CIVIL WAR

When he founded the presidency, Perón was backed by Argentina's growing labor movement as well as an emerging sector of industrial capitalists. The industrial boom which occurred during World War II brought a period of prosperity which persisted for some years and gave Argentina the highest living standard in Latin America. From this period grew the legend of Perón and Peronismo as the miracle cure for the country's ills.

At its start, Peronismo was the populist vision of national growth—"neither Yankee nor Marxist." In practice, it combined an autocratic state structure and a growing reliance on U.S. imports with social welfare programs.

The Euromunist movement, basing itself upon acceptance of the institutions of bourgeois democracy as inviolable representatives of the popular will, conceives of the struggle for socialism as an evolutionary process taking place within those institutions and regards solidarity with the socialist camp as an historical anachronism that only alienates Western European communists from their respective working classes. At the height of its influence in the mid-1970s, Eurocommunism was the official outlook of the influential Italian, French and Spanish Communist Parties, as well as of numerous smaller parties in Western Europe.

The first sign of the emerging crisis within the PCE was the open denunciation of Eurocommunism at the 1981 5th Congress of the party's Catalan branch, the United Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSUC), a central pillar of the PCE since the Spanish Civil War. The majority of the PSUC was then expelled from the PCE, and went on to form the PCE in April 1982.

The following year there was a steady decline in PCE membership and the party did very poorly in Spain's national and municipal elections. Thus, this October, the PCE was shaken by the resignation of Ignacio Gallego, a veteran party leader and the top official responsible for party organization. Until recently, Gallego was considered a close ally of Santiago Carrillo, former general secretary of the PCE and one of the figures most responsible for elaborating Eurocommunism's theoretical framework and political strategy. Gallego attacked the basic tenets of Eurocommunism in his letter of resignation addressed to the PCE Central Committee (as quoted in the Madrid daily El País):

"My identification with the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism clash with what most of you call the Eurocommunist strategy...."
Spanish CP... continued from previous page

I also know that many of those who distinguish themselves for anti-dogmatism have ended up defending the dogmas of social democracy. Forgetting revolutionary principles inevitably leads to confusion, pragmatism and, ultimately, to reformism in one guise or another.

Gallego also repudiated the cosmetic adjustments made by the PCE to the Eurocommunist line last year in an attempt to stem the party's crisis. Last year, Gallego was replaced by a party leadership committed to "renewal" in the party—but one that did not challenge the fundamental assumptions of Eurocommunism.

The PCE, which is at the center of efforts to unite communists in a new revolutionary party, also traces the demise of the PCE to the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism. In an article from the PCE's official organ Avant, reprinted in the August 1983 issue of Socialism: Theory and Practice, the PCE states: "From the moment the party could function legally [1977] its leadership began making one concession of principle after another to the bourgeoisie in the bid to 'look nice' in their eyes. It nourishes the hope to secure a last invitation to share in a 'unity government'...."

"On the international scene, the PCE leadership came up with unfounded criticism of the French and Portuguese communist parties, encouraged the 'Eurocommunist' tendency in the Italian Communist Party and courted European social democracy. On top of it all, Carrillo sharply attacked the socialist countries...."

"The PCE will continue its efforts to create in Catalonia a mass-scale communist party loyal to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. We shall promote in every way the re-emergence of a genuine Communist Party of Spain."

Concrete steps toward this end are already well underway. At a major PCC-sponsored sail in Barcelona October 16, over 8,000 people turned out to hear calls for the "reparacion" (recovery) of a Marxist-Leninist line and the "re-establecimiento" (re-establishment) of a revolutionary communist party in Spain. Representatives were present from communist parties and liberation movements in Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Chile, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Gallego particularly electrified the crowd with his support for the party building effort and his statement that Leninism cannot be separated from Marxism. Plans are also being made for a "Congress of Unification of Communists," tentatively scheduled for Madrid early next year.

Concerning Sandinista suppression of certain activities of the Catholic Church, this can hardly be discussed seriously as accountable to defense of the Revolution.

These measures are designed to insure that the electoral process does not provide an opening for the more privileged elements in Nicaraguan society (backed with CIA funds and advisers) to use their class advantages to erode popular power. Under conditions of economic and political stability, the Sandinistas have no lack of confidence in the Nicaraguan masses' ability to freely debate the key issues of state and determine which forces serve their interests. But in the midst of economic sabotage by counter-revolutionary elements and armed attacks on the population by hit-and-run contra terrorists, the Sandinistas are not about to allow the intimidation and demagogy that spree forth from a wealthy, desperate class to gain a free hand—as "free elections" or unbridled freedom to organize opposition parties under present conditions would do.

Besides postponing elections and restricting opposition political organizing, the Sandinistas censored the press, specifically the opposition newspaper La Prensa.

Again, the target of this suppression is the counter-revolutionary activity of the Sandinista classes. La Prensa is owned and operated by the most conservative members of the bourgeois Chamorro family, and at the core of its staff are a number of reporters who worked for the official daily of the Somoza regime when it was in power. La Prensa is favorably disposed toward the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE), led by Sandinista renegade Eden Pastora, which is engaged in armed attacks on Nicaragua from base camps in Costa Rica. Under these circumstances, when La Prensa writes sensationalist stories about alleged food or other commodity shortages, it is not surprising that the Sandinistas regard the matter as assisting economic sabotage rather than "objective journalism," and forbid such stories from being published.

Concerning Sandinista suppression of certain activities of the Catholic Church, this can hardly be discussed seriously as accountable to defense of the Revolution.

The key point is, the exercise of democratic liberties in Nicaragua—by whom and toward what end—is thoroughly framed by the clash of opposing class interests that underlies every political development in the country. Nicaragua today is gripped by the bitter and protracted struggle that inevitably accompanies any process of profound social transformation. As the country's long-oppressed majority begins to reshape society in its own interest, the property classes rebel and resist. These classes have not surrendered because the revolutionary classes have seized the initiative; on the contrary, they are that much more ruthless because political power has been wrested from their hands. Further, they have direct links to international capital and are quite skilled at playing upon the still-existing habits, traditions, and fears of the oppressed. This reactionary combination is extremely powerful and thoroughly antagonistic to popular democracy. No matter how much its political goals are couched in terms of "preserving democratic rights," it must be suppressed with laws, mass vigilance and the force of arms—in short, by the thoroughly excise of revolutionary power.

Faced with daily attack by both internal and external forces of counter-revolution, the Sandinistas have had no difficulty grasping this fundamental ideological point and have made it a material force in defense of their country. Predictably, Reagan is pointing to precisely this fact to justify his counter-revolutionary effort. Under these circumstances, only an antiwar movement in the U.S. that is as clear as the Sandinistas about the indispensable link between popular democracy and revolutionary power can mount an effective challenge to his reactionary crusade.

Dale Borgeson is a member of the Line of March Editorial Board.