

Anti-authoritarian Perspectives on
Latin America and the Caribbean

No. 2

No Middle Ground

Fall, 1983

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Chile Ten Years After

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No Middle Ground

**Anti-Authoritarian Perspectives on
Latin America and the Caribbean
No. 2 Fall, 1983**

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Libertarian Latin Ameri**

The graphics on pages 70, 56 and 30 have been reproduced from the libertarian soc magazine "Comunidad."

ERRATUM

The last line on page 57, left column, reads:

"Community party hacks and pelegos"

This line should have read:

"Communist Party hacks and pelegos"

After a commercial interruption, the revolution continues

Nation-wide protests indicate that the decade-long despotism of General Pinochet may soon come to an end. Pinochet came to power in 1973 with the support of Chile's business class, the multinational corporations and the U.S. State Department culminating several years of right-wing mobilizations. The coup was a response to the "Peaceful Road to Socialism" trumpeted by the parties of the Popular Unity Coalition as well as to the more direct actions by workers and *campesinos*, such as land and factory takeovers. Such actions posed an alternative that threatened capitalist rule and were often opposed by the Popular Unity parties as well. When the mass movement was finally faced with the immediate threat of violence from the armed bodies

of the Chilean state, 300,000 people rallied to demand that Allende's Popular Unity government distribute arms — a demand that the government rejected. (The character of the popular movement in Chile in the early 1970s is analyzed in the pamphlet *Strange Defeat*, which we are reprinting in this issue of *No Middle Ground*.)

Pinochet's economic policies followed closely the "monetarist" philosophy of Milton Friedman, which included privatizing economic sectors formerly in the state domain, lowering subsidies and tariffs, and further reliance on the international "free market." This policy worked for awhile, as the Gross National Product grew by over 7% each year in the late '70s.

In the last two years the economic situa-

No Middle Ground

From the introduction to the first issue:

No Middle Ground takes its name from the situation we believe has been developing in Latin America and the Caribbean: that the models of social change subsidized by the Western and Eastern powers have failed, and that there is no viable people's alternative except that of a self-managed revolution — a revolution in which genuinely democratic organizations, not reconstituted authoritarian states, emerge as the centers of social power. In our view, there is no middle ground between oppression and freedom, no rationale for revolt if not for genuine liberation.

No Middle Ground is a joint project of the following two groups:

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tion has turned upside down: last year Chile's unemployment doubled, the GNP fell by 13%, the National Bank has had to assume the debt of several major firms, the foreign debt has risen to \$18 billion. Chile's fiscal crisis, and the anti-working class policies of the fascist rulers, have brought an end to universal education and social security. (The regime's policies in these areas are discussed in the article "Dictatorship on shaky ground," by the Grupo Pedro Nolasco Arratia, in this issue.)

Of course, Chile is not the only country suffering from the current state of world capitalism. The world recession has led to a copper glut — reducing Chile's revenue. As markets contract, nations and companies find it harder to pay their debts.

The Chilean government's police state policies haven't changed over the course of the last several years. The leftist and Catholic opposition to these practices have, until recently, not been sufficient to mount nationwide strikes or protests. The impossibility of movement-building under the eyes of Pinochet's National Intelligence force, his ability to "disappear" dissidents or torture them, have prevented the opposition from mounting a serious threat to the regime for almost ten years.

I am not an economic determinist, but the recent history of Chile points to the world depression as the factor that has provoked the recent protests and unified the currents of opposition.

One pole of opposition is the neighborhood command centers, local groups operating out of meeting places provided by the church. These are centers of communication and medical relief during the protests, especially in the shantytowns. They operate independently of the political party system and include those who advocate direct action as well as those seeking negotiations.

Chile's parties have been prominent actors in the current protests. The Christian Democrats have moved from their ten-year stand of "loyal opposition" to one of demanding Pinochet's resignation in speeches and at rallies, though they have been willing to meet with the government to negotiate for concessions that will help them gain a first foot in the door of the

"soon to be opened" national assembly. Even some elements of the military are reported to lean towards a Christian Democratic solution to current discontents.

The Christian Democrats have been the prominent force in the Democratic Alliance — a coalition of conservative and liberal parties, but not including the Communists and major fragments of the Socialist Party. The Democratic Alliance is given credit in the international press for organizing the protests of the last several months. One problem with this explanation is that in September many parts of Santiago were barricaded by burning tires. Marches, meetings and sabotage occurred for more than four days running. Santiago University was also held for three days by students. (See the "Chronology of recent events" for a description of the protest events of the last several months.)

The leftist advocates of a guerrilla strategy, such as the MIR, have very little following though they claim credit for attacks on employment offices and power facilities.

Anarchists or libertarian socialists have also been involved in recent organizing; the article "Re-emergence of Anarchism," describes the stance taken by a recently-formed libertarian association, Socialist Ideas and Action (PAS).

At this point, most of the population appears to support the strategy of nationwide civil disobedience and hopes that a social transition to a freer society will take place with a minimum of additional deaths.

Whether a "non"-civil war develops very likely depends on the support Pinochet can muster from foreign capitalist institutions — financial and military. The French have been supplying weapons to Pinochet's "forces of order," and this year the U.S. lifted its ban on military assistance to Chile — a ban put into place in 1978 as part of the Carter administration's token campaign against human rights abuses.

— Neil Marshall

Chronology of recent events

Jan. 15 The Chilean government took control of the nation's largest banks at the behest of the International Monetary Fund's austerity program. Chile is scheduled to pay \$3.5 billion dollars on its loans this year.

Mar. 26 Riots and demonstrations occurred in four cities. The military was called out against the population for the first time since 1974.

May 8 A general strike and plant occupation by the National Union Command, a confederation of Chile's largest unions, was called off because Pinochet sent tanks and troops to three of the largest mines and threatened to "invade" any occupied facilities. Instead, the Union Command sponsored the first national day of protest on May 11th.

May 11 70% of the nation's students boycotted classes. Motorists blocked business-related and military traffic by packing the streets with automobiles. Marches and rallies of several thousands occurred. Demonstrations by lawyers led to beatings in the national courthouse.

May 14 Soldiers seized about 2000 people in predawn raids on two areas that had shown resistance on May 11th. The detained were held in soccer stadiums. About 200 union militants were arrested, and striking miners were fired.

June 10 At least 550 miners were fired, 350 arrested and three killed in strike actions at the El Salvador copper mine, Chile's third largest. The El Salvador and Chuquicamata copper mines were put under direct military occupation.

June 11 Hundreds of thousands march in the second national day of protest. Shantytowns in major cities throughout Chile were barricaded with piles of burning tires and trash. Clashes between rock- and glass-

throwing protesters and tear gas-, water canon- and rifle-firing "forces of order" led to 1300 arrests, many injuries and several deaths. Students held campuses, particularly the University of Santiago for three days. When they marched off campus, the police attacked with clubs and drove them back. To protest human rights violations, the Pinochet's constitution was ignominiously burned outside the supreme court before hundreds of demonstrators. Several city buses were destroyed by fire. Bombs exploded at seven electric power facilities.

June 20 Union leaders and the Communist Party disavow the violence which they claim is due to "splinter groups" outside their control.

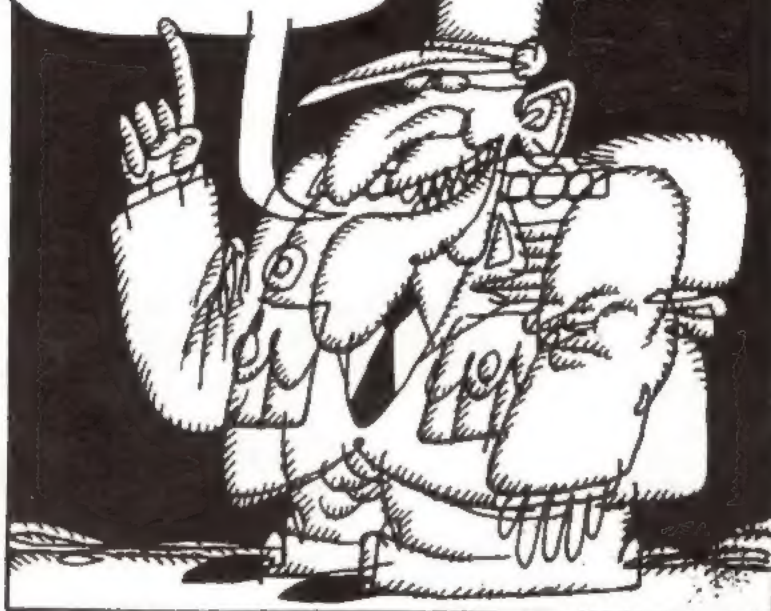
July 12 The junta arrest Gabriel Valdez, and other leaders of the Democratic Alliance—a coalition dominated by the Christian Democrats—for organizing the third national day of protest. Lawyers throw small change at government prosecutors in the national courthouse, protesting detention and arrest proceedings.

Aug. 12 As street demonstrations continued for the third straight day, the commander of the Air Force—Fernando Matthei, a member of the junta—publically questioned the government's account of the violence and informed Pinochet that the air force would not participate in further repression. In late August, Brigadier General Carol Urzúa Ibañez—the military governor of Santiago—is assassinated.

Sept. 3 Rodomiro Tomic—a Christian Democratic leader—said that if Pinochet would reach minimal agreement with the people, the protests would be unnecessary.

Sept. 8 6000 people formed the funeral procession for Miguel Ángel Zavala, a bus driver killed at a demonstration. 30,000 people lined the streets. The march, led by clergy and members of the Chilean Human Rights

**FELIZMENTE QUE NUESTRO
EJERCITO ES NACIONALISTA,
POR ESO SOLO
INVADIMOS
NUESTRO
PROPIO PAIS**



graphic: Consider

"Fortunately our army is nationalist; for that reason we only invade our own country."

Commission, was stormed by police after it had entered the municipal cemetery. Gabriel Valdez announced that any further dialogue with the junta was inconceivable.

Sept. 13 The fourth straight day of protests included maintaining the barricades of burning tires to block military/police related traffic, marching, pot-banging, throwing rocks at cops, and assembling, through

most of the night. Approximately 36,000 people were involved in La Leguna along, one Santiago shantytown.

Oct. 5 A protest of 10,000 students and miners in Santiago, called to support out-of-work miners, burned an effigy of Pinochet. Riot police fired buckshot and tear gas when the crowd tried to march on the national palace with the slogan "Enough of crime and torture."

— N.M.

Dictatorship on shaky ground

As an entirely new experimental model, Chile is now suffering the consequences of economic policies which have led to the destruction of the country's productive potential. In its aim of putting all production in the hands of private capital, the dictatorship has forgotten that industrialization in Chile has always been promoted by the State, which has historically provided technical and economic support to the most productive enterprises.

Having destroyed the social movement by outlawing the CUT and im-

prisoning or disappearing its leaders, the dictatorship imposed by decree a new work code that dissolved the unions. Moreover, the dictatorship has drawn up a new "constitution" with the intention of developing an entire socio-political system that destroys social security for Chilean workers.

Throughout the Chilean dictatorship, there exist certain elements permitting us to understand that the ideologues behind Pinochet possess a fragmented intelligence, thereby contributing to the atomization of Chilean society.



photo: UPI

The regime has skillfully imposed a reform of the educational structure. The Ministry of Education's functions have been relegated to the municipalities. Control of 5,156 scholastic establishments has passed to the municipal administrations.

In the municipalities, an infrastructure for providing medical aid to the poor was created. In keeping with the U.S. model, all social services were transferred to the private sector. The system of free medical aid is run by young doctors who are leading mouthpieces for Pinochet.

Employment agencies also exist in the municipalities. In each community, an infrastructure has been con-

didates of Pinochet's party. Consequently, the advance of the regime's power and of the capitalist system becomes more and more dangerous every day...

"Confronted with this new reality from which our people suffer, neither political parties nor traditional union structures have responded coherently or shown a capability of unifying Chileans to change their oppressive situation of domination."

The traditional opposition to the right includes the Christian Democrats, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and the remaining armed-struggle advocates of the

Maria B. says there has also been a development of so-called "lightning demonstrations." Extremely well-planned, fifty to a hundred people will suddenly gather for a five-minute demonstration during which they shout such slogans as "Free all political prisoners." These protesters emerge suddenly as though from the woodwork and just as quickly they will melt away at the first sign of the police.

structed that permits the regime and its apparatus to develop and control an entire complex of activities. These are: the Bureau of Women, the Bureau of Youth, the Bureau of Corporations, etc., all of which function at the community level. This typical proselytism of military regimes has functioned perfectly in Chile.

A new union organization has denounced this state of affairs in its documents: "The regime needs this community work to consolidate its power at the base; considering that after this 'transitional period,' a Parliament will be formed, along with political parties serving the regime. The young lackeys and official political activists who control the community work will be the future can-

MIR [Left Revolutionary Movement]...

But it is certain that the Pinochet regime does not fear the opposition of political parties as much as it fears rank-and-file movements, as was evident after the demonstration of May 11th.

In effect, repression is always exerted on the poorest sectors, the marginals, and the representatives of independent unions. Political parties are not serious rivals to Pinochet's dictatorship.

Note: This article was excerpted from an article by the Pedro Nolasco Arratia Group (a group of Chilean libertarian workers in exile) which appeared in Le Monde Libertaire, June 16, 1983.

10 Years After: The Re-emergence of Anarchism in Chile

Note: The following article about libertarian socialists/anarchists in Chile is translated from the Summer, 1983 issue of the German magazine Trafik.

It's encouraging to realize that the anarchist movement is reborn, even in Chile, where a U.S.-backed military coup and dictatorship had seemed to have completely obliterated it, along with everything else. Yet, in spite of the pitiless, on-going repression, accompanied by deep economic depression—for which the military authorities are, to a large extent, to blame—Chilean anarchists have begun to organize together.

In 1979, a new federation of various anarchist tendencies was founded. It goes by the name Socialist Ideas and Action (PAS). Here, long-time anarchist militants were joined by libertarian socialists who,

during the presidency of Allende (1970–73), had been independents in the *Unidad Popular* coalition and later members of the socialist party called MAPU. Immediately following the economic and military destruction of the Chilean revolution and reform government, the socialist movement completely collapsed and broke down into various factions. Some of these factions, having experienced the break-up of the *Unidad Popular* and their inability to organize effective resistance to the dictatorship in the years immediately following the coup, decided to unite with the PAS.

In July '82, at a national conference, held in Santiago, the PAS worked out a "Declaration of Principles" which clearly addressed libertarian themes. They declared their goal to be "the destruction of the capitalist State and the abolition of



photo: J. Polunbaum

capitalism's mass misery through the creation of a new social order based on the free federation of the people for mutual aid and co-operation in the production of social wealth, its collective distribution and egalitarian consumption, and its public control."

The PAS remained flexible as to strategies and tactics. They left it open how and where to intervene or propagandize. They also made clear that no individual who doesn't agree with an action decided to by a majority would be required to participate. In the section of their declaration entitled "International Ex-

periences of Revolutionary Unionism," the PAS proclaimed the necessity of a break "with the political bullshit of bourgeois democracy," as well as "with the crap of the traditional, bureaucratically-structured unionism." The PAS defines their own unionist strategy as "collective action; on-going, critical analysis of real social development; direct action, which requires each person to be a responsible activist in struggle; the continual oversight and immediate re-callability of all brothers and sisters who take on leading roles in elective bodies."

Given the existing conditions,

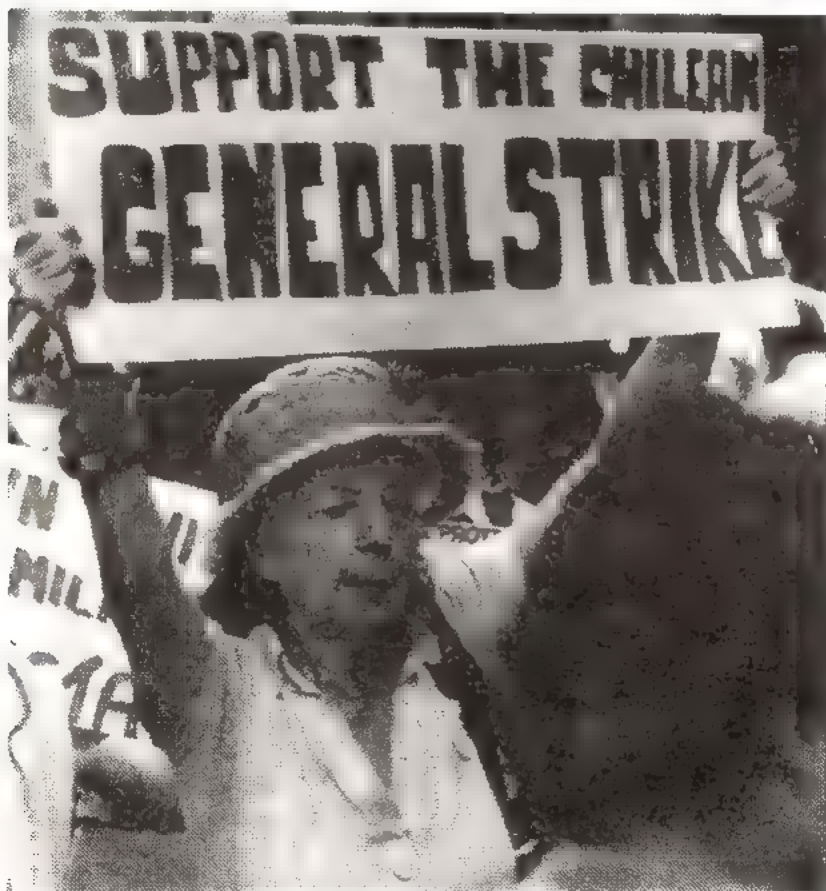


photo: David Vita

June 14th 1983: Protester outside Chilean consulate in New York.

Chilean anarchists are forced to carry out an underground struggle. And the requirements of this struggle have imposed on them the "choice" of a secure type of organization. Collective decision-making takes absolute precedence over spontaneous actions by individuals. None of the PAS militants can permit themselves the luxury of individual political initiatives, which may endanger the safety of the other members.

In a document worked out in Nov. '82, the PAS analysed the current situation of the Pinochet regime. They concluded that the junta has marched to a crossroads. They must either accept bourgeois democracy and a new capitalist social consensus or else heighten the potential for a new Chilean revolution by continuing on the road of intensified oppression and exploitation. Without pretending to have a crystal ball, the PAS militants feel that an attempt at

re-establishing bourgeois democracy is most likely. Even if this direction is taken by the junta and the bourgeoisie, it will not undermine the movement to destroy capitalism. The PAS feels that it may simply lead to a greater explosion, as the revolutionary movement re-emerges into the open, as the flame hits fresh air.

The PAS is decidedly opposed to all so-called "democratic" politicians, who would make deals with the junta while they ride on the backs of the people.

The PAS appeals for the further development of the autonomy of the people in their unions and neighborhood groups, in the struggle against the junta.

"No to Fascism! No to Phony Bourgeois Solutions! Strengthen the Popular Organizations! The people must organize themselves to fight for a socialist, revolutionary and free Chile!"

Supporting Groups

The following groups are part of the network of people supporting
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Strange Defeat

Editors' Note: *The following article was originally published by the Situationist group Pointblank! in October 1973.*

In the spectacular arena of current events recognized as "news," the funeral of social-democracy in Chile has been orchestrated as high drama by those who understand the rise and fall of governments most intuitively: *other specialists of power*. The last scenes in the Chilean script have been written in various political camps in accordance with the requirements of particular ideologies. Some have come to bury Allende, some to praise him. Still others claim an *ex post facto* knowledge of his errors. Whatever the sentiments expressed, these obituaries have been written long in advance. The organizers of "public opinion" can only react reflexively and with a characteristic distortion of the events themselves.

As the respective blocs of world opinion "choose sides," the Chilean tragedy is reproduced as *farce* on an international scale; the class struggles in Chile are dissimulated as a pseudo-conflict between rival ideologies. In the discussions of ideology nothing will be heard from those for whom the "socialism" of the Allende regime was supposedly intended: the Chilean workers and peasants. Their silence has been ensured not only by those who

machine-gunned them in their factories, fields, and houses, but by those who claimed (and continue to claim) to represent their "interests." In spite of a thousand misrepresentations, however, the forces that were involved in the "Chilean experiment" have not yet played themselves out. Their real content will be established only when the forms of their interpretation have been demystified.

Above all else, Chile has fascinated the so-called Left in every country. And in documenting the atrocities of the current junta, each party and sect attempts to conceal the stupidities of its previous analyses. From the bureaucrats-in-power in Moscow, Peking, and Havana to the bureaucrats-in-exile of the Trotskyist movements, a liturgical chorus of leftist pretenders offer their post-mortem assessments of Chile, with conclusions as predictable as their rhetoric. The differences between them are only ones of hierarchical nuance; they share a Leninist terminology which expresses 50 years of counter-revolution throughout the world.

The Stalinist parties of the West and the "socialist" states quite rightly view the defeat of Allende as *their defeat*: he was one of their own — a man of State. With the false logic which is an essential mechanism of their power, those who know



"The only power in Chile capable of giving justice to the people is not government A or government B. It is the organized people themselves."

— Chilean worker in an occupied factory

so much about State and (the defeat of) Revolution decry the overthrow of a constitutional, bourgeois regime. For their part, the "left" imposters of Trotskyism and Maoism can only lament the absence of a "vanguard party"—the *deus ex machina* of senile Bolshevism—in Chile. Those who have inherited the defeat of revolutionary Kronstadt and Shanghai know where-of they speak: the Leninist project requires the absolute imposition of a deformed "class consciousness" (the consciousness of a bureaucratic ruling class) upon those who in their designs are only "the masses."

The dimensions of the "Chilean Revolution" lie outside the constraints of any particular doctrine. While the "anti-imperialists" of the world denounce—from a safe distance—the all-too-convenient bogeyman of the CIA, the real reasons for the defeat of the Chilean

proletariat must be sought elsewhere. Allende the martyr was the same Allende who disarmed the workers' militias of Santiago and Valparaíso in the weeks before the coup and left them defenseless before the military whose officers were already in *his cabinet*. These actions cannot simply be explained as "class-collaboration" or as a "sell-out." The conditions for the strange defeat of the *Unidad Popular* were prepared long in advance. The social contradictions that emerged in the streets and fields of Chile during August and September were not simply divisions between "Left" and "Right" but involved a contradiction between the Chilean proletariat and the politicians of all parties, including those that posed as the most "revolutionary." In an "underdeveloped" country, a highly developed class struggle had arisen which threatened the posi-

tions of all those who wished to maintain underdevelopment, whether economically through continued imperialist domination, or politically through the retardation of an authentic proletarian power in Chile.

II

Everywhere, the expansion of capital creates its apparent opposite in the form of nationalist movements which seek to appropriate the means of production "on behalf" of the exploited and thereby appropriate social and political power *for themselves*. Imperialism's extraction of surplus has its political and social consequences, not only in enforced poverty of those who must become its workers, but in the secondary role allotted to the local bourgeoisie, which is incapable of establishing its complete hegemony over society. It is precisely this vacuum which the "national liberation" movements seek to occupy, thereby assuming the managerial role unfulfilled by the dependent bourgeoisie. This process has taken many forms—from the religious xenophobia of Khadafi to the bureaucratic religion of Mao—but in each instance, the marching orders of "anti-imperialism" are the same, and those who give them are in identical positions of command.

The imperialist distortion of the Chilean economy provided an opening for a popular movement which aimed at establishing a *national* capital base. However, Chile's relatively advanced economic status precluded the kind of bureaucratic development which has come to power by force of arms in other areas of the "Third World" (a term which has been used to conceal the

real class divisions in those countries). The fact that the "progressive" *Unidad Popular* was able to achieve an electoral victory as a reformist coalition was reflection of the peculiar social structure in Chile, which was in many respects similar to those in advanced capitalist countries. At the same time, capitalist industrialization created the conditions for the possible supersession of this bureaucratic alternative in the form of a rural and urban proletariat which emerged as the most important class and one with *revolutionary* aspirations. In Chile, both Christian and Social Democrats were to prove to be the opponents of any radical solution to existing problems.

Until the advent of the UP coalition, the contradictions on the Chilean Left between a radical base of workers and peasants and its so-called political "representatives" remained to a large extent *latent* antagonisms. The leftist parties were able to organize a popular movement solely on the basis of the foreign threat posed by American capital. The Communists and Socialists were able to sustain their image as *authentic* nationalists under Christian Democratic rule because Frei's "Chileanization" program (which included a policy of agrarian reform that Allende was later to consciously emulate) was explicitly connected to the American-sponsored "Alliance for Progress." The official Left was able to construct its own alliance within Chile in opposing, not *reformism* itself, but a reformism with external ties. Even given its moderate nature, the opposition program of the Chilean Left was only adopted after the militant strike activity of the 1960s—organized inde-



"Allende's greatest mistake was not giving us weapons. A lot of people, even women, would have fought."

— Chilean housewife

pendently of the parties—threatened the existence of the Frei regime.

The succeeding UP was to move into a space opened up by the radical actions of the Chilean workers and peasants; it imposed itself as an institutionalized representation of proletarian causes to the extent that it was able to *recuperate* them. In spite of the extremely radical nature

of many of the earlier strike actions (which included factory occupations and the workers' administration of several industrial plants, most notably at COOTRALACO), the practice of the Chilean proletariat lacked a corresponding theoretical or organizational expression, and this failure to affirm its autonomy left it open to the manipulations of the politicians. Despite this, the battle

between reform and revolution was far from having been decided.

III

The election of the freemason Allende, although it in no way meant that the workers and peasants had established their own power, nonetheless intensified the class struggle occurring throughout Chile. Contrary to the UP's assertions that the working class had won a major "victory," both the proletariat and its enemies were to continue their battle outside conventional parliamentary channels. Although Allende constantly assured the workers that they were both engaged in a "common struggle," he revealed the true nature of his socialism-by-decree at the beginning of his tenure when he signed the *Estatuto*, which formally guaranteed that he would faithfully respect the bourgeois constitution. Having come to power on the basis of a "radical" program, the UP was to come into conflict with a growing revolutionary current at its base. When the Chilean proletariat showed that it was prepared to take the slogans of the UP program *literally*—slogans that amounted only to empty rhetoric and unfulfilled promises on the part of the bureaucratic coalition—and put them into practice, the contradictions between the content and form of the Chilean revolution became apparent. The workers and peasants of Chile were beginning to speak and act for themselves.

For all his "Marxism," Allende was never more than an administrator of state intervention in a capitalist economy. Allende's *etatisme*—a form of state capitalism that has

accompanied the rise of all administrators of underdevelopment—was itself not more than a quantitative extension of Christian Democratic policies. In nationalizing the copper mines and other industrial sectors, Allende continued the centralization initiated under the control of the Chilean state apparatus—a centralization initiated by the Left's "arch-enemy" Frie. Allende, in fact, was *forced* into nationalizing certain concerns because they had been spontaneously occupied by their workers. In forestalling the workers' self-management of industry by defusing these occupations, Allende actively opposed the establishment of socialist relations of production. As a result of his actions, the Chilean workers only exchanged one set of bosses for another; the government bureaucracy, instead of Kennecott or Anaconda, directed their alienated labor. This change in appearances could not conceal the fact that Chilean capitalism was perpetuating itself. From the profits extracted by multinational corporations to the "five-year plans" of international Stalinism, the accumulation of capital is an accumulation always made *at the expense of the proletariat*.

That governments and social revolutions have nothing in common was demonstrated in rural areas as well. In contrast to the bureaucratic administration of "agrarian reform" which was inherited and continued by the Allende regime, the spontaneous armed seizures of large estates offered a revolutionary answer to the "land question." For all the efforts of the CORA (the central agrarian reform agency) to prevent these expropriations through the mediation of "peasant coopera-

tives" (*asentamientos*), the peasants' direct action went beyond such illusory forms of "participation." Many of the *fundo* takeovers were legitimized by the government only after pressure from the *campesinos* made it impossible to do otherwise. Recognizing that such actions called into question its own authority as well as that of the landowners, the UP never missed an opportunity to denounce "indiscriminate" expropriations and to call for a "slow-down."

The autonomous actions of the rural and urban proletariat formed the basis for the development of a movement significantly to the left of the Allende government. At the same time, this movement provided yet another occasion for a political representation to impose itself on the realities of the Chilean class struggle. This role was assumed by the Guevarist militants of the MIR [Left Revolutionary Movement] and its rural counterpart, the MCR, both of which succeeded in recuperating many of the radical achievements of the workers and peasants. The *Miristas* slogan of "armed struggle" and their obligatory refusal of electoral politics were merely *pro forma* gestures: shortly after the 1970 election, an elite corps of the ex-urban guerrillas of MIR became Allende's personally selected palace guard. The ties that bound the MIR-MCR to the UP went beyond purely tactical considerations — both had *common interests* to defend. Despite MIR's revolutionary posturing, it acted according to the UP's bureaucratic exigencies: whenever the government was in trouble, the adjutants of MIR would rally its militants around the UP banner. If the MIR failed to be the

"vanguard" of the Chilean proletariat, it was not because it wasn't enough of a vanguard, but because its strategy was resisted by those whom it tried to manipulate.

IV

Right-wing activity in Chile increased, not in response to any governmental decrees, but because of the direct threat posed by the independence of the proletariat. In the face of mounting economic difficulties, the UP could only talk of "rightist sabotage" and the obstinacy of a "workers' aristocracy." For all the impotent denunciations of the government, these "difficulties" were *social* problems that could only be solved in a radical way through the establishment of a revolutionary power in Chile. In spite of its claim to "defend the right of the workers," the Allende government proved to be an impotent bystander in the class struggle unfolding outside of formal political structures. It was the workers and peasants themselves who took the initiative against the reaction and in so doing created new and radical forms of social organization, forms which expressed a highly-developed class consciousness. After the bosses' strike in October 1972, the workers did not wait for the UP to intervene, but actively occupied the factories and started up production on their own, without state or trade union "assistance." *Cordones industriales*, which controlled and coordinated the distribution of products and organized armed defense against the employers, were formed in the factory complexes. Unlike the "popular assemblies" promised by the UP, which only existed on

paper, the *cordones* were set up by the workers themselves. In their structure and functioning, these committees—along with the rural *consejos*—were the first manifestations of a *councilist* tendency and as such constituted the most important contribution to the development of a revolutionary situation in Chile.

A similar situation existed in the neighborhoods, where the inefficient, government-controlled “supply boards” (JAPs) were bypassed in the proclamations of “self-governing neighborhoods” and the organization of *commandos comunales* by the residents. Despite their infiltration by the *fidelistas* of MIR, these armed expropriations of social space formed the point of departure for an authentic proletarian power. For the first time, people who had previously been excluded from participation in social life were able to make decisions concerning the most basic realities of their daily lives. The men, women, and youth of the *poblaciones* discovered that revolution was not a matter for the ballot

box; whatever the quarters were called—New Havana, Heroic Vietnam—what went on inside them had nothing to do with the alienated landscapes of their namesakes.

Although the achievements that were realized by popular initiative were considerable, a third force capable of posing a revolutionary alternative to the government and the reactionaries never fully emerged. The workers and peasants failed to extend their conquests to the point of replacing the Allende regime with their own power. Their supposed “ally,” the MIR, used its talk of opposing *burocratismo* with the “armed masses” as a mask for its own intrigues. In its Leninist scheme, the *cordones* were seen as “forms of struggle” that would prepare the way for future, less “restricted” organizational models, whose leadership would be supplied by the MIR, no doubt.

For all its concern over the right-wing plots that menaced its existence, the government restrained the workers from taking positive action



Workers' barricade in Constitucion, 1973

to resolve the class struggle in Chile. In so doing, the initiative passed from the workers' hands into the government's, and in allowing itself to be out-manuevered, the Chilean proletariat paved the way for its future defeat. In response to Allende's pleas after the abortive coup of June 29, the workers occupied additional factories, only to close ranks behind the forces that would disarm them a month later. These occupations remained defined by the UP and its intermediaries in the national trade union, the CUT, who kept the workers isolated from each other by barricading them inside the factories. In such a situation, the proletariat was powerless to carry on any independent struggle, and once the Weapons Act had been signed, its fate was sealed. Like the Spanish Republicans who denied arms to the anarchist militias on the Aragon front, Allende was not prepared to tolerate the existence of an armed proletarian force outside his own regime. All the conspiracies of the Right would not have lasted a day if the Chilean workers and peasants had been armed and had organized their own militias. Although the MIR protested against the entry of the military into the government, they, like their predecessors in Uruguay, the Tupamaros, only *talked* of arming the workers and had little to do with the resistance that took place. The workers' slogan, "A disarmed people is a defeated people" was to find its bitter truth in the slaughter of workers and peasants that followed the military coup.

Allende was overthrown, not because of his reforms, but because he was unable to control the revolutionary movement which spontaneously developed at the base of the

UP. The junta which installed itself in his position clearly perceived the threat of revolution and set about eliminating it with all the means at its disposal. It was no accident that the strongest resistance to the dictatorship occurred in those areas where the power of the workers had advanced the furthest. In the Sumar Textile Plant and in Concepcion, for instance, the junta was forced to liquidate this power by means of air strikes. As a result of Allende's policies, the military was able to have a free hand in finishing what it had begun under the UP government: Allende was as responsible as Pinochet for the mass murders of workers and peasants in Santiago, Valparaiso, Antofagasta and the provinces. Perhaps the most revealing of all the ironies inherent in the UP's downfall is that while many of Allende's supporters did not survive the coup, many of his reforms did. So little meaning was left to political categories that the junta's new Foreign Minister could describe himself as a "socialist."

V

Radical movements are underdeveloped to the extent that they *respect alienation* and surrender their power to external forces instead of creating it for themselves. In Chile, the revolutionaries hastened the day of their own Thermidor by letting "representatives" speak and act on their behalf: although parliamentary authority had been effectively replaced by the *cordones*, the workers did not go beyond these conditions of dual power and abolish the bourgeois State and the parties that maintained it. If the future struggles in Chile are to advance, the enemies within the workers' movement must be over-



Armed campesinos guarding occupied estate in Cautin Province, 1971.

come practically; the councilist tendencies in the factories, neighborhoods, and fields will be *everything* or *nothing*. All the vanguard parties that will continue to pass themselves off as the "workers' leadership" — whether they be the MIR, a clandestine CP, or any other underground splinter groups — can only repeat the betrayals of the past. Ideological imperialism must be confronted as radically as economic imperialism has been expropriated; the workers and peasants can depend only on themselves to advance beyond what the *cordones industriales* have already accomplished.

Comparisons between the Chilean experience and the 1936 Spanish Revolution are already being made, and not only here — one finds strange words coming from Trotskyists in praise of workers' militias

which fought against all forms of hierarchy. While it is true that a radical third force did emerge in Chile, it did so only tentatively. Unlike the Spanish proletariat, the Chilean revolutionaries never created an entirely new kind of society on the basis of councilist organization, and the Chilean Revolution will only succeed if these forms (*cordones*, *comandos*) are capable of establishing their social hegemony. The obstacles to their development are similar to those that were confronted in Spain: the Spanish councils and militias faced two enemies in the form of Fascism and the Republican government, while the Chilean workers face international capitalism and the manipulators of social-democracy and Leninism.

From the *favelas* of Brazil to the labor camps of Cuba, the proletariat

the Caribbean, the proletariat of Latin America has maintained a continual offensive against all those who seek to maintain present conditions.

In its struggle, the proletariat is faced with various *caricatures* of revolution which masquerade as its allies. These travesties have in turn encountered a false movement of so-called "ultra-left" opposition. Thus, the ex-fascist Peron prepares to construct a corporate state in Argentina, this time in a leftist guise, while the Trotskyist commandos of the ERP denounce him for not being "revolutionary" enough, and the *exguerrillero* Castro berates all those who fail to meet the standards of "communist" discipline. History will not fail to *dissolve* the power of these idiots.

A conspiracy of tradition — with agents on both the Left and the Right — ensures that existing reality is always presented in terms of *false* alternatives. The only choice accept-

able to Power are those between competing hierarchies: the colonels of Peru or the generals of Brazil, the armies of the Arab states or those of Israel. These antagonisms only express divisions *within* global capitalism, and any genuinely revolutionary alternative will have to establish is nowhere in power in Latin America or anywhere else, and this powerlessness constantly impels it to new actions. The Chilean workers are not alone in their opposition to the forces of counter-revolution; the revolutionary movement that began in Mexico with Villa's guerrilla bands has not yet come to an end. In the armed workers' militias that fought in the streets of Santo Domingo in 1965, the urban insurrection in Cordoba, Argentina in 1969, and the recent strikes and occupations in Bolivia and Uruguay, the spontaneous revolt of workers and students in Trinidad in 1970, and the continuing revolutionary crisis in

...Y A PREPARARTE A DIRIGIR LA INDUSTRIA



"Prepare yourselves to run industry."

itself over the ruins of these spectacular conflicts. The combined lies of bourgeois and bureaucratic power must be confronted by a revolutionary truth *in arms*, all over the world as in Chile. There can be no "socialism in one country," or in one factory or district. Revolution is an international task which can only be solved on an international level — it does not recognize continental frontiers. Like any revolution, the

Chilean Revolution requires the success of similar movements in other areas. Everywhere, in the wildcat strikes in the United States and West Germany, the factory occupations in France, and in civil insurrections in the USSR, the foundations for a new world are being laid. Those who recognize themselves in this global movement must seize the opportunity to *extend* it with all the subversive weapons at their disposal. □

'Because she's poor and black?'

The media have recently disseminated the information that the State Department has denied political asylum to Reina Monica Despaignes. The decision is based on the claim that the young stowaway has not demonstrated "a well-founded fear of persecution in Cuba." The decision refused to give any credence to the declarations of Reina, who has spoken publicly of the forms of harassment she received from the police, her detention and dismissal from work...and the attention she received from the organs of State Security. Aren't these facts sufficient for any citizen "having a well founded fear"? Were the gentlemen who made the decision to block Reina's permanent residency in this country villainous or just stupid? Don't they know that, even apart from Reina's repeated statements, the simple fact of her having secretly left Castro's fiefdom would condemn her to spending many years in prison? Are they acquainted with the episode of a youth who was returned

to Cuba, under similar circumstances, in January 1982 and who is now in jail?

We should ask ourselves what the true reasons were for this absurd and inhuman decision. Is it because Reina is a woman, poor and black? Perhaps because she isn't a Chinese tennis star or a Russian violinist? Or is it that the State Department wants to demonstrate to Fidel Castro their good faith in seeking discussions and future compromises?

Whatever the positive replies to these questions would be, it would be humiliating to the Cuban exile and for those who believe in North American democracy. We have always maintained that the vital interests of the Cuban people do not run parallel to those of North America's rulers. Our community ought to make clear its cry of protest about this case which demonstrates that divergence.

— *Guangara Libertaria*
Summer, 1983

Chronology of the Chilean workers' movement

1909 The *Gran Federacion Obrera de Chile* (GFOC) is formed in September by the more conservative labor groups to bring together the workers' cooperatives. Cooperativism is strong in Chile at this time, with 55,000 people in 433 workers' co-ops.

1917 At the GFOC congress of 1917, a more revolutionary tendency becomes dominant, replacing the more conservative faction, and the name of the organization is shortened to Chilean Workers Federation (FOCH). Their goal was the complete abolition of capitalism and its replacement by the workers' union federation, which would control industry.

1922 The first serious effort at direct manipulation of the workers' movement by political parties occurs. A delegation headed by Luis Emilio Recabarren appears at the 2nd National Congress of the FOCH. Recabarren has just returned from the USSR and announces his intention to form a Chilean Communist Party. FOCH abandons its federalist organizational practice in favor of centralism. The domination of CP politics alienates libertarian, syndicalist or social-democratic unionists, leading to a split in 1925.

1919 The Chilean IWW is founded as an anarcho-syndicalist workers organization in Valparaiso and spread rapidly throughout the country. The IWW espouses, as its tactic,

direct action, and, as its objective, abolition of wage-labor and direct control of production by the workers.

1920 Arturo Alessandri Palma is elected president and responds to worker activism by propagating a "corporatist" work code, inspired by Benito Mussolini, which aims at control of the working class.

1924 A coup d'etat takes place. At first only the IWW opposes the new regime. But a new wave of repression hits the workers' movement, with massacres, imprisonment, tortures.

1927 A new military regime comes to power with Carlos Ibanez del Campo at its head. A ferocious dictatorship destroys the unions one by one. There occur a series of assassinations of militants in plain view as meetings are letting out. Dawn kidnappings. Tortures. People forced into exile. The Chilean IWW ceases to exist. FOCH almost totally disappears.

1931 The fall of the dictatorship. The workers' movement enters a period of reorganization and Chile passes through a period of institutional crisis. The economic crisis amplifies this situation. The anarcho-syndicalist unions create the CGT (General Confederation of Workers). Though inspired by the IWW tradition, the CGT is built more on the federalist model of organization such as the Argentine FORA. Throughout the period of

1931-34 the unions of the CGT are involved in strikes and movement-building. During this process the General Association of Teachers is formed. The various political parties, such as the Socialists (SP), Communists (CP), the bourgeois Radical Party (RP) and the right-wing Phalange, advocate a legalized,

regulated form of unionism. The CGT unions reject the legalistic approach as a method for "dominating the revolutionary workers movement." Meanwhile, the CP has been trying to rebuild the FOCH but its support is weak. During this period the union movement is subject to no one but its own members, striking

Persona non grata in several countries

Italy, we're told, now has 3500 political prisoners. Among these is Juan Teofilo Pollocar—a Chilean libertarian exile. Juan was born in Coyhique, in the far south of Chile, in 1954 of a family of *campesinos*. Beginning in 1968, when he was 14, Juan came to participate in struggles on the land, in occupations of latifundia (large estates) and played various roles in organizations of Chilean *campesinos*. He was involved in the setting-up of a people's radio station in Coyhique, which is where he was the day of the military coup that overthrew the Allende government in 1973.

After the coup in Chile, Juan fled to Argentina, where he was detained by the military authorities. After a month in jail in Argentina, he was expelled and sent to Cuba. In April of 1975, Juan and five other Chilean libertarians were expelled from Cuba for political reasons and went to Italy. Because of their political expulsion from Cuba, a campaign of defamation against the six Chilean libertarians was launched by the marxist parties of the Popular Unity (Allende's coalition), whose organization in Italy, *Chile Democratico*, opposed their being

granted asylum in that country. Those of the six who were not in jail were forced to leave Italy.

Italy now has in effect a repressive law which permits imprisonment of people identified with the revolutionary left under a catch-all charge of "subversive association." This law had been passed, with the crucial aid of the Italian Communist Party, after the Red Brigades's assassination of Aldo Moro. In 1981 Pollocar was sentenced to 16 years in prison, under a charge of "subversive association" with the armed struggle group *Azione Rivoluzione*.

Juan's present situation is that he needs medical treatments, at a cost of 600,000 lira each, to avoid losing his leg. The Italian prison system does not provide for such medical attention. Italian and Chilean libertarians have been raising money on Juan's behalf. Information Network on Latin America has also been collecting funds on Juan's behalf and will forward funds to the folks in Italy handling solidarity on Juan's behalf. (Any donations for Juan should be so indicated and made payable to "Libertarian Aid for Latin America.") □

for its own principles and its revolutionary goals. It is not controlled by any political party seeking to dominate the labor movement for its own purposes.

1932 As always the armed forces fulfill their tragic role. On June 4 a group of politicians and military men carry out a coup d'état and install the government of Marmaduke Grove who declares Chile a "socialist republic," but the workers and the unions have no avenue for participation. On June 16th the military bring the 12-day-old "socialist republic" to an end.

1934 The Confederation of Chilean Workers (CTCH) is formed under the auspices of the Socialist and Communist parties. The Communists adopt the Popular Front tactic of alliances with other reform-oriented parties and "progressive" sections of the ruling class. The Chilean workers' movement now finds itself divided into two camps: the revolutionary unionism of the CGT, and the party-controlled unionism of the CTCH.

1938 Pedro Aguirre Corda, candidate of the Popular Front, is elected to the presidency. Although a national *campesinos* organization is formed in 1939, strikes during the harvest season are outlawed by the Popular Front government. CTCH leaders are elected to parliament and the CTCH becomes committed to the defense of the government and its policies. In 1939 the CTCH fails to support a printers' strike organized by the anarcho-syndicalist CGT. Internal democracy within the CTCH begins to suffer. Due to the failure of the Popular Front government, the CTCH splits into opposing Communist and Socialist factions.

1946 G. Gonzalez Videla, a member of the bourgeois Radical Party, is elected president with the support of the left parties. Videla propagates a "law of the defense of democracy" which is used to outlaw the CP, and also a campaign of repression is unleashed against the labor movement.

1952 Carlos Ibanez del Campo, whose bloody dictatorship in 1927-31 could hardly be forgotten by the working class, is elected president. To develop a common front against the bosses, the CTCH factions appeal for unity during 1st of May mobilizations.

1953 Unity discussions lead to the merger of the CGT and the two CTCH factions; in February the Chilean Workers Central (CUT) is born. The National Committee consists of Clotario Blest (President—an independent left-wing Christian), Baudilio Cazanova and Isodoro Godoy (Socialists), and Juan Vargas Puebla (a Communist). The National Council of the CUT consists of two Christian Democrats (a reformist Church-supported party), seven Socialists, a Phalangist, a Communist and four anarcho-syndicalists (Ernesto Miranda, Ramon Dominguez, Hector Duran and Celso Poblete). The unification of the labor movement is followed by a period of unity and action. Manual workers, intellectuals, *campesinos*, students and professional workers join up with the CUT. The workers are developing a consensus towards a confrontation with the bosses and the State. This is reflected in a 15-point program drawn up by the National Council. The CUT develops a campaign of partial work

stoppages, preparing for a general strike. The workers are demanding changes that are social and political as well as economic.

1956 It is in this social climate of rebellion that the national general strike of July 1956 takes place. For 48 hours nothing moves in Chile. Ibanez threatens to resign and give the responsibility for running the country to the CUT. However, 70% of the leaders of the CUT are of the marxist parties. Ibanez calls upon the left-wing parties for a solution to the crisis. The parties of the left ask the leaders of the CUT to call off the general strike. A committee is set up by the CUT, headed by the CUT president, Clotario Blest. When the committee presents a list of demands to the Ibanez government, Ibanez demands that the workers return to work before he will respond. With the Communists, Socialists and Radicals supporting this proposal, the general strike is called off. The four anarcho-syndicalists on the National Council protest that the strike should not be called off without first consulting the rank-and-file, but they are overruled. The return to work creates disorientation and demoralization. Having gained nothing, Chilean workers cannot understand why they should return to work.

1957 A new general strike is called, to back up the original demands made during the July 1956 general strike, which had not yet been fulfilled. This strike is a failure and the government responds with strong repressive measures. After this experience, the four anarcho-syndicalist members resign from the National Council.

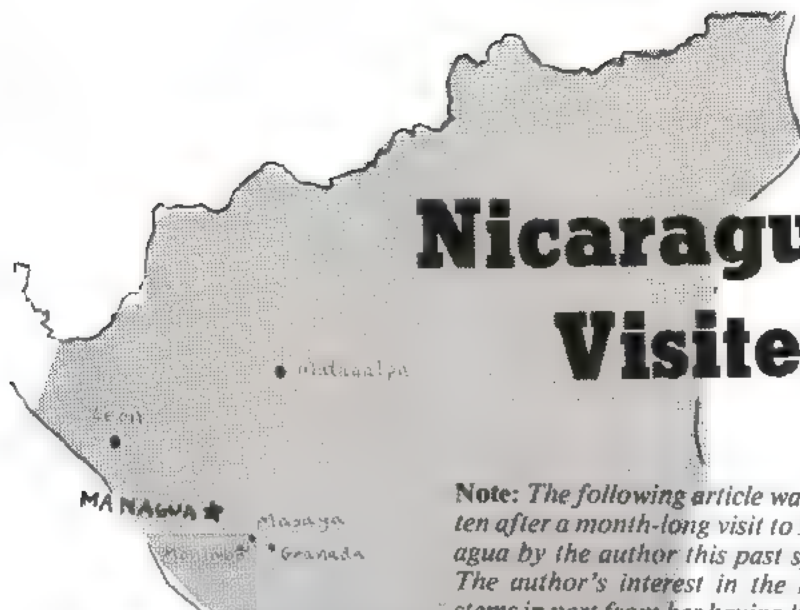
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Clotario Blest

The 1956 general strike, and its aftermath, demonstrated the destructive role of the political parties, which prevented revolutionary unionism from accomplishing its work of social transformation. The interests of the political parties were successfully imposed above those of the workers. After 1957, the CUT became a fish pond, with the parties fighting for control of the unions. Under the government of Allende, the CUT continued as an arena for the manipulations of the marxist political parties, and the Christian Democrats perfected their competition for control, as well.

— *Coordinadora Libertaria Latino-Americana*



Nicaragua Visited

Note: The following article was written after a month-long visit to Nicaragua by the author this past spring. The author's interest in the region stems in part from her having lived in Latin America for 14 years. This article provoked some controversy within the Information Network on Latin America. Several members of the committee expressed disagreement with some of the author's statements. We expect to print their reply to the article in the next issue.

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In March and April of 1983, I spent a month in Nicaragua. My motives for the trip were primarily investigative—I wanted to see for myself what conditions were like under the new regime, to get a sense of the basis of opposition and support for the government, and to learn whatever I could about the possibilities of a modern-day revolution in ■ “Third World” country. Not surprisingly, the experience reinforced my wariness of people who advocate total allegiance to the Sandinistas, as well as of those who claim that, since many of the basic institutions of capitalist society remain in Nicaragua, the Sandinista regime is fundamentally no different than its predecessor.

I had no credentials or official connections when I arrived in Managua, just a couple of addresses of friends of friends who worked and lived in the country. I chose not to organize my trip through the solidarity committee based in the U.S. because I have found the people in-

involved in these groups tend to be intolerant of criticisms of Sandinista policies, and I did not want to be responsible to anyone for what I might say and do while in Nicaragua.

Lack of credentials and official contacts was not an impediment, since I wasn't interested in interviews with the “comandantes” or in showcase tours. The few official types I interviewed formally were very willing to take the time out of their busy schedules to talk to ■ sympathetic American. Otherwise, it was easy to engage in conversations with people from all walks of life in the streets, on buses, on the beaches, and other places.

Tachito's Legacy

After the ouster of Somoza, the new government faced the awesome task of rebuilding a country decimated by years of civil war and decades of plundering by the Somoza family and friends. Particularly under the rule of the most recent Somoza ("Tachito"), the family squandered the country's resources in an inconceivably luxurious lifestyle, while basic social services such as schools, hospitals and public transportation were little more than non-existent for the majority of poverty-stricken Nicaraguans. Somoza's theft of international relief funds sent to Managua after the 1972 earthquake provided a major impetus for the revolt that overthrew him.

"Managua was a city" was the response I often got to questions of what the capitol was like before the earthquake. After 11 years, the "center" of Managua is still mostly rubble, with the exception of three or four surviving buildings that are visible from far away, and serve as landmarks for the purpose of giving directions. (Addresses in Nicaraguan cities are given, not with streets and numbers, but in relation to well-known landmarks. (A typical address would be "a half block south of the Esso station and two blocks west.") The large buildings are, ironically, the Bank of America building, the Intercontinental Hotel (both structures resembling typical American financial district and Holiday Inn-style architecture but very uncommon sights in this country), the National Palace (Somoza's bunker which is now a military base), and the facade of the cathedral, now draped with a red and

black portrait of Sandino, on what was once the main plaza.

The clock on the cathedral is stopped at 12:30, the time the earthquake struck, and the interior is filled with rubble and the stench of human feces. Several of the middle-to-upper-class neighborhoods remained semi-intact, but vacant lots filled with rubble abound, as do shantytowns constructed of wood, tin, cardboard and other scavenged materials.

The Sandinistas have built some homes and have allocated resources for communities to build their own—but there is a pitiful scarcity of materials. The miserable conditions the Sandinistas inherited from the Somoza regime were exacerbated by U.S. government policies, and by "decapitalization" (a catchword for capital flight, destruction of productive resources and smuggling of money and goods abroad by landlords and industrialists who left Nicaragua during the first years after the revolution).

In 1982 the U.S. government blocked loans for wheat purchases and in May 1983 drastically reduced U.S. purchase of Nicaraguan sugar, thereby undermining an important source of foreign exchange for Nicaragua. The U.S. has successfully blocked loans and relief funds from international agencies (such as a 30 million dollar loan from the Inter-American Development Bank destined to develop Nicaragua's fishing industry, and more recently, a loan from the World Bank to build roads to facilitate transportation to and from coffee farms), and discouraged U.S. bankers from loaning dollars or financing investments in Nicaragua.

The Somozas cultivated an ex-

treme dependence on U.S. and other imports. These must be paid for in dollars, which in turn must be earned by exporting goods. These measures have therefore had dire consequences for Nicaragua. The escalation of war has also meant that ever more resources must be allocated to the military effort.

Although Nicaragua has received some international aid from social democracies in Western Europe and from the USSR and its satellites, this aid does not make up for the crippling effects of U.S. cutoffs. An example of the problems of substituting Russian for American imports was illustrated by a man I met on the bus from Granada to Managua. He was going to the capitol to replace a defective auto part. I asked him whether it was very expensive to replace and he said in this case the problem was not the price.

"See this?" He held up the damaged part he was carrying. "I bought this two weeks ago, and it's already broken. It's Russian. I would be willing to pay two or three times as much for an American part, but they're nowhere to be found." While I was in Managua I also heard rumors of a fleet of Bulgarian buses that had been sent without necessary spare parts and were rotting away on some vacant lot.

If this story is true, it's tragic for Nicaragua, where vehicles of any sort are a luxury. Travelling by public transportation is arduous and frustrating. It often involves long waits in blistering temperatures of well over 100° for the rare buses which are filled way beyond their capacity, or for the occasional taxi that is too expensive for most Nicaraguans. The roads and streets



Susan Melcias

Woman washing laundry in sewer of downtown Managua.

are generally in an abysmal state of disrepair.

Vehicles are only one of a long list of scarce items. Shelves are often barren in the official supermarkets and I saw long lines for basic goods such as cooking oil, which is used in great quantities in Nicaraguan cuisine. Meat, toilet paper, soap and milk were hard to come by, even though milk is subsidized by the government, and when available sells at prices well below market value. It is typical of the absurdities created by capitalism that good coffee is non-existent in Nicaragua. The best beans are exported, and the domestic market in coffee was cornered some time ago by the multinational food processing companies, so that when one does find coffee at all, nine times out of ten it's instant coffee.

Nicaraguans have found original substitutes for some scarce items. Since glass is scarce, individual portions of everything from milkshakes to water are sold in plastic bags, knotted at the top, often with a straw sticking through the knot. After a little practice, I found it to be a perfectly adequate substitute, although I wondered about the ecological consequences.

Many Nicaraguans find ways of acquiring scarce items on the black market, which operates quite openly at the Mercado Oriental, a huge bustling open market in eastern Managua. Shopping at the Oriental is far more lively and interesting than the drab concrete western-style supermarkets the state runs, although hygiene is a serious problem and prices of goods are higher than government prices.

The government has tried to discourage speculators and black mar-

keteers at the Oriental, but has so far been unwilling to start a serious crackdown. This is not only because it would be a difficult and costly task, but because the government is probably sensitive to the resentment that this level of state intervention in daily life would give rise to among many people.

Many of the people I spoke to, foreigners and Nicaraguans alike, were impressed with the government's progress in education, hospital care, electrification and other basic services. The number of trained doctors produced by the University (UNAN—Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Nicaragua) had jumped from 50 to 500 a year since the revolution, polio had been all but eliminated as the result of the massive vaccination effort in 1982, and people from the lower classes now have greater, though still limited, opportunities for university training.

I encountered many foreigners working as volunteers or as employees of foreign solidarity services as doctors, nurses, architects, and engineers. Though often overwhelmed by the amount of work to be done (more often than not these professionals work many more hours than they're paid for) and frustrated by endless bureaucratic hassles, most felt their work was useful and rewarding, quite a contrast to their work in the "developed countries."

Attitudes

Inflation and scarcity have created a breeding ground for discontent with the new government. In some cases, complaints reflect the resentment of the upper class at the loss of privilege and status. One lady I spoke with complained bit-

terly about prices of the food and the quality of sugar under the new government. She remembered the times when shops were full and white sugar was plentiful, and insisted the Sandinistas were ruining the economy. She also said that you couldn't say anything openly against the government without fear of reprisals. I later discovered that her son, a well-to-do landlord, had recently been arrested and faced a sentence of 11 years in prison for smuggling arms to the *contras*. She herself was buying dollars on the black market, which she was probably saving for a flight to Miami where she had relatives, and which she talked of as though it were paradise.

It is very difficult to determine the actual degree of repression in Nicaragua. In the streets of Leon I met an electrician who insisted that repression was extensive. He told me government spies were everywhere, and one could not say anything against the government for fear of retaliation. Although he didn't give me any names, he insisted many people were in jail for simply having spoken out against the government. He praised the U.S. for its democracy, and refused to take my arguments against this view seriously. He was glad to be rid of Somoza, but felt that in many ways the Sandinistas had become a new elite. In Leon, he complained, the government had seized all the vehicles and buildings for its own use. The fact that he himself was talking so openly against the government to me, a complete stranger, made me very skeptical about his perspective. If what he was saying was true he would never have dared to be so critical with someone he had just met, and about whom he had no infor-

mation, especially since most foreigners travelling around the country are firm supporters of the government.

The most reactionary person I met was a manager of a rental car concession — a man with strong Indian features who came from a poor family. The concession was doing poorly owing to the difficulty of servicing and repairing its cars. He also felt the Sandinistas were ruining the economy, and he complained about the fact that his son, a university student, had been mobilized for the coffee harvest, and had returned from the experience with disrespectful attitudes. His daughter, formerly a school teacher, had recently quit her job rather than teach Marxist doctrine. He was the only person I met who confessed that he would be "satisfied" if the *Somocistas* succeeded in overthrowing the current regime.

Two poor peasant women I met on the outskirts of Leon said that, although they were now free of the terror they had lived under when Somoza's National Guard roamed the area, in other respects life was harder. Prices were higher, and they lived too far away from the new schools and hospitals to benefit much from them. One woman was in her 30s, and had borne 17 children of whom nine had survived. She claimed that she wanted to get sterilized but couldn't afford the minimal costs of the operation (about \$10 US, according to her). She earned 27 cordobas a day, not enough to send her five school-age children on the bus to go to school. When I asked her why she didn't join a state farm, she claimed that she couldn't get used to giving up her freedom.



A funeral procession in Jinotepe for assassinated student leaders. Demonstrators carry a photo of Arlen Sin, an FSLN guerrilla killed in the mountains.

I sensed a simmering resentment against the Sandinistas in the Indian *barrio* Monimbo, near Masaya, one of the areas of fiercest resistance to Somoza's National Guard during the Civil War. The people were celebrating Saint Lazarus Day, nicknamed *Fiesta de los Perros* (Festival of the dogs) because of the tradition to dress dogs up in costume for a march through town. The men I spoke with had been drinking all day, which accounted partly for the aggressive tone they took when talking against the "communists" and "Marxists" in the government. The only basis for their anger that I was able to extract, aside from allusions to Russian and Cuban presence, were

anger at the ideological content of the educational programs and what they claimed was the Sandinistas' disrespect for the Pope. I should add that Monimbo was the only place I encountered hostility against American visitors.

The broadest base of Sandinista support is the generation of young militants, many of whom were active participants in the war against Somoza. I met Aura Lila, a member of the Sandinista youth organization at the UNAM, when I happened upon the organization's office during a visit to the university campus. She was from a poor family from the north of Nicaragua and had joined the Sandinistas during the civil war. I was immediately

charmed by her warmth and openness. She was very friendly and eager to answer my questions (and pose her own) over lunch at the University cafeteria. I met many others like her: highly-motivated, courageous young people who were dedicated to reconstructing a new society after the horrors they had experienced under the Somoza regime.

Aura Lila told me about her participation in the student groups who had been mobilized to work in the fields during the coffee harvests in January and February. She said that coffee was beginning to rot in fields, especially in some border areas where peasants had fled because of fears of the attacks of the *contras*, thus endangering one of the most important sources of foreign exchange. Her friend, another student, told of how his group had to build air raid shelters and work with rifles slung over their shoulders in case of attack. She claimed that

work in these areas was voluntary, although I heard from other sources that in some cases students were obliged to perform some kind of labor in the fields. This did not seem like an outrageous demand of young people in exchange for the privilege of attending the free state universities. Although the mobilization of students for the harvest created some resentment, I do not believe it was an unduly harsh move on the part of the government.

The Discourse of Bureaucratic Power

Most people I met spoke favorably of the great strides made in education since the Sandinistas came to power. Young students who had been involved in the massive literacy campaign of 1980 felt the campaign was successful, both for students, many of whom lived in remote areas and had never been to school, and for teachers, who had a chance to get first hand experience

"S"? Oh, that's easy!

"S" is for Sandino, of course!

Hmm.. Let's see...
"A" is for armed struggle
"C" is for Carlos Marx,
or is it Carlos Fonseca?

This is boring, but I better look busy or I'll be betraying the revolution.



Susan Melnick

of the problems and daily lives of people who lived in the country. Paulo Freire the progressive Brazilian educator, assisted the literacy "Crusaders" in developing teaching methodologies.

Although I did not attend any classes, it is clear that the educational programs were designed not only to teach people how to read and write, but also to propagate the "message of the Revolution" as conceived by Sandinista ideologues. The literacy primer, *El Amanecer Del Pueblo* (Dawn of the People), included chapters like "The Defense Committees Defend the Revolution," "Revolutionary Workers' Organizations Promote Production and Oversee the Revolutionary Process," "Agrarian Reform will restore to the People the Production on the Land," and "Our Democracy is the Power of Organized People." The second objective of education is to "educate students in and for creative work and develop in them consciousness of the economic, social, cultural value of productive work."

It is certainly important for Nicaraguans to learn about the real history of their country, about the crimes of Somoza and the role of U.S. imperialism in its social and economic development. But the socialist realist tenor of government propaganda was a disheartening indication of the Sandinistas' ideological approach to political education.

Everywhere there are signs and slogans encouraging people to work harder, to emulate the heroes of the revolution, to sacrifice for the good of the country. An editorial in the Sandinista paper [*Barricada*] says, "to be a militia member is an honor,

an unequivocal sign of patriotism, a demonstration of personal honor and dignity." It is not surprising that the patriotic, moralistic rhetoric of the leaders would not sit well with independent-minded communities such as Monimbo. Although a decree after the revolution outlawed public homage to living revolutionary leaders, dead heroes are lauded and celebrated ad nauseum. Pictures of Sandino and Carlos Fonseca are everywhere, and in April the department of education announced the publication of 300,000 primers entitled "Carlitos."

Much to-do was made of the birthday of Karl Marx, whose doctrine, according to the lead speaker at the events of the day, "is all-powerful because it's true." Unfortunately, in a country where paper for printing is a very scarce item, the few shelves of the university kiosks where books are sold are mostly filled with the works of Sandino, Lenin and Karl Marx.

Marxist-Leninist terminology is abundant in the official communications, and in slogans such as *Vanguardia, Ordene!* (Vanguard, give us orders!). The language used in campaigns to raise productivity are unpleasantly reminiscent of the old Stakhanovist campaigns under Stalin. During the crucial cotton harvest, the government awarded productive teams with the title *Vanguardia de la vanguardia* (Vanguard of the vanguard).

The obsession with "productivity" and "sacrificing for the country" is of course partly explained by the imperatives of restoring a ravaged economy. Nicaragua desperately needs the foreign exchange to import food, medicines, oil, and

capital goods. But the difficult economic circumstances don't justify the pedantic ideological tenor of the government's addresses to "the people." This language is much closer to the traditional discourse of authoritarian rule than it is to the everyday idiom of Nicaraguans. (It is rumored that the Sandinistas used the services of a PR man of the ruling PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] of Mexico to school them in the arts of publicity.) The propaganda reflects an ideology and a practice which perpetuates an authoritarian relationship between the rulers and the ruled, and reinforces passive adherence to the decisions of the "leaders."

Benevolent Dictatorship

That the Sandinistas are in fact the rulers of Nicaragua is an undeniable fact. Despite occasional rhetoric about "democracy," "popular power" and "workers' state," Sandinistas directly control most institutions in the country, and reserve the right to censor all media. The political structure of Nicaragua was accurately analyzed in Tom Wetzel's article in the last issue of *No Middle Ground*. I would tentatively characterize it as a "benevolent dictatorship," albeit one that has broad support among the population. I should point out that the great majority of the people I met in Nicaragua, even those who were critical of the Sandinistas, did not want to see *Somocismo* back. Even those whose independent natures revolted against the excessive chauvinism and authoritarianism exhibited by Sandinistas, those who referred to Sandinista militants as "fanatics," tended to put a high value on the social and economic programs of the government.

During the first few days of my stay in Nicaragua, I was struck by the ubiquitous presence of men and women in military service. There are actually three different organizations: the police, the army, and the militia, all of whose members wear military-like uniforms. The similarity of the garb makes it hard for newcomers to distinguish between them, especially since their functions often overlap. Having just arrived from Mexico, where an encounter with the military is enough to strike terror into the heart of anyone, the abundance of people in uniform made me very uncomfortable.

But I soon learned that the day-to-day relationship between people and the law was quite different from anything I had experienced in other countries. Aside from one brief incident, I didn't witness any instances of harassment by men in uniform. Indeed, chances of being arbitrarily harassed by men in uniform are far greater in San Francisco's Haight district, where I live, than in the cities I visited in Nicaragua.

The exception was when I was traveling with a Nicaraguan friend past a roadcheck near areas where several people, including a French doctor, had just been murdered by contras. My friend didn't have any identification on him and challenged the officer's right to detain him for this reason. After a bit of unpleasant muscle-flexing by an officer who was in charge of the roadblock, and who exhibited the petty authoritarianism that seems to go with the job in most places, they let us go.

It is possible I was in a privileged position as a foreigner and so was less likely than most Nicaraguans to

be hassled, or to witness harassment. But many people, even those who were critical of the government, claimed that they were no longer in fear of military uniforms.

One fairly apolitical woman from Matagalpa told me of how different it was now when battalions came through town. In the old days, doors and windows would slam





Sandinista barricade during last days of fighting in Matagalpa.

shut, and the streets would be empty within minutes. Today the young men and women in uniform are treated just like anybody else, with the usual Nicaraguan friendliness.

A couple of other instances that occurred during Holy Week (occasion for endless partying of a rather unholy sort) convinced me that the cops don't normally inspire much fear among the general population, even when they're armed and trying to exert their authority. I spent Holy Week in Leon and Poneloya, a beautiful beach-town about 20 kilometers away from Leon that was the scene of much holiday activity.

One evening local buses were making special runs to the beach to accommodate the festive hordes. The conductor had

parked the bus in the square while it filled up, which took a couple of hours. (From what I could tell, buses don't have fixed schedules in Nicaragua, or if they do, they're never followed.) People who had arrived early were getting very restless waiting in the relentless summer heat for the conductor to decide the bus was full enough. They were very gay and rowdy—and many of the young men were “bolos” (Nicaraguan slang for drunk) so that by the time we took off I thought there was going to be a riot.

The departure was further delayed by a policeman with a flashlight who stood up at the front of the bus to give a little speech that began with “We're all civilians here...” He looked and talked like a boy-scout leader. I groaned to myself, thinking

oh, brother, more political pedantry. But the others in the bus were far less polite, they yelled and jeered, cracking smart-aleck comebacks in a slang that was mostly unintelligible to me. Occasionally the policeman would ask for silence and respect, but not too forcefully or successfully.

Once the fares were collected (five cordobas instead of the usual three, which led to more jokes and jeers) the boy scout once again demanded attention and "silencio." He turned out to have quite a comic routine, starting with a number on the Pope, and other parodies whose local allusions escaped me. Finally, he won the group over, not because he was in charge, but only because he succeeded in entertaining them during the ride.

The next evening I was riding in a covered pick-up with a group of young actors. A soldier, armed as usual, who was doing special duty on the streets monitoring for drunken driving (which had led to many serious accidents the year before) stopped us saying something about people hanging out the back of the truck. From the front of the truck came a barrage of insults, "Go mind your own business," and "Que necios" (What a jerk you are). I was amazed, and frankly worried that we'd all end up spending the night in jail. But after a while he just gave up and let us proceed.

What these and other incidents indicated to me was that in some important ways, the social changes that occurred in Nicaragua over the last few years had deconditioned people's passivity in the face of authority.

In Tom Wetzel's article on Nicaragua, he refers to the *Comites de Defensa Sandinista* as mere "transmission belts" for FSLN directives. Al-

though I did not go to any CDS meetings, my impression is that this is a misguided analogy to the Cuban *Comites de Defensa Revolucionario*, which were formed in 1960 a year after the Cuban revolution, ostensibly to defend Cuba against attack. In Cuba, these became arms of the government security apparatus. Possibly the CDSs that have been formed since the revolution are used to control the behavior of would-be opponents of the regime, both to the left and to the right. The government does call on them to function as "the eyes and ears of the revolution."

But many of the Nicaraguan CDSs appeared during the civil war. They were functioning before the Sandinistas took power, and, according to most accounts, were effectively running the country in the first few weeks until the new state took shape. My sense is that at least in some cases, the Nicaraguan CDSs can and are used to put pressure on the Sandinistas to comply with demands of the neighborhood.

While I was in Leon people told me about a dispute between the Sandinistas and the CDS of Subtiava, a popular neighborhood of Leon that was very involved in the fight against Somoza. Shortly after the revolution, the Sandinistas called on all supporters to turn over their arms to the government. The residents of Subtiava refused to do so. The Sandinistas insisted, and Subtiavans stood their ground and eventually the Sandinistas backed down.

The Workers and the FSLN

One of the people I interviewed in Managua turned out to be the secretary general of the CTN, Antonio Jarquin. The CTN (*Confederacion de Trabajadores Nicaraguenses*) is the largest of the unions that resisted

the government's attempt to consolidate all workers' organizations within the CST (*Central Sandinista de Trabajadores*). I was interested in talking to people of this organization, because I knew that the CTN had suffered repression for its stand against the Sandinistas' union centralization moves. Despite their association with the Christian Social Democratic Party, the CTN espouses democracy and worker self-management, opposes alignment with either of the imperialist blocs (USSR and US), and participated actively, if belatedly, in the struggle against Somoza.

It took me several days to locate the CTN offices. Everyone I asked claimed they didn't know of the CTN, or responded to my queries with angry denunciations. A member of the (appointed, not elected) executive committee of the FETSALUD (the healthworkers' union which was formerly a bastion of the CTN) implied in an interview that the CTN was no longer in existence, and in any case was unable or unwilling to give me information as to their whereabouts.

I had almost given up hope when I found their address in, of all unlikely places, the phone directory. I decided to go directly to the office, since getting to a telephone was at least as difficult as getting to the office. I announced myself and asked if anyone could answer a few questions, and was promptly ushered into the office of a pleasant young man. He seemed a little embarrassed by the frequent interruptions by all sorts of people coming to ask questions, and in one case by the arrival of two children who stared and giggled at me. I didn't realize who Jarquin was until the end of the interview when I asked for his name and position in the



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by Joaquín
of Nicaragua
1979, ed.
1982, Gre



INTERVENTION TIME

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n American banner!

n Pasos (1914-1947), from *Poets
ua*", a bilingual anthology 1918-
Steven F. White, Unicorn Press
ensboro, NC.

union. The office was covered with pictures of the Pope, the usual Sandino portraits, and — most unusual for Nicaragua — posters for Polish Solidarnosc.*

I knew from a perusal of back issues of *Barricada*, the official Sandinista newspaper, that the CTN had been denounced as "divisionist" for its opposition to the CST within FETSALUD. The Sandinista press had also accused them of making common cause with COSEP, the association of business interests which has consistently opposed Sandinista policies from a bourgeois liberal standpoint.

During contract negotiations, the CTN opposed the negotiating committee on the grounds that it was composed of people who were unknown to the workers. The CTN was not opposed to the contract itself — which is in fact pretty "progressive," it gives workers (or at least their reps) a lot to say over hiring and firing, wage levels, etc. — they were opposed to the hierarchy. Jarquin described in detail the Sandinista takeover of the FETSALUD, and subsequent shake-up within the CTN that led to the expulsion of leading CTN members who were under the influence of COSEP.

According to Jarquin, FSLN Commandantes Tomas Borge and Dora Maria Telles "assaulted" a national

* The Sandinistas officially denounced the Polish workers' strike, parroting the denunciations of the Polish government. A couple of foreigners I met apologized for this grotesque move, claiming that the *comandantes* were not really against the Polish workers, but they were forced into this position by their reliance on Russian aid.

assembly of the FETSALUD, and forcibly expelled the CTN from the assembly, because the CTN was against "union unity." Jarquin pointed out that the CTN is not against the idea of unified struggle, but it opposes "verticality," and "submission" to the CST.

Loss of the FETSALUD was a blow to the CTN, which was also losing ground in other areas as well, following an earlier surge in membership during the first months of the revolution. Jarquin attributed this to the fact that the CTN did have some links to the right. He also claimed these links were severed when COSEP sympathizers were expelled from the CTN by an overwhelming majority.

Jarquin pointed out that the CTN was not advocating any attempts to change the leadership of the country. The CTN recognizes the things the government has done for the Nicaraguan people, but is critical of the government's dependence on the Soviet bloc. According to Jarquin, this leads the FSLN to use unduly harsh language against the U.S. In the second place, the FSLN is dealing badly with economic problems, and creating artificial scarcity. When I asked him to elaborate on this, he claimed the Frente was hoarding supplies. When I asked for an example, he mentioned, of all things, leather, and gave me some detailed statistics supposedly proving that the

government is hoarding leather. He claimed that by hoarding supplies the government was consciously creating discontent to justify continued martial law. Finally, he criticized the lack of democracy that had led to the resignation of Alfonso Robelo and Violeta Chamorro* from the Junta, and the repression of dissidence.

I was struck by Jarquin's naive notions about U.S. foreign policy. When the interview was over, I asked him what advice he would give to people in the U.S. who wanted to help Nicaragua. He replied that Reagan should institute a "school for democracy" in Managua! This was not the first time I had heard similar criticism of the Sandinista attacks on the U.S. The misguided assumption that the U.S. would be favorably disposed to Nicaragua if only the Sandinistas would stop their denunciations is perhaps partly a consequence of the government's heavy-handed propagandistic style.

I remained unconvinced of Jarquin's claim that the government was contriving scarcity. To me this sounded like the propaganda of an opportunist who is trying to tap popular discontent. On the other hand, the CTN had good reasons for resisting the imposition of a centralized union apparatus and for protesting repression of dissenters. Moreover, the Sandinistas have taken over the fancy cars and luxury

* Robelo is currently ■ leader of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE), headed by Eden Pastora and headquartered in Costa Rica. A few weeks after this interview, ARDE launched guerrilla actions in the south of Nicaragua aimed at destabilizing the Sandinista gov-

ernment. ARDE has had difficulty maintaining financial and logistical support for their insurgency. Violeta Chamorro was the wife of the newspaper editor Joaquin Chamorro whose assassination under Somoza touched off massive protests.

homes of the rich people that fled as the Sandinistas came to power. This ostensible appropriation of the nation's scarce goodies may help explain rumors of government hoarding.



Government repression of workers rights and organizations is a very serious and complex matter. Who could fail to recognize the irony of a

government which, in the name of the workers, deprives them of their most basic form of leverage, the right to collectively withhold their labor power? Strikes have not only been banned since the Emergency decree of September, 1981, but in the legal code (much of which remains intact from the Somoza regime), they are lumped together with other civil crimes such as hoarding and



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Children harassing guards around bonfire in Matagalpa, June 1978

speculation, and economic sabotage committed by industrialists. Occupations of worksites are illegal, and punishable with 2-3 years imprisonment.

El Pueblo, a newspaper put out by *Frente Obrero* ("Workers' Front," an extreme left-wing group which professes allegiance to the Albanian leader Enver Hoxha) was seized by the Sandinista militants and its printing facilities were handed over to the Literacy Campaign. The paper attacked the Sandinistas for having created a bourgeois reformist state, and advocated sabotage of the government's economic plan in order to "bring power back into the hands of the people." Militants of CAUS, an organization allied with the pro-Moscow Nicaraguan Communist Party, were imprisoned for organizing strikes and distributing anti-government propaganda. Recently, six leaders of the longshoremen's union in Puerto Corinto, the country's main port, were arrested because their union wanted to quit the Sandinista labor confederation (New York Times 6/13/83).

I cannot agree with the Sandinista supporters I encountered who justified the suppression of civil rights on the grounds that freedom of expression and organization is a "luxury" that the Sandinistas cannot currently afford. On the contrary, government repression of these freedoms is a "luxury" which, in the long run, may undermine the Sandinistas' support among the population, and lead the government further along the path to totalitarianism.

★ ★ ★

From afar, there may be a tendency to locate the real representatives of freedom

and worker autonomy among those groups that suffer repression for having organized opposition to the state in the name of workers control. But the situation in Nicaragua is not nearly so simple. The fact, for example, that CAUS and FO were repressed for leading strikes does not necessarily mean that these groups are revolutionary, or even progressive.

FO and CAUS were involved in organizing strikes in key industrial facilities (e.g., sugar mills and textile factories), in some cases serious economic losses. The principal demand in these strikes was for higher wages, of up to 100% in some cases, in opposition to the government's austerity policies. The Frente succeeded in convincing the workers to return to work for much less after a few days of discussions and negotiations.

The strikes which led to government retaliation against the "ultra-left" organizations could have been oriented to strengthening workers' power in the face of the bourgeoisie, as had been the case in former actions when workers took over factories where managers were caught "decapitalizing," or went on strike to protest management's refusal to comply with new regulations which favored workers. But it is also possible, as the Sandinistas claim, that these groups were attempting to manipulate discontent in favor of their own organizations, whose ultimate aim was to seize power and install a "real" workers' state, Soviet style, or, in the case of FO, Albania-style. Nonetheless, my impression is that the repressive actions against these organizations justifiably left a bad taste in many mouths. Admittedly, these are only

impressions based on second-hand information, since I was unable to locate anyone in Nicaragua who admitted to knowing much about either group.

Demands for higher wages are certainly understandable given the high rate of inflation. In the Nicaraguan context, however, such demands could never be fulfilled for the working class as a whole, and could easily lead to the emergence of a labor aristocracy in strategic sectors. But this does not mean that workers should simply go along with whatever the Sandinistas request for "the good of the country."

There are many ways in which workers could (and do) act to gain autonomy from the state and to increase their ability to make decisions that affect their lives. A campaign organized along these lines could include, for example, insisting on workers' rights to elect delegates to participate in planning the production and distribution of goods, and thereby demanding a say both on what is to be produced in the country and by what methods. Rather than accepting the word of Sandinista administrators or "experts," workers could decide for themselves how to deal with problems of scarcity. They could demand access to all relevant information, national and international, to help them make these decisions. They could organize their own hearings to help them decide whether or not to expropriate sectors of the economy, and choose their own administrators and arbiters, rather than have them appointed by the government. They could fight for the right to set up their own means of creating and disseminating information, and find ways of linking up directly with one

another as well as with the unemployed, and other social groups, so as to be aware of divergent needs directly, and not through the mediation of the state. They could, in short, organize to gain whatever power they can within the limits imposed upon them by the economic and military situation.

Many of these actions would surely be strenuously opposed by the Sandinistas (or at least by some of the prominent leaders). The Sandinista government has been far more respectful of the property of capitalists and eager to protect their investments than the workers, who on several occasions were barely dissuaded from occupying factories by the personal intervention of the *comandantes*. There is no telling how such problems would have been dealt with had the workers been in the position to impose their own solutions. Even a truly libertarian movement of workers would have had to face many of the same constraints faced by the current government, for example, the imperative of generating foreign exchange with which to import necessities like medicine, and to alleviate other problems of scarcity.

Despite the vanguardism of the Sandinistas, discussions I had with a couple of workers indicated that Nicaraguan workers have gained unprecedented opportunities to organize and express their demands since the FSLN came to power. A woman who worked at the University in Managua as a janitor described the university employees' recent successful struggle to raise minimum wages and equalize wages to prevent discrimination. She was not a "fanatica" — she criticized the elitism of the university administration, the fact that the organization of the uni-

versity had only superficially changed under the new government, and complained that not enough efforts were being made to encourage university employees to attend classes. The government-appointed arbiters eventually decided in favor of the employees struggle against the administration's refusal to comply with their demands.

The FSLN & the people who work the land

The situation in agriculture, which has been well-documented in Joseph Collin's book *What Difference Does A Revolution Make?*, is a telling example of the dilemmas and contradictions of the Sandinista policies, and of the complexity of the situation they face. Before the revolution, the Sandinistas made promises of vast land redistribution with the slogan of "Land to those who work it." Immediately after the revolution they nationalized all the holdings of the Somozas and their allies who had fled the country, which amounted to one third of all agricultural lands. This left two-thirds in the hands of capitalist landlords (including the Somocista properties registered in the names of wives and dependents who had not fled). Much of the nationalized land was organized into state farms, and is currently administered by appointees of the Sandinistas.

The government also asked *comunas* (cooperatively worked farms set up in liberated zones before the victory of the revolution) to be handed over to the state. If left to the peasants, they feared, the land would be used to plant food crops rather than export crops which, they felt, would benefit Nicaragua more. Shortly after the revolution they began to discourage peasant takeovers

of agro-export industry lands for much the same reasons. If land was divided into small plots and given to peasants and landless rural workers, they reasoned, there would be a shortage of workers available to labor on the export-oriented farms. The state was reluctant to nationalize any more land because it lacked personnel to administer them.

While *campesinos* were being prevented from taking over large holdings, many of the landlords were leaving lands idle and squeezing their farms dry with all kinds of economic sabotage: fraudulent use of government loans, hustling cattle over the border to Honduras, over-invoicing for imported cattle goods to take advantage of the favorable exchange rate the government stipulated for productive purchases, and otherwise illegally liquidating their assets).

Many agricultural workers and peasants who were angry and frustrated with government policies continued to seize land "illegally." In February 1980 the ATC (the agricultural workers' organization that the Sandinistas helped to organize and whose actions were fundamental to the toppling of the Somoza regime) organized a march of over 30,000 peasants and landless rural workers in Managua. Under this pressure the government finally agreed to sanction all takeovers that had taken place thus far. The Sandinistas appointed tribunals to consider cases brought by peasants and agricultural workers against landlords, hoping this would end the wave of land seizures by workers and peasants.

Agricultural workers were also pressuring the state farms to turn idle government land over to them. When in 1981 the U.S. cut off credits

Cierre temporal debe ser lección para los confundidos

Deudas y anarquia ahogaron a Fabritex



Trabajadores con las "pilas verdes"

Cárdenas Rivero: "No más explotación extranjera"

Se abren de nuevo las minas de La Libertad

"Debts and anarchy sank Fabritex" says the *Barricada* headline after the Nicaraguan government shut down the country's largest textile plant Nov. 1, 1981 — on the pretext of non-payment of debts to the state cotton monopoly — adding that the "closing ought to be a lesson for the confused." The Fabritex affair clearly indicates the repressive methods employed by the Sandinista Front (FSLN) leaders against manifestations of working class independence from their top-down control.

In Feb. 1980 CAUS [Union Action and Unity Confederation — aligned with the pro-Moscow Nicaraguan Communist Party (PCN) — was the vehicle for a strike at 18 Managua factories, including Fabritex, demanding a 100% wage increase (inflation was over 130%). The FSLN declared the strike illegal and mobilized Sandinista loyalists to besiege the factory, eventually forcing the strikers back to work. Then, on March 4, 1980, an FSLN-organized "anti-CIA" march seized CAUS offices in Leon and turned them over to the literacy campaign.

On Oct. 21, 1981, 100 CAUS members

(including their two delegates to the Council of State) were arrested for publishing a leaflet that criticized the FSLN ban on strikes as well as government attempts to encourage foreign capitalist investment.

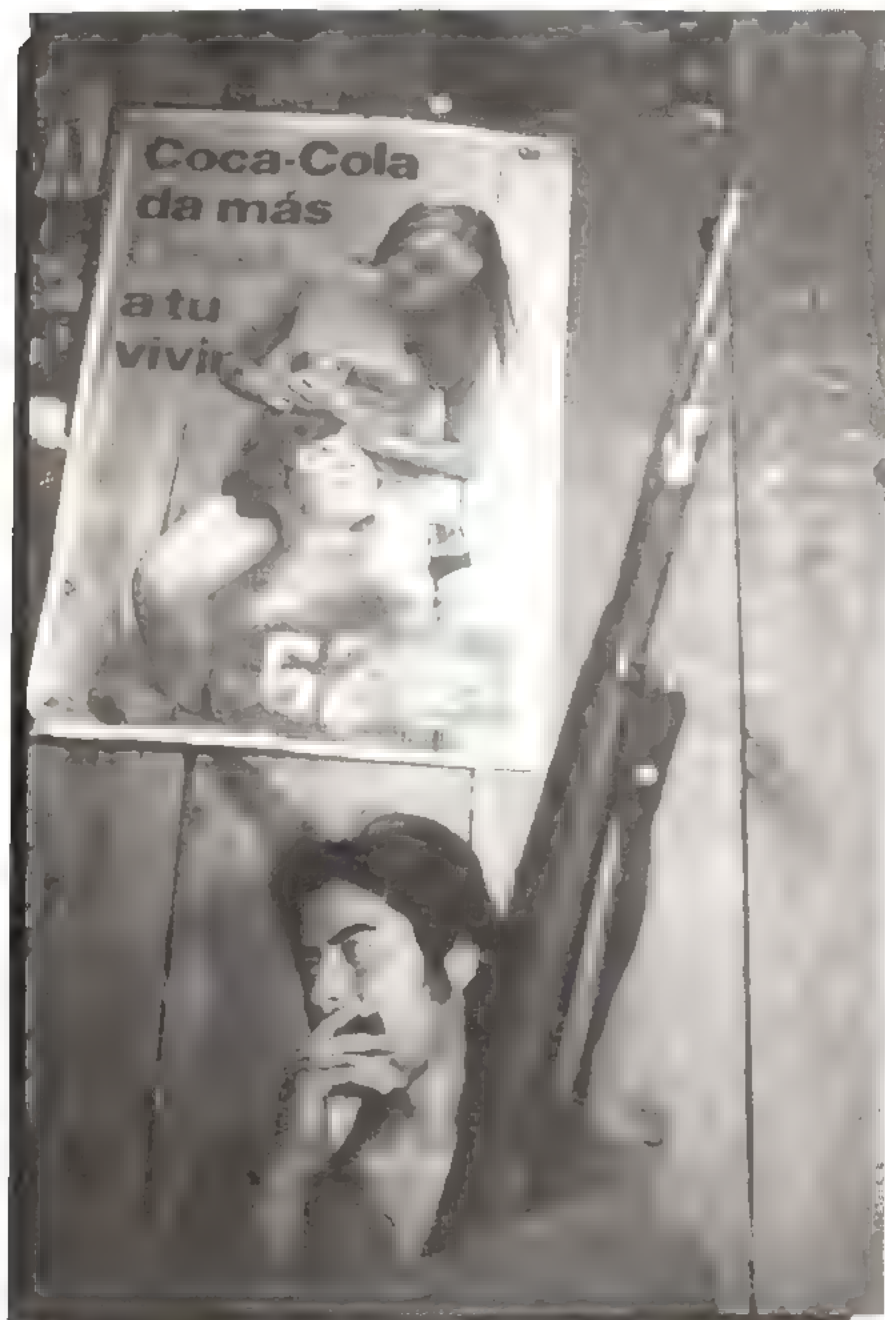
When the workers in the Managua factories still refused to abandon their chosen unions in favor of the government-controlled Sandinista Workers Central, the FSLN leaders decided a harsher "lesson for the confused" was needed; hence the closing of Fabritex on Nov. 1. The cops who closed the plant were accompanied by trucks to cart off all of the raw materials in the plant. CAUS was accused of a "provocative attitude," encouraging labor "indiscipline," poor quality and slowdowns. The government, said *Barricada* (Nov. 3, 1981), could not permit "the Fabritex machinery, among the most modern in the country," to "be squandered in this manner." Three and a half months later, a new company, Fanatex, was opened in the old Fabritex plant (with 12-hour shifts now not uncommon) — a maneuver presumably intended to weed out the more troublesome "anarchists."

— T.W.

for wheat, self-sufficiency became a bigger priority for the government. Continued pressure from farmers

provided impetus for the eventual official policy to lend idle state land to farmers, in exchange for pledges

Susan Meiselas



to work the land cooperatively and promises to work for wages on state farms when needed. As it turned out, fears of labor shortages on big export oriented farms were exaggerated since peak seasons for work on export crops and work on staple food crops grown locally by small farmers don't coincide.

The situation in agriculture is a clear indication of the nature of the relationship of state power to the people. The government-appointed experts dictated policy which the farmers were asked to comply with. It was the government, and not the agricultural workers, who appointed administrators and managers for expropriated land, in the name of "the people."

It is to the Sandinistas' credit that they eventually responded to pressure from below and that they didn't attempt to institute forced collectivization. It is also true that the government has made great efforts to improve conditions in the country, instituting social services and credit facilities designed to help out the poorest farmers. But the results have been mixed, partly because of lack of experience and understanding of rural life. Some of the pitfalls of the agricultural policies might have been avoided if people who worked the land had been more directly involved in making the decisions that affected them.

The Sandinistas no doubt believed that they had to take charge because the situation was urgent, that there was no time for the peasants and agricultural workers to organize themselves. They thought farmworkers would be unable to manage the expropriated lands themselves, and that they are not informed or educated enough to make respons-

ible decisions about agricultural and financial matters that affect the whole country. But the rural population had organized effectively in the fight against Somoza, and in some areas lands were being run cooperatively before the Sandinista victory. Why, then, did the Sandinistas deem it necessary to take over the administration of the *comunas*? Moreover, the Sandinistas have been in control for three years, and there is no indication of any significant shifts in the balance of power.

The problems of relations of authority is, of course, not solely due to the vanguardism of the Sandinistas. According to Collins, the takeover of the *comunas* did not meet with much resistance. There is a certain fatalism, a tradition of passivity in the face of authority, which has deep cultural and historical roots, especially in rural areas where the population was for generations at the mercy of the greed and brutality of an oppressive oligarchy.

In PoneLOYa a Nicaraguan friend described an incident he witnessed that said a lot about the difficulties of overcoming this inertia. Shortly after the victory, the Sandinistas offered to help the local fishermen by supplying boats and nets. This was probably part of a general plan to improve the fishing industry and reduce reliance on meat, since cattle grazing requires relatively large amounts of land which could be used more productively to raise crops. A general assembly was called in the town, and the fishermen were asked what to get together and make a list of what they needed. Twenty-five fishermen formed a cooperative which was provided with nets, boats, and motors so that the fishermen

could easily reach the deeper waters where fish are more plentiful. However, within a matter of weeks, most of the equipment had been lost or destroyed, and the cooperative had only five members left. In this case, it seems that the people had every opportunity to organize themselves independently to improve their living conditions, without interference or orders from on high to comply with. In general, I got the feeling that there were more possibilities for autonomous self-organization than many people were ready or willing to take advantage of (if only because the Frente lacks the cadre to administer as much as they would like).

Neither Socialism nor the Gulag — yet

Nicaragua is not a free socialist society, nor are the Sandinistas capable of leading the country in that direction. The reasons are not solely due to the economic backwardness of the country, or its isolation in facing the imperatives of the world market and U.S. imperialism, as leftists often claim. The Frente has firmly taken hold of the state apparatus, which it manages in the name of the people. The argument put forth by Frente defenders who claim that "the state is the people," and that any opposition to the Sandinista rule "plays into the hands of imperialism," follows the same logic that has blinded socialists to the dangers of vanguardism and the reality of totalitarian regimes time and time again. Historically, this blindness has led to the disillusionment of whole generations of revolutionaries when it became clear that the self-proclaimed vanguards they supported had turned their "socialist paradises" into prison camps where the most basic human rights

are violated as a matter of course, always "in the name of the people."

U.S. anti-Sandinista campaigns are creating a context which may well lead the Nicaraguan government to adopt increasingly totalitarian methods, and in which these methods will be harder and harder to resist. But Nicaragua is certainly *not* the totalitarian nightmare that rabid opponents of the *Frente*, both from the right and the libertarian left*, pretend it had become.

It is important for those of us who stand for a world free of hierarchical authority and capitalist social relations, to look not only at the *political structure* that has resulted from the Nicaraguan revolution, but also to recognize the *material forces* that can strengthen libertarian tendencies. Anarchists and libertarian socialists often fail to recognize these forces in their haste to point out what the leftists refuse to admit, namely, the persistence of the fundamental institutions that define capitalist and state-capitalist (or state-socialist) social structures: wage-labor, hierarchical state power controlled by a privileged elite, and the world market.

I have tried to point out some of the ways in which the Nicaraguan revolution had created opportunities for people to experience greater freedom, to taste the pleasure of exercising collective and individual power over their lives, however fleeting and limited these experiences may be. It is in these terms, I believe, that we should define our position on the events in Nicaragua.

— Caitlin Manning

* See, for example, the writings of Rafael Pallais on Nicaragua.

Clusters of glass, concrete and brick highrises sprout up for miles in all directions — visible amid the gritty haze. Beyond the skyscrapers and freeways, and spread over thousands of acres of landscape, are the factories that have made Sao Paulo into one of the world's major centers of industrial

production. But not everyone has benefitted equally from Brazil's growth. Not that much of the increased wealth has "trickled down" to the working class and "marginalized" poor peo-

Brazil's economic crisis and the 'new workers movement'

ple at the base of society. In 1960 the wealthiest 10% of Brazil's people received 39.6% of the national income, but by 1980 they were gobbling up 50.9%. Infant mortality has risen to 133 deaths per 1000 births — one of the highest rates in Latin America (for example, the rate in Mexico is 60 per 1000). Only 30% of Sao Paulo's homes are connected to sewers and only half have running water. About a third of Sao Paulo's workforce make less than \$75 a month.

Brazil is one of a number of "Third World" countries whose growth in the post-war era has brought it to the status of an industrialized nation. Today, the Sao Paulo region alone has greater production than all but 16 nations. During the 1970s, the average per capita income of Brazil grew by 295% — to \$1,959. With 130 million people, it is Brazil's large domestic market that has been the main target of Brazil's manufacturers.* For example, during the 1970s, the number of Brazilian homes with refrigerators and TVs doubled.

Brazil's rapid economic expansion in the 1960s and 1970s had been predicated upon low wages in a period of expanding market demand, which provided the surplus that could be re-invested in new plant. For example, wages at GM's Brazilian operations were only 8%

* Manufactured goods only make up 3% of Brazil's exports. Even when Brazil's principal exports — agricultural and mineral products — are taken into consideration, Brazil's economy is less dependent on exports than is that of the U.S. Only 9% of Brazil's GNP is export-related.

of total costs—compared to over 35% in the U.S.

The root cause of Brazil's current economic crisis is the same as for the rest of the capitalist world. The post-war boom led to so much productive capacity being built up—in Europe, the U.S., Japan, and newly industrialized countries like Brazil, Taiwan and South Korea—that the world market is saturated, and profitable operation has become more difficult. The world-wide slump has also affected Brazilian companies, lowering their revenues. And a world of less growth—and lower profits—has raised interest rates. Having run up the world's largest debt (\$90 billion), the

powers-that-be in Brazil are being squeezed by the world economic crisis. The country's rulers find themselves caught between the demands of the international bankers and the aspirations of a militant working class.

Total industrial output in Brazil may have fallen as much as 10% in 1982—the official figure looks so bad the government refuses to release it. As in the U.S., the crisis has especially affected the auto and steel industries. Steel production in Brazil dropped 15% in 1980-82 and auto production fell by 26%.

In Santa Madalena, a working class neighborhood on the fringes of Sao Paulo's industrial sprawl, the



After workers took to the streets to protest unemployment and wage/benefit

crisis is reflected in the fact that one out of four wage-earners are out of work. It is estimated that there are over 750,000 unemployed in Sao Paulo.* And 40% of Brazil's workers are "underemployed." Yet, 1,100 people arrive in Sao Paulo every month looking for work. Brazil's rapid industrialization has also prompted internal migration, as people move to industrial centers looking for employment.

But many of those who migrated

* According to Jackson Diehl, "Sao Paulo: Megalopolis Producing Strikes and Squalor as Well as Autos," *Manchester Guardian*, July 31, 1983.

to Sao Paulo looking for steady employment in the booming industries ended up in the shantytowns (*favelas*), populated largely by people with no regular source of income. The first shacks in the Santa Amelia shantytown in Sao Paulo were built in 1971 on land owned by the government and earmarked for a future highway. That first colony of shacks were built on the sly, often at night. Since then, Santa Amelia has grown by 1000%. Sao Paulo now has over half a million illegal squatters and homeless people. It was a protest march of unemployed people from the Santa Amelia shantytown that touched off the rioting last April.



cuts, Brazil started stalling on its pledge to implement economic austerity.

To the people in the *favelas*, it's hard to perceive the difference between the present economic crisis and the earlier "boom." "There's always an economic crisis," said Iraci Pereira de Andrade, a six-year resident of the Santa Amelia shantytown. "It's the same as always. There are days when people have enough to eat and days when they don't have any."* The long-standing frustrations and broken expectations in the *favelas* are a powder-keg of potential rebellion.

* Quoted in "Brazilians Dream of Leaving the Shantytowns" by Jackson Diehl, *Manchester Guardian*, Aug. 7, 1983.

The New Workers' Movement

Brazil's rapid capitalist growth, and the new patterns of employment and internal migration that it has created, have also shaped a new working class. The militancy and aspirations of this class provide the main constraint on what response Brazil's bosses and government leaders can conjure up to deal with their crisis.

The wave of strikes in 1978, 1979 and 1980 were a clear statement of this class's independence and organization. In 1980, in the mass strike of 200,000 metal workers in the "ABC" suburbs of Sao Paulo (Santo Andre, Sao Bernardo do Campo, Sao Caetano do Sul), "were manifested," observed Claudio Miranda,



"practices of autonomy and self-organization... the fact of their having maintained their strike for 41 days, without the use of pickets and in totally adverse conditions (the army in the streets, intervention by the unions, imprisonment of principal militants) which demonstrated clearly to the authorities, to the Left, and to anyone who wanted to see it, the force and capacity of self-organization of the most advanced sector of the Brazilian working class."*

The 1980 strike wave came during a period of government liberalization or *abertura* ("opening"). Nonetheless, the State repression during those strikes indicated how limited the government's "opening" was.

The first inklings of the "libertarian and autonomous" tendencies (in Claudio Miranda's words) of the new movement actually emerged in the "Osasco" and "Contragem" strikes in 1968, which included the following events:

- the strikes were accompanied by occupation of the factories
- practices of self-management (such as running the canteens themselves)
- taking the bosses hostage (at Osasco)
- self-defense groups were formed against police invasion
- strike co-ordination by committees elected in general assemblies and independent of the union leadership.*

"This tentative development was rudely interrupted by [subsequent] state violence, especially during the four years of the Medice govern-

* "Características del Movimiento Obrero y Popular en Brasil," *Bicicleta*, Feb. 1981, p. 43.

* Claudio Miranda, p. 41

Manufacturing as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product

	1960	1970
Brazil	26%	28%
USA	25%	24%

Gross Domestic Investment as percentage of Gross Domestic Product

	1960	1970
Brazil	22%	23%
USA	11%	19%

Average annual increase in Gross Domestic Investment

	60s	70s
Brazil	7%	10.1%
USA	4.8%	1.9%

Average annual increase in Gross National Product

	60s	70s
Brazil	5.4%	8.4%
USA	4.3%	3%

Average annual increase in energy production

	60s	70s
Brazil	8.3%	7.3%
USA	3.7%	0.7%

ment. Imprisonment, tortures, murders, censorship, patriotic propaganda everywhere — that was the tonic of those years."* Not until the *abertura* of the late '70s did those early beginnings bear fruit.

The new workers' movement emerged in a political vacuum in the aftermath of the military coup d'état of 1964 (aided by the CIA and the AFL-CIO's American Institute for Free Labor Development) which overthrew the reform-oriented populist government of Goulart.

After the military coup, the systematic repression that hit the populists, the Left, and, above all, the workers' movement — where some sectors had radicalized their demands and escaped reformist [e.g. Communist Party] control — completed the destruc-

* Claudio Miranda, p. 41



Brazilian Anarchist Press Fund Appeal

Brazilian anarchists are trying to rebuild the anarchist movement in Brazil under difficult but hopeful conditions. The British Direct Action Movement, together with the Black Cross, have volunteered to supply the group "O Inimigo do Rei" with an offset press. "O Inimigo do Rei" [The Enemy of the King] is a network of anar-

chist groups in several Brazilian cities who publish a newspaper of the same name.

Any donations should be sent to:

**Brazil Press Fund
Manchester DAM
Autonomy Center
c/o Raven Press
8-10 Great Ancoats Street
Manchester 4, England**

tion of the traditional populist and reformist leadership who, until then, had hegemony in the mass movement. The later failure of the militarist [guerrillaist] Left reinforced the situation of a profound political vacuum existing among the workers, who were disillusioned with the bitter fruits of reformist politics. (Claudio Miranda, p. 41)

A Another factor in the evolution of the new workers' movement in Brazil is the tradition of "corporatist" unionism, which began under the Vargas dictatorship in the 1930s. Like his model, Benito Mussolini, Vargas had espoused an ideology of labor/capital cooperation under direct state control. The "unions" created by the State had no independence of the State and only came into existence after the destruction of the anarchist and independent unions that had existed up until then.

Bureaucratic unionism, based on a union structure separate from the rank-and-file, was continued in later years and created a stratum of labor officials who could be used to control the working class. In no other country in Latin America (with the possible exception of Cuba) are unions as tightly regulated as in Brazil. Laws establish their organizational structure, elections, etc. Laws permit the government to appoint a trustee to run a union if it deems that a law has been violated (e.g. the appointment of a general as head of the principal unions in the country during the general strike last July). The existence of this bureaucratic system has meant that the new workers movement has often had to develop means of organizing the struggle independent of the unions

(as in the Osasco and Contragem strikes in '68).

The Workers Party

One political reflection of the new workers' movement has been the rise of the Workers' Party (PT). A radical party that advocates "participatory democratic socialism," the PT is not a party of the Marxist-Leninist variety. The PT, Claudio Miranda observes, "was born out of the initiative of combative unionists and popular leaders, not professional bourgeois politicians, for responding to diverse popular needs. The PT, in spite of using the form of a 'party', advocates a practice where it does not pretend to substitute itself for the workers but encourages their struggles, their rank-and-file organizations, and serves as a space for discussion, of exchange of experiences. Also, the PT gives a secondary role to electoral or parliamentary struggles. . . . Without doubt, the PT expresses, at least at the present moment, the existing level of consciousness, organization and combativity of important sectors of the Brazilian workers' movement."*

Nonetheless, "precisely because of its existence as a 'party', the PT suffers from limitations and contradictions," as Miranda says. A political party necessarily puts emphasis on changing state policy, and no matter how radical it may be initially, it will tend to orient itself, in the long run, to putting its leadership into power or accommodating others who have power. A party tends to put certain people forward as "leaders" of the movement — people like metal workers' leader Luis Inacio ("Lula") da Silva — which creates the possibility of a bureaucracy that

* Claudio Miranda, p. 43



acquires interests apart from those it claims to "represent."

The new workers' movement in Brazil is, in any event, not a creation of the PT, which is but one outgrowth of that movement.

The July Strikes

It is the new workers' movement that has provided the main opposition to the government's plans for dealing with the country's financial crisis.

Facing higher interest rates and a weak market for its principal exports, Brazil has found itself in an impossible financial situation. To get emergency loans from the vultures of the International Monetary Fund, it is necessary to implement the austerity measures routinely demanded by the IMF. The proposed austerity measures included: an end to fringe benefits for all new hires at government-owned companies, a 20% budget cut in the government-owned sector, an end to government sub-

sidies of gasoline and bread prices, and limiting wage increases to 83% of the rise in the cost of living. This last measure especially spelled disaster for working people in a country where inflation was been running at an annual rate of 150% as of July. The government of President Joao Figueiredo initially agreed to the IMF demands in February.

Then came the unemployed riots in Sao Paulo in April and the government began to waver on its intention to implement the austerity measures. In mid-May the IMF responded by stopping payment on the second half of its emergency loan. When the government finally did begin to implement the austerity policy, 1,100 workers went on strike July 7th at the Petrobras refinery in Paulinia — the largest refinery in the country. 4,000 workers then struck the refineries at Bahia and Sao Paulo and 7,000 workers threatened strikes at other Petrobras plants (Petrobras is the big government-owned oil monopoly in

Brazil). With the government's elimination of fringe benefits for new hires (as part of the cost-cutting policy), workers feared that the State bosses would force them out so as to hire new people without the same benefits.

100,000 metal workers in the Sao

—sell-out union leaders like Joaquin dos Santos Andrade, who got his start running the Metal Workers' Union for the dictatorship after the coup in '64—were able to get the meeting to call off the strike, substituting a symbolic one-day national general strike for July 21st. In the ab-

"More than 500 women looted a grocery store in Brazil's drought-ravaged northeastern region, taking seven tons of food, a local government spokesman said."

— San Francisco Chronicle Sept. 23, 1983

Sao Paulo industrial suburbs shut down the foreign-owned auto plants and large Brazilian-owned factories in sympathy with the refinery workers. Bus drivers and chemical workers soon joined the strike. Workers at the government-owned Banco do Brasil threatened to stop clearing checks. 20,000 workers took part in a protest rally in a soccer stadium, chanting "Stop the austerity measures or we will stop Brazil."* It was no longer just an action by a particular sector—the Petrobras workforce—but had become an action of workers as a class.

The strike initiative had come from the rank-and-file but the union leadership soon entered the fray to moderate the class confrontation that had developed.

On July 9th, on the third day of the mass strike, a heated meeting of 160 union representatives took place in the Metal Workers' Union headquarters in Sao Paulo, including representatives of all the major unions. Community party hacks and *pelegos*

sense of adequate rank-and-file organization independent of the union bureaucracy, the momentum of the strike was broken.

The government responded to the call for a national general strike by banning any press mention of the strike call. The military was put in control of the principal unions a week before the strike was to begin. The day before the strike, 12 leading militants were arrested. The day of the strike 400 more were arrested and the cops began kicking workers out of their usual meeting places, such as a church near the Ford and Volkswagen plants.

Nonetheless, the largest city in Latin America was brought to a halt. 80% of Sao Paulo's one million industrial workers were on strike for the day. The subway was closed down for six hours. Also, in Rio de Janeiro, 50,000 people demonstrated, and protests took place in other cities.

The demands of the general strike included: a rejection of the IMF demands, an end to the Law of National Security which effectively

* "Massive Strikes Rock Brazil," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 9, 1983.

denies all civil rights, freedom to engage in union activity without state control or intervention, and reduction of the workweek to 40 hours.

Banks on the edge

Even sectors of Brazilian capital are urging default in this situation. Since the strike, the Brazilian na-

tional legislature has passed a resolution urging rejection of the IMF demands.

Nonetheless, the Brazilian ruling class is caught in a difficult situation. If Brazil chooses default, Brazilian-



Sindicato dos Trabalhadores
Metalúrgicos de São Paulo

DIA 21

GREVE GERAL

- CONTRA O DESEMPREGO
- PELA SOBERANIA NACIONAL
- PELA DEMOCRACIA E A PARTICIPAÇÃO DOS TRABALHADORES NA MUDANÇA DA POLÍTICA ECONÔMICA.

NOSSA GREVE GERAL SERÁ DE UM DIA, ÀS ZERO HORA DO DIA 21 DE JULHO (SÁBADO), 24 HORAS ONDE TODOS OS TRABALHADORES DE TODAS AS CATEGORIAS DEVEM ESTAR JUNTOS:

- CONTRA A ATUAL POLÍTICA ECONÔMICA QUE GERA O DESEMPREGO, OS BAIXOS SALÁRIOS E A ALTA DO CUSTO DE VIDA;
- CONTRA O EXPULSÃO DOS SALÁRIOS QUE TRAZ MAIS ARROCHO E MISÉRIA;
- CONTRA AS AMEAÇAS DE EXTINÇÃO DO 13º SALÁRIO E MODIFICAÇÕES NA APOSENTADORIA;
- PELA MORATÓRIA E CONGELAMENTO DA DÍVIDA EXTERNA;
- QUEREMOS ESTABILIDADE NO EMPREGO E CONDIÇÕES DIGNAS DE TRABALHO;
- QUEREMOS O FIM DOS PACOTES, QUE NADA TRAZEM DE BENEFÍCIOS À CLASSE TRABALHADORA E SÓ MARGINALIZAM AS NECESSIDADES BÁSICAS E HUMANAS DOS TRABALHADORES.

A GREVE GERAL SERÁ DE UM DIA, A PARTIR DAS ZERO HORA DO DIA 21 DE JULHO AGORA MAIS DO QUE NUNCA É PRECISO ORGANIZAÇÃO E UNIDADE. TODOS DEVEM PARTICIPAR COM OS COMPAÑHEIROS. EM CADA BANCADA, EM CADA SEÇÃO, EM CADA FÁBRICA, COM FAMILIARES E AMIGOS, NO LAR, NO ÔNIBUS, NAS RUAS, A IMPORTÂNCIA DA GREVE GERAL.

ASSEMBLÉIA GERAL - DIA 15

O Sindicato está convocando todos os companheiros para uma assembleia geral da categoria em 15 de julho, às 19 horas, na sede do Sindicato, Rua Galvão Bueno, 780 - Liberdade. Nessa assembleia também serão escolhidos os delegados que irão participar do ENCLAT e a diretoria do Sindicato apresentará um balanço das atividades realizadas após o 4º CONGRESSO.

NÃO FALTE.

DIA 15 (SEXTA-FEIRA) ÀS 19 HORAS NA SEDE ESCOLA DO SINDICATO
R. GALVÃO BUENO, 780 - LIBERDADE

AJUDE A ORGANIZAR A LUTA

TODOS JUNTOS LUTANDO PELA SOBERANIA NACIONAL. POR UMA NOVA POLÍTICA

owned planes and ships would be subject to seizure in foreign ports, on claims by the social parasites who run the banks. U.S. banks, in particular, have a lot at stake. Nine of the biggest U.S. banks have an average of 57% of their total capital on loan to Brazil. U.S. banks, says *Business Week* (7/25/83), "could live with a 90-day halt in payments on principal if that led to an orderly re-scheduling of debts but not with a longer delay, which would force them to take massive write-downs of their assets."

"active strikes" for self-management in Poland in 1980-81 and the take-over of workplaces in Chile in 1972 in response to an attempted lock-out by the business associations.

But even if a united working class were to challenge the bosses for control of Brazil's industrial capacity, and begin to re-organize the country's economy to produce for the direct benefit of the people, the people of Brazil would still be subject to the dictates of the capitalist world market so long as their movement for

"Proving that blood can indeed be extracted from a stone, U.S. banks are making fat profits out of financially strapped Brazil. Last year, Citibank earned 20% of its world-wide income in Brazil, and Chase Manhattan pocketed a nifty \$25 million from local cruzeiro business alone."

— Business Week Aug. 22, 1983

From militancy to social change?

Whatever the ultimate scenario, it appears that crisis conditions and increasing working class militancy, throughout the "southern cone" of South America, poses the possibility of an international workers' movement emerging that can end the region's subordination to the dictates of capitalist austerity and the authoritarianism of local regimes.

The dependence of the society on the work-a-day activity of the people in the factories, refineries and other centers of work gives to the workforce a unique position in the fight for social change—a fact demonstrated in events as geographically diverse as the general strikes and

change is not part of a change of the system as a whole—a system that is international in its economic relations and military power blocs. To alleviate the dependency on regions that are still subject to an exploitative social order, a revolution has to encompass at least a large, multinational region with a complementary mix of resources, technology and skills. The fact of re-emerging militancy in the other countries of the "southern cone"—for example, the miner occupations in Bolivia's state-owned mining company—at least suggests the potential for a revolutionary change that breaks out of the confines of a single nation and unites workers throughout the region.

— Tom Wetzal

Note: *The following article, authored by Brian Kane, is a reply to Tom Wetzel's "Brazil's economic crisis and the 'new workers movement'." Both authors are members of the Information Network on Latin America.*

...and the other sides of rebellion

Tom Wetzel's article requires a balancing view.

His focus on workers (qua workers) and the economy omits other actors and other forces which need to coalesce in order for an anti-authoritarian movement to be successful.

Among other factors there is an extremely large, though increasingly encroached upon, indigenous population in Brazil, reasonably, see urbanization/industrialization as a destroyer, not only of their culture, but of the earth & environment which supports their culture.

In self-defense, indigenous people have taken steps to oppose this encroachment/destruction. This has included seizure of land on which their ancestors lived and armed self-defense against "pioneers." Within the movement of indigenous opposition a debate rages. Some indigenous people have chosen electoral/party politics through the PDT (Democratic Workers' Party) as a means by

which to raise their grievances. Others see the electoral process as part and parcel of the ruling process and see the need for direct action/direct democracy as a cure for the bargains that the Eastern Bloc and the Western Bloc allow.

Elsewhere, in the shantytowns the papers here report haphazardly about the ongoing collective looting of food and other items. Some parties near the left blame the right for trying to frame them as an excuse for further repression. At this point this activity seems to be under nobody's control and is an immediate and breaking down of the commodity relationship. And, since a policeman complained about their presence as a front, the looting seems to be carried out mostly by women and youth.

Also, from the shanty-towns a youth culture of opposition has grown from 1977 - parallel with the punk movement everywhere. In fact, one Sao Paulo's respected dailys seemed to blame the April riots on the punks with the banner headline, "Panic in S.P. - Punk Prophecy Comes True." The punk scene also seems to

be divided between the electoral types who *support* the PDT (or PT) and those of a more nihilistic inclination reflected in the names of some of the groups (such as Coquetel Molotov) and their activities (loads of punks did participate in the rioting).

For at least part of the year Brazil is looked upon as one of the most if not the most hedonistic of places. The carnival is participated in by all but this latent allowed paganism carries over "underground" the rest of the year. There is a lesbian/gay movement in Brazil which does not simply address itself to its sexuality but takes this as a starting point to address problems of power. One such group, Grupo de Acao Lesbico-Feminista says of itself that "we have fought to create an organization without authority figures."

Last and least known about are the ecology groups which probably reflect at least in some corners, a concern for problems of domination and exploitation.

The important unknown about all these disparate opposition elements including that part of the "working"-class who are truly operating autonomously is how their specific oppositions

fuel each others and a more general opposition - if they do.

— Brian Kane

Information gleaned from:
Connexions
4228 Telegraph Avenue
Oakland, CA 94609

Chana com Chana (Cunt to Cunt)
Grupo de Acao Lesbico-Feminista
Caixa postal 293, Sao Paulo, S.P.
Brazil

Maximum Rock 'n' Roll
P.O. Box 288
Berkeley, CA 94701

Antonio Bivar
rua Dona Verdiana, 410, apt. 63
Sao Paulo
Brazil

Cultural Survival, Inc.
11 Divinity Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138

Venezuela: The Prospects for Anarchism

Note: The following article, authored by Venezuelan anarchists, is translated from the Mexican paper El Compita.

It would be too presumptuous of us to prescribe the guidelines of any expansion of a native anarchist movement [in Venezuela] because, for one thing, that expansion and development will be determined by the activities of groups that come together and fall apart in accord with the dynamics of events as they emerge; for another thing, since Venezuela does not share the anarchist history peculiar to other parts of the continent, such as Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay, Peru, etc., we have no handy point of departure, no historical reference to wield its fascination over up and coming generations of revolutionaries and those advocating social change.

The history of Venezuela is the history of a country shackled by the dark dungeons of a prolonged dictatorship which, to all intents and purposes, persisted up until the early 1960s. Officially, the Gomez tyranny ended in 1936, but Gomez-ism continued to rule the roost for a further nine years, at which point a civilian/military coup of a populist nature, and led by the founders of *Accion Democratica*, ousted the old cabal linked with the tyrant Gomez who was then out of power.

In 1948 the military seized power and launched a despotic experiment that persisted for a whole decade.

Bourgeois Democracy and the Left

After 1958, Venezuela entered a period of bourgeois democracy. About the same time and under the influence of the Cuban Revolution, the Venezuelan Revolutionary Movement, urged on by the Communists obedient to Moscow, hastened to launch an armed struggle from which they emerged decimated and in disarray. That defeat led directly to the splintering of the Left. The old Communist Party watched as its youth wing broke away and most of its cadres drifted, by 1970, into the MAS (Movement Towards Socialism)—a movement advocating a socialism owing no obedience to any of the power-bases of the so-called “real” socialism. Another group by the name of *La Causa Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Cause) emerged, with views akin to those of the MAS but with more pronounced libertarian stirrings. Then again, still on the scene are tiny groups fiercely loyal to Marxist-Leninist precepts and professing obedience to China, Albania, Cuba, etc., but their roots in the ranks of the populace are exceedingly few. Another group to be considered is the so-called PRV (Party of the Venezuelan Revolution), led by Douglas Bravo, and having its origins in those who would not agree to return to the fold of the Venezuelan CP. The PRV, now deeply committed to above-ground politics, pursues a policy substantially different from the policies of other Venezuelan leftist groupings. Recent de-



bates within the PRV have made noises favorable to a libertarian brand of socialism and its theoretical journal has carried discussion articles arguing for the superiority of Bakunin's ideas over Marx's scholasticism.

Such then, in broad outline, is the panorama of the left in Venezuela. The labor movement, though, is subject to the hegemony of *Accion Democratica* exercised through the CTV (Confederation of Workers of Venezuela), the leader in the realm of trade union bureaucracy.

Also, still around are a few worker groupings controlled by the Communists, or the Christian Democrats; there is even one that is a perfect model of trade union gangsterism.

In the past decade, however, the labor movement has come together, as shown in prolonged and spectacular strikes, which, alas, have been ended by repressive measures by employers and the government. There is an autonomist strand within the labor movement and there we can detect libertarian awakenings and even

the odd councilist group (these, though, have no influence within the larger context of the overall working class in Venezuela).

The installation of a bourgeois democracy in 1958 had led to the burgeoning of a middle class with university background which has owed its advancement to the needs of public and private enterprises to call upon suitably qualified personnel to run their business. Even this middle class displays some libertarian stirrings such as neighborhood associations and ecology groups. But their effect is mainly legalistic — there is no questioning of the State as such.

Petroleum Power

Such is the all-pervasive role of petroleum in Venezuelan life that ignorance of it is tantamount to ignorance of the country itself. Hydrocarbon production was nationalized in 1975, and before that the Venezuelan state profited from the royalties of the oil industry. By means of earnings from its hydrocarbon resources, Venezuela has been able to equip itself with an economic and

social infrastructure, which, while still inadequate, would not be there at all if it weren't for the petroleum earnings.

Before petroleum, Venezuela was an agrarian nation no better off than Paraguay or Central America. The petroleum-producer Venezuela and its state is father and mother to all its subjects, and has pursued paternalism and maternalism so vigorously that nothing—absolutely nothing—is conceivable except in terms of that omnipresent State. Inured in this setting, Venezuelans have been conditioned to seek their salvation from the upper echelons of the country, and in Venezuela statism is the official religion.

The emergence of a native bourgeoisie, protected by the vast financial assets of the State, has similarly been a result of the action of the State. The Venezuelan private firm accounts for a small percentage of economic activity as yet, but recent forecasts indicate a major upsurge in private enterprise.

Such, then, are roughly the socio-economic realities of Venezuela today.

The Realm of Ideas

In Venezuela the ideological field has until very recently been dominated by Marxism... and not even by true Marxism at that but a Soviet-style version, introduced into the country after 1917, which has ruled the roost in the university chairs. Only when the left began to splinter did a vaguely libertarian banner (and not a specifically anarchist one) get hoisted. The Marxist "clerics," even those of heterodox views, have made it their business to promote propaganda against anarchism. Thus, in Venezuela anarchism is synonymous with chaos, disorder, violence, etc.

And some *companeros*, likewise influenced by heterodox Marxism, argue that those of our persuasion should drop the label "anarchist" in favor of "libertarian." Despite everything, we were able, a few years ago, to launch courses on anarchism at Caracas University's School of Philosophy. The lectures were attended not only by students but also by folk connected with social and political movements.

We might say that, just as heter-

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SIN PATRON



odox Marxism is of recent birth, it will be some time yet before anarchism finds expression in any organized movement. But that does not mean that it is not an influence constantly working upon debate within leftist movements. Because of the various obstacles presented by the specific environment of Venezuela, a Venezuelan brand of anarchism, when it does emerge, cannot be tied to any one school of anarchist belief. This means that there will be some *companeros* active in unions and pushing in a libertarian direction

while others might prefer instead cultural activity or work at the neighborhood level. For example, some *companeros* who subscribe to the anarcho-syndicalist view have come together to form a Venezuelan section of the International Workers' Association. The range of tendencies tends to bring dispersion of effort instead of leading to organic unity. So far, attempts to reach organizational unity have come to nothing. Anarchism is still as yet a novelty for Venezuela and can withstand such diversity. □

Workers' Rights in the Cuban 'paradise'

What is the current state of workers' rights in Cuba? A few incidents reported in the Cuban libertarian magazine *Guangara Libertaria* give us an indication.

In 1981 40 Cubans were arrested for trying to form a "free union;" five were sentenced to death by a provincial "Popular Tribunal" last January 25th. Amnesty International soon took up the case of the five youths (ages 19-26) and the resulting publicity created something of an international scandal. As a result, the five condemned men — Carlos Garcia Diaz, Angel Donato Martinez, Jose Luis Diaz Romero, Ezequiel Diaz Rodriguez, and Benito Garcia Olivera — had their sentence commuted to 30 years in prison.

However, in March of this year, the Cuban State Security arrested the magistrate who had overruled the death sentence, and four defense at-

torneys as well, for having considered the death sentence to be an excessive punishment.

★ ★ ★

Workers have reportedly also been arrested at the La Tropical brewery for demanding the right to strike. And in a sugar operation in Chaparra, in the center of the country, according to *Guangara Libertaria*, "a group of road workers had successfully organized a union on the basis of mutual aid." But, 30 of them have since been arrested and "five condemned to 30 years in prison."

And in the province of Sancti Spiritus, more than 300 *campesinos* were "beaten and arrested," according to *Guangara Libertaria*, "for setting fire to their production as a protest for having to sell their crops at prices established by the State."

For Freedom in El Salvador

Note: The following is a revised version of a leaflet we handed out at the demonstration July 24 in Concord, California, against U.S. intervention in Central America.

Before last year's elections in El Salvador, the U.S. government justified their support for the local rulers in that country by pointing to the land reform program, which was the political centerpiece of then-president Jose Napoleon Duarte. After Duarte was defeated in the elections by a coalition of rightists, the first act of the new government was to dismantle that semblance of reform. Since then, we're asked to believe that the U.S. is supporting a budding "democracy" in El Salvador since the present government was elected. The lack of secrecy in the voting, the repressive climate, and the fascist sympathies of the new leaders make a mockery of that claim.

It used to be the case that our rulers weren't so fussy about maintaining a facade of "democracy" over their operations in Latin America. Sending in the Marines was more their style—as in the Dominican Republic in 1965 or Nicaragua in 1909-30.

The fact is, any sort of revolution in Central America that aims at greater freedom and equality is going to be opposed by the powers-that-be here in the U.S. That's why opposition to U.S. intervention in Latin America is important for those of us

who want social change in the direction of freedom and equality—no matter what we think of the politics of particular opposition forces in Central America.

The underlying cause of the civil war in El Salvador is class oppression. The class who run the economy and government in El Salvador maintain their wealth and power by the exploitation of Salvadoran workers and *campesinos*. Bosses dominate the economies of every country around the globe—whether they have a capitalist economic set-up, as in El Salvador and the U.S., or a system based on bureaucratic state power, as in Russia and Cuba.

Have you ever heard of a State that didn't exist to defend the interests of the bosses in that country? Even under the best of circumstances, government elections have little to do with people being able to control their own destiny. Such "democracy" just means that the politicians who run the State in the interests of the bosses have to submit to a vote every so often to keep their jobs.

Genuine democracy would mean people determining their own destiny. To us, it doesn't make sense to talk of people having "self-determination" as long as society is divided into order-givers and order-obeyers, exploiters and exploited. It doesn't make any sense because, as long as bosses and landlords,



generals and bureaucrats, exist, most of the people won't have control over their working and living conditions.

Do "national liberation" movements liberate?

There are people who oppose U.S. imperialist actions in Central America who think it's necessary to give uncritical support to the organizations that currently dominate the rebel opposition in El Salvador — the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the Far-

abundo Martí Front for National Liberation (FMLN). We have our doubts.

The FDR is a multi-class coalition, including former members of Salvadoran juntas, that puts forward a "political solution" based on putting into power various politicians. The FDR advocates a "negotiated settlement" to the current civil war — negotiations with the very butchers and authoritarians who run El Salvador now. In short, negotiations in which the future of the Salvadoran people is decided, not by the people

themselves, but by a few politicians and military officers. The program of the FDR talks about "justice," but, in reality, exploitation and the top-down control of society by a minority is left unchallenged.

In the late 1970s, a militant mass movement had begun to develop in El Salvador. Organizations were emerging among *campesinos* and workers were beginning to undertake militant actions in solidarity with each other. For example, in March of 1979 workers at two bottling plants won their demands when STECEL (the electric power workers' union) backed them up by cutting off electricity nation-wide for an hour. Shortly afterward, STECEL was able to win its own demands by taking over the power

their own armed self-defense.

But, as it turned out, the armed struggle in El Salvador was not directly shaped by this mass workers' movement, out of their natural need to defend themselves, but was developed mainly out of small groups of leftists going to the countryside to set up armed bands.

Like other "national liberation" movements, the FMLN is based on a strategy of minority political groupings setting up their own guerrilla armies.

The ultimate reason for the civil strife is the oppressive social conditions, but there are different ways in which revolutionary movements can develop out of such conditions. And the problem is, the Che Guevara-style guerrilla war strategy sets in

"Can anything short of genuine liberation justify all of the courage and sacrifice, blood and tears, of the social war now underway in Central America?"

plants, blacking out the country, and electrifying the fences around the plants for self-protection. In September of the same year, workers occupied five factories in San Salvador and took their managers hostage to prevent an armed intervention by the government's terrorists in uniform.

The general strikes in March and June of 1980, and the mass protests against the murder of Archbishop Romero in April of 1980, marked the culmination of several years of increasing involvement of people in struggle against the powers-that-be. A social climate of virtual popular insurrection posed the possibility of the mass workers' movement directing the revolutionary process through their own organizations and

motion a dangerous social dynamic. In the course of the struggle against the old State-Terrorism, any of the mass organizations working people have formed, such as unions or neighborhood committees, get subordinated to the political/military command of a small cadre of leftist leaders. In our observation, whoever controls the guns in a society controls the factories and farms. And in El Salvador, the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL) — the largest component of the FMLN — has stated that even after the victory over the Salvadoran government, "the weapons of war" will not be in the hands of the mass organizations, such as unions in industry or the *campesinos'* organizations. The "vanguard" will have control over armed violence in

society.

When a revolutionary movement becomes so strong that it fundamentally challenges the entrenched rulers of social and industrial life, it naturally becomes a counter-power to the existing government and established institutions. When the revolutionary change is directed by mass organizations of working people, then the possibility arises that these organizations can become the foundation of direct rule by the population. An example would be the *cordones industriales* formed in Chile in the early 1970s when workers in many enterprises occupied them and took them over. The meetings of workers in the various workplaces began to link up with each other by forming co-ordinating councils (the *cordones*) for districts. These organizations also attempted to arm themselves for self-defense. A development of this sort opens the possibility of becoming the basis for running industry and society through direct democracy and direct popular control.

But when the counter-power that confronts the old state is the top-down military machine of a political party, which is always only a minority of the people, then this new military machine may simply replace the old State-Terrorism with a new state that rules over the people. Sometimes the new rulers make their peace with capitalism, as happened in Algeria. On other occasions, a new form of boss rule, based on State control over the economy, simply replaces the old form of exploitation, as happened in Cuba. Either way, exploitation and the boss/worker hierarchy continue and State repression remains a reality.

We don't deny the genuine cour-

age and sincerity of the individual revolutionaries in Central America. But we also feel that nothing short of genuine liberation can justify all of the courage and sacrifice, blood and tears, of the social war now underway in Central America.

Our doubts about the viability of the dominant revolutionary strategy in El Salvador are sadly relevant when we consider the history of revolution in this century. Numerous "national liberation" revolutions, in such countries as Cuba and China, have merely marked the transition to a new form of class oppression, not based on capitalist private property, but based on top-down control of industrial and social affairs by a class of party/state hierarchs. In 1982 five youths were sentenced to death in Cuba for trying to form an independent union; their sentence was commuted to 30 years only after Amnesty International organized protests.* This is only the latest of many indications of the continuation of oppressive class rule in that country.

We need to be honest about the limitations of the various "national liberation" movements. Many times in the past, activists who have worked for social change have discredited themselves in the eyes of other people because of their support for authoritarian regimes in other countries. Also, many activists have become disillusioned and dropped out when it became clear that oppression and exploitation continued to exist in the countries they had romanticized as a model for social change.

Real improvements in daily life do frequently accompany victorious national liberation movements. Such improvements can be seen a few

* See "Workers rights in the Cuban 'paradise'" in this issue.

miles to the south of El Salvador, in Nicaragua. Though a new state has been built up, at least people can now walk the streets without the intense fear of people in uniforms they felt under Somoza. Opportunities for health care and education have also been expanded.

On the other hand, we know that such improvements in the lives of working people happen, not because of the benevolence of the new rulers, but because of the active involvement of the people in the struggle. Any sort of revolution in which a previously entrenched ruling group is displaced can be expected to create immediate improvements for the

masses of people if only because the support of the people is important for the newly ascendent group to consolidate its hold on power.

However, the new climate of freedom and progress created by the revolution is sure to be temporary if the workers' own mass organizations don't gain control of industry and society. For, we know that the continued existence of the boss/worker hierarchy, under whatever system, guarantees future austerity and authoritarianism in the lives of workers. And we know that the existence of the State guarantees a future for repression and class rule, in some form. All we have to do is look at the



Nicaraguan laws banning strikes and censoring publications. And the signs in Nicaragua saying *Vanguardia, Ordene!* (Vanguard, Give Us Orders!) are obvious testimony to the continued division of Nicaraguan society into those who give orders and those who must obey them.

From self-managed struggle to self-managed society

What's the alternative? We're not objecting to the use of violence by the rebels. The powers-that-be in El Salvador have made it abundantly clear that they'll use any degree of violence to stop even modest changes. The question is: Who's going to be in control of the guns once the smoke clears?

Will the working class in El Salvador hold real social power through mass democratic labor organizations, run directly by the rank-and-file, or will the armed struggle just lead to the creation of a new State — and a new form of class oppression?

The structure of society that emerges from a revolution will be determined by the way the struggle against the powers-that-be was organized. Those who control the process of social reorganization will determine who controls and benefits from the new social set-up. The alternative to building a leftist junta in El Salvador is conducting the armed struggle by means of ■ mass workers' militia, organized by — and responsible to — the mass organizations of working people, such as the unions or other mass democratic bodies that working people form. That way, the people could ensure that they end up in power, instead of finding out after years of bitter struggle that they've just hoisted into power a new class of bu-

reaucrats, bosses and generals.

This concept of workers' self-defense is not without roots in Latin America. The anarcho-syndicalist labor organizations that were such a major movement for social change in Latin America in the 1920s/30s tended to see the issue of violence in this light.

Instead of the development of an embryonic state based on a leftist military machine, the alternative is the development of a movement for change in which the masses of working people are able to direct the process of change and all aspects of the struggle against the powers-that-be, including any armed fight. The emergence of workers' mass movements that pose a real democratic alternative to class rule happens every so often in countries all over the globe. The similarity between the *cordones industriales* formed in Chile in 1972 and the Interfactory Strike Committees formed in Poland in August 1980, and their similar methods of workplace occupation and direct rank-and-file control of the process of struggle, bear testimony to the possibility of an internationally unified system of direct workers' self-management of social and industrial life, not created by a leftist "vanguard" taking power "on behalf of" the people, but through direct, democratic organization and action of working people themselves.

Change must be international

In their fight against oppression, the revolutionary movement in El Salvador faces a system that is international in scope. Through the world market, the multi-national companies, the international military power blocs and financial

institutions, the system that oppresses the Salvadoran people—capitalism—has become so international that its workings are beyond the power of any single nation to control.

This implies that a strictly nationalist movement to “liberate” a single country will find itself confronted with virtually insurmountable difficulties. How many of the things the people of El Salvador want and need are made in that country? And how would they get the things that aren’t made in their country if the local revolution succeeds? Will they try to make a deal to satisfy the local bosses and foreign bankers and corporations? The other possibility is dependency on the bureaucratic bosses in the USSR. Either way, “self-determination” proves illusive.

Change must be international be-

America as a base for counter-revolution is the extension of the revolution to all of Central America, and especially to Mexico, which has the potential—in resources, skills, industry and numbers of people—to make a decisive difference in fighting for genuine liberation in that region.

What can we do?

What can working people in one country do in support of those engaged in struggle in another country? Instead of relying on the promises of politicians, in this country or anywhere else, the most effective form of solidarity, and the most effective way to fight for social change, is through direct action. The blockade at Port Chicago—a military facility used for loading weapons cargo bound for Central American—is a step in the right direction.

Actually, the people whose labor

“Will the working class in El Salvador hold real social power through mass democratic labor organizations, run directly by the rank-and-file, or will the armed struggle lead to the creation of a new state — and a new form of class oppression?”

cause people all over the globe are dependent on the productive activity of people in other countries. What’s needed is a movement that can re-organize social and industrial life on the basis of democratic self-management, united on an international scale.

Such a movement could only come from working people acting together across national boundaries in struggles all forms of hierarchy and exploitation.

The best remedy to the use of Honduras or other countries in Central

is necessary to the manufacture and transport of the instruments of death are in the best position to do something about it.

In the late 1970s, when the Argentine government directed its “dirty war” against the labor movement and the left, Spanish sailors decided to support Argentine sailors, and others in that country who were being repressed, by refusing to move any ships with arms destined for Argentina. Later they extended the ban to all Latin American dictatorships.

Here on the west coast, activists in

the ILWU (west coast longshore union) have promoted action to stop shipments of arms to El Salvador through the ports where they work. Indeed, loading of arms onto ships bound for Central America was reportedly moved to the military facility at Port Chicago due to the fear of longshore boycotts at civilian facilities.

As the U.S. sinks deeper into a morass of armed violence to stop movements for social change in Central America, it's possible the U.S. government may decide in favor of large-scale, direct U.S. combat participation. There is already fear of this possibility among enlisted people in the armed forces. Encouraging their disaffection, and linking up their concerns and struggles with those of workers in civilian life, also can undermine the potential of the armed forces as a reliable weapon of U.S. bosses for use in Latin America — or for use against workers here. Disaffection in the armed forces was a factor in the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. There is also the example of the soldiers refusing to co-operate when Nixon tried to use the army to break ■ national postal workers' wildcat strike in 1970.

Other things that people can do (and are doing) include the following:

- workers in companies that do military work discussing the conversion of the places where they work to more useful, non-military uses.
- using all available opportunities, including school classrooms and union meetings, to inform people of the real conditions in Latin America and the real history of the U.S. role there.

The most effective thing we can do is to organize for fundamental social

change here. The U.S. does not intervene in the affairs of countries in Latin America because of "misguided" leaders. The U.S. plays its particular role — propping up repressive regimes all over the globe — because a system based on production for profit, competition, and top-down social control by bosses requires a militaristic policy to maintain the power and wealth of those at the top. The U.S. is going to be militaristic until a social movement emerges here that can challenge the bosses for control of industrial and social life and pose the possibility of re-organizing society on the basis of unified workers' self-management — a society of equals, free of exploitation or authoritarianism. To take away the guns and bombs from the people in power, we have to take away their factories and companies also.

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San Francisco, CA 94102

*Libertarian Aid for
Latin American Workers*

c/o P.O. Box 692
Old Chelsea Station
New York, N.Y. 10113

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Libertarian Latin American Directory

The following is a list of anti-authoritarian publications and groups either in Latin America or of Latin Americans in exile. We have not been in contact with all the groups or publications listed but have compiled this list from various libertarian sources. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list and we intend to publish an updated list as we find out about additional groups or publications.

Fidel Alegre

Casilla de Correo Central 4459
Buenos Aires 1000 Argentina

Centro José Ingenieros

Calle Velazco 958
C.P. 1414 Buenos Aires Argentina

Federación Libertaria Argentina

c/o Carlos Beaufays
1551 Brasil
Buenos Aires 1154 Argentina

Mutantia

Grinberg
Casilla 260, Sucursal 12
1412 Buenos Aires Argentina

Organización Obrera

Calle Salvadores 1200
Buenos Aires Argentina
organ of the Argentine Regional Workers Federation (FORA)

Ato Livre

Caixa Postal 11277, C.E.P. 010000
São Paulo Brasil

Autogestão

C.P. 19241, C.E.P. 01111
São Paulo Brasil

Barbárie

C.P. 2454
40.000 Salvador-Bahia Brasil
libertarian publication

Nicolas Behr

SQS 415, F-303
70.298 Brasília-DF Brasil
poetry books

Edições Mundo Livre

rua Evaristo da Veiga 41, gr. 50
4 Rio de Janeiro Brasil

O Inimigo do Rei

C.P. 2540, C.E.P. 40.000
Salvador-Bahia Brasil

Instituto Municipal de Arte e Cultura

rua Rumania, n.º 20 — Caranheiras
22.240 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil

Os Libertários

Editora A
Caixa Postal 10563
Porto Alegre Brasil

Metanoia

C.P. 6393
40.000 Salvador-Bahia Brasil

Revista Autogestão

Caixa Postal 11277, CEP 95421
São Paulo-SP, Brasil

Viva Eu

Crusp. A. 503
Cidade Universitaria 05508
São Paulo Brasil

Opinión

Apdo. 144
Heredia Costa Rica

Comunidad

P.O. Box 15128
Stockholm Sweden
libertarian magazine by Uruguayan exiles

Acracia

Apartado 599
Cartago Costa Rica, C.A.

Tierra y Libertad

Guilarte Cerrada de Copérnico 5
Ciudad Brisa, Naucalpan Mexico

América Latina Libertaria
Cercle García Lorca
 15 rue Gracieuse
 75005 Paris **France**
publication of the Coordinadora
Libertaria Latino-Americana

Coordinadora Libertaria Latino-Americana
 c/o Cercle García Lorca
 15 rue Gracieuse
 75005 Paris **France**

Grupo Pedro Nolasco Arratia
 c/o Librairie Publico
 145 rue Amelot
 75011 Paris **France**
Chilean libertarian workers in exile

Propuesta Socialista y Libertaria
 c/o Carlo Aguin
 C.P. 120
 20100 Milano **Italia**
Uruguayans in exile



comunidad 36

O URUGUAI DA TORTURA

SITRAS

c/o Carlos I. Castro

Ap. 433

Reus Spain

*Argentine workers and unionists in exile***Alter Com/ILET**

Apartado 85-025

10200 Mexico, D.F. Mexico

Anilu Elias

c/o Augusto Elias

S.A., Niza 1 12 50 Piso

México 6, DF Apdo Postal 32-200

México

Antorcha

c/o Omar Cortes

Apartado Postal 12818

México 12 D.F. México

Caos

c/o Ediciones Antorcha

Apartado Postal 12818

México 12 DF México

tel: 575-05-28

*magazine published by Coordinacion Libertaria de México***El Compita**

Apartado Postal 12-818

12 D.F. México

Coordinacion Libertaria de México

c/o Ediciones Antorcha

Apartado Postal 12818

México 12 DF México

tel: 575-05-28

*publish CAOS magazine***Editores Mexicanos**

Luis González Obregón 5b

México 1, D.F. México

El Rebelde

Apartado Postal 240

Quevetaro, QRO México

Regeneración

Apartado 9090

México 1 D.F. México

*periodical of ideas and combat from the Mexican anarchist federation***Domínguez Rojas**

Apartado Postal M-10596

México 1, D.F. México

Guangara Libertaria

Publication Eclectica del Pensamiento Libertario

P.O. Box 1516, Riverside Station

Miami, Florida USA 33135

*revue by libertarian Cubans in exile***Confluencia**

Box 6029

19106 Sollentuna Sverige

*Uruguayan exiles***Apuntes**

Centro de Documentation e Investigation

Apartado postal 11647

Lima 11 Peru

Creatividad y Cambio

431 Quilea St.

Lima, Peru

*women's group***Ateneu Libertário de Leiria**

R. Dr. António da Costa Santos, 4

2400 Leiria Portugal

Oveja Negra

20th & Valencia

S.F., CA USA 94710

tel: 648-7492

*anti-authoritarian cultural magazine mostly by Cuban exiles.***Ruta**

c/o G. Garcia

Apartado 61881

Caracas Venezuela

Boletín A.I.T.

Apartado 6303

Caracas 101 Venezuela

Open Commission on Latin America

c/o NSF

Post Boks 1735

Vika, Oslo 1 Norway

Solidarity committee of the International Workers Association



