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THERE IS NO PEACE IN MIDEAST

Mandel: War Threats and Peace Movement

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The Zionists' crimes and the Palestinians' isolation

Daniel BENSARD

The siege of West Beirut lasted 79 days. For more than two months, the Zionist army (Tsahal) waged war on the Palestinian and Lebanese population. To break the resistance, it resorted to the most barbaric means—from cutting off water and electricity to blanket terror bombing, including the use of fragmentation bombs and attacks on hospitals.

It is still impossible to calculate exactly the number of victims (according to the official Lebanese sources, 17,825 persons were killed and 30,103 wounded; the Palestinian figures are higher). This represents a massacre comparable to the crushing of the Paris Commune in 1871. It was carried on day after day in front of the cameras of all the world's TV networks.

And still the world did not respond, or at best only weakly!

The Habib Plan, imposed by imperialism and guaranteed by the presence of American, French, and Italian troops, is the confirmation of this isolation of the Lebanese and Palestinian fighters. It provides for keeping Israeli troops in Lebanon and installing an ultrareactionary regime.

For all those who mobilized alongside the Palestinian resistance, the struggle continues to force the withdrawal of the Zionist troops and all imperialist forces from Lebanon, as well as to defend democratic rights, which are now being directly threatened by the Christian Phalangists.

But in order to mobilize for the new phase of the struggle, it is necessary to draw the lessons of the last two months as clearly as possible.

Zionism has starkly revealed its underlying nature and its role as the ally of American imperialism in the region. From start to finish, it was only able to carry out its military expedition thanks to diplomatic cover from the U.S. (reflected by one vote after the other in the U.N. Security Council) and to U.S. economic and military aid. The existence of the state of Israel, as it is presently constituted, has been shown to be indissolubly linked to its big imperialist backers.

The Zionist state has also revealed its colonial structure. Since its origins, it has been based on the expulsion of the Arab workers and peasants from the process of production, on the expropriation of their land, and racial discrimination.

During his skirmishes with the French president Mitterrand, Israeli Premier Menahem Begin revealed this whole attitude. Begin went so far as to say that the French criticisms of Israel were simply an expression of spite by a country that, in the face of the Israeli military successes against the Arabs, felt humiliated by its defeat in the Algerian war (1954-62). It is hard to imagine a cruder kind of colonialism or racism.

As for the "labor left" in Israel, it showed that it remains largely united in support of the imperialist aims of the Zionist state, and that this takes precedence over any "left" character it may claim. The Labor Party endorsed the "Peace in Galilee" operation.

In fact, the leader of the Labor Party, Shimon Peres, accepted a mission from the Begin government to defend the motives of the Zionist state in New York and Paris.

TRAITORS AND ACCOMPLICES

The attitude of the other major powers involved in the conflict was also revealed quite clearly.

This is true first of all of American imperialism. Israeli defense minister, General Ariel Sharon, said several times publicly that he had advised the Americans of the Israeli military plans well before the operations were launched. These revelations were by no means unintentional. They were designed to publicly implicate Israel's American ally.

As for the Soviet Union, it did not go beyond formal protests. Its passivity was explicitly denounced by the Palestinian leaders themselves. For example PLO chief Abu Ayad said: "We have stood up better against the Israeli army than all the Arab armies....The Soviet attitude therefore is all the more inexplicable. We have questioned Moscow both publicly and privately. We have gotten only symbolic encouragements. How can the Soviet Union afford to be so passive when the U.S. is involving itself so flagrantly in the fight? I don't understand it (1)."

The Soviets have had an easy way out by throwing the ball back into the camp of the Arab countries. They have argued, not without some cynicism, that they could not try to be "more Arab than the Arabs." But this does not make it

any less clear that their abstention marks the limits of their involvement in the Middle East and reveals their basic motives.

The Soviets' support for the PLO, thus, remains subordinated to what they regard as more enduring and advantageous diplomatic alliances, not for the sake of mobilizing the masses against imperialism but for the interests of the Soviet state.

Thus, it has become clear that the Soviet Union will not go beyond defending the Syrian regime, which remains its last significant ally in the region. On the other hand, it does not think that it has an essential stake in the survival of the PLO.

The role played by Soviet diplomacy in this conflict will certainly be instructive for the USSR's other allies in Latin America. Soviet "solidarity" will never go beyond what serves the clear state interests of the USSR. Anyone who tries to see it as generous internationalism is headed for some bitter disillusionments.

The Soviet betrayal is matched only by that of the Arab states. They literally did not lift a finger to help the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples. The PLO came to the Arab League summit held in Tunis on June 26-27, that is two weeks after the start of the Zionist aggression, with a 14-point solidarity plan.

This plan called for effective involvement of the Arab states in the armed struggle in Lebanon, condemnation of the U.S., because of its backing of Israel, as "the main enemy of the Arab nation"; immediate recall of the Arab ambassadors in Washington; boycott of American institutions and freezing of U.S. contracts in the Arab countries; and withdrawal of Arab funds deposited in U.S. banks. Not a single point of this plan was accepted, and the summit took no initiative.

Egypt has kept its ambassador in Israel, and Saudi Arabia has officially welcomed Beshir Gemayel, head of the ultrarightist Christian Phalange, thereby granting him the legitimacy in the eyes of the Muslim population of Lebanon he needed to get himself elected president.

This betrayal of the Arab states is acutely and vociferously resented by the Palestinian fighters in West Beirut. But it is nothing new. It is in a line of continui-

1. *Le Monde*, July 23, 1982.

ty with the massacre of September 1970 (Black September) conducted by King Hussein of Jordan, the anti-Palestinian counteroffensive supported by Syria in April 1976, and the Camp David Accords by which Egyptian President Anwar as-Sadat freed Begin's hands so that he could turn against the Palestinians in Lebanon. But this sort of betrayal has never been so blatant. And so it seems inevitable that it will lead relatively soon to political differentiations in the ranks of the Arab nationalists.

Finally, the West European imperialist powers took some distance from the U.S. by a few inconsequential votes in the U.N., but they took no significant reprisals against the Israeli aggression—no boycott, not even an embargo, on arms deliveries.

The most wretched aspect of the whole affair is that against the background of the dereliction of the USSR and the Arab states, Francois Mitterrand was able to appear, thanks to Begin's unbridled verbal attacks on him, as the most faithful supporter of the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples.

In June, after the onset of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Francois Mitterrand spoke during his visit to Vienna in favor of a withdrawal of "all three foreign armies" from Lebanon. Thus he lumped together the Syrian army, the Zionist army, and the Palestinian resistance, forgetting that unlike the first two, the Palestinian forces still have no homeland or state to which they could withdraw. In fact, this false symmetry, this false pretense of fairness, amounted to justifying the Israeli military presence as long as there were Palestinian forces in Lebanon.

Finally, at the end of the day, Francois Mitterrand is giving his support to a plan that calls in practice for evacuating and dispersing the Palestinians while keeping a Zionist army of occupation in Lebanon indefinitely.

The presence of the French Interposition force represents his support for the expulsion of the Palestinians and his support of the election of Beshir Gemayel to the presidency of the Lebanese state, in a military barracks and under the pressure of Israeli tanks.

In invading Lebanon, Ariel Sharon and Menahem Begin set three explicit goals:

-First, to smash the infrastructure and military backbone of the Palestinian resistance, whose activity threatened to combine with the upsurge of mobilizations in the occupied territories.

-Secondly, to drive the Syrian forces out of Lebanon and weaken Syria.

-Finally, to help set up an allied regime in Lebanon that would be ready to sign an agreement with Israel complementary to the Camp David Accords with Egypt.

Besides these avowed goals, there were at least two others. One was to reaffirm Israel's role as the irreplaceable special ally of imperialism in the region. The other was to restore Israeli national unity and mobilize Israeli public opinion



Yasser Arafat at a press conference (DR)

in order to overcome the effects of growing economic and social problems.

With these goals, the Israeli offensive became possible as a result of an international conjuncture and especially favourable for the Zionist operation.

It came in the context of the imperialist counteroffensive, and, after the unanimous support given by the imperialist countries to the British colonial expedition to the Malvinas, there was hardly any danger of serious condemnation by any imperialist country.

While the Israeli offensive fitted into this context, it could also take advantage from a certain margin of maneuver created by the imperialist crisis of leadership and the hesitations of American diplomacy (the replacement of U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig by George Shultz).

The Israeli government benefited from the paralysis of the USSR, which remains bogged down in its own problems in Poland and Afghanistan. It also benefited from the divisions and impotence of all the so-called nonaligned bodies, which are being more and more torn apart by the international polarization.

Thus, for the two months that the siege of Beirut lasted, the Arab League was unable to take the slightest initiative. The Tripoli summit of the Organization of African Unity had to be adjourned for lack of a quorum. The Bagdad conference of the Nonaligned Movement had to be postponed because of the Iran-Iraq war and transferred to New Delhi.

In these conditions, the Zionist operation was able to partially achieve its objectives without being able to accomplish any of them completely.

First and foremost, the PLO suffered a severe military defeat resulting in the smashing of its positions in Lebanon, in the expulsion and dispersion of its military vanguard. But it was not defeated without a fight. Contrasting with the abjectness of the Arab regimes, the PLO's 79 days of heroic resistance have given a

new legitimacy to the national and democratic demands of the Palestinian people.

This accomplishment, however, is not enough to turn a military defeat into a political victory. Dispersed in eight Arab states (Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, North Yemen, South Yemen, the Sudan, Algeria, and Tunisia), all of which are hostile in varying degrees to the PLO (let's not forget Jordanian King Hussein's hypocritical embraces of PLO leaders), the leadership and best trained military forces of the PLO will be kept under close surveillance. The Arab regimes will be more conscious than ever that the Palestinian resistance will have an anti-imperialist authority for the Arab masses that they have lost, if they ever had any. This will be another reason for redoubled surveillance.

There will be no lack of pressures trying to force the PLO to change its approach and become a diplomatic pawn in the maneuvers of the Arab states. Walid Jumblatt, leader of the Lebanese National Movement, indicated this in his own way on June 26 when he said: "The PLO needs a new leadership that will take a different approach in defending Palestinian rights....What is essential is a new Palestinian legality, a new strategy, a new leadership....I am aware that the PLO is in danger of a split and that a civil war among Palestinians is not impossible (2)."

As regards the withdrawal of the Syrian units belonging to the Arab Dismutation Force in Lebanon, Israel has not at all achieved its objective. It seems, however, in a position to get what it wants by force. The Israeli armies are face to face with the Syrian army in the Bekaa valley, and Damascus is almost within range of the Israeli artillery.

However, such a test of strength might force the USSR to react this time, because it would endanger its last diplomatic ally in the region. Israel may, therefore, try to negotiate a joint with-

2. Interview with Walid Jumblatt in *Le Monde* of July 26, 1982.

drawal of its own troops and the Syrian forces. But such a process will obviously be subordinated to the consolidation first in Lebanon of a regime allied with Israel and then of this alliance itself.

For the moment, without engaging openly in military operations against the Palestinian resistance, Beshir Gemayel's Christian Phalange has begun to build the nucleus of their police force and their administration in the wake of the Israeli army in the Chouff mountains and in the Saida region. They have been able to salvage the weapons left behind by the Palestinians and Syrians, which the Zionist occupiers have generously failed to take themselves. Moreover, Beshir Gemayel was installed as president on a military base in the shadow of Zionist bayonets.

As regards its fourth objective, Israel has no doubt established itself as the most zealous ally of imperialism in the region. It has shown that if need be it can act under the pretext of self-defense in a way that would be difficult for an American expeditionary force. This is especially true at a time when Yankee imperialism is finding it so difficult to overcome the "Vietnam syndrome" and act even in its own private preserve of Central America and the Caribbean.

Finally, the results of the Zionist operation are most doubtful as regards the internal situation in Israel. It might seem that Menahem Begin has achieved his goal and mobilized Israeli public opinion. The polls taken at the end of August showed 82% support for the "Peace in Galilee" operation. Nonetheless, cracks in the Zionist bloc appeared that are unprecedented in a war situation.

For several years now the economic situation in Israel has been deteriorating. Chronic unemployment has appeared. The inflation rate has been oscillating between 100% and 130%. The government is applying a monetarist policy calling for the reprivatization of certain sectors and the elimination of numbers of jobs. Now this general trend is going to be compounded by the costs of the war.

In August, it was officially estimated that the war had already cost 1.2 billion dollars, or 10% of the national budget. Inflation for the month of July hit a record high of 9.2%. The government has taken steps to reduce state subsidies on consumer goods and to increase state charges.

There have been drastic hikes in the prices of fuel, milk, transport, telecommunications, and electricity. Sales taxes have been increased and special taxes imposed on travel abroad. A state bond campaign has been launched, including compulsory purchase for nine months, with the money deducted from the gross wages of most Israeli earners.

The day will obviously come when the cost is going to be counted up. This accounting is going to be all the more painful because for the first time Israel had to wage an undisguisably dirty war.

In the past, the Israeli leaders have always been able to present their military operations as battles fought by a valiant

little David against a plotting gang of Goliaths represented by the Arab states. This time, they have carried out what was undeniably an aggression operation tramping on the frontiers and institutions of a neighboring state without even bothering to declare war. And the objective was to crush a people without a country and without a state, abandoned by all, people whose new diaspora will hold up to the Jewish community in Palestine the image of its own past.

THE PLO AT THE CROSSROADS

The Lebanon war and the siege of Beirut have illustrated once again the special features of the Palestinian liberation struggle. This struggle has been waged up till now mainly by a dispersed people without any territorial or stable social base.

The Palestinian resistance draws its strength from the refugee camps and the large numbers of Palestinians that have emigrated throughout the region and the Arab Emirates since 1948. Materially, it depends to a large extent on these emigrants and still more on the financial and military aid of the Arab regimes.

In these conditions, it is not surprising that a humiliated, dispersed people, pushed to the edges of the process of production should see the armed struggle as a rallying point and the main expression of a national dignity that they have to fight hard to maintain.

However, the Palestinian liberation struggle is up against much more complex problems than any other national liberation struggle. It does not face simple colonial occupation but another national community, which not long ago was oppressed itself and has formed a state that aims to drive out the Arab workers rather than exploit them. This—over and above the technological aid it gets from imperialism—is what gives the state of Israel its strength. It is still able to exploit reflexes of national self-defense sharpened by the trauma of the Nazi genocide.

This is why an effective struggle against Zionism requires developing the class antagonisms within Israeli society itself and an internationalist convergence between the Palestinian liberation movement and the Jewish proletariat.

Likewise, the Palestinian resistance has to base itself primarily on the anti-imperialist mobilization of the Arab masses. It cannot achieve this without coming into conflict with the pro-imperialist policies of most of the Arab regimes. The PLO has always tried to stick to a line of "noninterference" in the internal affairs of the Arab states. It has not, however, been able to prevent these states from interfering in the most brutal way in the life of the Palestinian resistance.

Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon have repeatedly intervened with armed force against the Palestinian resistance—in 1970, 1976, and 1982. The Arab regimes cannot tolerate the existence on their territory of a political and military force

that they cannot control and which—by its very presence—can stimulate an autonomous mobilization of the exploited and oppressed in their own countries.

In a nutshell, in order to defend the national and democratic rights of its people effectively, the Palestinian resistance needs a leadership that will take class positions toward the policies of the Arab regimes, as well as internationalist positions that can sharpen the contradictions of Israeli society. It is understandable how difficult it is to form such a leadership based on the refugee camps, whose populations are uprooted and lacking in experience of working-class struggle.

Nonetheless, the terrible blows that the Palestinian resistance has suffered in the last fifteen years make necessary a critical balance sheet and a process of clarification. Significant in this respect is Yasser Arafat's answer to a *Le Monde* reporter who asked him what he thought were the main mistakes made by the PLO during this long conflict. The Palestinian leader said: "We have not been able to explain our cause to the Israelis; we have not understood the Israeli mentality."

Arafat reduced what is a fundamental political problem to one pedagogical one. Nonetheless, he put his finger on the key question, how to break up the social cement of Zionism. And he offered the first elements of a positive answer:

"Our National Council has adopted several resolutions calling for the opening of a discussion with the democratic forces in Israel and we are ready to establish relations with all those that recognize our right to self-determination (3)."

The danger is that this realism will open the way to diplomatic deals in the framework of the Camp David Accords, rather than for a revolutionary strategy.

With regard to the question of relations with the Arab states, the PLO has not given any public indication of the lessons it has drawn. They must certainly involve a painful reassessment of the policy followed by the PLO leadership in the 1975-76 Lebanese civil war, in particular the accords that allowed Syria to organize the election of President Elias Sarkis on October 18, 1976, and made it possible to lay the groundwork for the Phalangist counteroffensive at a time when the Palestinian forces and the MNL were within inches of a military victory.

But this time the betrayal of the Arab regimes was so flagrant and so deeply resented that it will be difficult for the PLO to avoid a reexamination of this question.

Regardless of whether the PLO as a whole is able to change or whether a new course will be possible only after new differentiations within it, after the siege of Beirut, the PLO finds itself at a new historic turning point. It is as decisive as the one that after the failure of the Arab states brought the PLO to the forefront of the Arab anti-imperialist movement at the end of the 1970s. ■

3. Interview with Yasser Arafat in *Le Monde* of August 10, 1982.

Open letter to the Lebanese fighting organisations

Comrades and brothers, greetings in the name of resistance:

We address you publicly for the second time, seventy days after our first open letter,* seventy days in which the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples and their fighting forces waged a heroic fight that will forever hold a place of honor in the history of people's struggles.

But after this epic battle, we find the Zionist enemy succeeding in imposing their will by political means when they failed to do so by military means.

The explanation for this, comrades, has to be sought in the glaring contrast between the heroism of our two peoples and our fighters, and the political line that dominated our patriotic camp (this goes both for the line followed by the Palestinian leadership and for the line that predominated among the Lebanese).

In fact the PLO was not so much concerned about liberating the Lebanese territory that had been invaded (to say nothing of the Palestinian territory) as it was in gaining American recognition. To achieve this, it was prepared to grant legitimacy to the Zionist state and thereby disregard the heritage of 35 years of tenacious national struggle.

However, the recognition was not mutual; the PLO leadership got no corresponding concession. Then, finally, it preferred to abandon Beirut, the last bastion of the Palestinian resistance, in order to preserve itself so that it could continue to carry on the policy that it has adopted as a substitute for people's struggle—diplomatic negotiations based on the cowardly Arab regimes, which are agents of imperialism.

Here, you, comrades and brothers, bear a responsibility. Some of you put pressure on the Palestinian resistance to leave Beirut. Others failed to raise their voices to appeal to the Palestinian fighters to stay and thereby to counter the capitulationist intentions of the Palestinian leadership. In fact, comrades and brothers, the withdrawal of the Palestinian fighters from Beirut represents not only a submission to the will of Menahem Begin and Ronald Reagan. It also represents a very grave shift in the relationship of forces to the advantage of the Zionist, imperialist, and fascist offensive that is being waged against the Lebanese and Palestinian masses and their patriotic forces.

Having said this, comrades and brothers, let us recall what we said in our first open letter about what attitude should be taken to the so-called legal institutions. We appealed to you to reject the line of collaborating with the so-called legal institutions. We appealed for initiatives to create a new legality based on the sacrifice of the martyrs who fought to defend Lebanon and to dump the corrupt "legality" based on a more and more fictitious parliament. Instead, you preferred to wait and place your hopes in a rigged constitutional game that finally brought forth a fascist mouse as the president of an occupied republic.

A lot of things could be said to evaluate the period we have just gone through but that is not the purpose of this letter. The balance sheet can be left to history. Through this letter, we want to draw your attention to the gravity of the stage that is now opening up. In this new phase, any compromise by any patriotic organization with the Zionist-imperialist-fascist plan is a suicidal position. Such an attitude would help further to dig

the grave of the national movement as a whole. We do not have to try to prove to you that Beshir Gemayel, the leader of the fascist gang, who has liquidated his own allies, will not hesitate a minute to liquidate his historic enemies, no matter what intentions he proclaims when he takes office.

In this connection, it is essential to understand that there are objective class divisions in what you call the "Islamic and Patriotic Camp." The bourgeois forces that are the agents of the Saudi state, itself an agent of imperialism, and which are represented by Sueb Salam, will probably make a deal with the fascists after they have gained a voice in the government. This is why, while we are for the broadest possible front of opposition to the plan of the fascist dictatorship, we maintain that we should not rely on keeping these bourgeois forces in such a front but to begin working now to build a system of institutions able to lead and organize the patriotic resistance to the Zionist occupiers and their Lebanese tools.

We call once again for what we believe is the only program by which we can successfully oppose the offensive that we are now facing, a program based on the one we proposed seventy days ago (in order to prevent what has now happened), which we have modified in the light of the new circumstances. Its main points are the following:

1. Rejection of any compromises with the fascists that would allow the armed forces that they control, in particular, the "legal army" to enter our patriotic Beirut.

2. Unification and centralization of all our active forces in a National Guard in order to increase the effectiveness of these forces and to keep arms from being used by suspect groups for ends that serve the interests of our enemies.

3. Formation of a national command to lead the battle, a command elected by a central council of delegates elected by the fighting units.

4. Setting up "local councils" to organize the civilian forms of resistance in our patriotic Beirut, in particular, means of disseminating information to serve the struggle waged by the patriotic forces.

These are the measures, comrades and brothers, that we consider necessary for organizing the defence of our besieged Beirut. This is your last chance to rise to the level of the struggle. If you fail, you will not escape the guillotine of history, even if some of you manage to escape the executioners of Beshir Gemayel.

Greetings in the name of our resistance. Let our battle cry be "Fascism Shall Not Pass."

Revolutionary Communist Group
Lebanese section of the Fourth International

* See IV, July 19, 1982, p. 4, for the previous statement of the Revolutionary Communist Group.

"Ariel Sharon says we are foreigners"

Interview with leading Palestinians in Israel

A representative of the Sons of the Village, a major organization of Palestinians living on Zionist occupied territory, gave the following interview to Gerry Foley in Paris in August.

Question. What is the Sons of the Village?

Answer. Abna'l Balad is generally known as the Sons of the Village, but that is not an accurate translation. It would be more correct to say, "Sons of the Fatherland." It was established shortly after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and works mainly among the Palestinians in Israel.

Q. Did it originate among the large numbers of Palestinians who came under Zionist rule following the 1967 war?

A. No. There are 600,000 Palestinians inside the pre-1967 borders of Israel. They are citizens of the Israeli state. These are Palestinians who managed to hang on in the territories on which the Zionists built the Israeli state and the children of these Palestinian survivors.

In 1948, some 150,000 Palestinians managed to hold on in the Zionist-occupied territory. In that year 384 towns and villages were totally destroyed by the Zionists.

Now the Palestinian population lives in 104 villages and two towns—Nazareth and Beersheva, which had the status of towns before 1948.

The Israeli authorities have not accorded the status of town since to any Palestinian center. For example, the town I live in, along with 20,000 other Palestinians, is officially considered a village.

Over the past 34 years, many of our villages have developed into towns. But if the Israeli authorities granted them that status they would be obliged to give more state aid, financial help, and more land for development. And their policy is to prevent the development of our villages.

Q. What land rights do the villages have?

A. In 1948, they confiscated all the village common lands, that is the lands that belonged to the village as a whole and which were used for grazing sheep and other common purposes.

Officially this land belonged to the British mandate. So, after the termination of the mandate, the Zionists declared that the land belonged to them as the successor power.

But the Zionists were not satisfied with confiscating the common lands. They started taking over the lands of the Arab farmers as well.

Q. What happened to the Palestinian families who were deprived of their land?

A. As a result of this process, most of our people became laborers, workers, not in our society or villages but in Jewish settlements and towns such as Tel Aviv, Haifa, and other cities. Actually, we built these settlements and towns.



Police arrest Palestinian in occupied territories (DR)

At the same time, the Zionists prevented us from developing any alternative economic base in our areas; they stamped out anything that might lead in that direction. They even took over all the sources of water. These are owned by a Zionist state monopoly called Mekrot. It owns even the springs. It is a Zionist enterprise, like the Jewish Fund, which owns more than 90% of the land.

Q. Are these state corporations or Zionist associations?

A. Both. There is a wrong idea in the West that the Zionist movement is a socialist movement, since they nationalize land and sources of water, etc. This is totally false. They confiscate the land from the original owners and turn it over to Jewish settlements. They do not nationalize the land for the benefit of the people living on it.

As socialists, we are not against the nationalization of the land if it is for the benefit of the people living on it. But this process of Zionist land takeovers is a

totally different thing, and it has now started on the West Bank as well.

Q. Since these problems go back to the start of the Zionist takeovers, why was your organization founded specifically in 1967?

A. Before then, there was an organization called "Al Ard" (The Land). It was a Pan-Arab nationalist movement with Nasserist politics. But basically it was a Palestinian organization set up to defend Palestinian land. So, the Israeli authorities banned it.

We thought that we had to take account of all these experiences to make our struggle more scientific, more public.

Q. So, the idea was that the Sons of the Village would be a public, legal organization.

A. Yes, it is a legal organization. We emphasize the public means of struggle, demonstrations, and the formation of unions.

Q. Have you formed unions for Palestinian workers?

A. No, so far we have been unable to do that. But we are struggling to build local labor committees. Such bodies can be set up within the general framework of Histadrut, the organization the Zionists set up to deal with labor matters.

For example, in Nazareth, there is a labor council. We are trying to generalize this phenomenon. In the villages, most of the people are Palestinians and they are conscious of their national and social rights. So, we can influence these councils.

Q. Isn't Histadrut a Zionist organization?

A. Yes. It is not just a trade union. It is also the biggest employer in Israel. It owns the country's largest construction company, and most of our people are building workers. Only a section of Histadrut is supposed to be a trade union.

Most of our people are now members of Histadrut. You have to be in order to get health service. Some 90% of our people belong to the health service that is part of Histadrut.

Originally, only Jews could be members of Histadrut. But a campaign was waged against its discriminatory character. In 1956, we managed to force it to admit Palestinians.

It is still a Zionist organization and serves the Zionist state. For example, the construction company it owns works in Africa and worked before in the shah's Iran. It combines both workers and employers. But nonetheless, it is possible to use some of its institutions. These labor councils can have a certain independence and are supposed to be elected democratically.

Q. What other work does the Sons of the Village do?

A. We also work in committees to support the Palestinian village councils and governments, to defend the right of such councils to autonomy and state aid, to make sure they get what they are entitled to from the various ministries.

Q. So, the Sons of the Village is an attempt to organize the Palestinian people socially on all levels.

A. Yes. This is quite difficult in our conditions. We do not have an industrial proletariat. Our working class is scattered, since most of them are building workers. They work everywhere in Israel, in the Histadrut and also in private companies. They travel around the country from one building site to another.

A large section of Palestinian workers are also in the services. They work in restaurants and in cleaning homes. It is very difficult to organize such workers in trade unions.

But we have been able to organize them on the basis of the national oppression from which we all suffer. We set up general committees, such as the one to defend the village councils or the committee to defend the land, which was set up after the Day of the Land in 1976.

Social security is an important issue. Our children get only half what the Jewish children get by way of allowances. The Zionists argue that the fathers of Jewish families serve in the army, whereas Arab fathers do not.

Q. So, there is no conscription of Arabs?

A. The Zionists have succeeded only in imposing the draft on the Arab Druzes, a community of about 40,000. They got the Druze leaders, the sheiks and local notables, to sign a statement

accepting conscription.

Q. What effect has the Lebanon war had on the Palestinian community in Israel?

A. We are so proud of the struggle of our people in Lebanon. We think that their struggle helps us to hold on in Israel, because we think that the Israeli authorities are plotting to drive us out, to make us refugees like more than half of our people.

Ariel Sharon, the defense minister, says that we are foreigners. The education minister has said that we are a cancer on the body of the state. Now, if a doctor finds a cancer on the body of a human being, what must he do?

They talk about a "demographic" problem in the Galilee area, because Palestinians make up 51% of the population. Why is this a problem? Why is it necessary to Judaize this area? Because of the racist sound of this word, they use the term "develop," which has come to mean the same thing.

Conversely, if the Israelis win their objectives in Lebanon—to liquidate the Palestinian resistance movement and defeat the Lebanese national movement, to build a fascist regime under the leadership of the Phalange, they will immediately step up their Judaization of the West Bank and the Gaza strip and the destruction of the infrastructure of Palestinian society. ■

Two years after: demonstrations and perspectives in Poland

Jacqueline ALLIO

Some tens—or more likely hundreds—of thousands of people took to the streets throughout Poland on August 31 in response to the call from Solidarnosc. In many towns there were fierce confrontations and the forces of law and order did not hesitate to shoot when the tear gas and truncheon blows were insufficient to disperse the demonstrators.

The junta kills, the junta assassinates—this is the only conclusion which the Polish masses can reach after the second anniversary of the Gdansk agreement. It is a clear impasse for the regime who, even on the day before, were claiming, 'The people are with us, and they do not support those who disturb the peace and break the law.'

Five deaths, hundreds of wounded, more than four thousand arrested, this was the outcome of this day of confrontation between an exasperated working class and a repressive apparatus at the service of a clique of bureaucrats and generals. The false promises of the national entente, reiterated in Jaruzelski's speech some days previously, appeared for what they were: words, a smokescreen, empty,

a paltry ruse to lull the enemy to sleep. But in vain.

The determination shown by the crowds of young demonstrators is even more impressive given that the attempts to dissuade them did not leave any doubt as to the intentions of the regime. 'You can like or dislike the state of siege laws,' and Jaruzelski, waving the stick after dangling the carrot, 'but they must be respected. No breach will be tolerated.'

Neither the armoured columns, nor the manoeuvres of the Warsaw pact troops at the very gates of Warsaw, nor the appeals for calm by the Catholic hierarchy, asking the workers not to take to the streets, could prevent the demonstrations.

Certainly the leaders of the Provisional National Commission for the Coordination of Solidarnosc (TKK) were conscious of the risk they were taking in calling for mobilisation on August 31. 'We have taken account of the fact that the decision of the TKK could lead to victims. Yes. But the demonstrations will take place anyway, and they will be repressed,' said Zbigniew Bujak, in the appeal made on August 18. He stressed this point, 'It is impossible to hush up a de-

monstration, the regime would be frightened to do so', while 'it has turned out that the different forms of limited strikes are not very effective, because they are easy to hide.'

There were certainly victims. Some people will see in that a confirmation of their fears about the bloody consequences of such demonstrations and the discouraging effect that this will have on the population. But will not the picture of the stubborn and massive resistance of the demonstrators to the armoured columns stick in the consciousness and the memory of all the Polish people, giving them confidence that it is possible to say 'no' to the junta, 'no' to bureaucratic rule, 'no' to repression?

The brazenness of Polish television, trying to present the mobilisation as an 'artificial demonstration organised by bands of hoodlums and wild thugs', would only give rise to laughter or grinding of teeth. For anyone who still doubted it, it was proof that Solidarnosc lives and continues the struggle.

What perspectives for mobilisation after this demonstration of strength by the resistance movement? This question is even more sharply posed to the under-

ground leadership of Solidarnosc than before.

The view expressed by Zbigniew Bujak on the partial strikes is shared by numerous workers who have put this view forward in the underground press, mainly because of the very high number of sackings that have resulted, without the workers being able to respond.

As for the street demonstrations, while they show the relationship of forces at a given moment—as long as they are massive and very well-prepared—they also have obvious limits: apart from the vicious repression they can give rise to, they have very little meaning if they do not link up with the struggle in the strongholds of the working class.

Some people, like the Militant Solidarnosc Group from Wroclaw, justify counterposing street demonstrations to strikes under the pretext that 'in the street you are incognito', while 'in the enterprises it's always the same ones who strike'. They clearly declare themselves in favour of the struggle in the streets: 'We will not leave ourselves confined to the restrictive framework of the enterprises.'

Wladyslaw Frasnyniuk, the leader of underground Solidarnosc in the same town, replied to them: 'A struggle led by a strong, effective, consolidated social movement is the only way of "changing the course of events". There is only one such organisation which could force the regime to sign a compromise with society. Our tactic is an apparently difficult and unspectacular reconstruction of the organisation of workers in the workplaces. It is to rebuild an organisation which will be able to defend the social interest, using

the general strike as a last recourse. The situation in the country is such that this last recourse could very soon turn out to be necessary. All our actions are and must be subsumed to the preparation of such a strike.'

A year ago the First Congress of Solidarnosc fixed the objective of the establishment of a self-managed and democratic republic. Such a perspective can only mean the overthrow of the present regime. The Polish bureaucracy, supported in this by the Kremlin, will hesitate at nothing to defend its position and its privileges. How could one think that those who have plunged the country into chaos—to the point of bringing about a drop in spending power by 50 per cent at the end of the year—could be able to use anything other than force to keep their control over the mass of the workers?

Faced with the inevitability of this confrontation certain steps forward have been made by Solidarnosc concerning work directed towards the army. 'Not to act against the army, but to do work within it. Not to rely on a reflex of national consciousness at the moment of the test, when orders put Polish soldiers face to face with Polish workers. But to prepare for such moments by stimulating the atmosphere of weariness and bitterness that is beginning to arise among the officers because of their role as occupiers,' recommended a Solidarnosc activist in *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, the underground weekly in Warsaw.

Two days before the August 31 demonstrations the Committee for the Formation of an Independent Trade Union for the Militias made an appeal along these lines to the militia through

Radio Solidarnosc, 'Do not obey orders on August 31. Refuse to arrest demonstrators, and refuse to use force.' It advised them, in cases where they really would have to proceed to arrests and interrogations 'to do them with a minimum of enthusiasm'. Of course this is only one aspect of preparing the masses for a confrontation with the regime.

The perspective of preparation for a general strike, which has occupied a major place within the underground press for several months, seems to have lost a little of its immediacy. The leadership of Solidarnosc in effect declared a truce in July, and the TKK has adopted theses which put the emphasis mainly on the gradual character of the conquest 'of positions which should allow a broadening of the social and political rights of society', and on the necessity of building a decentralised movement.

Whatever the rhythm and stages of the struggle which is underway, it is the problem of the strategic orientation of Solidarnosc which is posed after August 31. The necessity to define the content of what Wladyslaw Frasnyniuk calls 'changing the course of events'.

In a forthcoming issue of *International Viewpoint* we will publish an article translated from the Polish *Inprekor* No 5, June-July 1982. This article, which is the position taken by the editors of *Inprekor* on the debate within Solidarnosc in Poland, allows us to both present the debate and the positions defended by the militants of the Fourth International. Other contributions to this debate have been published in *International Viewpoint* No 9, June 21, 1982. ■

Nicaragua under threat

Alain VITOLD

Since the beginning of July tension has mounted yet another notch in Nicaragua. The noticeable increase in the murderous raids by the 'contras' (counter-revolutionaries), and the increase in the number of Nicaraguans killed in these operations, have forced the government to take a lot stiffer attitude to its neighbouring countries. Daniel Ortega, co-ordinator of the governing junta, announced to the 100,000 people gathered in Masaya for the third anniversary of the revolution on July 19 that Nicaragua was the victim of a 'silencing invasion'. Commandant Luis Carrion, vice-minister of the Interior, was more precise: 'The aggression has already begun. We can no longer go on saying that we must prepare for war because the war has already started.'

Between Thursday July 1 and Sunday July 18 the Sandinista People's Army (EPS) was involved in its biggest battle

since the fall of Somoza, with a military unit of over two hundred which was encamped at Seven Bank, well inside the Nicaraguan border, in the Atlantic Coast zone. They were from Honduras and had a considerable supply of weapons, including rocket launchers which enabled them to bring down a helicopter. After two weeks of fighting the EPS put this battallion to fight, killing seventy five 'contras', but losing around fifty men.

According to the Sandinistas the fifty-odd armed attacks between May 1 and August 1 have caused more than a hundred deaths among the civil population. The main attacks have been:

-Monday July 19, a two-engined aircraft from Honduras launched two rockets against the fuel depots at the port of Corinto. These are the biggest depots in Nicaragua and their explosion would have caused the death of thousands of people.

-Saturday July 24, a group of 'con-

tras' tried to blow up a hydroelectric power plant near Bonanza on the Atlantic coast. Seven militia, including one woman, were killed.

-Saturday July 25, one hundred 'contras' from Honduras attacked the village of San Francisco del Norte. The defence of the village was undertaken by two score of peasant-militia, but they were unable to stop the attacks. Fifteen militia were killed, and several were tortured beforehand. Eight others were captured. The attackers painted the symbol of the FDN (Nicaraguan Democratic Front) and slogans like 'With God and patriotism we will fight communism!' Then they retreated across the Honduran border where army lorries and troops were waiting for them to protect their retreat.

According to Miguel d'Escoto, Minister of the Interior, the United States want to make Honduras 'the Israel of



Women militia in Nicaragua on the alert (DR)

Central America', the policeman for imperialist order and interests in the region. The US general Nutting stated publicly that there were 120 North American advisors in Honduras. In the *New York Times* of Thursday July 8, Raymond Bonner quotes a Honduran official who said, 'We cannot accept a socialist government in Nicaragua. It will be us or them.'

The Reagan administration has just spectacularly increased its economic and military aid to Honduras. Twenty-one million dollars will be for the extension of three airports. It has already been agreed to give 41.2 millions for the purchase of goods and military materials. Another hundred million will have been promised to president Suazo Cordoba and the Army chief, General Alvarez, during the trip they made to Washington in mid-July. New combined American-Honduran manoeuvres took place between Monday 19 and Saturday July 31, at some 20 kilometres from the Nicaraguan border.

The situation in Honduras is however unstable. Strikes break out regularly. For example, the teachers went on strike in mid-August in pursuance of their demands for wage increases and democratisation of the primary schools.

Present North American strategy is to encircle Nicaragua, to keep up the internal tension and completely isolate El Salvador. The formation of Democratic Central American Community (CDCA), which includes El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, and, since July 7, Guatemala. Strong pressure has been put on Panama to join.

Internally the most significant offensive has come from the Church and religious orders. These have grown amazingly in number and wealth. The Minister of the Interior has counted nearly two

hundred, of which 99 are in the capital, Managua. As they are violently anti-communist they are a base for the regroupment of the opposition to the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

The Catholic hierarchy tries to isolate the progressive sectors of the Church, in particular the four priests who are governmental ministers. The Sandinistas are sure that it is around the campaign 'to defend religion under threat' that the next big international propaganda campaign will be made.

The level of mobilisation of the masses reflects the importance of what is at stake. The militias are more and more numerous (at least 200,000 women and men) and can mobilise with impressive speed at times of danger. All the local centres and the important economic objectives are guarded day and night by militia in arms.

The day after the killings at San Francisco del Norte an almost spontaneous demonstration gathered more than 50,000 people, proof of an extraordinary level of combativity. Three years after the fall of Somoza, despite immense economic difficulties, despite imperialist plans, the Nicaraguan revolution has shown itself to be deeper and stronger than ever. International solidarity also must continue to be as strong as is necessary for the stakes involved. ■

Barseback—Focus of the Danish and Swedish antinuclear movements

"The antinuclear movement is not dead, even if you could get that impression from the press."

This is the way that the most prestigious of the Swedish dailies, Stockholm's Dagens Nyheter, began its report of the August 28 antinuclear-power demonstration at the Barseback reactors in southern Sweden, on the shores of the strait that separates Sweden and Denmark.

The defeat of the antinuke position

Astrid SODERBERGH WIDDING

The Swedish antinuclear movement experienced an unprecedented upsurge in connection with the March 23, 1980, referendum on nuclear power.

An extraparliamentary mass movement crystallized around the campaign for a "no" vote in the referendum, which offered an extraordinary opportunity to get a hearing. This campaign also became an arena for party bureaucrats pursuing their own interests. This was true in particular of the bourgeois Center Party and the VPK (Vansterpartiet Kommunisterna—Left Party of Communists, the Swe-

in the March 1981 referendum in Sweden was a major setback for the antinuclear movement, putting its future in question.

However, the August 28 demonstration appeared to mark the start of recovery for the movement. Dagens Nyheter wrote: "The organizers were delighted. The numbers, of course, were not as large as the 25,000 peak in 1977 or the 8,000 in 1980, but the 6,000 who showed up this year demonstrated that there remains

dish CP), the two parties represented in parliament that supported the call for a "no" vote.

Attempts by these parties to exploit the movement for their own ends blocked the building of a mass movement in areas where they gained a dominant influence and wrecked the possibilities for action.

The Center Party and the VPK were worried that after the defeat of the campaign for a "no" vote in the referendum, the antinuclear movement (the Folkkampanj) might continue and either give rise

a large hard core that is not giving up."

The following article explains the importance of the Barseback issue for the Swedish and Danish antinuclear movements and for the international movement against nuclear power. At the same time, it goes into the history of the antinuclear movement in the two Scandinavian countries, the reasons for past setbacks, and the prospects for struggle now.

to a party or remain a strong independent mass movement.

Either way, the continuation of the campaign would threaten the position of the two established parties. So, they pressed for dissolving the organization. They did not succeed, but they managed, through control of the leading bodies, to keep it effectively from giving impetus to any new struggles. The weariness of the activists after the referendum campaign also militated against any new struggles.

It was impossible to get a new campaign going against nuclear power as such.

But it was possible to focus activity on certain immediate questions, such as uranium mining or the disposal of nuclear waste. Activity on both these questions was given impetus by strong feelings that existed in the local areas concerned, and it developed outside the framework of the Folkkampanj.

But today the question of uranium mining has lost its immediacy and therefore its explosiveness. Likewise, the activity around the question of the disposal of nuclear wastes has lost its impact since those leading this work lacked political perspectives and did not understand how to conduct an effective campaign. So, today the antinuclear movement has come to focus around another question, one that has much greater immediacy, breadth, and impact than the others—the question of the nuclear power plant at Barseback. How does this question differ from the issues of uranium mining and the disposal of nuclear wastes?

1. There is a long tradition of opposition to Barseback.

2. Because of the location of the plant, not just Swedes but Danes have been building the campaign against it.

3. Over time, Barseback has become a symbol for both the Swedish and the Danish antinuclear movements. In Sweden, this means "if we stop Barseback, we stop nuclear power." In Denmark, which has no nuclear power plants of its own, Barseback offers a focus for the movement against the introduction of nuclear power, since it concentrates all the risks of nuclear power. Every conceivable argument against nuclear power can be used against Barseback.

Before going into the history of the various actions against Barseback, it is useful to take a look at the Danish antinuclear movement and how it functions.

In part in reaction to the mistakes made by the Swedes, the Danish antinuclear activists have organized their movement, the OOA, in quite a different way. Far from being dominated by political parties and having a hierarchical structure, it is a genuinely broad grass roots movement. In fact, if anything, it is rather unstructured.

Thus, the OOA lacks an elected leadership because the activists are afraid that such a leadership might steer the organization in an undesirable direction. Out of fear of becoming dominated by one or several political parties, until recently antinuclear activists have shied away from trying to gain support for their own organizations in any activities run by the various parties.

On the other hand, the Danish movement is extremely broad. Along with a great mass of individuals (who of course represent various tendencies), it includes four parties represented in parliament, as well as one large group that is not, the Communist Party. Within the Social Democracy, there is a strong current that supports the OOA on the Barseback question.

The OOA also, largely because of the work of our comrades in the Socialis-

tisk Arbejderparti (Socialist Workers Party, Danish section of the Fourth International), has a strong orientation to the trade-union movement.

The SAP has helped considerably to get the activists to see building opposition to nuclear power in the unions not just as one area of work among others but as the focus for most campaigns.

In Denmark, the campaign against Barseback has been carried on in one form or another since 1974, when the OOA was founded. The opposition to Barseback is also strong outside the OOA circles. In 1980, a poll taken in Copenhagen showed that 53% of the population of the main Danish city wanted the power plant shut down, and only 26% thought that it should continue operating.

This broad opposition to Barseback has been expressed in many ways since 1974, protest rallies, demonstrations, petitions, and appeals. The call for the October 1981 demonstration was signed by 137 organizations, including many trade unions, which organized their own contingents in the march. The SAP has continually stressed that the struggle against Barseback will have to be a prolonged one with many phases but that it must be kept up. The Socialist Party (Swedish section of the Fourth International) has argued the same line.

BARSEBACK'S ROLE IN THE ANTINUCLEAR MOVEMENT

Why has the opposition to Barseback assumed a special place in the Danish and Swedish antinuclear movements? This power plant is located in southern Sweden near several Swedish cities—Malmö, the country's third largest city, Lund, Helsingborg, Landskrona. It is also close to Denmark and to Copenhagen, the country's capital and main population center. Because of this particularly bad location, Barseback is one of the world's most extensively studied nuclear plants. In 1977, an investigation carried out by the U.S. safety expert Robert Pollard showed that the second Barseback reactor would not have been allowed to begin operations in the U.S.A. Five of its vital systems failed to meet the standards of the American Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

On April 13, 1979, a generator at the plant broke down due to bad construction. This incident gave rise to a new investigation, in which, among other things, comparisons were made with the accident at the Three-Mile Island plant in the U.S. Improvements in safety were called for. These continual improvements are costly. At the same time, they reduce the accessibility of the nuclear reactors. Thus, they undermine the economic viability of the Barseback plant and of nuclear power in general in a twofold way.

The attitude taken by both the Swedish and Danish authorities to the Barseback question has been to try to cover up the problems. It has been marked by secrecy and delaying tactics.

For example, the Danish antinuclear movement was long denied information about the contacts between the Swedish and Danish governments on this question and the facts presented in these discussions.

Certain "admissions," however, were made by politicians in high places. For example, in 1977, Premier Thorbjørn Fälldin acknowledged that "if we had known what we know today about the dangers of nuclear power, Barseback would never have been built." In 1978, the Danish minister of the environment Ivar Norrgård, said in parliament that the site of Barseback had been badly chosen.

The four parties represented in the Danish parliament that oppose Barseback introduced a resolution that Denmark ask the Swedish government to shut down Barseback. Before the debate and vote on this proposal, all the available facts on Barseback were supposed to be presented. There were to be three reports—one by a Danish-Swedish committee on safety in the plant, an emergency plan for Denmark, especially the Copenhagen region; an assessment of the consequences of a serious accident for Denmark by a pollution-study group.

These three reports were later complemented in March 1982 by a report on meteorological conditions and what effects these would have in the event of an accident.

The publication of the first three reports was delayed for a long time. When they did finally come out, the following conclusions were presented.

On Security

1. The Three-Mile Island accident could not be repeated at Barseback because the reactors there are not steam driven but water driven, and that error that was made in the U.S. was easier to avoid.

2. That the safety measures taken by the Swedes were satisfactory.

3. Nonetheless, these safety measures had to be seen as elementary, since total safety could not be assured.

On the Danish Contingency Plan

1. A revised emergency plan went into effect on October 1, 1981, based on the forces that already existed in the society to deal with an emergency—the police, civil defense, etc. It was important to be prepared, the report said, but this plan could in no way guarantee total safety in the event of an accident.

Regarding the probability and consequences of a serious accident: There was one chance in six million every year of the worst conceivable accident. Such an accident, moreover, would not have grave consequences for public health.

There would be a maximum of 24,000 deaths from cancer in a thirty year period after the accident, 1,500 birth defects, and 19,000 other cases of "genetic damage." These figures were adjudged quite low, and could, moreover, be reduced by shielding against radioactivity. However, the best radioactive shielding could not prevent all radioactive damage.

One of the professors who participated in the preparation of the pollution report reserved judgement about its conclusions. He argued that "on several points" the report represented "an underestimation of the environmental effects," that there was an attempt to minimize the problem.

The OOA also presented strong arguments that the report gave an overly optimistic picture, that Barseback represented a direct threat to all of Denmark. Every city in the country would be hit by radioactive fallout from an accident. While it has no nuclear power industry of its own, the country could be forced to evacuate its capital and leave it abandoned for years.

Taking 1 Rem per thirty years as the danger mark, the criterion established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, it is clear that sections of the population not only in Denmark but in Britain, France, Italy, and the Soviet Union, could be affected by an accident. In all, if the weather conditions were unfavorable, an area of 190,000 square kilometers could be hit.

The OOA argued that the Danish Emergency plan offered no guarantees that the "normal emergency facilities" could be put into operation in the event of an accident and function under those conditions. For example, in Copenhagen bus drivers and nursing personnel at the Royal Hospital have announced that they are not prepared to participate in an evacuation, because the protection for workers is inadequate. They are demanding that Barseback be shut down. In general, the evacuation plans are highly inadequate.

Finally, the OOA made the following general comment: In the two years of its existence, the Swedish-Danish Committee have juggled the facts presented in earlier reports, made a political judgment of them, and come to far more positive positions about Barseback and its safety conditions than the original reports. (The fact that this report was clearly political has not kept the Danish environmental authorities from saying whenever negative facts about Barseback come to light that it is not their job to make political assessments.)

Against the background of the three reports described above and a growing sensitivity of Danish public opinion on the question, Danish minister of the environment Erik Holst sent a written communication to the Swedish government in which he said that now that there had been a compilation of material about Barseback an assessment of it could be made.

Even if the likelihood of an accident is extremely small, Holst wrote, the impact of one would be very grave on public health and life in Copenhagen. Moreover, it would have both "material and psychological effects" on Danish food productions. So, continuing study of the plant was necessary. He proposed setting up a Swedish-Danish Commission, which would undertake a further evalua-



Antinuclear power demonstration in Sweden (DR)

tion of the available material, on the basis of the guidelines laid down by the Scandinavian Environmental Convention.

On March 25, the OOA commented on Holst's action. "The environmental minister's letter is an important opening on the side of the Danish government, but there must be some guarantee that this will not be another coverup maneuver." But a coverup was precisely what it was, since there was no clarification of the commission's political objectives in Holst's letter. The OOA stressed that further technical research was unnecessary.

The fact that this letter was a coverup maneuver was made even clearer in June when the Swedish government finally answered. The task of the commission was to be continued calculation of the risk ratio.

The OOA's response to this was quite sharp. Labor Minister Eliasson's answer was "unacceptable and arrogant. The Danish concerns, opinions, and protests were ignored. Why investigate what has already been investigated?" Shut down Barseback now! Similar criticisms and arguments came from the Swedish Miljöförbund (Environmental Association).

No matter how the Danish environmental minister's letter is evaluated, it represents about the strongest diplomatic move that can be made concerning the internal affairs of another country. Thus, it represents an important opening and more than sufficient reason for new initiatives in the fight against Barseback.

Are there grounds for taking up this question internationally?

"Considering the scope and geographical extent of the problems that would follow an accident at Barseback, it is clear that this question is not a Swedish domestic problem that has also aroused the concern of a lot of Danish citizens. The clearest example is the danger of early deaths among the populations of other countries and the possibilities that it might force the evacuation of large areas and cities. But the problems also involve judgments of what is an acceptable risk. As Goran Eklof, a leading antinuclear activist and leading member of the SP, said during the campaign for a "no" vote in the referendum on nuclear power:

"The Swedish authorities have up till now taken the position that the risks arising to the Swedish people from Barseback and other nuclear power plants are

acceptable, in view of the advantages these power plants offer. This is already an imposition on the large section of the Swedish people that does not share this assessment. But even if the Swedish people unanimously decided to accept the risks, the Swedish government does not have the right to decide for other peoples. Even if the Swedish referendum is taken to be a democratic expression of the people's will, the fact is that the majority of those who would be affected by an accident at Barseback, that is the population of the Copenhagen region, have no voice in the referendum. As long as the Swedish authorities reject the Environmental Protection Agency's norm that 1 Rem every thirty years is the maximum permissible dose for a population, and instead accept Rasmussen's maximum or another higher one, they are making decisions for the people in more than a dozen European countries. There is no reason to believe that these people accept a higher level of risks, especially since they get none of the benefits we see from nuclear power. Naturally it can be argued that these countries also threaten us by their nuclear power plants, but that does not hold in the case of Denmark, which has none and is most concerned."

But there are also totally "domestic" reasons for the antinuclear movements in other countries to pay special attention to the Barseback question now.

SP members active in the Swedish Miljöförbund have made an assessment that the question of the future of nuclear power may be decided relatively soon, particularly in the case of Sweden but also internationally. The nuclear power programs of the various countries show a converging tendency. In some countries nuclear power is not working well, in others the development of it is slowing down.

Thus, the resolution of a few pressing questions (which can be expected to be settled in the near future) can be decisive for the industry. Such questions are the French nuclear energy program and its final form and the question of Barseback. The nuclear power companies operate on an international scale. So, it is important for the antinuclear movement to as well.

The August 28 Barseback march was the first in a long time organized jointly by the Swedish and Danish environmental movements. It is essential to build wider and wider international opposition to the Barseback plant. ■

Antinuclear soldiers prominent in Dutch antiwar rally

Oscar van Rijswijk, a member of the Dutch section of the Fourth International and one of the antinuclear-missile soldiers recently charged with "revealing state secrets," was a featured speaker at the September 4 Rotterdam peace demonstration.

This march of 25,000 people was the largest Dutch antiwar action since the massive antimissile demonstrations last fall.

Twenty-eight soldiers marched in uniform in the demonstration despite heavy intimidation from the army command, most of them for the first time.

The report of the rally in the September 6 issue of the daily *Volkskrant* focused mainly on van Rijswijk's speech.

Among other things, he said: "Several dozen soldiers have come out to this demonstration—in uniform, in order to make it clear that people in the Dutch armed forces are also thinking critically about nuclear weapons.

"We soldiers are obliged to guard sites such as Volkel, 't Harde, Havelte, and others in Germany. We also guard American-occupied areas full of atomic warheads.

"We soldiers are obliged to learn to fire Nike and Lance nuclear missiles. We can be trained in laying nuclear mines and in firing Neutron grenades with howitzers.

"Not long ago, it came out that Weinberger, van Mierlo's [the Dutch defense minister] American counterpart, thinks that a nuclear war can be waged over a half year and won. That aroused a storm of outrage.

"We soldiers were not surprised. We are being trained in how to wage and survive a limited nuclear war...

"The soldiers are demonstrating in uniform today to show that they do not want anything more to do with this nuclear lunacy.

"The military authorities and some politicians claim that by demonstrating in uniform, we are bringing military dictatorship closer. They are standing things on their head. It is not their atomic weapons but our critical attitude in the army that promotes peace. It is not our wearing the uniform here, but their undemocratic practices that prepare the way for military dictatorship.

"Soldiers who distributed leaflets for last fall's demonstration in 't Harde were arrested and held for five days....Of the 120 soldiers who demonstrated in uniform last fall, seventy were punished....

"Today, too, Military Intelligence is running around taking pictures. Some of the soldiers demonstrating here were told by their commanders that they would get ten days in the stockade if they turned up at any affair like this....

"But punishments cannot keep soldiers from demonstrating. Despite this more and more are coming out on demonstrations. They have the sense to fear nuclear weapons much more than any punishment.

"With the introduction of Cruise missiles, the Defense Ministry wants to

that no one would ever utter the word 'nuclear weapons!' The officers claim that anything about nuclear weapons is 'secret.'

"We were later released and are now out on bail. But trials are being prepared against three members of the VVDM. For that reason, the Hands Off the VVDM has been formed, and it has gotten the active support of the peace movement.

"With your help, we soldiers can stand up to the wave of repression that has been unleashed against all those in the



Dutch soldiers protest against nuclear weapons (DR)

step up nuclear armament. At the same time, they are stepping up their intimidation of antinuclear soldiers. Last year in Steenwijk, two soldiers were arrested and taken from the base simply because they were thinking seriously of refusing to do guard duty....

"This summer the VVDM (Vereniging voor Dienstplichtige Militairen—Soldiers Union) was attacked. The VVDM supports freedom of expression in the army, and it backs up those who refuse to guard nuclear weapons sites. Four members of the Executive [including van Rijswijk] were arrested on charges of having stolen top secret information about atomic weapons. It has become clear that this was a sinister frameup by the Military Intelligence.

"Without any grounds whatever, people were arrested, held in isolation cells, told that they could not talk to a lawyer, and that their homes had been searched. I can tell you from personal experience that that is no joke. We were held for three weeks. That was supposed to make such an impression on soldiers

army who express critical views about atomic weapons.

"So, I call on all those here today to sign the petitions that are going around, support the soldiers who are going to be arrested for showing their support for this demonstration.

"Friends, we are not going to let ourselves be gagged by the Defense Minister in the Hague. We are going to continue to express our opinion about nuclear weapons...and the Cruise missiles are not coming here!"

The September 4 demonstration was marked by a much larger proportion of youth than the anti-Cruise missile last fall.

Rebel, the youth organization affiliated to the Dutch section of the Fourth International, pushed the idea of a conference to form an antiwar organization for youth in Holland on the model of the Youth CND in Britain. The IKV, one of the major peace organizations, has begun organizing a national meeting of youth groups to prepare the way for such a conference. ■

The threat of war and the struggle for socialism

Ernest MANDEL

Several times during the last two years the threat of an outbreak of the third world war in the near future seemed to loom. Impressionist commentators did not hesitate to draw this conclusion. A panic wave in fact arose, particularly in certain intellectual circles. The powerful and promising anti-war movement, which is growing today in the imperialist countries, was also at least partially affected. The number of publications about a third world war already begun, underway, or on the point of ending, are countless (1).

The actual events are not unimportant in creating this panic wave. In June 1982 we saw: the re-opening of the Iran-Iraq war, the Malvinas war, the preparations for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the growing foreign intervention in the civil war in El Salvador—without even mentioning the more or less forgotten 'little' wars. There are those in Chad, Eritrea, Namibia, the Western Sahara, not counting the civil war in Yemen, the still smouldering civil war in Angola and Mozambique, and even this list is not exhaustive...To conclude from this that the flames of a world conflagration were mounting was only one step, which some have taken without considering what this unjustified conclusion means.

It is completely irresponsible to get carried away by either panic or euphoria on such an important question—what is at stake here is the physical survival of the human race.

ADVANCES OF WORLD REVOLUTION

Imperialism is more determined than ever to employ its counter-revolutionary violence against every revolutionary advance in the world. This takes the form of systematic armed intervention; sometimes disguised as support to one of the sides in a civil war, at other times an open massive foreign intervention.

The world imperialist system is decomposing in the throes of a profound crisis. Revolutionary conflagrations have been erupting one after the other for over a half-century, with no end in sight. Thus, the main danger of war lies in these numerous foreign interventions against revolutions in progress. For the last decades the great majority of wars have been of this type. It is the same today. It will be the same tomorrow.

This is not in the least a new phenomenon. In fact, since the intervention against Soviet Russia in 1918-22, every revolution that has been triumphant, or

on the road to important victories, has had to confront a counter-revolutionary war from outside. These are just the most important examples of this statement: the intervention of German imperialism against the Finnish revolution in 1918; that of the Entente (France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania), using Rumania as the cutting edge, against the Hungarian Soviet republic of Bela Kun in 1919; Hitler and Mussolini against the Spanish revolution in 1936-7; the British and American intervention against the Greek revolution in 1944-49; the imperialist intervention against the third Chinese revolution; the first Indochinese war 1945-54; the imperialist intervention against the Korean and Chinese revolutions in 1950-53; against the guerillas in Malaysia 1948-60 and Kenya 1952; the second Indochinese war 1961-75; in Angola 1961, Mozambique 1964, and Guinea-Bissau 1971; the imperialist-Zionist interventions against Egypt and the repeated imperialist attacks against the Palestinian revolution in 1969, 1970, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1981, and 1982.

The scope of some of these wars was incomparably greater than the Malvinas war or the present imperialist intervention in Central America. We need only mention the first Indochinese war, the Israeli attack coupled with the Franco-British intervention on the Suez Canal in 1957, the Algerian war, and finally the second Indochinese war, which involved hundreds of thousands of soldiers from the imperialist countries.

The new fact is not these 'localised' counter-revolutionary wars. They are the rule. The new factor is that represented by the Nicaraguan and Iranian revolutions. There, at least at the moment of the fall of Somoza and of the shah, imperialism found itself *politically* not materially or militarily incapable of intervening because of the repercussions of the defeat it suffered in Indochina in 1976.

At the time the Fourth International considered that this paralysis had to be short-lived. The political resolution adopted by the Eleventh World Congress in 1979, as well as that of the International Executive Committee in May 1981, correctly stated that imperialism was developing the means to carry out new counter-revolutionary interventions into revolutions already underway, or new anti-imperialist initiatives. These preparations included, among other things, the setting up of the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF). This analysis has been confirmed since then.

The Malvinas war, the invasion of Lebanon, the imperialist intervention into Central America, and, rather more ambiguously, the Iran-Iraq war, are far from representing a new 'international situation', or bringing us to the threshold of the third world war. Rather they represent a 'return to normal'. That is, the systematic, obstinate attempt of imperialism to pit its counter-revolutionary strength against each new advance of revolution, a norm which has been established for nearly sixty-five years.

COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY WARS AND WORLD WAR

The two world wars which broke out in 1914 and 1939 were different from this almost uninterrupted chain of localised wars which punctuate the historical period since the Russian revolution. These wars prove the inability of imperialism to ensure peace for humanity. This, in fact, is one of the most important reasons for ridding ourselves of this system which emanates the most barbarous violence through all its pores. The third world war would be still more different. These are not only quantitative differences. They are qualitative. Unlike the 'localised' counter-revolutionary wars, the world wars involved tens, indeed hundreds, of millions of people. They brought on a corresponding toll of victims and material destruction. Thus, the functioning of the world economy was altered from top to bottom, bringing about a major drop of the productive forces, of the material wealth accumulated by humanity as a whole, and thus narrowing the basis for the socialist reconstruction of the world. It is nothing to do with 'pacifism' to recognise these effects. In this context we recall the judgement of the Communist International in March 1919:

'Europe is covered with debris and smoking ruins...the contradictions of the capitalist system confront mankind in the shape of pangs of hunger, exhaustion from cold, epidemics and moral savagery.'

It is true that the 'localised' counter-revolutionary wars can have the same effect in *one* country. The appal-

1. We note among these works one by Richard Nixon, former president of the United States: *The Third World War Has Begun*; that of former Joint Chief of Staff of the British army, General Sir John Hackett: *The Third World War* (Sphere Books, London, 1978). We also should mention the famous article by Edward Thompson 'Exterminism, the Last Step of Civilisation,' from the symposium 'Exterminism and the Cold War' published by *New Left Review* (Verso Books, London, 1982).

ing consequences of the imperialist destruction in Cambodia—six months bombing from March to August 1973 on all the densely-populated zones by the entire American air fleet in Indochina—are enough. But, from a materialist point of view, the difference is whether it is one country, or a small number, who are driven back to the brink of barbarism, with the possibility of seeing the rest of the world rapidly make up their lost production; or if it is the whole, or the vast majority, of humanity, which is driven to disaster without the reserves to rapidly emerge from such prostration.

This difference between the 'localised' counter-revolutionary wars and world war has its roots in the different objective causes of the two phenomena. 'Localised' counter-revolutionary wars are immediate responses to partial advances of the revolution. World war stems from the structural crisis of the system, against which it is a sort of last resort.

Of course this distinction has to be nuanced. Successive, although partial, advances of revolution are themselves the expression of the same structural crisis of capitalism which gives birth to world war. But despite this nuance the qualitative difference remains. 'Localised' counter-revolutionary wars can coincide, and many times have coincided, with periods of 'peaceful' expansion of the capitalist economy. A world war only arises when a deep economic depression appears to preclude any possibility of new peaceful expansion of the international capitalist economy for a long period. And, most importantly, 'localised' counter-revolutionary wars, being a response to the fragmentary advances of the revolution, can, and generally do, coincide with a rise in the mass movement which slows down, indeed paralyses, the general march of imperialism towards war.

On the other hand, the outbreak of the Second World War reflected in a concentrated way a defeat or series of defeats of the mass movement of such gravity that the proletariat was temporarily paralysed in its response to the warlike initiatives of the bourgeoisie. In other words, the 'localised' counter-revolutionary wars accompany advances or partial victories of the world revolution. The outbreak of the Second World War expressed a deep historic defeat of this same revolution.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND WORLD WAR

The fact that the third world war will be, in all probability, a nuclear war only emphasises all the more the importance of this distinction. It gives it all the more weight.

It would be absurd, and contrary to the elementary principles of historic materialism, to argue that the development of a nuclear arsenal capable of destroying at least twenty times the present population of the world (2) changes nothing 'fundamental' in the 'nature of the world war', and that this will pose the 'identical

tactical and strategic problems' for the world proletariat and the revolutionaries as the First and Second World Wars.

Considerable human and technical resources are needed to build a classless society. It will not be socialism that arises from the nuclear ashes, but a planet on which the predominant life will be grasses and insects (3) or, in the 'best' alternative, a barbarous human society from which the survivors of the holocaust will move forward in an arduous and centuries-long ascent. The communist project would anyway be completely cut off from reality for a long period. Obviously, one could think, wrongly in our opinion, that all this has already become inevitable.

But it is difficult to perceive why it would be particularly 'revolutionary' to substitute another project for the communist one, based on the hypothesis that the material base of communism is condemned to disappear—that is to say accepting the inevitability of a nuclear holocaust.

It flows from this that the strategic aim of the world workers and revolutionary movement must be to prevent the world nuclear war and not to 'win' it (whatever this might mean). That is, to explain this more precisely—to do everything possible to assure that the progress of the world revolution paralyses imperialism's ability to intervene with nuclear weapons, and to prepare the way for its nuclear disarmament by defeating its political power. However, as long as imperialism retains political power, and military and material power in the key countries, it would be utopian to think that the 'localised' counter-revolutionary interventions by imperialism can be prevented.

As the Fourth International has explained numerous times *disarmament is only possible within the imperialist fortresses that have nuclear weapons and not outside them* (4). Only the North American, British, French, German, Japanese proletariat (supported by the Chinese and Soviet proletariat) can defuse the nuclear weapons; outlaw any use of them, junk them, and remove them once and for all from the face of the earth. To think anything else is to believe in miracles which will not happen: that the imperialists will always be intelligent or afraid or demoralised enough not to use their weapons of despair even if they keep the power to do so.

One could, at first sight, find a contradiction between the fact that we stress the inevitability of 'localised' counter-revolutionary wars and at the same time

affirm the necessity and the possibility of preventing the nuclear world war. Do not the first run the risk of gradually opening up into the second, almost imperceptibly? Is there not a real risk that 'tactical' nuclear weapons will one day be used against advances of the revolution, either by imperialism directly or by one of its particularly determined allies (Zionist extremists in the Middle East or extreme supporters of apartheid in Southern Africa)? Does not any escalation and extension of 'localised' wars risk opening up a general conflagration, leading to a nuclear world war?

There is an element of truth in this objection, but only an *element*. It implies that the danger of nuclear war increases at the same rate the nuclear arsenal increases and 'local conflicts' multiply. But it is to move from dialectics to sophism to conclude from the consideration of the growing danger of nuclear war that its outbreak is inevitable.

It is exactly the particular nature of nuclear arms which allows us to pinpoint the major difference: as long as imperialism survives, local wars and the *danger* of nuclear war are inevitable, *the nuclear war is not*.

THE REALITY OF THE BALANCE OF TERROR

It is a fact that, despite the development of a more and more terrifying arsenal of nuclear weapons over the last thirty years, they have not been used until now. However, the number of 'local' wars has been growing and more and more sophisticated and murderous conventional weapons have in fact been used in them. The reason for this difference seems obvious. Those who possess nuclear weapons and can decide whether to use them know perfectly well their suicidal meaning for humanity. The general public can be fooled with the monstrous talk of nuclear wars which will only cost some hundreds of millions (sic) dead, and that 'those who have nuclear shelters will survive'. Those in power are not duped.

It is true that one of the partly 'rational' objectives of the mad nuclear arms race is the frantic search for nuclear weapons so 'small' and so 'clean' that their 'tactical' use in 'localised' wars would be possible without automatically unleashing a nuclear world war. Although this hypothesis cannot be totally excluded it is extremely unlikely, and anyway would mean a horrific cost in human life and destruction.

2. According to the report *Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons*, submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1980, the explosion of one thousand nuclear warheads of one megaton against the USSR and USA would cause the instantaneous death of 150-200 million people in these two countries. There are now already more than 40 thousand nuclear warheads stored in the world. And losses caused by nuclear fallout, famine, contamination, etc. should be included.

3. This is the title of the initial essay of *The Fate of the Earth* by Jonathan Shell (Pan Books, London, 1982), an otherwise weak and inconsequential book which describes the sui-

cidal consequences of a nuclear war for the human race with great conviction.

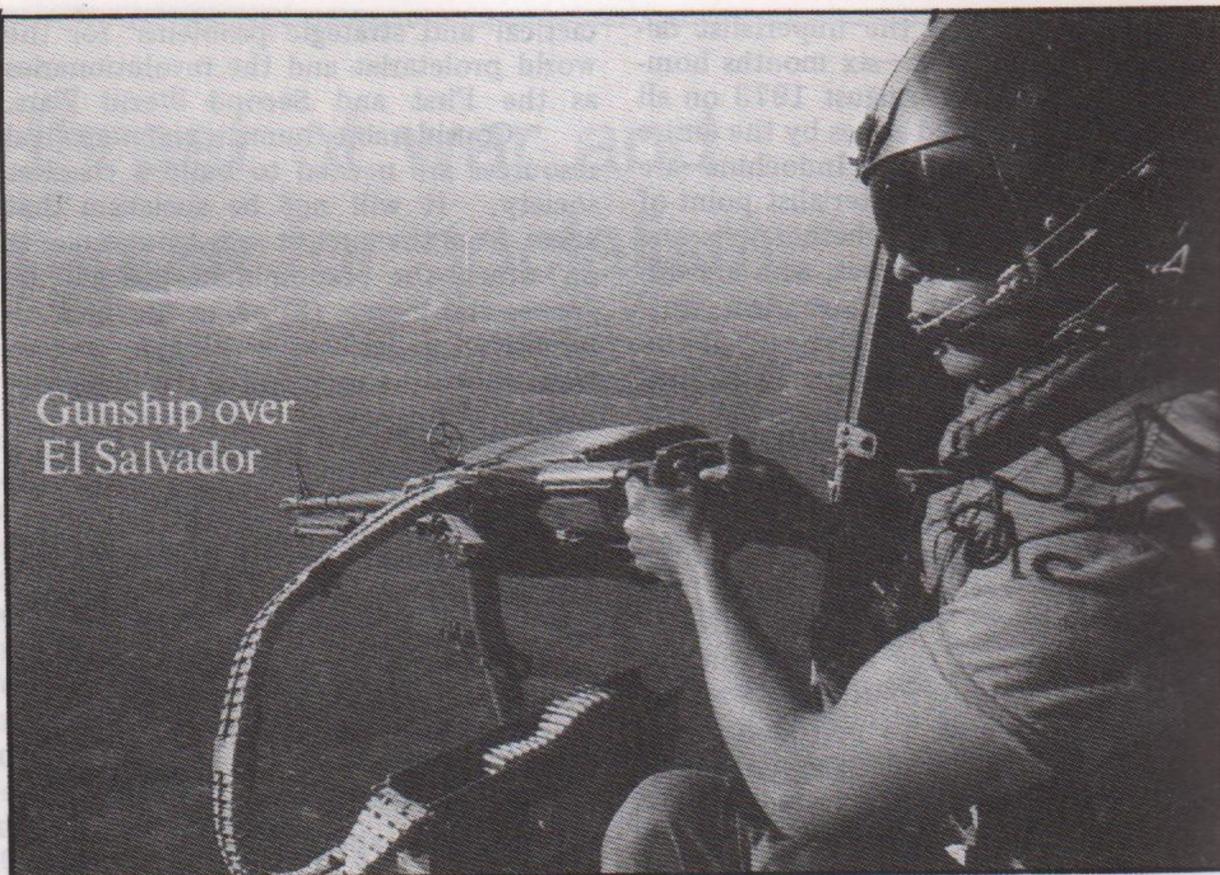
4. 'In the final analysis only the victory of the proletariat in the most highly developed imperialist countries, above all the victory of the American proletariat, can free mankind definitively from the nightmare of nuclear annihilation. This is the revolutionary-socialist solution that the Fourth International counterposes to the utopian illusions of "peaceful coexistence" and "victory" in a nuclear world war.' *Dynamics of the World Revolution Today*, document adopted by the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International in June 1963.

This clearly shows that it has been the fact that the Soviet Union has built and stockpiled nuclear weapons that has saved humanity up till now from a nuclear holocaust. Without this 'balance of terror' it is practically certain that imperialism would already have used nuclear weapons against the 'Chinese volunteers' during the Korean war and the Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions during the second Indochinese war (5), indeed against other revolutions.

Over and above the totalitarian and counter-revolutionary dictatorship, which is to a great extent responsible for survival of world imperialism, and thus, indirectly, for the existence of the nuclear threat, the existence of the Soviet workers state as a state of a different social nature from the imperialist states, a state that is not propelled down the road to a nuclear holocaust by its own deadly logic, reveals again its contradictory significance in the world today. This confirms the correctness of its Marxist characterisation, which displeases all those inconsistent and superficial detractors, who consider that the USSR is of the same social nature as the United States.

The statement that the 'balance of terror' has prevented the outbreak of the nuclear world war until now is not based on a naive faith in 'human rationality'. Our exposition of the profoundly irrational nature of 'late capitalism' has been too thorough for this reproach to be made (6). We base ourselves on something much more profound than Reason: the instinct for survival (in the physical sense of the term) in the possessing classes, and particularly their most powerful representatives in finance capital, the military/industrial complex, and their political leaders. These people constitute the richest ruling class that the world has ever known. To imagine that they would be ready to sacrifice all this wealth, this luxury, at any moment or in any circumstances on the altar of abstract ideas or 'absolute' principles like anti-communism, the 'defence of the market economy' (called 'defence of freedom'), 'hatred of revolution' is to completely misunderstand the motivations and the pattern of behaviour of this class.

What we see from time to time is nuclear blackmail aimed at *marginally modifying the relationship of forces within the 'balance of terror'*, not a suicidal attempt to use nuclear weapons to reintroduce capitalism in the East, or to alter the world relationship of forces between the totality of the imperialist forces on one side and the non-capitalist on the other (including the Soviet Union and China). This is the third time since the Second World War that imperialism has stepped up the nuclear arms race in this way. The first time was during the Korean war (1950-53). The second time was at the beginning of the 1960s. It started for the third time at the end of the 1970s. Each of these phases has ended in a new attempt at 'detente', that, is a confirmation of the 'balance of terror.'



Gunship over El Salvador

THE LIMITS OF THE 'BALANCE OF TERROR'

Although we believe that the 'balance of terror' has prevented for a whole historical period the use of nuclear weapons until now—and thus, the successive reprisals and escalations that would lead to the outbreak of the third world war—we do not consider that this will continue indefinitely. What makes possible a change in this situation is the increase in the structural crisis which is afflicting the world capitalist system.

The difference in the present stepping up of the nuclear arms race from that in the 1950s and 1960s is that it corresponds to an *intrinsic economic need* of the imperialist economy, linked to the long-term decline of the economic situation of capitalism. In conditions of stagnation of the rate of profit and of the 'normal outlets', arms production is more and the more the 'substitute market' par excellence that is impelling a resumption of capital accumulation.

The greater is the weight of arms spending in the imperialist economy, the greater is the pressure to increase austerity and dump the welfare state in all its forms. At the same time, the more the class struggle is exacerbated, including for immediate and defensive aims, and the more the imperialist bourgeoisie is forced to look for a change in the political regime in its principal citadels (7).

When we say that the North American, European, and Japanese ruling classes have been motivated for the last thirty years, and remain so today, by everything that their wealth involves in practice, and particularly by the possibilities for manoeuvre that derive from the immense reserves they still hold, this means something quite precise for us. That is a whole political, social, military, and ideological climate resulting from a long period of accelerated growth, which has made a profound mark on the leading

political personnel of imperialism. This has developed against the background of a specific relationship of forces vis-a-vis the working class as much as vis-a-vis the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies. Certainly this personnel is capable of any number of barbarous initiatives against the colonial revolution (torture in Algeria, defoliants in Vietnam, massacres in Latin America, 'anti-personnel' weapons used against the Palestinian people, etc.). But it is not ready for the self-destructive barbarism of an Adolf Hitler in 1944-45, or General Hideki Tojo at the same period in Japan.

There would have to be a totally different economic climate for the political personnel prepared to take the final solution for the whole of humanity to come to the leadership of the principal imperialist powers. The main forces of big capital would have to be literally driven to the brink. There would have to be other dominant ideologies, a different relationship of forces between the classes in these countries. Of course, as the downward trend of the international capitalist economy continues, and as the austerity offensive and war drive of international capitals sharpens, personalities, tendencies, indeed political forces, who symbolise the determination to literally fight to the death, including collective suicide, for the greater glory of private property, or

5. There are numerous already-published sources which attest to the debates among the American leaders in which the use of nuclear weapons was discussed. When the sources that are still secret today are published it will be shown that these were not the only occasions.

6. See the chapter 'Ideology in the Age of Late Capitalism' in *Late Capitalism* by Ernest Mandel, New Left Books, London, 1976.

7. A parallel aim of the resumption of the nuclear arms race by imperialism is to exacerbate the social and economic crisis of the USSR. Following the decline in the rate of growth of the Soviet economy the Kremlin found itself driven to make difficult choices if it was to considerably increase its military spending as Washington intended. To avoid this outcome it will have to pay a political price which imperialism is trying to make as high as possible.

the race, like Adolf Hitler and Hideki Tojo, will begin to appear in the wings and on the edge of the stage. But this time it will be nuclear death.

It would be deeply irresponsible to brush aside the possibility of such a 'suicidal turn' by the leading personnel of big capital, once a certain threshold of the structural crisis of capitalism in decline is passed, like that passed in Germany in 1932. Those who think that the 'balance of terror' or anti-nuclear propaganda can save us *forever* are like those who believe in the little voice that whispers, 'You can't die!' Alas, our own fate, we humans, is not only that individuals inevitably die, but even the species could disappear. If it does not master its own fate in time, if, faced with the threat of nuclear war, it does not impose firm rules of order on society, *by creating a world social order which makes war impossible*. This means the abolition of private property and the sovereign nation state, and the constitution of a world government of producers (the world socialist federation) which outlaws the production of any major weapons and which is able to ensure that this rule is respected.

The 'balance of terror' increasingly loses its effectiveness, as the depression and the longterm capitalist crisis worsen, as the relationships of force *within the imperialist bourgeois societies* modify, as the austerity offensive and the war drive intensify. These phenomena are structurally linked.

An essential first conclusion flows from this: whether or not a group of bourgeois politicians ready to launch a nuclear war come to power *depends on the outcome of the totality of the political and economic class struggle* in the principal capitalist countries in the years and decades to come. First of all such politicians would have to defeat the Western proletariat (and the anti-imperialist movement in the most developed dependent countries) before being able to push the button which would bring about the holocaust. An understanding of this is what must guide the orientation of revolutionary Marxists as well as the political course of all those who have understood the seriousness of the nuclear peril.

One parallel immediately comes to mind. Towards the end of the 1920s the great majority of the Stalinist faction used the imminence of war as a pretext for the criminal ultraleft course called the 'third period' of the Communist International. There were some correct elements in this analysis. But we know how right Trotsky was when he emphasised that nothing was inevitable in 1928, 1929, or 1931, (date of the unleashing of Japanese aggression against China which was at the same time both an extension of more general, but also more diffuse, imperialist aggression against the Chinese revolution, and the beginning of the march towards the Second World War). Not even in 1936 was anything inevitable.

The progress toward the Second World War had certainly already begun. But the inevitability of the Second World

War was the result of the defeat of the German proletariat in 1933, the betrayal of the advancing French revolution in 1936, and, above all, of the smothering and the crushing of the Spanish revolution in 1936-37. There was nothing inevitable about those things, certainly not in 1928-29.

In this sense, and with all the reservations necessary in historical analogies, the situation today is closer to that of 1928-31 than that after 1938. The decisive class battles are in front of us not behind us. It is these which will decide the march towards war.

We can formulate a second essential conclusion: the fate of humanity depends on the outcome of a race between the capacity of the international workers movement to overthrow the ruling power in the principal imperialist fortresses—obviously any exterior weakening would contribute to that overthrow but cannot substitute for it—to make a breakthrough in the progress towards socialism; and on the other side the attempt by imperialism to inflict decisive defeats on the international workers movement, which would leave the way open to nuclear war. Indeed, the austerity drive and remilitarisation offensive will lead sooner or later to a challenge to the essential democratic rights of the workers movement, which in its turn would open the door to a fundamental change in the political personnel of imperialism (8).

The first way involves the revolution growing over from its present fragmentary and empirical development to a universal and conscious development. The second means the defeat of the world revolution. While the first saves the human race, preserves the chances of a renaissance of civilisation in socialism, free from the horror of nuclear holocaust (9), the second way can, and one could even say probably will, lead to that very holocaust.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ANTI-WAR AND ANTI-NUCLEAR MOBILISATIONS

As the austerity offensive accelerates, as remilitarisation increases, and as there are more and more serious attacks on the social and political gains of the proletariat in the imperialist countries—along with murderous and barbarous attacks against the colonial revolution—the 'balance of terror' tends to lose effectiveness as a principal obstacle on the road towards the third world war. As this progresses, the importance of the anti-war movement (particularly anti-nuclear war)

8. We have insisted several times on the inherent political risks in maintaining bourgeois democracy for a democracy engaged in a policy of systematic impoverishment of the toiling masses. Certainly there is no automatic victory for the reformist left in such circumstances. This depends on a number of factors, varying from one country to another and from one situation to another. Nevertheless, the risk of an electoral disaster for the bourgeoisie, comparable to that of May 10, 1981, in France is real in such conditions. Recently, for the first time in history, the reformist left in Mauritius won all the seats in the parliament, in an election organised by the right.

grows to the same extent. The June 12 demonstration of a million people in New York (the biggest demonstration in the history of the United States, if not of the imperialist countries, with a million participants) is only a first indication of the potential of this movement.

What motivates this movement is not the immediate desire to overthrow capitalism, which alone bears the responsibility for the nuclear arms race, or support for the world revolution. It is true, of course, that many of the participants are motivated by these things and that it is the duty of revolutionary Marxists to propagandise for these ideas and increase their influence within the movement. But the fundamental motivation for this movement is *fear of the nuclear holocaust, the physical instinct of self-preservation*. This is why, to general surprise, the German masses, whose level of political consciousness is a lot lower than that of the French or Italian masses, have participated in the movement a lot more extensively than their class sisters and brothers in the neighbouring countries. The German masses are convinced that the whole of Germany will be destroyed in the first days of a nuclear war, and they want to live.

Those who pedantically deny the objectively revolutionary impact of the actions of these masses, under the pretext that they do not at first glance distinguish between the bureaucratised workers states and bourgeois states, that they sometimes use the jargon describing the US and the USSR as 'the super-powers', putting them on an equal footing; that these masses do not exhibit 'proletarian internationalism' towards revolutions in progress (reproaches which are, moreover, partly false) fail to recognise two essential aspects of the world situation.

Firstly, it is imperialism and imperialism alone that vitally and desperately needs nuclear weapons for its counter-revolutionary military strategy. Thus, to concentrate the movement against nuclear weapons is to objectively strike a blow at imperialism.

Secondly, to the extent that they include sections of the organised workers movement and the youth these mass mobilisations unleash an *objectively anti-capitalist dynamic*, independent of the phraseology used by certain of their leaders. These mass actions have imposed and will continue to press not only for concrete measures of unilateral disarmament (against the installation of Cruise and Pershing missiles, against North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) bases

9. Two Anglo-Saxon intellectuals, who are not at all revolutionary, have just declared themselves for the immediate abolition and outlawing of nuclear weapons; the British Lord Solly Zuckerman (*Nuclear Illusion and Reality*, Viking Press, New York, 1982), former chief scientific advisor to the British Ministry of Defence; and the American Theodore Draper, Social-Democratic historian specialising in the study of Stalinism, and a convinced anti-communist ('How Not to Think About Nuclear War', *New York Review of Books*, July 15, 1982). But they do not reply to the question, what are the political and social preconditions for this abolition and outlawing.

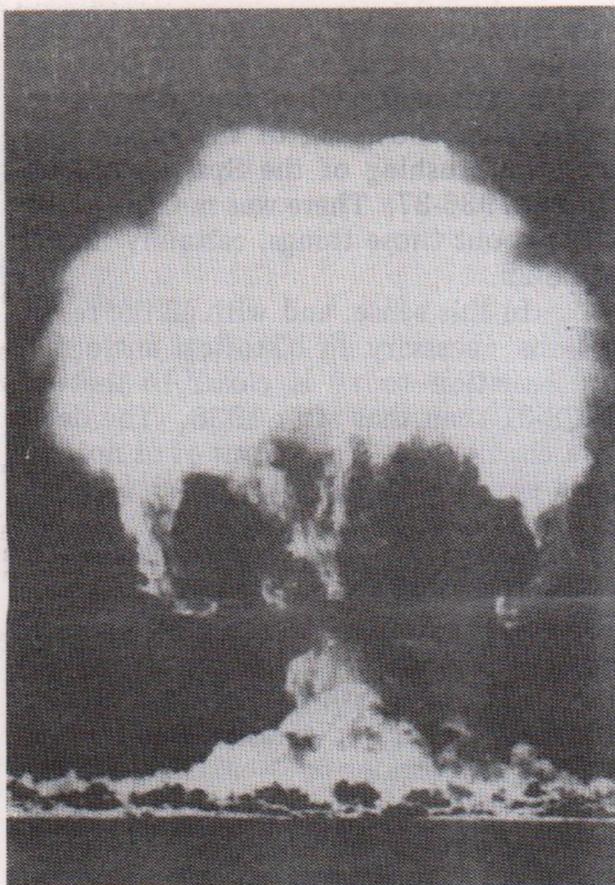
but also for an economic policy founded on the anti-capitalist alternative to remilitarisation and austerity—jobs not bombs schools and hospitals not military bases the 35-hour week through the radical reduction of the military budget, etc.

In a more general manner, the struggle against the nuclear arms race and against the remilitarisation offensive intersects, at least on one essential point, with the struggle against the capitalist crisis and capitalism in crisis. *This struggle teaches the widest layers of the masses that there is no pre-ordained fate decreeing that there will be a third world war, any more than there is a pre-ordained fate that decrees that there has to be an economic crisis, thirty-five million unemployed in the imperialist countries, famine in the third world or torture everywhere.* The 'Horsemen of the Apocalypse' can be stopped, if the masses, the exploited, and the oppressed take their destiny into their own hands.

In these conditions it is the duty of revolutionary Marxists to fight in the front line of the anti-war and anti-nuclear weapons movement, to be the unifying and agglutinating element, to involve the greatest possible forces of the organised workers movement and the 'social movements' which are its natural allies, to bring millions and millions of people throughout the world into the streets. If this movement broadens and spreads, we will see a pattern opposite to that of 1913-14 and 1938-39. *At those times, war smothered revolution, this time the revolution will stop the war.* It is within this unitary framework that we will defend the whole of our programme, for solidarity with the revolutions in progress, and with all the victims of the 'local' counter-revolutionary wars of imperialism. We, revolutionary Marxists, do not subordinate unified mobilisation to ideological debate, because we understand the decisive impact of these mobilisations on the objective fortunes of the world revolution.

In the same way we resolutely support the autonomous mass movement against the arms race in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the other Eastern European countries. Not that we put the workers states and the bourgeois states on the same footing as the capitalist ones, or that we have forgotten the duty to defend the former against the latter in the case of military conflict. But we understand that, in the situation in the world today, everything that helps the biggest and most unified mobilisation for unilateral disarmament by imperialism in Europe is a blow a thousand times harder against imperialism, and thus a contribution a thousand times more effective in defence of the USSR and the workers states, than a few more rockets, or a few less disciplinary conflicts in the army of this or that workers state.

In taking away from the bourgeoisie one of its main arguments for dividing the anti-war movement in the West, and slowing down its rapid growth, the anti-war movement in the East objectively



Nuclear bomb explosion (DR)

strikes a stronger blow against imperialism than against the bureaucracy. In reclaiming public control over foreign and military policy, the autonomous anti-war movement in Eastern Europe and in the USSR objectively promotes the anti-bureaucratic political revolution. This is an integral part of the world revolution and thus of the struggle to save humanity from nuclear destruction. As has just been shown in the advances of the political revolution and counter-revolution in Poland (10) such developments bring almost immediate consequences—positive in the first case, negative in the second—for the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle at the international level.

It is false and counter-productive to engage in a debate with pacifists on the question: which takes priority, abolishing nuclear weapons (as the ecologists say it is the priority to save the biosphere from pollution) or abolishing the capitalist system. *It is impossible to eliminate the threat of nuclear war without eliminating the capitalist system.* As long as the private ownership of the means of production lasts—the competition and the market economy that this entails, the determination for individual gain, the system of production for profit and all its deadly logic including exacerbated frustration and aggression—nothing and nobody will prevent groups or individuals from buying the machines and the labour-power to earn more money making the weapons that have the potential to destroy humanity. To prevent social groups from playing Russian roulette with the survival of the human race the social and material conditions required to assure what we all want must be created by the victory of the world socialist revolution, by the creation of a world socialist federation, by the socialisation of the means of production, their use under the widest public control, freed from all secrecy.

Thus, the criticism we make of the pacifists is not that they have 'exaggerated' the danger of nuclear weapons but

they have underestimated it. We reproach them for contenting themselves with temporary measures—the struggle for this or that immediate measure, although we obviously support the struggles for such objectives, such as that for a European nuclear-free zone from Poland to Portugal. We criticise them for not seeing that the terrifying danger will remain for as long as the capitalist system and the sovereign nation state do. That is, it will as long as *certain of them* can decide to make such bombs behind the backs of the vast majority of the human race. We say to the radical pacifists: humanity will not be freed from the nightmare of the nuclear threat unless it takes into its own hands the right and the power to decide what is produced and what cannot be produced. This implies: the elimination of private property, of competition between individuals and between states, and of the market economy. If you are not ready to pay this price it is because you prefer to run the risk of seeing the human race disappear, rather than change the social system that is leading to this collective suicide.

For us the struggle against war and the struggle for socialism are the same cause. Only a self-managed socialist world will be a world without weapons. The women and men who inhabit this planet, having understood the terrible danger they face, will decide collectively to cease making weapons of extermination and create the only social system capable of assuring that they remain banned.

We are supporters of every struggle, every concrete immediate mobilisation against the present resumption of the arms race by imperialism, but at the same time we will continue to relentlessly denounce the *historic illusion* that it would be possible to abolish the weapons of extermination without destroying the capitalist system. This is like the illusion of the 1950s and 1960s that it would be possible to get rid of economic crises without destroying the domination of capital. There is the danger this illusion will be exploded as resoundingly as the first, with results a thousand times more terrifying for the human race.

The struggle against remilitarisation, like the struggle against austerity, can only achieve its full scope, and above all can only achieve victory, if it is capped with an *overall anti-capitalist solution*. There is no other historic solution to the crisis of humanity—of which the race to nuclear suicide is the most striking expression—than the conquest of power by the workers, and its exercise by them on a world scale, in the framework of the broadest pluralist socialist democracy, based on the planned self-management of the producers. ■

10. 'Political Revolution and Counter-revolution in Poland', resolution adopted by the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, May 27, 1982, published in *International Viewpoint*, No 11, August 2, 1982.

A comeback for Swedish Social Democrats?

Mikael ERNWIK

The general elections coming up on September 19 in Sweden are the second since the Social Democrats lost control of the government in 1976, for the first time in 44 years. In the previous elections in 1979, they came within 4,000 votes of regaining their parliamentary majority.

The polls now strongly indicate that the Social Democrats will get back into office, although their lead over the bourgeois parties is less than it was a year or two ago. It is now predicted that they will edge out their rivals by 3% or 4%.

However, even if the bourgeois parties get a minority vote, the Social Democrats and their allies could still fail to get a majority in parliament. If the other party in the so-called Socialist Bloc, the Swedish Communist Party (Vansterpartiet kommunisterna—Vpk) does not top the 4% threshold needed for representation in parliament, it will lose all its seats (and most of its income). Its votes will not be transferred to the Social Democrats, but will be simply lost. The parliamentary seats will then be divided among the parties that got more than four percent of the vote.

The Vpk should top the barrier, with 5% of the vote, but the margins are narrow, and this party is in a very vulnerable situation for the following reasons.

1. It exists in the shadow of the Social Democrats, who are now waging a very right-wing campaign.

2. Its campaign is highly dependent on the media, since it is organizationally too weak to wage a campaign based on mobilizing its supporters.

3. In order to top the 4% barrier, it needs the votes of a lot of Social Democrats who have been willing in the past to cast their votes for it for tactical reasons—in order to assure that it would be represented in parliament or to increase the “left” pressure on the Social Democracy. Special studies indicate that such voters account for about a third of the Vpk score.

4. A new environmentalist party is getting a big boost from the media and threatens to cut into the Vpk vote. The polls indicate as of now that it will get about 2%.

THE SWEDISH TROTSKYISTS' CAMPAIGN

If the undemocratic 4% rule hangs like the Sword of Damocles over the Vpk, it has a more immediate effect on the candidates to the left of the established

workers parties. It creates an extraordinary pressure for voting only for those parties that have a chance right now to get over 4%.

The Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International, is running candidates for parliament all over the country, as well as in some local government elections—about 200 candidates in all. But despite a very extensive campaign, in the present conditions it is impossible to get more than a very small vote.

THE VOTE HUSTLING CAMPAIGN OF THE ESTABLISHED PARTIES

Since the September 19 election is going to decide who governs Sweden for the next three years, that question obviously dominates the campaign. In the present conditions, however, the tug of war between the two blocs is more intense and the argument emptier than in previous elections.

The Social Democrat line of attack is “Back to the reliable course the country steered under the Social Democratic governments. End the mismanagement of the bourgeois parties. In a period of crisis, a strong government is what we need, not a fissured bourgeois coalition.”

The reply of the bourgeois parties—the Liberals, Center, and Moderates—is “Give us your support so that we can keep putting our economic house in order, after the Social Democrat years when the country lived beyond its means. End the ‘socialist experiment,’ no more empty promises.”

These are the terms of the debate in an election where there is more heat and less real differences between the established parties, in which the basic problems of the society are being more carefully sidestepped.

WHAT IS AT STAKE

Despite the lack of real debate, this election can have not unimportant consequences.

If the Vpk loses its representation, this will set off an unprecedented crisis within it and create a completely new relationship of forces to the left of the Social Democracy.

If the workers parties fail to regain the government, the feeling of a lack of perspectives among the workers will deepen. This will open up the way for the bourgeois parties to step up their aus-

terity drive and social cutbacks. Relatively few workers would draw the conclusion that a new leftward course was needed.

Victory for the workers parties will give the reformist leaders a breathing space. At the same time, it would increase tensions in the bourgeois bloc. But the Social Democrats would find themselves facing the problem of having governmental responsibility in a period of economic crisis, with all the demands and pressures to which this can expose them.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC VICTORY WILL NOT CREATE A “FRENCH-TYPE” SITUATION

While scattered focuses of resistance have been developing to the bourgeois austerity drive, in general the workers movement has moved to the right since the last elections.

The slowness of a workers fight-back to develop is not surprising in view of the relatively favorable situation of Swedish capitalism in the past period and the strength of the Social Democratic Party. In these conditions, it will take considerable time for a real socialist alternative to emerge.

Thus, the response to the Social Democratic victory will be different from what happened in France after the Mitterrand triumph or even in Greece following Papandreou's success.

There will be a general feeling of relief if the bourgeois parties are defeated, but no spectacular outburst of joy and upsurge of demands for radical changes.

The Social Democrats have been very careful not to make any promises that would tie their hands or prompt the workers to take any action on their own.

However, there will be one inevitable result of a Social Democratic victory. For years, the reformists have used the perspective of such an electoral success to divert the workers from struggle against the bourgeois offensive.

For example, in the big strike in 1980, the Social Democrats advised the locked out workers to keep trade-union matters and political questions separate.

In 1981, when protests were growing against the bourgeois government's economic policy, the Social Democrats proposed new elections several times without doing anything to mobilize workers to force them.

In 1982, the Social Democracy counterposed the prospect of these elec-

tions to the demand for political strikes against the bourgeois government and its proposal to cut sick pay.

Once they are in the government, the Social Democrats will no longer be able to resort to such arguments. At the same time, they will face the "moment of truth" as regards the few promises they have made to the masses.

They have pledged to rescind some of the bourgeois government's most unpopular measures, such as its cut in sick pay, its cut of cost-of-living allowances for old-age pensioners, and reduced allotments for daycare centers.

The promise to "go back to what we had before" is not so much in comparison with the social needs that exist in a

period of rising unemployment and decline in real wages. But at least in these cases, it is a step in the right direction.

The Social Democrats, however, want to take back with one hand what they offer with the other. The increased state expenditures are to be paid for through an increase in direct taxes, which will fall heaviest on the worst off layers of society. This is quite consistent with their approach in this campaign of proposing to solve the economic crisis by stepping up their collaboration with capital.

The part of their program most highlighted has been their proposal for Wage Earners Funds, which will take money from the workers to give to indus-

try in return for giving the workers a small theoretical voice over the use of it.

This proposal has aroused a furious debate. Among other things it is being attacked, without any foundation whatsoever, by the bourgeois parties as the most ambitious socialist measure in Swedish history.

The proposal can lead to greater influence of a solidly Social Democratic fund bureaucracy over industrial production, which the capitalists regard as a nuisance, and that is the basis of their irritation.

The Wage Earners Fund can be a symbol of the Swedish Social Democracy's policy in the 1980s, which it is trying so hard to sell in this campaign—a reformism without real reforms. ■

The Papandreou government and the world economic crisis

The victory of Andreas Papandreou's Pan-Hellenic Socialist Party (PASOK) in the October 18, 1981, elections is often compared in Western Europe to the triumphs of the French workers parties in May and June of the same year.

Along with the Mitterrand government, the Papandreou regime represents the major new reformist experiment in Europe in a period when parliamentary politics has generally been shifting to the right.

PASOK's victory aroused the same sort of enthusiasm in Greece as Mitterrand's did in France. In both cases, the masses of poor people and workers expressed joy at the defeat of repressive rightist regimes and tremendous hopes for positive changes. In Greece, this was coupled with a certain atmosphere of national liberation because the right, including the dictatorship of the colonels that ruled the country from 1967 to 1974, has been backed by the U.S. and Britain.

The following selection from the July issue of the Greek Trotskyist paper *Ergatike Pale* describes the record of the PASOK reformist government in meeting the aspirations of the masses that gave it an overwhelming electoral victory last fall in the context of the deepening world capitalist crisis.

* * *

Standing at 5%, the official figures for unemployment in this country do not seem alarming by comparison with those in other capitalist countries—7.5% in the U.S., 10% in Britain, 7.5% in France and Italy. In trying to raise a hue and cry about the "catastrophic" policies of the PASOK government, Averoff (a leader of the right-wing bourgeois party) has predicted the numbers of jobless will rise to 250,000 by the end of the year, that is, 10%.

The fact is that the official unemployment figures fall far short of the reality because they cover only the insured. The government has nothing to gain by presenting the facts as they really are, and the New Democracy (the rightist party) has still more reason to cover them up.

So, the spectre of unemployment is haunting the country.... But if the actual percentage is what it is said to be, what is the reason for the worry and often the panic that is expressed?

The facts are different than those presented. We cannot make a direct estimate but it is possible by indirect means to come up with something approximating the truth.

The total number of building workers is 250,000. The average number of days they work, according to the bureau of statistics, is 130. This figure, of course, is not precise. Not all the jobs get recorded in the workbook, and so the number of workdays would be a bit more. Also, a small number of building workers are independent uninsured workers who spend 50-60 days working in the industry. But taking all these factors into account, the average number of workdays cannot exceed 150. That means that in the building trades the rate of unemployment is 50%.

In industry, unemployment is not so extensive, but it is certainly greater than what is claimed. Industry as a whole is working at 70% of capacity. In the textile industry, the rate of utilization of capacity is still lower....

If you add all this up, it means that the rate of unemployment is already 10% which Averoff says represents catastrophe. The catastrophe is already here....

And what is the government doing to deal with this problem?

1. It promises (and has begun) to give financial aid to weak companies. This measure is a failure. These companies have failed hopelessly and are about to increase the numbers of unemployed....

2. It will give financial aid to the stronger companies so that they can expand their operations. But the industrialists who have survived the sharp competition are not foolish enough to try to expand their production during a crisis of overproduction.

3. It will use the loans from the OECD to provide work for the unemployed building workers. This will affect 21,000 workers for six months. It is a crumb....

The family allowances owed to the families of building workers are not being paid on time. The pretext used by the government is that the "right left us an empty treasury." Mitterrand and Thatcher could say the same thing respectively about Giscard and the Labour Party, as long as they do not lose their self-control altogether and start talking about the world crisis of capitalism.

The workers, however, who are now threatened with impoverishment are not responsible for the "empty treasury." They were squeezed long enough by the right, and they have no desire now to tighten their belts "for the sake of socialism." [The PASOK government claims to be socialist.]

If there is too little work, reduce the workweek....

Unemployment benefits for all the unemployed.

The response will be that the economy, that is the capitalists, can't afford it. If they can't, let's get rid of them. Let the workers take their own fate, and that of society, into their own hands.

Prior plan for Northern Ireland: Irish revolutionaries speak

Following the end of the H-Block movement, the British authorities have come up with a formula for a new local assembly in Northern Ireland, which is to be elected on October 20.

This assembly is the second attempt of the British authorities to create a legislature that could claim to have democratic legitimacy for both the communities in the Northern Irish enclave—the pro-imperialist settler population and the nationalist, Catholic community.

The previous attempt, the “power-sharing” assembly set up in 1974 on the basis of the Sunningdale agreements, was abandoned in the face of the opposition of rightist Protestant leaders unwilling to make any concessions to the Catholic population, even ones of a tactical or nominal character.

Question. What is the meaning of the upcoming assembly elections and what is the attitude of People's Democracy (PD)?

John McAnulty. Before the rise of the civil rights movement, Britain had a very stable form of ruling Ireland, through the partition of the country and the Stormont parliament they set up in Belfast. Stormont could take the responsibility for administering a system of colonial repression that was in jarring discord to the sort of bourgeois democracy that was maintained in the rest of the United Kingdom, of which we were supposed to be a part.

The major victory of the mass civil rights struggle was that it forced the British to suspend the Stormont parliament. That destabilized their system of rule. Ever since, they have been trying to find a formula for restabilizing the situation in the framework of maintaining partition.

In earlier phases, they were prepared to offer some concessions to the moderate, procapitalist Catholic forces in the North. These included mechanisms whereby the Catholic capitalist politicians could “share power” with the Protestant leaders and recognition of an “Irish dimension,” that is, recognition of the interest of the Dublin government in the situation in the North.

Following the H-Block struggle and its failure to win all its demands, the British now have some leeway, and they seem to feel that they don't have to make any concessions to any major section of anti-Unionist (nationalist) opinion.

The Sunningdale assembly represented an attempt to restabilize the political situation in Northern Ireland following the breakup of the civil rights movement and the relative isolation of the Provisional IRA. The period from 1974-5 to 1977, when the mass movement around the H-Blocks began to develop was one of sharp downturn in the struggle of the oppressed population.

The attempt to impose this new assembly also follows a new setback for the mass movement. What danger is there of a new downturn comparable to 1974-77 or a more prolonged restabilization of the imperialist system in Ireland? What tactic should revolutionists take toward the assembly elections.

These questions are discussed in the

So, what the assembly concocted by Prior [British supremo for Northern Ireland] amounts to is an attempt to restore the old Stormont regime, with some modifications, probably with the British maintaining direct control of security. Therefore, what PD wants to do is build a broad unity against the new assembly. What we proposed initially was a total boycott of the elections. But since both the republican organization, Sinn Fein, and the Social Democratic and Labour Party [SDLP—the main Catholic bourgeois party] have decided to contest the election, the chances now for a successful boycott campaign seem doubtful.

We will continue to fight for a boycott, but if that does not seem possible, we'll work for an anti-imperialist united front in the elections. We will also put pressure on all the candidates to make a categorical pledge that they will not attend the assembly if elected.

Q. The SDLP has announced that it will contest the elections but that if elected its candidates will not take their seats. What do you think of that?

McAnulty. The *raison d'être* of the SDLP has been a strategy of negotiation with imperialism. In essence, they have argued that they could use the gains of the anti-imperialist movement to force concessions from imperialism.

The Prior Assembly, which offers nothing, puts an end to that sort of argument. After all the periods of negotiation in the past 14 years, the concessions that the SDLP have got from imperialism are exactly nil. Realization of this, realiza-

tion that the British weren't prepared to offer even the sort of powersharing concessions they did in 1974, led to a miniature revolt within the SDLP.

following interviews given to Gerry Foley in Belfast and Dublin in late August by Bernadette Devlin McAliskey and leaders of the People's Democracy, Irish section of the Fourth International.

John McAnulty, a well-known Belfast PD leader, was elected to the Belfast City Council in the spring. He will be a candidate, if PD contests the elections. Brendan Kelly is a leading member of People's Democracy working in Dublin. The interview with McAnulty follows the decision by the SDLP, the Northern Catholic bourgeois party, to contest the election. The interview with Bernadette McAliskey and Brendan Kelly was taken before the SDLP decision.

I would say that the majority feeling within the party is that there should be a boycott. But the prospect of that terrifies the SDLP leaders. They remember the period when the mass struggle forced them to boycott Stormont, and their experience of that period is that the bourgeois forces were pushed to the sidelines and the revolutionary took the leadership of the struggle. They would do anything to avoid getting into that position again.

So, the SDLP's decision to stand but to boycott the assembly itself is a concession forced from the leadership, who are essentially prepared to cooperate in all aspects with the British plans. That is confirmed by the position taken by SDLP leader John Hume immediately after the meeting that decided to boycott the assembly. He announced that the SDLP stood ready to negotiate changes in the assembly structure. That means that the SDLP decision bears the mark of betrayal.

The SDLP are asking the people to vote for them on an abstentionist basis, but within a few minutes of making that decision, John Hume, even before the election, has announced that he's willing to sell these votes to the British for whatever concessions they care to make. In fact, a close examination of the assembly proposals shows that there aren't any concessions that would change its nature.

Q. What about Sinn Fein?

McAnulty. The biggest weakness of the Irish revolution is the weakness of the working-class forces within it. The strongest anti-imperialist organization, the republican movement, is not a socialist organization in the scientific sense. It is a movement of revolutionary democrats.

So, during the hunger strike it was necessary to wage a hard fight against the abstract formalism that flows from the republicans' lack of working-class program. As part of this, Fergus O'Hare and myself contested the local government elections for PD, opposing the SDLP and so-called socialist pro-imperialists such as Gerry Fitt and Paddy Devlin. That helped to convince the republicans to abandon their traditional position of boycotting all elections.

But since the republicans do not have a working-class program, they don't see any direct connection between the political struggle during elections and mass politics, the struggle to build a working-class alternative. And so, after dropping the boycott position, they have flipped over to the idea that it is good in general to participate in elections, to a kind of electoralism.

So, we will be arguing with the republican activists, trying to convince them of the dangers the assembly poses and we'll be arguing for an anti-imperialist united front, no matter what tactic is decided on. And we think that such a front should be aimed directly at breaking up the SDLP and exposing the Irish government. We think that the population in the North should make a direct appeal to the Irish working class, and the working people of the island as a whole.

Q. Aren't there also divisions in Sinn Fein on this question?

McAnulty. There are roughly three sections. The more mature elements of the republican left do see some connection between a mass struggle and electoral policy, so their attitude wouldn't be all that different from that of People's Democracy. Another section is ready to adopt an electoralist strategy. And a third group favors boycotting all elections.

The fact that there is a lively debate inside the republican movement means that there is room for an organization such as PD to develop that debate, and to lead it onwards.

However, the crucial center for an anti-imperialist front does not lie in the republican movement itself, but in the broad layer of independent militants who made the mass struggle around the H-Blocks a possibility.

Q. What about the argument that if you run candidates, you will be splitting the republican vote.

McAnulty. In the first place, our record is clear. Ever since the end of the H-Block campaign, we have been working for an anti-imperialist united front against the assembly. So, our position in favor of unity is indisputable.

If we end up contesting the elections, one of the main reasons we will be asking for a vote is to show that there is very wide support for our proposals for united mass struggle.

If there is an anti-imperialist united front, we won't run candidates of our own.

Finally, this election will be on the basis of proportional representation. We will be asking people who give us their votes to give their second preference votes to other anti-imperialist candidates.

Q. Why do you think the H-Block movement suffered a relative defeat, and in view of that defeat what do you think you can win in the fight against the Prior assembly?

McAnulty. In the first place, the H-Block movement started very late. PD began calling for a struggle around the H-Blocks in 1976. But a real united, broad based campaign didn't get underway until after the first hunger strike began in the fall of 1980. So, the republican movement did not accept our analysis.

Many people thought that the prisoner fight was a detour. They didn't understand that the struggle was on the defensive. We argued that it was on the defensive, and that the British had picked this particular ground to fight on and we had no choice but to fight on it. But a united fightback was left until very late, until the prisoners themselves had developed a sense of absolute desperation.

Secondly, the imperialists and pro-imperialists, all the conservative forces, knew that if the H-Block movement won real victories that would have led to a major upsurge in the struggle. So, they were determined not to give in, no matter what. In this situation, we would have had to be able to mobilize all the forces of the Irish people to win.

Internally, the weakness of the anti-imperialist front represented by the H-Block movement was its lack of a class base. It was impossible in the time available to get the anti-imperialist movement to make a thoroughgoing turn to the working class. And given the Irish bourgeoisie's fear of the movement, only massive working-class mobilizations could have brought the strength of the Irish people to bear against imperialism.

Also, because of its lack of a class base and program, the traditional anti-imperialist leadership, the republicans, was not able to project a clear way forward.

Q. So, what is the way forward?

McAnulty. The first lesson of the last 14 years of struggle is that there is no way the nationalist minority in the North can win against the combined forces of the pro-imperialist majority in this area and British imperialism. It is possible to win only if the nationalist population of the entire island is mobilized.

Q. So, how do you accomplish that?

We need the support of the masses. But the masses aren't homogenous. It is the

working class that suffers primarily from imperialist domination, which is maintained by partition. So, the problem of defeating British imperialism and building a mass movement of Irish workers is the same problem.

We have to be able to draw the links between the political and military repression of imperialism in the North and the sort of oppression in the south that flows from the Dublin government's collaboration with the British, and with the general economic oppression of the Irish workers.

I think that the elements of the sort of leadership needed do exist. There are people in Ireland who have led genuine mass movements, there are people who have led genuine workers struggles, there are people who have survived 14 years of the most intense military and political repression in Europe.

These elements have not yet cohered into a united political leadership that could break the hold of the old labor bureaucracy and the pro-capitalist politicians. But I think that this process was advanced considerably by the H-Block movement, and that another step forward can be made in the campaign against the Prior assembly.

* * *

Q. Where does the anti-imperialist movement stand after the end of the H-Block campaign?

Bernadette Devlin McAliskey. There has been a debate among the anti-imperialist forces whether the end of the second H-Block hunger strike could be called a defeat.

I think that if you want to do anything, you have to start from reality, and the reality is that the hunger strike was defeated.

It was defeated inasmuch as ten men lost their lives and we were unable in the limited time available to win decisive support in the labor movement.

It became obvious that the only way we could have won was through a general strike. But we did not have anything like the forces needed even to call a one-day general strike.

The defeat was far from a total one. But masses involved in the movement were thrown into demoralization. Moreover, after the hunger strike, the major organization involved, Sinn Fein, pulled back, withdrew into itself, and that undermined the unity that was achieved.

Now, however, I think that the activists have reached the stage where they are saying, all right, we have come through 12 demoralizing months, we've allowed the Brits to get to a position where they could accelerate their offensive and launch the Prior initiative, and so we have to start rolling up our sleeves, and our immediate task is to figure out how to stop the Prior initiative. That's where we are now.

Brian Kelly. On the positive side, we learned a lot of lessons from the H-Block campaign. We learned in a con-

crete way the need to have an involvement in the trade-union movement, to have an involvement in the social and economic struggles of the workers. Bernadette said that there was no time to build a base among the workers during the H-Block campaign; that's another way of saying that the work hadn't been done before.

It's true that in the coming period the focus will have to be the assembly elections. But the campaign against the assembly will have to be broader than one just against repression and the British presence. We're in a better position to take into consideration the social and economic issues that flow from imperialist domination and repression.

At the moment there's a huge economic crisis in both parts of Ireland. Great numbers of people are facing unemployment and impoverishment. Unless we have answers for these people, they will remain passive.

The contrast between the recent two general elections in the South bears that out. One was held during the hunger strike, the other after. In the first we were able to get a very credible vote, and yet a couple of months after the hunger strike, when they were faced mainly with social and economic questions, the very people who would come on the streets in support of the prisoners did not turn to us as the people who could solve their problems. They turned to others who had actually opposed the hunger strike campaign.

Q How do you propose to raise social and economic questions in the campaign against the assembly?

McAliskey. It's harder to raise such questions in the context of the North. In the South, it's much easier. The government and the opposition have definite economic programs that you can oppose.

However, the Prior initiative is an attempt to stabilize the North so that Thatcher's economic program can be carried out fully there.

Part of it also is the British pressure against even someone like the present Irish premier, Charlie Haughey, who despite the fact that he has basically the same economic program as they does not take a servile enough line toward imperialism. They want a more reliable pro-imperialist in power in Dublin like Garret Fitzgerald of Fine Gael.

In fact, what we are facing with the Prior initiative is not just something for the North but a comprehensive British plan for restabilizing British control of the entire island.

Q. What does this assembly represent exactly?

McAliskey. It is nothing more than the election of 78 persons to sit together and discuss whatever they choose to discuss or are permitted to discuss by the British government. This assembly will have no power whatsoever over any aspect of social, economic, or political life in Northern Ireland.

Should the assembly by 70% of its membership or by a sufficient degree of

cross-community agreement deign to agree with any policy decided on by the British themselves, power will be given to the assembly to carry out that policy.

Q. That is, it has only one option, to agree?

McAliskey. Yes, that is all. It cannot oppose any British policy, even by unanimous vote.

Kelly. The British had to come up with some formula to counter the argument that they have no solution for the North, which they find embarrassing internationally. Now they can say, "we're offering democracy, everybody can participate, and we get an assembly, what more to you want us to do?"



Mothers of H-Block prisoners demonstrate (DR)

McAliskey. In the case of the Sunningdale assembly in 1974, at least the British offered an "Irish dimension," recognition of Irish national identity. Now they offer nothing like that. And the attempt of the Fianna Fail government in Dublin to get something like that has been vehemently rejected by the British authorities.

The Fianna Fail premier, Charlie Haughey, has gone on record as saying that the Prior plan is a disaster, that it is another attempt to make partitionist government in the North work when this experiment has proved a dismal failure. So, the British pushing this plan is a direct challenge to Haughey and the republican rump of Fianna Fail.

Kelly. During the hunger strikes, two governments were in power in Dublin—a Fianna Fail one and a Fine Gael-Labour coalition. Both of these governments failed to support the prisoners. That proved to the British government that the bourgeoisie in the South was politically quite weak. The British also realize that the Southern bourgeoisie are in a very tight economic situation. So, they feel fairly safe in moving ahead at this stage, because they know that they have the Southern bourgeoisie pretty well cornered.

Q. One thing that even the bourgeois press and politicians acknowledged

during the hunger strike was that the Catholic population in the North was totally alienated from the established institutions. Presumably the assembly is the answer to that. "Well, they voted for the assembly, and so they aren't alienated anymore."

McAliskey. That is one of the reasons why I think that the best tactic is to refuse to lend any legitimacy, however, to this assembly. If we say that we are against it, and end up running for it, it becomes very difficult to explain your position politically to the masses.

Q. What do you think that the possibilities are for a successful boycott campaign?

McAliskey. The picture is still very confused. The SDLP appears likely to be caught in its own trap and participate. The republicans are committed to contesting, if the SDLP does, and the rest of the anti-imperialist organizations as well.

At the same time, a number of people, including myself, have been discussing the question with the rank and file, and we find no support among the ranks in the SDLP, Sinn Fein, or among the independents in the H-Block movement for contesting the election. The gut feeling of the rank and file is to reject the assembly even if the SDLP stand, and if they do, to sink the SDLP, split the SDLP. I think that that is a more realistic prospect now than it was during the H-Block struggle, that the SDLP ranks and some leaders can be involved in an anti-imperialist campaign.

Kelly. The fact is that the SDLP is split down the middle on the assembly. The problem is that the anti-imperialist movement has not tried to bring pressure to bear. Among other things, that reveals an electoralist attitude on the part of Sinn Fein. It says that it wants to fight the SDLP in the elections. But we have a chance to fight them now, because the rank and file of the party hasn't made up its mind. So, we've lost a whole period when we could have been convincing them.

McAliskey. This is another one of the problems that arises from the lack of a strong revolutionary party in Ireland. In the framework of such a party the activists could keep going in both ups and downs. They would be able to act and not just react. Coming out of a period of demoralization, things begin to happen much more quickly than people left to themselves realize.

But I think that we still have time to build the kind of campaign we need.

Q. Another example of missed opportunities is the Southern general elections, especially the first. The H-Block movement needn't have ended in defeat if the republicans had been willing to support an anti-imperialist front that could have offered a general alternative, say with H-Block activists running in every constituency.

McAliskey. I think that that's true. But it is also one reason why we are in a better position today. The experience of the H-Block campaign moved Sinn Fein on the question of elections, away from the hidebound position that their organization doesn't touch elections. They are also now into the area where they have to politically justify any position going against anti-imperialist unity. There is a very important discussion going on inside the republican movement today.

Q. The problem seems to be that the republicans are still moving slower than events and when they change they can be equally wrong in the new circumstances.

Kelly. We have had some initial discussions with the republicans and found a certain agreement. The problem is that they don't seem to be conscious of the need to act quickly and decisively on the matter.

McAliskey. The present situation reminds me of 1977. The thrust is not coming from the leaderships of the anti-imperialist organizations but from the independent layers that support these organizations but are not tied to them.

I would hope that we will move rapidly to an open conference on the whole question of how to stop Prior, as we did in 1977 on how to stop repression.

Q. Is there time for that?

McAliskey. Yes. This is a result of the H-Block movement. In 1977, we had to go laboriously through a list of contacts to try to see who was still prepared to make a fight after three or four years of demoralization.

Today, we know that people are sitting waiting at the other end of a phone who are ready to come to a meeting next Saturday.

Q. You still think that its possible to get a mass boycott campaign?

McAliskey. At this stage, I still think that we can win Sinn Fein over to that position. In the constituency in which I live, Fermanagh-South Tyrone, even with the SDLP standing we could still put fifteen or sixteen thousand spoiled ballots in the ballot boxes. That wouldn't be as effective as a total boycott



but we'd end up in a position that even if we couldn't stop the assembly we'd come out of the elections with a mass movement going forward.

Q. During the H-Block campaign you were one of the major pressures on Sinn Fein to contest elections. Do you find it hard to argue with them now that they shouldn't participate in this election?

McAliskey. No, I don't find it hard to argue but they find it hard to understand it. Some of the young left leaders accuse me of somersaulting. But I've always said to them that we should look at the question of elections from the standpoint of tactics, as a concrete question.

Q. The last major test of the electoral tactic was in the 1982 Southern general elections. Your campaign in Dublin-North Central was the brightest spot in that campaign. You have continued working in this constituency. What connection does this work have with what you are trying to do in the North?

McAliskey. The fact that I am here and consistently fight this area is a challenge to the partitionist mentality, first of all.

Secondly, this is the only place in the country where we have held together, however loosely, the broad forces that were involved in the H-Block movement.

Q. Your campaign did succeed in drawing together almost all the anti-imperialist currents and all those that favor independent working-class political action.

McAliskey. It seems to have had a certain exemplary effect. People from another Dublin constituency, Clondalkin, have approached us, saying that they want to do the same sort of thing we are.

Kelly. For the time being, the unity that existed in the H-Block campaign has dissolved. But if you look

back, it took us four years of bitter struggles to achieve it. And now the terms of debate have decisively shifted. The need for anti-imperialist unity is generally accepted.

This is very positive for us here in the South, because we need unity in order to be able to offer a national alternative, and it has to be national to be serious.

Out of every 100 pence in a pound, 56 pence are spent by the government. People look to the government, their standards of living are very much dependent on government policy. They look to who's going to form the government, so they're not that interested in independent or local candidates.

But no anti-imperialist group on its own is capable of offering a national alternative. And if we don't get together to offer one, the vacuum will be filled by other people, such as the collective of pro-imperialist so-called socialists, mainly the Workers Party, a rump of the old Official republican movement, that got into Parliament in the last general election.

Q. How much of an obstacle are the Workers Party and the other pro-imperialist "socialists?"

McAliskey. I don't think they're much of an obstacle. The fact that they got in is a measure of our disunity, essentially. They don't offer a solution. The minute they got into parliament, they started bartering for tuppence-a-penny. They almost instantly disappointed the people who elected them thinking that they were an alternative.

Kelly. You see some interesting things if you look at the Workers Party results. There were five seats they could have taken going into the elections. The two areas that they didn't do well in were precisely areas where the H-Block campaign had been very strong. In one area where they took a seat, the H-Block campaign had been strong, but there was no anti-imperialist running against them. That was Waterford.

The Workers Party success is not attributable to hard local work. They did that everywhere. But they were successful only where there was no anti-imperialist opposition. Where they were opposed, their vote was reduced to a low level.

The Workers Party gains do, on the other hand, reflect a kind of polarization that's going on in Irish politics. Their vote reflects a working-class vote that's looking for an alternative.

McAliskey. I think we are heading into a new upturn. That's why it's important to get it right this time. That's why whatever tactic we decide on in the North, whether it is a united anti-imperialist slate or boycott, the important thing is that we come out of this election with a mass movement that's going forward. If we do, then we are in a position of strength to go into the next Southern general elections. And given the weakness of the government's majority in parliament, they can come up quite soon. ■

Electoral fraud in Mexico

The falsification of the electoral results in Mexico which was described in *International Viewpoint* No 12, August 2, 1982, has surpassed even the forecasts made then.

The Minister of the Interior recognised that the presidential candidate supported by the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT, Mexican section of the Fourth International), Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, had won 416,000 votes. This is clearly more than the 1.5% necessary to give the PRT the status of a legal party. But at the same time the Minister has said that the PRT list for the legislative elections only received 308,099 votes, that is 1.46%. Thus the PRT, for want of 0.04% of the votes, has been refused the eight deputies to which it is entitled.

This is a crude, clumsy, and cynical fraud. The government had begun to publish the results constituency by constituency in the first few days after the election. These results indicated that there was only a small difference between the number of votes in the presidential election and in the legislative election. The gap of 25% finally decided on by the governmental machinery to keep the PRT below the 1.5% barrier had therefore to be concentrated in a reduced number of constituencies, which gives grotesque results in some districts, such as 1,000 votes for Rosario and only 8 for the PRT list in the legislative election!

A study by the Centre for Enquiry and Study of the Social Anthropology of Mexico (CIESAS) concluded that of the eight million new voters (youth) the PRT would have won 300,000, that is 3.7 per cent (*Uno mas Uno*, August 17). If the minister's figures are to be believed therefore, the PRT only won 8,000 votes from voters over 25!

The principal left weekly in Mexico, *Proceso*, stressed that in the 171 constituencies where the PRT presented candidates, in addition to the national list of candidates for deputy, for individual election, the government attributed 279,072 votes to them. Thus, again if the minister's figures are to be believed, the PRT only obtained 30,000 votes in the 129 other constituencies.

Finally, during the first revisions of the results by the electoral commission for the principal district of the country, the Mexico valley, the government finally gave the PRT 85,000 votes, 13,400 more than they had originally announced. This difference is much higher than the amount the PRT officially lacks to get 7

or 8 deputies in the proportional share-out. However, despite this revision, the government refuses to give the PRT a single deputy.

It is clear that this is an arbitrary political decision taken by the governmental apparatus of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), and, more than likely, by its military machine. The reasons for excluding the PRT from Parliament are obvious: in a deep economic and social crisis the PRT will defend the interests of the workers and peasants, and the Central American revolution, in Parliament, without any concessions to some kind of national unity with the Mexican bourgeoisie.

The cynical and scandalous nature of this fraud has led all the opposition to support the PRT's demand for revision of the electoral result. The procedure is still going on in the electoral college. On July 22 a protest demonstration against this electoral fraud gathered more than 5,000 people in the centre of Mexico. It was organised by the PRT and the Partido Socialista Unificado do Mexico, (PSUM, the Mexican Communist Party). ■

New threats against Panamanian Trotskyist

During last June and July the teachers in Panama embarked on a wave of strikes demanding salary adjustments and the establishment of the sliding scale of wages.

At the beginning of the movement two demonstrations drew 50,000 and 60,000 people respectively. On July 13 a monster demonstration mobilised more than 200,000. During this strike wave, as during the successful strikes some years ago, our comrade Miguel Antonio Bernal, leader of the Revolutionary Socialist Movement (sympathising group of the Fourth International), was the official and legal advisor.

He was the object of a hysterical campaign by the bourgeois press. For example *El Matutino* June 20 headlined the front page: 'Leftist leaders bring violence into the strike'. The next day it again carried on its front page: 'Trotskyist leaders use the same methods as in the USSR'. On July 11 *La Republica* stated on its front page: 'Miguel Bernal turns the movement towards violence'. And the following day, again on the front page: 'Strikes and violence on an international scale: the Trotskyist agent Bernal leads in Panama'.

Our comrade has previously been the victim of police violence during anti-imperialist demonstrations. This present press campaign is aimed at breaking up the teachers movement by raising the spectre of manipulation, in order to isolate the movement by branding it with the label of communist, and particularly to discredit and isolate Miguel Bernal as a 'terrorist' and 'Trotskyist agent'.

This type of campaign paves the way for further attacks on Bernal. We express our full solidarity with him, and call for increased vigilance of the international workers movement and all defenders of human rights. ■

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This is the first issue of *International Viewpoint* since the summer break. The range of coverage in this issue illustrates the sort of issues we want to cover in *IV*. But it also illustrates the difficulties we have, bringing together reports and analysis of the major events in world politics.

To help us continue to expand and improve the magazine we need a stable income base of subscriptions. We hope that those of you who are reading *IV* for the first time, or who buy it regularly, or whose first subscription has run out feel that *IV* is a magazine that gives you important information and arguments. And that you will take out a subscription now.

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Selections from the left press...

THE MILITANT

Ford contract talks
Texas oil workers on st
Libya vs. imperialism
VOL. 4 NO. 6 FEBRUARY

The Militant, weekly newspaper reflecting the views of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, one of the founding parties of the Fourth International, August 27.

Militant correspondents Mary Nell Bockman and Michael Carper report from Dakota City, Nebraska:

"It looks like there's a war going on here. It's just like Vietnam." The young woman who said this looked around at the tanks, armed troopers, and the planes flying over us.

She doesn't live in Beirut or El Salvador but in Dakota City, Nebraska. She and the 2,450 members of Local 222 United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) on strike at Iowa Beef Processors (IBP) have learned what it's like to come up against an army.

A PRIVATE ARMY

On July 27, Governor Charles Thone sent two National Guard units to Dakota City to supplement the 100 state troopers already there. This massive show of force amounts to a private army for IBP, the largest meat processing company in the country.

At a cost to Nebraska taxpayers of 20,000 dollars per day, troopers have used pepper gas, mace, and clubs against union members and their supporters. On the day the Militant visited the picket line, 50 troopers and five tanks were deployed around the plant to "defend it" against the 12 picketers....

This strike, which has received international attention, was forced by IBP when the company demanded that the workers accept a four-year wage freeze, a permanent end to all cost-of-living raises, reduction in pay for new hires, and other concessions.

UFCW Local 222, in negotiations before the strike began, agreed to a two-year wage freeze and no cost-of-living raises for three years.

As one union member said, "That two-year wage freeze, which is really a wage cut for us, would give 25 million dollars back to IBP." But IBP, which made 57.8 million dollars in profits last year, wants more. Since June 7, the day the strike began, there has been one negotiating session between IBP and the union. Since July 30, talks have been suspended indefinitely.

Like the giant auto and steel companies, the IBP, which is owned by Occidental Petroleum, contends it needs major concessions from workers to be competitive in the industry. Threats of layoffs and plant closings are being used throughout the meat processing industry in an attempt to force wage cuts. Hormel, American Stores, and John Morell, all major meat processors, are currently trying to renegotiate contracts on this basis.

STAKES FOR OTHER WORKERS

Workers and management at these companies are watching the IBP strike closely. But as auto and steel workers have learned, concessions don't save jobs, only profits. The members of UFCW Local 222 understand this very well....

IBP is operating at about 25 percent of its capacity, having recruited scabs from South Dakota, Kansas, and Missouri.

Although IBP has managed to reopen the plant, the morale of strikers is high. They're determined to fight through the winter if they have to, they said, because they're fighting for food on the table and a decent life for their kids.

As these reporters left the picket line the words of one of the strikers never rang truer. He said, "Some people say you're crazy when you talk about revolution. But workers in this country are getting sick of this."

Socialist Challenge
Start the fight here!

Buzzing Buzby

Socialist Challenge is a weekly socialist newspaper sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.

In issue no 259, September 4, 1982, Marie Louise Irvine reported from Aberdeen on the growth of the solidarity campaign for health workers, presently taking action to demand higher wage increases:

"This rally pledges its continued support in defence of the NHS and its staff. It agrees to send a telegram to the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Scotland and the secretaries of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) to inform them that Aberdeen is ready and prepared to play its part in a general strike to restore justice and humanity to Britain."

The above resolution was passed unanimously by hundreds of trade

unionists at a rally in the Aberdeen Music Hall in support of the health workers, 28 August.

The rally followed the biggest demonstration Aberdeen has seen for 30 years. Over three thousand marched in support of the health workers. There were shipyard workers, dockers, seamen, fishworkers, waterworkers, firefighters, traindrivers and local government workers who had all gone on strike to show their solidarity.

The rally was addressed by Walter Watt, a plater in Hall Russel shipyard and a member of the boilermakers union. He said 'we shipyard workers don't want the National Health Service (NHS) to die, we need the NHS. We are all going deaf and blind because of our work. I've been a shipbuilder for 39 years and I've seen some horrible accidents. In the old days before NHS, we had to put coppers in a box for a hardship fund for workers who had suffered accidents. We don't want to go back to that'.

Bob Middleton, leader of the Labour group in the Grampian regional council said: 'Many of us here today remember standing on the picket lines with ASLEF (train drivers union) a few weeks ago. That defeat was an indictment of the trade union leadership. I've come to realise that any attack on any section of the workforce is an attack on the whole labour movement. That is why I feel we have to intensify the present action amongst those unions outwith the health service and if necessary call for a general strike....Those union leaders that are not prepared to defend the living conditions of the workers they represent should go'.

A woman speaker said: 'One of the most important aspects of this struggle is that it is mainly women workers that are involved. This is important because the Tories have launched a specific attack on womens rights. Women still only earn two thirds of mens wages and are being made redundant at twice the rate. Cuts in the NHS mean that it is women who will be expected to look after the old, the sick and the handicapped when there are no hospital places for them.

"The government saw health workers as a weak section of the labour force, because women workers are traditionally supposed to be submissive, well behaved and not interested in unions. You've proved them wrong on all counts. You have asserted that women have the right to work and should be well paid for the important work that they do. You've shown that when it comes to defending living standards, women workers can lead the whole trade union movement. Your struggle is an excellent example of the kind of unity we need to get rid of Tories."

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