

This planet is our planet—labor & the environment

Page 3



Miners' message to Moscow: "Gorbachev out!"

Page 24

The Freedom Socialist

Voice of Revolutionary Feminism

May-July 1991

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Bush's obscene victory: recession, repression, reaction & ruin

Twenty years after Vietnam, the U.S. Air Force finally got to bomb a Third World country back to the Stone Age.

Iraq was blown to smithereens. Roads, bridges, farms, homes, hospitals, electricity, food warehouses, communications and sewage treatment facilities—wiped out. Between 100,000 and 200,000 Iraqi soldiers and civilians were blasted to shreds by the bombs. Dead mothers and children litter the cities and towns. Water supplies are glutted with poisons and cholera is now upping the body count.

Bush sure struck a blow for freedom, didn't he? In the aftermath of Desert Storm, after Iraqi Kurds and Shiites rose up against Saddam at Washington's prodding, the U.S. sat back and let Saddam massacre them all to hell. Bush wants Saddam out, and was willing that Kurds and Shiites be cats'-paws in the effort to oust him. But Bush wants one of Saddam's Ba'athist generals in the saddle after the smoke clears. Victorious Kurds in Iraq would mean restive Kurds also pressing their legitimate national demands in Turkey, home to the largest U.S. nuclear stockpile in Asia. Shiite gains would stir Islamic fundamentalists from Tehran to Cairo, sorely distressing Bush's Saudi and Egyptian partners in crime.

Sorn of smudges the patriotic after-

glow, doesn't it? All that high-minded garbage out of Washington about "stopping Saddam's aggression"—and now these post-blitz atrocities. Oh well, as Henry Kissinger remarked after the U.S. betrayed the Kurds in the 1970s, U.S. foreign policy isn't about "social work." What it is about in the Mideast is retaining imperialist control of the oil. For this Bush needs compliant dictators, not democracy, in the region.

The hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees on Iraq's northern borders awaiting starvation or slaughter by Saddam are proof of this.

Desert Storm: war for profit.

The U.S. antiwar movement could not stop the slaughter that commenced on January 15. Cries for peace were drowned in the blitz. And oh what a blitz! The Pentagon barked, the media snapped to, and while horror rained on Baghdad a propagandistic carpet-bombing strafed and savaged the USA.

The boys in the international boardrooms *needed* this war, to make plain to a recalcitrant world that their rent-a-cop, the U.S. military, will level the earth to further the interests of Big Oil and the banks. Washington needed this war to rivet attention away from political time-bombs at home.

Big Oil, bankers, and brokers of arms are rich from this war. American workers, and workers abroad, will shoulder the billions it cost.

to page 23



United Nations: camouflage for Desert Storm

It's a tragedy of the Gulf war that so many in the U.S. antiwar movement saw no alternative to Bush's blitzkrieg other than U.N. economic sanctions against Iraq. And even many who favor total U.S. withdrawal from the Mideast think that the solution to the crises there—in the Gulf and in Palestine—will come through U.N. peace negotiations.

These activists mistakenly believe that the U.N. is a forum for all nations, negotiating equally on questions of international importance.

This illusion provided Bush with a handy fig leaf while he prepared to level Iraq.

U.N. impotence against U.S. aggression. But what's the U.N.'s record against other aggressions, those of U.S. client states and the U.S. itself?

- Three examples:
- Southern Africa, early '60s. The U.N. declares South Africa's occupa-

tion of Namibia, like Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, illegal. Washington then pursues "constructive engagement" with Pretoria for 25 years. The apartheid regime meanwhile plunders neighboring Angola. No U.N. action.

• Israel invades Lebanon, 1982. It cluster-bombs Beirut. Presides over massacres of Palestinian refugees. Twenty thousand dead. U.S. vetoes all Security Council measures to end the carnage. No action taken.

• U.S. invades Panama, 1989. Two thousand killed. Hundreds dumped in mass graves. Drug-money-laundering banker Guillermo Endarra installed as Washington's puppet in place of the unreliable drug-runner Noriega. U.N. condemns the invasion and does nothing.

A real international solution. The plundering nature of capitalism

page 23

Dateline Australia

Media censorship—weapon #1 in the war

What were you doing when the war started? Me, I was 450 kilometres from the nearest city, with a group of friends. Melbourne leftists on holiday. We were camped amongst the banksia trees, clearing up breakfast dishes. I tuned to the radio at 11:00 a.m., and we heard Bush's spokesman, Fitzwater, declaring the start of the latest U.S. war. At dinner that night we sat under the stars, amongst the possums, listening to the first attack on Baghdad, frightened to hell at the noise of the bombs, angry as hell at the Butcher of Washington, terrified that Israel was about to launch a nuclear attack on Iraq, mourning for the thousands who were dying.

The self-serving Hussein invaded Kuwait, but the whole thing started 70 years ago, when the British and French carved the Mideast up into have and have-not states, to divide

and conquer the Arab people and keep control of the oil. The Gulf oligarchies got rich making deals with Western oil monopolies; the rest of the Arab world got shafted. The U.S. made Israel a nuclear power; as added insurance against Arab revolt, it armed Arab bourgeois strongmen—Assad, Mubarek, Saddam Hussein—against their own people. All to maintain a "balance of power" and hold onto the oil. And when Saddam, inevitably, threatened that "balance," the U.S., after first assuring him the invasion of Kuwait was okay, moved in to crush him.

Who, if not Bush, is the real Gulf war criminal?

American Century: world-wide rampage. For people in most countries, the world's most evil, barbarous dictator is the President of the U.S. The so-called American Century

to page 22

New Freeway Hall
5018 Rainier Ave. S.
Seattle, WA 98118

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In This Issue

Vol. 12, No. 4

May-July 1991

International

Bush's Gulf victory	1
Dateline Australia	1
U.N. & Gulf war	1
Mideast history	20
Soviet Union	24

Special Supplement

"On the Nature of the Nicaraguan State"	5
---	---

Labor

Merle Woo victory	2
Reporter's free speech	24

National

Jobs vs. ecology	3
Logger's interview	3
Earth First! vs. FBI	3
Freeway Hall Case	4

Features

Sam Deaderick	4
Editorial	20
Clara Fraser column	21
Voices of Color	21

Freedom Socialist Credo

The Freedom Socialist boldly confronts and makes sense of the dizzying events shaping today's revolutionary world.

We're Marxists, Leninists, Trotskyists, feminists, humanists...we believe that all today's gigantic upheavals are links in an enormous global effort to topple the tyranny of imperialism or Stalinist bureaucratism or racist arrogance.

We hail the decisive leadership role played by people of color and by sexual and national minorities in the worldwide class struggle.

We focus on women's non-stop fight for equality which, in the final analysis, challenges every single basis on which capitalism rests. Feminism is essentially an energizing and unifying inducement to international revolutionary upsurge.

Our goal is to make these facts of life apparent. We aim to inject the socialist movement with the revitalizing ideas of Trotskyism and feminism in order to prepare it for victory in this crucial decade.

Staff

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Editorial Assistant

Janet Sutherland

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VALCO Graphics

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The **Freedom Socialist**
Voice of Revolutionary Feminism

Subscribe!

(Use coupon on page 8.)

Letters

Black Panthers

I just bought my first *Freedom Socialist* (Feb.-April '91), which included the article on Malcolm X by former Panther Aaron Dixon. I was happy to discover that Dixon is still active and writing a book on the Black Panther Party. I would like to contact him!
Stagolee
New York City

Anti-fascist

Greetings! This is Christian of Front Range Anti-Racist Action. I received a complimentary copy of the *Freedom Socialist* with a letter requesting our evaluation of the article "United Front repels Neo-Nazi threat" (Vol. 12 #2).

The grammar/writing style and content are all top notch! It's a very good thing to see our brother/sister anti-racist organizations doing such an excellent job protesting and resisting the racist/fascist cancer. Besides United Front Against Fascism, I believe that other anti-racist groups have taken part in these very same instances, with little or no credit given in the article. I hope this was just an oversight.
Christian
Greeley, Colorado

Exodus Freedom Socialist

I have just experienced a month of Scuds.
Kindly stop sending me

sample copies of your anti-Semitic newspaper; I am not interested in receiving them.
Nancy Nachum
Jerusalem

Women workers

I want to share with readers my thrill at the explosive response to the groundbreaking new Radical Women paper "Women Workers—Sparkplugs of Labor" (available from all RW branches; see box on page 22). It was presented this spring at the Marxist Scholars conference in Philadelphia, the Socialist Scholars conference in New York, and the Labor Notes conference near Detroit.

Based on the latest statistics on labor-force demographics, this paper provides the theoretical analysis for a new level of Marxist organizing. Humans are defined under capitalism by their economic role; since the 1950s, women's predominant social role has changed from de-classed and essentially powerless housewife to proletarian leader.

The increase of women from 31% of the workforce in 1954 to over 45% today has changed the nature of the entire American working class—from being dominated by an aristocracy of labor to being composed in the majority by the dispossessed. Women, people of color, and lesbians and gays are well over half of the working class today!

Feminist radicals are teaching the essential lesson that

the majority of today's working class has achieved a new dominance capable of shaking the world.

Betty Maloney
Radical Women Organizer
New York City

She likes us!

I appreciated greatly "On the Nature of the Nicaraguan State" and the article on war in the Mideast (Vol. 12 #3).

I was especially impressed by Clara Fraser's "Long Arabian Nights." Made dozens of copies and distributed them. Hope I have the distinct pleasure of meeting her personally some day and shaking her hand.

Jean Duffy
West Palm Beach, Florida

War resisters

Over thirty of us current war resisters are publishing a newsletter, *The ANTI-WARRIOR*.

The ANTI-WARRIOR will feature stories on prisoners of conscience, info on how you can help resisters facing upcoming trials, and opinion pieces by unapologetic dissidents within the war machine.

Send \$1 for issue #1 to: *The ANTI-WARRIOR*, 48 Shattuck SQ, Box 129, Berkeley, CA 94704.
Jeff Paterson
Berkeley, California

Readers are encouraged to submit letters, news stories, commentary, cartoons, graphics, photographs, and pertinent information on world and national affairs.

Victory No. 3 in Merle Woo's free speech marathon



As we go to press, word has just been received that Merle Woo has beaten the University of California again! On April 25, Woo, fired twice from her lecturer's position at the Berkeley campus, accepted a sweet \$75,000 settlement in lieu of reinstatement to her old job. After firings in 1982 and 1986, Woo's charges of discrimination and retaliation were vindicated both times.

Kudos to Woo, her union, University Council-American Federation of Teachers, and her defense committee for waging and winning the good fight!

The terms of her second reinstatement order, issued in 1989, had read that Woo be returned "to her position as lecturer with full back pay and benefits, seniority, and full

privileges of employment." UC refused to comply. What it offered—one-year positions and a clear indication she wouldn't be subsequently re-hired—was designed to force her to sue for reinstatement until she retired.

Given that, and the fact she'd done what she set out to do at the outset—stymie McCarthyism at UC—Woo pursued the monetary settlement as compensation.

Why did UC want her out so damn bad? Well, she's an Asian American, a lesbian, and a radical. That's three strikes. And she refused to shut up about UC's discriminatory treatment of students, faculty and staff. Unforgivable.

UC likes to posture as a bastion of free speech, spends millions of dollars doing it, and Woo was there to puncture the illusion. She publicly criticized UC's discriminatory practices, helped limit harassment of campus activists, helped her union organize for lecturers' job security, aided in developing a campus Multi-Cultural Lesbian and Gay Studies program, encouraged campus activism, and, naturally, fought discriminatory firings.

To top it, she promoted the need to build a socialist democracy to benefit all the disenfranchised. Definitely unforgivable!

Says Woo, "The fight

against UC was an important testing ground. We proved that we can beat the devil—by building support for free speech and the right to be radical. We won on the issues and prevented campus reaction from taking over."

Her victories have wide ramifications: UC is the largest employer in California, wielding tremendous political and economic clout. It also profits from the war economy by administering the government labs that spit out the U.S. nuclear arsenal. UC prioritizes war over education—and passes war costs onto students and staff: UC's Regents have voted a 40 percent fee hike and 1,000 staff worker layoffs.

Woo says, "The way to defeat UC is expose it as big business and an arm of the government. **We can win by organizing around the need for student, staff, faculty and community control of education.**"

"I'm proud to have contributed to UC's legacy of free speech and civil rights. I look forward to victories won by a new generation of student, staff, and faculty activists." □

Part two

Jobs vs. ecology

A dilemma manufactured by the profit system

Part One of "Jobs vs. Ecology" discussed the debate over the spotted owl, the state of the forests, and the corporate timber barons. This concluding installment looks at conditions for timber workers, the environmental movement, and what action can be taken to preserve both jobs and nature.

Owl vs. Man' was the headline for *Time* magazine's multi-page spread on the bird's listing as a threatened species last year.

'Owl vs. Man.' Them vs. us. Polluters and exploiters like to see environmental issues framed this way, as if a sound ecology were inimical to human interests. If we accept this view, they profit. Meanwhile, we suffer.

Why? Because the "environment" doesn't just include plant and animal subspecies few people have even heard of until their survival is in question. "Environment" also means everything from where toxic waste is dumped to the fact that our immune systems are weakened by the degradation of the planet's ozone layer.

The environment's quality means life or death for working people. Ecology is our issue, and we need to *claim* it in order to turn things around.

Cutting forests, squeezing workers. It is big business, not ecology, that is hostile to most human interests. Nowhere is this truth more stark than in the timber industry.

Harry Merlo, CEO for timber giant Louisiana-Pacific (L-P), summed up the corporations' attitude to natural resources in these words: "We log to infinity. Because we need it all. It's ours. It's out there, and we need it all. Now."

The companies consider workers in the same way—as a resource to be purchased as cheaply and exploited as thoroughly as possible. L-P is the outfit which closed a California mill in order to reopen it in Mexico, where they pay the employees 87 cents an hour. They are also willing to murder their workers to keep profits high.

In September 1989, at the L-P sawmill in Ukiah, California, a worker named Fortunado Reyes was mangled to death when he climbed onto a conveyor belt to clear it of jammed lumber. The machines were supposed to be turned off before a jam was cleared, but

workers were bullied into disregarding safety rules in order not to slow production down.

The way L-P operates is the norm. In February 1989, at a Georgia-Pacific (G-P) lumber mill in Fort Bragg, California, a pipe burst in Frank Murray's face, causing him to swallow oil full of carcinogenic PCBs.

At the hospital, the company tried to prevent his stomach being pumped, claiming the substance was just mineral oil. The spill area was not closed off, and sixteen people were contaminated and three shifts of workers endangered before the G-P stopped stonewalling.

The union, International Woodworkers Association (IWA), refused to represent the contaminated workers. IWA later tried to cut a deal with G-P that would have reduced an OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) fine for "willful poisoning."

Most timber jobs are non-union, and the unions that do exist don't do much for their memberships. Wage cuts and layoffs were fierce through the '80s. Top union officials work in tandem with management to peddle the company line on the environment. The IWA and the Western Council of Industrial Workers (WCIW) formed a coalition last year with Weyerhaeuser, G-P, and other timber companies to defeat national conservation legislation.

But the bureaucrats have not succeeded in pruning all pro-environment sentiment from the ranks of labor.

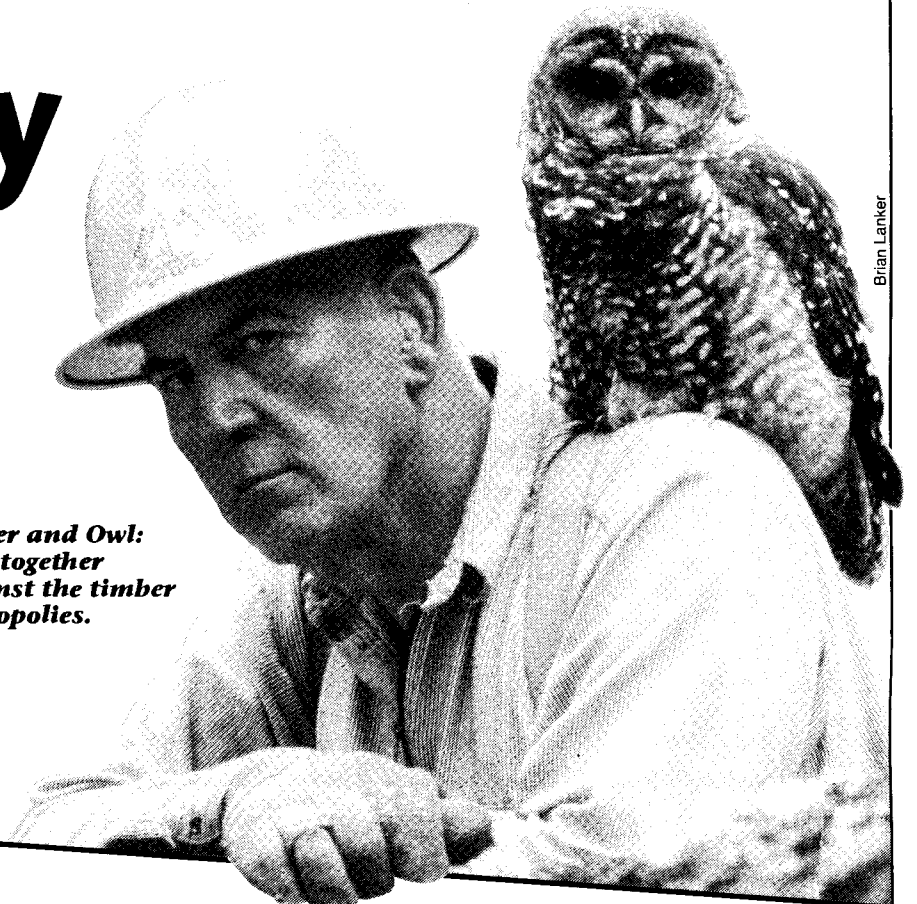
In Montana, for example, five environmental groups and two unions representing 800 millworkers worked together for four months to develop a proposal designating tracts in the Kootenai National Forest as wilderness, and therefore off-limits to logging, mining, and road-building.

For a holistic environmental movement. For the environmental movement to translate its appeal into effective results, it is going to have to do much more of this kind of joint work.

When it does, it can make great strides. Judi Bari and like-minded Earth First! colleagues have forged new alliances with California workers by helping to combat on-the-job disasters like the G-P accident,

to page 22

Logger and Owl: in it together against the timber monopolies.



Brian Lanker

A logger's outlook

Steve Goodman has felled trees in the Pacific Northwest for 20 years, mostly for small independent outfits. It is a job he loves—and is leaving. He is convinced that time is not on the logger's side, and he wants out while it is still his decision to make. Here are some of his thoughts on the controversy over management of the forests.

• **The spotted owl**

"The owl is a non-issue. The real question is, do we log old-growth timber or don't we?"

"You have the camp that says 'Let's log everything and worry about it later,' and then you have the side which says 'I love trees, and any death of a tree is a death of me.' Somewhere between these two extremes a decision has to be made about what timber to log."

• **Environmentalists**

"Maybe the environmentalists are right about the dangers of cutting the old growth. But this is not the last time this kind of conflict is going to come up. People's jobs are going to come in conflict again and again with environmental issues."

"And the feeling I get from environmentalists is, 'I don't care. It's not my job at stake. I want my environment saved—I don't care whether you keep your job or your kids go to school.' The environmentalists should show some compassion for what's going to happen to loggers' lives and come up with some kind of plan to help them."

"For people to make an intelligent decision on the issues, they need to have more facts, not just this PR war that goes on. Both industry and environmentalists cook their figures. It's just people throwing bumper stickers at one another."

• **Loggers & logging**

"In my opinion, clearcutting is the only reasonable way to log. It's safer. If you're working on real flat land, you can select-log. But where most of the

to page 22

COINTELPRO'S latest victims: radical environmentalists

On May 24, 1990, Earth Firsters Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney were driving in Oakland, California when a pipe bomb exploded in their car and sent the two activists to the hospital. Bari was there for over a month. Cherney was treated for a lacerated cornea and released—only to be arrested immediately by the Oakland police, who charged him and Bari with "illegal possession and transport of explosives."

The prosecution had no evidence and eventually dropped its case. But first they ensured that Bari and Cherney were thoroughly smeared in the media as "eco-terrorists" who accidentally bombed themselves. And the FBI and Oakland police never managed to find any suspects other than the victims.

But suspects there are, obvious ones. Foremost among them is the FBI, acting in the interests of the timber industry.

Bari and Cherney were central organizers of Redwood Summer, an ambitious campaign to halt the logging of much of California's last redwood forests by three timber giants: MAXXAM Inc., Louisiana-Pacific, and Georgia-Pacific.

MAXXAM had acquired a junk bond debt of \$750 million in its hostile 1985 takeover of Pacific Lumber. The corporations' stake in squelching resistance to their clear-cutting plans was high. Bari and Cherney were bombed eight days before the scheduled kick-off of Redwood Summer.

In the previous months, they had made crucial headway in breaking down divisions between environmentalists and working loggers and had won important allies in the feminist, people of color, and lesbian/gay movements. Bari, a member of the Industrial Workers of the World General Executive Board, had

been a labor organizer for seven years on the East Coast.

A month before the bombing, Bari convinced a majority of regional Earth Firsters to renounce tree-spiking, a dangerous, divisive practice that had loggers up in arms. In the weeks that followed, Bari, Cherney, and their colleagues were deluged with death threats and fake press releases issued in their name.

In one instance, Bari and three other women received a letter that said, "We have distributed your phone number to every organized hate group that could possibly have hostile tendencies toward ilk of your kind. No longer can sleazy dykes like you operate with impunity." Cherney and four other men got similar mail, adjusted for gender.

These tactics echo the FBI counter-intelligence programs (COINTELPRO) against the Black Panther Party, Native Americans, and others in the '60s and '70s. Ward Churchill, author of the invaluable study *Agents of Repression*, describes the FBI goal in these incursions: "First, it targets key activists, then it discredits the organization and breaks the morale of its participants."

But Bari and Cherney are undeterred. They both continue to organize for environmental and other causes. Redwood Summer attracted 2,000-3,000 participants and helped Earth First! claim a few victories over the logging companies. Perhaps even more importantly, Bari and Cherney's message of cross-movement solidarity is gaining adherents inside the ecology movement.

Not even dynamite can stop an idea whose time has come. □

Thanks to *Z* magazine and the Industrial Worker for material in this article.

Sam Deaderick

Gay rights pioneer, gifted writer and free speech partisan 1949-1991

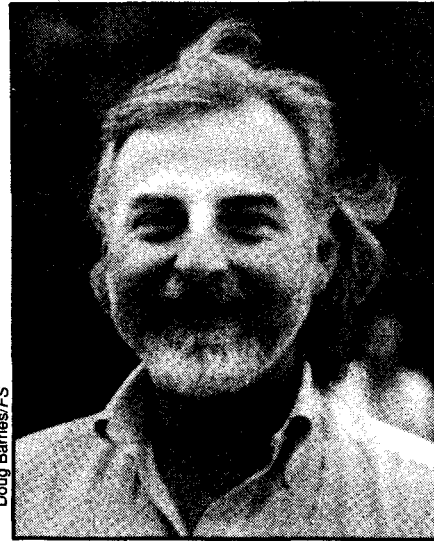
Sam Caponi Deaderick, who died of a heart attack on February 2 in Seattle at age 41, was one of those people who made a difference in the world. An early enlistee in the gay rights movement, he was a radical activist, writer, and thinker and a free speech advocate to the day he died. In his last months he wrote voluminously about the U.S. war in the Persian Gulf, the disaster it wrought at home and abroad, and what U.S. antiwar activists could and should do to end it.

Sam joined the Gay Liberation Front in Portland in 1970. It was with the GLF that he first gained notice as a movement writer and editor.

In 1974, Sam joined the Freedom Socialist Party, becoming an editor of this newspaper at its outset in 1975. As a writer he specialized in gay and international issues. With fellow editor Tamara Turner, he authored the remarkable series "Gay Resistance: The Hidden History," which ran in the *FS* from Fall 1978

to Spring 1980. He also co-authored the Freedom Socialist Party's 1982 Political Resolution, "Crisis and Opportunity," which, alone among the political pronouncements of the day, offered scientific grounds for optimism and resistance against the Reaganite onslaught.

Tired and in ill-health, Sam left the FSP in November 1983. Five months later he suffered a heart attack. Through it all he remained a friend of the party. In early 1984, ex-FSP member Richard Snedigar sued the FSP and nine individuals for return of a donation he and others had made five years earlier to a party eviction fund. Sam, a former FSP Executive Committee member, was named as one of the defendants. As an ex-member, he could easily have removed himself from the case; it was apparent early on that Snedigar's



Doug Barnes/FS

lawsuit was specifically a political vendetta against the FSP as well as a fraudulent grab for money.

But Sam, who knew Snedigar very well, declined to remove himself. He recognized the attempt by Snedigar and his lawyers to force public disclosure of FSP minutes and membership lists as a McCarthy-like broadside against the constitutional rights to free speech and association.

He remained proudly and publicly a Freeway Hall Case defendant to the end.

Sam was a political man, but not in any narrow sense of the word. He was a radical who loved the good life: good books, gourmet cooking, the opera, Billie Holiday, Mozart above all. Possessed of a skewering wit, he used it most often to spear low men in high places: pompous bosses, gassy politicians (Democrats and Republicans), and every stripe of hypocrite, bigot and phony.

He was loved and will be missed—for his political integrity, his generosity in friendship, and his theoretical and journalistic contributions to our party and to the social change movements. □

—ROBERT CRISMAN

Freeway Hall Case: What it is and what's ahead

Tenacity! That's the Freedom Socialist Party's hallmark, and neither the Washington state judicial system nor witchhunting lawyers have been able to overcome it during the Freeway Hall Case. This year, the party's persistence will be rewarded when the case is either thrown out or finally goes to trial in King County Superior Court.

The Freeway Hall Case is a First Amendment court battle pitting the FSP and eight individuals against an ex-FSP member who wants to bankrupt the party and put the skids on radical organizing.

It all started in 1984 when Richard Snedigar sued the party to get back \$22,500 he had given to a party eviction fund in 1979. Snedigar claimed the party had defrauded him. However, lacking evidence—he contradicted his claim in an early oral deposition—he and his lawyers turned the suit into a witchhunt. They demanded that the FSP hand over confidential internal records such as meeting minutes and membership lists.

Early court rulings backed Snedigar up. In challenging them, the FSP *lost or was ignored on 24 appeals and legal motions before winning* a tough, precedent-setting decision supporting First Amendment rights from the state Supreme Court.

Here are some of the issues that make this case important for all radicals, dissidents, and small "d" democrats.

- **Violation of privacy rights.** Had the courts seized FSP

records, all organizations would be vulnerable to political opponents.

- **Stereotyping of radicals.** Snedigar claims the FSP—"a small, declining cult"—brainwashed him out of his money. Classic redbaiting. And, as the history of this case proves, judges can still be swayed by it.

- **Donations jeopardized.** It would be impossible for any group to survive if donors can yank back their money years down the road.

- **Sentence before verdict.** Before even hearing the suit, the Superior Court awarded Snedigar \$42,000 because the FSP refused to hand over its minutes. Collection attempts were made. A defendant's house had to be put up as bond to prevent seizure of people's property.

Preparing for the long-awaited trial, the Freeway Hall Case defense team is currently hard at work raising funds and enlisting new support. Recent endorsers include James Forman, civil rights leader and author of *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*; Dolores Huerta, co-founder and first vice-president of the United Farm Workers of America; author, editor, and literature professor Annette Rubinstein, Ph.D.; radio commentator Dorothy Healey, author of *Dorothy Healey Remembers a Life in the American Communist Party*; and attorney and writer Michael Linfield, Nicaraguan Supreme Court member under the Sandinistas. □

—MATT NAGLE

**Make
it count.**

Your contribution to the
Freeway Hall Case Defense
Fund will help us protect the
First Amendment rights of
political organizers.

Our upcoming trial could
easily cost \$20,000. Please
give generously!

Send donations to: Freeway Hall
Case Defense Fund, 5018 Rainier
Ave. South, Seattle, Wash. 98118.

...showdown

from page 24

USSR's "Slavic heartland"—Russia, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Kazakhstan—in a loose economic federation. His aim was to elbow Gorbachev out of the picture and speed a transition to capitalism. Talks were initiated, but in February Byelorussia and the Ukraine pulled out. The Ukraine and Kazakhstan then urged Gorbachev to hurry work on the proposed new Union Treaty, his blueprint for a reconstituted federation of Soviet republics.

The Ukraine et al. feared being swallowed up in a union with Russia, by far the largest and most powerful republic. Yeltsin's own constituency, Russia's workers and farmers, strongly favored Gorbachev's referendum. After Yeltsin's plan collapsed, he wisely refrained from urging a "no" vote on the referendum.

Gorbachev took the referendum's passage as a ringing endorsement of his Union Treaty. A draft of the Treaty, initiated by eight large republics, traces the intended shape of the new federation.

How can it work? For example, the republics will have legislative control over their internal economic development and, as a natural corollary, the right to treat independently with other

republics and states. Yet the center is responsible for strategic economic planning, and foreign commitments by republics must be made in the framework of Moscow's international commitments.

Now, what planning can Moscow do if each constituent republic of the Soviet economy is allowed to pursue its development independently? What concrete means are there to integrate the needs and interests of the parts and the whole? The question is somewhat academic at the moment, of course. Perestroika is a dead letter and the center would be hard-pressed to handle a two-car funeral, much less strategic economic planning.

Believe it, the Treaty offers more of the same misery and the certainty of greater conflicts between the republics and Moscow.

Miners vs. Moscow. Conflict is already full-blown between the workers and the bureaucracy. One-third of the USSR's 1.2 million coal miners have walked off the job, and it looks as if factory workers in Byelorussia and oil workers in Siberia are about ready to join them.

The coal miners want Gorbachev and the government out. Says a Donbas region strike committee leader, "We want to destroy the present system of government [which] is incapable of

solving the nation's problems."

This could be the end of the story for Gorbachev. The 1989 miners' strikes were serious enough. Then the miners demanded self-management in the mines. Now, in effect, they're posing the question of who shall control the state, workers or bureaucrats. This is fundamental, a question of political revolution and civil war.

The miners are as yet susceptible to pro-market demagoguery from such as Yeltsin, however. Seventy years of Stalinist shortages and savagery have muddied the socialist idea, to say the least, and allowed the Yeltsins to make hay with the notion that freedom and prosperity will arrive with bourgeois democracy. Still, Moscow's slightest move toward market reform, whether it be layoffs or price hikes, has been greeted by the workers with absolute fury.

They've felt the breath of capitalism as it exists, and they want no part of it.

What they need now is ideological clarity. They need to realize that the Soviet Union's travail stems from its poverty and backwardness as compared with imperialism, and that the solution to the USSR's problems lies ultimately in the international arena.

The West has a lock on most of the world's productive wealth, financial resources, and cultural and technological expertise—all the prerequisites for a functioning socialist economy, or even

a capitalist one. By junking international revolution in the '20s, Stalin ensured that the West would retain its advantage. He wanted to build "socialism in one country," the Soviet Union, and "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism so that he and his henchmen could be left alone to enjoy the bureaucrats' paradise in the USSR.

Stalin's triumph meant that the West would control the earth's wealth, and that the Soviet Union would flounder. Also that it would be a prison-house for decades: the bureaucrats had ripped off an entire revolution from the workers who had made it, and they needed a police regime for protection.

Soviet Stalinism is now on its last legs. The workers are clamoring for democracy and the good life, all the things promised by the October revolution. But the promises can't be kept so long as the bureaucrats reign in Moscow and capitalists hold sway in most of the rest of the world.

The workers' fight falls on two fronts—against Stalinism and against the profit system. As this becomes clear, and as their fight progresses to outright contention for control of the Soviet state, Soviet workers will inspire Western workers to rise up in their own countries, and join in making revolution worldwide. □

—ROBERT CRISMAN

Part two

The Nature of the Nicaraguan State

by Stephen Durham & Susan Williams, M.D.



Susan Meiselas/ Magnum



Mario Ruiz/ J. Miller



Ramón/ Nueva Imagen/ Impact Visuals



Parte duo

La Naturaleza del Estado de Nicaragua

Recap

In the past installment, Durham and Williams, writing two years before the Sandinista electoral defeat, asserted that Nicaragua was a capitalist state, but a peculiar one: on the one hand, the Sandinista regime, which came to power through the popular insurrection, stood at the helm of a workers and farmers government. But the state continued to rest on, and protect, capitalist eco-

nomical relations. The government was accordingly unstable and self-contradictory.

After reviewing the importance of the Marxist concept of the state to any analysis of the Nicaraguan upheaval, the authors drew on the history of revolutions, from the Paris Commune to the Cuban revolution, to outline the three criteria which together determine the class character of a state ruling over a revolutionary society. The three criteria are: 1) the property relations and the extent to which they prevail; 2) the character of the

state apparatus, in this case the extent to which the previous Somoza regime had been dismantled; 3) the program and goals of the Sandinista leadership, i.e., the character of its relationship to the economy and to the masses and their needs.

No one criterion is sufficient to define the character of a state: should private property relations prevail after a revolution, one must also look, for example, at whether government policies are aimed at replacing the rule of capital, to come to a conclusion.

The installment's investigation into the Nicaraguan economy revealed that private ownership of the means of production, dominated by large capital, is the key feature of Nicaragua's "mixed" economy, and that this has been the case since the early years after the insurrection.

This second and last installment will resume the investigation of the nature of the Nicaraguan state with an examination of its institutions and the economic and social policies of the Sandinista government.

IV. Nicaragua's State Apparatus

Our second criterion for the establishment of a workers' state is the smashing of the bourgeois state apparatus and its replacement by a qualitatively different kind of governing structure, one which embodies proletarian democracy and operates in the interests of the majority of society.

To what extent was the Somocista state apparatus destroyed? What new political structures have emerged? Do qualitatively new forms of workers' rule exist? We must know this to gauge the nature and degree of the transformation of the Nicaraguan state.

Incomplete Break-up of the Somocista Army

Before the insurrection, more than 50,000 Nicaraguans died at the hands of the National Guard. The Guard was the fiercest and most hated face of Somoza's many-headed Hydra of repression.

Immediately after the Sandinista military victory, the Guard was liquidated as an institution. Its demolition was a major achievement of the revolution. The insurrection also led to the immediate and complete dissolution of Somoza's detested police force.

The victorious masses were determined to completely eradicate the Guardsmen, known as murderers, torturers, rapists, thieves, and total stooges for the regime. The revolutionary people wanted to carry out revolutionary justice, but only a handful of the Guardsmen were tried and executed.

The Sandinistas asserted that none of the Guardsmen would be killed for their crimes, and in many instances they restrained the people from performing summary executions. Indeed, within one year, the government freed thousands of imprisoned Guardsmen and other fierce opponents of the revolution.

But the FSLN publicly announced only a fraction of these releases because of the immense unpopularity of its action.¹

The FSLN also attempted to reintegrate a few of the National Guard by giving them jobs, but the majority fled the country into Honduras and became the nucleus of the contra counterrevolution.

New Organs of Armed Force

Within several months of the insurrection, new institutions of internal security—the police force and prison system—were rebuilt, essentially from the ground up, under the Ministry of the Interior, headed by FSLN leader Tomas Borge.

The standing army was completely reorganized under Sandinista authority. It operates under FSLN leader Humberto Ortega, Minister of Defense.

A striking feature of the transformation of the coercive forces is the widespread arming of the people in popular militias. Estimates of the number of workers and peasants with weapons range from a minimum of 60,000 (in the bourgeois press²) to 450,000 (according to Fourth International leader Ernest Mandel³).

The Sandinistas have consistently declared their commitment to keeping arms

in the hands of the people in order to defend the revolution against contra raids and the threat of U.S. invasion. Peasants in the frontline areas of the contra war receive guns today along with their land titles.

Late in 1987 the FSLN launched an aggressive campaign to revitalize the popular militias. They went door-to-door to enlist participation. This campaign was part of the two-pronged Sandinista defense strategy to build the militias and professionalize the army.

In the defense configuration, the draftee army, led by a professional officer corps, clearly predominates over the militias. There is also evidence that because the FSLN, as a party, is distancing itself from military leadership, the army is assuming an increasingly separate and independent role.

The militias, meanwhile, are not accountable to the people. Arms are in the hands of the population, but are being used to defend Nicaragua against military aggression from without, not to help transform Nicaraguan society or repress the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie.

The Sandinista Government

Between 1979 and 1984 the formal government was the Governmental Junta of National Reconstruction (JGRN). The FSLN designed this government in early 1979, before the insurrection.

The Junta functioned as a coalition government of the FSLN and the anti-Somocista bourgeois political parties. Bourgeois representatives sat on the Junta until its rule was ended in the 1984 elections.

Relations between bourgeois officials and FSLN were rocky from the beginning.

First, the bourgeoisie demanded that the Junta convene the Council of State and hold elections immediately after the insurrection. But, according to Borge, the FSLN wanted to wait until all the political parties, including those of the bourgeoisie, could organize and compete in the electoral process.⁴

Then, in 1980, popular demand forced the Junta to give Council representation to mass organizations. This prompted the banker and soon-to-be contra leader, Alfonso Robelo, to resign from the Junta. He was replaced by Central Bank President Arturo Cruz, who served only briefly before being appointed as an envoy to the U.S. Shortly after arriving in the U.S., Cruz resigned his post, joined the opposition, and remained, until his resignation, the political kingpin of the contra forces.

Between 1981 and 1984, the Junta consisted of Sandinistas Daniel Ortega and Sergio Ramirez, and Rafael Cordoba of the right-center, bourgeois Democratic Conservative Party.

Above the Junta stood the nine-member Joint National Directorate (DN) of the

FSLN, which still holds the real power. The DN defines policy for the government as well as for FSLN participation in the government and the mass organizations. The DN dominates through appointment of its members to key ministerial posts, and by its control of the coercive state apparatuses—the army, police, prisons and intelligence network.

Functioning as a de facto ruling group, the DN is the only coordinating political body in the government. The DN enjoys tremendous authority and popular support, grounded in the FSLN role in the insurrection.

Daniel Ortega served as the liaison between the DN and the Junta from 1979 to 1984. Governing by decree, the Junta oversaw the re-organization of the old government bureaucracy. The 1984 elections which ended the rule of the Junta placed a President (Ortega) and Vice-president at the head of the executive branch of government (the ministries and administrative departments).

The FSLN has been careful from the outset to maintain bourgeois representation at all levels of government. For example, the Ministry of Labor in 1980 went to Virgilio Godoy, the leader of the

after the insurrection. It abolished the previous constitution and the Supreme Court of Justice and provided for the destruction of unspecified "remaining structures of Somocista power."⁶ Many new laws have since been enacted by decree of the Junta.

Yet the court system in Nicaragua has only been *reorganized, not transformed*, by the revolution. The Somocista courts were dissolved, judges dismissed, and new judges appointed. Three special types of courts were established—labor courts, agrarian courts and special tribunals for political crimes. Still, the overall function of the courts and the law has been to "mediate" the class conflict: to strike a "balance" between the aspirations of land-hungry peasants and the property rights of landowners, between workers' demands and capitalist profits. This mediation has worked essentially in favor of the bourgeoisie.

Much of the old legal codes remain in force. Notable among these are Somoza's labor legislation, the penal code, and family legislation, including the law against abortion. In the early period of the revolution, the FSLN acknowledged the need for a complete revision of the legal codes but postponed this task to future elections and the establishment of a new constitution. The elections have come and gone; a new constitution has been adopted; the revisions have yet to be instituted.

The Junta prohibited in 1981 the withdrawal of capital from production, and provided for the confiscation of land which an owner refuses to use for production. At the same time, however, the government has declared illegal all strikes, peasant occupations of the land, and "any action aimed at forcibly modifying the relations of production."⁷

When tensions between government and bourgeoisie reached a critical level in the spring of 1980, direct negotiations between the FSLN National Directorate and the political arm of the capitalists, COSEP (Superior Council of Private Enterprise), which were mediated by the U.S. ambassador, resulted in the *ley de amparo*, a law providing court protection against the seizure of property. This law was later replaced, in 1986, by the preamble to the new constitution which declares *the mixed economy and the rights of private property to be immutable*.

Only in the area of land reform have the courts actually challenged existing property relations. However, changes in this sphere have gone no further than establishing a legal basis for a system of land redistribution which differs little in kind or degree from agrarian reform projects throughout Latin America.

The courts have consistently ruled against strikes and land confiscations by workers and peasants that directly threatened bourgeois property.

People's Tribunals were established to try Somocista collaborators. These tribunals, made up of a government-appointed judge and two citizens, sentenced many counter-revolutionaries to jail terms following the insurrection. Nevertheless, Sandinista determination to conciliate with hostile bourgeois forces has under-

to supplement page 4



Spirited recruits to Sandinista militia, Managua. *Animados reclutas de las milicias sandinistas, Managua.*

Liberal Independent Party, who served until February, 1984.⁵

In the meantime, while the Defense and Interior Ministries were built from the ground up, most government bureaus, especially those supervising economic planning and agrarian reform, incorporated the old apparatus; new heads were appointed from the FSLN top leadership. The majority of lower and middle administrators kept their posts, leaving intact the bulk of the Somocista bureaucracy.

The creation of the state sector of the economy gave rise to an expanded government officialdom, including agronomists, technicians and managers who make up one third of all those employed by the state economic sector. Huge tension and conflict is building between bureaucrats and workers in this sector, generated by government emphasis on large-scale, capital-intensive agro-export projects similar to those promoted by Somoza.

The Courts and the Legal System

The Fundamental Statute decreed in 1979 formed the nucleus of legal reform

Recapitulación

En el fascículo anterior, Durham y Williams al escribir dos años antes de la derrota electoral sandinista, aseveraron que Nicaragua era un estado capitalista, pero uno peculiar: por un lado, el régimen sandinista, que llegó al poder a través de una insurrección popular, estuvo al timón de un gobierno de obreros y campesinos. Pero el Estado continuó defendiendo y apoyándose en las relaciones económicas capitalistas. El gobierno fue por consiguiente in-

estable y contradictorio consigo mismo. Después de revisar la importancia del conceptomarxista del Estado frente a cualquier análisis del levantamiento nicaragüense, los autores recurrieron a la historia de las revoluciones, desde la Comuna de París hasta la revolución cubana, para delinear los tres criterios que unidos determinan el carácter de clase de un Estado gobernante sobre una sociedad revolucionaria. Los tres criterios son: 1) las relaciones de propiedad y la extensión en la cual prevalecen; 2) el carácter del aparato estatal, en

este caso el grado al que el previo régimen de Somoza fue dismantelado; 3) el programa y metas del mando sandinista, por ejemplo, el carácter de su relación con la economía y con las masas y sus necesidades.

Ningún criterio es suficiente para definir el carácter de un Estado: si las relaciones de propiedad privada prevalecieron después de una revolución, para sacar una conclusión, uno tiene que ver también por ejemplo, si las políticas de gobierno están dirigidas a reemplazar el dominio del capital.

La investigación en el fascículo acerca de la economía nicaragüense reveló que la propiedad privada de los medios de producción, dominadas por el gran capital, es el rasgo clave de la economía mixta de Nicaragua y éste ha sido el caso desde los primeros años postreros a la insurrección.

Esta segunda y última entrega resumirá la investigación de la naturaleza del Estado nicaragüense por medio de un examen de sus instituciones y de las políticas sociales y económicas del gobierno sandinista.

IV. El Aparato Estatal Nicaragüense

Nuestro segundo criterio para el establecimiento de un Estado obrero, es el aplastamiento del aparato estatal burgués y su reemplazo por un tipo de estructura gobernante cualitativamente diferente, una que personifique la democracia proletaria y opere en favor de los intereses de la mayoría de la sociedad.

¿Hasta que grado fue destruido el aparato estatal somocista? ¿Qué nuevas estructuras políticas han surgido? ¿Existen nuevas formas cualitativas de gobierno obrero? Debemos saber esto para poder evaluar la naturaleza y grado de transformación del Estado nicaragüense.

El Dismantelamiento Incompleto del Ejército Somocista

Antes de la insurrección, más de 50,000 nicaragüenses murieron a manos de la Guardia Nacional. La Guardia era la más temida y más odiada cara de la hidra de muchas cabezas de la represión somocista.

Inmediatamente después de la victoria militar sandinista, la Guardia fue liquidada como institución. Su demolición fue el mayor logro de la revolución. La insurrección también condujo a la completa e inmediata disolución de la detestada fuerza policíaca de Somoza.

Las masas victoriosas estaban decididas a erradicar por completo a los guardias, conocidos como asesinos, torturadores, violadores, ladrones y secuaces completos del régimen. Los revolucionarios quisieron llevar a cabo la justicia, pero sólo un puñado de los guardias fueron enjuiciados y ejecutados.

Los sandinistas afirmaron que ninguno de los guardias sería muerto por sus crímenes, y en muchas ocasiones restringieron al pueblo de realizar ejecuciones sumarias. En efecto, antes de un año, el gobierno liberó a miles de guardias encarcelados y a otros feroces opositores de la revolución.

Pero el FSLN anunció públicamente sólo una fracción de estas liberaciones, debido a la inmensa impopularidad de su acción.¹

El FSLN también intentó reintegrar a algunos exguardias dándoles empleos, pero la mayoría huyó hacia Honduras y se convirtieron en el núcleo de la contrarrevolución.

Los Nuevos Organos de las Fuerzas Armadas

Al cabo de varios meses de la insurrección, fueron reconstruidas las nuevas instituciones de seguridad interna—la fuerza policíaca y el sistema carcelario—esencialmente desde cero, bajo el Ministerio del Interior, encabezado por Tomás Borge, dirigente del FSLN.

El ejército permanente fue completamente reorganizado bajo la autoridad sandinista. Este opera bajo Humberto Ortega, líder del FSLN y Ministro de Defensa.

Un aspecto notable de la transformación de las fuerzas coercivas es el armamiento general del pueblo en las milicias populares. Cálculos aproximados del número de obreros y campesinos con armas van desde un mínimo de 60.000 (en la prensa burguesa²) hasta 450.000 (según el líder de la Cuarta Internacional Ernest Mandel³).

Los sandinistas han declarado consistentemente su compromiso de man-

tener las armas en las manos del pueblo para defender la revolución de ataques de la contra y de la amenaza de invasión estadounidense. Los campesinos en las zonas de la guerra con los contras reciben, hoy en día, armas junto con sus títulos de tierras.

A finales de 1987 el FSLN emprendió una campaña agresiva para revitalizar a las



Sandinista national directorate in session, Managua 1985. La dirección nacional sandinista en sesión, Managua 1985.

milicias populares. Fueron de puerta en puerta para reclutar a participantes. Esta campaña fue parte de la estrategia de defensa dual sandinista: formar a las milicias y profesionalizar al ejército.

En la configuración de la defensa, el ejército conscripto, dirigido por un cuerpo de oficiales profesional, claramente predomina sobre las milicias. También hay evidencia de que, ya que, el FSLN como un partido, se está distanciando del mando del ejército; el ejército está asumiendo cada vez más un papel aparte e independiente.

Las milicias mientras tanto, no son responsables ante el pueblo. Las armas están en las manos de la población, pero están siendo usadas para defender a Nicaragua contra la agresión militar desde afuera, no para ayudar a transformar a la sociedad o para reprimir a la burguesía nicaragüense.

El Gobierno Sandinista

Entre 1979 y 1984 el gobierno formal fue la Junta Gubernamental de Reconstrucción Nacional (JGRN). El FSLN diseñó este gobierno a principios de 1979, antes de la insurrección.

La Junta funcionó como un gobierno de coalición del FSLN y de los partidos políticos burgueses antisomocistas. Los representantes burgueses participaron en la Junta hasta que su mando finalizó en las elecciones de 1984.

Las relaciones entre los oficiales burgueses y el FSLN fueron escabrosas desde el comienzo.

Primero, la burguesía exigió que la Junta convocara al Consejo de Estado y celebrara elecciones inmediatamente después de la insurrección. Pero de acuerdo a Borge, el FSLN quería esperar hasta que todos los partidos políticos, incluyendo aquellos de la burguesía, se pudieran organizar y competir en el proceso electoral.⁴

Entonces, en 1980 la demanda popular forzó a la Junta a darles representación en el Consejo a las organizaciones de masas. Esto impulsó al banquero y próximo a ser líder de la contra, Alfonso Robelo a renunciar a la Junta. El fue reemplazado por Arturo Cruz, presidente del Banco Central, quien sólo sirvió brevemente antes de ser nombrado emisario a los EUA. Cruz renunció a su puesto al poco tiempo de su llegada a los EUA, se unió a la oposición y se

mantuvo, hasta su renuncia como el cacaico político de las fuerzas de La Contra.

Entre 1981 y 1984 la Junta consistía de los sandinistas Daniel Ortega y Sergio Ramírez, y de Rafael Córdoba del Partido Democrático Conservador burgués, de centroderecha.

Por encima de la Junta estaba la Dirección Nacional (DN) del FSLN, formada por nueve comandantes, que todavía sostiene el poder real. La DN define la política del gobierno, así como la participación del FSLN en el gobierno y las organizaciones de masas. La DN domina por medio del nombramiento de sus miembros a puestos ministeriales clave, y por su control de los

aparatos estatales coercivos—el ejército, la policía, prisiones y redes de inteligencia.

Al funcionar como un grupo gobernante de facto, la DN es el único cuerpo político coordinador del gobierno. La DN disfruta de tremenda autoridad y apoyo popular, fundamentado en el papel del FSLN en la insurrección.

Daniel Ortega sirvió como enlace entre la DN y la Junta, desde 1979 hasta 1984. Gobernando por decreto, la Junta supervisó la reorganización de la antigua burocracia del gobierno. Las elecciones de 1984 que terminaron el mando de la Junta, pusieron al presidente (Ortega) y al vicepresidente C. Ramírez a la cabeza de la rama ejecutiva del gobierno—los ministerios y departamentos administrativos.

Desde el principio el FSLN ha tenido cuidado de mantener representación burguesa en todos los niveles del gobierno. Por ejemplo, en 1980 el Ministerio de Trabajo fue para el dirigente del Partido Liberal Independiente, Virgilio Godoy, quien sirvió hasta febrero de 1984.⁵

Entretanto, mientras los Ministerios de Defensa e Interior fueron recreados completamente, la mayoría de las agencias gubernamentales, especialmente aquellas que supervisan la planeación económica y la reforma agraria, incorporaron al antiguo aparato; los nuevos jefes fueron designados por el alto mando del FSLN. La mayoría de los administradores de nivel bajo y medio conservaron sus puestos, dejando intacto al bulbo de la burocracia somocista.

La creación del sector estatal de la economía dió ascenso a una burocracia gubernamental ampliada incluyendo a agrónomos, técnicos y gerentes quienes forman hasta un tercio, de todos los empleados por el sector económico estatal. En este sector, se está generando una gran tensión y conflicto entre los burócratas y trabajadores, debido al énfasis del gobierno en proyectos a gran escala de capital intensivo de agroexportaciones, similares a aquellos promovidos por Somoza.

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Las Cortes y el Sistema Legal

El estatuto fundamental, decretado en 1979 formó el núcleo de reforma legal después de la insurrección. Abolió la constitución previa y la Suprema Corte de Jus-

ta, y proveyó la destrucción, sin especificarlas, de las "estructuras restantes del poder somocista".⁶ Muchas leyes nuevas han sido desde entonces establecidas por decreto de la Junta.

Sin embargo, el sistema de cortes en Nicaragua sólo ha sido reorganizado, no transformado, por la revolución. Las cortes somocistas fueron disueltas, los jueces destituidos y nuevos jueces nombrados. Tres tipos especiales de cortes fueron establecidas—cortes laborales, cortes agrarias y tribunales especiales para crímenes políticos. Aún así, la función en general de las cortes y de la ley es la de mediar el conflicto de clases: mantener un equilibrio entre las aspiraciones de los campesinos hambrientos de tierra y los derechos de propiedad de los terratenientes, entre las demandas de los trabajadores y el lucro capitalista. Esta mediación ha funcionado esencialmente en favor de la burguesía.

Muchos de los antiguos códigos legales permanecen en vigencia. Notables entre éstos, están la legislación laboral de Somoza, el código penal, y la legislación familiar, incluyendo la ley en contra del aborto. A comienzos del período de la revolución, el FSLN reconoció la necesidad de una revisión completa de los códigos legales; pero pospuso esta tarea para futuras elecciones y el establecimiento de una nueva constitución. Las elecciones han llegado y se han ido; una nueva constitución ha sido adoptada; las revisiones aún tienen que ser instituidas.

La Junta prohibió en 1981 el retirar el capital de la producción y dispuso la confiscación de las tierras que un dueño rehusa a usar para la producción. Al mismo tiempo, sin embargo, el gobierno ha declarado ilegales todas las huelgas, ocupaciones de tierras por campesinos, y "cualquier acción dirigida a modificar por la fuerza las relaciones de producción".⁷

Cuando en la primavera de 1980, las tensiones entre el gobierno y la burguesía alcanzaron un nivel crítico, las negociaciones directas entre la Dirección Nacional del FSLN y el COSEP (Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada), brazo político de los capitalistas, que fueron mediadas por el embajador de EUA, resultaron en la Ley de Amparo, ley que provee la protección jurídica contra el embargo de propiedades. Esta ley fue más tarde reemplazada, en 1986, por el preámbulo a la nueva constitución que declara que sean *inmutables la economía mixta y los derechos a la propiedad privada*.

Sólo en el área de la reforma agraria, las cortes, han desafiado a las relaciones de propiedad existentes. De cualquier modo, los cambios en esta esfera no han ido más allá del establecimiento de bases legales para una sistema de redistribución de tierras, que difiere poco en tipo o grado de los proyectos de reforma agraria adoptados a través de Latinoamérica.

Las cortes han fallado consistentemente en contra de las huelgas y las confiscaciones de tierra por parte de los trabajadores y campesinos que directamente amenazaban la propiedad burguesa. Los Tribunales Populares fueron establecidos para enjuiciar a los colaboradores somocistas. Estos tribunales, formados por un juez nombrado por el gobierno y dos ciudadanos, sentenciaron a prisión a muchos contrarrevolucionarios en seguida de la insurrección. No obstante, la resolución sandinista de conciliar con las fuerzas hostiles burguesas, ha socavado el potencial revolucionario de los tribunales, como fue más notablemente ilustrado, con el indulto, por el gobierno, de Eugene Hasenfus, mercenario estadounidense.

El indulto a Hasenfus encendió una fuerte protesta en Nicaragua. Según una encuesta realizada por el FSLN, 38% de la gente se opuso al perdón de este criminal de la guerra Contra.

El cisma entre la voluntad del pueblo a la página 5 del suplemento

cut the revolutionary potential of the tribunals, as was most strikingly illustrated in the government pardon of U.S. mercenary Eugene Hasenfus.

Hasenfus' pardon sparked heavy protest in Nicaragua. According to an FSLN poll, 38% of the people opposed the pardon of this contra war criminal.

The schism between the people's will and the government is a prime illustration of the incompleteness of the overhaul of Nicaragua's legal system.

Local Government

Local government embodied in Revolutionary Municipal Juntas (JMR) replaced the corrupt, patronage-riddled Somoza system.

The JMRs vary widely in representation, but most are comprised of people elected from or delegated by the FSLN, the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS), and other mass organizations, with some representatives from business and other political parties. JMR members are not elected directly or subject to recall, though a few officials have been removed by organized protest from mass organizations.

The JMRs have tried to consolidate a strong relationship between local government and the populace. Many of these efforts have been innovative, but their results have been mixed, hampered by a large turnover in JMR leadership. The JMRs have also been undermined by a lack of material resources; more than 50% of the JMRs have an annual budget of less than \$10,000.⁸

Tensions also exist between the JMRs and national government agencies. These central agencies still determine most policy and control the bulk of funding for local projects.

The Councils

In 1979 the Fundamental Statute created the Council of State as an advisory body to the JGRN. Comprised of delegates from labor unions, political parties, the church, business, and mass organizations, the Council generated many legislative proposals which were subsequently decreed into law by the Junta. But it never had any legislative power itself to enact or veto law. Consequently, the unions and mass organizations possessed no direct political power.

On the local level, this same limited, consultative function exists in the Popular Municipal Councils and the Regional Revolutionary Councils, where mass organizations, political groups, and business interests have only a non-binding voice in the formulation of policy. These councils are even less successful in influencing government policy on the local level than the Council of State is on the national level.

The Council of State was dissolved after the 1984 elections and replaced with the National Assembly, a legislative body separate from the government's executive branch.

The National Assembly drafted and, in December, 1986, ratified the new constitution, which codified the separation—as per bourgeois democratic norm—between the executive and legislative branches of government.

In summary, the law, the courts, and the governmental structure created by the new constitution are all consistent with a bourgeois democratic form of government.

Is there any evidence that this official governmental structure is balanced by any other forms or mechanisms of direct rule by the workers and peasants?

Let us look at the role of mass organizations in revolutionary Nicaragua.

The Mass Organizations

The emergence of popular organizations and their mobilization of the people in the insurrection was one of the most distinctive and exciting features of the Nicaraguan revolution. These groups also were important in helping to implement government policy, especially the enormously successful campaigns for literacy and health.

At their peak, roughly half the population belonged to some of the mass organizations—the CDS, Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), Rural Workers Association (ACT), Luisa Amanda Espinosa Nicaragua Women's Association (AMNLAE), and the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG). Also popular is the FSLN youth section (JS).

Sandinista Defense Committees

The largest mass organizations are the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) which function as neighborhood block committees. The CDS organize civil defense and actively recruit to the popular militias.

Based on the urban poor, the CDS organized the insurrection under the leadership of the FSLN. They were crucial in delivering the final military blow against the National Guard.

Immediately afterward, they took on some of the functions of state and had the potential of becoming new organs of workers' power. They carried out many police functions, guarding against counterrevolution and sabotage. They also were the focal point for some food distribution and other services while the new government was still on the drawing board.

After the Junta-led government was established, many of these functions were taken out of their hands, and power was consolidated in the FSLN National Directorate and invested in the Junta and its governmental bureaucracy, the army, and the Sandinista police. While the CDS remained important in implementing FSLN policy and rallying the population behind governmental programs, they lost their potential for becoming independent organs of workingclass rule.

Sandinista unions and the FSLN have precluded challenges by independent unions to bourgeois property rights, such as expropriations or asserting workers' control over production in the private sector.

Capitalist economic dominance and government emphasis on increased production have relegated the unions to watchdogging the hostile bourgeoisie and disciplining the workforce to achieve higher productivity.

The role of the unions is also restricted inside the workplace. For example, union participation on any level in workplace administration was guaranteed in 1983 by only 61% of the contracts in the state sector and 58% in the private sector.¹⁰

Strikes were illegal between 1982 and 1985.

Wages are set by the government and not subject to union negotiations, which focus on working conditions. But the workers are dissatisfied with current wage and price conditions, and tensions between them and the government are growing.

Some "production councils" exist in the state sector, but these are only advisory bodies, restricted to making recommendations on how to increase productivity. There is no evidence

they actually direct production. And even in this advisory role, they run into management resistance.

The unions are also being weakened by the contra war. Fifty-three thousand unionized workers (57%) have been incorporated into the defense effort.¹¹

The Peasant Organizations

The National Unions of Farmers and Cattle Ranchers (UNAG) is the only mass organization to arise in the countryside since the insurrection. It was organized in 1981 out of a split in the Agricultural Workers Association over the issue of wages and working conditions in agriculture.

Initially an organization of small peasants, UNAG has since integrated into its ranks all types of agricultural producers, including a small number of large landowners.

UNAG has been the moving force behind the government's channeling of social services since late 1985 from the urban areas to the countryside. It also lobbied for and won relaxed price controls for food in 1986, which increased private peasant income as an inducement to greater production.

The government has conceded totally to UNAG's demand that the distribution of land titles not depend on membership in agricultural cooperatives.

UNAG's main activities reflect the continued influence of private agriculture. It organized a market system in rural areas that is independent of the state-regulated distribution of foodstuffs. This parallel and competing marketing system funnels a large portion of rural production into the black market.

UNAG receives direct aid from the European social democracy in the form of loans from Sweden to help develop its internal marketing structure. The private sector was similarly funded by the World Bank in the year after Somoza's fall.

The Sandinista government openly supports UNAG, hailing the peasant producers and the "patriotic" large landowners as leaders in the reconstruction of the country. This stance adds additional strain to the fragile alliance between workers and peasants, and between urban centers and rural areas.

AMNLAE

AMNLAE (Luisa Amanda Espinosa Nicaragua Women's Association) reflects the vital role of women in the insurrection and their impact on society.

Active mostly in urban areas, AMNLAE has pressured the government to distribute land titles to women—a unique aspect of agrarian reform.

to supplement page 6



Peasants taking over unused land in Carazo Department. *Campesinos tomando unas tierras sin uso en el Departamento de Carrazo.*

The CDS have no decision-making power in government beyond their individual neighborhoods. And because of the worsening economic situation and the contra war, they suffer from lack of funds to carry out work assigned to them. Although the FSLN has attempted to build the CDS and sought to revive them through the election of new leadership in 1984, their social role is waning. A look at one of their main areas of work—food distribution—illustrates how the government bureaucracy actually undermines them.

In 1986, just as the CDS were geared up to launch an aggressive campaign against black market traders and price gougers, the government agency which sets and controls prices, MICOIN (Minister of Interior Commerce), decided to pursue an independent and competitive course by establishing a parallel market with prices slightly lower than the black market. The aim here was to coax speculators into legal transactions. This sabotaged the work and leadership role of the CDS.

Meanwhile, the government has assigned the unions, most of which are under FSLN control, to carry out food distribution programs, thereby duplicating CDS functions. Union food distribution centers were allocated more and better food. As a result, the CDS experienced further decline in membership and influence.

The Unions

The number of workers organized into unions since the Sandinista revolution is impressive. As of 1985, 228,000 of Nicaragua's 900,000 workers belonged to unions, an eight-fold increase from 28,000 in 1979.⁹

The largest union, the Sandinista Workers Federation, comprises 65% of all union members. Another 17% are in the Sandinista-led Rural Workers Association, which is primarily active among workers in state-owned agriculture.

The unions do not control production, even in the state sector. Close ties between the



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y el gobierno es una ilustración principal de lo incompleto de la reestructuración del sistema legal de Nicaragua.

El Gobierno Local

El gobierno local personificado en las Juntas Municipales Revolucionarias (JMR) reemplazó al corrupto sistema somocista infestado de patrimonialismo y clientelas.

Las JMR varían ampliamente en su representación, pero la mayoría están formadas por personas elegidas desde o delegadas por el FSLN, los Comités de Defensa Sandinista (CDS), y otras organizaciones de masas, con algunos representantes empresariales y de otros partidos políticos. Los miembros de la JMR no son elegidos directamente o sujetos a ser destituidos, no obstante, unos cuantos oficiales han sido quitados por las protestas organizadas por el movimiento comunal.

Las JMR han tratado de consolidar una relación fuerte entre el gobierno local y la población. Muchos de estos esfuerzos han sido innovadores, pero los resultados han sido mixtos, impedidos por la gran rotación en el liderazgo de las JMR. Las JMR también han sido minadas por la falta de recursos materiales; más del 50% de las JMR tienen un presupuesto anual de menos de \$10.000 (U.S.).⁸

También existen tensiones entre las JMR y las agencias del gobierno nacional. Estas agencias centrales todavía determinan la mayoría de las políticas y controlan el bulto del financiamiento para los proyectos locales.

Los Consejos

En 1979 el Estatuto Fundamental creó el Consejo de Estado como un cuerpo consultivo de la JGRN. Compuesto por delegados de sindicatos laborales, partidos políticos, la iglesia, las empresas y las organizaciones de masas, el Consejo generó muchas propuestas legislativas que fueron subsiguientemente decretadas como ley por la Junta. Pero nunca tuvo por sí mismo ningún poder legislativo para promulgar o vetar una ley. Consecuentemente, los sindicatos y las organizaciones de masas, no poseyeron poder político directo.

A nivel local, esta misma función consultiva limitada existe en los Consejos Populares Municipales y en los Consejos Regionales Revolucionarios, donde las organizaciones de masas, los grupos políticos e intereses empresariales tienen sólo voz, sin el poder de obligar en la formulación de políticas. Estos consejos son aun menos exitosos en influir las políticas del gobierno a nivel local que lo que el Consejo de Estado es a nivel nacional.

El Consejo de Estado fue disuelto después de las elecciones de 1984 y reemplazado por la Asamblea Nacional, un cuerpo legislativo *separado de la rama ejecutiva del gobierno*.

En diciembre de 1986, la Asamblea Nacional redactó y ratificó la nueva constitución, que codificó la separación como una norma democrática burguesa—entre las ramas ejecutiva y legislativa de gobierno.

En resumen, la ley, las cortes y la estructura gubernamental creadas por la nueva constitución, son todas consistentes con la forma de gobierno democrática burguesa.

¿Hay alguna evidencia de que esta estructura oficial gubernamental esté balanceada por algunas otras formas de mecanismos de mando directo, por parte de los trabajadores y campesinos?

Veamos el papel de la mayoría de las organizaciones de masas en la Nicaragua revolucionaria.

Las Organizaciones de Masas

El surgimiento de las organizaciones populares y su movilización del pueblo en la insurrección fue uno de los rasgos más distintivos y emocionantes de la revolución nicaragüense. Estos grupos fueron también importantes en ayudar a implementar la política de gobierno, especialmente las campañas enormemente exitosas de alfabetismo y salud.

En su punto culminante, aproximadamente la mitad de la población pertenecía a alguna de las organizaciones de masas—los CDS, la Confederación Sandinista de Trabajadores (CST), la Asociación de Campesinos Trabajadores (ACT), la Asociación de Mujeres Nicaraguenses Luisa Amanda Espinosa (AMNLAE) y la Unión

Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos (UNAG). También es popular la Juventud Sandinista del FSLN (JS).

Los Comités de Defensa Sandinista

Las organizaciones de masas más grandes son los Comités de Defensa Sandinista (CDS) que funcionan como comités de manzana de barrio. Los CDS organizan la defensa civil y reclutan activamente a las milicias populares.

Basados en los urbanos pobres, los CDS organizaron la insurrección bajo la dirección del FSLN. Fueron cruciales en enviar el golpe final militar contra la Guardia Nacional.

Inmediatamente después, tomaron algunas de las funciones del Estado y tuvieron el potencial de convertirse en nuevos órganos de poder de los trabajadores. Llevaron a cabo muchas funciones policíacas, cuidando en contra y del sabotaje de la contrarrevolución. También fueron punto focal para la distribución de algunos alimentos y otros servicios mientras el nuevo gobierno estaba todavía en la mesa de trabajo.

Después de que el gobierno dirigido por la Junta fue establecido, muchas de estas funciones fueron retiradas de sus manos y el poder se consolidó en el Directorio Nacional del FSLN e investido en la Junta y su burocracia gubernamental, el ejército, y la policía san-

jadores organizados en sindicatos desde la revolución sandinista. Para 1985, 228.000 de 900.000 trabajadores nicaragüenses pertenecían a sindicatos, un aumento de ocho veces de los 28.000 en 1979.⁹

La Federación de Trabajadores Sandinistas, el sindicato más grande, abarca el 65% de todos los miembros de sindicatos. Otro 17% está en la Asociación de Trabajadores Rurales con mando sandinista, activa principalmente entre los trabajadores de la agricultura, propiedad del Estado.

Los sindicatos no controlan la producción, aún en el sector estatal. Vínculos estrechos entre los sindicatos sandinistas y el FSLN han impedido desafíos sindicales independientes a los derechos de la propiedad burguesa, tales como las expropiaciones o reivindicar el control de los trabajadores sobre la producción en el sector privado.

El dominio de la economía capitalista y el énfasis del gobierno en incrementar la producción, han relegado a los sindicatos a vigilar a la burguesía hostil y el disciplinamiento de la fuerza de trabajo para lograr una productividad mayor.

El papel de los sindicatos es también restringido en el sitio de trabajo. Por ejemplo, la participación sindical en cualquier nivel de la administración dentro del sitio de trabajo, fue garantizada en 1983, por sólo el 61% de los contratos en el sector estatal y 58% en el sector privado.¹⁰

Las huelgas fueron ilegales entre 1982 y 1985.

Los salarios son establecidos por el gobierno y no sujetos

por exigencias de la UNAG que la distribución de los títulos de tierras no dependa de la membresía en las cooperativas agrícolas.

Las principales actividades de la UNAG reflejan la influencia continua de la agricultura privada. Organizó un sistema de mercado en las áreas rurales, siendo independiente de la distribución de comestibles regulada por el Estado. Este sistema de mercado paralelo y competitivo, orienta a una gran porción de la producción rural hacia el mercado negro.

La UNAG recibe ayuda directa de la socialdemocracia europea, en forma de préstamos desde Suecia, para ayudar a desarrollar su estructura interna de mercadeo. El sector privado fue financiado similarmente por el Banco Mundial, en el año posterior a la caída de Somoza.

El gobierno sandinista apoya abiertamente a la UNAG, saludando a los productores campesinos y a los grandes terratenientes "patrióticos" como líderes en la reconstrucción del país. Esta postura añade una tensión adicional a la frágil alianza entre trabajadores y campesinos, y entre los centros urbanos y las áreas rurales.

La AMNLAE

La AMNLAE (Asociación de Mujeres Nicaraguenses, Luisa Amanda Espinosa) refleja el rol vital de la mujer en la insurrección y su impacto en la sociedad.

Activa más que todo en las áreas urbanas, la AMNLAE ha presionado al gobierno para que distribuya títulos de tierras a las mujeres—un aspecto único de la reforma agraria. La AMNLAE ha sido también activa en las campañas de alfabetización, de educación para adultos y de salud.

En 1983, la AMNLAE emprendió una batalla agresiva para que se incluyeran a las mujeres—luchadoras activas y líderes en la insurrección—en el reclutamiento militar. La cual perdió porque el FSLN temió la reacción de la iglesia católica, que era ya hostil hacia la conscripción misma. De cualquier modo, la AMNLAE obtuvo el derecho de las mujeres a enlistarse en el ejército sandinista, aunque no fue sino hasta 1986 que las mujeres fueron integradas al ejército.¹²

La AMNLAE es determinante en el planteamiento de los asuntos e intereses de las mujeres. En 1986, durante el debate sobre la nueva constitución, muchas mujeres en la AMNLAE, por ejemplo, pidieron el aborto legal a petición.

Como con los CDS, la participación de las masas en la AMNLAE está decayendo, no obstante que aún existe un liderazgo activo y sonoro vinculado estrechamente con el FSLN y altamente visible en el gobierno.

En resumen, las organizaciones de masas en Nicaragua no son órganos de dominio de clase sobre la burguesía. Sólo durante la insurrección misma estas organizaciones (particularmente los CDS y la ACT) atacaron directamente las instituciones de dominio y de derechos de la propiedad burguesa. Por encima del papel pasajero y limitado de los CDS inmediatamente en seguida de la insurrección, las organizaciones de masas no han operado en ningún lado como órganos de poder de los trabajadores.

Con la disolución del Consejo de Estado y la adopción de la constitución, las organizaciones de masas, han perdido toda representación en el gobierno. Operan con el apoyo del gobierno, como grupos de presión para conseguir concesiones de los capitalistas.

La disminución de la participación en las organizaciones de masas surge de la erosión de su habilidad para influir en las decisiones que determinan el curso de la revolución. La UNAG, como única excepción, ha aumentado su influencia por el deseo sandinista de conciliarse con los capitalistas y campesinos terratenientes.

El crecimiento de la UNAG junto con la disminución de los CDS y el aumento de tensiones entre el gobierno y los trabajadores, presagian un mal agüero para el futuro de la revolución.

Conclusiones Sobre el Aparato Estatal de Nicaragua

La insurrección en 1979 resultó en la victoria militar del FSLN sobre la Guardia *a la página 7 del suplemento*



AMNLAE members in Managua rally against contras, July 1984. Miembros de la AMNLAE en Managua marchando en contra de los contras, julio de 1984.

Peter Kelly/Impact Visuals

dinista. Mientras los CDS siguieron siendo importantes en la implementación de las políticas del FSLN y al unir a la población detrás de los programas gubernamentales, perdieron su potencial de convertirse en órganos independientes del mando de la clase trabajadora.

Los CDS son poder de decisión en el gobierno más allá de sus barrios individuales. Y a causa del empeoramiento de la situación económica y de la guerra Contra, sufren de la falta de fondos para llevar a cabo el trabajo que se les ha asignado. Aunque el FSLN ha intentado construir los CDS y buscado revivirlos a través de la elección de una dirigencia nueva en 1984, su papel social está debilitándose. Una mirada a una de sus principales áreas de trabajo—la distribución de alimentos—ilustra como la burocracia del gobierno actualmente los *socava*.

En 1986, justo cuando los CDS estaban aprestados a emprender una campaña agresiva en contra de los comerciantes del mercado negro y de los infladores de precios, la agencia de gobierno MICOIN (Ministerio de Comercio Interior), que establece y controla los precios, decidió continuar con un trayecto competitivo e independiente, estableciendo un mercado paralelo, con precios un poco más bajos que los del mercado negro. El objetivo aquí era engatusar a los especuladores hacia las transacciones legales. Esto sabotó el trabajo y papel de liderazgo de los CDS.

Mientras tanto, el gobierno ha asignado a los sindicatos, la mayoría de los cuales están bajo el control del FSLN, el llevar a cabo los programas de distribución de alimentos, así entonces duplicando las funciones de los CDS. A los centros de distribución sindicales de alimentos se les repartió mejores y más víveres. Como resultado, los CDS experimentaron una disminución mayor en membresías e influencia.

Los Sindicatos

Es impresionante el número de traba-

a negociaciones del sindicato, el cual se enfoca en las condiciones de trabajo. Pero los trabajadores no están satisfechos con las condiciones actuales de sueldos y precios, y las tensiones entre ellos y el gobierno están aumentando.

Algunos "consejos de producción" existen en el sector estatal, pero éstos son sólo cuerpos consultivos, restringidos a hacer recomendaciones de cómo incrementar la productividad. No hay evidencia alguna de que ellos en realidad dirijan la producción. Y aún en este papel de asesores, se topan con resistencia administrativa.

Los sindicatos también han sido debilitados por la guerra Contra. Cincuenta y tres mil trabajadores sindicalizados (57%) han sido incorporados al esfuerzo de defensa.¹¹

Las Organizaciones Campesinas

La Unión Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos (UNAG) es la única organización de masas surgida en el campo desde la insurrección. Fue organizada en 1981 después de una división en la Asociación Agrícola de Trabajadores sobre el tema de salarios y las condiciones de trabajo en la agricultura.

Inicialmente una organización de pequeños campesinos, la UNAG, ha integrado desde entonces en sus filas a todo tipo de productores agrícolas, incluyendo un número pequeño de grandes terratenientes.

Desde finales de 1985, la UNAG ha sido la fuerza móvil detrás de la canalización de los servicios sociales del gobierno de las áreas urbanas hacia el campo. También presionó y obtuvo el relajamiento del control de precios de alimentos, en 1986, lo que incrementó el ingreso privado del campesino como un aliciente para una mayor producción.

El gobierno ha concedido totalmente,

AMNLAE has also been active in literacy, adult education and health campaigns.

In 1983, AMNLAE waged an aggressive battle to include women—active fighters and leaders in the insurrection—in the military draft. They lost because the FSLN feared the reaction of the Catholic church, which was already hostile to conscription itself. However, AMNLAE won the right of women to enlist in the Sandinista army, though it was not until 1986 that women were integrated into the military.¹²

AMNLAE is decisive in raising the issues and concerns of women. During the 1986 debate on the new constitution, for example, many women in AMNLAE called for legalized abortion on demand.

As with the CDS, however, mass participation in AMNLAE is waning, although there still exists an active and vocal AMNLAE leadership closely tied to the FSLN and highly visible in the government.

In summary, the mass organizations in Nicaragua are not organs of class rule over the bourgeoisie. Only in the insurrection itself did these organizations (particularly CDS and ACT) directly assault the institutions of bourgeois rule and property rights. Over and above the passing and limited role of the CDS im-

mediately following the insurrection, mass organizations have nowhere operated as organs of workers' power.

With the dissolution of the Council of State and adoption of the constitution, mass organizations have lost all representation in government. They operate, with the support of the government, as pressure groups seeking concessions from the capitalists.

The decline in participation in mass organizations stems from the erosion of their ability to influence decisions that determine the course of the revolution. The one exception, UNAG, has grown in influence because of Sandinista desire to conciliate with the landowning capitalists and peasantry.

UNAG's growth, together with the decline of the CDS and the growing tensions between government and workers, bodes ill for the future of the revolution.

Conclusions on Nicaragua's State Apparatus

The 1979 insurrection resulted in the military victory of the FSLN over Somoza's National Guard. Subsequent changes in the state apparatus have not gone much beyond replacing the National Guard with

the Sandinista army and reorganizing the police and prison system.

The Sandinistas have armed the population and organized them into popular militias. But these militias do not function as *vehicles for suppressing the bourgeois class*. Rather they are limited to defending the country against military incursions by the U.S.-instigated counterrevolutionaries.

Much of the state bureaucracy is essentially intact from the Somoza era. The only difference is that Sandinista leaders sit in the top posts. And the government consistently guarantees a voice and power to the bourgeoisie in formulating and executing economic policies. The Sandinistas promote instead of challenge capitalist hegemony in the economy.

Likewise, the courts and legal system have basically upheld the inviolability of private property and have confined the revolution within bourgeois democratic limits. The 1986 constitution, which enshrined the mixed economy and "political pluralism" as permanent features of state, cemented the position and power of the bourgeois class in the economy and the state apparatus.

No true organs of workers' rule have arisen either within the government or as a competing power formation. The mass organizations nowhere exercise the com-

bined legislative and executive functions characteristic of soviets elected by and accountable to the workers and peasants. They do not decide the direction of social development and are limited to pressuring for concessions from the capitalists.

Weakened by the revolution, the bourgeoisie has made some concessions but in no way has relinquished its economic control or political influence on the state bureaucracy.

Tension between the state and the people, especially in the economic arena, is yet another indication that the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus is woefully incomplete. This antagonism has sharpened with the growth of the government bureaucracy since Somoza's downfall.

The people characterize the bureaucracy as lethargic and slow to respond to changing circumstances. Wherever possible, the masses circumvent the bureaucracy to meet their survival needs. The growth of the black market is a primary example.

Dismantling Somoza's repressive regime did not constitute smashing the bourgeois state apparatus. That task remains, and cannot take place without making more radical inroads into the bourgeoisie's powerful position in the economy.

V. The Program and Goals of the Sandinistas

This third and last criterion, after economics and the state apparatus, enjoins us to evaluate the conscious leadership factor in the Nicaraguan revolution.

What Is Sandinismo?

Sandinismo is the product of three ideological currents: nationalism, Stalinism and liberation theology.

The FSLN brought these (actually harmonious) ideas together in a program of action which sufficed to overthrow Somoza, but not to advance and consolidate a *socialist* revolution in the interests of the workers, peasants and oppressed masses.

Sandinismo is eclectic. It devalues Marxist theory and is marked by a strong strain of nationalist exceptionalism: Nicaragua is unique, say the Sandinistas, and must find its own independent path forward. (Every country, of course, is unique, so tactics and strategy must vary. But each country is still a component, common part of global currents and politics.)

Defending the nation against the *contras* and the threat of U.S. invasion is the rallying cry of the FSLN. Nationalism cements the FSLN's wandering program, providing an ideological rationale for the people's front that is consciously maintained with the bourgeoisie.

The FSLN program, published in 1969 and not since revised, calls for the overthrow of the Somoza regime and the establishment of a revolutionary government representing all sectors of the population, including the "patriotic" bourgeoisie.¹³ The program advocates the nationalization of Somoza's property and a more equitable distribution of national income, but *it avoids addressing the question of socialism*.

With their stage-ist, Menshevik approach to revolution, FSLN leaders publicly and consistently renounce socialism as unattainable and unrealistic in this period. Hence, Sandinista reformist nationalism puts a brake on revolutionary progress, as does Stalinism, another counterrevolutionary ideological pillar of Sandinismo.

Despite their ideological debt to Stalinism, the FSLN did not come out of the Communist Party but originated as a small, independent Left formation in the late '50s. In 1959, Carlos Fonseca, who codified Sandinista thinking, and Tomás Borge founded the Moscow-oriented Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN). Two years later, they broke with PSN to build the FSLN.

The FSLN program enshrined Sandino's nationalism as the revolution's ideological bedrock, consciously rejecting Trotskyist internationalism and the concept of permanent revolution. Stalin-

ism within the FSLN was cemented by the Sandinistas' admiration of, and collaboration with, the Cuban revolution.

Fidel Castro's 1959 victory spurred the founders of the FSLN to move against Somoza, and Cuba became the inspiration and the staunchest ally of the FSLN's battle to overthrow the dictatorship in the '60s and '70s. But the military and economic assaults on Cuba by the U.S. and the defeats of the Latin American

which feed off all varieties of popular ideologies, the FSLN imbibed the false promise and regressive idealist philosophy of liberation theology.

Liberation theology, in its militancy, in its advocacy of social struggle against the exploiters, is progressive. But in its god-seeking mysticism and rejection of Marxist dialectical materialism—as well as its refusal to embrace the full liberation of women and gays—it is retrogressive. Christian socialism is far better than Christian capitalism, of course, but it is still illogical and unscientific, prone to become a wellspring of reaction at precisely the point where revolutionary progress—involving the satisfaction of human, and especially women's, needs on earth—be-

national solidarity that is paramount to the revolution's survival.

Cheerleaders for the Sandinistas assert that the leadership has not gone further to expropriate the capitalists because they *cannot*, given the material conditions in the country. This is nonsense, and the FSLN leadership itself states that limiting the assault on capitalist property relations was an a priori, conscious programmatic choice. As Tomás Borge noted in 1980:

We could have taken over all their businesses and we would not have been overthrown. I am sure of that. But what is most conducive to the economic development of the country is what is best for the Nicaraguan people. So when we talk about a mixed economy, we mean it; and when we talk about political pluralism, we mean it. This is not a short term maneuver but our strategic approach.¹⁴

It is increasingly evident that this cavalier, blind approach leads to economic and political perdition. The Stalinist notion that revolution should be limited beforehand to bourgeois democracy is profoundly and ultimately anti-revolutionary. All progress is won through struggle, economic and political, and revolutions which do not fulfill their integral nature are doomed to endless civil war.

Middle Caste Blues

The FSLN is a *middle caste* leadership, standing between the revolutionary masses and the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. It aims to maintain peaceful coexistence between the classes and between Nicaragua and imperialism. In essence, this means propping up capitalism.

In the early period after the insurrection, the Sandinistas had enormous latitude within which to maneuver conciliation with capitalism. They had mobilized the majority of the people against Somoza. The military victory conferred on them tremendous authority and popularity with the working and peasant masses.

The unquestioned political hegemony of the Sandinistas among the revolutionary people allowed them to repress the revolutionary dynamic in 1979-80, i.e., to halt land takeovers in the countryside and factory expropriations in the cities. The Sandinista success in largely containing the revolution within reformist parameters won them financial backing from a sector of international capitalism which hoped to influence them to halt the revolution altogether.

Unparalleled amounts of capitalist aid (including funds from the U.S.) poured into Nicaragua in the critical first years after the insurrection. This was key in

to supplement page 8



Campeños crowd into voter registration office, Atlántico del Norte. Muchedumbre de campesinos en la oficina de registro para votar, Atlántico del norte.

revolution in the late '60s and early '70s threw Cuba into abject dependence on Soviet largesse and conservatized the leadership. This fostered the reintroduction of Stalinism into the heart of Sandinismo.

Stalinism implacably eroded the socialist content of the FSLN program.

The third current in Sandinismo is liberation theology, which emerged in the '70s throughout Latin America as a result of heightened class tensions sweeping the region. Liberation theology poses as "true Christianity" the struggle of the poor for social and economic justice. In Nicaragua as elsewhere, the Catholic church was polarized between the liberation theologians and the reactionary hierarchy in the struggle against Somoza.

Isolated from the labor unions during the Somoza years, the FSLN organized rural agricultural workers, the urban poor, and students, among whom liberation theologians were also actively organizing against the dictatorship. Already steeped in nationalism and Stalinism, both of

gins to erode the bedrock idealist notion that God created us all and heaven can be found only in the afterlife.

Reconciling Christ with communism is a hapless endeavor.

The FSLN in Power

The FSLN continues to promote class collaboration, as codified in the tenets of mixed economy, political pluralism expressed through conflicting class parties, and international non-alignment.

The mixed-up economy guarantees private property rights to the bourgeoisie and effective bourgeois control over the decisive sectors of production, distribution and finance. The Sandinistas promote political pluralism—participation of the bourgeoisie in decision-making—as crucial to political and economic rebuilding. International non-alignment, meanwhile, dangerously abstracts Nicaragua from the boiling class struggle in Central America, and weakens the inter-

Nacional de Somoza. Los cambios subsiguientes en el aparato estatal no han ido más allá del reemplazo de la Guardia Nacional con el ejército sandinista y la reorganización en el sistema carcelario y de policía.

Los sandinistas han armado a la población y la han organizado en milicias populares. Pero estas milicias no funcionan como *vehículos para suprimir a la clase burguesa*. Mejor dicho están limitadas a defender al país en contra de incursiones militares por los contrarrevolucionarios instigados por los EUA.

Buena parte de la burocracia estatal está esencialmente intacta de la era de Somoza. La única diferencia es que los líderes sandinistas ocupan los altos cargos.

Y el gobierno consistentemente garantiza a la burguesía, voz y poder en la formulación y ejecución de las políticas económicas. Los sandinistas promueven a la hegemonía capitalista en la economía en vez de retarla.

Del mismo modo, las cortes y los sistemas básicos como el sostenido de la inviolabilidad de la propiedad privada y han confinado a la revolución dentro de los límites de la democracia burguesa. La constitución de 1986, mixta y conservadora religiosamente la economía mixta y el "pluralismo político" como rasgos permanentes del Estado, cimentaron la posición y el poder de la clase burguesa en la economía y en el aparato estatal.

No han surgido órganos verdaderos de mando obrero ya sea dentro del gobierno o

como una formación de poder que compita. Las organizaciones de masas no ejercen en ningún lado las funciones legislativas y ejecutivas combinadas, características de los soviets que son elegidos por y responsables a los obreros y campesinos. Ellos no deciden la dirección del desarrollo social y están limitadas a presionar para sacar concesiones de los capitalistas.

Debilitada por la revolución, la burguesía ha hecho algunas concesiones pero de ninguna forma ha renunciado a su control económico o influencia política en la burocracia estatal.

La tensión entre el estado y la gente, especialmente en el terreno económico, es aun otra indicación de que la destrucción del aparato estatal de la burguesía es la-

mentablemente incompleto. Este antagonismo se ha agudizado con el crecimiento de la burocracia gubernamental desde la caída de Somoza.

La gente caracteriza a la burocracia como letárgica y lenta en responder a las circunstancias cambiantes. Dondequiera que sea posible, las masas le dan la vuelta a la burocracia para satisfacer sus necesidades de supervivencia. El crecimiento del mercado negro es un ejemplo principal.

El desmantelamiento del régimen represivo de Somoza no se constituyó en el aplastamiento del aparato estatal burgués. Esta tarea aún permanece y no puede tomarse lugar sin que se hagan más incursiones radicales hacia la poderosa posición burguesa en la economía.

V. El Programa y las Metas de los Sandinistas

El tercer y último criterio después del aparato estatal y la economía, nos conlleva a evaluar el factor consciente de liderazgo en la revolución nicaragüense.

¿Qué Es el Sandinismo?

El sandinismo es el producto de tres corrientes ideológicas: nacionalismo, estalinismo y teología de la liberación.

El FSLN reunió estas ideas (en colaboración armoniosa) en un programa de acción que bastó para derrocar a Somoza, pero no para avanzar y consolidar una revolución socialista en interés de los trabajadores, campesinos y masas oprimidas.

El sandinismo es ecléctico. Devalúa a la teoría marxista y está marcado por una fuerte tendencia de excepcionalismo nacionalista. Los sandinistas dicen que Nicaragua es única y que tiene que encontrar su propio camino independiente hacia adelante. (Todo país, por supuesto es único, por lo tanto las tácticas y estrategias deben variar. Pero cada país sigue siendo un componente, una parte común de las corrientes y políticas mundiales).

El defender a la nación de los contras y de las amenazas de invasión por parte de los EUA es la consigna unificadora del FSLN. El nacionalismo cementa el divagante programa del FSLN, al proveer un raciocinio ideológico para el frente popular que está mantenido conscientemente con la burguesía.

El programa del FSLN, publicado en 1969 y no revisado desde entonces, pide el derrocamiento del régimen de Somoza y el establecimiento de un gobierno revolucionario que represente a todos los sectores de la población, incluyendo a la burguesía "patriótica".¹³ El programa aboga por la nacionalización de la propiedad de Somoza y una distribución más equitativa del ingreso nacional, pero evita hacer alusión a la cuestión del socialismo.

Con su enfoque menchevique etapista, a la revolución, los líderes del FSLN públicamente y consistentemente renuncian al socialismo en este período como algo inalcanzable y poco realista. De aquí que el nacionalismo reformista sandinista actúe como un freno al progreso revolucionario, como lo hace el estalinismo, otro pilar ideológico contrarrevolucionario del sandinismo.

A pesar de su deuda ideológica con el estalinismo, el FSLN no surgió del Partido Comunista, sino se originó como una formación de izquierda pequeña e independiente a finales de los '50. En 1959, Carlos Fonseca, quien codificó el pensamiento sandinista, y Tomás Borge, fundaron el Partido Socialista Nicaragüense (PSN) orientados hacia Moscú. Dos años más tarde, rompieron con el PSN para crear el FSLN.

El programa del FSLN conservó religiosamente el nacionalismo de Sandino como la piedra angular de la revolución, conscientemente rechazando el internacionalismo trotskyista y el concepto de la revolución permanente. El estalinismo dentro del FSLN fue cimentado por la admiración y la colaboración de los sandinistas con la revolución cubana.

La victoria de Fidel Castro en 1959 motivó a los fundadores del FSLN para actuar contra Somoza, y Cuba vino a ser la inspiración y el más fiel aliado en la batalla del FSLN para derrocar a la dictadura en los

'60s y '70s. Pero los ataques económicos y militares a Cuba por parte de los EUA y las derrotas de la revolución latinoamericana a finales de los '60s y comienzos de los '70s arrojaron a Cuba a una dependencia abyecta a la generosidad soviética y causó que la dirigencia se hiciera más conservadora. Esto promovió la reintroducción del estalinismo dentro del corazón del sandinismo.

El estalinismo erosionó implacablemente el contenido socialista del programa del FSLN.

La tercera corriente en el sandinismo es la teología de la liberación, que emergió en los '70s por toda Latinoamérica como resultado de las incrementadas tensiones de clase que recorrieron a la región. La teología de la liberación toma como "verdadero cristianismo" la lucha de los pobres por la justicia social y económica. En Nicaragua como en cualquier parte, la iglesia católica fue polarizada entre los teólogos de la liberación y la jerarquía reaccionaria, en la lucha contra Somoza.

Aislado de los sindicatos laborales durante los años de Somoza, el FSLN organizó a los trabajadores agrícolas rurales, a los urbanos pobres y a los estudiantes, entre los cuales los teólogos de la liberación estuvieron organizando activamente contra de la dictadura. Impregnados ya de nacionalismo y estalinismo, los cuales se nutren de toda una variedad de ideologías populares, el FSLN se regesivó de la falsa promesa, y la filosofía regresiva idealista de la teología de la liberación.

La teología de la liberación en su militancia y en su apoyo a la lucha social en contra de los explotadores, es progresiva. Pero es regresiva, en su misticismo en búsqueda de Dios y en su rechazo al materialismo dialéctico marxista—así como lo es su rechazo de abrazar la completa liberación de las mujeres y los homosexuales—Por supuesto, el socialismo cristiano es muchísimo mejor que el capitalismo cristiano, pero sigue siendo ilógico y científico, propongo a convertirse en una fuente brotante de reacción justo en el punto en que el progreso revolucionario—al involucrar a la satisfacción humana, y especialmente a las necesidades de las mujeres en el mundo—comienza a erosionar el cemento de la noción idealista de que Dios nos creó a todos y que el cielo sólo se encuentra en la vida venidera.

Reconciliar a Cristo con el comunismo es un esfuerzo desventurado.

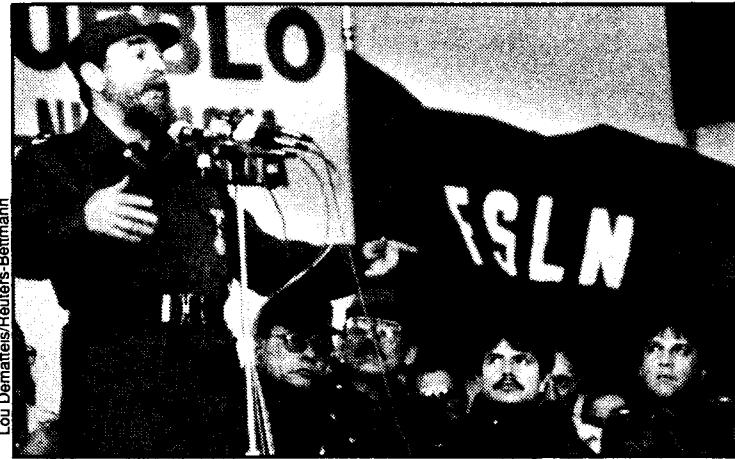
El FSLN en El Poder

El FSLN continúa promoviendo la colaboración de clases, como aparece codificado en los principios de la economía mixta, el pluralismo político expresado a través de partidos de clases opuestas y el no alineamiento internacional.

La economía mixta, garantiza los derechos de propiedad a la burguesía y un control efectivo burgués sobre los sectores decisivos de la producción, distribución y finanzas. Los sandinistas promueven el pluralismo político—la participación de la burguesía en la toma de decisiones—como clave para la reconstrucción política tanto

como la económica. El noalineamiento internacional, mientras tanto, peligrosamente abstrae a Nicaragua de la lucha de clases en Centroamérica, y debilita la solidaridad internacional que es de suma importancia para la supervivencia de la revolución.

Los porristas de los sandinistas afirman que el liderazgo no ha ido adelante en expropiar a los capitalistas, porque ellos *no pueden*, dadas las condiciones materiales en el país. Esto es un disparate y el mismo



Fidel Castro addresses Sandinista rally at Timbal, 1985. Fidel Castro dirigiendo un discurso en una reunión de sandinistas en Timbal, 1985.

liderazgo del FSLN declara que limitar el ataque a las relaciones de propiedad capitalista era una opción a priori, consciente y programática. Como lo señaló Tomás Borge en 1980:

Podríamos habernos apoderado de todas sus empresas, y no habríamos sido derrocados, estoy seguro de eso. Pero lo que es más conducente al desarrollo económico del país, es lo que es mejor para el pueblo nicaragüense. Así que cuando hablamos acerca de una economía mixta, lo decimos en serio; y cuando hablamos acerca del pluralismo político, también lo decimos en serio. Esto no es una maniobra de corto plazo sino es nuestro enfoque estratégico.¹⁴

Es cada vez más evidente que este enfoque ciego y arrogante conduce a la pérdida política y económica. La noción estalinista de que la revolución debe limitarse de antemano a la democracia burguesa, es profunda y ultimadamente antirevolucionaria. Todo progreso se logra a través de la lucha económica y política, y las revoluciones que no cumplan con su naturaleza integral están condenadas a una interminable guerra civil.

Melancolía de la Casta Media

El FSLN es una dirigencia de casta media, ubicado entre las masas revolucionarias y la burguesía nicaragüense. Busca mantener una coexistencia pacífica entre las clases, y entre Nicaragua y el imperialismo. En esencia esto significa apuntalar el capitalismo.

En el primer período después de la insurrección, los sandinistas tuvieron una enorme libertad para maniobrar en conciliarse con el capitalismo. Ellos habían movilizado a la mayoría del pueblo en contra de Somoza. La victoria militar les confirió una tremenda autoridad y popularidad entre las masas trabajadoras y campesinas.

La incuestionable hegemonía política de los sandinistas entre el pueblo revolucio-

cionario les permitió reprimir la dinámica revolucionaria entre 1979-80, por ejemplo, para detener las apropiaciones en el campo y las expropiaciones de fábricas en las ciudades. En gran parte, el éxito sandinista de contener en su mayoría a la revolución dentro de los parámetros reformistas, hizo que ganaran apoyo financiero de un sector del capitalismo internacional que esperaba influirlos para detener del todo la revolución.

En los primeros años críticos después de la insurrección, fueron vertidas en Nicaragua cantidades de ayuda capitalista, sin paralelo, (incluyendo fondos de los EUA). Esto fue clave para permitir que entre 1982-83 Nicaragua alcanzara la más alta tasa de crecimiento y mejoramiento económico de su nivel de vida en Centroamérica. Pero la presión continua de las masas revolucionarias, junto con el rechazo sandinista de capitularse del todo al imperialismo de EUA, engendraron un crecimiento en la hostilidad burguesa, culminando en una guerra contrarrevolucionaria abierta y en sanciones económicas a nivel internacional.

Desde entonces, se ha contraído el espacio de los sandinistas para maniobrar. La agresión imperialista ha desgastado materialmente la capacidad del FSLN de cumplir sus promesas para con las masas. Mientras tanto, la desorganización creciente en la economía, especialmente el crecimiento del mercado negro, pesa fuertemente sobre los trabajadores y los pobres urbanos, y ha provocado un descontento significativo y erosión en la confianza en la dirigencia.

La base política y económica, endeble, sandinista se está desbaratando.

La inquietud de clases en alza, no sólo en Nicaragua sino en toda Centroamérica, apunta hacia una confrontación en Nicaragua. Y esta tensión está encontrando su expresión dentro de las filas del FSLN.

Dentro del FSLN han surgido debates sobre las cuestiones de suma importancia de la política económica y el papel de las organizaciones de masas. Los parámetros y resultados, si los hay, de estas discusiones no son claros, pero el hecho de que están ocurriendo, indica que por lo menos algunos sectores del FSLN están tratando de encontrar un camino de salida al creciente atolladero.

Es posible que éstos debates pudieran culminar en un resquebrajamiento dentro del FSLN y el surgimiento de una vanguardia de izquierda que junto con otras fuerzas revolucionarias, pudiera implantar un liderazgo socialista en Nicaragua. Los líderes sandinistas de cualquier modo, aunque han dado golpes heroicos por la democracia y en contra del imperialismo, caen lejos, muy lejos de los estándares establecidos por Lenin y Trotsky en la Revolución de Octubre, en Rusia.

Como cualquier liderazgo de casta media, los sandinistas mantienen su posición en virtud del apoyo de los trabajadores y campesinos, permanecen susceptibles y responden, hasta cierto grado, a la presión de la masa revolucionaria. Pero sus programas y metas—atascadas en el estalinismo, al nacionalismo estrecho, en la teología de la liberación y al reformismo—siguen siendo insuficientes para llevar a Nicaragua hacia un Estado obrero.

a la página 9 del suplemento

allowing Nicaragua in 1982-83 to achieve the highest economic growth rate, and improvement in its standard of living, in Central America. But the continuing pressure of the revolutionary masses, along with the Sandinistas' refusal to completely capitulate to U.S. imperialism, engendered rising bourgeois hostility, culminating in open contra warfare and international economic sanctions.

Since then, the Sandinistas' room to maneuver has rapidly contracted. Imperialist aggression has materially eroded the capacity of the FSLN to deliver on its promises to the masses. Meanwhile, the

growing disorganization of the economy, especially the growth of the black market, weighs heavily on workers and the urban poor, and has provoked significant dissatisfaction and erosion of confidence in the leadership.

The flimsy, contradictory and wrongful economic and political underpinnings of the Sandinista regime are coming undone.

The heightening class unrest, not just in Nicaragua but throughout Central America, points toward a showdown in Nicaragua. And this tension is finding its expression within the ranks of the FSLN.

Debates have erupted within the FSLN on paramount questions of economic policy and the role of the mass organizations. The parameters and results, if any, of these discussions are unclear, but the fact that they are taking place indicates that at least some sectors of the FSLN are trying to find a road out of growing impasse.

It is possible that these debates could culminate in a split within the FSLN and the emergence of a left vanguard which, together with other revolutionary forces, could implant a socialist leadership in Nicaragua. The Sandinista leaders, how-

ever, though they have struck heroic blows for democracy and against imperialism, fall far, far short of the standards set by Lenin and Trotsky in the October Revolution in Russia.

Like any middle-caste leadership, the Sandinistas hold position by virtue of support from workers and peasants, and they remain susceptible and responsive to some degree to revolutionary mass pressure. But their program and goals—mired in Stalinism, narrow nationalism, liberation theology and reformism—remain insufficient to carry Nicaragua forward to a workers' state.

VI. The Atlantic Coast

The problems of the Sandinista revolution—its failure to transform the state bureaucracy and allow the revolutionary classes to empower themselves with new organs of state power—are revealed most starkly on the Atlantic Coast.

Ten percent of Nicaraguans live in Zelaya Province, the Atlantic Coast region, which is 53% of Nicaragua's land. The Atlantic Coast is the traditional home of Miskito Indians concentrated in the north along the Honduran border; the Black, English-speaking Creoles and Garifonos in the south around the town of Bluefields; and Sumo and Rama Indians, small indigenous populations concentrated in the north and south respectively.

The Atlantic Coast peoples, called *costeños*, have historically developed in isolation from the Pacific Coast region. It was only after the 1979 insurrection that the first, and still the only, road was built connecting Managua to Puerto Cabezas in northern Zelaya.

The historic exploiters of the Atlantic Coast had been the British and U.S. Under Somoza's rule, U.S. corporations had free rein to exploit the natural resources of the region: lumber, minerals, fish and bananas. The region remained underdeveloped, poor, and dependent on direct trade with the U.S., Costa Rica, and Caribbean neighbors. Education, social services and community life revolved around the Moravian Church.

The revolution erupted in the Pacific regions, the personal stomping ground of

Somoza's Guardia. The Atlantic peoples, though they had joined Sandino's liberation movement in the '30s, did not directly participate in the '79 insurrection. Nonetheless, because Somoza had been the overseer of capitalist decimation of the region's natural wealth, the *costeños* greeted the victorious revolution with a surge of support, pride, and an intense desire for self-determination.

With the ouster of Somoza and withdrawal of U.S.-based multinationals hostile to the revolution, the Indians' demand for self-determination took on new life, as did the question of autonomy for Nicaragua's Blacks.

But the hopes of Indians and Blacks for an equal place in the revolution ran up against cultural chauvinism and racism within the FSLN leadership. The Sandinistas distrusted self-organization among the Atlantic Coast peoples. They sent in economic, political and military overlords who attempted to rein in the revolution and make it conform to the goals of narrow Nicaraguan nationalism. The distrust was especially directed at the Miskitos, whose agriculture-based economy and espousal of communal property rights set them on a collision course with the Sandinista state bureaucracy.

Soon after the insurrection, the FSLN moved to impose its will on the Atlantic Coast: ALPROMISO, a multi-tribal organization built in the '70s to resist Somoza's encroachments, came under attack. The Sandinistas wanted it dissolved and the Indian communities affiliated with gov-

ernment-controlled mass organizations. Heated Indian protest forced the regime to back down, and in 1979 the Indian organization MISURASATA was formed and approved as the Indians' representative in the government.

Then in Spring 1980, the government imposed a Spanish-only literacy campaign among the Indians. But by October it gave in to the demand that Indian languages be included.

Meanwhile, economic tensions escalated as the U.S. boycott of Nicaragua wiped out vital trade and left the Atlantic Coast dependent on a tenuous import lifeline from the Pacific region. The contra war disrupted farming and mining, and the FSLN mismanaged what little production remained. Compounding the errors, the FSLN's 1981 Declaration of Principles claimed exclusive right to exploit the area's resources. Indian leaders charged that government plans threatened Indian land claims and disregarded Indian wishes to maintain and improve their tribal modes of production. Indian identity, they asserted, was a dead letter without the right to control their own land and maintain their own economy.

The greater the protests, the greater the government fear of Indian separatism. In February 1981, the Sandinistas suddenly arrested 33 MISURASATA leaders. Massive sitdown protests soon forced their release, but the die was cast and bitter conflict would ensue.

By the end of 1981, a majority of the 40,000 Miskitos who live on Nicaragua's Honduran border, the Rio Coco river, had crossed into Honduras to fight the FSLN government. In January 1982, the Sandinista military forced 8,500 Miskitos out of their villages along the Rio Coco and into

a government camp called Tasba Pri. Many died. The forced relocation, opening the door for a U.S. propaganda blitz to bolster Reagan's contra "freedom fighters."

With the escalation of the contra war, the whole Atlantic Coast became a military war zone patrolled by the FSLN Army. By late 1984, however, in response to military stalemate and international criticism, the government began voicing support for Indian autonomy. In 1985, Miskitos returned from across the Rio Coco and from Costa Rica to test the sincerity of the reversal, negotiating to keep their weapons if change proved false.

In 1987, after much government stalling, the national legislature finally passed an Autonomy Law which calls for elections to establish an independent government to replace Managua's bureaucratic administration in the region. Yet the original sources of conflict have not been dealt with: Indian and Creole critics of the Law point out that it fails to spell out how economic resources will be allocated, hence how economic development is to proceed. Nor is the question of communal land rights addressed.

The Autonomy Law does acknowledge the government's worst "mistakes"—though the word mistake here is an unworthy euphemism for calculated policy. But then, given that it leaves the basic economic questions unaddressed, the law appears designed as merely a gloss under which the old economic exploitation can take place. It would allow, via the elections, only the trappings of autonomy—and even this seems to be too much for the FSLN: the elections have not yet been called; the law remains unimplemented. The Sandinistas now seem bent on stalling the Indians into submission.

VII. Conclusions on the Character of the State

On the basis of the preceding analysis, the writers conclude that Nicaragua is not a workers' state. It meets none of the outlined criteria, none of the programmatic norms.

Nicaragua rests on a bourgeois-dominated, predominantly capitalist economy in which the state sector not only is not expanding in general but is contracting within the agricultural sphere. And the capacity of the government to plan, direct and control the economy, which was always tenuous, is now diminishing.

The FSLN government's ongoing commitment, in theory and action, to maintaining the role of the bourgeoisie in the country's economic and political life stands solidly in the way of transforming property relations.

The entire state apparatus, beginning with the Sandinista government, consciously and deliberately perpetuates bourgeois property relations and the capitalist exploitation of labor.

The revolution, moreover, has only partially destroyed Somoza's state machinery. Eight years after the insurrection, Nicaragua totally lacks any real organs of proletarian rule. No institutions exist resembling soviets, the historic model for proletarian rule. The form of government corresponds to bourgeois democratic rule, consistent with the bourgeois economic underpinnings of the state.

Additionally, the Sandinista leadership, that so-called "Marxist regime," lacks

the very socialist consciousness and commitment, and the clear programmatic goals, which could, if implemented, move the revolution forward against the private property system and toward workers' power, socialist morality, internationalism, and defeat of the contra-revolution without surrendering the gains and mission of the revolution.

If Nicaragua is not a workers' state, what then did the revolution accomplish?

The revolution was a *political* one, a massive popular uprising which smashed the police state and changed the *form* of bourgeois rule from the repressive Somoza dictatorship to the FSLN middle-caste government. The FSLN has instituted democratic freedoms but has limited democracy to the political arena. It channelled the revolutionary aspirations of the workers and peasants into a bourgeois democratic, not proletarian, form of rule. Nicaragua remains a capitalist state.

Within months after the seizure of power, the forward motion of the revolution was largely halted in order to preserve bourgeois property relations. Despite the victory over Somocista tyranny, and the initial gains after the insurrection, Nicaraguan society has begun to stagnate and even deteriorate, especially on the economic front. This was to be expected, given the terrible hardships imposed by the contra war and the U.S. embargo, but the FSLN turned erroneously to more capitalism and less workers' control to meet the emergency.

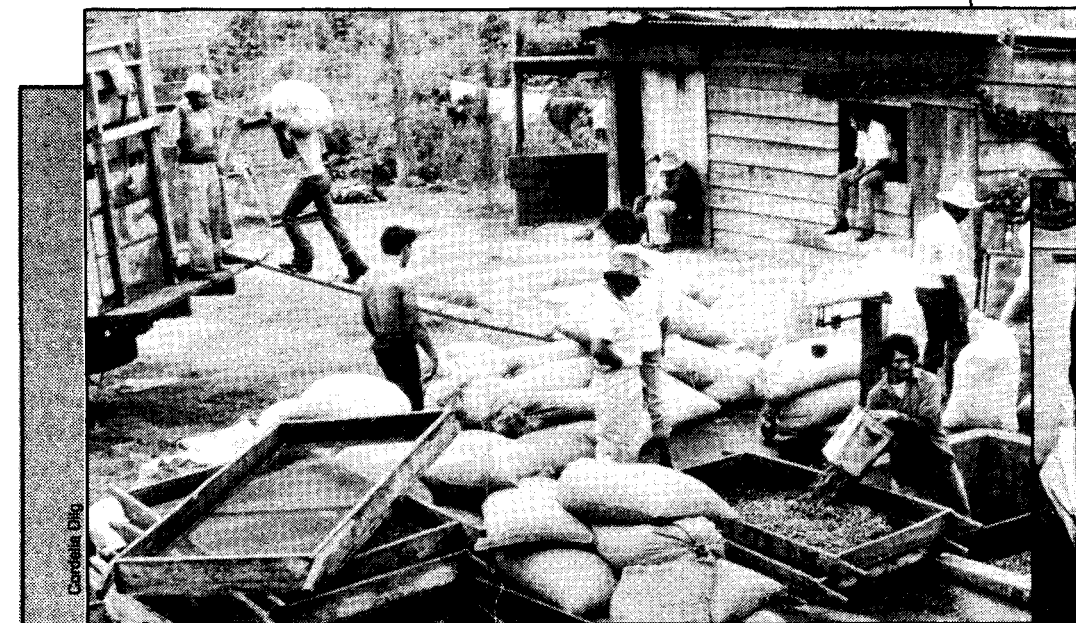
The bourgeois nature of the Nicaraguan state is further revealed in the unresolved tensions between the working class, which almost seized power in its own behalf after the insurrection, and the capitalists, who still wield their economic hegemony through the mediation of the middle-caste FSLN.

Nevertheless, the relative longevity of the Sandinista regime (as compared to Chile and Grenada, for example) is a direct result of and tribute to the fierce

combativeness of the masses and the fact that international class struggle is ascendant in Latin America and Asia. Under other historical circumstances, or in other regions of the world more removed from the U.S., a revolution like Nicaragua's would not likely have survived eight years.

U.S. imperialist proximity and pressure has kept the eyes of the world on Nicaragua, making it impossible for the leadership to slide unnoticed in a com-

to supplement page 10



(L) Peasant cooperative, Matagalpa Department. (R) Cooperativa Campesina, Departamento de Matagalpa. (R) Managua currency exchange; new bills for old to combat inflation. Government subsidies to agroexport capitalists helped kick inflation skyward by late '80s. (D) Casa de cambio en Managua, billetes nuevos por viejos, para combatir la inflación. Los subsidios del gobierno a los agroexportadores capitalistas ayudaron a mandar la inflación por los cielos a fines de los '80s.

VI. La Costa Atlántica

Los problemas de la revolución sandinista —su fracaso para transformar la burocracia del Estado y permitir a las clases revolucionarias adquirir ellas mismas poder con nuevos órganos de poder estatal—son revelados más descaradamente en la Costa Atlántica.

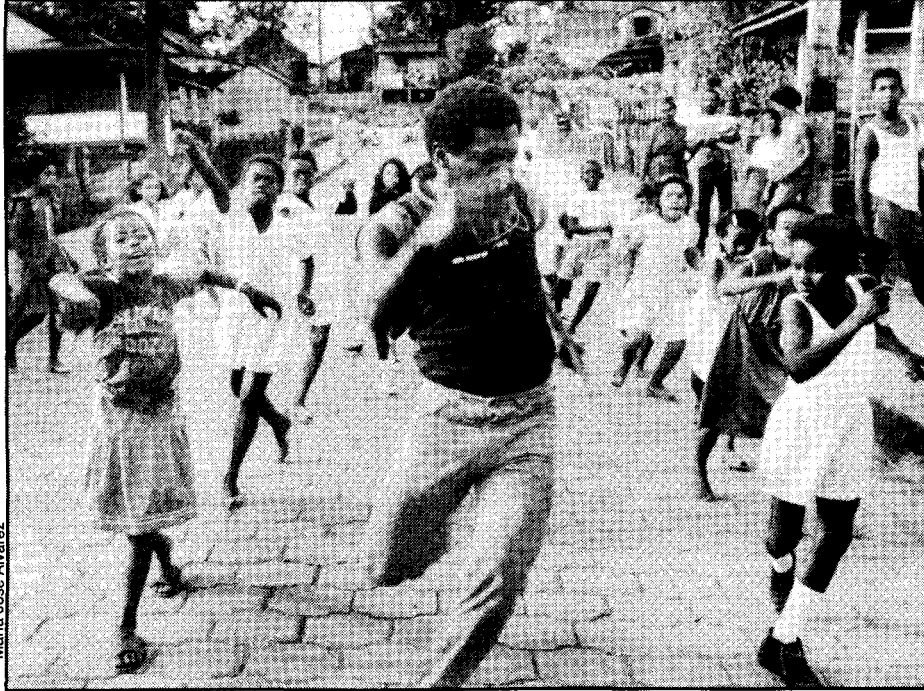
El diez por ciento de la población nicaragüense vive en la Provincia de Zelaya, la región de la Costa Atlántica, la cual constituye un 53% de la base territorial en Nicaragua. La Costa Atlántica es la patria tradicional de los indios miskitos que se concentran en el norte a lo largo de la frontera con Honduras; los negros, creoles de habla inglesa y los garífonos que viven en el sur alrededor del pueblo de Bluefields; y los indios sumo y étnias indígenas concentradas en el norte y sur respectivamente.

Las gentes de la Costa Atlántica, llamadas *costeños*, se han desarrollado históricamente en aislamiento de la región de la costa del Pacífico. Fue sólo hasta después de la insurrección de 1979 que fue construida la primera y todavía única carretera para conectar Managua con Puerto Cabezas en Zelaya del norte.

Los explotadores históricos de la Costa Atlántica han sido los británicos y los estadounidenses. Bajo el gobierno de Somoza, las corporaciones estadounidenses tuvieron rienda suelta para explotar los recursos naturales de la región: maderas, minería, pesca y plátano. La región se mantuvo subdesarrollada, pobre y dependiente del comercio directo con los EUA, Costa Rica, y los vecinos caribeños. La educación, los servicios sociales y la vida comunitaria giraron alrededor de la iglesia moraviana.

La revolución hizo erupción en la región del Pacífico, señorío personal de la

guardia de Somoza. La gente del Atlántico, aunque se había unido al movimiento de liberación sandinista en los años treinta, no participó directamente en la insurrección del '79. Sin embargo, como Somoza había sido el capataz del diezmar capitalista de las riquezas naturales de la región, los *costeños* recibieron a la revolución victo-



Rehearsal for the Maypole Festival in Bluefields. Ensayo para el Festival del Palo de Mayo en Bluefields.

riosa con una oleada de apoyo, de orgullo y con un deseo intenso de la autodeterminación.

Con la expulsión de Somoza y el retiro de las multinacionales basadas en los EUA, hostiles a la revolución, la exigencia de autodeterminación de los indios tomó una nueva vida, como lo hizo la cuestión de autonomía para los negros nicaragüenses.

Pero la esperanza entre los indios y los negros por un lugar equitativo en la revolución se topó con el chovinismo cultural y el racismo dentro de la dirigencia del FSLN. Los sandinistas desconfiaron de la auto organización entre el pueblo de la Costa Atlántica. Enviaron a caciques económicos, políticos y militares quienes intentaron reprimir la revolución y hacerla conforme a las metas del estrecho nacionalismo nicaragüense. La desconfianza fue

dirigida especialmente a los indios miskitos, cuya economía basada en la agricultura y la adhesión a derechos comunales de la propiedad, los situaron en un carril de choque con la burocracia estatal sandinista.

Pronto después de la insurrección, el FSLN actuó para imponer su voluntad en la Costa Atlántica: ALPROMISO, una organización multi tribal, construida en los años setenta para resistir las invasiones de Somoza, se vio atacada. Los sandinistas querían su disolución y que las comunales de los indígenas se afiliaran con organizaciones de masas controladas por el gobierno. Una protesta acaalorada por parte de los indígenas forzó al régimen a retractarse, y en 1979 la organización indígena MISURASATA fue formada y aprobada como la representación indígena en el gobierno.

Entonces en la primavera de 1980, el gobierno impuso entre los indígenas una campaña de alfabetización en español. Pero para octubre cedió a la demanda de que fueran incluidos los lenguajes indígenas.

Mientras tanto, las tensiones económicas escalaron cuando el boicoteo de los EUA a Nicaragua destruyó el comercio vital y dejó la Costa Atlántica dependiente de un cordón vital tenue de importación de la región de la cultura. La guerra Contra trastornó la agricultura y la minería, y el FSLN maladministró a la poca producción restante. La Declaración de los Principios del FSLN, agravando los errores, en 1981, reclamó el derecho exclusivo de explotar los recursos del área. Líderes indígenas acusaron que los planes del gobierno amenazaban a los reclamos indígenas y hacían caso omiso de los deseos de mantener y mejorar el modo de producción tribal. La identidad indígena afirmaron, fue letra muerta, sin el derecho a controlar sus propias tierras y mantener su propia economía.

Entre mayores las protestas, mayor es el temor del gobierno al separatismo indígena. En febrero de 1981, los sandinistas

arrestaron de pronto a 33 líderes de MISURASATA, protestas de "sentón" masivas forzaron su liberación, pero el dado estaba echado y los amargos conflictos proseguirían.

Para fines de 1981, la mayoría de los 40,000 miskitos que viven a orillas del Río Coco, frontera entre Nicaragua y Honduras, habían cruzado hacia Honduras para pelear en contra del gobierno del FSLN. En enero de 1982, el ejército sandinista sacó a la fuerza a 8,500 miskitos de sus aldeas a lo largo del Río Coco, hacia un campo del gobierno llamado Tasba Pri. Muchos murieron durante la relocalización forzada, abriendo la puerta para el blitz propagandístico estadounidense para reforzar a la Contra, los "luchadores por la libertad" de Reagan.

Con la escalada de la guerra Contra, la Costa Atlántica entera se convirtió en una zona militar de guerra patrullada por el ejército del FSLN. De cualquier modo, a finales de 1984, en respuesta al estancamiento militar y a la crítica internacional el gobierno empezó a expresar apoyo por la autonomía de los indígenas. En 1985 los Miskitos regresaron del otro lado del Río Coco y desde Costa Rica para probar la sinceridad de la oferta sandinista, negociando mantener sus armas en caso que el cambio probara ser falso.

En 1987, después de andarse con muchos rodeos del gobierno, la legislatura nacional pasó finalmente una Ley de Autonomía que convoca a elecciones para establecer un gobierno independiente que reemplace la administración burocrática de Managua en la región. Aun así las fuentes originales del conflicto no han sido resueltas: las críticas de los indígenas y creoles acerca de la ley, señalan que ésta falla en deletrear cómo iban a ser asignados los recursos económicos, y por tanto cómo iba a proceder el desarrollo económico. Tampoco es atendida la cuestión de los derechos de tierras comunales.

La ley de autonomía reconoce los peores "errores" del gobierno—siendo que aquí la palabra errónea es un eufemismo invocado para una política calculada. Pero entónces, dado que deja preguntas económicas básicas sin respuesta, la ley parece diseñada como una simple pulida bajo la cual la antigua explotación económica puede llevarse a cabo. Esto permitiría, por vía de las elecciones, solo las galas de la autonomía—y hasta esto parece ser demasiado para el FSLN: las elecciones no han sido proclamadas aun; la ley sigue sin ser implementada. Los sandinistas parecen estar decididos ahora en encerrar a los indios en la prisión.

VII. Conclusiones Sobre el Carácter del Estado

En base al análisis precedente, las conclusiones concluyeron que Nicaragua no es un Estado obrero. No reúne ninguno de los criterios trazados, ni ninguna de las normas programáticas.

Nicaragua descansa sobre una economía predominantemente capitalista dominada por la burguesía, en la cual el sector estatal no sólo no se está expandiendo en general, sino se está contrayendo dentro de la esfera agrícola. Y la capacidad del

gobierno para planear, dirigir y controlar la economía, que siempre fue tenue, esta disminuyendo ahora.

El compromiso continuo del gobierno del FSLN, en la teoría y en la práctica, de mantener el papel de la burguesía en la vida política y económica del país, se interpone sólidamente en la vía de la transformación de las relaciones de la propiedad.

El aparato estatal entero, comenzando con el gobierno sandinista, conscientemente y deliberadamente perpetúa las relaciones de la propiedad burguesa y la explotación capitalista de trabajo.

Además, la revolución sólo ha destruido parcialmente la maquinaria estatal de Somoza. Ocho años después de la insurrección, Nicaragua carece totalmente de cualquier órgano real de dominio proletario. No existen instituciones que semejen a los soviets, el modelo histórico del mando proletario. La forma de gobierno corresponde al régimen democrático burgués, consistente con los pilares económicos burgueses del estado.

Además, el liderazgo sandinista, el tal llamado "régimen marxista", carece de la verdadera conciencia y compromiso socialista, y las metas programáticas claras, que, si son implementadas, puedan mover hacia adelante la revolución en contra del sistema de propiedad privada y hacia el poder de los trabajadores, la moral socialista, el internacionalismo, y la derrota de la contrarrevolución sin rendir los logros y la misión y mejoras de la revolución.

Si Nicaragua no es un Estado obrero, ¿qué logró entonces la revolución?

La revolución fue una de tipo político, un levantamiento popular masivo que al levantamiento al estado policíaco cambió la forma del dominio burgués, de la represiva

dictadura de Somoza a la casta media de gobierno del FSLN. Este ha instituido libertades democráticas pero ha limitado a la democracia al campo político. Canalizó las aspiraciones revolucionarias de los trabajadores y campesinos en una forma de régimen democrático burgués, no proletario. Nicaragua sigue siendo un estado capitalista.

Durante meses después de la toma del poder, el avance de la revolución fue detenido mayormente para preservar las relaciones de burguesía sobre la tiranía somocista y las ganancias iniciales después de la insurrección, la sociedad nicaragüense ha empezado a estancarse y hasta a deteriorarse, especialmente en el frente económico. Esto era de esperarse, dadas las terribles penurias impuestas por la guerra Contra y el embargo estadounidense, pero el FSLN para hacerle frente a la emergencia se orientó erróneamente al capitalismo ya un menor control de los trabajadores.

La naturaleza burguesa del Estado de Nicaragua es revelada aún más, con las tensiones sin resolver entre la clase obrera, que casi tomó el poder para sí después de la insurrección, y los capitalistas, quienes todavía blanden su hegemonía económica a través de la mediación de la casta media del FSLN.

Sin embargo, la relativa longevidad del régimen sandinista (comparado con Chile y Granada, por ejemplo) es un resultado directo y un tributo a la combatividad feroz de las masas y al hecho de que la lucha internacional de Asia está en ascenso en Latinoamérica y Asia. Bajo otras circunstancias históricas, o en otras regiones del mundo más distantes a los EUA, una revolución no hubiera sobrevivido ocho años.

a la página 11 del suplemento



pletely counterrevolutionary direction. Then there's the fact that a victorious counterrevolution, that is, the negation of bourgeois democracy in Nicaragua, would also entail the negation of the Sandinistas themselves!

Bourgeois hostility is growing, placing Sandinistas and the masses at a crossroads. Nicaragua's gravest problems—the contra/U.S. insurgency and the dire economic crisis—can only be overcome if the workers and their allies advance the revolution—if they expropriate the capitalists and seize complete political con-

ontrol of the state. In other words, if they establish a workers' state.

But this would mean a stark reversal of FSLN determination to maintain the mixed economy, multi-class political pluralism, and international non-alignment.

Mobilized originally for the heroic battles against Somoza and then for defense against the contras, the masses have persevered despite their middle-caste leadership. But this situation cannot last indefinitely. Already, signs of the masses' fatigue and disillusionment with the Sandinistas are proliferating. If the revo-

lution does not march forward to proletarian rule—and soon—it will inevitably crumble.

History proves that under mass revolutionary pressure, a middle-caste, class-collaborationist leadership like the FSLN can still move to create a workers' state in direct response to mounting imperialist opposition. This is the possible and necessary scenario for sustaining the momentum of Nicaragua's revolution. History teaches that construction of a workers' state is ultimately the only defense against capitalist counterrevolution in this

epoch. To date, no workers' state has been overthrown from within and replaced with a bourgeois state. And this impressive historical evidence points the way ahead for Nicaragua.

Unfortunately, the FSLN is not moving in this direction. The revolutionary socialist cadres of the world proletariat must call on them to reverse their course, and call on the Nicaraguan Left and the revolutionary masses to demand implementation of all measures necessary to create a workers' state capable of safeguarding and extending the revolution.

VIII. Debate in the Trotskyist Movement

Disagreement on the nature of the Nicaraguan state has sparked intense and often acrimonious controversy among Trotskyists.

The viewpoints cover the spectrum: Nicaragua is a bourgeois state, or a healthy workers' state, or a deformed or degenerated workers' state, or a two-class workers' and farmers' government, or some sort of hybrid as yet unnamed.

This dissonant cacophony of opinion reflects the current fragmentation and ideological crisis of world Trotskyism.

At one pole we find the Spartacist League which implies that Nicaragua is a bourgeois state which underwent a political revolution with "overtones of social revolution" (i.e., nationalization of Somoza's property) and whose leadership is a "petty-bourgeois, radical-nationalist force" which remains outside the workers' movement.

The Spartacist League criteria for defining the state as bourgeois is very muddy, but the implication of their writings is that the determining factor is the continued predominance of bourgeois property relations.¹⁵

The SL also portrays the FSLN as agents of capitalism who finance "the fifth column of the contras."

Despite SL's strident and generally unbalanced critique of the FSLN, they call for Nicaragua's defense for two reasons: first, because of the revolutionary victory over Somoza and the "psychopathic killers" of his National Guard; second, because Nicaragua is currently the front line of defense of the Soviet Union against U.S. imperialism.

Other groups at this pole also classify Nicaragua as a bourgeois state without presenting any clear criteria for their assessment. Included in this line-up are the two U.S. sections of the International

Workers League (Fourth International)—the international organization comprising the majority of Latin American Trotskyists; Socialist Action, a split-off from the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP); and, perhaps most notably, the Nicaraguan Trotskyists. (Nicaragua's Maoists and Stalinists also consider Nicaragua a bourgeois state.)

The U.S. SWP—actually an ex-Trotskyist, de facto Stalinist formation—denies that Nicaragua is a workers' state, but does so by means of vast revisions of the theory of the state developed by Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

At the other end of the spectrum is the Fourth International majority headed up by the United Secretariat (USEC) of the FI. USEC sees in Nicaragua a workers' state whose leadership, by propounding the mixed economy and political pluralism, is following precisely the course that responsible revolutionaries should.

"Neither A Bourgeois Nor A Workers' State"—The SWP Reprise of Menshevism

Nicaragua, according to the SWP, not only presents the international movement with a new model for socialist development but has required the SWP to revise its previous Trotskyist analyses of every revolution since 1848. This must be some revolution!

The SWP believes Nicaragua is ruled by a "workers' and farmers' government" established after the military defeat of Somoza. Further, the Nicaraguan and Grenadian revolutions show that the workers' and farmers' government, in which state power is shared by two classes (working class and peasantry), is a *necessary* stage distinct from, preceding, and

directly transitory to a workers' state.

There is considerable fuzziness, to say the least, in the SWP analysis (presented in great detail by Mary-Alice Waters in "The Workers and Farmers Government: A Popular Revolutionary Dictatorship,"¹⁶ as regards the class character of the state, along with confusion of the state with the government that administers it.

The reason for the fuzziness and confusion lies, in the first place, in the fact that the SWP's formulation constitutes a complete rejection of Marx and Lenin's contention that only one class can hold state power. This rejection in turn stems from the SWP's habit of tail-ending the Sandinista pursuit of a multi-class Vahalla. SWP opportunism, which compels it to jettison the essence of Marxism on the question of the state, is anathema to true revolutionaries.

The SWP is compelled, as a "Marxist" organization, to cover its Menshevik tracks, with Marxist phraseology. It bolsters itself by citing Lenin's application of the term "workers' and farmers' government" to the Soviet Union after 1917. The Bolsheviks, however, used this term during and after the Russian Revolution as a popular synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry.

Historically, however, the term was also given a meaning opposite to that understood by the Bolsheviks. This meaning, first applied in the mid-'20s, signified the rise to state power of *bourgeois* forces at the head of the working and peasant masses. Stalin used the term in this sense as an attempt to give a good name to bourgeois revolutions, whereas the Bolsheviks and the early Communist International insisted that national liberation struggles in the imperialist era could only be won through a proletarian anti-capitalist revolution, and that purely bourgeois-democratic upheavals would end in fiasco. Stalin sought to limit revolutions precisely within bourgeois parameters, because he wanted release from imperialist pressure.

Bourgeois revolution in the imperi-

alist era does not change the social system (i.e. Iran, Philippines). The Stalinist "workers' and peasants' government"—and the SWP's—is a phrase designed to hide this sad reality.

Lenin, Trotsky and other leaders of the early Comintern had considered the ascension to power of such a government as an accidental detour created by unusual historical conditions, like war, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure sans revolutionary leadership, etc. They believed that such a government, resting atop a capitalist state, would be an unstable conjunctural phenomenon which could quickly turn into a roadblock to workers' power.

Delegates to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern in 1922 concluded that "the formation of a real workers' government, and the continued existence of a government which pursues a revolutionary policy, must lead to a bitter struggle, and eventually a civil war with the bourgeoisie."¹⁷

The Comintern was prepared to defend a workers' and farmers' government only if it grew out of, or furthered, open revolutionary assaults on capitalist property relations and led rapidly to the establishment of a true workers' state.

The workers' and farmers' government, in its true sense, is a temporary, unstable and episodic formation that contradicts the very class character of the state it rules. It must resolve this contradiction by using the state apparatus to bring about rapid transformation to a workers' state.

This was precisely the dynamic in Cuba between the defeat of Batista in January 1959 and the expropriation of the capitalists in August-October 1960. It was also the dynamic in China after the Maoist army assumed power.

Referring to the Stalinist corruption of the term, Trotsky wrote:

The slogan workers' and farmers' government is thus acceptable to us only in the sense it had in 1917 with the Bolsheviks, i.e., as an anti-bourgeois, anti-capitalist slogan, but in no case in the "democratic" sense which later the epigones gave it, transforming it from a bridge to socialist revolution into the chief barrier in its path.¹⁸

The SWP is correct only in stating that Nicaragua is not a workers' state, but the essence and rationale of their position completely repudiates the precept of permanent revolution—that the fundamental tasks of the democratic revolution can only be realized through establishing a workers' state.

The SWP once again turns Leninism on its head and stands forth as the epigone of the Stalinist epigones.

"Nicaragua Is A Workers' State"—Fourth International Apologetics

In contrast to the SWP, the majority faction of the Fourth International asserts that "The 19th of July 1979 marked the *first steps of the dictatorship of the proletariat based on an alliance with the peasantry, of the construction of a workers' state*, which has to be consolidated like any emerging workers' state."¹⁹ (Emphasis in original.)

According to the FI's 12th World Congress Resolution (1985), and in the writings of FI leaders Ernest Mandel, Paul LeBlanc and others, Nicaragua evidently

to supplement page 12

About the Authors

Dr. Susan Williams spent three weeks in Nicaragua with co-author Stephen Durham in April 1989 talking with Nicaragua's people and assessing the conclusions arrived at in this document.

An Assistant Professor of Medicine of New York Medical College, Dr. Williams is Chief of Gastroenterology at New York City's Metropolitan Hospital, which serves the mostly Puerto Rican and Black population of East Harlem.

Dr. Williams has been involved in the care of people with AIDS and in analyzing the impact of the AIDS crisis on Blacks, Latinos, gays, and women. She and Durham also collaborated to produce the document "AIDS Hysteria: A Marxist Analysis."

An incisive analyst of feminist issues and the women's movement, Dr. Williams has written and spoken particularly extensively on reproductive rights.

Stephen Durham is a Marxist scholar and theoretician whose visit to Nicaragua with Dr. Williams was the culmination of more than two decades of specialized study of South and Central America.

He received a degree in Latin American History, graduating from the University of California at Berkeley. He has traveled widely in Latin America and lived for a year in Brazil. Fluent in Spanish and Portuguese, he has taught English as a second language. He writes frequently on Latin American affairs for the *Freedom Socialist*.

Durham is also an ardent unionist and a veteran activist in the movement for lesbian and gay liberation.



Stephen Durham and Dr. Susan Williams

Sobre los Autores

La **Dra. Susan Williams** pasó tres semanas en Nicaragua con el coautor Stephen Durham en abril de 1989 conversando con la gente de Nicaragua y evaluando las conclusiones a las que habían llegado al escribir este documento.

Profesora de medicina en el New York Medical College, la Dra. Williams es la jefa de gastroenterología en el Hospital Metropolitano de la Ciudad de Nueva York,

el cual sirve por lo común a la población puertorriqueña y negra de East Harlem.

La Dra. Williams ha estado involucrada en el cuidado de pacientes con SIDA y en el análisis del impacto de la crisis del SIDA en los negros, latinos, homosexuales y mujeres. Ella y Durham han colaborado también en la producción del documento "La Histeria del SIDA, Un Análisis Marxista."

Una analista incisiva de la cuestión femenina y del movimiento de la mujer, la Dra. Williams ha escrito y hablado extensamente sobre los derechos reproductivos.

Stephen Durham es un erudito marxista y un teórico cuya visita a Nicaragua con la Dra. Williams fue la culminación de más de dos decenios de estudios especializados sobre Sur y Centroamérica.

El obtuvo un grado en Historia Latinoamericana, habiéndose graduado de la Universidad de California en Berkeley. Ha viajado ampliamente por Latinoamérica y residió un año en Brasil. Habla el español y portugués con fluidez, y ha enseñado inglés como segundo idioma. Escribe frecuentemente sobre asuntos latinoamericanos en el *Freedom Socialist*.

Durham es también un sindicalista apasionado y un veterano activista en el movimiento de liberación de lesbianas y gays.

La proximidad y la presión imperialista de los EUA han mantenido los ojos del mundo en Nicaragua, haciendo imposible a la dirigencia que se deslice inadvertida en una dirección completamente contrarrevolucionaria. Luego, está el hecho de que una contrarrevolución victoriosa, o sea, la negación de la democracia burguesa en Nicaragua, puede también acarrear ¡la negación de los mismos sandinistas!

La hostilidad burguesa crece, colocando a los sandinistas y a las masas en una encrucijada. La insurgencia de la Contra estadounidense y la horrible crisis económica—sólo pueden ser superadas si los

trabajadores y sus aliados avanzan la revolución—si expropián a los capitalistas y toman completo control político del Estado. En otras palabras, si ellos establecen un Estado obrero.

Pero esto significaría una completa regresión de la resolución del FSLN de mantener la economía mixta, un pluralismo político multiclasista y un noalineamiento internacional.

Las masas, movilizadas originalmente para las heroicas batallas en contra de Somoza y después para la defensa de los Contras, han perseverado a pesar de su dirigencia de casta media. Pero esta situación no puede durar indefinidamente. Ya

proliferan los signos de fatiga y desilusión de las masas con los sandinistas. Si la revolución no marcha hacia adelante al dominio proletario—y pronto—ésta se desmoronará inevitablemente.

La historia comprueba que bajo la presión revolucionaria de las masas, un liderazgo de casta media colaboracionista de clases como el FSLN puede movilizarse aún para crear a ser un Estado obrero en respuesta directa a la oposición imperialista en subida. Este es el posible y necesario escenario para sostener el momento de la revolución nicaragüense. La historia nos enseña que la construcción de un Estado obrero es finalmente la *única* defensa en

contra de la contrarrevolución capitalista en esta época. Hasta la fecha ningún Estado obrero ha sido derrocado desde dentro y reemplazado por un Estado burgués. Y esta impresionante evidencia histórica apunta el camino hacia adelante para Nicaragua.

Desafortunadamente el FSLN, no se está moviendo en esta dirección. Los cuadros revolucionarios socialistas del proletariado mundial deben pedirles dar marcha atrás a su camino, e invocar a la izquierda de Nicaragua y a las masas revolucionarias para exigir que se implementen todas las medidas necesarias para crear un Estado obrero capaz de salvaguardar y extender la revolución.

VIII. Debate en el Movimiento Trotskyista

El desacuerdo sobre la naturaleza del Estado nicaragüense ha encendido intensa y a menudo mordaz controversia entre los trotskistas.

Los puntos de vista cubren el espectro: Nicaragua es un Estado burgués, o un Estado obrero sano, o uno degenerado o deformado, o un gobierno biclasista, obrero y campesino, o alguna clase de híbrido aún sin nombrar.

Esta cacofonía disonante de opiniones refleja la actual fragmentación y la crisis ideológica del trotskismo mundial.

En un polo encontramos a la Liga Espartacista que supone que Nicaragua es un Estado burgués que sufrió una revolución política con "una revolución social" (por ejemplo, la nacionalización de la propiedad de Somoza) y cuyo liderazgo es "una fuerza nacionalista radical, pequeño burguesa" que sigue fuera del movimiento obrero.

El criterio de la Liga Espartacista, para definir el Estado como burgués, es muy turbio, pero lo que implican sus escritos es que el factor determinante es el continuo predominio de las relaciones burguesas de la propiedad.¹⁵

La LE también describe al FSLN como agente del capitalismo que financian "la quinta columna de los contras".

A pesar de la estridente y totalmente desbalanceada crítica por parte del LE en contra del FSLN, ellos reclaman la defensa de Nicaragua por dos razones: primero, por la victoria revolucionaria sobre Somoza y los "asesinos psicópatas" de su Guardia Nacional; segundo, porque Nicaragua es actualmente la línea del frente de defensa de la Unión Soviética contra el imperialismo estadounidense.

Otros grupos en este polo, también clasifican a Nicaragua como un Estado burgués sin presentar ningún criterio claro para su evaluación. En este alineamiento están incluidas las dos secciones de la Liga Internacional de Trabajadores (Cuarta Internacional) de los EUA—la organización internacional que incluye a la mayoría de los trotskistas latinoamericanos; la Acción Socialista, separados del Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST) de los EUA; y quizá más notablemente, los nicaragüenses trotskistas. (Los maoistas y estalinistas nicaragüenses también consideran a Nicaragua como un Estado burgués).

El Partido Obrero Socialista estadounidense—en realidad una formación extrotskyista, estalinista de facto—niega que Nicaragua es un Estado obrero, pero lo hace por medio de revisiones vastas de la teoría del Estado desarrollada por Marx, Lenin y Trotsky.

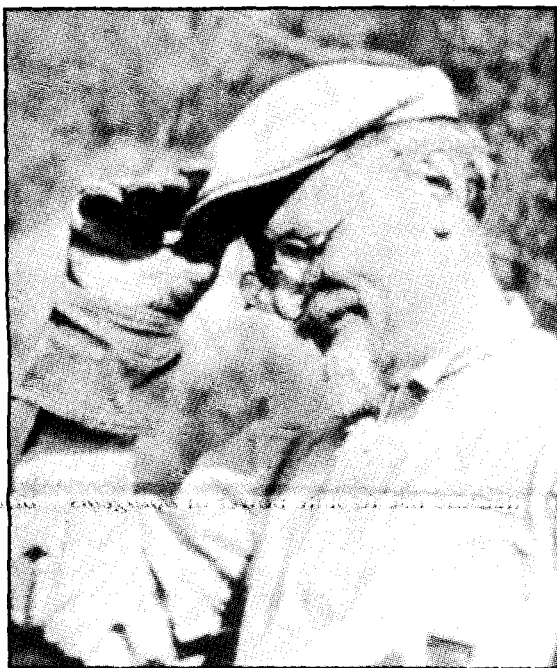
Del otro lado del espectro esta la mayoría de la Cuarta Internacional, encabezada por el Secretariado Unido (USEC) de la CI. El USEC ve en Nicaragua un Estado obrero cuya dirigencia, mediante la propuesta de la economía mixta y el pluralismo político, está siguiendo precisamente el curso que deben seguir los revolucionarios responsables.

"¿Ni Estado Burgués ni Obrero?"—La Repetición del Menchevismo del PST

Según el PST, Nicaragua no presenta solamente el movimiento internacional con un modelo nuevo para el desarrollo

socialista pero ha requerido que el PST revise sus análisis trotskistas previos, de todas las revoluciones desde 1848. ¡Qué revolución debe ser esta!

El SWP cree que Nicaragua está bajo el régimen de "un gobierno de obreros y campesinos" establecido después de la derrota militar de Somoza. Más aún las revoluciones de Nicaragua y Granada muestran



León Trotsky

que el gobierno de obreros y campesinos, en donde el poder estatal está compartido por dos clases (la clase obrera y la campesina), es una etapa distinta necesaria que precede a la anterior y directamente transitoria hacia un Estado de obreros.

Hay una borrosidad considerable, por no decir menos, en el análisis del PST presentado con gran detalle por Mary-Alice Waters en "El Gobierno de Obreros y Campesinos": Una Dictadura Revolucionaria Popular,¹⁶ con respecto al carácter de clase del Estado, junto con la confusión por parte del Estado con el gobierno que lo administra.

La razón por la borrosidad y la confusión, yace en primer lugar, en el hecho de que la formulación del PST constituye un rechazo completo de la opinión de Marx y Lenin de que sólo una clase puede sostener el poder estatal. Este rechazo a su vez surge del hábito del PST de andar tras la búsqueda sandinista de un nirvana multiclasista. El oportunismo del PST que lo fuerza a deshacerse de la esencia del marxismo sobre la cuestión del Estado es anatema a los verdaderos revolucionarios.

El PST está obligado como organización "marxista", a cubrir sus huellas mencheviques, con fraseología marxista. Se refuerza a sí mismo al citar la aplicación por Lenin del término "gobierno de obreros y campesinos" a la Unión Soviética después de 1917. Los bolcheviques de cualquier modo, usaron este término durante y después de la revolución rusa, como un *sinónimo popular para la dictadura del proletariado apoyado por el campesinado*.

Sin embargo, a este término, se le dio históricamente otro significado opuesto al entendido por los bolcheviques. El cual, aplicado primero a mediados de los años veinte, significó la subida al poder estatal de las verdaderas *burguesas* a la cabeza

de las masas de obreros y campesinos. Stalin utilizó el término en este sentido, como un intento para dar un buen nombre a las revoluciones burguesas: mientras que los bolcheviques y la Primera Internacional Comunista insistieron que las luchas por la liberación nacional en la era imperialista sólo podrían ser ganadas por medio de una revolución proletaria anticapitalista y que los levantamientos puramente democrático-burgueses terminarían en fiasco. Stalin buscó limitar a las revoluciones precisamente dentro de los parámetros burgueses, porque él quiso liberarse de la presión imperialista.

La revolución burguesa durante la era imperialista no cambia al sistema social (por ejemplo, Irán, Filipinas). "El gobierno de obreros y campesinos" estalinista—y del PST—es una frase diseñada para ocultar la triste realidad. Lenin, Trotsky y otros líderes del la naciente Internacional Comunista (Intcom) habían considerado el ascenso al poder de un gobierno tal como un rodeo accidental creado por condiciones históricas inusuales como la guerra, el derrumbe financiero, la presión revolucionaria de las masas sin liderazgo revolucionario, etc. Ellos creyeron que tal gobierno, que yace encima de un Estado capitalista sería un fenómeno coyuntural inestable que podría volverse rápidamente en un obstáculo para el poder obrero.

En 1922, los delegados del Cuarto Congreso de la Internacional Comunista concluyeron que "la formación de un gobierno obrero real y la existencia continua de un gobierno que persigue a una política revolucionaria, debe conducir a una lucha amarga y eventualmente a una guerra civil con la burguesía".¹⁷

La Internacional Comunista estaba preparada para defender al gobierno de obreros y campesinos *sólo* si éste provenía o continuaba los ataques abiertos revolucionarios contra las relaciones de la propiedad capitalista y se dirigía rápidamente al establecimiento de un Estado obrero verdadero.

El gobierno de obreros y campesinos, en su sentido real, es una formación temporal, inestable y episódica que contradice el mero carácter de clases del Estado gober-

nante. Este debe resolver esta contradicción usando al aparato estatal para traer consigo una transformación rápida hacia un Estado obrero.

Esta fue precisamente la dinámica en Cuba entre la derrota de Batista en enero de 1959 y la expropiación de los capitalistas entre agosto y octubre de 1960. Fue también la dinámica en China después de que el ejército maoísta asumió el poder.

Trotsky escribió que: En referencia a la corrupción estalinista del término que:

El lema "gobierno de obreros y campesinos" sólo es aceptable para nosotros en el sentido que tuvo en 1917 con los bolcheviques. Verbigracia, como un lema antiburgués y anticapitalista, pero en ningún caso en el sentido "democrático" que más tarde le dieron los epígonos, transformándolo de un puente hacia la revolución socialista, a la barrera principal de su senda.¹⁸

El PST está en lo correcto solamente al sostener que Nicaragua no es un Estado obrero, pero la esencia y la base racional de su posición repudia completamente el precepto de la revolución permanente dice que las tareas fundamentales de la revolución democrática sólo pueden ser realizadas a través del establecimiento de un Estado obrero.

Una vez más el PST pone de cabeza al leninismo y se erige como el epígono de los epígonos estalinistas.

"Nicaragua es un Estado Obrero"—Apolo-gética de la Cuarta Internacional (CI)

En contraste con el PST, la facción mayoritaria de la Cuarta Internacional, asevera que "El 19 de julio de 1979 marcó los primeros pasos de la dictadura del proletariado basada en una *alianza con el campesinado para la construcción de un Estado obrero*, el cual ha tenido que ser consolidado como cualquier Estado de obreros en surgimiento".¹⁹ (Énfasis en el original).

a la página 13 del suplemento

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became a workers' state solely by virtue of the military defeat and subsequent replacement of Somoza's repressive forces by the armed might of the Sandinistas. The *consolidation* of the new state then depended on two factors—the emergence of organs of proletarian democracy and the economic transformation of society, which, however, is deferred in its completion to a vague future date.

Propounding the majority FI view in a January 1985 interview, Mandel explicitly underscores the primacy of controlling the armed forces—to the exclusion of all other considerations for determining the nature of the state:

...the state power in Nicaragua represents the workers and poor peasants. Some 450,000 armed working people keep their guns in their homes. It is in the context of such a regime that you have to define the class nature of the Assembly, and not on the basis of formal criteria.²⁰

By hinging his definition solely on Nicaragua's "body of armed men," Mandel is fetishizing a single line from *State and Revolution* and tossing out 70 years of development of the Leninist theory of the state. He jettisons a rich body of knowledge and established criteria delineated through extensive and often bitter theoretical and political battles. And he "bends" Trotskyism to the service of Nicaraguan exceptionalism.

In terms of historical precedents for Nicaragua, the situation there is closest to what existed in Cuba on January 1, 1959 after the military victory.

An intensive debate ensued within the U.S. SWP on the nature of the Cuban state. Joseph Hansen, writing for the majority, explicitly rejected the notion that Cuba had become a workers' state at the time of the defeat of Batista and the passage of military control into the hands of the revolutionary army. Even 10 months later, after the formation of popular militias, Cuba was still not a workers' state. (An SWP minority denied that Cuba was a workers' state even after the elimination of capitalist relations of production because it lacked organs of proletarian rule and a Bolshevik/Trotskyist leadership.)

Noted Hansen:

The Rebel Army at that point served three conscious ends, predominantly political in nature: (1) to topple Batista, (2) to prevent a Guatemala-type counterrevolution, (3) to defend the coalition government, which was committed to safeguarding private property (with redistribution of land and rectification of abuses in other fields).

Hansen concluded:

The absence of socialist consciousness made it impossible to call Cuba a workers state on January 1, 1959, even though bodies of armed men, a special repressive force, did exist then.²¹

The goals of the victorious Sandinistas in 1979 were essentially the same as those of the Cuban leadership in its first days:

defeat the dictatorship, prevent a counterrevolution by local forces or U.S. invasion, preserve a bourgeois economy in association with land reform, and eliminate the worst capitalist saboteurs and human rights violations.

But the Sandinistas, unlike the Fidelistas, have never gone beyond these bourgeois democratic aims—and have prevented the masses from doing so. An armed populace alone—without the *transformation of property relations*, without the *organs of workers' rule* to bring about that transformation, and without a *leadership proclaiming a clear socialist program*—cannot make Nicaragua a workers' state.

Even if one were to grant the FI's premise that Nicaragua became a proletarian dictatorship—albeit an "emerging" and therefore fragile and tenuous one—what is their assessment after eight years of its "consolidation," according to their own guidelines?

Accenting the significance of creating new organs of workers' rule, the FI often points to the supposed growth of workers' democracy in Nicaragua as a key factor in this supposed consolidation. Their articles often make claims that CDS and other mass organizations are in fact organs of workers' rule, and they predict an expanding role for these groups in ruling society. But the very evidence presented in the 12th World Congress Resolution shows that the mass organizations have not taken on the function of class rule and that the influence they have wielded is waning!

The FI's frenzied search for signs of proletarian democracy in Nicaragua has turned them into apologists for political, opponent-class pluralism.

Mandel states that the pluralism espoused by the Sandinistas, and self-organization/self-management by the masses, are mutually interdependent and condition each other. He further characterizes the Sandinistas' espousal of pluralism as a "return to the original thought of Marx, of the Lenin of 1917, of Rosa Luxemburg and of Trotsky."²² Nonsense; where is the evidence?

The problem is that pluralism in Nicaraguan politics is *not* an aspect of *workers' democracy*, of expressing various currents *within* the revolutionary proletariat. Rather, pluralism expresses the influence and economic hegemony of the bourgeoisie in a "mixed," read capitalist, economy.

The FI states that "certainly in the last instance the economic foundations will be decisive in the consolidation of the workers' state."²³ (Emphasis in original.) But they are vague on when and how they expect this economic transformation to occur. And they do not produce an economic yardstick against which to measure progress in consolidating the workers' state.

FI commentators uniformly avoid any critical assessment of existing, fundamental property relations as they pontificate on the nature and dynamics of the revolution. They also ascribe difficulties with production or the black market to forces beyond FSLN control, and uncritically parrot the Sandinista assertion that

Nicaragua *must* conciliate with the bourgeoisie and leave their property intact.

Mandel rationalizes:

When people talk about the mixed economy, they are generally thinking of what remains of capitalist enterprise in the strict sense in Nicaragua. That is not where the main problems come from, because the production and exports of this sector are strictly monitored by the state (the situation is comparable to that of the NEP [New Economic Policy] in Russia).²⁴

This is flatly untrue. The Soviet NEP, i.e., the careful restoration of capitalist relations in Soviet agriculture and some industries in the early '20s, was instituted in the larger context of a fundamental and progressive change from capitalist to socialized property relations. The Soviet state had taken over the majority of in-

prise" (i.e., the majority of the economy!), and the Sandinista refusal to move against these overwhelming "remains," that are precisely the problem.

The FI's attempts to define Nicaragua as a workers' state crassly rely on glossing over the glaring deficiencies and contradictions of the record and the government programs. The FI has become a craven apologist for the FSLN leadership, running interference for them against the valid criticism of their concerned revolutionary supporters.

Tom Barrett of the Fourth International Tendency (FIT), the FI's closest U.S. co-thinkers, addressed Socialist Action's call for overthrowing Nicaraguan capitalism, in order to defend the revolution, as follows:

...the working class holds state power in Nicaragua, and...the process of permanent revolution is moving forward there. It must do so at its own pace, which cannot be dictated by North American Marxists basing themselves on learned texts.²⁵

In this underhanded, snide, anti-theoretical and redbaiting way, permanent revolution ("learned texts") is demonstratively tossed out the window by the allegedly Trotskyist FI.

Despite its apparent adherence to the language of Trotskyism, the FI effectively trails after the SWP revisionists. Both organizations let the Sandinistas off the hook for their refusal to move against the capitalists. For the SWP, Nicaragua's workers' and farmers' government, despite obvious bourgeois hegemony, is the inevitable, peacefully transitional road to socialism. The FI, arguing that Nicaragua is already a workers' state, avers that encroachment on capitalist property, while ultimately necessary, is just not that crucial right now.

How come? When will it be? Will it ever be?

The SWP justifies its position by unfurling an open assault on Trotskyism and the theory of permanent revolution. The FI "defends" Trotsky, and the Marxist theory of the state on which permanent revolution is based, but cavalierly twists principles to bolster an analysis that violates Trotskyism and then leads in practice to a position similar to the SWP's. Both groups in effect *endorse the status quo*, even as they affix different labels to the state.

But the beleaguered and desperate Nicaraguan revolution benefits little from such friends. Far more valuable to them, whether or not they know and accept it, is a carefully reasoned and critical analysis of the Nicaraguan state that uses the tools of Marxism, not to drop a halo on the Sandinistas but to shed genuine light on vital revolutionary questions and develop a course of action that can defend poverty-stricken, tiny, brave Nicaragua from the imperialist monster and impel the revolution onto the path of socialist democracy.

to supplement page 14



A tribute to Nicaragua's revolutionary spirit. Un tributo al espíritu revolucionario de Nicaragua.

dustry, especially in the key sectors, had nationalized all land, and maintained a monopoly of foreign trade. The leadership was forced to organize a temporary and partial retreat, and openly labelled it as such, in order to spur sluggish production.

None of this happened in Nicaragua. In Russia, Trotsky emphasized that the NEP was a danger to the workers' state and had to be constantly measured in terms of whether it ultimately strengthened state control of the economy or undermined it.

And even under the NEP, the state sector of the economy continued to grow, together with the Bolsheviks' overall engagement in planning and directing production. But the opposite is true in Nicaragua. The measures instituted there have proved incapable of planning and controlling capitalist production or the economy in general.

Mandel notwithstanding, it is precisely the "remains of capitalist enter-

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De acuerdo a la Resolución del 12º Congreso Mundial (1985) de la CI y a los escritos de los líderes Ernest Mandel, Paul LeBlanc y otros de la CI, Nicaragua evidentemente vino a ser un Estado obrero sólo por virtud de la derrota militar y el reemplazo subsiguiente de las fuerzas represivas de Somoza por el poder armado de los sandinistas. La **consolidación** del nuevo Estado dependió entonces de dos factores—el surgimiento de órganos de democracia proletaria y la transformación económica de la sociedad, que, de cualquier modo, está diferida en su realización a una fecha futura vaga.

En una entrevista realizada en 1985, proponiendo el punto de vista mayoritario de la CI Mandel subraya explícitamente la primacía de controlar las fuerzas armadas—con la exclusión de todas las otras consideraciones para determinar la naturaleza del Estado:

...el poder estatal en Nicaragua representa a los obreros y a los campesinos pobres. Unos 450.000 obreros armados guardan sus armas en casa. Es en el contexto de tal régimen en el que uno tiene que definir la naturaleza de clases de la asamblea, y no en la base de un criterio formal.²⁰

Al colgar su definición únicamente del "cuerpo de hombres armados" de Nicaragua, Mandel, está fetichizando un solo renglón de Estado y la Revolución y desechando 70 años de desarrollo de la teoría leninista sobre el Estado. Desechó un cuerpo rico en conocimiento y criterios sabidos, delineados a través de extensas y frecuentemente amargas batallas teóricas y políticas. Y "tuerce" el trotskyismo al servicio del excepcionalismo nicaragüense.

La situación allí, en términos de precedentes históricos para Nicaragua, fue lo mas cercana, a la que existió en Cuba el primero de enero de 1959 después de la victoria militar.

En este período siguió un debate intenso dentro del PST estadounidense sobre la naturaleza del Estado cubano. Joseph Hansen, escribiendo para la mayoría, **explícitamente rechazó la noción de que Cuba se haya convertido en un Estado obrero al tiempo de la derrota de Batista y el paso del control militar a manos del ejército revolucionario.** Aún diez meses más tarde después de la formación de milicias populares, Cuba todavía no era un Estado de obreros (una minoría del PST negó que Cuba fuera un Estado obrero, aún después de la eliminación de las relaciones capitalistas de producción porque carecía de los órganos del dominio proletario y de una dirigencia bolchevique trotskyista).

Hansen anotó:

El Ejército Rebelde, en este punto, sirvió para tres desenlaces conscientes de naturaleza predominantemente política: (1) derribar a Batista, (2) prevenir una contrarrevolución tipo Guatemala, (3) defender la coalición del gobierno, que estaba comprometida a salvaguardar la propiedad privada (con la redistribución de la tierra y la rectificación de los abusos cometidos en otros campos).

Hansen concluyó:

La ausencia de una conciencia socialista hizo imposible que el primero de enero de 1959, se llamara a Cuba un Estado obrero, aunque un cuerpo de hombres armados, una fuerza represiva especial, si existía en ese entonces.²¹

Las metas de los sandinistas victoriosos en 1979 fueron esencialmente las mismas de la dirigencia cubana en sus primeros días; derrotar a la dictadura, prevenir una contrarrevolución de fuerzas locales o una invasión estadounidense, conservar una economía burguesa en asociación con la reforma agraria, y eliminar los peores saboteadores capitalistas y las violaciones de los derechos humanos.

Pero los sandinistas, a diferencia de los fidelistas, nunca han ido más allá de estos objetivos democrático-burgueses—y han prevenido a las masas de hacerlo así. Un pueblo armado por sí solo—sin la transfor-

mación de las relaciones de propiedad, sin los órganos del régimen obrero para conseguir esa transformación, y sin un liderazgo que proclame un programa socialista claro—no puede hacer de Nicaragua un Estado obrero.

Aún cuando uno fuera a otorgar la premisa de la CI de que Nicaragua se convirtió en una dictadura proletaria—si bien una "en surgimiento" y por ende una frágil y tenue—¿Cuál es su evaluación después de ocho años de su "consolidación", según sus propias pautas?

Acentuando el significado de crear los

lo que queda de la empresa capitalista en Nicaragua, en el sentido estricto de la palabra. Esto no es de donde provienen los principales problemas, porque la producción y exportaciones de este sector están estrictamente controladas por el Estado (la situación se compara con la del NEP [Nueva Política Económica] en Rusia).²⁴

Esto es absolutamente falso. La NEP soviética, por ejemplo, a comienzos de los



Woman textile worker in Managua factory. Obrera textil en una fábrica de Managua.

nuevos órganos del régimen obrero, la CI con frecuencia señalaba al supuesto crecimiento de la democracia obrera en Nicaragua como un factor clave en esta supuesta consolidación. Sus artículos frecuentemente reclaman que los CDS y otras organizaciones de masas son de hecho órganos de dirigencia obrera, y predicen un papel en expansión para estos grupos, en regir a la sociedad. **¡Pero la mera evidencia presentada en la Resolución del XII Congreso Mundial muestra que las organizaciones de masas no han asumido la función de régimen de clase y que la influencia que habían ejercido está menguando!**

La búsqueda frenética de la CI de signos de democracia proletaria en Nicaragua, los ha convertido en apologistas de un pluralismo polvítico de clases oponentes.

Mandel establece que el pluralismo adoptado por los sandinistas y la auto organización y autoadinterdependencia de las masas, son mutuamente interdependientes y se condicionan una al otro. Más adelante caracteriza el pluralismo adoptado por los sandinistas como un "regreso al pensamiento original de Marx, al de Lenin de 1917, al de Rosa Luxemburgo y al de Trotsky."²² Tonterías; ¿Dónde está la evidencia?

El problema es que el pluralismo en la política nicaragüense no es un aspecto de la democracia obrera, de manifestar varias corrientes dentro del proletariado revolucionario. Mejor dicho, el pluralismo expresa la influencia y la hegemonía económica de la burguesía en una economía "mixta", léase capitalista.

La CI sostiene que "ciertamente en la última instancia los cimientos económicos serán decisivos en la consolidación del Estado obrero."²³ (Enfasis en el original). Pero estos son vagos en cuanto a cuando y cómo esperan que esta transformación económica ocurra. Y ellos no producen ningún criterio claro del campo económico contra el cual puedan medir el progreso en la consolidación del Estado obrero.

Los comentaristas de la CI evitan uniformemente cualquier evaluación crítica de las relaciones fundamentales de la propiedad existentes, al pontificar sobre la naturaleza y las dinámicas de la revolución. También imputan las dificultades con la producción o el mercado negro, a fuerzas mas allá del control del FSLN y repiten como loros sin criticar a la aseveración sandinista de que Nicaragua debe conciliarse con la burguesía y dejar intacta su propiedad.

Mandel racionaliza lo siguiente:

Cuando la gente habla acerca de la economía mixta, generalmente esta pensando en

años veinte, la restauración cuidadosa de las relaciones capitalistas en la agricultura y en algunas industrias soviéticas fue instituida en el contexto más amplio de un cambio fundamental y progresivo de las relaciones de la propiedad capitalista a socializada. El estado soviético se había apoderado de la mayoría de las industrias, especialmente en los sectores clave, nacionalizó todas las tierras y mantuvo un monopolio del comercio exterior. La dirección se vio forzada a organizar una retirada temporal y parcial, y abiertamente la membretó como tal, para espolear a la lenta producción.

Nada de esto ocurrió en Nicaragua.

En Rusia, Trotsky enfatizó que la NEP era un peligro para el Estado obrero y tenía que ser medida constantemente en términos de que sí, a fin de cuentas, reforzaba al control del Estado sobre la economía o lo socavaba.

Y aún bajo la NEP, el sector estatal de la economía continuó creciendo, junto con el empeño generalizado bolchevique de planear y dirigir la producción. Pero lo opuesto es verdad en Nicaragua. Las medidas instituidas han pasado ser incapaces de planear y controlar la producción capitalista o a la economía en general.

No obstante Mandel, los "restos de la empresa capitalista" (por ej., ¡la mayor parte de la economía!), y el rechazo sandinista de actuar contra estos "restos"

arrolladores, son precisamente el problema.

Los intentos de la CI para definir a Nicaragua como un Estado de obreros se fía crasamente en encubrir las deficiencias deslumbrantes y las contradicciones de historial y programas del gobierno. La CI se ha convertido en una apologista ansiosa del liderazgo del FSLN, interfiriendo a favor de ellos en contra de las críticas válidas de sus defensores revolucionarios interesados y preocupados.

Tom Barrett de la Tendencia Cuarta Internacional (TCI), los compensadores de la CI cercanos en los EUA, se pronunciaron al respecto del llamado de la Acción Socialista para derrocar al capitalismo nicaragüense, para defender a la revolución de la siguiente manera:

... la clase obrera sostiene el poder estatal en Nicaragua y ... el proceso de la revolución permanente, avanza. Debe de hacerlo a su propio paso, el cual no puede ser dictado por marxistas norteamericanos que se basan en textos aprendidos.²⁵

De esta manera socarrona, sarcástica, anti-teórica y anticomunista, la Revolución Permanente ("textos aprendidos") comprobadamente es arrojada por la ventana por los supuestamente trotskistas de la CI.

Aún a pesar de la aparente adherencia al lenguaje trotskyista, la CI efectivamente sigue a los revisionistas del PST. Ambas organizaciones soltaron de sandinistas del anzuelo por su rechazo de actuar contra los capitalistas. Para el PST, el gobierno de obreros y campesinos, a pesar de la hegemonía burguesa obvia, es el camino inevitable y pacíficamente transitorio hacia el socialismo. La CI argumenta que Nicaragua es ya un Estado obrero, en contra de la apropiación de la propiedad capitalista, que aunque a fin de cuentas necesaria, no es tan crucial en este momento.

¿Cómo es posible? ¿Cuándo será Nicaragua un Estado obrero? ¿Lo será alguna vez?

El PST justifica su posición desplegando un ataque abierto al trotskyismo y a la teoría de revolución permanente. La CI "defiende" a Trotsky y a la teoría marxista del Estado en la cual se basa la revolución permanente, pero la arrogancia enchueca los principios para reforzar un análisis que viola el trotskyismo y que conduce después en la práctica a una posición semejante a la del PST. Ambos grupos, en efecto **endosan al status quo**, aún cuando le cuelgan diferentes etiquetas al Estado.

Pero la revolución nicaragüense asediada y desesperada, poco se beneficia de tales amigos. Es de más valor para ellos, ya sea que lo sepan y lo acepten o no, un análisis crítico y cuidadosamente pensado del Estado nicaragüense que use las herramientas del marxismo, no para dejar caer un halo sobre los sandinistas, pero para verter una luz genuina sobre las cuestiones revolucionarias vitales y desarrollar un curso de acción que pueda defender a la empobrecida, minúscula y brava Nicaragua del monstruo imperialista e impulsar la revolución por el sendero de la democracia socialista.

IX. Propuestas Para la Acción

Debido a la necesidad urgente de los obreros y agricultores nicaragüenses por erigir un Estado obrero en Nicaragua y estimular a la revolución por toda Centro y Latinoamérica, el FSP debe de adoptar el siguiente programa de acción:

1. Llamar a los sandinistas y a las masas revolucionarias de Nicaragua a defender y llevar adelante a la revolución completando la expropiación del dominio económico e influencia política a la burguesía, y estableciendo un Estado obrero.

Este llamado debe hacerse a través de correspondencia, editoriales del *Freedom Socialist*, panfletos y discusiones con nicaragüenses. Usando la teoría y las lecciones de la historia para mostrar que el curso del FSLN de bloquear la formación de una dictadura proletaria puede resultar sólo en el deterioro y fracaso de la revolución.

2. Enviar visitantes del FSP inmediatamente. Debemos permanecer en contacto

cercano con el pulso de la revolución y observar su desarrollo, de primera mano, para confirmar, extender o alterar nuestro análisis.

3. Enviar a los visitantes a su regreso en giras nacionales para que informen al partido y fomenten discusiones y debates sobre las lecciones de la revolución, la naturaleza del Estado y nuestro programa, dentro de la izquierda en los EUA, especialmente entre los trotskistas, y el movimiento de solidaridad en Centroamérica.

4. Enfatizar la relación especial entre la lucha latinoamericana y la revolución norteamericana, publicando y diseminando nuestro análisis entre los revolucionarios latinoamericanos, especialmente trotskistas, y entre adherentes a la Cuarta Internacional y sus cuerpos oficiales.

5. Organizar o matricularse en clases de español, tarea clave para alcanzar un trabajo significativo con los latinos de aquí y en el extranjero.

a la página 15 del suplemento

IX. Proposals for Action

Because of the urgent necessity for the Nicaraguan workers and farmers to erect a workers' state in Nicaragua and stimulate the revolution throughout Central and Latin America, the FSP should adopt the following program of action:

1. Call on the Sandinistas and the

revolutionary masses of Nicaragua to defend and carry the revolution forward by means of completing the expropriation of the bourgeoisie from economic dominance and political influence, and by establishing a workers' state.

This call should be made through the media of letters, FS editorials, leaflets,

and discussions with Nicaraguans. Use theory and the lessons of history to show that the FSLN course of blocking the formation of a proletarian dictatorship can only result in the deterioration or defeat of the revolution.

2. Send FSP visitors to Nicaragua immediately. We must stay in close touch with the pulse of the revolution and observe its development first-hand in order to confirm, extend or alter our analysis.

3. Send returning visitors on national tours to inform the party and promote discussion and debate within the U.S.

Left, especially among Trotskyists, and in the Central American solidarity movement, on the lessons of the revolution, the nature of the state, and our program.

4. Emphasize the special relation between the Latin American struggle and the North American revolution by publishing and disseminating our analysis among Latin American revolutionaries, especially Trotskyists, and to Fourth International adherents and official bodies.

5. Set up or enroll in Spanish classes, a key task for meaningful work with the Latinos here and abroad.

X. Afterword: Since the Election

The 1990 electoral defeat of the Sandinistas confirms, in the negative, our conclusions on the nature of the Nicaraguan state, its contradictions, and the steps needed to move the revolution forward.

The revolution survived a decade of incredible human and economic destruction engineered by the Pentagon and the CIA—and it is this proud legacy of survival that is the basis for further progress.

The sheer will and determination of the Nicaraguan people and their commitment to the FSLN kept the revolutionary fires burning in the dark years of the contra war. Nicaraguans still supported the FSLN, even in the face of major setbacks such as the USSR's 1988 cutback of oil, which sent a message worldwide that it was open season on all Third World revolutions.

Nonetheless, the Sandinistas fell from power last year because, after 10 years in power, they had failed to sufficiently consolidate the revolution's achievements, fulfill the democratic aspirations and material needs of the Nicaraguan people, and carry the revolution forward in four key and interconnected areas.

First, the U.S.-pounded economy continued to spin out of control as the state bureaucracy, committed to "mixed" capitalism, imposed a brutal austerity plan which sacrificed the survival needs of wage earners and small producers to the interests of large agro-exporters. The FSLN cut food subsidies and pared away at the state industrial sector. Unemployment and inflation pushed the people into ever-worsening poverty. The country was shoved into a U.S. dollar-driven free market scramble for the barest necessities.

Second, the critical problems of the Atlantic Coast remained unsolved under FSLN rule. Sandinista military occupation continued after the conclusion of the contra war. Under the 1987 Autonomy Law, Indians' demand for the right to self-determination and Blacks' demand for equality remained unmet. Thousands of Indian fighters had returned to the revolution hoping that the government would incorporate Indians equally into the revolution, but those hopes were sacrificed to the interests of the Pacific-based

agro-exporters. The FSLN refused to use its resources to empower the Native producers in the development of the vast, untapped wealth of the region. Autonomy remained a fiction on paper; hence, the Sandinistas failed to bring the *costeños*



Election campaign: hope remained in the faces of FSLN supporters.
La campaña electoral: la esperanza se mantuvo en los rostros de los partidarios del FSLN.

into the heart of the revolution where they belonged.

Third, the needs of women, the mainstay of the Nicaraguan economy, were kept on the back burner. As the revolution spiraled downward, women, 43% of whom are single heads of households, were hit hardest on all sides—as mothers without childcare, as the lowest-paid workers, as beleaguered consumers in the chaotic, impoverished marketplace. The FSLN put the burden for replenishing the war-decimated population on women, refusing to legalize abortion. Women became the fiercest critics of government bureaucratism and corruption, even while their sacrifice and pride kept the Nicaraguan revolution alive.

Lastly, the democratic participation of the people in the running of the revolutionary state was discouraged, and the

power of the mass organizations shrank, because the Sandinistas opted for bourgeois-democratic parliamentarianism, enshrined in the 1984 Constitution. Little fresh grassroots leadership was allowed to develop.

The Sandinista policies engendered a crisis of the regime which came to a head early last year. The Nicaraguan people, poorer than ever and desperate for relief, used the February elections to protest the FSLN's failure to reverse the revolution's slide into chaos. The Sandinistas, cling-

ing overtime to dismantle the revolution by beheading the FSLN Army, returning state industry to private hands, cutting wages, and throwing Nicaragua open to unbridled investment by foreign and domestic capital.

Nicaragua's people see all this clearly. And they are fighting back, as the massive strikes in May and July last year so graphically demonstrate. This will to fight is the best evidence that the revolution is not yet defeated.

As the "loyal opposition" to the Chamorro government, however, the FSLN holds onto its middle-caste character, attempting to prevent a decisive confrontation between labor and capital and to maintain the political status quo.

Yet while top Sandinistas are cutting deals with Chamorro, and advocating compromises with the bourgeoisie, other FSLN sectors are more tied than ever to the people in the street.

Currently, the FSLN is wracked by internal debate. And a grassroots radical wing, adamantly opposed to the collaborationist course, is in the process of formation.

Leftwing Sandinista militants now need to push the FSLN as a whole to draw the proper lessons from its decade in power and hammer out a program for the real liberation of Nicaragua. The main lesson—capitalism is incompatible with the people's aspirations for democracy and independence. A program fashioned out of this realization would mobilize Nicaragua's workers, peasants, women, Indians, Creoles and youth to confront and oust the Chamorros and contras, and make Nicaragua a workers' state. Such a program, enunciated boldly, would also rally international forces who've been too long deluded by the notion that democracy in Nicaragua could somehow be consolidated this side of socialism.

One lesson of Chamorro's victory is that this idea is a delusion. The Sandinistas should shout it from the rooftops.

Meanwhile, the job of U.S. revolutionaries is to build a movement at home that will fight, in solidarity with the Nicaraguan people, against capitalism in both countries. U.S. imperialism is the problem in this hemisphere; the only solution, ultimately, is a *socialist confederation of states in the Americas and the Caribbean*. In the interim, the more effectively the U.S. movement builds for revolution at home, the easier it will be for the Nicaraguan people and those fighting imperialism everywhere.

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X. Postdata: Desde la Elección

La derrota electoral de los sandinistas en 1990 comprueba, en lo negativo, nuestras conclusiones sobre la naturaleza del Estado nicaragüense, sus contradicciones, y los pasos necesarios para avanzar a la revolución.

La revolución sobrevivió una década de una increíble destrucción humana y económica, maquinada por el Pentágono y la CIA—y es este orgulloso legado de supervivencia la base para un progreso posterior.

La pura voluntad y la determinación del pueblo nicaragüense, y su compromiso con el FSLN mantuvo ardiendo los fuegos revolucionarios en los oscuros años de la guerra Contra. Los nicaragüenses siguieron apoyando al FSLN aún frente a mayores contratiempos tales como los recortes de petróleo en 1988 por parte de URSS, lo que envió un mensaje mundial de que era temporada abierta de caza para todas las revoluciones del tercer mundo.

Sin embargo, los sandinistas perdieron el poder el año pasado porque después de 10 años de estar en él, fallaron en consolidar suficientemente los logros de la revolución, satisfacer las aspiraciones democráticas, las necesidades materiales del pueblo nicaragüense, y llevar hacia adelante a la revolución en cuatro áreas claves e interconectadas.

Primero. La economía golpeada por los EUA continuó girando fuera de control mientras que la burocracia estatal, comprometida al capitalismo "mixto", impuso un plan de austeridad brutal que sacrificó las necesidades de supervivencia de asalariados y de pequeños productores a los intereses de grandes agroexportadores. El FSLN cortó los subsidios de comida y se alejó del sector industrial del estado. El desempleo y la inflación empujaron al pueblo a una pobreza siempre empeorante. El país fue empujado a un salvés quien pueda de mercado libre, impulsado por los dólares estadounidenses, para conseguir necesidades más básicas.

Segundo. Los problemas críticos de la Costa Atlántica permanecieron sin resolverse bajo la dirección del FSLN. La ocupación del ejército sandinista continuó después de la conclusión de la guerra Contra. Bajo la Ley de Autonomía de 1987, la exigencia de los indígenas por el derecho a la autodeterminación y la exigencia de los negros por la igualdad, siguen sin cumplirse. Miles de luchadores indígenas habían regresado a la revolución con la esperanza de que el gobierno incorporara a la igualdad indígena en la revolución, pero esas esperanzas fueron sacrificadas por los intereses de los agroexportadores con base en el Pacífico. El FSLN rehusó usar sus recursos para autorizar a los productores nativos a desarrollar la vasta riqueza sin explotar de la región. La autonomía permaneció como una ficción en papel; por lo tanto, los sandinistas fallaron en traer a los *costeños* al corazón de la revolución al que pertenecían.

Tercero. Las necesidades de la mujer, pilar de la economía nicaragüense, fueron

mantenidas en el fogón trasero. Al descender la revolución en espiral, las mujeres, 43% de las cuales son únicas jefas de familia, fueron abatidas más fuertemente por todos lados—como madres sin guarderías, como las trabajadoras con paga más baja, como consumidoras acosadas en el mercado caótico y empobrecido. El FSLN puso la carga sobre las mujeres para reponer a la población decimada por la guerra, rehusándose a legalizar el aborto. Las mujeres se convirtieron en los críticos más violentos del burocratismo y corrupción del gobierno, aún cuando su sacrificio y



Summer 1990, Managua construction workers strike as inflation hits 34,000%. So much for Chamorro's promise of U.S.-aided economic rejuvenation. Verano de 1990. Trabajadores de una construcción en Managua en huelga, mientras la inflación alcanza 34,000%. Todo por la promesa de La Chamorro de la ayuda de restauración económica de los E.U.

orgullo mantuvieron viva a la revolución nicaragüense.

Por último, la participación democrática del pueblo en el avance del Estado revolucionario fue desalentado y el poder de las organizaciones de masas se encogió porque los sandinistas optaron por un parlamentarismo democrático-burgues, conservado religiosamente en la constitución de 1984. Fue permitido poco desarrollo de liderazgos populares proveniente de las bases.

Las políticas sandinistas engendraron una crisis del régimen que llegó al tope a comienzos del año pasado. El pueblo nicaragüense, más pobre que nunca y desesperado por alivio, usó las elecciones de febrero para protestar la falla del FSLN de revertir el deslíz de la revolución al caos. Los sandinistas, aferrados tercamente a políti-

cas fracasadas regalaron la elección. Chamorro sólo tuvo que prometer que los EUA vendrían a la ayuda de Nicaragua una vez que los sandinistas fueran expulsados. Y así lo fueron, por un pueblo desesperado y agotado.

La promesa de Chamorro estaba vacía; la "ayuda" de los EUA al Tercer Mundo consiste en armar dictadores precapitalistas y escuadrones de la muerte. Desde el pasado febrero, todo en Nicaragua ha empeorado. La inflación subió por los cielos. Setenta por ciento del pueblo esta atascado en extrema pobreza y el ingreso per cápita se encogió a niveles de 1945. Los derechos de la mujer están siendo echados atrás y la gente en la Costa Atlántica está más lejos que nunca de la autonomía. La región es, más que nunca, un campo militar

Las condiciones que engendraron la revolución se han duplicado en fuerza.

Chamorro y las fuerzas contras que regresaron están trabajando horas extras para desmantelar la revolución, decapitando al ejército del FSLN, devolviendo la industria del Estado a manos privadas, recortando los salarios y arrojando a Nicaragua de manera abierta a la inversión desenfrenada por capital doméstico y extranjero.

El pueblo nicaragüense ve todo esto claramente. Y

acuerdos con la burguesía, otros sectores del FSLN están más atados que nunca a la gente en la calle.

Actualmente, el FSLN está arruinado por el debate interno y un ala de origen radical proveniente de las bases, inexistente en su oposición al curso colaboracionista, esta en el proceso de formación.

Los militantes izquierdistas sandinistas necesitan empujar ahora al FSLN como un todo para trazar las lecciones apropiadas de su década en el poder y elaborar un programa para la liberación real de Nicaragua. La principal lección—el capitalismo es incompatible con las aspiraciones del pueblo por la democracia y la independencia. Un programa moderno basado en esta comprensión movilizaría a los obreros, campesinos, mujeres, indígenas, creoles y a la juventud nicaragüenses para confrontar y expulsar a las Chamorros y a los Contras, y hacer de Nicaragua un Estado obrero. Tal programa, enunciado a grandes rasgos, reuniría también fuerzas internacionales que han sido engañadas por mucho tiempo por la noción de que la democracia en Nicaragua de algún modo puede ser consolidada de este lado del socialismo.

Una lección purificadora de la victoria de La Chamorro es que ésta es un engaño. Los sandinistas deben gritarlo desde los tejados.

Mientras tanto el trabajo de los revolucionarios estadounidense, es el de crear un movimiento en casa que luche, en solidaridad con el pueblo



está luchando en respuesta, como lo demuestran tan gráficamente las huelgas masivas en mayo y julio del año pasado. Este deseo de lucha es la mejor evidencia de que la revolución aún no ha sido derrotada.

Como la "oposición leal" al gobierno de La Chamorro, no obstante, el FSLN se aferra a su carácter de casta media, intentando prevenir una confrontación decisiva entre mano de obra y capital y, a la vez, mantener el statu quo político.

Pero mientras los cabecillas sandinistas hacen tratos con La Chamorro y discuten

nicaragüense, en contra del capitalismo en ambos países. El imperialismo estadounidense es el problema en este hemisferio; la única solución, al final, es una confederación socialista de estados en las Américas y en el Caribe. En el interín, entre más efectivamente construya por la revolución en casa el movimiento estadounidense, más fácil será para el pueblo nicaragüense y para aquellos que están luchando contra el imperialismo en todas partes.

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Editorial

Opportunity knocks for 4th International after SWP exit

DOTTING THE LAST "I," the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, once the revolutionary standard-bearer of U.S. Trotskyism, formally severed its fraternal connections to the Fourth International on June 10, 1990.

With Leon Trotsky, the party had led the founding of the International in 1938 in order that, through the affiliation of Trotskyist parties in different countries, a cohesive international workers' revolutionary movement could be built.

But the SWP publicly sloughed off Trotskyism in 1982 with its noisy repudiation of the theory of permanent revolution, Trotskyism's ideological bedrock. Leaving the Fourth was pretty much a formality: the spirit of Trotskyism had been slain and laid to rest inside the party since the mid-'60s.

HERE'S WHY THE SWP dumped the Old Man: Trotsky taught that every oppressed group, from gays to steelworkers to national liberationists, needs a socialist revolution to get what they're after because capitalism stands in the way of democracy and equality for everyone. He also said that workers are going to have to lead these movements because only their interests are 100 percent opposed to those of the profiteers.

That's at the heart of permanent revolution and the SWP wanted none of it. It's been decades since they believed that workers could make a revolution, especially in the U.S. Little wonder, since for them the only workers who count are the straight white hard hats who man heavy industry (what's left of it)—who are undoubtedly the most privileged, conservative strata of the workforce.

Wild horses couldn't get the SWP to admit that the spark plugs of labor today are its new majority, the underprivileged ones, the women, people of color, immigrants, gays.

The SWP spent roughly 20 years touting Archie Bunkers as U.S. labor's revolutionary vanguard; naturally, this woeful hucksterism produced nothing but cynicism and disorientation in the party. Finding their skewed version of class struggle an increasingly sterile enterprise, the SWP opted for political get-rich-quick schemes, hopping in with labor bureaucrats, Black nationalists and reformists, NOW-type feminists, and red baiters in the antiwar movement—whoever looked at the moment like they might have some clout with "the masses."

By 1982 it was time for the SWP to say to hell with the pretense and dump Trotskyism outright. God knows why it took the party eight more years to leave the Fourth International.

NOW COMES Socialist Action to try to claim the sole U.S. Trotskyist "franchise" in the international body.

This figures. SA's leaders are people who were purged from the SWP in the early '80s during the party's anti-Trotskyist mop-up campaign. But aside from balking when it came time to toss the permanent revolution overboard, these people don't have any quarrel with what the SWP had become by the late '60s and '70s. They share the same adulation for white males as the fountainhead of meaningful social change, the same blindness to the race and sex dynamics that are reshaping the U.S. working class, and the same consequent cynicism with regard to the revolutionary potential of a predominantly female, rainbow, and lesbian/gay workforce. All this adds up to SWP-style opportunism toward movement bureaucrats and reformists—and the same sectarian arrogance toward the rest of the Left, especially other Trotskyists, that the SWP displays.

During the Gulf crisis SA worked overtime in antiwar coalitions to keep open socialists off the speakers' platforms at rallies. The SWP was famous for trying to muffle radicals in the anti-Vietnam war movement.

FOR THE PAST EIGHT YEARS, SA has coexisted as an affiliate group inside the Fourth International with two other U.S. Trotskyist organizations, Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT) and Fourth International Caucus of Solidarity (FIC), as well as with the SWP. FIT and FIC came out of the same purges that SA did, and the differences among the three groups are largely sectarian, not political. SA is the biggest of the bunch. Now that the SWP has split, SA figures it's time to muscle in and claim bragging rights as the lone "official" U.S. Trotskyist group.

The International might go for it. They never fought the SWP's apostasy, other than with a paper defense of permanent revolution, hoping the appeasement would keep its largest, best-financed group in the fold. This delicate appreciation of the SWP's organizational weight is doubtless why SA refrained for eight years from pressing its claim. Now SA thinks it's the Arnold Schwarzenegger of American Trotskyism—no small virtue as far as the International leadership is concerned.

The whole thing stinks. The mere fact that SA can grab for sole affiliate status as if it were a Burger King franchise speaks to a near-terminal degeneration of the International. Should the power play be upheld, the Fourth can kiss goodbye its last tatters of heritage and integrity. (The International has since opted to keep all three groups in the fold—Ed.)

What the Fourth International should do is reject SA's
to page 23



How the West seeded the Desert Storm clouds

Modern Mideast history dates from the crumbling of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, when hegemony over the region was consolidated by western European powers, primarily Britain and France.

The outbreak of the war sharpened European realization that oil was crucial as a strategic military commodity, essential for motorized ground and air transport and more powerful navies. Accordingly, control of oil became the West's overriding political concern in the region.

Britain and France carved the Mideast into separate states, installing pliant rulerships in each. They aimed to protect their oil monopolies, throttle pan-Arab revolt and "contain" the USSR to the north.

The new configuration of states was only loosely based on the old Ottoman adminis-

Zionism provokes Arab revolt. Colonial subdivision of the Mideast into artificial nations and the installation of fragile, puppet Arab rulers still did not guarantee stability. So the British helped set up a Zionist "homeland" for the Jews in Palestine as a garrison against Arab nationalism.

Jewish immigration to Palestine, given the green light with the Balfour Declaration in 1917, remained at a trickle through the '30s. However the trickle became a flood in the wake of the Holocaust and the refusal by Western "democracies"—primarily the U.S.—to admit Jewish refugees during World War II.

The creation of Israel in 1948 and the resulting expulsion of the Palestinians sparked a resurgence of the Arab revolution, which led to successful nationalist revolts in Egypt and Iraq in the '50s. Added to the shifting political mix was the final displacement of the Euro-

arm Israel against all the Arabs as the West's proxy guarantor of "stability."

Western oil corporations poured billions into the coffers of Gulf state ruling families, and the U.S. armed the Arab nationalist states, one against the other, to contain them within a web of interstate rivalries. In this way, the Arab rulers were each tied to the West against their own people. The U.S. also gave Israel all the military hardware it could possibly use and made it the region's sole nuclear power.

But there remained Arab poverty, outrage and aspirations to freedom; the canker of Zionism; and the ambitions of strongmen such as Saddam—all guaranteed sooner or later to produce an explosion in this imperialist-armed camp.

The set-up of Saddam.

Iraq, though oil-rich, has chafed continually over the injury done it by the British in 1922. It emerged from its 1980-88 war with Iran—in which it was armed and abetted by the U.S.—with a massive war debt, an equally massive military machine, and a whetted desire to become the reigning Mideast power.

Iraq needed top dollar for its oil. Then, tiny Kuwait began over-producing from its wells, driving world oil prices down, enraging Saddam, and setting the stage for war.

Kuwait as an oil producer is at the service of British Petroleum and Gulf Oil. It jacked up production at the behest of the imperialists. Can you imagine this mouse tweaking the tiger's tail otherwise? Saddam's ambitions threatened the imperialist status quo in the Mideast. He had to be maneuvered into a confrontation and destroyed.

Iraq threatened to invade Kuwait. U.S. ambassador to Iraq April G'aspie told Saddam the U.S. would stand aside. He likely didn't believe that, but figured he could win a favorable compromise in an ensuing face-off. At any rate he went in—and George Bush drew that infamous line in the sand.

Remember all this when the final tally for this obscene slaughter strikes home. □



Prince Faisal (front) at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, where Britain and France betrayed the Arabs and partitioned the Mideast to hold on to the oil.

trative divisions. Kuwait, for example, was ripped away from Basra province (southern Iraq today) by British Proconsul Sir Percy Cox in 1922. Britain wanted to deny Baghdad access to the Persian Gulf and forestall any Iraqi challenge to British dominance there.

peans by the United States as the chief imperialist power.

Policy: divide, conquer, arm Israel. The U.S. plan for the region was simple. Shore up the Gulf oligarchies against nationalism, coopt the new nationalist regimes, and

Voices of Color

Blacks and Asians:

WE ARE NOT ENEMIES

The writers of the following column are Darryl Powell, an African American fire-fighter and social activist in New York City, and Emily Woo Yamasaki, an Asian American actor, office worker, and member of NYC Radical Women.

New York City media barons decided they'd struck pay-dirt last year with the chance to sensationalize the Black community boycott of two Korean markets in Flatbush.

Tabloid headlines flashed when the boycott was triggered by a Haitian woman's charge that a Korean shopkeeper had unjustly accused her of shop-lifting and then assaulted her.

Both the media and the city fathers figured the controversy would serve as a handy counterweight to the uproar over white racism in the murders of Black men in Howard Beach and Bensonhurst. See, screamed the nightly news broadcasts, Blacks and Asians are racist too!

But the picketers and boycott organizers we've talked to are not anti-Asian bigots. They point to good relations between some Korean store owners and the predominantly Black communities they serve. But the two stores in question are notorious for their disdainful treatment of the people in their communities, and for that reason we believe this boycott was justified.

Divide and conquer. The city's actions reinforce our belief: the press called the boycott organizers "outside agitators," when in fact they were community people, primarily Haitians. Then, New York's first Black mayor, David Dinkins, crossed the picket line to buy fruit. And the police, for whom Black community self-organizing is anathema, used the boycott to harass picketers and clamp down on street vendors.

Little wonder that, after the Korean shopkeeper was acquitted in January of assault on the Haitian woman, some Blacks have concluded that the system works for Asians but not for them.

The city fathers played their old divide-and-conquer game. But the truth of this situation is that the system doesn't work for *anyone*—except the rich.

Bombarded by stereotypes. As an Asian American woman and an African American man, we are keenly aware that our communities have sometimes been in conflict, and not just in New York. In recent years, incidents of mistrust,

race-baiting and violence have erupted between U.S. or Caribbean Blacks and Koreans, Vietnamese, and other Asian and Pacific Islander groups from L.A. to Boston.

Why? Are our cultures so incompatible that we inevitably clash? Are our people natural racists and xenophobes?

We don't believe it.

We do believe that this system invests a lot of energy in **teaching** racism. We're bombarded with, and sometimes buy into, the hype: Asian immigrants are the "model minority" that steals jobs from American workers; Blacks, meanwhile, are lazy, would rather be on welfare than hold jobs, are natural thieves, ad nauseam.

These are the stereotypes. What's behind them? And who benefits?

Racist politics equals capitalist economics. We find the answer to the above questions in the fact that, while oppressed people are at each other's throats, white male bosses and landlords get rich off a discriminatory wage system and exorbitant rents for slum housing.

That's the capitalist stake in keeping us divided. If we're tied up fighting each other, we won't be struggling together against the real enemy.

And, as economic recession deepens, Blacks, Koreans, and all the oppressed will be pushed toward more frantic squabbling over dwindling jobs, housing, financing for homes and small businesses, and other pieces of the shrinking economic pie. The powers-that-be are hoping we'll think that our own group's survival

hinges on another's demise.

That's why cultural nationalism—which sees race, not class, as the primary dividing line among us—isn't the answer. Poor Blacks and Koreans struggling to make it **aren't** each others' enemies. The system which serves the money-men who are pitting us against one another is the problem.

And that problem won't be solved by "Buy Black" campaigns, either. Control of all wealth is in white capitalist hands. And even if we could do business entirely within our own community, we'd still be stuck in an economic ghetto, with a few of our own added to the ranks of the exploiters.

We need to unite. Rather than scapegoat each other, we need to build multi-racial **alliances**—based on respect and recognition of the real economic and social walls that divide us.

And we can do it. Last year in Tacoma, Washington, a group including Korean Americans, Blacks, other people of color, whites, and radicals rallied together outside a pro-Nazi Populist Party meeting. They were protesting Populist links to an Aryan Nations plot to bomb Korean businesses, a Black nightclub, a gay disco, and Jewish synagogues. Those Nazis sure saw we had something in common. Fortunately, so did the anti-Populist protesters.

Obviously, it's urgent we get past our divisions. We should begin holding inter-community dialogues that educate about our diverse cultures and histories. The Flatbush boycott sparked vital discussions, including forums organized by Radical Women in New York and San Francisco. African American and Asian American feminists Barbara Smith and Merle Woo talked at these forums about both the difficulties and necessity of uniting across the color line, and most people in the racially diverse audiences agreed that we can only win by working together.

Racial antagonism among people of color is, like white racism and like sexism and anti-gay bigotry, a cornerstone of the capitalist system that sits on our backs. We have to break through that antagonism and get rid of that system. As that happens, racial and ethnic diversity will become the occasion not for hostility, but for celebration. □

—DARRYL POWELL AND EMILY WOO YAMASAKI



Clara Fraser

From the White House War Room to the Gulfstream Waters

PEOPLE ARE OFTEN NOT what they seem. Not only that, people frequently don't really believe in the sentiments and ideas they claim to hold.

Which is why I cast a jaundiced eye on the supposed infallibility of public opinion polls, and why I reject the actions of even large crowds as proof of their political attitudes.

A recent article in the daily press announced that adults generally respond to inquiries into their opinions by saying what they think the other guy wants to hear, or something that conforms to an apparently conventional, safe outlook.

That's obvious. Since most of what they hear and see comes from the mass media, people regurgitate those concepts. And instead of pithy political discourse, a stale and mechanical idea-recycling process results.

We are all victimized by this dead-end, vicious-circle paralysis of public debate.

A terrible war was waged. President Burning Bush said the country overwhelmingly supported it. General Stormtroopin' Norman, in his haute couture camouflage pajamas, said the troops were all gung ho. The soldiers said so too. TV and press reporters said what Bush and Schwarzkopf had said. Then the man and woman in the street said what all the above said. And the next thing you knew, there was vast exaltation over this super-victorious war, swiftly followed by corrosive despair and demoralization in a peace movement grown bewildered by the support-our-troops demagogues.

The country appeared to be turning ultra-right.

DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT. There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy, and few workers, students or retirees in the U.S.A. are all that enamored with the philosophy that justifies the holocaust we rained down on our workingclass sisters and brothers in the Persian Gulf.

Even the frenetic welcome parades bespeak more relief and pity than crazed jingoism. In Seattle, the parade committee split into pro- and con-militarism factions, and it's hard to tell who will produce the larger contingent—the patriots or the protesters.

WHAT AN IRONY. It is so gratifying on this May Day, 1991 that the Moscow parade is mercifully bereft of those menacing fleets of tanks and seas of bayonets that graced Red Square in the long darkness-at-noon era. American troop parades never featured armaments—I never saw any during World War II or any other war. But Seattle's celebration will be encased in martial hardware; I fully expect to see multi-colored, sequin-studded missiles dangling from the Space Needle. Shades of old Joe Stalin!

The Reverse Vietnam/Reward Our Soldiers contagion is just that—an epidemic born of the 4th-of-July yearning to remedy past injustices against Vietnam vets and do something positive, do the right thing, show the right stuff. But how do you express sympathy for hapless kids shanghaied into incinerating the cradle of human civilization—Iraq—from whence most modern culture sprang? How can you cheer an invading force that ruthlessly murdered its own history, its own heritage, its own ancestral homeland?

You can't. You can't applaud marauders or bestiality. What you can do is befriend individuals and learn what is truly on their minds and in their hearts. For out of these innocent and misguided troops will come the new antiwar leaders, the new militants, the new revolutionaries. It was ever thus.

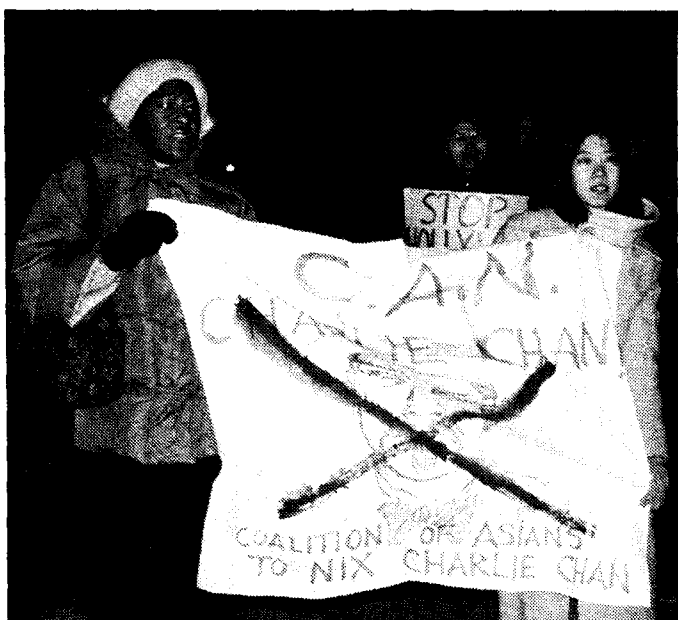
DISORIENTED PEACE ACTIVISTS need to take a deep breath, dig in, and peer beneath the surface of things on earth, into the hidden molecular action that reveals the contrasts and conflicts and realities of life that get obscured by misleading exterior surfaces.

War fever is not a constant. Personal demo-fatigue will pass. The Left will resurrect explosively. And a lifestyle of armchair commentary and chic-bitter resignation will pale and wither.

Indeed, many movement dropouts wither away completely—they die too young once they cut ties with their political roots and a culture that looks forward instead of nowhere.

EVERYBODY KNOWS the world is engulfed in the Gulf war's bloody afterbirth. Nobody except the Bushniks is very happy about it, no matter what pieties they may spout. Someday, sooner than you think, and this side of the rainbow, the angry, afflicted and sensitive people will embark on a voyage of self-discovery that will carry them across the whirlpools of circular logic into an undiscovered harbor swept by fresh breezes—by their recognition of their own deep-seated convictions and hopes for a brave new world.

When people start to unearth the truth about their subterranean wishes and dreams, at that point in history the planet will start becoming habitable. And the revolutionary essence of America will once again bloom. □



Conky Lee

...jobs vs. ecology

from page 3

renouncing tree-spiking because of the danger it poses to workers, and organizing timber hands into IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) locals. Their success can be measured by the retaliatory violence and dirty tricks against them. (Please see accompanying article.)

As well as with workers, environmentalists need to mend fences and build alliances with people of color. Environmentalists and Native Americans already frequently collaborate together to simultaneously protect resources and treaty rights, but much more needs to be done.

The dumping of garbage and poisons in ghettos, barrios, and on reservations is environmental racism. Three out of every five U.S. Blacks and Hispanics live near uncontrolled toxic-waste sites.

"Cancer alley" is a 75-mile chain of dumping grounds for oil refineries and petrochemical plants lining the Mississippi River. Altgeld Gardens is a housing project in one of Chicago's Black ghettos built on top of a still-stinking former landfill and near a sludge plant, a steel mill, a paint company, a huge incinerator—and another 80-foot-high landfill.

If these aren't environmental problems, what qualifies?

The good news is that strong campaigns against toxic waste in poor neighborhoods are being waged all across the country. Some local protest groups have as many as 600 members, and many of them are led by women of color.

Rx: get rid of the profiteers. Our earth is being clear-cut, strip-mined and killed off to provide an ever-growing glut of goods, from paper to pistons to perfumes to petro-poisons—anything capitalists can sell at a price. Our land, water and air are increasingly toxic because industry finds it cheaper to dump its pollutants than clean up its act. Big capital is invested in deadly technologies and many harmful, superfluous products; earth-friendly research, techniques and goods are squelched and kept off the market.

Incessant imperialist wars for markets and resources are scarring our planet as well, and bomb-makers are now the kingpins of industry.

This is the logic of a system defined by the endless, competitive chase after profits. Capitalists must have it this way or go out of business.

There is no way to save and heal the earth—and gear production for human needs—without overturning the system.

Fight the corporations now!

Meanwhile, there are crucial battles we need to fight, and some we can win now. Once we dump the despoilers, we want something left of the planet to enjoy and to manage! And it's precisely these battles that will educate people to the need to get rid of the system once and for all.

We must fight to make the corporations responsible for maintaining jobs while safeguarding the environment. They're the ones who have reaped the profits from the exploitation of both people and resources over the decades.

The prerequisites for accomplishing this are democratizing the unions in the woods and mills, organizing the non-union workers there, and building a firm alliance between conservationists and labor. Then we will have the power to make demands and initiate programs like the following:

- Create new jobs through systematic inventorying of the forest and reforestation, including experiments in reproducing forests with the qualities of old growth. In many areas, nobody knows how much forest is left, what condition it's in, or which species live there. Sustainable forestry can never be practiced without this information.

- Give economically depressed logging communities money and **decision-making power** over job retraining programs,

creation of new jobs in the area, and relocation assistance.

- Remove all time limits from unemployment compensation.

One much-discussed option that will **not** create new jobs is a ban on export of raw logs. U.S. companies ship unprocessed logs abroad because that's where the market is. Trying to stop this is not going to **create** a market at home, where recession reigns and construction is sluggish.

Funding for conservation and job relief can be gotten by:

- Ending subsidies to the mining and timber industries and others which make intensive use of scarce natural resources. Subsidies come in many indirect forms, such as artificially low fees for mining, tree-cutting, and grazing on public lands.

- Slashing the "defense" budget. Alongside its horrific destruction of people and nature and our creations, the Pentagon is an insatiable consumer of finite resources. It is the biggest single U.S. consumer of petroleum.

The tasks necessary to begin putting human beings back into synch with the world we live in are undeniably gargantuan. Fortunately, Mother Nature is very patient and resilient.

But the time to start is now. Even mothers have their limits! □

—ANDREA BAUER

...logger's outlook

from page 3

logs are still left is steep ground. Select-logging on that ground is a nightmare, and dangerous. Select-logging—it sounds like a great idea. But nobody ever asked us about the safety factor.

"This is a dangerous job to begin with. Something like 20 people a year die working in the woods in Washington state alone. If somebody in Seattle inhales some ammonia gas, you can pick up the newspaper and read about it. But some poor slob can get killed in the woods, and there's nothing."

"If the environmentalists are right, my feeling is that my job isn't so important that I'm going to rape the universe and say to hell with it. I'll go find a job doing something else. But that's easy for me to say because I live close to a metropolitan area.

"It's different for someone in Raymond or Forks. They've worked 20 years in the woods, they're maybe 40, 45, 50 years old, and all of a sudden they're not going to have a job—what the hell are they going to do? They have a house with a mortgage. They have kids at home. They have to just pick up and leave everything behind them.

"A lot of them have lived in these towns for three and four generations. Their great-grandfather was a logger and their grandfather and their father. There's a lot of pride there.

"What are you going to do? Are you going to make a make-work job for them? Make them bus boys and bartenders? You're never going to turn a place like Forks into a tourist town anyway—it rains

too damn much."

• The timber industry

"It's a cutthroat industry. It's not a bad thing that the environment has become an issue. The logging companies used to just do anything—build roads in wintertime, run cats up and down a riverbed. Nobody was there to stop them. They wanted to get the timber out and they wanted to get it out cheap."

"Big companies like Boise Cascade and Weyerhaeuser hire mostly immigrants without papers to do the tree planting. They pay them next to nothing. The conditions are **terrible**. It's slave labor. It's a backbreaking, horrendous job. I couldn't do it.

"Three or four years ago there were about 12 Hispanic tree planters riding in a crew pickup, working for a subcontractor working for Weyerhaeuser. They had an accident with a logging truck and quite a few of them were killed. There was just **one mention** in the newspaper and it's gone, history, nothing ever heard of it again. You know that Weyerhaeuser had to twist some arms to see that that story did not go any further."

"There's going to be less and less jobs. That means that the people who are left are going to become more and more competitive. There's two ways the companies can handle that. They can pay less money. They can press for more production. And that means more injuries, more deaths."

• Leaving the woods

"I just can't abide the idea of working in an office. I think of that and shudder."

"The last day I was working as a fulltimer in the woods, I saw an animal I had never seen before, after 20 years—a baby ermine. Neat." □

...censorship

from page 1

has been the bloodiest in history. From the war on Mexico in the early 1900s to the Gulf war, the U.S. Army has rampaged worldwide, smashing workingclass movements, invading smaller countries, committing the vilest of atrocities—all in the interests of Wall St., and more lately of Tokyo and Bonn as well.

You don't believe me when I speak of atrocities? In the Marshall Islands in the Pacific, people were deliberately contaminated with nuclear fallout from U.S. H-Bomb tests in the 1950s. Mutations and deaths continue there today.

Hiroshima itself was perpetrated not to win the war against Japan, but to warn the Soviets that the U.S. was fully prepared to continue the war—against them. Likewise, 250,000 people perished under Allied bombs in Dresden in 1945—merely to warn the advancing Red Army of the West's military power.

Blacking out the real war. Have they ever told the American people any of this? No! Your news, and your history, is censored.

For example, everybody, including the Iraqis, got more information from CNN than the American people did. In Australia, we had two "feeds" from the Gulf. The U.S. feed cut to military pictures every time something politically sensitive came up; the general feed from the European pool did not.

Little of what the media reported reflected reality. Twelve hours after the bombing started we heard that the entire Iraqi Air Force and most of the Revolutionary Guard had been wiped out. Yet it later came out that only around 100 of 750 Iraqi planes had been destroyed. The Revolutionary Guard was also largely intact in secure bunkers—and it seems they largely still are after the ground offensive; they are now defending Hussein against the Iraqi people.

Then there were the oil slicks. Sycophantic U.S. media hacks churned out kilometres and kilometres of video tape showing cormorants drowning in an oil slick "released by Hussein." Yet that slick came from an abandoned **Saudi** refinery. There was a larger slick in the middle of the Persian Gulf, nowhere near any coastline. Iraq couldn't have caused it, but "allied" bombers could. I bet they didn't discuss **that** in the U.S.

They censor American news because they are desperate to create the impression that they are winning, against a villainous enemy, with a minimum of casualties. They are desperate to overcome the "Vietnam syndrome," brought about by the defeat there against a smaller military force, which sparked a revulsion among the U.S. population against further military adventures.

The imperialist warmakers won this battle, at the cost of tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers, and tens of thousands of civilian workers and farmers. They "did not

target" civilians, then pulped ordinary people in a Baghdad bomb shelter. And did they tell you that the price of Turkey's support was the U.S. bombing of Kurdish villages? Or that the Kurdish resistance movement suspended its armed struggle against Hussein rather than line up with American "liberators"? Did they tell you of the millions of people who took to the streets of Europe, Africa, and Asia to protest this war?

No, they "sanitized" everything.

Job for the U.S. movement. There is a lot of fear and hatred directed against all things American here and around the world. But why should you, American workers and antiwar dissenters, be saddled with what your rulers do?

Bush and Co. want you to believe that the U.S. is the world's policeman against aggression, and to comply with their suppression of the rest of us—and yourselves.

Note that while the Pentagon was leveling Iraq, Washington continued to preside over spiralling unemployment and deficits at home. Bush urged passage of "crime" bills that would make your country an outright police state. The war against Iraq was a war against you, too.

The working people of the world need you in the USA to lead in ridding us and yourselves of your parasitical, warmongering rulers! Get them off my back, your back, and the backs of the Arab, African, Asian, Latin American and South Pacific peoples.

You must lead in preventing any more wars for profit. Capitalism is a cancer on the world. Together we can excise it, but you workers of the USA must be the principal surgeons. □

—PETER MURRAY

Peter Murray is Secretary of the Suburban Train Guards' Section of the Australian Railways Union.

An international socialist feminist organization in the front lines of the fight against racism, sexism, fascism, anti-gay bigotry and labor exploitation.

Radical Women

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles: 1918 W. 7th St., #204, Los Angeles, CA 90057. 213-413-1350.

San Francisco Bay Area: National Office, 523-A Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94110. 415-864-1278.

NEW YORK

New York City: 32 Union Square East, Rm. 907, New York, NY 10003. 212-677-7002.

WASHINGTON

Port Angeles: 512 E. 7th, Port Angeles, WA 98362. 206-452-7534.

Seattle: New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle, WA 98118. 206-722-6057.

Spokane: W. 3005 Boone, Spokane, WA 99201. 509-327-9196.

Tacoma: P.O. Box 5847, Tacoma, WA 98405. 206-383-4142.

OREGON

Portland: 7038 N. Fairport, Portland, OR 97217. 503-289-7082.

AUSTRALIA

Melbourne: P.O. Box 266, West Brunswick, VIC 3055. 03-386-5065.



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...obscene victory

from page 1

Prognosis: escalating conflict. Now what? More wars, in the Gulf, in Palestine, wherever investments are threatened, wherever gold can be gotten from the selling of guns.

And in the U.S., where debt, S&L rip-offs and racist drug wars eat at the future; where health, education and welfare are now all but trashed; and where the hemorrhage of jobs to the war machine brings class conflict closer, war will serve as the grand excuse to step up repression against all dissent.

Bush's blueprint: recipe for chaos. Washington would have us believe that war is the gateway to peace in the Mideast and to world economic prosperity. A de-clawed Saddam is removed as a threat to Mideast stability. A pro-West Arab axis in Riyadh, Cairo and Damascus is being nailed in place. A new regional security is hailed as possible.

This would mean oil could resume flowing securely to Europe, Japan and the emerging Asian economies. Japan could continue to finance America's spiraling debt. U.S. investments in overseas oil-run economies would be safe.

But don't break out the champagne just yet, George.

Consider Iraq. Iraq is a mess. Everything there is destroyed. Iraqis are struggling for life, yet the basis for life can no longer be said to exist. The Kurdish and Shiite rebellions, now beaten back thanks to Bush's double-cross, will continue to simmer and spark, not just in Iraq, but in Turkey, Iran, and the entire Mideast. The Iraqis remember who slaughtered their dead. And as famine and cholera sweep through their country, as refugees spill towards the borders in hordes, as hatreds and gunfire proliferate, how will the U.S. stay exempt from the chaos?

The cozy relations between the Gulf oligarchies and Western oil moguls were jeopardized by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Now danger comes from a thousand directions. Most frightening to the oligarchs is the heinous legacy of this war—the mass U.S. slaughter of Arabs for oil. The Arab people will never forget at whose invitation the slaughter took place. And retribution is waiting in the chaos stalking the Gulf.

Also, peace between Israel and the Arab world is an impossibility.

Does Bush really think that the Palestinians are "discredited" among Arabs for their support for Iraq? Is he unaware of the anti-U.S. riots that punctuated the war from Morocco to Jordan?

Let the Israelis try to expel the Palestinians to Jordan as they plan. Let the Saudis, et al., pitch in with the Zionists. Then let them duck. Mubarek hangs by a political thread in Cairo. Pictures of Assad are being defaced all over Syria. And the Saudis are now desperately expelling their own Palestinian "guest" workers.

Bush knows an explosion awaits on the West Bank and throughout the Arab world the minute the Israelis give the expulsion orders. That, and profits, is why the U.S. is shipping its Mideast allies billions in weapons.

Quicksand for capitalism. Arms dealers will prosper in the New Mideast Order and so will the banks, for awhile. But oil prices will careen out of control.



Activists come to strategize against U.S. aggressions at Stop the War Coffeehouses, sponsored by the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women in Seattle, San Francisco, and New York. Pictured above at a "Poetry Against War" coffeehouse in Seattle in April is featured guest Nellie Wong, Bay Area feminist and antiwar activist (seated, center). At left another poet takes advantage of open microphone.

Since Gulf oil is much of the foundation of capitalist economy, world finance, production and trade face being shipwrecked.

The Pentagon and CNN can no longer sanitize the utter devastation that billows forth from the Mideast: the starving Kurds huddled on the borders of Turkey and Iran; the upheavals and riots and bloodshed; the economic destitution spreading worldwide; the incalculable environmental destruction.

The current domestic "victory" euphoria will melt like snow in the fifth pit of hell. All the horrors in the U.S. that the war put on hold will re-grip the nation. The war itself will sicken the U.S. public at last. A new mood will spark renewed protest against the war and the Washington warmakers.

Timidity hobbled antiwar leaders. The U.S. antiwar movement couldn't stop Bush this last time around. He blitzed us too quick. He had to blitz quick or face disaster at home.

What else stood in the movement's way besides time? A divided national movement: two coalitions when one was the ticket. Leadership in each who were scared of democracy, especially of discussion openly condemning the war as a capitalist enterprise.

One coalition, the National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, was led by groups such as CISPES who spent the 1980s telling people that congressional Democrats would halt the U.S. wars on El Salvador and Nicaragua. They hoped to pressure Congress to stop this war too, and because all of Congress is capitalist, they didn't want out-front socialists on the scene to offend.

The Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East was run by the Stalinist Workers World Party. Lo and behold, WWP didn't want socialists "alienating popular forces" in its bailiwick, either.

What popular forces? Church people and progressive unionists spent a whole

decade supporting radicals and socialists in Central America against the U.S.

Twenty-five years ago many supported Vietnamese communists as well. Would they faint dead away if they heard an American socialist speak? Not likely. But the "popular forces" WWP and the Peace Campaign didn't want to alienate were Bush's supporters, the solidly pro-war Democrats and other red baiters in the establishment, the media and the streets.

Liberals and Stalinists crave respectability. Open socialists and those who are drawn to radical ideas and action—people of color, women, youth, lesbians and gay men—are an unknown quantity and a potential embarrassment should their anger and frustration with the whole system be too directly or powerfully expressed.

That's why those outside the political "mainstream" were effectively shut out in both coalitions. The leadership of those least likely to support the system was shortchanged; hence, any swift chance of bringing the war home was lost.

Most damaging is that, in kowtowing to mainstream opinion as defined by the flag-waving media, antiwar leaders allowed Bush to define the issues. For example, was protesting the war really a matter of "not supporting our troops," as Bush insisted? No, it was a matter of defying the system that drafts the disadvantaged to fight and die for U.S. and Arab billionaires. Yet antiwar leaders defaulted to Bush on this question.

Campaign leaders waved Old Glory at rallies and called on the movement to "support our troops"—by bringing them home safely, to be sure, but somehow the distinction got lost.

The U.S. flag and the support-our-troops slogan belong, by definition, to Bush and Co., and no wishful liberal thinking can change that fact.

Movement shakeup. Currently there's a shakeup in the antiwar movement. In the Bay Area, for example, both national coalitions have disbanded.

In Seattle in March, the People of Color Task Force withdrew from the Cam-

paign-affiliated Seattle Coalition for Peace in the Middle East because of "repeated incidents of blatant racism and sexism in the SCPME." The Task Force "will continue to meet and expand" and is "committed to linking the issues of global peace, and economic, racial and gender justice in the U.S."

These are surely the issues the movement has to deal with. Yet the split was a setback for the Seattle movement, and all the reasons for it are not yet clear. While racism, sexism and red baiting certainly played a role, the drive to disband was pushed by local Democratic Party/Rainbow Coalition folks who are noted these days primarily for the care they take not to offend the sensibilities of Seattle's Democratic mayor, Norm Rice. Rice doesn't want anyone raining on his scheduled day-long "Allied Victory" parade June 22. Could it be his antiwar buddies cynically used real issues which the movement must confront to disband the Campaign and head off a showdown with Rice?

The opera ain't over... Possible motives behind the Seattle rift aside, the shakeups are but a prelude to a healthy reconstitution of the movement.

Even before the war started, a host of antiwar organizing efforts were springing up nationwide outside the aegis of the two national groups. Protests by people of color, women, and youth were daily events.

As Bay Area activist Tom Boot puts it, "Bush bit off more than he can chew; the initial mobilizations have kept people around, despite the blitz."

Boot is a member of African Americans Against the War, a Black community group that seeks to end militarism abroad, educate on its effects at home, and support Black resisters in the military. The group, says Boot, "is very democratic" and "has no problem with open socialists."

Socialists continue to organize and educate against the war. For example, the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women sponsor weekly Stop the War Coffeehouses in Seattle, New York and the Bay Area where activists can come and discuss and strategize on ways to end all wars.

One Seattle coffeehouse in April featured a talk and a video by Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Anti-Imperialist. The event disproved the revisionist notion that the '60s antiwar movement had spit on returning Vietnam veterans, showing that vets joined the movement by the thousands, as leaders, when they got back. The following week's coffeehouse, co-sponsored by Youth Against War, addressed the concerns and leadership of young people in today's antiwar movement.

In the last *Freedom Socialist* we wrote about the International Brigades put together by FSP, RW, and other organizations and activists in the three above-mentioned cities. Their points of unity strongly linked the issues of the oppressed in both the U.S. and Mideast and addressed the critical questions of democracy in the antiwar movement itself. These are the issues that will reshape and rejuvenate the movement in the coming months.

Not a moment too soon: the U.S. won't stop its aggressions; that means we have to. It means looking to the leadership of those outside the media's "mainstream." It means challenging the system that makes war abroad and at home. It means pinpointing the capitalist source of the war and uprooting it.

That's the job. Let's get to it. □

—ROBERT CRISMAN

...camouflage for carnage

from page 1

precludes equality among nations. Lenin and Trotsky recognized this 70 years ago when they denounced the League of Nations as an imperialist forum for "mediating" the continuing subjugation of the rebellious colonial world. The same denunciation applies today to the U.N.

Lenin led in forming the Communist Third International (Comintern) in 1919 as a counterweight to capitalist "internationalism" as expressed by the League. His idea was to further the class war and over-

throw of capitalism in all countries. This would have paved the way for a worldwide socialist federation of states and real equality among nations. After Stalin wrecked the Comintern, Trotsky formed the Fourth International to keep this process alive.

The demand is being voiced for U.N. negotiations to resolve the Gulf and Palestinian crises. We can insist that the U.N. arrive at justice for the Palestinians in Palestine—possible only in a socialist bilateral state—but let us not be surprised when the U.N. fails even to achieve a Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories as demanded by the PLO.

Let the U.N.'s failure spark the demand among radicals for a mass international socialist organization to finish the job the Comintern started. Will the Fourth International step forward as the vehicle? □

...Fourth Intl.

from page 20

claim—a contemptuous one-word sentence—"Never."—and call a conference of all U.S. Trotskyists, for the purpose of discussing, clarifying and resolving the real political differences among them, above all with regard to the American Revolution. The fact that the International has so far eschewed this approach accounts for the sectarian muddle afflicting it now.

Stalinism, the main roadblock to Trotskyist leadership of the world's revolutionary movements, is crumbling. Now is definitely the time for regroupment.

Revolutionary opportunities abound for Trotskyism, and if the Fourth International won't take them, Trotskyists who

want to make revolutions will bypass the Fourth International. Last year, a group of Soviet radicals called for an open international conference of Trotskyists to be held in Moscow. Wonderful ideal! The Soviets think it's high time our movement got its political act together, without regard to franchise rights or the rest of the sectarian nonsense. We agree.

And we believe that such a conference, held in Moscow, where the fate of the first workers state is now being decided, could have a sobering and salutary effect: it would certainly inspire and strengthen the fledgling Trotskyist movement in the Soviet Union and help resolve our movement's sectarian gridlock; and it might even wake up some who have thought until now that being big fishes in small, stagnant ponds is the essence and destiny of Trotskyism. □

Price hikes and miners' strikes Soviet workers and bureaucrats head for showdown

Three recent developments have punctuated the Soviet bureaucracy's lurch toward total collapse. The 76 percent "yes" vote on Gorbachev's March 17 referendum to preserve the Soviet Union bought the bureaucrats a little time, but the April 2 price hikes boosted the cost of consumer goods an average of 60 percent and helped trigger the spreading coal miners' strikes, which have been fueled by the conviction that the rulers in Moscow must go.

The referendum showed that there are definite factors slowing the centrifugal rush of dissident republics away from Moscow. But the vote isn't much of a reprieve for Gorbachev. Those price hikes are bad news: installed to halt the quickening slide toward economic disintegration, they'll do nothing of the sort. What price escalation has done is to bring the miners out of their pits demanding Gorbachev's hide. This outcome was predictable.

Why perestroika was a pipe dream. Seven years ago Gorbachev

and his technocrats came to Moscow determined to reform an economy terminally shot through with bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption and waste. Gorbachev launched perestroika hoping that capitalist-style "correctives" would get the job done.

Anticipating squeals from the old-line Stalinists who had pigged off the system in handsome fashion for decades, he also promoted glasnost in order to flush out "bureaucratism."

Perestroika was a bust from the beginning. At what point would the anarchy of the market clash with economic planning, however riddled it was with holes? This point was worth considering, given the possibility of shipwreck, but anyone who asked Gorbachev about it found he didn't have a clue. He said he didn't want full-fledged capitalism, just "elements." Which ones? How many? To what degree?

Mumble, mumble, mumble.

Gorbachev's vagaries hardly mattered. Early on it was apparent that "reform" meant scrapping the ossified procurement and distribution systems, figuring out what to do with the millions of equally ossified mid-level bu-

reaucrats who more or less ran them, and then setting up new systems and training people to run them. Where were the resources, the financing, the technical expertise? Who had a plan to take care of the estimated 20-40 million workers slated for axing in the pro-capitalist "reshaping" of industry?

And where would the transition leave the top dogs? Talk about a stumper for Gorbachev. The bureaucracy is to the old command system as barnacles are to rocks in the sea. And Gorbachev is a bureaucrat, however "enlightened."

What the hell to do? Gorbachev fiddled around but perestroika languished, unable to take root—because who knew where things would end up? That's the question Western bankers asked. They answered by withholding the investment capital that Gorbachev counted on to seed the transition.

Things just drifted from bad to worse. The economy pancaked; shortages became acute; grumblings grew to a dull roar. Every stop-gap, halfway measure Gorbachev tried only managed to enrage people. The republics, suppressed for decades, rebelled. The coal miners struck in '89. Gorbachev's brain trust—Shevardnadze, et al.—began

jumping ship.

By mid-1990, it started to look like Gorbachev and the Soviet Union were history. Clinging for political life, the Soviet president had already begun cozying up to Stalinist hardliners, the KGB, and Red Army generals, the only forces able to counter the impending disintegration, at least so far as Gorbachev was concerned. The reformer had died, apparently; the bureaucrat remained.

Hard realities conditioned "yes" vote. This question was put to Soviet voters on March 17: "Do you consider it necessary to preserve the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics, in which the rights and freedoms of people of any nationality will be fully guaranteed?"

The question was disingenuous. The republics have never been sovereign or free in the grip of the Russified bureaucracy. Still, the idea of a free and equal association exerted an appeal among the various nationalities.

There were other, realpolitik-type considerations. Russian president Yeltsin, the Roaring Rambo of the Soviet pro-capitalist right wing, had earlier floated a scheme to bring together the

to page 4

Reporter Sandy Nelson's free speech case Target of newsroom gag rule attracts national interest

Political activist and award-winning journalist Sandy Nelson has won some important new allies and national press attention in her free speech battle at the *Morning News Tribune* in Tacoma, one of Washington state's major daily newspapers.

In August 1990, MNT management committed an unfair labor practice and violated Nelson's constitutional rights by demoting her to the copy desk because of her off-the-job political organizing. The National Labor Relations Board has twice refused to take up her case.

Nelson is organizer for Tacoma Radical Women and active in her union. Since her late teens, the 34-year-old journalist has been an outspoken fighter for social justice.

Now she's fighting for her on-the-job life. After receiving excellent performance evaluations in past years at the paper, she was given the lowest rating in the most recent evaluation. Management warned her to "improve" by May, but refuses to train her on copy desk procedures.

Publicity yields support. Nationwide publicity for Nelson's case has attracted allies. The prestigious *Columbia Journalism Review* and *Ms.* magazine have published pro-Nelson articles this year.

Locally, the *Seattle Gay News* and the *Seattle Weekly* have covered the case. Seattle's Stonewall Committee for Lesbian and Gay Rights organized a public forum in April featuring Nelson and Emmett Murray, president of the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild Local 82. And at one of the Freedom Socialist

Party's Stop the War Coffeehouses in Seattle, Nelson had a chance to talk one-on-one with her supporters and interested newcomers.

Nelson's union continues to stand with her. And despite the two rejections from the NLRB, the Newspaper Guild and the Sandy Nelson Defense Committee will keep pressing through the Board for her reinstatement and an end to retaliation.

Case endorsements continue to roll in, most recently from the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the Northwest Women's Studies 1991 Regional Conference, AFSCME 2083-C in Seattle, and Seattle Women in Trades.

Media propaganda mills. As word spreads that management demoted Nelson to muzzle her on and off the job, people are asking, "Why? How is a politically active journalist a danger?"

To the general public, reporters like Nelson are no danger at all; rather, they're a boon. They can make sense of the issues that impact people's lives. That's why Nelson won awards for her *Tribune* articles on the struggles of Native American women. She knows the issues.

But to the news industry, Nelson is a wrench in the media machine. The goal of news conglomerates like McClatchy Incorporated, which owns the *Tribune*, is to make money, just like any other business. Corporate advertisers are their big source of revenue. Hence, profit considerations determine the way the news gets presented; issues are covered, or not covered, in such a way as to preserve the capitalist status quo.

The media have a bias. They are, in effect, a giant propaganda mill for the

"American Way of Life." This doesn't square with their mandate and that of working reporters to "cover the story" objectively. How to paper over the discrepancy? The first need is a compliant workforce.

Nelson, as a reporter, always "covered the story," and until this year, the *MNT* could dredge up no cause for complaint. But she's a socialist feminist activist, hardly the compliant type, and management saw her as potential trouble. So they invoked an "ethics" code governing what an employee may and may not do off the job, and bounced Nelson off her beat and onto the copy desk.

The *MNT* doesn't even have an ethics code; that's one of the items on the table in contract

Pentagon as editor. So the ethics code that doesn't exist is really a gag rule for the Nelsons of the newsroom. Meanwhile the news industry rewards reporters who play their game: Mideast war correspondent Brit Hume, for example, plays tennis with George Bush

and is himself a media celebrity. No wonder it was so easy for the Pentagon to censor the news coming out of the Gulf war!

The White House is preparing more wars for profit abroad and more attacks on home-front dissent. The attackers hope to succeed under the cover of censorship, via the squelching of reporters like Nelson. That's why the stakes are so high in her war with MNT management.

Political activists must rally around reporters like Nelson. We need a media that endeavors to "cover the story," that doesn't censor itself at the behest of the profiteers and the Pentagon. Write to MNT managing editor Norm Bell and demand that

Nelson be reinstated to her writing position: *Morning News Tribune*, P.O. Box 11000, Tacoma, WA, 98411. Send a copy to Art Joyner, Newspaper Guild, 3049 South 36th Street, Tacoma, WA, 98409. If you can gather signatures on postcards supporting Nelson, please call the Sandy Nelson Defense Committee at 206-572-6643. □

—MATT NAGLE



Nelson, unfazed by newsroom gag rule, carries her fight to the public.

Krista Morison