

One could say that one of the conditions missing [in Colombia] is a generalized guerrilla offensive like that which occurred in 1989 El Salvador. We would have to wait until March 1993 to know if here, too, the conditions exist for a peace intervention by the U.N.”

He added that the Salvadoran process has yielded several lessons for Colombia. The first is that in El Salvador, the negotiations were never interrupted by military actions on either side, as has happened in Colombia. The second is that the negotiations and dialogue were never restricted as to subject matter, nor was any theme considered postponable, while in Colombia the government did not want to discuss certain issues. The third lesson is that a human rights agreement was signed well before the cease-fire was signed.

Colombian Ambassador Bejarano intervened at this point to insist that in Colombia, human rights protection agreements had indeed been signed and that international observers had been accepted, but that the problems of violence in Colombia were much more complex than in El Salvador, while at the same time they corresponded more to internal factors that had to be resolved by the Colombians themselves.

### **The press must censor terrorist atrocities**

*During the Nov. 24 presentation, CINEP collaborator and “independent” television journalist Ramón Jimeno spoke about “The Media in the Peace Negotiations.” Jimeno is the author of a book on the M-19 terrorist assault on the Colombian Justice Palace in November 1985 entitled The Two Occupations (Las Dos Tomas), which presents the terrorist takeover and the military “seizure” of the palace as comparable.*

Jimeno complained of the way in which the press covers military confrontations during peace talks. He complained that on various occasions, guerrilla actions were used as a pretext to suspend dialogue and that neither the journalists nor the owners of the media understand that during a dialogue process where there has been no cease-fire yet declared, “what the military forces of both sides try to do is express themselves with a show of force and to position themselves better for the negotiations.” He criticized the press for describing the guerrillas as common criminals, and protested that the government had put a price on the heads of the guerrilla chieftains.

He stated that the press had shown its weakness vis-à-vis negotiations with the drug traffickers and guerrillas following the kidnappings of such famous journalists as Francisco Santos, son of *El Tiempo*'s director, and Diana Turbay. According to Jimeno, before those kidnappings, *El Tiempo* had opposed negotiations but that afterwards, the newspaper had changed its line and granted space to the demands of the traffickers in its pages. Thanks to that, said Jimeno, there were negotiations with the narcos and that focus of violence ended.

According to Jimeno, when the military operation cur-

## **U.N. military intelligence says FMLN has no backing**

*A military intelligence source from the United Nations Organization in El Salvador (Onusal) offered the following on-the-ground observations of the situation in El Salvador to EIR following the Nov. 25 conference in Bogotá, Colombia organized by the Center for Research and Popular Education (CINEP):*

I have had the opportunity to talk with peasants, with the guerrillas, and with Salvadoran Army officers. The peasants did not support the FMLN. Rather, they feared the FMLN because if they didn't collaborate, they could be killed. The FMLN was never a large organization, nor did it have a chance of winning a military victory.

The FMLN's actions were only massive in 1989, when they announced their great offensive to take power. In fact, they always carried out very small attacks with mortars, which could be carried out with three people in a Renault-4 who later fled. These small attacks were magnified by the international press. Their actions were simply terrorist. A few people could plunge a city or a population into darkness, and these were the great attacks.

The FMLN's famous 1989 offensive, which was in fact the beginning of the peace accords imposed by the United States, was really no such thing. That offensive was carried out by men lent from Nicaragua. Nicaragua sent 7,000 men, and the offensive was carried out with 12,000. The other 5,000 were squads of children under 15 years of age, headed by some “internationalists.” These “internationalists” were Cubans, Colombians, and Peruvians who went to support the FMLN offensive. That is, they were from the FARC, ELN, Shining Path, the

rently ongoing has failed, “the example of the M-19 will become more important. Its legalization demonstrated that it did not pose any threat to the institutions and to democracy. No matter how many concessions are granted to the guerrilla coordinator [FARC-ELN], this will not pose any threat to the institutions.”

At the conclusion of Jimeno's presentation, CINEP director and Jesuit priest Francisco de Roux complained of the bloc formed by the Colombian media association Andarios, whose members published a joint declaration accepting the press censorship established by the state of emergency, which prohibits the press from giving publicity to the terrorist groups. De Roux said that only *EI Colombiano* criticized the Andarios position, and that later both *El Tiempo* and *El Mundo* editorial-

MRTA. . . . To give an example of how important the role of these "internationalists" is, the director of [the FMLN's] Radio Venceremos is a Colombian.

That offensive was a military failure, and afterwards it was very difficult for them to recoup. But at that moment, the idea of "the peace" and the idea that nobody could win was sold. . . . At the same time, the FMLN could only operate with international support. Apart from Nicaraguan backing, there were the refugee camps in Honduras administered by the International Red Cross. In those camps, the family members of the guerrillas received food, health care, and housing, while the other victims of the conflict who were not guerrillas remained without any kind of assistance.

But the guerrillas also went there to rest and recover from their wounds. When they were on Salvadoran territory and the Army chased them, the guerrillas would go to these sanctuaries [no-man's lands along the disputed border between El Salvador and Honduras] and there the Army was restricted. Honduras never dismantled the guerrilla camps for fear of international reaction. . . . In the Red Cross sanctuaries, there were also "Doctors without Borders," who cared for the health of the guerrillas and their families. All of them were Europeans, primarily French. There, recently graduated doctors did their rural internship.

On numerous occasions, the Red Cross intervened to assist the guerrillas logistically. Sometimes the guerrillas were besieged and the Red Cross would enter, allegedly to assist the wounded, but in reality it was to re-supply them.

The most important military victories of the guerrillas were in the diplomatic negotiations and on the streets of U. S. cities, and not on the battlefield. The first thing they demanded was the dismantling of the rapid-deployment battalions. These were a few battalions with their own

aerial capability which enabled them to immediately respond to any FMLN action. This capability, for example, doesn't exist in Colombia, where soldiers have to be transported by land with the serious threat of being ambushed.

The guerrillas today are the ones who are judging the military, to determine who will be promoted and who will not. Three years ago one saw an army in combat. Today one sees a headless, demoralized army, which is going to be reduced by half and which in time will be completely infiltrated by subversion, because it is subversion which is determining the promotions.

Thus, one can summarize the peace the U. N. has imposed as consisting of the gradual delivery of power to the Marxists. The United States and the U. N. decided to give power to the FMLN.

Now the guerrillas are going to have land, cooperatives, administration of credit, and they are going to obtain the votes that they never had before. They are also going to have money from the state, while the only obligation of the guerrilla is to demobilize. They can say they are handing in all their weapons, they can present the same guerrillas over and over again and receive new identification to legalize themselves. Since there is no control, the guerrillas can receive two or three different identifications, and the FMLN can claim that it has already demobilized all its men. Within three years, the state is not going to have any defense, because that has already been destroyed by the peace agreements, and any little group can overthrow a decapitated, demoralized, and infiltrated army.

The guerrillas which before mortified the people by demanding their quotas of money, their collaboration, and who used serious threats to get it, will continue to threaten and demand; only now they will be wearing police uniforms, and now they will receive their quota not only from the citizens, but also from the state itself.

ly attacked *El Colombiano* for having done so.

De Roux accused the owners of the media who signed the Andarios communiqué of "negotiating the consciences of their journalists." Immediately, one of De Roux's collaborators reported that in the city of Cali, the political studies department of the Jesuit Javeriana University conducted a poll in September which claimed that 73% of the population favored dialogue with the guerrillas, while a second poll conducted in November showed that 83% of the people favored a military solution.

According to De Roux, the guerrillas had done nothing extraordinary to make the people change their minds. The only thing that had happened was that the press decided to oppose the dialogues and to seek the military option. "Thus

is demonstrated the press' ability to manipulate, and how they consider themselves the owners of public opinion."

During the question and answer period, an incensed journalist denounced the terrorist actions of the guerrillas during the negotiations, and asked if CINEP was asking the press not to report on "*boleto* [a form of protection money], extortion, kidnapings, assassinations, and *vacuna*," a variant of extortion. Jimeno responded that it was a fact that the official army financed itself with taxes, which were a kind of *vacuna*, and that all of these guerrilla actions were simply methods of tax collection to maintain themselves. "If one wants to be objective, one must unify one's language. Either you call the army's being financed by taxes *vacuna*, extortion, and *boleto*, or you call these guerrilla actions tax collection."