

## The left

---

# Will Colombia's CP turn terrorist?

by Valerie Rush

The Colombian Communist Party's annual congress, held this past December, was the scene of a major policy shift by the leadership of that organization. The victory of proterrorist forces at that event over a contrary faction which has historically predominated in the party leadership, has grave implications not only for the future of the mass-based political organization, but for the country as a whole.

It is *EIR's* evaluation that if this policy is not reversed, the loss of the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) as a moderating and positive influence on broad sections of the population could lead to the disintegration of Colombia's precarious stability into the El Salvador-style anarchy and bloodshed already predicted by some observers.

The PCC "turn"—presaged by a gradual eclipsing of the antiterrorist faction's views in the party daily *Voz Proletaria*—not accidentally coincided with the December 1980 Cuban Communist Party congress. At that event, the Cuban Communists openly embraced jacobin uprisings, and allied themselves with dark age fanatics like Khomeini in the name of "national liberation."

At the PCC congress, the battle centered around collaboration with the terrorist cult group, the M-19, which has gained a certain perverse popularity in Colombia as a result of extensive media hype portraying the terrorists as anti-imperialist "Robin Hoods." The rejection of a pro-industrialist programmatic perspective in favor of a pluralist, "minimal" program premised on "unity of the left" signaled the victory of the pro-M-19 forces in the PCC.

That victory was furthered by the passage of a resolution at the congress which decided against publication of future editorials in *Voz Proletaria* for fear they might prove "offensive" to new allies—and divisive in PCC membership ranks.

In the month since its party congress, the PCC has shifted into a noticeably more radical, antidevelopment mode. They have adopted the Cuban line that the Carter-Khomeini deal for release of the 52 American hostages was a "victory" against the imperialist United States.

The party newspaper now devotes entire pages to sports and to the fledgling environmentalist movement in Colombia which, as in the advanced sector countries, is intended to be used as a terrorist deployment against the industrialization of Colombia.

The M-19 has already demonstrated how this mindless terrorism is intended to work. Last month, the group bombed several major hydroelectric projects in Colombia to protest the government's drastic energy-rationing program. As a result of the sabotage, the rationing will be extended indefinitely—providing the M-19 with a pretext for further such actions.

## The importance of the PCC

Ironically, the PCC's historic importance in Colombia's political life has been defined by its consistent support for the industrial development and modernization of the country and its willingness to ally with what it termed "nonmonopolistic capitalists" for that purpose. In this sense, the PCC can be compared to the Berlinguer faction of the Italian Communist Party, which has served a similar role in that country.

In addition, the PCC's public denunciations of the drug trade as an assault against the sovereignty of Colombia have served as an important obstacle to the advances of the drug mafias among the Colombian peasantry where the PCC has its strength.

Colombia's "communist" sects, like the MOIR or the ELN, have generally been on the opposite side of the fence, supporting terrorism, drugs, and a Maoist "zero-growth" outlook.

In its current radical mode, however, the PCC will rapidly become indistinguishable from the M-19, which recently issued a "program" virtually identical to that of the "new" PCC. The adoption of adventurist tactics and growth of left-wing violence will be seized as the justification for imposing a strongman like Alvaro Gómez Hurtado as the next president of Colombia. Gómez, a right-wing asset of the Society of Jesus, has been identified as a key controller of the M-19, and has historically been the PCC's number-one enemy.

This scenario has already begun to unfold. After the M-19 kidnaped American citizen Chester Allan Bitterman last month, the military's high command—closely allied to Gómez—announced a massive "antiguerrilla" sweep to be carried out in several rural areas. Under the personal supervision of General Fernando Landazábal Reyes, otherwise known as the "Pinochet of Colombia," the army is deploying its crack counterinsurgency troops into territory known to be dominated by armed peasant self-defense squads supported by the PCC. Rumors that the M-19 has militarily joined forces with these peasant defense groups have already begun to circulate in the Colombian press.