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SPECIAL EDITION

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U.S. Sends 1300 Troops

Invasion from the North Part 2: Panama

After General Noriega sent in troops to the Marriott Hotel on March 28 to beat and arrest pro-U.S. opposition leaders (and a few American journalists who got in the way), outraged officials in Washington fumed, "This is the last straw!" On April 1 the imperialist bully struck back. The U.S. said it is sending 1,300 new troops to Panama and threatened to send in more. But there's one question you, won't hear from U.S. officials: What the hell is the Marriott Hotel doing in Panama?!

This new military move in Central America comes just one day after the last batch of 3,500 U.S. combat troops returned from "exercises" in Honduras. This time, 1,300 Yanqui soldiers are being sent into the middle of a tense situation in Panama. Their mission: to make sure the U.S. gets its way, one way or another. It is a new and dangerous act of U.S. aggression in Central America.

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November
Elections—
A Week on the
Razor's Edge



Three Main Points

by **Bob Avakian**
Chairman of
the RCP, USA

What do we in the Revolutionary Communist Party want people to learn from all that is exposed and revealed in this newspaper? Mainly, three things:

1) The whole system we now live under is based on exploitation — here and all over the world. It is completely worthless and no basic change for the better can come about until this system is overthrown.

2) Many different groups will protest and rebel against things this system does, and these protests and rebellions should be supported and strengthened. Yet it is only those with nothing to lose but their chains who can be the backbone of a struggle to actually overthrow this system and create a new system that will put an end to exploitation and help pave the way to a whole new world.

3) Such a revolutionary struggle is possible. There is a political Party that can lead such a struggle, a political Party that speaks and acts for those with nothing to lose but their chains: The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.

This Party has the vision, the program, the leadership, and the organizational principles to unite those who must be united and enable them to do what must be done. There is a challenge for all those who would like to see such a revolution, those with a burning desire to see a drastic change for the better, all those who dare to dream and to act to bring about a completely new and better world: Support this Party, join this Party, spread its message and its organized strength, and prepare the ground for a revolutionary rising that has a solid basis and a real chance of winning. □

ZONE PRODUCTIONS

PRESENTS:

*They say they will
Dicen que lo harán*



A Video Documentary on the Revolutionary Communist Party USA

Against the backdrop of a tense planet where nuclear nightmares haunt the young, rebellion rocks the Third World, and police drop bombs on Black radicals in America, a fresh view of future possibilities emerges. Here the revolutionaries of our time share their vision, their strategy, and their roots.

Founded in 1975, inspired by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, the RCP is the only Maoist party in the U.S. today. Their history begins in the upheavals of the 1960s when their chairman Bob Avakian first gained experience as a revolutionary leader.

Through interviews with party representatives and supporters — long time antiwar activists, proletarians from ghettos and barrios, Latin American immigrants, punk youth, ex-Black Panthers, including rare historical footage of Bob Avakian — a picture emerges of their uncompromising internationalism and their surprising analysis of the potential opportunities and forces for a mass armed uprising. Most surprisingly they are also convinced of the possibility of success.

Color/54 minutes. A Bilingual video available in two subtitled versions: Spanish and English.
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WAR STORIES

a report from
South Africa

The RW is now featuring an important series on South Africa by correspondent Michael Slate. For three years a great upsurge rocked the apartheid regime of South Africa. This rising was more widespread and more ferocious than any rebellion there since the youth of Soweto kicked off a countrywide liberation movement in the late 1970s. The apartheid rulers responded with a brutal State of Emergency which has been in force in some parts of the country for two and a half years. Little news has come of the struggle in South Africa in many months. The Western press has gone right along with a big press blackout imposed by Pretoria. But recently Michael Slate traveled to South Africa where he was able to investigate the current situation, learn more about the upsurge, and talk firsthand to a wide range of revolutionary people. The RW has been featuring an ongoing series of articles on his observations. Part 8 of "War Stories" will appear soon in the RW, and we urge our readers to check with your local distributor for back issues of this exciting series.



BANNED IN SOUTH AFRICA

The *Revolutionary Worker* has been banned in South Africa for importation and distribution. The ban announced in early September was retroactive to May and continues in force. Despite this ban, the RW continues to be read in South Africa.

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Palestine

Land Day vs. the Occupiers



The rulers of Israel are desperate to break the back of Palestinian resistance after four months of massive *intefadeh* uprising. When the underground leadership of the *intefadeh* called for major actions to commemorate March 30, Land Day, the Zionists decided to make this a decisive showdown.

Israeli Defense Minister Rabin threatened, "You determined Land Day. Let's confront each other, we'll see who will be stronger." Prime Minister Shamir declared: "The means are not important; it's the ends that matter. The aim is that these days pass, as all days must, in peace and quiet."

But Israel hasn't had any "peace and quiet" since last December, and the Palestinian people gave them none during the week of Land Day.

Twelve years ago, on March 30, 1976, a general strike swept the "Israeli Arab" area around Galilee in protest against the systematic theft of Arab land by Israel for expanding Jewish settlements. In the confrontations that followed Zionist troops killed six Palestinians. Since then Palestinians have commemorated that date as Land Day, or *Yom al-Ard* in Arabic.

Palestinians living inside the "green line" (Israel's self-proclaimed borders) planned to use Land Day for a show of unity with their sisters and brothers fighting in the "occupied territories" of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. So Shamir made a bully's threat against them: "If the Arabs of Israel won't come to their senses, reality will be harder and laden with impending disaster. I am not afraid. A test of strength between us and them is like a contest between an elephant and a fly."

At the same time, an Israeli court handed down sentences on the two army privates who used a bulldozer to bury four Palestinian youths alive under two feet of mud on Feb. 5. The two were given jail terms of only five and six months. The rest of the platoon and their officers received no punishment. The American press portrayed this sentence as just, or even severe! In fact, this wrist slap will serve as a "green light" for more atrocities.

Tightening the Screws

There was a huge mobilization by the Israeli military throughout Palestine in preparation for Land Day.

The three main concentrations of Palestinians were severed from each other and placed under heavy guard. The West Bank was sealed off from the outside world; the press was banned and traffic was stopped by military roadblocks. Gaza was also sealed off, but there the people were also placed on 24-hour curfew — confined to their homes for the three days around March 30. Finally, the Galilee, an area where most "Israeli Arabs" live, was pumped full of 4,000 police, including a helicopter-carried tactical unit.

Rabin said his purpose was to create "isolation between the territories and the Arabs of Israel." The heavy restrictions did not apply to any of the 50,000 Zionist fanatics who now also live in the "occupied territories."

Arrests piled up in the days leading up to Wednesday's Land Day actions. One hundred and fifty were arrested on Monday night alone, according to the Palestinian Press Service (PPS). Defense Minister Rabin announced that there were 4,000 Palestinians in custody, *nearly half*

of them seized in the two weeks before Land Day.

The death toll mounts rapidly. Early in this uprising, troops rarely killed more than one Palestinian a day. However, in the last few weeks reports of as many as four dead in a day are common. There is fear that press bannings will mean more killings may go unreported.

On Tuesday, March 29, troops forced merchants in many towns to close their stores so that the masses could not stock up for Wednesday's general strike. The occupation authorities cut telephone lines to areas that have been particularly combative: the Gaza Strip and the villages of northern West Bank.

Land Day — And the Crucial Land Question

It is no accident that March 30 emerged as a key battleground. Land Day concentrates two burning political themes that target the very existence of the Israeli settler state:

On that first Land Day in 1976, Arabs in Galilee chanted "This village belongs to Palestine, not Israel!" They were not demanding citizenship *within* Israel but supported the joint struggle of *all* Palestinians for national liberation, which can only be achieved with the overthrow of the Zionist settler state. So the first theme of Land Day is that *all* territory now dominated by Israel is Palestine.

The second important theme is land itself. In 1976 the immediate issue was the state-sponsored theft of 1,600 acres of Arab farmland in the Galilee area. The existence of Israel is based on systematic theft of land from its Palestinian owners. Armed theft over many decades forced millions of Palestinians from their farms, their orchards, and their ancestral villages into exile. And that theft continues today, especially in the "occupied areas" where Zionist settlers brazenly grab the best land, the water resources, the roads, and the fishing rights of Palestinians. Land Day is a declaration that *land throughout all of Palestine* must be returned to Palestinians.

In colonial and semicolonial countries, the overthrow of foreign imperialist domination is central to getting rid of oppression. In China Mao Tsetung charted the road of new-democratic revolution which is the only real way forward for national liberation.

In Palestine there is a special colonial situation. Imperialism created an expansive, reactionary settler state that drove a whole people from their homes in a series of vicious wars and seizures. The return of stolen land to Palestinians is a cornerstone of the revolutionary goal of the defeat of the Zionist state and establishing a democratic, secular state of Palestine. Israel brags that it uses armed might

to "create facts on the ground." Land theft and the forced expulsion of Arabs have been central to those "facts." A key part of the revolutionary process is creating *new*, liberating "facts on the ground": reclaiming the hills and fields from those who stole it. Without that, Palestinians cannot achieve liberation; they would remain refugees in their own country, deprived of the most valuable land, forced to sell their labor in the fields and factories of their oppressors.

Land Day touches on this vision; it links the return of Palestinian land with the national liberation of the Palestinian people. This is what the Israelis hoped to crush last week. They failed completely, again.

March 30 — Spring Blossomed on Land Day

Israel's West Bank Commander Mitzna had to admit, "We can't say that Land Day was quiet. It was not." Another military spokesman said, "There is no question that there were more clashes, they were more violent and more spread out."

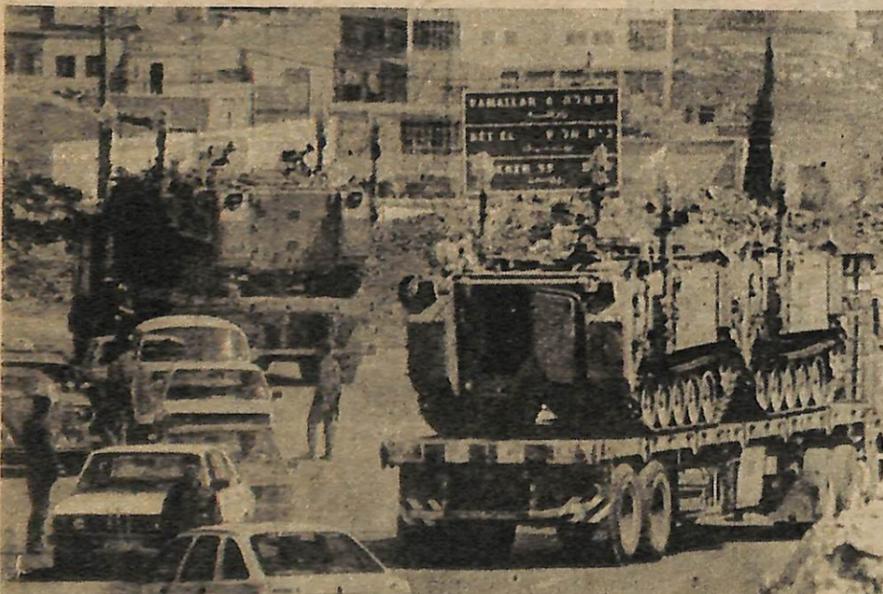
In fact the actions were defiant, inspiring and seemingly everywhere; some said the depth of revolt was "unprecedented." It burst out in fiery colors, like the wildflowers of spring.

A general strike was virtually total on both sides of the "green line." Schools were closed, shops were shuttered. The Israelis did not even try to open the "green line" to Arab workers entering Israel — there was no significant scabbing, period. It was the most successful general strike ever and continued past Land Day itself.

A report in the *New York Times* said "roads in the West Bank were cluttered with Palestinian barricades. Many troops were on hand, with helicopters hovering above as youths gathered at crossroads and threw stones. The army said shots were fired at soldiers near Deir Abu Mashal."

House-to-house searches by Israeli troops met resistance. In one incident, a 50-year-old Palestinian woman defending her children was shot in her home and left to bleed to death. Army spokesmen said she endangered troops with a rake.

Armed Zionist patrols were repeatedly ambushed by crowds of stone-throwing youth. In Ramallah, hundreds fought troops. In another incident, troops staged a massive assault on a Palestinian barricade near Hebron. Arriving in several jeeps and a helicopter, dozens of soldiers fired into the crowds of fleeing people. Eight West Bank villages were closed, suggesting that street actions there had wrenched them completely from Israeli control.



Israelis prepare for Land Day.

Continued on page 10

Special to the RW:

Inside Stories from the Streets of Haiti—November 1987

November Elections: A Week on the Razor's Edge

Part 1

By Nadine Andre

In Haiti *dehouke* and *rache*, the Creole terms for “uproot” and “tear out,” are no longer words that refer to agriculture. Today they describe a mass movement — a movement aimed at thoroughly digging up and smashing the roots of the old order. A nation founded on a powerful slave rebellion, Haiti is now, once again, the scene of a people in revolt. Up against a legacy of American invasion and Duvalierist terror, the past two years have witnessed general strikes and uprisings in every major city and the beginning of peasant upheaval in the countryside. As brutal repression has continued, so too has the impatience and rage of the masses. There is a rich story behind the scanty and distorted accounts of this struggle in the mainstream U.S. media. Nadine Andre, a journalist fluent in Haitian Creole, went to Haiti during the tumultuous period of the November 1987 elections. She was able to hear the story firsthand from the Haitian people and investigate and learn more about the rapidly developing situation. RW No. 446 carried Andre's story of the burning of the Marché Salomon in the days before the election.

A member of the “Leopards,” the special counterinsurgency force, in front of the National Palace.



Nadine Andre — Special to the RW.

The razor-sharp edge of politics in Haiti last November extended well into its air space. The plane I was on was only a third full and a restless silence had prevailed since Miami. As the island of Hispaniola came into view, someone behind me commented that a fellow passenger closely resembled one of the presidential candidates, Rockefeller Guerre. Immediately there was a flurry of nervous admonitions for him to “*pran prekosyon*” — to be careful.

Political tension was not the only thing that loomed up and enveloped us before we touched ground. Even from the air, Haiti's beauty has an almost alarming quality; it is something you are unprepared for. The blue of the mountains takes you by surprise and pulls you back two centuries to the “maroons” — Haiti's first guerrillas, rebel slaves who escaped to these mountains. And an aerial view of Haiti is a view of an overwhelmingly rural country — 80 percent of the Haitian people are peasants. Countless valleys and ravines unfold one after another. A Creole proverb explains, “*dèyè mò gen mò*,” “behind the mountains are mountains.” Erosion is painfully evident. Many of the mountains rise up steep and naked, stripped of the fertile topsoil that the peasantry lives by. But as we descended, I could see that wherever there was a water source or the slightest bit of irrigation, vibrant green burst forth. Not a bad introduction to Haiti, I thought: life fiercely insisting, refusing to relinquish its place, determined to triumph in the end.

Like everyone else, I had many questions about what to expect during election week. But early on I realized that answers would come only by taking in the rush and swirl of rapid-fire events. It was a period of profound conflict and crisis in Haiti. And like such periods anywhere, it was a time when preconceived notions of how events would develop had to be thrown out and exchanged for a view that could encompass a dynamic mix of forces in a telescoped period of time. In this case, that period of time was to be no more than seven days.

The airport was typically eerie. No bigger than a good-sized suburban supermarket and parking lot in the U.S., it was staked out by heavily armed soldiers and police. A pathetic little band played without enthusiasm. My transit at the airport was uneventful, but two days later an acquaintance from the U.S. found herself there alone, face to face with some of the main players in the clash that was to occur that week. A regular visitor to Haiti, she had planned to rent a car after arriving at the airport. By the time she found out that there were no cars to be had, the airport had emptied of travelers and taxis. As dusk approached the soldiers became more and more menacing. It was clear they did not appreciate her presence, but until they set up a roadblock on the only road to the airport, it wasn't clear why. The word on the streets is that after darkness falls, the army closes off the airport road and uses the airstrip for drug running. After the woman reached a friend by phone, his car was stopped at the roadblock. Soldiers surrounded her, demanding: “Who is waiting for you?” When she told them that a number



Nadine Andre — Special to the RW.

Mural near the university. Straws are labeled "Canada," "England," "U.S.," "France," and "Japan." Glass contains a map of Haiti.

of people were expecting her, a soldier slammed a cartridge into his rifle, pointed it at her head and said, "That's interesting." They finally let her walk down the airport road to her friend's car.

Out in the streets of Port-au-Prince, though, the mood was different. I spent the first few days scoping out the scene in the capital. My first glimpse of the people's political exuberance was the graffiti on anything flat enough to be written on. A prominent wall downtown announced, "A bas 1915!", "Down with 1915!", the date the U.S. invaded Haiti. "Aba Makout!", "Down with Macoutes!" was everywhere. And amid electoral slogans and posters of candidates: "Viv revolisyon," "Long live revolution!" A sprawling mural near the university portrayed five people labeled "Canada," "U.S.," "France," and "Japan," and "England" sucking straws in a glass containing a map of Haiti. All of this was set against an American flag. Even tree trunks had been enlisted in the effort: painted red and blue, the color of the Haitian flag that François Duvalier had changed to the despised red and black. When I once made the mistake of wearing a red shirt and a black skirt, I was seriously advised to never dress that way again.

Chauffeurs of Debate

Red ribbons dangling in the windshields of cars identified them as taxis. During my first week in Haiti, I spent a lot of time in these taxis, more out of a desire to find out what was politically going on than to get to any particular destination. The taxi drivers, or "chauffeurs," were one of the most politically militant groups in the city. Osman Jean-Gilles was one of these "chauffeurs." He had a 1979 Toyota with one door that didn't open, three children in the slum called La Saline, and an astute analysis of the political situation. He did not actually own the Toyota. In fact, he owed \$3,000 on the cab, \$400 of which he had to come up with every month. Most of the thousands of "chauffeurs" in the city, he said, rent their cabs or drive them for the owner. He also explained that even as the price of gas was going down in New York, it was climbing in Haiti. "Everyone knows," he said, "that gas is a dollar a gallon in New York now, while it's two dollars here. And the government just announced that they are going to add a fifty-cent tax per gallon. They want to provoke a strike, a confrontation, so that they can say elections are impossible. But we won't make a move." To save gas, Osman threw the cab into neutral at the slightest incline. And, as was customary, the fifteen-cent fare doubled because my destination was uphill.

I soon learned that I could count on these taxis to bring up to six or seven people together in discussion. One after another person would get in the cab, lay claim to a few inches of seat, greet the others, and, in just that order, join the conversation. It was a commonplace occurrence that made the tense hostility in U.S. cities seem strange in

comparison. So I traveled through Port-au-Prince in taxis crammed with people all heading different places and walked through the slums called "bidonvilles" looking for answers to the questions I had brought with me.

Pre-election Views

What exactly were the terms of this battle for the elections, I wanted to know. Did people really think any of the candidates could or would change things in Haiti? How did people view the role of the U.S. in all of this? The first thing that became apparent to me was the legacy of the last two years of wrenching, sometimes uplifting, struggle in Haiti. The level of political sophistication on the street was high and political discussion and debate permeated everything. People approached the elections with the bold assurance of people who had themselves forced Duvalier out and with whom any future president would have to deal. Women selling nothing more than chewing gum and peanuts out of broad flat baskets discussed the candidates with wide-open candor. They debated and carefully examined candidates' ties to the Duvalier regime and to the United States. Young men without jobs spent the afternoon waiting for a flat tire to fix, discussing the nature of foreign relations Haiti should have. A typical exchange took place in one cab I was in. An older civil servant spoke contemptuously of the KNG government and the Tontons Macoute (Duvalier's personal army of thugs, officially disbanded but who continue to operate within the military as well as more broadly). As soon as he got out, a younger man protested to the rest of us that it was impossible for the man to have worked as a civil servant for the government all those years and not be a Duvalierist or a Macoute himself. The term "Macoute" was being used more broadly to describe all those who benefited from the corrupt and oppressive system.

The previous spring many people had voted for a new constitution which was promoted by the U.S. and the pro-U.S. Haitian "technocrats." The constitution included guidelines for elections which put restrictions on the old-line Duvalierists, who some have referred to as the "dinosaurs." And many people's hearts had quickened at the prospect of at least some kind of change, something other than warmed-over Duvalierism. In the months leading up to the November elections, thinking among the masses was both more realistic as well as contradictory. Especially among the majority of people, the bitterly poor who must struggle to survive day-to-day, there was a feeling that the dechouke movement had to uproot society even further and that Duvalierism could only be gotten rid of through some kind of violent confrontation. And there was widespread anti-U.S. sentiment and distrust of any candidate exposed as being in the service of U.S. imperialism. At the same time an overwhelming majority of people had registered to vote, even though no single can-

didate had emerged as popular among the broad masses. And the slogan "pouvoir populaire" (people's power) was, among some, associated with the idea of a popular election.

Still others had few illusions about the candidates or the elections themselves. Wilson Alcius, a slight young man who introduced himself to me as a "révolutionnaire," was one of those. Wilson had worked as a tourist guide before Jean-Claude Duvalier was chased out. But after political upheaval broke out and continued, he only occasionally found work as a guide for foreign journalists. He spoke French and Creole, as well as a good deal of English, Spanish, and Italian, though he read only with great difficulty. In many ways Wilson was typical of a younger, more angry minority with a clearer political analysis of the elections. Sylvio Claude, a pro-

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Nadine Andre — Special to the RW.

Chicago Sanctuary Protest

“No a la Migra! Sí a la Vida!”

At first glance, the barren brick building with slotted windows looks like just another industrial park factory. But then the coiled razor wire surrounding the parking lot, the video camera atop the building, and the sign reading “U.S. Justice Dept., Immigration and Naturalization Service” comes into view. This is the recently opened INS detention center located in the Chicago suburb of Broadview.

On March 27 chants of “No a la Migra! Sí a la Vida!” (No to immigration, yes to life) filled the air, and the chain link fence surrounding the detention center’s parking lot was decorated with large banners reading “Broadview — Shut it down!” and “NO ONE IS ILLEGAL!” A crowd of seventy-five people, mainly middle-class church members, gathered in response to a call by the Chicago Metropolitan Sanctuary Alliance to “Just Say ‘No’ to La Migra!” The Alliance is a network of thirteen sanctuary churches which support and shelter immigrants forced to flee U.S.-backed terror and death squads in Central America. “CIA and Pentagon destroy the villages, INS hunts down the survivors!” is how one banner summed up the vise squeezing these immigrants. Many protesters pinned “Illegal” buttons on jackets and coats.

The approaching May 4 deadline for applications for “amnesty” under the repressive Simpson-Rodino Act gave the demonstration an added urgency. One speaker, a sanctuary church minister, exposed how Central American immigrants are systematically denied political refugee status. While 84 percent of Nicaraguans (who are anti-Sandinista) and 47 percent of all Poles receive political asylum, he reported that only 3.6 percent of Salvadorans, 3.7 percent of Guatemalans, and 4.8 percent of Hondurans are granted this status. A Guatemalan refugee living in sanctuary, his identity hidden under a hat, sunglasses, and bandana, said, “When we’re deported, we’re assassinated in our country.”

According to a speaker from Proyecto Libertad, the Rio Grande Valley of Texas bordering Mexico has been virtually sealed off from the rest of the country through INS checkpoints, turning the entire area into a giant detention center. Proyecto Libertad, a Texas-based legal aid organization reports that 17,000 Central Americans were arrested by the INS in 1986, a six-fold increase over 1982.

A sanctuary minister from the Wheaton United Methodist Church read a religious litany, calling the Simpson-Rodino Immigration Reform and Control Act “an immoral and racist act” that is “not an amnesty program, it’s a punishment program.” He went on to target the Broadview detention center as part of a growing apparatus that will be used to apprehend and deport immigrants who won’t qualify for legalization.

“It [Broadview] is located in a strategic spot near the Eisenhower Expressway and close to O’Hare Airport,” read the leaflet put out by the Alliance. “At last report, the only accessible phones needed credit cards. Detainees are advised of their legal rights, but legal representation is made inaccessible by the center’s location outside of Chicago. Broadview was set to expedite mass deportations. It is an efficient machine for the implementation of an immoral law.”

The crowd cheered as a Catholic priest urged people to break the law, disobey the Simpson-Rodino Immigration Reform and Control Act, and respond to “a higher law, the law of your conscience built on your faith and the Bible. Do not oppress the aliens among you,” he said.

This priest was speaking for the Hispanic Caucus of the Chicago Catholic

Archdiocese, which mounted very significant opposition to the Simpson-Rodino law late last year — during a traditional Christmastime religious ritual practiced by the Hispanic churches, 2,000 people, mainly Latinos, came out to protest the new INS law in Chicago. A pastoral letter issued by the Hispanic Caucus at the time stated that the Simpson-Rodino law’s “real purpose is to control immigrant workers, not to demand amnesty.” Another section of the letter addressed and criticized their reasons for not confronting the law sooner. “We have been too distant from the oppressed people and their sufferings when we should have been standing at their side.” A May 5th conference is being held by the Metropolitan Sanctuary Alliance for employers who will take a position of non-compliance with the INS rule that they demand

workers’ identity papers.

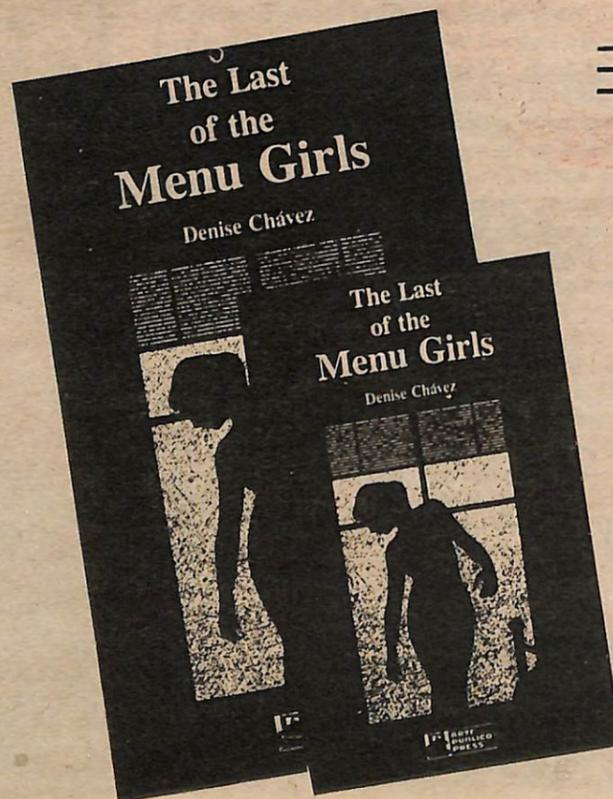
After the passage of the Simpson-Rodino law many who work with immigrants supported the law, hoping it would help the undocumented. Charlie, who had come to protest the law, said, “At first it seemed so many would qualify, and then we realized so many wouldn’t.” Charlie, a white man who attends a Black and Latino Catholic parish and volunteers at a homeless shelter, went on, “Take Jesus. He’s a Cuban guy in his 50s; he’s been here a long time. But he got stabbed in a holdup and when they opened him up at the hospital they found he had cancer. He’s sick, so he won’t qualify under the amnesty.” A communal house of brothers and volunteer workers has taken Jesus in to live with them since he is “illegal” and doesn’t qualify for any medical aid from welfare.

Charlie described how he had seen the exploitation of illegals while working at a factory job. “The employer wasn’t paying them zip, doodleysquat,” he said. “I was making \$4.64 an hour, but they were paid \$2.25 for the same work.” He was living in a boarding house, paying \$35 a week. When two Salvadorans came looking for a room, they were charged \$50 a head for sleeping in the same bed.

Explaining how he became a volunteer, Charlie said he is a Vietnam vet who became an alcoholic and wound up homeless. “I’ve been there myself and I work in the shelter to repay those who helped me. . . . I went to Dachau when I was stationed in Germany. You look at this,” he said, pointing to the Broadview detention center, “and you wonder, when are they going to stoke up the furnaces?” □



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Hundreds Deported in Orange City

La Migra Runs Amok

Justino Llamas and three friends were on their way to work last February 27 in the city of Orange, near Los Angeles. Only blocks from his house, Llamas stopped the car to get coffee and donuts. "All of a sudden," Llamas told the *Los Angeles Times*, "the police pulled up behind us. I still don't understand what went on. We didn't do anything wrong." The cops wrote citations for Llamas and one of his friends for not wearing seat belts, even though the car was parked at the time, and asked his other two friends for their IDs. When they had no ID on them, they were arrested. The Orange Police Department then turned them over to the INS Border Patrol in San Clemente, more than thirty miles south of Orange. Later that day the police called Llamas at his house and told him that one of his friends "was on his way to Tijuana."

Three days later, again in Orange, José Luis Lara was riding to work with a friend. They too were pulled over for not wearing seat belts. Lara and one other passenger in this car also had no ID, and they too were deported. "What kind of a country is this where you get arrested for not having a seat belt," Angélica Lara told the *L.A. Times*. "My husband's not a criminal."

Starting from February 24, these scenes have been repeated hundreds of times along Chapman Avenue in the El Modena area of the city of Orange. The Orange police are targeting hundreds of immigrant day-laborers who wait each morning along a one-mile stretch of Chapman to be hired. Orange city officials claimed that they were carrying out this clampdown in order to deal with a rising crime rate.

The only "crime" that people like the Laras committed was to move to Orange to look for work. José, Angélica, and their four-month-old son lived in a two bedroom apartment along with two other families, sharing the rent. Their situation is typical for tens of thousands of Mexican and Central American immigrants. Many are even worse off, forced to live under freeway overpasses or in vacant lots. In this society, trying to find work or being homeless is a deportable crime!

Besides stopping people for such things as not wearing a seat belt in a parked car, the Orange police stopped, cited, and turned over to the INS hundreds of immigrants for having a dirty license plate on the car, tossing a cigarette butt on the ground, and other trumped-up charges. Many people were just stopped and harassed because the cops thought they had Latino facial features.

There are no published figures on the total number of people stopped by the cops, but after the first three days of sweeps on Chapman Avenue the Orange police turned sixty-seven immigrants over to the Border Patrol. After sixteen days, that number was 173.

On March 10 the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Orange County Coalition for Immigrant Rights had set up a meeting with city and police officials to protest these attacks on immigrants. Up to then the INS had applauded the actions of Orange police

from the sidelines but had not themselves come into Orange to conduct raids. But at 6:45 a.m. on that March 10, with the Orange police doing traffic control, the INS sent in Border Patrol agents to the Chapman Avenue area and seized 136 immigrants. It was a *gestapo*-style raid. Robin Blackwell of the Orange County Coalition for Immigrants Rights and area residents told the *RW* that Border Patrol agents chased people through yards, hopped fences, and kicked in doors to grab immigrants. According to the INS, 133 Mexicans agreed to "voluntary departure," two were eligible for "amnesty," and one Salvadoran asked for a hearing.

Gearing Up for May 4

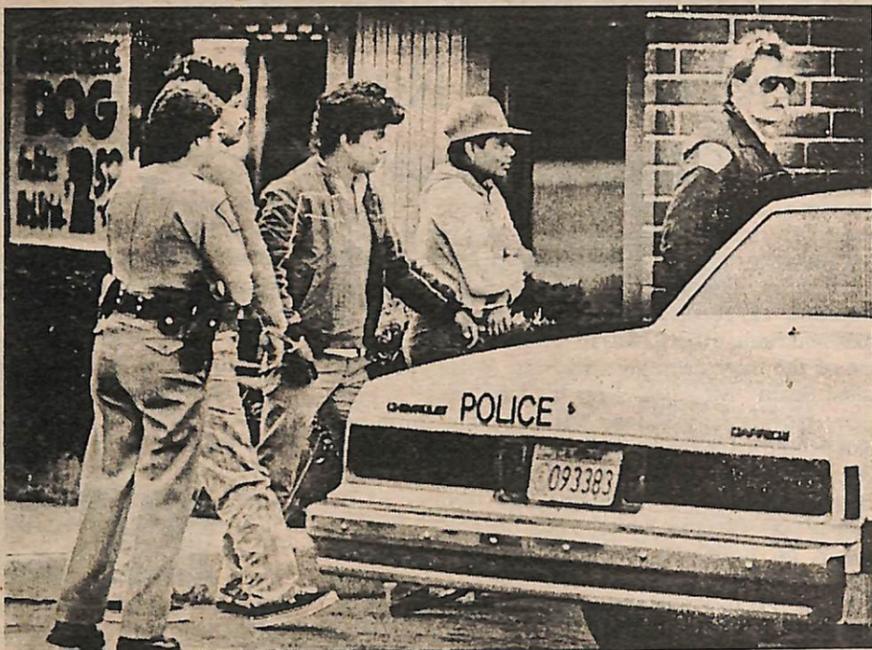
Before the Orange city sweeps the "official" policy of local police forces in the southern California area was to leave immigration law enforcement to the INS. Despite the policy, local police often went after immigrants anyway. But what is going on now in Orange looks very much like it is part of a major and coordinated campaign by the ruling class against immigrants.

With the May 4 deadline for filing for "amnesty" under the Simpson-Rodino Act approaching, it seems the INS is working with local police agencies on ways to turn up the heat on immigrants. A message is being delivered to immigrants with an iron fist: either comply with Simpson-Rodino and "come in and register" with the government, or become invisible and silent.

According to Robin Blackwell, on February 22 Harold Ezell, Western Regional Director of the INS, and the Orange chief of police took a "walk-through" tour of Chapman Avenue and the surrounding neighborhood, which is a largely immigrant area. The next day the chief of police, Mayor Perez, the Orange City Council and others, possibly including a representative from the INS, held a closed-door meeting. Then, on February 24 the city of Orange police began their clampdown.

The attacks have been accompanied by hysterical anti-immigrant articles in the media. The *L.A. Times*, for example, headlined one article "Illegal Alien Congregations on City Streets Spark Outcry." The article talked of people being "accosted" by immigrants looking for work and in general described the day laborers as nuisances who should be cleared out. Robin Blackwell told the *RW* that most of this "outrage" seems to have come from one source — the owner of a \$3 million piece of property on Chapman Avenue who claims day laborers are ruining his investment.

It is no accident that the INS is going after day laborers — immigrant proletarians who have not been able to find steady work and are forced to stand on street corners every day for whatever low-paying jobs they can get. Since the passage of Simpson-Rodino, with its provision for fining employers who hire "illegals," the number of immigrants forced out onto the streets to look for work has mushroomed. There have been reports that entire workforces at some factories have been fired and replaced by workers



with some sort of ID. At the same time the INS is pursuing felony charges against some immigrants caught with fake IDs. In addition to those already in the U.S. and without work, the INS reports record numbers of people crossing the U.S.-Mexico border in the past few months. Many of these immigrants will also end up on the streets as day laborers.

There are signs that the anti-immigrant attacks by the Orange police might become a model for other cities in southern California. The *L.A. Times* has quoted officials of several cities in Orange County who said that they are closely watching the sweeps in the city of Orange and are thinking about taking up the same policy. Other published reports say that the L.A. Police Department is also keeping a close eye on the sweeps in Orange. *Noticias del Mundo*, a Spanish-language newspaper in Los Angeles, recently quoted a high-ranking LAPD official who said that they do turn immigrants over to the INS but haven't made this a priority at this point. Other LAPD officials quoted in the same article said they liked the Orange policy.

Opposition to the Attacks

The police/INS sweeps in Orange have been met with outrage and opposition. The ACLU and the Orange County Coalition for Immigrants Rights began handing out information packets to the day laborers along Chapman, advising them of their rights, and they also called a press conference on March 3 to expose what was going on.

At the press conference about 100 or more Latino immigrants, mostly Mexican day laborers, came in defiance of *la Migra* and the Orange police, who had an observer there. One immigrant who spoke up was 19-year-old Manuel Cardenas, who talked through an interpreter and was quoted in the *L.A. Times*. Cardenas had been deported only five days earlier. He said that he and a friend were walking along on Chapman Avenue at about 11 a.m. on February 26 when cops in an unmarked car handcuffed them and took them to the police station. "We were walking on the sidewalk. They did not tell

us what we had done wrong. They said I should not be here in this county of Orange any more and don't come back. They didn't say anything about my rights." Cardenas said he had to pay a coyote \$300 to bring him back across the border.

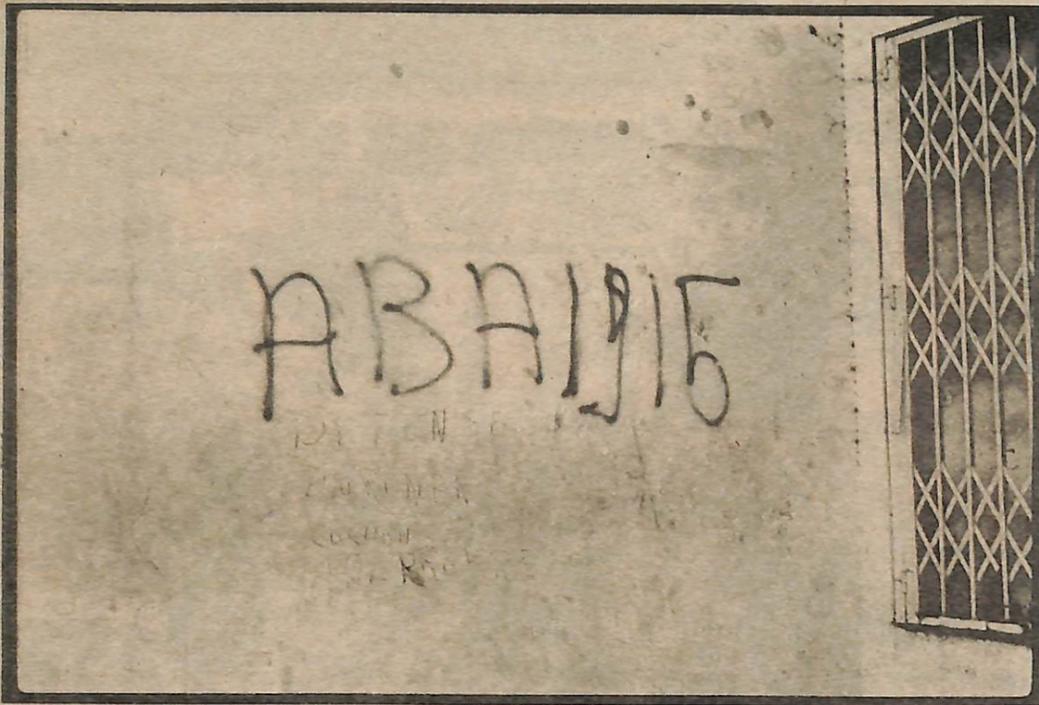
On Saturday, March 19 the Coalition for Immigrants Rights held a protest of the raids, raising demands such as "Jobs not Jail." About twenty people with banners and signs went to the section of Chapman Avenue where the Orange police have been attacking the immigrants. There have been reports of other forms of resistance, including warning networks being formed and opposition to the anti-immigrant attacks from merchants in the area.

More INS Attacks

Meanwhile the INS expanded its assault on immigrants in Orange. According to an account in *La Opinión*, another Spanish-language newspaper in L.A., the INS pulled off raids on March 16 which went beyond the Chapman Avenue area. The INS said they arrested and deported 124 immigrants from various locations in Orange in a three and one-half hour operation. This brought the total number of immigrants deported from Orange to about 430 in just over three weeks.

After the March 16 raid an INS spokesman told *La Opinión* that "This is not an act against a certain group. If these people are in this country illegally, they have to be deported." Earlier, after the March 10 raid, an INS spokesman told the *L.A. Times* that they can't "ignore" the Chapman Avenue area "if criminal activity is taking place. The fact is they are here illegally and when they come here and commit crimes, there is no way we can sit back and let that happen."

The real criminals in these attacks on immigrants are those holding state power. It is clear from the threats they make that *la Migra* is taking aim on all immigrants. Can anyone who hates this shit sit back and allow it to continue? □



Nedine Andre — Special to the RW.

"Down with 1915!", the year the U.S. invaded Haiti.

November Elections: A Week on the Razor's Edge

Continued from page 5

U.S. candidate who has been jailed a number of times, is considered an incompetent politician by many but also praised for his courage and upheld as somewhat of an anti-Duvalier martyr. But Wilson told me Sylvio Claude was just as entrenched in the corrupt system as the Macoutes. He also explained to me that Marc Bazin, the ex-World Bank official, was in the service of the U.S. — one of the most damning criticisms. Wilson derisively called Bazin "Mr. Clean" for his false image of being above Duvalierist graft and talked of how Bazin paid poor people to travel around the country to campaign for him. Wilson also told me the U.S. had urged Gerard Gourgue, a pro-U.S. candidate and member of the original post-Duvalier junta, to quit the KNG in order to remain an untainted candidate for the presidency. Rejecting seductive illusions about change through elections, the bottom line for people like Wilson was the understanding that the old system could never be uprooted without some kind of mass violent upheaval.

Government Campaign of Terror

But the question of the day on Sunday, November 22, just one week before election day, was whether or not the elections would even take place. The new constitution banned people closely tied to repression under the Duvalier regime from holding public office for ten years. And on this basis, in early November the Provisional Electoral Council, or the CEP, which was responsible for carrying out the elections, had rejected twelve presidential candidates who were former associates of the Duvaliers. The ruling structure, particularly those forces tied to the old feudal oligarchy, the Macoutes and the military elite, feared that any semblance of a popular election would threaten their hold on power. And so they set out to sabotage the elections. The military and the Macoutes launched a campaign of terror which targeted the CEP, some candidates (two of whom were assassinated in pre-election campaigning), and the people.

Many people told me that repression under the KNG was worse than it had been under the Duvalier regime. And as the elections approached, repression intensified. Nighttime death-squad attacks left bodies to be found the next morning. Usually gunfire came from speeding unmarked cars and men in civilian clothes. And by the time I arrived, this kind of terror had totally altered the daily tempo of Port-au-Prince. By 4:30 in the afternoon, vendors in open-air markets were hurriedly packing up their things. And in a country where people used to gather in groups on the roadsides and talk late into the warm evenings, where students had stood until midnight under lampposts reciting their lessons aloud, the streets were deserted by seven o'clock. This unofficial curfew was trespassed at the risk of death. Turenne Charles, a man who traveled through much of the city every day on his way to a job as a dishwasher, leaned forward as he worked and told me, "You go to Delmas or Carrefour, and in every corner you hear that someone has died. There are truckloads of military in civilian clothes out there."

People's nerves were pulled as taut as the sisal ropes used to secure huge loads on the top of trucks in Haiti.

People were, Turenne explained, "fache enba chal." That is to say, they were extremely pissed but carefully containing their rage. The brutal violence of the government and the Macoutes was intended to stop the elections as well as any mass upheaval that might erupt. And there was the feeling among some that even the slightest outbreak would be used as a pretext to unleash further attacks on the people and cancel the elections with cries of "chaos" and "anarchy." Even those who understood the elections to be a sham with no promise of change were determined that neither the army, the Macoutes, nor the KNG gain ground in this showdown. There was talk, in hushed voices, of a "dezya am dechoukag" — a second uprising — if the elections didn't come off. And in all of this there was an understanding that more was at stake than whether or not elections were held. Many felt that, more fundamentally, there was the question of whether or not the people would be able to hold onto the political ground they had gained since Duvalier's flight and what kind of a position they would be in to move to a higher level.

The air was heavy and wet and the sun unforgiving as Wilson and I walked through the broad, empty streets near the National Palace. Off to one side the U.S. consulate was being barricaded, apparently in anticipation of the elections. A crew of Haitian workers was constructing a cement wall encircling the consulate and the entire effort looked as if it was at least several weeks behind schedule. "Vive CNG, Aba Kominis" ("Long live the KNG, Down with Communism") had been stenciled by reactionary pro-government forces on nearby buildings. And people had then altered them to read just the opposite. A machine gun mounted on a flatbed truck was parked in front of the consulate, attended by two Haitian soldiers in camouflage fatigues. The terror of the KNG had targeted a number of pro-U.S. candidates and things were clearly not unfolding exactly the way the United States had intended. Suddenly the whole scene at the U.S. consulate struck me as being a somewhat bizarre reflection of the larger pre-election picture. It was not clear if the Haitian soldiers were there to protect or to keep tabs on the United States. Was the barricade to hold off the Haitian people or the Tontons Macoute?

I remember that in anticipation of election day there was a feeling of time almost being suspended. Political tension focused on the coming election, and the rapid development of events made each day seem like a week. Throughout there was the feeling of a dangerous calm before the storm. As Wilson and I walked along an unusually well-groomed park across from the National Palace, my friend jeered, "They've been in power for two years and all they did was build this fucking park!" Then, simply out of habit and not because anyone else was nearby, he told me under his breath: "It's quiet now, but it is very dangerous. It was dangerous when there were demonstrations, but this is more dangerous. Things are very, very hot."

Waking on Monday, November 23, the feeling of suspended time snapped like the machine-gun fire during the night. The entire city awoke to find that one of the most important open-air markets in the country, the Marché Salomon, had been burned down that night. With one stroke the KNG and its supporters had directly targeted the poor people of Port-au-Prince and declared just how high the stakes were for them in this battle. As I set out to visit the site of the market, bloody tracks were everywhere. In the darkness, scarlet messages had gone up on scores of walls throughout the city. Around every corner was the same announcement: "Viv l'armée," "Long live the army" — sometimes accompanied by "Abas CEP," "Down with the CEP." That same night the CEP headquarters and the offices of two presidential candidates were shot up, and the election office for the capital district was broken into and arson was attempted. Before I set out for the Marché Salomon, Jean-Luc, a French friend, returned with more news from a smaller open-air market where he had been buying vegetables. "They give us the day, but the night belongs to them" was the phrase people in Port-au-Prince had used up until then to describe the death-squad terror of the military and the Macoutes. But that Monday the Macoutes broke their own rules and carried out their attacks in broad daylight. Jean-Luc had seen a group of forty men in civilian clothes carrying machine guns marching through the city, busting up cars in the middle of the morning. Schools closed and by early afternoon most stores and shops had been shuttered and locked.

Standing amid the smoldering rubble at the site of the Marché Salomon fire, I spoke with people still reeling from the assault. Their very next sentiment was, "Kounye a se la ga a" — "This is war." It was a sentiment shared by people all over the city. On the way to the hospital where victims of the night's terror were taken, I saw that people had set up barricades with burning tires and car parts. "You can kill me... the elections will take place," a woman told me, and I heard this many times later that day. With the press of events, the sentiments of people in their tens and hundreds of thousands changed quickly and dramatically. My own notebook reflects the accelerated pace of events and political debate as careful notes gave way to a hastily scrawled record of developments rebounding off each other.



Poster seen all over Port-au-Prince reads, "In the legislature, in the palace, in the state, in the army, no room for Macoutes."

Nedine Andre — Special to the RW.



Nadine Andre — Special to the RW.

U.S. embassy, Port-au-Prince.

Brigades de Vigilance

The next morning, Tuesday, November 24, a new phrase, “brigades de vigilance,” jumped out from radio broadcasts and echoed through the alleyways of the slums of Port-au-Prince. Overnight these vigilance brigades of ordinary people had become a visible force in almost every poor neighborhood. Rather than paralyzing people, Monday’s onslaught of terror had called forth defiance. Tuning my radio to the non-government stations, I heard strident reports of actions by the vigilance brigades, including the disarming of Macoutes. And in a brave move, some antigovernment radio stations read formal statements from these brigades over the air.

I set out for Carrefour Feuilles, the poor neighborhood near the center of the city which was instantly renowned as the birthplace of the vigilance brigades. As I walked through the streets of Carrefour Feuilles in the late afternoon, I talked to people already gathering on the “galeries,” or stoops, for the nighttime vigil. At first glance the scene appeared ordinary enough, men and women with no jobs, children and old people sitting on dusty cement stairs, out as dusk approached and the day’s heat lifted a little. But something more subtle and far more significant was taking shape.

As the scene came into sharper focus, I could see people with a calm but deliberate air carrying pipes, lengths of lumber, rocks, or sitting with clubs, machetes, or knives within reach. A piece of lead laying next to the gearshift caught my eye in the taxi I took to another neighborhood. People there told me, “Even if some of us are shot, we can stop them.” Many confessed that they had made a serious mistake in 1986 after Duvalier was forced to flee the country — after disarming some of the Macoutes, the people had given many of the arms they had seized to the army. That night in every “bidonville” people stayed awake, waiting and watching all night. “Veye yo!”, or “Watch them!”, was on tens of thousands of lips.

In most press reports, these vigilance brigades were described as spontaneous developments, evidence of people’s dedication to “democracy” in Haiti. But those who knew better explained that the brigades were the product of political activity and organizing on many different levels over the past two years. On any given block in a poor neighborhood in Port-au-Prince there might be a group of student or youth activists, a member of the progressive trade union CATH, or women active in women’s organizations. Vigilance brigades took root in many networks which were already in place and spread quickly. They reflected people’s gut feeling, gained over two years of intense and bloody battles, that the struggle against the government had to fundamentally rely on the people themselves.

I left this great atmosphere of people on the offensive and found myself in a very different scene. Like all of the foreign journalists in Haiti for the elections, I was re-

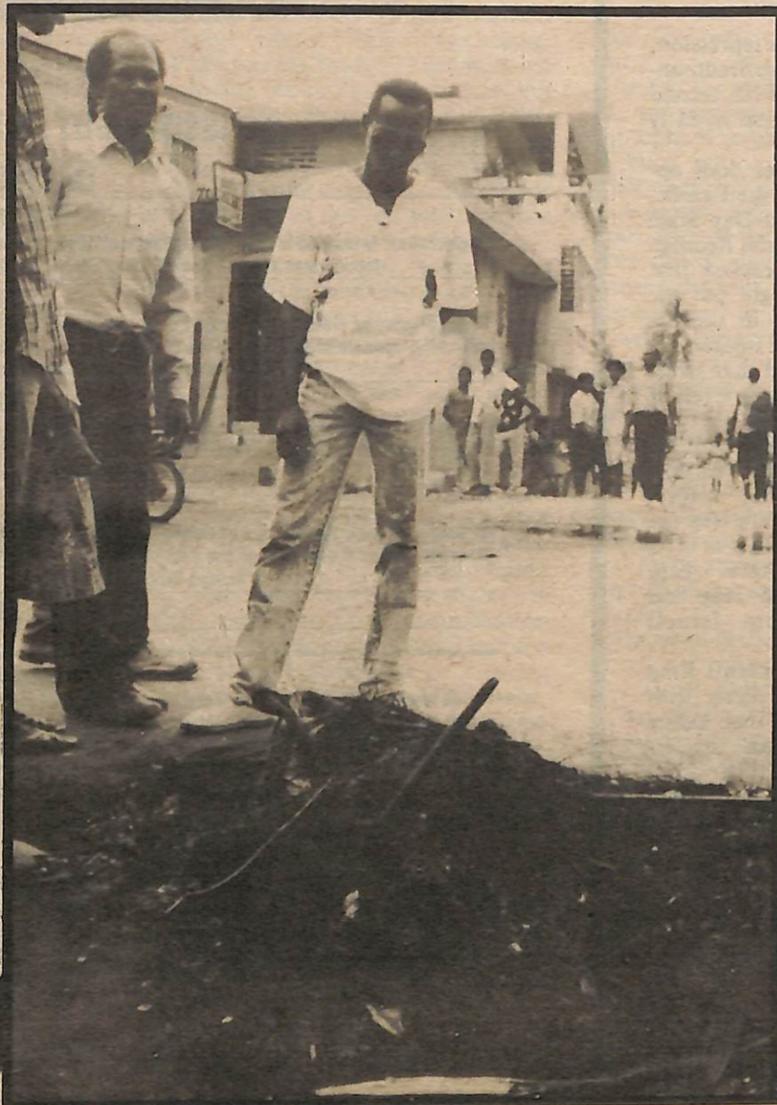
quired to get a photo I.D. card issued by the CEP — the bright yellow badge marked “Haiti Elections” was to become a death warrant for some later that week. Entering the building which housed the CEP offices after the original headquarters had been destroyed was like walking into territory under siege. Beyond the metal detectors, sand bags, and cement barricades was a large room. In it were millions of ballots, paid for courtesy of the Canadian government, in manila envelopes marked for locations in the farthest reaches of Haiti. The place was in total disarray. With the elections less than a week away, it was impossible to imagine the CEP dealing with the logistical problems, let alone the Macoutes and the army. The CEP press conference I went to that afternoon was equally grim. In sharp contrast to the people’s daring, the candidates and CEP members looked beleaguered, hemmed in, and terrified.

By Tuesday I felt as if night and day had been reversed. The day was lived in anticipation of dramas which would unfold only in the darkness. That night the vigilance brigades erected barricades all over Port-au-Prince to

stop death-squad cars and commandos. People’s patrols were also on the streets. Four men were apprehended and killed Tuesday night by the brigades. Two of them were policemen — one a member of a political investigation unit. Two others were stopped in a car in the slum of Cité Soley and after they were killed their bodies were set afire. Revolvers and ammunition were found in their car. The next morning I read that one of them had, in the horrified words of a pro-government daily, been “émasculé par la population” (castrated by the people). The masses had also stormed the house of a Tontons Macoute in the well-to-do neighborhood of Fontamorra. The Macoute’s house was burned down and two of his speedboats were demolished.

That same night people all over the city heard grenades exploding in Carrefour Feuilles, the place the “brigades de vigilance” had first appeared less than forty-eight hours before. These blasts announced the next episode in this explosive week.

To be continued



Nadine Andre — Special to the RW.

Remains of a Macoute who was “boukane” — roasted by vigilance brigades.

Land Day

Continued from page 3

Reports are that four Palestinians were killed and seventy injured in the West Bank on Land Day. The "official death toll" now stands at 120, with more deaths reported daily.

The Israeli army tried to claim that there were only "small disturbances with no casualties" in the Gaza Strip. However, the Strip was completely sealed off to the outside, so it should be assumed the Israelis are lying. The heavy-handed wall of silence that Israel is putting up around Gaza makes it hard to find out what is going on there.

Inside the "Green Line"

For years Arabs within the "green line" have been told by Israel to cut their ties with the rest of the Palestinian nation and to forget dreams of a liberated Palestine. Their struggle (it was said) was at most against their "second-class citizenship" status within Israel.

But after this Land Day, the *Chicago Tribune's* headline read: "Arabs in Israel Leave No Doubt about Loyalty." Hundreds of thousands of "Israeli Arabs" observed the general strike. Many thousands of them marched to beating drums and loudly shouted, "It's better to die than to lose your land!"

Shamir's New Threats

On Thursday, only one day after this heavy defeat, Prime Minister Shamir traveled to the West Bank and surrounded himself with an audience of racist settler thugs for a bloodthirsty stump speech. Standing in the ruins of an ancient West Bank castle, he declared: "They say... this land belongs to the rioters, the killers, the terrorists. But anyone who wants to damage this fortress and other fortresses we are establishing will have their skulls smashed against the boulders and walls." Shamir raged that Palestinians were "grasshoppers" who would be crushed.

Barely hidden behind such talk is a threat that Zionist troops and settlers may be unleashed to commit new levels of horrible pogrom-like massacres. At the same time Israel is taking further steps to prevent the outside world from hearing and seeing the details of Israeli crimes. The day after Land Day, the Palestinian News Service was closed down, accused of being linked to the Palestine Liberation Organization. Using the language of Nazism and apartheid, Israel said the closing was "necessary for maintaining public safety and public order."

U.S. Endorsement

As Israel was increasing the repression, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz announced that he will make his second "peace mission" to the region in early April.

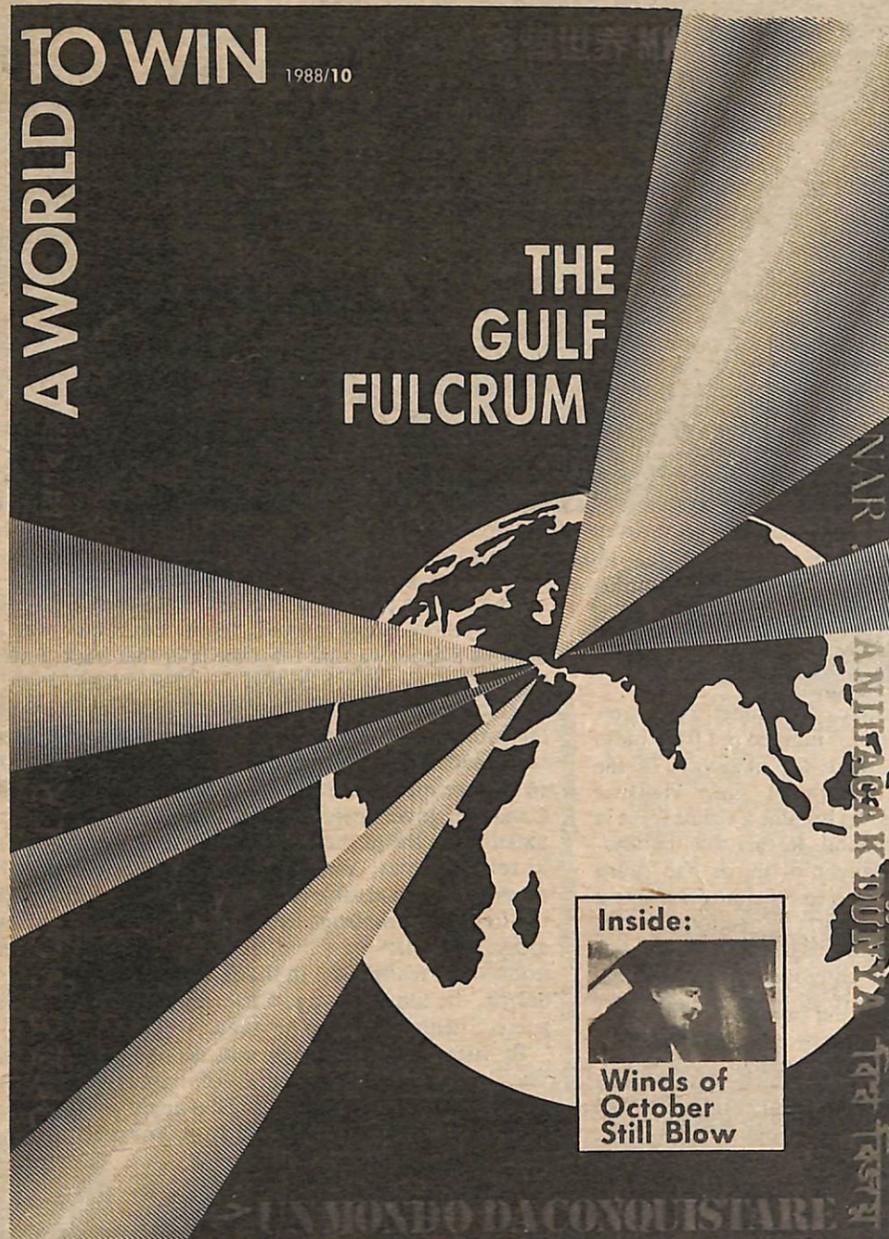
Nothing the United States does opposes the brutal violence of the Israelis. In fact, on the eve of Land Day State Department spokesman Charles Redman explained that the U.S. believed that Israel "not only has the right but the obligation to restore order in the occupied territories." A second Reagan administration spokesman said that Israel was obliged "to use appropriate levels of force to accomplish that end."

There are dual tactics at work here: on one hand, the Israelis seek to "soften up" the Palestinians with murder, torture, and growing economic warfare. On the other hand, the United States sends in its envoys, who pretend to have clean, neutral hands, in order to reap the diplomatic benefits from Israeli atrocities.

There are reports that Jordan's King Hussein has agreed to go along with Shultz's "peace plan" and that Yasser Arafat and the PLO "external" leadership may allow Palestinians to sit down for a talk with Shultz during his coming visit. At the same time, the latest leaflet from the underground "United National Command of the Uprising" called for a general strike and confrontations with Israeli soldiers to protest Shultz's trip.

The Palestinian uprising has left the Zionists and imperialists reeling from a series of defeats. As is their nature, these oppressors are preparing to respond with new, perhaps even more grotesque brutality and deceit. The intense struggle continues. □

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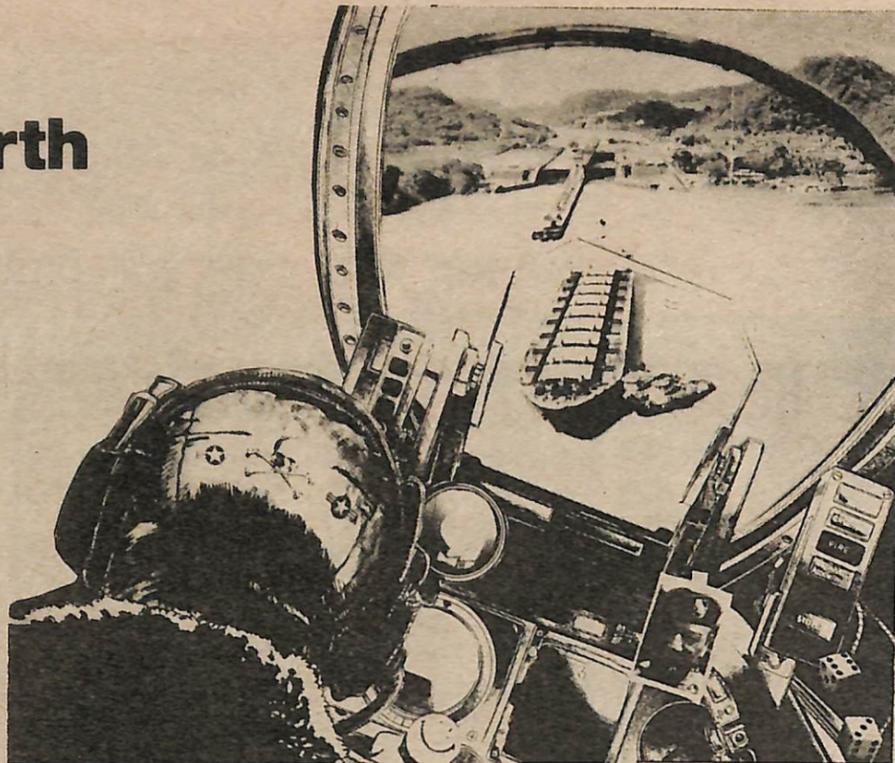
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Invasion from the North

Part 2: Panama



Continued from page 1

The troops will leave this week from Fort Ord, California; Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; and Fort Meade, Maryland. The deployment includes 300 Marines, 500 Army military police, an Army aviation unit with 350 soldiers, and 150 troops from three Air Force ground defense units and two canine squads. Several combat assault units are among them. Also being sent are twenty-six U.S. military helicopters, including seven AH-1 Cobra gunships which are considered by military experts to be one of the Army's most deadly weapons.

The U.S. military headquarters in Washington is threatening openly that this may only be the first wave of an even bigger deployment. Pentagon officials told the press that among the 1,300 troops are what it calls "headquarters elements" — command and control operations to ensure a "smooth transition" if the decision is made to send more troops to Panama. There are reports that Secretary of State George Shultz and some others in the Reagan administration wanted to move thousands more troops into Panama right away.

The sending of the 1,300 troops is the latest step by the U.S. to use its military muscle in Panama. Less than two weeks earlier, the U.S. ordered a special force of 670 soldiers to Panama, supposedly to guard the major U.S. military operations and bases of the Southern Command — the headquarters for U.S. military operations in Latin America. It comes less than a week after the USS *Okinawa*, a helicopter carrier on its way back from the Persian Gulf with 700 Marines on board, was sent through the Panama Canal. The *Okinawa* is now sitting just off Panama's Pacific coast. And while the 1,300 soldiers were getting ready to leave the U.S., 40,000 U.S. troops and twenty-eight U.S. warships were gathering in the Caribbean for the latest U.S. military maneuvers.

"Stabilizing" Panama

The immediate aim of the U.S. is to force General Manuel Noriega, the head of the Panamanian Defense Forces, out of power. It was the U.S. which put this reactionary thug in power and built him up in the first place, and Noriega performed his tasks well for the masters up north. Over 130 of the top 500 U.S. corporations (and hundreds of others) have offices in Panama, and over 10,000 U.S. military personnel are stationed there permanently. Panama under Noriega has also been very useful for the U.S. in its intrigues in Central America.

But now the U.S. wants to get him out of the way to tighten up control over Panama. As the location of the Panama Canal, the site for CIA electronic surveillance stations, and base for the Southern Command, Panama is very important to the U.S. rulers. And the U.S. is also worried that its problems in Panama make it look weak in the eyes of the world.

The Pentagon statement on the sending of the troops openly talked about the imperialist interests behind the move: "The instability of the current situation in Panama... and the potential for increased threats to U.S. citizens and interests in Panama make this deployment essential at this time to insure the con-

tinued safety of U.S. personnel and facilities."

The Reagan administration has been trying various ways to pressure Noriega out. They squeezed Panama's dependent economy by creating a shortage of U.S. dollars (which is the currency in Panama), they backed a general strike by opposition forces who are very much at the U.S.'s beck and call, and they called on the military to stage a coup against Noriega. But so far all this hasn't worked. In fact, Noriega has been stabilizing things his way to some extent by forcing the general strike to crumble, figuring out ways to keep some dollars coming in, and tightening control over his military.

Coups and Other Plans

By sending in its rapid deployment troops and threatening a full-scale military assault, the U.S. hopes to stabilize things *its* way. The first choice for the U.S. probably is to encourage a coup in the Panamanian military, with the U.S. troops standing by as an encouragement — and a threat. In the past few weeks U.S. officials have been openly courting officers in the Panama Defense Forces who are afraid that if Noriega goes, *their* position and lives will also be in danger. The U.S. is promising that all they want is to get rid of Noriega and that the military as a whole will not be touched. The other side of the promise is that if the Panamanian officers *don't* go against Noriega, some of them will be swept away along with him.

This is more exposure that the U.S. doesn't want to see any fundamental changes in Panamanian society. The U.S. imperialists want to keep and strengthen their grip on Panama, and they need a brutal local military and police to keep "peace."

But Noriega has crushed one coup attempt already, and the U.S. is making it clear that it is considering other options. There are reports in the press that State

Department officials were pushing for taking direct military action, for example having the CIA organize a coup or using a paramilitary force to kidnap Noriega and bring him to the U.S. for trial on drug-trafficking and money-laundering charges. The Pentagon, it is reported, is reluctant to do any of this because officials fear that such blatant actions could lead to anti-American protests among the masses in Panama and beyond. The press

has also played up calls by U.S.-backed anti-Noriega figures for U.S. military action against the general.

It is unclear whether these reports have been "leaked" in order to put more pressure on Noriega or if there are real arguments within the administration over concrete plans. But the U.S. ruling class as a whole see eye-to-eye on the need to get Noriega out as soon as possible. There has not been a word of opposition in Washington against Reagan sending troops to Panama. Liberal Democrats like Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, who have tried to build up an image as "peace makers" in Central America, have been even more rabid than the Reaganauts in calling for the U.S. to "do whatever must be done" to get rid of Noriega.

The U.S. is also looking nervously at the situation among the masses in Panama. There are reports of growing food shortages and hardships among the poorest sections of the people, and a move by the U.S. military could have unpredictable consequences in this situation.

The stand of proletarians is clear: The U.S. has no right to decide and determine what will happen in Panama. Noriega is an enemy of the Panamanian people — but behind Noriega and others in the Panamanian ruling class stand the U.S. godfathers and their system which keeps Panama under foreign domination.

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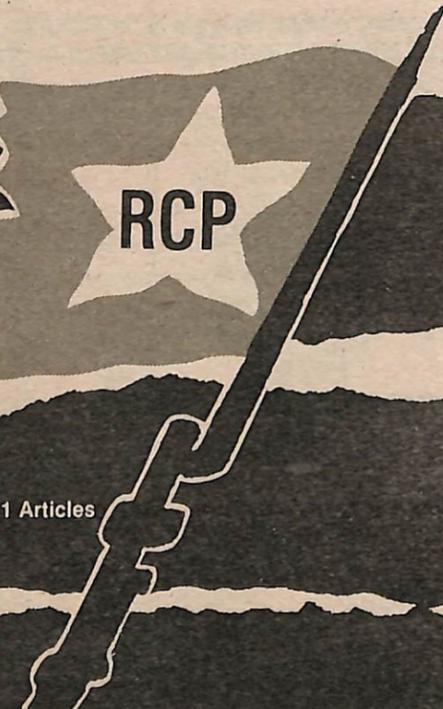
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