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(FOUO 8/81)

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LATIN AMERICA REPORT

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CONTENTS

COUNTRY SECTION

COLOMBIA

M-19 Guerrillas Alleged To Have Come From Cuba via Panama
(PRELA, 17 Mar 81) 1

CUBA

New Peasant Housing Program Initiated
(Gloria Marsan; BOHEMIA, 13 Feb 81) 2

Training of Sugar Industry Technical Personnel Studied
(Concepcion Duchesne; BOHEMIA, 13 Feb 81) 9

Railway Problems Taken Up in Roundtable Discussion
(Alberto Pozo, et al.; BOHEMIA, 30 Jan 81) 18

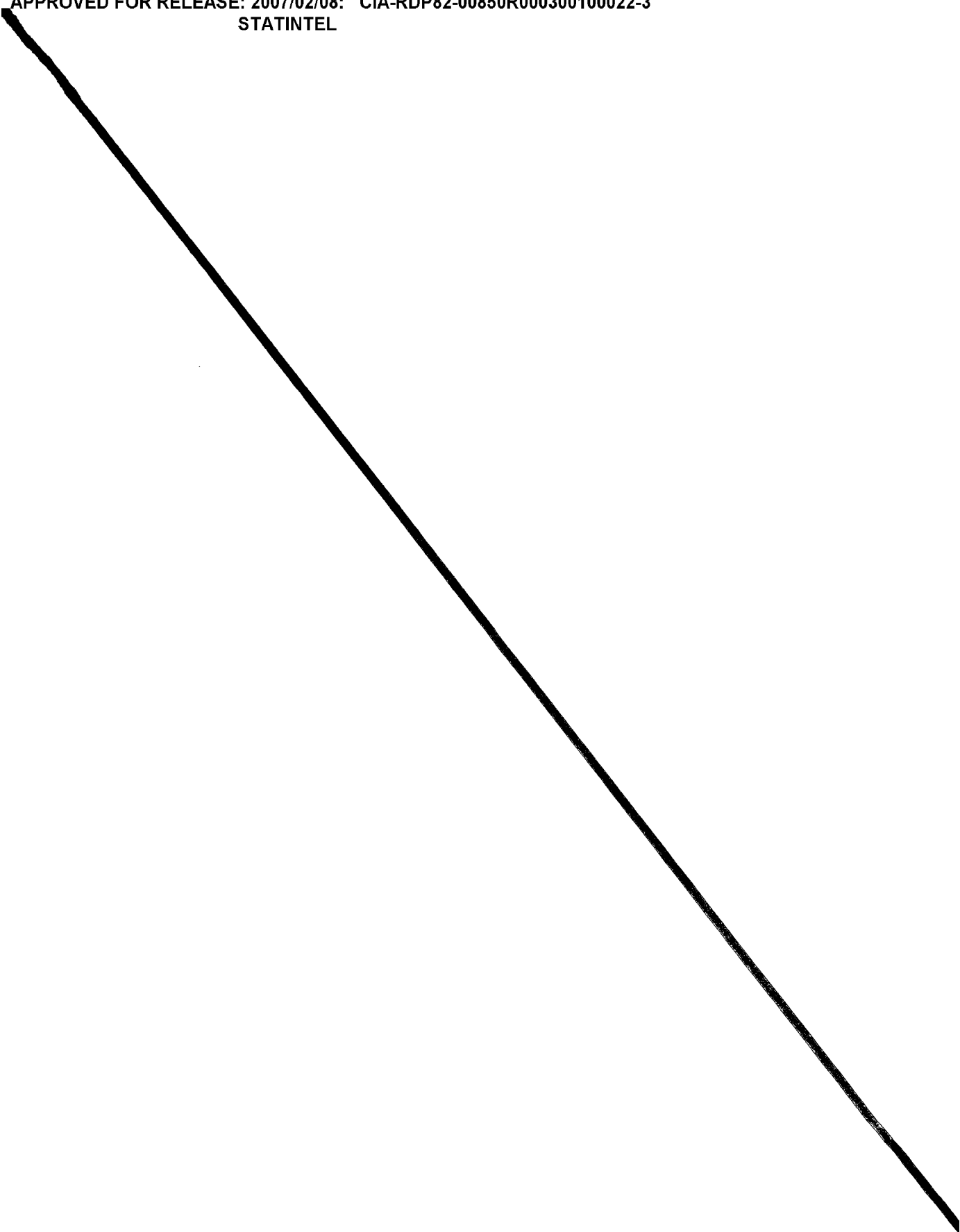
EL SALVADOR

Duarte on Agrarian Reform, Leftist-Rightist Violence
(Jose Napoleon Duarte Interview; EL DIA, 15 Feb 81) 31

- a -

[III - LA - 144 FOUO]

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COUNTRY SECTION

CUBA

NEW PEASANT HOUSING PROGRAM INITIATED

Havana BOHEMIA in Spanish 13 Feb 81 pp 28-31

[Article by Gloria Marsan: "Where Is the Peasant Going To Live?"]

[Text] Something That Could Have Been Forgotten

Some time ago, on the occasion of a working meeting on research and social development in the Caribbean in which several countries of the area participated, we interviewed Juan Luis Martin, a sociologist of the Technical Center for Housing and Urbanism of the Ministry of Construction [MINCONS].

During our interview, which was very pleasant, but which was never published because of that implacable enemy of the journalist called "space and time," our interviewee spoke to us extensively on the studies, projects, plans and so forth for the development of housing and social conditions for the peasants.

This newswoman, as a revolutionary and a peasant, felt profoundly enthusiastic about everything proposed and suddenly asked a question, which to her surprise stumped the interviewee. "How is the MINCONS accomplishing the performance of that work?

The sociologist thought a moment and finally answered: "Really, for the moment, I cannot answer your question."

Everything would have remained as one more old unpublished piece of work, which with time would have been forgotten, if it had not been that a few days ago that same Juan Luis Martin called us to let us know the accomplishment of a new work. This time it was on the development of the peasant housing of the Agricultural and Livestock Cooperatives (CPA). Truly I did not go to the meeting with much enthusiasm.

Today, sitting once more in front of the typewriter, I again feel within me the happiness of those times in the rural area when I dreamed of a better future for our peasants. However, it is no longer a dream; it is an absolute reality.

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The Cuban peasants, like all citizens within a country in revolution who fight hard against blockades and threats and who, therefore, have to remain in a constant state of vigilance and defense, are already advancing towards higher forms of production. This is not an easy route but little by little they are eliminating their customary isolation, building a house according to the economic development of the country and, at the same time, raising their social and cultural level.

Toward Higher Forms of Production

A patient and systematic work of disseminating, convincing and winning over each peasant family has been accomplished by the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), carefully observing the principle of voluntariness, so that when the time comes, it will move toward socialist forms of production.

At the end of last year, the results of that work could be seen. A total of 1,052 CPA's have been created. The cooperatives, initially small, have served as schools for training cadres, since many of the men and women who are now at the head of the large CPA's were trained for collective administration in them.

With the higher form of organization assumed by the peasants, the roads to the modernization of agriculture were also opened. In general the change brought changes in agricultural practices to which the private farmer was accustomed and the use of mechanization and technology was instituted.

During the past year, the CPA's maintained cost of production per peso down to 70 centavos. High yields per area were generally obtained, doubling and tripling the production of the individual parcels which made them up.

The majority of the CPA's distributed profits among their members. This shows that while the superior form of production in cooperatives is in the minority with respect to the private farmer, in turn their productivity is greater. Thousands of peasants are already enjoying the benefits of cooperation in our rural areas.

Fifty percent of net earnings are distributed as profits among the partners. Of the rest, 25 percent is used to amortize goods provided, 13 percent was placed in the expenditure fund, 8 percent went into the social fund and 4 percent was earmarked for culture, recreation and sports.

Women in the CPA's

An important aspect of the cooperativization process is the integration of the peasant woman into the cooperatives, which has been a constant and growing feature during these past 3 years. At this time more than 30 percent of the members of the CPA's are women.

Generally, the cooperative offers them a chance to work, which they did not have before, and as the CPA's grow and develop, their chances to become a force of great influence and change in the life of their families increases.

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The Past and the Present

The Cuban rural population, whose main occupation is agriculture, has traditionally been widely scattered in isolated houses of which only 3 percent had acceptable living conditions. This means that 97 percent of housing consisted of typical huts with roofs of palm leaf thatching, walls of palm frond fibers and dirt floors. Of the total, only 12 percent had water installations and some 9 percent had electric lights.

After the victory of the revolution, rural housing settlements were being built by state brigades, settlements which became small towns, in some cases of separate houses or four or five-story multifamily buildings. These buildings were provided gratuitously and completely furnished, including basic household appliances (television and refrigerator).

These rural settlements are created on the basis of the sale of the land of the small farmers for the creation of state farms, always within strict observance of voluntariness. In these cases, the peasants become the tenants of their habitations. Those who become workers in the community become workers for wages, receiving a wage according to the work they perform.

All citizens who live in these communities, as is natural, equally enjoy the comforts, services and sports or cultural amusements offered. Production obtained in these communities is distributed to society by the state.

However, the settlements of the CPA's, have other characteristics. They produce and sell to the state the fruit of their labors collectively, taking a part of the earnings to be distributed equally among the partners, depending on the individual contribution.

Undoubtedly any of these rural agricultural groupings immediately allows the peasants to overcome a number of difficulties they faced in their scattered and generally isolated housing; lack of community services such as schools, medical care, shopping section, running water, electric lighting, communications, sewage and so forth.

New Plans

It is obvious that this difference between the two types of groupings means a change in construction and distribution of housing. It is for these purposes that the MINCONS, the ANAP and other agencies are merging their efforts to offer the members of the CPA's some settlements, which because of their quality, become incentives for cooperativization.

Since the first cooperative was created, there was concern not only for the improvement of housing but also that the plan would contribute to increasing productivity. A general improvement of all social aspects is sought by all this, merging the integration of the territory with present and future economic prospects, thus forestalling possible conflicts with subsequent development.

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All these points make the definition of a territorial policy necessary with respect to the agriculturally based population settlements within the framework of the development of the network of settlements in the country, in this manner channeling the use of available resources in each region, and also for each phase of the future, preventing the jeopardizing of the growth foreseen.

During the closing of the Fifth ANAP Congress, Commander in Chief Fidel Castro said that the method used in some rural communities such as those of Triunvirato, Jimaguayu and others, represent the method for facilitating the social and economic development of the peasants.

However, this system requires great investments for which the country does not have the necessary resources and, therefore, the integration of land could take several years and neither our peasants nor our revolution can wait that long.

Analyzing these aspects and seeking to contribute to territorial consolidation, merging present economic possibilities with the type of housing being proposed and adapting it to the lifetime each of the settlements will have, the MINCONS undertook the task of compiling and studying existing housing plans, evaluating them in keeping with the peasant life style. It was found that in the majority of cases they cannot adapt to those requirements and are in concept styled for urban conditions.

The experiences of some socialist countries in this field were also researched. It was extraordinarily interesting to find that a country with building resources as vast as those of the Soviet Union in 1968 adopted the policy of greatly favoring one and two-story buildings with family plots, built directly by members of cooperatives; leaving the most industrialized methods to the building activity of the state and then only for multiple-story buildings in cities of more than 20,000 inhabitants.

Considering everything that was studied, and favoring the reciprocal influence between the progressive improvement of the level of livability and the increase in agricultural-livestock production, it is sought to raise the standard of living in the rural area to benefit the policy which tends to balance it with that of the urban area and simultaneously place a maximum curb on rural migration to the city.

This means that a way is sought to provide realistic and progressive solutions to accelerate the concentration of the scattered rural population, including that housing which will be affected by state agricultural plans, and that this be done with little state support, counting basically on the efforts of the peasants themselves so that it will be precisely they who help to change the environment which surrounds them.

An Architect Speaks

Architect Salvador Gomila, director of the Technical Center for Housing and Urbanism of MINCONS, tells us how this work is progressing: "We believe that it has been a very interesting experience to work in a program which has completely dealt with these aspects and which has truly offered some encouraging results.

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"The important point is that the type of housing needed has been determined according to the characteristics of the cooperative, taking into account the changes that these settlements must undergo.

"According to the possibilities of their growth and their future size, we have sought a starting point so as to learn up to what point we can channel the growth which can be seen for these peasant organizations.

"All this allows us to work on the future of the administration of housing; how loans for their construction can be arranged, the prices they should have, how they will be sold, their ownership and so forth.

"The basic idea has been to try to offer the peasant a type of housing which may be built by him, individually and with the support of the cooperative, and which at the same time fills his own requirements.

"This means that we seek the possibility of selling them the plan with its manuals for building it themselves, as explicit as possible, and even selling them the 'packaged' materials, which means in the form of numbered packages to facilitate the building sequence.

"We believe this system is going to make possible the participation of the masses in the solution of an internationally serious problem with a greater use of existing potentials. Its application is going to be feasible in the agricultural settlements as well as in the small cities.

"We believe this program is going to have a considerable influence, even compared with the housing already being built in this phase. This means that the MINCONS is making available all the necessary technical assistance but construction will be decentralized and controlled by the cooperative.

"Some projects of economic temporary housing have been analyzed so that work may be started, because the peasants could not wait for our studies. Some houses have already been built because we are working while on the way to improving the program. That is the reason for the recently concluded competition by means of which a varied number of plans were obtained.

"Among those selected there are those with housing of the types that will last between 15 and 30 years or more. In each case it has been taken into account that the materials and the building systems used do not require special conditions nor the need for complicated technology, but use local resources. They are adaptable to any topography and have the possibility of being arranged in groups of between 15 and 150 or more houses.

"These aspects will be determined by the long range plans of the government because there can be the case that a cooperative is being developed now in a zone where there is a small town without any prospects of developing and the town that has those prospects is very far away and there is no way at this time to transport the peasants to that area. We cannot ask them to wait 10 to 15 years to integrate their cooperative and build their new housing. In that case, temporary housing is built.

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"When the cooperative is located in an area of future development, then the housing has to be of a better level. But if there are no means for better construction, then temporary housing will have to be built because it is cheaper. That is why the economic improvement of the cooperative is important, since it will be the cooperative, individual or collective manner, that will finance the project.

"It is indispensable that we be very clever in determining the type of settlement and where and with what characteristics it is going to be built. And within all that, give it a set of minimum standards so that buildings will not be erected without advice on the proper methods.

"It is important that streets be traced and the proper size of the parcels of each house be determined in keeping with the possibilities of the cooperative so that in those cases where it is feasible, they can keep some domestic animals without posing a health problem because of their number. This, in turn, avoids the uprooting of the peasant's animals.

"Finally," concludes Architect Gomila, "it must be taken into account that the country encourages economic planning and that one way of taking this to the masses is for them to be the ones to apply it. That is one of the reasons all this is being done in such a way that it will be the collective, as well as the individual budget, which will decide the goals to be reached."

The Plans

The plans selected up to now tend to satisfy the needs of families ranging from three to eight persons, consider the life style of the peasants, and add areas such as a grocery store and a place for field equipment, as well as more space in kitchens, porches, sheds and so forth.

This year, the cooperatives will begin to receive printed plans. They will include the lists and amounts of the principal materials. Profusely illustrated do-it-yourself manuals, which in very simple form technically instruct cooperative members in the building of their houses, will also be added.

Joint Work

If we consider the work remaining to be done to change the forms of production of all the peasants, then we could think that very little has been done. However, it is necessary to consider the work these peasants are doing at the same time to promote their cooperatives, giving examples of organization, discipline and productivity.

And if we consider that there are thousands of peasants willing to join in the cooperatives, then the conclusion is reached that the work has progressed a great deal. Nevertheless, we know that on the work of each peasant within the

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cooperative, its management and its example depends the increasing incidence of work in common, and, therefore, the ever-growing success of the established CPA's.

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COUNTRY SECTION

CUBA

TRAINING OF SUGAR INDUSTRY TECHNICAL PERSONNEL STUDIED

Havana BOHEMIA in Spanish 13 Feb 81 pp 60-63

[Article by Concepcion Duchesne: "Sugar and the Future"]

[Text] The importance of the sugar industry in the Cuban economic picture is, as is known, decisive, and this has been the main point in the short, medium and long range decisions made by the leadership of our revolution. The merger of historical and climatic factors, productive tradition, configuration of markets, the sure market for sales represented by the socialist community with its advantageous exchange conditions and the scarcity of other basic natural resources, caused the sugar agroindustrial complex to occupy a place as our most important export product. This situation was perfectly explained by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro in his report to the First Party Congress and emphasized and expanded in the report to the Second Congress.

In this respect, it would be worthwhile to recall that of each peso in foreign exchange of any type that enters our country, 85 centavos belong to sugar industry production. This indicates that it is not only our main exportable product and principal source of foreign exchange but that it virtually dominates the national economy, determining its development and the chances for improving the standard of living of the people through the use of its revenues in the process of new productive expenditures and in the purchase of durable consumer goods, food and so forth. This means that the sugar industry represents one-third of national revenues.

On the other hand, it is the main source of raw materials for developing other production based on its agricultural and industrial byproducts. It is practical, for example, to develop a branch of such great prospects as the sucrochemical on the basis of sugar. Let us remember that these specific possibilities were expounded during the neocolonial republic by all revolutionary scientists and economists, who with the weapon of criticism opposed the underdevelopment and the imperialist distortion of our main industry imposed by the governing oligarchy, the obedient servants of the neighbor to the north. Thus, Fernando Ortiz, Capero Bonilla, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Nunez Jimenez, Sergio Aguirre, Pino Santos, Moreno Fragnals, among others, far from maintaining iconoclastic positions, maintained the dialectic analysis of evaluating the national prospects of the sugar industry by displaying its potential for overcoming the results of the distorting and exploitive use of single crop agriculture and the servile surrender of sugar production to the imperialist, monopolistic centers of power.

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Comprehension of this unpostponable fact is contained in the development plans made by the revolution, which found a clear expression in the 1976-1980 5-year period, in this one we are beginning (1981-1985) and in the prospects up to the year 2000, and in which Fidel has emphasized: "In the sugar industry, the continued growth of our main exportable resource must be insured and the diversification and expansion of sugarcane byproducts must be facilitated."

Role of Higher Education in Sugar Industry Development

Very well, what reply should higher education, the principal educator of highly skilled personnel, give to these guidelines to specifically guarantee this harmonious and growing development?

We went to obtain the opinions of those who are responsible for this teaching task in the Sugar Industry Faculty founded in 1976 in the Jose Antonio Echeverria Superior Polytechnic Institute (ISPJAE), whose direct ancestor was the branch created in 1972 in the Camilo Cienfuegos sugarmill.

Of course this is not a matter of a "roundtable discussion" but a collective exchange of ideas, shared questions, doubts and plans. For this purpose, we requested the attendance of Engineer Eduardo Ojito, dean of the faculty; Engineer Ismael Gonzalez, assistant dean, and doctor candidate Ricardo Jorge Machado, auxiliary professor of the Economic Engineering Department.

[Question] It seems to us that we should begin our conversation by explaining a subject as important as the role of higher education in the economic development of the country, particularly the function of the specialists trained in this faculty.

"Of course," answers Machado, "because economy in education is a speciality already consolidated in other socialist countries, one of whose most important results is to make clear things which were not seen 20 or 30 years ago; that the most strategic factor of a country is education, since it decides the economic life of the country because it is linked to the education of the labor force, which is a decisive factor in the productive forces. In this respect, the distribution, use and optimum employment of the labor force is going to become an important development factor, not only for the sugar industry, but for the entire country.

"Sometimes, it must be said, awareness of the economic role of education is not rooted, not even in our own areas. I say that it is a strategic economic factor in more than the short term (say 4 or 5 years) because what happens in the system of education has an effect in the creation of a skilled labor force for decisive periods of from 15 to 20 years.

"Short term solutions may be sought for such and such an industry but the strategic solution is decided in the educational sphere, that is, the engineers we are now graduating are the ones who are going to be deciding what takes place in production in the period 1985-1986. Therefore, it is an important problem.

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"I believe it is an error to say that education is a simple superstructural problem. It is linked to the economic base because it trains the productive force. The quality of the latter is going to become the principal factor of productivity and social and economic development. It is not substantially the equipment, the technological element which is important--its importance cannot be magnified because it would be a technocratic view of the problem--but the human factor, the quality of the graduate, who in the case of the sugar industry is going to work with the future of an entire nation.

"In short, the best talents must be brought to the faculty because of the strategic importance their training has for the development of our principal industry. I must say that our faculty is very new and there has been no clear information or dissemination of its possibilities and its obvious and undeniable importance."

A Qualitative Leap in Education

[Question] Machado, the Sugar Industry Faculty is of recent creation but we believe you can help us to understand its importance if we refer to the history of sugar industry education in our country.

[Answer] This type of education suffered many shortcomings in the past. In 1907 a sugar industry school functioned in Cienfuegos and another was founded in Havana in 1909. Up to that time all the agricultural technicians of a certain level were English, North Americans, Germans or French. The key positions were held by foreigners who came to Cuba, finished the harvest and left.

The country's educational resources began to provide the industry with national personnel as of that time, but with many restrictions.

In 1928, the Faculty of Agronomy was created in the University of Havana. However, the agronomist knew about the agricultural technology of sugar but nothing about the mills. The Cienfuegos and Havana schools trained specialists in manufacturing but they knew nothing about sugar, while other schools of various specialties trained the machinery operators, machinists and mechanics, and indeed there was a small Tower of Babel because from the point of view of a common language, there was no uniformity. These problems, for example, are not found in the chemical or petroleum industries because all are uniformly trained; they speak the same language. The same thing does not happen in the sugar industry because it contains various specialties and the individual has to supervise several things and technicians are trained little by little.

The foundation of the Sugar Industry Faculty means a qualitative leap in the educational resources of the country because not only are agroindustrial engineers trained here with a view of the overall picture but at the same time, they are trained in the practice of production. They spend months together with sugar technicians, a sort of microenvironment is created in which the sugar industry and agroindustrial technologists understand each other better.

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Traditionally, this faculty represents a qualitative leap, I insist, in the history of the educational institutions devoted to training personnel for the sugar industry because it makes it possible to create a common base where specialists interrelated in their functions are trained, aware of the harmonious merging of their tasks.

A Proper Policy of Attracting the Best Students

[Question] It is obvious that our revolution makes it possible to have access to education in these vital specialties, but we would like to know the criteria for the structure and makeup of the curriculum.

[Answer] At this time, the system for entering into higher education has as a result the fact that the more outstanding students feel attracted to the specialties which are best known because of publicity or tradition: electronics, medicine and so forth, for example. However, in our specialties, there has not existed up to now a systematic and sustained work to attract students of middle-level education. That is why the student does not even know what an agroindustrial engineer or a sugar industry engineer does.

This results in a contradiction: It being the faculty which trains the higher level technicians for the industry that provides the largest percentage of foreign exchange to the country, it receives the students who have made it their 10th choice and some have not even chosen it. In this fashion, the best talents emerging from education go to other specialties, which although important, do not have the degree of vital importance ours have.

I believe that this question must be viewed as we view it: That our specialties become known; that there be enough awareness among students of the importance of these specialties and of their specific prospects so that the best talents of this country will come to lend their services to the industry, which for a great many years will resolve the problems of the development of the country.

We want to go, for example, to the Lenin School and give lectures to the students; we want the press to talk about agroindustrial engineering, talk about the sugar industry technician, talk about the future the graduate has in these engineering specialties. We want the students to go to the sugarmills, because not all of them are like the Martinez Prieto, whose conditions are not good. We have others like the 30 de Noviembre, built a short time ago; we have the Espartaco, finally, we have a number of research centers in the Ministry of the Sugar Industry, where the graduate can project himself into the future with the great possibilities of the byproducts, with the main problem of the country. I believe the publication of those things in BOHEMIA is going to be of great help to us in the area of informing and attracting specialists.

"Obviously," adds Comrade Eduardo Ojito, "this is a vital problem. We must stimulate the preuniversity students and make them aware so that they will know the present sugar industry, its future needs and its part in the needs of the country.

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"The present total of our enrollment is 657 students, of whom 474 are taking day courses and 183 the evening-night courses. If we make an overall estimate, and taking into consideration that the efficiency of the faculty is 27 percent, 100 to 200 students may be graduated from the day courses. Beginning this year, the various specialities will be increased and we have already 14 technologists in sugar production. Obviously they are very few by comparison with the prospects for development of the industry.

"If we graduate 60 every year, a very optimistic figure indeed, we would have 350 to 400 graduates in the 5-year period, which is the minimum for the drive the sugar industry will have, since in this 5-year period of 1981-1985 there will be new sugarmills, and in the next 5-year period the construction of others or some remodeling will be undertaken, in addition to the new factory for bagasse panels and the paper mill, although bagasse is going to be a subject taught at the Chemical Engineering Faculty.

"As a result, it can be said that according to the enrollment that is entering, that which exists and the needs foreseen, an intensive work is required for attracting students to the faculty. The enrollment we have now is 234 students in the first year, a good number, which means that 130 to 150 could graduate, however, if what happened last year is repeated and of the 222 students who entered only 70 were promoted to the second year, then the problem becomes more acute. That is why it is necessary to work to attract better talents to insure efficiency and increase the number of graduates in keeping with the specific needs of the development of the industry.

What is an Agroindustrial Engineer?

[Question] How is the training of the agroindustrial engineer viewed with respect to the requirements of the recently organized complexes?

"This specialty," says Gonzalez, "is being created precisely to respond to the agroindustrial complex. For some years we have been graduating agroindustrial engineers, whose role in the complex is vital. As you know, we are going to have a complex in Havana, another in Madruga (Gregorio Manalich), another in Holguin (Urbano Noris), another in Santa Clara (Uruguay) and this primary line.

"The agroindustrial engineer is the one who links agriculture to industry as far as the management of the complex is concerned because he is a specialist in the problems of managing the agricultural-industrial complex. He is an engineer who has knowledge of agriculture and industry and who knows the principles of scientific management.

"The first group was graduated in 1975-1976. The figure today does not reach 100."

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Eduardo Ojito says: "I want to say more on the profile of the agroindustrial engineer, because in addition to being able to work in the management of the agroindustrial complex, which would be the most he could do at an enterprise level, he can also work in specific functions of management in agriculture and industry, which means that he is not destined only for working in the management of the agroindustrial complex, although his work as such would be the most useful there because he also has knowledge, intellectual and practical tools for working in what is the scientific organization of work within the sugar industry in the sugarmill complex as a whole, or within a particular area within the complex. On the other hand, he can also work in what is economic management and control in the area of sugarcane agriculture or in a specific part of the sugarcane agriculture complex. In short, he can fill different positions in the various sectors of the complex, although, as we have said, his best performance would result from the degree in which he is able to perform a management activity in the complex as a whole."

"The need to train this type of engineer," adds Machado, "as my comrades have pointed out, resides in the fact that the sugar industry carried with it a number of contradictions within the factory. As is known, there are those who argue that a sugar factory is three factories: One which grinds sugarcane, another which makes sugar and another which produces steam. Each of these factories has a chief and it usually happens that these three chiefs have differences because they have a one-sided training, since the educational resources of the country for many years did not have the possibilities of training these specialists harmoniously, specialists whose language was not the same and therefore they could not understand each other completely."

"The agroindustrial engineer, on the other hand, is capable of speaking a language common to the three chiefs. There lies his importance because these internal conflicts had been undermining the efficiency of the industry. There were not only differences with agriculture, which is important, but, for example, they existed between the chief of machinery and the chief of manufacturing. The agroindustrial engineer places both of them in contact and creates an atmosphere of mutual understanding because he masters the various aspects of sugar manufacturing technology: machinery, agricultural biology and the agricultural technology of the sugarcane. This man can play the role of coordinator of the activity and optimize the various areas of industry and agriculture."

"Of course, he must have a number of personality traits, since it is supposed that many of them will be management personnel. The idea of their training was precisely that: A career for management cadres with the suitable capability to channel the will of a group of men in terms of specific objectives."

Technologist in Sugar Production; Technologist in Fermentations

[Question] How could we describe the other two specialties taught in the faculty?

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Eduardo Ojito answers: "The sugar production technologist is capable of supervising, managing or transforming technological processes of sugar production from the point of view of the physical and chemical transformations, which means from the extraction of the juice in the tandem, its passage through the centrifuge to the storage of the sugar. This entire chain of technological flow is his responsibility: how the largest amount of sugar possible can be extracted; how industrial yield is optimized and increased; how the best quality of sugar is obtained and how the technological process can be made more economical and efficient. In my opinion, he is one of the most important technicians in the sugar-making industry.

"The role of the technologist in fermentations is of extraordinary importance; he has a very defined field of development and of significant importance in this 5-year period.

"Although that specialty will not begin to be taught as such in the faculty until 1982, the necessary foundations have already been established. Let us remember everything that the production of byproducts means from the point of view of the microbiological process such as the production of torula, livestock feeds, the saccharomyces (the brewing or breadmaking yeast), alcohols, amino acids, a number of productive items of great prospects for development.

"The need is posed of training 60 fermentation technologists in each course. However, 45 is a good number, normal within the limits of requirements because it is a specialty that is going to be used in the 10 present torula plants, besides the 10 which will be built. Moreover, an amino acid plant is going to be built and the distilleries will be expanded and modernized. In short, it is necessary that in this, as in the other specialties, we have enthusiastic persons capable of placing their intellect at the service of the research and management of the complex agroindustrial processes of sugarcane. That is the reason for the insistence by my comrades in obtaining a suitable dissemination of information on its prospects and for the attraction of the best talents."

A Future Rich in Prospects

[Question] Although during our conversation we have more or less explicitly referred to the prospects and development of the sugar industry, we understand that this subject could be briefly delved into because it is a matter, as you have explained, of providing an incentive for the students...

Ojito emphasizes: "This subject is exciting, not only to us who are, as it is said, in love with our work, but for anyone who is interested in the development of the country. It must be well understood that it is necessary to transform the sugar industry and take it to its highest technological levels, as Comrade Fidel has instructed repeatedly. There is an infinite field of work in the sugar industry--it is not a sectarian exaggeration--in terms of the transformation of the industry itself, which is undergoing a significant development, with specific research centers making possible the display of the intellectual and scientific capabilities of our graduates. Moreover, it must be understood that the sugar industry is also a food industry which has to undergo a great transformation. Fidel has pointed out this fact in the sense that as a food

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industry it has its specific requirements and specifications. In this fashion, the sugar industry is undergoing technological transformations which require specialists with a high degree of initiative and discipline. That is why it is necessary that the most important specialties be given publicity, that information on them be disseminated and that all those who have anything to do in this work give their best efforts. For example, this exchange of opinions with BOHEMIA is of great interest for us.

"But together with what we have proposed, or better yet, outlined, we must say that environmental changes are being undertaken in the sugarmill complexes, that is, material incentives to some points in the wage reform as well as the creation of new conditions in the complexes. We know that this is not a problem about which people usually think: a complex which is far away, without proper conditions and so forth. But when we confirm that this probable situation is being overcome in an irreversible manner, we see that prospects and incentives are palpable and together with this there are the technological transformations which are being carried out. The young person has to evaluate all these elements in which the moral and material factors are combined because it is a need of the economic development of the country and because chances for improvement and fulfillment are opened to him.

"Just think, the 30 de Noviembre sugarmill complex says it needs 25 professionals. If we suppose that 15 should be sent to each complex, some 2,000 technicians would be needed for some 150 sugarmill complexes. This means that opportunities are practically infinite in the sugar industry itself, besides those in the byproducts industry."

"At this time," says Machado, "bagasse panels have a price three times higher than the price of sugarcane itself or the torula which has an elastic market which accepts a good part of what may be produced.

"In a seminar on chemistry held in the Academy of Sciences, there was talk about sugar industry problems already resolved at the laboratory level, textile fibers from sugarcane, research in the food industry in light industry and so forth.

"It is a matter of understanding that the strategic future of the country has to be defined on the basis of its own natural conditions and ours indicate that we profit from producing sugar, whose plants possess a number of very strange properties which favor an even greater exploitation of the sugar through its many applications in byproducts.

[Question] Since we are speaking of stimulating an interest in these specialties, it seems to us that it would be useful, if you agree, to recall the words of our heroic guerrilla when he inaugurated the Cuban Institute for Sugarcane Byproducts Research (ICIDCA):

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"The experience of our scientists has already shown that the possibilities of using sugarcane byproducts may mean enormous amounts of assets for the country, and they may even turn sugar, in the course of time and the development of technology, into a marginal product, while the chemical products derived from the transformation of sugarcane will be the ones which will have the greatest importance in the value of production."

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COUNTRY SECTION

CUBA

RAILWAY PROBLEMS TAKEN UP IN ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Havana BOHEMIA in Spanish 30 Jan 81 pp 16-21

[Report of roundtable sponsored by BOHEMIA, with journalists Alberto Pozo, head of the economic section; Gregorio Hernandez, of the economic section; and Luis Toca, graphic department, participating]

[Text] The building of the new Cuban central railway obviously is one of the infrastructure projects with the highest priority at the present stage in national development. However, the functional service it provides, basically transporting passengers, suffers from a complex of shortcomings accumulated throughout recent years and is as a result a constant concern of our government and party, as well as the part of the population which uses this service.

Based on this situation, and in view of the fact that profound steps designed to modify this state of affairs have been undertaken, we invited to this BOHEMIA roundtable the leadership team of the Western Division, the most important of this national railway administration which territorially covers the provinces of Pinar del Rio, Havana, City of Havana and Matanzas, that is to say, from Guane to Los Arabos.

The following comrades participated as members of the panel:

Alvero Montero, division director; Luis Hurtado, assistant director; Edel Somoano, chief of the rail service inspectorate; Domingo Verdaja, director of the Western Traction Enterprise; Calixto Palazon, administrator of the October Revolution workshop; Luis Salgado, head of division operations; Geo Rene Garcia, director of the Western Railroad Cars Enterprise; Lazaro Solis, chief of personnel and cadres; and Esteban Marturel, in charge of training. Also present were comrades Luis Avila, chief of control and inspection; Nilda Castro, in charge of operations; and Sebastian Rodriguez, head of the passenger department.

The following, then, are the questions asked and the answers given.

[Question] The national trains are confronting operational difficulties, in particular delays in schedules and departure and arrival times. What is the reason for them and what is being done to correct them?

Luis Hurtado: It is a fact that our national passenger trains have encountered difficulties throughout this five-year period. We are preparing a report in which we analyze the development of these trains in the years between 1970 and 1980, and we

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believe that the observance of scheduled departures is really very poor. In 1980, there was some recovery, with 50 percent of the departures and 40 percent of the arrivals on time, although we still have a rather difficult situation.

We are still far from achieving the quality of first-class service, air conditioning, etc, for which the customer pays. These trains have complex technology, technology we have not yet been able to operate on the level needed for maximum service to the benefit of the public.

Here there is another group of problems which also have their effect. Everyone knows that in these last five years there has been and still is intensive work on rebuilding the railway. Along many sections, in this rebuilding, the new track parallels the old one, and this has caused serious difficulties, with many derailments, not so much for passenger trains as for freight trains, but obviously there were many interruptions along the track and the normal rotation of the railroad cars, both passenger coaches and locomotives, has been affected. In other words, the trains have not arrived on time. Also, the breakdown of discipline has been a major factor to an equal extent. In this connection we should say that we began in 1980 to see an improvement in this discipline, due to the organizational measures being carried out and thanks to the application of decree laws 32 and 36, authorizing harsh penalties for workers and chiefs who do not carry out their duties.

In 1981, this process of improvement which is already to be found on national passenger trains should increase. In railway construction as such, the sections which are being put into use in the eastern provinces and which will be put into service in the first quarter of 1981 will make it possible to reduce the interruptions along the route.

On the other hand, serious work is being done to complete some of the most important investments in our workshops. Investments, I repeat, the training of personnel, the rebuilding of the railway, to which substantial new lines in the eastern provinces will be added in this first quarter, should make it possible to provide efficient service in 1981. The western division operates 96 passenger trains daily, as well as the 6 national ones. All of the work of the division, everything achieved in the rest of the services, affects the national passenger trains.

Alvaro Montero: I would like to point out two things.

One has to do with the operation of the railroad cars, that is the passenger coaches. The basic percentage of violations of prompt departure time for trains has to do with the coaches. To eliminate this problem steps have been taken at the workshops of the Western Railroad Car Enterprise, located in Luyano, which services this fleet. These include organization measures, retraining of personnel, innovations which needed introduction, because without a doubt there was a problem with replacement cars, let us say during 1980. In the peak months--June, July, August and September, above all the first three--a difficult situation developed with freon gas which is used in the cooling equipment. On an average, due to limitations in the supply of this gas, 25 pieces of equipment were out of service, while at other times other pieces of equipment were out of service due to parts problems.

But behind these objective problems with the railroad cars, there are also and without a doubt a series of problems which had been concealed and still are being, involving a low level of demand with regard to quality, negligence in the work, lack of consistent training of the personnel such as to provide us with workers highly qualified to repair railroad cars such as these, which are sophisticated. Work is being done along this line as well.

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And another problem we must take up is that nothing is gained simply by insuring that a national train leaves its base in Havana on time. For if it is important that it leave Havana on time, it is equally important that it depart from the interior of the country, from Santiago, Holguin, Tunas, or Camaguey, on time. For obviously, when these trains are running behind, this has an effect on the preparation and care of these trains which must depart from Havana again. This is a problem which affects the other provinces in the country as well, and we believe that perhaps the rest of the provinces also need such worker training.

A heavy investment plan, which without a doubt will yield its first results in coach technology as such, has been undertaken. In other words we are training 140 men in the Luyano workshop as electricians, mechanics, etc, and this will also improve the opportunities for productive work quality by the labor force.

[Question] The "peak months" represent a major problem. Have steps been taken to avoid the unpleasant situations in which the travelers sometimes practically "attack" the trains?

Luis Hurtado: What has traditionally happened every summer is that we did not maintain reserves. We put into service everything we had and when there were problems with the equipment for the causes mentioned above, during the peak we have mentioned, we were left without reserves. In the final analysis, we were committed to these excesses of demand and then were relying on the same fleet as we had had in service, and what occurs is lag after lag, accumulating to the point of 10 and 12 hour delays on the national passenger trains.

Our work has been full of shortcomings. There is one very important thing which irritates the people a great deal, and this is incorrect information on the reason for this delay, these lags.

What is happening with this problem of "attacks" on the trains? Let us say that the train is going to depart at 2000 hours. The Holguin train departs at 1955 hours, that from Tunas at 2200 hours, and that from Santiago-Guantanamo at 2353 hours. When these trains are late, all of their passengers come together in the station terminal. This makes 2,100 passengers together, which is practically uncontrollable. When the time comes for the train to depart at 2000 hours, these passengers are all still here, and then a public avalanche which it is practically impossible to control occurs. The only solution to this, apart from the other measures adopted such as the remodeling of the terminal, coordination with the PNR [National Revolutionary Police], to avoid these "attacks" on the trains, etc, is to guarantee punctuality. For this is what happens first, but in addition to having 2,000 passengers together in the terminal there is no possibility of providing services for them. The buffet service cannot accommodate them, and the bathroom and sanitary facilities are inadequate too. There is not enough cold water for them and nowhere to sit. The only real, practical solution to this problem is to guarantee that the trains depart on time.

For if train no 5 has reservations in Matanzas for Holguin, Colon, etc, for example, and the passengers in Havana take these seats, when the train arrives at these places, these towns, the passengers from these places find that their seats are taken. The only solution, and the old railroad men say so, is to keep to the schedule.

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Alvaro Montero: The important thing here is to say that there can be no doubt that the "attacks" on the trains have occurred. In the early months of 1980 I went to the people's government authorities and the police in Colon, asking for their cooperation, in Los Arabos and at the Colon station itself, where "attacks" on the trains were constantly happening. Even with the conductor carrying out his duty, these "attacks" occurred, mainly on Monday mornings and Sunday nights, and the organizations in Colon and Los Arabos gave us their support and this was resolved. But the conditions at the stations also contribute to this. Currently we are remodeling the central station in Havana. Why? To provide somewhat better conditions and technological facilities, if we may call them that, to insure discipline among the passengers within the terminal premises. All of this will lead to a substantial improvement in order on the trains and, naturally, will be accompanied by a series of disciplinary measures we have had to adopt with the conductors and stewards who were unable to keep order on the trains. For if there is a steward at the entrance to a coach he should not allow unauthorized persons to enter it.

[Question] There has been a systematic breakdown of discipline in the personnel engaged in platform activities, to the detriment of the quality of service. What is being done to eliminate this evil?

Alvaro Montero: Without question, the railway must be an organization with discipline very like that in the military. In all countries in the world there are railway disciplinary regulations. These are inviolable rules. The errors which may occur in other sectors of the economy cannot be allowed in railway operations in many cases, because this would cost lives and have an incalculable impact from the economic point of view.

Railroad discipline was breaking down and the regulations governing this discipline were failing. Now then, the promulgation of decree laws 32 and 36, along with a higher level of demand on the management level, strong party and trade union support, have made it possible to reestablish discipline, both in the labor and technical sectors, according to the needs of the railway system. This has made it possible for us to achieve a leap in quality on labor discipline problems today, not only from the point of view of the worker but also, where there was much to be desired, from the point of view of the management on the various railway operations levels because in railway activities, those in charge have a great deal of influence on the general operational work as such. An improper or thoughtless decision by a superior can give rise to other discipline problems among the workers. The Havana urban buses now have their own regulations, and this year we will have them for the railway.

[Question] Service on the trains has suffered from serious problems. Have any specific steps been taken with visible positive results?

Edel Somoano: In reality we have had problems with the efficiency of our work, to which the first contributing factor has been the lack of an overall system for service on the trains, which linked with difficulties encountered with certain supply requests has resulted in the insufficient quality of the service offered.

In the early months of last year, we were faced with the failure of supply enterprises to deliver localized products: ham, chicken, smoked pork loin. We also had problems with beer and soft drinks. This situation was normalized, and a good supply of products was achieved during 1980.

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In direct connection with the quality of services, the lack of exigency on the part of some buffet managers, failure to observe labor regulations, and also, in the cases concerning the trains, violations of the norms, contributed directly. It has often happened that with a product on board the train, it was not made available, and often when there was an opportunity to request it from the commissaries or intermediary stations, an incorrect quantity was requested, that is to say not enough to meet the demands of the customers. Also in some cases situations occurred with bread, so that when passengers asked there was not bread enough to make snacks. There were not many cases, but they did occur, especially in Las Villas and Camaguey, which are the central places where there is the most pressure. There was also the problem of electricity, because sometimes the lights failed and there was no way to supply the trains. We also have the situation of the restaurant cars. Some national trains depart without them, for technical equipment reasons. Also there have been breakdowns during operation, so that cold drinks could not be provided. Often even when there was chicken, we could not serve it hot, and all of these things have their effect on poor service quality.

[Question] Were these problems objective or were there subjective factors contributing to poor service quality?

Somoano: I believe that the majority of these problems with service quality had to do with the lack of exigency on the part of our restaurant car managers on board the trains.

[Question] What steps were taken?

Somoano: In those cases we learned of officially, we dismissed personnel from their posts. We applied decree law 36 where buffet managers are concerned and decree law 32 for workers, and there have been a large number of comrades for whom these measures were invoked and the results have been magnificent.

[Question] Are there further objective problems, or is it a question of the professional skill of the workers providing this service?

Somoano: Service has been improving gradually. We were assigned the task of drafting a plan, a proposal, for the improvement of present and future services, both on board the trains and at the terminal stations, that is to say the main ones, where cafeterias and other facilities are concerned. We also have some new carts in operation, staffed by comrades who sell snacks, beverages, fruit and cigarettes...whatever goods the customer wants at the moment, direct to the consumers. They are now in use on the Havana-Santiago trains.

[Question] At the Cienega workshops we learned of some problems in organization and efficiency affecting the rate of production and quality. What can you tell us about this?

Domingo Verdeja: We would like to divide the question into two aspects: objective problems and subjective problems. The beginning of the year 1980 was without a doubt unfavorable. In the last days of 1979 we received the TEM-4 locomotive fleet based in Camaguey. These locomotives were equipment with a new technology for our workshops and workers, although they had been in use for 16 years. The introduction of this new technology caused problems for the personnel dealing with the equipment, and in

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addition there was the problem of machine personnel, which was also insufficiently trained in the handling of this equipment. Along with these we have the French MGO locomotives for maneuvering, with a fleet of 25. Because of problems in improper operation in 1979, 18 had to be repaired, which means that at the beginning of these years, the cycle of these locomotives was more than 80 percent, and thus they began to cause problems.

We also deal with the Fiat coaches. The Fiat motor coaches are vehicles which, although they were recently purchased, have some deficient components. This equipment began to arrive in 1976. It arrived and we did not have all of the conditions for their optimal exploitation. To this must be added problems of discipline, lack of exigency, and quality, rather difficult problems to resolve in these cases.

During the year 1980 we devoted special attention to training. There were a number of training and advanced qualification courses. You have spoken of the Rufino Gonzalez School. It is not under our direct jurisdiction, but rather that of the division's department of training, and it is there, where we are concerned, that the engineers and engineers' helpers are trained. In our workshops, both in Cienaga and at October Revolution, electricians and air, truck and other mechanics are trained and the theoretical studies provided at Rufino Gonzalez are supplemented where the engineers and helpers are concerned.

In practice, between the courses completed and those in progress at this time, more than 150 young people passed through these classes in 1980.

It would be well to note the high level of repairs we had to carry out this year. To have an idea of the magnitude of this task, the record number of repairs carried out at the Cienaga workshop was 63 pieces of equipment, in 1976. To reach this figure, it was necessary to include 25 Hungarian DUM-9 locomotives from Camaguey. In 1980, with our fleet, we set the historic record, with the repair of 92 pieces of equipment. This in practice reveals a development in the repair sector of more than 40 percent. We hardly added to the percentage of workers in order to achieve this 40 percent increase. However, there is an improvement where discipline is concerned. At the beginning of this past year, 1980, absenteeism was running between 6 and 7 percent. The level at which we ended the third quarter of this year was below 3 percent, because due to the discipline level, involvement of more than 4 percent of the physical workers in labor activity was achieved in practice. Work was done throughout this stage on a plan for organizing the repair flow, including plans not only for dates equipment would arrive and depart, but also the time each component would be disassembled and remounted.

The comrades providing service on board trains complained that the refrigerators did not keep things cold. In these past five years, we have hardly received a single replacement part for this equipment. Units are being adapted so that at the beginning of the year all of the motor coaches will have functioning refrigerators, so as to be able to respond to this complaint by the comrades offering service on board, who in their turn must cooperate with us, because these refrigeration facilities are not intended to cool, but to maintain cold. Therefore drinks should be cold when they are placed in them.

However, I believe that there is extraordinary activity by the political groups, the trade union and the youth, which, with the contribution of decree laws 32 and 36, has enabled us to end the year under rather favorable conditions--conditions which have

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contributed not only from the point of view of repairs, but also operations, with the doubling during the year of the number of locomotives put into service.

[Question] We learned of the existence of heavy absenteeism affecting the repair of locomotives, among other things, at the October Revolution Workshop. Are these and other negative situations continuing or have there been achievements?

Calixto Palazon: In October 1979, the level of absenteeism for the whole center was 9.7, and in the month of November it was 4.4. However, in October 1980, overall absenteeism at the center was 2.3, and in November, 1.9. When we analyze the workshop specifically, we see that there was absenteeism of 8.3 in October 1979, while in October 1980 it was 3.8. In the month of November 1979 it was 7.6, and in the same month of 1980, the figure was down to 3.4 percent. As can be seen, success has been achieved in connection with absenteeism.

There is also absenteeism among the young people, who because of the characteristics of our center are not accustomed to night work, above all on Saturdays and Sundays. For our center works round the clock, and every day of the year, holidays or not, rain or shine, because the equipment must be finished, and with the young people we have many problems in this connection. However, among the older comrades, who are accustomed to this type of work, there is not so much evidence of absenteeism.

Alvaro Montero: It is at this work center, the October Revolution Workshop, that the results of collective work by the trade union, the administration and the party can best be seen. Here we have not only achieved the reduction Comrade Palazon spoke of from the point of view of absenteeism, but another very important modality has been put to use. The engineers, in order to be able to take retraining courses for the various types of locomotives, must leave production. However, what is being done on the initiative of the workers' movement at this center? As there is a shortage of personnel, the engineers have all been taking requalification courses at schools scheduled for various hours of the day, without having to leave the train. They return from the Santa Clara run and go to the course, and there they earn requalification. We have already graduated the first 20 comrades from such courses.

[Question] From various sources we know that there are serious discipline problems and even accidents in the division yards, affecting the normal provision of service, both for passenger and freight traffic. What is being done to eliminate this problem?

Luis Salgado: There were certain difficulties in 1980 at the railway junction yards in Havana, as a result of the derailments which occurred on a number of occasions because of the condition of our tracks, which have been in use for more than 60 years. Another problem was absenteeism, along with the lack of exigency on the part of superiors. The objective problems and lack of discipline among the personnel led to the fact that trains were not made up and services provided to the customers on time. This led to the whole problem of congestion at the yards. The work at the yards is very important, because if good work is not done there, the trains cannot depart on time. The yard personnel is getting the same treatment from us as the road personnel, since all personnel serves at some time there, in the yards. In other words, when you join the railroad, as a stoker, brakeman or engineer, you must begin at the yards, working two or three thousand hours there.

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There was the idea that the yards were rehabilitation centers, because penalized personnel were sent to work there. This has been eliminated. The yard personnel is being given the importance, the treatment, it deserves. An assembly is held at all the yards, with all the workers participating, every week.

[Question] Isn't there a plan for the Havana central junction?

Alvaro Montero: By means of measures currently underway, we have practically eliminated derailments. Where do they occur? In the yards, due to the old junctions, crossties, limited drainage and great age of the yards, which are 60 years old, as Comrade Salgado has rightly said. The construction of new yards is included in the plans for railway reconstruction.

What has the ministry administration approved? Well, repair work. The process of rebuilding the Havana yards will begin in 1981. The administration of the Ministry of Transportation has given priority to attention to the technical condition of the yards within the development activities for 1981.

How will this process of rebuilding develop? It encourages us railroad men greatly to undertake this reconstruction. In addition, we will basically resolve the railway problems in Havana, but this will have to be done in the midst of work. That is to say, the work cannot stop, nor can industry or the make-up of trains in operation. We will be building one track while the trains use another. In fact, we are studying how to do this. It is a serious matter. All of us railroad men will be put to the test. The organization of the railway is a test, a task, a clock--bulldozers, motor graders, motor excavators. After they finish, shape the embankment, install the line and go on to another, we will under these conditions progress toward the complete reconstruction of the yards. To this end we have the resources the ministry has allocated. Yards are being put together of concrete and switches produced in Cardenas. In addition, plans call for the earth-moving brigades of the MITRANS [Ministry of Transportation] Construction Enterprises to do the road infrastructure work.

In this whole problem of struggle to reestablish railway traditions in order to improve our service, even under present conditions, we have established a switch factory in Cardenas producing this basic railway route element, the switch. It should be said in passing that in addition to the fact that they are very expensive on the world market, for they cost about 12,000 or 14,000 pesos, there are none, none are available. In 1980, 91 switches were produced and in 1981, at least 300 will be produced. This is very important, because this is an item which cannot be found, and in addition, it represents one of the basic railroad problems at this time.

Salgado: The personnel supervisors in the yards must know the railroad. They must necessarily be railroad men in order to be yard foremen. On promotion, an assistant yard foreman becomes yard foreman, a yard foreman becomes yard supervisor, then chief of station, and so on. However, what a contradiction! It is known that wages are lower than established for road services and this is being examined in a general way, but the problem is that a train conductor earns 177 pesos. This is the wage established by scale, the fixed wage, and an A-category yard supervisor, because there are A, B and C categories, earns 163. This means that logically a yard supervisor would be better off as a conductor, if he left the yard. The conductor has certain advantages in addition: he is on the line, works fewer days, has his meals when he is traveling, etc. In addition, supposing that other conditions are equal, and he earns 177 and the A-category yard supervisor, who bears tremendous responsibility, earns 163 pesos, what in and of itself will this produce? The fact that the supervisors currently are not the best trained.

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Wage reform will improve the wage increase for each individual in the proper proportion, and in addition, coordinated work is being done by the highest level in our ministry with the State Labor and Social Security Committee, to study and propose solutions to these and other matters essential to railroad operation.

[Question] Everyone knows how important the improvement and efficiency of the domestic port-transportation-economy chain is. Where the railroads are concerned, how is the removal of freight from the port of Havana developing?

Luis Hurtado: With regard to the port of Havana in particular, we are in a good position. We have achieved a cumulative 105 percent, and we believe that with the modest contribution we are making, the port can fulfill its plan. We have organized extra labor days and we have assigned equipment, special equipment to serve yard trains, yard services to serve the port directly, and to the extent that we have been making these advances in removing freight, these railroad cars taking freight out, we are carrying out our task at the port. We have had months in which we have hauled 50,000 tons away from the port instead of the 20 or 25 thousand we have promised.

[Question] At the Western Railroad Car Enterprise, there have been difficulties with repair quality and prompt delivery of the railroad cars, contributing to the delay in train departures. Has this picture changed?

Geo Rene Garcia: It is equally true that our activity is basic with regard to the whole process of scheduling national trains, and one factor we might call decisive is quality, also evidenced by the comrades providing service on board. This had led to a profound and detailed analysis by the enterprise of its difficulties, in view of the great transportation demand in the months of June to September, leading to intensive use of the railroad car park. This is related to the shortcomings in the quality of maintenance and repairs, just as this is caused by the lack of a large number of parts and materials imported in inadequate quantities, hindering us greatly.

Currently we can say that the equipment being repaired is subjected to complete restoration in terms of external and internal cleaning, as well as bearing in mind the allowable parameters the fleet must in fact have.

Lazaro Solis: Going further into all of the comrades' complaints about discipline, basically, we can say that with its strengthening and the appeal to the workers themselves, what we are seeking to express is a new style of work. The application of decree laws 32 and 36 has given us an opportunity to reestablish a part of the labor discipline. This has been a constant struggle in our sector. Up to 1979, absenteeism in any activity involving locomotives and also the roadways ranged always between 9 and 10 percent. In the workshops it was 6 and 7 percent, and this remained stable. During 1979, 857 measures were implemented, in the midst of a situation which made their application difficult. However, by the month of October 1980, 2,965 measures had been implemented, 591 of them involving final dismissal.

Alvaro Montero: So that we can understand the situation which existed here, the dismissal of 591 from an enterprise which has more than 10,000 workers comes to more than 5 percent. Naturally, this was the least desirable element, but, well, they were railroad men and this is a serious thing. Now, in an analysis of the factors which hurt us most and still do, we come to unjustified absenteeism. A total of

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1,736 measures were implemented because of unjustified absenteeism alone. We have had 74 for lack of respect to superiors, 31 for disobedience, 259 for negligence, 1 for mistreatment, etc.

Let us also speak of decree law 36, because in our division, since this measure has been in effect, we have also begun to apply it to those leading comrades and employees who act negligently in given situations which confront them in their official positions. And we can say that currently 116 measures have been implemented, ranging from warnings to permanent dismissal.

[Question] Recently the division has hired personnel on a high level without adequate training. What is being done to improve their labor quality?

Esteban Maturel: In 1980, 81 courses were offered, 47 for qualification and 34 for advanced training, and 2,657 workers studied various specialties in them. In addition, an old desire of the railroad workers, which was to reach the middle level of education, has been actively sought. Also at the Jacinto Garcia Espinosa Technological Institute, 200 students are being trained in various railroad technological specialties as middle-level technicians.

[Question] Are the intermediary supervisors as demanding as they should be to guarantee efficiency in the results of the work?

Alvaro Montero: I think that many of the shortcomings noted in the railroad system throughout this time were precisely influenced by a low level of demand from the supervisors, above all on the intermediary level. In other words, the work of the intermediary superior, the station chief, the yard supervisor, the dispatcher, the shift foreman in the workshop, the brigade foreman, has a tremendous influence on the railroad system. These men basically operate the railroad, not the high management levels. It is this team of cadres on this level which makes the railroad function, and in reality, this has to do with the problem we have been discussing--the lack of regulation, the lack of adequate cadre training, the lack of wages to encourage the railroad men themselves to aspire to be supervisors. And this is a phenomenon which has been seen here, for many of these posts have been occupied by supervisors who are not railroad men. Traditionally there was a line of promotion in the railroad. The supervisor who was a supervisor got there by beginning on the line, as a brakeman, conductor, engineer or station chief. Thus he could rise to be what they called superintendent of operations, today called the assistant director for operations. But in the railroads, as a result of the breakdown in the system, the time came when supervisors were "improvised," and as they were not sufficiently trained, the truth is they began to make blunders. This has slowly been improving and the results can be seen in the work.

[Question] From what you have said then, will the various measures be organized to pursue an advancement policy within the sector?

Alvaro Montero: An excellent question. We are in a position to operate as the railroads have always operated. For example, thanks to steps taken by the ministry administration, we have been authorized by the Cuban organs of peoples' government in Matanzas, Pinar del Rio, etc, to give priority in employment by the railroads to children of railroad workers and members of their families. This represents an important step in the education and training of our personnel. In coordination with

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our trade union, we have now insured that personnel enrolling in the various courses for engineers, conductors and workshop employees work on the line first, making application from there. After six months we say to them "you have a right to enroll in the following courses." As it was before. This, then, will lead to effective advancement for all personnel. In other words, by this means it is possible to recover the meaning, traditions and pride in being a railroad man.

[Question] Have accidents increased or declined in the division?

Luis Hurtado: If we look at the cold figures, we must admit that accidents have increased. However, this is not the reality. Forty percent of all the accidents are due to causes external to the railroad. There are obstructions on the line, collisions with nonrailroad vehicles, animals, people, etc. In the whole of 1980, there was not a single class A accident in the division. Class A is the most serious. The class B accidents which have occurred were precisely these collisions with nonrailroad vehicles, basically due to violations of article 23 of the traffic code by the drivers, who failed to respect the signal to stop at crossings. We are working intensely on this problem with the office of the attorney general of the republic and the police. This category which we call obstruction of the roadway accounts for 40 percent of all the accidents in the division. In coordination with traffic, we are working to improve all of the halt signals, and some large, giant barriers suitable for automobile drivers and the railroad are being installed.

One very important fact is that to bring a 1,500-ton train traveling at 80 or 90 km per hour to a halt, it takes 800 to 1,200 meters, a kilometer, and anything within that distance is simply carried along. The engineer can make every effort to brake and the train will not stop short of one kilometer. At the plenary session in Camaguey, there was also intensive discussion of this problem of animals on the tracks and people walking along them. It seems incredible that given the number of people struck by trains, it is not understood that one must not walk along the railroad right of way.

[Question] Why is there duplication in the sale of tickets for the national trains?

Luis Hurtado: We know that this problem of the double sale of seats is one of the most irritating things which has occurred in this stage of railroad operation. We would even say it is shameful that steps have been taken to prevent this and yet it happens. Actually, wherever man participates in the reservation system throughout the world there is the possibility of duplication. Elsewhere this has been resolved by leaving one percent of the seats available to adjust for errors which may occur, but these are minimal errors. This is not the case with this mass duplication which has occurred on our railroad since the month of April, when the reservation system began. In our case a group of reasons are involved, basically lack of administrative control and lack of organization, and inadequate training of the personnel who must deal with this activity. All of these things have been practically resolved now. A group of measures has been implemented to effect the complete replacement of the entire administrative team, substituting experienced personnel transferred from the bus system to direct this activity at the Havana terminal, reinforced by the establishment of national bus offices where one can now also make railroad reservations. This provides a whole series of other opportunities for the people to avoid coming here and creating so much congestion in the terminal with the waiting lines which develop. Currently there are 19 places other than the terminal where one can make reservations, in San Jose, Guira, Alquizar, Artemisa, Tulipan, Cienaga, the Isle of Youth and Pinar del Rio. Also it will be possible to make reservations other than at the station itself for the trains from Pinar del Rio and Cienfuegos.

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[Question] What goal has been set for the celebration of Railroad Men's Day?

Alvaro Montero: I believe that this question is timely in terms of the railroad workers, because despite the difficulties and the problems encountered, positive results were achieved in the general work in 1980. But these are basically quantitative, numerical indicators. In terms of quality we have had many problems.

In terms of economic indicators, the division showed a substantial increase of 16 percent in labor productivity, a decline in the cost per peso of production, an improvement in the turnover of rolling stock in the port-transportation-domestic economy chain, a decline in the number of accidents for which the railroad was responsible, a 30 percent increase in freight transportation, a 17 percent increase in passenger transportation, and also the wage indicators improved. The general efficiency indicators for locomotive operation, locomotive yield and railroad car yield also improved.

The plan adopted by the enterprise management and the workers' movement for 29 January calls for providing a proper response to the problem of quality in passenger transportation service. It is a simple response involving basically the national passenger trains, because the local trains, as Hurtado said, have been improving. All the efforts the railroad workers are making are obscured by the poor quality of service on the national passenger trains, the 5 trains up and the 5 down, or 10 trains in all. Nationally, there are 2,000 passenger trains, of which 10 are the cause of daily and constant complaints from the people, although it should be pointed out that there are difficulties and shortcomings in connection with other types of trains too. In other words, we plan constant improvement in the conditions, as described by the comrades connected with service on board, in connection with the schedules, so that we will in fact see a response to the justified complaints which have been received for some years, in particular those voiced by comrades Guillermo Garcia and Jorge Risquet at the national railroad meeting in Camaguey. And as a special task, we might say of a mass nature, we are undertaking the completion of the remodeling at the central station, and in addition, the process of modernization and repair of a group of railway stations which were practically abandoned is under way.

The investments in the railroad workshops are being increased to provide for the completion of a group of project goals in Cienaga and Luyano and to complete some major central railway projects. These include the Colon and Los Arabos yards, with their temporary stations and, an important project, improvement of living conditions for some road brigades to allow us to stabilize this work force. There has been excellent assistance from the upper ministry administration, above all in connection with a series of problems having to do with the needs encountered, the lack of resources and facilities, above all construction materials and other things the workers need.

Beginning with 29 January, all of our railroad men will have the new uniform, which is fine and elegant, and will put us in a position to show the other face of the railway system.

Another important thing is the completion of a bridge in Pinar del Rio which will allow us to bring heavy locomotives into this city. This will save us three light locomotives. Currently, for many years now, since the capitalist era, only light locomotives could enter Pinar del Rio for lack of heavy bridges. From Pinar del Rio

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to Guane no, but at least as far as Pinar del Rio we can effect an economy of three light locomotives. What we will not be able to fulfill is the physical ticket unit plan, because our suburban passenger transportation has dropped off greatly. The suburban service played a role when there was no bus service. When buses were established, since practically all of these suburban dwellers are poor, there were few travelers. From Guines to Havana, for example, the limited fleet was not equal to the consumer demand and they came by train, but if one can travel from Guines to Ocho Vias by bus in 40 minutes, then there is no reason to take the train. The same thing happens in Guanajay. We have what can be called real stopwatch service there between Guanajay and Havana. I think it takes 40 minutes, and in addition there is constant bus service there.

It remains for us to strengthen the national passenger service and the inter-provincial services above all. This is what the railroad needs, what the country needs, and these suburban lines will continue to be replaced in the final account by buses, because they are not profitable or adequate from the point of view of rapid service, because antiquated equipment is used and the technical condition of some sections of the line will not allow rapid train travel. We all know that suburban transportation service must be fast and frequent. Currently, because of the limited resources available, we are not in a position to offer the kind of service the users of suburban transportation need.

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COUNTRY SECTION

EL SALVADOR

DUARTE ON AGRARIAN REFORM, LEFTIST-RIGHTIST VIOLENCE

Montevideo EL DIA in Spanish 15 Feb 81 p 14

[Interview with Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte, via telex; date and place not given]

[Text] For this feature article, EL DIA interviewed, via international telex services, the president of the Government Junta of El Salvador, Jose Napoleon Duarte.

The chief executive of the strife-torn Central American nation discussed various issues, offering an official explanation of the reasons for the right and leftwing violence and terrorism ravaging the Caribbean nation.

The following is the complete text of EL DIA's talk with President Jose Napoleon Duarte.

[Question] Could you give us an overview of the current situation in El Salvador? I would ask you to keep in mind that you are addressing a nation, Uruguay, that knows little or nothing about what is going on behind the war that has broken out in your country.

[Answer] The grave situation that the country is currently in is the result of more than 50 years of economic and social frustrations, as well as the curtailing of political opportunities for authentic democracy. For decades El Salvador lived under a system of injustice, selfishness and arrogance on the part of the economically strong segments of the population towards the poorest groups.

The country's wealth became concentrated in the hands of a few families, who therefore wielded political power. These families dominated the country's financial system and the trading of our main exports.

The electoral system was of use only for fraud and to impose candidates. Government corruption became institutionalized, and the people's aspirations for a more just life were neglected.

As was to be expected, all this created a climate of anguish and despair. There was a total breakdown in the scale of civic, human and political values.

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Democratic political sectors were dismantled, and their leaders intimidated, exiled or murdered, which fostered a radicalization.

All of these built-up frustrations gradually made people prone to violence, and leftwing extremist groups found idealist banners to wave in front of them. For its part, the far right refused to realize that its lack of social sensitivity was also paving the way for an explosive situation.

Briefly, the injustice and social and political frustrations that our society fostered for a half century were the determining factors in touching off the violence and bloodshed that we are now enduring.

As far as the present situation is concerned, we are in a climate of structural violence resulting from our recent past: the far right is trying to recover the traditional privileges that it has lost, and there is violence from the far left, which has absolutely no grass roots support and wants only to gain power to install a Marxist-style totalitarian government.

The international subversives announced a "final offensive" in the military sphere for 1 January and at the same time a general strike in the political sphere. Both moves failed, which indicates, on the one hand, that our Armed Forces are professionally capable of containing subversion and, on the other, that the people do not support the extremist groups because the overwhelming majority of them went to work as usual.

This means that most people want to live and work in peace, and the revolutionary government is striving to foster such a climate.

The First Non-Marxist Revolution

[Question] Did the current Government Junta, which you preside over, arise as an option to what seemed to be an imminent leftwing takeover? Could you tell us about the junta's philosophical and political (its basic political platform) leanings and what its ideological backing is?

[Answer] I assumed my present responsibilities at one of the most tragic moments in our history, and I accepted this difficult job because I feel that I have an obligation to make my patriotic contribution so that the Salvadoran people see their grievances satisfied. I have fought for democracy for 20 years and I am going to continue doing so in spite of the risks and sacrifices this might entail. This struggle of mine, which the people are fully aware of, is my moral backing in the leadership post entrusted to me.

El Salvador is, at present, promoting the first non-Marxist revolution in the Americas.

The 'Legend' of the 14 Families

[Question] Costa Rica's Revolutionary Democratic Front told EL DIA in an article published on Sunday 18 January that "14 families wield power and own

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the wealth in El Salvador, with the support of the army" and that "the agrarian reform does not exist" because "many lands that were divided up and handed over to the peasants have returned to the control of their owners." Could you explain what kind of technical and financial assistance was made available to the peasant farmers who were given land to make sure that the "agrarian reform" did not fail?

[Answer] As a system, the country's oligarchy has been done away with. As I said before, the lands now belong to the peasant farmers grouped together in cooperatives or other associations. The banking and financial system, as well as foreign trade, have been nationalized, and thus the small group that used to wield economic power has been displaced. Those who still promote the legend of the 14 families do so because they lack arguments to defend their own theories or simply as another element in their campaign of lies and disinformation.

For its part, the army, on the basis of the 15 October 1979 proclamation, is on the side of the people to guarantee the revolutionary process we have begun.

As far as the agrarian reform is concerned, I can tell you that not only is it moving forward but it is growing stronger all the time as well. I would like to explain that there are two phases to our agrarian reform. The first phase involves the expropriation of estates covering more than 500 hectares, in other words properties of more than 700 manzanas [1 manzana=1.75 acres]. This part has already been taken care of, and some 200 families that owned about 300,000 manzanas were affected. Part two of the first phase will consist of the expropriation of 100 to 500-hectare estates, and this is about to begin.

The second phase involves the implementation of Decree 207, the law encumbering and transferring farmland to the people who cultivate it directly. In other words, we are making landownership available to the peasant farmers who used to pay rent, either in cash or in kind, for the use of the land. Rounding out this phase is the utilization of untilled land. I should clarify that the peasant farmers are not given the land for free; rather, they pay off the total value of the land in installments. Now that I have explained this, I will inform you that in the 1980 farm year the country harvested its largest crop ever of corn, beans and rice, which are staples for the masses, to the extent that not only was domestic demand met but we even had enough corn to export to countries like Mexico and Nicaragua. If we take into account the agitation, terrorism and intimidation by subversive groups in the countryside, we can assert that Salvadoran peasant farmers are the bulwark of the agrarian reform and are giving an example of responsibility and determination to consolidate this progress.

As to technical and financial support, the Agriculture Ministry and the Institute of Agrarian Transformation take care of technical assistance, and the Agricultural and Livestock Development Bank (BFA) along with the nationalized banking system handle financial backing. In addition, we have set up FINATA [National Farmland Finance Bank], whose main purpose is to finance the acquisition of farmland by ordinary tenant farmers or tenant farmers who have pledged to buy the land, sharecroppers, installment buyers and other individuals

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who work the lands directly, whether they pay in cash or in kind. As the institution that is becoming the force behind Decree 207, which represents the second phase of the agrarian reform and which is benefiting a million peasant farmers, FINATA will finance the acquisition of rural properties of up to 7 hectares. I would just like to add that FINATA will also finance farm cooperatives, community associations of peasant farmers and other farmworker organizations desiring to acquire farmland.

Violence from the Right and Left

[Question] Could you explain in detail and above and beyond the formal reasons that have been made public, the reason for the resignation of Mr Paredes, the vice minister of planning? (The Revolutionary Democratic Front told EL DIA that "he resigned because of the government's repressive activities.")

[Answer] I think that Mr Paredes Castillo lacked the patriotic courage to cope with the difficult times that our country is experiencing. Three days before leaving his post, he went to Colombia and Panama and described the process of change that the Salvadoran Revolutionary Government is spurring. We think that Paredes Castillo, who was educated by the Jesuits who uphold the theology of liberation, a restless and emotionally unstable man, was also under pressure from his family, and as was to be expected, something personal happened that threw his emotional balance off. As far as your other remark is concerned, I have already stated and I will repeat that repression in El Salvador is practiced by the radical left and rightwing groups that are using violent means to try and impose their will on the people. The people are caught in the middle, suffering the consequences of the subversion and terrorism that the Revolutionary Government is striving to control and eradicate.

[Question] Former White House press secretary Jodie Powell said in Canada that if Reagan "supports the right wing in El Salvador, that will be a major step towards the establishment of a far left government there in the months to come." Do you think that "more determined" aid from the United States could radicalize the current Salvadoran process by committing the junta to the United States and justifying what the junta itself has termed the "internationalization" of the military struggle?

[Answer] Independently of its amount, U.S. aid to El Salvador is part of the cooperation programs between two friendly peoples and governments. There are people in my country now who are worried more about American aid to El Salvador than about the economic aid, training and mercenaries that the countries backing Soviet expansionism are providing Salvadoran subversives. This is what is causing greater bloodshed. We reject any sort of intervention; the only thing we want to do is carry out our peaceful revolution without foreign interference from any side. We do not want the conflict to be internationalized.

The Validity of Various Accounts

[Question] You attributed the death of the American technicians working with the junta on the agrarian reform to "extreme rightwing groups." Your deputy

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foreign minister, Dr Alejandro Gomez Vides, said in Montevideo, however, that "it was the left," conceding his disagreement with you. Could you explain how as government leaders of the same country, you two have different views on the same problem?

[Answer] The Revolutionary Government denounced the murder of Mr. Rodolfo Viera, president of the Salvadoran Agrarian Transformation Institute, and of the two American citizens who worked part-time on the agrarian reform. As far as assigning responsibilities is concerned, we noted at the time that from an analysis of the criminal activities and the objectives set forth by the domestic and international spokesmen of the extreme leftwing groups, we could point to them as being responsible because, moreover, they were the sole beneficiaries. Nevertheless, we also noted that we were not ruling out the possibility of an irrational vendetta by extreme rightwing terrorist factions. In other words, both sides were under suspicion, and therefore either account could be true amid the violence that the two extremes are promoting.

[Question] If the Government Junta of El Salvador has progressive principles, could you explain what the substantive differences are between it and the Salvadorans who have taken up arms, differences that have made a bloodless understanding for the good of El Salvador and the continent impossible?

[Answer] The basic difference is that they want to implement their political ideas through terrorism and subversive violence. We are attempting to promote our revolution through peaceful means and dialog. In addition, the socioeconomic programs that the leftists are offering are, in fact, less radical than the ones that the Revolutionary Junta has offered and is implementing. Furthermore, we advocate pluralism, and they, totalitarianism.

I would like to point out that on numerous occasions I have called for us to sit down and discuss our national problems, the only condition being that the people who are bent on resorting to violence put down their arms. We have even issued an amnesty law to help bring about peace.

[Question] Mr President, how long do you think that Salvadorans will keep on dying on account of the ongoing war?

[Answer] I trust in God that it will not be much longer.

[Question] Mr President, what is your opinion of the support that the continent's Christian Democrats (including Uruguay's), meeting in Caracas, have given the current Government Junta of El Salvador?

[Answer] Such support is a show of solidarity with our efforts to democratize El Salvador.

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