japanese, French, British, everybody. But such miracles can't go on forever. The gentleman is building a house of cards that'll collapse any day because it lacks a solid foundation.

The United States is now the world's leading debtor country. According to the estimates made by the comrades at the Institute of Economics, the United States owes the rest of the world around 600,000 million dollars. On top of that it has a national debt of 1,650,000 million. In three years that debt has increased by 650,000 million. The U.S. trade deficit last year ran to 120,000 million, and it may be as high as 140,000 this year. The budget deficit was around 200,000 million. That country is buying things and spending things that it does not produce. No economy can withstand such conditions. And to top it all, the highest figures in military expenditures in history.

The United States is spending money at the rate of approximately 300,000 million dollars a year. Where are those dollars coming from if no new taxes are being levied? We are financing the United States' rearmament with those dollars that cost us so much and with those interest rates which are much higher than the normal interests levied on any loan. We are financing it by selling our minerals cheap and buying their junk at increasingly higher prices.

We are like the Indians, who said they didn't know what gold was or how much it was worth, so they gave the Spaniards a handful of gold in exchange for a tiny mirror, the first Indians the Spaniards say they found here. That's the way we're being treated, that's how we're being condemned to a life of poverty, that's how we're forced to finance luxury and the madness of spending hundreds of thousands of millions on means of destruction.

As we said recently, those hundreds of thousands of millions, those 2 million million that the gentleman who is president of the United States is going to spend in eight years will do less for the well-being of man than an aspirin that costs a fraction of a cent.

That's what the whole thing boils down to. And now they want to collect a debt running to 360,000 million during a crisis worse than that of the '30s. Where and how are they going to get the money? Because what has been described as economically impossible means just that. When

We want to resolve this problem without taking a cent from anybody but at the expense of battleships, aircraft carriers, missiles . . .

it's described as politically impossible, it means people will have to be murdered in order for them to go through with the sacrifices required by the debt payment.

And when we say that it's morally impossible, it's because it's a case of plain robbery, because we've been plundered for five centuries, and the only thing to do is, well, I always say cancel the debt. But I was deeply concerned when the Ecuadoran comrades told me that in Ecuador "cancel" means "pay." So I'm saying, "No, no, no, don't cancel the debt in that way. The thing is to erase the debt, forget it. Let them remember it. We can forget all about it." (LAUGHTER)

I understand why there are some who say, "Why that way? That's a very radical formula." No, it isn't. It's a realistic formula. Why do I say that it must be cancelled, forgotten, or erased or whatever we choose to call it, or that a moratorium must be declared? It all means the same thing anyway. Figures prove that the debt cannot be paid, that it's impossible to settle it, and that no matter what formula is applied it will only make it more impossible, regardless of all calculations, rescheduling, and even loans to pay the interest. That serves only to increase the debt, with growing interest rates, and as the debt grows, so does the impossibility of settling it.

Well, if the creditors like the formula of lending the money to pay the interest every year and they promise to go on doing it every year, there's nothing more to be said. Let them go on lending money and spending paper to keep track of how the debt goes on growing. That's no problem.

It's the experts who are going around inventing magic formulas, but they don't work out. All you have to do is to put them to the demolishing test of the figures and it becomes evident that the debt is unpayable. It's that huge, friends. It's not a question of three and a half cents, or a question of the million-peso gift I was presented with. It's a question of 360,000 million overvalued dollars and excessively high interest rates amidst the cruelest protectionist policy ever.

Argentines, Uruguayans, Brazilians, Colombians, Panamanians, or Costa Ricans are killing themselves trying to produce more beef, but it

Time after time they pay us less and charge us more, and this is why they become richer and we become poorer . . .

doesn't matter. Their meat will increasingly be worth less, that is, if they can find a market. Because in Europe — the Europe we financed for centuries with the sweat and blood of the Indian slaves and mestizos — the domestic producers are paid 2,500 dollars per ton of meat as a result of subsidies and they sell on the market at 800 dollars per ton. And when the Uruguayan, Argentine, or other Latin American meat exporters try to sell their meat, it's a miracle if they get 1,200 or 1,250 dollars per ton.

They do the same with sugar, and they're doing it with many other subsidized products. The United States has just announced a policy for heavily subsidizing grain exports — corn, wheat, soya. On the other hand, just a few days ago they adopted protectionist measures, suppressing the general customs tariffs on Latin American products ex-

ported to the United States at an annual value of over 5,000 million dollars.

A new thesis recently came up in the U.S. Senate and Congress to the effect that natural resources are subsidies. That is, if an oil-producing country sells to its own industrialists below world market prices, that's a subsidy; if a country, given its sources of power, has cheap electricity available and uses it to produce aluminum or any other metals, then they say this cheaper electricity is a subsidy and, accordingly, customs tariffs must be levied on it.

What is left, what is being left to live on if, in addition, new tariff measures are established every day? And it's not just the protectionism but also the dumping; the European Economic Community has right now 600,000 tons of frozen meat, they subsidize it and sell it at 800 dollars. What will Latin American meat producers live on?

I've given you some examples. In addition they're producing synthetic products; synthetic materials and synthetic fibers, for instance, synthetic rubber and similar products have begun to replace cotton, rubber, and other Third World products. The trend now is to substitute optic fiber for copper in communications. What are the Chilean people, the Peruvian people, and other peoples who produce that metal for export going to do now?

I read recently they were producing I don't know how many types of synthetic sugar, nonfattening synthetic sweeteners, maybe to lead sophisticated lives, I don't know; eating something else rather than sugar.

International standards should be established whenever one of these industrialized countries turns out some synthetic product: what the rules are that ought to be applied, under what conditions and subject to what time limits; because no one should be allowed to ruin any Third World country living off these products overnight, no one should be allowed to abruptly introduce a product that causes millions of persons to starve.

Every day a new measure resulting from a protectionist wave breaks over the industrialized capitalist world.

The Latin American countries piously meet to implore that they be taken into account, that they are starving, and they write letters. In this situation, they set up a small group, the so-called Cartagena Group,* and start writing moderate, careful, elegant, polite letters: "Look, sir,

Let's have a general strike of debtors . . .

please, we need to have political dialogue to settle these problems, to discuss the question of the debt. Look, sir, give us a break: increase the basic funds of the International Monetary Fund, the special drawing rights, make provisions for a special fund earmarked to cover excess interest, help us."

And so the spring meeting of the International Monetary Fund was held in the month of April in Washington. Well, the Cartagena Group wrote its letter, made its proposals, pleaded, implored, and was left waiting. The matter was settled in 15 minutes, they were told: "No!" and that was that. "That's ridiculous, forget about it, work hard, export, be austere, economize so you can pay the debt, and, moreover, develop."

Amazing! For my part, I at least had the pleasure of sending my pamphlet to the Monetary Fund meeting. I sent it to them to give them an idea of what the world is about. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

It so happens that under such circumstances there's always hope — hope is what multiplies fastest in the world.

Now comes the Bonn summit, a gathering of the big, powerful masters of the world economy to discuss different problems: star wars, the arms race, and also the economic disputes among them. How are they going to remember our problem if they haven't been able to solve their own? With the exception of the United States — which, thanks to all the trickery and witchery, (LAUGHTER) succeeded in accomplishing three things: reducing unemployment, boosting the economy, and rearming



Granma

Delegates at conference of Latin American and Caribbean women.

without taxation — the rest of the countries have hit rock bottom, they really have.

How many unemployed are there in England? Three million. Naturally, they have their bit of dole there, something, they are not as badly off as our unemployed, who don't even have a bill like the one I was given. (LAUGHTER) France, 3 million unemployed, the FRG, [Federal Republic of Germany] 2.5 million, Spain 3 million. What grows over there is unemployment, which has now become an obsessive madness. And they don't seem to realize that they have so much unemployment, among other reasons, because industry is underutilized and there's no one to sell to, since their prospective customers have no money to buy, because they pay them little for their products and make them pay the debt plus interest, etc. etc.

They don't even realize that the solution to this problem of the debt of the Third World countries would signal the beginning of the recovery of their own economies. Not just the debt, for other very important things would also be needed apart from the debt, apart from the clean slate, apart from forgetting about the debt. And we're not referring of course, to those who had their savings deposited there — a doctor in the United States, somebody else, the owner of a small business; no, no, no, we don't want anybody losing his savings, we don't want the U.S. or British taxpayers, or those from any other country, paying more taxes.

No, what we want is an end to the insanity of the arms race, we want to resolve this problem without taking a cent from anybody but at the expense of battleships, aircraft carriers, missiles, fantasies, madness, star wars, and interplanetary wars, that is what we are advocating.

In connection with the illusions and hopes I was speaking about, the Cartagena Group says: "This is our chance, now the people meeting in Bonn will surely listen to us, let's write them another letter." (LAUGHTER) So they wrote them another letter — I read it — and this time it was a more serious letter. They designated Uruguay's President Sanguinetti to write the letter, and this time it was a dignified, measured, serious letter. It was not written in the traditional imploring language used in these communications, the letter called things what they were. It spelled things out as they were, existing problems, and the need for political dialogue to find a solution.

They sent the letter to Bonn — that was early May — and approximately a month went by before they finally received a reply to the letter sent by the president of Uruguay on behalf of the Cartagena Group. It had a bit of everything — I'm not going to take too much time here telling anecdotes we're all familiar with — but they didn't know how to deal with that little hot potato: they passed it around one to another, played ball with it, (LAUGHTER) and then one of them sat down to write, spoke on the phone surely with other rich colleagues, and said: "Take a look at the little project we're sending back there," and in the end their reply was: "Nothing doing, forget about it, gentlemen! Work hard, be austere, economize, write off the deficits, each and every one of you solve the problem." (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE) Incredible, simply incredible, a circus, a piece of theatrics, "Manage as best you can!"

What are we going to do? Do you believe they're going to sit down and talk? Nothing doing, they look down on us too much, they look

* Named for a meeting of finance and foreign ministers of 11 Latin American countries held in June 1984 at Cartagena, Colombia. — IP

down too much on Latin American countries and Latin American governments to really sit down and talk. They are not going to sit down and talk, they are not going to sit down and talk until we show all the necessary dignity and fortitude to begin to solve this problem. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE)

This is, in essence what we are advocating. Or are we going to keep on writing letters? (LAUGHTER) A girl not wishing to have anything to do with her boyfriend would have shown more consideration for his love letters than the Bonn Group did for the Cartagena Group, no question about that! It was the biggest brush-off ever, incredible! There's no way to smite the heart of the Bonn tycoons, of the masters of the world's money. (LAUGHTER) Are we going to keep on writing imploring letters?

What do workers in a union do when they are being bugged and ignored by the boss? What do they do? When they get tired of asking and repeating, "Look, dear boss, listen, pay attention to me, my children are barefoot, my children don't have anything to eat. I have no money to buy medicine, I can't make ends meet, my house is leaking," and they are simply ignored, they go on strike. What we are then saying is, in essence, for everybody to understand, let's have a general strike of debtors, a general strike of debtors! (PROLONGED APPLAUSE)

It wouldn't even take much energy; for, you see, we spend much more energy with our hands stretched out, always asking and getting no reply. Think of what it means to have your hands stretched out like that 10, 20 years! (LAUGHTER) And the fact of the matter is that we've had our hands stretched out for more than 20 years. It's tiring, it's exhausting. So, we say let's put our hands in our pockets. (HE PUTS HIS HAND IN HIS POCKET; LAUGHTER)

And then, what do we do next? Yes, we keep our hands in our pockets. Now the movement is like this. (HE TAKES HIS HAND OUT OF HIS POCKET AND STRETCHES IT OUT AS IF TO GIVE SOMETHING) No! that takes a lot of energy; putting your hand in your pocket, taking it out and giving something, putting your hand in your pocket, taking it out and giving something. That's the movement we are constantly making now and it's exhausting. It may develop one's muscles but it paralyzes the heart once and for all, causes a heart attack. (LAUGHTER) So, we simply say: hands in pockets. If you get tired, take them out and calmly stretch them, giving nothing. (LAUGHTER)

This is what it's all about. If we don't force them, they're not going to talk. We're not saying: let's do things like this, unilaterally, but instead let's demand that they talk with us, because there are a lot of things to talk about. And when they say: "Let's talk about the debt," then we'll tell them: "No, we must talk about the debt and many other things or we continue on strike."

Let's talk about the debt, the new international economic order, which was approved by the United Nations, the overwhelming majority of the economic duties and rights of states 10 years ago, and now they don't want to even hear about it, the big six or seven rich countries, don't want to hear about it. They want to keep doing business as they are now, an insane thing to do because in addition it is harmful to themselves, to their own economies; they want to go on spending money on arms, they want to go on having the power to pulverize the world and turn the Earth into a vacant lot inhabited exclusively by cockroaches that can allegedly best resist nuclear fallout. (LAUGHTER)

And so by calling a strike we would even be contributing to peace in the world, we would be sending them a message saying: "Gentlemen, stop the madness. We are not willing, moreover, to go on paying for the weapons with which you're going to wipe us all — and you yourselves — from the face of Earth." The last part we wouldn't really be so sorry about.

We would be sorry as far as we ourselves are concerned, but when it comes to some of these madmen, it would be much better really that they opt for individual instead of collective suicide, for they have no right to dispose of the lives of 5,000 million people, they have absolutely no right. And that's what they are doing.

And here we are now doing the same exercise: stretching out our hands. We are not even asking any more; what we're doing is giving more and more all the time.

So, in our weakness lies our strength, because I think the right conditions are there for us to reach a strong and conclusive decision.

I give you an example of how we can all unite, and it is possible that on this we will all unite. Please note, this is now a struggle for countries' right to survival and development. We are all in the same boat: Muslims, Christians, Catholics, Adventists, Hindus, Marxists, socialists, super-socialists, extremists of the right and left (LAUGHTER) and the boat is sinking.

What are we going to do? Nobody's going to start asking their neighbor whether they're Christian or Hindu, or Muslim or Marxist-Leninist, liberation theologian, or of any other religious or political standing. Nobody's going to stop and ask that. The boat's sinking and what's needed is a lifesaver, a lifeboat to reach the shore, or people have to swim ashore, in an orderly way. Or if you prefer, we're in the desert, dying of thirst, with but a few minutes of life left in us and we need fresh water, lots of it, we have to look for water desperately, water that we all want so much.

That's the situation the Third World countries are in. We are speaking basically of Latin America because Latin America is the Third World region that carries greatest political weight, is more developed, and has greater possibilities of taking the lead in this battle. But it's really a Third World battle; what you are putting forward, those problems, that struggle you are formulating and proposing, is for Africa and Asia. And I assure you, Latin American will not be alone in that struggle.

So, it is a question of survival for all. What each country does internally is up to each country. On these questions, what we are putting forward is what seems to us right, not what each country should do. I imagine each country knows what to do in this situation, what to do to make sure no money escapes.

We are not even saying we should spend that money but invest it in development. In effect they are saying, "And where are you going to get the money for development from if you don't pay the debt?" They have to be told that what we give to them we are going to keep and, without paying any interests, we are going to invest in development. Because a country like Brazil can invest 120,000 million in 10 years. Mexico can invest another 120,000 million; Argentina, some 50,000 to 60,000 million. Nobody, now less than ever, would give them such foreign resources for development. There are a good number of countries that with the money they are paying out could finance their development themselves, employing it well.

What's more, I think the people would support putting an end to that tiring exercise of constantly handing over money. They would support it. They would support a development program with those resources, because we know that such monstrous needs are not resolved from one year to the next. If no money were to be paid out and it was only used for this purpose, only a small part of our problems would be solved temporarily. The lasting solution to these problems has to come through development, that's clear; we are not proposing some kind of international economic populism.

We know that the problems that exist are terrible, but we also know how to solve those problems mathematically: through development. Then we'll still talk about austerity and sacrifice, but not to hand over

If we don't force them, they're not going to talk . . .

money to our gentlemen creditors, plunderers, debtors — yes, because in all truth they are the debtors, not us. Our conscience should be clear, at least mine is clearer than it has ever been: because the more I think about this, the more I say that they are the ones who owe us, they are the debtors, we are the creditors.

If we do this, we will simply be putting an end to a system that has lasted almost five centuries and beginning to lay the first stones for the future, another future of which we can one day be proud. We are absolutely sure they will do nothing, they will pay no attention, they will let us starve: let them all die, all those children you have mentioned there, let them go on dying, more and more of them. So that in 20 years' time we can meet again somewhere and say: Now two and a half million are dying, on conservative calculations like these. And to say there are now

no longer 52 million unemployed but 100 million.

Can we resign ourselves to that future? I say, is that a Catholic, Christian, or a Marxist concept? As we said in one of the commissions: you don't have to be a Marxist or socialist or communist to understand it's a crime to use money to give to those who have plundered us for centuries, or to acquire superfluous goods or, for example, a million cars, gas, tires, and raw materials to go out on Sunday and lead a frivolous life when a child is starving to death or while a child is dying of a disease without medicine, or has died because he wasn't give a 20-cent vaccination.

You don't have to be a communist or socialist; you only have to be a Christian, to have a basic sense of ethics (APPLAUSE) to say: That's not right, that goes against the most elementary moral principles, against the most elementary ethical principles, and a Christian could say: That goes against the most elementary Christian principles.

So, it's not been difficult for us to have understood each other as well as we have here at this meeting, just as I am sure that workers of various beliefs and political ideologies who will meet here in mid-July will understand each other. Of that I am sure. This is clear and is basic; it's a question of survival, because we repeat here what we have said on other occasions: ideas don't generate crises. You have to be crazy to think you can generate a crisis with an idea, crises are what generate ideas. (APPLAUSE)

And this crisis is generating ideas, an awareness and unity; it is generating programs for struggle for us all, now that we have a greater

I say they are the ones who owe us, they are the debtors, we are the creditors . . .

awareness, and really we are not going to waste time writing letters. What I do think we should do is send all the documents you've drawn up here to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; all the documents of this women's meeting should be sent to all governments for them to become aware too. (APPLAUSE)

We should use our energy to shape an awareness; that's what we should put our time to; that's what's worthwhile. Because no small circle of people who meet and talk is going to solve this if nobody learns of what's been discussed, because that's flimsy, weak, risky. If we think we're going to solve problems in discussion circles, in meetings, that's a great mistake. The greatest safeguard is that these ideas come to be part of our people's awareness.

Meetings, fine, you have to have them: they're a basic structure for saying things that have to be said, because we're not proposing war, we're proposing that we sit and talk to solve these problems. "Ah, even if you don't want to, we'll solve them one way or another." That is what we have to say to them and that we're not afraid of them. Why should we be? We have said: What are you going to do, what can you do if we take a strong, firm position?

Barely 40 years ago, they had the world carved up; the whole world map was theirs. Now there are more than 100 newly independent countries. There are countries that had territory 10 times their own: the mania, the craze of the time was to have colonies.

And what has happened? The world has come a long way, has changed a lot; now the developing countries, the underdeveloped countries as I prefer to clearly and crudely call them, to differentiate them from the industrialized countries, make up the immense majority of the world community.

What can the rich countries do, an embargo? When did they embargo us? We've been embargoed now for 26 years, we are still economically blockaded, and we've never been better off in all truth. (APPLAUSE) Embargo, blockade? They can't blockade the entire world, because they'd be blockading themselves, they'd be without coffee, without chocolate, without raw materials, without fuel, they'd be left with nothing; they'd be blockading themselves, it would be a hara-kiri because they can't blockade the Third World.

How can this struggle be implemented? Well, the idea would be a consensus of all, a common stand on all our part. Will there be consensus? There may be, for example, among the Latin American countries,

but perhaps late, and perhaps certain countries will not have the time to wait for a consensus. It's possible that one, two, three, or four countries in despair, say we're on payment strike. If the whole union can't meet and take concerted united action, some are going to go on strike.

Some are practically already on strike, although of course without saying so: they have to pay so much in interest and they don't pay; can't pay; they postpone payment for three, four, five months, but they're quiet. The others, the creditors also keep quiet on this because they don't want it to become very public. When one says: Look, I'm not going to pay because the situation simply doesn't allow for it, because it's unjust, because it's not right, and because I've decided to take the decision, then there will be enormous connotations.

It only takes a few who are already desperate, to go out on strike. But the principle of solidarity is all-important. Conditions have to be created, conditions for when certain countries, a group of countries, even if it's small, can't wait for consensus and in desperation throws down the gauntlet and when economic measures are tried against them, that they then have the full solidarity of the entire Third World with them. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE)

I don't doubt for one moment that there will be that solidarity, and there will be industrialized countries that will not be involved, and I am sure, absolutely sure, that the socialist countries will be in solidarity! (APPLAUSE) Just as I am sure that of every 100 member nations of the UN, over 90 will support that group of countries. (APPLAUSE)

Of course, I am convinced of what they will do because I know their cunning. I know how foxy those former colonial powers can be, and I know that they won't take any immediate initial measures, they will hurry to sit down and negotiate and try to put out the fire because, if they take measures against a group of countries under those conditions, raising a flag on a problem that concerns all Third World countries is like putting out a fire with gasoline: the fire and solidarity will spread.

Developments in the Malvinas which you also mentioned in your resolutions are not so far removed: a NATO country declares war on a Latin American country, and despite the fact that there was at the time a horrendous government in Argentina it had the backing of the whole of Latin America, and nonaligned, the Third World, in its war with Britain, despite, I repeat, the government in power there. Latin American and Third World countries did not vacillate in supporting the Argentine people in that struggle; they overlooked everything else and simply agreed that there were NATO soldiers killing Latin Americans, and in that war no other country stood to either gain or to lose absolutely anything!

That was a great teaching. There was unity around the Argentine people. But in this problem which affects the lives of all Third World countries, in which there's a lot to win and lose, then the solidarity will perhaps be all the more extraordinary than ever before.

And I repeat, the ideal thing would be a consensus, that everybody be united from the start. But the situation of some countries is so serious and desperate that I doubt there'll be an opportunity to wait for a consensus. I think that the process of democratic opening in several important countries — Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil — that the survival of those processes will depend on whether or not there is a solution to these problems.

Some may ask what will happen if governments don't show determination, if this battle is not taken up, if this problem is not solved, what next? Neither do I have any doubts on what is going to happen. There will be pretty generalized social upheaval throughout the hemisphere, possibly revolutionary social upheaval.

It also has to be said to these gentlemen who have such a phobia about and are so allergic to revolutions, because they hear the word revolution and immediately begin to sneeze, especially Mr. Reagan who's superallergic to social change, upheaval, and revolution; it has to be said: You don't want revolution? Well, you're going to have them by the dozen across the world if the situation continues. (APPLAUSE)

Will they be capable of thinking things over? A journalist asked me. What do you prefer? My answer was: that the debt issue be solved and the principles of the international economic order be applied so that conditions for the development of those countries be created. I think this position is more constructive.

I have said that there will be a chain reaction. We are reaching a crit-

ical mass. We will try to ensure that chain reaction be a controlled one, as in a nuclear reactor, so there won't be an explosion like Hiroshima. I have no doubt but that conditions are intolerable and will lead to inevitable social explosions.

There can be no other solution; there is no way to prevent it other than what we are proposing. Because I think: Well, two, three, four, 10 revolutions in Third World countries, what would they mean on their own? I think it is more important right now for all those countries — I say so in an objective and calm manner — to solve the problem of the debt, the new international economic order, and create real conditions for development, because social change alone won't solve the tremendous accumulation of economic and social problems. There could be a better distribution of what we have, but we would still lack the resources to bridge our accumulated needs gap.

There is the Cuban example. In Cuba it wasn't just social change that paved the way for the work of the Revolution — part of which you have seen for yourselves — the possibility of providing schools for all our children, the possibility of wiping out unemployment, the possibility of health care for all workers and all families, the possibility of providing every Cuban with social security, our possibilities for development, in addition to all the money we must spend on defense, which you can imagine is quite a bit because of our next-door neighbor, since we can't move from here, which obliges us to undertake huge defense expenditures.

How has all this been possible? Well, because a sort of new international economic order has been established in our relations with the socialist countries. We are not selling sugar at three cents, or nickel, or citrus fruit or any of the other things we send to the socialist countries at rock-bottom prices; they give us good prices and this gives us important earnings.

How else could we purchase the 11 million tons of fuel we use every year? We must bear in mind that our fuel consumption is nearly equal to the entire output of Ecuador, which is an oil-exporting country. Simply because we have no other sources of energy: we have no major rivers, we are a long and narrow island, there are no big waterfalls, rivers are small, and water is mainly used in agriculture. When the Revolution took power, there were no forests left — we have had to plant thousands of millions of trees. We have no coal; we are now beginning to discover some oil and gas deposits and are increasing production.

I will give you an example: we export 7.5 million tons of sugar per year. At current world market prices, if there were a market for all those exports, it wouldn't be enough to cover the costs of a quarter of the oil Cuba needs. Cuba hasn't solved its problem simply with the desire for social justice and with social change; it has done so because it has different economic relations from those historical relations we were speaking

of that Latin American countries and the countries of the Third World have with the developed capitalist world.

This has provided us with the resources to build factories, roads, highways, dams, schools, hospitals, and homes; nowhere in Cuba will you see slums, and that's saying a lot. I know of Latin American capitals that have 6,000 slums inhabited by millions of people; we don't have any.

The minimum educational level of our working population is nearing ninth grade. All children of elementary school age go to school and

Raising a flag on a problem that concerns all Third World countries is like putting out a fire with gasoline: the fire and the solidarity will spread . . .

more than 90 percent of those in the 1-16 age group. We have a ratio of one teacher per 11 or 12 students, 256,000 teachers trained by the Revolution who are already studying at higher levels. In the future, in our elementary schools, starting from first grade, the teacher will not be someone who reached the ninth grade and then spent four years training to be a teacher but rather one who reached ninth grade, then spent four years in teacher training and six at the university.

Yesterday you visited an institution I was glad you could see in practice: the family doctor, coinciding with the same block as the Federation of Cuban Women. This revolutionary program began to be implemented not long ago, and already there are over 200 doctors involved. By the end of the year there will be another 500 and, starting in 1987, about 1,500 a year, and then more than 2,000 a year until there are 20,000 doctors involved. This gives us the guarantee, not just of maintaining existing levels in public health but also of advancing ahead of nearly all or all the industrialized countries.

In public health we are already competing with the United States. We are not exactly competing with Haiti, but with the United States; their infant mortality rate is 12 per 1,000 live births in the first year of life, ours is 15, we are only three points behind. We have the same life expectancy, and in other health indices we surpass them. We are competing with them, and I haven't the slightest doubt that in the next 15 years they will fall far behind even if it means that I have to stop smoking. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

With such a revolutionary institution, with such revolutionary innovations we are making in the medical field, the doctors we are training, the quality of the doctors, the development of all clinical and surgical fields and the new medical sciences program, the selection of students by vocation and quality on a mass basis, we will not only be placed in a leading position, we will also be able to help other countries with our experience and our doctors. We already have about 1,500 doctors working abroad, more doctors than the UN World Health Organization has working in the Third World, more than double, (APPLAUSE) and we barely mention it.

If you look at how much that costs the UN, you will see it is hundreds of millions, and we do so at a very low cost, simply having the people able to do so, to go any place in the world as a newly graduate doctor, as a specialist or anything else, which is the main thing.

It's what the individual has in him, because a revolution can't only be judged in terms of buildings, factories, or institutions that you see, well, this building is very fine, this conference center or other large buildings, factories or schools; a revolution is judged by what people are like inside, (APPLAUSE) that's the key thing. This is what enables us to send doctors and teachers abroad.

When the Nicaraguan comrades asked us for teachers to work in the most remote and most difficult areas, we offered 29,000 elementary school teachers; and when the mercenary bands murdered two or three teachers, 100,000 came forward, practically all of them, and they don't just come forward, they go, enthusiastic and determined. Of the teachers in Nicaragua about half were women (APPLAUSE) and most had a family and children. And they go to Nicaragua as they would go to Angola or South Yemen or Southeast Asia. Because of today's values of our people, our citizens, our teachers and doctors trained by the Rev-

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olution, we can do anything at very little cost because, if you don't have the person to go there as a doctor or teacher or technician in any of those fields, no amount of money will solve it.

I don't want to talk about the things the Revolution has done; it really pains me to talk about this after all that I have heard here. I speak of it simply to make it clear that we have had the resources with which to do this, we have administered them well; not a dollar leaves the country, not one! In 26 years there has been no embezzlement on the part of any minister, deputy minister, or leader, not a single one. (APPLAUSE) Money isn't stolen, money doesn't trickle out; it is used and invested. But basically we have just economic relations with the socialist countries.

Now, regarding all the campaigns Cuba is undertaking on the subject of the economic crisis and the foreign debt, one thing has to be said: Why have we done it? Very simple, because our country, of all the countries of Latin America and the Third World, is the most immune to the situation at this time, that is, we don't have those problems.

We can speak because we don't have to turn to the Monetary Fund every day or month, fortunately, we have never had to do so. No, we haven't held talks with the Fund because they kicked us out long ago — or we left, I can't even remember anymore how it happened — and we have renegotiated our hard currency debt, since we do have such a debt, which is not 100,000 or 20,000 or 10,000 million, but about 3,000 million dollars. It accumulated during the periods of low sugar prices; we contracted debts which are no longer growing, but they do exist.

In 1982 we renegotiated our debt, which is small compared to that of the other Latin American countries. We are free to raise the issue and discuss it, and they can't take steps against us, because the United States

A sort of new international economic order has been established in our relations with the socialist countries . . .

already did all it could against us in the economic field, and it pursues our exports, trying to prevent us from obtaining foreign exchange and markets, constantly persecuting and harassing our economy; it isn't just the blockade.

If we sell nickel to Italy, there is the United States to pressure the Italian government not to buy the nickel, claiming that it would be an act of disloyalty, that NATO and the world would come to an end if they buy nickel from Cuba. If we sell to Japan or any other country, they exert strong pressure so that they won't buy from us. They have banned U.S. imports of steel or equipment containing Cuban nickel.

They work methodically and systematically so that we won't be able to export, to create problems for us, and here we are dying of laughter, dying of laughter! I think they will die of cirrhosis of the liver, (LAUGHTER) their liver will shrivel up because for over 25 years they have been trying to make life impossible for Cuba and now they only have left lies, tricks, and propaganda; they are but a moral skeleton.

What can they say about Cuba? If they review all of Cuba's indices, some of which are better than theirs, we don't have as many cars as they do, nor do we want to have as many, we don't want to poison the city with carbon monoxide or bankrupt the country buying tires, spare parts, or gas.

No, not that madness, they can have all the cars they want; but we have better education, better indices than they do, and we are starting to have better health indices and are ahead of them in quite a few things in spite of the blockade and all the efforts they made to destroy the Revolution.

We can say that all of us are alive by a miracle because they have had a whole lot of plans to eliminate the leaders of the Cuban Revolution. They are unscrupulous, those gentlemen have no scruples of any kind. And they have been from both parties ruling that country, those who have been thinking up such crimes have not all been from one party. Well, they'll die of liver disease, I repeat. All their efforts have been in vain, since they can't do anything to us; they can't take measures, nor can the rest of the developed capitalist world take measures against us.

What has occurred to them to respond to Cuba's charges and explana-

tions, to the analyses Cuba has made? They are desperate since they can't do anything practical. What can they do, drop three nuclear bombs here? No they can't do that. Besides, they know we aren't afraid of their three nuclear bombs, which is even more important. (APPLAUSE) Three nuclear bombs or 100, 1,000, or 10,000 nuclear bombs amount to something if you're afraid of them, but if you aren't they're chicken excrement, (LAUGHTER) that's all. Nor is it easy in the world today to drop nuclear bombs.

And they can't, simply can't strike at us economically anymore than they have done already, nor do they have ways of intimidating us or forcing us to be silent! Their methods and subversion have failed, as have their threats of conventional war, because they know what would happen if they invaded us, they know it is easier to enter than leave.

So what is left? Suffering, crying, resorting to underhand, plaintive propaganda, inventing tricks and stories. What is their latest invention? A little campaign saying Cuba is inconsistent because it's talking about canceling the debt. Now I'm saying more: there must be a strike. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

I said I would be brief and I promise to keep my word in a few minutes. They say Cuba is inconsistent because it is renegotiating while it is saying all this. It is no secret that in 1982 we began to renegotiate our hard currency debt, just like everyone else, and we have met our obligations. Cuba is one of the few countries that can handle the situation without any trouble.

It is very simple: we have about 5,500 million dollars' worth of exports and the figure is increasing every year — we could say pesos because we peg the peso above the dollar, it would be a higher figure, but let's say our exports come to roughly 5,500 million dollars a year — and the servicing of our debt with the industrialized capitalist world comes to 8.56 percent of the total value of Cuba's exports. There are countries paying more than 50, 40, or 30 percent as a rule in Latin America; we are paying 8.56 percent for the interest on the debt with the industrialized capitalist world.

There are no problems of this or of a financial kind with the socialist world, because our debt with our main creditor, the Soviet Union — and for some time, this is not the first time — has been renegotiated without any problem, without the Monetary Fund or the Paris Club, for 10 or 15 years interest-free!

Ten or 15 years and no interest! Just look at that formula! Why isn't that applied to all the countries of Latin America? Why isn't their debt renegotiated for 15 years interest-free and without having to pay a single cent during that time? For nobody even remembers the principal now; what is currently wiping out the Third World is the interest on the debt. It is interest, not capital, it's like a life tax with a built-in tendency to growth.

In other words, we don't have this problem in our economic relations with the socialist countries. They say that we have a big debt with the Soviet Union and they want to know how much it is. Should I tell them? I'm not going to tell them, let them find out for themselves. (LAUGHTER) They, and also the members of the Paris Club, want to know how much our debt with the Soviet Union amounts to and we said to them: "You have nothing to do with this and we are not going to tell you."

We took a hard line and then the United States began to send notes to the Paris Club countries asking them to demand that we reveal our debt with the Soviet Union. We said: "No, it has nothing to do with this." We gave them no information nor do we intend to in the future. But we

Cuba is waging this battle because it is in a position to do so, because nobody can threaten it, because nobody can muzzle it . . .

would like to let them in on one very interesting piece of information, which is that we have no problems.

Our debt with the socialist countries is rescheduled practically automatically, on a long-term no-interest basis. Our sugar and all our other export products have different prices with them.

Only 15 percent of our trade is affected by this crisis, that is, when we

have to buy medical equipment, raw materials, or industrial equipment we can't obtain in the socialist countries. We do about 15 percent of our trade with the West, sometimes more, sometimes less, but usually around that figure.

Almost all our sugar, practically all our export products are sold to the socialist countries at much higher prices. That's where we get the resources for what we're doing now. But the United States claims that we are inconsistent, because we're rescheduling our hard-currency debt.

In fact, several days ago, a gusano-Yankee organization — not a Cuban-American organization as they say — a gusano-Yankee organization announced that it had obtained a secret document, which is simply the document Cuba sends every year to its creditor banks and to the creditor countries with which we have rescheduled our debt. They claimed they had in their possession a secret document and began to manipulate the supposedly secret document. You can see how secret it is, when a total of 614 copies (LAUGHTER) have been sent out to all the banks with which we maintain relations, all the states of creditor countries, many friends, and even journalists in the economic field: a total of 614 copies.

Their claim that it's a secret document is ridiculous; by now they don't know what else to say. They claim that Cuba is inconsistent because while it's rescheduling its debt, it says that Latin America's debt should be canceled. We're the one who least need it. Cuba's great merit is precisely that of waging a battle to solve a problem in which the least affected is Cuba. I can't think of a better example of solidarity with Latin America and the Third World countries. And Cuba is waging this battle because it is in a position to do so, because nobody can threaten it, because nobody can muzzle it. (APPLAUSE)

You can well imagine what would have happened if any other government in Latin America had come up with such proposals. It's easy to imagine how long that government would have lasted if it started to openly put forward these formulas and explain how to obtain some degree of relief from the crisis.

Of course, we're the least affected by the economic crisis and of course we will apply whatever formula is found for the rest of the countries. But we're not waging a battle for Cuba, we're waging a battle for the Third World. That is what we are really doing.

We would draw very little benefit from an economic standpoint if, in effect, the problem of the foreign debt were solved and a new international economic order were established. Only 15 percent of our trade would start to benefit, along with a certain percentage of our payment of the foreign debt. However, practically 100 percent of the Latin American countries' economy would benefit.

Now, then, I maintain that 10 or 12 percent of current military spending would be sufficient to solve the problem of the debt. It's chicken feed, since those insane characters would still have enough money to destroy the world five times over. Now, what we're saying is this: a new international economic order may mean an additional income of no less than 200,000 million dollars for the Third World countries and a cut-down on expenditures of over 200,000 million a year.

If, for example, Latin America and the Third World were able to increase their purchasing power by 300,000 million dollars a year, the industrialized capitalist countries themselves would be able to run their industry at full production, creating new jobs, and beginning to solve their own economic crisis.

We are not saying this to help the capitalist system or anything like that. We don't give a damn about the capitalist system and, as far as we're concerned, it can sink into oblivion if it wants to. What we do want is to prevent the Third World countries from sinking. What we don't want is for this crisis to have catastrophic effects on the Third World. Because, unless the right solution is found, the evolution of the problem will have traumatic effects.

We're not playing the role of incendiaries proclaiming revolution in the Latin American and Third World countries. We are speaking of revolution, yes, but a revolution in the unfair international economic relations that exist today. What is done in each country is strictly a private affair of each country.

The U.S. arguments to detract from Cuba's thesis are ridiculous. They're so desperate they now turn to this allegedly secret document to extract a platitude: that Cuba is rescheduling its debt. I say yes, we will

continue to reschedule and wait patiently to see what happens. Our situation is far from desperate, and we're not waging a battle for us but for the Third World.

Now then, what have they not said? What details are there in the document of which they have not said a word? They haven't said a word, for example, about the fact that in 1984 Cuba's economy grew by 7.4 percent and work productivity by 5 percent.

The latter represented a savings of 200 million pesos in wages, the equivalent to the work of 90,000 workers, and our methodology in calculating the gross social product does not include the value of the work

I maintain that 10 or 12 percent of current military spending would be sufficient to solve the problem of the debt . . .

done or the productivity of teachers and doctors and hundreds of thousands of other workers in the social services. The only item that is taken into account is material production.

Nothing was said either about the fact that the unit cost of production per peso was cut by 2.4 percent which, in the overall concept of the economy, represented a 365-million-dollar reduction in cost.

The document also states that in 1984 investments in Cuba ran to around 4,000 million dollars, about 14 percent over 1983. All these indices show greater efficiency and sustained growth. That year, Cuba was the only Latin American country to show such a growth rate: 7.4 percent, to the United States' 7. In the first four months of this year, Cuba's economic growth rate was 6.6 percent over last year's and work productivity increased by 4.8 percent.

We're interested in productivity because in many places we don't have the labor force. When we introduce a new machine, we do not fire a worker. On the contrary, the workers welcome the new machine, the new technology.

For example, a total of 350,000 canecutters took part in the 1970 sugar harvest, whereas this year only 70,000 were needed. We have cut down the number of canecutters by almost 300,000 — 280,000 to be exact — as a result of mechanization. You realize what this means in our country, where a canecutter had to work so very hard, plagued by Cuba's heat and humidity. Now practically all canecutting is being done by harvesters, the workers are being paid higher wages, and their living conditions have improved greatly.

We have no problems in this respect and our economy is doing well, very well. And there have been no cuts in social expenditures. On the contrary, the budget increases every year on a par with economic growth. That's the reason for the increase in the budgets for public health, education, and services.

We've already made our plans for the next five years, as well as for the next 15 years. We know exactly how many doctors and teachers we are going to have and how many factories and houses we are going to build. All our economic and social development plans are made. We simply have no problems.

We're not waging a battle for our own benefit, and yet those ridiculous spokesmen for imperialism, trying to contradict that idea, utilize the fact that we are rescheduling our debt, something they learned from the document that Cuba sends to its creditors every year but not to the International Monetary Fund because it has nothing to do with this.

Of course, the creditor countries have their own little club. They like it, but they don't want anybody else to have a club. A club for creditor countries, yes. A club for debtor countries, no. No wonder they don't want a strike. But since they don't want a debtor countries' club and they don't want to sit down and discuss things, then they'll be facing a strike.

We've already discussed things with the Paris Club, but the Yankees keep on sending materials defending their side. The Yankees run to the Club, because, as a rule, the members are NATO allies, and they give them the Cuban documents. The Yankees, of course, know what's going on, but we too are familiar with every document the Yankees send to the Club.

Three years ago — maybe two and a half — when the banks' repre-

representatives got together here to discuss things, I met with them and told them: Look, I know that you have a paper that the United States sent. I have it, too. Here it is, look at what it says and you will see how they're sabotaging every measure, every step that is being taken in these negotiations.

Then, we were the ones who had to say: We want to find solutions and would like you to cooperate but, if you pay attention to what the Yankees are saying, then we're very sorry but we're going to be the ones to set the terms and the period for payment.

Naturally, I showed them the paper. All of them had the document the United States had sent to every creditor country refuting ours. So, this is nothing new, this is old hat, one of the many tricks used by the United States to obstruct any Cuban economic or political activity.

Well, as I said, I'm excluding other topics, there's plenty of them to talk about. But while in this meeting where we have discussed information and drawn some important conclusions, I also wanted to point out some data pertaining to the United States.

It was mentioned in the commissions and in the Final Appeal that there are illiterates in Latin America — 45 million, you said, and 52 million unemployed. All right.

Now, how is the United States doing when it comes to education, how is it doing? Don't you believe they are much better off than we are, which is a disgrace (I'm not talking about us Cubans but about us Latin Americans), and for some reason I have my doubts about the number of illiterates mentioned in the final declaration.

Concerning the United States I have a dispatch here datelined May 26 that reads as follows: "Sociologist Jonathan Kozol, author of *Illiterate America* said today that one-third of the U.S. adult population can't read and that the government should make a bigger effort to fight growing illiteracy in the United States."

Imagine, while they are making preparations for star wars, millions of U.S. citizens can't read here on Earth. (LAUGHTER)

"He indicated that the United States ranks 49th among the literate countries in the United Nations." Forty-ninth, so there are 48 countries ahead of the United States in education.

"He told booksellers and editors attending the annual convention of the American Booksellers Association that the U.S. gross national product has lost 100,000 million dollars due to illiteracy.

"Kozol said that the Reagan administration's proposal for voluntary programs to solve illiteracy was inadequate. He said that Secretary of Education William Bennett recently stated that teaching people to read and write was not an obligation of the federal government and that the parents were to blame for not reading to their children.

"Kozol said it was our job to make it clear that solving this problem is up to the government.

"Forty percent of the enlisted men and military personnel has a fourth- to eighth-grade reading level, said Kozol."

This is an interesting fact because in Cuba, for instance, those going into military service have a 12th-grade education; they go in with at least 12th grade; whereas up there 40 percent are in fourth- to eighth-grade reading levels. "This forces the army to publish educational literature in the form of comics, with drawings and illustrations. According to Kozol, it takes five pages of comics to explain by means of drawings how to open the engine hood of a jeep." For such a simple operation they need five comic pages.

"The number of adult illiterates is 7 million more than the number of people who voted for the winner in the 1984 elections, said Kozol." Yes, according to this gentleman there are more illiterates than voters who voted for Reagan in the elections. Such is the great democracy of the North; excellent, excellent, not just because of the magnificent elections they hold and the presidents they sometimes elect, but because of the number of illiterates in that country.

Now, that was a UPI [United Press International] dispatch but here's another from AFP [Agence France Presse]. The former dealt with a sociologist's statements, and the AFP dispatch says:

"A recent report on reading by Secretary of Education William Bennett has set in motion a parallel campaign urging children to read more and watch television less."

According to the report, "Most U.S. children do not read more than

four minutes a day, while they spend an average of more than two hours watching TV.

"To the 27 million functional illiterates we would have to add another 46 million who, according to official estimates, can decipher and understand but can't read fluently.

"Of the 158 UN members, the United States ranks only 49th according to the degree of literacy."

These figures indicate that there are 73 million illiterates and semi-literates in the United States, once those who can't read fluently are included. And the United States has 240 million inhabitants. That's why it seemed odd to me that Latin America and the Caribbean, with almost 400 million, only had 45 million illiterates. I believe we have many more than that, undoubtedly.

In medicine they aren't much better off. I have some figures here on what's happening in that country. An international dispatch reports the following:

"The quality of black children's lives in the United States declined over the past five years and they have now greater possibilities of being born into poverty, not getting higher education, and becoming unemployed in the future, according to a report by the Children's Defense Fund released today in Washington.

"The authors of the report said that the statistics attest to such regression and that, considered as a whole, those elements accurately depict the permanent inequality depriving black children of a better life.

"With respect to 1980" — and precisely since this man was elected — "black children run greater risk of being born into poverty, of lacking prenatal care, of being born to adolescents or unwed mothers, of having unemployed parents, and of even being unemployed themselves, apart from having no access to higher education.

"According to Fund Chairwoman Marian Wright Edelman, a black child, compared to a white child, currently has twice the possibility of dying during the first year of life or of being born prematurely.

"According to this scale, a black child is three times more likely to live in a female-headed household or die from mistreatment, and four times more likely to die during childhood or to be arrested during adolescence, and five times more likely to live later on welfare.

"For the first time in this decade, emphasized Marian Wright Edelman, the black mortality rate went up in 1983, and at present 35 black newborns die each year in the United States, as opposed to 18 white babies."

Think of it, the white population is much greater than the black population in the United States and still 35 newborns die, not in their first year of life, but at birth, as opposed to 18 white newborns.

As we can see, not only have they brought illiteracy and poverty into our countries but they themselves haven't succeeded in getting rid of them. They are the victims of their own plundering and selfish system.

At least in our country we have concerned ourselves with all these problems — we have solved many of them and plan to advance further in coming years. As I said and reiterate now, we can advance not only because of the social changes but also because of the just economic relations between Cuba and the socialist countries.

We advocate for the rest of the Third World countries the same type of relations with the industrialized countries. This is what we are advocating. And that's why I also explained in Commission No. 1: "It isn't enough just to cancel the debt or solve the problem of debt; what's needed is a new international economic order, what's needed is economic integration of the Latin American countries, if we really want to succeed in the future, to uproot these dreadful evils you have mentioned in those documents, and to find a solution to all the problems that cause us all so much anguish."

I beg you to forgive me, I promised to be brief and I wasn't.

Before I finish, I sincerely wish to convey to you our gratitude for your presence in our country for the encouragement it has meant to us, for the boost you have given to our efforts and our struggle, and to congratulate you on the excellent meeting, the magnificent papers, and the extraordinary appeal you have issued to all the women of Latin America and, we could say, to all the women of the Third World, to all the women in the world and to all the peoples of the world.

Thank you very much.

(OVATION)

Appeal of Havana women's conference

'We are unwilling to pay for the effects of the crisis'

[The following is the final appeal of the Havana conference on the "Situation of Latin American and Caribbean Women Today" sponsored by the Continental Front of Women Against Intervention. The text is taken from the June 16 issue of the English-language *Granma Weekly Review*, published in Havana by the Cuban Communist Party.]

* * *

The meeting on the Situation of Latin American and Caribbean Women Today was held June 3-7, 1985, in Havana, convened by the Continental Front of Women Against Intervention. It was attended by 296 delegates from 27 countries in the region, representing the broadest and most diverse political, social, cultural, and religious sectors.

We women participating in this event have unanimously coincided in our analysis of the grave situation facing our peoples and the need for concrete efforts to further the united action of all Latin American and Caribbean peoples in facing the crisis.

Aware of our strength and that the problems of women are the problems of their peoples, that the crisis is a double burden because of the inequality and discrimination which for centuries have affected generations of women, we are agreed in that the struggle against the discrimination of women and for full equality is an inseparable part of the struggle against dependency and underdevelopment.

Ours is a continent rich in natural resources with a priceless human potential.

And yet:

- 50 million human beings go hungry.
- A million children die each year from hunger and malnutrition.
- There are 45 million illiterates, of whom more than half are women.
- The number of unemployed and underemployed is more than 52 million.
- The levels of inflation are frightening; in 1984 there was a 175.4-percent increase in consumer prices in the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- There has been a drop of 50 percent in real wages in some Latin American countries.
- The daily lives of millions of women are made unbearable by impoverishment, insecurity, and uncertainty.

We don't want such a way of life!

We are unwilling to pay for the effects of the crisis with greater sacrifice.

The growing foreign debt is one of the major expressions of the crisis and a destabilizing factor for the majority of Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The foreign debt comes to 360,000 million dollars.

In 1983 and 1984, in interest and profits alone, the huge sum of 56,700 million dollars has left the region.

Every dollar which leaves the region via the debt and interest is a dollar which does not contribute to development and to the solution of such pressing problems as hunger, health, housing, employment, and education.

Women are half the population of Latin America and the Caribbean.

We have a right to be heard and be part of the solution to the crisis.

We logically ask ourselves how the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean will pay the interest on the foreign debt if the means to do so do not exist?

It is not a matter of willingness, it is impossible.

The measures of the International Monetary Fund would place all our economies simply at the service of paying the debt and the interest, with absolute contempt for the social costs involved in terms of hunger and poverty. These measures are rejected and resisted by the peoples, as shown by the Dominican people.

Repression will not solve the crisis!

We, the women of Latin America and the Caribbean, have agreed that a way towards a solution is the integration of the region based on common interest and mutual benefit, mobilizing all our energy and our potential resources, together with the cultural heritage of our peoples.

We urge the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean to seek lasting and equitable solutions.

We call for unity of words and deeds among the peoples.

We call for resolute struggle against underdevelopment and dependency and for the establishment of a just new international economic order which will assure and protect the lives and well-being of present and future generations.

For the women of Latin America and the Caribbean are joined by the struggle for peace, equality, and development, seeking concrete effective solutions.

The irrational arms race, senseless in a nuclear context, runs counter to peace, increases tension, and absorbs resources needed for development.

Military expenditures already amount to a million million dollars, part of which could help relieve the suffering, poverty, and isolation of millions of human beings on this continent.

Latin America and the Caribbean have been for many years the political backyard of our powerful neighbor to the north.

Today, the peoples are demanding their

legitimate right to exercise their sovereignty and national independence.

We Latin American women join our voices to this demand. Day after day, by diverse means, ways, and demonstrations, creatively and with imagination, we are involved in the struggle to restore our independence and our identity.

At this crucial hour, solidarity must prevail as a living expression of our founding fathers' Latin Americanist spirit. We Latin American women can and should be the promoters of the broadest solidarity with the struggle against all kinds of intervention, against all kinds of foreign interference.

The participants in this meeting share the same opinion: that the right to self-determination is a basic principle as well as an inalienable right of all peoples. Therefore, we reject the policy of strength, the military aggression, and the economic blockade in force against the sister people of Nicaragua.

Not only the defense of national sovereignty but also every people's right to self-determination are at stake in that Central American country.

In the same spirit we support the Contadora Group's peace efforts as a political, negotiated solution to the Central American conflict.

We are aware of the fact that stability in Latin America will never be achieved as long as there is the cumulative social injustice, exploitation, repression, and poverty of so many years that have led the peoples of El Salvador and Guatemala to wage a frontal battle for their sovereignty, rights, and freedoms.

The U.S. military bases in Honduras and the occupation of part of that Latin American territory by foreign forces constitute an insult to our independence and dignity as free peoples.

We support Argentina's sovereign rights over the Malvinas and we reject the establishment of military and nuclear bases on those islands and on Easter Island, owned by Chile, viewing them as a threat to peace and security in the area.

The continent has entered a new era that reflects the peoples' desire for change and aspirations to a better life.

The process of democratization supported by the great majority in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil evidences this spirit. Women have always played a major role in these changes and constitute an integral part of the forces struggling for the success, advance, and consolidation of the process.

The women of Paraguay and Haiti, victims of the continent's oldest dictatorships, also share the same aspirations.

We are in solidarity with the Chilean

people's growing struggle for democracy, in which women's fighting spirit is an invaluable contribution to the popular rebellion that has made the tyrannical regime untenable.

As the personality and identity of Our America, based on common links, is being reasserted, we express our solidarity with women who are still living in the continent's remaining colonies and neocolonies, especially in Puerto Rico — a nation under inter-

vention and under threat of being torn from our roots — whose people are waging a tireless struggle for self-determination and independence.

We denounce the excessive growth of the military apparatus, the constant maneuvers, and plans to utilize the Caribbean as one big military base for the continent.

We Latin American and Caribbean women have taken a historic step on the difficult yet

not impossible path to unity.

We have been divided for centuries.

We have learned that there are no insoluble differences, that we are united rather than separated in the diversity from which we derive strength and inspiration for creative action.

We must unite to guarantee the life of our peoples!

Women of America, unite!

DOCUMENTS

Evaluation of world political situation

Fourth International leader discusses significance of 1985 World Congress

[The following is an interview with Daniel Bensaïd, a leader of the Fourth International and of its French section, the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR).

[The World Congress of the Fourth International was held in February of this year. The interview originally appeared in the April issue of the LCR's magazine, *Critique Communiste*. This translation, along with minor editorial changes, is taken from the June 17 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly review published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question. The task of a World Congress is to determine the main features of the international situation now and in the period ahead. And the situation today is dominated by a crisis in every part of the world.

Answer. The World Resolution adopted at the congress characterizes the crisis from the standpoint of its underlying mechanisms as the gravest ever experienced by capitalism on the international scale. This point is important in order to assess and put into perspective the situation in the European capitalist countries, in order to combat the notion that the crisis can be resolved by a new wave of technological innovations or simply through limited defeats of the working class. Whatever the timing, tempo, or obstacles, the crisis is going to persist and deepen.

The specific crisis of the Eastern bloc countries does not derive automatically from that of imperialism, although it is given impetus indirectly by some of the latter's effects. There are by now considerable indications that the mechanisms set in place when these states were established are losing their effectiveness, with major political consequences.

Q. While the effects of the economic crisis are becoming painful, we have not seen any more or less general challenge to a manifestly bankrupt capitalist system in the West European countries. The mood in the working class

is not one of self-confidence. The social situation in France is eloquent in this regard. At the same time, the victorious Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua seems quite isolated, threatened by a U.S. imperialism that has gone back to its old tricks.

A. You have to go back to the right turn that happened in 1980 between the end of the Carter administration and Reagan's entry into the White House. On the other hand, that was the year of the triumph of the Nicaraguan revolutionists. From Reagan's first actions as president, we began talking about an imperialist counteroffensive.

Such a counteroffensive has in fact developed on the general political level; on the military level, with the renewed arms drive; and on the social level with austerity offensives in the various capitalist countries.

However, we should try to assess how successful the imperialists have been in achieving their objectives. Their aim is to turn around the international situation that took form at the end of the 1970s and which was marked by the paralysis of the U.S. after its defeat in Vietnam.

You refer to the devastating effect of the crisis on the European workers' movement. You should also include Japan. In these countries, the working class has experienced setbacks, defeats, although they remained limited in scope, for example the defeat at Fiat in 1981 or the recent outcome of the test of strength between Thatcher and the British miners. We will have to see now what effect this latter defeat is going to have on the social resistance of the workers' movement, since it's clear enough that the objective of the Conservative government is to undermine the organizational strength and even the democratic rights of the labor movement.

However, for the moment this imperialist counteroffensive has run up against working-class resistance whose potential is far from exhausted. If you just take the year 1984 in Europe, we saw the struggle by the factory councils in Italy in defense of the sliding scale of wages, the historically unprecedented strike

of the British miners, the remobilization of the West German union movement in the campaign for the 35-hour week, general strikes of public workers in Belgium and the Netherlands, and regional struggles in Asturias and Sagunto in the Spanish state. In the latter country, at the start of 1984, social struggles came up more or less to the level of 1975 in the aftermath of [dictator Francisco] Franco's death. So, there have been big fightbacks, often ending in compromises, without a decisive victory on the one side or the other.

The view of the present situation that was developed in the pre-congress discussion and in the congress itself was one of a tug-of-war in which for the moment the two sides are more or less in balance without either one being able to gain a clear advantage. This is not because of the inherent strength of the opposing classes but because of the weaknesses from which each suffers.

The crisis of leadership in the working-class movement has prevented it from winning victories. But this statement has to be qualified a bit in the light of the British miners' strike. It was not a lack of determination on the part of the miners' leadership that explains the defeat, but the attitude of the other trade unions and a real split in the working class, which existed also in some mining areas. The mechanisms of solidarity in the workers' movement did not operate effectively enough to overcome the resistance of the traitor union leaderships.

At the same time, there is a parallel crisis of leadership on the bourgeois side. Thatcher has just won a victory on the front of social struggle, but she may face a defeat on the electoral and political front tomorrow. There is a general instability of the political setups. Whether it is the reformist left or bourgeois parties that take on the job of applying austerity, they very quickly have to pay the price for this on the electoral level.

On the level of the basic relationship of forces among the classes, we say that nothing has yet been decided. It is necessary to measure the points scored by the bourgeoisie against what they have to get, if not to resolve their crisis, at least to gain a serious respite and

the time to carry through economic restructuring.

When the representatives of the bosses are saying openly that it is necessary to reduce the buying power of wages by 15 percent, the bourgeoisie is still far from having achieved that. Likewise, it is far from having dismantled past social gains, in particular the social security systems and unemployment insurance in the various countries. These battles have not yet been decided.

It is true, nonetheless, that there has been a real erosion of the strength of the trade unions, mainly in southern Europe because this has occurred to a limited extent at most in the North. The decline in trade-union membership has been spectacular in the Spanish state, and considerable in France. In response to the attacks the workers' movement has faced, one might have expected deeper-going and more rapid processes of reorganization.

One of the reasons for the slowness of the processes or reorganization that are occurring (to some extent) in the unions but not yet very much on the political level is the fact that the inflow of youth into the centers of production has been slowed to a trickle. The statistics show this clearly in France and Spain.

On the other hand, one of the important elements in the combativity of the British miners' strike was the role played by youth. With the swelling of youth unemployment, there has been little rejuvenation of the work force except in marginal or temporary jobs.

There have been some striking indications of this exclusion of young people from the industrial work force. For example at the last congress of the Workers Commissions in Spain, the average age of the delegates was around 37 or 38, which is very high. The youngest delegate was 29! The generation that represents the center of gravity in the working-class fightbacks has lived through the end of Francoism, May 1968 in France, and the 1969 upsurge in Italy.

Since 1976, the younger age groups have been coming on the scene at best in reduced numbers. This has a major negative effect. It weakens the workers' movement more than the working class as such.

The second element is that the extent of unemployment is not provoking the reactions of self-defense and solidarity that were in fact seen in the 1930s, although they should not be exaggerated. The means that exist now for administering the problem of unemployment create a situation where the predominant mood is still a confidence in, and looking toward, the established institutions rather than the idea that the workers' movement itself should take the responsibility for solving them. This obviously can last only as long as the bourgeoisie is able to finance these systems. We are in an intermediary situation.

If the working class is on the defensive, mass movements are nonetheless developing whose importance should be properly assessed. Some people are talking about a depoliticalization of the youth. But that is wrong. The political activity and mobilization of the

youth today are more powerful and more extensive than they were in the 1960s at the time of the anti-Vietnam war movement.

The great mobilizations of the youth in Europe today against the threat of war, against the missiles, the marches against unemployment in Belgium have been massive. Even in France, where such mobilizations have been weaker, the anti-racist demonstrations have affected far more youth than the anti-imperialist mobilizations 20 years ago.

However, and this is an important difference from the 1960s and 1970s, political consciousness has not developed in a way commensurate with the mobilizations. There is a general mistrust of political organizations and a doubt that makes it difficult for people to see the way forward. But this blockage should not lead us to underestimate the extent of mobilization and readiness for struggle among the youth.

The third limit that the imperialist counter-offensive has run up against is obviously Central America. The U.S. does want to intervene and the threat is real. But for the moment there is still a considerable gap between Reagan's statements and his actions. His line of rebuilding imperialist power has made a certain impact on public opinion, to the extent that he has gotten an opening for launching a new arms drive. But with respect to foreign interventions, the Vietnam syndrome continues to stand in the way. Direct intervention in the Middle East or El Salvador would still be difficult for the imperialists. That is why the central question in our congress was defense of Nicaragua, the only revolution in progress in the world today. It not only represents a national liberation struggle but a struggle for socialism, for the establishment of a workers' state in the shadow of the United States.

Q. In the past in our movement, we have thought in terms of a dynamic, an interaction among what we called the three sectors of the world revolution — the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, in the dependent and semicolonial countries, and in the post-capitalist bureaucratic societies of the Eastern bloc. How does this dialectical interrelationship operate today?

A. You can describe the effects of the crisis that run through more or less all the sectors of the world revolution. But, and this is one of the features of the present situation, there is not any immediate unity of the world revolution. That is the problem. We maintain our overall view. There is a unity in the long run. But today there is no direct interaction among the various sectors.

A convergence did appear in 1968, when the Tet offensive in Vietnam, the Prague Spring, and May-June 1968 in France all came together to give the impression that the three sectors of the world revolution were marching in step. But this is no longer happening.

It should not be thought that the convergence was an optical illusion, a subjective shortcut dreamed up in Rome or Paris. That was a time, for example, when the Latin

American revolutionary organizations looked to Europe and believed in the possibility of a revolution on the old continent. They saw the European revolutionary organizations as sister organizations facing similar problems.

Today, the prevailing view among the Latin American revolutionary organizations is that Europe is a big backup area for solidarity. It is useful and nice that people are still revolutionary in Western Europe, but revolution is no longer on the agenda there.

The Polish developments have had a dual effect on Latin American revolutionists. For a major sector, they brought a revelation of the fragility, the possible crisis, of the bureaucratic states.

In Brazil and even in Nicaragua, sectors linked to the Christian Base Communities and liberation theology have been particularly sensitive to Poland, and not only because of the religious question involved.

However, the conclusion drawn by other revolutionary sectors, including even the more lucid, was that Poland proved that "it can't be done," that you can't defy the USSR on its own doorstep and that [Gen. Wojciech] Jaruzelski is the lesser evil. You hear this being said in currents that can be regarded as revolutionary, where it is seen as realism.

So, there is a desynchronization among the various sectors of the world revolution. Among revolutionists in the dependent countries, it is considered that the effects of the crisis in the European or developed capitalist countries still don't amount to anything serious. There is unemployment, but there is still social welfare. The phenomena of economic collapse and social dislocation convulsing the dependent countries are unknown.

The unity of the revolutionary dynamic is hard to see, and this situation fosters a view that sees the international class struggle dominated by the relationships between the blocs, between the systems of alliances among states.

Q. You say that the Nicaraguan revolution was at the center of the congress. What tasks of solidarity with this revolution were adopted?

A. The Nicaraguan question was in fact central in the preparation for, and the proceedings of, the congress. It is the only socialist revolution in progress, and it affects the political relationship of forces in the world for four reasons:

- It is taking place in the heart of the U.S. sphere of influence.
- It is taking place in Latin America while the Cuban revolution continues to have an impact, when Cuba has not yet suffered a bureaucratic counterrevolution and still serves as a beacon for the continent.
- It has already become a domestic political problem in the U.S. because of the proportion of the American population today that is Spanish-speaking.
- It is a detonator for an explosive situation in Central and South America.

For all of Latin America, Nicaragua shows that Cuba is not an exception, that, in the con-

text of the crisis, revolution is possible today.

So, solidarity with Central America is a long-term task for us in order to affect the international relationship of forces. It is also important for the new generations in Europe, which are active against nuclear weapons, racism, and famine. They are moved by a feeling of human solidarity but often also feel impotent. Solidarity with Nicaragua is one of the few activities where you can work directly for a revolutionary solution.

Q. In Europe, it has been hard to assess the impact of the Nicaraguan revolution on Latin America as a whole. Has this revolution really aroused the hopes of the entire continent? Is it helping to renew the strategic and political thinking of the vanguard in these countries?

A. After the trauma caused by the failure of the armed movements in the early 1960s, Nicaragua has demonstrated the possibility of a military victory. That does not mean that you have to copy a Nicaraguan model. The Latin American organizations are a lot more cautious today. They realize that what happened in Nicaragua was a combination of different sorts of struggles, self-organization of the masses, civil defense committees, guerrilla warfare, forms of insurrection. It is an example for study that is rich in lessons, if you are careful to keep in mind its specific features.

The Nicaraguan revolution has revived debate on strategy, how to fight for power, including on the political-military level. It is also food for thought about the problem of tactical alliances in the revolutionary struggle. The Nicaraguan case is quite special, because here the revolution took the form of an antidictatorial struggle at the same time as it represented the fulfillment of a nation that had never really existed independent of imperialism.

It is necessary to point out this specificity without obscuring the more general problem that arises today throughout Latin America: that is, the costs of the crisis have been such that they have produced a breakup even in some sections of the bourgeoisie itself. It is inconceivable that in countries such as Mexico, Argentina, or Brazil the effects of the crisis will operate in such a way as to give rise to great mass proletarian currents overnight. We are going to see much more differentiated, complex, intermediate forms of reorganization and realignment.

We do not think that the structure of the bourgeoisies in the more industrialized countries such as Brazil or Argentina is such that they can generate a new wave of nationalist bourgeois populism like Peronism. In the last analysis, even if they bridle at the reins, they are renegotiating their debts and are highly dependent.

However, in these countries there are sections of the petty bourgeoisie that are going to break with populism without necessarily going over to hard-and-fast working-class positions overnight. How should this problem be dealt with? The working-class united front is not a sufficient answer.

In Brazil, the working-class united front is represented by the PT (Workers Party), which got an average of 3 percent of the vote in the 1982 elections, plus the Communist Party and the pro-Albanian CP, which are very limited groups. What is needed is an answer for popular sectors that goes beyond the PT, that politically expresses the unity in action that is possible around social, democratic and anti-imperialist demands.

A third very important thing to think about is that in the vanguard, or at least in significant parts of it, the form of transition in Nicaragua after the overthrow of Somoza is being taken very seriously. It is not seen only as a way of maneuvering and gaining time in the face of imperialist threats.

What I am thinking of here essentially is democracy, pluralism, and elections. The experience of five years of pluralism in Nicaragua is becoming seen as an apprenticeship in politics, appreciated for the possibility it has offered for solving conflicts, for discussion, and regarded, moreover, as appropriate to the rate of social transformation.

While this phenomenon is still limited, an astonishing combination has developed between the trauma of 10 or 12 years of dictatorship, in which tens of thousands of people were made "missing" and tortured in many Latin American countries, and the eruption of the Nicaraguan revolution. We have to try to imagine the extent of the trauma. These extreme forms of repression were not the result of foreign occupation, as we saw in Europe, but a phenomenon produced by the societies involved themselves. This has produced a concern for democracy that is likely to be long lasting. It goes very deep.

Then, on top of this has come the experience of Nicaragua, which seems to offer an answer to the aspiration of liberation while maintaining democratic guarantees. Its impact is enormous. This is contributed to in many countries by the role of the church and the effects, which may be indirect, of the Polish example, although this affects more limited sectors.

All this is helping to modify the behavior and thinking of the vanguard. The revolutionary organizations of the 1970s were often militarized movements, with the discipline and absence of debate that this implies. Now you get the impression that a lot of these organizations are thinking that in order to achieve power you will have to unite different components with different traditions, that you have to learn to live with such differences. This idea of pluralism that is being applied to social and political action as well as governmental organizations is also influencing the way people see building organizations and their internal life. I don't say that this attitude is already an acquisition, far from it, but this concern is new.

Q. With regard to Nicaragua, you just mentioned Poland. The congress also rediscussed the portent and lessons of this temporarily defeated antibureaucratic revolution.

A. On Poland, there was a debate on two

levels. The first was in response to a position held by a very small minority that tended to reduce the struggle against the bureaucracy to a fight for democratic reform of the institutions of the Polish state. Their view was that the task was not to overthrow these institutions, inasmuch as they were part of the defenses of the workers' state against imperialism.

Our view, to the contrary was that one of the most interesting things about the experience of the Polish revolution was that it showed, or confirmed, the need to destroy the key elements of this state apparatus, its repressive supports, which serve to oppress the working class of these countries. This discussion, which I have simplified here, has other implications for understanding the tasks in a country like Poland.

The other discussion, which is far from being exhausted, was more of a thinking out of the terms of our strategy. There was a common framework regarding the perspectives of the Polish revolution. That is, we agreed that the political revolution is a real revolution and not a pseudorevolution. But we had a strategic discussion about how to assess the real development and above all the level reached by the movement in 1980-81: What was the real extent of self-organization? To what extent did this rapid process of self-organization of the masses through Solidarnosc, the self-management councils in the factories pose consciously — not objectively but consciously — the question of an alternative form of rule? To what extent was this question taken up if not by the movement as a whole at least by an important network of cadres.

Linked to this was a second question: What were the real weight and roots in the working class of certain institutions, such as the Polish Communist Party? It had lost a lot of its members. Many of them had joined Solidarnosc, that's true. But could you expect this party to collapse, because it was built artificially by

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support from the state apparatus? Or did it have historic roots that meant that you had to have a policy for promoting differentiation within this party over a long time?

Society in such countries is not unorganized with only a bureaucratic lid on top. The tendrils of the CPs run through it, as well as the regime's transmission belts and the Church organization. How should you deal with these facts? Can a spontaneous mass antibureaucratic upsurge directly pose the question of power?

Mass movements in such countries may roll a lot faster than in capitalist countries, consciousness can rise a lot more quickly. But the problem of finding a real political strategy cannot be solved spontaneously just by the momentum of the movement. A strategy means more than just a general strike and fight for power. It involves something else besides. The more you think about the need for a political strategy, the more the question of a revolutionary party is posed.

However, in the East bloc countries, people are obviously suspicious of the notion of a party, which they identify with the ruling party. Along with this, there is a hope that the mass movement will resolve all the problems in a short time. If you accept, on the other hand, that there are political and strategic problems that have to be solved, the question of a vanguard organization, of forming a militant current on a defined political basis, then arises.

Another problem that was discussed was how to respond strategically to the argument of the threat of Soviet tanks. You can always criticize the positions that the KOR [Committee for the Defense of the Workers] put forward in Solidarnosc for being weak-kneed. But what produced the notion of the need for "self-limitation" of the revolution was the search for some kind of standoff, at least a nonaggression pact, with the Soviet bureaucracy.

KOR's response to the problem, that is that social and economic questions should be left to the workers' movement and diplomatic and military ones to the bureaucracy in order to avoid a direct collision with the USSR, was an illusion.

The alternative that we put forward throughout the Polish events was that the more daring the movement was and the further that it went in the struggle for power, the higher would be the cost the Soviet bureaucracy would have to pay in order to intervene. This response is the starting point for combating any reformist policy in the East European countries. But it is only a starting point. You have to answer another question: what sort of solidarity should be appealed for and built in the other East European countries and in the USSR itself? What sort of language should you adopt toward them? What sort of dialogue should you develop, and with whom?

If you think in this context, it is clear that divisions in the bureaucracy itself are important. The division in the Polish Communist Party, the crisis it underwent in the summer of 1981,

like the crisis of the Czechoslovak CP in 1968, represent problems that can counter-balance the threats of intervention by Warsaw Pact tanks.

The document adopted at the congress offers an initial response to these questions. In it we stand on a strategic foundation — on a basis of experience in struggle, political lessons to be accumulated, orientations to be discussed in our ranks, as well as with the oppositionists in the East European countries who engage in dialogue with us.

Q. In accordance with the stalemated world situation that you have just described, it seems that the forces of our International have not experienced any notable growth in the recent years. Five years after the last world congress, how does the strength of the Fourth International look in those countries where it has organizations?

A. Except in Mexico and to a lesser extent in Brazil, the International has not grown numerically since the Eleventh World Congress. Overall, we have maintained our forces. There have been gains in terms of new sections, mainly in Brazil, Uruguay, and Ecuador. Our first African section has been recognized in Senegal.

The fact that we have maintained our strength might seem to represent a static situation. But in Latin America, where we were badly weakened by the split that followed the Eleventh World Congress, the International has been rebuilt, consolidated, or advanced in most countries of the continent, leaving aside Central America.

In Europe, our strength has remained the same or declined in some cases. But at the same time we have made progress in terms of our organizations putting down social roots, stabilizing their functioning, and building leadership teams. This is very important when you remember that after 1968 the organizational continuity of the sections emerging from entryism¹ was precarious. In 15 years this capital has been rebuilt. In the last years it has been consolidated. Finally, the dominant note at our congress was a determination to go about political work differently.

Q. There, you have to make clear what you are talking about.

A. You have to remember that in the past the International, not exclusively but mainly, served as a point of reference for analysis and for defending our program in the most general terms. That was in part the inevitable result of isolation and having to struggle against the current, even though there was a constant striving to keep the connection with practical work and to do the utmost with our limited resources, as is shown by the help we gave to the

1. Entryism refers to a policy adopted by some sections of the Fourth International in the 1950s in which their members worked inside the mass reformist-led Communist and Social Democratic parties for an extended period of time.

Algerian revolution.

For example, we defended the concept of permanent revolution against the Stalinist theory of revolution by stages, with a feeling that from that flowed quite naturally the answer to political situations. For many sections there was no difference between putting forward their general ideas in propaganda and political activity in the form of initiatives, tactics, operations, answers to day-to-day political problems.

The situation was particularly dangerous because every concrete political response to a given problem tended to appear either as a direct confirmation or betrayal of the program. There was no flexibility, no room in between. This mechanism is no doubt behind a lot of the splits we have seen.

What is new is the idea that we are trying to respond to concrete political problems. We could, for example, discuss in general terms the permanent revolution, the worker-peasant alliance, determine whether, in the context of the democratic tasks in antidictatorial struggles, we can make alliances with sections of the bourgeoisie. But for all the Latin American sections today these questions are no longer something to be discussed on the level of principles alone or general theory. Because every one of them faces a concrete problem that it has to solve.

Should we be in the Izquierda Unida [United Left] in Peru? How should we fight against extending this coalition to the APRA [American People's Revolutionary Alliance], which is a full-fledged bourgeois party? How should the electoral battle be waged from this standpoint? In Brazil our comrades took part in the formation of a mass workers party, the PT. But this is neither the major nor the only party of the working class. How should we appeal to other sectors and continue to build the PT? This party exists as an independent working-class party. But independence in and of itself is not a complete class program.

In Uruguay, should we join the Frente Amplio [Broad Front], a broad front which does include a bourgeois party but also embodies the united resistance to the dictatorship, which has been the political expression of the united reorganization of the trade-union movement, which gave rise to a thousand local and street committees, etc., in Montevideo? And if we should be in this front, what sort of fight would we wage in it? These are the problems that the sections want to discuss now.

Small organizations, once they have passed a certain threshold of development and begin to play a role in the crisis of the workers' movement, assume responsibilities far exceeding their numerical forces. For example, our Bolivian comrades played an important role in the formation of the new majority that emerged at the last congress of the COB, the Bolivian Workers Federation. They can no longer just challenge the CP, as they could when it led the COB, to launch a general strike or organize mass self-defense! Now it is their responsibility to do that, or in any case a responsibility they share. This is the reason for the need for

concrete answers that was deeply felt at the world congress.

In the same way, the functioning of the International must change. What the comrades expect is not to be offered programmatic orthodoxy in response to the concrete situations they face. Of course, this sort of answer remains important in polemics with other currents. But what our comrades need is a framework for discussion in which they can take up their problems of line in other terms than "censure" or "excommunication." Outside the International, the Moreno and Lambert currents² offer a caricature of such practices.

Within the framework of our common programmatic orientations, there is a place for political dialogue that does not involve making judgments of people but rather an attempt, between sections or between sections and the International leadership, to deal with political problems, to utilize common experience.

Over and above whatever political differences they may be, there is a conviction that we are trying to solve the same problems. We may offer different answers, but they do not necessarily involve differences of program, historic breaks, or capitulation on anyone's part.

This feeling was very strong and very evident at the congress. It proceeded without any break, although there were on the agenda debates over fundamental programmatic questions that involved some of the points on which the Fourth International was founded. This was the fourth world congress that I have attended and by far the most tranquil because there was this broad majority for this conception of the International and a determination to transform it accordingly.

Q. Fine. But there are still the basic problems that arose in the International under the impact of the Polish and Nicaraguan revolutions. What is more, our movement is absent as an active force from the Central American scene. How did it respond to this situation?

A. In a way, the Nicaraguan revolution represents a challenge for us. It is a revolution made by others, and at the beginning we understood it badly. The situation could produce two extreme reactions in our ranks. One is to reject the programmatic guide that they think kept us from recognizing the Sandinista revolution and linking ourselves to it. For the comrades who are developing this position in the International, the theory of permanent revolution is a sectarian theory that leads us away from understanding real processes. So, we have to get rid of it. What remains valid about Trotsky, according to these comrades, is his

defense of the traditions of the Third International, of its first four congresses. On the other hand, they think that what Trotsky added in the 1920s and 1930s handicaps us today.

This reaction could give rise to a debate counterposing revision and orthodoxy, which would have been disastrous. To the contrary, we tried through a concrete study of the Nicaraguan revolution to determine whether our programmatic guidelines were relevant and how they had to be updated.

Did the Sandinistas lead their revolution in spite of themselves, despite their policy of alliances with sections of the bourgeoisie, despite their conception of economic transition? Or did they do so thanks to their policy? Today, while we might make some criticisms of certain aspects, we recognize that the Sandinistas won thanks to their policy and not "in spite of it."

It is necessary to study this policy and to determine where it creates problems for us. We collectively reread Trotsky's work on permanent revolution and eliminated some confusion. While the bourgeois democratic and socialist tasks of the revolution are not separated in time by a Chinese wall, they are not totally telescoped either. The proletariat can have different allies at different times in the revolutionary process.

Unfortunately, some Trotskyists put forward a version of the theory of permanent revolution in the dependent countries that resembles the one that the Stalinists criticize, that is, an ultra-leftist one, the struggle for power right away and not as the result of a revolutionary process that may begin by struggles around democratic, antidictatorial, and national demands.

Another danger was to fall into a certain masochism and false humility. Other people have made revolutions. We should learn from them. We reject this. Of course, we always have to learn from experiences. But we are a historical current that preserves one little thing in particular, an international view of revolution, and which from its origins has represented an alternative view of Stalinism. Unfortunately, today even among revolutionists you don't find very many who share our position of supporting both Solidarnosc in Poland and the revolution in El Salvador.

In the same way, we, who have maintained a programmatic tradition for decades, should not run away from it at the very time that other people in Latin America are discovering that the democratic and socialist phases of the revolution are part of the same process, when the Salvadoran CP, under the pressure of events, is rejecting the old Menshevik and Stalinist theory of "two revolutions," a democratic one and a socialist one separated in time. It is not for us to retreat at a time like that! There is no reason to hang your head or eat humble pie when history proves you right.

We can integrate ourselves completely into this rethinking and re-examination if we are involved in the work and an integral part of the process. The determination to do this was general in the world congress and there was a con-

fidence in the role that the International can play if we are clear about what can be done and achieved today.

Q. Integrating ourselves fully in this discussion, working together with other revolutionary forces — that's fine. But what perspective for building the International emerged from this congress?

A. An old notion was thrown out at this congress, the idea that the International could suddenly transform itself into a mass organization by making a breakthrough around a key event in the world class struggle. The reorganization of the vanguard on the international scale will be a longer, more complex, and more uneven process. There is not going to be such a great leap forward, such a transformation, at least not in the foreseeable future.

The idea of a sudden transformation of the International could seem logical enough in 1938 when our movement was founded. There were then three currents in the workers movement — the Stalinists, the Social Democrats, and a Fourth International that represented the direct and still fresh heritage of the Russian revolution. Moreover, there was still a strong hope that a mass Russian section could reemerge from the war, that the Moscow trials and deportations had not struck deep enough to destroy the revolutionary tradition.

The spectrum of political forces in the international workers' movement today is much more open-ended. There are not only Stalinists, Social Democrats, and the Fourth International. There are intermediary positions that have many strong bases of support. The situation, therefore is much more complex. The question of forming new parties is being raised everywhere in Latin America. We must participate fully in these processes, while continuing to keep our sights set on the need for the Fourth International and defending its program. This goal requires different methods of work.

If the congress proceeded in this way, it was also because the process had been set in motion before, in particular through the transformation of the press of the International. *Inprecor* and *International Viewpoint* are now reporting extensively on the activities of the sections. It has become clear that the more we are led to collaborate with other currents, the more we have to do so on the basis of confidence in our own positions, and thus it is necessary to train and widen a layer of international cadres. It is ironic that our international, which holds the record for longevity over the others, waited more than 50 years before setting up its own international cadre school. This school has been functioning now for three years.

Regional meetings of political bureaus (in Europe, Latin America, and soon in other parts of the world) have created channels through which people can discuss politics, which offer a framework for exchanging experience regarding similar problems.

When we talk about centralizing the International, people tend immediately to think about

2. Nahuel Moreno, of Argentina, led a split from the Fourth International on the eve of the 1979 World Congress. Pierre Lambert leads the Internationalist Communist Party (PCI) of France. In 1963, when the majority of the Fourth International was reunified after a 10-year split, Lambert and his followers remained outside the international.

the application of the decisions of a central committee. On the international level, things are much more complicated. There can be a centralization in the form of making a decision. You pass a resolution on an important world question and apply it. But there are other kinds of centralization, and political dialogue is one of them. The machinery that has been set up, the dynamic that has been set in motion, and the congress demonstrate the common resolve that exists to persevere in this direction.

Q. From this new standpoint, what role is the leadership of the International called upon to play, and what sort of relations does it propose to build up with the sections?

A. The method that I have just spoken of has proved necessary and useful not only for dealing with proposals for programmatic revision. But let's take these as a starting point. They reflect within the International centrifugal tendencies that exist outside it. Because the Nicaraguan revolution exists, because the unity of the world revolution, while it exists as an underlying tendency, is not immediately apparent or visible to the untrained eye.

When you face real demands, you cannot respond to such pressures only by a reaffirmation of principle. That would be fatal. You could get a confrontation between sections facing more and more concrete problems and an International that would serve just to warn them against missteps and programmatic deviations — a sort of permanent red light!

The centrifugal tendencies can be controlled within the International only by facing up to the difficulties, not by taking refuge in abstractions. We do not have an international leadership based on the experience of a revolution, endowed with a great authority won in the test of the class struggle. This means that we have to find mechanisms of leadership that can build political dialogue by concentrating what is best in the accumulated experience of the International in order to make it easier to find answers to the problems as they arise. The result can only be an enrichment of the understanding and heritage of the International.

In discussing in this way, the International becomes interesting and useful for currents that don't necessarily have any intention of joining soon. Some organizations in Asian or Latin American countries are asking to participate in the schools of the International because they find in them a historical clarification they often lack.

In Asia, for example, the China-Vietnam-Cambodia conflict has made it necessary to rethink the entire history of the workers' movement in the region. In the International's schools, such organizations outside our movement also find elements for comparing political experiences, so long as these experiences are dealt with in their own terms and not dissolved into programmatic generalities, which are important but do not in themselves solve the problems.

Obviously this change and this resolve at the

same time create expectations. This resolve has to be matched by answers to these expectations. So, the congress posed a challenge. We have to prove able to carry forward, taking the time necessary, this transformation in the functioning of the International, its approach to political problems, and its relations with the sections.

In accordance with this logic, it will be necessary to rethink the conception of future world congresses. The Twelfth World Congress was a typically transitional one. Some 80 percent of the time was devoted to discussing general programmatic questions and the remaining 20 percent to the conception and functioning of the International. The concerns were expressed, but little time was left for taking them up thoroughly. This, moreover, raises a problem in itself. How can a world congress discuss concretely the line in Bolivia? Either the discussion would be for the information of the delegates, or we would risk making decisions about questions with which people have only a superficial familiarity.

It has to be possible to discuss and adopt broad resolutions on key points, such as the problems of the imperialist military drive on Nicaragua, and reserve a considerable part of the time at the congresses for work in commissions. This, moreover, was roughly how the

Third International functioned in its first congresses.

As for the specific role of the leadership bodies of the International, they should be left the responsibility for defining the position of our movement as a whole toward big events in the class struggle but also for dialogue with the sections about their problems of line, for preparing regional meetings, for publishing and setting the line of the international press, for adjusting the system of international education to the needs of the sections, and for coordinating and centralizing what can be centralized of the experiences of building the sections.

This objective is modest and ambitious at the same time. It can be accomplished only by relying more and more on the leaderships of the sections themselves; by internationalizing their work; by widening, on the basis of concrete tasks, the network of cadres involved not only in the discussion but in the activity of the International; and by assuring that the leadership bodies can reflect the living experience of the sections and their cadres.

We have to seek a real synthesis and not simply confirm a division of labor, which in the long term would be fatal, between the daily political work in which only the sections are involved and international leaderships devoted to theoretical and programmatic questions. □

10 AND 20 YEARS AGO



July 28, 1975

As many as 600,000 persons out of a population of more than five million are threatened with starvation in Haiti, which has been stricken by drought for the past year.

Although the prospect for disaster was obvious for many months, Haiti's President for Life Jean-Claude ("Baby Doc") Duvalier did not formally declare a food emergency until the end of May. The regime admitted at that time that more than 300,000 persons were in a desperate situation. It attributed the famine to a "natural catastrophe."

Not all Haitians are suffering from the country's "natural catastrophe," however. In fact, some are growing fat from it.

Jean-Claude Duvalier himself is managing quite well.

Meanwhile, the regime uses budgeted funds for such things as a \$3 million mausoleum for "Papa Doc" Duvalier and a \$5 million outlay to host preliminary World Cup soccer matches.

For Haitians, the Duvalier dictatorship has meant poverty, brutal repression, and starvation. For international companies in search of cheap labor it has meant an easy buck. Wages of \$1.30 a day for manual laborers have attracted 150 companies to the country in the last four years, most of them from the United States.

WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*)

July 23, 1965

In a lead editorial July 15 the *New York Times* (international edition) stated rather bluntly what has not yet been "officially acknowledged" by Washington. The "United States is fighting a land war of steadily growing proportions in Asia." The big *New York* daily, which is one of the most serious capitalist newspapers in the U.S. and by far the most influential, voiced foreboding. "This is a momentous development in American history and it should be treated as such and not as a minor soon-to-be-ended expedition to advise and bolster the Saigon government."

The editors see three alternatives. It would be a "disastrous escalation ... to carry the war further and more heavily into North Vietnam, with the strong possibility of directly involving Communist China, not to mention the Soviet Union." For this imperialist newspaper it would be "equally disastrous" to "get out now." The editors therefore propose that Johnson should seek "to establish a series of unconquerable beachheads along the coast and a perimeter around Saigon, and then hold on until the situation changes and negotiations on honorable terms become possible." What is most significant about the stand taken by the *Times* is that it sees no real hope of victory. On the contrary it is very much afraid that Johnson's war will end in disaster.

Shultz visits 'contras' in Thailand

Boosts morale of battered Son Sann forces

By Will Reissner

Visiting a base camp of Kampuchean counterrevolutionaries in Thailand on July 9, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz received a hero's welcome from the assembled *contras*. The camp, run by Son Sann's rightist Khmer People's National Liberation Front, is six miles from the Thai-Kampuchean border.

Residents of the camp lined Shultz's path. On cue from organized cheerleaders, they broke into chants of "USA — Number One" as Shultz passed, and waved signs in English bearing messages such as "God Bless America" and "We're Real Freedom Fighters."

Shultz's visit to the Kampuchean counterrevolutionaries was intended to be a morale booster for the rightists, who are fighting Kampuchea's government from their bases inside Thailand. The rightists were driven from their bases inside Kampuchea earlier this year by a dry-season offensive mounted by Kampuchean and Vietnamese troops.

Since 1982, the Reagan administration has provided millions of dollars in covert aid to two Kampuchean rightist groups headed by former premier Son Sann and former prince Norodom Sihanouk, the *Washington Post* reported on July 8. The funds and supplies have been channeled by the Central Intelligence Agency through Thailand, the newspaper reported.

Two months ago, CIA Director William Casey made an unpublicized visit to the Thailand-Kampuchea border area, the *Post* added.

In addition to the covert aid, the Reagan administration has been providing the Son Sann and Sihanouk forces with some \$16 million per year in overt "humanitarian" aid.

On the same day that Shultz was visiting the Son Sann camp, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a measure sponsored by New York Democrat Stephen Solarz to provide \$5 million in overt U.S. military and economic funding to the Kampuchean rightists. The money is to be funneled through the Thai government.

In a letter to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the Reagan administration stated it "welcomes the Solarz provision."

The Senate had already adopted an identical measure earlier in the year.

Thou Thon, commander of the guerrilla camp visited by Shultz, stated he was "overjoyed" to hear about the Solarz bill.

The rightist leader also told Shultz that his visit "raises the spirits of Khmer people everywhere." The commander added, "you give us hope to carry on our battle against the cruel Vietnamese invaders."

Vietnamese troops in are Kampuchea at the

invitation of the Kampuchean government. They provide a military shield against the return of the Pol Pot forces based in Thailand. As Kampuchea's own armed forces have grown in strength, there have been annual withdrawals of contingents of Vietnamese troops from the country.

Vietnamese officials have repeatedly stressed that if Pol Pot's forces were eliminated, Vietnamese troops would leave Kampuchea immediately. Even without the elimination of the Khmer Rouge, Vietnamese and Kampuchean officials have indicated that within five years the Kampuchean armed forces will be strong enough to resist the Thailand-based guerrillas without Vietnam's help.

While in Thailand, Shultz also visited a Thai military base less than three miles from the Kampuchean border. There Shultz climbed into an M-48A5 tank, acquired by the Thai armed forces with some of the \$100 million in annual U.S. military aid to Thailand.

Three days after Shultz's visit to the Thai military base, annual Thai-U.S. military ma-



neuviers began at Thepa on Thailand's southern coast. The "Cobra Gold" maneuvers include a practice invasion of Southeast Asia by U.S. and Thai marines and U.S. Army troops backed up by U.S. Air Force F-15 fighter planes.

The government of Vietnam blasted the Cobra Gold maneuvers as a "provocation" that would "escalate tension" in Southeast Asia. □

Vietnam to return more MIA remains

The Vietnamese government informed a U.S. military team visiting Hanoi on July 6 that it has recovered the bodies of 26 more U.S. soldiers killed in Vietnam. The Vietnamese officials also invited U.S. officials to survey a B-52 crash site near Haiphong to determine if the site contains more recoverable bodies.

Since the end of the Vietnam war in 1975, the Vietnamese government has located and turned over to U.S. officials the bodies of 99 U.S. soldiers and airmen. Another 17 bodies have been turned over to the Pentagon by the government of Laos.

A total of 2,464 U.S. troops are still listed as missing in action (MIA) in Southeast Asia, 1,820 of them in Vietnam. The bodies of most will never be recovered, having crashed into the sea or into remote jungle areas. More than 78,000 U.S. servicemen still remain unaccounted for from World War II, and some 8,100 from the Korean War.

In a recent letter to Indonesia's foreign minister, Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach pledged that his government will do everything possible to provide the fullest possible accounting for the Americans missing in the war.

In order to be able to carry this out,

Thach called for a "high-level meeting" between Vietnamese and U.S. officials to discuss the problem of the MIAs. Washington has no diplomatic relations with Hanoi.

The Reagan administration has repeatedly and cynically used the MIA question for propaganda purposes in the United States itself. At times administration officials have charged, without presenting any evidence, that Vietnam may still hold some Americans prisoner. This charge is disputed by the 1976 report of a special House of Representatives committee, which concluded that "no Americans are still being held alive as prisoners in Indochina, or elsewhere, as a result of the war in Indochina."

But this year, as in past years, the administration flew the families of MIAs to Washington to take part in what it calls POW-MIA Recognition Day, July 19.

More than 1,000 family members gathered at the Pentagon on July 19 to hear speeches by Vice President George Bush and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. John Vessey. Army bands played for the crowd, and 10 helicopters flew over the gathering in the "Missing Man" formation. □