

International VIEWPOINT

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Bolivia : toward a test of strength

**European
votes show
less room
for reformism**

**Argentina
after the terror**

**Peru's
new guerrillas**

**Mandel
on Marx**



International Viewpoint

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The SPD's "social" capitalism bites the dust in West Germany

Gerry FOLEY

Few times in history has the electoral defeat of a Social Democratic party threatened such serious consequences for working people as the defeat of the West German SPD in the March 6 general elections.

The victory of the Christian Democrats and their liberal allies strengthens the capitalist austerity drive against workers, not only in West Germany but throughout western Europe. It increases the threat of war, and hence the danger to the survival of many millions of people, if not humanity as a whole. It reinforces U.S. imperialism in its counteroffensive against the colonial revolution.

Immediately following the SPD debacle, Reagan made an aggressive speech March 8 aimed at both the Soviet Union and the Central American revolutionists. It obviously threatened an escalation of Washington's counteroffensive against liberation struggles, and of the military threats against the Soviet Union that go hand in hand with it.

The establishment of a hard right government in West Germany came at exactly the time Reagan needed a boost to get congress to accept the cost of increased American involvement on the side of the reactionary and murderous Central American regimes. This was, and remains, a crucial question for U.S. and world imperialism, since it has become clear in recent weeks that the Salvadoran army is faltering.

In its statement on the election results, the International Marxist Group (IGM), German section of the Fourth International, said:

"An iron triangle can now be forged between the Reagan, Thatcher and Kohl/Strauss governments. The common program of all these regimes is austerity, mass unemployment, stepped-up armament, and military pressures on the Soviet Union. The fact that on the same day as the West German elections, in France, the bourgeois parties got a majority in the municipal elections reinforces this perspective."

In West Germany itself, there is considerable talk in the press and media about a return to the "Adenauer Era," that is to a right-wing political climate and the Cold War.

The Christian Democrats, in fact, won their second largest victory in his-



tory, getting just under an absolute majority. In addition, their liberal allies, the Free German Party (FDP) got about 7%.

With the onset of the capitalist crisis, the FDP lined up clearly with the right, and a considerable proportion of its voters went over directly to the Christian Democrats. It is now clearly a right wing party. Its score is explained to a large extent by second-preference votes from Christian Democrats anxious to assure that the party did not fall below the 5% threshold for representation in parliament.

The victory of the right, the IGM statement said, marked "a real turn in Bonn. A period of thirteen years of SPD-led governments and 17 years of governments in which the Social Democrats were a force has now definitely come to an end. The bourgeois-bloc government that took office in October 1982 will now have a free hand for four years."

However, the bourgeois victory could not bring a return of the sort of capitalist stability that existed in the 1950s:

"The big majority for the bourgeois bloc in Bonn cannot be compared with the apparently similar electoral strength it had in the 1950s and 1960s. Then the bourgeois parties represented the boom. The growth of the economy was bringing everyone a higher living standard, shorter work hours, and longer vacations.

"The 1980s are a quite different period. They are bringing a decline in the

standard of living, growing mass unemployment, work speedups, and social cuts. The wage earners have already felt the effects of this. They knew that the Christian Democrat and liberal politicians were for a tough pro-employer policy in the crisis and for cuts at the expense of the masses. This fact marks the turn and is the index of the defeat the working people have suffered."

The Christian Democrat victory marked the total bankruptcy of the "social" capitalism of the Social Democrats. After nearly a generation of SPD governments, unemployment has begun to rise drastically.

In the March 10 issue of *Was Tun*, the paper of the IGM, Winifried Wolf wrote:

"In West Germany, the country that (former SPD chancellor) Schmidt used to like to call 'The German Model,' unemployment has been growing at an even faster rate than it has on a world scale; it is mounting explosively. At the beginning of 1983, in comparison with 1970/71, the rate had grown by ten times. In comparison, with 1976-79, it had grown by three times."

At the time of the 1980 general elections, the poll conducted by the Mannheim Forschungsguppe Wahlen showed that 58% of the voters considered unemployment the main problem. In February 1983, this had gone up to 88%.

Some 64% of voters thought that guaranteeing the buying power of pensions was one of the most important issues; 57% included reducing the national debt among the main questions. Fifty-three percent listed price stability as one of their main concerns. The environment was a major issue for only 48% of voters.

A majority of the voters were opposed to the stationing of more nuclear missiles on German soil "regardless of what the East does." At the same time, most voters indicated greater confidence in the SPD on the issues of peace and the environment.

Thus, what the election results show is that the immediate worry about making a living had a greater influence on the decisions of voters than more remote threats, no matter how terrible.

The IGM statement noted:

"Geissler, the chief ideologist of the Christian Democrats, claimed: 'We won with the support of the workers....In fact, the Christian Democrats scored their biggest gains in former SPD strongholds. In Nordrhein-Westfalen, where the SPD got an absolute majority, the CDU is now the strongest party. Two million former SPD voters are estimated to have crossed over to the Christian Democrats, whereas the SPD won just about nobody from them.

"On election night, (SPD representative) Glotz said: 'The Christian Democrats won with their talk about an economic upswing.' That was one of the few true things the SPD said that evening. But it was only a half truth.

"In fact, the main issue in this election was the mass unemployment and not the missiles. The 19 million who voted for

the Christian Democrats, including the majority of wage earners, wanted to vote for an economic upturn.

"The Christian Democrats had said that an upturn was possible only under a Kohl government. This demagoguery was backed up with threats of an investment strike and letters from bosses to their personnel calling on them to vote for the Christian Democrats, because if they did not win, there would be massive lay-offs.

"This campaign, however, could be successful only because the SPD offered no alternative. It also promised 'sacrifices' for the wage earners and a 'not so drastic' austerity.

"With this policy, the SPD undermined its positions precisely where it should have buttressed them. It lost specifically on the issue where it has traditionally had the advantage over the Christian Democrats."

"Shortly before the elections, the polls indicated that 57% had the most confidence in the Christian Democrats' ability to cut unemployment.

"If everyone was saying that an austerity policy was necessary, then it would be better to do it 'right,' in order to prepare the way for an upturn. If capitalism was the only possible system, then better vote for the party that has the confidence of the capitalists and not for those whom the bosses threaten with a continued investment strike."

The most positive result of the election was the fact that the environmentalist party, the Greens, based on the protest movements, topped the 5% barrier to get into parliament:

"On election night (Green leader) Petra Kelly said: 'We will seek extra-parliamentary action. The only bright spot in this vote is that for the first time in the history of West Germany, with the exception of the immediate postwar period, a group to the left of the SPD will be represented in parliament that clearly says that it will use its positions in parliament to promote mass mobilizations, especially against the stationing of the missiles.'"

The Green vote was much smaller than it could have been, however, because the leadership refused to try to build a broad left block or come out clearly in support of an SPD government against the right.

More fundamentally: "The decisive weakness of the Greens is exactly the same as the SPD, the question of unemployment. The Greens either said nothing about this or did not go beyond abstractions...."

"The election result is a rude awakening, moreover, for a section of the left that concentrated entirely on the question of whether the Greens could get over 5%. This goal was achieved. But the decisive thing is that there was no majority for an SPD government."

The GIM denounced the statements by the SPD leaders that the voters had delivered their verdict and it would have to be respected:

"The voters were not able to decide on the main questions in their daily lives

and concerns. The turn in Bonn must not be respected...it must be fought. What is needed is not 'constructive opposition,' as the (SPD leader) Vogel says but hard and consistent resistance to Kohl and the capitalists, in the factories, the offices, in the streets, in front of NATO bases.

"Sixty-five percent of the population is against the U.S. missiles. Over half of the population is for a neutral West Germany. The overwhelming majority of the population sees the fight against unemployment as the main issue.

"But this government will do nothing against unemployment. The stock market zoomed up alright on March 7. But to the extent that new investments are made, they will mainly rationalize jobs away.

"Within a year there will be 3 million unemployed. In six months, new U.S. missiles will be brought in. The majority of the population does not want that. This government was elected only because there was no socialist alternative...."

and because the Greens offered only a partial program."

The GIM statement concluded:

"March 6 was a defeat for the workers movement and the left....We cannot underestimate the effects of this on the social relationship of forces. The bourgeois bloc is determined to inflict severe defeats on the workers movement and the peace movement. The stationing of the missiles at the end of the year and the labor contract negotiations involving the demand for a 35 hour week may be the key battles. But it would be wrong to concentrate only on these 'big' questions.

"Offensives by the right always look for weak points. So, the first targets may be the foreign workers and abortions rights.

"All these battles are ahead of us. They were not decided by March 6. Social Democrats, Greens, and socialists must fight together against the missiles, unemployment and social cuts." ■

A new warning to the SP-CP government in France

Although the outcome of the second round of the French municipal elections on March 13 apparently differed from the first, with the left showing greater strength, it in fact only confirmed the message. Left voters who abstained on the first round to show their discontent went to the polls in the second to block the right. That cut the left's losses to 30 urban areas of over 30,000 population.

Gerry FOLEY

PARIS — The first round of the French municipal elections held March 6 showed the standard symptoms of the failure of a class-collaborationist reformist government.

Increased abstention by disillusioned workers went hand in hand with stepped up aggressiveness and self-confidence on the part of the bourgeois parties, and with a shift of the middle strata to the right.

In cities of more than 30,000 inhabitants, the right got 51.5% of the vote, as against 46.5% for the SP-CP coalition. The right regained control of a series of key urban centers, such as Brest, Nantes, Roubaix, Tourcoing, and Arles.

There was a marked coolness to the government leaders. The premier, Pierre Mauroy; and the minister of the interior, Gaston Defferre, were hard pressed to retain their local mandates.

Neither was able to win reelection in the first round in their respective strongholds of Lille and Marseilles.

The rebuff to government leaders was absolutely clear, to such an extent that Defferre has announced that if he is defeated in the March 13 second-round vote, he will resign from the cabinet.

The right swept 18 out of the 20

arrondissements (boroughs) of Paris. The slates headed up by the mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac, the right's leading national figure, averaged 64%. Even in the two arrondissements that they failed to win on the first round the 13 and 20, they got a plurality.

The Paris electorate is overwhelmingly petty bourgeois. But it is very much affected by national swings. And the results seem to reflect also the nationwide tendency of the middle strata that voted massively for the left in 1981 to shift to the right.

It has been a long-standing bourgeois policy to push the working class out of Paris. Of those manual workers and poor remaining, a large percentage are immigrants. They do not have a vote. And their presence and problems are used by the right to whip up reactionary fears among the poor and middle-class sections of the older French population.

There is a large immigrant population, for example in the 13 and 20 arrondissements, where the left is strongest. In the latter, the slate of the Front National, a fascist-like group that specializes in anti-immigrant rabble rousing, got 11% of the vote.

The campaign for the second round in the 20 has already been marked by violence, with an attack on SP election

workers March 10 by a right-wing gang.

The Marseilles "Anticrime" slates got an average of 6%. In Roubaix, the anti-immigrant candidate Marcel Lecluse got 10%.

The big bourgeois parties themselves were not squeamish about immigrant-bashing. Thus, in Dreux, there was a common slate between Chirac's Rally for the French Republic (RPR) and the Front National.

In the 18 arrondissement, where there was formally a left majority, the RPR candidate Juppe scored a surprise win over the SP leader Lionel Jospin. Juppe had made a point of bemoaning: "The situation has gotten considerably worse; there are the drugs, the prostitutes, and the immigrants."

In Marseilles, Defferre tried to steal the right's thunder on this question. His argument was that the right had permitted "unregulated immigration" but the left government had imposed "controls." But he had a marked lack of success in trying to beat the right at its own game.

While the overall abstention rate was only one percent higher than in the last municipal elections in 1977, its composition was different. For example, the rate goes up to 30% for towns over 30,000.

Rouge, the paper of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International, estimated that about 10% of former left voters abstained.

In Roubaix, the overall participation rate was 93%, but only 65% in the working-class areas. In Lille, in the right northern part, 80% voted; in the left areas it was 62%. There were 10% less voters in the left areas, 15% more in the right-wing ones.

The right's greatest trump, moreover, was the demobilization of the left voters. Where it provoked a marked left-right confrontation, it tended to be blown away by the reaction of the left voters.

That was the case, for example, in Gerardmer, in the Vosges area, where the vote for the bourgeois parties dropped from 57.98% in 1977 to 47.89%. The LCR also ran a strong campaign in the area. It got 5.39% of the vote, along with 27.19% for the CP and 19.51% for the SP.

The LCR ran a joint campaign nationally with Lutte Ouvriere (LO - Workers Struggle), another Trotskyist group. In various areas, there were joint slates with other groups and independents.

Thirty-three of the slates in which the LCR participated got between 3 and 6% of the vote. Two LCR members were elected to municipal councils.

In Saint-Etienne de Rouvray, a working-class suburb of Rouen, Michelle Ernis, a high-school teacher, topped the 5% barrier with a vote of 5.13%.

In Cenon, a working-class suburb of Bordeaux, Alain Remoiville, a chemical worker, was elected with 6.83%.

Rouge asked Remoiville about the effect of his success on the credibility



of the LCR as an alternative for the workers at his factory. He said:

"We could see the results even before the vote. A lot of people looked to us in the struggles but not when it came to elections. This time the two things were complementary. We were already respected in the plant. Now, having somebody elected to the city council makes the party a more credible force."

Michele Ernis said that the local reaction to her election was generally favorable, especially in the women's movement. But not in the CP.

"It was pretty tense...When the mayor, a CP member, announced the results, I wanted to make a statement. But I was physically blocked by CP activists. They were furious. The funny thing is they congratulate themselves that it is the proportional representation law passed by the left that lets the right be represented in the city council. But they accuse us of 'stealing a seat' from them."

On the other hand, in the town of Trappes, the local CP quoted a statement calling for left unity in the second round by an LCR candidat in its campaign mailing.

Since its base is solidier, the CP vote held up relatively better than that the SP, the big winner during the rise of the left. Nonetheless, it continued its slow decline.

The far left vote did not increase notably in these elections. It also did not polarize a broad protest vote as it did in some places in 1977.

However, something fundamental is changing even though the absolute vote totals remain roughly the same. The far left votes now come increasingly from rebel workers.

Radicalized intellectual elements that supported the far left before, under the impact of the economic crisis and of a crisis of perspectives, tended to vote more for the Environmentalist slates. That is, they shifted toward a vaguer, less political alternative.

These slates got significant votes generally, over 4%, for example, in the 20 arrondissement of Paris. But the leaders of this slate gave their supporters no direction for the second round, except not to vote for the Front National.

The message of the far-left vote was

somewhat confused by the campaign of the Internationalist Communist Party (PCI) led by Pierre Lambert. This group has its origins in the Fourth International. It ran candidates in 142 areas, of which about 110 were very small towns. It got a significant vote in many places, although smaller than the LCR in the major towns. It got four candidates elected.

If the PCI had joined a common revolutionary slate, it would have been possible to get candidates elected in many places. All indications are that the vote for the PCI was simply a vote for an alternative to the left of the CP. That is, the same sort of people voted for it for the same reasons as they did for the LCR-LO slates.

However, the PCI took a different attitude toward the government candidates. For example, it agreed to withdraw where they made pledges to "respect the mandate" they were given.

The LCR-LO conducted an extensive campaign. Even before the final rally in Paris March 4, the local election rallies had drawn 15,000 people.

The windup rally drew 5,000; it was the largest held by any of the working-class slates in the Paris area. The Union of the Left (CP-SP), by comparison, brought out only 3,800.

Alain Krivine, the main LCR candidate, noted in an interview in *Rouge* following the elections that the predominant mood of those who came to the LCR-LO rallies was thoughtful. They asked basic questions; "Can socialism be built in one country. Could France break the European accords? Are we prisoners of competition? Is it possible to achieve social change despite the crisis."

Most of those who came were seriously looking for an alternative to the SP and CP. The rallies "definitively drew in layers of rebel workers looking for an alternative, for some force that could change things." "You could see this seriousness in the collections... But the questions always on their minds was 'Are you going to make a breakthrough? Is your agreement with LO going to lead to anything?'"

Also, Krivine noted, "there were a lot of immigrants at these meetings. They were worried about the wave of racism and felt that we were the only ones who had not let them down." ■

Labour defeat points to step up in inner-party fight

Paul LAWSON

LONDON — On February 25, the Labour Party suffered one of its worst election defeats in post-war history at the by-election in the inner-London working class area of Bermondsey. A Labour stronghold since 1924, Bermondsey saw a massive 44 per cent swing to the Liberal-Social Democratic alliance, which beat Labour by 17,000 votes to 7,500.

The result has caused intense speculation that the resignation of Labour leader Michael Foot is now imminent. If Labour lose the forthcoming by-election in the northern industrial town Darlington, Foot's resignation is virtually assured.

The Bermondsey by-election had been precipitated by the resignation of the sitting Labour MP, right-winger Bob Mellish, in protest against the decision of the local party not to re-select him as their candidate, but instead to adopt left-winger Peter Tatchell.

The election was thus a deliberate attempt by Mellish and his local right-wing caucus to demonstrate the unpopularity of the new Labour left associated with Tony Benn. Mellish himself represents the worst type of old-style machine politician, controlling with his supporters the local council on 'Tammany Hall' lines.

On the face of it Mellish's ploy seems to have worked brilliantly, even though the candidate which the Mellish caucus themselves put up was soundly defeated.

In fact the Bermondsey by-election was no simple test of the popularity of the Labour left. The Labour candidate Tatchell faced an overwhelming array of national political forces, that combined to defeat him. Foremost among them was the right wing of the Labour Party itself. Engineering the defeat of Tatchell was part and parcel of their campaign to remove Labour leader Michael Foot and replace him with right-wing deputy leader Denis Healey.

THE LABOUR RIGHT'S OFFENSIVE

Since 1980 the British Labour Party has been the site of the fiercest left-right battle of any mass workers party in Europe. This battle has already led to the split of a section of the right wing to form, in 1981, the Social Democratic Party, led by Roy Jenkins. The SDP has now formed an electoral bloc with the Liberals — the 'Alliance'. The experience

of 11 years of right-wing Labour government since 1964 has created deep hostility to the Labour parliamentary leadership among Labour's grass-roots activists.

At the 1980 Labour conference this hostility — especially to the ritual dismissal by the leadership of left-wing policies adopted by Labour conference — exploded into the open, through the adoption of a series of democratic reforms in party structures. These gave local activists more say in the selection of parliamentary candidates and the national leader.

The democratic reforms were followed up by a series of left-wing victories on policy questions, including a 35-hour week with no loss of pay, and in 1982 a two-thirds majority for unilateral nuclear disarmament. The swing to the left inside the party fuelled the campaign waged by left leader Tony Benn for the position of deputy leader in 1981 — a campaign which went deep into the unions, whose leaders are generally a bulwark of the Labour right.

In the event, Benn was not elected, thanks to the block votes of the trade union leaders and the votes of the MPs. But 80 per cent of the local party organisations voted for Benn. Benn's defeat — by just half of one per cent in the electoral college — was a crucial turning point. The swing to the left inside the party has since 1981 given way to a massive counter-offensive by the right-wing, spearheaded by the right-wing trade union bureaucracy and the Healey faction in parliament.

The counter-offensive took the form of the capture of Labour's National Executive Committee, previously dominated by the left, and the use of this power-base to witch hunt the left wing with red-baiting tactics. Adopting a 'salami-tactic', the right wing first aimed their fire against the far-left Militant tendency in the party, which they allege is 'Trotskyist'. (1) The day before the Bermondsey by-election the NEC expelled the five members of the editorial board of the newspaper *Militant*, including its founder Ted Grant, and foremost public spokesperson Peter Taffe. The expulsion of the *Militant* editorial board is the prelude to a wider witch hunt of the whole 'Bennite' left.

The past year saw a sharp turnaround in the British political situation. Thatcher's war against Argentina over the Malvinas islands created a huge wave of

national chauvinism, which Labour leader Michael Foot did nothing to combat and indeed supported. Only a small minority of the Labour MPs, including Tony Benn, opposed the war. The result was a sharp shift of public support towards the Conservative Party, away from Labour and the SDP-Liberal Alliance. Despite 3.5 million unemployed and Britain's economic crisis, this shift has not been reversed.

TORY DOMINANCE

If an election were held now it would result in a mammoth Tory victory, a fact which has thrown the Labour leadership into panic. In particular, Michael Foot is the most unpopular national leader of a political party since opinion polls began. Seeking to reconcile left and right his leadership is seen as transparently indecisive.

It was against this background of declining support for Labour that the Bermondsey by-election was called. Tatchell's candidacy had been an issue of intense controversy since Michael Foot denounced Tatchell in December 1981 and promised, in the British parliament, that he 'would never be a Labour candidate'.

But in face of the intransigence of the Bermondsey local party, Foot eventually climbed down. However, for 15 months before the election the sensationalist bourgeois press has exposed Tatchell as 'Red Pete', conducting a smear campaign on the basis that he was gay and that before coming to Britain from Australia he had refused to fight in the Australian army in Vietnam. 'Queer' and 'draft dodger' were the least of the epithets thrown against him.

The start of the election campaign saw an extraordinary act of sabotage by the Labour bureaucracy. Tatchell's campaign leaflets were confiscated and his first press conference cancelled because the leaflets had been printed on the press of the *Militant* tendency. No one however objected to the contents of the leaflets! This only fuelled the speculation in the press that Tatchell was a supporter of *Militant*, which in fact he is very far

1. *Militant* is in fact a centrist political tendency originating in a split from the Fourth International in 1965. Its most characteristic feature is its extreme propagandism, notably its reduction of all political problems to the 'nationalisation of the 200 leading monopolies'. It is reckoned to have 2-3000 organised supporters.

from being. Tatchell's politics are in fact to the right of Tony Benn.

This act of sabotage was compounded by the expulsion of the *Militant* leaders on the day before the election — an action which reinforced the image of Labour as divided and hesitant.

Tatchell faced an unprecedented 15 opposition candidates including the candidate of the Mellish caucus ('Real Bermondsey Labour') and the SDP-Liberal alliance, the Conservatives, the fascist National Front, the Communist Party. All, with the exception of the CP, concentrated their fire on Tatchell.

At the beginning of the campaign, right-wing working class voters often supported 'Real Bermondsey Labour' candidate O'Grady. But an opinion poll published one week before the vote indicated that only the SDP-Liberal candidate had a chance of beating Tatchell. This provoked wide-spread tactical voting, with a large percentage of the traditional Conservative vote being mobilised behind the SDP-Liberals to 'keep Tatchell out'.

Throughout the campaign the daily press conducted one of the most extraordinary campaigns of modern times. London's only evening paper *The Standard* carried front page attacks on Tatchell virtually every day, while Britain's notoriously sensational popular daily press (which is rivalled only by the more sordid publications of the Springer press in Germany) published millions of words of abuse. No candidate in post-war Britain has had to face such a campaign.

In the latter stages of the campaign, Michael Foot went out of his way to associate himself with Tatchell, the person he had denounced 15 months before in parliament. In this way he made the campaign an issue of the credibility of his leadership of the party. The result is a stinging rebuff.

Despite the strong mobilisation of Labour activists to help the campaign, Tatchell's tactics created major problems. In the face of the press hysteria, he chose to de-emphasise political issues, and waged a battle on the basis of class loyalty, stressing his loyalty to local working people and their immediate concerns. It is nonetheless true that even the most exemplary campaign would have been defeated by the extraordinary mobilisation of the bourgeoisie against Tatchell.

The defeat is a bitter one for the Labour Party left wing. It appears to disprove the contention that Labour's left-wing policies have mass support. Leading right-wing witch-hunter John Golding — nicknamed 'Labour's Jaruzelski' by the left — immediately declared that 'it is not the real Labour Party that has lost in Bermondsey'.

The efforts of the right wing will now be redoubled to remove Foot and replace him with Healey before the coming general election, almost certain to be in June or October of this year. For the SDP-Liberal Alliance, the Bermondsey result is an important victory — the first seat they have won from Labour. But it

is a freak result, one unlikely to be widely repeated in the very different conditions of a general election.

The replacement of Foot will however do nothing to solve the crisis of British Labourism. The Labour left includes tens of thousands of activists, appalled by their own party's betrayal of Tatchell and bitterly hostile to Healey.

Despite the political successes of Margaret Thatcher, she has not defeated a single major section of the British working class in struggle, and has deliberately avoided any confrontation before her hoped-for second term office. As the

British crisis deepens such confrontations will however occur. If the re-composition of British politics is primarily taking the form of a crisis of the Labour Party, this crisis will inevitably intersect with wider social struggles so the crisis deepens.

The British Labour left, unlike the situation in most social-democratic parties in Europe, has been stiffened by several thousand activists who have already drawn revolutionary conclusions. Their long experience of Labour government's in office has hardened their resolve. They will not be easily defeated. ■

Argentina: a battered working class begins to raise its head again

Jean Pierre BEAUVAIS

BUENOS AIRES — "The military, they aren't gone yet, but they're already threatening to come back." He spoke in a low voice. Was it out of fear of being overheard? On his tired face, you could read a succession of fear and hatred, resignation and hope.

But Juan was virtually a privileged person. He was a survivor. In this ruined country, bled white and beaten to its knees by seven years of dictatorship, he was still alive. He had not been through the concentration camps or been tortured. He even had a job.

For fifteen years, Juan has worked in the automotive industry. In 1974, he was in the Renault factories in Cordoba, when the 8,000 workers there waged an exemplary struggle that lasted for months to defend their buying power and force the release of their imprisoned trade-union leaders. At the time, he was elected a shop steward.

"Three years later, in 1977, a year after the military took power, everybody who had held a position of leadership in the conflict — several hundred people — were without a job. Dozens were in prison or 'missing.'"

Later, Juan found a new job in the Volkswagen factories in Monte Chingolo in the suburbs of Buenos Aires. In 1974, he was earning the equivalent of about 2,000 francs a month (US 285 dollars). Today, holding a job at the same level of skills, he earns the equivalent of 570 francs (US 82 dollars). In 1974, he work-

ed 43 hours per week. Now he has to work 53 hours. "That's the cost of the defeat, of the depression," Juan said.

"The automotive industry was one of the key sectors of the Argentine economy. It was in the hands of foreign capital. The market and production were divided up among Ford, Fiat, General Motors, Renault, Peugeot, Citroen, Volkswagen, and Mercedes.

"At the time of the big mobilizations in 1969 and 1974-75, the auto workers and our union, SMATA, played a militant, leading role. Under the dictatorship, we became one of the main targets of the repression. At the same time, the multi-nationals got a completely free hand to restructure their operations to adjust to the economic crisis.

"Some of them moved out of the country, almost overnight. That was what General Motors and Citroen did, for example. Others reconsolidated. Fiat and Peugeot, for example. In six years, five of the big factories shut down, and two thirds of the workers in the industry were left without jobs. In the other factories, those that are still working today, productivity has been increased two or three times, while real wages have dropped about 70%."

Juan could have added that his wages are now less than half those of a Volkswagen worker in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Ten years ago, this relationship was exactly the reverse. He could have added, too, that his buying power, which in 1974 was equivalent to one third that of a Volks-

wagen worker in Germany, is not a tenth of that today. The relationship between the buying power of Renault workers in Argentina and in France is about the same.

To say that Juan was optimistic would be an exaggeration. Overwhelmed by the day-to-day struggle for existence, he nonetheless had hope. "For six years, the atmosphere at the Monte Chingolo factory was dominated by fear. Fear of repression, fear of being laid off, fear of hunger...For some months now, it has been different. We are discussing again among ourselves. Assemblies are being held. And in response to new threats of layoffs banded about by the management, we even organized a march in the neighborhood near the factory. That was on December 7. At the time, I could hardly believe it..."

Aldo enjoyed none of the privileges Juan did. He is married, with two children. He is a plasterer, and for close to two years he has been without a job. Being without a job for him means being without any resources whatsoever. There are no unemployment benefits for the two million unemployed in Argentina (about 20% of the economically active population). The story of Aldo's life is the history of the country's descent into poverty. This has meant absolute poverty in a country that is being deindustrialized.

It was only the support of his family, the spontaneous solidarity in the neighborhood of Pompeya where he lives, and above all the soup kitchens run by the parish that enabled Aldo, his wife, and children to survive. Aldo remembers vividly the hardest times. For example: "When the teacher came to the house last winter. The price of food had gone up again. She could not longer divide the food in the school cafeteria between those children who could pay and those who could not."

What was his greatest fear? "Sickness. A lot of the people in the neighborhood who are working can no longer pay to go to the doctor. Besides, the doctor moved out. For a while, two voluntary nurses maintained a church-supported clinic. But the health services said that that was illegal, so they had to stop."

Polio has reappeared in the working-class suburbs of Buenos Aires. But in Aldo's neighborhood the priest ran a free vaccination campaign.

What can a building worker approaching middle age like Aldo hope for? The building industry is one of the hardest hit by the economic crisis. It is functioning at about 30% of capacity, according to the bosses' own statistics. Half-built buildings, deserted building sites abound in Buenos Aires.

A few months ago, on the recommendation of experts sent by the International Monetary Fund, who were anxious to see that the situation did not go over "the threshold of the unbearable," the military government announced that the payment of unemployment benefits was being studied. But if Aldo ever

thought that he might benefit from this, he will soon be disillusioned. The projected payments — 200 francs (18 US dollars) a month will only go, under certain conditions, to workers who lost their jobs in 1982! That represents about 10% of those presently unemployed. And, owing to the government's lack of credit, the application of this measure has been suspended.

A quick calculation would show, however, that the annual cost of these unemployment benefits amounts to barely 2% of the interest on the short-term credits granted in recent weeks by the banks of the imperialist powers. These credits have been allocated primarily for replacing the military materiel destroyed during the Malvinas war.

The stories of these two, Aldo the unemployed plasterer; Juan, the automobile worker, show better than any statistics could the nature and extent of the economic crisis in Argentina. The effects and manifestations of this crisis are all the more striking in a country that, even though it remained economically dependent, had nonetheless undergone a certain industrial development. Moreover, the Argentine working class also — long the largest and most concentrated proletariat in Latin America — has strong traditions of struggle and organization that go back decades.

One indication of the impact of the crisis is that grim and unsanitary shantytowns are mushrooming around Buenos Aires, and they look very much like those that surround other Latin-American cities. But the men and women crowded into them are not uprooted people coming from poor and overpopulated areas. Such people scarcely exist in Argentina.

The Argentine shantytown dwellers are former blue- and white-collar workers who are now unemployed. They have been ejected from their factories, ejected from their homes because they could no longer pay the rent, and forced out of their neighborhoods, where the price of food was too high. They are outcasts from the city, outcasts from a society where illiteracy, undernourishment, and sickness are growing rapidly.

Other, better off layers, are also being hit. A large number of professionals, technicians, architects, and doctors have had to leave the country because they could not make a living there, and they have gone to swell the ranks of the hundreds of thousands of exiles scattered in Latin America, the United States, and in Europe. Among those who have stayed, there is no telling how many are eking out a living in marginal jobs. Thousands of trained professionals are earning their living today as taxi drivers in the capital city.

"The cost of the depression, the cost of the defeat," Aldo said. The defeat also has other faces, other voices. The most moving, the most courageous are those of the mothers who have devoted their lives to searching for their "missing" children. The demonstration they have held every Thursday afternoon for

years on the Plaza de Mayo in front of the president's palace has become a constant challenge to which the dictatorship has no answer.

Where are they? Where are these 25 to 30 thousand "missing" Argentines? They army still has secret detention centers. How many have died under torture in the marine mechanics school near the River stadium, where the big football matches are held? How many have perished a few steps away in the basement of the central police department between Moreno and Caballo streets? Whose bodies lie in the special areas of the cemeteries under lines of grim crosses marked "N.N." for "No Name"?

A few of the "missing" have reappeared in recent months — mutilated, broken people, full of fear and guilt. They are obsessed by one question: "Why did I get out? Why not the others? Did I collaborate?"

"We have to kill as many people as necessary to restore peace," the former head of the junta, General Videla, said. One of his aides, General Saint-Just, who was governor of Buenos Aires Province, made things clearer: "In the first place, we are going to kill all the subversives, then their accomplices, then those who remain passive, and finally the cowards." That was at the "heyday" of the dictatorship.

Today, when the hatred and isolated regime is at the end of its rope, when the government is supposed to be returned to civilian hands late this year, the time is no longer favorable for such speeches. The military would like that sort of thing to be forgotten. So, history is being rewritten. Excesses may have been committed, they say. But these were individual cases in the framework of a "war" against "subversion" directed from abroad, against terrorism.

The military hope to whitewash and salvage their institutions, to get people to forget against whom and at whose expense they waged their "war on the home front."

But the reality is there to be seen, naked, grotesque. The enemy was not some remote "subversives." It was the masses of workers, the working class, its trade-union activists, its politically aware activists. It is these workers who make up the great majority of the dead, the "missing," the prisoners, and the victims of the economic pillage that accompanied this "war."

And the people who directed this war are those who have accumulated and are accumulating fabulous fortunes. They are the bosses of the multinationals sitting in their glass and steel towers. They are the inhabitants of the gilded ghettos, who live in a luxury by no means inferior to their counterparts in Paris, London, or New York. Since 1976, these people have stashed 6 billion dollars in Switzerland, according to a recent study by the Swiss Socialist deputy Jean Ziegler. This amounts to 15% of Argentina's enormous foreign debt. ■

The repressive course of the Belaunde Terry regime in Peru

Since December 1982 the front pages of the Peruvian daily newspapers have been preoccupied with the activities of the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) guerrillas, in the remote Ayacucho province.

The fight to combat the guerrillas has become the number one priority of the Belaunde Terry government. One of the events which has caused the biggest stir was the killing of eight Peruvian journalists in the area on January 26, 1983. The media claimed that the local peasant population had killed them, believing them to be Senderista guerrillas. But according to further reports the peasants state that they were carrying out the orders of the government to kill any strangers in their area.

To combat the guerrillas the government has declared a state of emergency in the province, and sent the army to allegedly 'reassure the population and protect the forces of law and order' (Liberation, Paris, January 25, 1983).

Sendero Luminoso has support among the local peasant population, and to an extent reflects the justified discontent, particularly of the young peasants, under the present government.

When he ran for president in May 1980, Belaunde Terry played heavily on the fact that he was ousted from the presidency by the so-called military coup for reform of October 3, 1968. But throughout the past three years his Accion Popular government has followed a more and more repressive course. The latest stage is his sending the army to stamp out the 'guerrilla war' in Ayacucho.

This repressive course has gone hand in hand with an economic policy openly favouring imperialist investors, which has led to the reprivatization of many sectors of the economy. Belaunde Terry's regime has shown no evidence of a desire to solve any of the fundamental problems, such as unemployment, malnutrition, infant mortality, and illiteracy.

More and more, the direction of the Belaunde Terry regime is symbolized by the Peruvian army commandos who have been scouring the streets of Ayacucho, knives in hand, chanting 'Terrorists, tonight we're coming into your house, and we're going to eat your guts and blow off your head.'

The fight against the guerrillas of Sendero Luminoso in the Cuzco area is going to be used as a pretext for stepping up the militarization of social and political life of the country. After all, did not the minister of war, Luis Cisneros Vizquerra, recently call for the support 'of all good Peruvians, in or out of uniform' against Sendero Luminoso (La Republica, Lima, December 29, 1982)?

In the May 1980 general elections Hugo Blanco was elected to parliament representing the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Peruvian section of the Fourth International). In this interview he explains the context in which Sendero Luminoso have been able to gain support through making a balance sheet of the first three years of the Belaunde Terry government, and explains the action perspectives and orientation of his party.

Question. How does the PRT assess the Belaunde Terry government?(1)

Answer. Fundamentally, this government represents the interests of the imperialists. In this period, when the system is in crisis, if it is to defend these interests, it can only do so by plunging the great majority of the population into hunger and poverty. Let's look at some central aspects of its economic policy.

What has marked this administration is strengthening the private sector. Facilities are being given to private enterprises, most of which are imperialist owned. The co-operatives and co-operative centres are being weakened or dissolved. Once they have been fragmented, they will fall easy prey to big capital. Finally, they have decreed

a gradual privatisation of the public companies.

We can give some examples of this privatisation policy. Big advantages are given to the imperialist oil companies. At the same time the state oil company, Petroperu, is being run down. Measures are being taken in favour of the imperialist mining companies, and the state mining sector is contracting, particularly in the area of marketing. The nationalised steel industry is on the point of sinking, leaving the debris to salvaged by North American, Japanese and other imperialist companies. Fishing is another sector where the state company is being rundown in favour of capitalists. The national electricity company is

not exempt from this policy either.

The objective of the government is to get agribusiness transferred into private hands. To this end, the co-operative organisations at all levels are being destroyed, and their property being offered to the big landowners (latifundistas) whose expansion the government supports.

As for imports, the way is open for foreign goods to flood the market and to destroy industry in the country.

Exports are becoming more and more concentrated into the hands of private firms. The state companies for internal trade are equally under attack, and that has serious consequences for the poorest layers of the population. The national income serves mainly to pay a gigantic external debt, which grows each year, and to finance military extravagance. The budgets for health, education, housing, and other things that are really necessary for the population, are being continually reduced.

The constant and more and more drastic devaluation of the national currency, the sol (2), is rapidly worsening the poverty of wage earners. As for the peasants, their loans are given in dollars! Given the galloping inflation, after a period, they have to pay back in soles twice what they received, plus the interest.

Certain diseases, which we thought belonged to history, have reappeared in Peru; malaria, rabies, etc. Infant mortality is increasing. Two children have to share the same cot in hospital, two women in labour have to share the same bed, children are being born in hospital corridors.

And in a country where the health service is so precarious, and getting worse, the private clinics and laboratories are getting richer. A United Nations study showed that there was overcharging of 400 per cent on medical imports.

Q. What is the present state of mass activity, and what role does the PRT play?

A. The pro-imperialist policy of the regime that is taking the bread out of people's mouths has hit hard against all sections of the population. The people have responded by vigorous mobilisations.

The workers in the companies in danger of privatisation have acted to defend the nationalised sector. In

1. The president, Fernando Belaunde Terry was the candidate of Accion Popular (AP) in the presidential elections in May 1980. This formation won 43% of the vote, on the basis of quite demagogic propaganda — which has been continually contradicted by the subsequent repressive policy of the regime.

Against all expectations these elections represented a serious defeat for the bourgeois populist organisation APRA which won only 25% of the vote, and for the left as a whole, which got 15 to 20%.

2. On the day that Belaunde Terry formally took office, July 28, 1980, the US dollar cost 290 soles. In July 1982 the exchange rate was 710 soles to one dollar — a drop in value of Peruvian currency of almost 150% in two years.

several enterprises, they have fought to defend their standard of living. In others, they are fighting against the illegal closure of the enterprises in question and against lay-offs. The peasants have had the first national general strike in their history, against governmental policy towards them. The co-operators are defending their co-operatives. The university students are defending the universities which are being stripped of resources. The neglected regions of the country are struggling to draw attention to their specific problems.

The most frequent forms of struggle are region-wide strikes; paralysis of activity at a regional level for one, two, or three days. There have been marches that have involved sacrifices, like the mineworkers of Canarias who, with their families, including the children, covered more than 700 kilometres. During this march 5 children died, as well as a woman who had just given birth, and a worker. The peasants block the roads, taking the land to build huts in which to live. This happened at El Palomar, where the police killed five inhabitants. Hunger strikes, and workplace occupations have also taken place.

Unhappily, these struggles have not been co-ordinated, which has considerably lessened their effectiveness. The leaderships of the workers confederations did not fulfil their duty to co-ordinate and centralise these struggles. The General Workers Confederation of Peru (CGTP), led by the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP), would have been able to do so, but did not want to. Neither did the United Left (Izquierda Unida - IV), a coalition of most of the left, want to initiate a centralised struggle.

The PRT is in favour of co-ordinating and centralising the struggles of the workers and the exploited as much as possible. We consider that to be our fundamental task today. Unfortunately, our organisational weakness does not allow us to do this on a large scale.

Q. What is the meaning, and the real impact, of the Ayacucho guerrilla struggle? What does 'Sendero Luminoso' (Shining Path) represent?

A. Sendero Luminoso is a Maoist group with some very sectarian aspects. It considers that all those who do not support it are reactionaries who have to be eliminated.

It rejects participation in elections and devotes itself to guerrilla warfare. Cleverly, its activists began by preparing their troops for war through minor sabotage actions, and then soon took up guerrilla warfare. Their stronghold is the mountainous region of Ayacucho, one of the poorest and most remote regions, where there is strong religious feeling. This makes it easier to push such articles of faith as, 'The thought of comrade Gonzalo (the leader) guides the world revolution'.

The economic policy of the regime, which cuts so brutally against the interests of the population, and the failure of the mass leaderships to offer an alternative by mounting an effective struggle is leading to an increase in the actions and influence of Sendero Luminoso.



Fundamentally, the government has responded by repression. It enacted an 'antiterrorist' law - imprisoning, torturing, raping, and assassinating the Senderistas, peasant leaders, and other people. But this has not enabled it to crush Sendero Luminoso, which has recently executed several well-known people in the area, amongst them the most powerful local figures. The guerrilla forces have also made numerous attacks and ambushes against the forces of repression, coupling these with new acts of sabotage.

Finally, the government has sent the army into the Ayacucho region, where it has inflicted even greater repression. It has carried out house to house searches, and given orders to shoot suspects on sight. This has not been very effective against Sendero Luminoso, which was able to call a strike against repression in the town of Ayacucho that mobilised 90 per cent of the population.

Other sabotage operations are being carried out in other areas of the country, including Lima. Unfortunately, the victims include peasant leaders of other sections of the left, members of peasant co-operatives, and leaders of organisations in non-Senderista areas.

However, it is notable that, despite all these negative factors, Sendero Luminoso, rather than being crushed by repression, is growing. This shows that the economic situation of the population is desperate, and that there are always more disappointed people, disappointed not only by the bourgeois political machines, but also by the mass organisations and the left parties.

The PRT is presently discussing these recent events.

Q. In recent months the conflicts in the countryside have worsened, which has led to serious confrontations between the peasants and the government's repressive forces. Whilst Sendero Luminoso concretely poses the question of armed struggle, the rest of the left only seems to be concerned with the next elections. What is the political position of the PRT on armed self-defence, on peasants self-defence patrols (rondas campesinas) (3), etc?

A. During its last conference, the Confederacion de los Campesinos de Peru (CCP) (4) approved the proposal, which has been put forward several times by the PRT, of setting up a Self-defence Secretariat, to encourage and organise the peasants armed struggle against the armed repression of the government.

We know that this vote in itself is not enough, and that it will be necessary, on the basis of this agreement, to push forward the organisation of self-defence in the country areas. We understood, too, that this has to be done in line with the specific local conditions, without falling into adventurism.

In the past, we have taken part in these type of actions. Nowadays we can see the embryo of armed self-defence in what are called the rondas campesinas (peasants patrols) in the Cajamarca province, where the peasants have organised themselves to protect their cattle against thieves. This armed vigilance has already led to minor confrontations, including with the police, who aid and abet the

3. The 'peasant patrols' are a form of peasant self-organisation against the exactions of the cattle thieves. But most of the time, the police being associated with this activity, the 'peasant patrols' constitute peasant self-defence from the repression or passivity of representatives of the bourgeois state. These forms of organisation are an elementary stage of the mass self-defence process in the peasant community.

4. The Sixth National Congress of the CCP took place in Lima on 16-21 July, 1982. In the issue of *Combate Socialista* (paper of the PRT) for the first fortnight of October 1982, Hugo Blanco - who was re-elected a member of the National Executive Committee and secretary for human rights of the CCP - made a first assessment of the congress.

Among its positive aspects, he emphasised the attendance of 1,201 delegates and guests, the degree of rank-and-file involvement in the discussion, the comradesly spirit of the debates, the points of agreement that came out, and the 'vigorous intervention of peasant women, demanding their rights and combatting machismo'.

The PRT, for the first time, had a political intervention in this congress as a member organisation of the Confederation. It presented documents, and peasant members of the PRT took part in the debates and commissions.

thieves. We consider that this is an example of armed action organised by the masses, even if it is still only embryonic.

If the peasants continue these strike actions, including blocking the roads, governmental repression directed at the mass organisations in the countryside will force them to defend themselves with arms.

During the national civic strikes, the urban population began to gain experience in confronting armed repression. We think that the masses organised in the towns will also begin to develop armed self defence.

Q. The 1983 municipal elections are approaching; there's already a pre-election atmosphere. What is the position of the PRT on these elections? Do you have a policy of making electoral alliances? and, on that question, what is the balance sheet you make of the alliances you made in the past, FOCEP, ARI etc? What does the PRT think about the possibility of an electoral alliance between the APRA and the United Left?

A. Let's start on the balance sheet. The big discussions on this question, and the rapid development of the dynamic of the class struggle, have prevented the PRT from making a common balance sheet of the experiences of these fronts up till now.

My opinion is that the weight of sectarianism among the majority of Peruvian Trotskyists prevented, on both these occasions, our movement finding itself at the head of broad mass revolutionary fronts. Our weakness allowed the reformists, through the creation of the United Left (IU), to take advantage of the desire for unity among the masses. The reformist leadership of the latter front prevents it becoming an instrument for mass struggle. It serves to put a brake on it, and channel the masses towards electoralist illusions.

The PRT has still not decided on its policy for the municipal elections in November. Personally, I think that these elections will have less importance for the masses than the previous ones. A large part of them have lost any illusion that they can do very much to improve their situation through municipal elections. Moreover, apart from a few exceptions, the left mayors and municipal councillors have been absorbed into the system, and do not try to use their posts as an organising centre to support the struggles of the people against the government.

There are several possibilities for the PRT's participation — launching candidates of mass organisations; candidates of the PRT itself, either alone or as a member of one or several fronts; critical support for the IU candidates.

Given the character of the municipal elections, and the differences in political reality in various regions, it is most probable that these three different types of participation will be combined.

As for the possibility of an electoral

alliance between APRA and IU — the PRT thinks it is a shameful betrayal for the IU to ally itself with a party of the right, which is involved in the repressive system. This helps to deceive the starving

difficulties which arise because of the sectarianism that has traditionally marked these organisations, sectarianism towards the rest of the left, which is then reciprocated.



masses, when what they need is to turn toward self-organisation of their own struggles, independent from all the exploiters.

But, unfortunately for IU, it seems that APRA is declining its company this time.

Q. With reference to the other groups that claim to be Trotskyist, what relations does the PRT have with them at the moment? Are there possibilities for joint work? Is there any possibility of unification?

A. The PRT was created through the fusion of Trotskyist groups. We had the illusion that it would be possible to form a single party with the PST and POMR. But our efforts were in vain, and were exploited in a dishonest way by the comrades from the other groups.

At the present time we have undertaken to co-ordinate with the POMR-PST (that is the PST and a part of the POMR) for certain common activities, such as the formation of the Socialist Parliamentary Bloc. (5) We will try to go forward in this direction, as far as possible. We will make the same effort with the POMR.

However, we are conscious of the

As for the possibility of unification, we think it is difficult at the moment for the reason I have just mentioned, and because of the lack of internal democracy in these parties, and because of their attitude towards us. They do not set their course in accordance with the needs of the class struggle in this country, but follow the orders they get from Nahuel Moreno or Pierre Lambert.

Naturally, the PRT wants to combine its efforts with all revolutionaries, through common work and fronts. If programmatic and political homogeneity makes unification possible, so much the better. We hope that the revolutionary process will lead to a convergence of many organisations. ■

5. In a September 15, 1982, meeting, the parliamentary representatives of the PRT and the POMR-PST (unified party) decided to form a Parliamentary Socialist Bloc. This Bloc made its first intervention in parliament when the government of Premier Manuel Ulloa was called to give an account of its policies in September. The APRA voted with the opposition against the government, provoking a Cabinet reshuffle. In a declaration adopted on December 16, 1982, the Bloc pledged to 'make the voices of the exploited heard in parliament', and 'from this position to give impetus to the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses'.

The "social truce" ends in Bolivia

Faced with the growth of massive strikes and protests in the summer and early fall of 1982, the Bolivian military regime was obliged to agree to hand over power to a civilian government in order to avert an uncontrollable explosion. Following the installation of the new government in early October, the top military fell into disarray. Major figures are now in exile charged with smuggling, involvement in drug traffic, and other criminal offenses.

The military handed the government over to the major electoral force in the country, the Union Democratica Popular (UDP), a front whose major components are the MNR-I of Siles Suazo, the left-wing of the old bourgeois national movement put in power by the revolution of 1952, and the PCB, the Bolivian Communist Party.

The form that the transfer took was an ambiguous one. The National Assembly suspended by the military was called back into session. This body, based on the elections held before the 1980 coup, has a right-wing majority, now very much out of step with the mood in the country. At the same time, the executive branch was handed over to a UDP government.

On November 5, less than a month after the UDP government took office, it adopted economic measures that it claimed were necessary and in the interests of the people. They were, the UDP said, part of a "New Economic Policy." This term reflects an attempt by the UDP to compare the present capitalist crisis of the Bolivian bourgeois state with the economic crisis of the Soviet workers state in the 1920s.

Before November 5, the increase in the cost of living had exceeded a rate of 800%. Wages remained stationary, and this rapid rate of inflation and speculation reduced their buying power to a fiction. Unemployment had grown enormously. The annual income of the state had stabilized around 900 million dollars, of which 600 million had to go for interest and retirement of the foreign debt.

The remainder, 300 million dollars, was all that was left to meet the needs of the national economy. In fact, the state's coffers were empty, and the Central Bank had no foreign currency reserves.

The military had decided to let the peso float against the dollar, which led to windfall profits for the exporting sectors and bankruptcy for small local industry. This in turn led to increased unemployment and underemployment, impoverishment of the masses, and the weakening of the national currency. The price of imported products, including medicines, increased by more than 1,000%. It is important to point out that 80% of the key enterprises of the national economy are in the hands of the state, and, with the exception of the Huanuni mine, they were all bankrupt.

On November 5, the UDP cabinet decreed an austerity program and appealed to the masses for a hundred-day "truce" to allow it to restore order in the economy. The hundred days ended on February 16.

On January 9, the UDP government suffered a major split, with the departure of the MIR, the most right-wing component of the coalition, even though it is led by former guerrillas. It is widely believed in the Bolivian left that the MIR is aiming for a government of national unity including the right-wing parties, the PCN and the ADN of the former military dictator Banzer, as well as the so-called "Historic" faction of the MNR, the MNR-H. In fact, the MNR split over the issue of cooperating with the Banzer dictatorship. The "Historicos" are the faction that collaborated.

The following is an assessment of the first hundred days of the UDP government and the tasks it poses for revolutionists by the Political Bureau of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario — Combate (Revolutionary Workers Party — Combat), the Bolivian section of the Fourth International. The statement has been edited somewhat for an international audience.

THE EFFECTS OF THE UDP'S ECONOMIC MEASURES

Of all the measures adopted by the UDP government on November 5, only those involving currency control by the Central Bank and the establishment of a fixed rate of exchange for the peso could be considered to have any positive aspects. But even these decrees were far from adequate. In fact, while the dollar was set at 200 pesos, the internal demand was so high that in a few days the rate of exchange reached 400 to one.

With the exception of the currency-control measure, all the steps taken by the government very much resembled those that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) tried to impose while the military dictatorship was still in power. But the dictatorship was not able to apply them out of fear of the reaction of the masses. Priority was given to foreign trade, to the middle-sized mining corporations (the private mines), to the agribusiness sector in the eastern part of the country, the private banks, and all those sectors that bring in foreign currency so as to enable the state to meet the interest and principal payments on its foreign debt.

These priorities were set to the detriment of the statized sectors, which will increase unemployment and stifle the small-scale industry working for the local market. All this, in fact, amounts to a typical monetarist policy to guarantee the interests of imperialist capital.

Thus, the UDP government, in which the masses have placed their hopes, has done what the military government did not dare to. This policy has had the following results: 1) increased inflation,

combined with a fall in the value of the peso, which, together, has led to an inflation rate of 1,500%; a 13% increase in unemployment; a monthly minimum wage of 8,490 pesos, which corresponds to the expenses of a family of five for only a week and a half; and, finally, the threat a new devaluation of the peso in the near future. It is clear that the bulk of the state sector is still sinking into bankruptcy, along with private nonexporting industry. It is clear also that the subordination of the national economy to U.S. and West European imperialist capital is reaching a crucial point, especially since the country no longer has any reserve capital.

Far from mitigating the economic crisis, the UDP government has aggravated it, and shifted its weight still more onto the shoulders of the workers, the urban masses, and the poor peasants. Now, plunged into a political crisis, the UDP government is trying to rectify its earlier economic measures by carrying out new devaluations and setting the minimum wage at a miserable level, just high enough to slow down workers struggles. Another such measure is establishing workers comanagement of the statized enterprises. But in every respect the UDP government is continuing to follow the road of subordination to imperialist capital and the lines laid down by the IMF.

With its attempts to make mitigating adjustments in its austerity policy, the UDP will succeed only in increasing hunger and unemployment for the masses, worsening the subordination of the country to imperialist capital, increasing foreign debt, and enriching the four octopuses that feed on the national

economy. (i.e., the native bourgeoisie, the landlords, the military, and the imperialists). It will succeed only in increasing sacrifices and austerity measures imposed on the workers, and, as a result, in accelerating the process of social decay. This will necessarily involve a polarization of the social forces, the isolation of the government from the masses, and a strengthening of the reactionary right. In fact, the right is seeking not only to improve its opportunities for lining its pockets, but to assure its possibilities for enrichment by regaining political power. This is why the reactionary right is plotting against the government and is bound to move toward a coup d'etat.

THE DILEMMA OF THE UDP GOVERNMENT

Mismanagement by the reactionary right's military alterego left the UDP a totally bankrupt economy. But the UDP was also left with the job of containing the movement of the workers and the poor masses, which was threatening to overflow and break down the retaining walls of capitalism. It was not the UDP that won this democratic opening, but the poor masses in their heroic struggle, which began with the strike of the Huanuni miners in November 1981, and continued to spread throughout the country until it inflicted a decisive political defeat on the military dictatorship.

However, it is important to see, as the masses do, the difference between a dictatorial regime with a fascistic orientation and a bourgeois democratic one. The masses feel this difference acutely. We do also. But while we place no real hope in the UDP government, we do have confidence in the capacity of the masses for struggle. So, it should be clear that we will support all "democratic and anti-imperialist measures, all measures in the interest of the people" taken by the UDP government. We call on the people to maintain their independence in their political and trade-union activity so that they can continue the struggle for their own demands and historical objectives.

From October 10 to November 5, it can be said that, to a certain extent, the masses lowered their guard, waiting to see what the UDP government's measures would be. However, it took no step in the interests of the people or against the imperialists. And, in fact, the pro-imperialist measures it finally adopted were a brutal disillusionment for the working people. It is important for the masses to go through this experience so that they can see through the "anti-imperialist and populist masque" of this government.

A ONE-LEGGED GOVERNMENT

This government has arisen as the result of pressure and a political deal. We warned that a government set up by the parliament would be a one-legged

one. But the MIR and the reactionary right wanted a parliamentary solution. We, the PCB, and even the MNR-I insisted on the need for elections, despite the time that was lost. Elections would have made it possible to push back the right, to defeat it on the electoral level as well as in the streets. It is true that the masses cannot eat ballots, and, as the MIR demagogically said, that the hungry cannot wait. But what we wanted to do was to push the democratization process to the maximum, since the political and social relationship of forces was extremely favorable to the left and to the UDP.

In this situation, the UDP would have been able to gain an absolute majority in parliament and at all levels of government. This would have encouraged and emboldened the masses and obliged the new UDP government to take measures against the oligarchy, to take on the paramilitary gangs, to push back the reactionary sectors in the army, and to defeat the right in parliament.

All domestic and international reactionary forces combined immediately to stop elections and impose a solution based on the existing parliament. Today, there is a right-wing majority in parliament, and the UDP government remains confined to the executive branch, without any real decision making power. But the masses have already gone beyond that phase of the struggle. That is, now that the UDP has revealed its antipopular character and its line, the fact that it lacks an absolute majority in parliament is hardly important anymore.

FISSURES IN THE GOVERNMENT

What is more, the UDP bore the seeds of its own decay within it, since it is a class-collaboration front. In a country such as ours, where there is a native bourgeoisie that is organized and differentiated as a class, where the national economy is totally subordinate to imperialism, where there are oligarchic strata linked to international finance capital,

where the army serves as the policeman for imperialist interests, a bourgeois democratic regime based on class collaboration cannot last for long. Political and social confrontation is on the agenda. Thus, at the end of 1982, the first fissure appeared in the government and in the UDP itself, with the departure of the MIR from the government.

The MIR's aim is to get a government of "national unity," including the UDP, private enterprise, the army, and the reactionary right organized in the ADN, the MNR-H, and the PDC. It wants a policy of rapprochement with U.S. imperialism and the European bourgeois governments in order to contain the revolutionary upsurge of the masses and reconsolidate the bourgeois state. For these objectives, they are using the fight against the paramilitary gangs and the drug traffic as a cover; they have no intention whatever of promoting any mass mobilization.

The UDP has no clearly defined political or economic positions on either the national or international level. The 13-day crisis touched off by the MIR's departure from the government is now combining with the row started up by the government's condemnation of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, which provoked a strong reaction from the Communist Party.

However, the PCB does not want to leave the government. It is hanging on to its place in the cabinet by tooth and nail. Because this position offers opportunities in two areas that are decisive for its reformist policy — working in a class-collaborationist government and controlling the labor movement.

Both the MIR and the Americans are interested in getting the PCB out of the government. This is not because they fear that PCB will push a radical policy; this party has no such intention. What they want to do is to quiet the fears of a backward, oligarchical bourgeoisie. But the MIR, as well as the Americans and the West European Social Democrats,



know that it is better to keep an old toothless hound dog in the kitchen and fed it on scraps, than have it running around outside raising a howl. This is what the myopically anti-Communist local bourgeoisie and oligarchy stubbornly refuse to see.

The departure of the MIR from the government had two effects:

1. It swelled the ranks of the right.
2. It put the UDP government on a short leash, with narrowing mass support.

THE THREAT OF A COUP

It is no accident that the MIR has been saying that "this government is not the one the masses elected, a new government of national unity is needed." It is no accident that the reactionary right in parliament has begun a barrage of challenges to various UDP ministers. It is not an accident that the reaction is denouncing this government a total disaster and calling on the people to replace it. Nor is it by chance that at the end of December, representatives of the ADN, of the MNR-H, of private enterprise, of the MIR, the truckers, and the military met at Tarija. They are plotting against the government, preparing to isolate it and overthrow it.

The government is on the defensive. It can only be saved temporarily if the masses shore it up. But it cannot appeal to them because it itself represents the native bourgeoisie and not the workers.

We think that this government cannot survive long. What the right proposes to do is already public. It is going to mount an economic boycott, boycott the government, and create a general economic and political crisis in order to get parliament to intervene and name a right-wing government headed by Victor Paz Estenssoro and Jaime Paz Zamora (MNR-H and MIR), supported by their colleagues in the ADN, the PDC, private enterprise, and so forth. This will be a cold coup, of course, but still a coup. It will lead to a cutting back of democratic freedoms, a shifting of the process to the right, and a blocking of the mass upsurge.

The relative demobilization of the masses that resulted from hopes being placed in the UDP government and from an acceptance of the 100-day period of grace that the government asked for is now beginning to overcome. Up till now, all labor organizations in the country have called for a minimum wage of 40,000 pesos a month backed up with a sliding-scale of automatic cost-of-living allowances.

There is a very wide-ranging discussion in the workers movement over the comanagement proposal. Some sectors accept it; others reject it categorically. We have called for a majority for the workers in comanagement boards in statized enterprises, along with collective workers control with the right of veto in private enterprises. We are proposing the discussion in the unions of a program of demands to deal with the economic crisis in order to open up the way for mobilizing the workers, peasants, and the poor masses in general to defend and deepen the democratic process, to strengthen the mass organizations, and enable the Bolivian Confederation of Trade Unions (COB) to play an independent role leading the mass movement.

MASS SELF-DEFENCE

Today there is a noticeable upturn in the mobilization of the workers and the poor masses. Factory occupations are being carried out to counter the economic boycott of the bosses. Assemblies and congresses are being held where alternatives in the interests of the people are being discussed, as well as methods of struggle and organization. All this is focused on combating the economic crisis and confronting the counteroffensive of the right in parliament and in the army. This is the reason why mass organization and people's self-defence are so important.

In the new period opened up by the end of the "100 days" on February 16, there is no doubt that there will be a revival of the social struggle. If the gap grows between the UDP government



and the aspirations of the masses, it is clear that we are heading for a political confrontation in short order, which could even take the form of armed clashes. The masses are going to defend the democratic process. They are going to fight for decent living conditions, decent working conditions, and a living wage, for a genuinely democratic and revolutionary solution, for a government of their own.

Our party supports such a perspective. Undoubtedly, the UDP government is part of the democratic process that we are determined to deepen. But in fighting for this, we are not defending the bourgeois government but rather the gains of the masses. The main enemy at the moment is not the UDP government but the reaction entrenched in parliament and the army. In fact, it is these reactionaries who represent American imperialism and the European Social Democracy.

THE LEFT ALTERNATIVE AND REVOLUTIONARY MASS LEADERSHIP

The only national political pole of attraction to the left of the UDP is the Partido Socialista-Uno. The POR-C cannot be that at present because it is still only a relatively small party, not really organized on the national level. We are, however, the only revolutionary Marxist current with a perspective for growth in the coming period since other small revolutionary groups have begun to fade away. We are, of course, trying to extend a hand to these groups and





make statements about rarified political and technical questions without linking these to the fundamental problems of the country, or appealing directly to the masses, or clarifying its position toward the government, the state, the economic crisis, for the preparations for a coup.

THE SECTARIANISM OF THE PS-Uno

We maintain a completely collaborative attitude toward the PS-Uno. We support it, or mobilize side by side with it, to confront the right or gain ground from the UDP. But the PS-Uno accepts unity only on a temporary basis, to win elections. It does not have a united-front strategy.

At the militant Huanuni mine, the PS-Uno took a wrong, sectarian step, running a purely party slate. Out of the 1,800 votes cast (the total workforce is 2,200), it got only 57 votes. However, in alliance with dissident Maoists, we won an absolute majority, defeating the UDP and the official Maoists.

The UDP and the parties that make it up are not maintaining monolithic unity in all areas of mass work. Thus, there are openings for achieving limited agreements with radicalized sections of these parties. For example, in the eastern part of the country, the MNR-I has a militant base among the peasants and the poor masses. So, this offers a possibility for making alliances with it on certain occasions against the right bloc. In the universities, we form united fronts with the MIR and the PCB, or with other independent and revolutionary groups. All of this is done in the framework of a tactic of building united mobilizations against the common enemy.

THE PROCESS OF SELF-ORGANIZATION

In the mass movement, the process of self-organization is beginning to ripen.

The factory occupations have given rise to factory committees or strike committees. The economic crisis is giving impetus to the development of Committees to Defend the People's Economy (CODEP), which the MIR is trying to control from the office of the vice presidency, which it holds. But there are still no independent mass organs of self-organization. In some areas, neighborhood committees play a role in assuring supplies and services. But such committees have not become a general phenomenon in the cities where they exist, nor have they developed on a national scale. So far it has been the unions, the departmental (district) union structures and the COB, that have been playing the main role. But we have not yet reached a stage of political development higher than the peak reached last October. That is why there are still no structures of mass self-organization other than the unions.

This is still a period of ferment, of discussion, of learning, but the processes that are beginning now will be extremely important in the big confrontations that are looming on the horizon and which may be extremely dramatic. ■

ARTICLES ALREADY PUBLISHED IN INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

— General Strike Rocks Bolivia, by Fernando Zamora, No 5, 26 April 1982.

— Prerevolutionary Crisis Looms in Bolivia, by IV, No 16, 1 November 1982.

— Interview with Bolivian Indian Leaders, by IV, No 17, 15 November 1982.

— The Radicalization of Bolivian Peasantry, by S. Romande, No 17, 15 November 1982.

— The Bolivian Cauldron, by S. Romande, No 23, 24 January 1983

draw them together in a single revolutionary current.

However, this is not sufficient to meet the tasks of the moment and those that lie ahead. We need a broader policy of alliances, one that can draw in revolutionary and progressive sectors, authentically democratic sectors, sections of the population interested in consolidating and deepening democratic process. This is why we are calling on all these forces to confront the main enemy, and, for that purpose, to build a democratic political-military leadership. Such a mass leadership can only be built on the basis of a revolutionary and democratic program bringing together the genuinely democratic and revolutionary left parties, the unions, and the progressive institutions. The only form it can take is a Revolutionary People's Bloc.

The PS-Uno lacks both organization and a clearly defined policy. Therefore, it cannot develop as an alternative political leadership for the mass movement. If it overcame these deficiencies, the PS-Uno might manage to focus the radicalized consciousness and determination to fight of the working masses, and become a mass leadership.

However, as of now that is not the case. In middle-class areas, where there have been elections, the PS-Uno has scored smashing victories, gaining from the backlash against the UDP. But it has not gone any further. Throughout a period filled with social struggles, it has not called for any mobilizations, demonstrations, or rallies. It has sat on its hands, doing nothing more than





Bolivian miners elect union leaders (DR)

The fight of the Bolivian Fourth Internationalists

The following interview with a leader of the POR-C, the Bolivian section of the Fourth International, was made in La Paz in mid-February.

Question. How much time does the present government have?

Answer. It's impossible to predict exactly how fast things will move. We know that in Bolivia bourgeois democratic governments don't last long.

The U.S. is anxious to cap the social volcano that is threatening to blow up in its Latin American back yard. They have tried the method of dictatorship, and the people have defeated them. They have tried democratic governments, but these have not held up very long.

Moreover, in Bolivia the various factions of the native bourgeoisie, the oligarchy, and the army are linked to different international interests. Besides, a factor that has decisive weight is the maturity and experience of our working

class, its impressive class consciousness and militancy.

The right is plotting to establish a regime of the hard right. The workers are fighting for their rights and their demands, for a revolutionary solution. Whether the UDP government falls and how quickly depends on the interaction of all these factors. But it is certain that it cannot hold up for long and that we are heading toward a political and military confrontation with the right.

Q. What is our strategy for the event of a coup d'etat?

A. The political results and the social cost for the masses will differ, according to whether it is a cold coup or a bloody one. If it is a cold coup, the repression will be limited, but there will be repression to destroy the mass organizations and consolidate the power of the right. A violent coup will be aimed at destroying the political and social organizations

of the masses and wiping out their gains in a single blow. In the immediate future, it seems more likely that bourgeois and the imperialists will go for a cold coup than for a hot one.

The masses have just gone through the experience of a criminal, despotic, bloody, and barbaric dictatorship. They are not disorganized, and in fact are developing self-organization. A violent coup would run straight up against a mass response and would threaten to unleash a mass counteroffensive that could seriously endanger the bourgeois state. The COB leadership could be bypassed by the combativity of the insurgent masses and the actions of the small revolutionary parties, whose authority might rapidly grow.

The right prefers a cold coup. But the kind of coup the reactionaries have in mind does not resemble the traditional scenario of rebellions initiated on military bases — a dawn attack on the presidential palace, ouster and exile of the president. This time, they are talking about three things — an economic and political boycott, forcing the president to resign, and getting the parliament representing 'a broad national agreement' to appoint Paz Estenssoro (of the MNR-H) as president and Paz Zamora (of the MIR) as vice president.

We are calling on the masses and their parties to defend the people's rights and to organize people's self-defense.

Q. How did the POR-C come through the change from clandestine to legal work?

A. Although we are a small party, with a limited material apparatus, we were able to come through two years repression without being destroyed. Our losses were only about 30%. Of course, that is a third of our organization that was hit by repression, and we had to concentrate our forces in certain social sectors and certain areas. It would have been wrong to scatter our forces; that would have made us an easy target for the dictatorship.

We declared that we would accept "neither exile or surrender." We put our confidence in the masses and their capacity for a rapid recovery. We had confidence in ourselves and in international solidarity. We never underestimate the enemy, and we do not overestimate the strength of the masses.

However, the assessment we made of the government's situation, that it had no popular or international support but rested solely on repression, without even the support of the social forces it sought to represent, made it possible for us to foresee that the dictatorship would not last long. We saw that its talk about remaining in power for twenty years was only a bluff.

We had to begin to face the repression with little preparation. We had no houses, no money, no press, and not even an elementary technical apparatus. We had to build that on the run, in the

course of the struggle. It was not that we were surprised by the coup. It was simply that despite our previous efforts we did not have the material means to build an apparatus. But we were able to take the first steps toward this as a party.

Our organization was small, close knit, and a large proportion of our members were trained cadres. That was our first weapon against the repression. Our party never stopped doing mass work. It was able to shield itself from the repression, but without cutting itself off from the masses.

After the initial atmosphere of fear was overcome, we started to concentrate our forces and set up our political leadership.

We had made progress in reorganizing the party and in raising the morale of the membership as well as in the mass sectors in which we were working. We put out our press and maintained a regular fortnightly publishing schedule. We started with a very small run, distributed in the beginning among trade unionists and members of the other parties. Then we overcome our technical limitations and increased our circulation to 2,500 copies nationally. In a period of repression, a newspaper or even a simple leaflet is an invaluable thing in the hands of workers, and so our paper passed from hand to hand.

To be sure, if we had not had the benefit of international solidarity, we would have had difficulty in coming through the repression. We might have been forced to go into exile or at least we would have been more exposed to repression owing to the material precariousness of our lives. We got a modest but essential revolutionary support from the comrades of the Fourth International and some independent comrades outside the country. But our party itself was able to face adversity and overcome it. We proved that it is possible to build a revolutionary organization in the midst of a period of repression, if you have a correct line

and if the morale of the fighters is commensurate with the demands of the situation.

It was in this period of clandestinity that we began to set up mass fronts — the Revolutionary Workers Front (FTR), the Revolutionary Student Front (FER) in the universities and high schools, and the Revolutionary Peasant Front (FCR). We scored major successes in these areas, inasmuch as independent trade unionists and even members of other parties joined. Our party led these united-front organizations and offered them a political line.

In this period, we consolidated our political role in the resistance. We were an important component of the CONADE, an underground body involving the COB, the MNR-I, the MIR, the PCB, the PS-Uno, the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Katari (an Indian organization), the PRIN (the most left of the groups originating in the MNR, led by Juan Lechin, the chairman of the COB), and an independent group. It was the basis of our proposal that the April-May programmatic document of this front was drawn up. We launched a propaganda offensive to mobilize the masses and to stimulate strikes in 1980, which the government claimed was terrorist activity.

In November 1981, our miner comrades, led by Felipe Vasquez, encouraged the Huanuni miners to organize their union, issue a signed appeal, unleash a general strike, and confront the dictatorship. All our comrades, including Comrade Vasquez were arrested and brutally tortured. But in an immediate response to this, our women comrades in the mining region organized a hunger strike and inflicted a new defeat on the dictatorship. The movement spread and marked the beginning of the end for the dictatorship.

Twice, the dictatorship managed to break up the leadership of our party. Twice we were able to rebuild it with new cadres and continue the struggle.

In May 1982, we were the only party that functioned as such in the mobilization and workers march. We were there with our own flags, posters, and press. We were, to be sure, protected by the security groups organized by the parties. But we came through a whole process without being destroyed by the repression, while revolutionary organizations larger than ourselves before the coup disappeared without leaving a trace.

The party also grew numerically in this period, especially in the working class and the middle strata.

It is not simple to make the transition from working underground to working in conditions of democracy and legality. What is more, it would be wrong to turn the entire party to legal work in a country where democracy never lasts long. We are following a mass orientation in our organizational and agitational work, but we maintain the basic elements of underground organization, prepared to reorganize the party in the underground if necessary.

Today, we have our mass fronts, which are operating publicly. We have party members and leaders working publicly. At the same time, we maintain that there is a need for clandestine organization and security work, both in a period in which there are still paramilitary gangs, and for the periods to come. Thus, the party is preparing itself for all situations. We reject the cult of clandestinity. But we also combat organizational laxness.

The basic contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was not resolved by the assumption of power by the UDP government. It will be resolved only by civil war.

Q. Are we prepared for a new coup?

A. We are not organizationally and militarily prepared to defeat a bloody coup by ourselves. We rely on the masses and their fighting capacity. If the masses are defeated, we will be also, and we would then have to undertake a new phase of the struggle, with new methods and new forms.



What's behind the Angola – South Africa talks

Nathan PALMER

On December 8, 1982, on the island of Sal in the Cape Verde archipelago, bilateral discussions took place between representatives of the Angolan and South African governments. There is scarcely any doubt that the subject of these talks was the situation in the south-western part of southern Africa. That is, they must have dealt with the Namibian conflict and the South African raids against the SWAPO camps located on Angolan territory, as well as with the guerrilla war being waged by UNITA, with South African support, against the MPLA government in Angola.

Little information has leaked out about these five hours of talks. The South African delegation was headed up by the minister of foreign affairs, "Pik" Botha; and minister of foreign defense, General Magnus Malan. The rank of the negotiators points up the importance of this meeting.

The Angolan foreign minister, Paulo Jorge, said in London during an official visit February 5 that the meeting was held on the initiative of the South Africans. The outlines of the positions on both sides are well known. For the South Africans, things are simple — no deal until the Cuban troops are withdrawn from Angola. At a press conference, Pik Botha said: "South Africa will not reduce its forces in the territory (that is Namibia) until the Cuban troops have left Angola." (1)

The Angolans have a different point of view. For them, the Cuban involvement was essential to drive back the South African invasion during the 1975 civil war and to keep the present government in power thereafter. Paulo Jorge indicated that this question has two sides to it, and that a withdrawal of Cuban troops could be considered only if "the South African threat were considered reduced."

It has been confirmed by the Angolan minister and by the South African government that a second meeting will be held shortly. Needless to say, there has been a flurry of speculation that an agreement is on the way. At the end of January, the Portuguese press service announced a two-month ceasefire between the Angolans and South Africans. This report proved to be at least premature. But that does not mean that there are not

reasons to believe that an agreement is likely for a provisional ceasefire.

THE UN TAKES A BACK SEAT

The two-handed card game that has now begun, with the U.S. dealing the cards, contrasts with the stalled diplomatic operation being conducted by the UN. In fact, this operation has been essentially in the hands of the Group of the Five Western countries that are members of the Security Council — that is, Great Britain; France; West Germany; Canada; and, most of all, the U.S.

The United Nations has, to be sure, discussed Namibia at length and adopted a considerable number of resolutions on the subject. Since 1973, SWAPO has been recognized by the General Assembly as the sole representative of the Namibian people. Resolution No. 385, adopted unanimously by the Assembly on January 30, 1976, condemns South Africa and provides for "free elections under UN supervision."

In 1978, a series of resolutions were adopted. They including Resolution No. 432, which recognizes the need for re-integrating into Namibia the port of Walvis Bay, the country's only deep-water port. South Africa has detached it from Namibia with the aim of hanging onto the port if it is obliged to relinquish its mandate over the country as a whole. Another was Resolution 435, which set up an aid group for organizing elections, Resolution No. 439 condemned South Africa's decision to proceed unilaterally to hold elections in December of that year. It declared in advance that the results of these elections would be invalid.

From January 7 to January 14, 1981, a conference was held in Geneva under the auspices of the UN that laid out the first five major points for the first stage of settlement. These were 1) that South Africa permit the holding of elections, 2) that a ceasefire be declared and a demilitarized zone set up in the northern part of the country, which would be reinforced by 7,500 UN troops, 3) phased withdrawal of South African troops, 4) the election of a constituent assembly, 5) withdrawal by South Africa within one week after the announcement of the results.

Subsequently, the Group of the Five was to make proposals closer to the



South African demands. That is, it called for the election of an assembly in March 1983, based on "one man, two votes," with both direct and proportional representation, thereby favoring the white minority (75,000 out of a population of more than a million, according to the 1981 census). This stands in contradiction to a Black majority and the demand by SWAPO for a system of "one man, one vote."

On the military questions, the Five dropped the proposal for a demilitarized zone and reduced the projected UN force to 6,000. Finally, they proposed to carry out the process not under the control of the General Assembly but of the Security Council, which is less antagonistic to South Africa.

In June 1982, the Group of the Five had to face the fact that the negotiations had become stalled, since SWAPO refused to give in on the question of the electoral system. So, they decided to go over immediately to the second phase as regards the United Nations role during the transitional period.

THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION — POLITICAL CRISIS AND LOW INTENSITY WARFARE

In Namibia itself, an internal crisis led South Africa to resume official control of administration. On January 18, it dissolved the "National Assembly" that it set up after the 1978 electoral farce, and concentrated power in the hands of the General Administration.

The South Africans had set up a Council of Ministers presided over by Dirk Mudge, cochairman of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, which was then the major pro-South African formation. It played the game, taking steps to wipe out the more visible aspects of apartheid.

Internal rivalries would soon divide the DTA, with the departure of Peter

1. *Pretoria News*, November 27, 1982. (All quotations from publications in English and Afrikaans have been retranslated from French versions.)

Kalangua. In May 1982, he formed Christian Democratic Action. The new formation had a mainly Ovambo base, but was financed by the German Christian Democrats, among others.

The conflict between Mudge and the South African administrator sharpened, leading Pretoria eventually to drop its protegee. The December 9 issue of the Johannesburg magazine *Report*, for example, wrote the following about the need for unity among those opposing SWAPO: "From this standpoint, it is a great pity that a public confrontation is looming between Mr. Dirk Mudge and the general administrator, Mr. Danie Hough....Those interested in Southwest Africa/Namibia know that the DTA no longer has the support that it did in 1978....Such a situation has given rise to discontent and distrust."

Further on, with respect to the meetings set up by the South African premier with a view toward forming a new interim government, *Report* said: "It is hard to believe that Mr. Mudge and the other DTA leaders know nothing about this. One can only advise them to participate in this process, because the role of the DTA is by no means ended."

Apparently, the Mudge card was losing its value.(2) And the military operations in the northern part of the country were still going on. In 1982, this "low-intensity war," according to the official terminology used by Pretoria, resulted in 77 dead in the South African ranks, as opposed to 61 in the preceding year. According to the same sources, SWAPO's losses amounted to 1,268 (as opposed to 1,494 in 1981). More than half of these losses were suffered in South African raids on Angolan territory (200 in March during Operation "Super" and 350 in July-August). It should be added that in the first week of January 1983, the South Africans lost eight white soldiers in a mine explosion. (SWAPO seems to be making increasing use of land mines.)

Thus, South Africa has not only been occupying Namibia territory but also a slice of southern Angola, in which it claims the right to move at will, in accordance with the doctrine of "hot pursuit." Assured that they can act with impunity and with the blessing of the U.S., the South Africans barely waited for General Walters, Reagan's itinerant ambassador, to leave Luanda at the end of July, following talks on a Namibian settlement and the Cuban presence in Angola, before they launched a large-scale invasion of southern Angola.

U.S. POLICY AND THE GROUP OF THE FIVE

It is no secret to anyone that the Reagan administration has developed a special relationship with Pretoria. The Cape Verde talks were a diplomatic success for the American government, especially since it has claimed loudly that settling the Namibia question is one of the priorities of its African policy.

On August 29, 1981, Chester Crocker, undersecretary of state for African affairs, said: "It is clear that the Namibia question is the flash point in this part of the world and is seriously worrying the diplomats. It is equally clear that the war could continue and spread, unless a solution to the principal problems can be found that will satisfy all the parties, including South Africa....We realized immediately that the Namibia negotiations were central in the closer and closer relations we are developing with Black Africa and southern Africa, and that they stood high on the agenda in our talks with our allies.(3)

The imperialists' policy in the region is obviously aimed at preserving their interests and their domination. But South Africa has clearly understood the Reagan administration's special interest in Namibia. "The Reagan administration has just completed the first half of its term. Over the last two years, in view of the other priorities on the international scene, it has invested a surprising amount of energy and political capital in SWA/Namibia.

"The reason for the U.S. interest in this relatively remote region is simple — the presence of 30,000 Cubans in Angola. Were it not for the latter, who complicate Washington's overall East-West strategy, you could be sure that the Namibian problem would not go above the intermediate rungs of the State Department. It is the Cubans who have drawn the White House's attention.

"Since the present administration is already looking toward the next elections, it is not surprising that strong operations are taking form on the major foreign-policy questions. This why Pretoria should play all of its strong cards in the most recent series of talks. If we

do not seize the opportunity to get out of a situation that is devouring our energies, we could find ourselves dealing with recalcitrant Democrats in 1984."(4)

Seeking to carry their policy to a successful conclusion, the U.S. has dragged the Group of the Five into a diplomatic offensive. The favorable attitude of these countries to South Africa has been pointed up by the South African white press since 1981: "The five negotiating countries have not only declared publicly that they have never considered SWAPO as the sole representative of the Namibian people. They have followed up their words with deeds by negotiating directly with all parties in the territory. These concerned parties see this move as an important concession, and South Africa is reserving the most favorable reception for the turn things could take."(5)

More recently, the chairman of SWAPO, Sam Nujoma, expressed astonishment at the position adopted by the U.S.'s partners in the Group of Five in claiming that the Cuban presence represented one of the main obstacles to a settlement. In an interview published in the January 25, 1983, issue of the Paris daily *Le Monde*, he described even the Mitterrand administration's policy as "a double game."

The European imperialist countries do not want to be left on the sidelines; they have a direct interest in Namibia. Even if there is not an identity of views among

2. In a statement the members of the Council of Ministers who resigned said that they had decided unanimously not to accept reappointment to this government body. Cf. *The Citizen*, January 1, 1983.
3. A speech given in Honolulu at a convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.
4. The Johannesburg *Sunday Times*, November 21, 1982.
5. *Die Burger*, Cape Town, October 30, 1981.





Demo against South Africa's rigged elections (DR)

the EEC Ten on SWAPO(6), there does seem to be unanimity about preparing the way for the integration of an independent Namibia into the framework of the Lome Convention. This agreement links the EEC to 63 countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Its third version is due to go into effect after January 1, 1985. Such integration is all the more important for the EEC since it would fit into the pattern established by the requests made in October 1982 by Angola and Mozambique to be admitted to the Convention as observers.

THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE CRACKDOWN IN ANGOLA

The background to the Angolan and Mozambican overtures to the West is the crisis of their economies. Angola is suffering severely from the Namibian conflict, combined with the guerrilla war being conducted by UNITA in the south and east of the country. In reporting President Dos Santos' proposals on November 11, 1982, the Angolan news agency, Angop, estimated that the country had invested 10 billion U.S. dollars in national defense since independence in 1975. Such expenditures are a heavy burden, when the country is on the brink of bankruptcy, with a downturn in all sectors except petroleum.

Official Angolan sources regularly report guerrilla operations by UNITA in the south and east, where it has traditionally been active, and in the central part of the country, for example, near Huambo, where the head quarters of the People's Defense Organization has been attacked.

UNITA seems to have succeeded in consolidating its regional base and in creating running sores in various areas within the country.

It is all of these problems together and the desire to accept bilateral discussions with South Africa that are at the root of the crackdown and purges in the MPLA-Workers Party. They are not the result of a settling of accounts between pro- and anti-Soviet factions. If such a rivalry exists, it does not form the line of demarcation between those who are ready to negotiate with South Africa and those who reject this.

At the beginning of 1982, a campaign was launched against corruption, which involved appeals to the ranks. Then, the prestigious military leader, Iko Carrera, emerged from his disgrace. On his return from Moscow, he was put at the head of a commission to reorganize the army. It is this same Iko Carrera who was the initiator of the national emergency plan adopted by the Central Committee on December 8. This plan accorded special powers to Eduardo Dos Santos and provided for the ouster of Ambrosio Lukoki, a member of the Political Bureau and chief of information.

The purge affected certain ministers, in particular hitting the entourage of Lucio Lara, a member of the Political Bureau and considered to be the No.2 man in the regime. His wife was removed from her responsibilities for training cadres. His adopted son was arrested. This crackdown was essential in order for the government to be able to carry through its contacts with Pretoria, since the Luanda regime is not in a strong position. It had, therefore, to reinforce its authority over the party.

While Mozambique is not directly affected by the Namibian conflict, it is suffering from a similar policy being carried out against it by Pretoria through a different set of rebels. In this case, it is the Mozambique National Resistance, which has claimed responsibility for the sabotage of the petroleum storage tanks in December 1982 in the port of Beira, the country's second largest city. In Lesotho, moreover, Pretoria is supporting the Lesotho Liberation Army, which is linked to the Basuto People's Congress in exile. Growing activity by the Mozambique National Resistance has forced the Mozambican army to carry out operations to keep the capital of Maputo from being cut off from the agricultural regions in the south.

A CAMP DAVID FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

It is becoming more and more clear that U.S. diplomacy is seeking not just a settlement of the question of Namibian independence but a settlement for the entire region based on a special alliance with South Africa, an ally that has undeniable military strength but which has the disadvantage of a poor political image created by its policy of apartheid.

South Africa has, moreover, made a notable effort to demonstrate its military power in operations that it backs or carries out on its own. It made its latest demonstration of strength on the very heels of the Cape Verde discussions. In a murderous raid between 1:00 and 2:00 a.m. on Maseru, the capital of Lesotho, South African forces killed thirty African National Congress activists and seven local people, five women and two children. This Israeli-style raid is not the only resemblance between these two countries, which alternate military fire-breathing with diplomatic siren songs.

The Maseru raid did not, in fact, prove an obstacle to South Africa continuing its contacts with Luanda. Pretoria could even permit itself the luxury of suggesting that SWAPO might well pay the price for a ceasefire with Angola. Answering questions from the foreign press on January 27, Pik Botha said: "Luanda offers them (the SWAPO fighters) shelter and support, knowing that they are going to do their dirty work in the neighboring territory. (Therefore) it is not essential to take SWAPO's viewpoint into account in an agreement between Angola and us."

The subsequent course of the negotiations and the evolution of the situation on the ground will indicate how likely it is that the imperialists will be able to carry out their plans.

6. The Political Commission of the European Assembly adopted a resolution on September 23, 1982, calling for the "dissolution under international control of the SWAPO military groups based in Angola." It also demanded "proper consideration for the ethnic realities in Namibia and rejection of SWAPO's claims to be the sole representative of the Namibian people."

US Socialist Workers Party goes to trial

Will REISSNER

By setting a March 1 trial for a lawsuit against the Socialist Workers Party in federal court in Los Angeles, Judge Mariana Pfaelzer has dealt a blow to the constitutional rights of every progressive organization in the United States.

At issue are fundamental questions. Can the U.S. government force the Socialist Workers Party, or any other political group, to accept an avowed enemy into membership?

Can the courts decide which members may or may not be elected to leadership posts?

Does the government have the power to decide if a political group's activities conform to its stated program and historic goals?

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is a key provision of the Bill of Rights. Under this amendment, the SWP and all other political organizations are supposed to be free from governmental interference in their internal life.

After the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1789, it took two years struggles by small farmers and urban working people to force the adoption of the Bill of Rights in 1791.

Ever since, workers and small farmers had to wage constant battles to force the government to recognize these rights, while the ruling rich have persistently tried to restrict political freedoms.

Today, in Judge Pfaelzer's court, another round of this battle is being fought. By allowing this suit against the SWP to go to trial, Pfaelzer is trampling on the First Amendment.

The legal action was brought against the SWP by Alan Gelfand, an attorney employed by the Los Angeles county government, who is an outspoken opponent of the SWP's policies. He was expelled from the organization in 1979.

Gelfand is asking that the court order his membership restored. He further wants his expulsion judged a violation of the party's rules. And he wants the court to remove those responsible for his expulsion (including some of the SWP's national leaders) from the positions they were elected to by the party's membership.

Judge Pfaelzer has repeatedly refused to throw the case out of court, even though it violates the most basic political rights of the SWP.



On February 12, SWP attorneys filed a motion in federal court demanding that Pfaelzer disqualify herself from the case due to her "bias and prejudice" against the Socialist Workers Party. This charge stems from the recent discovery that from 1974 to 1978, while Pfaelzer was a member of the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners, she was directly involved in authorizing police spying and disruption operations against the Socialist Workers Party and its members, as well as against dozens of other political and religious groups.

JUDGE WAS TOP COP

The motion that the judge disqualify herself points out that by authorizing these police attacks against the SWP's right to freedom of association, she "has already decided a central factual issue in this case: whether the SWP is protected by the First Amendment from governmental interference and inquiry."

In addition, during the trial two

Los Angeles police agents — who infiltrated the Socialist Workers Party during Pfaelzer's years of overseeing police spying — are scheduled to be star witnesses against the SWP. The party's attorneys have charged that Pfaelzer cannot be unbiased about the undercover operations she personally okayed as police commissioner.

Despite the facts, however, the SWP's motion on disqualification was turned down, and Pfaelzer will preside over the trial.

The history of this case began four years ago, while the SWP was involved in a major offensive to expose and combat government spying and disruption against political organizations. Part of that offensive involved a lawsuit, *Socialist Workers Party v. Attorney General*.

In the course of that case, which is now awaiting a decision by Federal Judge Thomas Griesa, the SWP was able to expose the decades-long campaign by the FBI, the CIA, and other government agencies to harass and disrupt the SWP and other political groups opposing governmental policies.

In late 1978 the government had been forced onto the defensive by the SWP's campaign against the political police. The U.S. attorney general had been cited for contempt of court for refusing to release FBI informer files. That contempt ruling was being appealed by the government.

At that point, Alan Gelfand intervened in the legal proceedings in his capacity as a lawyer and without the SWP's knowledge, filing his own personal brief on the case.

Gelfand claimed in his brief that he could not be adequately represented in the case by the SWP's attorneys, because his interests were different from, and indeed adverse to, those of the SWP. He suggested in his brief that certain long-time SWP leaders had been agents of the Soviet secret police and/or the FBI.

When the elected leadership of the SWP learned of Gelfand's action, they initiated proceedings against him. In January 1979 he was expelled from the SWP for "undisciplined and disloyal behavior in violation of the organizational principles of the Socialist Workers Party."

In July Gelfand filed his current suit in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles against the SWP and individual party members. He charges that the SWP deserves no protection under the First Amendment's guarantees against hostile governmental interference because the party is actually controlled by the government!

Gelfand claims that the SWP was taken over by government agents decades ago, and that these agents expelled him because he sought to expose them. By his twisted logic, it was Gelfand's First Amendment rights that were violated by the government, whose agents expelled him from his organization.

'NOT A SHRED OF EVIDENCE'

Judge Pfaelzer has repeatedly refused to throw Gelfand's case out of court, despite her own admission in court that in the nearly four years since Gelfand filed his suit, he has been unable to provide any evidence for his claim of a government takeover of the SWP.

At one point in the case, Pfaelzer categorically acknowledged: "There isn't one shred of evidence whatsoever that the persons who engineered, as you say, all of this were government agents. There isn't any evidence."

Nonetheless, Pfaelzer has allowed the legal attack on the SWP to continue for nearly four years. To defend itself, the party has had to divert huge amounts of money and time from the political objectives the SWP is organized to advance.

Already, members of the SWP's leadership have been forced by court orders to submit to 160 hours of questioning by Gelfand and his high-priced lawyers. Thousands of additional hours have been spent in preparation for this questioning

and in handling other legal work involved in this case.

Pfaelzer have given Gelfand a blank check to question SWP leaders at great length about any subject he chooses, no matter how irrelevant to this case.

People have been asked questions such as: "What are the laws of the development of matter as expressed by the pre-eminent philosophers of dialectical materialism?..."

"Can you give examples of how each of these three laws manifest themselves?..."

"How does it apply to that glass of water?..."

"Is thought matter?..."

"Is thought space?..."

In addition, SWP leaders have been questioned at length about their personal lives and family backgrounds, including their social life while still in high school, activities in the Boy Scouts, and the political and religious beliefs of their parents.

Questioning has even extended to the sex lives and other personal relationships of the SWP members.

To date the SWP has already been forced to spend more than 30,000 dollars on travel expenses and transcript costs alone, not to mention the legal fees involved.

And the case has not even gone to trial yet!

Using the powers of the court, Pfaelzer has accomplished the same kind of harassment and disruption of the SWP's activities that the FBI, CIA, and other police agencies have been carrying out for decades under cover.

HEALYITE CULT FUNDS CASE

Yet the only significant fact established in all the hundreds of hours of pretrial questioning is Gelfand's own admission that the funds to pay for his enormously expensive battle against the SWP are being raised by the national secretary of the Workers League (WL), a minuscule organization that carries out virtually no activity in the U.S. workers movement. It is linked to the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) of Britain.

Gelfand has admitted that both before and after his expulsion from the SWP, he acted in consultation with these two organizations. He also made at least two trips to London to meet with WRP officials about his suit. And since at least 1980, two representatives of the WL-WRP have been working as "investigators" for the law firm handling Gelfand's litigation.

The Workers League and the Workers Revolutionary Party broke from the Trotskyist movement in the early 1960s. They refused to support the Cuban revolution, denounced the rise of Black nationalism, and abandoned Marxism for a cult existence around their guru, Gerry Healy.

At a January 31 hearing, Pfaelzer made clear that at the March 1 trial she will give Gelfand a green light to continue

the abuse of justice she has already allowed in the pretrial period.

Gelfand charges that government control of the SWP began many decades ago when, he claims, such veteran socialist leaders as Joseph Hansen — editor of this publication until his death in 1979 — and George Novack — currently a contributing editor — supposedly engineered the takeover.

ANYTHING GOES

Pfaelzer ruled against an SWP motion that Gelfand be obliged to establish the relevance of any evidence before his submits it to the court. "They can put in what they want," Pfaelzer ruled.

She noted that Gelfand's attorneys admit they have no direct evidence of any 40-year-old government takeover of the SWP. But she ruled they can present any circumstantial evidence they want to, no matter how far back it goes or how irrelevant it is.

The judge also assured Gelfand's lawyers that even if their claim of a longstanding government takeover of the SWP falls apart, she will decide whether the SWP followed proper procedures in expelling Gelfand.

Pfaelzer has decided that the U.S. courts, not the SWP membership, have the final say over the party's organizational rules and practices. Moreover, this decision opens the door to permanent court supervision of the SWP's internal functioning.

The SWP's attorneys point out that "an injunction requiring readmission of an admittedly hostile individual into the ranks of the SWP would have to be followed up with regular supervision of his treatment by the party."

In that case, "the district court, and not the membership of the party, will then be the final arbiter of who can belong to the SWP, and what internal procedures may be used to expel a disloyal member from the party's ranks."

But even if the district court rules in the SWP's favor, tremendous damage has already been done to the SWP's First Amendment rights. The court has conducted a far-reaching inquisition into the SWP's ideology and methods of operation.

It has accepted the principle that the courts can intervene in the party's internal life.

It has forced the party to spend tremendous amounts of money and time to defend itself from this attack.

As SWP National Chairperson Mary-Alice Waters points out in the February 18 *Militant*, "The scope of the issues posed in this lawsuit against the Socialist Workers Party is clear. The court's actions constitute a threat not only to the political liberties of every single opponent of government policies in the United States but to every defender of the Bill of Rights as well." ■

(From *Intercontinental Press*, New York, February 28, 1983.)

The 100 years of Marxism since Marx



Ernest MANDEL

There is a strange paradox about the place of Marxism in the world today, a hundred years after Marx's death. Its influence in society seems greater than ever. Never have so many round-table discussions, academic conferences, books, and magazine and newspaper articles been devoted to Marx as on the occasion of this centenary.

Never have so many heads of state and governments, so many leaders of mass parties throughout the world claimed to be guided by Marx's ideas. But at the same time, never has there been so much talk about a "crisis of Marxism," about its "irreversible decline," or even "death."

In fact, Marxism represents a union of two movements, a theoretical one and practical one. It is necessary to look at these two movements to determine that what the balance sheet of Marxism is today.

On the one hand, Marxism has a rigorously scientific side, which respects all the laws of scientific work. Throughout his life, Marx remained a scientist; he had nothing but contempt for anyone who concealed or falsified facts or the results of investigations under any pretext whatsoever, including "we mustn't discourage the militant workers."

Marx continued his scientific work, in particular, because he was convinced that only truth is revolutionary. It was his conviction workers struggles could never come to fruition, that is, could never lead to the building of a classless society on a world scale, unless they were continually enlightened by the results of a scientific analysis of reality and its development.

On the other hand, Marxism also involves a devotion to liberation that is no less rigorous and demanding. Before Marx, philosophers, and social scientists, were generally content to interpret the world. For Marx, the aim of science was to transform the world and to do so with a clear purpose. It was necessary, through revolutionary action, to eliminate all social conditions in which human

beings were enslaved, miserable, mutilated, alienated beings. It was necessary to build a society in which the free development of every individual would be essential to the development of all. To this aim Marx remained faithful to his last breath.

These two objectives of Marxism, the scientific explanation of social development in all its ramifications and the achievement of the most thoroughgoing liberation ever conceived of, were so bold that the major accusation made against Marx, which is still the main one today, is that he was the last of the utopians. The claim is that such a vast scheme could never be realized.

To this accusation, those who believe in heaven add that Marx was guilty of the sin of pride, that he founded a "religion of humanity," a claim that is in total contradiction to fundamentally critical, and constantly self-critical character of Marx's teachings. But these people argue that Marx created a religion without God, and that, therefore, in seeking to do an excess of good works, he ended up finally doing inordinate evil.

Toiling humanity, which is suffering and struggling to break its chains can hardly share such skeptical, resigned, and cynical judgements. It will not reconcile itself to its chains on the basis of an argument that it cannot be known whether they can ever be completely broken. The proposal that it would be better to put a little oil under the manacles than file through them and throw them into a ditch will never satisfy those enchained men and women who prefer to rise up against slavery. As long as humanity endures, this breed of revolutionists will never disappear.

A hundred years after Marx's death, what is the balance sheet of the two sides of Marxism?

As regards its effectiveness in analysis and in scientifically predicting events, the balance sheet is entirely positive. If we compare the world of 1843 with that of 1983, and if we ask ourselves whether the transformations that have occurred are those that Marx predicted,

if they are the result of the nature of bourgeois society and the contradictions rending it, as he taught us to understand them, the answer has to be "yes," without any significant qualifications.

Marx understood, better than any scientist or moralist of his time the mighty and terrible impetus of the technological revolutions that are inherent in the capitalist mode of production. They arise from private ownership, the market economy, competition, and the insatiable drive to extort more and more surplus value from living labor in order to accumulate more and more capital (dead labor).

This was a portentous dynamic because it contained a promise of liberating labor, through automation, from all uncreative, tiring, and alienating work. It was a terrifying one because it was leading to the periodic transformation of the productive forces into forces of destruction that were undermining man and nature and threatening to destroy entire planet.

Marx understood that competition would lead to the development of monopolies, which in turn would become locked in fiercer and fiercer competition. The small capitalists would be ruthlessly absorbed or crushed by the big ones. Bourgeois society would evolve toward becoming a pyramid, with a great majority of wage earners at its base and at the top in every country a few dozen giant firms and financial groups. And rising above that on the international scale there would be a few hundred "multinationals that would lay down the law for all the bourgeois states, and embroil all workers and all peoples in a monstrous machinery in which everything was subordinated to their individual profit drives.

Marx understood that this machine was going to break down periodically, that the capitalist system would give rise at regular intervals to economic crises and wars, whose cost would eventually become unbearable and then fatal. How foolish today those prophets look who claimed during the 1950s and 1960s that capitalism had at last exorcized its

devils, that is, was going to guarantee full employment, continued growth and a constantly rising standard of living, as well as enduring peace.

The prolonged depression gripping the international capital economy today is a striking confirmation of the correctness of Marx's scientific analysis. He understood that, whatever partial and temporary advantages humanity might derive from this system, the wage and semi-wage workers were going to rise up in cohesive masses against this monstrous machine. That is, it was from the class struggle of wage labor against capital that the potential would arise for transforming the world to achieve the liberation of every man and woman.

This struggle would first take the form of a spontaneous revolt, without any clear consciousness of the aims to be achieved or the means by which to achieve them. It would go through a gigantic labor of organization, of cooperation and learning class solidarity on all levels. It would lead finally to conscious revolutions, guided by the experience accumulated. This process would be propelled by objective needs and by an understanding of political needs. It would be furthered by the Marxist program itself.

In view of the great tasks of these revolutions, it was inevitable that there would be partial and even total defeats. The working class would examine its victories and its defeats in a ruthlessly critical way. It would continually have to retake ground that seemed to be definitely won in previous periods, until this vast historic movement of the rise, decline, and renewed rise of class consciousness and proletarian revolution led to the building of socialist society on a world scale.

Of all of Marx's analyses and projections, it is unquestionably this vision of the historic advance of the working class that is the most impressive. At the time the Communist Manifesto was published, there were no more than 100,000 trade-union members in the entire world, about 10,000 socialists, and at most a few hundred communists. And all of them were in half a dozen countries. Today, there is no country in the world, not even the smallest island in the Pacific or the most remote corner of equatorial jungle where capitalism, impelled by its irresistible drive to expand, has been able to establish a factory, a harbor, or a store employing men or women for wages that unions have not sprung up.

Throughout the world, there are now hundreds of millions of workers in unions; and this rise of the union movement has been accompanied by the formation of parties proclaiming themselves socialist that have tens of millions of sympathizers, or tens of millions of people who vote for them. Out of this, there are hundreds of thousands, if not millions of communists who proclaim themselves Marxists. As regards the self-critical tendency of proletarian revolutions, you just have to open your ears to

hear expressions of it in tens of thousands of factories, workshops, offices, commuter trains, and subways throughout the world.

But what is the balance sheet of Marxism as a movement for liberation? It is no less impressive. But it is also distinctly more contradictory.

Thanks to the stimulus given by Marx and Engels and their followers, the workers fighting and organizing against the bourgeoisie have gained a clear-sightedness that has enabled them already to partially transform the world by making some advances toward liberation.

The following are some of the main gains that have been made: The fight for the reduction of the workdays has gone on from cutting down a workweek of 72 hours and more to a battle for the 35-hour week, which we can and will win. There has been a no less intense struggle to extend solidarity to our most exploited and oppressed brothers and sisters — women, youth, the unemployed, the immigrant workers, the national minorities, the sick, the disabled, and the elderly.

There are also the efforts that have been made to extend this class solidarity on a world scale. This is a difficult but not an unrealistic task, as shown by the movements in solidarity with the Cuban, Indochinese, and Central American revolutions, coming after the earlier movements in the interwar period.

Finally, there are the first victorious socialist revolutions, inspired in particu-

lar by the thought of Lenin — from the October Revolution in Russia to the Yugoslav, Chinese, Cuban, and Indo-Chinese revolutions. All of this is a reality in today's world, even if these gains will not be definitively established as long as international capitalism lasts. We can already say that if it had not been for Marx and Engels, today's world would be a very different and far more inhuman place than it is.

However, their vision of the emancipation of humanity has not been realized anywhere in its entirety. The two mass currents into which the real workers movement is divided, reformist Social Democracy and Stalinism (with the Euro-communist subcurrent gradually shifting from the latter to the former) have both come to a resounding failure.

Social Democracy has not moved forward one inch toward abolishing capitalism through reforms. The present capitalist crisis, with its train of unemployment and poverty, the hunger that exists in the so-called third world, the threat of nuclear extermination that hangs over the human race, are sufficient testimony to this failure.

While the Stalinist bureaucracy was able to usurp the fruits of the most gigantic revolutionary effort ever undertaken by a working class, it has ended up in a total impasse. The society that has emerged from victorious revolutions has not led to socialism but has remained frozen midway between capitalism and socialism. In addition, in all cases, save

Marx and Engels with Marx's daughters (DR)



in Cuba, a despotic bureaucracy rules, blocking any further advance toward socialism. This bureaucracy subjects the workers to obvious oppression, and in every country where it exists, and throughout the world it more effectively discredits socialism, communism, and Marxism than any bourgeois propaganda has ever been able to do.

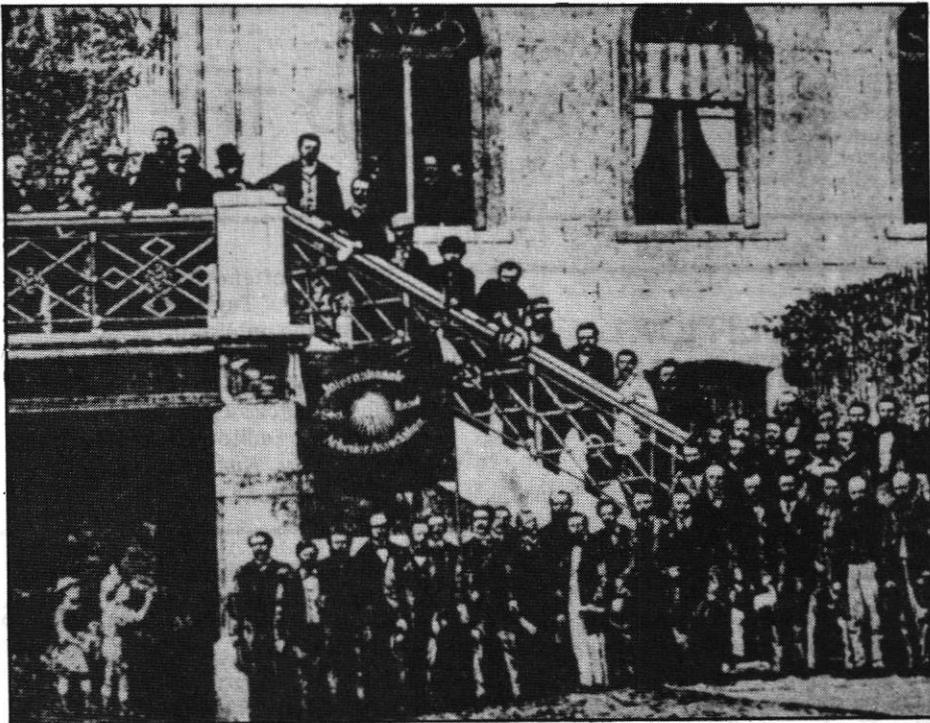
It is in this failure and nowhere else that we can find the source of the so-called crisis of Marxism about which there is such a storm of hot air is being raised these days. It is not a crisis of Marxism but a crisis of the practice of a bureaucratized workers movement, as well as crisis of the bureaucratized post-capitalist societies. These crises are, moreover, going hand in hand with a more and more open abandonment of Marxism by the leaders of these movements, which in its way confirms that Marx has nothing to do with it.

Applying the Marxist method and criteria to analyze these crises leads to four conclusions.

1. In the first place, it would be entirely wrong to look for the origins of these crises in the ideas of Marx. Marx's greatest contribution to the understanding of the history of societies is that in the last analysis it is social existence that determines consciousness and not the reverse. To imagine that the Social Democrats' capitulation to the first imperialist world war and their subsequent aid to the capitalist counterrevolution, followed by the crimes of Stalin and the capitulation of the reformists and the Stalinists in their turn to Hitler, were the consequence of imperfections in the writings of Marx, an extra comma or an absent adjective, borders on the ridiculous. The great tragedies of the Twentieth Century are the work of capitalism not of Marx. They can only be explained as the outcome of clashes between hundreds of millions of human beings, of conflicts in the material interests of great social classes or sections of classes. In this context, ideas — both "good" and "bad" — play a role, to be sure, but hardly the main one.

2. Furthermore, it is just as wrong to look for the ultimate source of Stalin and the deviation of the victorious socialist revolutions in the Slavic soul, the Mongol conquest of Russia, or the little power-hungry sadist who lies sleeping in all of us, awaiting only the proper conditions to come to a violent awakening.

The secret of the victory, as well as of the degeneration, of the Russian revolution lies in the last analysis in the contradiction between the ripeness of the objective conditions for the world revolution — the world crisis of capitalism that began in 1919 — and unripeness of the objective conditions for building socialism in Russia and China, as well as the unripeness of the subjective conditions for achieving revolutionary victory on a world scale. For a long period this produced deviations in the course of the world revolution, and the negative consequences are far from being overcome.



Meeting of the First International (DR)

3. Thus, the vitality of Marxism was demonstrated in the most striking way by fact that it was able to offer the most precise analytical methods for explaining what happened to Social Democracy and Stalinism.

Specifically, it is the Marxist criticism of the bureaucracy in the workers movement, of bureaucratic dictatorship, and bureaucratized transitional societies that in the most scientific, the most thorough, and the one that most points the way toward real historical solutions.

To the great surprise and the no less great horror of all reactionary forces in the world, from the Kremlin to Washington, and including the Vatican and the right-wing "dissidents," a growing part of this Marxist critique is coming from the East European countries and China themselves. This is just the beginning of a reawakening that is full of promise.

4. The final thing we see is that for thirty years a real mass movement has been underway to overcome in practice the crisis of Stalinist "Marxism," (which has nothing in common with real Marxism) and "living socialism" (which has nothing in common with socialism).

This is what we call the anti-bureaucratic political revolution. It reached its highest point so far in the 1980-81 revolutionary upsurge in Poland. It is to the historic credit of Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International that they predicted this revolution and they were the only ones who prepared for it.

The victory of the political revolution will in no way mean a restoration of capitalism. After the inevitable groping, this movement will lead to the triumph of planned, democratically centralized self-management in the economy. That is, to use Marx's own words, it will lead to the rule of the associated producers.

With respect to the state, this revolution will lead to a system of workers self-administration based on the most extensive pluralist socialist democracy, that is, the rule of workers councils, under which the state will immediately begin to wither away. It will be the councils that govern. The revolutionary party essential to the establishment of this system will confine itself to offering political guidance and never try to substitute for them.

Moreover, periodically the workers in the industrialized capitalist countries have also advanced along the same road to emancipation, with evitable ups and downs in the process. This has happened in Russia in 1917, in Germany in 1918, in Hungary in 1919, in Italy in 1920, in Spain in 1936, in Italy again in 1948 and 1969, in May 1968 in France, and in Portugal in 1974-75.

The liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples is little by little taking the same direction, under the influence of partial industrialization and the emergence of the proletariat as the major class within them.

These are then the three sectors of the world revolution in which history is painfully working its way toward the only positive solution to the crisis of humanity — the rule of workers councils, a world socialist federation in which all the men and women on our planet will finally be able to take control of their lives, will eliminate war forever, end the production of weapons of mass destruction, and put an end to the exploitation of labor and to political oppression.

This is what the Fourth International is striving for. It is for this Karl Marx did his titanic work. From the moment that historic movement achieves its first victory in an industrially advanced country, all the chatter about a "crisis of Marxism" will be forever ended. ■



AROUND THE WORLD



POLITICAL PRISONERS IN TURKEY

The Komal Yayinevi publishing house in Turkey became known for publishing works on Kurdish culture, the history of Kurdistan, and social questions.

On January 18, the No 1 Military Court in Istanbul issued its verdict on the case of Recep Marasli, managing editor of this publishing house.

In 1978 Komal published the study 'The Kurds and the law' in the book *Kurdistan 1914-1946*. For this he was sentenced to twelve years in total. Also in 1978 he published 'An Open Letter to His Excellency Pasha Mustafa Kemal, President of the Turkish Republic and Victor in the Holy War'. For this he was sentenced last July to another four years in prison.

Marasli was charged under various sections of the Turkish penal code for offences including propaganda designed to reduce partially or completely destroy civic rights or national feelings or undermine them by racist considerations. That is--by raising the question of a separate national identity of the Kurdish people. Further he was charged with insulting and belittling the Turkish nation, the parliament, and the armed forces; inciting the public to commit crimes; and blackening the name of Mustafa Kemal.

Marasli stated in his defence, 'this case is an argument that there is no freedom of thought...By wanting to impose harsh penalties for mentioning the existence of the Kurdish people in Turkey and for defending the right of this people to a life worthy of human beings and to self-determination, the military prosecutor and the expert in this case show themselves to be the instruments of a racist, colonialist policy.'

Marasli explained that he had wanted to publish these books 'with the aim of countering the distortion of information, the obscuring of scientific facts, and the silencing of political debates, all of which are tyrannical abuses; and with the aim of enlightening public opinion and stimulating discussion.'

He also raised a protest against the prison conditions in which he had been held, the tortures which he had witnessed.

His testimony ended with a damning indictment of the denial of human rights in Turkey.

Demir Kucukaydin has been in prison

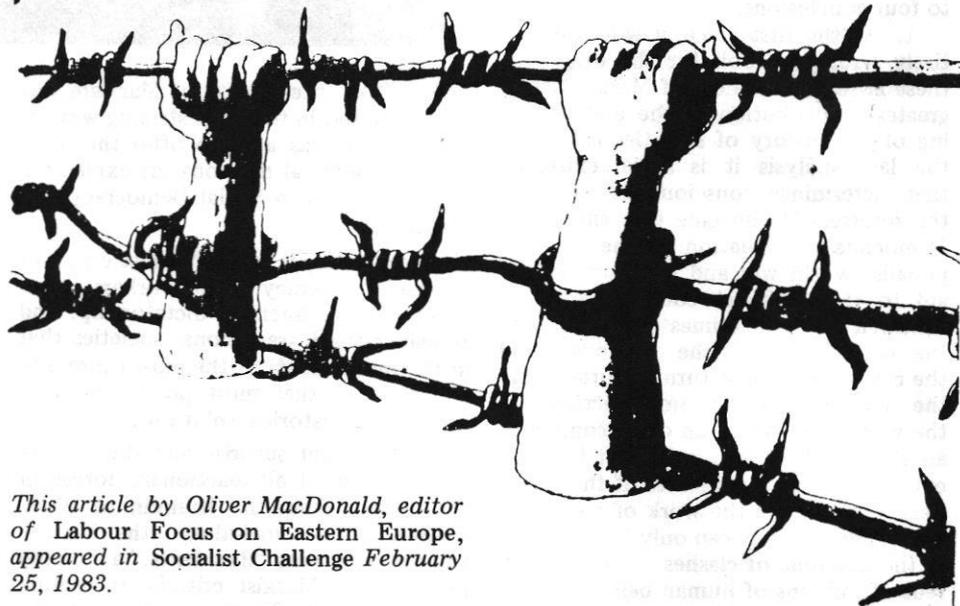
since 1974 for offences under the same articles of the Turkish penal code, which forbid the publishing of any propaganda deemed to be seeking to bring about the 'domination of a social class over other social classes'.

He was the editor of a short-lived political weekly *Kivilcim* (The Spark) first published in 1974 with the aim of

establishing a 'proletarian party' in Turkey.

Kucukaydin was sentenced to 40 years imprisonment, reduced on appeal to 17 years and nine months. Further sentences have been imposed for trying to escape, insulting a judge, and sending a telegram to the military authorities protesting against executions. ■

BALUKA MUST BE FREED



This article by Oliver MacDonald, editor of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, appeared in Socialist Challenge February 25, 1983.

Over the last week news has arrived from Poland that Edmund Baluka is gravely ill in prison after four weeks on hunger strike. His case demands urgent action from the entire left.

Baluka has played a historic role in the life of the Polish working class. He led the workers' strikes in Szczecin in 1970-71 that brought down the Gomulka regime and laid the foundations for the tradition of independent working class action that re-emerged in August 1980 in the strike movement that gave birth to Solidarity.

Forced into exile in the early 1970s, Baluka lived for a number of years in Britain, working in a Manchester factory. In the late 1970s he moved to Paris and, with the help of Marxists there, he produced a bulletin championing workers' rights and socialist ideas.

In the Spring of 1981 he returned illegally to Poland — the demand of the Szczecin strike committee in August 1980 that he be allowed to return had not been acted upon by the authorities.

He regained his job in the Warski shipyard, his old work-place, and was very active in the working class movement there until the military coup of 13 December. He was then interned for many months.

While all the other internees in Wierzchowo camp were eventually released, Baluka was not. Instead he was arrested in the camp and held in the notorious Szczecin Kaszubska prison in complete isolation. He remains there to this day.

Baluka is one of the very few original internees to be held in jail under arrest. The other two groups are the seven top leaders of Solidarity and the five prominent KOR activists who played an influential role in Solidarity.

Baluka himself was not a leader of Solidarity, but the police have a special reason for singling him out. He formed a socialist party in Szczecin and proclaimed the need for the workers to organise their struggles around a socialist programme. The great majority of the workers did not see the value of creating a separate party outside Solidarity

and Solidarity itself did not formally adhere to a socialist programme.

But the regime saw the long-term threat that Baluka posed and also noted the enormous personal authority he still commanded amongst the Szczecin workers. This universal respect was enhanced by his courageous and intransigent leadership amongst the internees. Baluka also is the only one of the top leaders of the 1970-71 movement to remain prominent in the working class movement. For all these reasons, the police want to break him and smear him with lies and slanders in the media through a show-trial.

The projected trial of the 7 Solidarity leaders and 5 KOR activists must be a key focus of protests by the labour movement in Britain. But the fate of Baluka must be given equal prominence on the left, all the more so because he will gain little publicity in the mass media here in comparison with the other two cases.

Edmund Baluka was a founding sponsor of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* and educated those of us who knew him on the real conditions of the working class in Poland. He helped, in the late 1970s, to bring together the different strands of socialist opinion here in a common effort to defend workers' rights in Eastern Europe. That unity is needed now in his defence.

Protest letters and telegrams calling for his release should be sent to: *The Governor, Areszt Sledczy, Ul. Kaszubska, Szczecin, Poland.* ■

RELEASE NICKY KELLY

Nicky Kelly is in Portlaoise prison in the South of Ireland serving a twelve-year sentence for his alleged involvement in the Sallins Mail Train Robbery in 1976.

Kelly has always claimed that he is innocent. He was convicted on the basis of a confession, and no other evidence. When he was brought to court medical evidence was given of extensive bruising and swelling on his body. One of the two doctors that gave this evidence was the medical officer at Mountjoy gaol. Kelly stated that he had signed his statement to stop the beatings he received while in custody. The police claimed that his statement was voluntary, and he had been 'friendly and co-operative' during questioning.

Kelly's two co-defendants were acquitted on appeal when the Appeal Court threw out their statements as inadmissible evidence.

When Kelly made his final appeal in October 1982 two eminent psychiatrists, Dr. Rona Fields of Belle Vue Hospital New York, and Dr. Robert Daly of Cork, gave evidence that he was suffering from anxiety neurosis. Kelly had gone to the United States while on bail awaiting sentencing after his first trial. He returned to Ireland voluntarily in June 1980 after the acquittal of his

fellow accused, in order to clear his name. He was immediately arrested and sent to Portlaoise gaol. There he spent two years waiting, in the midst of legal wrangles, until his appeal was heard. It was disallowed on a legal technicality, despite the fact that the Provisional IRA in 1979 publicly stated that they had carried out the robbery, and Nicky Kelly and his co-defendants were innocent.

Nicky Kelly is now very ill, continuing to suffer the after effects of the brutal treatment he received before his trial.

At the time of his trial the main Irish newspaper, the *Irish Times*, published evidence that there was a 'heavy gang' of detectives within the Gardai. This and other allegations pressured the government into setting up a judicial inquiry. However, its implications have never been fully implemented.

Nicky Kelly's case has been taken up by a number of human rights and political organisations. Amnesty International have expressed great concern at his treatment while in custody, to the present and previous Irish governments. The Irish Council for Civil Liberties and the Prisoners Rights Organisation have called on the Minister for Justice to release him. The Minister has the power to do this and this is now Kelly's only recourse as he has exhausted the legal appeals procedure. Members of the Irish parliament and other prominent individuals have taken an active interest in the case.

This case is of great concern to the Irish anti-imperialist and leftwing organisations. Nicky Kelly is a member of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, who were the target of considerable police harassment at the time of his arrest—his fellow accused were also members of the IRSP—the party headquarters were raided and some 40 members and supporters arrested. It is undoubtedly Kelly's politics that have made him the target for this continuing brutal treatment.

The Release Nicky Kelly Committee, a broad-based group, is working to build up pressure on the government from Ireland and abroad. They ask for messages of protest at his treatment, and demands for his release to be sent to: *Dr Michael Noonan, Minister of Justice, Government Buildings, Dublin 2, Ireland.* Please send copies to the committee at: *11 Grange Terrace, Blackrock, County Dublin, Ireland.* ■

DANISH FOURTH INTERNATIONALISTS SEEK BALLOT STATUS

The Danish section of the Fourth International — the Socialistisk Arbejderparti (SAP) — has collected about 20,000 signatures for ballot status in the next legislative elections.

It takes 18,000 certified signatures to be on the ballot, and therefore to be accorded the same rights as the recognized parties, including radio and TV time. On turning in the petitions to the Ministry of the Interior, the SAP issued a statement saying: "Since the last election the problems of the Danish working people have gotten worse. This is to no small extent because the biggest workers party, the Social Democracy, deliberately turned the government over to the parties of the bosses.

The SP allowed the bourgeois parties to form a government so they could press the austerity program rejected by the ranks of the Social Democratic Party and the workers movement. For the de-

tails see *IV*, No. 25, March 7, 1983. These bourgeois parties have moved quickly to use this power to attack large sections of the population.

"It is more necessary than ever to build a workers front against the bourgeois government. The big demonstrations and strikes in October, the dockers strike (mid-December to mid-February), and the fight against the proposed national two-year labor contract now indicate the ways to force this government out. Therefore, the SAP has made building this struggle its main priority.

"For this struggle to develop, political initiatives are needed for unity among the workers parties and to offer an alternative to Schlueter (the premier).

The SAP is going to use the coming elections to build support for the fighting workers and to press the other workers parties to unite around a program of struggle against the crisis." ■



Women fight for their rights on International women's Womens Day

Penny DUGGAN

International Womens Day 1983 came at a time when women throughout Europe are facing assaults on their democratic rights and standards of living. The austerity offensive of the ruling class, the ideological attacks on women's hard won rights to work; to choose when and whether to have children; the ever present threat of nuclear war — particularly this year when American nuclear missiles are scheduled to be stationed in Europe — have provoked women to respond, although the exact focus varies from country to country.

In Belgium women from the trade unions and the women's movement once again mobilised under the slogan 'Women against the Crisis', building on the success they have achieved over the last two years in uniting different layers of women in a common response to the attacks they face from the austerity offensive. For the first time in Luxembourg there was a united women's demonstration to mark the occasion, under the slogan 'Women against austerity'.

In Italy the women's movement feels itself strengthened by the tremendous response to the demonstration that took place in Rome at the end of January, in response to the defeat of a proposal to remove the anti-rape laws from the category of a crime against morality to a crime against the person. Some 50,000 women assembled at short notice to protest this.

For March 8 there were demonstrations in Milan, Rome, Venice, and Bologna. An important aspect was the involvement of young high school students in Rome and Milan who had their own demonstrations. Demonstrations in Rome assembled 50,000 women. The demonstration which involved the women's movement and trade unions throughout the country took up both the question of sexual violence and the effects of the economic crisis on women.

At Comiso, the proposed site of Cruise missiles women demonstrated for disarmament.

In Holland a number of local demonstrations took up the themes of the effects of the economic crisis on women.

In France the minister for women's rights is organising a week-long series of debates, exhibitions and theatre to celebrate the event — featuring among other things the launch of a new stamp, first in a series commemorating women. Many French women feel they have little to celebrate under the Mitterrand government, despite its recent fulfillment of its promise to introduce state reimbursement for abortion. The austerity policies of the government, as else where in Europe are hitting at women.

The CGT, CP-led union federation, called for four hours time off with pay for women; and the CFDT is organised its own internal gathering. Women's groups are in Paris and in other cities organised demonstrations.

For German women the results of the federal election on March 6 were of major significance. Not only is the new Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union planning to introduce legislation to stop state funding of abortion (see IV No.25) but it will be stepping up the ideological campaign to convince women to return to their traditional role within the family. The new Chancellor Kohl has been clear, 'The family is love, consideration of others, and willingness to sacrifice.' In other words women will be asked to take over caring for the sick, elderly, and more responsibility for childcare. And the 'tender power of the family' is based on mothers' according to Norbert Blum. Some 6,000 women demonstrated against the proposal on abortion in Karlsruhe on February 26. In the week of March 8 local actions will take up the themes of unemployment, peace, and abortion.

In Dublin several hundred women demonstrated against the proposal to amend the constitution to outlaw abortion.

In Spain the right to abortion is also the major focus of mobilisation, along with the right to employment. The right wing right-to-lifers had a demon-



stration of 150,000 on March 5. The women's movement responded around March 8 with debates, exhibitions and other activities as well as demonstrations. The campaign for women's abortion rights has received important support from delegates of the Workers Commissions in Barcelona who have adopted a resolution supporting women's right to decide whether to have abortions, and for these to be paid for by the state. This resolution has been supported by other organisations such as the Federation of Associations.

In Britain the dominant theme of the events planned around March 8 was the question of peace and opposition to nuclear weapons. The women from the Greenham Common camp — who have been protesting for over a year at the proposal to site American Cruise missiles at this base — were invited to meetings and demonstrations up and down the country to explain why they think it is important for women to join the movement against nuclear missiles.

On this theme an international women's demonstration took place in Brussels on March 8, demanding an end to the arms race.

The celebration of International Women's Day was decided by the International Conference of Working Women in 1910 to commemorate and celebrate the struggles of women workers. The date was fixed at March 8 in 1913 to commemorate an important strike of women textile workers in New York that had taken place in the 1880s. One hundred years later women workers all over the world are still using the opportunity of International Women's Day to highlight their demands for their rights that are still continually under attack. ■