

• REPORT FROM EL SALVADOR • REPORT FROM EL SALVADOR •

These are the first of a series of feature articles written for Prensa Latina from El Salvador by Mexican journalist Mario Menéndez at the risk of his life. The author was an exceptional witness to the ferocious repression unleashed by the hated oligarchy — a faithful servant of Yankee imperialism — and to the heroic struggle of the people for their liberation

**DEEP, IRREVERSIBLE CRISIS**

# GENERAL INSURRECTION IN THE MAKING

BY MARIO MENÉNDEZ RODRÍGUEZ (SPECIAL FOR PRENSA LATINA)



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Historic moment: the agreement of unity of action of the mass organizations, Popular Revolutionary Bloc, 23th of February People's Leagues, Unitary Popular Action Front (FAPU) and the Democratic Nationalist Union (UDN), among others.

The case of Ernesto Barrera Moto shook the pillars of Salvadoran social conscience with even greater force, because this exemplary priest chose armed struggle, joined the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces and died in unequal combat against the regime's repressive bodies.

Mexican nun María Esther López' life was saved because the killers felt that as a foreigner it was politically wiser to merely deport her.

However, among the savage crimes that have shaken public opinion and the Catholic Church in general, Archbishop Romero in particular, special stress is placed on the killings of Apolinario Serrano (Polín), founder and general secretary of the Christian Federation of Salvadoran Peasants (FECCAS), bastion of the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR), the principal mass organization in El Salvador, and Felipe de Jesús Chacón, outstanding leader of the Christianity Courses Movement and father of BPR general secretary Juan Chacón Vásquez.

The killers' hatred and fear of these persons, "essentially good and very much loved by the people," to quote the Archbishop of San Salvador during an exclusive interview with Prensa Latina, were reflected in their unrecognizable bodies. Suffice it to say that Felipe de Jesús was not only shot; his face heralding the new human being was flayed; his eyes that had witnessed countless crimes and the tongue with which he had denounced the fourteen families were cut out.

The Salvadoran people were left with no course but that of revolutionary violence in reply to ultraright-wing terror. And they have opted, after having exhausted all peaceful means, for wielding the legitimate, supreme right of insurrection.

The sixth meeting of the Revolutionary Council of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces... Had the journalist been caught with these pictures he would not be alive today.

None of this is an exaggeration.

In the martyred, heroic land of the Aguilares — three brothers, priests, who played an outstanding role in early 19th century independence struggles against Spanish colonial rule — the bullets of automatic rifles hidden in the bush destroyed the body of a venerable Jesuit, Rutilio Grande, when he was on his way home after visiting a household in mourning due to right-wing terror. He was sacrificed to Moloch, "in the name of National Security."

In San Vicente, parish priest Alirio Macías was riddled with bullets by members of one of the fascist bands serving the fourteen families: ORDEN (Nationalist Democratic Organization).

In the bloody streets of San Salvador priest Octavio Ortiz made the sign of the cross and begged for mercy for people wounded in a demonstration. The killers did not heed his pleas, they were not moved by the tears of the man of God: a light tank crushed him to death. The bodies of other victims were also flattened by armored vehicles.

The name of Rafael Palacios has been added to the list of priests murdered by the fascist hordes, as has that of Alfonso Navarro Oviedo, executed in the Miramonte Monastery. The fourteen families accused this noted leader of Christianity courses of having helped organize rural and city wage earners.

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYNTHESIS

Today more than ever before the dispossessed are determined to destroy the old, outworn economic, political and social structures of the prison-country which for close to half a century has been under the yoke of an implacable military dictatorship, guardian of the interests of the oligarchy and foreign capital, and where:

- Less than half of one percent of the owners possess 37.3 percent of the arable land while 91.4 percent own 21.9 percent.
- Fifty-eight percent of the population have less than ten dollars a month to "live on."
- Sixty percent of the Salvadorans living in rural areas and 40 percent of those living in the cities cannot read or write.
- Just 15 percent of the economically active population work all year round.
- There are less than three doctors per 10 000 inhabitants and most of the country's 1300 doctors are concentrated in the capital.
- There are under two hospital beds per thousand inhabitants while there are no reliable infant mortality data.
- Population density is 200 per square kilometer, and in San Salvador over 200 000 people exist in subhuman conditions — with cardboard or newspaper covering, no plumbing facilities, running water or electricity.



In such a setting, even minor struggles to back wage demands become grave social conflicts.

## UNITY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY AND DEMOCRATIC FORCES

The relentless advance of the Salvadoran people takes on greater thrust because for the first time the most outstanding revolutionary political-military organizations — the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces, the Communist Party of El Salvador, the Armed Forces of National Resistance and the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) are acting together.

At the same time this unity of action also extends, in actual practice, to the main mass organizations: the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR), the 28th of February People's Leagues, the Unitary Popular Action Front (FAPU) and the Democratic Nationalist Union (UDN), organizations with which important Catholic Church and social democratic sectors cooperate, as well as the realistic, progressive sector of the Christian Democratic Party and an unknown number of young military men who for security reasons act with great caution.

The horizon of unity among revolutionary and democratic forces broadens with the process of social liberation, which also includes the Revolutionary Party of Salvadoran Workers and

the People's Liberation Movement, both founded in 1979, and other leagues and groups.

In demonstrations, in the armed occupation of cities, towns, cantons, estates and factories, the indispensable coordination leading to the qualitative development of the revolutionary process is evident.

## FOREIGN INTERVENTION

Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser of United States President James Carter, does not hide his concern over the revolutionary situation in El Salvador, especially after the failure of the first government junta, which lasted slightly over two months, and the lack of popular support for the "new" attempt to deal with the crisis. The "new" attempt is that of the armed forces, "represented" by Colonels José Guillermo García, Jaime Abdul Gutiérrez (both with close ties to the CIA) and Adolfo Arnaldo Mejano, in alliance with the right-wing sector of the Christian Democratic Party headed by engineer José Napoleón Duarte.

The appointment of Robert White, adviser for several years to Paraguayan dictator Alfredo Stroessner and specialist in counterinsurgency, as ambassador; the visit by Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs William Bowdler; and the arrival of more than a few Pentagon officials coincide with the incorporation of several thousand U.S. Somozist,

the dynamics of events in El Salvador could mean an important change in U.S. policy regarding Latin America. Hence, a direct armed intervention against the homeland of Agustín Farabundo Martí (labor leader killed during the 1932 slaughter) first with the participation of the regular armies of Guatemala and Honduras and then, or perhaps at the same time, of special U.S. operative divisions stationed in the Caribbean.

The Pentagon has its cards on the table, as demonstrated by General Robert Schwitzer, one of its specialists in armed interventions.

## INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

In 1932 El Salvador was the scene of a popular insurrection that was crushed by the regime of General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez. The toll of blood for that attempt to storm the heavens of freedom, democracy, independence and social justice was extraordinary: over 30 000 dead, among peasants, students, workers, and other sectors.

Since then Latin America in particular and progressive governments and peoples of the world in general have a debt of solidarity with the heroic Salvadoran people whose impressive, just struggle of today, after close to half a century, is entering a decisive, difficult stage.

People of good faith have the floor.

Saigonese, Guatemalan and counterrevolutionary Cuban mercenaries into the ranks of private armies at the service of the fourteen families and with stepped-up repression in El Salvador.

The repressive high command, clandestine in nature, includes Washington advisers; generals such as José Alberto Medrano, colonels such as José Guillermo García; majors such as Roberto D'Abwison; and the financial groups of the Cuscatlán Bank and the Popular Credit Bank, both associated with foreign capital — especially U.S. capital. The command coordinates not only the operations of private armies but also the activities of the National Security Agency (ANSESAL), the National Guard, the customs, treasury and national police, the army's Counterinsurgency School, — located in San Francisco Cotera in Morazán department in the eastern part of the country — the Engineering School of the Armed Forces (CIIFA) — located in Zacatecoluca, La Paz department in the central region — and ORDEN — which in turn maintains ties with the Guatemalan "National Liberation" Movement headed by mass murderer Mario Sandoval Alarcón.

The linkup of an infinitesimal part of the fortunes of the fourteen families — especially the Hill, Regalado and Dueñas families — with the "National Security" experience of the fascist military is hidden behind corporations set up for that purpose with the support of the Cuscatlán Bank and the Popular Credit Bank into which the Central Bank funnels over half the financial resources of the Salvadoran state.

Week after week large shipments of arms for the private armies and special bodies of the ultraright, plus the "institutional" forces, arrive from Miami and Guatemala. And Ilopango International Airport shifts its civil operations to Comalapa in order to become exclusively a strategic military air force center. In the past few days it has received from the United States several dozen combat helicopters for counterinsurgency combat.

Meanwhile the United States Government, in agreement with that of Honduras, where the Francisco Morazán National Liberation Front is active, has mined the main highways along the Honduran border with El Salvador and Nicaragua.

## THE STRATEGIC DOMINO

Unquestionably, El Salvador is the United States' strategic domino in the Central American game. If it falls, according to Pentagon thinking, Guatemala and Honduras would not be far behind.

But if the Salvadoran revolutionary movement is defeated in the decisive clashes of the next few months, then the armed forces of international neofascism would intervene in Nicaragua.

Within the cold war setting of recent weeks,

In a people's prison: Interview with the South African ambassador

# ARCHIBALD DUNN: ACCUSED OF HORRIBLE CRIMES

● **SOMEWHERE IN EL SALVADOR.** February 14. — "Yes, I have consciously served the Government of South Africa. I identify with its apartheid policy. I have served as adviser to Salvadoran military presidents, and I don't care what they do to me," Ambassador Archibald Gardner Dunn, captured on November 28, 1979, by the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces, told Prensa Latina.

Sceldom before in the history of revolutionary processes has a journalist entered a people's prison to interview an official held prisoner by an organization fighting to transform society, much less in the exceptional conditions of civil war existing in this small country.

The 80-minute interview was obtained after an impressive revolutionary control over the operational situation, studied with scientific rigor for hours along roads and paths; the mind always alert and the body prepared to apply the emergency measures explained at the start of the whole movement leading to the people's prison.

A climate of tension characterized the operation, and at times a cloud of uncertainty made for a rarified atmosphere, especially when we had to stop outside garrisons and posts manned by the regular and special or secret forces of the military dictatorship. Any mistakes, even as the result of an unforeseen circumstance, could mean death.

## SOUGHT FOR CRIMES AGAINST BLACK PEOPLE

Ambassador Archibald Gardner Dunn is a veteran racist officer of his country's intelligence service in Central America and one of the individuals most sought after by the South African liberation front, which accuses him of savage crimes against the black people.

In a letter to the top leadership of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces, which was read in the presence of this writer at the closing of the sixth meeting of their Revolutionary Council, the South African guerrillas state, among other things, that:

- a) they are deeply grateful for the gesture of international solidarity demonstrated with the action known as Long Live the Struggle of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America which consisted of "kidnapping the reactionary ambassador of racist South Africa," describing it as a "blessing" for the liberation front because it took place when some of its members are facing execution by hanging; [For 14 years Nelson Mandela, president of the African National Congress, has been held in the prisons of the Pretoria regime.]
- b) Archibald Gardner Dunn "deserves no consideration or pity from any armed revolu-



A revolutionary fighter stands guard in the people's prison.

tionary hand that falls on him" due to his criminal record;

- c) if possible they wish to take part with the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces in the negotiations with the racist Government of South Africa in order to bring about an exchange of agent Ambassador Dunn for the black revolutionary leaders sentenced to death in South Africa; and,

- d) above all, "please don't let him go until we get there."

## THE DEMANDS HAVE NOT BEEN MET

Before receiving the letter from the South African freedom fighters to the Revolutionary Council of the Farabundo Martí PLF, the demands raised by the political-military organization in exchange for the release of Archibald Gardner Dunn were limited to the publication of two statements in the main newspapers of the capitalist world.

In the first document (under 12 typewritten pages) the Farabundo Martí PLF stressed that the operation was of an essentially internationalist nature; it denounced the development of economic, military and political ties of the United States, Israel and South Africa with the military dictatorships of Latin America, stressing those in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, El Salvador and Guatemala. It also denounced what has already become an agreement, the South Atlantic Treaty Organization (SATO).

In regard to that treaty, which brings even closer the danger of a nuclear holocaust, the PLF statement said that NATO has "equipped and trained the South African military forces" so that the racist regime could become the "agent promoting the SATO military bloc" which includes the military regimes of the Latin American southern cone, where apartheid forces are already gaining a bridgehead. Concretely, areas in Bolivia and northern Argentina are beginning to be settled by racist immigrants from the African southern cone.



The demands have not been met. They include the publication in the main newspapers of the capitalist world of two documents, in one of which the killings in El Salvador are denounced.

In the second document (close to 21 typewritten pages) the PLF outlined the dramatic economic, political and social situation in El Salvador, revealing the main reasons leading up to the October 15, 1979, coup d'etat and the constitution of the first post-coup junta. It also set forth the goals of the immediate, savage repression unleashed against the popular organizations and explained the perspective of the struggle in Central America and the strategy of a "prolonged people's war" led by the Farabundo Martí PLF.

In the second document, a solution is offered to the Salvadoran crisis through the constitution of a people's revolutionary government, and some of the necessary measures are set forth: genuine implementation of democratic and political freedoms, expropriation of the means of production owned by the fourteen families, agrarian and urban reforms and a literacy campaign.

Fear of the truth prevented publication of the two documents, the only demand for the release of the South African ambassador.

### FACE TO FACE WITH ARCHIBALD DUNN

As a security measure the revolutionaries of the Farabundo Martí PLF proposed that I cover my face with a hood or mask. However I convinced them that in order to stave off any possible doubts regarding the interview in the people's prison, and, in addition, with the South African ambassador, it was necessary to run a personal risk.

They didn't like the idea, but they finally agreed. And so Archibald Dunn met the writer of the present series face to face.

The veteran racist was in good health. He was unable to disguise his status as a South African intelligence officer. At first he attempted to use his considerable experience to try to obtain information and at the same time misinform the reporter.

When he noticed the presence of a photographer, Dunn thought of the possibility of putting psychological pressure on his captors through the media if he managed to "sell" the image of a sick man to international public opinion. Thus he stayed in bed throughout the interview, but the contents of his statements, his tone of voice and his cynical laugh into the tape recorder revealed him to be the individual described by the South African combatants.

The racist official thought that the writer was interested only in his case and assumed he had just arrived in El Salvador. Thus, when asked if he was aware of the identity of the people who were holding him captive, he replied:

"No, I don't have the slightest idea, and I am unaware of the reasons for the kidnapping."

"But Mister Dunn," I said, "just a few weeks ago, to be exact, in the last few days of December, you sent two letters that were carried by the Salvadoran media... One of the letters was addressed to your wife and the other to your friend Ernesto Rivas Gallont [at the service of "the fourteen families"]. You told them that you were well, in the hands of the Farabundo Martí Liberation Forces and asked them to see to it that the instructions and demands were carried out so you could recover your freedom... In addition a flag of the revolutionary organization is hung right in this people's prison..."

Archibald Gardner Dunn was silent for a while and then said:

"Well, what of it?"

"Well, for a start," I suggested, "how about sticking to the truth?"

Little by little the veteran actor with colonial airs began to lose control.

"And what is the truth?" he asked.

"Let's talk," I said, "about the truth of the South African racist regime, where black people are persecuted, tortured and killed. Let's talk about the savage discrimination against 25 million human beings whose most elementary rights are denied and who are forced to live like animals... Have you forgotten the Sharpeville and Soweto massacres? Or have you forgotten that you happen to be the South African ambassador?"

Dunn smiled cynically:

Dunn is a veteran officer of the Pretoria intelligence service in Central America. He thought that by playing sick he might be able to exert psychological pressure on his captors through the press. So, he refused to get out of bed. The contents of his statements, the tone of his voice and his cynical laugh before the tape recorder revealed him to be the individual described by South Africa's freedom fighters.



"In prisons anywhere in the world, some unpleasant things happen. That is true, but in South Africa we do not practice a conscious policy of torture, killing and discrimination against black people... as you claim... On the contrary, black people enjoy the same rights as we whites..."

He was about to go on, but I interrupted:

"A prison, Mister Dunn, that is precisely what South Africa is today for millions of black people; a huge prison that includes Namibia and which Vorster tried to extend to Angola... To be sure, from what I can see, the conditions in which you are being held and the treatment you are being given in this people's prison are very different from what's meted out to blacks in the South African cages. Isn't that the case?"

Suddenly, in an attempt to distract attention from him and recover some of the ground he had lost, the ambassador asked:

"Why are you attacking me?"

"I'm not attacking you, Mister Dunn, just stating the facts, of which you are well aware and seek to distort. Because the reason for your kidnapping is the racist nature of the regime you represent, and which has been condemned by the United Nations. And you are not unaware of that..."

Again, Dunn fell silent.

"Why don't you speak, Mister Dunn?" I asked.

Once again, the cynical laugh:

"The problem is that people don't understand my country's government. In South Africa, to a certain extent, there are some racial differences, but we do not hide them. The same thing is true for other countries... We have been in Namibia since the end of World War I, but things are changing, we are helping to change them; elections were already held..."

"What's that about changes?" I interrupted. "Namibia today is occupied by South African racist troops and the elections that you organized were a farce. They were held in the absence of United Nations observers and without the participation of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) which represents the legitimate rights of the people..."

Archibald Gardner then stated:

"Well, the fact of the matter is that I haven't seen the latest official reports...."

"No, Mr. Ambassador," I said, "the truth is that your replies are very strange coming from an official of your standing, with so many years in the South African foreign service.... The electoral farce was staged in Namibia over a year ago.... However, let's continue, because you still haven't given us your view of what is going on in your country...."

The visibly annoyed Ambassador replied:

"People there enjoy a regime of freedoms that you know nothing about...."

"Are you referring," I broke in again, "to the bantustans, the territories reserved for blacks? Have you forgotten that your government plans to take away from the black people their South African citizenship so it can then claim that there is no racial segregation?"

As the interview went on, the veteran racist officer increasingly lost his self-control....

"And why did South Africa invade Angola?"

The reply was categorical:

"To help our old friend Jonas Savimbi."

In regard to the South Atlantic Treaty Organization (SATO) and the many links of all kinds existing between the United States, South Africa, Israel and the military dictatorships of the Latin American southern cone and those of Guatemala and El Salvador, Dunn, once again, displayed the strange "ignorance and naiveté" that characterize him as a long-time Pretoria intelligence officer:

"If a country produces arms, if it has arms, it may try to sell them... but since I possess no official reports I am unable to reply in regard to military pacts and such things.... Such things as whether we have the atom bomb or not...."

The interview had lasted for over an hour and my presence was becoming most annoying to the South African diplomat....

"One last question, Mister Dunn, What is your role in El Salvador and Central America in particular and Latin America in general?"

"Look, let's get something straight: I have consciously served the Government of South Africa; I identify with its apartheid policy; and I don't care what they do to me. The presidents and military commanders of El Salvador have honored me with their friendship and at times have requested my advice, which, as a good friend and in order to serve the government, I have been happy to offer.... I can say the same thing in regard to Nicaragua, where I also served as ambassador [during the Somoza dictatorship]... but, as to the rest of Latin America, I cannot reply.... I have no official report.... Yes, it is true that I am a good friend of the Argentine ambassador in San Salvador, but, look here, just leave me alone...."

And that was the end of my 80-minute interview with racist Ambassador Archibald Gardner Dunn.

Readers can imagine what it meant to this writer to emerge from the people's prison with these materials: a cassette with the taped interview and a roll of film of pictures of the historic event. For hours, death hovered very close.

The return journey seemed endless.



A battle in the heart of the capital: a soldier shoots his G-3 from inside a car...

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*...revolutionary struggle was — and is — the only course...*

But there was no need to do so, because the zones we were in are organized politically, by the party of the organization, and militarily, by the army, the guerrillas and the militia, that is, by the People's Liberation Armed Forces.

In addition, the mass organizations in those places are supervised by the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR).

#### **A REFUGEE IN MEXICO: WORKING IN MÉRIDA**

"For a short time," Salvador Cayetano Carpio remarked before we began to record the interview, "I was in exile in Mexico. I worked in the place you're from, in Yucatán. Mérida is very pretty and the people there are hospitable... but I had to return to my country to continue the struggle..."

The security chief of the PLF had said we had four hours for the first interview and he warned that the security measures should be followed to the letter.

The message seemed aimed at the journalist since "Marcial" is one of those leaders who have great respect for discipline and are the first to set an example, never demanding more of others than they do of themselves.

And so we began the interview to answer ten years' worth of questions...

#### **THE FARABUNDO MARTÍ PLF IN APRIL 1970**

When and why was the Farabundo Martí PLF founded?

"The beginning of the work to organize it goes back to April 1, 1970, which means that this year it will be a decade ago. It came into being as a necessity of the revolutionary process of our people, a process that, having reached a certain level in the class struggle, required forging political and organizational instruments capable of implementing their struggle in an integral way in all spheres... This historical necessity arose after a long process of ideological struggle within the traditional organizations when it became evident that they stubbornly refused to lead the working class and the people in the new stages of struggle that needed to be undertaken... Concretely, the traditional organizations denied the possibility and necessity of the Salvadoran people undertaking the process of revolutionary armed struggle. They also denied the mounting element of revolutionary violence in the struggles of the broad popular masses..."

"Now then, within the Communist Party of El Salvador and the organizations influenced by it, if there hadn't arisen a stubborn majority that at all costs blocked the advance towards the political-military strategy that the people needed for moving towards new stages of struggle, no need would have arisen to create a revolutionary organization such as the Farabundo Martí



*Interviewing a militiaman after the occupation of Peña, a landed estate belonging to a member of the Salvadoran oligarchy — one of the many revolutionary actions carried out by the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces.*

People's Liberation Forces, which rapidly incorporated broad sectors of the people into all forms of struggle.

"Life has shown that the advance of the process of class struggle cannot be stopped with dogmatic formulas, which, at a given point, no longer correspond to objective reality and to the historical need for social development. That is the reason the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces came into being.

"Before it was founded, I repeat, it was necessary to wage within the Communist Party and other organizations an ideological struggle that took many years; it began virtually with the victory of the Cuban Revolution, when the most clear-sighted people in those organizations began to feel that a dogmatic line could not lead the revolutionary process into the new stages that were required.

"By the end of 1969 it was very clear that El Salvador, its people, needed an overall strategy in which all methods of struggle could be used and combined in dialectical fashion, and that armed struggle would be the main thread running through the people's revolutionary fervor and would become in the process the basic element for the destruction of the counterrevolutionary forces.

"So, in reaching that conviction, the most clear-sighted people, who at that moment understood the needs of the revolutionary struggle in our country, had to withdraw from the organizations to which they had virtually devoted their lives, with a great deal of pain but with great realism in taking the step. . . . Thus it was necessary to create more effective instruments of struggle for the people. . . . To do so it was necessary to leave posts of great responsibility and honor in those other organizations.

"Several of our members who later joined the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces as founding members were esteemed leaders of

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the workers movement. For instance, José Dimas Alas was the secretary general of the Labor Unity Federation and one of its founders; Comrade Ernesto Morales was the youth secretary of the same Federation; and there were others who were also labor leaders who had to leave the traditional organizations to be able to develop in the new revolutionary school. . . . In my own case I resigned as general secretary of the Communist Party of El Salvador, a post I had held for a number of years. I made the move when it became evident that it wasn't possible to get the Party to understand the need for a political-military strategy, that is, an overall revolutionary strategy, and that this had to be demonstrated to our people in practice. . . . Once the correctness of the political-military strategy was demonstrated in practice, when it was clear it could no longer be denied, the different honest forces in the country could find in the new organization a point of contact on a new basis. . . .

"In other words, after it was demonstrated that revolutionary struggle was — and is — the only course, then and only then was it possible to seek other paths in the direction of greater unity. . . .

"And it is through the efforts of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces, through the efforts of many comrades killed in struggle over the past ten years, that it has been clearly demonstrated that the political-military revolutionary strategy of prolonged war has enabled our people to advance to a stage in which no honest person in El Salvador can fail to recognize that it is the only course for the definitive liberation of our people."



## WE HAD TO FIND OUT IF WE COULD MAKE THE GRADE

However, in the first two years, that is 1970 to 1972, the organization today known as the Farabundo Martí PLF went without a name. Why was that?

"That was an easy decision to make, and we made it at the first meeting of our organization for reasons that we regarded then as basic for becoming revolutionaries with a new discipline, forged in the sacrifices required by the course we were adopting, that of prolonged war, a course that had not been tried in our country....

"We needed to find out if we were capable of promoting that course and if we ourselves as people were going to succeed in following that course, if we would be able to acquire enough strength and make the necessary sacrifices, give up normal life for an underground existence and cope with strict compartmentalization....

"That is, we needed to be tempered in the crucible of practice. You can say it was a test to see if we were capable of putting theory into practice. And only practical experience could give us the answer....

"Moreover, in previous years, in El Salvador there had been a lot of theory, and we had fought against the theories of the armchair revolutionaries.... So we had to prove that we weren't going to be revolutionaries in word alone. The course was difficult and unknown; we had to find out if we could make the grade.

"In the second place, we were deeply influenced by the appearance in the '60s of a number of organizations with the good intentions of taking the road of the guerrilla struggle in the mountains; they would immediately speak of those aspirations to internationalist comrades from other countries, who helped them fraternally, so they could carry out the revolutionary project in El Salvador.... However, after a short time it became clear that those groups broke up, that they splintered.

"We needed to leave that formula behind, and so, for the first while, we didn't ask for aid of any kind from our comrades abroad. That's because we didn't feel that we had in practice lived the revolutionary life that would mean we were

deserving of being recognized as revolutionaries.... There was a third factor involved; we needed not only to prove ourselves and forge the initial group and the cells that began to form around our organization, we also needed our people to begin to recognize through actual practice that a serious revolutionary organization had emerged, one that was prepared to conduct the revolutionary struggle in all respects.... That was why we decided not to adopt a name until our people recognized the organization because of its political and military importance....

"That was decided between August and September 1972, when some of our dearest founding comrades had already shed their blood fighting the enemy. Their deaths shook the people, who saw how exemplary those comrades were in their readiness to give their lives for the people's cause. That spirit of determination, of devotion was recognized by the Salvadoran people....

"Moreover we had already conducted some actions in solidarity, international solidarity. For instance after the Trelew murders, we blew up the Argentine embassy. Another series of actions against imperialism were carried out and our people were shaken by the possibility and the existence of an organization that was emerging as using all methods of struggle.

"Then, once that point had been reached, we had to inform the people of our existence; the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces also began to influence and conduct propaganda among the masses.... Our objective was to build a broad mass movement...."

## THE PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW SOME OF THEIR LEADERS

After ten years this is the first disclosure of the identity of the top leader of the central command of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces. What are the reasons for this?

"This is a natural thing in our organization. Due to its characteristic of being an underground, compartmentalized organization, no one is known by their real name. Even within the central command, the comrades who work daily in the top war command don't know each other's real names. Therefore, within the organization, the great majority of the comrades don't know my real identity....

"It is a rule of our organization that only in the context of the needs of our work are we to see each other's faces. And that has to be the case not only in regard to myself but also in regard to the cadres who direct the revolution in our organization....

"But there is another consideration: the members of our organization fuse with the organization into a single collective. Our work is collective and individual contributions become part of the patrimony of our organization. There is no need in that regard for people to be identified by their real name; what our organization requires are pseudonyms.

"So, because of the collective work, the compartmentalization, the rules of an underground existence and also for security reasons, it was very natural for my name not to be known....

"Now, for political reasons, the organization feels my name should be revealed. Those reasons have to do with the moment in which we are living and the need for the people to know some of their leaders."

The part of the past recounted by Salvador Cayetano Carpio is projected towards a qualitatively different present and demonstrates once again the dialectics of development through contradictions. For in a decisive moment for the process of social liberation, the Communist Party of El Salvador, today led by Schafik Jorge Handal, has earned the historic merit of offering an example of unity of action of the revolutionary and democratic forces that provided a great thrust to the revolution and deserved the recognition of the Salvadoran people.

A peasant, Belazo, tells Prensa Latina how the hordes of the extreme right killed his child and brother-in-law. His wife and sister-in-law tried to describe the crimes but broke down into sobs....



# The war enters its final stages

- The time depends on broader unity of international solidarity
- A grave for marines if U.S. intervenes ● People certain

## IV

● **SOMEWHERE IN EL SALVADOR**, February 21. — "This war, which has now lasted ten years, is entering its final stages. . . . We don't think it will be too long before a people's revolutionary government is set up, and if the United States steps in directly El Salvador will be the grave of Yankee Marines," warned Salvador Cayetano Carpio, top leader of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces.

In an exclusive interview for *Excelsior*, "Comrade Marcial," champion of the political-military makeup of the Salvadoran revolution, unfolding in a strategy of prolonged people's war combining all forms and means of struggle, stressed that the time needed to attain the social liberation of this small nation depends essentially in developing and strengthening the unity of action of revolutionary and democratic forces.

### AGUSTÍN FARABUNDO MARTÍ AND NICARAGUA IN 1979

The organization bears the name of one who is a "lofty symbol in the history of El Salvador, Central America and Latin America."

Because Agustín Farabundo Martí, as Carpio pointed out, "has been the most outstanding revolutionary in the whole of our people's history. An exemplary internationalist, he fought alongside Sandino and his guerrillas in the Segovias in Nicaragua. Founder of the Communist Party in March 1930, two years later he headed a vast popular insurrection — which failed, due, among other reasons, to the following: limited development of the working class, ignorance of military arts, almost total lack of arms, military structures and leaders, a Party to which there was still no shape, which was taking its first steps, and with a basic weakness in its social composition. . . ."

Agustín Farabundo Martí, taken prisoner due to an act of betrayal, was shot by General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez in 1932, when over 30 000 Salvadorans lost their lives.

However, the weaknesses and errors mentioned, which led to others that also played a role in the defeat of the popular movement, "were studied and analyzed carefully by our organization," explained Carpio, "and the teachings obtained from that heroic experience guide current revolutionary practice. . . ."

Suddenly Carpio fell silent. . . . through his mind pass the names of the numerous martyrs who made the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces possible. . . . He recalled the initial nucleus, the founders of the Salvadoran dawn. . . . Only a few are left. . . .

And he added:

"The internationalist example of Agustín Farabundo Martí was reflected in actual practice during the struggle of the Sandinista people of Nicaragua against the savage Somoza dictatorship, when a brigade from our organization, under the name and the red banner of the exemplary revolutionary, fought and shed their blood for the liberation of our beloved Nicaraguan brothers and sisters. Artillery men Luis, Neto, Morris and Quique were killed in action in Nicaragua in 1979 and posthumously named honorary councilors of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces at our sixth meeting of the Revolutionary Council. . . ."

In the early days, "when we had to prove ourselves in the revolutionary school and earn political and military recognition from the people," Carpio himself led and participated in armed actions. "And not only in the beginning, but afterwards, too, whenever there was need of certain operations."

### POLITICAL ASYLUM 'IS NOT A POSITIVE EXPEDIENT'

Due to the specific conditions of El Salvador (a small land area, crisscrossed by roads and with no high mountains, and with 200 inhabitants per square kilometer), one of the characteristics of the members of the People's Liberation Forces is not to use political asylum.

"The struggle in our country is very hard, the repression constant," explained Carpio. "All revolutionaries are under threat day and night. Going out on the street is in itself a risk, a military operation almost. . . . In addition, comrades must carry out their work and cover all sectors: among the masses, in the guerrilla, in the army, all over. . . . And so their lives are constantly in danger. . . ."

"Because of this, and precisely because of this, we have had to build up a sense of awareness, a mystique. . . . Thus, the members of our organization are prepared to give their lives for the interests of the people at any time and under any circumstance, wherever necessary; at home in the city, when attacked by the repressive forces, in the country, night after night, when the special bodies and paramilitary bands of ORDEN attack and set fire to villages and hovels. . . . For months on end, the comrades are forced to remain in hiding, far from their families. . . ."

This writer has interviewed peasants, such as the Bellozos, the Rodríguezes and the Ramírezes, to mention just a few examples, who for eight years have not gone near a village, because the ultraright-wing hordes have threatened them with murder. People around must obtain for them all they need to survive.

In the Salvadoran countryside, peasants organize to fight the special bodies and paramilitary bands of ORDEN, which kidnap, torture, murder and set fire to villages and hovels.



Such a situation "inculcates a mystique, a sense of realizing that the struggle, in its very advanced stage, is going on here in the country, on every single millimeter of our soil. As a consequence, a psychosis of asylum has arisen, the idea being to leave El Salvador and thus escape death. And so, several thousand Salvadorans, that is, the people who comprise the advanced sectors of our people, felt obliged to leave the country...."

The commander in chief of the People's Liberation Armed Forces — army, guerrilla and militia — stressed:

"Revolutionaries must set an example and remain alongside their people, who are suffering the consequences of the violent repression.... Revolutionaries need to take advantage of difficult conditions in order to achieve a greater mastery over the methods and forms of clandestine struggle; they must become skilled in the art of conspiracy in order to better serve the Salvadoran oppressed masses.

"Because of that our organization holds that asylum is not a very positive expedient for the revolutionaries in El Salvador.... There have been some exceptions, due to special situations, but they serve to confirm the rule...."

### UNITY: A HISTORIC MILESTONE

In recent weeks, in the nation that is a key piece for United States' interests in Central America, a process of unity of action has been rapidly unfolding among the political-military revolutionary organizations and also among the mass organizations.

What is Carro's opinion on unity and the prospects for it?

"The present steps of coordination in a gradual process of unity unquestionably represent a victory in the practice of our people's revolutionary struggle. A whole new stage is beginning in which the revolutionary and democratic forces will achieve, in a progressive, but progressively rapid and intensive fashion, in decisive phases, toward mutual revolutionary confidence and unity in various aspects.

"The recent agreement forged among the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces, the National Resistance and the Communist Party of El Salvador, an agreement consisting in the formation of a coordinating body for the start of a whole process of unity, is really a historic step, a far-reaching development for our people, an agreement that comes about precisely on the threshold of increasingly intensive battles that are of mounting importance in terms of taking power.

"It can be said that the agreement is a historic milestone; it marks the start of the joint efforts of our entire people in order to finally crush oppression, poverty, hunger, the lack of democratic freedoms, repression, and to build a people's revolutionary government that will lay the groundwork for a just, human, fraternal society, one that will enable our country to be independent, one in which all sectors of our people will enjoy broad democratic freedoms....

"This process has cost the people a great deal of blood. Reaching an agreement on unity has meant in practice, over the years, testing the correctness of a strategy, one that has shown that dogma, incorrect interpretations of our reality, had to be left behind and that all honest people in our country, all progressive people finally had to reach the conclusion that in El Salvador the only course is popular revolution.

"On this basis, we have set out fully aware of what we are doing, with firm steps, on the road to the monolithic unity of all the people.

"It is the triumph of a strategy put into practice by the people, a strategy in which hundreds and hundreds of the best patriots of our people have shed their blood for the interests of the exploited classes; a strategy in which the ruling classes have demonstrated all their cruelty and their incapacity when it comes to solving even the slightest problems confronting the masses of the people.

"In reaching the conviction that there is no more room for demagogic solutions, for phony variations on the theme that the imperialists are trying to implement, in alliance with their savage partners on the local scene, that is, the ruling classes and the hired guardians of their wealth; now that all this is clear, when no one can claim any more that there is any solution other than armed struggle, combined with all the other forms of people's struggle, there has been a rise in the level of awareness of all the organizations that want the happiness and well-being of our people, and it is on that higher basis that coordination has been put forward as the start to the process of revolutionary unity...."

"Naturally, since the Salvadoran revolutionary organizations have had different origins and taken different courses in which they have been developing in parallel fashion, it can hardly be said that the road to higher unity is an easy process. Higher stages of unity would be organic unity in all spheres.

"However, there is one thing of which we can be sure: we who have realized that people's revolution is the only solution also realize that we must forge close unity to transform the popular movement into an uncontrollable torrent that will sweep away oppression and exploitation.

"The revolutionary organizations and we who lead them are absolutely determined to consolidate, bolster and develop that unity, to raise it to increasingly higher stages, notwithstanding the difficulties that may present themselves in the process. If we have demonstrated that our people are capable of confronting all the offensives of imperialism and the ruling classes so far, we will also be capable of demonstrating that we are sufficiently mature as to succeed in solving any problem that may turn up on the road to the unity of the revolutionary and popular forces.

"So, even though the present moment involves initial steps in coordination, it must be clearly stated that they are based on a firm determination to advance in the most correct way possible, as intensely as possible, until all the hands of our people become a single hard-hitting fist....

"We believe that the time is not so far off when we will build a people's revolutionary government.... Together, the people are marching forward, and there is no force capable of defeating them. No one and nothing will stop the liberation process of the Salvadoran people....

"Thus, these steps toward unity are firm, conscientious ones. In addition, we are determined to carry the process to its last consequences. Those steps represent the opening of a new chapter in the history of El Salvador and will determine the victory of the popular revolution and the advance towards socialism."

### BROADER PEOPLE'S UNITY NEEDED

Not all the political-military organizations are included in the present National Coordinating Body (CN). Will it be open to the others?

"Yes, they certainly will be. In voicing our determination to move forward on an increasingly broad basis as regards uniting all the people, that means that the CN is open to other organizations. Moreover, by way of example: the unity agreement mentions the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP).... It is necessary for all the organizations to join forces for action against the common enemy.... The people demand that....

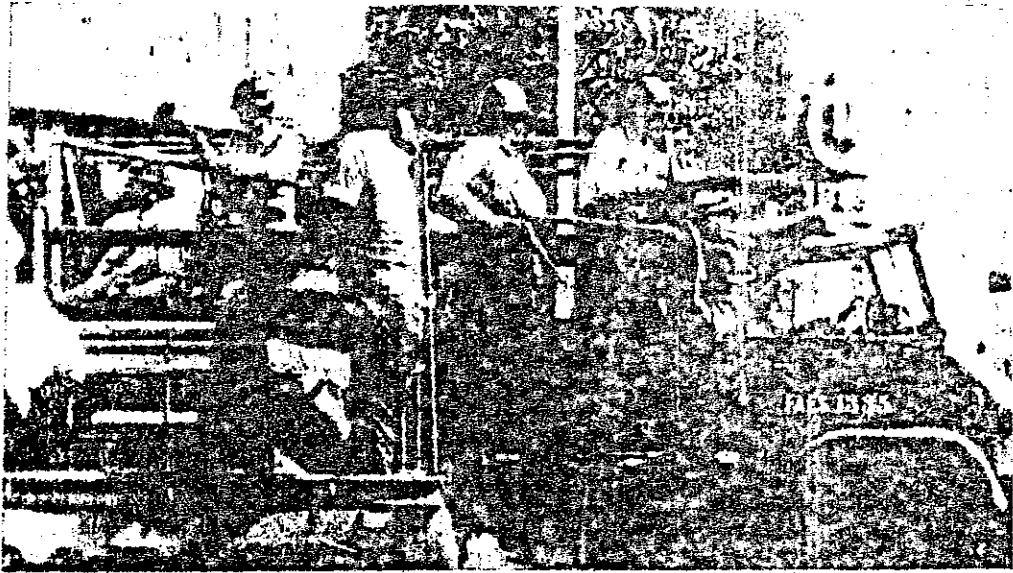
"The creation of our coordinating body has had favorable repercussions among the masses and another body was founded from among them that includes the Popular Revolutionary Bloc, the 28th of February People's League, the Unitary Popular Action Front and the Nationalist Democratic Union.

"It can be said that the coordination of the mass organizations represents a second stage, at the level of the fighting masses, the organized masses who are advanced in their awareness of the struggle and include large sectors of workers, peasants, middle strata and other groups of the population....

"However, there are other sectors of the people who should also become part of a process of rapprochement and unity. I refer to the democratic sectors of the Church, honest army officers, professionals and the small and middle-level business people; all those are included in the unity program.

"Of course, stages and channels must be established that will lead to the formation of a single bloc of unity, first on the basis of the political-military organizations, then the circle of militant popular mass organizations and finally the democratic organizations. Among the latter, I'm thinking, for instance, of the Social Democrats, the advanced sectors of the Christian Democrats. And naturally, the channels, bodies and links for unity have to be left open for those armed forces officers who are willing to fight alongside our people, in keeping with the interests of the working class and of working people in general.

"So, as can be objectively noted, we are at the start of a vast process of unity that will lead to the formation of broad revolutionary unity of the people, the basis for a people's revolutionary government."



Going out on the street in El Salvador is a military operation almost. All revolutionaries are under threat day and night.

### CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS SPLIT INTO 3 SECTORS

The United States is hastily supplying the present ruling junta in El Salvador with millions of dollars in emergency aid in an attempt to "stabilize" the revolutionary panorama that is jeopardizing its interests in Central America.

What is the role of the Christian Democrats in the Salvadoran regime?

Marcial, who in referring to the unity program included the "advanced" Christian Democrats, explained:

"After the collapse of the first ruling junta after less than two months in office, a second version is now on the scene, but in more difficult, precarious conditions, because U.S. imperialism has been forced to step in publicly, openly, barefacedly, to see just how it can shore up the Salvadoran regime.

"In addition to money, Washington has sent special officials who in talks with the Christian Democratic leaders got them to serve as a cover for the military dictatorship to continue to slaughter the people and intensify the counter-revolutionary war.

"The Christian Democrats lend themselves to all that, although let me point out that the Party is not monolithic. Three currents can be clearly distinguished.

"One of them is headed by José Napoleón Duarte, who has made a pact with the oligarchy and represents the most retrograde interests.

"In close alliance with the U.S. State Department is the sector headed by Rubén Zamora, who in the past claimed to be a left-winger but who now, in cooperation with the Duarte sector, represents what they themselves call the 'center to right.'

"These two currents have isolated the most advanced sector of the Christian Democrats and brought about a 'new variation' which has no prospects, really, but does serve the interests of imperialism.

"Moreover, it is significant that the Christian Democratic reactionary turn preceded the appointment of the new U.S. ambassador, Mr. Robert White, who has served, no less, as adviser to the Stroessner dictatorship in Paraguay, one of the most monstrous regimes to plague a people of the Americas...

"So this adviser to killers and cutthroats, this expert in counterrevolution, massacre and oppression, is the man chosen at this time by the State Department to advise the Salvadoran military and their front organization, the Christian Democratic Party."

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### INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

In the case of Nicaragua, the support of the progressive peoples and governments of the world in general and of Latin America in particular prevented a direct military intervention.

How do you assess international solidarity?

"First of all, let me say that our people want to make their revolution in the framework of their legitimate right to self-determination. The United States has no right to meddle in El Salvador's economic, political or military affairs... Nevertheless, it seeks to maintain and bolster dependent capitalism at a point when our people feel the time has come to move on to other stages of struggle.

"Furthermore, we are certain that the solidarity of the anti-interventionist governments of the continent, as was the case with Nicaragua, will stop the bloodied fist of imperialism. We are also certain that our people will receive the powerful, determined support of all the peoples of the world who will do all they can to prevent any kind of armed intervention in El Salvador."

### EL SALVADOR: A GRAVE FOR THE MARINES

What about the possibility of direct U.S. armed intervention in El Salvador?

"It must be borne in mind that imperialism has prepared to intervene in Central America and the Caribbean, and it was no accident that precisely when El Salvador became the scene of a real possibility for revolution, in September and October 1979, the president of the United States chose to stage that provocation around the lie about Soviet troops in Cuba..."

"That gave Carter a pretext to get ready to intervene in our countries and that is the reason for the creation of the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), ready to land in any country where the interests of the ruling classes and the imperialists are endangered..."

"The United States has proclaimed its willingness to intervene in El Salvador and other Central American and Caribbean countries... Here it can do so with the puppet armies of Guatemala and Honduras and in the last analysis, it could use its own troops... If imperialism steps in directly, El Salvador will become another Vietnam and the grave of the marines."

### NEAR FUTURE ONE OF GREAT STRUGGLES

What does the immediate future hold in store?

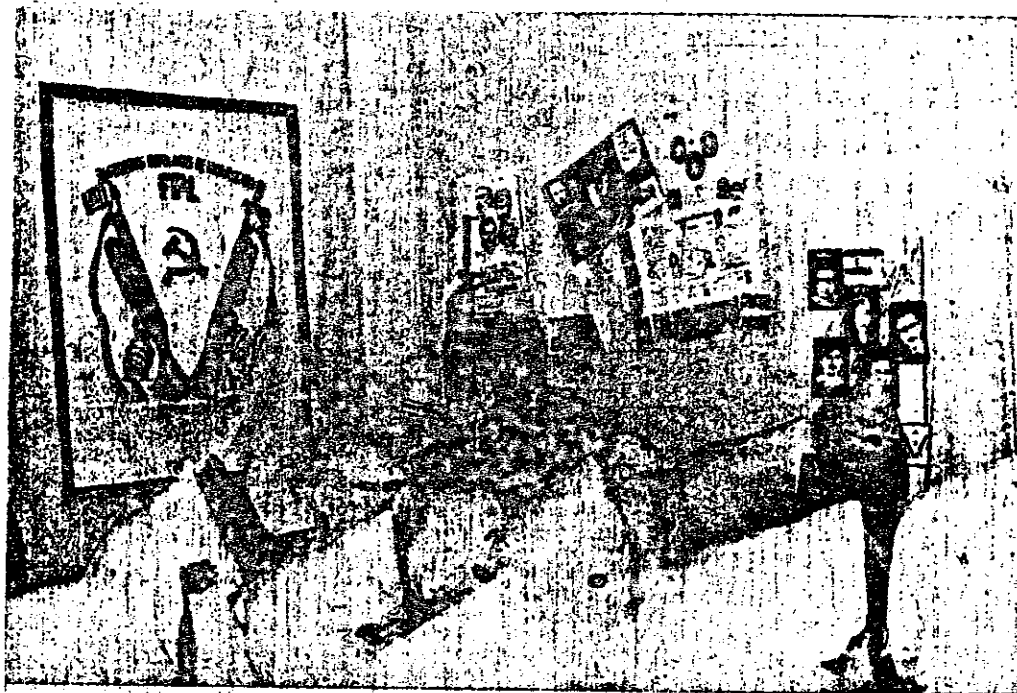
"The immediate future will be one of large-scale struggles for our people. The road to social liberation is not an easy one. We chose the course of prolonged people's war but this war, after ten years, is entering its final stages.

"Prolonged war does not mean interminable war. The accumulation of revolutionary elements throughout the process of the prolonged people's war, moving from the simple to the complex, has led to the war now entering the highest stages of the struggle..."

"Our people's future is a future of victory of the revolution, and the building of a sovereign and independent state, and then the course towards higher stages of human coexistence, and we should not regard this as very remote in time."

# 'ANA MARÍA' SECOND IN COMMAND OF THE FARABUNDO MARTÍ PLF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE IS DECISIVE

- Women make up 40 percent of Revolutionary Council
- Prensa Latina present at sixth meeting of Revolutionary Council
- From armed commandos to the Party



Women make up 40 percent of the Revolutionary Council.



Members of the Council unanimously passed the report given by Comrade "Marcial" and the political-military line to be followed by the organization over the next few weeks and the months to come.

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● SOMEWHERE IN EL SALVADOR, February 22. — An extraordinary woman, "Ana María," holds the second highest post in the top leadership body of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces (PLF).

Forty percent of the members of the Revolutionary Council, the leadership body of the political-military organization, are women.

Information of this kind can be revealed now by Prensa Latina because for the first time the Central Command invited a journalist to attend the final phase of what in essence was the recent Congress of the PLF, that is, the sixth meeting of the Revolutionary Council, which gathered together the most valuable, experienced and responsible cadres from all areas of work: organization, militia, guerrilla, army, mass organizations, finances, agitation and propaganda, etc. These are cadres tempered among the people, in



*Women fought to protect the 300 000-strong demonstration of last January 22 when under attack from the regular and paramilitary troops at the service of the fourteen families.*

the crucible of an intense struggle that does not see age as an obstacle.

The degree of women's participation in the leadership of the revolutionary war is especially surprising given the picture of social oppression, which is accentuated for the female half of the population.

In interviews conducted after the Council meeting — in a country where 80 percent of households have been destroyed — this writer was able to see for himself the decisive presence of women in the national military commission of the Central Command.

Prensa Latina, moreover, witnessed the dramatic death in battle in an attack on National Guard headquarters of 19-year-old "Patricia," a member of the guerrilla fighters' leadership in one zone in the country. Her unidentified body was taken by members of the repressive forces to a morgue, but that same night PLF members recovered the body and took it to a union office, where workers and others mounted a vigil to honor the young revolutionary.

The next day, Sunday, several thousand people staged an impressive demonstration of mourning as they walked to the cemetery following the workers and students who took turns carrying the coffin bearing the remains of Paula Emilia Osorio, "Patricia" in the underground.

"Eva," "Ursula," "Rumilla," "Juana Montano" are some of the women who preceded Paula Emilia along that same route.

Day after day, the struggle intensifies, the war spreads and takes on new dimensions.

The huge demonstration of 300 000 Salvadorans in the capital on Tuesday, January 22, was attacked with unprecedented fury by the regular and paramilitary forces at the service of the fourteen families.

Fifty demonstrators were killed by bullets from the G-3s, while 230 others were wounded. However, the figure would have been much higher were it not for the self-defense mechanisms of the Farabundo Martí PLF, the National Resistance, the Communist Party and the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), including a large number of women who fought intelligently and bravely to protect the people who are expressing their unconditional support for the unity of action agreement reached by the revolutionary and democratic forces.

The spirit of unity that prevails on the national scale can be measured by that courageous, extraordinary expression of the people's will on Tuesday, January 22. When 300 000 people decide to disregard the threats of mass murder to rally in a capital like San Salvador, with less than one million inhabitants, that means that the determination to stand together to speed up the demise of the present regime of social injustice is truly monolithic and unshakable.

Large numbers of women fighters in the guerrilla and militia forces took part in the pre-insurreccional fighting from January 24 to 27 in Cotepeque and nine other cities and towns that were militarily occupied by the Farabundo Martí PLF. Some of the women were killed, and their names joined those of their comrade, Paula Emilia Osorio.

#### STRICT SECURITY MEASURES

If the revolutionary war in El Salvador is difficult, complex and intense, the security measures surrounding the holding of a meeting lasting several days of the top body of the country's most important political-military revolutionary organization naturally had to be strict in the extreme.

At times this writer rode in the back of a vehicle enclosed in a sack. On other occasions, he had to keep his eyes closed and his head

bent down. Sometimes, we had to hike long distances, following peasants along paths discreetly guarded by women and children. There were long hours of tension before we finally reached a place guarded by persons equipped with modern arms. Inside, everyone without exception was wearing the by now familiar hoods and masks.

The members of the Council and the journalist were not allowed to reveal their identities to one another. Only the top leader of the Farabundo Martí PLF, Salvador Cayetano Carpio, was authorized to disclose his.

### A STRUCTURE OF ARMED COMMANDOS

The development of the Farabundo Martí PLF did not take place according to the classical principles that stress the need for a Party structure with political cells, on the basis of which the military bodies emerge.

In the case of the Salvadoran revolutionary organization, the starting point is a simple guerrilla structure that moves dialectically towards the complex, that is, in the direction of a class-conscious Party, and this generates a quantitative and qualitative leap in the struggle of the dispossessed masses.

At this point, we asked Carpio whether the roots of the PLF were to be found in the concept of the guerrilla foco.

"You have to remember that revolutionaries take objective reality and their knowledge of it as the point of departure for transforming it.... And just what was our own reality?"

"The initial group started virtually from zero. We lacked logistics; infrastructure, funds, arms and, if that weren't enough, we lacked military know-how. But at the same time, the people needed to be shown that on the strength of their own forces, they could and should take up arms against their enemies.... So we had to choose between putting off the solution of that necessity and offering the people organizations that were incomplete and had already shown their inefficacy as all around means of struggle or else form armed commandos. We chose the latter course...."

"An important element in that decision was the fact that most of us in the Farabundo Martí PLF were workers, people of working class origin. We'd led very militant workers struggles and had accumulated experience and increased our awareness of the needs of the working class. We'd reached the conclusion that after so many years of military dictatorship, the electoral course was closed in our country and that the unions, in themselves, were not effective means for leading the people to liberation. We were convinced that the struggle limited to the political sphere, and especially to peaceful and legal means, was closed to our people.... What we needed to do, then, was to get the people to trust their own ability to master other forms of struggle.... Thus, instead of a Party structure, we began with the structure of armed commandos."

### THE PEOPLE MAKE THE REVOLUTION

The man who knows the terrible depths of a society capped by a unified terror apparatus, who for over a year was held in secret jails in El Salvador where he was subjected to savage torture, the leader who day after day defies death alongside the dispossessed, the author of *Secuestro y capucha* (Kidnapping and Hoods), that is, Comrade "Marcel" (Salvador Cayetano Carpio), stressed:

"After the years of struggle alongside the



Young people armed with rapid-fire rifles look down from the walls of Salvador's National University on troop movements.

working class, we were thoroughly convinced that the people alone could make the revolution, and we were familiar with the enormous potential of the people, not only in theory but in practice.... So, only if the Salvadoran people joined the struggle would it be possible to replace the society of exploitation with a better one, without exploited or exploiters.... And so the armed commandos were the starting point...."

"However, I should point out that from the start we regarded our line of action in terms of an all-around plan. The armed commandos, that is, the guerrillas, were never regarded as the absolute means to make the revolution, but simply as the primary bodies whose mission consisted of sounding a clarion to the people regarding the possibility of using other methods of struggle. At the same time, we reached out to the people to have them join both the armed struggle and other forms of popular struggle in which we are deeply involved...."

"Thus, the first armed commandos were formed with the dialectical conception that they should at the same time reach out to the masses and work among them...."

"Therefore, in just a few months' time, the political-military conception of the organization became an integral reality.... To all appearances, then, if they weren't aware of our dialectical conception of the process, people could have thought that ours was a military plan."

"In a brief period of time, just a matter of months, our organization took shape as a military and political one — although in reality the dialectical concept was developing: the idea that the people alone could build their revolution and that, if we had to begin with guerrilla warfare, it was a passing stage, part of an overall plan that conceived the people as mastering all means and forms of struggle...."

"That conception took us far away from the idea that the guerrilla on its own can make a revolution, that the guerrilla, isolated from the people, replaces the people in their prime task of carrying out their own transformation."

### OUR OWN AND OTHER PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES

In April 1967, with El Salvador being ruled by a despotic military government, an unusual

revealing occurrence took place. Unity of action on the part of workers, made possible a general strike declared in solidarity with the workers of Acero, S.A. steelworks, located two kilometers from Zacatecoluca, and which won for all the right to strike.

Salvador Cayetano Carpio, then leader of the Salvadoran bakery workers and one of the organizers of the strike, analyzed that moment in the history of the labor movement in a booklet called *La huelga general obrera de abril 1967* (The April 1967 General Workers Strike), which was recommended to the Central American workers for study.

Thirteen years later, he has this to say: "In all honesty, we can state that, from the start, we ruled out the guerrilla foco theory...."

"In that regard, we were helped a great deal by the experience of some guerrilla movements in South America and in other countries that were removed from the people, that failed to reach out to them to organize them and that succumbed to militaristic designs.... After building support groups, we attained a certain degree of influence among the working class and the student movement.... However, our activity carried the most weight among the teachers...."

"In 1974 we were able to reach out to the agricultural workers and the impoverished peasants. A lot of them joined our organization, which gave shape to the relation between the guerrilla and the mass movement as well as their mutual influence.... This enabled us to steer clear of erroneous plans that we had witnessed in other revolutionary organizations...."

### THE NEED FOR THE PARTY

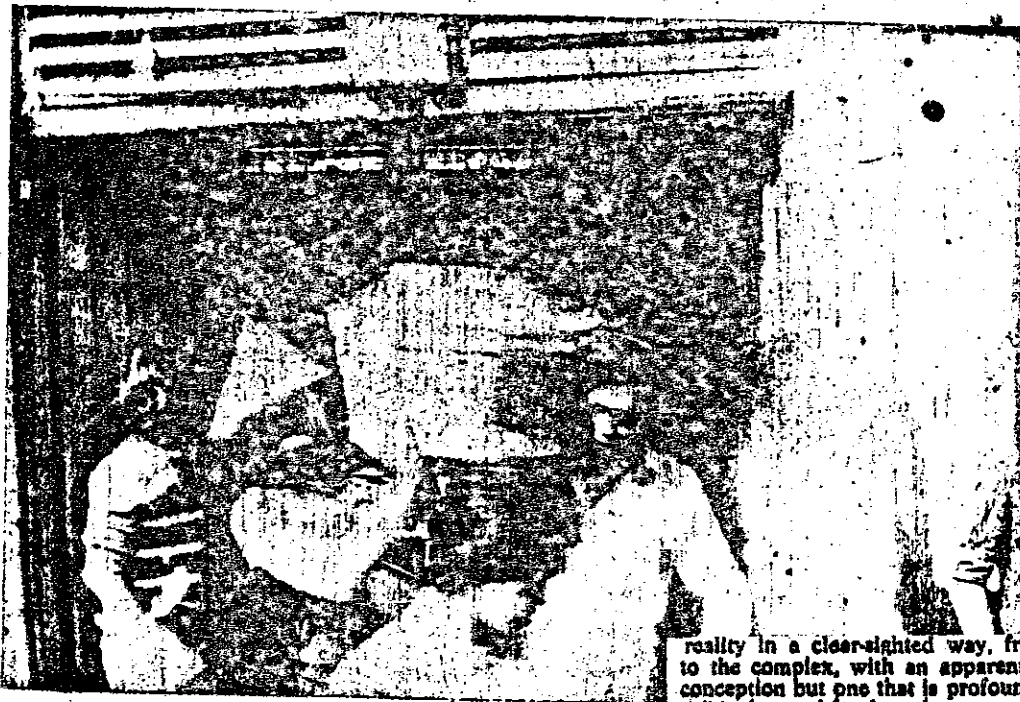
Carpio continued: "Evidently, with the growth of our influence among the masses, a base began to arise for the development of the guerrillas and, with the mounting militancy of the masses, a broad base for popular violence began to take shape that led to the setting up of mass self-defense corps and the people's militia.... And, clearly, all this in turn helped to create the conditions and the need for a political vanguard organized as a Party...."

"Without a Party it was impossible to direct such a ramified movement. We needed to adopt the structure and essence of a Marxist party of the working class. It was and is impossible to direct such a ramified popular movement without the Party."

"Therefore, it would appear that we traveled unorthodox paths and arrived at a certain point that might seem should have been our starting point.... But in fact we set out to create the conditions which, in turn, created the Marxist working class party: with the masses, the guerrilla forces, the army, the militia, with a people in arms, a people in struggle for their immediate demands."



"Ana Maria," the comrade at my side, is the second in command of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces, says Salvador Cayetano Carpio to Prensa Latina during the sixth meeting of the Revolutionary Council.



The Salvadoran people bore on their shoulders the coffin of Paula Emilia Osorio, "Patricia" underground, to the cemetery.

## WE BEGAN WHERE WE HAD TO BEGIN

The leader of the Farabundo Martí PLF continued:

"The whole thing seemed to us a pretty simple application of dialectics: apparently we began backwards, but in fact we began where we had to begin, given the specific circum-

stances... Now we are building a growing Party with cadres who have been seasoned by the struggle; a Marxist-Leninist Party that leads the guerrilla, the militia, the army... The masses are joining... and the people, led by a vanguard, are taking the cause of the revolution into their own hands.

"Now, that seems to us to be Marxism, even though we started with armed commandos, because the implications are dialectical, and in the specific circumstances of our country, that was the most suitable course. We're not the only ones to have been through that experience: other organizations have also arisen in more or less similar circumstances."

## FROM THE SIMPLE TO THE COMPLEX

"The experience of the Farabundo Martí PLF shows some interesting things. In the first place, we didn't formulate the guerrilla-or-Party problem in an artificial way — that is, what comes first? What has priority? — much less did we counterpose guerrilla and party. No, we didn't get tangled up in all those involved conflicts of the intellectuals, just as we didn't get bogged down in the armed struggle versus peaceful struggle dilemma... "We dealt with objective

reality in a clear-sighted way, from the simple to the complex, with an apparently unorthodox conception but one that is profoundly dialectical.

"And we felt that there was no reason to counterpose armed and political forms of struggle; rather, they had to be combined and promoted. The same can be said of the Party-guerrilla relation, since both belong to the development process of Salvadoran society, a dialectical process in which leadership naturally is in the hands of the revolutionary vanguard. And the same goes for the guerrilla-people, guerrilla-mass struggle relation: the whole is interrelated in such a way as to endow the process of social liberation with a faster pace.

"If we speak of combining all forms and means of struggle, if we believe in uniting, in rallying, why should we counterpose those means? "The problem, as we've stressed, was the need for the people to master one more form of struggle, but at a higher level, that is, armed struggle, and for the people to have confidence in their own forces... That was the reason for setting up the armed commandos...

"However, we began the difficult course with the conviction that only the people could transform society and hence needed to join an overall process on the basis of a political-military strategy, led by the working class in alliance with the peasants...

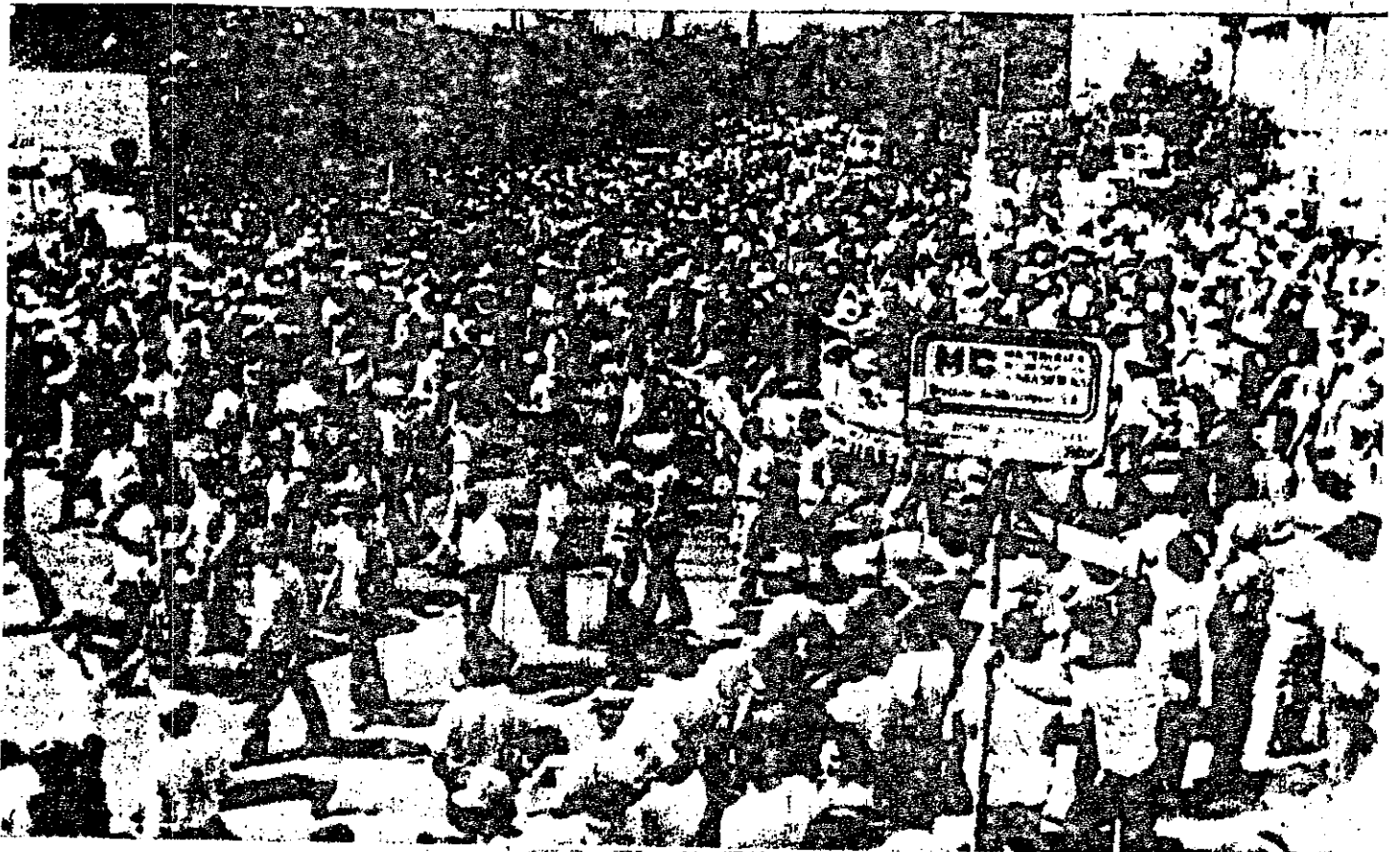
"The transition grows easier to the extent to which other classes, groups and sectors of society join the struggle. Our goal is the people's revolutionary alliance, whose strength and guarantee of continuity and development depend on the breadth and the correct leadership on the part of the working class Party, that guides the whole process, which includes the struggle of the mass organizations, the guerrilla, the militia, the army... From the struggle for immediate, basic demands to military combat.

"Thus, from the start, there has been ideological, political and military cohesion in the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces," the organization's top leader concluded.



# THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM

- People's Revolutionary Government will be anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchic.
- A broad alliance of all social sectors is necessary — says Salvador Cayetano Carpio



*We need a broad alliance between all social sectors excluding the oligarchs and their allies, says Comrade "Marcial." And the people showed that alliance exists in a 300,000-strong demonstration on January 22.*

VI

● SOMEWHERE IN EL SALVADOR, February 23. — "The People's Revolutionary Government (PRG), which will put an end to the rule by the fourteen families and the guardians of their wealth, and to imperialist plunder and oppression, will not be socialist," stated Salvador Cayetano Carpio, top leader of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces (PLF), the organization whose political and military influence grows by the day in the country and heralds — in its unity of action with the National Resistance, the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) and the Communist Party — the approach of the insurrectional stage and the inevitable end of the present regime of extreme social injustice.

The commander in chief of the Farabundo Martí PLF's militia, guerrilla forces and army, the designer and builder of a Party at war, explained to *Prensa Latina* that a government of workers and peasants alone would not be able to carry out the fundamental tasks of the essentially anti-imperialist, anti-oligarchic Salvadoran revolution.

"Those tasks are wide ranging and profound. In order to carry them out, cooperation is necessary, the determined and enthusiastic support of the broadest possible social sectors. . . . That explains the need of a revolutionary popular alliance. . . . an immense social base that will guarantee freedoms and the broadest democracy. . . . Present in that alliance, in addition to the workers and the peasants, will be the small and middle farmers and businessmen, the teachers, students, employees, professionals, technicians and the priests and military who are on the people's side. . . . Thus, the government will not be made up of one class alone — although the workers in alliance with the peasants will play the leading role — but rather it will be a government of all social sectors except the fourteen families, the imperialists and their allies. . . . That means that we too will be one of the forces comprising the vast popular alliance."

## IF THE PLF SAYS SO, IT MUST BE TRUE

A few years ago, in an attempt to cover up the torturing and killing of political prisoners, the government of Colonel Arturo Armando Molina attempted to u.s. the Salvadoran people and called into question the seriousness and determination of the Farabundo Martí PLF.

That was the first and only time, because the mistake cost the oligarchy the life of Mauricio Borronovo, Colonel Molina's foreign minister.

Since then no member of the fourteen families or top official of the institutions at their service — much less the representatives of foreign governments and capital — has made any more mistakes regarding the revolutionary political-military organization. And at present it is hard to find people in El Salvador who doubt or question the information supplied by the PLF.

"If the PLF says so, it must be true" has become a saying in this country.

## THE PHENOMENON OF CAUDILLISMO

The degree of development of the Farabundo Martí Party is such that the "phenomenon of caudillismo has been overcome. . . . Today any leader can fall in battle, from the person in the top post to one of those holding posts at lower levels, and our political-military organization would be in a position to replace that person immediately," stated Salvador Cayetano Carpio.

A network of cells, "production," "geographical" and "special" cells built up during the development of the armed struggle and which is growing in breadth and depth, guarantees the continuity, leadership, organization and coordination of the PLF.

The production cells constitute the fundamental basis of the Party and are located in places of work and study. The geographical cells answer to the need to organize, in terms of political-military strategy, hamlets, districts, neighborhoods and big farms. The special cells

function within the guerrilla forces and the rapidly growing People's Liberation Army.

Thus, the PLF Party is rooted in the people and directs, organizes and coordinates more easily vast social sectors in all spheres.

## GOALS OF THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT

Carpio stressed that the "People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) will not be a socialist regime but will be a government which, with the efforts of all the people, will build the economy on the basis of independence and sovereign development...."

The objectives of the Salvadoran revolution, in its first stage and in keeping with the conception of the PLF, are, explains Comrade "Marcial," as follows:

"To put an end to domination by the imperialists and the fourteen families in the political, military, economic, cultural and social spheres.

"To transfer to the people the basic means of production that will make it possible to lay the groundwork for the transition to a new society: the large stretches of land, major means of transportation, electric power, the refineries, foreign trade — coffee, cotton, sugar, shrimp and others.

"To increase the overall standard of living of the population; promote the development of public health and education programs; create jobs; build housing; put an end to illiteracy; and do away with unemployment once and for all.

"To destroy the instruments of military and paramilitary oppression of the ruling classes by building the People's Army in which all the officers of the old army who want to stand beside the people will have a place; to organize the masses, the people, at all levels; and sectors; to build the organs of people's power; to conduct intense ideological work among the masses, especially among petty bourgeois sectors, so they can take their place alongside the workers and peasants to contribute to the construction and development of the revolutionary process that will lead to a new society.

"Of vital importance is the strengthening and defense of the revolutionary process... of a broad people's democracy.... That is why the People's Revolutionary Government will rest upon the armed and organized people... only the people in arms can guarantee the advance of the process towards socialism.

"Those tasks and objectives will naturally be carried out in stages of a process which may be long or short, depending on the intensity of the efforts of the people and the leadership by the most advanced classes of our society."

## THE PROGRAM

To destroy the power of the oligarchy and imperialism; to put the basic means of production in the hands of the Salvadoran people; to encourage and not damage the small and middle bourgeoisie; to guarantee a regime of democracy and freedoms, in a country where the capital city's radio and television stations ushered in the new year by playing the U.S. marines march; the People's Revolutionary Government will of necessity have to act firmly right from the start.

Salvador Cayetano Carpio says that the PLF feels that the program of the PRG should contain the following points:

"In the economic sphere, nationalize all the big companies with imperialist capital, including factories, banks, businesses and services; expropriate all the means of production in the hands of the fourteen families; centralize the planning of the economy; nationalize the banks; radically overhaul the tax system so workers are not obliged to pay taxes; nationalize the main public services — water, electricity, transportation, refineries, communications, ports and airports, large hotels and the like — carry out a thorough agrarian reform and lay the groundwork for urban reform; increase real wages through raises and price cuts on vital goods and services and state contributions to overall welfare — medicine, social security, vacations, etc. — establish mechanisms of aid and exchange among the small and middle property owners, who will benefit from a credit policy favorable to them.

"In the social sphere: free medical care; construction of hospitals and health care units in the rural and urban areas in keeping with population distribution; improvement of urban and intercity transportation services; creation of jobs that will eliminate unemployment and help fight the root causes of delinquency and other social problems; promotion of the broad organization of the workers, peasants and middle sectors in their respective unions and social, cultural, sports and other organizations...."

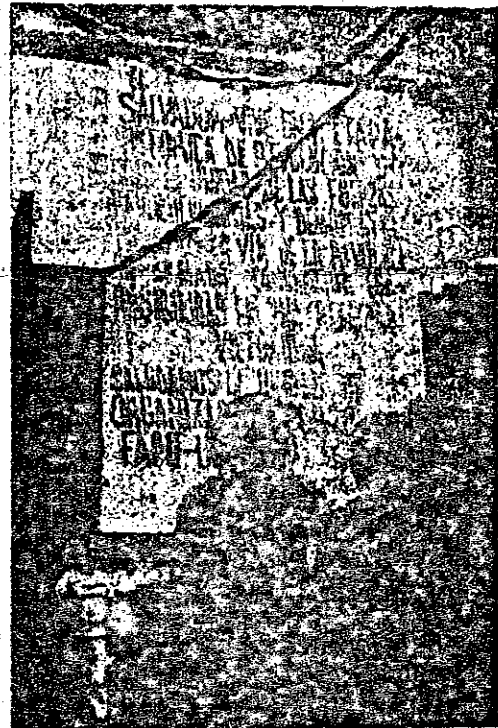
"In the political and ideological sphere: the Legislative Assembly and the executive and judicial branches will be dissolved, as well as all government and state organs at the service of the oligarchy. A new Constitution will be drafted because the present one answers to the interests of imperialism, the fourteen families and their allies. The municipal government will be reorganized so as to ensure broad participation by the people. The main mass media will be nationalized. Elementary and secondary education will be made available to all children of school age, and illiteracy will be wiped out in two years at the most. The organization of the masses will be institutionalized; the people's power organs and bodies to defend the revolution will be set up. Relations will be established with all countries in the world, with priority assigned to relations with the progressive countries under the principles of mutual respect and self-determination. El Salvador will apply for membership in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries...."

"In the military sphere: the reactionary army will be dissolved at once and the People's Revolutionary Army set up, with the officers who are really on the people's side eligible for membership...."

"At the same time the PRG will punish all those guilty of crimes against the people; it will dissolve the hated repressive bodies: the National Guard, the National Police, the Treasury Police, the Secret Police and ORDEN. El Salvador will leave the Central American Defense Council and other international bodies of the same type, created by imperialism to attack the oppressed peoples...."

The top leader of the PLF paused briefly before smiling confidently and declaring:

"Those requirements and measures are enough to get an idea of what the victory of the revolution will mean to the Salvadoran people. And that revolution is now at the higher stages of struggle that will be crowned by inevitable, conclusive victory."



The banner shows what the Salvadoran people want: unity of action between the revolutionary and democratic forces to push ahead with the process of social liberation.