

# INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

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## South Africa

# Black Protests Defy 'State of Emergency'

Right: Youths demonstrate in KwaThema.



## 40 Years After Hiroshima and Nagasaki

# Why Truman Used the Bomb

Left: Nagasaki after atomic bombing.

**Havana Conferences Discuss  
Latin American Debt Crisis**

# Cuba's debt proposal generates big debate

By Doug Jenness

Since the beginning of this year, the Cuban government has been campaigning to win support for canceling the foreign debt owed by Latin American and Caribbean countries. This effort has been the central activity of Cuban President Fidel Castro in recent months.

The Cuban leader has given many speeches and interviews on the growing economic and social catastrophe in the region. He states that the \$360 billion debt and \$40 billion interest is unpayable and should be canceled. He calls on the debtor countries to join together to fight for this perspective. What is needed, he says, is a general strike of debtors.

Addressing a regional conference of women in Havana in June, Castro asked, "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 housing is leaking,' and they are simply ignored, they go on strike. What we are saying is, in essence, for everybody to understand it, let's have a general strike of debtors!"

The Cuban proposal has received widespread coverage and generated considerable debate throughout Latin America and the Caribbean (although it would be difficult to learn the scope of this from the meager coverage in the big-business media in North America and Western Europe).

The Cuban initiative is being conducted through government bodies, trade unions, women's groups, professional organizations, the international press, and many other forms. Just in the past few months, hundreds of representatives from a wide range of organizations have come to Cuba to participate in conferences on the debt crisis. Several of these have been among the most representative meetings of this type ever held in the region.

Since the first of June, meetings have been held in Havana of nearly 300 women from 27 Latin American and Caribbean countries, 150 journalists from 20 countries, more than 300 union and peasant leaders from 29 countries, and some 1,200 prominent figures from 30 countries. All of these gatherings have focused on the debt crisis and its devastating effects in the region.

Addressing the opening session of the conference of prominent political, literary, trade union, and other representatives on July 30, Castro stated, "This is the broadest and most pluralistic gathering ever held in our hemisphere."

This conference, like the others, brought together participants with differing political views on many questions. Many do not necessarily agree with the Cuban proposals for canceling foreign debts, but believe that it is important and useful to discuss the issue with representatives from other countries. The Cuban representatives, while not seeking to impose their views on the meetings, have actively contributed to the discussions. In addition to speaking in the meetings, the Cuban participants distribute copies of many pamphlets. Most are reprints of the recent speeches and interviews by Castro.

The rapid publication in French, English, and Spanish of this material and its wide international distribution has been a significant feature of the Cuban effort. At the UN-organized conference on women in Nairobi, Kenya, in July, for example, the Cuban delegation and its supporters distributed tens of thousands of copies of these pamphlets. The Cuban participants raised their ideas on the debt crisis in the workshops and in organized discussions with hundreds of people attending the conference.

## Washington's response

The U.S. government and the big bankers who profit handsomely from the high interest payments squeezed out of Latin America and the Caribbean are upset with the Cuban government's campaign and are attempting to undermine it.

In an article in the July 1 *Newsday*, a major daily published in the New York City area, Tad Szulc stated that Castro's "increasingly aggressive and skillful campaign among the Latin Americans is disturbing to the Reagan administration as well as to the banks. It is understood that he is not merely engaging in demagoguery."

Szulc continued, "Meanwhile, the debt issue, dangerous and complex enough as a

## Joan Newbigging: 1942-85

Joan Newbigging, a leader of the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), Canadian section of the Fourth International, for many years, died in Montreal July 31 after a long fight with cancer.

Born in 1942, Newbigging joined the Canadian section in 1965 and for nearly 20 years served on its Central Committee. She had recently been the editor of *Socialist Voice*, the RWL's English-language newspaper, and continued to work in the party's national office until shortly before her death.

purely financial problem, has been turned by Castro into an explosive political question."

*Business Week*, published in New York, said, "So far, workers throughout Latin America have been relatively passive in accepting austerity programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund.

"But if Castro succeeds in stirring more militancy in some of the larger unions," the big-business magazine added worriedly, "it could be destabilizing for the region. That would make it more difficult for new democratic governments in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay to justify their adherence to stringent programs and dutifully pay their bankers."

Recently Alan García Pérez, the newly installed president of Peru, announced measures aimed at slowing down the drain of hard currency from Peru. He said that his government would limit interest payments to 10 percent of gross export earnings and would deal directly with creditors rather than with IMF officials. The capitalist press in the United States immediately linked García's move to the discussion generated by Castro's proposal.

Some papers praised García's measures — which would have been denounced as too bold a year ago — as moderate alternatives to Castro's proposal. García's action reflects the mounting discontent over the debt crisis. And the response to it from some in U.S. ruling circles shows that the Cuban initiative is setting the framework for the discussion on what to do about the worsening economic situation.

One Latin American diplomat told the *New York Times* that Castro "is improving our bargaining position with the banks. He is pushing them to the wall with the idea that we won't pay. We will pay; we have to pay. But we can only pay if the rules of the game are changed. We have to have better terms. Castro is pushing for all of us. He is saying things we don't dare say. He may help us find some middle ground, and we appreciate this."

Castro described the impact of the fight to cancel foreign debts to the delegates at the Latin American Federation of Journalists Congress in July. He said "it's a snowball rolling and growing, growing and increasing in speed, and nothing can stop it now."

"The battle is already producing some benefits," he continued. "Now that the masters who suck our blood and our sweat are scared they're beginning to handle things more carefully and are showing signs of using more anesthesia in order to sacrifice their lambs."

Washington is also attempting to counter the Cuban initiative by pressing prominent Latin American leaders to stay away from the Havana conferences and not associate themselves in any way with the Cuban effort. Banking officials are beginning to demand virtual loyalty oaths.

Castro explained to the journalists' conference that "one of the tactics they use whenever they have the opportunity is to ask such concrete, direct questions as, 'Hey, what do you think of Cuba's proposal?' With these questions they sort of trap the governments which

must negotiate and renegotiate their debts every month. To tell the truth, generally speaking, these governments have been very careful, have shown a lot of respect for Cuba and, naturally, have been very cautious in their answers."

"Needless to say," he added, "the spokesmen for the U.S. administration are turning on the heat everywhere, desperately inventing all sorts of tricks to belittle Cuba's ideas and weaken the powerful movement that has developed."

#### Role of masses in the struggle

Castro has repeatedly stressed the need for the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean to establish a united stand against payment of the debts. In spite of different social systems and political viewpoints, he has stated, there is a basis and urgent need for united governmental action.

As part of this orientation, Castro explains "the importance of the masses taking part in this struggle. This is the most important reason for heightening the people's awareness," he told the journalists' conference. "Even in the case of those governments that are convinced they can't pay, when the people champion the cause, this will increase the chances for reaching a consensus in the case of governments which don't dare express it for one reason or another."

"We're not proposing that the masses be aware of the problem in order to put pressure on their governments," he continued. "On the contrary, what we're saying is that the people's awareness of the problem would help those governments that must take a difficult decision. And we're also saying that it's very important that the masses be aware so that they can join this struggle, as a guarantee of the success of the struggle and also to forestall behind-the-scenes maneuvers and conciliatory formulas behind the people's backs."

One of the important effects of the Cuban government's initiative around the debt crisis has been to improve its standing in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is reflected by the number of governments in the region that have re-established diplomatic and economic relations with Cuba. It is also shown by the breadth of the delegations coming to Havana. Never, since the workers and peasants took power in Cuba in 1959, has the class relationship of forces in Latin America been as favorable to them as it is today.

Cuba's increased respect in the region raises the political price Washington will have to pay if it sends U.S. combat troops into Nicaragua or Cuba.

The Cuban and Nicaraguan governments are prepared to confront the direct military might

of the U.S. government. They know that they must rely on the determination and thoroughness of their own defense efforts. This defense includes not only military preparations, but their entire range of international activities.

The Cuban initiative around the debt crisis is not only helping the peoples of Latin America stand up against the demands of big international bankers, but also advancing the fight against U.S. military aggression. □

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### Our summer schedule

This is the last issue of *Intercontinental Press* before our summer break. The next issue will be dated September 9.

# Botha proclaims 'state of emergency'

*Continued Black protests defy police, troops*

By Ernest Harsch

"There is a state of terrorism in South Africa."

That assessment by Stone Sizane, a leader of the anti-apartheid United Democratic Front (UDF), was already evident to most Blacks even before the white minority regime declared its state of emergency. It was to become much more obvious in the days that followed, with the imposition of stringent police and military rule over the Black townships, the arrest of hundreds of political activists, and the police killings of at least a score of demonstrators.

But this crackdown did not immediately break the wave of massive Black mobilizations that have been sweeping South Africa for nearly a year. It was met with continued resistance.

## 'Carry on the struggle'

Sizane and other UDF leaders first broke the news of the state of emergency on July 20 at a rally in Cradock, near Port Elizabeth, hours before the government officially announced it. Between 40,000 and 50,000 Blacks had gathered in Cradock to bury four local UDF leaders slain three weeks earlier by a pro-apartheid death squad.

The crowd's mood was defiant. UDF leader Rev. Allan Boesak condemned the state of emergency, stating that it would cloak "more repression, more deaths and more disappearances of more leaders." Rev. Beyers Naudé, a prominent white opponent of the apartheid regime, vowed that the emergency "will not stop us."

Many demonstrators shouted slogans in support of Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the armed wing of the outlawed African National Congress (ANC), which is fighting to overthrow the apartheid regime. Green-black-and-gold ANC flags were draped over the coffins of the four slain UDF leaders.

Three days later, another 50,000 people demonstrated for four hours in KwaThema, east of Johannesburg, at a funeral for 15 Blacks gunned down by the police.

Again, protesters carried ANC flags. They chanted, "Buya, buya Oliver" (Come back, come back Oliver), referring to ANC President Oliver Tambo, and "Give us weapons. We want to strike back at the state." A speaker from the Azanian Students' Organisation, a key UDF affiliate, pledged that Blacks would "carry on the struggle."

In the Langa township in Cape Town, in Cathcart and Stutterheim near East London, in Daveyton, and in Soweto, the sprawling Black township outside Johannesburg, Blacks

have taken to the streets to protest the state of emergency and to condemn the regime's racist policies, some of them falling before police bullets.

In the Black townships around Port Elizabeth, residents are continuing to boycott white-owned shops. In Cape Province, some 80 percent of all Black students are boycotting classes, while other boycotts have continued in Black townships around Witbank and Pretoria. For the first time since the current upsurge began, student boycotts also spread to GaRan-kuwa, in BophuthaTswana, one of South Africa's 10 rural African reserves known as Bantustans.

In an ANC radio broadcast to South Africa from the Black-ruled country of Zambia, ANC President Tambo declared that "all areas of our country should join in the general offensive to make the apartheid system unworkable and South Africa ungovernable."

## International protests

The apartheid regime's crackdown was met with prompt protests around the world, including from trade unions, political parties, and governments.

In the United Nations Security Council, the representative of the West African country of Burkina sponsored a proposal on behalf of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries calling for mandatory economic and political sanctions against South Africa. The proposal was vetoed by the U.S. and British delegates. The Security Council then adopted a milder resolution calling on governments to voluntarily suspend new investments in South Africa (the U.S. and British delegates abstained on that vote).

The widespread condemnations of the repression in South Africa — coming at a time of ongoing protests against U.S. and West European support for the apartheid regime — compelled a number of Pretoria's allies to take their distance from it. The French government recalled its ambassador from South Africa and barred new investments there. Most other members of the European Economic Community also recalled their ambassadors.

Even Washington — which has strengthened its ties with Pretoria in recent years under the policy known as "constructive engagement" — was forced to issue a few formal protests against the state of emergency. But the Reagan administration stressed that it would not abandon its "constructive engagement" policy.

The Tory government of Britain likewise criticized Pretoria's crackdown, while maintaining that it would also oppose economic sanctions. As one government official

explained, Britain, which is the largest foreign investor in South Africa, has "the most to lose" if sanctions went into effect.

## Arrests and police sweeps

Pretoria's decision to impose the state of emergency is a measure of the persistence and scope of the current upsurge. Not since 1960, in the immediate wake of the Sharpeville massacre, have the apartheid authorities felt compelled to take such a step. They hope that these new measures will enable them to achieve what "normal" police actions — such as the killing of some 500 Black protesters since mid-1984 — have been unable to achieve.

At this point, the state of emergency applies to 36 districts, concentrated largely in the industrialized regions around Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth that have been the main centers of resistance in recent months.

Under it, the police and military have the power to arrest anyone without a warrant for up to 14 days, a period that can be extended with government approval. They can also conduct searches, seize property, impose curfews, seal off entire areas, forcibly move people, shut down businesses, and impose press censorship. Anyone defying such regulations can be jailed for up to 10 years.

On July 31, the regime outlawed all mass funerals in the areas affected by the emergency decree, thereby closing off the only remaining legal form of mass political expression.

A special provision grants legal immunity to the police and military, thus giving them a free hand to kill and torture. According to the Detainees' Parents Support Committee, such immunity heightens the "inevitability of deaths in detention."

Armed with these new powers, police and troops went into action in scores of Black townships. Entire neighborhoods were cordoned off as police raided homes to seize political activists, student leaders, union organizers, community figures, church officials, and others. Police and army patrols were stepped up, and whenever demonstrations formed, the police moved in with armored cars, clubs, tear gas, and bullets.

By the end of July, the number of detentions had climbed to nearly 1,300, according to the official count. Anti-apartheid groups put the number higher.

Many of those arrested were local community activists and middle-ranking leaders of the UDF. (Much of the UDF's national leadership had been arrested earlier.) Some UDF leaders have gone underground, while a few are reported to have fled the country.

By striking at the UDF, the authorities are

aiming to deprive the upsurge of political leadership. And without that, they hope, the mobilizations will eventually dwindle.

But that is far from assured. Even South African intelligence officials admit that the police and army can do no more than contain the unrest, with no immediate prospect of ending it. One such official, quoted in the July 14 Johannesburg *Sunday Times* just a week before the state of emergency, said, "There is a revolutionary assault going on out there and we have no instant counter-revolutionary solution."

### Workers move to the fore

The current Black mobilizations are the largest and most sustained in decades. In key respects, they run deeper than the upsurges of either 1960 or 1976.

In 1960, the Black majority was unprepared for the apartheid regime's crackdown. The main nationalist organizations, including the ANC, were outlawed and temporarily crippled.

The 1976 youth rebellions had no overall leadership. The Black working class, which did not yet have its own unions, played only a limited role. The ANC was functioning largely in exile and had not yet reestablished a mass base inside the country. By early 1977 the protests had been suppressed by a murderous police repression that left more than 600 dead.

The current upsurge comes out of those experiences and features some important advances in organization, leadership, and social power.

The Black working class, which numbers 8 million, has taken on a much greater leadership role.

Hundreds of thousands of Black workers now belong to independent unions that have been organized in virtually every key industry, including the gold mines. They have repeatedly gone on strike for higher wages and union recognition.

They have reacted against police repression and apartheid laws. In November 1984, some 1 million Black workers participated in a two-day general strike in the Johannesburg-Pretoria region. This was followed by local general strikes called by Black political organizations in Grahamstown, Uitenhage, and Port Elizabeth. On May 14, some 100,000 workers walked off their jobs to protest the death in detention of Andries Raditsela, a leader of a predominantly Black chemical workers union. And on July 18, just two days before the imposition of the state of emergency, a general strike paralyzed most industries in Pietermaritzburg.

More than in either 1960 or 1976, entire Black communities have been drawn into struggle, both around their immediate material grievances and against the apartheid regime's denial to Blacks of their most elemental political rights.

The sectors of the Black population known as Coloureds (of mixed ancestry) and Indians, which number 3 million and nearly 1 million respectively, have been drawn into a much closer alliance with the 24 million Africans.

This was reflected in the successful boycotts of the August 1984 elections to the apartheid regime's new Coloured and Indian chambers of parliament.

Giving some national direction to the mobilizations is the United Democratic Front, a coalition of more than 600 groups: community organizations, trade unions, student associations, women's groups, and others, with a combined membership of some 2 million. The overwhelming majority are Black but some progressive whites belong as well.

### Support for ANC

Another strength of this upsurge is the greater and more direct involvement of the ANC.

This has been made possible by the vastly increased support for the ANC among the Black population, and even among progressive whites. At rallies, demonstrations, funerals, and other events, the open displays of support for the ANC are becoming more and more common.

Many prominent UDF leaders make no secret of their support for the ANC's policies. A good number of the UDF's affiliated groups have adopted as their program the Freedom Charter, which is also the ANC's program.

A key reason for this support is the fact that the ANC is the only organization today that is actively waging an armed struggle to overthrow the apartheid system. Over the past several years it has carried out several hundred armed actions within the country and is now estimated to have 7,000 fighters.

The ANC is simultaneously helping to build and strengthen the mass movements. It has members in the trade unions and other groups, organized in clandestine cells.

Just a month before the imposition of the state of emergency, from June 16 to June 23, the ANC held its second national consultative conference in Zambia (the first was in 1969). It was attended by 250 delegates, many of whom traveled secretly from South Africa.

A conference communiqué declared, "Our Conference agreed unanimously that the Botha Regime is still determined to defend the apartheid regime of white minority rule by force of arms. Accordingly, it agreed that there was no reason for us to change our broad strategy, which pursues the aim of seizure of power by the people through a combination of mass political action and armed struggle."

In an interview after the conference, Francis Meli, a member of the ANC's National Executive Committee, explained that "the developments inside the country have been an inspiration to the ANC."

In the same way, the growing strength and effectiveness of the ANC is an inspiration to those in the mass movements within South Africa.

### Failure of Botha's 'reforms'

The power of this upsurge has struck some important blows against the regime's local administration, which functions largely through Black collaborators. Last year alone, 240 members of Black municipal councils resigned

under mass pressure. Of the 38 councils with the greatest administrative powers, only five are still able to function. Many Black policemen have also been driven out of the townships.

With the virtual crippling of the regime's Black municipal administrations, Black community groups, including unions and student organizations, have in some townships become the centers of authority.

This has caused alarm in ruling-class circles. A column in the July 18 *Beeld*, an Afrikaans-language daily that often reflects government thinking, warned, "In the classical revolutionary pattern, overt attempts are now being made to establish 'liberated areas' in South Africa, in which organizations favorably disposed toward the ANC exercise authority."

This is an exaggeration, designed to justify the imposition of the state of emergency. But it nevertheless reflects the difficult situation in which the regime finds itself.

In face of the rising political ferment, the Botha regime has initiated a series of reforms in the apartheid system that were unthinkable just a decade ago: the scrapping of prohibitions on marriage and sexual relations between people of different colors, the recognition of Black unions, the ending of certain minor forms of segregation. Some officials have even raised the idea that urban Africans may some day be granted a truncated form of political representation where they live, thus questioning the old government policy that Africans could only obtain political rights in the Bantustans.

While some government officials had hoped that these limited measures would help dissipate popular opposition, that has clearly not happened. To the contrary, these reforms have inspired Blacks to fight for further gains. And the imposition of the Coloured and Indian chambers of parliament — which was widely seen as an effort to divide those sectors of the Black population from the African majority — actually provoked resistance.

According to the UDF, the very imposition of the state of emergency is "an admission by the government that its fraudulent so-called reform scheme has failed. Apartheid, as long as it exists, can only be maintained by sheer force." □

## Bhopal disaster report

Poorly designed storage tanks that were installed over the objections of Indian engineers, major safety systems not maintained in working order, and personnel cuts intended to save money all contributed to the accident at the Union Carbide chemical factory in Bhopal, India, last December. More than 2,000 people were killed as a result of the gas leak.

A 12-person team sent to India by two international labor federations attributed the accident to failure of the Union Carbide management to properly operate and maintain the plant. The group's report was made public July 30.

# Havana hosts broad conference on debt

*Political breadth and democratic discussion were unprecedented*

**By Mary-Alice Waters**

HAVANA — "We are waging a struggle for national liberation," declared Cuban President Fidel Castro in his closing speech here to the Meeting on the Foreign Debt of Latin America and the Caribbean. We are not waiting for the masses to develop a socialist consciousness, he said. Latin America must lead the fight today for the independence and sovereignty of the peoples of the entire Third World. "We have the right to determine our own future free of plunder," he said.

While the slaves, who created the wealth of today's imperialist exploiters, had to purchase freedom from their masters, Castro declared to thunderous applause, "we must conquer our freedom without compensating our oppressors."

The five-day meeting ended here in the early morning hours of August 4. More than 1,200 delegates were present from 31 countries of the Caribbean and Latin America. The political breadth of the participants and the character of the democratic discussion were unprecedented. No one could remember anything even remotely similar held anytime, anywhere in the hemisphere.

Among the delegates were more than 100 trade union leaders and representatives of peasant organizations, 115 heads of parties and other political organizations, plus representatives of hundreds of other political groups. There were 50 delegates representing various

women's organizations, Castro announced at a press conference the day after the meeting. He said there were also 90 delegates from religious groups, 40 military officers, numerous businessmen, academic figures, scientists, artists, and representatives of the press.

Despite a concerted effort by Washington to prevent Latin American and Caribbean governments from participating in any semi-official manner, the presidents of both Argentina and Bolivia sent personal representatives, Ecuador was officially represented, and a Nicaraguan government delegation was headed by Vice-president Sergio Ramírez.

Guillermo Ungo, president of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), and Fermán Cienfuegos, a commandante of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), represented El Salvador.

Significant also was the representation from throughout the Caribbean islands and the recognition that the English-, French-, and Dutch-speaking peoples of the Caribbean are also part of Latin America.

In closing the continental meeting, Castro took the floor simply as the last speaker, from the host country, presenting the positions of the Cuban government. There was no final declaration issued. None had been planned, and none was needed, Castro noted.

The conference had accomplished its purpose. This was to increase awareness of the economic and social catastrophe facing the

peoples of the region who are today being crushed under the weight of a collective foreign debt of some \$360 billion.

The Latin American debt is today larger than was the foreign debt of all Third World countries combined six years ago. As virtually every speaker who took the floor agreed, the debt is "unpayable and uncollectible." The discussion at the conference focused on how to respond.

The tone of the conference was one of fraternal discussion, not polemical confrontation. There was a pervasive sense of strength through unity, expressed by the meeting itself. The historic identity of the Latin American and Caribbean peoples — their common afro-indio-latin roots, and their common struggle today — was felt by all present. Within that context, a real discussion took place, focused on several points.

First was the issue of whether or not it is economically possible for some countries to pay some portion of their debt. Second was the question: even if it were possible to pay, should we pay? And third, what kind of forces must be organized, unified, and mobilized in order to impose the will of the Third World debtor nations on the imperialist banks and their governments?

## **Solidarity with Peru**

Castro addressed himself to each of these issues in his closing remarks.



"Meeting on the Foreign Debt of Latin America and the Caribbean," held in Havana.

Much of the discussion concerning whether it is economically possible to pay any portion of the debt was centered around the decision of the newly installed Peruvian government of Alan García Pérez to earmark a maximum of 10 percent of gross export earnings each year for servicing Peru's massive debt of \$14 billion. Interest alone on Peru's debt is currently running at \$1 billion a year. Interest and principal payments due this year amount to 120 percent of Peru's anticipated foreign exchange earnings.

During the conference, numerous prominent figures, such as former Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley and Anselmo Sule of Chile, head of the Latin American Bureau of the Socialist International, pointed to the Peruvian example as the realistic and responsible road for the debtor nations, both economically and politically.

In his closing remarks Castro emphasized that Peru could count on the maximum solidarity of all Latin American and Caribbean countries as it took whatever steps were necessary to respond to Washington's threats and actions. He praised the Peruvian leaders for the calmness with which they had handled the announcement on August 2 that the U.S. government was suspending economic and military aid to Peru.

He also denounced the attempts being made by Washington and its news agencies such as the Voice of America to counterpose the Havana conference to the actions of Peru's new government. The Havana meeting, Castro insisted, could only strengthen Peru's hand and help all who were standing up to Washington's imperial demands.

Castro also used part of his intervention to explain at length why he remained convinced that the "10 percent" road was an illusion. "I listen with great respect to all those who argue that, yes, it is possible to pay," Castro commented. "But I still do not believe so. Even in those few cases where it may seem possible, it is not."

#### **Debt really unpayable**

"I get blamed for saying the debt is unpayable," Castro joked. "But it is really not my fault. It is the mathematicians who are responsible." Simple math, he said, understandable by any grade-schooler, proves the debt is unpayable.

He then went on to demonstrate, with several variations, that if the 10 percent formula were applied by all of Latin America and the Caribbean for 20 years, the end result would be a collective foreign debt of five times its current size.

Not only would the Latin American people have handed over \$20 billion in tribute to the imperialist banks, but unpaid interest on their crushing debt load would generate new, unpayable debts, rapidly snowballing to several trillion dollars. "That," said Castro, "is our brilliant future. That is what mathematics proves."

The debt is a cancer, Castro concluded, "a cancer that multiplies, that spreads throughout



FIDEL CASTRO

the body, that destroys the body. It requires a surgical removal. Nothing short of surgery can solve the problem. You cannot leave a single malignant cell in the body, or it will metastasize, the tumor will be reproduced, and the body destroyed."

That is why, Castro noted, there is no technical formula that can cure the disease imperialism has created. "It must be surgically excised. There is no other solution. Anything else is simply not facing reality."

#### **New economic order**

Throughout the conference, speakers frequently reiterated that cancellation of the foreign debt was only one of several steps that must be taken to change the crushing exploitation of the Third World peoples. Without a change in the unequal trade relations and the integrated, coordinated development of the economies of the region, the gap between the imperialist nations and the underdeveloped countries will only continue to widen.

That gap, Castro pointed out, is today increasing like the distance between two vehicles, one of which is moving at 10 kilometers an hour while the other is traveling at 150 kilometers an hour.

Moreover, it was frequently noted, the resources to cancel the debt do exist. A small percentage of the billions of dollars now devoted to expenditures on weapons systems and war preparations would be sufficient to cancel the foreign debt of the entire Third World, as well as provide significant development resources. If adopted, such policies could have a positive impact on dealing with unemployment and inflation in the imperialist countries, it was pointed out.

The result, Castro argued, would not be the salvation of capitalism. "There is no possible salvation for capitalism," he noted. But "the problem is that we should not die before capitalism does."

A second theme running throughout the dis-

ussion was the political question of whether the people of the Third World have a responsibility to pay debts incurred by governments and individual businessmen, or whether justice and morality are on the side of those who say "even if we could pay, we should not pay."

In a section of his closing remarks that was reminiscent of his 1979 speech to the United Nations on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Castro noted that posing an obligation to pay the debt today is like holding an infant responsible for the debts of its parents, or asking a father to finance the assassination of his own children.

We owe the oppressors nothing, Castro noted, because it is we who created their wealth, it is they who are indebted to us.

#### **United front against imperialism**

The third theme of the conference discussion that Castro addressed dealt with Washington's attempt to pit the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean against each other and the need for exploited working people throughout the continent to take the question of the foreign debt in hand and make it their own.

The efforts being made by the Cuban government to increase awareness on the question of the debt, the need for a new economic order, and the need for Latin American economic coordination and integration, Castro insisted, are in no way counterposed to anyone or any group seeking to find a solution to the economic problems of the region. They are not counterposed to the efforts of the so-called Cartagena Group, which represents the governments of the 11 biggest debtor nations of Latin America and the Caribbean. To the contrary, they strengthen the Cartagena Group in its negotiations with the imperialist banks and agencies.

What is important, he argued, is to broaden the forces involved in the struggle.

The only objection we make to the Cartagena Group, Castro stated, "is that it has not expanded to include all Latin American and Caribbean countries, like this meeting in Havana. The argument is used," he continued, "that the Cartagena Group are the main debtors. But this world is not a world of 'main debtors' and 'non-main-debtors.'"

"Let the present Cartagena Group lead, let it be the coordinating body, a leading committee, the founders, whatever. Let other countries join them.

"In our meeting here each country has voice no matter whether it has 250 million or 100,000 inhabitants. It is a country. It has its anthem, its flag, its own rights, and it has to be respected."

Moreover, Castro emphasized, no government can fight alone, without the support of its own people and the solidarity of the peoples of the entire Third World.

"To the extent that the ideas we are discussing here leave the ivory towers, to the extent that these ideas become the ideas of the masses, of the peoples of all strata, to the extent that these ideas become the ideas of the workers and peasants and of the students of Latin America, these ideas will sooner or later

triumph," he concluded.

"We are hiding no cards up our sleeves," the Cuban president said. "We have a clear-cut, straight-forward strategy. Part of that strategy has been to create awareness."

That is why, he emphasized in his press conference the following morning, Cuba has organized five sizable international gatherings in Havana in the last eight weeks — with women, with journalists, with communist parties, with trade union leaders, and the broadest and most representative of all, the continental meeting just concluded.

"In raising the banner of the foreign debt and the economic crisis, Cuba is not defending any narrow interest of its own," Castro insisted. Nor is this something new. Cuba began raising this issue more than 15 years ago, he noted, when Latin America's foreign debt was not even \$30 billion, and no one else was even discussing it.

"Today, however," he noted, "it is the people of Latin America and the Caribbean who are taking the banner into their own hands. Cuba has no wish to be the standard bearer now that the flag has been passed into the surest hands, those of the people."

#### Solidarity with Nicaraguan people

The question of the foreign debt was the central and unifying concern of the Havana meeting. But as all those present were fully

aware, the economic aggression of U.S. imperialism throughout the region is today combined with Washington's massive support for and financing of the war being waged against the peoples of Nicaragua and El Salvador. Expressions of solidarity were numerous throughout the conference, and many delegates noted that the battle in Central America is a battle for the future of all Latin America and the Caribbean.

The breadth and character of the meeting itself, the strength of the Latin American and Caribbean unity and consciousness expressed there will not go unnoted in Washington, as the U.S. rulers weigh the consequences of any direct U.S. military intervention in the region.

Likewise, as the Havana meeting confirmed, there can be no doubt of the historic change that has occurred in the relationship of socialist Cuba to the rest of the region. Despite 26 years of unceasing effort by imperialism to isolate and destroy the influence of the Cuban revolution, it is Cuba that is today showing the way forward in a historic battle to defend the interests of the people of the entire region, of the entire Third World. Nowhere else but Havana could such a broad, democratic, and representative gathering have taken place.

The success of the continental Meeting on the Foreign Debt of Latin America and the Caribbean is a sign of the future, not the past. Nowhere is this being noted with greater concern than in Washington. □

their ballot in support of the constitution's nuclear-free clause.

In January 1981, the constitution became law, and Belau became in name a self-governing republic, with Remeliik as its president.

However, before Belau can gain recognition or legal standing internationally as a self-governing nation, its status as a Trust Territory must be rescinded by the United Nations. This is only possible by agreement of the U.S. government.

The U.S. authorities have refused this until Belau ratifies a "Compact of Free Association" with the United States, deleting its ban on nuclear weapons and ceding its sovereignty.

Under the proposed compact, the U.S. government would have veto power over all domestic and foreign policy decisions of the Belau government that it deems contrary to U.S. security interests, and any part of Belau's territory could be taken over by the United States for military purposes.

Twice the proposed compact has been put to a referendum at U.S. insistence, and each time it has failed to gain the 75 percent approval needed to amend the constitution.

#### U.S. military plans

Opposition to U.S. attempts to overturn the antinuclear provisions of the constitution was further fuelled when the U.S. administration revealed its plans for Belau once the compact is ratified. It intends to take over one-third of Belau's land area for military airfields, a jungle warfare training zone, and a submarine port (where the United States' new Trident submarines are expected to be based). Construction of these military facilities is already underway, with the assistance of New Zealand companies.

The United States has also said that it regards Belau as an important "fallback base" should it lose its military bases in the Philippines.

President Remeliik's close collaboration with the U.S. government in seeking to impose the "Compact of Free Association" on the territory has angered many of Belau's 15,000 citizens.

In the lead-up to the last referendum, in September 1984, Remeliik was taken to court by a broad range of organisations on charges of fraudulent and corrupt practices relating to the referendum. The case was eventually dismissed on a technicality, and the referendum went ahead.

Despite the failure of the compact to gain the necessary support from voters in that referendum, Remeliik and his government called on the United States to ratify the agreement anyway. The compact is presently before the U.S. Congress. □

## South Pacific

# President of Belau assassinated

*Context is Washington's opposition to independence*

By Andy Jarvis

[The following article is taken from the July 26 issue of *Socialist Action*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Auckland, New Zealand, that reflects the views of the Socialist Action League, New Zealand section of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

The president of the Pacific Island nation of Belau, Haruo Remeliik, was shot to death on

June 30. It has since been reported that three men have been arrested, but the circumstances surrounding the assassination remain unclear.

Over the past six years the people of Belau have been subject to intense pressure and threats from the United States government as it has sought to deny them their right to self-determination and independence.

Belau was seized by the United States from Japan during World War Two. Technically a United Nations Trust Territory, Belau, like the other nations of Micronesia, has been a U.S. colony ever since.

In 1979, following a long campaign, the United States finally agreed to grant Belau self-government. A constitution, drawn up by a constituent assembly elected that year, declared the territory nuclear-free.

#### Trust Territory

In an attempt to have the antinuclear provisions of the constitution overturned, the U.S. government demanded three successive referendums during 1979-80. Each time the overwhelming majority of Belau's voters cast



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# Unionists discuss debt in Havana

*'Most representative trade union meeting in history of hemisphere'*

By Doug Jenness

The Latin American and Caribbean Trade Union Conference on the Foreign Debt, meeting in Havana, Cuba, July 15-18, voted unanimously for a document (which has become known as the Havana Act) that calls for a cancellation, moratorium, or indefinite postponement of payment on foreign debts and interest. The conference also called for a regionwide Day of Action Against the Foreign Debt on October 23.

Roberto Veiga, secretary-general of the Cuban Workers Confederation (CTC), in his welcoming speech, noted that the immense majority of the Latin American and Caribbean organized trade union movement was represented at the conference. "We are at the doors of the broadest and most representative trade union meeting in the history of this hemisphere," he said.

The broad participation at the conference, he pointed out, was in spite of a determined attempt by the U.S. government and top U.S. union bureaucrats to pressure organizations from attending the gathering.

"Several guests were pressured repeatedly and very strongly," he said. "Certain U.S. airlines resorted to the weak procedure of retaining until the last moment the tickets reserved for certain comrades. . . . We know of all the things done against this event and even the ridiculous, slanderous, and inconsistent arguments resorted to."

These efforts failed, however, to disrupt the meeting, Veiga said, and the region's unions were well represented at the conference. Moreover, he pointed out, "we do not want to either judge or criticize the few trade unions that had expressed their willingness to attend this event but later desisted due to pressures or some other reasons. Several leaders of those organizations contacted us to express their regrets over the difficult situation in which they found themselves and asked us to understand the reasons for their absence, expressing their sympathy and support for the objectives of this conference."

The conference was marked by a spirit of unity and solidarity that was reflected in the discussion and by the proposals adopted. "We are absolutely convinced that a historic task, such as the one we face," Veiga stated, "needs the unification of its workers and its trade unions. The unity of peasant organizations is also needed for this task. Without the participation of the masses and without unity, we would be at the mercy of the powerful interests that seek to isolate us, divide us, and weaken us in order to defeat us."

Veiga explained that the idea for the confer-



"Down with unemployment." September 1983 rally in São Paulo, Brazil, protests government's IMF-imposed austerity policies.

ence had been expressed by many Latin American and Caribbean trade union leaders. Especially in the last two years, union organizations have called for greater coordination. In May a conference of Caribbean workers meeting in Guadeloupe proposed Cuba as the site for a continentwide conference.

## Conference organized on broad basis

"We can say that never before had a trade union event been organized on our continent

## Delegates from 29 countries

There were 330 participants at the Latin American and Caribbean Trade Union Conference on the Foreign Debt held in Havana, July 15-18. They came from 197 organizations and 29 countries. A total of 46 national central trade union organizations or confederations; 135 trade union, professional, or territorial organizations; and 16 peasant organizations sent delegations.

Almost the entire organized trade union movements were represented from such countries as Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay, Venezuela, Panama, Nicaragua, and Cuba. A significant majority of the unions of Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Cayenne were also represented.

with such broad criteria," Veiga said. "All existing central and national confederations of this region were invited, regardless of their affiliations, size, or political or philosophical position. The same criterion was used when many labor unions and other organizations were invited. The majority of the people present know it well, because they witnessed the preparatory work done for this meeting.

"It had to be this way," he continued. "This is not the time for trifles or narrow-mindedness. . . . At this crucial time, which calls for the closest unity of our great homeland of Latin America and the Caribbean, we repeat, at this crucial time, sectarian attitudes could never be explained or justified by history."

Veiga explained how the proceedings of the conference were organized. "We did not consider the use of material prepared in advance, reports, or any kind of document or speech that would influence opinions. We always favored, and it shall be so, that this great meeting, with an open agenda, will allow everyone to express themselves on the subject we are gathered for — freely, openly, sincerely — and create a strict respectful climate for each person's positions and opinions.

"We want a sincere, fraternal, and honest discussion, without any kind of pressures or inhibitions," he continued. "We are convinced that without interfering with each organization's respective positions, with respect for each other's ideas, we can find a great degree of convergence on a problem like the foreign debt, which is the only subject to be discussed

by our conference and will unite us all because it affects us all, regardless of our political or philosophical affiliation, whether we are social democrats, Christians, conservatives, or communists."

Veiga noted that representatives from several trade union organizations involved in the conference preparations had suggested each country should select a spokesperson to speak for all the different organizations in the country. "Of course, we appreciated the unifying and positive sense behind this stand," he said. "However, as some of the comrades here present know, we have not been inclined to encourage that suggestion. We would not want the members of some national delegations to feel pressured by this. We want all to speak up, all who wish to express themselves to do so, because we are sensitive to everyone's problems and because all of the people present show solidarity to everyone's problems."

Eighty participants spoke in the discussion. They described the conditions in their countries resulting from the gigantic foreign debt and the mounting anger against this situation. Their contributions were taken into account in the preparation of the principal document that

was drafted by a commission during the meeting.

The Havana Act noted, for example, that a majority of the delegates urged that the foreign debt and its interest be canceled. The document also makes reference to other speeches that proposed that the foreign debt be delayed for an indefinite period of time or that a moratorium be called.

#### Cuba's internationalist standpoint

Veiga stated that the CTC "does not have any personal or national interests" in hosting the conference. "Those who know us," he said, "are aware that our country is acting for nothing other than the traditional solidarity, the Latin American, internationalist position, which our working class and all our people are known for. . . . You, the delegates and guests attending this conference will be able to confirm this directly because you will be able to move freely in our country and will have very close contacts with our working people."

He added, "What motivates us in this struggle is the same feeling that inspires Cuban doctors and other health workers who today serve in over 25 Third World countries, almost al-

ways in the most inhospitable regions, combating the most tragic effects of the drought in Ethiopia, helping countries such as Burkina Faso, Laos, Kampuchea, and many others. What else could motivate us if it is not a deep responsibility and duty to mankind and the destiny of our people? What motivates us in this struggle is the same feeling with which 30,000 Cuban teachers spontaneously volunteered when 1,000 were asked to help with the brother Nicaraguan people's education."

Veiga explained that Cuba itself owed a great deal to the solidarity of Latin American working people. "We will never forget that during the most difficult years of the revolution, during the unforgettable days of Girón [the U.S.-organized Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961] and the October [1962 missile] crisis, during the difficult and dramatic days of all the pressures and attacks against Cuba, the Latin American and Caribbean working class went out on the streets, shook up Montevideo, Mexico, Santiago, and many other cities. The working class, directed by their trade unions in Latin America and the Caribbean, were prepared to fight and die to defend our cause."

#### Look to U.S. workers, not bureaucrats

Veiga stated that the top union leaders of the United States "have nothing to offer us, as they seek to legitimize the foreign debt problem, hiding its origins and partly blaming our countries for its causes."

He continued, "Those who seek to deceive us by telling us that the debt is payable if the IMF softens the unfair and unbearable conditions it is imposing on us have nothing to offer us. Those who say nothing to denounce that the IMF's adjustment programs threaten our people's economic and social future and represent greater dependence and a violation of our countries' national sovereignties have nothing to offer us. Those who view the debt problem by resorting to technocratic simplifications and abstract general guidelines, unworthy even of the bourgeois theoreticians of the early days of capitalism, have nothing to offer us. Those who raise the banner of protectionism that suffocates our nations' economies have nothing to offer us. Those who shamelessly endorse and encourage the current U.S. administration's aggressive foreign policy without taking into consideration the ill-fated consequences for our countries' development and for the sacred interests of peace have nothing to offer us."

He then added, "Naturally, we cannot confuse the corrupt high-ranking bureaucracy of that organization with the entire U.S. trade union movement and workers. We know that there are honest leaders and organizations affiliated with it that do not share the reactionary policy of the elements who control that organization. We are sure that among U.S. workers we will increasingly find understanding, support, and solidarity. They too are suffering from unemployment and other social ills. They too are vitally interested in seeing our countries overcome this crisis, develop, and reacti-

## Letters from around the world

We get a modest, but regular, stream of letters (not as many as we would like) from our readers. Sometimes we receive short notes from new subscribers as well as from regular readers when they renew their subscriptions. We also get letters from readers about their activities.

For example, a reader in Palmer, Massachusetts, in the United States recently wrote, "Thank you for beginning my subscription. I'm in an affinity group that vigils weekly and want to say that *Intercontinental Press* contains much to make handing out literature more valuable." He described a local protest against U.S. intervention in Nicaragua that his group participated in. He said that, among other things, antiwar literature was distributed to Marine recruits. "Thanks for passing along the spirit of the revolution in your magazine," he concluded.

We also received a letter from Izumi Aizu who is part of a committee in Japan that is attempting to prevent the destruction of one of the few remaining forested areas in the greater Tokyo region. The area, called Ikego Hills, near the town of Zushi, has been the site of a U.S. Navy underground ammunition depot for 40 years. "During this time," Aizu writes, "it has been prohibited from public access, allowing all the greenery and wildlife to enjoy the most natural environment. . . ." Now, "the U.S. Navy has requested land on which to build 1,000 homes for those stationed at Yokosuka Naval Base."

Aizu reports that the citizens of Zushi

have banded together and "formed an impressive movement against the plan."

The committee is asking for protest letters to be sent to Mr. Kazuji Nagasu, Governor of the Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan.

A reader from Canada, notifying us of his recent move from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Montreal, Quebec, wrote, "Thanks for your efforts, keep up the good work!"

He asked if it is possible to obtain a French-language version of the interview we ran in our June 24, 1985, issue with Bélo, a leader of the Socialist Workers Organization of Senegal. The answer is yes. *Inprecor*, a French-language fortnightly published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, translated and printed the interview in its July 22 issue. A copy can be obtained for 12 French francs, by writing to *Inprecor*, 2, rue Richar-Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France.

For those who missed the interview in English, a copy can be obtained for US\$1.25 by writing to *IP*.

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vate international trade.”

Cuban President Fidel Castro, who attended the conference sessions, expanded on this point in his concluding remarks to the gathering.

“We need the support of the workers and public opinion in the capitalist countries in-

involved. . . . Thus, we are proposing formulas that may reconcile the interests of public opinion, the people and the workers of the United States, Japan, England, Europe, and our interests.”

Castro continued, “I am talking about interests of the people. What cannot be reconciled

are the interests of the system with those of our peoples.”

In his closing talk, Castro also suggested that the October 23 Day of Action be extended to include not only trade unions, but political organizations, peasants, students, women, and others. □

## DOCUMENTS

# Union conference adopts ‘Havana Act’

## *Sets October 23 for day of protests against foreign debt*

[The following document was adopted unanimously by the Latin American and Caribbean Trade Union Conference on the Foreign Debt. The translation from Spanish is by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce.]

\* \* \*

The Latin American and Caribbean Trade Union Conference on the Foreign Debt was held in Havana July 15–18, 1985. Leaders of 46 national trade union confederations or central organizations; 135 trade union, professional, or territorial organizations; 16 peasant organizations; and 9 bodies of regional and international organizations were present at this conference. A total of 330 trade union members of 197 organizations from 29 Latin American and Caribbean countries participated in this event.

The unanimous view was that this conference had been the broadest and most representative event, the one most geared toward unity, of any held by the organized Latin American and Caribbean trade union movement. The union leaders also stressed the timely and necessary nature of this meeting, held at a crucial moment for political and economic independence and for the regional peoples’ future.

Participants referred to the extreme gravity of the current economic crisis, whose intensification affects both Latin America and the Caribbean, placing the area countries in a worse situation than that experienced during the so-called Great Depression of the 1930s.

In Latin America, the gross national product [GNP] grew only 1.7 percent in 1981, in 1982 and 1983 it declined in absolute terms by 1 and 3 percent, respectively, and in 1984 it grew by a weak and insufficient 2.6 percent. This means that in terms of GNP per inhabitant, both Latin America and the Caribbean have declined to the levels they had 10 years ago.

Numerous participants stressed the tragic economic and social situation suffered by the Latin American peoples plunged into this crisis — especially workers in both rural and urban areas, who are the victims of unemployment, deteriorating standards of living, and an alarming increase of extreme poverty — and referred to the internal structural changes required to resolve these problems. In this con-

nection, it was underscored that in Latin America and the Caribbean there are approximately 56 million unemployed people and 110 million underemployed people. No less than 40 percent of Latin America’s population lives on the lower limits of critical poverty, and 30 percent live under these limits.

All participants stressed that the foreign debt is the most dramatic expression of the current crisis as well as its most important element. It not only tends to worsen the crisis but also prevents economic recovery, blocks every chance of development, and subjects our people, especially the workers, to unbearable policies that restrict their standards of living and jeopardize our sovereignty by intensifying our dependence on creditor banks, the IMF [International Monetary Fund], and the governments of the industrialized countries, which control this organization’s decisions.

The participants reviewed the most important aspects of the process of rapid Latin American indebtedness as well as its causes, indicating that the causes can be found in the principles of the present unfair international economic order, especially the unequal exchange situation that forces us to sell at lower prices every time, while we buy at increasingly higher prices. In 1984 alone, protectionism and dumping, based on a selfish policy of subsidizing products that otherwise would not be able to compete in the markets — resulted in some \$20 billion. This contradicts the hypocritical rhetorical endorsements of free trade frequently voiced by the U.S. and European Economic Community governments.

The combined effects of high interest rates and the overvaluation of the dollar, which represent an additional \$45 billion annual expenditure for the regional economies, increase interest rate payments. This in turn leads to more flight of capital, which during this period totaled over \$10 billion, increases the cost of amortization in dollars, and aggravates inflation.

The participants also pointed to the irresponsibility of creditor banks which, competing to place their capital in the form of loans, disregard bank-security rules and induce the regional countries to contract debts in order to maintain the considerable profits that these banks have obtained and continue to obtain.

IMF policy and principles are unanimously condemned, as this institution reflects the interests of the creditor banks and the governments that created and control it. The IMF, with its rigid monetarist approach that concerns itself only with monetary variables and fiscal balances while remaining totally indifferent to the harsh social realities of Latin America and the Caribbean, unemployment, and the impoverishment of workers, is playing an ill-fated role. It has demonstrated that it is the gendarme protecting the banks’ profits as well as the institution charged not only with supervising but also with economically repressing Latin American countries.

The participants agreed to describe the constant debt renegotiations as false solutions to the debt problem because, conducted at high cost and under ominous conditions imposed by the IMF, these renegotiations only serve to prolong our countries’ agony and bolster their dependence and subjection.

The debt crisis, they pointed out, is like a suffocating noose around the necks of Latin American and Caribbean peoples and workers. Further tightening is equivalent to death. The only alternative is to face this challenge firmly with dignity, unity, and solidarity.

Most participants called for annulment of the foreign debt. Other unionists suggested moratorium variations, the immediate suspension of debt and interest payments, or their indefinite postponement. However, they all agreed that the debt is unpayable. This view is essential for achieving economic recovery and improving the levels of employment, education, health, and social security in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is even essential for our aspirations to exercise true sovereignty over our political and economic destinies on the basis of eliminating that instrument of dependence and foreign coercion.

Participants also stressed that the annulment, moratorium, immediate suspension of payment, or indefinite postponement of debt and interest payments is essential for the survival of the regional processes of democratic opening. They noted that, should efforts be made to continue collecting this debt at any cost, general social explosions would occur as a result of the unbearable situation to which our workers and masses have been led. With

their heroic resistance to IMF impositions, certain regional peoples have already dramatically underscored that these limits are being reached.

There was broad concurrence on the need to indissolubly link the solution proposed to resolve the foreign debt problem to the establishment of the new international economic order, whose principles were approved by the UN General Assembly in 1974. Participants asserted that unless phenomena of such negative effects for Latin America and the Caribbean as the unequal exchange, the unjust practice of protectionism affecting our countries, the uncontrolled actions of transnational companies, and the monetary and financial manipulations that establish high interest rates and favor the overvaluation of the dollar are eliminated, short-term relief would soon disappear, and we would once again find ourselves in similar or worse situation than the present one.

Similarly, a large majority endorsed the idea that it is essential to exercise the firmest Latin American unity, unity characterized by solidarity, so that along with our actions in connection with the foreign debt and the struggle for the establishment of a new international economic order, we can march with resolve toward regional economic integration, using it as a powerful means for achieving economic development, bolstering our negotiating capacity, and improving the standard of living of our workers and peoples.

In keeping with the above, the conference agreed that participating trade unionists should approach their respective organizations to propose a mobilization of the workers, making these banners of struggle their own: annulment, moratorium, immediate suspension, or indefinite postponement of foreign debt and interest payments; establishment of a new international economic order; Latin American and Caribbean unity and advancement toward forms of Latin American and Caribbean economic integration at the service of our countries' development and independence.

The participating union leaders fully agreed that in order to achieve these goals, and faced with the gravity of the crisis affecting all regional workers and peoples, it is essential for the trade union movement's various tendencies and persuasions to continue looking for a broad base for practical agreement so we can make an increasingly effective contribution to the struggle for the rights of our affiliates and countries without detriment to our respective positions, and as an expression of our sense of historic responsibility and the Latin American and Caribbean spirit that moves us all.

Participants at the conference also underscored that the arms race and the policies of interference and aggression worsen the economic crisis, negatively affect the foreign debt, and use resources needed for development. Therefore, they stressed that the struggle for a reduction of military expenditures is indissolubly connected to the struggle for peace and our people's development.

They unanimously agreed that this meeting has made a historic contribution to this objec-

tive by favoring an exemplary, democratic, and respectful dialogue based on the absolute equality of all currents of hemispheric unionism. During this dialogue, each leader was able to explain the views of his country's trade union movement, his organization, or his own personal opinions, as the case may be, in a framework of absolute freedom.

As the organization charged with organizing this event, the Cuban Workers Confederation stressed from the very outset that the idea was not for this conference to reach definite agreements. However, the participating unionists' broad consensus regarding the adoption of recommended actions and their submission for consideration by the various organizations to which the union leaders gathered here in Havana belong became evident during the meeting.

The proposals agreed on, which reflect the feelings of the immense majority of participants, follow:

1. To propose to the organized trade union movement that it demand from the governments of their respective countries the adoption of measures leading to the annulment, moratorium, suspension, or indefinite postponement of the foreign debt and interest payments and the expression of solidarity with the other Latin American and Caribbean countries that assume this stand.

2. To suggest to the labor organizations that, in accordance with each country's specific conditions, they promote the incorporation of governments into a united front of Latin American and Caribbean debtor countries that might serve as interlocutor vis-à-vis the private banks, the international financial organizations, and the governments of the creditor industrialized countries.

3. To recommend that union and peasant leaders participating in this event propose to their organizations a continued review of the foreign debt problem with the broadest participation possible, in order to reach consensus about its causes, repercussions, and the struggle strategy that each country must adopt to face this situation.

4. To transfer to the unions and peasant organizations the suggestion that, in the struggle to solve the debt problem, they should closely associate with other social forces and their organizations — students, youth, intellectuals, businessmen, religious and women's groups, inhabitants in general, human rights organizations, university professors, and teachers.

5. To forward the results of this conference to the Latin American and Caribbean heads of state and government, the United Nations and its worldwide and regional organizations, SELA [Latin American Economic System], the creditor countries' governments, and official and private financial institutions, and all personalities and organizations deemed appropriate.

6. To disseminate as much as possible the results of this conference among workers and peoples in general, as well as the information available on the economic crisis affecting the regional countries and its most important as-

pects, foremost among these, the foreign debt.

7. To endorse the Latin American and Caribbean trade union movement's next action geared toward unity, which might include the creation of the coordinating mechanisms firmly advocated at this conference by a majority of participants in order to advance to higher levels the hemispheric organized workers' struggle in face of the debt problem.

8. To urge all workers and trade union organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean to stage a day of continental action on October 23, 1985, against the foreign debt and its catastrophic effects on our countries' social and economic lives.

9. To support all regional or subregional summons on the subject of the foreign debt, such as the trade unions' conference called by Southern Cone unions for late 1985, and the next trade union conference of Latin American and Caribbean workers, slated for Bolivia. The latter has been called by the Bolivian Labor Federation to give continuity to this effort while demonstrating solidarity with the workers of that fraternal country, one of the most seriously affected at present by the destructive consequences of the economic crisis and the foreign debt.

10. Inspired by the historic legacy found in the sacred book of the Mayas, which says: "May all rise, let all be summoned, let there not be one or two among us who stay behind," participants at this conference finally reiterate, based on this, their commitment to fight first, for the annulment, moratorium, immediate suspension, or indefinite postponement of foreign debt and interest payments; second, for the establishment of a new international economic order; and third, for Latin American and Caribbean economic integration at the service of our countries' development and independence. □

## Nicaragua, Cuba admitted to Latin American Parliament

The Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) voted in June to admit Nicaragua and Cuba as new members with full rights. Also admitted were Argentina, Uruguay, and Guatemala. Parlatino, an organization of members of legislative assemblies of Latin American countries, was formed 21 years ago.

Carlos Núñez, president of the Nicaraguan National Assembly, described the vote on Nicaragua's admission as "a recognition of the institutionalizing of the revolutionary process which throughout the five years has improved as a state and will continue in these tasks, with the drafting of the republic's new constitution."

The admission of new members to Parlatino occurred at the same meeting that called a continent-wide conference on the debt crisis for October 10-13 in Montevideo, Uruguay.

# On hijacking, terrorism

## Broadcast in Cuba hits Washington's hypocrisy

[The following editorial statement was broadcast from Havana on July 3.

[It makes reference to the wave of hijackings in the 1960s and early 1970s between the United States and Cuba. In February 1973, the U.S. and Cuban governments signed an agreement aimed at curbing hijackings of aircraft and boats. It committed both countries either to try hijackers "for the offense punishable by the most severe penalty" or to extradite them.

[In October 1976 the Cuban government canceled the agreement. This action was taken following the blowing up near Barbados of a Cuban plane. Seventy-three passengers and crew members were killed.

[Cuban President Fidel Castro explained that the cancellation was made because there was evidence that the CIA was linked to the sabotage of the Cuban plane. At the same time he reaffirmed that the Cuban government would continue to discourage hijackings and would continue to honor its antihijacking pacts with Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia.

[In December 1984, when Castro announced the U.S.-Cuba accord on migratory relations between the two countries, he briefly reviewed the hijacking problem.

["Even though the official agreement between our two countries was no longer in effect after the plane was blown up off Barbados," he stated, "we have adopted increasingly strict measures against skyjackers during the last few years." The result, he said, is that "we have virtually solved this problem, which was one of the problems that most concerned the people of the United States, because they feared that anyone with a bottle of gasoline, or a bottle of water, could say he was going to blow up a plane, so he could hijack it to Havana."

[Castro added, "It is Cuba that has solved the skyjacking problem — a diabolical invention that has been aimed against Cuba since the beginning of the revolution — in the United States. This is an irrefutable fact."

[The statement below notes that the consistent opposition of Cuban officials to hijacking stands in sharp contrast to Washington's hypocritical stance during the recent hijacking of a TWA flight in Lebanon.

[A July 1 news broadcast on Cuban radio reported that while Washington attempted to portray the TWA passengers as heroes, it had difficulty convincing people in the United States that this justified "support for any action that the U.S. government might carry out. Although it is evident that no one could approve of what happened and that this action — the hijacking of a plane — violates international law, there was no strong reaction from the U.S. people."

[The translation from Spanish of the statement printed below is by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce.]

\* \* \*

The U.S. government has proved to be forgetful and inconsistent because just after 39 U.S. citizens aboard an aircraft hijacked by Lebanese Shiites were kidnapped in Beirut recently, the United States launched a campaign posing as champion in the struggle against these kinds of actions.

President Ronald Reagan and his current advisers have forgotten that it was precisely the United States that encouraged hijacking in the early 1960s by receiving all Cuban counterrevolutionaries who hijacked aircraft and forced them to fly to the United States as patriots and freedom fighters. This repudiable terrorist practice was very much in fashion at the time.

Far from raising their voices to protest an action that endangered the lives of hundreds of defenseless people, the Yankee leaders at the time happily received the hijackers who also had a dark history of crimes against the Cuban people. Most of them belonged to the repressive forces of the Batista dictatorship and were fleeing the justice of the revolution that triumphed on Jan. 1, 1959.

Now, the successors of those who engendered hijacking have forgotten their heritage and try to pose as champions of a cause they only defended when they were directly affected. Drawing a line that forgets the past, Reagan and his advisers seem to say: Let's forget about it.

If all of this were so simple, the new U.S.

campaign against hijacking could be deemed a tardy act of repentance. However, nothing is farther from the truth. Washington has completely forgotten its compromising past as if it did not exist. To top it off, the United States attacks several independent countries, describes them as terrorists, and holds them responsible for the wave of recent hijackings.

The list, announced a few days ago by presidential spokesman Larry Speakes, includes Cuba and Nicaragua, among other nations. A greater paradox or such nerve cannot be conceived. In other words, two of the countries most affected by the political, military, and economic aggressions of the United States are, in the eyes of President Reagan, also to be held responsible for hijacking.

Anyone who cares to check Latin American history will realize without too much effort that the United States has been and is the main party responsible for, and sponsor of, all terrorist actions that occurred in the past few years.

Besides the more than 50 Yankee military interventions in the region's countries and terrorist and plunderous actions willingly sponsored by the various U.S. administrations, we can mention hundreds of other actions carried out by the White House that prove this assertion. These include destabilizing actions against progressive governments in the area, such as those of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala and Salvador Allende in Chile, and the murders of and attempts to murder important revolutionary figures in the subcontinent.

One of the most despicable terrorist actions by the United States is the financing and support by the White House of the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries who attack the Nicaraguan Sandinist revolution from their bases in Costa Rica and Honduras. With this history of crime, Washington does not have the moral standing to describe those countries as terrorists that have earned the U.S. leaders' hate for their worthy, sovereign, independent, and anti-imperialist stance. This is simply a shameless, cowardly act. □

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# Protesters urge moratorium on debt

*IMF demands president perform economic miracles*

By Steve Craine

In the first two days of July as much as 60 percent of Panama's work force participated in a general strike to protest the adverse effects of the country's economic crisis. Demonstrations of students in Panama City were broken up by police, who injured several demonstrators with shotgun pellets.

The strike and demonstrations were organized by the National Council of Organized Workers (CONATO). The protesters opposed measures announced by the government of President Nicolás Ardito Barletta to raise taxes, cut spending on social services and government payrolls, and revise the country's labor code to remove some of the few protections it gave workers.

In addition to these immediate demands, the protests called for a moratorium on payments on Panama's external debt for 15 years — until 2000. This debt now stands at US\$3.75 billion. Although this is a small amount when compared with the mammoth debts of Mexico or Brazil, on a per capita basis Panama's debt is far larger.

Ardito Barletta took office in October as the first elected president of Panama since 1968. At the time, hopes were high in Washington and among Panama's ruling capitalist families that he would be better able to deal with the country's economic problems than the series of military figures who had governed for the previous 16 years.

The new president is portrayed as an expert in the field of international finance, having worked for the World Bank for seven years before resigning in February 1984 to run for office. At that time he was the World Bank's vice-president for Latin America. Earlier he had studied economics at the University of Chicago under Professor George Shultz, now U.S. secretary of state. He also served as minister of planning and economic policy in the government of Gen. Omar Torrijos from 1973 to 1978.

Torrijos had come to power in a 1968 coup against a right-wing president, Arnulfo Arias Madrid. He was president until 1978, when he stepped aside as self-proclaimed "Chief of Government and Supreme Leader of the Panamanian Revolution." But he remained influential in the government as head of the National Guard until his death in a plane crash in 1981.

General Torrijos tried to maintain an image as a reformer and anti-imperialist interested in the welfare of the people of Panama. Some of the measures taken by his government remain very popular, especially the treaty he negotiated with Washington in 1977 to regain



Slums of Colón. City is a regional center for international trade and finance.

sovereignty over the Panama Canal. Ardito Barletta tried to use his association with Torrijos to boost his standing with the voters and make his harsh economic prescriptions more palatable.

The new president was chosen for the position by the outgoing military leaders, particularly Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, commander of the Panamanian Defense Forces.

Ardito Barletta's narrow victory over former President Arias in May 1984 has been attributed to direct intervention by the military. The official count gave him a margin of only 1,713 votes out of a total of 600,000, and this was only after General Noriega ordered the counting stopped when Arias appeared to be slightly ahead.

Since taking office, Ardito Barletta has maintained his close relationship with General Noriega. The two men, together with their top aides, meet regularly to discuss government business.

## U.S. military presence

In addition to the 14,000-man Panamanian Defense Forces, about 10,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Panama. Earlier this year, joint maneuvers, called "Minuteman II," were conducted in Panama with U.S. marines and Panamanian troops.

The U.S. base at Ft. Gulick in the Canal Zone was turned over to Panamanian control on Oct. 1, 1984, as provided for in the 1977 treaty. However, 13 other U.S. military installations remain on the Canal Zone's 650 square miles. The area is not scheduled to be completely free of U.S. military facilities until 2000.

One of the functions of Ft. Gulick was to house the U.S. Army School of the Americas. Since it was founded in 1946, some 44,000 officers from many Latin American countries received military training there. Many of the school's graduates have played key roles in pro-U.S. governments throughout the continent. The Pentagon decided to relocate the school, probably to the United States, rather than accept Panamanian control over the facility. Much of the equipment and supplies, however, were simply moved five miles down the road to Ft. Davis, which is still run by the U.S. Army.

## A refutation of Castro?

In addition to military cooperation, Washington hopes to be able to use Panama as an example of a debtor nation dutifully adjusting its economic policies to meet the needs of the big banks in New York and other financial centers.

Ardito Barletta, along with Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid, has been trying to come up with an alternative to Cuban President Fidel Castro's call for a total cancellation of Latin America's foreign debt. The Panamanian and Mexican presidents are attempting to put together a plan acceptable to the debtor governments and the banks for postponing interest payments to a later date.

*Washington Post* correspondent Edward Cody pointed out the political role the new Panamanian president is expected to play. In an article in the July 15 issue of this leading big-business daily, Cody described Ardito Barletta's task as "similar to that faced by other new civilian governments replacing military rule in a trend hailed by the Reagan administra-

tion as progress in the effort to restrict Marxist influence in the hemisphere."

Cody also called Ardito Barletta's plan for the Panamanian economy "an early testing ground for repeated assertions by President Fidel Castro of Cuba that the democratic Latin governments cannot pay their debts to U.S. banks without risking violence in the streets."

So far, there are no indications that Panama is passing this test any better than other deeply indebted countries in Latin America. The working people of Panama did not grant a "honeymoon" to their first elected president in a decade and a half. Mass protests in November and December, following Ardito Barletta's October 11 inauguration, forced him to back down on his first set of economic proposals, which he had presented as a "national urgency" package.

At that time he proposed tax increases and a freeze on wages in the public sector in an attempt to balance the budget, as demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The annual budget deficit in 1984 was \$132 million, and the IMF had stated that it would not consider granting new loans or renegotiating terms of payment on existing loans until the government could control its deficit.

#### Regional commercial center

Panama's economy, unlike those of most other Central American countries, is not primarily oriented toward the export of agricultural products. Instead, the country serves as a center for banking and commerce for the Central American region. The Caribbean port city of Colón is a free trade zone, and there are few restrictions on financial transactions in the rest of the country. The Panamanian currency (the balboa) is directly tied to the U.S. dollar to facilitate trade.

In 1983, for example, exports of goods (primarily bananas) earned only \$303 million in foreign exchange. In the same year the re-exporting business in Colón brought in \$1.475 billion simply through buying goods from one country and selling them somewhere else. In-

terest earned by international banking operations in Panama totaled \$6 billion. About 120 international banks have branches in the country.

In recent years, however, the world economic downturn and especially the debt crisis of the Latin American countries have led to cuts in banking operations. Traffic in the Panama Canal is also down, resulting in further losses for the treasury. The government has resorted to foreign loans just to cover the deficit in operating expenses.

The big bankers who operate through the World Bank and IMF have placed conditions on their loans to Panama, including spending cuts, the elimination of subsidies, easing of price controls, and increased incentives to in-

dustry. An August 1984 World Bank report, "Panama: Structural Change and Prospects for Growth," pointed in the direction of making Panama more subservient to the U.S. economy. It blamed chronically high unemployment on "distorted private sector incentives and the resulting weakness of the productive sector." These problems, along with the deficit in the government's budget, the report stated, developed through "government policies of industrial protectionism and food self-sufficiency."

The World Bank and the big bankers it works for now hope their protégé Ardito Barletta will be able to implement their recommendations and keep the lid on the mounting discontent of the Panamanian people. □

## First issue of 'Nouvelle Internationale'

The first issue of *Nouvelle Internationale*, a French-language journal of Marxist theory and politics, has just been published in Montreal.

*Nouvelle Internationale* is published under the joint editorship of leaders of the Revolutionary Workers League, the Canadian section of the Fourth International, and of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. The coeditors are Michel Prairie from the RWL and Mary-Alice Waters from the SWP.

The first issue's introduction, written by Prairie, states that the journal is "aimed at working-class militants who are struggling against capitalist exploitation and oppression. It will take up the most important questions of program, strategy, and organization confronting those who are building communist parties today in North America and elsewhere in the world."

The 256-page inaugural issue focuses on the theme of the alliance of workers and exploited farmers in the revolutionary struggle for power. It includes two articles that have already appeared in *Nouvelle Internationale*'s English-language counterpart, *New Internationalist*, which began publication in 1983. These are "The Workers' and Farmers' Government: A Popular Revolutionary Dictatorship," by Mary-Alice Waters, and "Their Trotsky and Ours: Revolutionary Continuity Today," by Jack Barnes. Barnes and Waters are leaders of the SWP and of the Fourth International.

Also contained in the first issue are excerpts from Cuban President Fidel Castro's main report to the first congress of the Cuban Communist Party in 1975. In this speech, Castro describes the main stages that the Cuban revolution passed through from 1953 to 1964.

Two articles on the workers' and farmers' government by Joseph Hansen are also included. Hansen, a longtime leader of the Fourth International and the SWP, and editor of *Intercontinental Press* until his death in 1979, played a major role in helping to reconquer the revolutionary communist continuity with Marx and Lenin on the question of the workers' and farmers' government.

Lastly, *Nouvelle Internationale* publishes two documents from the Communist International of Lenin's time. They are the resolution and report on the workers' and farmers' government from the June 1923 session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, which have not been readily available in French since the 1920s.

Prairie notes in his introduction that *Nouvelle Internationale* is an internationalist journal. "It will deal with political questions facing the toilers of Quebec, English Canada, the United States, and other advanced capitalist countries. It will discuss the struggles of the oppressed peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. And it will take up the gains made by the toilers of the workers' states, where capitalist exploitation has been abolished, as well as the problems that still confront them. Within this framework, *Nouvelle Internationale* will pay special attention to the revolutionary struggle that today grips Central America and the Caribbean."

The introduction notes that the publication of *Nouvelle Internationale* "responds to a particular need today in Quebec" in light of the debate in the workers' movement there on the results of the last 25 years of struggles and the misleadership of the trade union bureaucracy and the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois.

For many years, Prairie explains, "Quebec workers have been in the vanguard of working-class struggles in Canada, both through the scope of their battles and the social impact of their demands. This militancy was unquestionably stimulated by the simultaneous development of a powerful movement for Quebec's national and linguistic rights that deeply shook the Canadian imperialist state."

*Nouvelle Internationale* is available for \$6 (Canadian) for one issue or \$14 for a three-issue subscription, from *Nouvelle Internationale*, C.P. 280 Succursale de Lorimier, Montreal, Canada, H2H 2N7. [Readers in the United States may send US\$4.50 (\$10 for a subscription) to *New Internationalist*, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014.] □



# Thousands mark end of UN women's decade

*Fight against U.S. aggression, apartheid, Zionism central to women's rights*

By Andrea González

[The following two articles appeared in the August 9 issue of the *Militant*, a socialist weekly published in New York. Andrea González is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York City. The articles have been slightly abridged.]

\* \* \*

NAIROBI — Thirteen thousand women participated in Forum '85, the United Nations-organized conference open to all women. It took place at the University of Nairobi July 10-19.

Parallel to Forum '85 was the official UN conference on women. The latter conference was only open to government-appointed delegations and went on from July 15-26.

Forum '85 and the official conference were the third set of parallel conferences on women organized by the UN since it declared 1975-85 the Decade for Women. Both Forum '85 and the official UN conference were organized to mark the end of this decade and to evaluate women's progress in the last 10 years on the themes of peace, equality, and development.

Although Forum '85 was organized on the themes of equality, development, and peace, participants agreed that without winning peace, women could not win anything else. This made an unofficially organized Peace Tent set up on Nairobi University campus a center of political discussion and debate during the 10-day conference. It served as a place where workshops continued and new topics were discussed.

The eyes of Forum '85 participants turned to two of the most important battles for peace in the world today: the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa and the fight against the U.S. aggression in Central America and the Caribbean.

Hundreds of women crowded into rooms to hear representatives of the fight against South African apartheid and Pretoria's domination of Namibia.

## The fight against apartheid

At these workshops women gave graphic descriptions of life under apartheid. In one, Sister Bernard, a Catholic nun and a leader of the Transvaal Women's Federation, explained, "South Africa cannot renounce violence because apartheid cannot survive without violence. They use violence that goes beyond physical force. . . . Such a fundamentally violent system," she said, "cannot be reformed into a peaceful system."

African National Congress (ANC) representative Rose Sear explained that the apartheid



Andrea González/IFP

Discussion on debt crisis in Peace Tent at Forum '85.

system is responsible for violence throughout southern Africa. "The brutality spills onto the frontline states [Black-ruled countries near South Africa] as well," she said. "South Africa commits atrocities against the people of the sovereign states of Angola, Mozambique, and Botswana. The people of all southern Africa are paying with their blood so that the people of South Africa can be free."

At yet another workshop an ANC representative explained that U.S. government support for South Africa is not limited to economic or military aid but includes political cover. It was the U.S. government, she said, that linked South African withdrawal from Namibia to the withdrawal of the Cuban internationalist forces in Angola. "The ANC," she said, "rejects this linkage because we know that before any Cuban troops withdrawing got back to Havana, the South African regime would launch a massive invasion of Angola."

## U.S.-backed war in Central America

Workshops on Central America and the Caribbean were similarly packed with women who wanted to learn the truth about the revolutions in that region.

Women were visibly moved by Alicia de García, a representative of the Mothers Committee of El Salvador, when she gave an account of the death squad activities in her country. These atrocities, she explained, continue today under Salvadoran President Duarte's "democracy."

The situation of women in Nicaragua was a sharp contrast to that of the other women of Central America. Magda Enriquez from the Nicaraguan Women's Association

(AMNLAE) explained that in 1979 the new revolutionary government "without money, without structure, with no army, no judges" but with the "political will" encouraged women.

The people of Nicaragua as a whole have made great advances despite limited resources, Enriquez said, because "the people are not the objects of development but the subjects of development — the subjects of change." All the gains the Nicaraguan people have made — literacy, health care, land reform, urban reform — have benefited women the most and have "made us very popular around the world." But, she continued, it has made the U.S. government consider us "very dangerous." It has led the U.S. ruling families to fund and direct a mercenary war against Nicaragua.

Enriquez called on the women of the United States to join the women of Nicaragua in the fight against this war. She told the crowd that "we are convinced we will win. In the history of the world armies have defeated armies but there is no case where an army has defeated an entire people."

## 'The debt is unpayable'

Cuban women led an important discussion on the imperialist-imposed foreign debt crisis in the Third World, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Cuban delegation set up a literature table with pamphlets of speeches and interviews by Cuban President Fidel Castro explaining his proposal that the debt be cancelled. These pamphlets, in English, Spanish, and French, were distributed free.

In meetings on the debt crisis, women from



Peru, Mexico, and Argentina described the impact of the debt on their countries.

A Salvadoran woman told the crowd that the money taken from Latin America by the U.S. banks is used to pay for the U.S.-backed war in her country and against Nicaragua.

Summing up the view of the women from the region, a Colombian woman explained, "the debt is immoral — economically and politically — and it is unpayable. To guarantee democracy we must end negotiations with the International Monetary Fund and oppose U.S. intervention in Central America."

A debate at the Peace Tent on the Iraq-Iran war also drew a large crowd. Women from Iran set up massive photo displays on the campus demonstrating the effects of the chemical warfare used against their homeland. The Iraqi regime, encouraged by imperialism, launched war against Iran five years ago in an attempt to overturn the 1979 Iranian revolution.

Throughout the conference protest actions were organized. These actions included demonstrations against U.S. support to the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines, against apartheid in South Africa, and against the Israeli government's 1982 invasion and occupation of Lebanon, and a rally against U.S. aggression against Nicaragua (see story below).

Criticism of the U.S. government's foreign policy was sharp throughout the conference. However, there was little "anti-Americanism" toward the U.S. women. Speakers from the liberation struggles around the world explained that it was the U.S. government not the U.S. people who is the enemy of their struggles. They appealed to U.S. women to fight with them against Washington's reactionary policies.

#### **Disruption by pro-Israeli forces**

Throughout the conference supporters of Israeli imperialism organized a campaign to stop the conference participants from hearing the truth about the Israeli government's brutal oppression of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples.

In a workshop I attended on the conditions of Palestinian women in the Israeli-occupied territories of the West Bank, some 10 opponents of the right to self-determination for the Palestinian people marched as a group into the room and attempted to disrupt first the presentations and then the discussion. Failing to force an early end to the workshop they marched out shouting.

A big part of the discussion here and at the official UN conference concerned Zionism and the Israeli government's racist oppression of the Palestinian people. While the official UN conference document, approved July 27, did not denounce Zionism as a form of racism, as many delegates proposed and as had been done at the 1975 UN official government conference in Mexico City, most women here viewed Zionism, along with racism, apartheid, and exploitation, as an obstacle to the advancement of women.

Opponents of women's right to abortion also had an organized participation in Forum '85.

These forces from the United States, Britain, and Australia organized themselves into the so-called Pro-family International Coalition. They hoped to make opposition to abortion rights the center of the conference. Having failed in this, they organized a press conference to complain that the women at the forum assumed abortion was a human right. These elements opposed contraception and characterized discussions about women having affirmative action, child care, and so on as discriminating against housewives and mothers.

#### **Over 1,000 workshops**

The conference was organized into over 1,000 workshops on these and scores of other topics. In addition there was a film festival of over 180 films and videos by and about women, as well as art and photo exhibits from various countries. A craft center and market was set up for Forum '85 where Kenyan women demonstrated and sold local handicrafts. One section of the campus grounds was

set aside for music and singing. The campus was lined with tables with information on the situation of women in various countries. Many of these displays spilled over to blankets on the grass.

The U.S. had the largest number of women attending the conference. While the majority were professionals and business women, there were also many students and working women.

Many of the workshops organized by U.S. women, including Black women, tended to focus on the problems of professional women. One group of participants, however, organized a workshop entitled "Third World Women in the United States Speak Out: a Working-class Perspective." This gave participants from around the world a true picture of the problems faced by Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and other oppressed minorities in the United States.

Forum '85 ended July 19 with an outdoor program of cultural performances and speeches. □

## **Rally protests U.S. war against Nicaragua**

### **By Andrea González**

NAIROBI — Thousands of women participating in Forum '85 gathered on the grass at Nairobi University for a noontime rally to protest U.S. aggression against Nicaragua July 18.

Two hours before the rally was scheduled to begin, Dame Nita Barrow, the convenor of Forum '85, banned all demonstrations. Organizers of the solidarity rally were denied a sound system.

Supporters of the Nicaraguan revolution rigged a microphone to a portable stereo system and the rally began. Although women had to strain to hear the speakers, the spirited rally went on as scheduled.

The rally was opened by Hortensia Allende, the widow of the former Chilean President Salvador Allende, who was murdered in the U.S.-backed coup in that country in 1973. Allende thanked the women for their efforts to stop the U.S.-backed war against Nicaragua. She warned that a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua would lead to a long protracted war throughout the region.

Following Allende, greetings were given from women representing various organizations in the United States. They pledged to redouble their efforts to build a movement that could stop U.S. intervention in Central America.

In a moving speech a Chilean woman put into words the sentiment of the hundreds of women from Latin America at Forum '85. She said, "We in the interior of Chile from different organizations of women, of students, of workers, are organizing solidarity actions with Nicaragua because we consider Nicaragua a vision for Latin America. We in South America have the ability to build the same free society."

Reminding the women that the next day, July 19, was the sixth anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution, a woman from El Salvador told the crowd that "my people, with arms in hand, salute with respect, admiration, and great affection the Sandinista revolution. We must all demand, all of us, that the Yankees get out of Central America."

The representative from Vietnam was greeted with a standing ovation. She told the rally that despite the bombs and toxic chemicals the U.S. government had used against the Vietnamese people, the U.S. imperialists had been defeated in Vietnam. "So we are convinced that the heroism of the people and the women of Nicaragua in face of the U.S. intervention, will win. The U.S. imperialists were defeated in Vietnam and will be defeated in Nicaragua."

Susanna Ounei, representing the Kanak people struggling against French colonialism in New Caledonia, told the audience that the struggle of the Kanak and Nicaraguan people are the same. "As people who fight we understand each other. And we demonstrate our solidarity with you."

A representative of the African National Congress (ANC) also spoke at the rally. She told the women that "we have to be here to pay solidarity to our sisters ... because we are fighting the same enemy — American imperialism which is intervening in Nicaragua and supplying arms to South Africa that are used to kill the children, the women, the people of Southern Africa."

Maireya Baimea of the Intercontinental Women's Front Against U.S. Intervention — an organization of Latin American women — ended the rally by calling on women to send a message to Washington that they will actively oppose U.S. intervention in Nicaragua. □

# Tribute to Pierre Frank

'For six decades a Bolshevik-Leninist'

By George Novack

[The following article, dated Jan. 21, 1985, appears in the recently published *Pour un portrait de Pierre Frank* (Toward a Portrait of Pierre Frank). Frank, a long-time leader of the Fourth International and its French section, died April 18, 1984, at the age of 78.

[Published in Paris by La Brèche, the book is a collection of articles about Pierre Frank by friends and collaborators. It also includes six articles written by Frank.

[Among the tributes are articles by Fourth International leaders Ernest Mandel and Livio Maitan, who worked with Frank for many years. A statement of "Final Homage" by Mary-Alice Waters on behalf of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States is also included.

[In his introduction, Michel Lequenne explains that writings by Frank on French politics between 1934 and 1968, selected for this volume, are only a few of the many articles he wrote on a broad range of topics. He states, "We hope that the success of the present volume will make it possible to go ahead with the publication of the writings of Pierre Frank."

[The book is available for 75 French francs (US\$8) from PEC, 2, rue Richard-Lenoir 93100 Montreuil, France.

[George Novack has been a leading member of the U.S. SWP and Fourth International for many years. Friends and collaborators celebrated his 80th birthday August 5.]

\* \* \*

Pierre Frank belonged to that generation of young idealists who were inspired by the October 1917 revolution. He entered the French Communist Party in 1925 when he was 20 and then became transformed into a Left Oppositionist in revulsion against the retreat from revolutionary internationalism of the Comintern, whose historian he would become. His political trajectory paralleled that of such founding figures of the Left Opposition in the United States as James P. Cannon, Carl Skoglund, Vincent R. Dunne, and Max Shachtman.

I, on the other hand, came later as part of a second wave of anti-Stalinist intellectuals who were radicalized between the crash of 1929 and the triumph of Hitlerism in 1933. We made our way to the already established International Communist League (ICL) that Pierre participated in launching. We newcomers, though of the same age as he, regarded Pierre as a veteran because he had been one of Trotsky's secretaries in Turkey and was a member of the International Secretariat.

After the Nazi steamroller crushed the German Opposition and our cadres oriented to form a new International at the end of 1933,

we in North America gave special attention to the French section and placed great hopes in its progress. For a while it became a pacesetter for other groups of the International Communist League. This was signaled when a decisive majority of the Bolshevik-Leninists voted to forfeit their organizational independence and join the French Socialist Party in order to win over its leftward-moving elements to the program of the Fourth International.

When this tactic, known as "the French Turn," met with widespread resistance, Trotsky urged Jim Cannon to attend the ICL plenum in Paris in October 1934 and back the proposal. I remember Cannon calling me into his office to explain how empty the treasury of the Communist League of America was and asking whether I could solicit enough money from contacts to pay for the trip. (That was the first of numerous such fund-raising assignments I fulfilled over the next half-century.)

That same year the U.S. Trotskyists followed the precedent set by the French and broke out of our isolation by successfully negotiating a merger with the American Workers Party. Thus the two sections on opposite sides of the Atlantic mutually influenced and reinforced each other's course.

Over the next five years the French section was beset by acrid factional battles and splits. Consequently we tended to view Pierre less as an individual personality than in his relation with his close associate Raymond Molinier whose actions we disapproved.

## Upheavals of World War II

Afterwards the upheavals of the Second World War changed many things in the life of the Fourth International as elsewhere. During the hostilities we were largely cut off from our foreign cothinkers, receiving most of the news about their situations through those maritime comrades who shipped overseas. That way we heard that Pierre had escaped from France and been interned as an "enemy alien" in a British concentration camp. Also that he remained steadfast in his adherence to the Fourth International and was eager to resume activities when he was liberated. As soon as he returned to France after the war he joined the united Internationalist Communist Party (PCI) and took his place in the leadership of the Fourth International which he held until his death.

My direct personal relationship with Pierre began in the closing months of 1951 after the SWP delegated me to act as its observer on the International Secretariat. I went first to Paris with my companion, Evelyn Reed, though we resided most of the time in London by agreement with Michel Raptis (Pablo) and Gerry Healy. I came to know Pierre rather well as a



PIERRE FRANK

colleague and friend in connection with the work at the center of the International.

Still vivid in my memory is the experience of my first meeting with him which I had arranged one afternoon at his workplace. Following the address I had in hand, I entered and crossed a courtyard and mounted five steep flights of stairs where I hesitantly knocked on the door of a small dressmaker's room. She directed me to a narrow closetlike space with barely enough room for a desk and two people. There Pierre transacted his business. As we talked, he rummaged through his clothes and entered some notes in an account book. It was jokingly said that Pierre kept the receipts and records of the Secretariat in his pockets. Such was my introduction to the headquarters of the International!

To be sure, in this period of reaction during the Korean War our movement was at quite a low ebb, so its affairs did not require much of an apparatus. Pierre had to perform his functions almost single-handedly and in a surreptitious manner.

Political developments proceeded differently on opposite sides of the Channel during my sojourn in Europe. Whereas the ranks of the British Labour Party swung leftward toward Bevanism,<sup>1</sup> giving a lift to the activity of our entrist comrades, in France the government crackdown on the Communist Party and the expulsion of the Lambertists<sup>2</sup> created many

1. The left wing in the British Labour Party in the post-World War II period was led by Aneurin Bevan, a former coal miner. In 1951, Bevan resigned his position as minister of labor in protest against the military rearmament policy of the Labour Party right wing. — IP

2. A tendency headed by Pierre Lambert that was expelled from the French section of the Fourth International in 1952. The expelled organization adhered to the International Committee, one of the two public

difficulties for the French section.

My admiration for Pierre's tenacity in the face of increasing hardships grew greatly during these trying days. His activity was tireless, his devotion to our common cause utterly selfless.

My stay from the autumn of 1951 to February 1953 concluded amidst reverberations of sharp differences back home in the SWP, which posed the threat of a break in the International. Just before my departure Marguerite Metayer, Pierre's companion, arranged a farewell dinner for me at their apartment, which was attended by Pablo, Ernest, and Livio. In discussing these reports, these resident members of the Secretariat implored me to do my utmost to dispel any "misunderstandings" between Paris and New York in order to head off a split. I earnestly promised to do my best.

As it turned out, there was much more involved than misunderstanding, and, before 1953 had passed, the breach was consummated both in the SWP and the International. As in the mid-1930s, I found myself in sharp disagreement with Pierre and his close associates and we parted company again. It took 10 years for the split to be healed. Pierre was one of the promoters of the reunification in 1962-63.

#### 'World Outlook'

Not least among its achievements was the issuance of *World Outlook* (the predecessor of *Intercontinental Press-Inprecor*) that was intended to coordinate the unified forces around a common line. The publication was put out weekly in Paris largely through the efforts and initiative of Joe and Reba Hansen. Pierre was one of the original contributing editors together with Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, and myself. Joe later told me how much they were indebted to Pierre's support, not only as a regular literary contributor but also as part of the volunteer work force that helped assemble and staple the mimeographed sheets for mailing on publication day. That kind of cooperative spirit, he commented, was the mark of a genuine Bolshevik. Pierre understood that a contributing editor was one who really contributed.

Pierre performed invaluable service to the weakened Internationalist Communist Party during the rough decade of the late '50s and early '60s by keeping alive the teachings of Marxism and the traditions of Bolshevism. Such steadfastness enabled the small organization to attract to the Fourth International's program a significant segment of Communist student youth, resulting in the creation of the Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR) and infusing fresh energy into the Trotskyist movement. The fusion of the JCR and PCI gave birth in 1969 to the present Communist League and prepared the ground for its expansion in the

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factions of the Fourth International between 1953 and 1963. When the International was reunified in 1963, Lambert's supporters refused to participate. They are presently organized in the Internationalist Communist Party (PCI). — IP

years after the events of May-June 1968.

Educated as a chemical engineer and steeped in the Marxist method, Pierre took a lively interest in the scientific and philosophical developments of his time. I always found his contributions in our press on these subjects pertinent and informative. At no time was he led astray by the many fashionable deviations from dialectical materialism that have proved seductive to one school after another of French intellectuals.

Taking advantage of his comprehensive knowledge of the ideological currents popular on the left since the 1920s, through Joe Hansen I sought his opinion 20 years ago about the introduction I had drafted to my anthology on *Existentialism Versus Marxism*. Along with useful suggestions, his reply contained the following remarks on our differing evaluations of the influence of surrealism and existentialism. These excellently exemplify his approach to the problems of contemporary culture.

I would like to deal with your comparison of surrealism and existentialism as phenomena of the two world war periods. I have not gone back to the texts after having read your introduction so possibly I am very subjective. Perhaps I still view the surrealists through the recollections of a 20-year-old, and the existentialists with much more maturity. You say that existentialism has a much more serious base than surrealism and exercises a far wider influence than it.

I do not contest the first point. In truth surrealism never had genuine philosophical pretensions. It was before all and above all a movement of revolt against the bourgeois conformism before 1914 which had acquired moldy forms and discredited itself in the course of the war. However I have the impression that surrealism has exerted a much greater influence

than existentialism in the literary and artistic field. Surrealism effected a genuine revolution in these domains. After the intervention of the surrealists no one could write the same as before. Whatever has been of value in French literature after them has been marked by their intervention in one form or another. Painting, sculpture were equally shaken up.

I cannot say as much of the existentialists. I do not see any great work they have produced or which could even have been indirectly inspired by them. As for [existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul] Sartre, except for his dramatic production, I am not impressed by any of his literary works. They are all as pessimistic as those of [surrealist writer Louis-Ferdinand] Céline, but the latter is much superior as an author.

In my opinion what gave vigor to surrealism was its revolt against bourgeois conformism; it was influenced on the one hand (not very consciously) by the Russian revolution, on the other hand by Freud and psychoanalysis. The surrealists broke windows and let in great currents of fresh air. Sartre likewise wanted to produce a literature of "commitment," but except for some moments of infidelity he has been committed to the French CP which he characterized in a lucid moment as "reactionary" (preface to his book on Nizan). But this term had no precise value to him and he has failed to draw the [requisite] conclusions from such a judgment.

So much for Sartre.

That kind of question can be left for future historians of present-day Western literature to decide.

What is not to be doubted is the worth of Pierre's work for the Fourth International. For six decades he conducted himself as a dedicated Bolshevik-Leninist. His mentor, Trotsky, would have considered this distinction the highest accolade. And so should we. □

## Guadeloupe upsurge wins activist's freedom

The French Caribbean colony of Guadeloupe exploded in celebration on July 29 with the news that Georges Faisans, an imprisoned proindependence leader, had been freed in France. This victory followed sustained mass demonstrations and a six-day general strike.

Faisans is a leader of the People's Movement for an Independent Guadeloupe (MPGI) who was based in France. During a visit to Guadeloupe last year, he struck a white school teacher after the teacher made racist slurs against a young Black woman. Though the teacher did not press charges, Faisans was brought to trial and sentenced to three years in prison.

When his term began at a French prison on June 4, Faisans launched a hunger strike to protest his jailing. Support actions in Guadeloupe mounted to demand his release.

On July 24, Point-à-Pitre, the capital of Guadeloupe, was paralyzed by mass demonstrations that had been called by a score of political organizations and trade unions. Barricades were set up across all the roads into the city, cutting it off from the rest of the country. Demonstrators clashed with police. French President François Mitterrand sent in more

than 200 additional riot police.

A general strike shut down many businesses and industries across the island, which has 340,000 inhabitants. As the demonstrations, strike, and roadblocks continued, the Paris daily *Le Monde* commented that an "insurreccional climate" was sweeping Guadeloupe.

Radio stations broadcast declarations by the main proindependence groups, such as the MPGI and the People's Union for the Liberation of Guadeloupe (UPLG). Alex Lollia, a leader of both the Movement for United Trade Union Action (MASU) and the Revolutionary Socialist Group (GRS, Antilles section of the Fourth International), broadcast an appeal for continued demonstrations until Faisans' release.

Confronted with this outpouring — the largest in Guadeloupe since police killed 50 demonstrators in 1967 — the Mitterrand government decided to back down and grant Faisans a conditional release (he cannot leave France and must report regularly to the police).

Already inspired by the upsurge of the independence struggle in France's colony of New Caledonia in the South Pacific, this victory will give a further boost to the struggles in the French Caribbean colonies. □

# Activists greet Nicaragua book

*Discuss how to get out truth about revolution*

By Eileen Morgan

[The following article appeared in the July 26 issue of *Socialist Action*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Auckland, New Zealand, that reflects the views of the Socialist Action League, New Zealand section of the Fourth International.]

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"We have come together tonight with a common aim — our caring and sympathy for a people in struggle," Labour MP Judy Keall told a public meeting of about 70 people in Auckland on Friday, July 19.

Judy Keall was one of six speakers helping to officially launch a new book from New York-based publishers Pathfinder Press, *Nicaragua: the Sandinista People's Revolution*. This book is being distributed in New Zealand by Pilot Books.

"We have chosen to launch this book about Nicaragua on a very special day for the majority of Nicaraguans," Pilot Books' sales manager Terry Brydon explained to the meeting.

"Six years ago today, the working people of Nicaragua, led by the Sandinistas, finally triumphed over the US-backed dictator, Somoza. What replaced the Somoza tyranny was a government that represented the interests of working people; that carried out a massive literacy campaign to teach hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans to read and write; that also carried out a health-care programme."

## 'Powerful tool'

"This new book," he continued, "is a selection of speeches and interviews with leaders of the Sandinista revolution for the period 1982 through to the end of last year.

"It is a powerful tool in getting out the truth about Nicaragua and combating the lies spread by the likes of Reagan. President Reagan's latest attack on Nicaragua has been his labelling of Nicaragua as being one of five so-called 'terrorist countries' whose leaders he described as 'misfits, looney tunes and squalid criminals.'"

"But this book shows quite a different reality. In it, the Sandinista leaders describe the escalation of the US-backed *contra* [counter-revolutionary] war; the role of the Sandinista unions in defence and production; the advances in agrarian reform, under which tens of thousands of peasants have received land."

"Because this book lets the leaders of the revolution speak for themselves, it is an important one," Terry Brydon stressed. "And it is one that everybody who is serious about wanting to know what is happening in Nicaragua should have."

Commenting on *Nicaragua: The Sandinista*

*People's Revolution* Judy Keall quoted from a speech contained in it by Magda Enriquez, a leader of the Nicaraguan women's organisation.

## 'Practicing democracy'

"When we as women decide where the child-care centres are going to be built, we are participating. When we the women decide we need a hospital to deal with specific gynaecological problems, and we get that hospital, we are practicing democracy. When we are able to vaccinate 200,000 children over a weekend . . . we are building democracy. When the people teach the people how to read and write, we are building democracy."

"I think that says it all," commented Judy Keall. "And I'm very proud to be associated with this book launching tonight."

Three of the speakers sharing the platform with Judy Keall — Maori activist Eva Rickard, Corso [an independent agency that organizes aid for the South Pacific] regional organiser Janet Bedggood, and meat worker Bob Aiken — will be participating in a labour movement fact-finding tour of Nicaragua in early September. All three emphasized how much they were looking forward to the opportunity of seeing the revolution at first hand.

"I tried to read the book," Eva Rickard told the meeting. "Heavy reading, but very true. I think this book needs to be read by people, because it was written by the people that were involved in it. For me, it was a revelation of a people's struggle."

Her words were echoed by Northern Clerical Workers Union secretary Syd Jackson. "I commend the book to all of you," he said. "I think the simplest statement that I could make is that it does present what I believe to be the correct version of what is happening there."

"I was freaked out, but hardly surprised, to learn that President Reagan is trying to push legislation through the Senate at the moment which gives the CIA open licence to assassinate, exterminate, leaders who they find offensive to their particular political philosophy."

"We know that the CIA has been doing this for many years, in many countries. But I think it is significant at this time, particularly with the struggles in Central and Latin America, that Reagan should be seeking that kind of mandate so that they can openly move into these countries with the full support of the United States government, and annihilate people who merely profess to live according to a different philosophy to that which dominates the United States capitalist way of life. . . ."

"We therefore need to be standing up in support of the struggle in Nicaragua. Because we

need, in turn, to bring home the lesson of that struggle throughout the whole world of indigenous peoples to assert their right to live their lives in the way that they decide for themselves.

"And we need to direct those lessons also to the position in Aotearoa [the Maori name for New Zealand], to the position of the struggles of the Maori people. Because we are the products of colonialism, we are the products of imperialism . . . we are the most impoverished group in this society. And that needs to be recognised and acted upon."

Referring to Eva Rickard's participation in the fact-finding delegation to Nicaragua, Syd Jackson said: "I'm very proud that you are the representative of our people, Eva. I know that you will represent the views of our people to our brothers and sisters there, and will carry to them our aroha in their just struggle. . . ."

"I think it is also appropriate that when Eva goes on this trip, she goes at a time that marks the 10th anniversary of the Maori Land March — the anniversary is eight days before you leave. That, in my view, was one of the great turning points in the Maori struggle in Aotearoa. I think it is appropriate, therefore, in light of the 10th anniversary of that great event in our history, that you should be sharing in the struggle of another group of people."

## Getting out the truth

The role participants in the tour to Nicaragua can play in building solidarity with the struggles of the Nicaraguan people was taken up in a speech by the tour's national organiser, Bob Aiken. "By getting out the truth on Nicaragua, the delegation, along with this new book on the Sandinista people's revolution, can play an invaluable role in the struggle to stop imperialism's war against Nicaragua," he explained.

He described some of the gains made by Nicaraguan working people in the six years since the overthrow of Somoza, and the increasingly direct war moves of United States imperialism over the same period.

"A recent article in the Cuban weekly *Granma* described Nicaragua as a country 'surrounded by friendly peoples and enemy governments.' International solidarity and sympathy, along with the determination, combativity and preparation of Nicaraguan working people themselves, is an important factor that the U.S. has to take into account at this time," he emphasised.

"The capitalist rulers of the U.S. are at present discussing and evaluating the best ways to defeat the Sandinistas and the threat of their example. Some important sections want to launch a direct U.S. intervention, as in Grenada. Others, however, have started to publicly warn about the dangers of such an adventure. . . ."

"By visiting Nicaragua and concretely addressing ourselves to some of the questions that have been raised by the U.S. government's charges against the revolution, the fact-finding delegation can help shift the balance in favour of Nicaragua's working people." □

# Why Truman used the atom bomb

*Hiroshima and Nagasaki were first victims of cold war*

By Will Reissner

Never had so many people been killed in a single bombing raid. In one night, more than 80,000 Japanese lost their lives and 1 million were left homeless as their city went up in a fireball.

It was the night of March 9-10, 1945. The place was Tokyo, where the U.S. Army Air Corps unleashed an awesome new weapon against Japan: the napalm firebomb. The resulting firestorm devastated the Japanese capital, destroying 267,000 homes. The heat was so intense that water boiled in the city's canals and glass turned to liquid. By midafternoon on March 10, some 15.8 square miles of Tokyo had been gutted.

The firebombing of Tokyo was just the opening shot of the air campaign against Japanese cities. On March 13 the city of Osaka was hit with napalm bombs. The resulting fire wiped out 8.1 square miles of buildings.

On March 16, the U.S. B-29s struck Kobe, Japan's sixth largest city. Three days later they hit Nagoya. There, for the first time, high explosive bombs were dropped along with the firebombs in order to hamper firefighting efforts on the ground.

These four air raids alone gutted 32 square miles of four key cities. Japan's air defenses had become so weak that less than 1 percent of the U.S. bombers were lost on the missions.

Once the effectiveness of the firebombing was proven in Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, and Nagoya, the U.S. military drew up a list of 33 urban areas to be destroyed from the air. By June, only one of the 33 remained intact.

## Up in smoke

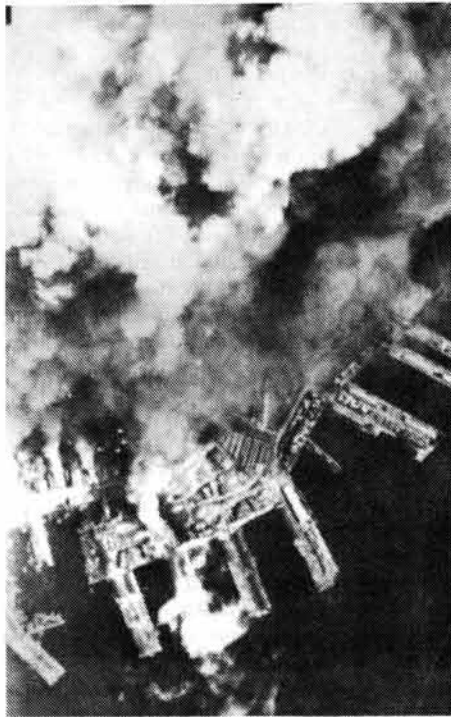
By mid-June, of the 257.2 square miles covered by Japan's six largest cities, 105.6 square miles had been leveled. Millions of people were left homeless. Thousands of crucial factories were in ruins. Industry had almost come to a standstill.

The U.S. Army Air Forces then turned their attention to 58 cities in the 100,000 to 200,000 population range. By July the B-29s had reduced 43 percent of the built-up areas of these smaller cities to ashes.

The Japanese ruling class' objective of supplanting the British, French, Dutch, and U.S. colonial empires in Asia was literally going up in smoke — the smoke of Japan's cities.

As a late-developing capitalist country, Japan entered its imperialist phase at a time when most of the world had already been divided up by other imperialist powers.

In 1895 Japan seized control over Taiwan, and in 1905 Korea became a Japanese colony. The Japanese imperialists also expanded their



Firebombs destroy port of Kobe.

economic interests in China, and in 1932, Tokyo established a puppet government in an "independent" Manchuria taken by force from China.

But the Japanese capitalists looked with longing at the huge European empires in Asia. The British colonialists controlled India, Burma, Malaya, and Hong Kong. The French controlled Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea. The Dutch controlled the vast Indonesian archipelago. The United States had seized the Philippines from Spain in 1898.

The start of the war in Europe in 1939 presented Tokyo with what seemed to be a golden opportunity to expand its colonial empire. France and the Netherlands were occupied by German troops in 1940, and Britain was barely hanging on in the European war.

The one serious rival for control of eastern Asia was the United States, which had long looked to China as a gigantic potential market for sales and investments.

The growing rivalry between Tokyo and Washington reached a crisis in mid-1941. In talks in Washington between Japanese Ambassador Kichisaburo Nomura and U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Hull demanded that Japan withdraw its troops from China and Indochina. When the Japanese government rejected this demand, the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands imposed an economic em-

bargo on Japan.

This move threatened to cripple Japan by depriving it of U.S. oil, as well as the raw materials of the British and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia, particularly oil from Indonesia.

Following the breakdown in the U.S.-Japanese talks in Washington, U.S. Secretary of War Henry Stimson recorded in his diary that "the question was how we should maneuver [Japan] into . . . firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves."

The Japanese military developed a plan to cripple U.S. military power in the Pacific by attacking the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor. It hoped that before Washington could rebuild its strength in the region, Japanese control over eastern Asia would be too secure to be challenged.

It was a gamble, and it came close to succeeding. Having wiped out most of the U.S. Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, the Japanese military swept through the British, French, and Dutch colonies. By May 1942, Tokyo had conquered Indonesia from the Dutch, Indochina from the French, the Philippines from the United States, and Malaya and Burma from the British. Japanese troops were poised on the threshold of India, the "jewel" of the British empire. They also controlled most of eastern China.

In many places the invading Japanese were initially greeted as Asian liberators from the rule of the European colonial powers. The initial enthusiasm for the Japanese troops, however, soon turned to bitterness as the Japanese proved to be scarcely different from the European imperialists they replaced.

Ultimately the Japanese rulers lost their gamble. U.S. industrial capacity made it possible for Washington to rapidly rebuild its military strength, and U.S. forces began counterattacking the Japanese.

## Tightening noose

By 1945, Japan was being strangled by the tightening noose of U.S. naval and air forces. U.S. submarines and surface warships were able to impose an increasingly effective blockade of the Japanese home islands. Although Japan was totally dependent on imported oil, by April 1945 oil shipments to Japan had stopped. U.S. war planes ranged so freely over the Japanese archipelago, that they virtually severed communications between the main island, Honshu, and the islands of Hokkaido to its north and Kyushu to its south.

By the end of July 1945, Japanese shipping was virtually immobilized. U.S. planes dropped mines that effectively shut Japanese ports, while submarines stalked any ships that

made it through the mine fields. By early August, 90 percent of Japanese merchant shipping had been destroyed, and the 10 percent that remained was bottled up in Japanese ports. The Japanese navy had been reduced from 2.25 million tons to less than 200,000.

#### Tokyo asks for end to war

The majority of Japan's leaders recognized by early 1945 that they had lost the war. A report prepared by the Japanese cabinet acknowledged that the country's ability to wage war had been broken. Shipping losses, the report stated, were staggering. Railway transport had dropped to one-half the previous year's level. Coal production was too low to keep industry functioning. Steel output had fallen to one-tenth the level of the previous year. Aircraft production had declined sharply, despite the top priority assigned to that sector by the Japanese government.

Recognizing that the war was lost, in early July the Japanese government asked the Soviet Union, which had not yet entered the Pacific war, to act as an intermediary between Tokyo and Washington to bring the conflict to an end. Tokyo proposed sending a special delegation, headed by Prince Konoye, to Moscow to discuss avenues to peace. The only conditions the Japanese government placed on ending the war were continued Japanese sovereignty over the home islands and maintenance of Emperor Hirohito on the throne.

Soviet leader Joseph Stalin passed the Japanese message to U.S. President Harry Truman and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill when the three met at Potsdam, outside Berlin, on July 17. The meeting was to discuss the postwar situation in Europe and the approaching end of the war in the Pacific.

But even before receiving word from the Soviet leader, Truman knew that the Japanese government was seeking an end to the fighting, because Washington had broken Japanese diplomatic codes and had intercepted the messages between Tokyo and Japanese diplomats in Moscow.

Truman and Churchill rejected the Japanese overture out of hand. Instead, on July 26, they insisted that any Japanese surrender must be "unconditional." Yet less than three weeks later, Washington accepted the Japanese surrender on August 14 *on the very same terms* the Japanese had proposed in July.

#### Why the atomic bombings?

What had changed? The only difference was that in the intervening period Washington had dropped two atomic weapons on the cities of Hiroshima on August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki were two of four Japanese cities that had been spared destruction in the fire-bombing raids in order to serve as examples of the destructive power of the new atomic weapons. Ironically, Nagasaki had not been the primary target of the plane that bombed it. That plane had been sent to wipe out the city of Kokura but had run into foul weather. After three passes over Kokura, and

running out of fuel, the B-29 turned to Nagasaki, its secondary target.

At Hiroshima, more than 70,000 people died instantly in the explosion. A similar number were horribly burned or seriously injured, and suffered from the effects of the intense radiation. Tens of thousands died in subsequent days and weeks. Fires burned what had not been immediately destroyed in the city. Some 4.7 square miles of the city lay in ruins.

In the days between the two atomic bombings, B-29s continued to fire-bomb other Japanese cities. On the evening of August 8, four more cities were destroyed.

Although the bomb dropped on Nagasaki on August 9 was more powerful than the one used against Hiroshima, it caused fewer casualties and less damage because it fell three miles from its target due to heavy cloud cover. As a result, high ridges shielded much of the city from the bomb's immediate destructive power. Nevertheless, 35,000 people died instantly and some 60,000 were injured by the blast, which obliterated an area of 1.45 square miles.

#### Did atomic bombs save lives?

The two atomic bombs, coupled with the Soviet Union's entry into the war against Japan on August 8, led the Japanese government to surrender on Aug. 14, 1945.

President Truman emphatically justified the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the grounds that "it was a question of saving hundreds of thousands of American lives" that would have been lost in an invasion of the Japanese home islands.

British Prime Minister Churchill had estimated that U.S. casualties would reach 1 million and British casualties more than 500,000 if the invasion of Japan took place. U.S. military officials argued that one-tenth of the Japanese population, some 10 million people, would perish in such an invasion.

This claim that "the bomb" was dropped to save lives has been repeated so often that it has entered the realm of "common knowledge."

Yet we have seen that in July the Japanese government had been ready to end the war on the terms finally agreed to one month later.

Japan was already approaching collapse before the atomic bombs were dropped. Just in the fire raids, which had begun with the May 9 bombing of Tokyo, some 330,000 civilians had been killed and another 476,000 injured. The destruction included 2.3 million homes, leaving 8.5 million civilians without shelter and 21 million displaced.

Prince Nauhiku Higashi-Kuni told the Japanese parliament on September 4, only weeks after the war ended: "The general conditions of the country began to show marked signs of impoverishment and exhaustion. So much so that in the days just preceding the termination of the war it seemed almost impossible to carry on modern warfare further for any long period of time. The production methods such as we had adopted before would shortly have to face insurmountable difficulties as a result of the destruction of transportation and

communication facilities caused by air raids. Our losses in naval and aerial strength were so enormous as to obstruct seriously the prosecution of the war."

The Pentagon had indeed drawn up plans for an invasion of Japan to begin on Nov. 1, 1945. But with or without the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and with or without the November 1 invasion, the Japanese government would have surrendered by the end of 1945.

This assessment is contained in the "U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey 4, Summary Report on the Pacific War," which concluded: "Certainly prior to Dec. 31, 1945, Japan would have surrendered even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, even if Russia had not entered the war and even if no invasion had been planned or contemplated."

The survey's vice-chairman, Paul Nitze, stated, "It is our opinion that Japan would have surrendered prior to Nov. 1 in any case; the atomic bomb merely accelerated the date at which Japan surrendered."

Two months before the bombing of Hiroshima, Admiral William Leahy, head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reported that the Japanese were already "thoroughly defeated" by the naval blockade and were ready to surrender.

If Japan was indeed defeated, and if Truman eventually accepted the same terms of surrender he had rejected a month earlier, why then were the atomic bombs used? And why, after the fearsome demonstration of the destructive power of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, was a second bomb dropped three days later?

The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not the closing shot of World War II. Rather it was the opening shot of the U.S. cold war against the Soviet Union. It was intended as a demonstration to Moscow that Washington had developed an awesome new weapon of unimaginable destructive power and had no qualms about using it.

In retrospect, Truman's behavior at the Potsdam Conference was indicative of the use to which he hoped to put "the bomb."

The day before the Potsdam Conference opened, President Truman received a cable from Washington stating "It's a boy!" This meant that an atomic bomb had been successfully exploded near Alamogordo, New Mexico.

When the Potsdam Conference was originally proposed, Truman planned to press the Soviet Union to enter the war against Japan, with Soviet troops attacking the crack Japanese forces in Manchuria and perhaps invading the northern island of Hokkaido.

But as U.S. scientists moved closer and closer to completing the atomic bomb, Truman lost interest in Soviet participation in the Pacific war. Washington feared that Soviet troops in Manchuria would strengthen the hand of the Chinese Communist forces against Chiang Kai-shek and that a Soviet invasion of Hokkaido would lead to joint occupation of Japan at the war's end.

## Washington's nuclear threats

On many occasions since 1945, successive U.S. presidents have threatened to use nuclear weapons. A number of these threats have since become public, although there is no assurance that all instances of U.S. nuclear blackmail have been revealed.

In 1946, President Truman threatened the Soviet Union with nuclear attack to force the withdrawal of Soviet troops from northern Iran.

During the Korean War, President Eisenhower warned China and the Soviet Union that he would use nuclear weapons in Korea unless an armistice was signed.

Eisenhower also threatened China with nuclear attack in 1955 and 1958 when China was trying to recover the off-shore islands of Quemoy and Matsu.

During the Vietnamese war of independence from France, Eisenhower seriously considered using nuclear weapons to lift the Vietnamese siege of the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

Eisenhower also threatened to use nuclear weapons against Moscow in 1956 if Soviet troops came to the aid of Egypt, which had been invaded by troops from Britain, France, and Israel.

In 1959, Eisenhower threatened the

Soviet Union with nuclear attack during a dispute over the status of Berlin.

In 1962, President Kennedy threatened to use nuclear weapons against Cuba to force the removal of Soviet missiles from the island.

In an interview in the July 29 *Time* magazine, former President Richard Nixon admitted that on four occasions he considered launching nuclear attacks. In 1969, he recalls, he considered using nuclear weapons against North Vietnam, but rejected their use because it would interfere with his hopes for better relations with China.

In 1971, during the India-Pakistan border war, Nixon was ready to use nuclear weapons if China had joined the war on Pakistan's side, thereby bringing the Soviet Union in on India's side.

Nixon also states he was ready to use nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union if it launched a preemptive strike against China's nuclear facilities.

The fourth occasion was in 1973, when Nixon put U.S. armed forces on a full nuclear alert after the Soviet Union threatened to give direct aid to Egypt in its war with Israel.

sians?"

The hostility of Churchill and Truman to the USSR was nothing new. When the workers and peasants, led by the Bolsheviks, overthrew capitalist rule and took power in November 1917, Churchill was British minister of war. In this capacity he was the prime mover behind sending British troops to Russia to try to crush the new Soviet republic. Even after the last British troops were withdrawn from Russia, Churchill was instrumental, in 1920, in providing British weapons to the reactionary Polish regime so it could mount an invasion of the Soviet Ukraine. Truman, too, had never been reconciled to the overthrow of capitalism in the Soviet Union. As late as 1941, while still a member of the U.S. Senate, Truman had remarked that "if we see that Germany is winning the war, we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and in that way kill as many as possible."

U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes recalled later that it was hoped that the atomic bombings would intimidate the USSR and allow Washington "to dictate our own terms at the end of the war."

After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, historian Barton Bernstein reports, "Byrnes was eager to use the bomb as at least an 'implied threat' in negotiations with Russia, and Truman seems to have agreed on a vigorous course in trying to roll back Russian influence in Eastern Europe."

The U.S. and British rulers were particularly concerned with the outcome of the war in

Europe. Contrary to their hopes and expectations, the Soviet Union and Germany had not bled each other white, leaving Washington and London to pick up the pieces and rule the world unchallenged.

The Soviet Union did indeed suffer staggering losses in the German invasion. Twenty million Soviet citizens lost their lives. Fifteen large cities, 1,710 medium-sized cities, and 70,000 towns and villages were completely or partially destroyed. Some 25 million people were left homeless, 31,850 factories and 98,000 collective farms were destroyed, as well as 40,000 hospitals and clinics.

Despite these staggering losses, the Soviet people fought on and defeated the German army almost single-handedly. In 1943, Churchill admitted that the Western allies were "playing about" with six German divisions while the Soviets faced 185 divisions.

As late as February 1945, the balance of the war could be seen in the fact that the German high command dispatched 1,675 tanks and assault guns to the Soviet front compared with only 67 to the western fronts where British and U.S. troops were fighting.

As the Soviet armed forces pushed back the German troops through Eastern Europe, the existing pro-Nazi regimes in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and elsewhere were overthrown and governments friendly to the Soviet Union established.

In Western Europe, powerful Communist parties in France and Italy had emerged out of the antifascist resistance movements.

### Targeting Soviet cities

Truman was determined to roll back the gains the Soviet Union had made in the closing months of the war and to stabilize procapitalist regimes in Western Europe. Washington saw the new atomic weapons as a key tool for establishing its hegemony over the postwar world. As U.S. press magnate Henry Luce said, the end of the war was to usher in "the American Century."

Truman was quick to pick up the club of the atomic bomb and brandish it against the Soviet Union. Barely two months after the Japanese surrender, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff appointed a special committee in October 1945 to "select approximately 20 of the most important targets suitable for strategic atomic bombing in the U.S.S.R. and Soviet-dominated territory."

Washington openly threatened U.S. nuclear war against the Soviet Union. As Flora Lewis reported in the Aug. 15, 1980, *New York Times*, "When the United States had a nuclear monopoly, its willingness to use the weapons in dire circumstances was credible. The threat alone was power, as proved by the disclosure that President Truman got the Soviets out of Iranian Azerbaijan in 1946 by secretly introducing the menacing possibility of a nuclear attack."

What prevented a third use of nuclear weapons was not U.S. restraint, but the Soviet development of its own nuclear arsenal. The first Soviet nuclear weapon was tested in August 1949. □

When Truman read the cable at Potsdam, his whole attitude toward Moscow became markedly more hostile.

According to U.S. Secretary of War Henry Stimson, who accompanied Truman to the Potsdam Conference, Truman's attitude "hardened noticeably" after reading the message.

Stimson added that "as sole possessor of the bomb, he had good reason to expect easier future dealings with Stalin."

Even before Truman received word that the test had been successful, Stimson recalls, the president had confided to an adviser: "If it explodes, as I think it will, I'll certainly have a hammer on those boys," referring to the Soviets.

Churchill, too, noted the change in Truman's behavior at the conference. "When he got to the meeting after having read this report [on the successful explosion near Alamogordo] he was a changed man. He told the Russians just where they got off and generally bossed the whole meeting."

Churchill was told of Truman's news soon after the U.S. president had received it. Churchill's chief of staff recorded in his diary that the British prime minister "was completely carried away . . . we now had something in our hands which would redress the balance with the Russians. The secret of this explosive and the power to use it could completely alter the diplomatic equilibrium. . . . Now we had a new value which redressed our position. . . : now we could say: 'If you insist on doing this or that well . . . And then where were the Rus-

# U.S. concentration camps

## Internment of Japanese Americans in WW II

By Patti Iiyama

In what has been called "the civil liberties case of the century," Gordon Hirabayashi in Seattle, Washington, in June reopened the question of the legality of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

In mid-1942, under orders from President Franklin Roosevelt, 112,000 people of Japanese descent were evacuated from the West Coast and incarcerated behind barbed wire in concentration camps. Two-thirds of the evacuees held illegally without trial were citizens of the United States.

Hirabayashi was one of three young Japanese-American men convicted of resisting the military-imposed curfew and evacuation. The others, Minoru Yasui and Fred Korematsu, have also recently reopened their cases.

During the war, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld their convictions and thereby the legality of the policy of evacuation and internment. The court decisions in 1942 and 1943 served to uphold the war-powers doctrine that "pressing military necessity" frees the military from constitutional limitations, whether or not the actions taken by the military are in any way connected with the prosecution of the war.

Hirabayashi is now seeking the overturn of his conviction on the grounds of government misconduct. New information has been uncovered that shows that government officials withheld, altered, and suppressed evidence indicating that there was no military necessity to incarcerate Japanese Americans.

The argument of military necessity was the major reason given to justify internment — supposedly there was danger of sabotage and espionage by the Japanese and therefore it was necessary to remove this potential fifth column from the "war zone." Although the Japanese forces were winning at the beginning of the war in the Pacific, the prospect of a Japanese invasion of the U.S. West Coast was not likely.

### Racist justifications

No cases of sabotage or espionage were ever found among the people of Japanese descent living in the United States. However, this lack of sabotage and espionage was seen as proof of their sneaky disloyalty. Liberal California Attorney General Earl Warren, who later headed up the U.S. Supreme Court, testified in 1942:

"I am afraid many of our people in other parts of the country are of the opinion that because we have had no sabotage and no fifth column activities in this State since the beginning of the war, that means that none have

been planned for us. But I take the view that this is the most ominous sign of our whole situation. . . . I believe that we are just being lulled into a false sense of security and that the only reason we haven't had disaster in California is because it has been timed for a different date, and that when that time comes if we don't do something about it it is going to mean disaster both to California and to our nation."

The military necessity argument was based on the racist notion that it was not possible to distinguish "loyal from disloyal Japanese," since they all look alike. In fact, it was argued, all Japanese are inherently "loyal" only to Japan.

General John DeWitt, commander of the U.S. Army Western Defense Command, stated openly, "A Jap's a Jap. They are a dangerous element. . . . There is no way to determine their loyalty. . . . It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen; theoretically he is still Japanese, and you can't change him . . . by giving him a piece of paper."

Congressman John Rankin of Mississippi said in 1942, "This is a race war. . . . The white man's civilization has come into conflict with Japanese barbarism. . . . One of them must be destroyed. . . . I say it is of vital importance that we get rid of every Japanese whether in Hawaii or on the mainland. They violate every sacred promise, every canon of honor and decency. . . . Damn them! Let's get rid of them now!"

Few organizations and individuals withstood the pressures of this wartime jingoism. The New Deal liberal politicians, from Roosevelt to state and city officials, aligned with traditionally right-wing forces in sanctioning, if not demanding, the evacuation of all Japanese.

Some organizations, mainly the American Friends Service Committee, protested the evacuation and worked with evacuees to improve their conditions in the camps. The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union was the only union to go on record opposing evacuation.

The *Militant*, the newspaper expressing the views of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, attacked Roosevelt's Executive Order authorizing evacuation as "an indiscriminate and brutal witch-hunt . . . having the character of a racial pogrom." It criticized the evacuation as a violation of the rights of Japanese Americans "driving them from their homes, terrorizing them, and in actuality encouraging the racial discrimination that is being fanned on the West Coast."

The *Militant*, which opposed the war aims of both U.S. and Japanese imperialists, also printed articles analyzing the basic reason behind the "campaign of racial terrorism" on the



Grandfather and grandchildren awaiting shipment to concentration camp.

West Coast: the greed of corporate agriculturalists for the land developed by the Japanese Americans.

"And so the story of the Japanese-American evacuations stands today — a repressive measure, based purely on racial discrimination and motivated chiefly by the desire of Big Business for additional profits, which is presented as a necessary part of the 'war for democracy.'"

The American detention camps were not as brutal as Auschwitz or Buchenwald in Germany. There were no torture chambers, gas ovens, or firing squads. They were essentially prison camps, much more like the traditional Indian reservations. In fact, two of the 10 centers were actually located on Native American reservation lands in Arizona.

Each of the 10 camps was relatively isolated, on land where no one else chose to live. Physically, they were all similar in terms of the ruggedness and barrenness of the terrain and the confinement of inmates within a small area enclosed by barbed wire and guarded by military police. The evacuees themselves maintained the upkeep of the camps under the supervision of white personnel.

They received token compensation for their prison labor.

Although the evacuees initially cooperated with the authorities with unprotesting acceptance, once they were in the camps they were constantly in conflict with each other and the administration. There were no attempts to escape or any violent resistance, and there was rarely any mass, sustained civil disobedience.

Most of the evacuees were resigned to their fate, but resistance, both active and passive, occurred more frequently than is generally known. Protest rallies, demonstrations, work stoppages, and even general strikes of evacuees took place at all camps around the issues of living conditions, especially food and

PATTI IYAMA has relatives who were killed by the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Her parents were interned in the concentration camp at Topaz, Utah, during World War II.



housing, the availability of employment, wages, and working conditions. Due to lack of leadership, though, most of this resistance was not politically directed.

Dissension in the camps became polarized around the loyalty oath that all evacuees over the age of 17 were asked to sign in 1943. The most serious controversy arose over questions 27 and 28:

No. 27. "Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?"

No. 28. "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any and all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, to any other foreign government, power or organization?"

A substantial group refused to sign in protest against evacuation and incarceration in camps and as a demand for equal status. Issei (Japanese-born immigrants), forbidden to become U.S. citizens because of their race, were being asked to voluntarily relinquish their Japanese citizenship and assume stateless status.

Eventually question 28 was rewritten so that many Issei could answer without giving up their Japanese citizenship. But the questionnaires, which were ostensibly to be used for military recruiting, were then used as the basis for separating the "loyal" from the "disloyal" and shipping the "disloyal" to Tule Lake concentration camp.

The most political protests took place at Heart Mountain, Wyoming, where there had been protests, demonstrations, and organized resistance from the beginning. When Nisei

(second-generation Japanese) were again made eligible for the draft on Jan. 20, 1944, the Fair Play Committee led by Nisei evacuees at Heart Mountain began advising Nisei of their rights and counseling draft resistance. By the end of March 1944, 54 of the 315 evacuees ordered to report for induction failed to do so.

When the Fair Play Committee began to agitate for a general strike at Heart Mountain, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) arrested the key leaders, shipped them off to Tule Lake, and then arrested all 54 evacuees who had refused induction. In a series of court cases, the backbone of the resistance was broken. The draft resisters, whose numbers had swelled to 63, were tried in June 1944 in the largest mass trial for draft resistance in U.S. history. They were found guilty by the judge and sentenced to three years in jail; their appeal was denied by the Supreme Court.

#### Nisei in the army

The Japanese American Citizens League urged Nisei men to volunteer for the segregated 442d Infantry Combat Team Battalion, which was led by white officers. They justified the segregation on the grounds that "we were inconspicuous scattered throughout the Army. . . . Individual records wouldn't prove much. The Army had said that Nisei protestations of loyalty were so much hogwash. We had to have a demonstration in blood."

However, Nisei evacuees were on the whole not anxious to volunteer to fight for a country that had incarcerated them without trial solely because of their race. Only some 1,200 volunteered in 1943, though the WRA had estimated three times as many would sign up. And most of the volunteers came from Hawaii where there were no detention camps. Between Janu-

ary 1944, when the draft was reinstated for Nisei, and November 1946, about 300 eligible Nisei men refused to report for induction.

Altogether 33,000 Japanese Americans, more than half from the mainland and the rest from Hawaii, served in the U.S. Army during World War II. The most famous formation, the all-Nisei 442d Combat Team, was the most decorated unit in the U.S. Army during World War II.

In the racist tradition of the U.S. Army, the 442d was consistently used as the first wave of assault troops whose bodies paved the way for the white troops following them into battle. They suffered 9,486 casualties, 314 percent of the unit's original strength.

The U.S. military was able to use the 442d as shock troops by exploiting the Nisei's desire to prove their loyalty. Washington felt confident that there would be no protest from troops who believed that only their blood could win freedom for the Japanese still interned in concentration camps at home.

In the summer of 1943, in response to the critical labor shortage caused by the war, the WRA began a program encouraging permanent relocation outside the camps. On Dec. 17, 1944, the War Department announced that West Coast exclusion orders against persons of Japanese descent would be terminated as of Jan. 2, 1945. On March 20, 1946, Tule Lake Segregation Center was the last camp to be officially closed.

The relocated evacuees faced little hostility on the East Coast or in the Midwest. However, those who returned to the West Coast had to cope with a campaign that was more vicious, organized, and vigorous than that urging evacuation in 1942. This campaign reached its peak in February, March, and April, 1945, in an attempt to frighten away the first evacuees who returned.

Although there was no vigilantism, there were enough incidents of harassment and violence to discourage evacuees at first. In spite of this, the West Coast anti-Japanese campaign of 1945-46 was relatively ineffective. Many evacuees returned to the West Coast after a brief stop in the east.

#### Fight for compensation

The returning evacuees were burdened by enormous financial losses suffered during the hasty evacuation. The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco conservatively estimated in 1942 that the total loss to evacuees, not including lost interest, wages, income, and appreciation, was \$400 million. In 1948 the government began to adjudicate claims for losses due to evacuation. The payments were stingy — an average of 10 cents per dollar of 1941 values and actually less due to inflation between 1941 and 1948. The average award per claim in one year was \$40 while it cost the government \$1,500 simply to process a single claim.

In contrast to these token reparations grudgingly given the interned Japanese Americans, the U.S. government awarded \$213 million tax-free to U.S. companies whose property abroad was damaged during World War II —



Manzanar "relocation" camp in California.

an average of 75 cents on the dollar as compared to the 10 cents given to the Japanese Americans. Nearly 30 years after the war ended, in 1967, the U.S. government awarded \$27 million to International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) in compensation for war damage to its factories in Germany. This included \$5 million for damage to the Focke-Wulf plants that manufactured bombers.

But the U.S. government, even while acknowledging that Japanese Americans suffered unjustly, has been stalling on awarding them reparations. Today Japanese Americans are demanding more substantial reparations from the U.S. government as partial compensation for the emotional trauma and physical

and financial losses they suffered from the camps. Reparations legislation is currently before both houses of Congress. The bill would provide \$20,000 compensation for each of the 56,000 Japanese-American victims who are still living.

The court challenges by Gordon Hirabayashi, Minoru Yasui, and Fred Korematsu to the unlimited war powers granted to the military have important implications for all Americans. If the court acknowledges government misconduct in suppressing evidence, then the factual basis for the Supreme Court's decisions would be undermined and the legal precedents for mass incarceration solely on the basis of race would be limited. □

the fundamental question of who owns Britain — the people or the multinationals."

In the past several years, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has made her own contribution to privatizing land. Under the 1981 Forestry Act the Thatcher administration sold more than US\$100 million worth of public forest lands between 1981 and 1984. The Forestry Act places no limit on how much public land can be sold, giving Thatcher a free hand to sell more.

The proposed land reform law would exempt holdings of any person who personally occupies or farms the site which is their principal place of residence if the property's capital value does not exceed £250,000 [\$350,000] on Jan. 1, 1986. The ownership of buildings and homes would not be affected.

The bill provides that the administration of all land will be vested in District Councils or Borough Councils. "The future use of all such land shall be responsive to local need," the bill states, "and shall be determined, following public debate, through the preparation of local plans by the appropriate local authority."

All revenues collected as a result of the transfer of land ownership would be divided as follows: one-third to local councils; one-third to the national government; and one-third to be distributed as land dividends to every British citizen living in Britain.

In a public statement announcing the proposed legislation Wetzel said, "The common ownership of land is a fundamental reform because land is the surface area of our planet. [A]llowing it to be abused by private landlords is not only to tolerate a moral injustice but to accept a gross distortion of the economy. Private land ownership increases the cost of housing, factory building, offices, schools and hospitals. Land speculation encourages this abuse of wealth generated from land. . . ." □

## Britain

# Land reform discussed

## *Proposed law would partially nationalize land*

By Chester Nelson

A national campaign has been launched in Britain to combat the misuse of land and the high rents that are the result of rising land costs.

"Land abuse in Britain — the socialist case for reform" was the theme of a national conference held in London on June 15. The conference was sponsored by the Labour Land Campaign, an organization formed in March 1984 by trade unionists, Labour Party members, and others.

The conference discussed such questions as: How do rapidly rising land values restrict local and national provision of decent housing? How does the buying and selling of land for profit affect the environment? Why is it difficult to find out who owns Britain's land and how much it is worth? How do high land prices constrain industrial expansion? Why do landowners get massive payments for ensuring that they preserve sites of environmental and historical importance? Why do landlords have the right to restrict access to huge areas of Britain's countryside?

Among the speakers were members of Parliament, including Labour Party MP Tony Benn; trade unionists; and representatives of community and environmental groups.

The flyer announcing the conference explained, "The issue of land has fallen off the political agenda and the problems of speculation, environmental degradation, economic wastage and land dereliction are not being debated within the Labour Movement. There is no move at present to commit a future Labour Government to implement changes in land control to benefit the whole community rather than a few as at present."

"This conference," the sponsors continued, "is the first major national effort in recent times to remedy this."

The conference came one month after Benn

and Dave Wetzel, chair of the Labour Land Campaign, unveiled a "Common Ownership of Land Bill" in the House of Commons.

### Land bill proposed by Tony Benn

The proposed bill provides that "ownership of land in Great Britain shall be vested in the nation to be held in trust for the people."

The motivation for this action is outlined in the preamble of the bill. It states that "the people of Britain have from time immemorial tilled the land, have depended upon it for their homes, life and sustenance and have acted as stewards to preserve it for future generations, and yet have never had the full legal title to its ownership vested in them."

Moreover, "by numerous Acts of Enclosure passed through Parliament, long before the people enjoyed their rights under universal adult suffrage, the title to much common land was wrongly conveyed to the ownership of great land-owners."

The Enclosure Acts permitted big landowners to fence huge tracts of common lands used by peasants. The enclosed land became private property that was leased and traded as a commodity. In the 17th century many of the big landlords leased the land to capitalist sheep farmers. Hundreds of thousands of peasants were forcibly driven off the land by these enclosures.

The proposed law would repeal all enclosure acts established over the last few centuries.

### 'Who owns Britain?'

Speaking about this feature of the bill, Benn stated, "The first acts of privatisation were the Enclosure Bills. What we are proposing to do is to put to right an historic wrong perpetrated against the people of this country. We are merely proposing to revert back to a form of community rights which are inalienable from the people in a democratic society. At stake is

## Unemployment up in Grenada

Unemployment has increased in Grenada since the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) headed by Maurice Bishop was overthrown in October 1983, former PRG cabinet minister George Louison told reporters on a recent trip to Trinidad and Tobago. Unemployment has gone from 12 percent to 40 percent.

Louison, who was minister of agriculture in the Bishop-led government and is presently a central leader of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement in Grenada, stated that Washington's promise to cover the damages from its 1983 invasion of the island has been far short of the total bill. U.S. compensation has only totaled US\$57 million, he said, but the damages cost \$200 million.

According to a dispatch from the Caribbean News Agency (CAN), Louison also reported that prostitution and cocaine use are up since the U.S. invasion. He said that U.S. soldiers who were part of the invasion force introduced cocaine into the country. Prostitution, which was being eliminated under the Bishop government, is now regular and common, he said.

# Interview with Miguel D'Escoto

Nicaraguan foreign minister explains reasons for his fast

[The following interview with Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto appeared in the July issue of *Envío*, published by the Central American Historical Institute in Managua.

[On July 7, D'Escoto, a Maryknoll priest, announced he would begin a period of fasting and prayer for peace. He was granted a leave from his responsibilities as head of the Foreign Ministry, and Deputy Foreign Minister Víctor Hugo Tinoco was appointed acting foreign minister. On August 3, D'Escoto ended his fast.

[The text of this interview is taken from the July 11 issue of *Barricada Internacional*, the English-language weekly of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).]

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*Question.* Throughout the Nicaraguan revolutionary process there have been many spectacular moments in which dramatic condemnations and urgent warnings have been made. Many people say this merely demonstrates the weakness of a process that constantly needs a "show" to be believed and inspire solidarity. Some people might think that your fast is another example of this phenomenon, a sign of weakness and a manipulation of religious sentiments by the revolutionary government. Some may also consider it a foolish decision born of impotence, a new "show" to attract attention because all the political cards of negotiation have been played. . . .

*Answer.* I've expected all those opinions and judgements beforehand. They are incorrect. But if I deny them, they still won't believe me. In any case, I give my word as a priest that this is a very personal decision which has been inspired by my Christian and priestly consciousness, faced with the reality of death and destruction that exists in Nicaragua as a result of the war of aggression declared against us by the U.S. government.

This situation causes me great suffering and I feel a responsibility to act. To act in all possible ways. This war financed by the United States is a phenomenon of such a nature that all the conventional methods of defense we have been using — and which we should continue using to defend the life of our people — are insufficient; I believe they must be complemented by other methods. The fast I have decided on is one of those "other" methods.

I have been considering this for quite some time. I have always wanted to unite my necessary tasks as foreign minister with gestures that make my priesthood and my faith explicit. A fast is a religious act. In making this decision I have consulted not only my colleagues in the Nicaraguan government, but also my religious brothers of the Maryknoll Order, my religious



MIGUEL D'ESCOTO  
Matilde Zimmermann/IP

superiors, Christians, priests, and nuns of Nicaragua. I have never made individual decisions. But I would also add that this decision was under formulation even before, and I am not improvising anything now. . . .

Two ideas, two experiences of faith have been maturing with me in my life as a Christian and a priest. As a citizen and also as Nicaragua's foreign minister all these years, these convictions have become even stronger, and they make demands of me.

One conviction is what we Christians call "the mystery of the cross." I am convinced that when, with our words and our actions, we clearly announce that God is the Father of all and we are all brothers, and when we denounce anything that opposes that fraternity, we are persecuted, slandered, and end up suffering the cross. When we are builders of brotherhood, we become the target of the hostility of those who defend an unjust order, the old order in which men are not equal nor are they brothers.

This has also happened to Nicaragua, as a nation initiating a project of justice and brotherhood. Its struggle to do something new has made it a target of aggression for those in the United States who can't stand to have anything changed.

On the other hand, I am convinced that violence is not Christian, that all violent methods are not Christian. This does not mean that I discredit those Christians who have been forced by different circumstances to employ violence. What I mean to say is that the Christian ideal, when it can be lived fully, is a non-

violent ideal, a nonviolent project.

I have no doubt that we must struggle. There is so much to struggle for in this world . . . to remain complacent is true heresy. In Nicaragua, Somozaism and U.S. aggression have imposed the need for defense. But I believe more and more that it is necessary to complement that military defense with other methods. In Nicaragua, we Christians must incorporate nonviolent methods in our war of legitimate defense.

I always think of Martin Luther King, who made the greatest advances in this direction. For me, he is undoubtedly the greatest saint of our times. Christians confront aggressive violence with legitimate defense, but we also have the responsibility to make creative nonviolence a key element of the good news we announce in our daily practice.

I am well aware that more traditional theology approves a "just war" and "tyrannicide." I defend that in Nicaragua. But I understand that, ideally, we cannot always remain at that stage, as if we had already attained our goal. No, that is no more than a concession in a world that is in the process of growth and maturation.

We must begin to work for nonviolence. I know that we must be patient and we must begin introducing nonviolent ideas and methods, developing audacious and new actions, raising consciousness in this area. I trust that, bit by bit, the new order will open the way and the older order will crumble. . . .

I have always defended these convictions and I think that the politics and diplomacy of a small country like Nicaragua should also incorporate these gestures. I want to make a step on this road; I feel that I must. . . .

I remember when I joined the FSLN's struggle. The *muchachos* knew quite well how I thought, how I felt about all these things. But they told me, and I understood them perfectly, that the tool of nonviolence was not developed here among us, that it was impossible to reap what we had never been able to sow. And they told me that when we had triumphed, then we could sow and reap and make Nicaragua a completely nonviolent country. Later, with my work as foreign minister, with the situation of war imposed on us, those concerns were frozen, waiting for a better moment in which to plant the land . . . . I believe it is now one of those moments and that I should act on these convictions.

*Q.* Nicaragua periodically goes through very serious crises, critical stages. . . . How would you evaluate the current moment; is there something about it that makes it more serious than others?

A. I was sick in June, feeling an old back pain sharply, and I had a lot of time to think about what we should do, about the gravity of the situation, about the destiny of our people. . . .

I see the situation like this: up until now we have successfully fought the U.S. government's aggressions in the military, diplomatic, economic, and legal trenches.

They have attempted to overthrow us with the counterrevolutionary war. And in the military trench we have resisted and are winning. This opinion is even shared by U.S. officials themselves. Gen. Paul Gorman, former head of the Southern Command in Panama, has stated that the CIA mercenaries cannot overthrow the Sandinista government, that they have no possibility of winning the war in the short-, medium-, or long-term. So their only alternative is the decision to use U.S. troops. . . .

We have also held out in the economic trench. And they have not been able to defeat us. They have tried to isolate us from Western markets and imports, but have not been able to. Nicaragua is not isolated from any country in the world, from any market. They can't do it.

With the war they have tried to ruin our production but, in spite of it all, we are making it; our economy, even with the war, is more stable than that of the rest of Central America. All these countries are going through serious economic crises today, and we are too, but ours is by no means the worst, and with the solidarity of so many countries in the world we can avoid greater deterioration.

In the judicial trench, I'm 100 percent sure that we are going to win our case in the International Court of Justice at The Hague. I have no doubt about it. This case, which will go down in history as the most important case seen by that Court, will show illegal U.S. behavior as it is, and that will be a great triumph for the revolution.

When one analyzes the entire situation like this — and I believe it is the correct analysis — when one sees how we are winning on all fronts, one deduces that President Reagan should have already desisted in his aggression, should have changed his policy, should have decided to resign himself to living with us. He hasn't done that. There's no sign that he is willing to do that. He has mortgaged his political prestige on the aggression against Nicaragua. All that, all the work of these years, shows me that his determination is to destroy us and that the decision to invade has already been made. . . .

They have wanted to isolate us from Western Europe and Latin America, to force us into

an alignment with the socialist nations and other countries politically stigmatized by the U.S. because they are not vulnerable to its pressures. It is true that, by placing great pressures on its allies, the United States has been able to erode to a certain degree international sympathy for our process, but it hasn't been able to achieve what it was after, that is, to isolate us.

In these times, the embargo was something like a "blessing in disguise," because with it we won a great deal of solidarity in Europe. Recently, during the tour with Daniel Ortega, we were able to verify the widespread rejection of Reagan's policy in Europe and the will to maintain relations with us. In the diplomatic trench, the Reagan administration is being defeated.

*Q. According to some people, there has been so much talk of invasion already that it has become one of the best dramatic resources Nicaragua has to hide its political weaknesses. Is that true? Is the invasion a real possibility, a probability to be dealt with. . . .?*

A. We would like to be mistaken; we are not speaking of a fantasy, but of reality. The decision to invade us has been made. And after all these years of military preparation, propaganda, and political pressures, the Reagan administration only needs two things to be able to launch the invasion. It needs to create propitious conditions within the United States, and it needs to fabricate the detonating pretext as a justification.

The pretext can be created easily, especially in Costa Rica where the militarization process and complete tolerance of the counterrevolution accentuates the seriousness of the situation. Precisely because of this, we have insisted on the need to neutralize the shared border area with Costa Rica. And this is why we have said that, even if the Costa Rican government does not accept the proposal, we are willing to unilaterally demilitarize our border area. We hope this initiative makes clear our will for peace. It is obvious that the United States cannot accept this proposal, because it needs precisely that zone to create the detonating pretext. This situation is relatively new, and I feel it is very serious.

If not in Costa Rica, the United States can seek to create the conditions elsewhere, in a different way. Reagan has several pretexts up his sleeve. Congress has even outlined some possible situations that would facilitate the launching of an invasion.

But what seems most crucial to me at this moment, what moves me to decide on the fast, is another factor. Reagan needs to create internal conditions in the United States to be able to invade, and it is clear that he has advanced a great deal in this task. He was able to manipulate the Congress, and make it bend to his desires. But he has not yet been able to convince U.S. public opinion. The more he talks, the less he convinces. And it is because the United States has tried to play three roles at the same time: accuser, judge, and executioner. The

President hasn't been able to persuade his nation, he hasn't been able to do it. There is a gap, and we must make it wider.

The people of the United States are in that gap. The U.S. people are those who can and must hold Reagan back. And among the U.S. people, the most effective actions to obtain this are those carried out with bravery, patience, and perseverance by the thousands of women and men who have "pledged to resist" the aggressiveness of U.S. leaders; to "resist" with nonviolent actions the policy of violence and terrorism. Their numbers must multiply, they must increase their resistance, they must widen the gap of resistance.

The attainment of peace depends, to a large degree, on those nonviolent methods and the conviction that makes them possible. It was reflecting on all that, on the great seriousness of this moment in which it would seem we have tried all the different alternatives, that I realized we cannot wait.

Now is the time to be more creative and audacious, to hold back the U.S. government and make it impossible for them to continue the war of aggression and to finally force the decision to launch an invasion. Thus, I thought of seeking new complementary methods, of occupying new trenches. . . .

*Q. Abandoning the military trenches. . . .? Do you mean going on to another form of struggle, the unarmed struggle. . . .?*

A. No, I think we have to keep struggling and strengthening ourselves in the four trenches I mentioned before. We cannot abandon any one of them. Rather, now is the time to occupy a fifth trench in this struggle, the "theological trench." Those of us who are Christians, believers, must also occupy this new trench to overcome Reagan.

He has been employing this method and increasingly uses "religious" arguments, "theological" justifications to try to sway U.S. public opinion. And because he has failed in all the other trenches, the way he presents the conflict will become more extreme: he, the United States, and American civilization are "good." In Nicaragua is "the bad," the terrorism that must be completely destroyed.

The argument, as can be seen, follows a tremendously simplistic line of thinking; because of that it is quite worrisome, as among some people it can be successful and convincing. Reagan has tried to appropriate the struggles dear to the right-wing religious community in the U.S., his speeches always include religious allusions. He is not a Catholic, and yet is always referring to the Pope. . . .

I believe that faced with all this manipulation of religious sentiments, our bishops are the ones who should take on the largest responsibility, denouncing the falsehood of these arguments . . . but they have not wanted to do that. On the contrary — with silence or with words — some of them have provided Reagan with more arguments for his "theological war" against Nicaragua.

And thus, in every international forum, we

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must listen to allusions to phrases of Archbishop Obando and Bishop Vega, used by U.S. representatives to justify their country's aggressions. . . . I know this reality very well, and it causes me great suffering. It hurts me to see how hard this is for so many Christians in Nicaragua, especially young people.

The theological trench is there, and we must occupy it. But not to make one, two, or many statements of condemnation. . . . No. The world is flooded with documents. What's needed are actions. We must do things! Thus, I have thought that it is our task, as Christians, to carry out nonviolent actions that express in a living way what a piece of paper cannot express.

Thinking about all this, consulting with my brothers, talking with Daniel [Ortega] about the gravity of the situation, I have seen clearly before God that as a foreign minister and priest I should do this before anyone, and do it now. That is why I decided to fast.

*Q. And why that particular action, which is not exactly a hunger strike asking for a specific*

*demand? What do you hope to obtain through a fast? What effectiveness could an action like that have?*

A. I think about the prophets, who fasted at times of serious national crisis in Israel. In sackcloth and ashes, fasting, they expressed their clamor before God so that He would do justice, and represented their people. Thus, with dramatic gestures, they hoped to point out their condemnations to secular leaders. . . . I believe that we have reached a point, in this unequal war we endure, in which we must also express with dramatic testimonies, with non-violent actions, what is going on here. These actions underline our words.

I hope, with this fast, to underline all the diplomatic efforts Nicaragua has made in favor of peace, life, and dialogue. I also want to denounce President Reagan's terrorist policy against our people. I want, above all, to ask the men and women of good will in the United States, in our Latin America, and throughout the world, to become conscious that all of us are at stake in this unequal war, so they will act, so they do something.

I want to fast because it is something hard for me. I know there is sacrifice and risk involved in what I am going to do. I hope to place my fast and my prayers before God so He hears us, so the world hears us. I want to unite prayer to suffering, to the cross, in a nonviolent testimony. What I will suffer will be nothing in comparison with what our people are suffering in this war.

In my fast I will remember the mothers who have lost their sons in this aggression, and that will give me strength. From this trench, I will accompany all our combatants, who with so much effort and sacrifice risk their lives to defend the homeland and the lives of all of us. With my prayers I want to be with them. Together, we must stop Reagan.

How many efforts have we made in these years and nothing seems to be enough. . . . What else can we do? Because of all of this, I decided to fast, so that in the United States and the world something like a religious insurrection is unleashed, in which many believers occupy the trenches and we can hold back the invasion, so that we can win peace and live. □

## DOCUMENTS

# Vargas Llosa's 'Historia de Mayta'

Fourth International leader reviews new novel about Peruvian revolutionist

By Daniel Bensaïd

[The following review appeared in the March-April issue of *Inprecor: Selección Para el Cono Sur* (Selection for the Southern Cone), a bimonthly magazine published in Montevideo, Uruguay. Bensaïd is a leader of the Fourth International and of its French section, the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR).

[The translation from the Spanish is by *Intercontinental Press*. Quotations from Mario Vargas Llosa's book and *Le Monde* were translated from the original.]

\* \* \*



MARIO VARGAS LLOSA

*Historia de Mayta* is the story of a shattered dream, of the impossible or forbidden passage from fiction to reality. Its central thread is an investigation — a “quest” Vargas Llosa told *Le Monde* (Nov. 16, 1984) — to reconstruct the story of Mayta, a Trotskyist, homosexual, and guerrilla of the first period,<sup>1</sup> through the fragmentary and contradictory recollections of those who knew him.

In this way, little by little, a jigsaw puzzle of the past comes together, silhouetted against the contemporary backdrop of an “apocalyptic

Peru” that is totally falling apart, headed for a new “war of the end of the world,” in which ideologies and blocs confront one another through shadows and puppets, culminating in brutal, meaningless, endless violence.

In “its absurdity and tragedy,” the sad and insignificant history of Mayta therefore appears, by contrast, as “a premonition,” coming as it did before the victory of Castro and the focquista passion of the 1960s. In Vargas Llosa's words, it is “an x-ray of the Peruvian misfortune.”

The novelist's investigation takes up Mayta at a crossroads in his life, where doubt and faith, enthusiasm and disillusionment, relentlessly confront each other. The narrator

works a wrenching process that flows from the crisis of the militant to the crisis of his cause, from the revolutionary to the revolution. By its nature this process involves a choice, a taking of sides. It turns the revolution into a subjective fiction. From the start it downplays the revolution's social and historic necessity.

From fragmented remembrances, the personality of Mayta emerges bit by bit as an intransigent moralist (who at the age 15 carried out an individual and private kind of hunger strike in solidarity with the poor), a dissident by vocation (who broke with the church, then with the Communist Party, and finally with his small Trotskyist group to retreat into his irreducible solitariness.)

He is an “ascetic,” a “suicidal” character who refuses to “give in to feelings,” which in his own words means to “soften,” to “bend,” to “make these small concessions that undermine morale.” The very choice of the term is unusual, to “give in to feelings” seems misplaced: is Mayta frustrated, a perverse monk? Everything suggests that.

Vargas Llosa concentrates on Mayta's “self-destructive tendency,” his tendency toward “heresy, toward organic rebellion,” as someone for whom “dissenting” is almost second nature. Vargas seems fascinated by a type of pathology of rebellion. He does not see any need to seriously question the norm because he is dazed by a search for political purity that leads to unreality, to an ultimate level of dissidence, whose source is “more emotional or

1. *Historia de Mayta*, by Mario Vargas Llosa, Barcelona, 1984, 346 pp. The novel tells the story of Alejandro Mayta Avendaño, a member of the Revolutionary Workers Party [POR(T)] who organized an abortive uprising in 1958 in the Andean town of Juaja, Peru. — IP

ethical than ideological."

The radical imperative of the absolute shatters on the trivial, ultra-mundane reality of the real revolution: "a broad patience, an infinite routine, something terribly sordid, with a thousand and one examples of selfishness, a thousand and one villainies, a thousand and one...."

By attempting to force the course of historic reality, vision and the imagined history degenerate into totalitarianism. However, the tragedy of Mayta is that he is not a blind fanatic, but rather an already partially lucid intransigent as shown by his formulas, which parallel those of Vallejos' sister, the nun, who is his companion in arms: "Who told you that faith is incompatible with doubts?" or "We lost the false illusions, but not the faith."

Thus Vargas Llosa again makes the facile analogy between religious faith and political faith, without asking himself about the possible differences between the two. In the final analysis, revolutionary commitment does not take as its starting point any guarantee of a divine character, nor any scientific-type certainty in the future. This itself leaves the individual with full responsibility for his choices and acts: the militant decides his life as a whole on the basis of a reasoned wager and some probabilities. Based on these, he places absolute energy at the service of what are necessarily relative certainties. If you can use the word "faith," this rational faith, which contains neither paradise nor purgatory, has nothing to do with mystical grace.

The "weariness" that Vargas Llosa discovers in an old photo of Mayta is probably the product of a long overhaul over this narrow path. And yet, on this exhausted face is still inscribed this "secret integrity" that causes him "to react; ... against any injustice" and this "righteous conviction that the only unpostpon-

able, the most urgent, task was to change the world."

#### The confusion of values

Only in the last chapter does Vargas Llosa reveal the last word of the enigma that has run through the whole novel: what is it that was able to grab hold of Mayta's passion, destroy him and reduce him to a ghostly street seller of ice cream? The author maintains that it was not the failure of his short-lived epic nor even the unjustified years of prison. It was the discovery that the revolutionary actions to which he devoted himself to cross the dangerous bridge leading from fiction to reality had lost their political substance and were "objectively" reduced to common crimes.

And Vargas Llosa delivers his message to us: his rejection of subversive violence and of the theories that imprison reality or forcibly mutilate it. The sole solution that Vargas accepts lies in the path of reforms: "It is difficult to admit that the solution might be gradual, that mediocrity is preferable, in terms of reforms, to an absolute perfection that does not exist." And by contrast, Vargas asks himself whether Mayta's "minuscule insurrection is not the start of all those ideologies that present violence as the solution for Latin America" (*Le Monde*, Nov. 16, 1984). Behind Mayta are not only Marx, Lenin, or Trotsky, but also Guevara, Fonseca, and so many others who are repudiated as promoters of totalitarianism.

Perhaps disenchanted militants of the post-Franco period in Spain might allow themselves to be seduced by the evocation of the alienation of the militant through the case of Mayta. The same thing might happen when the book is published in France.

However, you cannot separate the pieces of Vargas Llosa's reasoning: it is a consistent reasoning that appears in *The War of the End of*

*the World*. Paradoxically, on the pretext of establishing a realistic policy against a violence that has degenerated to the point of madness, Vargas Llosa's opposition to the reality of ideologies forces him to invent a built-to-order reality that is as imaginary as it is fleeting: democratic institutionalization in Latin America. Since this path is choked off by the crisis, the growing imperialist domination, the daily misery, his counterposition of the reasonable "mediocrity" of reforms to the impossible revolutionary perfection is illusory. To cling to this illusion leads in practice to establishing a right-wing policy.

#### The literary failure

In contrast to Vargas Llosa's previous novels, by its structure and its conclusion *Historia de Mayta* explicitly assumes a political and esthetic manifesto, which is perfectly summarized in the interview in *Le Monde*: "At the same time, it is a novel about fiction: fiction in literature, fiction in politics. Positive fiction and negative fiction. Positive fiction is literary fiction, one that recognizes itself as such, that invents, that surpasses reality and creates a different reality that consoles you. Negative fiction is fiction that does not recognize itself as such, that claims to be the truth, the rational description of reality."

But this novel itself illustrates the failure of the attempt. Whatever might be its interest, it is a poor novel, Vargas Llosa stumbles over a literary endeavor that has no known solution: to bring the modern revolutionary militant into literature.

In their mythical abstraction, the characters of Antonio Conselheiro and his cangaço chiefs took on a powerful reality in *The War of the End of the World*. Each in his way appeared with epic presence. By contrast, Mayta remains a vague, unintegrated silhouette: we

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can feel affected by one or another of his features, have a political dialogue with him, feel fondness, but Mayta does not exist. He fades along with the impressions he has left in weak or ill-intentioned remembrances.

There is a deep-seated reason for this narrative failure. Since its classical epoch in the 19th century, the novelistic drama has dealt with a subject who is divided between public man and private man, a division rooted in the deepest part of his being, and potentially neuroticized in his relation with collectivity. But the authentic revolutionary militant, through a commitment that unifies theory and practice, reestablishes a deep relationship between the individual and the historic totality in motion and tends to overcome this disconnection. Of course, this does not end contradictions, but they are different from the ones that characterize the novelistic drama: their historic reality always exceeds, overflows, their literary equivalent and renders it ridiculous.

Under the pen of the narrator only an empty shell or a caricature appears: the militant, his existential density, does not belong to the same world as the narrator and resists being possessed by the novel.

The Revolution belongs to drama, or to comedy, but certainly not to the novelistic genre. It would be worthwhile to reflect on why the great revolutions of this century have not had worthy narrative expression. The Stalinist novels are moralizing fables. Those novels worthy of the name that do deal with the theme of revolution have always done so through repentant, disenchanted, or marginal militants. It would be a bit simple to explain the phenomenon by arguing that the militant who is not in crisis and has not abandoned the struggle belongs to an inhumane, mechanical universe, outside any possible esthetic creation.

Because, on the contrary, the relationship of the militant to others and to the collectivity takes place through forms that do not completely correspond to those of classical psychology, with which the novel maintains a profound connection.<sup>2</sup>

#### History rebels

Mayta, the militant, is no exception to this rule. Even when he breaks with the party or the group, he refuses to bow his head, he firmly rejects sinking into "his story." In the final analysis, this stubborn ethereal quality gives him a grandeur, independent of the author's will. Sensing that Mayta's personality is slipping through the lines and is escaping from him, Vargas Llosa forces his features in order to better confine him and, doing this, inevitably falls into caricature. For example, why

2. At least until the great Proustian revolution. Since then there have been some metaphysical novels (Lowry), novels that express the conflicts of particular social categories (the female novel of V. Woolf, D. Lessing, or M. Duras), or of a baroque variant of particular societies (Márquez, Carpentier, or there is even a novel of dissidence (Solzhenitsyn). But in it we do not find the classical novelistic subject.

make his hero a homosexual? Mayta could perfectly well have been a Trotskyist, guerrilla, and homosexual, but he wasn't. Then why add this feature? "To accentuate his marginality," the author tells us, "his condition as a man full of contradictions." If this is the reason, he could have also made him a Jew or Black.

Novelistic realism means "to lie with understanding of cause," Vargas Llosa repeats various times, to the point of thereby establishing a rule of his esthetic. This would be the only way to write stories on the basis of histories. This distance between stories and histories, this subtle variation of just two letters, this necessary lie, is however the sign of an impossible project, which ends in simple sleight of hand. Fiction falsifies history, claiming to grasp its strength of reality and conviction.<sup>3</sup> And as would be expected, history rebels: Mayta escapes from his author, completely dominating him in human and moral terms (at least the Mayta that you can make out beyond the book, who would be the subject of a magnificent biography, but not a novel written by a literati absolutely incapable of understanding him).

In one part of the novel, this pale reflection of Mayta says: "I want to be what I am. I am a

3. The story of Mayta is also full of allusions to the contemporary history of Latin America, from the death of Che to the origins of "Sendero Luminoso."

revolutionary, with flat feet. I am also a homo. . . . For this there needs to be a revolution. . . . a *different* revolution. Not one that is half-way, but the authentic, integral revolution . . . where no one for any reason feels ashamed to be what he is." Words, words . . . a speech from a meeting, dead phrases fallen from Mayta's tree. Also the language totally escapes concrete reality and becomes devoid of substance.

Thus the Mayta trapped in Vargas Llosa's web is only a pale copy, a type of cardboard figure. And the author bestows tender commiseration upon this cardboard figure, the indulgence of an adult toward a child, as a studied homage to a warehouse of lost causes. However, Mayta does not say his last word. First of all, what is the value of certain "won" causes? And who gets the final say on whether a cause is "won" or lost? Who is the judge and what is his law?

Vargas Llosa, with his sweeping rejection of what he calls "political fiction" — which he classifies negatively, accepting only literary fiction — in fact capitulates to reality as it is. On principle he rejects the enormous efforts of consciousness and imagination that make up great social transformations, the creative utopias of the revolutions that, forging their own road, carve out a history without any predestination. □

## 10 AND 20 YEARS AGO



August 4, 1975

Some Vietnamese refugees have discovered that life in the Land of the Big PX [U.S. military store] isn't all it was cracked up to be and have demanded a ticket home. Many who are awaiting repatriation in the refugee camps are getting very impatient at Washington's stalling.

"We want to leave as soon as possible," one refugee said. "We are depressed, and this is like prison . . . a big open jail."

The Pentagon had no second thoughts when it whisked thousands of Vietnamese out of their country in a hasty retreat — often snatching up in its net people who had no wish to flee, along with children who had little say in the matter.

Now, however, when thousands want to return, the red tape miraculously appears. Refugees have to undergo a grilling, fill out the answers to twenty-nine questions, and wait on Washington's good graces.

A group of 164 refugees at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, staged a demonstration in an attempt to speed up their return. Washington responded by flying them at least part of the way, to Camp Pendleton in California.

"We wait a long, long time already, almost two months," said Le Minh Tan, a former Saigon fire inspector who was elected leader of

the group.

"I am not a troublemaker," he said, "but we want to go back as soon as possible. If for any reason they try to keep us in the United States, we might have a demonstration after this month."

## WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*)

August 6, 1965

The troops sent out by the Belaunde government [of Peru] to try to put down the guerrilla fighters in the Andes were given orders "not to give any quarter and not to take prisoners." According to the press, a government spokesman said that the aim was to end "once and for all the extremist subversion" and that no live "martyrs" were wanted.

This savage attitude has given rise to fresh fears for the life of Hugo Blanco, Peru's best-known peasant leader who has been held without trial for more than two years in the jail at Arequipa in the southern part of the country.

He is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of War which announced that it would take no prisoners in the current battles. It is possible that the officials of this ministry will now decide to give Hugo Blanco a drumhead court-martial to provide a "legal precedent" for summary executions of prisoners captured in the current struggle in the Andes.

# International Youth Camp held

*Young fighters from 22 countries discuss revolutionary politics*

**By Ken Collins and Ellen Haywood**

AGEN — Some 800 youth from 22 countries exchanged political experiences and rallied against imperialism at the second International Youth Camp, held July 21–27 here in southern France. The camp was organized by European youth organizations in solidarity with the Fourth International.

A similar youth camp last year in West Germany drew 600 participants.

This year's camp was hosted by the Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR). It was held at a large campground owned by one of the major French union federations, the General Confederation of Labor (CGT).

The French JCR delegation was the largest, with over 200 youth at the camp. It included a number of Arab, African, and Asian immigrant youth.

The JCR is helping to lead a broad campaign against racist attacks and deportations of immigrant workers in France. A major antiracist demonstration is scheduled to take place in Paris Dec. 1, 1985. The JCR is calling on anti-racist fighters throughout Europe to participate.

The JCR is also active in organizing solidarity for the Nicaraguan revolution, the liberation struggle in El Salvador, and the Kanak people of New Caledonia, a French colony in the South Pacific. A delegation of Kanak youth participated in the camp.

## Many countries represented

Large delegations of more than 50 youth came from Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Italy, Spain, and West Germany. There were also delegations of 20 or more from Austria, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. About a dozen youth attended from Sweden, nine from the United States, and smaller delegations from Canada, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, and Senegal.

Most of the camp participants were between 15 and 26 years old. Many were not yet members of revolutionary socialist youth organizations or had joined only recently. They came to learn about the activities and political perspectives of the youth organizations and the Fourth International.

The week's activities were filled with panels, workshops, films, discussions between delegations, and sales of literature. On two nights, delegations presented skits and songs. Camp participants also enjoyed swimming, games, excursions, dancing, and many hours of informal discussion.

Each day panels and workshops, which were translated into six languages, focused discussion on different political themes. These

themes included the fight against the production and deployment of nuclear weapons by the imperialist powers; the fight against racism and attacks on immigrant workers in Europe; and women's rights struggles, especially the fight for abortion and reproductive rights.

Other central topics were the capitalist destruction of the environment including the Bhopal, India, disaster and the imperialist domination of colonial and semicolonial countries including the massive foreign debt imposed by imperialist banks.

## Anti-apartheid workshop

A large workshop on the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa was led by Claude Gabriel of the Revolutionary Communist League, the French section of the Fourth International. There was considerable interest in the anti-apartheid movement in the United States and the October 11 Anti-Apartheid Protest Day that has been set in that country.

On the final day the panels and workshops took up the gains of the Nicaraguan and Cuban revolutions and the imperialist offensive against them. Camp participants discussed such solidarity activities as sending internationalist brigades to Nicaragua and organizing tours of Sandinista and Salvadoran youth.

Two spirited rallies were held during the week. The first was devoted to the struggles of workers against the austerity drive of the capitalist rulers of Europe. It featured a young participant in last year's miners' strike in Britain as well as Danish, Belgian, and other trade unionists.

The second rally, which wound up the camp, expressed the determination of the participants to continue, and deepen, solidarity with the Central American revolutions and anti-imperialist struggles around the world.

## 'We are all Sandinistas'

Speakers from the Salvadoran Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front–Revolutionary Democratic Front (FMLN-FDR), the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS), Irish Sinn Féin, and the United Secretariat of the Fourth International addressed the rally. Greetings read from the Nicaraguan Sandinista Youth (JS-19) were interrupted with sustained ovations and chants in various languages. The most popular chant was "Somos todos Sandinistas!" (We are all Sandinistas!)

Gayle, a national bureau member of the French JCR, called on youth to join the struggles against racism and for equal rights for immigrant workers in their own countries and to build the December 1 antiracist demonstration in Paris. Two other resolutions called on youth organizations to demand amnesty for the jailed and fired British miners and to fight for women's right to abortion and against sterilization abuse.

A meeting of the leadership of all the delegations on the last day assessed the camp as a big success in deepening collaboration and building revolutionary socialist youth organizations internationally. There was general agreement to hold another international youth camp in two years. □

## French police harass U.S. socialists

**By Candace Wagner**

AGEN — On their way to participate in the international youth camp, three members of the Young Socialist Alliance from the United States were detained by French border police.

Their baggage was searched, personal letters opened, and addresses of friends in France were copied. Books, pamphlets, and newspapers were confiscated on the grounds that they were "communist literature."

The YSA members were interrogated and harassed for a total of two and a half hours.

When youth camp organizers called to protest this attack on democratic rights and

demand release of the literature, the police changed their story. They claimed that the literature was not confiscated but was only being held pending a review by a commission in charge of imports, a review that could take as long as three weeks.

In a protest statement sent to the authorities and to major daily newspapers in France, camp organizers denounced this attack on democratic rights, calling it an arbitrary use of import laws, political harassment, and a violation of individual rights.

YSA National Secretary Peter Thierjung sent a message to the French government's minister of the interior as well as the border police protesting this "attempt to prevent young fighters from around the world from exchanging ideas and experiences."