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Regional Meeting On Politics Of Structural Adjustment

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Oct. 23-26 in Panama City, over 200 scholars and representatives of Central American and Caribbean non- governmental, labor and indigenous organizations convened for the second annual conference on the politics of economic readjustment. The meeting was sponsored by the Managua-based Regional Coordinator for Economic and Social Research (CRIES). In a statement released at the close of the conference, participants said neoliberal economic models imposed by multilateral financial institutions on regional governments are aimed above all at paying "a foreign debt which cannot be paid." Policies recommended by the lending institutions lead to "irrational" measures such as "dismissal of public employees [which] increases unemployment rather than reducing it, and cutbacks in social services." The statement said, "The increase in poverty, environmental destruction, expansion of the informal sector, rising crime rates, and deterioration of health care and education services are the bitter fruit harvested by our peoples by such programs." (Basic data from AFP, 10/26/91; ACAN-EFE, 10/27/91)

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