

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

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**WORKERS MOVEMENT—NEW EXPERIENCES
IN RESPONDING TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS**

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Workers fight back against crisis

This issue completes the first calendar year of "International Viewpoint." The enclosed index shows the range of world news coverage and background articles that we have started to develop in our first eleven months of existence.

But since this issue comes in the midst of the year-end holidays, we decided to present a picture of some general developments in the labor movement in a number of the large industrialized countries and the work of the Fourth International around them.

With the deepening of the world economic crisis, these developments become more and more central to world politics. But the general lines tend to get a bit lost in the flow of everyday life, as is the case for the basic problems of working people. They tend to fade into the background.

The fact that we are focusing on the developments in the labor movement of some of the large imperialist countries does not mean that there are not vital things happening in the labor movement of colonial and semi-colonial countries.

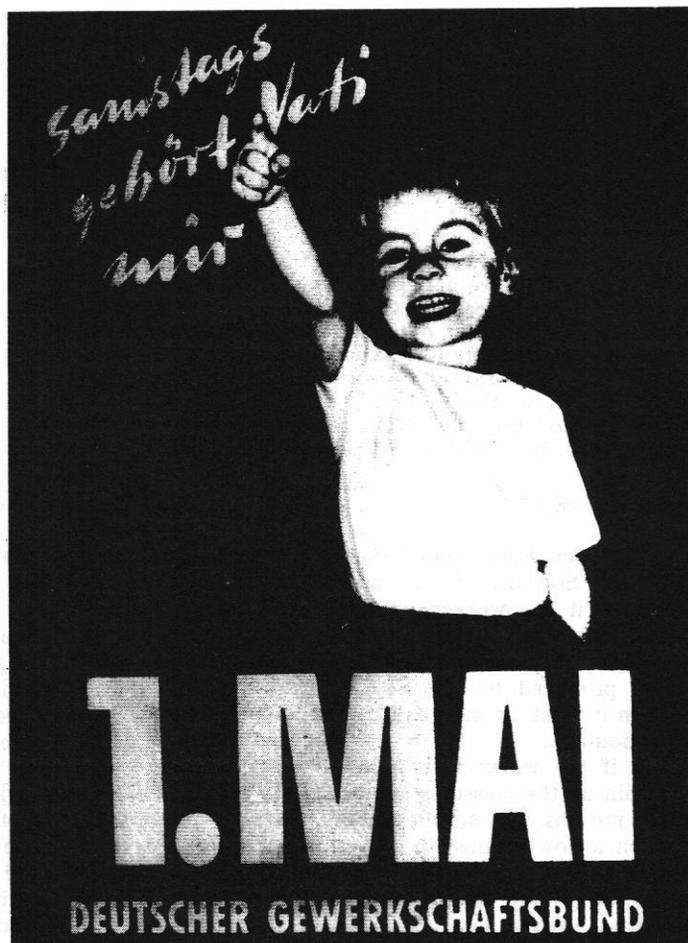
This issue goes to press shortly after the massive reemergence of the Argentine labor movement, for example, one of the best organized and most combative in the world. Over more than two and a half decades of one repressive military dictatorship after another has tried without success to break it.

A few weeks ago, however, after nearly seven years of the most brutal dictatorship in Argentine history, a regime that liquidated thirty thousand labor, socialist, and human-rights activists in gangland style, the Argentine unions shut down the key centers with a successful general strike.

In India also, for example, hundreds of thousands of textile workers remain on strike in Bombay after nearly a year, challenging the growth of antilabor repressive legislation in the country that is supposed to be the model of democracy for the "underdeveloped world." And the Indian Fourth Internationalists are playing an active role in building the strike.

Some general themes of the radicalization in the past two decades, moreover, have taken on a new form as a result of the economic crisis. That is true for example of the question of women's liberation. And this issue has a review of the development of the movement around women's rights in Western Europe since the onset of the recessions.

In the recent years, also there have been a few important experiences with reformist governments in the context of the economic crisis, even when they are put in office by a powerful wave of working-class support. One is in France. A new one is now beginning in Spain in a more explosive economic, social, and political context. The material in this issue shows



Trade-union poster for shorter working week, 'My daddy needs his Saturdays.' (DR)

how the Spanish and French Fourth Internationalists are dealing with the special problems such regimes pose for revolutionists and working class activists.

Another article deals with the growth of working-class resistance to the employers' offensive in North America.

Taken in all, the articles and documents that follow should serve as a background to events that will continue to unfold in the coming years and be of great importance for the future of the revolutionary movement. ■

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We have brought forward the production of this issue by one week to avoid the postal problems with the holidays. The next issue will be dated January 10, 1983.

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French workers grow impatient

This article is a report made to a national workers conference of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR — French section of the Fourth International) on the weekend of November 13/14 1982.

This conference brought together over one thousand members and supporters of the LCR with delegations from other revolutionary groups in France including Lutte Ouvriere and the left wing of the Parti Socialiste Unifie. The vast majority of those attending were activists from the two major trade union federations in France, the CGT and CFDT. Also present were members of the youth organisation associated with the LCR, Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire.

The theme of the conference was: 'what response should workers make to the crisis?'. The two major reports looked at the causes of the capitalist crisis and what response from workers and the situation in France today and how to respond

to the attempts of the present reformist government to manage the crisis for capitalism.

A roundtable discussion between economists and trade union leaders, including Ernest Mandel, discussed the causes of the crisis and a workers' solution to it in more detail.

The weekend also included workshop discussions on themes from the reports, including looking specifically at women's struggles today, the problems of youth and work, the role of immigrant workers, and building the movement of solidarity with Polish workers.

Comrades also contributed on their own experiences of particular union and workers struggles they had been involved in, including unionisation fights, battles against redundancy, and the fight for support for women's abortion rights.

The weekend was summarised by Alain Krivine in outlining the tasks in building the LCR today.

Jean LANTIER

Who has benefited from "the change" that the Socialist Party leaders talk about? Is it the workers who gave the Communist and Socialist parties their majority in parliament? In view of the results produced by the SP-CP government in its first 18 months in office, one could doubt it.

But if the workers are not the ones who gain by the measures adopted in the last 18 months, why are the bosses setting up such a howl against the government? The bosses and the right, in fact, are preparing the ground for a campaign to destabilize the government.

Can the gains that the bosses and the right-wing parties have made in their offensive be rolled back? Is there any way to mobilize the workers? To put it another way, what objectives can they be mobilized around?

A determined defense of the workers demands has to lead to a perspective for fighting capitalism as a whole. What sort of concrete perspective for that can be offered? Finally, how can we break the logjam in the present situation? We have to try to answer all these questions now.

THE CP-SP GOVERNMENT HELPS THE CAPITALISTS

In his speech on November 5, Premier Mauroy lambasted the right, which likes to talk about people becoming disillusioned with the May 10, 1981, victory of the left. He did so in the name of those who, he said, benefited from the change. Who are they? Certainly not the workers. In the wake of May 10, they were cheated of a decisive social advance. The nationalizations did not even lead to the sort of rights for the workers and the unions that were associated with the nationalization of the public utilities after the war. What is more, the owners of those enterprises that were taken over by

the state received generous compensation.

In a letter to the new managers, Dreyfus, the minister of industry at the time, recommended that they retain all the usual criteria of capitalist management. In general, the government adopted the rule that capitalist profit could not be touched. In general, it rejected the idea of using the nationalized sector as a lever for dealing with the jobs problem, which it could have done by reorganizing production in accordance with need.

With the start of the new session of parliament after the 1981 elections, the government resorted to using the instrument of decrees, rather than passing laws on which there would be public debate. It pursued a constant line of aiding investors. Thus, it set out on the road of one concession after another to the demands of the capitalists.

There were in fact only two possible roads. And the government took the one of administering the economic crisis for the benefit of the bosses and at the expense of the workers. From June to November 1982, all the measures taken have had the effect of shifting the cost of social insurance from the bosses to the workers. All the relief measures by the government have been the removal of taxes from the corporations.

More generally, by freezing wages without freezing prices, the government inflicted a steady loss of buying power on the workers. It gave the bosses all the latitude necessary for shifting the costs of the crisis onto the workers. Mauroy's philosophy is the following: "It is our responsibility to prepare ourselves to endure a crisis that will last a long time and will affect the entire world. This international crisis is associated with technological changes that pose major problems for the present system of production." That is what he said recently in an interview with the daily *Le Matin de Paris*. Thus, clearly, he intends to direct his government toward helping the

bosses overcome this crisis. He is offering them the following assistance: A freeze on employers' contributions to the social security system over 1983; a shift of the cost of family allowances to the workers; government aid in getting credit; state-financed loans; and tax writeoffs for investment in new machinery.

The government's attempt to do away with cost-of-living allowances means trying to tie wages to productivity. Transferring the costs of social insurance to individuals involves attacking the right to medical care. Now the cost of a hospital room has been separated from the medical costs reimbursable by the social security system. Hospital budgets are being cut. There is a systematic attempt to impose the criterion of profitability on the hospitals. The system of unemployment insurance, which has come under attack from the employers' organization, is also going to be severely cut back.

DISASTER FOR THE WORKERS

The effects of these measures have been immediate. Despite the government's claims that it is bound by principle to give priority to the poorest paid, the minimum wage is still just 2,891 francs net per month (7 French francs equal roughly 1 US dollar.) About 3 million wage earners (in a country of 55 million inhabitants) get less than 3,500 francs monthly net. There is a general and rather rapid decline in buying power. The employment rate is also dropping. In September, there were 2,039,700 registered unemployed, of whom barely half were getting unemployment benefits.

A study done by Catholic Aid in Lyon shows that from January to May 1982, requests for food increased considerably. More than 80% of the applicants were unemployed French citizens (a large proportion of the workers with the poorest pay and least job security are immigrants without French citizenship —

IV). Of these, half had a job in 1981. Among the French applicants, half were unskilled (OS) workers in plants in the Lyon region. Some 45.3% of those interviewed received no unemployment benefits.

The erosion of buying power and the growth of unemployment are creating poverty pockets that can spread.

This is the price that has to be paid for the course chosen by the government. Giving in to the demands of the capitalists in a period of economic crisis means making the workers pay an enormous price. And yet, the bosses are screaming and setting up piteous wails. Why are they unhappy with such a policy?

WHY ARE THE BOSSES BITING THE HAND THAT FEEDS THEM?

Despite the fact that the government has showered them with gifts, the bosses do not intend to give it the slightest respite. An SP-CP majority in parliament and Mitterrand in the presidential palace are the result of a working-class victory at the polls. And the bosses are determined to wipe it out. No matter what Mauroy does, the bosses will never regard his team as an acceptable government.

For the bourgeoisie, the problem remains the same. Under this government, as under the preceding one, it has to step up its attack on the working class in order to restructure the system of production to comply with the demands of profitability. In order to maintain their profit rate, the bosses want to reduce wages, eliminate all restrictions on the way they employ labor (introduction of the shift system, rotating shifts, employment of part-time workers, freedom to transfer as they please, hiring and firing at their convenience) and the freedom to restructure whole industries. In order to achieve this, they have to inflict a decisive defeat on the working class as a whole and its organizations. So, the May 10 victory of the left, regardless of the policy of the government that came out of it, represents an obstacle to this offensive.

It is not that the government is not amenable to the capitalists' demands. Nonetheless, it is not the instrument the bosses need for their offensive. To the contrary, the Mauroy government came into office as a result of an electoral victory that reflected an unfavorable relationship of social forces for the bosses. This is why the main employers organization, the CNPF, and the bosses in general, are trying to prepare the conditions for overturning the new majority. They are doing this by several methods.

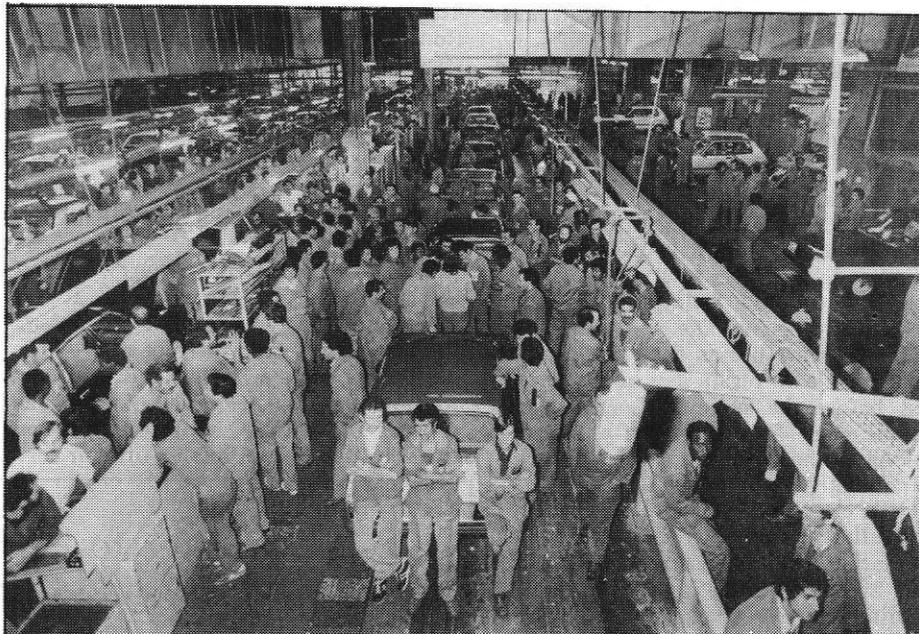
The CNPF is taking advantage of all the government's measures to cut back the social gains of the workers. The stalling tactics of the bosses' phoney industry-by-industry wage negotiations that were supposed to pave the way for an end to the wage freeze show how determined they are. By early November, only 15 contracts had been signed, affecting 450,000 workers.

At the same time, the bosses have turned a deaf ear to all the appeals to invest. Despite the tax breaks that have been offered, the investors' strike continues. The bosses are stashing away the subsidies to use them in restructuring their enterprises and increasing their profitability at the workers' expense.

Along with this, the CNPF and the SNPMI are complaining bitterly about the inadequacy of legislation to benefit "enterprises." Mauroy's November 5 speech announcing the shift of the cost of family allowances to the workers and making available all sorts of loans to capitalists is an indication of what the truth is on this score. The fact is that Gattaz, the chairman of the CNPF, is guided in this respect more by a desire to destabilize the

sional unemployment and therefore unsuited to the chronic unemployment of a period of economic crisis. But the bosses also wanted to humiliate the government, which had tried to arbitrate the dispute, offering a Solomonic decision.

A second example is the Brest shipyards. The Brest bosses laid off workers. The government cancelled the layoffs. The bosses refused to accept the cancellation. Chotard himself, one of the leading figures in the CNPF, went to Brest. He not only advised the local bosses to remain firm; he suggested that the bosses of smaller companies declare bankruptcy in order to avoid complying with the government order.



Carworkers at Talbot on strike (DR)

government than by a calculation of the economic benefits accruing to the bosses from the government's measures.

THE BOSSES MOBILIZE IN THE STREETS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT

The CNPF and the bosses in general are mobilizing against the government. For this purpose, they have been manipulating sectors such as the doctors, the farmers organizations, and the defenders of private schools. These demonstrations indicate that the bosses are prepared to try to make a show of strength in the streets. Moreover, the fact that the bosses are using flanking tactics does not mean that they have excluded head-on attacks. Two cases illustrate this.

The unemployment fund, UNEDIC, could easily have been refloated, since the five trade-union confederations involved in the negotiations made a major concession, agreeing that the workers would pick up 17 billion francs of the deficit. Nonetheless, the CNPF has broken off the negotiations and is threatening to put the fund in bankruptcy. The bosses think that it is essential to break up a system of unemployment insurance based on occa-

THE TEST OF THE UPCOMING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

The right is linking this offensive with its preparations for the municipal elections. If the government and the majority parties are beaten, the right will use the March elections as a springboard for demanding that the date be moved up for the parliamentary elections. This perspective, however, involves two problems for the right. The institutions of the Fifth Republic, set up as a result of De Gaulle's coup d'etat in 1958, give all power to the president.

Therefore, the prospect that the right faces is having to fight a prolonged offensive and running the risk of destabilizing institutions that have proved an effective bulwark against unrest. Mitterrand is in the presidential palace. It will take something more than early parliamentary elections to get him out.

The second unresolved problem is a consequence of the first. While the municipal elections are a test for the entire right, it is not united about the perspectives. No authoritative leader is emerging from its ranks with a political plan for uniting the offensive and leading it to victory. Nonetheless, if the municipal elec-

tions are won by the right, this will represent a turn in the political situation opened up after May 10.

THE WORKERS ON THE DEFENSIVE?

A certain doubt is creeping into the minds of the workers. Is the offensive of the right and the bosses changing the relationship of forces? This is reflected by a moderation of demands and actions, a hesitation to mobilize for fear of "playing into the hands of the right." But the experience since May 10 confirms the fact that struggle is the only thing that makes the bosses retreat. And there has been no lack of struggles. Despite the skepticism of a lot of trade-union officials, the most recent struggles show that the relationship of forces is still in favor of the workers.

The strikes at Citroen and Talbot involved sections of workers that have traditionally not been very well organized, the immigrants. However, these strata with less experience in struggle than the rest of the working class went into action and forced the bosses' organization in the PSA automotive empire to yield.

After the workers returned from vacation this year, the feelings were running so strongly against the company union and the straw bosses that the foremen were unable to regain any of the ground lost before the summer. Locals of real unions were formed in the plants that belong to the trust, reflecting a high level of combativity.(1)

It is clear that these struggles were not just a flareup in a backward sector. They are rather the clearest expression since May 10 of determination by the workers to bring "the new course" into the plants.

While attacks on the workers such as the cutbacks in social benefits and buying power have been successful, the workers have not been defeated. They have not yet begun to fight, and the tensions are building up. There will be a delayed-reaction effect in those sectors directly hit by the drop in real wages. Nothing has been settled, even if most workers have remained with their hands in their pockets.

A POWDERKEG IN STEEL

Such a delayed-reaction effect can be predicted in the steel industry. Minister of Technology and Science Chevènement's commitment to applying the Davignon Plan (which means 12,000 layoffs on the way) will rekindle the struggles in the steel centers, and they will be fought with the determination that comes from desperation. This smoldering combativity has reached such a heat that the trade-union confederations have been obliged to offer an outlet. That is the only meaning of the days of action scheduled in October and November.

(1). Previously the only union allowed by the Citroen management was the Confederation des Syndicats Libre (Free Trade-unions Confederation) affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The workers went on strike in early summer 1982 to get rid of these unions, and for free union elections.

Under direct or diffuse pressure from their ranks, the union leaderships have wriggled, calling scattered actions and watering down demands and the objectives of mobilizations. The various confederations continue to follow a divisive policy that makes the fightback even more fragmented.

Despite this bag of tricks resorted to by the union bosses, even in the context of these days of action, where unity was achieved, the mobilizations were often powerful ones. This was the case for the workers in the national gas and electric company, the Paris tax clerks, and the railroad workers in Ile-et-Vilaine in Brittany. Moreover, in many congresses and national meetings of trade unions, leaders argued for organizing a general fightback. This happened, for example, at the national meeting of 4,000 CGT shop stewards in the national gas and electricity company and at the congress of CGT workers in the nationalized sector of the armament industry.

THE GOVERNMENT LOSING CREDIBILITY WITH THE WORKERS

The government tried to present itself as the arbiter in these conflicts. It was shown up as a supporter of the bosses. In Citroen, the wage increase won by the struggle in June was declared illegal by Auroux, the minister of labor. When the workers at the FNAC bookstores went on strike in October in defense of their cost-

of-living allowances, the boss of the concern, Essel, was able to use a statement by the Minister of Labor declaring illegal the FNAC system of cost-of-living allowances tied to prices. This judgment was made, scandalously enough, on the basis of a Gaullist decree in 1959, the year following the successful coup d'état.

Thus, the workers have learned to some extent in experience that the government does not support their mobilizations and sometimes even displays open hostility to them. Moreover, a lot of workers involved in struggles have sought aid and support from the parliamentary deputies belonging to the new majority. Most often they have found a friendly deputy, but these deputies have not done anything more than listen in a polite and sympathetic way to their demands.

In every case, these deputies voted for the Beregovoy plan cutting social benefits and approved the austerity policy. This has made enough of an impression on the workers that the idea that there is a need for action by the workers and the unions independent of the government has been gaining ground, despite the obstacles that have been placed in the way of mobilization. This attitude has gained momentum inasmuch as the hopes placed in the new majority have been rapidly dashed.

In the wake of May 10, the workers parties and unions did not press their advantage. They did not try to mobilize the masses that had brought Giscard down. Nonetheless, there was a strong

Open Letter to Francois Mitterrand and Socialist Party and Communist Party Deputies

This open letter was launched by one thousand workers in the Rouen region on September 28, 1982. It has now been signed by over 30,000 workers throughout France. Committees from towns all over France of those who have signed it have held two national meetings, and are preparing to present it to the parliamentary groups of the Socialist Party and Communist Party, and the the President, Francois Mitterrand.

The measures which the government has taken since June, and those which are planned for the months ahead, seem very serious to us.

To reduce buying power, to provide for restrictions on social security benefits, to increase the unemployment insurance deductions from workers' pay are all going to worsen our living and working conditions. At the same time the employers are continuing to lay-off workers, or to close a large number of enterprises.

These austerity measures are not hitting at those who are responsible for the crisis, the capitalists, who are keeping their profits.

This way of acting will only disgust the workers, and encourage the employers to demand more.

We refuse to accept these measures.

We elected you on May 10, 1981 to launch a new course.

We know that the big employers, as well as the right — Giscard, Chirac and Lecanuet — will not stop at any means, any attack, to stop this new course. They will go as far as street demonstrations, and they will mobilise their troops for the municipal elections.

We are ready to mobilise, to ensure that the choice that was made on May 10 is respected, against the bosses and the right. We will do so united and together, whatever our political positions or trade-union affiliation.

We demand that buying power is maintained and that lay-offs be stopped.

You, the President and the members of parliament must respect our hopes and demands. You should take from the privileged, take some of their billions, and not take from us.

aspiration among the masses for unity. Far from challenging the logic of a sick system, the CP and the SP, the CGT, as well as the CFDT and FO, adapted themselves for administering the crisis.

UNION BUREAUCRATS TRY TO CONVINCE WORKERS TO WORK HARDER FOR LESS

These organizations accept the argument that in order to maintain jobs it is necessary to aid the companies and unite bosses, unions, and workers in this. Some even advocate that the workers accept wage cuts for the sake of the company's competitiveness. This rigged game amounts to asking the workers to accept the reduction of their buying power, to agree to work more and harder, while the bosses keep the power to fire as they please, not invest, and lie about the real state of the company's ledgers.

To sum it up, this means turning back the clock of the trade-union movement. It means that workers should work harder for less. This is unacceptable on the face of it. Wage sacrifices have never guaranteed the maintenance of jobs. As long as the bosses keep their monarchical power in the plants, as long as they get the profits, there cannot be any sharing of the responsibility between workers and bosses.

Since these organizations argue that workers should take responsibility for the companies, they claim that the most important task of the workers movement is aiding management. The top union bureaucrats — Marie, Krasucki, Herzog — as well as Mitterrand, all talk the same language. The time has come to bridge the old class barrier between the owners of the means of production and the exploited producers so that the workers and the bosses can run the factories shoulder to shoulder.

The CFDT says that the bosses have maintained an outmoded system of social relations, and that it has now to overcome this by assuming the role of making proposals. The CP says that co-management today is no longer class collaboration because the bosses have shown their incompetence. What is needed today, all the unions say, is shop committees that will make proposals for improving production, unions that will work out alternative plans, and vigilance against waste.

A boss class that has not given an inch since the May 10 victory is not going to consider sharing its power for one instant. It will fight to the death to hold on to its power. Sharing the management of a factory with the boss is just another way of saying that the workers should make all the sacrifices for the sake of productivity.

DON'T MAKE PROBLEMS FOR THE WORKERS' GOVERNMENT?

When the bosses are waging a class war against buying power and jobs, it is criminal to hold out your hand to the enemy and offer to collaborate with him.

All the unions are trying to hold back

the workers from mobilizing with the argument that this government has a long-term lease on power and that this should not be put in danger. A lot of workers are thinking, "if this had happened in Giscard's time, people would already be marching in the streets." But today even though the government is administering the capitalist crisis the argument that it is supposed to represent the workers is used as a pretext for giving up the fight on everything.

The Beregovoy plan for social welfare, the wage freeze, increased deductions for unemployment insurance, and the like are all getting past without a blow being struck, with the workers parties and unions agreeing not to notice. So, the SP and the CP, the CGT, and the CFDT are leading the workers down a blind alley. The plea that we cannot cause problems for a government that is helping the bosses push their rate of profit back up and to restructure their plants means asking us to give up every immediate demand, it becomes an alibi for surrendering on everything, it means opening the way for the return of the right.

A poison is seeping into some layers of trade-union activists, the idea that nothing can be done about this crisis, that it is a necessary stage to escape from inflation and unemployment. The propaganda campaign the government is waging under the slogan "Face the Truth" is designed precisely to spread this idea, that the national economy has to be defended as it is, with its capitalist profit logic.

"MADE IN FRANCE, O.K.?"

The French CP is pushing a similar campaign. Its recent posters raise the cry "Made in France, O.K.?" What these arguments boil down to in essence is that the crisis can be eliminated by a national effort to increase the competitiveness of French products. In order to accomplish this, the CP and CGT leadership maintain, something more than a special effort and cooperation between workers and bosses is needed. That is, we need protectionist measures to keep out foreign products and to make sure that French goods are bought instead of them. The crisis is supposed to have been caused simply by the incompetence of the capitalists as managers.

These campaigns have a certain impact simply because they seem to appeal to common sense, but their apparent realism is only very superficial.

Blocking imports leads inevitably to higher prices. If import quotas were multiplied, French workers would have to buy products made in France all right. Sheltered from foreign competition, these goods would inexorably go up in price. At the same time, the foreign products that would be sold in smaller quantities would also increase in price to assure the Japanese or West German bosses the same rate of profit as the French ones. If they exported less, they would regain what they lost by higher prices.

Furthermore, it would not end there.

Facing a reduction of their export market, the foreign firms would get their governments to impose retaliatory tariffs. This would lead to a spread of protectionism that would shrink export markets still further. What is more, protectionist measures would hit French industries that export a lot of their products, such as the aerospace and automotive industries. This would result in higher unemployment in these industries.

Since, in accordance with the dictates of capitalist management, the French firms would have to maintain their level of competitiveness on the European and world markets, even if protectionism became systematic, the French bosses would continue to try to push down the level of wages and employment in order to maintain their ability to compete with foreign products.

Fundamentally, the SP's "Face the Truth" campaign and the CP's "Made in France, O.K.?" campaign are a diversion. The French bourgeoisie is trying to make the workers pay for the crisis, for the restructuring of the productive system, and for the shutdown of branches considered unprofitable. The SP and CP can construct all sorts of schemes, but this reality cannot be gotten around. That is why it is necessary to attack the power of the bosses and the law of profit.

NO WAY FORWARD WITHOUT ATTACKING THE LAWS OF CAPITALISM

This system is unjust and immoral. For example, in 1979, Francois Michelin (boss of the tire trust) declared to the French, German, and Swiss internal revenue services that his personal income amounted to 109,000,300 francs a month. And after 15 years an ordinary worker (OS) earns 3,700 francs a month in the Michelin factories.

The bosses shed salt tears, complaining that there is a recession on and they cannot pay. What do generally unverifiable claims like that matter for the workers? Wages and jobs are basic immediate needs, regardless of whether the bosses say they can pay or not. The demands the LCR supports correspond to the needs of the workers:

A 35-hour week with no cut in wages is the least that can be done right away to deal with unemployment. The bosses lay off people when they consider that they have a surplus of the commodity that labor power represents for them. It is a commodity for the bosses, but the only means of survival the workers have.

A 35-hour workweek would make possible massive hiring of the unemployed, who are mainly women and youth. This means, of course, taking on the bosses, forcing them to retreat. But then the only thing the bosses understand is a relationship of forces. The forty-hour week was won by the June 1936 general strike. The Gattazes of the day were pleading poverty no less piteously than the present ones. So, to provide jobs now, we need a 35-hour workweek, whether the bosses consider this possible or not!

When the bosses tell us, "you are out to ruin the economy," our answer is that this economy is based on their principles and their ownership, and that we are not responsible for it, although we are the ones who produce the wealth. It is they who are responsible for unemployment, the waste of human beings, and the stalling of technological advance.

The way to fight inflation is with a sliding scale of wages and prices. Wages cannot be tied to productivity or the success of the plant. They must be based on prices by means of automatic and retroactive cost-of-living increases in accordance with an index that reflects price increases.

THE POOREST FIRST?

Some trade-union and government officials are saying, help the poorly paid first, the others can wait. The buying power of the workers has to be defended, and not just that of the workers at the bottom of the scale. The demagogic statements of these union and government officials is based on the idea that total wages must not rise, in order not to overburden the companies. This already represents resignation. In fact, these people set a cutoff point, beyond which wages cannot be defended. For the CFDT, for example, the cutoff point is twice the minimum wage. What new scientific notion is this that workers cannot go beyond 7,200 francs a month (that is, twice the minimum wage demanded by the CFDT)? In trade, a lot of high managerial personnel make less than that. On the other hand, in certain sectors of petrochemicals and aerospace, workers make more than that.

Total wages must rise as much as necessary to meet the workers' needs for buying power. What is more, the very trade-union confederations that have formed special unions for professionals are now telling us that such people do not have to be defended. The only way the workers have to win the professionals over is to show them that they have an interest in joining the working-class camp. To cast them off altogether means driving them into the camp of the bosses, since it is neither an accomplished fact nor inevitable that they will line up with the bosses.

All wages set by contract and law must be defended by a sliding scale, and in heavy industry that includes a wage scale that goes up to 10,200 francs a month.

Is making the bosses pay a simplistic or irresponsible slogan? It is a simple thing to say that this has to be the real objective of working-class mobilizations. To cut through the smokescreens of the reformists and the verbiage about helping to manage the companies and buckling down and joining in a great national effort, the LCR reaffirms that it is the bosses who are responsible for the crisis. In order to solve the problem of jobs, production, and inflation in a lasting way, they are the ones we have to go after; we have to break their law of profit, that is,

expropriate them. This involves another kind of logic, which has been developed by the workers movement in the past. It has to be repopularized.

REORIENT PRODUCTION TO MEET SOCIAL NEEDS

The bosses produce to make a profit. Regardless of whether social needs are left unsatisfied or not, the bosses decide in a completely anarchistic way to halt or continue production in accordance with the sole criterion of profit. The law of profit has to be replaced by a law of satisfying social needs.

Let's take the example of steel, which is one of the most illustrative. The bosses want to eliminate 15,000 more jobs. Why? Because there is no more need for steel? To the contrary, this basic product is extensively used in building housing. And there is a lack of housing. The CP program says that it is necessary to build 500,000 dwellings a year. Before May 10, the SP said that 16 out of 55 million French people lived in homes that were not even minimally equipped. But the capitalists consider that it is not profitable to meet these needs. Nonetheless, the nationalized sector includes the USINOR and SACILOR steel trusts. These two large enterprises could be turned immediately to production oriented to meeting the most urgent social needs.

The utilization of the nationalized sector should be the keystone of such a policy. With its present scope, it could serve as the springboard toward an overall reorientation of production. The nationalized banks hold 77.1% of credit and 85.8% of deposits. The nationalized sector accounts for 33% of corporate investment and 12% of the Gross Domestic Product. Multinational giants such as Rhone-Poulenc in the artificial fibers industry (the third largest in the field worldwide) and the Thomson electrical appliances trust are now included in the nationalized sector. They could be oriented to meeting the immediate social needs (for household appliances and clothing).

The task of a workers government would be to use this public sector to take public initiatives to provide jobs and meet the needs of the people. The extreme concentration of these units of production makes this task easier, as well as making it easier to establish workers con-

'The bosses should pay for unemployment' (DR)



rol over production in order to reorganize it.

WHERE IS THE MONEY GOING TO COME FROM?

Where is the money going to come from? Even though neither Credit Agricole (which used to be the world's largest credit concern), nor real estate credit, nor consumer credit, nor the foreign banks have been nationalized, the nationalized credit sector could be concentrated into one bank with a great pooled capital. Such a bank could provide the funds necessary for the nationalized sector.

Today, the capitalists are still pillaging the nationalized sector. In both the railroads and Social Insurance system, capitalists are diverting the funds. A centralization of the nationalized banks must be accompanied by the establishment of exchange control, in order to stop the flight of capital.

Not only should controls be set up on foreign trade should be renegotiated. The present government has done this with Algeria. It agreed to raise the price of Algerian natural gas in order to safeguard the sales of French industrial products in Algeria. It is possible to oblige our trading partners to renegotiate the terms of trade in conformity with a reorientation of production to meet social need. When a country such as France is carrying a foreign debt of 233 billion francs, that means there is something to negotiate. If you are a big debtor, you are also an important customer.

THE TASKS OF THE LCR

The crisis can only be ended by the victory of one or the other of the two camps that exist, the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the LCR, with its limited means, has to work to prepare our class for this confrontation. This work has to be directed toward two objectives. The first task is to promote united mobilizations of the working class. This means giving impetus to struggles for immediate demands, in defense of our social gains, struggles that have an anticapitalist dimension.

In order to accomplish this, we have to remove the obstacles to mobilization. It is necessary to overcome the divisions by stepping up appeals for unity and making efforts in more and more places to pro-

mote it in action. We have to show the workers that resting on your arms means giving up without a fight in the face of the offensive by the bosses and the right. It is necessary to show in practice that the only way to get significant wage increases, more jobs, and to stop social service cutbacks is to take on the bosses.

At the same time, we have to indicate where these mobilizations have to lead, that is, to disarming the bosses. One of the main obstacles to mobilizing the workers is precisely the lack of anticapitalist answers being offered, the lack of alternatives to the proposals of the reformists for finding a way out of the crisis. To point the way out of this dilemma, the LCR has to reassert that socialism is the only way out of the crisis in the interest of the workers.

In carrying out these two tasks, we have to intervene in the struggles to direct action and demands against the bosses. In FNAC, at Bella, in Citroen-Levallois, and elsewhere this has been the primary role of LCR activists — to push for unity, for demands that unite the workers, for objectives and forms of action that promote unity.

At the same time, this means that we have to answer the questions of thousands of trade-union and political activists attached until recently to the dominant organizations in the workers movement, who have realized that they have been led down a blind alley but do not have any anti-capitalist alternatives.

From this standpoint, the role of the trade-union opposition caucuses is central. They will grow if they turn toward action, challenge the reformist orientations of the established leadership, and, by their activity and the answers they offer, revive the understanding and spirit of class-struggle unionism. The LCR has to play an active role in this anti-capitalist current that exists now, as it did with the *Rouen Appeal*. A national current of opinion took form around this petition drive demanding anticapitalist policies corresponding to the needs of the workers. That was a beginning.

Finally, in presenting an anti-capitalist program, the LCR has to propagate on a mass scale the revolutionary perspective that distinguishes it as an organization and is its reason for existence. ■

CNPF: Conseil Nationale du Patronat Francais, National Council of French Employers. The main employers organisation.

SNPMI: Syndicat Nationale des Petites et Moyennes Industries, National Union of Small and Medium Industries. A newly-created right-wing pressure group of the petit bourgeoisie.

CGT: Confederation Generale du Travail, General Confederation of Work. The largest union in France in which the majority of leaders and activists are CP members.

CFDT: Confederation Francaise Democratique de Travail, Democratic French Confederation of Work. The second largest French union, formed by a leftwing split from a Christian union in 1964. Members of all currents of the Socialist Party are active within it. The leadership supports the rightwing Rocard current within the SF.

FO: CGT-Force Ouvriere, Workers Strength. The most class collaborationist of the French workers unions. It split from the CGT in 1947 on an anti-communist basis, and today proclaims itself 'independent'.

Fightback shapes up among US and Canadian workers

Will REISSNER

North America is sunk in its deepest economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. According to official figures, unemployment in the United States is more than 10.4 percent of the workforce and rising. In Canada the figure is 12.2 percent.

U.S. factories are operating at only 68.4 percent of capacity, the lowest level since the government began keeping records in 1948. U.S. officials acknowledge that this figure would be even lower were not so many plants already shut down altogether.

In Canada, industrial production has dropped more than 16 percent, and the government in Ottawa predicts that overall economic output will have plummeted more than 4 percent by the end of the year.

In industry after industry, U.S. and Canadian capitalists have used the crisis of their economic system to demand that workers give up hard-won gains in wages, benefits and job conditions.

The bosses' demands for concessions have been actively supported by the highest levels of the trade-union bureaucracy. These labor misleaders, totally steeped in class collaborationism, put forward the view that employers must prosper before the workers can prosper. They urge the rank-and-file to give up what the labor movement won in previous struggles.

The AFL-CIO officialdom parrots the line of the bosses and the U.S. and Canadian governments that current wage levels and "lax" work rules make North American industry uncompetitive and therefore cause the layoffs and plant closings.

Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau recently put this view forward in several televised speeches calling for labor to sharply reduce its demands for wage increases. He asked Canadian workers to ponder the question, "Can we compete, not just against other Canadians . . . but against the automaker of Japan, the lumber worker of Scandinavia, the wheat farmer of Nebraska?"

Union officials in Canada and the United States have taken up this refrain. They tell the ranks that if "our" companies are to be able to compete, the employers need wage relief and greater control over work rules. The union officialdom seconds the bosses' insistence that improvements in wages and working conditions must be tied to increased profits.

Under the initial blows of the economic downturn, many workers were con-

ned into accepting this argument.

LESSONS BEING DRAWN

But three years of bitter experience with concessions have started to convince many workers that givebacks have not saved jobs or solved economic problems. They have begun to see that concessions simply set in motion a deadly spiral leading to demands for further concessions.

In recent weeks, this changing consciousness has been demonstrated by Chrysler workers, steelworkers, coal miners, and public employees in North America.

Three years ago — under concerted pressure from management, the Carter administration, and the United Auto Workers union leadership — Chrysler workers agreed to a far-reaching package of givebacks. Without these sacrifices, they were told, the company would go bankrupt, and they would all lose their jobs. Faced with these grim alternatives, Chrysler workers accepted the need for "equality of sacrifice."

The 1979 Chrysler contract was hailed by the entire employing class as a model to be applied throughout U.S. and Canadian industry.

But when the contract came up for renewal in mid-October, U.S. Chrysler workers voted down the new pact negotiated by the UAW leadership. The rejected contract offered no immediate wage increase or job protection, and contained further concessions on speedup and work rules.

In Canada, Chrysler workers were offered the same contract. They too rejected it and went on strike November 5.

In the aftermath of these votes, UAW President Douglas Fraser, who has a seat on the Chrysler board of directors, felt enough heat to temporarily step down from the company post.

Chrysler workers learned the hard way that concessions do not save jobs. In 1979, when Chrysler demanded that workers accept significantly lower wages and benefits than those received by General Motors and Ford workers, the company employed 76,000 workers. Three years later — after they gave up an estimated 1.06 billion dollars in wages and benefits and are now paid 2.68 dollars per hour less than GM and Ford workers — there are only 45,000 Chrysler workers left.

Today Chrysler is sitting on more than 1 billion dollars in cash, but still wants more concessions.

Chrysler workers have said "enough is enough!" The 10,000 Canadian strikers

have had no raise since March 1980, despite two years of double-digit inflation in Canada. As a result, their buying power has dropped more than 25 percent.

The strikers in Canada are receiving support from U.S. Chrysler workers, who know that the outcome in Canada will have a big impact on their own upcoming struggle for a new contract. Ford and GM workers also have a big stake in the outcome, since these corporations have used the Chrysler concessions to demand similar givebacks.

The Toronto *Globe and Mail* described the Chrysler strikers as "lemmings rushing to the ocean" who "seem to have an uncontrollable urge to hurry to the unemployment lines."

But these auto workers know that three years of concessions did not keep more than 30,000 of their colleagues from the unemployment lines.

The rejection of the Chrysler contract in the United States and Canada shows that workers are beginning to break from the deadend strategy of class collaboration — the idea that what is good for the company is good for them.

"I can't meet my mortgage payments with another wage freeze," one striker told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. "Neither can a lot of the fellows in the plant. If we're going to go under, we're going to make damn sure the company does too."

Another worker was not impressed with company claims that it would go bankrupt if the workers refuse more concessions. "Let it go down," he said, "I'm going down."

The Canadian UAW members are showing that the way to fight for jobs is to stand up for the interests of their class, no matter what the employers say the results will be for profits and business prospects.

STEELWORKERS SAY "NO"

Just as the UAW's 1979 Chrysler contract was a model the employers tried to ram down the throats of other workers, so too was the no-strike pledge the United Steelworkers of America agreed to with the steel companies in 1973.

But rank-and-file steelworkers are also drawing the lessons of their experiences over the past decade. And they are resisting company demands for greater concessions.

On November 18, the executive board of the USWA unanimously accepted a 45-month contract that would have reduced average earnings for steelworkers by 1.50 dollars per hour, in cash and 75 cents in benefits in the first year alone.

Steelworkers President Lloyd McBride claimed the bosses insisted on these takebacks, and that a strike would only lead to greater use of imported steel.

But the very next day, 600 local USWA officials, who are more in touch with the mood of the ranks, overwhelmingly rejected the contract. Clearly the example of the Chrysler workers encouraged this resistance.



Unemployed in the US stand in line for unemployment benefit (DR)

Following the vote, McBride said that he had tried to persuade industry negotiators not to insist on so many concessions. But "The industry said these were things they had to have," he lamented.

MINERS OUST LEADERSHIP

On November 9, U.S. coal miners sent a strong signal that they intend for their union to fight hard for their interests by voting out incumbent United Mine Workers President Sam Church. Church had vowed to return the union to cooperation with the mine owners. In his place, the miners elected Richard Trumka, who campaigned against giving up past gains won by the union.

In 1972 the miners ousted the corrupt regime of Tony Boyle, who was noted for sweetheart deals with the mine owners and terrorism against the rank-and-file. Through that battle for union democracy, the miners won the right to vote on their contract — a weapon they have put to good use. Since then the UMWA has been the single biggest obstacle in the labor movement to the takeback campaign of the employers and their government.

In 1977 the mine owners proposed a contract that contained provisions against the right to strike, drastic curbs on the power of union safety committees, and sharp reductions in health and retirement benefits.

Although the union president recommended acceptance of that contract, the miners voted it down and struck for 111 days for a better deal. In the process they defied the Carter administration, which invoked a Taft-Hartley "back to work" order.

In 1981 the miners again blocked company attempts to cripple the union and expand nonunion coal. Voting down the first contract proposal, which had been endorsed by UMWA President Church, they struck for 77 days before a settlement was reached.

Today the miners face a stepped-up drive by the employers, who insist that profits must come before miners' health

and safety, or their right to a decent living.

With tens of thousands of miners on layoffs, the coal companies have instituted speedup and cutbacks on safety. The mining of nonunion coal has sharply increased. The Reagan administration is trying to gut federal health and safety legislation.

All these issues will come to a head when the union contract expires in September 1984. By rejecting the policies of the Church misleadership, the miners have taken a big step toward arming their union for that fight.

The editors of the *Washington Post* registered their concern over the miners vote and the Chrysler strike: "The election results suggested that UMW members refuse to accept the fact that the coal industry does not exist in a vacuum and that miners' wages ultimately depend on the competitiveness of the product they produce. It is a fact others like to ignore: the Chrysler workers who are striking in Canada, for example."

ONE-DAY STRIKE IN QUEBEC

In Quebec on November 10, hundreds of thousands of public-sector workers showed their determination to resist cuts in their wages and elimination of thousands of jobs by staging a one-day strike that shut down schools, Montreal mass transit, and many of the province's health facilities. The workers also authorized union leaders to organize a general strike of unlimited duration if the need arises.

In pressing their demands, the public-sector workers rejected the provincial government's claim that economic disaster looms over Quebec unless expenditures are drastically reduced.

As all these developments show, a new mood is developing among workers in the United States and Canada. They are beginning to see that the way to defend their jobs and living standards is to use the power of their unions to resist the employers' demands, not to seek ways to cooperate with the bosses in boosting profits. A fightback is beginning to shape up. ■

Labour prepares for elections

The Labour Party bureaucracy in Britain is preparing for a probable general election in 1983 by a swing to the right. It has announced that it will switch away from electoral activity based on marches or demonstrations to basing it on television appearances! This is despite the halfmillion strong demonstrations that can be mobilised on at least one aspect of Labour's policy — nuclear disarmament. It is also despite the fact that 1982 saw an upturn of trade union struggles — even if most ended in defeats, and if there is even a small economic upturn in 1983 this could strengthen this trend. An intensive witch hunt has been launched within the Labour Party by the attempt to expel the "Militant" group (an ex-Trotskyist organisation). The right wing of the party led by deputy leader Denis Healey has gained firm control of the party executive for the first time for almost a decade.

These rightwing victories in the Labour Party have been accompanied by major successes of the ruling class in the trade-union struggles. The miners voted to reject a strike on

wages, against the advice of their union executive — although there is still the prospect of a fierce struggle on jobs. South Wales miners have announced that they will strike from January in defence of jobs and demanding that the National Coal Board increase investment in the pits by 50%. British Leyland car workers also rejected a struggle on wages. The months long healthworkers dispute has essentially been abandoned by the bureaucracy.

Meanwhile unemployment continues to cut a swathe through the traditional strongholds of British industry. Despite their willingness to struggle British workers have so far been incapable of checking this. There is a minority current within the British Labour movement, but they have not been able to put forward and gain majority support for an adequate response.

The Labour Party has come forward with its plan to 'save British industry'. This article from 'Socialist Challenge' looks at how far this provides an adequate workers response to the crisis.

Amid strong hints of a spring election, Michael Foot and David Basnett have relaunched Labour's Programme with a promise to cut unemployment to one million by 1988.

The policy, announced last week, was rounded out by Peter Shore on Tuesday. Using that modern-day oracle, the Treasury computer, he says it can be done without the economic crisis the Tories confidently predict, by spending Labour's promised £9bn on social services and public sector investment — with an incomes policy.

There is no doubt that a spending programme would cut unemployment temporarily. But the 64,000 dollar question is: what next? It was one thing to march forward without drastic new measures but with radical reform programmes in the 1960s and 1970s when the economic crisis had not bitten so deeply.

Will such a programme work? Isn't it going to provoke massive inflation (as it did in 1974), a run on the pound (as it did in 1975), and a sharp U-turn (as it did in 1976)?

The answer turns around what Labour will do when the IMF and CBI put on the pressure. Will they cave in, as in 1975 — or will they take additional steps needed to bring the banks and CBI under Labour's control, instead of vice versa. And there's the rub. Two vital steps are omitted from Labour's programme which will be essential if the package outlined by Michael Foot is to be achieved. These steps are:

- The nationalisation of the banks and financial institutions;
- Serious measure to mobilise working people to take control over investment decisions by large-scale industry.

The Labour leadership believes it will not need such measures because by borrowing to finance expansion it can produce a new boom. This isn't very convincing. If the election programme is to have any credibility, therefore, the left will have to prove itself able to win the battle for these additional measures during the life of a Labour government, through a

combination of extraparliamentary mobilisations and a struggle to replace Labour's right wing leaders.

John Harrison in 'Marxism Today', for July 1982, explains; despite the monetarist ideological cover, what the Tories have done is to 'crash the economy'. Their aim is to destroy working class resistance and shake out unproductive or uncompetitive capital, thus laying the basis for a substantial rise in productivity and profits for domestic industry.

As John Harrison points out: 'Output fell by more than in any other downturn for over half a century, including the crash of 1929-32. . . Manufacturing output fell by a colossal 15 percent in the twelve months from December 1979. This compares with a maximum fall in any single year of the 1930s of only (!) 5.5 per cent.

A crash on this scale should make us cautious about simply carrying on where we left off. The chronic postwar problem of British industry has been poor competitiveness, provoked by underinvestment: insufficient up-to-date machinery.

But now there are not only not new machines — half the old ones have been broken up and even some of the newer ones too. John Harrison explains that despite the apparently sensational rise in productivity last year, almost entirely due to harder working, speed-up and so on, 'British unit labour costs (the conventional measure of competitiveness) are still 35-40% higher than in 1979, and the UK was hardly a record-beater then.'

This low competitiveness is not because the British workers are highly paid. On the contrary, they are now about eighth in Europe. Productivity is low fundamentally because we do not have modern machines.

If this is not corrected, government-financed expansion can only result either in a flood of imports produced by better machines abroad, or in very high prices at home because workers are forced to buy badly-produced home goods.

Of course it could be corrected if the government, and the unions, took charge

of investment. And if they drew up a plan of investment, geared to supply the needs created by Labour's spending on social needs, the economy could expand to meet new demand in a relatively smooth way.

So it is possible to implement Labour's programme using socialist means. It is, to say the least, much harder to do it by capitalist means. This involves guaranteeing profits for private capital. Capitalists are quite rational: they invest where they can get the highest profit. And for fifty years this has meant abroad.

Everything in Labour's programme would make this worse. It would only become profitable to begin large-scale new investment at home if the working class's resistance was completely smashed. To put the figure on this, we need only study the demand advanced by the CBI: for a thirty per cent real wage cut. And Labour could never deliver such an attack successfully; indeed it is doubtful whether anything short of fascism could do so. So there will be no incentive for new investment.

Worse still, however, the banking sector — which has grown massively under Thatcher — would bitterly resent the imposition of exchange controls which Labour would have to reestablish, and the loss of profits which would result from letting the pound sink.

It is geared to overseas investment and, as in 1975, would use every bit of influence it possessed to try and unseat the government.

Labour would thus face a combined assault from industry and bankers, which it would be unable to match unless it was prepared to take them over.

Thatcher has crashed the economy: and Peter Shore wants to uncrash it. But you can't put a crashed car back on the road without some drastic garage work. It isn't the same shape. And the sooner we have a Labour leadership that understands this the better. ■

Need for anti-imperialist alternative

Ruth TAILLON

The November 24 General Election in Southern Ireland was the third time in 18 months that Irish voters have had to go to the polls. With the economic situation going from bad to worse, none of the bourgeois parties have been able to come up with any convincing answer to the country's glaring economic and social woes. Faced with a lack of any real choice, the Irish electorate has proved reluctant to give any party a clear mandate to govern.

An analysis of the vote, however, shows that many Irish people are indeed looking for an alternative to the capitalist parties.(1)

The outgoing Fianna Fail remains — as it has been since the founding of the state 60 years ago — the largest party. It lays claim to the mantle of republicanism and many people still identify it with their aspirations for a unified country independent of Britain. But this time around, many traditional Fianna Fail voters turned to the Labour Party and the Workers Party. In the absence of a strong anti-imperialist electoral challenge, these two parties were able to represent themselves as the defenders of workers' interests.

This election took place in a markedly different political situation than those in June 1981 and February 1982. June 1981 was at the height of the hunger strike. The mass movement rallied to the support of the ten prisoner candidates, winning the election of one hunger striker and another prisoner. In February 1982 the impact of the mass movement was still present. Fianna Fail, losing some of its traditional voters to the H-Block candidates, lost power and the Fine Gael/Labour coalition formed the government.

The February 1982 election took place when the Coalition's austerity package became too much. The impact of the mass movement was still present, and although the major anti-imperialist organisations, Sinn Fein, the Irish Republican Socialist Party; and People's Democracy, Irish section of the Fourth International, all ran separate campaigns, their common themes were understood.

Fianna Fail were elected in February 1982. But their strikingly similar attempts to resolve the economic crisis caused their downfall, precipitating the most recent elections.

Peoples Democracy has consistently argued for an anti-imperialist united front in elections as a vital strategy in a period of chronic governmental instability. When it was not possible to achieve this in February, PD sponsored the candidature

of Bernadette McAliskey in Dublin, and ran one of its own members in the western industrial town of Limerick.

This time Bernadette McAliskey was the only candidate fighting the election on an anti-imperialist and socialist platform. But the election-weary people were not prepared in large numbers to vote for an independent, even one as popular as Bernadette, when her campaign was not part of a national alternative.

McAliskey is strongly identified with the struggle in the North of Ireland against British rule and the repression of the nationalist community. As her candidacy was not part of a broader movement, it was not seen as offering a real alternative by the mass of people, who tended to regard casting a vote for her as a purely symbolic protest. Consequently her vote declined by half to 1,023.

With the general election in the south coming so rapidly on the heels of the northern Assembly elections, and in the absence of other anti-imperialist organisations from the electoral field, PD was not able to put forward its own candidates. The organisation gave its backing to McAliskey, and is centrally involved in her constituency committee. (This committee was established prior to the February election and has since then maintained a presence in the area.)

The weakness of the anti-imperialist movement allowed the misleaders of the working class to gain ground.

The Labour Party, which had suffered badly in February, and was predicted by many to be in its death agony, increased its seats from 14 to 16. The party has been badly divided over the question of its involvement in Coalition governments. It was this dispute that caused its party leader, Michael O'Leary, to defect to Fine Gael shortly before the election was called. But ironically, the very public internal dispute, with significant pressure from the anti-coalition section of the rank-and-file, allowed the Labour Party to project something of an independent profile.

It is the outcome of the battle within the Labour Party which will determine who forms the incoming government. There is significant opposition to the party being a partner in coalition, and the issue will be decided at a special party conference on December 12. Two of the biggest trade unions, the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, and the Federated Workers Union of Ireland, are against Labour participation in a Coalition government. They argue that Labour should support a minority government of whichever party offers the most in a negotiated deal.

The discontent in the party's ranks is reflective of the mood of the working class, who, pushed to the wall by the economic crisis, are looking for ways to fight back.

The Workers Party, which made great exertions to distance itself from its republican past, has also worked hard to fill the space in the political spectrum now occupied by Labour. They have achieved notable success. Although two of their three sitting deputies lost their seats, they held one and gained another, and increased their overall vote, gaining 5-10% of the vote where they stood.

Having firmly rejected the national liberation struggle, the Workers Party has sought to build up a reputation as 'bread and butter' socialists. However, when they abandoned the struggle for national self-determination, they also abandoned socialism; they support state repression of anti-imperialists both sides of the border, and their answer to the south's official jobless rate of 13.5% is increased state handouts to entice the multinationals in.

Another such right wing economicist 'socialist', Jim Kemmy, the virulently anti-nationalist deputy of the Democratic Socialist Party, lost his seat. But unfortunately it does not seem that he was defeated because of his rejection of the fight against imperialism. His loss seems to have been brought about by a witch-hunt by the Church and the right-wing over his very public opposition to the proposal that would make abortion not just illegal but would make unconstitutional any law that might relax the ban.

What the so-called socialists of Labour, the Workers Party and the DSP have in common is that they counterpose fighting for economic gains for the working class within the framework of the existing 26-county state to the fight to end Partition as the prerequisite to any real social or economic reform. The reality of Ireland is that there is no way out of the economic blind alley in which working people find themselves without fighting to end British imperialism and partition, without fighting to unite the country under the control of the workers and small farmers.

The anti-imperialist movement, which has led the struggle for national liberation, has not been seen to be in the leadership of the struggle on social and economic questions. They have thus lost ground to the pro-imperialist 'socialists'.

None of the anti-imperialist organisations alone is strong enough to mount an effective challenge to these misleaders of the working class. However, the lesson of the H-Block/Armagh campaign is that united they can provide a credible alternative leadership to the masses of Irish people north and south who have shown their willingness to fight back. ■

(1). The final tally divided the 166-seat legislature as follows: Fianna Fail 75 (down 5); Fine Gael 70 (up 6); Labour 16 (up 2); Workers Party 2 (down 1); Independents 3.

Defending womens rights in the austerity offensive

In this and previous issues of 'International Viewpoint' we have outlined the scope of the worldwide crisis of capitalism and how the world capitalist class is attempting to force the exploited and oppressed throughout the world to pay for this crisis with their jobs, living standards, and the everpresent threat of war.

While this attack affects the whole of the world working class, certain sectors of it are more adversely affected because of their structural position, and because they are singled out for particular attack in an attempt to divide the working class and impede its unity in the face of attack.

Penny DUGGAN

Throughout Europe the theme of 'Women against the Crisis' is becoming increasingly familiar in meetings, conferences, and demonstrations. Under this slogan women from trade unions, political parties, women's groups, and campaigning organisations are coming together to protest at the way women are suffering from the combined effects of the capitalist crisis, and demand that the labour movement act in their defence.

While over the last ten or fifteen years women's position in Western Europe has improved considerably in a number of ways there is a real risk that these gains will increasingly be lost.

Both because of their position in the family and in the workplace, women are in the front line of the capitalists' attack. Cuts in social spending on childcare, health care, and other social services; cuts in the real level of wages; all place the greatest burden on women in their role as the mainstay of the home and family. As workers women are regarded as expendable, after all they only work for 'pin money' and so can be brought into the workforce or excluded as suits the needs of the employers. Along with all this is a massive ideological offensive to justify the material attacks being made on women's rights, which are trying to roll back the gains that women made during the 1970s, benefitting from the momentum of the women's movement in a period when the crisis was not so deep that concessions could not be made.

The scope of attacks on women in the present situation is raising the question of how women can organise to fightback with increasing urgency.

The women's liberation movement which grew up all over Europe in the 1970s is in an organisational decline. This movement developed primarily outside the organisations of the labour movement, resting on women-only groups that were often initiated by women from the student or professional sectors.

The impact of this movement was enormous. In every layer of society, the ideas of women's equality and liberation

prompted discussion and response. Thus, although the women's groups and organisations have lost some of their organisational strength, and political perspective, the ideas remain strong, and in much broader layers of society.

The commitment of the mass organisations of the working class to defence of women's rights, uneven though it is, can provide a starting point for the joint action of women in defence of their own rights, within the context of an overall workers solution to the crisis of capitalism.

BACK TO THE FAMILY

To quote Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for Social Services in the present British government, 'You know, if God had meant there to be equal rights to work he would not have created men and women.' Such sentiments are not specific even to such right-wingers as the present Thatcher government in Britain. Within the labour movement itself there are those who believe that women should sacrifice their jobs to provide jobs for men, or the young unemployed.

This ideological onslaught comes after over a decade of increasing opportunities for women. It is used to justify the cutting back at women's rights on every front — their right to work, particularly in qualified and fulltime posts; their right to state-provided childcare facilities; their right even to decide when, and whether, to have children.

Such an attempt to turn the clock back is not new. During World War II women in many countries were encouraged to go out to work, to fulfill necessary production tasks previously done by men. In order to facilitate this in Britain childcare centres, public laundries, and subsidised restaurants were instituted to some extent. A campaign was waged to convince women that they could, and should, do such jobs, many of which in the munitions factories were both heavy and dangerous. For many young women it gave them a taste of social and economic independence that they would remember all their lives. However, once the war was over and men returned to

In this article we look at some general trends in how women in particular are suffering the effects of the capitalist crisis in Western Europe, and how far the workers movement has moved to their defence. This article is based on a report given to a Fourth International cadre school in August 1982 on the present situation facing women in Western Europe.

In future issues of 'International Viewpoint' we hope to look more extensively at the themes and countries treated in this article.

civilian life there was a dramatic turnaround in attitudes. Suddenly Dr Spock began to be acclaimed as the great theorist on childcare, with his position that women had to devote themselves to their children for the first five years of their life, unless they wanted their babies to grow up psychologically disturbed. Women were told it was now their duty to give up their jobs for men. The social services suddenly vanished. Everything changed — the Paris fashion designers lengthened skirts and whittled down waists for the return to 'femininity', after the practical short skirts of the war years.

Today it will not be so easy to drive women back to the home. The gains that women have made over the past years have been as a result of their own struggles, and the broad layers of women who consider that they have the right to determine the course of their own lives will not be easily persuaded otherwise. The enormous entry of women into the workforce in the postwar boom has brought about a structural change in the position of women that cannot be easily reversed.

However, this does not mean that the present attack taking place on women's rights is not serious. It is vital that women and men together, as a united working class, fight every inch of the way to defend and extend women's rights.

ABORTION UNDER ATTACK

One of the central campaigns of the women's movement in Europe has been for the right to abortion and contraception. Women know that unless they can decide when, and whether, to have children, then many other rights become almost meaningless.

Since the mid-1960s, some advance has been made on this front in almost every European country. Even where the laws have not been changed, the campaigns of women have provoked a discussion on this previously taboo subject, and quite often in practice laws have been less strictly enforced.

But today, even where the laws are liberalised, women find themselves increasingly on the defensive. The British 1967 Abortion Act has survived ten

attempts in parliament to amend it restrictively since it was passed, thanks to massive campaigns that have won the support of the trades union movement and the Labour Party. However, 'backdoor' attacks continue: increasing bureaucratic procedures that doctors and their women patients have to go through, prosecutions brought by the virulent anti-abortionists against well-known doctors, hysterical propaganda about aborted foetuses being left to die in hospital sinks, and, of course, cuts in the health service provisions for abortions.

In other 'liberal' countries in northern Europe, the women's movement is preparing itself for defence action. A government commission in Sweden is preparing a report on the functioning of the abortion law there and, although it is not expected to propose any changes, it is thought that anti-abortion groups will take the opportunity to do so.

Where abortion remains completely illegal, there are even attempts to harden attitudes. In the South of Ireland, where it is not allowed for any reason, there is an amendment to the constitution being put which would make any law mitigating this prohibition unconstitutional and thus severely increase the difficulties in making any progress on this front. In Belgium, where it is also illegal, prosecutions of women and doctors were restarted in 1982, having been de facto suspended since 1973. Although the sentences passed so far have been quite light, the doctors concerned are continuing to practice abortions, and thus run the risk of further prosecutions.

In the Spanish state a relative victory was scored when women and doctors charged with having had or performing abortions in the 'Bilbao trials' were given minimum sentences or acquitted. However, the newly elected Socialist Party government has made only the most minimal promises on abortion — 'a feeble depenalisation of abortion which in fact would deny this right to women,' the October 8 issue of *Combate*, the weekly paper of the Spanish section of the Fourth International explained. In Portugal, the Communist Party recently presented a bill to parliament that would have introduced some limited right to abortions in the first twelve weeks. Although the bill was defeated by 127 votes to 105 votes, it represented a step forward, insofar as it was the first time the subject had ever been raised in the Portuguese parliament.

One of the successes of the 1970s was the introduction of a law permitting abortions in the overwhelmingly Catholic country of Italy. However, this law was always fraught with difficulties in functioning — the clause allowing medical staff to refuse to do abortions on conscience grounds for example is considerably more of a barrier in Italy than in Britain, although the vast majority of women consulted in referenda have supported the right to abortion. Now, the special women's clinics — the *consultiori* — have been incorporated into the state

system and taken out of direct control by women. They have also been given responsibilities for the old, drug addicts, etc, and so are less able to help women.

The only real success on this question recently has come in France where the Mitterrand government has, after much prevarication, agreed to introduce 70 per cent reimbursement of the cost of abortions. This was originally promised before the May 10, 1981, election but only announced in December 1982 (*International Viewpoint* No 16, November 1, 1982).

The attack on abortion rights constitutes the centrepiece of the ideological attack on women aimed at denying them a role outside their traditional place as the support of the home and family. As it has been one of the central campaigns of the women's movement, the fight for the right to choose is one of the questions of women's liberation that has been most widely debated within the labour movement and the workers political parties.

Although the British labour movement is in advance of the majority of Western European countries, with both the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party being in support of abortion and prepared to take action in defence of the existing abortion laws, most Social-Democratic union federations and political parties, and the Communist Parties and their associated trade-union federations, have gone some way to supporting women's demands on this question. However, this is not the case for example in the Netherlands where women are a particularly low percentage, 20%, of the workforce. In Belgium the debate within the labour movement has broadened to involve the Catholic trade-union federation.

This came about because, in order to achieve unity between the Social-Democratic and the Catholic trade-union federations for a 'Women against the crisis' demonstration for March 8, 1982, it was agreed to leave out the question of abortion. However this prompted a debate particularly among the women at the base of the Catholic federation, (*International Viewpoint* No 6, May 10, 1982).

However, not surprisingly, it has been the problems of women as workers that have drawn the most response within the workers movement.

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK

Alongside the demand for women to have control over their own bodies goes the demand for the right of women to enter into paid employment outside the home.

As the economic crisis cuts the real wages of workers, and unemployment hits harder, it is becoming more and more glaringly obvious that women's wages, including for married women, are in no way just for inessential 'extras' and luxuries, but are an essential form of income. Of course for the increasing numbers of women who live alone or who are the breadwinner for a family this was never in doubt. And for all women an income

of their own has always been a guarantee of independence.

UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG WOMEN

During the period of the economic crisis women's unemployment has been rising at a faster rate than men's. For example, in Britain unemployment among women is rising at twice the rate for men: 16.2% to 29.4% of the total in 1973 to 1978. In Belgium only in 1982 did men's unemployment begin to rise higher than for women.

Women, because of their family responsibilities, make up the majority of the 'reserve' workers for capitalism, in part-time jobs, on short-term contracts, or simply forced to move in and out of the workforce at different times to fit in with family needs. Women are also in general a less skilled sector of the workforce, who increasingly find it more difficult to get jobs again having once left employment for whatever reason.

One major area of women's employment that had been steadily increasing, the state sector, is now static. This also is an important factor in the rapid increase in women's unemployment, as the increasing number of women on the job market are now finding the former opportunities in the state sector drying up.

However, even the figures do not necessarily illustrate the full extent of women's unemployment. Many women, particularly married women, do not register as unemployed, because they are not entitled to unemployment benefits, or because they do not regard themselves as truly unemployed.

Women's right to work can only be defended by taking up a specific defence of women's right to jobs in the framework of defence of jobs by the working class as a whole. The demand for the 35-hour week which will increase jobs, and for wages to be linked to the cost of living, would be of enormous advantage to women as a layer for whom unemployment is high and wages low; in Britain women's average wage is still only 60% of the male average wage.

However, women also have to be given positive encouragement and increased opportunities to enter into new areas of employment that have traditionally been male dominated. In many European countries the *Affirmative Action* programmes of the United States, which placed a legal requirement on employers to reach certain quotas of women employees in jobs such as mining, have been studied with interest.

A WAY TO RIGHT THE WRONG

Women historically have been denied the training that would give them access to skilled jobs, both in industry and in other sectors. Unless rapid steps are taken to overcome this historical disadvantage then the notion of 'equal access' to jobs is meaningless. Women just are not qualified to take up many jobs. For example, in Britain where many skilled jobs in engi-

neering, electricians, traindrivers, etc, require apprenticeships, women are almost only found serving apprenticeships to become hairdressers.

The idea of positive action to help women get into different jobs is becoming more and more widely discussed. In Austria the Social-Democrats made some limited attempt to encourage women to take courses in electrical engineering, and have declared themselves in favour of positive action in general. In Germany a special apprentice programme for young women was established at a factory in Cologne, but it was found that the young women finishing this course then found it difficult to get permanent jobs. This has happened in other countries where one particular company or educational institution has introduced such courses when this has not been part of an overall plan with an obligation on employers to also positively discriminate in employing workers. This is one of the many weaknesses in the Sex Discrimination Act in Britain which allows for positive discrimination in education and training for jobs, and for advertising, but not at the point of employment. However both the TUC and the Labour Party in Britain have adopted policy in favour of positive action, and some employers, often local councils, have declared themselves 'equal opportunity' employers, who are thus committed to employing women on an equal basis, in traditionally male jobs.

Italian workers in Fiat cars have won a significant step forward on this front. There the unions forced the management to agree that 50% of all new recruits should be women. In Sweden companies that establish themselves in particularly crisis-hit areas with government grants have to employ at least 40% women. In addition if Swedish companies employ women in traditionally male jobs they can get large state subsidies. These are some of the most significant practical steps that have been achieved. But it is significant that this question is getting increasing attention throughout Europe, from the Spanish state, where a planned conference of the Women's Commission of the Comisiones Obreras (independent trade unions) has scheduled women's right to work and positive action as a major item for discussion, to Sweden. As Italian women wrote in motivating a European conference on women and work, 'Even the themes of feminism have changed since this massive entry of women into the labour market (in the post war boom). "What kind of work?" has become the central question.'

PART-TIME WORK = PART-TIME UNEMPLOYMENT

Part-time work is often seen as being a good thing for women, giving them a chance to combine a job that offers them a little independence and some extra money for luxuries with taking the responsibility for the children and the family.

The truth of course is quite different. First of all women have the right to work and need a full wage, and a satisfying job. Secondly part-time work is in the interests of the employers. It allows employers to use the workforce more flexibly, in a way that is dictated by their need to increase their profits. It makes employment more precarious and breaks up the organisation and solidarity of the workforce. Employers can use the labour power provided by women without having to pay either individually or through the state for the social services such as childcare which would make it easier for women to work full time.

In many countries of course part-time workers do not have the same benefits in terms of holiday entitlement, sick pay retirement benefits, or job security as full-time workers. For example, in France, part-time workers on average get the equivalent of 15 to 20% less than the rate of pay of full-time workers. This is despite the fact that the position of part-time workers has been 'improved' by recent decrees of the government.

Often part-time work is dressed up as 'job-sharing', or a new emancipated way of organising working which allows people to give more time to other activities. But, in contradistinction to the workers demand for 'jobsharing with no loss of pay', part-time work does mean loss of pay. And it is quite clear by looking at the statistics that it is not women's choice to work part time. Can it be that, for example, 40% of all women who work in Britain have freely chosen to accept badly paid and insecure jobs?

Many trade unions have formally criticised moves towards institutionalising part-time work but there has been very little practical action on this front. For example, the CGT trade-union federation in France which was opposed to part-time work, reacted quite differently when the Mitterrand government announced decrees enshrining it in the employment laws. CGT-leader Krasucki was asked what the CGT would do; he replied that they had organised a press conference, and beyond that the workers would know what to do in their factories!

Such passivity in the face of new attacks on women, despite formal policies adopted is nothing new.

WOMEN AGAINST THE CRISIS

The scope of attacks taking place on women today poses political questions sharply — how to defend women's rights as part of the defence of the rights and living standards of the working class. Is defence of women's rights, for example to work, counterposed to men's right to work?

Despite the advances that have been made within the workers movement in formal positions on women's rights it is too often obvious that this is just demagoguery, and that in concrete struggles to defend jobs the labour bureaucracy will sacrifice women.

Yet often women have been in the forefront of struggles. For example, in

the clothing industry there have been some notable struggles. Women in the Lee Jeans factory in Scotland occupied their factory after it was announced that it was going to be closed, meaning the loss of all their jobs. They organised a campaign of solidarity throughout the British labour movement, which resulted in the factory being bought by another manufacturer. Their determination was saluted by many other workers as giving a real lead in the fight against unemployment. In Sweden, which women from Lee Jeans visited, there was also an important occupation of a textile factory by women workers which waged a successful solidarity campaign among other trade-unionists, and also provoked discussion on the use of occupations in the fight against unemployment.

Women are prepared to counter every attack by the capitalists — not only to take action against immediate threats. In Belgium the International Women's Day demonstrations in the last two years brought together many women, and the trade-union federations, under the slogan 'Women against the Crisis'. The Labour Party in Britain was forced by its growing, active and leftwing women's organisation to hold a national festival for women's rights in 1982, involving trades unions and women's groups, which built on the momentum of a 'Women against the Tories' festival organised by women's groups in 1981, and the series of unemployment marches the Labour Party had organised over the past year.

In some countries the trade-union bureaucracy has blocked this type of unity. This happened, for example, in West Germany. The national union federation, recognising that women workers were increasingly turning to the unions, organised a series of events around this theme for International Women's Day 1982.

In France one of the most successful events in recent years was a conference on 'Women and Work' organised in April 1982 which attracted 2,000 women and men, many of whom were trade-union activists, to discuss all the questions facing women in the crisis.

Increasingly, under the impact of the crisis, women are coming together from many different standpoints to defend women's rights. And it is also being shown that it is women within the mass organisations of the working class who can use that organisational strength to reach out and give a lead to all women.

This process is uneven, in some countries even the women's commissions in the unions of workers political parties are under attack. But the historic success in Britain, where the national trade union federation, the TUC, called a national mass demonstration to oppose attacks on women's abortion rights points the way forward. This success was achieved by a determined fight by women through the trades unions to force their leaderships to defend their interests.

Defend the sliding scale

As a result of the upsurge of workers struggles in Italy that began in 1969 — at the time it was called the “Creeping May” by comparison with the May-June 1968 rebellion in France — the Italian workers gained a number of very advanced concessions from the bosses.

In particular, the sliding scale of wages became well entrenched. Thus, despite the onset of economic crisis in Italy, the buying power of the workers held up far better relatively than in other European countries. As the crisis has deepened, the

Italian capitalists more and more centered their attacks on the sliding scale, arguing that it was making their labor costs impossibly high by comparison with other countries, where the capitalists found it easier to roll back the workers' past gains.

The following interview, given to our correspondent in mid-November, describes the latest phase of this crisis and its influence in bringing down the Italian government. It explains the role that Fourth Internationalists have played and are playing in this key struggle of the Italian working class.

Question. In June this year the Confindustria (Italian Confederation of Industrialists) disavowed the 1975 agreement on the sliding scale of wages, threatening to cease abiding by it from February 1983. The Lega Comunista Rivoluzionario (LCR, Italian section of the Fourth International) launched a petition against this move. Can you tell us what form this campaign has taken, and how it has been received?

Answer. This initiative was taken by several union representatives from factories in the north of Italy. In particular from Alfa Romeo and Face Standard in Milan, from Breda in Brescia, and from the Co-ordinating Committee of Fiat Workers in Cassa Integrazione.(1) There are several tens of thousands of them!

The launch of this initiative was based on the conviction that, faced with this attack from the Confindustria, and the employers in general, a broad workers resistance could develop. This conviction stemmed from some concrete facts. For example many, many sections of working class have taken positions in defence of the sliding scale, and the trade-union congresses in 1981 came out in favour of maintaining the 1975 agreement.

The initiative of the LCR engineering workers has taken the form of collective signatures for an appeal addressed to the unitary trade-union federation CGIL-CISL-UIL.(2) This appeal called on the leaderships to lead actions to defend the sliding scale and to force the employers to withdraw their decision unconditionally. In particular it called for rejecting the blackmail of the Confindustria, who threatened not to renew the contracts if the workers did not accept the disavowal of the 1975 agreement.

This initiative immediately got an enormous response among the workers. Within several days, several thousand signatures had been collected in the factories of the three towns where the appeal was launched.

There was a first attempt to extend the initiative during the general strike on June 25, when there were almost half-

million workers in the streets of Rome. The strike was organised by the trade-union leaderships; officially to protest against the decision of the Confindustria but, in fact, to channel the huge protest movement that was developing in the workplaces.

During the Rome demonstration, the initiators of the petition organised stands to collect signatures, and this had a big effect. Many union representatives and leaders not only signed the appeal but took copies for their own workplaces. It was particularly significant that many representatives from factory councils — the backbone of the Italian working class — showed themselves ready to take the initiative on their own account. There was another example in Milan. After the June 25 strike our comrades were collecting signatures during the regional general council of the CGIL-CISL-UIL federation. Some 180 representatives from factory councils took the appeal to get it signed.

In July the comrades took the appeal, signed by more than 50,000 workers, to the trade-union leadership in Rome and organised a press conference there. This press conference was widely reported in the newspapers, as were other stages in the campaign.

Q. How have the trade-union leaderships reacted to this campaign?

A. To understand the trade-union leaderships' reaction you have to take account of two elements: first of all that they committed themselves to drawing up a document to be accepted by the three components of the unitary federation, CGIL-CISL-UIL, which anticipated putting into question some elements of the 1975 agreement on the sliding scale. But it is also important to take into account the very strong reactions that have occurred within the trade-union organisations, including in important sections of the apparatus, against the Confindustria decision.

The campaign launched by the LCR comrades therefore intersected with these deep differentiations taking place within the confederations. For example, in July,

the comrades sent the petitions signed by workers in the Turin factories to the FLM(3) leadership in Piedmont. They announced in a press statement that they considered this initiative ‘useful because it aimed to awaken the workers to a decisive question for the whole trade-union movement’. In the same statement they undertook to carry through the struggle for ‘the renewal of contracts, for rescinding the disavowal of the agreement on the sliding scale, and the creation of more jobs.’

We've seen similar reactions at other levels of the trades unions. The factory council at Alfa Romeo in Milan offered the use of their headquarters for a press conference. And this is not simply due to the fact that the LCR workers have an important influence in this factory council, but also to the positive reaction of the workers to their initiative.

On the other hand, it is obvious that the union tops have tried to ignore this initiative and have not, for example, given an account of the meeting that took place when the delegation came to give the signatures to them in Rome.

This reaction is in line with their general attitude towards all those who question their policy of concessions to the employers.

These are just small symptoms of the conflict going on in the unions. To understand the full scope, you have to take account of what happened during the consultations among the workers organised by the Secretariat of the CSIL-CGIL-UIL. It was there that the official representatives laid out the concessions that the leaderships were ready to make. During this meeting our comrades fought for the rejection of the document. They counterposed to it a platform for struggle that could relaunch the workers fight-

(1). Laid-off workers who continue to draw the major part of their wages.

(2). CGIL: General Confederation of Italian Workers, CP-led union.

CISL: Italian Social Confederation of Workers, Catholic union federation.

UIL: Union of Italian Workers, SP-led union.

(3). Federation of Metalworkers, composed of: the FIOM linked to the CGIL; FIM linked to the CISL; and the UILM linked to the UIL.

back against the bosses' offensive. In fact, the official document was rejected by the majority of the workers who took part in the assemblies.

This rejection took a number of forms, because there was not agreement on an alternative. Some rejected the document without counterposing anything to it. Others voted for the text put forward by our comrades. Finally, others proposed amendments to the official document which did not challenge the underlying orientation of the leadership but only its most immediate consequences.

The battle around these amendments — led in particular by the FLM — offered room for all sorts of manoeuvres by the leadership. But, over and above the criticism that we made of this tactic, it is important to understand the deep contradictions that it revealed.

Q. Has this campaign had an impact on members of the Communist Party, and in general how have the CP reacted on this question of the sliding scale?

A. To answer that question, all that has to be said is that the majority of the signatories of the appeal are comrades of the CP, rank-and-file activists, and in some cases CP trade-union cadres. In July *l'Unita* (CP daily paper) talked several times about the signature collection that was going on. In reality the attitude of the CP on the sliding scale is symptomatic of much more general problems which they are facing in the present period. Unlike their position during the previous consultations, when they supported the ceiling of 16 per cent on wage rises, this time they adopted a much more cautious attitude towards the trade-union leaderships' proposals. Thus, they opened up a certain safety valve for some of the discontent that their own workers base was expressing.

In September and October, *l'Unita* published numerous protest letters from activists against the policy of the union tops. This in no way represented a decision by the CP to take the lead of the protest movement, but it did show its wish not to appear, once more, in opposition to the most militant sections of workers.

At the same time the CP wanted to prevent an open confrontation between these sectors and the union leadership. They tried to propose intermediary solutions acceptable to both sides. Thus, they largely inspired the amendment tactic of the FLM.

These concerns of the CP appeared clearly in an article by Gerardo Chiaromonte in *l'Unita* on November 3, at the time of the consultations. He stated that the argument about labour costs put forward by the employers and accepted by the unitary federation is a real problem. But he immediately introduced nuances in explaining that this is not the only problem, that there are several ways of responding to it, and that, perhaps, the tack chosen of the CGIL-CISL-UIL federation was not the most adequate. In consequence, he concluded, the consultations should offer the workers the opportunity

to improve these proposals. As you can imagine, this article provoked endless polemics between different components of the unitary federation. In a press conference, Chiaromonte explained that the CP in no way intended to defeat the trade-union document, that it had no other alternative proposal, but the workers would not accept it. This is why, for him, it would be necessary to partly reformulate it in order to make it acceptable.

Q. Can you tell us in detail how the consultations in the workplaces took place, and what were the results?

A. I've already told you about the massive rejection of this document by the workers. But we have to be more precise on the most significant elements of the consultations. First of all I should point out that everywhere where alternative motions were presented (almost exclusively where our comrades were present) they won a huge majority of the workers' votes. This was so in the big Turin factories like Aeritalia, Bertone, numerous Fiat plants, and in the big factories in Milan and Brescia, and in Italsider of Tarante.



Italian metalworkers demonstration (DR)

In the factories the trade-union leaders organised a skilful piece of scene-setting. They had learnt the lessons from the previous consultations. They tried to avoid general assemblies, and to start the consultations in the least militant factories, etc. Despite that, where the oppositional fight was taken up, it won the support of the majority of workers. This was so even in the presence of much respected trade-union leaders like Bruno Trentin, who came in person to T.B. and Breda in Brescia. There were twenty votes for his proposal and sixty against. At Nuova Pignone in Florence, Del Piano, a leader of the CISL, was so challenged that a real revolt broke out when he wanted to speak again, and he was forced to leave. At Falck in Milan, Pierre Carnitè, leader of the CISL, quite simply refused to come to the assembly after he heard that the factory council intended to present an alternative document.

All these examples give a good idea of the atmosphere existing in the workplaces. Even the fight for the amend-

ments was not as simple as those who moved them hoped. For example, the factory council from Alfa Romeo in Arezza, or the FIOM at Brescia, presented much more advanced texts than the FLM.

What is clear from the results is that the traditionally most combative sections rejected the platform of the union leadership.

A more detailed analysis of the votes would demonstrate other significant factors. For example, in Milan province, the government employees and teachers en masse have rejected the union proposals.

But the union leaderships have completely ignored this outcome. They have proved this time, as never before to such an extent, their complete contempt for the workers' wishes.

Q. At the same time as the consultations drew to a close a new government crisis opened up with Spadolini's resignation. Do you think there's a link between these two developments?

A. The Spadolini government played an essential role in putting the question of labour costs at the centre of the discussions in the workers' movement. Even at

the beginning of the consultations Spadolini openly declared that if the workers did not accept the union document, and if, consequently, the employers and unions did not arrive at an agreement on labour costs, he would block the sliding scale by decree.

However the SP and the CP, as much as the trade-union confederations, did nothing to increase the anti-government dynamic which appeared in the course of the consultations. The CP in particular limited itself to emphasising the disagreements between the components of the majority government, without pointing up the obvious role that the situation within the working class played in the governmental crisis. There is no doubt that the capacity for resistance once again shown by Italian workers had an impact on government and its component parts. This is particularly true of the Italian Socialist Party, which is counting on the elections to strengthen its political weight. It cannot have failed to notice the workers' reaction. ■

Labor without rights: The foreign workers

Elfie FLECK

The following article from the December 2 issue of Die Linke, the paper of the Austrian section of the Fourth International discusses a question that has become a key one in the labor movement of nearly all the northern European countries. The occasion for it, and the starting point, was a study done recently by the Sozialwissenschaftliche Studiengesellschaft showing the extent of antiforeigner-worker prejudice in Austria.

The real antiforeigner bigots are not the people who babble on at the family dinner table about "all these bohunks." They are not the ones who moan and groan about the "furriners'" noisy kids. They are not even the ones who write "Foreigners Out!" on walls and billboards.

Of course, all the commonplace expressions of antiforeignerism cannot be minimized. They do indicate dangerous prejudices that could be activated at any time. Already today, the antiforeignerism that exists is used to justify discriminatory laws and a shortsighted policy by the unions.

But there is a much greater danger than your prejudiced man in the street in those quarters where no sociological study of antiforeignerism can measure it. It is represented by the state officials and the interest groups that exploit antiforeignerism at the same time as verbally condemning it.

There are the big businessmen and industrialists. They note with concern the growing antiforeignerism of Austrians. They talk about "social and humanitarian duty to the foreign workers" and about how essential the "foreign coworkers" are, even in "a period of recession." And what they are thinking about is their own economic interest.

This display of brotherly love for the foreign workers should not surprise anyone. The foreign workers suit almost ideally the demands of the "free market economy." Because they have no legal rights, they can be most easily used to drive down wages and as a pressure for maintaining labor discipline (that is, inhuman working conditions).

A study of the industries in which a relative high percentage of foreigners are employed show that most of the "guest" workers are in the lowest wage categories. In 1981, 22% of the workers in textiles were foreigners. In the restaurant and

hotel business, the percentage was 17.8%. In leather, it was 15.7%, and in the shoe and garment industry it was 9.4%. In agriculture and forestries, it was 9.2%.

The high percentage of foreign workers in unskilled occupations makes it easier for the bosses to keep the wages for these jobs even lower. Thus, in 1968, a helper or unskilled worker got 82% of a skilled worker's wage. By the middle of the 1970s, this had fallen to 75%.

Foreign workers have little defense against demands of the bosses that they wear themselves out on the job. They have to work particularly hard, be particularly punctual and conscientious. Finally, they are the first fired. And that has much more serious consequences for them than for their Austrian coworkers. Within no more than six months after they find themselves without a job, they are deported to their home countries, where once again they face unemployment and poverty.

The facts speak for themselves. The rate of industrial accidents is 150% higher among foreign workers than among Austrians. The rules about medical checks are generally avoided. In fact, the health of foreign workers and their families is markedly worse than comparable Austrian groups (this is a result not only of the working conditions to which they are subjected but to the subhuman housing they get). In particular, the percentage of tuberculosis is considerably higher.

The great advantage that the foreign labor offers for the capitalist economy is its, in the fullest sense, "flexibility" and "mobility." These virtues will undoubtedly be demanded of the Austrian labor force, especially in recession times.

Moreover, the phenomenon of emigrant labor is fundamentally nothing new. Ever since the industrial revolution, workers have had to migrate to the places the capitalists consider most favorable for their operations. All those Novaks and Pospisils in the Vienna phone book are a reminder of earlier migrations of workers within the Austro-Hungarian empire. A lot of our great grandparents were foreign workers too. In the postwar period, however, labor migration has taken on unprecedented dimensions. Today every seventh worker in Europe is a "foreigner."

One thing is clear. The situation of the foreign workers shows the anarchic logic of the established economic system particularly clearly. They can be hired and fired (and gotten rid of) at any time. They are the ideal plaything of the econo-

mic royalists. The role that has been assigned to these workers as a cushion against fluctuations in the job market is maintained by the state through laws that serve the interest of these same economic royalists.

The Foreign Workers Employment Act passed on March 20, 1975, without a dissenting vote, is an instrument that can serve both in periods of boom and periods of crisis. The regulation about the quotas for foreign workers is as flexible as they themselves have to be. But where there is no flexibility is about the rights they have here. The Foreign Workers Act is the legal basis for denying any rights whatever to foreign workers in the workplaces and in society.

The text of the law begins by stating that employers can apply for work permits (Paragraph 3). The foreign workers themselves have no right to enter into contracts. What is more, work permits are good for a year at most, and are given only for specific jobs in specific firms in specific spots (Paragraphs 7 and 6 respectively). Thus, foreign workers in Austria are deprived of the most basic right of working people, the right to choose where they will work, and the denial of this basic right is established by law. The dependency of the foreign workers on their bosses is a modern form of slavery, and the way that they are traded on the labor market is a modern form of the slave trade.

Regular recessions are carefully calculated into the law. Thus, work permits are to be given only "if the labor market justifies this." (Paragraph 4, Section 1.) This is explained in the following way, "if the employment of a foreign worker for the job concerned does not threaten the job of a native." Furthermore, the hiring of a foreign worker is made conditional: "To maintain the jobs of native workers. . . foreign workers are to be laid off first." That is, foreigners must be laid off "if short hours for a considerable time can be avoided thereby." (Paragraph 8, Section 2.) Thus, an unhealthy division of workers according to nationality was the express intention of the legislators.

Moreover, the law provides for determining the number of foreign workers in accordance with economic ups and downs (Paragraph 12). This is simply the writing into law of the deals the so-called social partners (the unions, the bosses, and the government) have been making since 1962. Thus, this year they worked out a deal to reduce the number of foreign

workers by 17,000. But already by the end of August 1982, 17,537 less foreign workers were employed than in the same month last year. This overzealous application of the quota means that in this period more than 10% of the foreign workers have been fired. Despite the fact that they represent only 6% of the total workforce, they account for over 50% of the jobs lost.

A small amount of the laid off foreign workers have been replaced by new ones. Thus, in 1982 in Lower Austria, 200 Yugoslav and Turkish workers were recruited. Foreign labor is exploited in accordance with the rotation system. The principle is that they are not to be allowed to put down roots, because they would limit their geographical mobility.

For the emigrant workers themselves, this means they are continually insecure. At the most, they can count on staying put a year, and even this little bit of security can be taken away from them at any time. So, there is no way that they can make any plans.

Because of this extreme insecurity, it is difficult and often quite impossible for foreign workers to bring in their families. Against this background, no serious social policy for dealing with the problems of the emigrant workers is possible. All the talk about "integration" (whatever this means) takes on a hollow ring.

The role of the Austrian Socialist Party with respect to the foreign workers is, to put it mildly, disastrous. On the one hand, it never tires of appealing for humanitarian sympathy and preaching equality for all, especially in the recent period when the activities of right-wing antiforeign circles have been becoming bolder. On the other, as the government party it is responsible for legalizing inequality, for the fact that the law considers certain human beings inferior.

So long as the SP does not fight for the equality before the law of all workers, regardless of their nationality, all their appeals for solidarity with the "guest"(1) workers remains hollow. It is a false notion to believe that the phenomenon of antiforeignism can be tackled on the human level without changing the laws.

Antiforeignism has economic and political causes. It is, to a certain extent, created by those who run the state and the economy. As long as it does not exceed certain limits, they find it useful. Since it is inscribed in the laws, in the Foreign Workers Employment Act, all the well-intentioned deploring of it is of little use.

There is often a pernicious interaction between the prejudices of a large section of the Austrian people and the text of the laws. For example, the poll done by the Sozialwissenschaftliche Studiengesellschaft showed that 78% of Austrians agreed with the following statement: "The foreigners often come here with their children only so that they can collect the high Austrian family allowances that we pay for with our taxes." In the Foreign Workers Employment Act, it says that before a foreigner can be given a



Austrian graffiti, 'Turks out' (DR)

work permit, "it must be ascertained whether there are grounds for suspecting that there was an intent to abuse the Austrian social welfare and family allowance laws and whether this was a factor in the applicant's decision to take employment on Austrian territory."

THE ATTITUDE OF THE UNION BUREAUCRACY

The Austrian trade-union confederation (OGB) is not any less antiforeign than the Social Democratic government. It considers that its first duty is to defend the interests of the Austrian workers. Layoffs of foreign coworkers are not considered layoffs: "They're only foreigners." If they are sent back to their home countries, they do not show up in any of the unemployment statistics. Appearances are maintained. The much admired "Austrian Model"(2) has not suffered any loss of prestige.

On the other hand, the OGB is very interested in collecting dues from the foreign workers. These are often deducted from their wages without their even knowing about it.

Foreign workers have no real voice in the factories. They are not eligible either for election either to the factory councils or to the chamber of workers representatives. Thus, grotesque situations can arise where almost all the workers in a factory are foreigners, and the two or three Austrians there are the ones that have to be elected to the factory council.

Under these conditions, factory councils that feel responsible for the foreign workers are often torn between the demands the higher levels are obliged to make and the pressures of their own base, which has little sympathy with the foreign workers. "A factory council that doesn't look after the native workers' interest is going to get brickbats thrown

at it," a factory council member wrote out of bitter experience.

The shortsightedness of the workers organizations on this question can have disastrous results. The assumption that the "release" of foreign coworkers is going to make the jobs of Austrians securer in a lasting way is going to prove to be a deception, and this may happen very quickly. In fact, the foreigners are only the final and weakest link of a long chain. Once they are gone, it is the turn of the others.

†Women who have to be sent back to the home.

†Handicapped and older workers who cannot keep up with the speedup.

†Workers in out-of-the-way areas and industries in crisis.

†The politically undesirable, who should be removed in order to keep the "social peace" from being endangered.

The winners are the bosses, who get a free hand to carry through their rationalization plans.

From this standpoint, supporting the "guest" workers represents more than solidarity with a group that by itself is too weak, and most importantly too deprived of legal rights, to defend its own interests and demand its human rights. In this society we are all foreign workers. Only a united struggle by Austrian and foreign workers can be effective against layoffs and unemployment.

(1). The euphemistic term coined for foreign workers in the German-speaking countries is "Gastarbeiter," literally "guest worker."

(2). Austria has a Social Democratic government and a relatively large amount of state intervention in the economy, to a considerable extent because a part of the country was occupied by the Soviet Union from the end of the war into the 1950s. At the same time, until recently it has remained little touched by the world economic crisis. Therefore, the SP claimed to have discovered a new and more successful model for running the economy.

Tasks of Spanish revolutionists in new situation

The new Spanish government installed on November 30 was clearly chosen to reassure big business rather than inspire the masses of working people that gave the Socialist Party (PSOE) an overwhelming victory in the recent elections.

The new minister of the economy, Miguel Boyer, is a former official of the Bank of Spain and of the Industrial Institute, the holding company that manages the public sector created under Franco.

Boyer has made it clear what the economic orientation of the new government will be: "There is no other solution in this country than following a policy of austerity. Any attempt to stimulate an immediate upturn without first straightening out the economy . . . will only delay the day of reckoning . . .

"Our priority is not to increase domestic demand, because this would only upset our balance of payments, as the French example shows. We have first to restimulate investment, then exports. And to accomplish this, there is only one road. It is necessary that the profit accruing from increased productivity remain in the hands of the directors of the businesses so that they will decide to invest it. For the time being, the workers will have to be satisfied with maintaining their existing buying power."

Of course the French example also shows, which Boyer did

We have to take advantage of the desire for change and of the hope the masses have now of getting a whole series of elementary demands to promote mass mobilizations. This is the only way to assure real advances. We have to take advantage of the partial gains that can be made to strengthen the organization, the consciousness, and the combativity of the mass movement, to encourage it to take up still more important objectives.

Nothing can substitute for an analysis of the concrete situation opening up and for learning by experience how to deal with that situation. But we think that the following general criteria will prove useful in this work.

1. Build Mass Mobilizations to Win the Most Urgent Demands

The fundamental task is to promote the mobilization of sections of the masses. To accomplish this it is essential to wage an intense campaign of agitation around the demands that large section of the mass movement consider important and pressing. Such demands can be the basis for initiatives in action involving both the radicalized sectors that already distrust the policy of the PSOE, as well as broad sectors of the masses that still have confidence in the SP government.

Following the elections, the conditions are better for building such mobilizations. But because they must involve new layers and because they are going to be built under a PSOE government, the demands around which they will be built cannot be exactly the same as those that served as a basis for the agitation and propaganda of the period of the Counter-Reform.*

Of course, some demands that served as the basis for mobilizations in the past will continue to be used (for example, opposition to layoffs). But we are going to see new themes arise around which real mobilizations can develop (such as in education and public administration). And we will see other demands reformulated in accordance with the modifications that will be introduced by the actions of the PSOE government and by the campaign of harassment that will be started up by the right.

There is no point now in trying to draw up a list of such urgent demands. They will depend on the way the economic situation evolves and on what happens in the mass movement. Revolutionists will need to demonstrate a great capacity for initiative and flexibility. The important thing to be stressed is simply that these will be basic demands that will make it possible to translate into mass mobilizations the feeling that the promised change has got to start having some effects in real life, that things have got to start happening differently in practice, that the legacy of the Counter-Reform has to be thrown out. And getting rid of the Counter-Reform will mean ending both the practices that developed de facto (torture, incorporation in NATO) and the laws that were actually passed (such as the law limiting autonomy for the oppressed nationalities, LOAPA).

2. Put Forward a Revolutionary Alternative

However, the tasks of revolutionaries cannot be limited to building mobiliza-

not say, that in the context of a worldwide crisis of overproduction, no amount of presents from the state can induce the capitalists to invest to expand production and create jobs. In fact, the new Premier Felipe Gonzalez promises only a 0.5% reduction in the already disastrous rate of unemployment for the coming year.

That at best offers a pretty thin hope for a country where the population in whole regions such as Andalusia is not only suffering a declining living standard but is on the verge of famine.

Nonetheless, the victory of the PSOE has created large expectations among the workers and poor masses in the Spanish state, as well as increased uneasiness among the capitalists and the right, which were already showing an inclination to move toward strongarm methods of dealing with the population in a period when the economic situation can be expected to get worse and worse.

Therefore, the political and social situation in Spain is now in the melting pot, and it is difficult to predict how it will develop.

The Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), Spanish section of the Fourth International, adopted the following set of orientations on November 28 to begin to deal with the new situation.

tions for immediate demands. It is also necessary to lay the groundwork for carrying the mobilizations further, for the next step forward of the mass movement. They have to lay out a revolutionary alternative that can offer perspectives and coherence to the present struggles. Today these tasks are more important than ever. In fact, while it is true that the mass mobilizations will begin on the basis of elementary demands, it is also true that the determination of the masses to extend and consolidate gains is going to run up against such formidable obstacles as the armed forces and the state apparatus inherited from Francoism. This includes an Article 8 that excludes the right of self-determination of the nationalities, a constitution that enshrines the market economy.

It is necessary to begin today to prepare the mass movement by propaganda and agitation to remove the obstacles to winning these demands. It is also essential to make it clear that the only way to assure full satisfaction of these vital demands is to take the revolutionary road leading to socialism, breaking definitively with the limits imposed by capitalist property, the bourgeois state, and imperialism.

3. Our Attitude to the PSOE Government

It is clear that the PSOE government is not proposing a revolutionary road, such as that outlined above. Its entire policy is based on adjusting possible reforms to

* This refers to the government takebacks after the ebb of the upsurge following Franco's death.

win the agreement of the capitalists, the state apparatus, and the imperialists. This is why we do not believe that this government is going to meet the deeply felt demands of the masses and why we think that it will even let important parts of its stated program be blocked.

We revolutionists do not identify with this government, nor are we going to support it politically. But we have to take into account that the workers look at this government in a fundamentally different way than they do to a bourgeois one. The workers voted en masse for the PSOE government, and they expect it to act as their ally against the bosses, the right, and against the putschist elements in the armed forces.

All this means that very broad sectors of the masses are waiting to see what measures the government may take. Others are ready to mobilize in support of some of its measures. And still others are ready to mobilize to press it to act. But those sectors that look with distrust on the government at the start represent a very small minority.

The task of revolutionists must be to deepen this distrust and extend it to new sectors of the masses so that the perspective of an alternative revolutionary road can gradually gain an audience. But in order to carry out this task effectively, it is necessary to focus the attention of people on mobilization as the effective way to win demands, even the most elementary ones. It is necessary to point up the need for building mobilizations, regardless of the different ways people see the government. This is possible because the point of departure for the mobilizations has to be attacking the right and reaction.

As for the government, we will support its progressive measures; and we will not hesitate to mobilize against any attempt to overthrow it by the right and the reactionaries. But we will not hesitate either to criticize it severely and publicly when it makes clear compromises with the right, with "the powers that be," and with imperialism, concrete compromises that harm the interests of the workers. Unfortunately, we think that there is going to be no lack of occasions for that. In fact, in a more advanced phase of the process, mobilizations confronting the government may be indispensable. The condition for this is that they be seen clearly by the masses to be necessary to defend the interests of the workers against the capitalists and the reactionaries and to press demands that the government act in a more determined way.

4. A United-Front Orientation

Impelled by the Active Sectors of the Mass Movement

The only way to achieve mass mobilizations for the most urgent demands is through initiatives in action based on the active sectors of the movement, the same sectors that played the key role in the mobilizations throughout the period of the Counter-Reform. In a section of this



PSOE poster 'No entry into NATO' (DR)

layer, a justified political distrust of the PSOE can lead at times to ultraleftist and sectarian reactions that can get in the way of a real orientation for mobilizing the masses.

But this fact cannot alter our determination to encourage initiatives by these active sectors in accordance with a united front line directed toward those sectors of the masses that still have confidence in the PSOE. In fact, we are certain that we can convince a good part of these comrades that initiatives of this kind are a prerequisite both to revive the mass movement and to widen distrust of the PSOE's reformism. And we are convinced that the great majority of the initiatives in action are going to have to originate in these active sectors.

5. A Diversified and Flexible United-Front Policy

This is another prerequisite for the success of the initiatives in action that we propose. It is necessary to take into account the diversity of the political currents that influence these combative sectors of the mass movement, as well as the novelty and diversity of the situations that we are going to encounter. We think that it is important to take account of the following aspects in pursuing a united-front policy.

— First of all, we have to take into consideration the new perspectives that may open up for tendency activity in the Workers Commissions (the union in which the CP has been dominant) where a large and militant left wing has been present for some time.

— Secondly, there will continue to be a need for building unity in action of a broad spectrum of groups around specific projects and themes. This has been done in many places by the anti-NATO movement, and laid the ground work for the anti-NATO committees that have begun lately to be formed.

— Thirdly, we think that it will continue to be very useful to build action fronts on the basis of long-term unity in action around a platform of demands, such as the *Esquerra Unida del País*

Valencia and the *Bloque de la Izquierda Asturiana*. It is true the vote that these fronts got in the recent elections did not put much wind in the sails of these projects. Moreover, the new political situation poses in a different way the themes on which there is an experience of unity. Nonetheless, it is also true that this kind of unity is more than ever necessary to be effective in action. And the coming elections for the municipal governments and the parliaments of the nationalities make it urgent to maintain this unity, so that the fighting left can present a visible alternative in the electoral arena and get some higher votes than in the elections that have just taken place.

In elections at the city and town level, the revolutionaries will have more electoral credibility, and the argument that you have to use your ballot to back people who can win will not have so much force now that the PSOE has a majority at the all-Spain level. So, we think that in many cities and towns the conditions exist for building action fronts that can run united-front slates in the coming elections.

6. Asserting the Political Identity of the LCR

Our determination to achieve unity within the mass movement and with other revolutionary currents must be combined with an effort to propagate as widely as possible our own proposals for action, our own political ideas, and our conception of the revolutionary road for achieving socialism. In the process of reflection that the PSOE victory opened up, we strongly believe that we have important contributions to make, both as regards the present tasks of the mass movement and the task of building an alternative revolutionary leadership.

Rooting ourselves more deeply in the mass organizations will no doubt help us assure that our proposals are fully appropriate to the situation and to the mood of the masses, as well as to establish a more profound dialogue with the vanguard sections of the working class. ■

Index 1982 Issues No 0-20

AFGHANISTAN

With the Mujahedin in Panchir Valley
Interview by Michel LEQUENNE 18 29 Nov 82

ARGENTINA

Six Years of Military Rule in Argentina
Lars PALMGREN 4 12 Apr 82

Deepening Crisis of the Argentine Dictatorship
B. MIRALLES 5 26 Apr 82

Repercussions of the Malvinas War
Daniel JEBRAC 10 5 Jul 82

Crisis in Argentina
Jorge BUARQUE 14 4 Oct 82

AUSTRIA

German and Austrian SPs Block Solidarity with
Polish Workers
Peter BARTELHEIMER 2 15 Mar 82

Labour Without Rights — Foreign Workers
Elfie FLECK 20 20 Dec 82

BELGIUM

Belgian Workers Mood Turns Angry
Francois VERCAMMEN 2 15 Mar 82

Chronology of the Belgian Strikes
Francois VERCAMMEN 4 12 Apr 82

Blowup in Belgium Sparked by Antilabor Offensive
Francois VERCAMMEN 4 12 Apr 82

Women's Rights and Belgian Unions
Ida DEQUEECKER 6 10 May 82

Belgian Youth: Jobs Not Bombs
ROOD 7 24 May 82

Belgian Unionists Released
IV 7 24 May 82

Belgian Trotskyists Congress
IV 9 21 Jun 82

Local Elections in Belgium
IV 14 4 Oct 82

BOLIVIA

General Strike Rocks Bolivia
Fernando ZAMORA 5 26 Apr 82

Prerevolutionary Crisis Looms in Bolivia
IV 16 1 Nov 82

The Radicalization of Bolivian Peasantry
S. ROMANDE 17 15 Nov 82

Interview with Bolivian Indian Leaders
IV 17 15 Nov 82

BRAZIL

Brazilian Workers Party Prepares for Mass Election
Campaign
Daniel JEBRAC 1 1 Mar 82

What Sort of Socialism for the Brazilian Workers?
Roundtable Discussion. EM TEMPO 1 1 Mar 82

Lula: 'I think the Polish workers were on
the right path...'
IV 1 1 Mar 82

The Stakes in the Brazilian General Elections
IV 17 15 Nov 82

Interview with PT Candidates
EM TEMPO/IV 17 15 Nov 82

BRITAIN

The Balance Sheet of Thatcherism
John ROSS 0 28 Jan 82

British Trotskyists on Malvinas Crisis
SOCIALIST CHALLENGE 5 26 Apr 82

British Labour Takes Up Women's Demands
Judith ARKWRIGHT 6 10 May 82

Growing Opposition to War in Britain
Penny DUGGAN 7 24 May 82

Celebrating Fifty Years of World Revolution
Paul LAWSON 7 24 May 82

Thatcher Goes for Blood
Penny DUGGAN 8 7 Jun 82

Victory for Thatcher but Crisis Continues
Richard ROZANSKI 10 5 Jul 82

British Workers Prepared to Fight
SOCIALIST CHALLENGE 14 4 Oct 82

New Stage in Britain
Brian HERON 15 18 Oct 82

Labour prepares for elections
SOCIALIST CHALLENGE 20 20 Dec 82

CANADA

US/Canada Workers Fightback
Will REISSNER 20 20 Dec 82

CARIBBEAN

Trotskyist Writer Speaks in Havana
IV 3 1 Apr 82

CEYLON

Ceylon Workers Win Important Victory
IV 17 15 Nov 82

Save the Lives of Kuttimani and Jegan
IV 17 15 Nov 82

CHILE

Chilean Strikers Appeal for Help
IV 6 10 May 82

Chile: Beginnings of Political Recomposition
Jair GIL 15 18 Oct 82

CHINA

Where is the Democratic Movement in China Going?
Gregor BENTON 1 1 Mar 82

Defend Lau San-Ching
IV 11 19 Jul 82

Repression of Chinese Democratic Movement
Jacques and Jean TOSSI 12 2 Aug 82

Polish Events have Repercussions in China
Ji LI 17 15 Nov 82

COLOMBIA

Out of the Colombian Labyrinth
Angel MUNOZ 3 1 Apr 82

A United Left Slate in the Colombian Elections
IV 3 1 Apr 82

Interviews with Leaders of the Colombian
Left Coalition
Angel MUNOZ 3 1 Apr 82

Death Threat to Colombian Trotskyist
IV 6 10 May 82

CUBA

'People's Power' in Cuba
Fred DENFERT 0 28 Jan 82

Nicaragua; Cuba Prepare for U.S. Interventions
Jean-Pierre BEAUVAIS 4 12 Apr 82

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Czechoslovakia and the Polish Example
Anna LIBERA 9 21 Jun 82

CENTRAL AMERICA							
The Explosiveness of Central America Sergio RODRIGUEZ	0	28 Jan 82	The War in Lebanon: Turn in Middle East Situation USEC FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	16	1 Nov 82		
Washington Organizes Mass Murder in Central America Vincent KERMELE	1	1 Mar 82	FRANCE				
Trotskyist Writer Speaks in Havana IV	3	1 Apr 82	Eight Months of the Left Government in France Daniel BENSARD	0	28 Jan 82		
Survey of the Rise of the Central American Revolution Sergio RODRIGUEZ	3	1 Apr 82	French Trotskyists Register Growth IV	0	28 Jan 82		
Central American Peoples Face Imperialist Escalation EDITORIAL	3	1 Apr 82	Polish Solidarity in France Reflects Rise of Worker Militancy Felix LOURSON	2	15 Mar 82		
New Situation in Central America Sergio RODRIGUEZ	8	7 Jun 82	French Workers Strike Against Left Government's Givebacks Pierre REME	2	15 Mar 82		
Central America Solidarity IEC FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	9	21 Jun 82	Women and the Left Government in France Linda WOODS	3	1 Apr 82		
War Danger Mounts in Central America Jean-Pierre BEAUVAIS	19	13 Dec 82	French Local Elections Show Fruits of Class Collaboration CRITIQUE COMMUNISTE	4	12 Apr 82		
DENMARK			Women's Movement After Mitterrand CRITIQUE COMMUNISTE	6	10 May 82		
Danish Trotskyists' Congress Steve POTTER	8	7 Jun 82	French Youth Plan Campaign Against War Drive IV	8	7 Jun 82		
Barseback — Focus of Danish and Swedish Anti-Nuclear Movements Astrid SODERBERGH WIDDING	13	20 Sep 82	Left Austerity in France Daniel JEBRAC	10	5 Jul 82		
EAST GERMANY			The Fight for Free Abortion in France IV	16	1 Nov 82		
Interviews with East German Peace Activists IV	7	24 May 82	French Workers Grow Impatient Jean LANTIER	20	20 Dec 82		
EL SALVADOR			GREECE				
A Reporter's Notebook of the Salvador War Lars PALMGREN	1	1 Mar 82	The First Hundred Days of the Left Government in Greece Christian PICQUET	4	12 Apr 82		
Decisive Moment Approaches in El Salvador Vincent KERMELE	2	15 Mar 82	Economic Crisis in Greece ERGATIKE PALE	13	20 Sep 82		
Report from the Liberated Zones of El Salvador Jean-Pierre BEAUVAIS	3	1 Apr 82	GRENADA				
Interview with FMLN Representative Miguel ROMERO	5	26 Apr 82	Young Workers Build the Future Pat KANE	4	12 Apr 82		
For a World Front against Intervention in Salvador DOCUMENT	5	26 Apr 82	Grenada: Three Years of Revolution Paul LAWSON	4	12 Apr 82		
First World Forum of Salvador Solidarity Movement Miguel ROMERO	5	26 Apr 82	GUATEMALA				
Countdown Continues Toward Direct U.S. Intervention Vincent KERMELE	5	26 Apr 82	Guatemalan Guerrilla Organizations Unite DOCUMENT	3	1 Apr 82		
The Importance of the Salvador Solidarity Movement Gerry FOLEY	5	26 Apr 82	Guatemalan Elections — Guerrillas and Two Flagpoles Lars PALMGREN	3	1 Apr 82		
Women and Salvadoran Revolution INTERNATIONALEN	6	10 May 82	Guatemalan Indians in the Fight Against Imperialism COMPANERO	4	12 Apr 82		
Gains for Salvadoran Liberation Forces Jean-Pierre BEAUVAIS	18	29 Nov 82	On the New Military Government in Guatemala BANDERA SOCIALISTA	5	26 Apr 82		
Broadening Solidarity Movement A. MEYLAN	19	13 Dec 82	HAITI				
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS			Head-On Confrontation Looms in Haiti Livio MAITAN	1	1 Mar 82		
British Hands Off the Malvinas USEC BUREAU FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	6	10 May 82	Haitian Workers Party: 'We are in solidarity with Solidarity.' Livio MAITAN	1	1 Mar 82		
Demonstrations Against Reagan the Warmonger: Appeal USEC BUREAU FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	7	24 May 82	Release Samuel Roche IV	12	2 Aug 82		
Defend Iranian Revolution IEC FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	9	21 Jun 82	INDIA				
Central America Solidarity IEC FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	9	21 Jun 82	Bombay Strike IV	17	15 Nov 82		
Britain: Hands Off Malvinas IEC FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	9	21 Jun 82	250,000 Bombay Workers on Strike IV	18	29 Nov 82		
Halt Israeli Aggression USEC BUREAU FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	9	21 Jun 82	IRAN				
Building Revolutionary Youth Organisations IEC FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	10	5 Jul 82	Iranian Socialist Weekly Banned IV	6	10 May 82		
Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Poland IEC FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	11	19 Jul 82	Iranian Victory Gerry FOLEY	8	7 Jun 82		
			Defend Iranian Revolution IEC FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	9	21 Jun 82		

HKE Statement on Khorramshahr Victory DOCUMENT	9	21 Jun 82	Defending Women's Rights Against Austerity Penny DUGGAN	20	20 Dec 82
In Evin Prison Interview with Bahram Ali ATAI	10	5 Jul 82	Workers Fightback Against Crisis EDITORIAL	20	20 Dec 82
First Iranian Offensives Gerry FOLEY	12	2 Aug 82	IRELAND		
War and Revolution in Iran Interview with HKS LEADER	16	1 Nov 82	Irish Section of the Fourth International IV	0	28 Jan 82
The Fight of Kurdish People in Iran Interview by Gerry FOLEY	17	15 Nov 82	In Irish Elections; Bernadette Points Way Forward for Anti-Imperialist Movement Gerry FOLEY	1	1 Mar 82
Latest Iranian Offensive IV	19	13 Dec 82	Interview with Bernadette Devlin McAliskey Gerry FOLEY	1	1 Mar 82
The Iranian Workers Movement and Khomeinism Saber NIKBEEN	19	13 Dec 82	Why I Became a Revolutionist Bernadette DEVLIN McALISKEY	12	2 Aug 82
ISRAEL			Prior Plan for Northern Ireland Interview with B. McALISKEY/ PD LEADERS	13	20 Sep 82
Zionism Begins to Show Cracks; Interview with Maia EDRI	4	12 Apr 82	Urgent Need for Anti-Imperialist Alternative Ruth TAILLON	20	20 Dec 82
The Return of the Sinai Jeannette HABEL	6	10 May 82	JAPAN		
Begin Still Seeks Middle East War Michel WARSCHAWSKI	6	10 May 82	Victories of Japanese Capitalists Lead Down a Blind Alley Yohichi SAKAI	4	12 Apr 82
The Effects of Middle East War Gerry FOLEY	9	21 Jun 82	Toward a Class-Struggle Current in the Japanese Unions Yohichi SAKAI	5	26 Apr 82
Revolutionary Activity in Israel Gerry FOLEY	10	5 Jul 82	Against the Right-Wing Offensive in Japanese Labour Movement Yohichi SAKAI	7	24 May 82
Mass Opposition to Begin's War Gerry FOLEY	11	19 Jul 82	LEBANON		
'Ariel Sharon says we are foreigners. . . Interview by Gerry FOLEY	13	20 Sep 82	Hour of Decision in Lebanon EDITORIAL	10	5 Jul 82
Growing Anti-War Feeling in Israel INTERVIEW	14	4 Oct 82	Beirut Under Seige Jean-Pierre BEAUVAIS	10	5 Jul 82
Deepening Impact of War in Israel Interview with A. MAYIR	15	18 Oct 82	Increasing Stakes and Dangers in Beirut EDITORIAL	12	2 Aug 82
ITALY			Problems for Israeli Occupiers in Lebanon IV	12	2 Aug 82
A Turning Point for the Italian CP? Elettra DEIANA	2	15 Mar 82	To All Who Refuse to Capitulate. Statement of Rev. Comm. Group Lebanon DOCUMENT	12	2 Aug 82
Italian Metal Workers Demonstration IV	5	26 Apr 82	Second Open Letter of the RCG in Lebanon DOCUMENT	13	20 Sep 82
Defend the Sliding Scale Interview with Elettra DEIANA	20	20 Dec 82	The Massacres at Sabra and Chatila EDITORIAL	14	4 Oct 82
INTERNATIONAL			The 1976 Lebanese Civil War Daniel BENSAID	14	4 Oct 82
Peace Movements of the 1950s Jean-Louis MICHEL	0	28 Jan 82	After PLO Withdrawal Interview with S. JABER	15	18 Oct 82
October Peace Demonstrations Jean-Louis MICHEL	0	28 Jan 82	Debate on the Interposition Force in Lebanon DOCUMENT	18	29 Nov 82
New Peace Movement Jean-Louis MICHEL	0	28 Jan 82	LUXEMBOURG		
The European Workers Movement After Poland Ernest MANDEL	2	15 Mar 82	Luxembourg General Strike IV	5	26 Apr 82
Workers Confront the Crisis of Capitalist Europe Christian PICQUET	4	12 Apr 82	On the Luxembourg General Strike Robert MERTZIG	6	10 May 82
Reagan Visit to Europe: Focus for Mass Protests John ROSS	4	12 Apr 82	MALAYSIA		
Malvinas War Moves Show Imperialist Threat to Humanity IV	6	10 May 82	Death Sentences in Malaysia IV	12	2 Aug 82
Against Reagan and U.S. Intervention in Central America IV	7	24 May 82	MALVINAS		
A Million Hiroshimas Christian PICQUET	7	24 May 82	What is Involved in Malvinas Island Crisis? Daniel BENSAID	5	26 Apr 82
What is at Stake in Reagan's Trip to Europe Garret RUSH	7	24 May 82	British Trotskyists on Malvinas Crisis SOCIALIST CHALLENGE	5	26 Apr 82
Demonstrations Against Reagan the Warmonger: Appeal USEC BUREAU FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	7	24 May 82	British Hands Off the Malvinas USEC BUREAU FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	6	10 May 82
Crisis of World Economy Ernest MANDEL	8	7 Jun 82	Malvinas War Moves Show Imperialist Threat to Humanity IV	6	10 May 82
Mass Mobilisations Against Reagan IV	9	21 Jun 82	Growing Opposition to War in Britain Penny DUGGAN	7	24 May 82
The Threat of War and the Struggle for Socialism Ernest MANDEL	13	20 Sep 82			

Thatcher Goes for Blood Penny DUGGAN	8	7 Jun 82	Against Imperialist Intervention. Declaration by LCR France; LCR Italy; SWP USA	14	4 Oct 82
Britain: Hands Off Malvinas! IEC FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	9	21 Jun 82	Growing Anti-War Feeling in Israel INTERVIEW	14	4 Oct 82
Victory for Thatcher but Crisis Continues Richard ROZANSKI	10	5 Jul 82	Some Proposed Plans in Lebanon IV	14	4 Oct 82
Repercussions of the Malvinas War Daniel JEBRAC	10	5 Jul 82	The Fez Summit Relaunches Fahd Plan Livio MAITAN	14	4 Oct 82
MAURITIUS			The Massacres at Sabra and Chatila EDITORIAL	14	4 Oct 82
Left Victory in Mauritius IV	11	19 Jul 82	After PLO Withdrawal Interview with S. JABER	15	18 Oct 82
After the Elections in Mauritius Claude GABRIEL	12	2 Aug 82	Deepening Impact of War in Israel Interview with A. MAYIR	15	18 Oct 82
MEXICO			The Real Terrorists at Tel Aviv and Washington Vincent KERMEL	15	18 Oct 82
Mexican Trotskyists Campaign for Democracy and Socialism; Salvador and Poland Gerry FOLEY	1	1 Mar 82	The War in Lebanon: Turn in Middle East Situation USEC FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	16	1 Nov 82
Mexican PRT Convention Attracts 7,000 Supporters Fernando ZAMORA	3	1 Apr 82	Debate on the Interposition Force in Lebanon DOCUMENT	18	29 Nov 82
The PRI Attacks PRT Campaign IV	3	1 Apr 82	Caught in an Israeli Roundup Interview with LEBANESE MILITANT	19	13 Dec 82
Mexican Bosses React to Central American Revolution Alvaro LAIN	5	26 Apr 82	NETHERLANDS		
Swedish Amnesty Leaders on Human-Rights Candidate in Mexican Elections IV	5	26 Apr 82	Dutch Workers Mobilize to Defend Health Benefits KLASSENSTRIJD	2	15 Mar 82
Campaign Linked to Struggles BANDERA SOCIALISTA	5	26 Apr 82	Growing Fightback by Dutch Workers Rienke SCHUTTE	7	24 May 82
Mexican Women's Committees Campaign for Rosario Fernando ZAMORA	7	24 May 82	Attack on Dutch Peace Movement IV	11	19 Jul 82
New Success for PRT in Mexico IV	9	21 Jun 82	Antinuclear Soldiers in Antiwar Rally IV	13	20 Sep 82
Mexican Election Campaign Anibal YANEZ and Jose PEREZ	11	19 Jul 82	NICARAGUA		
Mexican Trotskyists Breakthrough Interview with Edgar SANCHEZ	12	2 Aug 82	Country Prepares for Invasion Michael BAUMANN	4	12 Apr 82
Electoral Fraud in Mexico IV	13	20 Sep 82	Nicaragua; Cuba Prepare for U.S. Intervention Jean-Pierre BEAUVAIS	4	12 Apr 82
Mexican PRT Analyse Outcome of Election Campaign Interview with Edgar SANCHEZ	15	18 Oct 82	U.S. Dirty Tricks in Nicaragua Interview with Philip AGEE	8	7 Jun 82
MIDDLE EAST WAR			Nicaragua Under Threat Alain VITOLD	13	20 Sep 82
The Effects of Middle East War Gerry FOLEY	9	21 Jun 82	Serious Threats Against Nicaragua INTERVIEW	14	4 Oct 82
Halt Israeli Aggression USEC BUREAU FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	9	21 Jun 82	NORWAY		
Beirut Under Siege Jean-Pierre BEAUVAIS	10	5 Jul 82	A New Fighting Socialist Organisation in Norway INTERNATIONALEN	2	15 Mar 82
Declaration by Mid-East Revolutionaries DOCUMENT	10	5 Jul 82	OBITUARY		
Hour of Decision in Lebanon EDITORIAL	10	5 Jul 82	Gisela Scholtz Dies in Paris IV	1	1 Mar 82
The Palestinian Resistance Claude DEVILLIERS	11	19 Jul 82	Fred Brode: A Man of Much Courage IV	18	29 Nov 82
Mass Opposition to Begin's War Gerry FOLEY	11	19 Jul 82	PANAMA		
Mass Mobilizations Become Decisive in Middle East War EDITORIAL	11	19 Jul 82	New Threats Against Panamanian Trotskyist IV	13	20 Sep 82
Problems for Israeli Occupiers in Lebanon IV	12	2 Aug 82	PERU		
Increasing Stakes and Dangers in Beirut EDITORIAL	12	2 Aug 82	Congress of the Peruvian PRT Angel MUNOZ	3	1 Apr 82
'Ariel Sharon says we are foreigners. . .' Interview by Gerry FOLEY	13	20 Sep 82	Blanco Death Threat IV	4	12 Apr 82
Second Open Letter of the RCG in Lebanon DOCUMENT	13	20 Sep 82	POLAND		
The Zionist Crimes and Palestinian Isolation Daniel BENSAID	13	20 Sep 82	Test of Poland EDITORIAL	0	28 Jan 82
			Polish Workers Struggle to Maintain their Dignity and Solidarity Gerry FOLEY	0	28 Jan 82
			The Roots of the Polish Economic Crisis Ernest MANDEL	0	28 Jan 82
			The Solidarity that the Polish Workers Need Jacqueline ALLIO	1	1 Mar 82
			On Eve of Crackdown: Solidarnosc Debates Question of Power Zbigniew KOWALEWSKI	3	1 Apr 82
			Mass Workers Movement Reorganizes in Poland IV	4	12 Apr 82

Workers' Spring Begins in Poland Cyril SMUGA	6	10 May 82	Swedish Workers Relearn the Method of the Political Strike Kjell OSTBERG	2	15 Mar 82
The Resurgence of the Mass Movement in Poland Gerry FOLEY	7	24 May 82	Strike Wave Grows in Sweden KLASSENKAMPEN	5	26 Apr 82
Tensions Within Polish Bureaucracy DOCUMENT	8	7 Jun 82	Swedish Youth Congress IV	8	7 Jun 82
Debates in Solidarity Jacqueline ALLIO	9	21 Jun 82	Barseback — Focus of Danish and Swedish Antinuclear Movements Astrid SODERBERGH WIDDING	13	20 Sep 82
War of Position DOCUMENT	9	21 Jun 82	A Comeback for Swedish Social Democrats Mikael ERNWIK	13	20 Sep 82
The Third Alternative DOCUMENT	9	21 Jun 82	Swedish Social Democrats Regain Power IV	14	4 Oct 82
'You have an historic chance. . .' DOCUMENT	9	21 Jun 82	TURKEY		
Six Months After Jaruzelski Jacqueline ALLIO	10	5 Jul 82	Reagan's Show and the Repression of Turkish Workers IV	2	15 Mar 82
Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Poland IEC FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	11	19 Jul 82	Massive Repression Aimed at Turkish Trade Unionists WAS TUN	2	15 Mar 82
Two Years After in Poland Jacqueline ALLIO	13	20 Sep 82	The Rise and Crisis of the Turkish Workers Movement Mehmet SALAH	6	10 May 82
New Wave of Repression in Poland USEC BUREAU FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	14	4 Oct 82	Turkish Generals and West German Bosses WAS TUN	7	24 May 82
What Strategy for Solidarnosc? POLISH INPREKOR	14	4 Oct 82	Turkish Labor and Socialist Movement After 1980 Coup Mehmet SALAH	7	24 May 82
Jaruzelski's 'Trade Union' Law; New Blow Against Solidarnosc Cyril SMUGA	16	1 Nov 82	URUGUAY		
Solidarnosc Answers Jaruzelski Jacqueline ALLIO/Claude SEVRAC	17	15 Nov 82	Union Repression in Uruguay IV	12	2 Aug 82
Open Letter from Polish Workers DOCUMENT	17	15 Nov 82	Uruguayan Dictatorship Faces Reviving Workers Movement Mario SUAREZ	18	29 Nov 82
Letter from Solidarnosc Activist DOCUMENT	17	15 Nov 82	USA		
Respond to the Appeal of Polish Workers Jacqueline ALLIO	18	29 Nov 82	Mexican Trotskyist Faces Deportation from U.S. Marilyn VOGT	5	26 Apr 82
'The Left and Us'; Letter from Solidarnosc Militant DOCUMENT	18	29 Nov 82	Defeat of the ERA IV	18	29 Nov 82
Solidarnosc After Failure of General Strike Jacqueline ALLIO	19	13 Dec 82	US/Canada Workers Fightback Will REISSNER	20	20 Dec 82
Radio Solidarnosc Broadcasts DOCUMENT	19	13 Dec 82	USSR		
PUWP Leader on Strikes, the Church, the State of War Tadeusz POREBSKI	19	13 Dec 82	Dissident Movement in the USSR Laetitia CAVAGNALS	12	2 Aug 82
Solidarnosc Activists Speak. . . DOCUMENT	19	13 Dec 82	Change of Regime in the Kremlin Gerry FOLEY	18	29 Nov 82
SENEGAL			VIETNAM		
Legalization of the OST IV	3	1 Apr 82	Self-Criticism at Fifth Congress of Vietnamese CP Pierre ROUSSET	12	2 Aug 82
SOUTHERN AFRICA			WEST GERMANY		
Independent Black Unions In Southern Africa Nathan PALMER and Peter BLUMER	8	7 Jun 82	German and Austrian SPs Block Solidarity with Polish Workers Peter BARTELHEIMER	2	15 Mar 82
Black Workers Growing Militancy IV	12	2 Aug 82	German Democratic Socialists IV	4	12 Apr 82
Behind the ZANU-ZAPU Conflict Perry FREEMAN	17	15 Nov 82	Toward a New Socialist Party in West Germany? WAS TUN	4	12 Apr 82
SOMALIA			Turkish Generals and West German Bosses WAS TUN	7	24 May 82
Smoldering Miniwar in Somalia Claude GABRIEL	19	13 Dec 82	Schmidt Still Runs SPD; But Ranks Support Peace Movement Winfried WOLF	7	24 May 82
SPANISH STATE			The End of the SPD/FDP Government DOCUMENT	14	4 Oct 82
Polish Events Highlight Confusion in Spanish Workers Movement Angel MUNOZ	2	15 Mar 82	End of an Era in West Germany Winfried WOLF	15	18 Oct 82
Spain: PSOE On Eve of Success Interview with Jaime PASTOR	16	1 Nov 82	West German Youth Against Cuts IV	17	15 Nov 82
Workers Gain in Spanish Elections Gerry FOLEY	17	15 Nov 82	Solidarity with Alexander Schubart IV	17	15 Nov 82
Economic Disaster for Spanish Workers J. ALBARRACIN/P. MONTES	18	29 Nov 82	YUGOSLAVIA		
New Reformist Experiment in Spain DOCUMENT	20	20 Dec 82	Poland: The Impact in Yugoslavia Catherine VERLA	15	18 Oct 82
SWEDEN			ZIMBABWE		
A New Socialist Party for Sweden Mikael ERNWIK	1	1 Mar 82	Zimbabwe Strikes IV	5	26 Apr 82

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

ISSUE No 20

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Workers Fightback Against Crisis <i>Editorial</i>	3
French Workers Grow Impatient by <i>Jean Lantier</i>	4
US/Canada Workers Prepare Fightback by <i>Will Reissner</i>	5
Labour Prepares for Elections by <i>Socialist Challenge</i>	11
Need for Anti-Imperialist Alternative in Ireland by <i>Ruth Taillon</i>	12
Defending Women's Rights in Austerity by <i>Penny Duggan</i>	13
Defend the Sliding Scale Interview with <i>Elettra Deiana</i>	16
Labor Without Rights — Foreign Workers by <i>Elfie Fleck</i>	18
Tasks for Revolutionists in New Reformist Experiment <i>Document</i>	20
1982 Index; Issues 0-20	22

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