

# American priest questions U.S. imperialism

by Margaret Baer

Bob Stark, an American priest stationed in Nicaragua, spoke at the U of A on the political and religious situation in Central America, last Thursday.

The talk was part of "Ten Days for World Development," an education program to promote awareness of poverty and injustice in the Third World. Organized by a coalition of denominations, this year's Ten Days (January 28 - February 7) focused on Central American issues.

Stark outlined conditions in Nicaragua, which has been forced into a defensive position against counter-revolutionary forces. In July, 1979, the Sandinista National Liberation Front overthrew the Somoza dictatorship. However, the former Somoza National Guard is now making frequent incursions along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border. Both overtly and covertly, such counter-revolutionary actions are supported by the United States.

"Reagan admitted giving \$20 million to the National Guard," said Stark.

The counter-revolutionary movement, stated Stark, is not composed of "monolithic allegiances"; rather, there is a wide cross-section of classes. The same is true of Sandinista supporters, as Stark emphasized the "popular" nature of the revolution.

One of the unfortunate results of the counter-revolution is government press censorship which the Sandinista government began almost a year ago.

"The government could document CIA infiltration of the press" similar to that of Chile's press during the 1973 overthrow of Allende, said Stark. But, he thinks censorship has outlived its usefulness. "The press (opposition) can have a powerful role in de-stabilizing a country, but it

(censorship) is damaging more than helping now."

Responding to charges of state persecution of the Church in Nicaragua, Stark said there is persecution, but it comes from counter-revolutionaries. Fifty-six people have been killed in Stark's parish area alone in the past year. Most victims are Christian community leaders involved in health and literacy campaigns.

Stark said it is a popular counter-revolutionary tactic to ambush Christian communities as a warning to the people not to engage in so-called "Communist activities." Such activities include reading Scripture or learning how to read and understand business contracts for farm deals.

The Sandinista government, in fact, tries to secure areas for church activities. In addition, several top government officials are also Church officials.

Besides attacks from within, the Sandinistas must battle a "well-financed misinformation campaign designed to decrease the credibility of Nicaragua," stated Stark. The most vulnerable point, he said, is the Miskito Indian situation on the northeast Atlantic coast. U.S. influence there is strong (the 1962 Bay of Pigs episode was launched from this area) and there have been efforts by the U.S. to exploit the plight of 8,000 Indians who were relocated.

Stark said the indigenous peoples were not the only ones relocated, and though there are still problems, the Miskito Indians were well supported with housing and medical aid.

Stark mentioned several telling incidents of international press distortion. One involved *Time* magazine, which printed a picture of some Miskito leaders with a caption below stating there were visitors in Moscow. In fact, they were in Nicaragua, and *Time* retracted later.

Stark sardonically commented, "It was a rather convenient mistake."

Such mistakes are not uncommon and, many would say, are deliberate. A big claim is Cuban involvement in transporting arms through Nicaragua to El Salvador, though the U.S. has yet to produce concrete evidence of such involvement.

"To say Fidel is running the whole show is an insult to Central America," said Stark. Sadly, such oversimplifications are typical of U.S.-generated international press.

The Catholic priest, who has received permanent placement in Nicaragua, stressed his adopted

country's role as a new model for under-developed countries. The Sandinista government is working towards a mixed economy and diversified technological dependence (capitalist and socialist sources).

Though Nicaragua is often hailed as a Communist, pro-Soviet nation, Stark pointed out that it is actually a leading non-aligned country.

Looking at its United Nations record, "Nicaragua is more non-aligned than Peru," said Stark.

However, he said it is U.S. strategy to push Nicaragua towards the socialist/Soviet stance so that the Central American nation of 2.8 million people will be strangled economically and forc-

ed to use its resources on military defence.

The U.S. wants "to make the model die" for reasons of it being too costly, said Stark. Nicaragua must be made to seem "not a viable Third World model."

All was not doom and gloom during the discussion, though. The priest left a hopeful impression on the crowd.

"Nicaragua is like a flower. We believe our country, our faith, is flowering. The only thing that can destroy it is a cold wind from the North. I tell the people of Nicaragua that chinooks can also come from the North," Stark said.

Through dialogue such as this meeting, the "flower's" chances of growing should increase.

## Professional opportunities down

**WOLFVILLE (CUP)** — The recession is now eating its way into professional job markets where university and college graduates have always found jobs with relative ease.

A national placement firm reports that job openings in accounting, management, engineering, science and other professions decreased by 30 per cent in the last three months, reaching a record low at the end of December.

In its quarterly survey, the Technical Service Council reported a decrease of 81 per cent in these professions last year; only 659 job vacancies were recorded, compared to 3,414 a year ago and 4,328 in June, 1981.

The survey results are based on job listings by 1,700 employers in the manufacturing, mining, construction, consulting and service industry sectors across

Canada. TSC, a non-profit firm, also offers a counselling service and is sponsored by private industry.

"The number of job vacancies for professionals is a leading indicator, often given six to twelve months' warning of an improvement in general employment," said TSC president Neil MacDougall. "Unfortunately, there are no signs of an upturn."

Accounting was an area that seemed recession-proof. It was in the greatest demand, next to computer programming and systems analysis. But in recent months many accountants have been laid off by manufacturing and public accounting firms. Demand for computer programmers has also declined.

"Many employers are so concerned about survival that their lay-offs have included muscle as well as fat. When the upturn

does come vacancies for part-time and contract employees will improve first," said MacDougall.

The largest number of lay-offs has occurred in the support department category, including public relations, research, corporate planning, aviation, training and personnel. Openings for industrial relations and personnel are only a fifth of those listed a year ago.

Other occupations that have seen a dramatic decline in job openings include junior chemical engineers, chemical process engineers, purchasing agents and electrical engineering designers.

Occupations that are in relatively high demand include experienced electronics engineers, electronic technologists and petroleum engineers.

### NOTICE: S.U. GENERAL ELECTION FRIDAY 11 FEBRUARY



#### ELECTION RALLY

Wednesday 9 February 12 Noon SUB Theatre  
(Doors open 11:30 hr. Classes cancelled from 1200 to 1300 hr. on this occasion only.)

#### ADVANCE POLL

Thursday 10 February 1000 - 1500 hr.  
SUB, Main Floor (East)

#### POLL LOCATIONS:

Building	Area	Hours
Law Centre	Main Entrance East Side	10:30-13:30 hr
CAB (Northeast)	Northeast Corner	9:00 - 17:30 hr
CAB (South)	Pedway to Engineering	10:00 - 16:00 hr
Chemical-Mineral Engineering	Main Entrance	10:30 - 14:00 hr
Clinical Sciences	Second Floor by Escalators	10:30 - 13:30 hr
Corbette Hall	Second Floor Main Foyer	10:30 - 13:30 hr
Education	Lounge Area (North) near E.S.A. Offices	9:00 - 17:30 hr
Faculte' St. Jean	Salon des Etudiants	9:00 - 13:30 hr
Fine Arts	2nd Floor - HUB Pedway Entrance	9:30 - 16:30 hr
H.M. Tory	Main Foyer	9:00 - 17:00 hr
HUB (North)	Purple Lounge	9:30 - 17:30 hr
Lister Hall	Outside Cafeteria	11:00 - 18:00 hr
Medical Sciences	Second Floor Near Vending Area	10:30 - 13:30 hr
Rutherford	Upper Concourse	9:30 - 17:00 hr
SUB	Main Floor (East)	9:00 - 18:00 hr
V-Wing	Vending Area	9:30 - 16:00 hr

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