

WHEN THE ANDES ROAR





In the offensive launched beginning in June 1984 the armed battalions of the poor led by the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) rattled the Andes from the southern tip of Peru all the way north. They shook the "eyebrows of the jungle" fringing the mountains on the east and the valleys overlooking the coastal plains on the west. The revolutionary army struck from within the shantytowns and plazas of the largest cities, including the capital. All this gave a foretaste of what the revolutionary initiative of the workers and peasants, unleashed by correct leadership, can and will do.

This offensive, which the PCP has entitled "Begin the Great Leap", shows signs of continuing in subsequent waves. The Peruvian press is downright hysterical about the armed struggle's advances; the media of the world's various imperialist capitals, while consoling themselves that there are no prospects for the immediate victory of the revolution in Peru, no longer find it possible to predict that the PCP is about finished.

When the Communist Party of Peru first launched the armed struggle in 1980, the world press and media carried out an active policy of boycotting it. After all, with counter-revolutionary garbage spewing out of China and elsewhere after Mao's death, was not Maoism itself supposed to be dead?

Then, when the guerrillas led by the PCP broke through this blackout, the coverup continued in another form—lies and distortions. The party referred to by the press as "Sendero Luminoso" was said to be guided by "messianic Inca nationalism" or just about anything else imaginable except what the PCP openly declared: "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism." The mobilisation and incorporation of masses of peasants, especially poor peasants, into the revolutionary war was described as the result of the PCP's "terrorist intimidation" of the rural population—as if anyone could hope to rival the slaughter carried out by the Peruvian government with arms and advisers supplied by the Soviet Union, U.S., France, etc.

Today the progress of the armed struggle has meant that the imperialist media's blockade on the news of the revolution in Peru has be-

gun to break down. Now they are forced to say a few things about it. But what they all continue to try to cover up—and always will—is the real nature, content and aims of the revolution in Peru and its international significance.

Quite a bit has been accomplished since the PCP first launched the armed struggle in May 1980 with a relative handful of small, inexperienced detachments of fighters, consisting mainly of party members, and even since December 1982 when the guerrillas first had to directly confront the Peruvian armed forces instead of mainly the rural police and police counterinsurgency forces. At that time six provinces in Ayacucho and adjoining departments were declared an emergency zone under the military and political control of the armed forces. (Peru is divided into 23 departments which are further subdivided into provinces.) Since then, the guerrillas have been able to break through the military's efforts to encircle and suppress them, and have spread the armed struggle widely, so that the original emergency zone now includes 16 provinces with well over a million inhabitants. And now the military has been forced to open a second emergency zone several hundred kilometres northwest.

The establishment of the People's Guerrilla Army in 1983 marked a higher level of organisation of the revolutionary armed forces and their quantitative growth, reportedly reaching a strength of several thousand men and women under arms. Some units are made up of a majority of women and there are a number of women commanders as well as party leaders, which reflects the revolutionary content of the war being waged in a country where the "right" of the landlord and his cohorts to rape peasant women reveals the overall position of women. In addition to the main guerrilla forces, regional and village-level forces have developed, drawing broad masses of peasants into the armed struggle.

These military developments have made it possible to protect, develop and extend the areas where a new revolutionary regime and a whole new set of revolutionary social relationships are sprouting, and in this way to

prepare the conditions for the revolution to seize nationwide political power.

The June Offensive

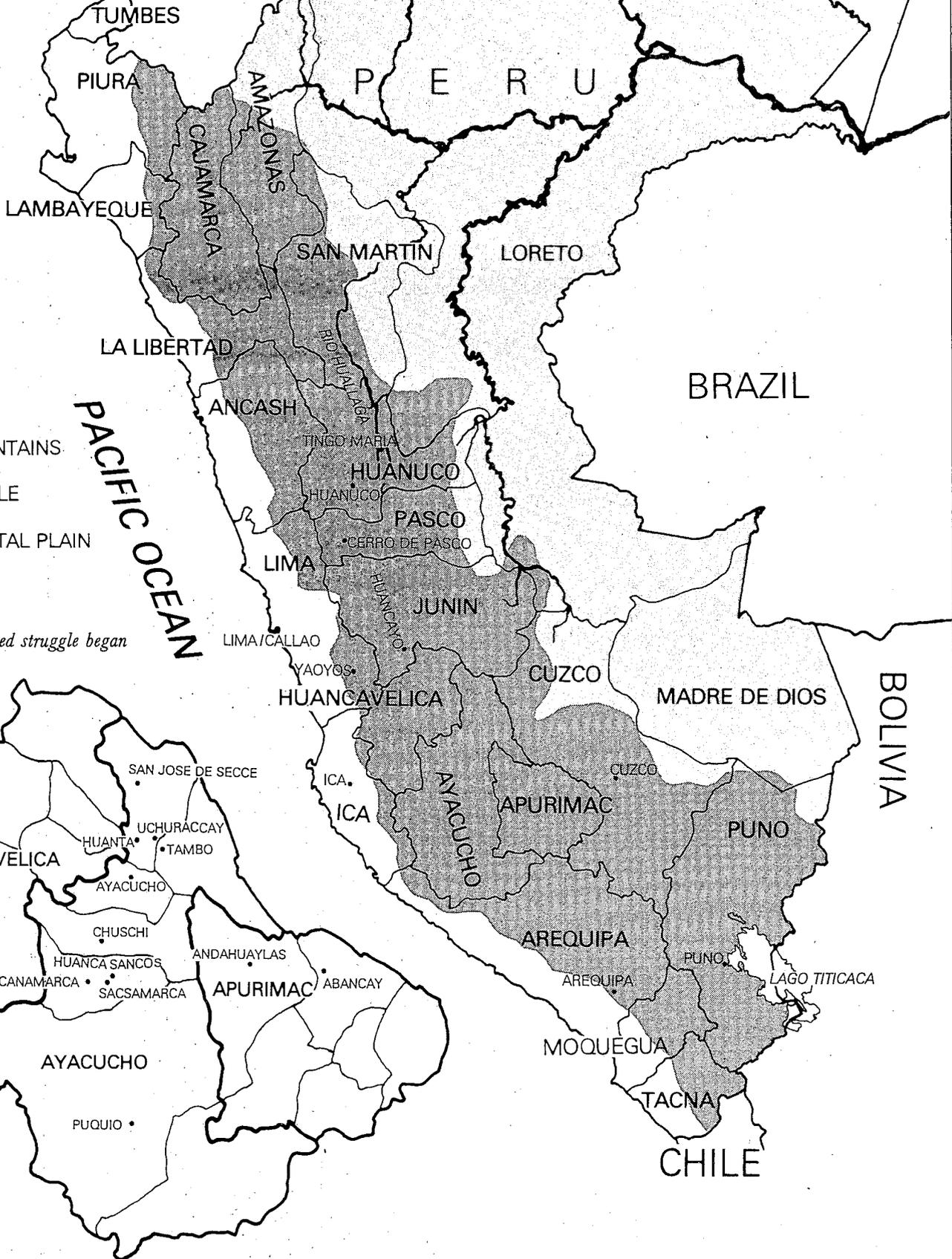
For some time now the PCP has been able to maintain relatively stable revolutionary base areas in the south-central Andes, especially the northern half of the department of Ayacucho and adjoining provinces in Huancavelica to the west and Apurimac to the east. Once this was a very productive agricultural area; in fact it produced a higher standard of living under the Inca empire 400 years ago than today. Since then, the lopsided development resulting from imperialism's search for profit has meant the concentration of capital in the coastal plantations which produce cotton and sugar for export. Most of Peru's tractors are concentrated there, along with its cities, factories, doctors and so on, while the half of Peru's population that lives in the *sierras* (mountains) is sentenced to rot there. Most of those who leave find an equally hungry existence in the shantytowns surrounding the cities.

In the *sierras*, the landlord's word is law—often literally so, since it is usually the landlord or his cronies who are appointed to be the local authorities by the central government, whose rural police and troops enforce these relationships. No self-respecting landlord returning from some urban outing would carry his own packages through the village if there was a peasant in sight who could be ordered to do the toting. These suffocating, feudal conditions confine many of the peasants to a few rows of grain, often sown with planting sticks.

Here, in the dry countryside 3000 metres high, the party's red banners are hung everywhere amid the mountain peaks, and boulders painted with revolutionary slogans abound. But because this area has been a stronghold of the revolution, it has suffered some of the worst repression, including armed forces occupation since the end of 1982 and recently aerial bombardment. In the June 1984 offensive, guerrilla units attacked rural police outposts and armed forces patrols in and around dozens of small towns in Ayacucho,

ECUADOR

COLOMBIA



-  MOUNTAINS
-  JUNGLE
-  COASTAL PLAIN

Where the armed struggle began

PACIFIC OCEAN

BOLIVIA

CHILE

including San Jose de Secce, Tambo and Huanta in the northern part of Ayacucho and Lucanamarca, Sac-samarca and Huancasancos in the department's centre, reclaiming areas where they had been driven back after the army came in, and reaching as far south as the small city of Puquio. They also carried out a series of actions in Huancavelica and incursions hitting eastward in the province of Andahuaylas in Apurimac.

At the same time there were strikes in the eastern mountain range near Cuzco and government offices in the city of Puno were hit. Arequipa, a major city, was blacked out; then guerrilla units blew up the city's "Palace of Justice" and other military and political targets. A particularly nasty surprise for the government took place when the guerrillas seized five districts with 10,000 inhabitants in Yaoyos, on the edge of the western sierras not far from Lima. According to newspaper reports, the guerrillas attacked police forts and posts, forced the local authorities to resign, and held mass meetings where the inhabitants declared their own laws. After a fierce battle with 300 counterinsurgency troops, the guerrillas reportedly retreated towards Huancavelica, while the pursuing troops, failing to catch them, confiscated every scrap of red cloth and every piece of printed material they could get their hands on. There was also guerrilla activity in the foothills of Ica overlooking the coastal plains leading toward Lima. While the PCP is still far from having carried out its strategic objective of surrounding the cities from the countryside, these moves show that it is becoming a material reality.

A series of clashes in the jungle highlands around Tingo Maria and the Huallaga River valley stretching north and south towards Huanuco showed the spectacular development of people's war in an area which until recently was not considered to be under the party's influence. For a long time the peasants in the valleys of this area have been dominated by enormously powerful cocaine gangsters. A U.S.-trained and supervised government antinarcotics unit had been operating in this "eyebrow of the jungle" region, but the fact that they

never saw much action before their first clashes with the guerrillas says something about their drug regulating mission. In fact, the national police later complained that they were surprised by the guerrilla attacks because they didn't have any agents in what has long been widely known as one of the main cocaine capitals of the world. Of course, after the guerrilla offensive the government declared the area the country's second emergency zone and sent in the armed forces. This guerrilla action was reported by the U.S. to "prove" that the PCP is in league with drug traffickers. But even a Lima newspaper pointed out that if that were so, then why did the guerrillas have to fight with stolen army guns, shotguns and tin cans filled with dynamite hurled with slings, when the drug dealers are well supplied with all kinds of automatic weapons, sniper rifles, speedboats and small planes, etc.

Another significant development was indicated by the guerrilla attacks shaking the mining region of Cerro de Pasco where the PCP has had some beginning but important influence. These Quechua-speaking miners have strong ties with the overwhelmingly Quechua-speaking peasants; at the same time they make up an important part of Peru's industrial proletariat. Until recently they were considered an exclusive stronghold of the legal "Left." Apparently the political situation among these miners has become explosive. A major railroad bridge across a mountain gorge at Infernillo, considered a monument to the U.S. and British imperialists who built it, was completely destroyed; a mining train was seized and sent hurtling down the mountainside, taking a lot of track with it. Attacks in the department of Junin reportedly included an assault on an army barracks in Huancayo.

Assaults reported in the north, in the cotton plantations of Piura as well as in the mountains of Cajamarca, La Libertad and Ancash, completed the picture of a revolutionary army able to strike almost simultaneously from one end of the country to the other, mobilising forces from diverse sections of the people and areas.

The offensive manifested dramatic advances in the party's ability to

carry out warfare and influence events in the cities, in accordance with the PCP's conception of the armed struggle in Peru as a unity of fighting in the countryside and cities with the countryside being principal.

The city of Ayacucho has long been considered a "senderista nest," whose lower classes, especially among the city's youth, are considered fair targets by the occupying armed forces. Now this is increasingly the case among the urban poor in the shantytowns of Lima and other cities as well. The almost total unemployment in many of these suburbs built of shacks (unemployment even if in the disguised form of people trying to feed their families by selling cigarettes one at a time on the downtown sidewalks) is also a reflection of the situation in the countryside from which many of these people have been driven by hunger, and lately by the repression as well.

The ruling classes can hardly be said to feel secure in the city of Ayacucho or even in Lima and other cities where until recently they were able to impose a certain atmosphere of "normality." This has been abruptly replaced with repeated periods of military control. Within a 72-hour period in July 19,000 people were swept up in Lima, Ayacucho and other cities. Police swept through bars, restaurants, gambling halls, stores, plazas and streets detaining everyone who could not present proper identity papers or aroused their suspicion in any other way (such as perhaps being too poor and/or too Indian). This operation was supposed to be launched in secret—presumably the passers-by in large cities were supposed to be sufficiently accustomed to tanks, helicopters and soldiers to suspect nothing out of the ordinary. Those detained were held while police sorted through them searching for real or suspected revolutionaries. One of those caught in these dragnets was the schoolteacher Laura Zambrano Padilla, said to be "Comrade Meche" of the PCP. Lima and the adjoining port city of Callao were occupied by the military again in August; again in November many thousands were picked up in similar raids.

Nevertheless, such "pre-emptive measures" failed to stop the spread of

armed organisation among the urban masses nor to prevent major urban military actions against police and armed forces posts and patrols, government buildings and other symbols of the reactionary order. One of the many dozens of these, in addition to those previously mentioned, was the destruction of the offices of the Soviet airliner Aeroflot, located appropriately in the ultra-luxurious Sheraton Hotel, a building itself widely hated as a symbol of imperialism and burned down once before during a mass upheaval in Lima ten years ago.

Bloody Revenge

In the face of this nationwide revolutionary offensive the authorities have exacted a costly revenge. In July, the *Sinchi* ("Allpowerful," in Quechua) counterinsurgency troops, a part of the *Guardia Civil* police modeled after and trained by the U.S. Green Berets, were withdrawn from the countryside and the armed forces were given complete control of all anti-guerrilla operations. Almost 500 people were reportedly killed in August alone. The official death toll since May 1980 reached 3,300 in September 1984; by all accounts there have been over 5,000 killed, the vast majority by the armed forces and police and civilians under their command. There are almost 900 prisoners charged with "terrorism," including over 80 women. Only a tiny handful have ever been brought to trial and the government hardly seems inclined to do so.

A hypocritical "national debate" in the halls of parliament on whether or not to restore the death penalty seems merely an exercise in who can call for the most cruelty—the partisans of summary execution debate those more legalistically inclined who favor military tribunals, which one newspaper labeled "waiting rooms for the firing squad." Meanwhile, in the countryside there isn't much question of legalism or even of such niceties as firing squads.

There is simply unrestrained mass counterrevolutionary terror. Captured guerrillas are often hacked to death or crucified; sometimes their heads are cut off and displayed on poles in front of *Sinchi* encampments to terrify the peasants. The army

command openly boasts that it takes no prisoners in the countryside. The original armed forces head of the emergency zone, General Cisneros, spoke of having to kill 60 peasants to get three "senderistas." His replacement, Clemente Noel, explained the fact that armed forces communiques consist almost entirely of "body counts" by saying "We don't have time to identify dead "senderistas." Officially almost a thousand people are listed by the government as "disappeared." The real number is acknowledged by almost everyone to be many thousands, probably 5,000 since 1982 in the emergency zone alone.

At first it was government policy to cover this up. Later the authorities found it necessary to publicise their terror.

In January 1983, shortly after the army was officially sent into Ayacucho, eight journalists were found murdered near the Ayacucho town of Uchuraccay. They had gone there to investigate government fanfare surrounding what the government said was the spontaneous slaughter of guerrillas by local peasants tired of being bothered. A government investigation headed by internationally famous Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa declared the government innocent of any complicity in this latter incident, which the commission said came about when peasants mistook the journalists for more guerrillas and killed them also. Later it came out that there had been no mistaken identity (the journalists' film rolls were discovered and developed, showing the whole incident). It was also revealed that the Vargas Llosa commission had specifically decided not to find out what a *Sinchi* patrol had been doing in the area at the time. After these revelations, there was no further investigation.

Now there are open concentration camps, like the one run by the marines in a sports stadium in Huanta and the army's Los Cabitos barracks in the city of Ayacucho. When a journalist disappeared after voluntarily walking through the main gate of the Huanta stadium to investigate, the government paid no attention at all to the protests of those who had not yet realized what things had

come to.

In August, the stench of corpses led people searching for the body of the disappeared journalist to three unmarked mass graves dug in the dry earth near the village of Pucayacu in Huanta. Reports on the number of bodies ranged from 50 to 89. They had been hacked to pieces with their hands tied behind their backs, all killed a few days before in what appears to have been one single mass execution. One of the very few pieces of bodies that could be identified was that of a peasant last seen alive in the hands of the marines in the Huanta stadium. The armed forces issued a bland communique claiming that what had been discovered was a grave where the guerrillas had buried their comrades killed in clashes.

"Democracy" and Armed Decisions

Of course, with a pro-U.S. government in power, Peru still ranks high on the U.S. bloc's list of democratic countries. There is even to be a presidential election in April 1985, though the raging civil war and the repeated imposition of national states of emergency are interfering somewhat with campaigning. Peru's President Belaunde met with Reagan in September 1984. Allegedly to support Belaunde's "democratic" efforts, Reagan granted him some temporary and minor relief from the International Monetary Fund's relentless demands on Peru, an economic concession granted in view of the U.S. bloc's overall pressing political necessities. The French government, which for various reasons has found it expedient to distance itself from U.S. policy elsewhere in Latin America, has given Belaunde arms and other encouragement.

But at the same time Peru's *legal* political life is taking place within increasingly narrow boundaries. As the armed workers and peasants have stormed onto the political stage, the country's legal "opposition" has increasingly been forced by the necessities of the counterrevolution itself to define its position in relation to a real and present revolution. This situation also has made it increasingly clear to all that none of Peru's important contradictions are going to be settled

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Free Meche !



A WORLD TO WIN 1985/1

This letter was sent all over the world from Peru in July:

"This is to tell you that Laura Zambrano Padilla, a teacher, known as Meche and a great revolutionary fighter, was arrested this past July 20. We must develop a campaign to save her life, and against the cruel and savage torture to which she has been subjected. They are trying to kill her—this was openly threatened by the head of DIRCOTE (Police Anti-terrorist Command) himself, whose name is Gastelu, and it must be exposed.

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by elections.

The significant splits within Peru's ruling classes have been intensified by the government's failure to halt the armed struggle. Powerful forces within them are preparing public

"Here a campaign is developing to defend political prisoners and denounce the "disappearances": Since the struggle has reached its highest level, once again they are carrying out massacres and bodies are appearing in the hills and ravines. On July 25, 80 Guardias Republicanas (police), called the *Llapan Atiq* in Quechua, went into the prison at Callao where 84 women fighters are locked up. They violently abused the women, robbing them of all their possessions that might be worth anything, and destroying everything

opinion for an armed forces coup d'etat—a step favored by some pro-U.S. and pro-Soviet elements. Peru's President Belaunde delayed giving the armed forces exclusive control of the anti-guerrilla struggle partly because the last time he did so,

else. They threw in tear gas bombs and beat the women brutally. Ten women were injured in this way: comrades Delia Taquiri, Elizabeth Romani, Dihla Ruiton; Juana Cuyubamba, Jenny Rodriguez, Isabel Gonzales, Nancy Burga, Dora Munoz, Isabel Carhuentico, Aida Zaire, Lina Romero and Marina Infanzon. But of all this, the centre of the exposure campaign should be the teacher Laura Zambrano, known as 'Meche.'"

in the 1960s, the armed forces overthrew him and set up a military junta that flirted with the Soviets.

It is a real barometer of the changes in Peru's political situation that when Belaunde finally did take this step, it was applauded by Lima Mayor Al-

fonso Barrantes, president of the United Left coalition which groups together most of Peru's reformist parties, including the pro-Soviet CP and those who have followed China's current rulers into an accommodation with the U.S.:

"We consider that this decision is a step that the President of the republic should take but we affirm that war measures are insufficient if they are not accompanied by social and political measures to stand up to terrorism." In order to achieve such measures, he said, what is necessary is "the unity of all democratic forces against this phenomenon of Senderism." After the discovery of the massacre at Pucayacu, Barrantes declared that criticism against the excesses of the police should not become a condemnation of them as an institution. While some in his coalition whose social base requires more radical demagogery have called for the government to institute a "dialogue" with the guerrillas—a "dialogue" which would require the PCP to abandon the armed struggle—Barrantes criticised such a stand as "utopian." Clearly this probable standardbearer of the "Left" in the 1985 presidential elections recognises quite well that the interests of the ruling classes as a whole, whatever their differences, lie in unrestricted warfare against the revolution. This is quite a changed tune since 1983 when Barrantes was running for mayor of Lima. Then he did his best to avoid the question of the armed struggle altogether and run on purely economic issues, in an effort to rope in the intermediate who didn't support the guerrillas but didn't support attacks on them either; then the slimy Barrantes called the guerrillas "compatriots." (The main role of the "Left" in those November 1983 elections was to propagandise in favor of electoralism in general. The PCP called for an active boycott of the elections. Despite the threat of heavy fines—and implicitly, death—for not voting, a majority of the population in the country as a whole didn't. Quite a few of those who did cast spoiled ballots. In some sections of the emergency zone, the government was unable to hold any elections at all, supposedly due to a lack of candidates.

Barrantes' open taking of sides with the government shows how much the political climate has become polarized and dominated by the armed struggle in the last year. It is also a sharp example of what Lenin called "the split in socialism," between revolutionary Marxists and those who use phoney Marxist rhetoric to justify counterrevolution, a split which has come to mean two camps facing each other around the world. Barrantes, after all, has been hailed as a model not only by both the pro-Soviet and pro-Teng Hsiao-ping revisionists in Peru, but also by a variety of reformist "leftists" in the U.S., Europe and elsewhere.

Origins and Development of the PCP

The Communist Party of Peru was founded in 1928 by José Carlos Mariátegui. After studying Peruvian reality and the great revolutionary events then shaking the world, Mariátegui had come to the conclusion that Marxism represented the "shining path" (*sendero luminoso*) to emancipation. But although the party affiliated with the Third International of Lenin and Stalin, after Mariátegui's death the revolutionary struggle was set aside for over a generation, until the early 1960s when Mao Tsetung's polemics against Soviet revisionism led to a rebirth of the Marxist spirit and a rediscovery of Mariátegui. (Later in the decade the influence of the Cultural Revolution in China was also extremely important.) Pro-Cuban forces who had refused to make a break with revisionism took up the armed struggle and were crushed. For the Marxist-Leninists in the PCP, the party's inactivity in the face of this situation was intolerable. As Comrade Gonzalo, then leader of the party's work in Ayacucho, later declared, "It is not enough to criticise revisionism. We must assume our own responsibilities."

Rebuilding the party along revolutionary lines under Comrade Gonzalo's leadership took fifteen years, with difficult twists and turns and several major splits. This process clarified the party's strategy of building up revolutionary strength by waging people's war, essentially a peasant war led by the proletarian

party surrounding the cities from the countryside until eventually the cities too could be taken and a New Democratic Republic established, clearing the way for socialism. The party would forge and lead a united front, in the course of and for the purpose of waging war against the regime of feudalism and comprador and bureaucrat capital (big capital linked to the landlords and subordinated to imperialism). This united front would include the working class and the peasants, especially the poor peasants, as well as the rural and urban petit bourgeoisie and, to a certain degree and under certain conditions, the small-scale national bourgeoisie as well when the revolution acquired sufficient strength. In this way the proletariat and its party could lead the revolution in Peru as part of the world proletarian revolution with the final aim of eliminating classes and class society everywhere in the world. This is the explanation for what the bourgeois press finds most incomprehensible about the PCP: the fact that while preparing for and fighting rural guerrilla warfare, in a region with few roads in a relatively isolated country, it has paid such close attention to matters such as the Cultural Revolution and the overthrow of proletarian rule in China after Mao's death, and the task of rebuilding the international communist movement—questions upon which more than a few parties have crashed. More than that, it has gone to great lengths to educate the broad masses in these matters which learned commentators may find unfathomable but which workers and peasants find very relevant to the goal of emancipating mankind.

Before the party launched the armed struggle in 1980 there was a year of concentrated preparations. A careful survey was done of the conditions and sentiments of various sections of the masses, which along with geographical considerations was used to determine where to launch the armed struggle. A summation of the previous experience of armed struggle in Peru and elsewhere in the world and especially of the military line Mao developed in China led the PCP to some clear criteria in this regard. While in early stages protracted people's war could not be sustained in

the areas most accessible to the government's armed forces, where the enemy could bring his full strength into play, at the same time such a war could not be fought relying on terrain considered inaccessible to the enemy, as did the Peruvian guerrillas inspired by the Cuban "focoist" theory in 1965 who concentrated their efforts in the sparsely populated upper heights of the mountains. Instead, in order to be able to rely on the masses and develop as a war of the masses, the armed struggle would have to be concentrated in those areas where it was possible to work towards developing revolutionary base areas, the embryo of a revolutionary political regime under the party's leadership, in order to fully mobilise the masses in these areas for the revolutionary war and on this basis exert revolutionary influence more broadly throughout the country and society. A party military school was established to train the first party cadres to lead the armed struggle.

The first campaign was called "Initiate the Armed Struggle." Actions were centred in the countryside, focused on the land question: seizures of crops, land invasions where the peasants invaded the landlord's fields to plant their crops and later returned to collect their harvest at gunpoint, sabotage of the infrastructure, boycott of local elections, armed agitation and propaganda. A large hacienda would be seized and a mass meeting called to distribute the contents of the hacienda's warehouses among the peasants. The landlord's buildings would be burned down and the landlord's bullies who had terrorised the peasants would be punished.

On mountain peaks overlooking cities, at dusk, enormous flaming hammers and sickles illuminated the sky. Soon the party's first detachments grew to platoon size. They marched by night, avoiding the roads, and attacked by day, often every day. The police and paramilitary bands organised by the landlords chased them all over the countryside, without being able to engage the guerrillas in unfavourable decisive battle. The revolutionary forces divided up so that the reactionaries would be forced to divide up to follow them; then the guerrillas regrouped and attacked. In this the party was

guided by Mao's line about dividing up the enemy and eating him up piece by piece. Guerrilla units learned to move rapidly on foot through the mountains, sometimes fighting and marching over many hundreds of kilometres without pause.

The party also organised units in the cities, based especially in the shantytowns but reaching into different classes and strata. In addition to supporting the armed struggle in the countryside, urban party units also had the task of "forming armed detachments to put themselves at the head of the mob," as Lenin put it in describing preparations for the insurrection in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. They learned how to mobilise hundreds or even thousands of people on the streets in a matter of minutes for a lightning rally and to surround and destroy a government building or other target and then scatter again. Lima and other cities were repeatedly blacked out both to facilitate military attacks and to demonstrate the weakness of the government and the guerrillas' growing power.

By the end of the first year of the armed struggle, the guerrillas had opened up several zones in the countryside where they could operate more or less freely, along with other new zones where they were active. In order to seize arms, build up larger revolutionary armed units and create the conditions for building base areas, the PCP launched a campaign called "Dealing Blows." Police outposts in the countryside were attacked and wiped out, effectively wiping out the old political power in much of the countryside in the five northern provinces of the department of Ayacucho. This was in the context of the party's over-all efforts in this period to release the revolutionary initiative of the masses and "shake the countryside and city with armed struggle" so as to create the new political conditions that would allow these revolutionary base areas to come into being.

Two events in the city of Ayacucho in 1982 gave what was to the authorities terrifying evidence of the qualitative growth in the guerrillas' support and armed strength. In

March of that year, a relatively small guerrilla force in the city of Ayacucho blew up power lines, surrounded and pinned down the police and counterinsurgency troops in their barracks and blew their way into the departmental capital's prison. There the guerrillas and the 300 prisoners raised the red flag over the prison courtyard, sang the "International" and then escaped. Enraged, the next day the police took their revenge on three suspected guerrillas who were murdered in their hospital beds. Six months later, Edith Lagos, a 19 year old party member who was one of the prisoners freed in the Ayacucho jailbreak, was captured by the police in the aftermath of an attack carried out by her unit. She was then cut open by police bayonets. Her funeral was a phenomenal outpouring of the revolutionary masses which shook the whole country; 30,000 people in this town of 80,000 filled the streets as she was buried wrapped in the party's red banners.

Later, in January 1983, when armed forces tanks were arrogantly rolling up and down the streets of this city, a successful general strike called by the party under its own name made it unmistakably clear just who commanded the loyalty of the masses and who had nothing to rely on but terror.

"Peasants Killing Peasants?"

Especially after the armed forces first came into the mountains, many of the most aggressive actions against the guerrillas were carried out by *mesnadas*, paramilitary bands based on rich peasants and corrupt elements, often led by retired army non-coms and sometimes directly run by the counterinsurgency forces. Such attempts to build up reactionary counter-guerrillas have been standard CIA tactics from Vietnam to Turkey and bear striking resemblance to the procedures spelled out for the U.S.-supported *Contras* in Nicaragua. Whatever crimes these bands commit against the people—and the opportunity to rape and loot seems to be one of their main recruiting promises—are conveniently ascribed by the government to the re-



VIVA LA LUCHA ARMADA!

PARTIDO COMUNISTA DEL PERU 1980-1981

revolutionaries. When these mesnadas assassinated suspected members and sympathisers in the villages, as they did often, or succeeded in killing a guerrilla unit after first gaining their confidence by pretending to be revolutionary sympathisers themselves, as also happened a few times, it was reported in the press as a tragic case of "peasants killing peasants"—driven mad, as Vargas Llosa wrote, by a war that had nothing to do with them and which they could not understand. When these mesnadas were wiped out by the guerrillas, the press reported it as a massacre of innocent peasants by mindless fanatics.

By mid-1983 most of the mesnada bands had been destroyed or decapitated. The government (and its U.S. and Israeli advisers in counter-revolutionary warfare) has certainly not given up utilising better off strata and different contradictions among the peasants to its advantage, including even some former leftist

peasant leaders who acquired the status of new landlords through various agrarian reforms. After all, the countryside includes members and representatives of all the different classes and political positions.

But there are limits to what can be done with such bands, especially when there is a genuine and growing revolution and the main thing motivating these armed bullies is the punishments and blandishments of the bigger armed bullies in power. Now official government policy is not to give them firearms which they could willingly or unwillingly lose to the guerrillas.

During the last half of 1983 and the first half of 1984 the party was said by the enemy to be "on the run" in much of the original emergency zone. Certainly the first year of direct confrontation with the armed forces was very hard for the revolutionaries. Yet it was during this period that they were engaged in the difficult but successful

campaign to "Defend, Develop, Build"—defend the People's Committees the PCP led among the peasants, develop its mass work and the guerrilla war and build new People's Committees as widely as possible. It was this campaign which made the June 1984 "Begin the Great Leap" offensive possible.

The first People's Committees had sprouted towards the end of 1982. When the landlords and the rest of the local authorities were overthrown, many peasants wanted to divide up the land. But although the PCP holds that feudalism cannot be abolished without dividing up the land among those who work it, it considered such a step premature without sufficient political power to enforce and guarantee—relatively—this new social system. Still it was necessary to establish the embryonic basis of the new revolutionary order, or in other words, of a new regime.

The People's Committees arose out

The PCP Speaks on "Terrorism"

The mountains and countryside are a powerful and natural base for any revolutionary war in our country. Ours is peasant war, led by our party, which is converting the countryside into the armed bastion of the revolution, in the concrete form of base areas—embryos of the New State of workers and peasants—and isolating the reactionaries and their imperialist masters in the cities. There the proletariat and the masses burn the bottoms of the enemy's bloody paws mainly through armed actions which serve the struggle in the countryside, the centre of the storm, and prepare the conditions for the final assault on the cities and the total, complete and thorough defeat of the reactionary order and the army that maintains it. This road, the only road to revolution, is now open; this is the road on which more and more of the proletariat and the masses, our people, are moving towards their own armed

emancipation, by their own hands, since "The people and only the people are the motive force of world history".

What is the essence of the government's political and military position with regard to the guerrillas? It is to combat them as "terrorists." But in this the Peruvian reactionaries, their state and the Belaunde government are only following the pattern set by their Yankee imperialist masters. It is well known that U.S. President Reagan, his Secretary of State Al Haig and the rest of his followers put the "terrorist" label on the revolutionary wars now being waged in the world. With this they try to discredit armed action, playing on the masses' correct rejection of the old individualist, anarchist, dead-end terrorism long condemned by Marxism, lumping together the defense of property and so-called "social peace" along with what they claim is the de-

fense of life—all with the idea of winning the masses to their side or at least neutralising them.

Calling the armed struggle "terrorist" is nothing but taking up the demagogic and reactionary position of Yankee imperialism in order to oppose the armed revolution, seeking to cover it with slander while they mount the bloodiest repression and genocide. Further, they use this rotten manoeuvre in their contention for world hegemony with Russian social-imperialism; they try to link revolutionary action to the social-imperialist superpower through this so-called terrorism. This is another way in which they seek to discredit genuine revolution which has nothing at all to do with the sinister centre of contemporary revisionism that has converted the country of Lenin and Stalin into the hegemonic superpower of today.

It is to be expected that the Peruvian reaction, their Belaunde government and their media hacks can't do anything but carry out the orders and directives of their imperialist masters. But they are not the only ones who condemn our armed struggle as "terrorism." Also climbing on this bandwagon are the opportunist

of the first committees established by the peasants to divide up the harvests they'd seized by force of arms, committees which soon took on the additional tasks of organising the collective planting of future harvests and work in general, and increasingly exercising other functions of political rule as well. For instance, a captured document recording the decisions of the first mass meeting establishing revolutionary power in a shantytown near Lima, was published by the Lima press in 1984. Decisions were made to ban gambling, drugs, fortune telling, continual drunkenness, beating women or other family members, robbery, bullying, and collaborating with the police. Penalties established for these violations ranged from small fines to cutting hair to execution in the case of outright police agents. The bourgeois press howled against the "injustice" of this last penalty, but it is absolutely necessary for the masses to impose

their will in this way in order to be able to release their initiative. There are still few places in Peru where the authorities cannot enter if they amass sufficient force, although their ability to do so is limited and can only be applied to a few places at any one time, while large areas of the countryside especially remain out of their control. When the authorities do come in they always take reprisals, combining the selective public torture of suspected communists with indiscriminate terror.

At first the five members of each committee were chosen by all of the masses in a particular village at a public meeting, but this policy proved impossible to maintain in the face of the repeated murder of committee members, who are now chosen by representatives of the masses and maintain the secrecy of their identity. These commissars--so-called because they have a commission from the masses which can be revoked--in-

clude a committee secretary, a commissar of security to watch over class enemies in the village, a production commissar to lead the organisation of production and commerce, a commissar of community affairs to deal with registering births and marriages, education (a particularly important task since the army and police have driven many school teachers out of the countryside), recreation, etc., and a commissar of people's organisations to lead various mass organisations such as the poor peasants' movement, the class conscious workers and labourers' movement, the popular women's movement, the youth movement and now even a children's movement which arose completely unforeseen by the party because of the demands of the children themselves.

An Organising Committee of the Peoples' New Democratic Republic has been set up on the basis of these People's Committees and in con-

manipulated by the hardened revisionist Jorge Del Prado (head of the pro-Soviet Peruvian Communist Party-ed.) and his clique, obediently following the baton of that Russian imperialist boss and world-wide puppeteer Brezhnev.

It is natural that these enemies of the revolution act this way since they cannot stand by with folded arms while their position is undermined--their position of riding on the backs of the masses whom they've sold out for so long in the service of social-imperialism's collusion and contention with Yankee imperialism. But also in this same chorus we find "Patria Roja," which issues furious calls to the self-proclaimed "left" to unleash a holy war against supposed "terrorism." The sinister division of labour they propose is that they take up the ideological and political struggle against "terrorism" while the government carries out all-around repression. Yesterday enemies of Teng Hsiao-ping (when Mao, whom these revisionists claimed to support during his lifetime, had Teng removed from office-ed.) and today his admirers, they have to attack us for fighting Yankee imperialism, the partner of their new revisionist boss, and even

more for applying Marxism-Leninism-Maoism which yesterday they invoked and today they reject. Nevertheless, this chorus line has been joined by others who are still dazzled by the so-called "democratic opening" and "democratic road"....

The more the people support us and gain heart, strengthening our forces, the more desperate will be those who want to hide and smother our revolutionary advances under the ragged cloak of "terrorism," since we are the armed revolution in development. There are those who call us "Sendero Tenebroso," the gloomy path, while they try to preserve the shadows that are being pushed back by the brilliant light of our actions guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. There are those who call us "unpatriotic" while they sell out the country to imperialism. There are those who call us "infantile" without any proof and without understanding that even if that were the case, the genuine struggle of the class and of the people teaches us and matures us while opportunist senility has set in among them spreading its contamination without regard to age. There are those who brand us as "provocateurs" without realising in their

blindness that they are persistently provoking the righteous anger of the people with their unrepentant although frustrated promotion of capitulation. And finally there are those who call us "adventurers" without noticing in their political stupidity that they are just the same old political swindlers and careerist politicians. Nevertheless, on one thing they are completely correct: we have no love for parliamentary cretinism and do not worship electoral opportunism. We are plainly and simply Marxist-Leninist-Maoists.

Chairman Mao has taught us, "It is a good thing to be attacked by the enemy, since it proves that we have drawn a clear line of demarcation between ourselves and the enemy. It is still better if the enemy attacks us wildly and paints us as utterly black without a single virtue. It demonstrates that we have not only drawn a clear line between the enemy and ourselves, but have achieved a great deal in our work."

From "Desarrollemos la Guerra de Guerrillas" (Develop the Guerrilla Warfare), a pamphlet signed by the PCP Central Committee, dated March 1982, which was circulated in an illegal edition of several hundred thousand in Peru. ■

junction with the development of the Revolutionary Front of Popular Defense in the countryside and the Revolutionary Movement of Popular Defense in the cities (both forms of united front organised according to the party's conception of the different tasks in the countryside and in the cities at this moment).

These political steps made possible by advances in the revolutionary war contribute both to further accelerating the armed struggle and to preparing for the eventual seizure of nationwide political power. By the time of the launching of the June 1984 offensive there were about 100,000 people living under and participating in the new political power led by the party in its base areas.

Training Proletarian Revolutionaries

In the first few years of the armed struggle the party lost a very large number of its members. Since then its ranks have grown many times over. Formerly based especially among students, many of whom were the children of peasants, today it is composed mainly of poor peasants themselves, as well as some workers. This has posed in an increasingly sharp way the task of training party members and the masses in the stand and science of the international proletariat. The basic list of materials for training party members focuses on Mao's writings (including *Struggle in the Ching-kang Mountains*, *A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire*, *Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War Against Japan*, as well as a selection of his writings on philosophy), some works by Lenin (including *Imperialism and the Split in Socialism* and *The Collapse of the Second International*) and selections from Mariategui, among others. Hardly a reading list for "messianic Inca nationalists!"

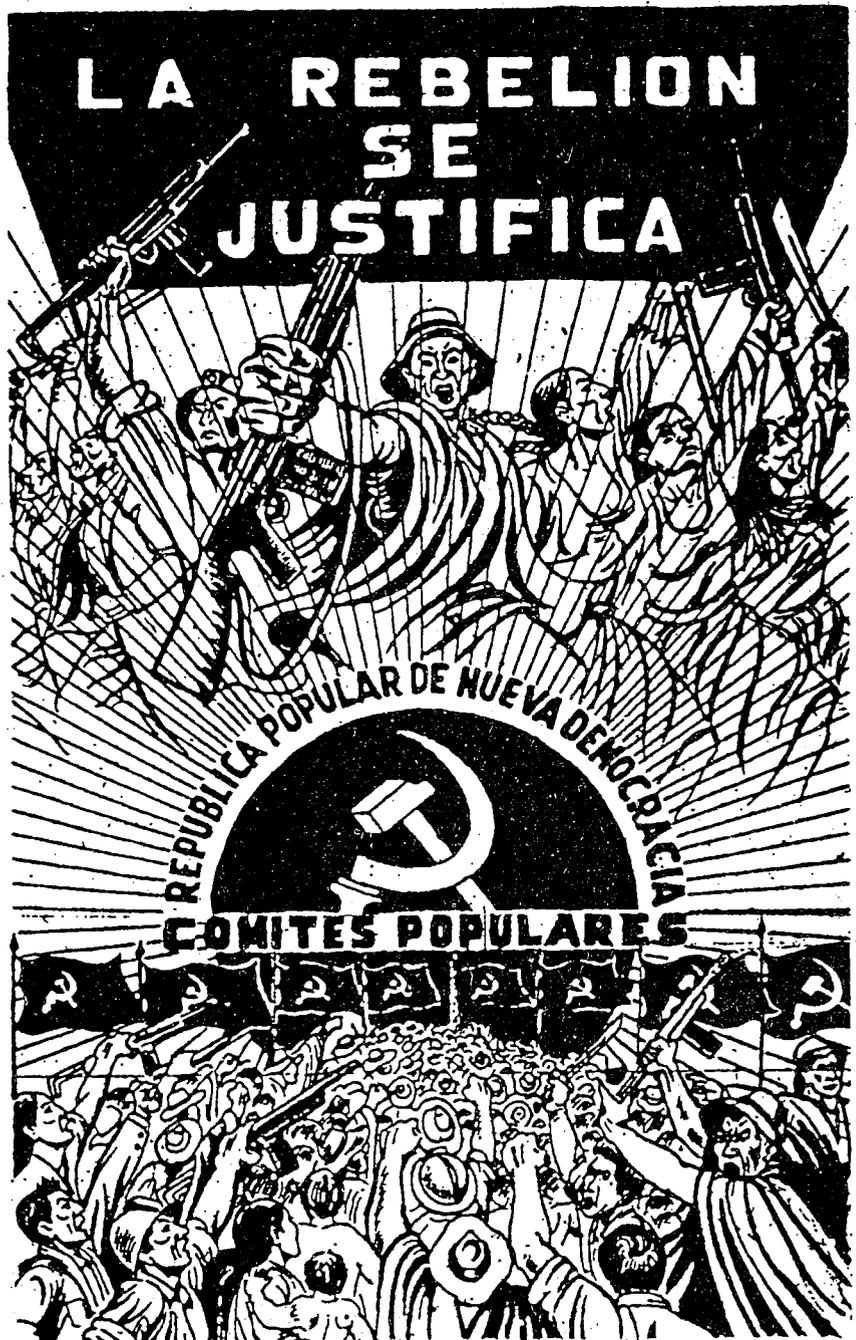
Several party pamphlets have circulated in the hundreds of thousands as have revolutionary posters which along with the seizure of radio stations on several occasions have been a means of agitation reaching the majority of the peasants who can't read.

The *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* has also appeared in a Peruvian edition.

For a while the Peruvian press excoriated the PCP for its alleged "nationalism," which really meant criticising it for opposing revisionism (that is, the fact that it opposes revisionism in power in the USSR, as well as China and Albania, and its stand on Soviet "aid": "It's better to have simple weapons than sell your soul to a new master). More recently the Peruvian press has taken to trumpeting about the PCP's "internationalist connections" (claiming

It's right to rebel

that the PCP isn't nationalist enough) and running article after article about what it refers to as the "Senderista International." But senior journalists in London and New York told RIM supporters who had brought the PCP's open letters affirming its RIM adherence to their attention that they would not be allowed to report anything that would interfere with the blackout of the Peruvian armed struggle's real aims (continued to page 42)



Life and Death in Peru

Population:

- 18 million
- Lima/Callao--5 million
- 49% Quechua and other Amer-Indian
- 33% mestizo
- 12% European
- 6% African

Life expectancy:

- 58 years--national average
- 49 years--rural average
- 45 years--Ayacucho average
- Almost a third of all babies born in Ayacucho die before their first birthday.

Income:

- \$1100 per capita GDP (gross national product divided by population)
- \$100 per capita in Ayacucho
- Minimum 1983 wage could buy one-half of minimum amount of food for survival of a family of five.
- Average 1983 wage could buy 80% of that amount.

Unemployment:

- Up to 60% in urban areas
- No figures on rural unemployment
- 30% economically active population fully employed.

Occupations:

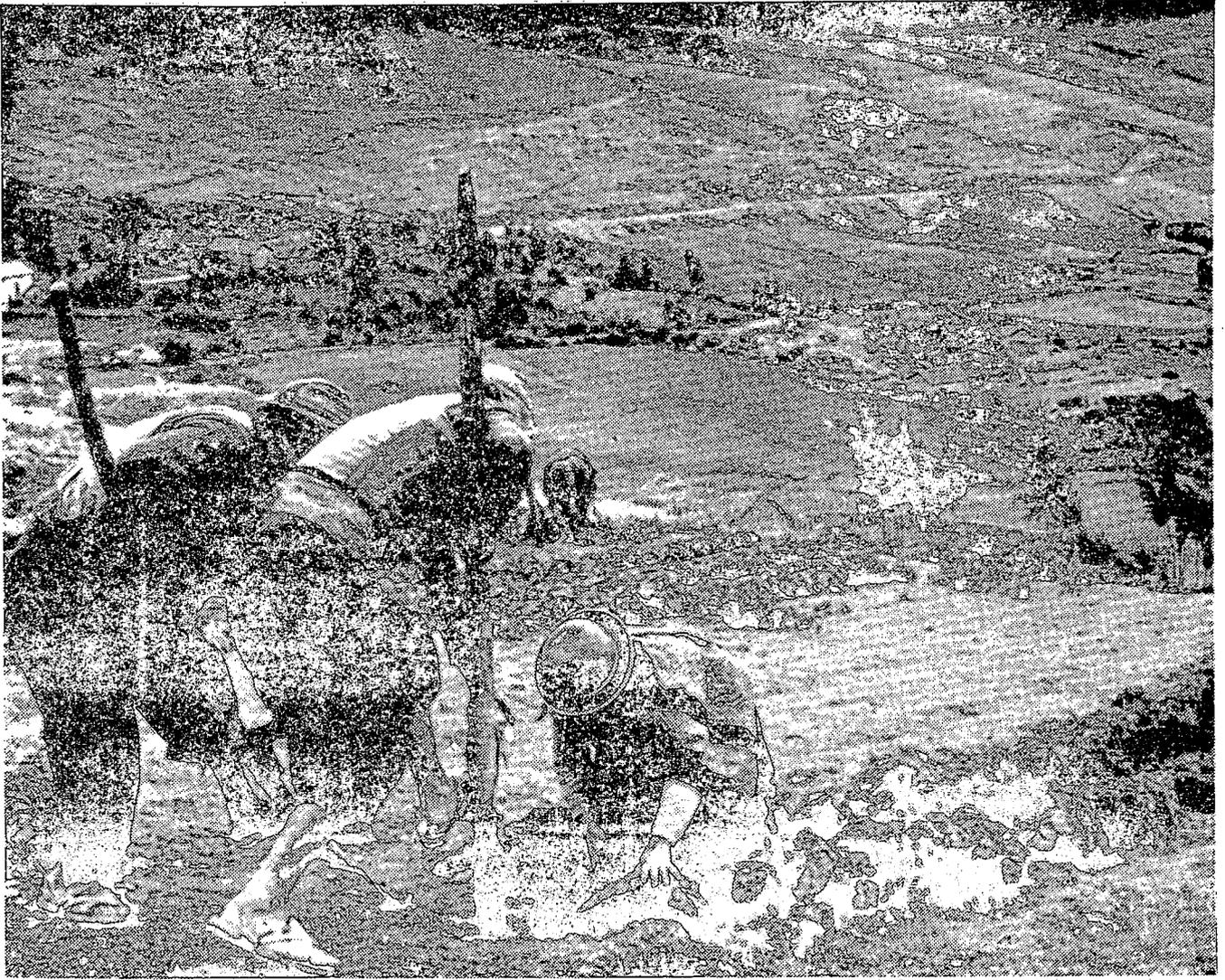
- 1980 figures not released. 1970 figures for occupations, 1972 (post agrarian reform) figures for landholding:
- 45% economically active population is involved in agriculture (or fishing--a small number).
 - 77% of holdings are under 5 hectares (12 acres).
 - 34.4% holdings under 1 hectare
 - 17% 5-20 hectares (middle peasants)
 - 4% 20-100 hectares (mainly capitalist agriculture)
 - 2% over 100 hectares (These holdings, which amount to over 54% of total arable land, include traditional latifundia, vast grazing enterprises and coastal capitalist plantations)
- 14% economically active population is employed in manufacturing, of which
 - 35% in factories
 - Majority in shops of under 5 people (mostly artisanal workshops)
 - 85% in shops of 50, or less people
 - (Figures for considerable agricultural proletariat employed in modern plantations not included)

Foreign investment:

- 48% U.S.
- 13% Switzerland
- 9% Panama
- 4% Italy
- 4% U.K.

Government Arms:

- 250 Soviet T54 and T55 tanks
- 170 U.S. French medium tanks
- 42 Soviet M 18 helicopters, plus U.S. and U.K. light helicopters
- 32 Soviet Sukhoi fighters
- 24 French Mirage fighters
- 6 West German subs
- 2 Italian guided missile frigates (with French missiles)
- 160 Soviet military advisers
- No public figures for U.S. and Israeli advisers, although many sources including U.S. semi-official mercenary *Soldier of Fortune* magazine report their presence



And the Reaction of the Bourgeoisie

"'What do you want,' said the lieutenant, 'These kids are fanatics. Fourteen, fifteen years old at the max. They yell, 'Long live the Communist Party of Peru!' as we shoot them.'"

"Today the words 'Sendero Luminoso' make the native bourgeois in suburban Miraflores tremble. Every time Sendero makes the lights go out, they imagine that the cholo (Indian) hoards who live in the shantytowns are about to descend on their deluxe ghetto."

"I couldn't meet the senderistas in the mountains or the jungles, but I could meet their families and friends who visit the Fronton, an island prison for senderistas. Many of them, from all levels of society, support Sendero's ideas. Unfortunately the discussions with them didn't go beyond cliches about the armed struggle, the guiding thought of Chairman Gonzalo, the people's republic that will arise from a new democracy, the heroic resistance of the prisoners. But the strangest thing is that this delirious talk is completely shaking Peru."

Le Nouvel Observateur, 7 December 1984

(continued from page 40)

that the media has still been able to impose to a large extent on an international level.

The Peruvian government and its West and East bloc "advisors" have already gone to unprecedented extremes against the revolution, including not only the mass murder, "disappearances" and concentration camps already all too familiar in Latin America but even aerial bombardments, strategic hamlets and other advanced techniques of imperialist domination developed in Algeria, Vietnam and Afghanistan. Experience has proved that there are no limits to the cruelty of reaction; certainly they have even more suffering in store for the Peruvian mas-



ses. The People's War will certainly be protracted before reaching final victory. But the revolutionary armed struggle under the party's leadership has begun, which was a very difficult step, and it has endured and grown in the face of four and a half years of increasingly fierce attacks, which has been no less difficult. The revolution in Peru is advancing, and advancing the world revolution of which it is a component and which it serves; its base areas are base areas for the world revolution and the red flag flying over them calls on all those who yearn for revolution. ■

Uninvited Guests

In July of 1980, President Belaunde, the entire diplomatic corps and several thousand invited guests as well as some uninvited masses were attending the annual military parade. Suddenly the air was filled with red balloons painted with hammers and sickles, which held aloft red banners declaring "Long Live the Armed Struggle! Long Live the PCP! Workers and Peasants Government! Down with the Belaunde Government!" Guerrillas in nearby plazas had studied the wind currents and released the balloons so that they would fill the sky over the parade. Pigeons carrying banners were also released.

Suddenly dozens of penguins dressed up like presidents with tuxedos and presidential sashes were thrown into the contingents of the parade. The result was complete pandemonium. The police arrested everyone in sight, including the penguins, but although some revolutionaries ended up in jail cells for the night alongside the furry fake presidents, the police never could figure it all out and finally released them all.

On another occasion, the revolutionaries dressed up a dog to look like the leader of the pro-Soviet revisionists and released it in Congress. Another famous incident of the early days of the guerrilla war was the hanging of a dead dog, Indian symbol of a tyrant sentenced to death by the people, on a lamppost outside the Chinese embassy along with banners proclaiming solidarity with Mao's widow Chiang Ching and other revolutionaries jailed by the new revisionist rulers in China.