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"PEACE PLANS" AND MASSACRES IN LEBANON

Contribution to Solidarnosc Debate

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The massacre of Palestinians at Sabra and Chatila

The massacre of more than one thousand Palestinians in the Sabra and Chatila camps by the reactionary Lebanese militias between September 16 and 18, 1982, flows from the logic of the aggression unleashed three months ago by Israel against Lebanon.

Menachem Begin has obtained the withdrawal of the Palestinian fighters from Lebanon. But he cannot content himself with that. Every concentration of the Palestinian people represents a potential centre of resistance against the humiliations and crimes committed by the Zionist state.

Taking the assassination of Bashir Gemayel as a pretext, the Israeli government has trampled underfoot the agreement signed less than a month ago, and sent its troops to West Beirut. It has done this under the pretext of guaranteeing order and security. In reality the Zionist army opened the way to murder and the 'pogrom'.

According to one of its spokespersons the Israeli army went into West Beirut because it wanted 'to rid the town of all the troublemakers'. In other words, to disarm the progressive Lebanese forces, to hit at their militants and leaders. The Zionist troops did their dirty work, combing through the neighbourhoods, the houses and the refugee camps, with veritable lists of proscription prepared by the information services.

It is impossible to estimate exactly the number of people arrested and sent to unknown destinations. But this operation indicates already what sort of regime the Zionist state wants to see installed in Beirut.

The repression against the Lebanese progressives has however been relegated to second place by the massacre of the Palestinians perpetrated by the reactionary Lebanese militias, with the backing of the Israeli army, who gave them free access to the camps and knew their intentions perfectly well.

ISRAEL AND IMPERIALISM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MASSACRES OF THE PALESTINIANS

Today, tragically, the necessary role played by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in the self-defence of the refugee camps has been proved. Its withdrawal left tens of thousands of Palestinians at the mercy of their worst enemies.

The real content of the Habib plan and the real role of the Multinational Intervention Force have equally been proved. The departure of the fighting units of the PLO left the Israeli army occupying the field. From the moment that the Intervention Force turned its back Ariel Sharon took the first opportunity to push his military advantage.

It is not very important to know whether the authors of the carnage at Sabra and Chatila were the Phalangists of Bashir Gemayel or the mercenaries of Commandant Saad Haddad. The killing logically flowed from the war of extermination waged by the Zionist state, which does not hesitate to use such monsters as instruments and allies. Nobody should be fooled: the blood of this massacre soils the hands of Begin, Sharon and their imperialist sponsors, in the first line of which is American imperialism. Everyone knows that a massacre was possible, and even probable, and they knew the potential authors.

They did nothing to avoid it. On the contrary they facilitated the task of the assassins. After that the crocodile tears can always flow in Washington, Paris, Rome, Ryad, Damascus, and even Moscow whose silence and passivity largely contributed to the isolation of the Palestinians.

The crisis opened by the assassination of Bashir Gemayel and the massacre by the Palestinians showed however that the imperialists and the Zionists will have difficulty in perfecting the victories achieved against the PLO and the Lebanese National Movement. The stabilisation of a strong state in Lebanon, desired by the Israelis, and the neo-colonial solution of a Palestinian mini-state, wanted by some imperialists, are not for tomorrow. Many centrifugal forces are at work, which do not always accord with the needs and wishes of Israel or Washington. In addition there are disagreements between the proposals of Israel, the United States, and those put forward at Fez by the Arab states, in agreement with the PLO.

SOLIDARITY: FROM PROTEST TO MOBILISATION

The project of recomposition of the Lebanese state around the Gemayel family and the Phalange which it has formed can still be put into question, despite the election of Amin Gemayel to replace his dead brother as President of the Republic of Lebanon. It is true that the reactions to the assassination of Bashir Gemayel reveal the pressures towards national unity, beyond contradictory social interests. Almost all the Lebanese forces, including the Communist Party and the Lebanese Organisation for Communist Action, participated in the mourning after the assassination of Bashir Gemayel. From every political standpoint came praises for the dead murderer of Palestinians at Tell-el Zaatar, for the man who liquidated his rivals even within the Christian camp. The same revolting homage occurred at the international level. But it is still a long way from these reactions to the recomposition of a strong state apparatus in Lebanon.

For the workers and anti-imperialist movement throughout the world the horrified reaction to the massacres at Sabra and Chatila must not be expressed only through mute and resigned indignation, but by a relaunch of activity and solidarity. Political parties, trade unions, and mass organisations must act urgently to oppose the Zionist operation and prevent new massacres.

— Zionist army out of Lebanon!

— Total support to the Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese progressives: they must be assured of the means of self-defence against the Zionist troops, Phalangist militias, and mercenaries of the butcher Haddad!

— Immediate freedom for the Palestinian and Lebanese Prisoners!

— No to the denial of democratic rights in Lebanon: the right to information, organisation, meetings ...!

— Support to the resistance movements in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza, and to the anti-war movement in Israel!

The Fez summit relaunches the Fahd plan

Livio MAITAN

The decisions of the Arab summit in Fez were presented by a large part of the international press as a major event. *Le Monde* entitled its September 11 editorial: "A decisive step."

One could remember that certain of the "principles" of the Fez text had already been advanced in the past, albeit in a less explicit and systematic fashion. One could denounce the Fez summit as an operation of the Arab governments to make us forget, by a stunning diplomatic initiative, their complicit passivity during the bloody weeks of Israeli aggression in Lebanon. It was, for example, the first reaction of the Palestinian mayor of Nablus, who spoke of the "abandonment" of the PLO by the Arab regimes, and added: "We hope that the Fez resolutions will not have the same fate as those of the last summit, which, in not being followed up in any way, was of great benefit to our enemies."

It is nevertheless undeniable that something new was produced at Fez. It is enough to remember that the Fahd plan — whose almost exact similarity to the Fez resolution is evident — had been rejected less than a year ago by part of the Arab leaders, by the Syrians and, despite the opinion of Yassar Arafat, by the leadership of the PLO itself. Today, the same "principles" are unanimously adopted, with the exception of Libya, voluntarily absent from the summit, and of Egypt, excluded from all meetings of the Arab League since the Camp David Agreement.

Nevertheless it remains the case that point 7 implies recognition of the state of Israel and that, we repeat, unanimity was reached by the different currents represented by these regimes on this point also. This is not a secondary point.

In other words, after having passively accepted, even favoured, the dismantling of the most important military positions of the PLO and the dispersion of its forces, the Arab governments, the majority of whom are hit or threatened by grave social and political crises, are putting forward more clearly than ever their moderate solution to the Palestinian problem. This solution entails the creation of a Palestinian mini-state, within the framework of the recognition of Israel, and with the perspective of being able to control this mini-state thanks to the economic hold that they

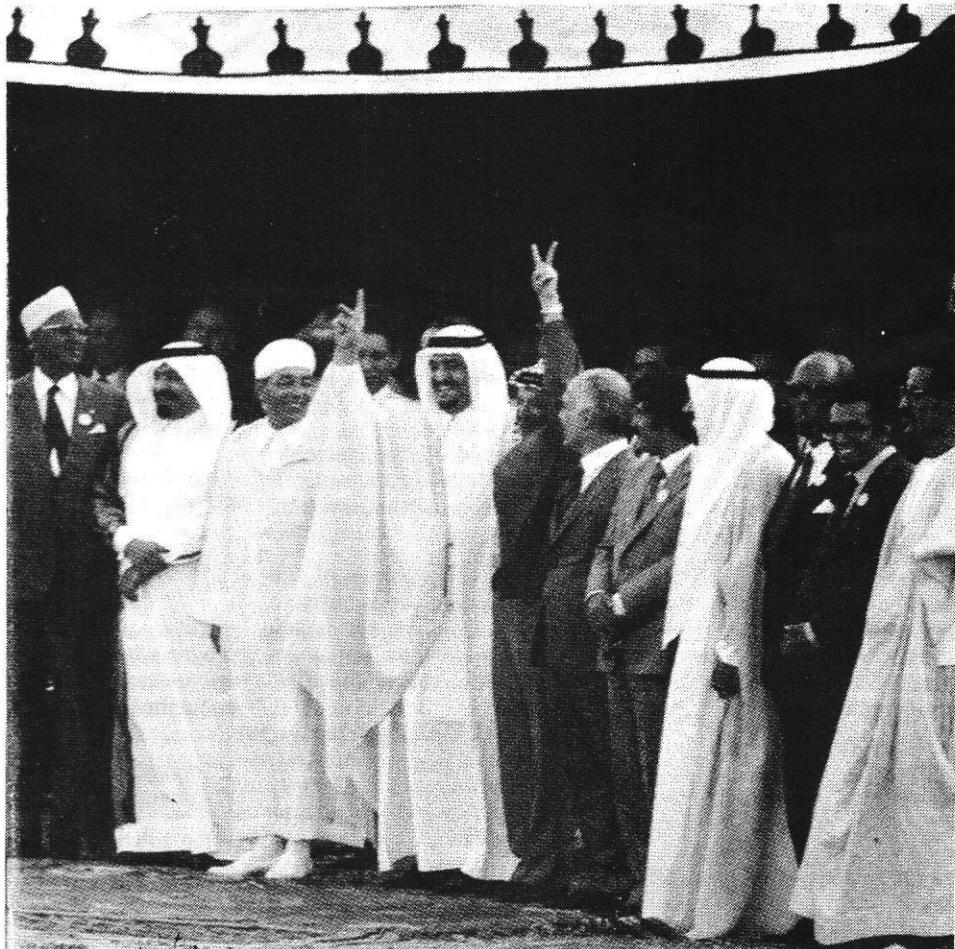
will have over it. North American imperialism — directly and/or by means of international institutions — could endorse the operation by calling to order the leadership of the Zionist state.

But here is the stumbling block: Begin, as could be expected, has totally rejected the Fez "principles". After all, why should he accept today, after having dealt a heavy blow to the PLO and having proved once more the powerlessness of the Arab governments, what he has never accepted in the past, the creation of an independent Palestinian state? Neither is he prepared to yield on autonomy — a real autonomy — of the occupied territories. He continues to oppose it, as he did during Camp David and after. This is shown most clearly by his refusal of the Reagan proposals, which outline an inter-

mediate solution, excluding the creation of a Palestinian state, but proposing an autonomy for the occupied territories "in association" with Jordan.

This is why the impasse has not been overcome, even on the diplomatic terrain. The opposition to the Fez plan on the part of the Israeli Labour Party confirms, moreover, that the attitude of Menachem Begin does not flow from extreme fanaticism or political blindness. It flows from the very logic of Zionism and from the dynamic of a state that was founded and is maintained on the negation of the right of the Palestinians to have a homeland, and that considers that even an embryo of Palestinian independence constitutes a threat to its existence and to its ideological and political foundations. ■

Yassar Arafat and Arab leaders at Fez summit (DR)



Some proposed plans

The resolution of the Arab summit at Fez adopted "the following principles":

- 1) the retreat of Israel from all the territories occupied in 1967, including the Arab part of Jerusalem;
- 2) the dismantling of settlements set up by Israel on Arab territories after 1967;
- 3) the guarantee of freedom of worship and belief for all religions in the Holy Places;
- 4) the reaffirmation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the exercise of their valid and inalienable national rights, under the leadership of the PLO, its sole and legitimate representative, and the compensation of all the Palestinians who do not want to return to their homeland;
- 5) the placing of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the control of the United Nations for a transition period not longer than a few months;
- 6) the creation of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital;
- 7) the Security Council of the United Nations to guarantee the peace between all states in the region, including the independent Palestinian state;
- 8) the Security Council of the UN to guarantee that these principles be respected.

* * * *

The Saudi Arabian Fahd plan contains the following points:

- 1) the retreat of Israel from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, including the Arab city of Jerusalem;
- 2) the dismantling of all settlements established by Israel in the occupied territories since 1967;
- 3) the guarantee of freedom of worship for all religions in the Holy Places;
- 4) the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to return (to their homeland) and compensation of all Palestinians who do not wish to return;
- 5) the placing of the West Bank under the protection of the United Nations for a transition period not exceeding a few months;
- 6) the creation of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital;
- 7) the recognition of the right of all states in the region to live in peace;
- 8) the United Nations or certain member states to assume responsibility for the guarantee of the application of these principles.

The Reagan "proposals" which, according to Reagan himself, fall within "the framework of the Camp David Agreement", aim to "reconcile the legitimate worries of Israel for its security, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people". It demands that the Israeli government stop the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories, and the affirmation of the right of the Palestinian residents in the West Bank and Gaza Strip "to full autonomy in their own affairs". This would have to do with the transition period of five years anticipated in the Camp David Agreement. After this period, Israel would have to pull out of the occupied territories, applying Security Council resolution 242 of the UN, but this would not necessarily imply the creation of an independent Palestinian state, a solution which Reagan rejects explicitly. "The final status of these territories", he declared, "must be reached by mutual concessions, by negotiations. But the US believes firmly that an autonomous government of the Palestinians, in the West Bank and Gaza, in association with Jordan, offers the best chance for a just and lasting peace". As for Jerusalem, it "must remain united and its final status should be decided by negotiations."

* * * *

In Moscow, Leonid Brezhnev put forward a sort of Soviet "counter peace plan" in 7 points:

- 1) the restoration to the Arabs of all the territories occupied by the Israelis in 1967 and the proclamation of "unalterable borders between Israel and its Arab neighbours".
- 2) the guarantee of the right of the Palestinian people to create an independent state;
- 3) the restoration of East Jerusalem, "Holy Place of the Moslems", to the Arabs;
- 4) the assurance to all states in the region (implicitly to Israel as well) of the right to existence, security and independence;
- 5) the engagement of all parties, Israel and Palestinians included, in mutual respect of the sovereignty and integrity of the other states;
- 6) the guarantee of this agreement on an international level through, for example the Security Council;
- 7) "as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people", the PLO must be involved in the settlement of the crisis.

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Growing opposition to the war in Israel

This interview with a member of the Revolutionary Communist League (section of the Fourth International in the state of Israel) was done in Paris in September 1982.

Question: *What has been the attitude of the Arab masses in the Israeli state and the occupied territories during this latest war in Lebanon?*

Answer: At first, when there was practically no news, and the official propaganda went on a big campaign, people were very concerned with the fate of the Palestinian fighters, their own fate, and they were afraid of repression. But that did not last very long.

Once there began to be news — from radio broadcasts, particularly *Radio Montecarlo* reporting directly from Beirut — of how courageously the Palestinians were fighting, despite their isolation, that the Israeli army was at a standstill outside Beirut, that compared to past wars they had suffered serious losses, the mood changed radically. The people were proud of the Palestinian fighters, and began to be active. The students were the first to react, with meetings, demonstrations, solidarity activities, marches. Bir Zeit University, the centre of the mobilisations, which had been open for a few months, was closed for the third time this year, but this did not stop the movement. Other layers of the population mobilized in their turn through demonstrations and strikes, (particularly commercial in the main towns). Demonstrations also took place in the refugee camps. Money was collected, and lots of people gave blood to the Red Cross. All in all several tens of thousands of people took part in the mobilisations.

The mayors on the West Bank published a declaration condemning Israeli aggression and supporting the PLO. They openly criticised the Arab states for their passivity. They also made criticisms of the USSR and the other bureaucratised workers states. I should say that when the mass structures were prevented from functioning by repression the mayors played an important role. For example usually it was they who called for the general strikes. The structures, for example trade unions, could only keep functioning at a local level.

Q. *What is the situation in the Arab regions of Israel?*

A. The situation is not different from the occupied territories. The same two stages that I have described took place there as well. In the second stage there was open opposition which was concretised in very

militant demonstrations and marches against the war, and strong support for the Palestinian resistance. One demonstration of 30,000 people took place on July 31 in Nazareth, it was the most impressive in the whole history of the region. **Q.** *We have had several reports of the movement against the Begin-Sharon policies in which wide layers of the Israeli population have participated. What can you tell us about this?*

A. In the first days there was a very strong wave of chauvinism. Undoubtedly the war had popular support in Israel. But when the news came of the fighting in Beirut and the existence of strong pockets of resistance in Sidon and Tyre, when it was clear that this was not a few days expedition, not a bad number of people began to question themselves, and the left began to take concrete initiatives.

A Committee against the War in Lebanon was formed with the participation of the Bir Zeit Committee, groups of women against the war and independent personalities. A first demonstration was held on June 12, a thousand people demonstrated in front of the building where Begin has his office. The culminating point of the mobilisations was the big demonstration at Tel Aviv jointly organised by the Committee against the War in Lebanon and the Peace Now movement, which drew about 100,000 people.

The women's groups were very, very active in the three main towns, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa. They came partly from the feminist movement, and partly from the anti-war movement, and included mothers and wives of soldiers. For several weeks they demonstrated every Tuesday at Tel Aviv. These were small gatherings but aimed to ensure the continuity of the movement. Particularly significant was a demonstration of 200 women in black in Jerusalem, which made a very big impression.

Q. *Can you tell us something about the opposition to the war within the army?*

A. At first there were protests, but they were unorganised, and did not go beyond individual initiatives. Some soldiers refused to go to Lebanon. One case which caused a stir was that of Ali Geva, an officer who publicly stated that he would not go to Lebanon. He was discharged from the army. His stance provoked quite a lively debate, with opposing positions being taken. Some supported the idea that one had to go into the army, even to Lebanon. Others that one should refuse to enter at all. Still others, including our comrades of the LCR, that one should do military service but refuse to cross the

border to Lebanon.

Soldiers groups were formed. The two most important were: 'Soldiers against the Silence', who made a propaganda campaign against the crimes that the army committed during the war, and who were close to Peace Now; and a smaller but more militant group who were called 'There is a limit for Israel', composed of people who had refused to go into the occupied territories, and accepted the idea of a Palestinian state.

In fact, we can say that a quite large number of soldiers refused to go to Lebanon. Some of them were transferred elsewhere, others were threatened with repression. I do not know if action was in fact taken against them.

Q. *What were the reactions of the working class?*

A. There were new things on this field as well. During the previous wars the government was always concerned to get a period of 'social peace', and to ensure a mobilisation of the working class as well. This time they did not succeed in getting this. Struggles — economic ones — did not stop, they grew even more. For example, there was a strike in progress in an electricity generating company. It continued after the war broke out. Potassium and phosphate factories near the Dead Sea came out on strike during the war, as did even the employees of the airline El Al.

I'd like to remind you that in other respects the social situation is very serious. Among other reasons because the government has again cut the subsidies that kept down the prices of a whole series of basic commodities. Following that there were price rises of 25 to 30 per cent. At the same time unemployment increased, particularly following the closure of a number of small companies.

To return to the attitude of the working class. One cannot say that they participated actively in the struggle against the war. But they made it understood that they were not prepared to pay for a policy which requires periodic wars. But we should emphasise that opposition to the war was expressed, including by demonstrations, among the poorest layers of the Israeli population.

Q. *We have previously published information on the activity of the LCR. Do you want to add anything?*

A. I can only confirm that the LCR has been very active in the mobilisation against the war, particularly by its participation in the Bir Zeit Committee and the Committee against the War in Lebanon. We have also been very active in the Arab sector, participating for example in the big demonstration in Nazareth.

The 1976 Lebanese civil war

by Daniel BENSARD

Commanding a state barely as big as two French départements (or a couple of American counties or British counties), the Lebanese bourgeoisie has played a profitable role of intermediary between the Western market and the Arab hinterland.

While agriculture accounts for only 17% of the national income and industry for 20%, the services (commerce, banks, transport, tourism) — which employ only 10% of the economically active population make up the preponderant share — 58%. And Lebanese industry is mainly light industry, serving as an appendage of the service sector.

The result of these facts is that a heterogeneous petty bourgeoisie constitutes the absolute majority of the population, and this helps to perpetuate the confessional character of the Lebanese state.

Since it was established, the state has remained very weak, torn by family rivalries and tribalism and undermined by corruption. It is organized on an openly confessional basis. In a 99-seat parliament, 30 seats are allotted to the Maronite Christians; 20 to the Sunni Muslims, 19 to the Shiite Muslims, 11 to the Greek Orthodox, 6 to the Greek Catholics, 1 to the Armenian Catholics, 1 to the Protestants, and one is variable. The president of the republic is always a Maronite, the premier a Sunni, the chairman of the parliament a Shiite, and the vice premier a Greek Orthodox.

The presence of 400,000 Palestinian refugees, the majority of them in camps, could not help but shake the unstable equilibrium of this structure.

Since 1969, the Lebanese bourgeoisie has sought continually to rid itself of the Palestinians. In 1973, the failure of an attempt by the official Lebanese army to wipe out the camps led to the formation, arming, and growth of the Christian Phalange, the Kataeb. In 1975, the leader of this body, Beshir Gemayel openly proposed holding a referendum to decide whether or not the Palestinian resistance could remain in Lebanon.

On March 1 of the same year, a repressive operation by the Lebanese army against the Arab fishermen in Saida gave rise to fraternization between the poor Arab population and the Palestinian resistance, despite the proclaimed determination of the Palestinian organizations not to interfere in Lebanese affairs. The Lebanese bourgeoisie, five years after the Jordanian one, came to fear an inter-

locking of the Palestinian resistance and the class struggle in Lebanon itself.

In April, the Christian militias made an initial move, massacring 27 Palestinians. There was an immediate response. Things started to escalate. The right armed frantically, with the help of the U.S. In September, it launched a general offensive that proved fruitless. In January, it organized a new systematic massacre in the shantytown of la Quarantaine outside Beirut. The Muslim forces, Lebanese progressives and Palestinians, retaliated by a similar massacre in the village of Damour.

With the war stalemated, Syria proposed to intervene to "safeguard the unity of Lebanon and prevent new massacres." On January 22, 1976, an accord was signed under its patronage. There were supposed to be "neither victor nor vanquished."

The confessionalism of the Lebanese system was reinforced, and no substantive reform was envisaged. From January to March 1976, the Christian right, the Muslim right, the Lebanese left, and the Israeli destruction in Beirut (DR)



Palestinian organizations all proclaimed their support for the Syrian intervention. The only discordant note in this chorus of approval was the denunciation of the Syrian regime and its role in Lebanon by some small far left groups.

However, immediately after the January 22 accords the Lebanese regular army began to break up. Dissident Arab officers formed an "Army of Arab Lebanon," which started to snowball. The Christian officers responded by forming a Lebanon liberation army. Along with the army, the Lebanese state itself was coming apart.

The clashes increased and the progressive forces advanced. On March 21, they occupied the center of Beirut. On March 24, President Frangieh fled and took refuge in Jounieh, the new capital of Christian Lebanon. In two weeks of bloody battles, the left and the Palestinian resistance movement gained control of more than two thirds of the country, and were in a position to achieve a military victory. This outcome, however, was to be blocked by Syrian intervention and the attitude of the leadership of the Palestinian-Progressive bloc.

On March 11, the Syrian mediators declared that they were helpless in the face of the new deterioration in the situation, and they left the country. They were called back by the Lebanese right, which was facing a military defeat that would have led either to a partition of Lebanon (with the Christian minstate losing its advantageous economic relations with the Arab countries) or by political concessions that would establish a new relationship of forces within the country.

Syria responded to this appeal, and at the beginning of April threatened to close its borders to all arms shipments for the Palestinian resistance. The forces of the Saika, the Palestinian organization organically linked to the Syrian regime, tried in vain to block the offensive against the reactionaries. Then, 2,000 Syrian soldiers moved into Lebanese territory. The population of the Muslim areas raised the cry of treason. Yassar Arafat went to Damascus. Syria withdrew its troops in exchange for the left and the Palestinian resistance accepting a ceasefire at a moment when victory was in their grasp.

On May 8, the Syrians showed their determination to assure that the election of a president took place in Lebanon, despite the continuation of the fighting. Sarkis was elected by 66 votes, with

three abstentions, in an election that intimidation and corruption made into a more grotesque masquerade than ever.

The main rival of Sarkis — who was the candidate of the Christian right, the Syrians and the Americans — was Raymond Edde, former leader of the Maronite right, this time supported by the left, the Palestinian resistance, and French imperialism.

The left was disoriented and paralyzed by the accords concluded by Arafat in Damascus on the eve of the election. In the wake of the election, the same Arafat sent a message of congratulations to the new president. But the Palestinian organizations of the Rejection Front resumed the military offensive. Al-Fatah was forced to go along. Syria tried to negotiate a new agreement. The week that followed the election was marked by bloody battles.

On May 31, Syria intervened again, sending a corps of 20,000 soldiers (as against a mere 2,000 in April). The Palestinian-progressive forces resisted this intervention. Many Syrian tanks were destroyed. The uncertainty of the outcome led to the sending in of "Green Helmets" from the Arab countries. On June 23, the meeting in Ryad of representatives of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, and Syria confirmed the isolation of the Palestinians.

The relationship of forces began to turn to their disadvantage. On June 12, following bloody fighting, the Palestinian camp of Tell el-Zatar fell, under the

assaults of the Christian militias backed up by the Syrian army. During this period, the Israeli army helped to encircle the Palestinians by putting military pressure on southern Lebanon. On October 18, the Ryad accords sanctioned the Syrian occupation.

From the 1975-76 civil war several lessons emerge that maintain all their force today.

The confessionalist system made it possible to present the civil war as a religious war and cover up its real anti-imperialist and class character. The counterposition of poor Muslims and rich Christians is true only in a general way. The leaders of the Muslim big bourgeoisie were smart enough to line up with the Muslim camp to hold on to their clientele and work for a compromise that would safeguard the social structures of the Lebanese state.

On the other hand, a section of the Christian poor masses were forced to join the Phalange by the fear of religious massacres. The military methods used by both sides reinforced this partly deceptive confessional polarization.

The Palestinian-progressive front operated as a defensive front. Faced with the breakup of the Lebanese state, it was led to take on more and more tasks in provisioning, administering, and providing public health and police services in the Palestinian camps. But it was careful not to challenge the official state bodies. It patched up the cracks in the legal governmental system without ever offer-

ing itself as an alternative power. In so doing, it was conforming to the limits it set itself:

"The program of reforms presented by the national movement is not a socialist or communist programme ... It in reality constitutes a program for moving from the most backward sort of feudal regime toward a liberal and democratic capitalist system, in which the term democratic is to be understood in the bourgeois sense." (George Haoui, member of the Lebanese CP Political Bureau, in an interview with Agence France-Presse, December 29, 1975.)

Finally, the PLO leadership held to its official position of "noninterference in the internal affairs of the Arab regimes." But it could not prevent the Jordanian or Lebanese Arab masses from being confronted with the same threats and the same problems as the Palestinian refugees — the threat represented by Israel and the repression exercised by their own bourgeoisies.

Regardless of the intention of the Palestinian leaders, there is an inevitable tendency for these struggles to interlock. And if they try to avoid interfering in the internal affairs of the countries in which they have taken refuge, it is just as inevitable that the regimes in these countries in order to maintain their power will interfere in the affairs of the Palestinian resistance in the most brutal way, as was the case in Jordan in 1970, in Lebanon in 1975-76, and now once again.

Against imperialist intervention

It has taken the massacres in the Sabra and Chatila camps for Reagan, Mitterrand and Pertini to pretend to have discovered that the Palestinians are threatened with veritable genocide by Begin and his fascist Lebanese friends.

In the name of a hypocritical "peace" which they constructed through the American Habib plan the three heads of state have decided to send their contingents of the "Intervention Force" to Lebanon.

We, internationalist militants in France, Italy, and the United States, denounce this new dispatch of imperialist troops to the Middle-East under the pretext of guaranteeing the security of the Palestinian refugees and Lebanese civilian population.

What has been the purpose of the United Nations troops (UNIFIL), now stationed in south Lebanon for months? On June 6, at the time of the Israeli invasion, they were content to let the Zionist tanks pass on their march towards Beirut.

What has been the purpose of the "Intervention Force" sent at the end of August as stipulated in the Habib plan? This force organized the departure of the Palestinian combat units, and assured the presence of the Zionists in Lebanon. They backed the election of the Phalangist killer Bechir Gemayel for president by a rump parliament, which met in a barracks guarded by Israeli bayonets. They demolished the defense lines of the Palestinians in West Beirut.

As of August 14 the "Intervention Force" composed of American, French and Italian troops, left the sector, leaving behind them a disarmed population facing the Zionist army, Phalangist militia and the mercenaries of the butcher Haddad.

Whatever the exact identity of the murderers of Sabra and Chatila, they could only carry out their horrible task with the agreement and complicity of Israeli senior officials. The Washington, Paris and Rome governments know all too well that this tragedy was possible and foreseeable.

The new mission of the "Intervention Force" will not serve the interests of the Palestinian people any better than the last. Who can think that the American marines, yesterday the instruments of imperialist massacres in Vietnam, today in Central America, can protect the oppressed in Lebanon?

Who can believe that the French paratroopers, the police of imperialism in Africa and the Caribbean colonies, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, can act in Lebanon against the interest of imperialism and its Zionist bridgehead in the Middle East?

Their presence will only serve to reconstruct a strong Lebanese state backed up by the Phalangist militia of Amine Gemayel, and ally of Zionism. They can only bring new threats and new dangers for the Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese National Movement.

The real demands of the hour are different:

- Immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Zionist army of occupation from Lebanon and all the occupied territories;
- Break diplomatic relations with the criminal regime of Begin and Sharon;
- International recognition of the PLO as the authentic representative of the Palestinian people;
- Total support to the Palestinian people in their fight to regain their legitimate national rights;
- Solidarity with the Palestinian masses in the occupied territories and with the antiwar movement in the state of Israel.

LCR — *Revolutionary Communist League* (French Section of the Fourth International)

LCR — *Revolutionary Communist League* (Italian Section of the Fourth International)

SWP — *Socialist Workers Party* (American organization in solidarity with the Fourth International*)

(*Reactionary legislation prevents the SWP from being the American Section of the Fourth International.)

British workers prepared to fight

Millions of workers in Britain responded to the call by the Trades Union Congress for action in support of the healthworkers on September 22.

The workers in the National Health Service have been taking action over the last five months in support of their demand for a higher wage increase than that offered by the government. The vast majority of the ancillary workers in the Health Service earn less than the official poverty line. But even the latest offer gives them only 4% now and 3.5% later. Their demand is for 12% now.

The shabby treatment of the healthworkers has won them wide public sympathy. Among the health service workers anger and bitterness has been widespread. Even the Royal College of Nursing, a non-trade union professional body, has bitterly criticised the government, and discussed abandoning their rule against strike action. Some ambulance crews ignored the TUC guidelines and withdrew emergency cover on September 22 as a signal of their anger and determination.

Support for the healthworkers was strongest in Scotland where 750,000 workers took some form of action.

Throughout Britain the mines, buses and docks were strong areas of support. No national newspapers were published. Other public sector workers were prominent in their support for the healthworkers. Schools and local government were closed for all or part of the day. The type of action taken ranged from supporting healthworkers on their picket lines to complete 24 strikes.

The results of last week's Trade Union Congress reveal two striking features of the labour movement today. The first is that there is a tremendous fire below in the ranks of the trade unions — a burning desire to see a fight with the Tories and to score some victories. Only one trade union leader, Frank Chapple, leader of the electricians' union and this year's TUC president, went against the overwhelming desire of the trade union movement, including his own union's, to back the healthworkers' struggle through his dumb insolence from the Congress platform.

The second cardinal feature is that there is a rumbling crisis of leadership of the unions. The vote to change the composition of the General Council to favour the right wing; then the vote to support the September 22 Day of Action in support of the healthworkers; the rejection of an incomes policy, followed the same day by the acceptance of the TUC/Labour Party plan which implies that very policy — all show that the trade union leadership is being forced to face both ways on nearly every single aspect of its policy. It is caught between an embittered membership and a ferocious Tory government.

Only one trade union leader — Arthur Scargill of the National Union of Mine-workers — who dominated the platform of the TUC, came near to approaching the type of strategy needed against the Tories. Scargill, however, represents a tiny minority of the trade union leadership who is prepared to fight Thatcher. And the odds are that over the next period this section will become even smaller.

Over 250,000 workers demonstrated in support of the healthworkers throughout the country. The largest demonstration in London attracted around 100,000.

The action called by the TUC was in defiance of the new Employment Act of the present Tory government which makes 'sympathy strikes' illegal. Previous action by the electricians on Fleet Street, the main centre of national newspapers, resulted in prosecution of the union branch secretary. However, with such a huge response to the TUC's call the Confederation of British Industry, the employers federation, decided that discretion was the better part of valour and advised their members not to take any action against their employees.

The TUC have now called for further days of action, on a regional basis. But given the intransigence of the government the only hope for the healthworkers is to turn the widespread sympathy for them into a national organised 24-hour general strike. The increasing readiness to take actions shown by the increasing number of strikes this year, already up 60 per cent on the 1981 figures before the healthworkers action started, indicate that this perspective is not impossible. But, as the editorial from *Socialist Challenge* explains, the leadership of the union movement is not prepared to go that far. *Socialist Challenge* is a weekly socialist newspaper supported by the *International Marxist Group*, British section of the Fourth International.

The changes in the General Council mean that many of the potential allies for a 'broad left' on the leadership of the TUC have been eliminated. A strategy which relies on gradually increasing the influence of the left in the high command of the union movement is at the very least an impractical one for the foreseeable future.

No. The eyes have to be on the ranks. The only way in which the threats made by Scargill against the Tory government can be translated into reality is through the systematic organisation and mobilisation of those forces in the unions willing to fight.

The potential for such a fight was revealed by the 2500-strong Labour Movement Conference against the Witch-hunt in the Labour Party, called by the Militant Tendency in their defence. Unfortunately, Militant, both by inclination and incapacity, were unable to translate the occasion into anything more than an impressive showing of verbal opposition to the witch-hunt against the left in the Party.

Both Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn do have the ability to call a congress of the left, both to fight the Tories and the right wing of the labour movement who are acting to obstruct the fight. This is the next step for the Bennite movement.

At the TUC conference, Tony Benn unveiled his strategy of not challenging Michael Foot for the leadership of the Party before the next general election, and of exposing the manoeuvres of the

right wing to dump Foot for Peter Shore.

The question that should be asked on the left of the Party is not whether this tactical ploy is correct, but rather how has the left become so weakened that its leadership is forced to support the man who leads the witch-hunt against it.

Similar considerations apply as in the trade unions. Benn's influence is growing weaker and weaker in the leadership of the party — in line, albeit after a lag, with changes taking place in the trade unions. But Benn's support inside the rank and file of the party remains undiminished.

An intransigent attitude towards the inevitable introduction of the register — namely a refusal to tolerate expulsions on the basis of the register can only be backed up by organisation of the left, starting at the rank and file basis, both in the Labour Party and in the unions. Refusal to organise on this basis has meant that Benn has been forced to retreat.

Both the Militant Conference and the October 30 conference initiated by Hackney Constituency Labour Party to discuss action against the register are steps in the right direction. But as isolated events, they cannot start to turn the tide in the labour movement. Joint trade union and Labour Party action to force the Tories from office is not a pipe dream, as support for the healthworkers' action shows. But the principle of joint action between both arms of the labour movement must be extended towards the principle of organising *the left's*.

The the fire below will start to take on an organised expression. And then the Tories will really start to sweat!

Serious threats to Nicaraguan revolution

This summer two comrades of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International, went to Nicaragua to participate in international solidarity brigades organised by the European solidarity committees. On their return they spoke to Daniel Jebrac about their experiences.

Question: You were both in Nicaragua as members of a solidarity brigade. What was this initiative?

Answer: The European solidarity committees decided to send solidarity brigades to Nicaragua this summer, coming from most of the countries of the Old World. There were several hundred of us. The role of the brigades was to work in the villages on rebuilding, particularly after the catastrophic floods of last May. Rebuilding bridges and roads and schools. This allowed us to have a direct and daily link with the population, particularly the peasants. From the point of view of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) it was important, above and beyond the material help which was modest, to give a feeling in the rural regions of the political solidarity and international resonance for the Nicaraguan revolution. Thus the initiative was considered very positive by the Sandinista leadership. As for us, it allowed us to visit the country and to have contact with the mass organisations, to see the revolutionary ardour and enthusiasm which exists, despite the extremely difficult conditions.

Thus, the comrades of the French brigade in August were able to have direct experience of the situation of permanent aggression in which Nicaragua lives. While they were working at La Rencheria, north of Chinandega, near the Pacific coast, the village was attacked by a group of 'contras' (counter-revolutionaries). Two militia were killed, including the leader. A group of twenty five *contras* was broken up afterwards. Moreover, one of the aggressors had infiltrated the Sandinista Peoples' Militia (MPS). All the comrades in the brigade were hit by the extreme military and political tension in the country.

Q. What are the precise forms that the counter-revolution is taking now?

A. The counter-revolution is a lot more active than it was three years ago. Firstly, North American strategy is clearer. Since Reagan took office a whole series of plans have been worked out. Considerable sums have been released for this. The 19

million dollars set aside for the destabilisation of Nicaragua, and openly admitted by Thomas Enders, the Under Secretary of State in charge of Latin American affairs, in front of the American Senate, is only what is known. By the adoption of the Symms amendment the Senate gave the President carte blanche to intervene in the region. The Americans cannot tolerate the development of this revolution indefinitely.

The military co-operation of the US with Honduras has become a real operation of constructing an army of intervention in the region, as much against the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front-Revolutionary Democratic Front (FMLN-FDR) in El Salvador as against the Nicaraguan revolution. The Somocista groups have been reinforced by the desertions of the former member of the Government of National Reconstruction (GRN), Alfonso Robelo, leader of the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN), and of the Vice Minister for Defence, responsible for the militias, Eden Pastora, as well as by the departure to Honduras of about ten thousand Miskito Indians in October 1981.

These groups are the spearhead of the direct aggression against Nicaragua. The principal are the September 15-legion (ex-Somocista guards) who have a radio station of the same name, the Nicaraguan

Democratic Union (UDN), and the sector of the Misurasata (Indian organisations) controlled by the minister Stedman Fagoth. In total, three to four thousand armed men along the Honduran front.

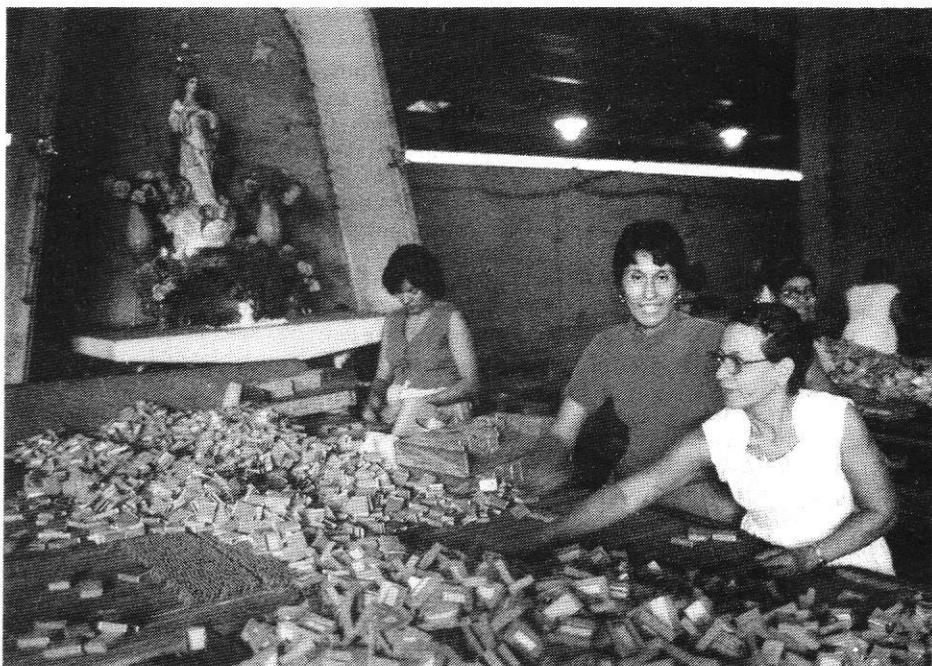
On July 24, 1982 a band of about a hundred *contras*, with mortars and heavy machine guns, made an incursion into Nicaragua. They occupied the village of San Francisco, between Choluteca and Esteli, for two and a half hours, leaving fourteen dead and taking eight hostages. These assassins explained that they would have spared their victims 'if they had been members of religious sects'. On their return to Honduras they were taken in lorries to their camp by Honduran soldiers.

However these groups of *contras* have still not succeeded in uniting or establishing a coherent strategy. The ex-commander Eden Pastora has not sided with them. After the massacre at San Francisco he even stated publicly that he would not ally with criminals and that he would do nothing that would facilitate an American intervention. This attitude indicates how seriously we should take the threats hanging over Nicaragua.

Q. You have talked of the role of the religious sects. What is their place in the counter-revolutionary plans?

A. A striking aspect of the present situa-

Women workers in Nicaragua (DR)



tion is their proliferation. There are almost two hundred. They are heavily financed by the North American sects. They have a dual objective. Internally, to organise the sectors of the population which find themselves marginalised by the revolutionary process and to divert them from the tasks of defence, the sects particularly make a campaign against the carrying of arms. On the other hand, on the international scale, to contribute to the isolation of the progressive sectors of the American church, which is more and more active in the movement against the war and against intervention in Central America.

We should give some more precise information on the particular role of the Miskito Indians, given the orchestrated international campaign there has been on this subject. In December 1981 the situation became particularly serious. Since July 1979 several religious sects have worked amongst them, particularly the Moravians, including a former minister linked to the Somoza dictatorship, Stedman Fagoth. The Sandinistas did commit some errors in their attitude, paternalism, authoritarianism, which would have shocked the Indian community which is attached to its traditional values and respect for the old, while the Sandinistas are often 'muchachos' (young men).

At the time when the *contras* increased their military incursions over the Honduran border the Sandinistas evacuated the population to stop the haemorrhage and to face the attacks coming from Honduras. In Honduras itself the Miskitos live in camps financed by the United Nations. Some of them are in favour of a policy of returning. But the current of Stedman Fagoth opposes this. The unit which launched military aggression at the beginning of July was composed of two hundred Miskitos.

In Nicaragua itself the situation seems to be considerable improved. The new villages built by the FSLN at Tasba Pry are now finished and offer the Miskitos living conditions and standards of hygiene that they have never had before. Last July Commandant Tomas Borge, Minister of the Interior, went there to do a meeting and give the communities in the zone the title deeds for the collective property. But although the situation is better it is still precarious because of the military tensions. Thus, for defence reasons, the Sandinistas have had to forbid the fishing boats to leave the port of Puerto Cabezas on the Caribbean coast.

That said, the whole international campaign on the supposed massacres of Miskitos is a huge propaganda operation orchestrated by the imperialists.

Q. You have just described several aspects of the counter-revolutionary manoeuvres. How do these link up with the internal resistance of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie?

A. It is undeniable that the sabotage by the bourgeoisie has reached the proportions where it puts into question the 'national unity' advocated by the Sandinistas and the projections for economic development.

Despite the strict control and reprisals decapitalisation continues. Almost the whole of the leadership of the main bourgeois political organisation, the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) of Alfonso Robelo, has taken the road to voluntary exile in Costa Rica. The MDN and the Council for Private Enterprise (COSEP) still refuse to take the seats reserved for them in the Council of State. Last spring the director of the Central Bank resigned from his post, denouncing the growing control of the Ministry for Planning, led by the Sandinista commandant Henri Ruiz, on monetary policy which — according to him — was putting into question the existence of the private sector ...

At the moment the main political attack of the bourgeoisie is to take over the campaigns of the Catholic hierarchy against the atheism of the Sandinista revolution, and against the popular mobilisation against American aggression, which sometimes has a restricting character.

In fact the private sector is more and more marginalised. In agriculture, which is the main productive sector oriented towards export, the public sector, which represents only 20 per cent of activity, work works in close liaison with the co-operative sector which is strongly developed. Today it is really only within cotton cultivation that big capitalist property remains a majority.

In industry the successive measures of expropriation have increased the public sector to nearly 40 per cent of production. In the service sector the state controls two-thirds of the activity, following the extension of the network of the peoples' shops. In general one can say that the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie no longer has control over the essential part of the economic machine.

However, faced with American aggression, the social gains that have been made, and the strengthening of the mass organisations, inspired by the FSLN, the bourgeoisie does not have a solid enough social base to allow it to throw the process into question itself. Thus, unlike two years ago, it can have hardly any hope of turning the situation to its advantage by elections in 1984 or 1985. Its only way out is an alliance with imperialism.

Certainly there is a regroupment, rather than a bourgeois force, which is called the Doctor Sacasa Democratic Coordination (CDDS). Weakened by the departure abroad of Alfonso Robelo, it maintains a position which it calls 'patriotic' against the imperialist pressure. In this framework certain sectors of the bourgeoisie still hope that the gravity of the economic difficulties will lead to disaffection from the government and they will be able to present themselves as a solution.

You should know that there will be nil growth in 1982, and that the catastrophic floods of May 1982 have been followed by unusual dryness which is a serious blow to the harvest of crops like maize.

Q. Faced with the pressures and threats from imperialism without, with the manoeuvres of the sects and the bourgeoisie within, the Sandinista leadership has radicalised its political formulations. In his May 1 speech Commandant Tomas Borge talked openly of socialism, as did other trade union leaders. Does this mean anything?

A. This ideological radicalisation has a certain importance at the level of the mass organisations rather than meaning a turn in political orientation — the references to the 'mixed economy' are still there. Previously they only called themselves Sandinista, now they claim to be socialist.

The main mass organisations are the Sandinista People's Militias (MPS). They are massive and very popular. Practically everybody is involved in them.

At first they were conceived as workplace militias. Now they have developed towards geographical militias, for the village or neighbourhood. This is for the good and simple reason that the units of production are often too small to provide operational units. Nevertheless, in the bigger enterprises there is a specific militia organisation.

But the militias are so massive that the political level is very uneven. The mass organisation that plays the central political role is still the Sandinista Defence Committees, CDS. These are the local committees which have the responsibility to discuss and organise all aspects of social life. The people participate more or less regularly but, even if they do not go to all the meetings, if they have a question to put they do it through the CDS. The CDS are the structure of representation and dialogue between the state apparatus and the citizens.

The situation in the trade-union movement has changed in the last few months. The Sandinista Workers Central (CST) seems to have become the main trade union, ahead of the CTN, an anti-Sandinista trade union, more or less linked to the North American unions; the CAUS, linked to the ultra-Stalinist Nicaraguan Communist Party, or the Workers Front, of Maoist origin. The last two seem to be much smaller now. Thus, the FSLN is now for the first time a majority within the working class, even though its influence is still contested. This was not the case in the first months after the fall of Somoza. All this gives an idea of the main features in the evolution of the situation.

To conclude we would like to emphasise the importance of solidarity work, and the necessity for it to be restarted. Nicaragua is facing a hostile campaign and permanent aggression. All the comrades who participated in the solidarity brigades this summer were able to see this, and go back to their respective countries with the conviction necessary to give life to the indispensable work of solidarity. ■

The end of the SPD/FDP government: the fightback must begin!

The break up of the Social Democrat/Liberal coalition in Bonn brings to an end sixteen years of Social Democratic government. Although the SPD itself has expected this shift for a long time it nevertheless represents a major turn in the relationship of forces between the social classes and their political parties.

This change in Western Germany, the world's second most powerful imperialist state, strengthens the Western German employers and US imperialism, when only a year ago the Socialist Party in France won the presidential and parliamentary elections — the greatest victory in its history — and, in the last few days, the Swedish Social Democratic and Communist Parties won an absolute majority in Parliament.

The occasion for the final end of the Social Democrats in government was the 'Lambsdorff Paper' produced by the FDP Minister for the Economy. Given its concept of a 'social-market economy' and the deepening economic crisis this autumn it would mean that practically all the reforms introduced by the SPD-FDP government would be withdrawn. The paper had every possible proposal to increase the rate of profit for the employers at the expense of the working class. It proposed a massive shift from direct to indirect taxation, cancellation of taxation on industry and reduction of trade taxes. There would be unlimited scope to change working hours to suit the employers' interests. An extensive programme of privatisation of the public sector was proposed, along with even more drastic cutbacks in the welfare state — the reduction of unemployment pay to fifty per cent of the previous wage — which is only the first step in dismantling the social gains of the working class.

Lambsdorff's proposals were not a political slip. They had the approval of almost all the employers' organisations. With the sustained economic recession, the expected record figure of two million unemployed, and a new budget deficit of over one billion marks, the paper made clear that a governmental party which has to take into consideration the interests of the trade-union leadership is not viable in the present situation.

The FDP's wish for a change of government was not however the reason for the break up of the coalition, despite the SPD's attempts to create a myth of 'betrayal'. Genscher and Lambsdorff, the leaders of the FDP, would not have dared to act in this way if the SPD had possessed the ability to mobilise the working class and young people as it did during the 1980 elections, or during the attempt

of the CDU leader Barzel to remove the SPD from office in 1972. The massive loss of votes for the SPD among the working class, youth, and the middle class, to the point where its votes in state elections fell to below 35 per cent, was the work of the SPD itself.

It was the SPD which explained, in its 1982 and projected 1983 austerity policies, that the workers must make sacrifices, that misled the workers as to the dimensions and the causes of the crisis. It was the SPD in alliance with the trade-union leadership that obstructed any fightback against austerity. It was the infamous call for repression against those protesting at the extension of Frankfurt airport for military reasons, and Schmidt's fervent support for NATO's rearmament policy, that led hundreds of thousands of young people to seek an alternative to Social Democracy.

It is dishonest of the Social Democrats to accuse the FDP of wanting 'the wage earners and trade unions to accept lower real wages, and the unemployed, pensioners, tenants, and the socially vulnerable to make great sacrifices' when the SPD itself asks exactly the same from wage earners and the socially oppressed. Schmidt in fact repeated his support for these policies in his declaration to parliament.

The task now is to find another policy — one which means that the employers themselves bear the burden of the crisis they have created, which does not stop short of breaking the power of the bankers and the employers in its effort to defend jobs. A programme which bases itself on the distribution of the available work between all the workers, and prevents the employers' efforts to secure their profit through new rearmament measures.

All the calls to the trade-union leadership by the SPD 'not to rock the boat' so that the Social Democrats can solve the problems have failed. In fact they have led to deep discouragement and political uncertainty among the workers. This has been shown during factory closures and redundancies, as well as at the last elections. For the first time in the history of the Bundesrepublik half the working class today chooses to vote for the CDU/CSU. The SPD has opened the way to government by the employers through its reformist policies.

The DGB, Western Germany's central trade union federation, has called demonstrations against austerity on October 23 and 30. All possible forces must be mobilised to turn these demonstrations

into the beginning of a strong opposition to the bourgeois measures. Trade unionists, supporters of the peace movement, the women's movement, anti-nuclear groups, those who are fighting discrimination against immigrants, or unemployment, as well as all those who suffer from the austerity measures of the bourgeoisie, should join forces to demonstrate against unemployment, rearmament, and destruction of the environment. For the trade unions these demonstrations should be the first steps in a new line of march.

- For joint trade union action against the employers' anti-union measures
- For jobs not bombs
- For the 35 hour week now — with full pay and job creation
- Against any other austerity policy, whether budget cuts or decrease in real wages
- A militant common line of march for the big majority of wage earners, employed, unemployed, pensioners, young or old, immigrant or German, women or men.

SPD members who disagree with the line of their party, who hold Schmidt and the SPD leadership responsible for having made it possible to throw the burden of the crisis onto the backs of the workers, and for having disarmed the working class, must fight for the SPD to draw the conclusions from these developments.

The SPD in opposition will no more turn to a socialist policy than it did in government. This was made explicit by Willy Brandt when he stated that the Social Democrats will not change their political line with the change in government.

For all these reasons it is necessary to put forward a political course that attacks the power of the employers instead of the completely failed line followed by the SPD leadership. It is important that all those who support a socialist solution to the crisis, who want to organise opposition to unemployment, social cuts and national chauvinism, who oppose the destruction of the environment, rearmament, and discrimination against women can present their own alternative in the coming federal elections. ■

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Crisis in the Argentinian dictatorship

Jorge BUARQUE

During the inauguration of the Bignone government, a top functionary said: "We're back in 1972." This remark summed up the Argentine political situation pretty well.

Clarín, one of the leading dailies in Buenos Aires, commented: "The difference is that it's worse now. Lanusse [who headed the fading military government in 1972] had the support of his lieutenants. Peron and Balbin were possible alternatives. And we were not coming out of a war in which we were defeated."

The defeat Argentina suffered at the hands of the British intervention force in June at a time when the dictatorship was being increasingly challenged within the country has opened up a new political situation.

A former minister of Galtieri summarized the main characteristics of this new stage rather well — a crisis of the military junta, fragility of the credible bourgeois alternatives, and the start of a slow process of recomposition of the workers movement after the grave defeat it suffered in March 1976 and the massive slaughter of its cadres by one of the bloodiest dictatorships in the history of Latin America.

WHY DID THE MILITARY JUNTA GO FOR DOUBLE OR NOTHING?

After the end of 1981, the military junta stepped up the warlike tone of its declarations. Using the conflict with Chile over the Beagle canal as a pretext, the dictatorship started up an intense campaign to prepare public opinion for a military undertaking. It was a classical recipe. The objective was to reconsolidate the unity of the military commands on the basis of a broad social consensus that would include the bourgeois opposition parties and neutralize democratic and workers struggle.

The fundamental objective of this military operation was to improve the national political situation for the dictatorship and not to oppose the imperialists in fact and still less to unleash a war. This has been confirmed by the revelations made since the military defeat.

The soldiers coming back from the Malvinas were not afraid of the censorship. They denounced not only the extreme cowardice of their officers but also the army's total lack of preparation for war. "We went off for a military parade

and not a war. We had no ammunition, nor the clothing and infrastructure to face the cold and British encirclement," a soldier said. All the eyewitness accounts confirm this judgment. General Lami Doza, chief of the airforce, has himself recognized that at least a third of the Argentine airplanes could not be used in combat because of innumerable technical problems.

Why then did the military junta decide to launch this operation? The decisive factor was the rise of workers struggles, which were making the political situation explosive and increasing the dictatorship's isolation. The March 30 demonstrations represented the peak of the workers resistance over the six years of the dictatorship. That was just a week before the landing in the Malvinas. This was the final argument that impelled the junta to launch the operation.

The dictatorship used every means available to stop the March 30 day of struggle. It stepped up social surveillance, went after the trade unionists, and tried to intimidate the movement (this was the objective, for example of the kidnapping of Ana Maria Martinez, an activist of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores).

Despite this, the demonstrations were a resounding success. Some details about them are not well known, and it is important to understand their real scope. The demonstration in Buenos Aires mobilized 15,000 persons, who clashed for hours with the enormous repressive array. The demonstrations in the provincial cities were also large.

What happened in Mendoza is a good example. The demonstration began peacefully with about 500 participants, and the police refused to obey orders to use force to stop it. Then the gendarmeria, a special unit known for its brutality, went into action, opening fire on the front ranks and killing a leader of the reform movement.

The local TV station was broadcasting live from the spot and showed the events to the entire population. The reaction was a clear indication of the political changes underway in Argentina and of the readiness of the workers to fight. The center of the city filled with demonstrators, who fought the repressive forces and drove them into retreat. Three more workers were killed in the fighting.

This radicalization reflects a working-class response to the economic and political crisis of the dictatorship. This crisis in fact grew qualitatively worse in 1981 and

the first five months of 1982. The economic indicators showed a drop in buying power of 51.5% between February 1981 and February 1982. Almost 30% of the population (some 3 million persons) are out of work. The Aleman-Galtieri economic plan is designed to raise this figure to 5 million! The level of wages of the working class is 30% lower than it was before the 1976 coup d'état. The official calculations themselves recognize that the drop in the real wages of public employees is at least about 40%.

Before the March 30 day of struggle, there were already various signs of the rebellion brewing among the population. In the southern zone of Buenos Aires — Bolano and Berazateguie — 45,000 persons occupied land to guarantee their right to housing. They set up occupation committees and resisted the repressive forces. The struggle for "Peace, Bread, and Work," the slogan of the demonstration, was spreading.

For the dictatorship, it was becoming urgent to alter this situation. That was what tipped the scales for the Malvinas operation.

AFTER 74 DAYS, A HUMILIATING MILITARY DEFEAT

The streets of Buenos Aires are still covered with posters on the Malvinas. Among the appeals, the patriotic proclamations, and the denunciations of Thatcher and the U.S., one poster stands out as the most colorful and the most widely circulated. It is "The Prayer of a Malvinas Soldier." Calling on Heaven for help, it begins with a plea for "my leaders."

The plea was fruitless. The 10,000 soldiers who fought in the Malvinas know that well, along with the rest of the Argentine population. The defeat was caused, first of all, by the inability of the military junta to fight imperialism. And it is essentially for that reason that the grave crisis now afflicting the military dictatorship was touched off.

In selecting the target of the military operation, Galtieri tried to avert confrontation. Why else would he have sent troops that were not prepared for war? Why also choose the Malvinas and not the Beagle canal, since it was evident that the Chilean dictatorship would be forced to fight for the same reasons as the Argentine one was. But Galtieri thought that Thatcher would not move in, as he explained clearly in an interview with

Oriana Fallaci. It is not impossible that this belief was fostered by information provided by the U.S. State Department representatives in Buenos Aires itself. According to this version, Washington was not only warned of the operation, but it gave the greenlight. It is not impossible that that is the way it happened. The February 28 coup in Spain has already illustrated the existence of parallel, and even contradictory, diplomatic operations within the State Department.

On the other hand, the choice of the Malvinas as a target for this military operation was designed to enable the government to exploit the anti-imperialist feelings of the Argentine people. Such sentiment exists, and it is a basic factor in the history of the country. It was expressed and deepened in the course of the war itself. British imperialism was and remains an enemy to be toppled. The Latin-American solidarity based on this sentiment was expressed most strongly in the monster demonstrations in Lima and the diplomatic activity of the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments.

However, despite the confusion that it created, and despite the reality of this anti-imperialist feeling, the dictatorship's political operation failed even before the outcome of its military venture was decided.

At the first mass rally in front of the presidential palace, the Casa Rosada, Galtieri was violently hooted when he tried to present himself as the representative of Argentina. After that, the demonstrations and rallies supporting the war effort shrunk rapidly. Despite its support for driving out British colonialism, the population did not mobilize actively because it did not want to support the military junta. And, in the absence of an independent working-class policy, the anti-imperialist struggle did not take a clear enough form.

The April 30 demonstration called to celebrate May Day by the CGT, the national union federation, with the support of the authorities, brought out no more than 2,000 persons. There were ten times this number the month before for a head-on cash with the police. The demonstrations on June 10, after the British Army had landed on the islands, drew no more than 3,000 persons.

The reason for this lack of popular support is clear. After six years of "The Process," with 30,000 missing persons (by comparison with 191 under the Brazilian dictatorship), and 15,000 political prisoners, with a third of the working class out of work and living from hand to mouth, and with a drop in the wages of those employed of more than 50%, the Argentine people could not place the least confidence in the dictatorship to fight the imperialist aggressors militarily.

Everything that happened shows that this distrust was justified. The junta refused to touch the imperialist economic interests in Argentina. It was unable to respond militarily and to mobilize the potential forces. The navy let the Belgra-

no be sunk. The army retreated, leaving its soldiers stranded. The airforce refused to continue fighting the last three days in order to cover the retreat of the army.

The political and military cowardice of the junta was exposed by the action of one of its exemplary representatives, Lieutenant Astiz. In 1976, he was responsible for the Navy Mechanics School, where prisoners were held and tortured, through which, according to Amnesty International, 4,700 men, women, and children passed. Only a hundred survived. Shortly after this, he was responsible for the operation to infiltrate the movement of the Mothers of the Plaza del Mayo and for the kidnapping and murder of 12 of them. Subsequently, he was in charge of infiltrating the exile organizations in Paris. And he was the first to surrender to the British.

ANTI-IMPERIALIST POLICY NEEDED FOR THE ARGENTINE WORKERS MOVEMENT

In deciding to launch the Malvinas operation, Galtieri managed for a moment to regain the initiative in domestic politics. First of all, he threw the workers offensive that started with the March 30 demonstrations out of gear. Next, the dictatorship accomplished its objective of getting the bourgeois operations and the trade union leaderships to accept an agreement for collaboration. The silence of these sectors about the employers' offensive (3,000 layoffs at Ford) and even about the continuation of kidnappings (three workers accused of being members of *Politica Obrera* were abducted on June 21 and 22) for a short period created favorable conditions for the junta's operation, since there was serious political confusion in the workers movement.

What was needed to counter the manoeuvres of the dictatorship was a clear line of class independence. It was necessary to keep up the fight against the dictatorship and find ways to build the anti-imperialist mobilizations around economic, political, and military measures that would have been effective in fighting the imperialists. Such a line was not put forward. The responsibility for this failure lies with the workers leaderships.

1. The Peronist trade-union leaders and the Partido Justicialista supported the junta and opposed any independent working-class mobilization. Lorenzo Miguel, the main leader of the CGT, went so far as to compare Galtieri to Peron! In an article published by the magazine *El Caudillo*, under the title "The Brothers Are United," the picture of Galtieri appeared with the following caption: "It is a long time since we have heard a president talk this way." In demanding a "military transition government, the Peronists made a compromise accepting the continuity of the military dictatorship. The Argentine Communist Party adopted a similar position.

2. The PST (the Argentine section of

the International Workers League) and *Politica Obrera*, organizations that claim to be Trotskyist, started by presenting a plan of anti-imperialist and anti-dictatorial demands, but they very rapidly dropped any perspective of an independent workers struggle. In fact, they dissolved themselves into the support for the patriotism of the junta. This evolution was particularly striking and scandalous in practice. Both parties organized festivals and collected money, as well as calling for compulsory contributions to be deducted from wages for a "Patriotic Fund Drive," launched and controlled by the dictatorship. They eliminated anti-dictatorial demands from their agitation, arguing "we are in the same military camp as the dictatorship."

3. Finally, other revolutionary groups failed to grasp the new situation. They kept on operating in their accustomed pattern, without changing their approach one iota. They held to a neutralist position toward the war.

In this situation, the political confusion deepened, and this enabled the dictatorship to manoeuvre freely during the initial weeks of the war. But the hatred of the dictatorship also deepened qualitatively after the surrender of Puerto Argentino.

A new more profound and more explosive crisis was brewing.

THE POLITICAL CRISIS AND THE REALIGNMENT OF THE BOURGEOIS FORCES

The military defeat precipitated the fall of Galtieri, after the refusal of the political parties to meet with the president to study the framework in which to continue "The Process." Bignone, put in office by the army on the basis of no more qualifications than the fact that he was not directly compromised in the war, was unable to restore the unity of the military commands.

A general, Delia Larroca, was in fact arrested for expressing criticisms about the conduct of the war. The airforce and the navy avoided committing themselves in the nomination of Bignone, who was thus put in office in violation of the political rules established by the military officers themselves.

Rumors went around Buenos Aires about possible pronunciamientos, as a result of the continuing dissension among the military officers. A new episode in this conflict erupted with the resignation of General Lami Dozo, chief of the airforce, who had openly advocated creating a party of the military to continue the "Process."

It is true that throughout the crisis the military maintained certain coordinating bodies. The Military Committee has been meeting since July 3 to study the progress of diplomatic moves with respect to the Beagle canal in particular. In reality, this military leadership has continued to function, the big difference being that none of

the three armed forces has been able to achieve political and military dominance.

In commenting to journalists about Bignone's installation, General Viola summed up the situation as follows: "We are living through an extraordinarily difficult situation. The question of the institutions of government has now become extremely delicate."

To restore the unity of the military, Bignone set as his first objective integrating the various currents in the army into the government. Thus, the cabinet includes ministers from all three of the preceding military dictatorships.

From Galtieri's cabinet, there is Ricardo for education and Castella for public health. From Onganía's cabinet, there is Pastore for economics and Bauer for public works. There is even a minister from Lanusse's time, Nosiglia for housing. This military team bears a clear responsibility for the repression. Major Minicucci, Bignone's liaison officer with the ministers was responsible for the concentration camps that were maintained outside Buenos Aires until 1978.

The aims of this government were defined by the chief of the army, Nicolaides: "It will be necessary to take advantage of this transitional period to achieve the following objectives: a) to reinforce our basic institutions; b) to use the support for the Malvinas campaign as the basis for genuine national unity; c) to assure by all respectable means a national solution." (*Clarín*, July 4.)

These are the outlines of a plan for a "controlled liberalization," involving considerable reinforcement of the repressive apparatuses and tight political control by the military officers. In his inauguration speech, Bignone said: "It must be clearly understood that any pursuit of personal or group special interests in the period that is opening up will do grave harm to the development that has been charted, and could provoke a major crisis in the country. This is true both as regards political behavior and socio-economic matters."

What is the most striking in this political crisis, and to a large extent determines its tempo, is the total unity between the military dictatorship and the bourgeois parties. All the bourgeois leaderships have declared in favor of Bignone and the continuation of the military regime:

The Multipartidaria is supporting Bignone on the basis of his promises of democratization. As for the main Peronist leader, Bittel, before he even knew that Bignone must take the presidency, he told *Folha da Sao Paulo*:

"A major effort has to be made to restore the credibility of the armed forces in the eyes of the Argentine people. If the new president does not assume that task, this possibility will be definitively compromised, because this would indicate that they were trying to find a new government formula within the circle of top military officers." (June 26, 1982.)

It is true that the National Commission of the Partido Justicialista demanded

in an official statement, dated July 2, "that there be a clarification of responsibilities." But its orientation is the same — collaboration with the military officers to organize the transition and later the formation of the government that will come out of the March 1983 elections.

The Peronist movement is still the major force in the electoral arena in Argentina, and it was the first current to take public initiatives after the end of the "moratorium on politics." Some 8,000 persons demonstrated to commemorate the anniversary of Evita's death, and 5,000 for the anniversary of Peron's death.

However, the Peronist current is deeply divided, and it does not seem able to achieve the minimum homogeneity for sustaining a government. This is one of the factors that led the Multipartidaria to discuss the difficult course of turning itself into an electoral front to organize a future civilian government, if the military chiefs keep their promises!

The trade-union bureaucracy has lined up with the Peronist positions. Lorenzo Miguel of the CGT told a journalist: "The country has an urgent need for moralization. You see the paradox, when people talk about the armed forces today and criticize them, it has to be kept clearly in mind that the man who was and remains our leader was a member of these armed forces. This is why we think that these institutions must serve the welfare of the Argentine people and in particular the workers." (*Clarín*, July 27.)

The other bourgeois forces have the same attitude, which was summed up brilliantly by Oscar Allende, the leader of the Partido Intransigente: "My party will not follow and will not support the new course of the military regime but it will not try to destabilize it either."

Finally, the church is strongly supporting the regime: "We appeal to all those responsible for leading and building the country, on all levels, to unite in the name of the common good, without any narrow self-interest, and in a spirit of liberality and fraternity, so that we can overcome one of the gravest dangers that the country has ever had to face — the possibility of the fragmentation of the state, which would represent failure for the entire community." (Resolution of the Executive Commission of the Conference of Bishops.) It was not until the last days in August that the church began to raise some timid questions about the situation of the "missing persons."

This broad compromise by all the bourgeois forces with the Bignone government has given the present political crisis a special twist. The breakdown of the dictatorship, accelerated by the divisions among the different military commands, has been aggravated by the breakdown of the bourgeois opposition parties, which have been deprived of their traditional leaders and are already divided by the support of different factions for several different candidates who have already declared that they will run for the presidency.

The option supported by the majority of the military officers is Bignone's accord with the Multipartidaria, which provides for elections on July 30, 1982, followed by a transfer of power to the new government. But in view of the conditions described above it by no means assures that the situation can be kept under control.

Thus, the country is entering into a period of prolonged political crisis and great instability. The way in which this crisis develops will depend essentially on whether the working class can regain the level of organization achieved at the time of the March 30 clashes. In this situation, the possibility of attempts at a military coup by sectors opposed to the process of liberalization cannot be ruled out. Such coups could be based on the strength of the repressive forces and would be designed to increase the military's manoeuvring room by striking a new repressive blow against the working class. They might be headed up by figures such as Lami Dozo or Onganía. The debate over which of these two roads to take is being conducted almost openly among the military officers.

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS — THE COST OF SIX YEARS OF THE "PROCESS"

The political crisis has been aggravated by the economic recession with which it has coincided. In 1950, Argentine production represented 25% of the total Latin-American production. In 1960, this proportion had already fallen to 19%, and in 1982, it was only 10%. (Aldo Ferrer, *Economie et Politique en Argentine*.)

The figures that testify to the gravity of the Argentine economic crisis vary somewhat from source to source. But they converge to show the following result of the monetarist policy that has been pursued. The 1981 domestic product was no more than the 1970 total. (Adolfo Canotro, *Jornal do Brasil*, August 1, 1982.)

According to the July 5 speech of Economics Minister Pastore, since 1974, there was only a 2% growth. In the first quarter of 1982, the domestic product dropped by 9.4% by comparison with the same period in the previous year (*Clarín*, July 4.) Moreover, the gross domestic industrial product is reportedly 30% lower today than it was in 1975 (*Folha de Sao Paulo*, August 20, 1982.)

During the first five months of the current year, the crisis reached its deepest point. According to the government's own figures, industrial employment fell by 25%. In reality, it must have fallen by about 30%. The internal market has contracted drastically — 56% less cars have been sold than in the same period in the preceding year (according to the figures of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry), and sales of light consumer goods have collapsed. The effect of this crisis on the traditional economy has

been disastrous, considering that 80% of Argentine businesses are oriented to the internal market. Unutilized industrial capacity rose from 41% to 46% (according to the figures of the Argentine university.

While it is true that in the first phase of the "Process" that businesses benefited from the reduction of wage costs, they quickly began to run into other problems: "If the disease doesn't kill you, the cure will." A study done of the main businesses showed that for 60% of them labor costs were only 5% of their total costs. On the other hand, financial costs represented 30% to 50% of total costs, and in some cases as much as 80%. The devaluation of capital and capital concentration have accelerated. According to Martinez de Hoz's ministry, 301 financial concerns went bankrupt.

The social effects of this policy speak for themselves. The proportion of the Gross National Product represented by wages has dropped from 50% in 1975 to 30% now. The drop in real wages may have reached 60%, according to INDEC's figures. The wage freeze in the public sector was the main means for controlling the budget deficit.

Shortly after the 1976 coup, the first violent attack was launched against buying power. Real wages were cut but through political repression rather than massive unemployment. In the first three quarters of 1976, real wages were 40% lower than the average for the preceding year and 30% lower than the average for 1960 (*Clarín* editorial, July 3). But the 1982 crisis has already taken on another aspect — a new, still more abrupt drop in buying power, combined with massive unemployment. The Aleman plan provided for increasing unemployment by about 50% in industry, that is, throwing about 5 million workers out of a job. Today, the Argentine economy is incapable of absorbing the social effects of these six years of dictatorship.

The policy of Pastora and Bignone (who was already a collaborator of Martinez de Hoz the father of Argentine monetarism) was designed to deal with this situation by a combination of measures in two stages: First a temporary, formal price freeze in order to regain room for manoeuvre in the negotiations with the Multipartidaria; and then a new reduction of domestic consumption in order to cutback imports and restore a balance of trade surplus, making it possible to pay back the foreign debt and negotiate new credits.

The bourgeois parties agree with this policy, which is going to cause enormous inflation. After the speech by Pastora which announced the devaluation of the peso Emilio Mondelli, minister of the Economy in the last Peronist government, had no difficulty in affirming that "The description of the situation is exact, and the proposed measures are the only ones that can be taken at the moment."

But there is no doubt that the employers have not accepted the short-term price freeze, still less will they accept negotiations aiming at a general wage rise. The president of the Argentine Industrial Union, Jacques Hirsch, explicitly declared, "In the present critical moments we have to reactivate the productive forces, but at the same time there is a risk of falling into a process of hyper-inflation. The conditions for free collective bargaining have not been restored, and the government must continue to fix the fundamental terms of the contracts."

The radicals had the same line, "In my opinion we would make a very grave error in trying to resolve the crisis by a massive rise in wages. This type of measure would rapidly lead to generalized price rises which would harm the eventual aim. Wage rises must be differential and cautious, only helping the lowest paid," (Enrique Vasquez, *Clarín*, June 27).

Thus, the Argentine bourgeoisie is sitting on a powder-keg. It has a very narrow room for negotiation. The possibilities of reforming this monster created by Martinez de Hoz are not very great either. Once more it is proven that only the political struggle of the working class can bring a radical response to the crisis. As Hegel said, "In South America the republics only rest on military power, and their whole history is a continuous revolution."

THE PRESENT STAGE OF THE STRUGGLE FOR A WORKERS PARTY

In this context, which can be summarised as the crisis of the military dictatorship, fed by its economic policy as much as by the humiliating defeat in the Malvinas, the struggle to build a Workers Party in Argentina takes on more and more immediacy. It already means more than just propaganda or education.

While Peronist populism is still hegemonic in the working class it no longer has the strength of attraction that it regained with the last return of Peron. In addition, the agreement between Bignone and the Multipartidaria worsens its crisis.

On the other hand the Argentine working class has an experience and tradition of political and trade-union struggle far superior to that of the Brazilian working class for example. The construction of a party of workers could take root more quickly and deeply.

The example of a recent workers strike, in which the workers took to the streets with posters of Jean-Paul II and Lula indicates the impact of the Workers Party experience in Brazil.

This is why the construction of an Argentine Workers Party is already an

organizational and agitational task. Certainly its concretization depends on the evolution of the CGT and the trade-union organization. Two new factors influence this evolution. First of all the manoeuvres of the dictatorship against the CGT have increased. A CGT-Azopardo has been created (see *International Viewpoint* No. 10, July 5, 1982), to which the government has given the former headquarters of the CGT in Azopardo street. This brings together all the most class-collaborationist sectors of the bureaucracy: the 20 who remained in the union administration during this period, constituting the most conciliatory wing towards the regime; and the CNT, the sectors who have abandoned the traditional political organization of Peronism.

Secondly, the historic leaders of the CGT itself (today called the CGT-Brazil, after the street where its headquarters is sited) is looking for recognition from the government and collaboration with it. Saul Ubaldini, the secretary of the CGT, and the other leaders were present at the investiture ceremony for the Minister of Labor.

This process is aggravating the contradictions within the CGT which has organized different mobilizations against the dictatorship: the two "strikes" of April 27, 1979 and July 22, 1981, the rally of November 1981, and the demonstrations of March 30, 1982. This experience is stimulating the interventions of certain political factions of the trade-union bureaucracy, including certain union leaders personally inclined to support the formation of a workers party.

The strikes which took place in August indicate a tendency towards the possibility of big workers struggles in the coming months, and confirm the process of radicalization and politicization in the working class. The struggle of the bus drivers which won their demands, and above all the struggle led by SMATA (the militant auto workers union), are the most advanced expression of this tendency. The auto workers are an extraordinary example. Some 800 demonstrated at Mercedes Benz and 2,500 occupied the centre of Buenos Aires on August 19. The police did not intervene. The leader of SMATA, Pepe Rodriguez, suspended in 1976, spoke to call for a struggle against the military dictatorship and to present a plan for action over the next weeks.

The confidence of the workers in their own strength has been increased through these initiatives. The wage demands are becoming generalized. Factory Committees are being organized. The working class is reorganizing, drawing on all the experience of its previous traditions, and becoming a protagonist in the evolution of the political situation. The fight for a Workers Party is linked to the totality of these elements and is a product of the necessity to unify these forces against the dictatorship.

This is where the future of the dictatorship and of the Argentine working class will be decided. ■

A new wave of repression in Poland

The hundreds of thousands of people who participated in the street demonstrations on Tuesday August 31, to celebrate the anniversary of the signing of the Gdansk Agreement in 1980 clearly showed the strength of Solidarnosc. General Jaruzelski and his police did not hesitate to kill five demonstrators.

However on Monday September 13, the date on which Poland entered the tenth month of the state of war, thousands of workers again took to the streets. At the Huta Lenina steel-works in Cracow — the biggest workplace in the country — the young workers formed a contingent at the factory gate to go to the town. In Wroclaw the militia were assailed from all sides by groups of demonstrators.

All this is witness to the desire of the masses to finish with the state of siege, the determination of the working class in its rejection of the bureaucratic military dictatorship, and the deep desire of the masses to reconquer the gains they won from August 1980.

The worsening of the economic situation can only increase the exasperation of a working class which, for eighteen months, denounced the parasitism of the bureaucracy and stated its wish and its ability to take affairs into its own hands. The 'normalisation' policy of the Military Council of National Salvation (WRON) has already led to a drop of thirty per cent in buying power. Everything indicates that this will continue.

The bureaucracy has proved that it has nothing to offer to workers, except bloody and brutal repression. The ZOMO (motorised police reserves) do not hesitate to shoot at point blank range on workers and the crowd, as they did at the mine at Wujek on Wednesday December 16, 1981, or at Lublin on August 31. Fierce new confrontations are looming on the horizon. Warsaw and Moscow are preparing themselves.

The regime is stepping up repression. More and more convictions are being handed down. For distributing leaflets, or participating in strikes or demonstrations, more than 2,000 militants have been sentenced to 4, 5, indeed 10 years in prison.

Thousands of workers have been sacked for having said no to the despotism of the bureaucrats by go-slows at work, supporting the demands of Solidarnosc, in showing their solidarity with their companions suffering the repression.

In the camps fenced with barbed wire the regime has begun to 'stop' militants — at the moment primarily those from the KOR (Social Self-Defence Committees) — and begin trials of them. The junta accuses them of conspiracy aiming to 'overthrow the government of people's Poland by force'.

Once more these attacks against Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Jan Litynski, Henryk Wujek, and Jan Jozef Lipski show General Jaruzelski's wish to find scapegoats, and to do everything to divide the movement between the advisors of Solidarnosc, intellectuals and workers. In accusing Jacek Kuron and his comrades of 'terrorism' the bureaucracy is trying in vain to present them as provocateurs, responsible for the present repression and the maintenance of the state of war.

But the Polish workers have shown more than once that they have not been fooled by these manoeuvres. The leadership of Solidarnosc underground, the Provisional Commission for Co-ordination (TKK) has already declared, in taking up the struggle for liberty for the former members of KOR, 'This measure opens the way for other show trials which aim to put trade union militants out of social life for long years. The KOR affair is only a beginning. Afterwards other internees will be called to appear before the tribunals under false accusations.'



The Polish workers and Solidarnosc should find support that is as strong as their own determination within the international workers movement. For some months it has been proved that only the workers are prepared to actively help the struggle of the Polish workers and the underground trade union. What is surprising in this? Attacks on trade-union freedoms and the workers movement are the outcome of the bourgeoisie's policy of austerity. The only preoccupation of the bankers and their allies is that 'order' be definitively re-established to assure the payment of the interest due on the Polish debt.

The interests of Polish workers converge with those of workers throughout the world. But for a real solidarity campaign to exist it is necessary to build it, to break from routine. Those who limit themselves to declarations of good intent must be forced to act. We should denounce the hypocrisy of those who refuse to actively mobilise because they have in their heads a project of reconciliation between the Polish workers and the junta, aiming ultimately to make them accept the bureaucratic yoke.

The leaderships of the workers organisations are today put to the test: the breadth of the campaign against the intended trials of the KOR leaders and for the freeing of all political prisoners will give the measure of the desire to give resolute and unconditional support to the demands and struggles of millions of Polish workers.

In the workers movement revolutionaries must do everything to launch concrete solidarity initiatives, to win broad and united mobilisation against repression:

- Free Lech Walesa, Jacek Kuron and their comrades!
- Lift the state of war!
- Restore democratic and trade-union rights!

Bureau of the United Secretariat of the *FOURTH INTERNATIONAL* Friday, September 17, 1982.

What strategy for Solidarnosc?

The following article by the editors of *Inprekor*, the Polish language journal of the Bureau of the Fourth International, was published in issue No. 5 of that magazine. It has recently been printed also in issue No. 6 of *Veto*, the clandestine bulletin of the Committee for Social Self-Defense (*Komitet Oporu Społecznego — KOS*), which is published in Poznan.

In May 1982, the underground Solidarnosc leaders in Wrocław, a city in the southwestern part of the country, as well as leaders in Warsaw called for preparing for a general strike. They envisaged factory occupations that would be actively defended. The calls of these leaders were echoed shortly afterward by those of underground leaders in other regions.

Along with this, the Warsaw Regional Executive Commission announced that "the present forms of expressing our refusal to accept the existing state of affairs — such as 15 minute protest strikes or 15 minute blackouts — are suspended in our region." (1)

On June 26, the Provisional Coordinating Committee of Solidarity (TKK) decided to suspend all strikes and demonstrations throughout the country until the end of July. It announced that this period "would be used by the union to develop and reinforce its organizational structures and to prepare for a general strike, if the circumstances oblige us to resort to one."

In the first months of the "state of war," the symbolic resistance actions undoubtedly played an important role. But they have finally shown their limitations, at least as the main form of resistance.

The work stoppages carried out in several regions, and even the May 13 warning strike called by the TKK, have been assessed in varying ways. The reactions of the Warsaw trade-union activists collected after the Thursday, May 13, actions testify to this. They did strengthen the combativity and self-organization of the working class. But the results obtained were not commensurate with the work that had to go into building them.

Still worse, the price that the strikers in many plants had to pay proved too high. The military dictatorship fired a lot of workers after these strikes. On the other hand, Zbigniew Romaszewski, a member of the Warsaw regional leadership and director of Radio Solidarnosc,

explained that the workers "are ready to take much greater risks, if they know that this 'will be their final combat'." (2)

TOWARD OVERCOMING THE CRISIS OF STRATEGY

The strategy of a one-sided "war of position" put forward by some Solidarnosc activists, especially in the Warsaw region, has thus been shown to be inadequate and contrary to the dynamic of the movement. Instead of confining themselves to building the structures of a clandestine society, as dictated by the basic lines of this strategy, the working masses came onto the streets in impressive demonstrations. These actions very quickly led to street confrontations.

The elements of a "war of movement" had accompanied the forms of a "war of position" earlier — in the form of strikes — after May 1. But now these elements began to come to the forefront. However, all this happened in a spontaneous way. The street battles were fought without any knowledge of the tactics of this form of struggle.

It was in such conditions, for example, that the clashes took place in the Cracow marketplace on May 13, when the ZOMO (riot police) brutally attacked a defenseless crowd. Some even say that on this occasion the movement suffered an important defeat.

On this question, a clandestine bulletin says: "After being broken up several times, crowds can become demoralized, they can become prey to feelings of helplessness, or even yield to panic. Visible signs of this appeared after the Thursday, May 13, demonstrations.

"The plainclothes cops had no difficulty in arresting people in the crowd who had been picked out beforehand. And this was the same crowd that a few minutes earlier had attacked the water cannon in Grodzka street. After the 13th, there were no more demonstrations, and the wall slogans have disappeared. This shows how much time it takes society to recover from this sort of thing(3)."

It is not the natural bastions of the working class, the big industrial plants, that have been the theater of this "war of movement."

"The May 1 and 3 demonstrations that testified strikingly to the strength of the resistance to the military-party dictatorship not only by their form but also by their social composition, differed from

the July-August 1980 strikes. While there was no lack of workers in the streets, it was the university student youth, the nonindustrial workers, and youth of high school age that were the majority. They did not put forward slogans different from those projected by workers Solidarnosc. They themselves did not perceive any difference between themselves and the workers Solidarnosc. The workers — to our knowledge — did not regard the demonstrators as outsiders. But it is, nonetheless, true that this spring the resistance has been led by sectors of the society that were in a minority in Solidarnosc.(4)."

There is no doubt but that at this point the strategy that had been pursued by the resistance movement went into crisis. On Friday, May 7, Bogdan Lis, a member of the Gdansk regional leadership, wrote to Zbigniew Bujak, chairman of the Warsaw region:

"I have reported on the meeting of the TKK, and I have conveyed to representatives of the big plants the position of the four regions on strategy and tactics of action. They were all downcast. They all thought that if there is no decisive action, if people are not convinced that we are preparing for a general strike to force a national understanding, even at the price of a major compromise — we will have no support (5)."

Shortly after this, the workers in several dozen big plants in the Warsaw region demanded that the regional Executive Commission (RKW) prepare for a general strike.

The call for a general strike is a decisive event.

In the first place, it means that the dynamic of the movement is inexorably linking forms of a "war of movement" with those of a "war of position." A general strike is the major form of a "war of movement" available to the working class.

Even the Solidarnosc activists who declared for a "war of position" have been forced by the dynamic of the resistance itself — since as spontaneous street

1. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 16, Warsaw, July 2, 1982.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Głos wolny, wolność ubezpieczający*, No. 19, May 30, 1982.

4. "Le printemps polonais: dans les rues?" (anonymous article from Poland), *Bulletin d'Information* of the Comité de coordination du syndicat Solidarnosc en France, No. 21.

5. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 15, May 27, 1982.

confrontations developed, the resistance started getting out of the control of the movement's coordinating bodies — to recognize that they could not exclude the forms of a "war of movement" or relegate them to a limited tactical role. In fact, such forms appeared regardless, even if they were neither planned nor organized.

Secondly, the call for a general strike means that the working class is taking an increasingly negative attitude to both symbolic acts of passive resistance and limited strikes, which are costly and offer no perspective.

On the other hand, the workers are favorable to, and ready for, actions of strategic scope, battles that would be at least decisive if not final, which could concentrate all the energy of the working class and the other oppressed sections of society rallied around it, battles that could lead to decisive gains, actions that, in other words, would oblige the bureaucracy if not to withdraw from the scene, at least to yield considerable ground.

— Thirdly, the call for a general strike — that is, the carrying of a "war of movement" into the factories and fighting it there — is the confirmation of the basically proletarian character of the resistance to the military dictatorship. From the outset, since the summer of 1980, this has been the character of the Polish revolution, not only because of its working-class social content and the leading role that the working class has played in it but also because working-class forms of struggle — economic and political mass strikes — have been the main form of struggle for the mass movement as a whole. The resistance has maintained all these features of the Polish revolution:

"The decisive struggle will begin where the previous struggle left off — behind the walls of the factories from which the independent workers union drew its strength. In the wake of the spectacular street demonstrations, the process of regaining self-confidence through solidarity in successful strike action has already begun and is continuing to grow. This time, there is a feeling of self-confidence radiating from the factory walls and from the workers behind them(6)."

In taking the decision to prepare for a general strike, we have to realize what a momentous decision this is for the leadership of the mass movement, how great a responsibility it involves, and the fact that has a historic importance. We have to realize the character that any real general strike and what conditions are necessary for it to lead to success. In fact, general strikes are governed by certain laws that have to be strictly observed.

In the first place, it has to be understood that a general strike is a large-scale revolutionary action by the masses, by the entire mass movement; that it means we are moving into an openly revolutionary situation. Trotsky wrote, in this regard: "... the general strike is not possible except under the condition of extreme political tension, and that is why it is always the incontestable expression

of the revolutionary character of the situation(7)."

From this it follows that the launching of such a strike must reflect the fact that the masses are ready for a revolutionary action, and that all the component parts of the Solidarnosc network are prepared to engage in such a struggle.

In the writings of the Solidarnosc leaders, two tendencies can be perceived now, which if they persist, could reduce the chances for the victory of a general strike. One is represented, for example, by Zbigniew Bujak, who wrote a letter dated Friday, May 21, to Bogdan Lis, commenting on the attitude of the workers in the big plants in Gdansk who were expressing their support for a general strike: "Explain to them that because of the character of this strike (active self-defense), it would amount to a revolution (overthrowal of the government)."



Solidarnosc resists (DR)

Bujak was right. The entire working class has to realize that this is a revolutionary action of great scope, and that it means taking the road that leads to overthrowing the bureaucratic regime. But, contrary to what Bujak says, a general strike will not necessarily end in either the defeat of the movement or the overthrow of the bureaucracy. As we will show further on in this article, it is possible to envisage a partial defeat for the bureaucracy and a correspondingly partial victory for the mass movement.

Zbigniew Bujak continues further on: "If they accept that, explain to them that the TKK can prepare to lead such a strike and that we are beginning such preparations, but I personally will not be the one to call such a strike. In fact, issuing such a call is tantamount to sending thousands of people to their deaths, and they cannot ask me to assume such a responsibility. What the TKK can do is to take the leadership of a strike that has already begun, one called for example by the Lenin Shipyards, or the Inter-Enterprise Committee in Gdansk, or by the Network of Big Factories.

Assuming the leadership of such a strike (if we are prepared for it) will make it possible to cut the losses through a coordinated resistance(8)."

We cannot agree with such an attitude. If a general strike becomes an immediate question, the TKK cannot wait to assume the leadership until it is initiated by the rank and file. It must take responsibility for assuring that the necessary groundwork for it is laid, and not just at the level of the plants and coordination between them. (Among other things, assuring effective coordination among the plants requires linking up the inter-enterprise committees that exist in various regions or establishing liaison, by radio for example, between the plants during the strike, as is proposed by Zbigniew Romaszewski.)

In the preparatory stage itself, the TKK has to assure that there is a centralized strike leadership in every region and

on the national scale, as well as the basis for united and planned action. It must take the responsibility for issuing the call for the general strike and setting the date for its commencement.

As Wladyslaw Frasyniuk, a Wroclaw region leader said back in April when he raised the question of such a strike: "The society must be prepared, it has to be kept in a state of conscious preparedness, and the most favorable time chosen. The society has to be prepared for seizing such an opportunity(9)."

The responsibilities of the leaders of the movement have to be understood as Zbigniew Romaszewski says:

"I assume the responsibilities I have when I accepted a mandate to the national and regional leadership. I am responsible not only for given decisions but for the absence of decisions, for the fact that Solidarnosc is in danger of paralysis and our country, of Czech-style

6. "Le printemps polonais: dans les rue?".
7. Leon Trotsky, "Once Again, Whither France," *Leon Trotsky on France*, Monad, New York, 1979, p. 94.

8. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 15.

9. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 13, May 12, 1982.

normalization. I am responsible for disorganized actions that could end in bloodshed and have no effect(10)."

Another dangerous tendency, on the other hand, is reflected by Romaszewski. He points out correctly that the December 1981 defeat was due in particular "to the fact that the demands put forward by Solidarnosc were out of line with the means it was prepared to use." The means were in fact too limited. On the other hand, he makes the same error today, but in reverse, maintaining that "only a combination of total determination by the society and limited demands can force the regime to compromise(11)."

A disproportion between means and ends — in both cases — can lead to defeat. And this danger is not any the less when the demands put forward are too limited, by comparison with the means employed in the struggle to achieve them. It is precisely such an error that threatens Solidarnosc today.

THE GENERAL STRIKE AND THE QUESTION OF POWER

Every large-scale revolutionary struggle, and therefore any general strike, has to be armed with an action program. In building a general strike, such a program has to be put forward. Its precise formulation and popularization play a dual role. First, only this program being taken up by the broad masses, by the whole mass movement, makes it possible to determine when the latter is really ready for a general strike. Secondly, the program makes it possible to advance the consciousness and combativity of the masses, and this plays a fundamental role in the preparation of the strike itself.

This is why, while it is correct and necessary "to organize a poll of the factories to find out when they are ready for the strike and what forms it should take (11)" — as the Warsaw Regional Executive (RKW) proposes — this is in itself insufficient. Such consultation should also be carried out with respect to the action program, that is, the immediate and transitional aims to be achieved by the strike.

Such a program must correspond to the nature of the general strike. It should obviously include all the most pressing demands of the mass movement represented by Solidarnosc. But the question has to be raised where these demands should lead.

They can be divided into two categories — demands that can be met within the limits of the military dictatorship and those that can be met within the framework of the bureaucratic dictatorship in general (military dictatorship being only one of the possible forms of the bureaucratic regime).

The release of all the political prisoners is conceivable, although not very likely, within the framework of the military dictatorship. The military government, feeling its grip slipping, might agree to this in order to maintain its rule.

On the other hand, the other two demands presently being put forward by

the movement — rescinding of the state of siege and reestablishment of trade-union rights — can only be achieved through the overthrow (or forced resignation) of the military dictatorship. However, winning them does not require overthrowing the bureaucratic regime right away but only being able to force it to make concessions.

All these demands must be included in Solidarnosc's program for building the general strike. Not only are they not too ambitious but, they are insufficient for such a strike. "Nothing can be on a higher plane than the general strike, except the armed insurrection. The entire history of the working class movement proves that every general strike, whatever may be the slogans under which it occurs, has an internal tendency to transform itself into an open revolutionary clash, into direct struggle for power(12)."



This is sort of a "law of movement" of general strikes.

"The fundamental importance of the general strike, independent of the partial successes which it may and then again may not provide, lies in the fact that it poses the question of power in a revolutionary manner. By shutting down the factories, transport, and in general all the means of communication, power stations, etc., the proletariat by this very act paralyzes not only production but also the government. The state power remains suspended in midair. It must either subjugate the proletariat by famine and force and constrain it to set the apparatus of the bourgeois state once again in motion, or retreat before the proletariat (13)."

These statements also hold for bureaucratic states, although we must not forget certain special features of such regimes. The bureaucracy can resist generalized work stoppages better than the bourgeoisie because, unlike the capitalists, it is not a class integrated into the process of production but only a parasitic layer. As a result, a general strike would have to be long to break its resistance. The danger of famine, therefore, is greater.

If only for this reason, it is necessary to envisage going from a passive general strike to an active strike in more and more plants as the strike continues. With respect to the active strike affecting most of the north Italian factories in 1920, Trotsky stressed that such an action meant in reality establishing workers power: "... all that was lacking was to organize it, and to draw from it all the necessary conclusions(14)."

In fact, an active strike poses the question of power still more forcefully than a passive occupation strike. Commenting on this active strike while it was spreading, Antonio Gramsci asked: "Will not all these proletarian republics, which is what the factories occupied and run by the workers are, not be constrained by the force of historical development to federate and to organize in a united way to counterpose their own central power to the bourgeois power (15)?"

What are the conclusions to be drawn from all this? Let us go back again to Trotsky's reflections on the general strike:

"The leaders of the proletariat must understand this internal logic of the general strike, unless they are not leaders but dilettantes and adventurers. Politically this implies that from now on the leaders will continue to pose before the proletariat the task of the revolutionary conquest of power. If not they must not venture to speak of the general strike (16)."

This is essential to judge whether the mass movement represented by Solidarnosc is prepared to put forward and to fight consistently to achieve the demands that are necessary in any general strike.

However, all this does not mean that a general strike can achieve victory only if

10. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 16.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Leon Trotsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

14. Leon Trotsky, *The Struggle against Fascism in Germany*, New York, 1977, p. 189.

15. Antonio Gramsci, *Ecrits politique*, I, p. 385.

16. Leon Trotsky, "Once Again, Whither France," p. 100.

the military dictatorship and the rule of the bureaucracy in general are overthrown, being replaced by workers power in the cities and countryside. The general strike can lead to a partial victory, to a compromise between the state and the society. But two questions have to be taken into account.

-- First, there is no way to reconcile the interests of the working class and the great majority of society with those of the bureaucracy. They are and will remain diametrically opposed. Thus there can be no "historic compromise" between them. Degenerate and isolated, the bureaucratic regime by its nature can only be totalitarian, and it will remain so as long as it survives. Under such a regime, the working class and the society cannot be self-managed.

Only a tactical compromise is possible, not a strategic one. If the latter is achieved, it will be the expression not of an inclination of the bureaucracy to seek a "national understanding" but only a concession to the power and determination of the mass movement. It will be the expression of a relationship of forces existing at a given moment between opposing camps, a relative balance making it impossible for either to achieve total victory. It will thus be a ceasefire, and at the same time the prelude to new and violent struggles.

Such a compromise will not form the basis for any "national accord." (This is the utopian and muddled perspective put forward by the authors of an action program that is circulating clandestinely in Poland(17).) The following approach is more useful:

"Let us face reality — basic democratic rights cannot be reestablished in Poland, Solidarnosc cannot be rebuilt without overthrowing the dictatorship installed on Sunday, December 13. The hope for a national accord was destroyed on that day by the regime itself.

"While the idea of an accord itself has managed to survive, it can only be achieved in opposition to this regime. That is what is happening. A real national accord is growing up every day in the underground organizations, in the factories, the universities, the prisons, and the internment camps. People of differing opinions and with different political pasts are coming together in such an accord.

"All that is lacking is a link up between these various milieus and the various regions for this accord to take on a fully national character(18)."

We agree with these remarks, which are taken from the bulletin of the Inter-enterprise Workers Committee of Warsaw.

-- Secondly, even if it does not solve the question of power — and it is probable that it will not — a general strike will pose this question forcefully. If the bureaucracy is forced by intolerable pressure to make a tactical compromise, the only way that the mass movement will be able to keep this partial victory from being wrested later from its grasp is to take proper advantage of it to transform the relationship of forces achieved through

the struggle into a more or less advanced situation of dual power.

To build a situation of dual power — that is what is necessary to win a partial victory in the general strike, and that is the meaning that such a partial victory has. The conclusions of this have to be drawn and presented in Solidarnosc's action program for building a general strike.

THE QUESTION OF POWER IN THE ACTION PROGRAM

The first demand that has to be included in the action program is for the release of all the activists of Solidarnosc and other independent organizations whether sentenced after being tried or interned without trial.

"In every war," as Zbigniew Romaszewski has correctly pointed out, "even in a war waged by a government against its own people, one principle is observed — the question of prisoners has to be discussed before there can be any talk about agreements. Otherwise, any accord would be only a capitulation, capitulation all the more grave because it would weaken out most important weapon — our solidarity (19)."

The second point of the program has to be the demand for ending the state of war and therefore the military dictatorship.

Finally, the program has to include the demand for the reestablishment of trade-union and democratic rights in general that were won between August 1980 and December 1981. In particular, this means fully restoring the freedom of action of the independent self-managed union Solidarnosc, with its present statutes, all its democratic elected leaderships, its organizational structures, and the programmatic resolution adopted at its First National Congress of Delegates chosen by the masses.

However, these are only immediate demands. Along with them, Solidarnosc's action program must include more advanced demands representing the elements of a transitional program. In fact, those demands that can be won under bureaucratic rule cannot be severed from the goal proclaimed in the political resolution of the First National Congress of Solidarnosc, the building of a self-managed republic.

Such demands cannot be isolated from the strategic aim that the Polish working class adopted after August 1980, when it took up the struggle for genuine socialism — that is, a democratic system run for the workers by the workers. And in this struggle, the Polish proletariat linked workers democracy and republican democracy with a genuine socialization of the major means of production. The precondition for achieving this goal is overthrowing the rule of the bureaucracy. The demands that, when achieved, will make it possible to open up the road leading to this goal must, therefore, have a place in the action program.

We think that partial gains in the realm of political democracy, such as the

achievement of the immediate demands already mentioned, must be complemented by at least some limited gains that will provide a basis for protecting the society from the dangers that imperil its material existence. These are gains that will make it possible to shield the society from the effects of the economic crisis and will open up the way for waging an effective struggle against this crisis.

A social (working class) program for combating the crisis — for combating the spectre of famine, poverty, massive unemployment, and more generally the final collapse of our national economy — has to be, therefore, an integral part of Solidarnosc's action program.

There are two social priorities today — assuring full employment for all workers and guaranteeing the socially necessary minimum living standard for all citizens. The achievement of these objectives must be the basic goal of social and economic planning in the near future.

The goal of production cannot be the profitability of the individual enterprise, which is an expression of the market economy, but rather the satisfaction of the most pressing social needs, which is the expression of cooperation among the producers.

This means that it will often be necessary to maintain production in one or another plant or to start it up even when the costs of such production are higher than the average costs in a given industry. However, the real costs of production in all enterprises have to be clear. The society must know how much it "pays" and why, and at the same time the total subsidies cannot exceed the sum of the income gained by the other enterprises.

The establishment of workers control over production and distribution (including over rationing, and in fact such a check was established in the fall of 1981 by Solidarnosc in the Lodz region), workers control over all the enterprises, has to be the axis of a program for fighting the crisis. Therefore, it should be the main demand in this part of Solidarnosc's action program.

In 1932, Trotsky wrote:

"In contemporary Germany, under the conditions of the present crisis, control over industry signifies control not only over the operating but also over the partly operating and shut-down industries. This pre-supposes participation in control by those workers who worked in those industries prior to their dismissal. The task must consist of setting the dead industries into motion, under the leadership of factory committees on the basis of an economic plan (20)."

17. W. Brzoza, S. Dobry, J. Kowalski, A. Malinowski, *Aout apres Decembre: programme de lutte pour un Etat d'entente nationale*, mimeo., 1982.

18. CDN, No. 2, April 17, 1982.

19. Remarks by Zbigniew Romaszewski on Radio Solidarnosc, Warsaw, April 30, 1982, reprinted in Polish in *Inprekor*, No. 4, April-May 1982; in French in *Inprekor*, No. 127, May 31, 1982.

20. Leon Trotsky, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, p. 242.

Let us be specific about the sort of plans involved:

"If it appears that in a given enterprise stopping production would benefit the society more than continuing, the workers concerned must be given the time to draw up an alternative plan. In this time, the workers, under the leadership of their council and with the involvement of the union, must develop a plan for a new kind of socially useful production, on the basis of the available machines and raw materials, so that the enterprise can resume operations and maintain the present level of employment (21)."

It is necessary, therefore, to demand the reestablishment of freely elected workers councils. Such councils should have the status of workers control. At the same time, since any tactical compromise is only a prelude to new struggles, they must be means for organizing the fight for self-management. They have to prepare the workers to take power in the plants and the working class as a whole to establish a system of self-management throughout industry and in commerce and all other economic activity. This involves building up a vertical structure, coordination, and cooperation, and thus democratically centralizing the self-management bodies.

Workers control is a form transitional to self-management. This is the way it was understood, to cite a Polish example, by the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). Under the influence of this party, the National Council of Ministers of the clandestine state approved, on August 1, 1944 — the the Warsaw uprising was launched — a call for plant councils (which is what they called workers councils then).

A PPS activist later wrote: "The decree on plant councils, which reflected a determination to socialize the means of production and at the same time a way of assuring this, introduced democratic principles into the internal life of the factories and the mines. It established the principle of workers participation in running the plants and supervising production. It was a first step toward workers management.

"This decree, which was drawn up in the underground, called for setting up a system of workers representation and pointed toward the introduction of a system of planned economy, which is a form of transition to socialism (22)."

The setting up of such workers control in the present conditions would mean the burgeoning of a situation of dual power in industry and in the state sector of the economy as a whole, since the system of workers control "has a contradictory character, presenting a sort of economic interregnum." (23)

The bureaucracy will no longer hold total and exclusive power over the means of production and, likewise its monopoly of power in the state will be cut into. In this respect, Trotsky wrote:

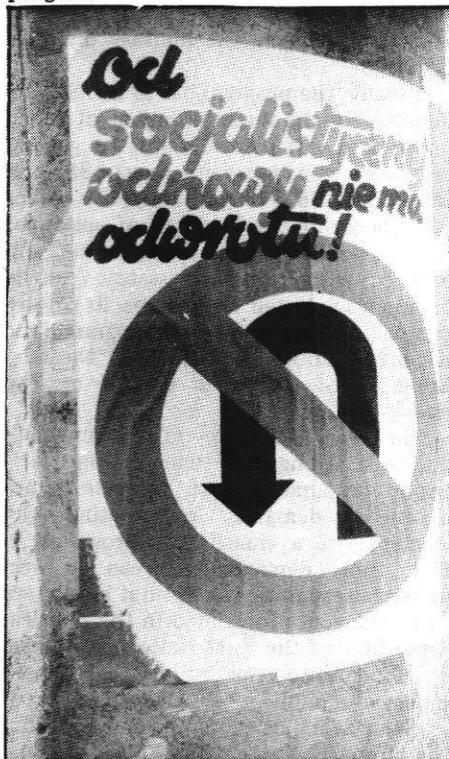
"This means that to the regime of dual power in the factories corresponds the regime of dual power in the state.

"This correspondence, however, should not be understood mechanically, that is, not as meaning that dual power in the enterprises and dual power in the state are born on one and the same day."

In certain conditions, Trotsky writes, and we have to take into account the possibility of such conditions existing in Poland if a general strike leads to a partial victory for Solidarnosc; "... workers' control of production can come considerably ahead of developed political dual power in a country (24)."

The demand for workers control should be complemented by one for citizens control over the organs of local administration. Only national councils, chosen through free elections — in the beginning at least at the elementary level — can be the means of exercising such a control (and at the same time be organs of struggle for territorial self-management).

Such a demand appears even in the Theses of the Social Council of the Primate of Poland (mimeographed, Warsaw, 1982), which take a very moderate line toward the bureaucratic regime. So, all the more, such a demand must be part of Solidarnosc's action program.



It is impossible to foresee what the relationship of forces between the regime and the society will be at the moment a general strike proves victorious. It cannot be excluded that such a strike will overthrow the rule of the bureaucracy. Nor can it be excluded that the new relationship of forces will be reflected in a large-scale situation of dual power. It is also possible that economic power — following the development of active strikes in a large number of plants — will pass into the hands of the working class and may be institutionalized in the framework of a Self-Management Chamber or Socio-Economic Chamber of the Diet, while at

the same time political power remains in the hands of the bureaucracy. It is possible at the first only at the economic level through the growth of workers and social control in this sphere.

That is the minimum that we should seek in undertaking a general strike, that is in posing the question of power. Solidarity should fight for such control with the same energy, the same determination, the same assurance as it fights for the release of its activists, and for the reestablishment of trade-union rights.

We stress that this is the program necessary for undertaking the strike. But there is no reason why more advanced demands could not grow out of the strike itself. They could go beyond the call for workers and social control over the economy to calling for the immediate institution of workers and territorial self-management.

SELF-DEFENCE, AGITATION IN THE ARMY AND POLICE FORCES, AND THE ACTIVE STRIKE

Let us now consider, apart from an action program corresponding to the laws of the general strike, what the other conditions are for the success of such a strike.

First of all, as the Solidarnosc regional leaders in Warsaw, Gdansk, and other places have correctly stressed, during a general strike it will be necessary to organize self-defense in all the plants.

With respect to the factories affected by occupation strikes, Antonio Gramsci writes: "Military defense of the factory is the first and foremost problem confronting the citizens of the factory-state." At the same time, he noted: "The workers are prepared to accept self-defense as an obligation for all, and that is correct, but at the same time they have a tendency to think that this obligation should be met by everyone without exception and right away. This is already an error. Military defense has to be organized by special detachments (25)."

This is why the preparation for active self-defense has to go hand in hand with the setting up in the factories of detachments of workers guards under the control of the union Solidarnosc. The latter must be prepared to defend the plants but to avoid the street demonstrations that are often to be staged during the strike. To draw a section of the repressive forces away from the occupied factories.

During the period preparatory to the strike, the organization of the workers guards should take simple form; at least, that is what is indicated by the experience of the workers movement. This means small groups of three, five, or ten persons under the orders of a guard

21. Zbigniew Kowalewski, "Solidarnosc et la lutte pour l'autogestion des travailleurs," Lodz, 1982, pp. 24-25.

22. Z. Zaremba, *La commune de Varsovie*, p. 41.

23. Leon Trotsky, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

25. Antonio Gramsci, *op. cit.*, pp. 384-385.

leader for the factory or neighbourhood and of a special cell of the Solidarnosc regional or inter-enterprise committees.

Setting up company-size detachments (250 persons) will not as a general rule be possible before the strike if clandestinity is to be maintained. What is meant by clandestinity here, of course, is simply that the composition and technical aspects of the workers guards will remain secret.

On the other hand, a political campaign for the formation of workers guards has to be waged openly in the union press, because both the slogan and the organizational principles and activity of the workers guards have to be known to the broad masses. During the strike, it will be necessary to form larger detachments, but it has to be kept in mind that in street confrontations groups of a limited size, ten to a hundred (the latter may sometimes be grouped in battalions of around a thousand persons) are the most useful.

"The slogan calling for the formation of a workers militia, that is, self defense detachments, makes no sense in terms of a revolutionary struggle unless it means an armed militia," Trotsky wrote (26). Arming the workers guards can seem a very difficult task, but that is not so. If the consciousness is developed among the workers of the need to arm, if the urge is aroused in them to arm, a fierce determination to arm, then the conditions will be ripe for arming the workers guards.

This task, cannot, however, be left to the activists of this guard themselves. It has to be explained that arming the workers guards is a task for the entire movement, because these units are not just a part of the movement. The formation of the workers guards is a step toward arming the masses in general.

At the start, the workers guards will be armed in a makeshift or even primitive way. But even such crude forms of armament will be a means for acquiring real weapons when confrontation occurs with the repressive forces.

During the active defense of the enterprises that took place in some Silesian mines in December 1981, axes, swords, and pikes were made in the forges; the workers armed themselves with picks and clubs. Some of the ZOMO were killed, because the workers used fire extinguishers that propelled supercooled liquid and white-hot metal spears to defend the strike.

The precondition for forming and arming workers guards is that the mass movement be ready to resort to force if necessary. Mass violence must not be confused with individual terrorism or the actions of small groups operating on the fringes of the mass movement or trying to substitute themselves for it.

"The fear of being suspected of terrorist tendencies (and the regime's propagandists do everything possible to equate every instance of self-defense with terrorism) sometimes paralyzes critical thought," a clandestine bulletin explains. "Fear of the spectre of terrorism made it

impossible before December 1981 to form workers guards. If such units had been formed and organized in time, the authorities would have had to think twice about launching a frontal attack on the union. An attack on the disarmed workers could succeed, but it would have been a different matter if the enterprises had been prepared to defend themselves (27)."

Speaking of the military crackdown, Wladyslaw Frasnyniuk, a member of the Warsaw leadership, said: "At the time, I called on people not to defend themselves in an active way. Today, I think that the situation might have developed differently, if Silesia had not been the only place where the occupied enterprises were defended (28)".

Another bulletin says: "In the light of what happened in December 1981, there is reason to think that if the resistance had been more active and determined on the mass scale, the action of the 'forces of order' would have ended in defeat for the Military Council for National Salvation (WRON). The strikes conducted then, especially in the big plants, had the character of isolated centers of passive resistance. In most cases, when they were attacked no attempt at active self-defense was made. In such a situation, it was not difficult to break them one after the other in a few days time.

"The examples of the Wujek mine and the street clashes in Gdansk show that where the resistance was active, it was not easy to break it (Wujek was not taken; left isolated, it surrendered). If the resistance had been active everywhere, the military would not have had the forces to move in simultaneously in a number of places, and the attitude of the soldiers would also have been different.

"On the basis of the fragmentary information we have, it is clear that if the soldiers did not point their guns in the air (in view of the way the situation developed, could this have been hoped for?), in many cases, nonetheless, soldiers and even officers expressed unhappiness about what was happening, and the WRON itself avoided using the army directly against the workers. A lot of things might have happened if there had been real confrontations on a mass scale (29)."

But would not active self-defense of the enterprises have provoked the repressive apparatus? A clandestine bulletin offers a good answer to this question: "Pogroms such as the slaughter of peaceful demonstrators in Cracow show in fact that the authorities have no need of pretexts to use physical terror. If they want, they create such pretexts themselves, without any help or prompting. To the contrary, in those places where the regime ran into a determined counter-attack (in particular in the big factories), there was little or no repression after the May 1982 demonstrations. The language of force is the only one the dictatorial regime understands (30)."

The argument of all those who think that armed workers guards should not be formed because they could not stand up against a modern army anyway is only pseudorealistic. In fact, the task of the workers guards is not to defeat the army, or even to repel its attacks on the occupied plants.

The main enemy, as the December 1981 repressive operations showed, are the ZOMO. They have been not only designed and specially trained for fighting the workers. Their task is also to separate the soldiers from the workers in every case where it becomes necessary to bring in the army in order to block any linkup between the soldiers and the workers.

As an advanced detachment of the mass movement and the entire working class, the workers guards have to be able to stand up to the ZOMO, to acquire modern weapons in the course of these struggles, and thereby keep the ZOMO from blocking fraternization between Solidarnosc and the soldiers.

The guards have to appear as a fighting force that could be joined by units of the army. This process could begin with units refusing to fire on the workers. After that, they could come to realize they could not go halfway but would have to give active support to the fighting workers.

Zbigniew Romaszewski is right when he notes:

"It is sufficient for a battalion to refuse to fire ... That is what happened in February 1917, when a small Cossack unit went over to the side of the demonstrators, and then, a month later, the czar was gone (31)."

The task of the workers guards is not — or at least not primarily — to fight against the army but, to the contrary, to fight for the army.

Another important precondition for the success of the general strike, one intimately linked to that described previously, is to win over the army and the police through consistent agitation within their ranks.

Many things will be determined by the political work Solidarnosc directs at the soldiers and police — how widespread the revolutionary ferment is in their ranks; the extent to which the ranks begin to waver between obeying the junta and falling in behind the mass movement; the likelihood of units going over to the masses and how many.

Such agitation cannot be limited to convincing the soldiers and police what side of the barricades the children of the working people should be on. It must explain to the soldiers and police the slogans, aims, and action program of Solidarnosc. It must, moreover, give impetus to the struggle within the army

26. Leon Trotsky, "La guerre et la IVE Internationale," *Oeuvres*, t. IV, EDI, Paris, 1979, p. 78.

27. *Druk*, No. 13, June 19, 1982.

28. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 13.

29. *Wolna Myśl*, No. 4, 1982.

30. *Druk*, No. 13.

31. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 16.

and police forces for demands specific to these bodies, with the aim of defending the rights, dignity, as well as the material and moral interests of those soldiers and police.

Such agitation promote the raising of demands within the repressive apparatus for progressive reforms in the system of national defense and the upholding of public order. If such demands are put forward in the army and police forces, Solidarnosc should actively support them and include them in its action program.

Finally, Solidarnosc should call for the formation of soldiers and policemen's councils as organs of struggle for rights of members of these forces and to coordinate the activity of the democratic movement within them. The union Solidarnosc should collaborate and cooperate with such bodies. Today already, following the example of the URSUS tractor factory in Warsaw, it is necessary to form Solidarnosc worker-soldier commissions.

Solidarnosc should also call for forming unions within the army and police forces. In 1981, for a few months, organizing committees for a policemen's union were already showing up. But what is needed now is just a resumption of the struggle these committees started. It is also necessary now to fight for the right of soldiers to organize in an independent union. There is nothing unusual about this. Such work is done in many Western armies and even coordinated internationally by those involved in it. Some workers unions support this activity. In fact, since 1966, a union has operated quite legally in the Dutch army, the National Soldiers Union (VVDM). Solidarnosc should introduce the democratic concept in Poland that soldiers have a right to organize in unions.

The last precondition for a successful general strike that we want to discuss here is preparing the union to move on to an active strike. In no mass movement in history, probably, did the notion and tactic of the active strike have the sort of popularity it did in Solidarnosc in the fall and the beginning of the winter of 1981. This represents considerable capital already accumulated by the Polish revolution, which cannot be left unutilized in the building of a general strike. Drawing on, and enriching the experience of a not inconsiderable number of Solidarnosc plant organizations and some regional leaderships that were then beginning to make preparations for an active strike can offer a good point of departure today.

As we know an active strike involves the striking workers resuming production under the control or leadership of strike committees. The control exercised by these strike committees must not be confined to production but also extend to the distribution of the goods produced during the strike.

If the strike is to be really a general one, it is essential that some plants involved in it go over immediately to an active strike. In the event of a general strike, these necessary "exceptions" do not contravene the principle that all



First Solidarnosc congress 1981 (DR)

should strike, if the "exceptional" plants go on an active strike.

We have already had a partial active strike in August 1980, when certain plants that were in the MKS (Interenterprise Strike Committee) maintained production that was socially necessary or useful for the needs of the strike itself. For this, they got special authorization from the MKS.

THE INTERNATIONAL IMPACT OF THE POLISH GENERAL STRIKE

Like all workers revolutions, the Polish revolution is national in its form but international in its content. Consciousness of this has been developing in Solidarnosc, as is shown by the growing tendency to assume the symbols of the international workers movement. Not long ago, Solidarnosc reclaimed for itself and the Polish working class, the May Day holiday that the bureaucracy usurped for its own purposes for decades. "In Poland," a clandestine bulletin wrote, "the enemies of the people rule by cynically waving the red flag. All we have to do is take the red flag away from them and they were exposed for what they are — exploiters and tyrants (32)."

"From the outset, the Polish crisis has gone beyond the borders of Poland," another bulletin says. This is why the anonymous activist who wrote that says, "it was necessary from the beginning to

clearly explain the meaning of our conflict and the goals of our struggle, which is the same struggle that was begun by the German workers in 1953, continued by the Polish and Hungarian workers in 1956, which spread to Czechoslovakia in 1968, and which we waged in December 1970, June 1976, and August 1980 (33)."

Another bulletin says:

"The most recent events in Poland have shown the context of a communist system [we would say a system of bureaucratic totalitarian rule] the correctness of Trotsky's maxim that the revolution cannot triumph in one country (and in any case not in one satellite country) (34)."

This interpretation of Trotsky's thinking has to be corrected. It is possible for a revolution to win in one country, although difficult. What is not possible is to complete the building of a self-managed workers republic in one country.

At the time of the general strike, consciousness of the international character of the Polish revolution will be more necessary than ever. In fact, such a strike will be a dramatic call to awaken the workers and the societies as a whole that are subject to the same totalitarian rule in the other East European countries and

32. *Tygodnik Stanu Wojennego*, No. 7, April 17, 1982.

33. *Przegląd Prasy*, No. 1, April 19, 1982.

34. *Wolna Myśl*, No. 4.

in the USSR, and it will become the model for the workers in the capitalist countries in their struggle to liberate labor.

Solidarnosc may still find itself waiting for the response of the workers in the East when it has already become an example for the workers in the West. In that case, it may appeal to the latter to respond to the general strike in Poland by stepping up and extending work that many of them are already doing, and to link this still more to their own struggle. In fact, international workers solidarity with the general strike of the Polish workers can prove to be an important factor in the success of such a strike.

"If there had been real mass struggles, a lot of things would have been possible. But the defeat of the junta would almost certainly have led to armed intervention by the Warsaw Pact forces. After a struggle whose duration is hard to predict the freedom movement would have been drowned in blood (35)." This opinion is widespread in Solidarnosc. Here it relates to December 1981. But this same fear could come up in connection with a general strike involving active self-defense of the enterprises.

This, however, is a very one-sided way of looking at the problem. Even an erosion of bureaucratic power resulting from a prolonged "war of position" — assuming that that were really possible — could lead to Soviet military intervention. But, while a danger, such intervention cannot be considered certain for many reasons, including those cited by Zbigniew Romaszewski in an interview he gave on the preparations for the general strike. (36).

The problem has to be put in a different way. The bureaucratic regime is already threatened and will continue to be. In December 1981, it played its last domestic card, the repressive apparatus, without managing to stabilize its rule over the society. That is, it did not accomplish the task it set for itself and which had been set for it by its masters in the Kremlin.

If only for this reason, the danger of Soviet intervention has increased. The military dictatorship "now holds only one card. It can appeal for fraternal aid from the Soviet Union. But playing that card is not up to the junta alone. That decision is conditioned by the geo-political strategy of its 'Big Brother' who, fortunately, at the moment has other things to think about (37)." These pre-occupations of the Kremlin bureaucracy are both in the Soviet Union itself and in its camp. Internally, the difficulty is the growth of an economic and social crisis. But there also are external problems, to cite only Afghanistan, where the breadth of the resistance is forcing Moscow to commit a not inconsiderable military potential there.

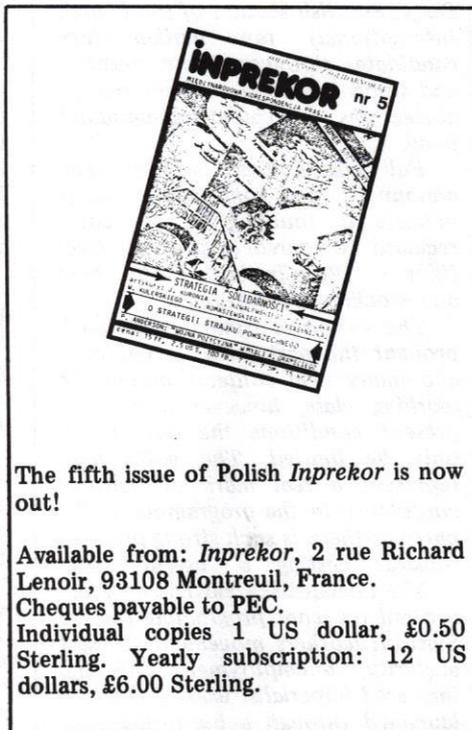
Instead of hiding our heads in the sand, we must answer the question of whether the totalitarian bureaucracy of the USSR will decide to rescue the totalitarian bureaucracy in Poland if it finds

itself facing a formidable adversary. What can neutralize or at least limit the threat of Soviet intervention?

Can this threat be warded off by a Solidarnosc that is powerful but has to take refuge in passive resistance? Or can this be accomplished by a Solidarnosc that would be still more powerful because it would be prepared to occupy the factories in a coordinated and organised way and to fight in the streets under the leadership of an armed workers guard, and prepared finally to mount a sustained campaign of intense agitation among the Soviet soldiers, who would have nothing to gain from such a war?

The more favorable relationship of forces Solidarity achieves in the general strike, the more supporters it has in the workers movements of other countries — today in the West, tomorrow also in the East — the more the bureaucratic regimes in the USSR will hesitate before sending their armies against the mass movement in Poland. If Solidarnosc had been ready to defend itself actively in December 1981 and to use force, as the bulletin we quoted above says, "the regime would have had to think twice before making a frontal attack on the union."

Today, it is possible to make the totalitarian regimes in the USSR and East Europe think twice before deciding to invade Poland. This can be done by improving the relationship of forces for Solidarnosc, by a general strike and by assembling all the preconditions to assure the success of such a strike, by appealing to the workers in the West to support the strike in Poland actively and the workers in the East to follow its example. Facing the sort of enemy these regimes represent, force is the most effective means of persuasion. ■



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Local elections in Belgium

On October 10 the Belgian people will once again go to the polls, this time for municipal elections. A long community-based tradition pervades all Belgian political structures, and changes are more easily made at this level. This election follows several months of rise in workers' struggles in the 1981-82 winter, the most important social movement that Belgium has known since the 1960-61 general strike (see *International Viewpoint* No 4 April 12, 1982).

Undoubtedly this will not be weighty enough to reverse the "Thatcherite" course of the Martens-Gol government. But it will awaken broad interest among the politicized militant workers.

The Revolutionary Workers League (LRT/RAL, Belgian section of the Fourth International) has been actively campaigning for some time. In February 1981 it, as usual, launched an appeal for unitary lists around two axes: 1) an anti-austerity platform, and 2) a series of demands at local level under the title 'the municipality at the service of the workers'.

Until summer 1982 negotiations with the pro-Chinese Belgian Workers Party (PTB), and the Belgian Communist Party (PCB), seemed once more unable to break through the barrier of the sectarianism of these two organisations.

However, openings then began to appear which, as in a game of dominoes, followed one after the other. By the time of the deposition of the lists on September 10 the LRT/RAL had succeeded in getting 14 unitary lists, including several in the principal towns. The agreements were in general between the LRT/RAL and the PCB, as in Anvers, Gand, Bruges, Malines, Sint Niklass, Wavre, Brussels, and three workers boroughs in the Brussels conurbation, Molenbeek, Saint-Gilles, Saint-Josse. In many of these cases the lists included an important number of candidates from the recent mass movements, trade unionists, women, youth, and the anti-missiles movement, attracted by the unitary dynamic.

This spectacular turnabout by the PCB was completely pragmatic. It did not indicate any new political orientation, but rather a new indication of its deep crisis.

At Scarbeek a list 'Democracy without frontiers' has stimulated a unitary feeling which will go still further. Around the anti-racist committee in one of the most anti-immigrant localities in Belgium, are organised the LRT/RAL, the PTB, the

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 16.

37. *Druk*, No. 12, May 31, 1982.

centrist organisation 'For Socialism' (PLS), representatives of the Christian workers movement, and independent personalities.

At Herstal (Liege), the PTB, which refused unity elsewhere, participated in a coalition with the LRT/RAL, PLS and the RPW (workers split from the Walloon Assembly).

On the Flemish side the most unexpected feature was that the Socialist Party, which has an autonomous political existence from the francophone Socialist Party, tried cautiously to turn to the left. Under the aegis of the president of the parliamentary fraction of the Flemish Socialist Party a coalition was formed between the SP, LRT/RAL, the PCB and some independents. While the common platform was weak on immediate demands the electoral opportunism of the SP in Leuven led it to denounce the banks and holding companies as trouble-makers in the crisis and to oppose austerity for the workers, in contradiction with the national line of this party. It also supported, financially and politically the FMLN of El Salvador, and unconditionally opposed the installation of new NATO missiles.

Decidedly, something has begun to move in the workers parties, at the point where the government is launching a new attack against the working class and when the workers movement is preparing to respond. This is the essential political axis of the campaign the LRT/RAL is making throughout the country. ■

Social Democrats regain office after 6 years

The two main workers parties gained an absolute majority in the Swedish general elections on September 19, as had been forecast in many opinion polls.

Olof Palme, the leader of the Social Democrats, will return to head the government after six years in opposition. SAP, the Social Democratic Party, is now bigger than the three bourgeois parties together — having gained an additional 2.7 per cent of the vote and 12 new seats.

The Vansterpartiet Kommunisterna (VPK), the Swedish Communist Party, won 5.6 per cent of the vote, taking it well over the 4 per cent threshold for parliamentary representation, and giving it 20 seats. This result was better than the opinion polls forecast right up to the end.

This seems largely due to an important last-minute increase in 'tactical' votes by left social democrats to ensure representa-

tion for the CP, and to put a little more left pressure on the incoming social-democratic government. Olof Palme himself more or less called for this tactical voting when, during the latter part of the campaign, he said that it was better to have a Communist Party in parliament, than to have it concentrating on extra-parliamentary activity.

The rightist *Moderata Samlingspartiet* has become the biggest of the bourgeois parties. Its vote increased by over 3 per cent to 23.6 per cent, taking its seats from 73 to 86. The centre party declined by a further 2.6 per cent to 15.5 per cent. For the liberals it was a catastrophic result, down 4.7 per cent to only 5.9 per cent. Thus the governmental shift was unavoidable. The new government will be installed on October 8.

The political polarisation indicated by these results reflects a campaign which was one of sharp debates by the Social Democrats on the one hand, with the VPK as a sort of loyal slightly more radical left wing, and the three bourgeois parties, clinging together to try and stop a further 'socialist transformation' of Sweden and gain ground in relation to each other, on the other.

The two 'middle' parties as they are generally known were heavily squeezed in this process. The rightist party — which walked out of the three-party coalition demagogically protesting against an agreement on a new tax system between the Social Democrats, the centre party and the liberals — seemed for the majority of the

electorate to be the most consistent and most anti-socialist of the bourgeois parties. It gained at the expense of the other two from a dynamic and rhetorical election campaign. In their comments on the results the centre party and the liberals complained bitterly of the lack of real 'three-party loyalty' on the part of the 'moderates'.

But the sharpness in the debate had very little to do with any fundamental political differences between the two blocks.

The Social Democrats gained more from their criticism of the horrors of six years of bourgeois rule than from any clear alternative proposals of their own.

However it seems clear that what will come is a social-democratic variant of austerity, better marketed but not very different from the policies of the bourgeois government.

Olof Palme, interviewed just after the election, made it clear that the government for the next three years will be reformists who do not make any reforms. Even the few electoral promises made by the Social Democrats will be adapted to 'crude reality'. The reintroduction of previous levels of sick pay, pensions, and unemployment benefit will be paid for by an increase in indirect taxes.

Given how limited the fundamental political differences were, the heat of the election debate was artificial.

This was proved the very day after the election when a couple of well known capitalists who had been engaged in sharp polemics with the Social Democrats came forward explaining that 'naturally' they would co-operate as much as they could with the new government, and 'of course' they were going to take the hand Olof Palme had immediately held out to them.

They even explained that the 'wage earners funds' for industrial investments, far from being an immediate threat of impending socialisation, would be an issue for discussion and negotiation between the employers and the government.

What is at stake here is the effort to build a new version of the shattered 'Swedish model'; to forge a new variant of class-collaboration in the context of the outcome of the elections. However, the Social Democrats return to government in a different situation from that which they experienced up to 1976. The economic crisis is hitting traditional Swedish industries harder and harder. For the bourgeoisie the Swedes continue to 'live above their means', that is the workers will not give up what they have won over decades just like that. For both the new government and the workers movement new political problems will arise. Many traditional concepts and customs will be put into question. In this situation the possibilities of putting forward a socialist alternative will be increased. ■

Socialist Campaign

The Socialistiska Partiet (Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International) ran parliamentary candidates throughout the country, and stood in several local and regional elections — two hundred candidates in all.

Full results have not yet been announced, but some local reports indicate a doubling in the votes received compared to previous elections — 1200 in both Gothenberg and Stockholm for example.

The extensive campaigning work brought the party new prominence and many new contacts within the working class, however under the present conditions the vote could only be limited. The votes won represent a real mark of political confidence in the programme of the party as there is such strong pressure towards casting a 'useful' vote.

The Socialistiska Partiet campaign centred on what programme for the Swedish workers movement to fight austerity, unemployment and the increased imperialist war drive. It was launched through a big propaganda effort, including the distribution of 200,000 copies of its special electoral newspaper.

PETER GRAHAM
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