

# INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

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## LEBANON WAR ANNOUNCES RISE OF EXPLOSIVE CRISES IN MIDDLE EAST

### Rebuilding Solidarnosc: A Dossier

8 FF, British Pound 0.65, Irish Pound 0.70, Skr 9, Dkr 12, Nkr 10, Ikr 17, US dollars 1.50, Canadian dollars 1.70, Australian dollars 1.35, DM 3.50, Dutch fl. 3.25, Austrian schillings 24, Drachmas 14.8, IS 25, Mexican Pesos 40, Cypriot Pound 0.65, Yen 400, Leban. Piastres 6, BF 65, SF 2.5, Portuguese Escudos 90, Rand 1.30, Pesetas 145, Italian Lire 1 700.

# Halt Israeli aggression!

*The following statement was issued June 13 by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.*

The Zionist state has unleashed a new war of aggression against Lebanon aimed at crushing the Palestinian resistance. Begin and Sharon have not hesitated to resort to the most powerful means of destruction and the most criminal methods. They have savagely attacked and bombed Palestinians and Lebanese without making any distinction between civilian and military targets.

This war has already claimed thousands upon thousands of victims, and the cost mounts every day. Hundreds of thousands of people have had to abandon their homes and jobs to swell the already enormous mass of refugees. Material destruction has been vast in both the cities and countryside. Palestinian targets have been hit with unprecedented violence by an army that, according to Begin and Sharon's plan, is supposed to impose a "final solution."

The Israeli attack was long premeditated. They were only waiting for a favorable occasion to unleash it. In 1978, Israel launched a similar operation, which by hindsight seems to have been a dress rehearsal for the present one. At that time, the Palestinian resistance was able to maintain the bulk of its positions, and they were not breached either by the smaller-scale operations that ensued.

Thus the problem that the Palestinian resistance poses for the Zionists continued to exist on the military level also. Despite the advantages the Zionists gained as a result of the Camp David agreements, this question was not solved politically. That was what the Zionist establishment could not accept.

Another cause of concern for the Zionist leaders was the evolution of the situation in the occupied territories, most of all the upsurge on the West Bank, where the Zionists were confronted with growing mass opposition, and the determined struggle of the Golan Arabs who have remained on a protest strike for months.

The rise of the Arab masses was all the more worrying because it was having an impact on layers of the Israeli population itself, as shown by the March 27 demonstration in Tel Aviv. The effects of the economic situation were also also a serious pressure. For the first time, the standard of living of the Israeli masses fell. In such a context, there was a grow-

ing feeling of insecurity and pessimism about the future, an increasing awareness that the country was caught in a blind alley.

To meet these problems, Begin needed to pull off some spectacular stroke that could create a new situation, and lend some solidity to his propaganda about "a new 1948," that is the opening up of a new phase of growth for the Israeli state.

The main objective of the military offensive was to deal the PLO the hardest blow in its history and thereby deal a political setback to the mass resistance in the occupied territories.

At the same time, Begin sought to weaken Syria both militarily and politically and force it to withdraw from Lebanon. This would prepare the way for a restructuring of the Lebanese state, "freed" from Palestinian influence, which would be handed over to the most conservative and reactionary forces, those elements prepared to accept a "Pax Israeliana" under the tutelage of imperialism. It would mean a shift in the balance of forces between the Arab states as a whole and Israel in favor of the latter.

Begin thought that there were a number of favorable conditions for launching this operation now. They included the prolonged neutralization of Egypt resulting from the Camp David agreements; the breakdown of the Lebanese state; the weakening of the Lebanese left; the impossibility of any action by the Iraqis; and the internal problems of the Syrian regime, which made it unable to run the risk of a major military confrontation.

Begin knew very well that the American imperialists would make only formal objections, since they also have an interest in seeing the PLO crushed, Syria weakened, and Israel strengthened. He knew also that the West European bourgeoisies would not do anything concrete to stop him.

Begin wanted as well to show that the Israeli state is not comparable to the Shah's Iran, that it had a considerable military strength, great political cohesiveness and represented the only solid underpinning for a counterrevolutionary strategy in the region.

His calculations proved correct. The U.S. even opposed the adoption of a resolution condemning the attack in the United States. The West European states, including "socialist" France, did nothing more than issue condemnations as empty as they were hypocritical. The USSR

maneuvered behind the scenes, interested mainly in rescuing its ally in Damascus. It has not in any way come to the aid of the Palestinian resistance. The U.N. force in no respect fulfilled its assigned task of serving as a buffer.

The Arab Deterrence Force—in effect, the Syrian army—did everything possible to avoid fighting. The Arab states remained passive.

Within Israel itself, the Labor opposition gave blank-check approval to the aggression, and the antiwar demonstrations drew only a few hundreds of participants, who were brutally attacked by advocates of Jewish national unity.

The ceasefire agreement concluded separately between Israel and Syria was promoted by the U.S., which feared that Begin would go too far and touch off upsets in the region whose consequences could not be predicted. Iran's decision to send forces to aid the Palestinian resistance was the first alarm signal.

The PLO regarded the initial ceasefire as a betrayal, another indication that the Syrian regime was much more concerned with its own fate than the vital interests of the Palestinian people. Under the pressure of this maneuver, it in turn accepted a ceasefire, which seems extremely precarious. Begin has already violated it several times and undoubtedly will violate it any time he thinks that he has something to gain.

The successes scored in Israel's new blitzkrieg make it possible for the Zionist state to base itself on a position of strength in the negotiations now going on, and which will continue in an intense way, regardless of the vicissitudes of the military confrontation.

Begin will be able to count on substantial aid from the imperialists and on the more or less direct complicity of the reactionary forces in the region.

Nonetheless, the Zionist leaders' hope of opening a new phase in the history of their state and its domination in the region are in great danger of being dashed. The main objective of the war was not achieved. The PLO suffered very severe blows, lost positions, had to accept very painful losses, but the Israelis could not destroy it.

The PLO guerrillas fought and continue to fight heroically, and their centers of resistance have not been eliminated even in the cities subjected to the enemy's worst attacks.

The hesitation that Begin began to show as soon as his army reached the outskirts of Beirut in itself reveals the blind alley in which Israel remains caught.

In the Lebanese capital and its suburbs, there are about two hundred thousand Palestinians who are determined to defend themselves to the last. To crush the Palestinian resistance and its organization, the PLO, which is not a "gang of terrorists," but the expression of the national aspirations of a people fighting for independence and survival, the Zionists would have to unleash a massacre bordering on genocide. And after that they would have to envisage massive population transfers toward uncertain destinations.

Moreover, the Lebanese reactionary forces, which have not overcome their own divisions, are scarcely in a position to impose a strong regime of any stability whatever.

Building a puppet Arab militia like that led by Haddad in the southern Leganon border area is possible only in a limited and relatively thinly populated area. In any case, such an operation could not make it possible to avoid the costs of a prolonged intervention of the Israeli armed forces.

The internal situation in Israel could change as the precariousness of the successes made by the offensive become clear and as the losses suffered by the aggressors come to be known. These losses are quite modest compared with those suffered by the Palestinians and Lebanese, but they will seem grave to the Israelis, who are not prepared to pay a high cost in blood for victories.

It is essential for the workers movement to mobilize throughout the world to force an immediate halt to the criminal aggression by the Zionist state, and to assure full solidarity with the Palestinian resistance. Demands must be raised that the Israeli army withdraw from all of Lebanon and that all the repressive and occupation forces be withdrawn from the occupied territories; that Lebanese sovereignty be restored; and the Palestinians keep their positions, their armed forces, and their organizations.

It is necessary to denounce the complicity of the U.S. with Begin, and the hypocrisy of the West European states, which have adopted economic sanctions against Argentina in the Malvinas conflict, to take any concrete action against the Israeli aggression.

The workers states have to be called on to offer economic and military aid to the Palestinian resistance and to all the Lebanese forces fighting alongside the Palestinians against the Zionists. ■

**STOP ZIONIST AGGRESSION!**

**ISRAELI TROOPS OUT OF LEBANON NOW!**

**SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE!**

## IEC Plenum May 1982

The second plenum of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International since the Eleventh World Congress took place during May in northern Europe. The IEC is elected by name at the World Congress and is the leadership body of the International between world congresses. Today its elected members come from 25 different countries.

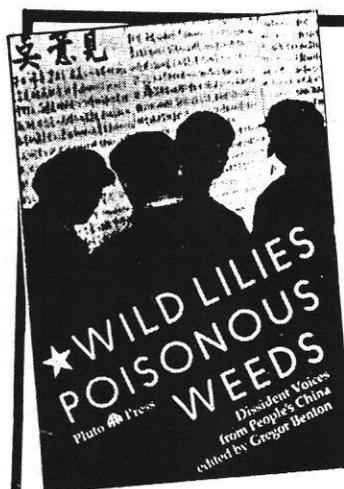
During its meeting, the IEC adopted resolutions of general orientation on: the lessons of the political revolution in Poland; on militarism and the imperialist war drive; and on the building of revolutionary youth organisations. It also adopted declarations on current events, such as the war in the Malvinas and the war between Iran and Iraq; and motions of solidarity against repression in Iran,

Uruguay, and Portugal. The IEC approved the line of two reports presented: one on the development of the Central American revolution, the other on the revolutionary experience of the island of Grenada in the Caribbean.

Finally, the IEC had two oral discussions: on the prospects of building the Fourth International today; and the organisational effort to implant ourselves in the major industrial sectors, as decided at the last World Congress.

The IEC decided to open the preparatory discussion for the Twelfth World Congress, the sixth since the 1963 reunification.

We publish in the present issue of *International Viewpoint* the main declarations and solidarity resolutions.



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# Interview with Israeli Revolutionist: The effects of the Middle East war

*The following interview was given to Gerry Foley in Paris on June 11 by Mikado, one of the leaders of the Revolutionary Communist League, Israel section of the Fourth International. The text has been translated and edited.*

\* \* \*

*Question. What are the aims of the Begin government in the war it has launched against Lebanon and Syria?*

*Answer.* The main aim is to liquidate the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) politically and militarily. The present Israeli leadership has primarily a military conception of the PLO. It thinks that the PLO is essentially a relatively small group of terrorists that can be driven back and liquidated by military operations.

The second objective is to change the relationship of forces in the region by inflicting a severe political or military defeat on Syria. The relationship of forces started shifting against Israel after the 1973 war.

The third objective is to restore a feeling of national unity and confidence in the Jewish population of Israel itself, to show that the Zionist state can put an end to the pressures the Arab revolution has been bringing to bear on it. The confidence of the Jewish population has been severely shaken in recent years.

*Q. How successful has the Begin government been in creating an atmosphere of national unity among the Israeli Jews?*

*A.* The war has produced an appearance of national unity. The radio plays military marches all day long. There is no news about the number of casualties. The government does not face massive opposition in the streets or large open political opposition. That is not surprising. We are not yet at the stage where the majority of the Israeli population is ready to confront their government while a war is going on.

But for the first time during a war itself, opposition voices have been raised from the first day, including the establishment. Some deputies, for example, abstained on the motion of censure presented in parliament by the Communist Party. This sort of thing has never happened before during a war. Our comrades working in the Committee for Solidarity with Bir Zeit University (a Palestinian school shut down by the Zionist autho-

rities) have been circulating a petition against the war which has already been signed by dozens of liberal personalities. This is also something new in the context of a military confrontation.

There have already been some cases of refusal to obey orders in the army, refusal to cross the frontier. This is the position we advocate, and other political currents have taken it up.

Moreover, there have already been a number of small demonstrations against the war including a few dozens of people and the writing of antiwar slogans on the walls. This reflects the activity of left oppositionists, but no one would have tried to do this during the 1968 war or even the 1973 one. The most popular slogans, written in Hebrew, are "Out of Lebanon Now!" "Down With the Barbarous War in Lebanon!" "The PLO is Indestructible!" "The PLO Is the Whole Palestinian People!"

The real test will come after the war. Our comrades estimate that already more than 150 Israeli soldiers have been killed. This is not insignificant for Israel. And we do not believe that the Israeli offensive can achieve its objectives. It may deal blows to the Palestinian movement, even very severe ones, but it is incapable of destroying the Palestinian movement. Therefore, after the offensive ends, it can have a boomerang effect on Israeli society itself, as a result of the ineffectiveness of this offensive, and the price that the Israeli army will have to pay for it.

*Q. What impact has the war had on the Arab population of Israel and the occupied territories.*

*A.* The immediate effect is shock. The Palestinians can see the results of the Israeli offensive on Arab TV—the destruction and death, the wounding of tens of thousands of people, hundreds of thousands driven from their homes. The Arabs also know that one of the government's plans is to take advantage of a situation such as the present one to drive the largest possible number of them out of Israel and the occupied territories.

*Q. What chance does Begin have to achieve a shift in the relationship of forces in the region?*

*A.* If Israel does not succeed in dealing a mortal blow to the Palestinian resistance, the result of the war will in fact be a defeat. Nothing less than smashing the movement would be enough. Even in the Litani River opera-

tion four years ago in southern Lebanon, Israel made military gains. PLO bases were destroyed. But the PLO came out of the confrontation stronger than before.

The government says that its objective is to drive the Palestine resistance back to the level of 1948, that is, to total atomization of the Palestinian people and destruction of their national movement. If they don't achieve that, the operation will represent a defeat. And then, they could not achieve their second objective either, which is a change in the overall relationship of forces in the region.

And, they would not achieve their third objective either—the reconsolidation of Zionism among the Israeli Jews. Within a very short time after the end of the war, large sections of the Jewish population will start demanding an accounting for the cost.

*Q. How far are the Israelis prepared to go? Are they ready to occupy Beirut, the southern half of Lebanon, or even Damascus?*

*A.* Trying to occupy Beirut would be simply madness. But Begin and Sharon have done several things that are hard to explain politically, such as the Golan Heights annexation and the attack on the Syrian helicopters in 1981, which led to the siting of Syrian missiles in the Bekaa valley and made no sense politically.

I am not certain that the whole military offensive has been thought out politically, that the government has a clear idea of when to stop. It is not excluded that the military operations will set off their own dynamic that will carry things far beyond what is politically acceptable. So, I don't exclude an occupation of Beirut, but that would be such a colossal error that I have difficulty believing that they would do it. The same goes for a prolonged occupation of the southern half of Lebanon.

What Israel will try to do before undertaking a general confrontation with Syria, is try to clear the territory under its control of all Palestinian bases, that is, the southwest of Lebanon up to the Beirut-Damascus road. It also seems to want to set up rightist Arab militias trained and paid by the Israeli army. Begin is very proud of the Christian militia commanded by Saab Haddad that it set up in the border area.

But it was one thing to be able to do this in a thinly populated backward

area about fifteen kilometers deep along the southern Lebanese frontier. It is a qualitatively different thing to try to do it in an area that extends all the way to Beirut and includes cities of 100,000 or more inhabitants such as Tyre and Saida.

In the southern half of Lebanon, the possibility also has to be left open that Begin will decide to up the ante, including even a long occupation of the southern half of Lebanon. This would deepen the crisis in Israel rapidly. It would bring out the fundamental contradiction between Israel's striking power and its limited resources, especially in human terms.

Occupying the southern half of Lebanon would require mobilization of several brigades and maintaining them as a standing force, even when there were no military operations. This involves heavy economic and social costs. The Israeli army is a reserve army. It cannot take a prolonged mobilization.

*Q. You said that a division was appearing in the Israeli bourgeoisie already over how far to carry the war.*

A. Yes, you can see this by reading *Ha'aretz*, the serious bourgeois daily. Of course, it has not come out openly against the war. But in the two issues published since the start of the war that I have seen, it poses a whole series of questions. Was this operation thought out politically? Does the government know how far it wants to go? Will it be able to stop in time? These questions express a skepticism about the advisability of the offensive, and this obviously reflects a feeling that exists within the Israeli bourgeoisie.

*Q. What is the dividing line in the bourgeoisie? Is there a section more concerned about maintaining good relations with U.S. imperialism?*

A. No. That is not the basis of it. There is a section of the Israeli bourgeoisie that has a more realistic reassessment of the relationship of forces in the region and which does not believe that the situation can be changed by military force alone.

*Q. And there is also a section of the Israeli bourgeoisie that wants a generalized war in the region?*

A. Yes, there is no doubt that there are people in the Israeli establishment who want a regionwide war. They want to settle accounts with Syria, no matter what the price.

*Q. What does settling accounts with Syria mean?*

A. A general confrontation with the Syrian army, possibly including occupation of Damascus. Sharon has boasted several times that if necessary, Israel is capable of taking Damascus.

*Q. What are the chances that this section of the bourgeoisie can get the ball and run with it?*

A. There are two factors that make such a possibility unlikely. One is that a regionwide war is more than American imperialism can accept, because Israel cannot carry this off quickly and cleanly. It cannot wage a six-day war against

Syria. Secondly, it cannot quickly wipe out the Palestinian resistance. It could not do that four years ago during the Litani operation, and it cannot do it today.

I think that the U.S. imperialists gave Israel the green light for a few days only. The U.S. knows that if this offensive goes on for too long or becomes too extensive that it could have a profoundly destabilizing effect on the neocolonial regimes that have been built up in the region and on which its ability to control it depends.

*Q. What are the Begin government's objectives with respect to Syria? Do they conflict with the needs of U.S. imperialism?*

A. Begin wants at least to humiliate Syria, to force it to accept a political defeat in Lebanon, to evacuate Beirut, to take its missiles out, to remain passive in the face of the massacre of the Palestinians. That is the minimum he wants to achieve. But a rapid campaign to break the back of the Syrian army cannot be excluded.

Here, on the other hand, an international factor comes into play. Syria has a military assistance pact with the USSR. The Soviets cannot let the Israeli offensive against Syria go beyond a certain limit, and this poses an acute problem for Washington.

However, already the political defeats the Syrians suffered in Lebanon in the first days may have put the final nail in the coffin of the Assad regime, which is faced with mass opposition. This opposition has conflicting objectives. It is dominated by the traditionalist right, the Muslim brotherhood, which is supported by Iraq and Jordan.

From Israel's point of view, it is a secondary question what would replace the Assad regime. There is a current in the government, represented by General Sharon, that would not mind even if a more militantly anti-imperialist regime replaced Assad.

From Sharon's point of view, anti-imperialist regimes are preferable in the Arab countries. This would mean that the imperialists would have to depend entirely on Israel, and therefore would have to give all their support to Israel and not maneuver at its expense with neocolonial regimes.

*Q. Do you think that the Iraqi defeat in the war with Iran played a role in the Begin government's decision to unleash this war?*

A. Yes, that was very important, especially in Washington's approving such an operation.

From Israel's point of view, it saw that the war between Iran and Iraq was going to end, and that a realignment would take place in the region. It had to take advantage of the disarray in the Arab camp caused by the war before the situation could be restabilized, before the regime of Saddam Hussein could fall.

*Q. Isn't it possible that the U.S. left Israel a certain space to carry out this war to reinforce Iraq and the Arab rightist regimes against the pressure of Syria*

*and Iran?*

A. Undoubtedly this is the main reason Washington has an interest in seeing Syria defeated, so long as this is a limited defeat, or in seeing the PLO defeated right now, which would indirectly be a defeat for Syria and which would reinforce the regimes that imperialism counts on to maintain order in the region—Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the Gulf Emirates.

*Q. Do you think that there is a possibility that the imperialists can achieve this objective?*

A. Yes, there is a real danger of that, given the impasse in which the more anti-imperialist regimes find themselves.

*Q. What was the attitude of the Palestinians to the Iran-Iraq war?*

A. There has been a great sympathy for the Iranian revolution. This revolution to a considerable extent inspired the Palestinian masses in their upsurge against the occupation and against Zionism.

However, this sympathy has been somewhat attenuated by two factors. One was the appeals made to Arab nationalism by the Iraqi regime at the start of the war. The Iraqis talked against the repression against the Khuzestan Arabs, which was real enough, and about the right of these people to belong to the Arab world.

The second factor, which had a particular effect on the most politicized layer of Palestinians was the repression against the Mujahadeen, who have long enjoyed popularity in the Palestinian movement. They had very good relations with the PLO dating from well before the revolution. So, the repression against them has deeply troubled a not insignificant vanguard among the Palestinians.

*Q. Could you describe a bit more what the Revolutionary Communist League is doing in this crisis?*

A. Our comrades are very active right now through the Committee for Solidarity with Bir Zeit. Everyday there are leaflet distributions and poster paste-ups. We have participated in two demonstrations, one in Tel Aviv and the other in Jerusalem. We have to admit that on many occasions, our comrades have been attacked physically. But they are not falling into impressionism, saying that the masses are with Begin. The masses are obviously with Begin today, but we know that this support is not deep and will not be long lasting.

*Q. But so far there is no official repression?*

A. No. The test will come in the army. A number of our comrades were called up, and they and representatives of other currents have refused to cross the frontier. We will see how the government reacts. Will they close their eyes or limit themselves to symbolic sanctions, as they have in the past, or will they take the opportunity to carry out a serious repression. It would be a big mistake for them to do that because it would increase the echo of these actions in the army and among the population. ■

# BRITAIN—HANDS OFF MALVINAS

Great Britain is determined on a bloodbath in its efforts to take the Malvinas from Argentina. In despatching 100 ships and 26,000 soldiers, it has decided to sacrifice the lives of hundreds of Argentine and British soldiers. It is using some of the most sophisticated armaments in the world against a semi-colonial country. The British task force carries nuclear weapons. The Fleet commander has power to use these 'in case of emergency'.

This is the lengths of barbarity to which British imperialism is prepared to go to defend its interests against the oppressed peoples of the world.

The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International calls on all the workers, peasants and oppressed of the world to mobilise in support of the Argentine people against imperialism and colonialism.

British action in the South Atlantic is the most dangerous threat to world peace today. It is a cover to the stepping up of US military action against the revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean.

This is not Thatcher's war alone. The US government has fully associated itself with this operation and other imperialist powers are complicit through their sales of arms to Britain, the logistical support, their economic and military boycott of Argentina and their continued diplomatic support for Britain's action throughout the war. Reagan has made it clear that he 'will not allow' a British defeat. All imperialist ruling classes have quickly recognised where their fundamental interests lie.

The decision to despatch the third largest fleet in the world, to launch a military invasion to recapture the islands and to bomb the Argentine mainland if necessary has nothing to do with the hypocritical claim to be defending the British inhabitants on the Malvinas.

This is a war against the peoples of Latin America. Neither Britain nor the US can allow any colonial country to assert its rights. To do so would encourage all peoples of the region in their fights to overthrow the reactionary oligarchies that rule them today and throw out their imperialist backers.

The specific importance of the Malvinas is the access they give to the resources of the Antarctic, to the oil that has been discovered around the islands and the strategic position that the islands occupy in the South Atlantic.

Britain's war against Argentina is not between 'democracy' and 'military dictatorship'. It is between an imperialist power and a dependent country.

Britain's open aggression has triggered off a growing wave of hatred against London and Washington—the two imperialist powers which have dominated the region for many years.

The battle for the Malvinas against imperialist aggression reinforces the impact of revolutionary advances in Central America and the Caribbean throughout the Latin American continent.

The Fourth International fully endorses the urgent appeal of Fidel Castro in his capacity as chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement to help halt 'Anglo-American aggression'. Fidel Castro has correctly pointed out that this war has 'become a lesson for all 3rd World countries which defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity' whatever their political regime.

We agree with him that 'this is the hour of Latin American solidarity'. The Fourth International will work to mobilise the widest possible solidarity in Latin and Central America with Argentina against this aggression. We call for active and unconditional support for Argentina. In this war Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas must be definitively established and internationally recognised without reservations.

We salute the Argentine workers for their rapid mobilisation in defence of Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas.

The recuperation of the Malvinas by the Argentine military junta coincided with the national aspirations of the Argentine people against British imperialism. The pro-imperialist Military Junta had reached a real low point of discredit and isolation after six years of bloody repressive policies against the Argentine working masses.

The action recuperating the Malvinas was carried out only days after a demonstration of tens of thousands of workers who demanded 'Peace, Bread and Work'. This was an expression of a strong awakening of the masses. The Junta's action aimed to divert the growing wave of popular opposition against the failure of its brutal repressive policies. But the Argentine working masses enthusiastically supported the recuperation of the Malvinas while at the same time maintained their independence from the Junta. They acted in this way because Thatcher's war is a war against the Argentine people as a whole.

The mobilisation of the Argentine masses against the imperialist attack will break the barrier of all the junta's vacillations faced with imperialism, freeing all the potential force needed to crush the aggressors.

The need to defend the Malvinas has come into contradiction with the pro-imperialist positions of the Junta. It has already been obliged to withdraw from Washington's plans to involve it in imperialist intervention in Central America.

For many years Argentine workers have carried out heroic resistance to the economic and repressive measures of imperialism executed by the military junta. Today faced with the open attack of British imperialism they must demand intransigence against aggressor. At this critical time any weakness is an obstacle placed in the way of the anti-imperialist energies of the Argentine people, a betrayal of the national cause.

Therefore it is more urgent than ever to guarantee the greatest freedom of organisation, press and association as well as other democratic rights. We support the demand for accounts to be settled on the fate of the 30,000 'disappeared'. These militants have proved themselves in the struggle against imperialism. They will be in the front ranks in the struggle against British aggression. Freedom for the political prisoners and the return of the exiles are more necessary than ever. These measures would strengthen the Argentine people against aggression. They will be won through mass mobilisations. The workers and oppressed should not bear the enormous costs of the war. The aggressors and exploiters must pay British and North American interests must be expropriated in order to strike another blow against imperialism and aid the Argentine people.

Anglo-American aggression has changed the conditions of the Argentine people's struggle for their just demands. The Argentine workers, correctly, have no illusion that the junta will take measures aiming to build a more effective resistance against imperialist aggression—its barbarous repression justifies this defiance.

That is why the battle against imperialist aggression does not imply any truce with the Junta or any concessions on the independence of the workers and peasants in the struggle for their demands.

The Fourth International denounces the underhand moves of the United States to set up, if possible, a new government in Argentina totally subordinated to their interests and even more repressive.

But in strengthening their organisations, struggling for their rights, mobilising against imperialism, the Argentine masses will come to finish off the military dictatorship.

The Fourth International will fully commit itself to mobilising the broadest solidarity with Argentina against this aggression. We fully support the mobilisation of the Latin American peoples in solidarity with Argentina.

The Fourth International calls upon European and North American workers to fight to end their government's

blockades and economic boycotts of Argentina and to halt military aid to Margaret Thatcher under whatever form. Neither the Argentine masses nor the victims of the Junta's repression will benefit at all from these governments' support to Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan.

The workers of Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Canada have no interest either in supporting the alliance of their own exploiters against the Argentine people.

The working people of North America and the developing anti-war movement are perfectly right to demonstrate to demand the halt to all North American aid to this bloody colonial war which can only reinforce Washington's war-mongering course.

The Fourth International calls on the British labour and anti-nuclear missiles movement to struggle against the chauvinist hysteria whipped up by the capitalist press. We also call for the broadest possible mobilisation for the withdrawal of the British Fleet.

We denounce the support of the principal British trade union leaders and the Labour Party to Margaret Thatcher's war. Any victory against Argentina will be the signal for an increased offensive against the rights of British workers themselves. A British defeat by Argentina would, on the contrary, constitute

a powerful encouragement in the struggle against British imperialism and will strengthen the struggle to kick out this ultra-reactionary Conservative government and strike a blow against Ronald Reagan's warmongering.

The real allies of British workers are the workers and exploited, oppressed Argentine masses. ■

**DOWN WITH BRITISH IMPERIALISM'S DIRTY COLONIAL WAR!**

**IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH ARMED FORCES FROM THE SOUTH ATLANTIC!**

**END IMPERIALIST BOYCOTTS OF ARGENTINA!**

**LONG LIVE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS SOLIDARITY WITH THE EXPLOITED AND OPPRESSED OF ARGENTINA AND CENTRAL AMERICA!**

**THE MALVINAS ARE ARGENTINE!**

*International Executive Committee  
of the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL  
May 27, 1982*

## Mass mobilisations against Reagan the warmonger

● **FRANCE:** More than 20,000 demonstrators marched across Paris June 5. The systematic boycott by the mass media, pressure from the Socialist Party and the abstention of the Communist Party could have meant a small and marginal demo. However, this was the strongest anti-imperialist demonstration for many years. The lead banner demanded: 'No to the arms race, no to the oppression of the peoples'.

Despite the last-minute withdrawal of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, the agreement between the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR—French section of the Fourth International) and Lutte Ouvriere led—with the

participation of the Solidarity committees with Central America and the anti-nuclear committee—to the formation of a broad majority in the demonstration around the slogans: against 'Reagan-la-guerre'; support to the Central American struggles; against the Versailles summit of the wealthy industrial countries; against French imperialism; and for the withdrawal of French troops from Africa and from the overseas departments and territories.

Particularly dynamic and colourful were the contingents of the LCR and its associated youth organisation, the JCR. These contingents grouped about a third of the demonstrators present, a fact

noted by the French press.

Among the personalities who addressed the rally after the demonstration was Hugo Blanco, leader of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, Peruvian section of the Fourth International. He was vigorously applauded when he denounced the intervention of the USA into Central America.

● **ITALY:** Almost 150,000 people gathered in Rome on June 5. The most impressive delegations came from the south, particularly from Comiso, Sicily, where construction work on Cruise missile bases is to begin shortly. Comiso has become the rallying cry of all the actions against the arms race in the penin-

*German soldiers demonstrate against nuclear weapons outside NATO summit (DR)*



sula. 'Comiso does not want to become another Hiroshima' declared the lead banner of the contingent. The demonstration was particularly combative, particularly in the contingents of the Lega Comunista Rivoluzionario—Italian section of the Fourth International—and Democrazia Proletaria, which centred their slogans against NATO and against American aggression in Central America.

Despite the efforts of the Communist Party (PCI) and the Proletarian Unity Party (PDUP) to keep equal balance between the denunciation of imperialism and of Soviet policy, large sections of the Young Communist Federation and the CP took 'Reagan the warmonger' as a symbol.

The mobilisation was smaller than that of last October. There were two reasons for this. Firstly the PCI and PDUP through the 'Committee For Peace' did everything they could to restrict the mobilisation and give it a symbolic and pacifist character. The other is that Italy was paralysed by a general strike the previous Thursday which had already brought hundreds of thousands of workers out into the streets.

- **BELGIUM:** 10,000 people demonstrated at Antwerp on June 5 against the installation of Cruise and Pershing missiles, the first step towards unilateral disarmament. This was organised by the Flemish Committee against Nuclear Arms. Some delegations from Wallonia also joined it.

The LRT/RAL (Belgian section of the Fourth International) participated in the demonstration with its own slogans without having signed the appeal for bilateral disarmament which served as the unitary platform for the demonstration.

- **IRELAND:** Irish CND mobilised 10,000 for its demonstration in Dublin on June 5. Members of People's Democracy (Irish section of the Fourth International) participated in the march which was called on slogans defending Irish neutrality, opposing nuclear weapons and opposing Reagan.

- **GREAT BRITAIN:** 250,000 people attended the rally organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in London on June 6. Over half participated in the three feeder marches which converged on the park from the south, west, and north of London. That morning the Greater London Council declared the region a nuclear-free zone, joining over 130 other local councils who have made that decision, including all those in Wales.

The action was sponsored by the national leadership of the Labour Party. Many local Labour Party and trade-union branches were represented with prominent contingents from the Transport General Workers Union, the Fire Brigade Union, the National Union of Mineworkers, and the healthworkers unions, presently involved in a pay dispute, with banners: 'Jobs not Bombs, pay the

NHS'. However the most notable feature of the demonstration was the massive and lively youth contingent within which the 1,000 strong contingent of supporters of *Revolution* and *Socialist Challenge* (newspapers sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International) was prominent. This contingent took up the slogans 'British out of Malvinas', 'US out of Central America', 'Down with Reagan'.

The demonstration was a blow for the Thatcher government, showing that the 'Falklands effect' in British politics has not succeeded in completely turning the tide in her favour. CND was able to continue to build this massive demonstration through its activity in opposition to the war in the South Atlantic. Many of the speakers at the final rally, including Tony Benn, and Arthur Scargill of the miners union, expressed their opposition to the Falklands/Malvinas war.



- **HOLLAND:** Over 5,000 people demonstrated in Amsterdam on June 10 against the new nuclear missiles and US intervention in Central America. The demonstration was supported by all the left-wing parties, the Central American solidarity committees and the peace organisations. However, these forces were reticent to build a militant demonstration with an anti-Reagan, anti-American character. The previous weekend 'Rock against Reagan' concerts in Nijmegen and Amsterdam had drawn over 6,000 people.

The IKB (Dutch section of the Fourth International) and the youth organisation Rebel formed a contingent of 200 with the slogans 'After Nicaragua the whole of Central America', 'Reagan-murderer', 'Their struggle, our struggle—international solidarity'.

- **WEST GERMANY:** Around half a million people demonstrated in West Germany on June 10; over 400,000 in Bonn at the time of the NATO summit, 40,000 in West Berlin and others in smaller demonstrations around the country, in the biggest-ever organised action in the country. The Bonn demonstration was organised by a coalition of pacifist, Christian, ecological, Central American solidarity, and political organisations around the slogans: 'No deployment of Pershing 2', 'No Neutron Bombs', 'Negotiations on arms limitations', and

'Solidarity with the colonial revolution, Turkey, El Salvador'.

Prominent in the demonstration was the slogan of the East German peace movement 'Swords into ploughshares'. The GIM (German section of the Fourth International) and its youth group marched in a contingent of several hundred with many young people around the slogans 'Out of NATO', 'Solidarity with Salvador, Turkey, and Solidarnosc', 'Britain out of the Falklands', and for solidarity with the East German peace movement.

The demonstration was a real signal that the peace movement is broadening and there is a growing impact of the East German peace movement which is stimulating debate on what demands should be raised. The trade unions who were previously very hostile to the movement are beginning to retreat and did not, as they did last October, forbid trade unionists to participate. Over the last few months there have been a number of initiatives by trades unionists around the slogan 'Jobs not Bombs'.

- **USA:** A million people marched on June 12 in New York at the time of the UN special session on disarmament in a demonstration called on the demand for an immediate bilateral freeze on nuclear weapons. The demonstration was a striking affirmation of the growth of the peace movement and the fear felt by many that the US is heading towards a large-scale war. This demonstration was very broad and heterogeneous with many people drawn onto the streets for the first time by their fear of nuclear weapons and their desire for a halt to the arms race. A current, including the Socialist Workers Party—American organisation in solidarity with the Fourth International—organised around slogans that opposed the wars going on right now: 'Not a man, not a cent for Washington's wars', 'US out of Central America', 'Stop the war against Nicaragua, El Salvador, Cuba, Grenada', 'Israel out of Lebanon'.

The enthusiastic response to slogans of the 'Jobs not Bombs' type illustrated the concern felt about the social offensive in the States, and how this is related to the war drive.

Central America was an important theme of the demonstration. All references to El Salvador were enthusiastically greeted, as was the representative of the FDR who spoke at the rally outside the UN building. Also speaking was Isabel Letellier, widow of the murdered Foreign Minister of the former Allende government in Chile, who explained the efforts of the US state department to bring down that government and how they would try to do the same in Nicaragua.

Representatives of the Black movement included the Reverend Ben Chavis of the National Black Independent Political Party and a speaker from the National Black United Front who opposed the wars that the US is involved in now, in Central America and in Lebanon.

# Solidarity with the People of Central America and the Caribbean

An imperialist war against the people of Central America and the Caribbean has begun!

Since the revolutionary overthrow of the hated dictatorships in Nicaragua and Grenada three years ago, led by the FSLN and the New Jewel Movement, the workers and peasants of Central America and the Caribbean have been on the march. Each day they are deepening their struggle against the imperialist domination that has brought nothing but decades of misery and suffering.

Faced with the revolutionary advances throughout the region, the U.S. ruling class has no choice but to use its massive military power to protect its imperialist interests.

In *El Salvador* the people in arms, led by the FDR-FMLN, have continued to strengthen their political and military capacities and expand their international diplomatic offensive. Following the electoral farce of March 28, the new government of Alvaro Magana was put together by the Yankee embassy. The numbers of massacres and tortured has increased. Even the miserable "land reform" of Duarte has been annulled. The latest batch of officers and special troops trained in the U.S. have returned. The level of U.S. aid has increased to the point where today only three other countries in the world receive more aid than the dictatorship of El Salvador.

In *Guatemala* the newly formed unity of the revolutionary forces and the broadening popular base of anti-imperialist struggle amongst the Indian majority of the Guatemalan people, has been met by the coup of last March that brought to power the military junta headed by General Rios Montt. While the demagogic declarations about the necessity for (Christian love and) "civil peace" have multiplied, they have served only as a cover for the resumption of imperialist aid. With this support, General Montt is carrying out new and even more brutal massacres in the rural areas, especially against the Quiche Indian people, and stepping up his military offensive against the UNRG.

While the revolutionary forces of El Salvador and Guatemala are today fighting to overthrow bloody pro-imperialist dictatorships, the workers and peasants of *Nicaragua* and *Grenada* are mobilising to fight to the last drop of blood to defend their revolutionary governments and the social, economic, and political advances they have achieved over the last three years.

As the May Day celebration in Managua proclaimed: "We will defend the revolution, building Socialism." Faced with these new advances, imperialist aggression against Nicaragua has already reached a qualitatively new level. Daily battles are now being fought with imperialist-armed counterrevolutionary units operating out of bases on two fronts: Honduras and Costa Rica.

A counterrevolutionary government-in-exile is being put together, trying to establish itself on Nicaraguan territory, where it can "legitimately" call for open imperialist intervention.

Economic strangulation and sabotage, diplomatic isolation—all weapons are being used to try to weaken and divide the Nicaraguan people and bring down the first workers and peasants government in Central America which is moving to abolish capitalist exploitation and oppression in Nicaragua.

In *Grenada* a similar process is unfolding as the working people of that island nation deepen their economic and social gains.

Destabilisation efforts and other counterrevolutionary operations financed and directed by various imperialist interests have been accompanied by massive naval maneuvers in the Caribbean, carrying out simulated landings on Grenada. In fact, the last months have seen a total of four naval maneuvers involving all the principal imperialist powers of NATO. Their goal has been not only intimidation but a dress rehearsal for a blockade and landings wherever in the region imperialism decides to strike.

The problem for Washington is clear.

Behind El Salvador and Guatemala, Nicaragua and Grenada, stands *Cuba*.

Imperialism's military escalation is aimed at crushing the rise of revolutionary struggles throughout the region. Today it is the Salvadoran people who are suffering the harshest imperialist aggression in the region. But the ultimate objective must be the Cuban workers state, because imperialism knows that Cuba will support the struggles of the people of Central America and the Caribbean to the end. While the Cuban revolution lives, the current reactionary offensive cannot triumph.

The war which is today being waged by Anglo-American imperialism against Argentina is intimately tied to the imperialist offensive in Central America. It too is intended to intimidate the working people of Latin America and teach

them that they dare not assert the right to control their own lands, their own resources, their own destinies.

The Anglo-American imperialist aggression against Argentina and its consequences throughout Latin America has created difficulties for the war plans of the imperialists and their allies in the region. But the certainty of an ever larger and more direct Yankee intervention in Central America and the Caribbean has not changed.

U.S. imperialism will not renounce the use of a single weapon in its arsenal for blocking the extension of the socialist revolution in what it considers to be its own "backyard."

We are living through a decisive moment.

We must fight to prevent the imperialists war drive from achieving its objectives.

The revolutionaries of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Grenada, and Cuba have not retreated a single step. On the contrary each day their authority with the people and their capacity to take initiatives on all fronts increases. New revolutionary victories, new workers states are being born in Central America and the Caribbean.

United, fighting international solidarity with this forward march of the revolution will play a decisive role in the struggles that are coming. Our brothers and sisters on the front lines of battle in Central America and the Caribbean are fighting in the interests of working people the world over; our struggle is one!

The solidarity committees must be strengthened. The World Front for Solidarity with the Salvadoran People shows the road to follow for the coordination of solidarity work.

The mobilisation of the broadest forces in action against the escalating imperialist war moves in Central America and the Caribbean must be a central task.

The Fourth International commits its entire forces to continue and deepen this solidarity work. ■

**NO IMPERIALIST INTERVENTION!**

**INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN!**

*International Executive Committee of the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL May 1982.*

# Defend the Iranian Revolution!

The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International stands with the millions of toilers among the people of Iran who have mobilised in the streets over the past several days to hail the defeat of the Iraqi invading army and the retaking of Khorramshahr by Iran. At the very outset of the war, twenty months ago, young Iranian fighters, joined by the Arab population of that region put up an heroic but unsuccessful resistance to the Iraqi occupation of their city. This led the people of Iran to rename it Khoninshahr, 'City of Blood'. Although not all Iraqi forces have yet been expelled from Iranian territory, the victory at Khoninshahr not only has the tremendous symbolic significance for the Iranian masses but also goes a long way towards breaking the back of the war by imperialism and the Iraqi regime against the Iranian revolution.

In response to these decisive military advances by Iran, the spokespersons for imperialism and pro-imperialist regimes such as those in Egypt and Saudi Arabia are warning Iran of the consequences of any move by Iranian forces into Iraqi territory. These regimes are strengthening a counter-revolutionary front aimed against the Iranian revolution.

What they actually fear is the impact which the revolution and the defeat of the counter-revolutionary Iraqi aggression will have on the class struggle throughout the region. It is for this reason that Washington and other imperialist powers, behind a smokescreen of 'neutrality', have stood behind the invasion from the outset. They viewed it as a key front in their battle to crush the revolution of the workers and peasants of Iran. As Secretary of State Alexander Haig put it this week, expressing Washington's worries over the Iraqi retreat, US 'neutrality' in the war was not the same as 'indifference'.

The imperialists fear that further advances by Iran to expel the Iraqi army and secure its borders will set off a crisis for the Saddam regime and stimulate the mobilisation of the workers and peasants of Iraq. They fear the destabilisation of the reactionary pro-imperialist rulers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan. They fear the inspiration that will be drawn by the Palestinian people on the West Bank, in Southern Lebanon and

inside the 1948 borders against Zionist repression and the Israeli drive to war.

The imperialist-backed Iraqi war brought tremendous death and destruction in its wake. Thousands of Iranian fighters were killed or maimed and there are nearly 1.5 million Iranian war refugees. In conducting this reactionary war, the Saddam regime sent thousands of Iraqi youths to their deaths. Massive destruction was rained on the cities, villages, oil fields and port facilities of Iran. This destruction, combined with the drain of resources to conduct the defensive war and the imperialist economic boycott of Iran, has seriously exacerbated the living conditions of the Iranian workers and peasants. The Iranian masses responded to this attack on their revolution by repeatedly pouring into the streets, supporting the war effort and demanding actions against the hoarders, capitalists and officials who impeded this effort. They have also insisted on implementation of the broader social and economic programme previously promised by the regime and rejected its repressive measures against the workers movement. The workers and peasants

have continued the fight for their own economic, social and democratic demands against the policies of the current government.

Although the imperialists have been dealt a setback, the defeat of Iraq will cause them to step up attacks on other fronts against the Iranian revolution, including their effort to topple the current government, they will continue the economic boycott of Iran and escalate military aid and cooperation with counter-revolutionary forces. In this context, the campaign of the Mujahedeen for the overthrow of the Khomeini must be rejected. It is completely incorrect to believe that any help for the cause of the workers and peasants can come from an alliance with the current represented by Bani Sadr. It is rather in the active fight against the monarchist and counter-revolutionary forces, especially in the army, and for their own demands that the Iranian masses, through their independent mobilisation, will confront the current regime and advance along the line of march towards a workers and farmers government.

When the Iraqi invasion was launched in late 1980, the October meeting of the United Secretariat adopted a statement entitled 'Defend Iran against Iraq and imperialist attacks!' At that time, the Iraqi invasion had already stalled following initial success. The October statement concluded:

"The initial hopes of both Bagdad and imperialism for a swift victory were thwarted, thanks largely to the mobilisation of the Iranian masses against the Iraqi attack. The designs of imperialism in the region can be countered by urgently raising as widely as possible the demands:

**-IRAQI TROOPS OUT NOW!  
-IMPERIALISM HANDS OFF  
IRAN!  
-FULL SUPPORT FOR THE EFFORTS OF THE IRANIAN MASSES TO DEFEAT THE HANDS OF REACTION!  
-DEFEND THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION!"**

Two years later, the International Executive Committee reaffirms these demands in hailing the victory over Iraq at Khoninshahr.

*International Executive Committee  
of the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL  
21 May 1982*

## Solidarity with Iranian prisoners

*The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International and all sections and sympathizing organizations call for an urgent appeal to wage a campaign among the supporters of the Iranian revolution for the freedom of the imprisoned comrades, Bahram Ali Atai and Mohammad Bakher Falsafi.*

*Send telegrams to:*

*Hojatolislam Mousavi Tabrizi  
Prosecutor General of the Islamic  
Revolutionary Court  
Teheran, Iran*

*copies to: Jomhuri-e-Eslami  
Teheran, Iran*

*"As a supporter of the Iranian revolution and opponent of the U.S. government's threats against it, I urge you to release the anti-Shah, anti-imperialist fighters, and supporters of the Iranian Revolution, Bahram Ali Atai and Mohammad Bagher Falsafi, who are being held without charges at Evin Prison in Teheran."*

# HKE statement on Khorramshahr victory

The Hezbe Kargarane Enqelabi (HKE—Revolutionary Workers Party), one of the three groups in Iran that adhere to the Fourth International, issued a statement on the occasion of the decisive defeat of the Iraqi forces in the second battle of Khorramshahr. The declaration called for a new advance of the mass mobilizations in Iran.

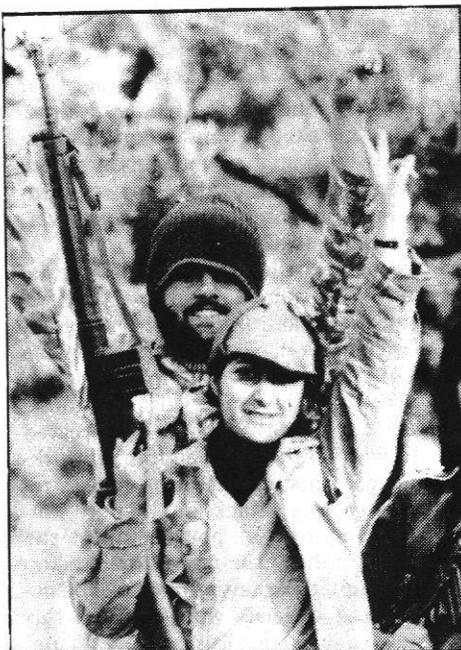
In addition to the slogan "For the Total Repulse of the Military Attack," it raised the slogans "Forward to Economic Reorganization of the Country and the Regions affected by the War," "Forward to the Establishment of the First Workers and Peasants Government in the Near East."

The statement said: "Now the victories at the front have shown that Saddam's army could be defeated only by the mobilization, organization, and the consolidation of mass movements of the people and the workers and toilers organizations, and the military forces. The recent victories have not only provided conditions for consolidating the movements and organizing millions of people, but have weakened the position of the capitalists, landlords, and government bureaucracy. This became clear with the ousting of the Bani Sadr wing from the government and the exposure of the plot by Ghotbzadeh....

"The shoras [workers councils] were under attack. Bourgeois and petty bourgeois politicians and their disputes dominated the political state. But the war created conditions favoring the initiative of the masses in action.

"The power of the mass mobilization, the revolutionary confidence of the masses in defense of their revolution swept away these obstacles. The Jihad Sazendegi [Campaign for Reconstruction], which at one time had difficulty in getting to the front has...assumed a key role in the war. The Pasdaran, who at one time had difficulty in getting the simplest weapons now have the best equipment." In the beginning of the war, the workers had a hard time getting military training; now this has become one of the main factors in the victory on the various fronts. In short, it can be said that the thousands of martyrs who shed their blood on the battle fronts have not only liberated Khorramshahr but put the revolution in a better position to deal the final blow to the weakened capitalist forces of Iran.

"...Iran has become a revolutionary example for the entire Middle East; the



Victorious Iranian revolutionaries (DR)

eyes of the disinherited masses in the region and beyond are fixed on the Iranian revolution as a guide for their struggle against imperialism and Zionism....

"As a result of its victories...the Iranian revolution is now in a better position to reorganize the economy of the country. The experience of the revolution and of the war has shown that it is only by mobilizing the power and initiative of the masses that the obstacles can be removed and the tasks of the revolution advanced....Not only should all obstacles to the work of the workers shoras...be removed but they should be given control over production.

The industries as a whole should be put under the control of the shoras, the capitalists' account books should be made public, and a state monopoly of international trade should be established. These are immediate steps that must be carried out to prepare the way for overall planning.

"In the present conditions, reviving agriculture requires...a deep agrarian reform....Such an agrarian reform requires the support of the peasants throughout the country, the active collaboration of the Jihad Sazendegi and the Besich [Mobilization of the Poor] in the regions. It is on the basis of such a reform and mo-

bilizing the peasants that the conditions will be created for establishing a linkup and unity between the peasants and the workers.

A nationwide campaign against illiteracy, which is part of a cultural revolution, is among the steps that will strengthen the tie between the cities and countryside and advance the revolution. Such a campaign is possible only by mobilizing the masses of students and teachers....

"We have seen the measures limiting freedoms of political and workers organizations. These steps have not only not helped achieve the victories on the front but have weakened the home front. To prevent terrorism...what is needed is not limitations of freedoms but political enlightenment, encouragement of political discussion among the masses, and mobilizing them on this basis. Therefore, the following steps should be taken to establish political freedom—freedom of the press, recognition of the rights of anti-imperialist and prerevolutionary parties, an end to illegal arrests of anti-imperialist workers, activists in the workers shoras and others.

In the wake of the victories...it is important to establish unity among the oppressed nationalities in the various regions of the country and, more important still, the war-hit regions. Today, after the military mobilizations of the Arabs, Kurds, and the tribes against the aggression of Saddam Hussein, it is clear that only by granting the national rights of these peoples can all the working people of the country be united in unbreakable unity against imperialism."

The statement called for the publishing and education in the languages of the oppressed nationalities. It continued:

"Women make up half of the society. Unity in the struggle against imperialism requires mobilizing this half of society. This can only be done by building a national women's organization that would fight for women's demands in the framework of the anti-imperialist struggle....

"There is an urgent need for a government of the disinherited, independent of the capitalists and landlords...this need is being felt more than ever. Such a government would make Iran into a bulwark of all the disinherited of the Islamic world for the final victory in the struggle against imperialism and Zionism." ■

# Solidarity debates: which way forward for the Polish workers movement

Jacqueline ALLIO

After the first moment of shock created by the bureaucracy's military crackdown on December 13, 1981, the spirits of the Polish workers very quickly revived. The power of the resistance movement that can be seen today testifies to their determination to fight against those that they call the "occupiers."

The defeat generated quite an intense debate in the mass movement on the strategy and tactics for winning the three immediate demands that everyone agrees on—lifting the state of siege, release of all the prisoners, and restoration of trade-union and democratic rights in general.

Most of the activists writing in the bulletins published clandestinely by Solidarity indicate that these demands are the minimum for pursuing the struggle begun by the working class to take their affairs into their own hands. None of them directly questions the need of such a fight, at least in the long run.

The differences of opinion are on the timing and the means of establishing a more favorable relationship of forces with respect to the junta.

\* \* \*

In the positions they have taken, the best-known trade-union leaders (1) express a concern shared by the bishops and the lay advisors of the Polish primate, Monsignor Glemp. They are anxious to prevent at any cost an uncontrollable social explosion that could lead to a bloody confrontation with the regime.

Zbigniew Bujak and Wiktor Kulerski think that the way to do this is by building a decentralized social movement with the objective of undermining the junta's authority by organizing a "clandestine society."

For his part, Zbigniew Romaszewski rejects any approach based on the view that the system is unreformable, because that would mean that "the situation in Poland is not just a difficult one but hopeless."

Opposing any sort of extremist policy, he argues that what has to be done is "widen the room for maneuver for critics." The only possible approach, according to him, is a "political perspective based on the system evolving toward democratization without bloodshed."

In an attempt to avoid the danger of resignation and passivity as well as "an emotional reaction to injustice, an attitude of all or nothing, Bogdan Lis and Bogdan Borusewicz argue that the only way forward is to stick to a program confined to the three demands mentioned above. Such a program would have, also, to take account of "the realities, in particular the geopolitical ones, over which we can have only a limited influence."

Thus, "certain national objectives must be deferred to a later time." The immediate objective is to regain legality for Solidarity and get the prisoners released through an "accord with the regime" that "will require good will on the part of all those concerned."

The representatives of the church, both lay and clergy, also stress this point: "The regime must recognize that it is impossible to get out of this crisis without dialogue and without the civil society accepting certain things. But, on the other hand, it is also an essential precondition for internal stabilization that the civil society understand the needs of the system and the objective situation of the state." The civil society would have also to demonstrate this "realism in taking account of the consequences that flow from the geopolitical position of our country (2)."

The shadow of the Soviet Union falls ominously over this debate, as can be seen: "Political stabilization, even if it involves limited Soviet interference in the internal affairs of Poland, may seem a relatively attractive alternative in comparison with an endless conflict in central Europe. That is why, among the leaders of People's Poland also, we find representatives of a more flexible policy that could lead to the achievement of a lasting compromise." (Zbigniew Romaszewski.)

What is striking in these documents is the persistent illusions about the possibilities for a *lasting* understanding with the regime and skepticism—or outright hostility by some, such as Zbigniew Bujak—toward any perspective of centralized action, such as a general strike. This supposedly "would restore the government's cohesiveness and enable it to crush the movement once and for all."

On the other hand, whether they consider Soviet military intervention likely or not, all the writers argue their positions in the name of Poland's geopolitical situation and the impossibility of exceeding certain limits in the confrontation with the regime without risking an explosion that would be a catastrophe.

The breadth and determination of the protest movement that shook Poland in the first half of May shows clearly that the perspectives outlined by the leaders were at least incomplete. On the other hand, Jacek Kuron saw that such mobilizations could develop. In February in the Bialoleka camp, he stated his conviction "when it is attacked, when it is forced to suffer poverty, a healthy society responds by fighting back." Likewise, he said: "the occupiers have put an end to any chance for peaceful action."

Therefore, Kuron advocated preparing for an organized mass uprising that could "take the form of a simultaneous offensive against all the centers of power and information in the country." He took up this idea again and developed it in an open letter to the leaders of the resistance published on May 12 (3).

He wrote that he was convinced that resistance actions were not an end in themselves and that the workers would not mobilize forever without some clear goal. This was all the most true inasmuch as the catastrophic economic situation is creating a pressure whose moral and social effects on a population that wants "a normal life" cannot be predicted.

According to Kuron, all sorts of concessions are justifiable to the extent that they reflect a social compromise between the state power and an independently organized civil society. "It is necessary to make every effort today to get the Soviet leadership to understand that with a minimum of good will on its part, a national understanding among Poles—even without the participation of the present rulers of the country—will not endanger the USSR's military interests and can only be beneficial as regards its economic interests."

1. Cf the interview with Zbigniew Bujak and Wiktor Kulerski published in the Warsaw region of Solidarity bulletin *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 2, February 11, 1982; the polemics by Zbigniew Bujak ("The War of Position") and by Wiktor Kulerski ("The Third Possibility") against Jacek Kuron's "Theses" published in *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 8, March 31, 1982; "August 1980-December 1981 and Afterward?" a mimeographed document by an underground leader of Solidarity in Warsaw, Zbigniew Romaszewski, which is dated March 15, 1982; the article by activists in the Gdansk region (including Bogdan Lis and Bogdan Borusewicz) intitled "A Compromise Without Capitulation," published by *Solidarnosc*, the bulletin of the Gdansk region, No. 34-65, April 7, 1982.

2. *Theses of the Social Council of the Primate of Poland* (mimeo), Warsaw 1982.

3. Jacek Kuron, "Propositions pour sortir d'une situation sans issue," *Le Monde*, March 31, 1982; and Jacek Kuron, "You Have a Historic Chance," *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 13, May 12, 1982.

However, Kuron said that he was convinced "you cannot avoid defeat by refusing to fight." An uprising—or rather the *threat* of an uprising—was the only way to force "the occupiers" to retreat. Pursuant to this, he points up the need for centralizing the resistance movement, because he considers that only such centralization can prevent scattered and uncontrolled social explosions.

Kuron also stresses, which is something new for him, the need for work directed at the army and police in order to win over a section of the troops to the objectives of the resistance movement.

Over and above several positive aspects that appear in Jacek Kuron's documents, in particular his proposals for work directed at the army, a number of critical observations have to be made:

Although he talks about an uprising, Jacek Kuron does not envisage the overthrow of the bureaucratic regime and its replacement by workers rule, but rather a compromise between the two.

But the military crackdown showed that a lasting compromise with the bureaucracy is impossible. It is one thing to say that accords reflecting the relationship of forces at a given moment in the struggle have been reached by the workers and the regime. Such tactical compromises, like the Gdansk accords in August 1980, or the agreement granting workers free Saturdays in January 1981, are not only inevitable but necessary. But it must not be forgotten, however, that in signing these accords the regime "yielded only to the power and determination of the working class (4)."

To base the strategy of the resistance on the search for a compromise—as is proposed by Jacek Kuron, Bogdan Lis or Bogdan Borusewicz—can only lead to grave setbacks. By making such proposals, these representatives of Solidarity are helping to revive illusions that have been shown in recent months to be false by the facts themselves.

More and more often, we find this attitude being denounced by Solidarity activists. In a letter from a reader to one of the underground journals, one can read: "There is nothing left for us but resistance, from passive resistance to armed struggle if necessary. All those who think that the Military Council for National Salvation (WRON) will agree to negotiate are naive, to say the least. For the WRON, negotiating would be tantamount to suicide.

"This regime will defend itself against the society in a truculent way, resorting to every means, including waging a bloody war against the population. We can have no illusions about that! The only realistic program for us is to organize for a confrontation that is inevitable" (6).

The position taken by the leaders mentioned above is all the more dangerous because most of them, like Jacek Kuron, do not clarify what a compromise should involve. "You seem to have forgotten that in order to negotiate a compromise, there has to be a certain margin for maneuver, and that by retreating as much as you do, you deprive yourself of any possibility for maneuvers for concessions," an activist wrote in a "Letter to Zbigniew Bujak" (7).

Of course, the minimum conditions for a compromise have to be made clear, but it is wrong—as Bogdan Lis and Bogdan Borusewicz do—to relegate to some indefinite future the fight for all the demands that were in the center of the struggle waged by Solidarity and which raised the question of power. That is, the fight for the elimination of all sorts of injustices and consequently for the elimination of all the parasites fattening at the expense of the workers; the struggle for a genuine socialization of the basic means of production; the fight for a self-managed, genuinely democratic society.

In the name of the "here and now" and "realities," you cannot ignore what has been shown repeatedly throughout the history of the workers movement—that is, there is no way to draw a precise dividing line between immediate and long-term objectives, which tend to become intertwined in the course of struggles.

Therefore, while we do not reject compromises on the tactical level, we cannot help but agree with the following



"Solidarnosc—No to provocation" (DR)

-The first is that Jacek Kuron, like many other leaders of Solidarity, maintains the idea that a lasting compromise with the bureaucracy is possible. In his February document, he even talks about a compromise with the Soviet bureaucracy.

-The second thing is that he does not indicate what would be the basis of such a compromise. "The leadership of the resistance must prepare the society both for major concessions to achieve a compromise with the regime and for the liquidation of the occupation by an organized mass uprising," Kuron wrote in his February document. To talk now about a 'situation in which the regime will not come to an understanding with the society and not even with itself,' as he does in the second, does not clarify things.

-The third is that the working class seems strangely absent from his document as the central moving force in the resistance movement, which explains the little he has to offer by way of proposals for *concrete ways* to mobilize the working class in its entirety around immediate objectives.

It is important to point out that such compromises are only transitory, that they do not represent the final victory but only successes that prepare the way for other struggles. A number of Solidarity activists did believe that the gains in the August 1980 Gdansk accords were irreversible, that only the Soviet threat "forced society to put a damper on an important part of its aspirations" (Jacek Kuron). December 13 dispelled this illusion.

As Adam Michnik wrote (5), "Solidarity was a deadly threat to the ruling apparatus. It did away with the Communist [we would say Stalinist] principle that the Communist Party represents the working class."

In fact, the rise of Solidarity deprived the bureaucratic apparatus of all legitimacy. And an illegitimate regime can maintain itself in power only on the basis of repression. Because of this, there cannot be any strategic compromise between the society and the bureaucracy—any coexistence with an independent workers organization undermines the power of the bureaucracy.

4. *Kos*, No. 5, February 1982, the bulletin of the Solidarnosc Committee for Social Resistance in Warsaw.

5. Adam Michnik, "La guerre polonaise," published in No. 16-17 of the Paris magazine *l'Alternative*.

6. *Opornik*, No. 10, April 26, 1982.

7. *Tygodnik Wojskowy*, No. 12-13, Warsaw region bulletin.

position that was expressed in an underground bulletin:

"There is no one here that we can come to an understanding with", so "we have no other choice but intransigent civil resistance based on the solidarity of the society (8)."

It is impossible to separate democratic demands—such as the call for restoration of trade-union rights—from those that directly challenge the power of the bureaucracy. To the contrary, it is necessary to look for a bridge between the two types of demands.

From this standpoint, it is wrong to say, as Bogdan Lis does, that "on the basis of the formula negotiated by the trade-union movement, we will see whether the unions will be able, for example, to play a role in running the country or whether they will be able to concern themselves only with trade-union problems (9)."

The whole recent history shows that far from being merely a union in the traditional sense of the term, Solidarity represented a social movement that went far beyond the limited tasks of defending the workers' immediate interests to tackle the problems directly involved with running the economy and political life.

That was what happened before in the context of the legal activities of Solidarity; it continues to today under the junta. This has to do with the nature of this society where capitalism no longer exists, but socialism has not yet emerged—every economic demand immediately raises a political question.

"The hope that trade-union activity can be limited to strictly trade-union questions without any need for getting involved in politics represents a misunderstanding," Zbigniew Romaszewski said. We agree entirely with him. "The questions of work, wages, and jobs are certainly purely trade-union matters, but that does not mean that they are not bound up very extensively with labor legislation and therefore with the running of the economy."

The author of the "Letter to Zbigniew Bujak follows Romaszewski's line of reasoning to the end:

"The society is now fighting for survival, and a precondition for this—an essential one in my opinion—is a real economic reform, which is impossible without a political reform, and therefore without the demise of the Military Council of National Salvation."

#### "PREMATURE ASSAULTS" ON THE REGIME

On the other hand, we do not want to sow the opposite sort of illusions, leading people to believe that the fight for democratic rights or economic demands leads *automatically* to a political struggle or to a revolutionary situation in which the working class could triumph.

It is necessary to take account of the concrete situation you are in at each moment. There is a fundamental differ-

ence between the conditions in which Solidarity waged its struggle on the eve of December 13 and those in which it is working today. It is obliged to wage an *underground* struggle, deprived of one of the elements that gave it its power, that is *legal* structures existing in every region, city, and plant along with the ability to present the point of view of the workers publicly at every moment.

Despite the massive character of the resistance and the impressive combativity that has been demonstrated since the crackdown, the grave setback represented by the loss of democratic rights in general and trade-union rights in particular cannot be underestimated. Ten million workers openly organized is not quite the same thing as ten million workers trying to organize clandestinely.

So, although we do not share the pessimism of Zbigniew Bujak, who out of fear of an uncontrolled social explosion insists on caution above all else. But we are not as optimistic as Zbigniew Romaszewski when he says that December 13 was "only a lost battle, in which we lost a little material and in which the organizational structures were wiped out." These losses, he says, "are not essential."

The perspective for continuing Solidarity's struggle today has to take account not only of the morale of the masses but also of the objective limitations obstructing their organization and activity.

Revolution is not a linear process, contrary to what Wiktor Kulerski seems to think when he evokes a seizure of all the levels of control and decision making by the masses. The description he gives indicates clearly that this is supposed to lead to a situation of dual power, but apparently without a direct confrontation with the regime at any point. Such a perspective is illusory because the Polish bureaucracy will defend itself, and it showed on December 13 that it was ready to use *every* means to maintain itself in power.

In analysing the experience of the 1905 revolution in Poland and Russia, Rosa Luxemburg wrote:

"In the course of the political crisis accompanying its seizure of power, in the course of the long and stubborn struggles, the proletariat will acquire the degree of political maturity permitting it to obtain in time a definitive victory of the revolution. Thus these 'premature' attacks of the proletariat against the state power are in themselves important historic factors helping to provoke and determine the *point* of definite victory (10)."

This victory depends in part on unforeseeable factors linked to the radicalization of the masses, whose anger explodes suddenly focusing around demands that sometimes seem harmless at the start. "The spontaneous element plays a big role in all mass strikes (11)."

Victory also depends on patient propaganda and educational work by a vanguard, which, as history shows, for

long periods consists only of nuclei of activists. This is true of Poland, like everywhere else. The work done in 1967-80 by the small groups linked to the Committee to Defend the Workers (KOR, later the Committee for Social Self-Defense), and to the free-union organizing committees, etc. prepared the ground for the August 1980 strikes.

Finally and especially, victory depends on the capacity of a revolutionary leadership to offer an action program making it possible to rally the broad masses around specific objectives at the decisive moment in the confrontation. And that cannot be improvised in a matter of a few days.

#### COORDINATING THE RESISTANCE

December 13 showed how unprepared Solidarity, and especially its leadership, were for a confrontation with the regime. To draw the conclusion from this that you must *not* confront the bureaucracy, that you must not challenge the "leading role of the party," would be absurd and fundamentally wrong.

To draw such a conclusion would mean that there is no hope and that the demands pushed by millions of workers over many months have to be dropped. But you cannot just call for a mass uprising against the "occupiers," as Jacek Kuron calls them, without more serious preparation.

The Polish masses have demonstrated their determination to retake the initiative. This has become particularly evident since the beginning of May. Does this mean that they are ready to take power in the coming weeks.

The contributions to the discussion by plant activists who disagree with the perspectives proposed by various Solidarity leaders indicate a demand for coordinating the activities of the movement in order to regain a more favorable relationship of forces. This is the dominant note, rather than a straining to strike the decisive blow.

"A lot of energy and enthusiasm are being wasted...because working in a dispersed way as we do we cannot act effectively. The only effective means of rebuilding a real social network, and what people are impatiently waiting for, is the subordination of our actions to the union regional authorities (12)."

Another contribution maintains, in response to Zbigniew Bujak's arguments that the leadership cannot make decisions for the ranks: "The view that the work of the union should be decided on by the membership as a whole is a worthy one. But in a period when it is impossible to convoke a general congress of the dele-

8. *Przetrwanie*, No. 12, March 19, 1982, Warsaw region bulletin.

9. *Solidarnosc*, No. 34-64, Gdansk region bulletin.

10. *Reform or Revolution?* in *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, New York, 1970, p. 83.

11. *The Mass Strike*, in *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*.

12. *Opornik*, No. 3.

gates, during the state of siege, the membership has no way of expressing its opinion and the slogan 'Let the workers decide!' raised by the [Warsaw] regional leaders sounds as naive as statements of the state authorities do cynical. The state of war will last a long time, and a policy of waiting, whether it is waiting for the voice of the people or for that of the union leaders, is no policy.

"If we remain passive, time will not work for us, quite the contrary. We do not propose creating new structures, nor changing the name or the objectives of the union. We propose action. We have democratically elected regional leaders, and the membership has the right to expect that they will lead the work of the regional organization and work in the region in general." And this means that they have to take "initiatives that will stimulate the present activity (13)."

"What we need," the author of the "Letter to Zbigniew Bujak" wrote, "is a national leadership able, here and now, to create the conditions in which it will be possible for Solidarity to regain legality.... We do not need orders but coordination... to build a massive resistance movement and infuse it with hope."

Recently, the criticisms of the ranks expressed in the underground press have been getting sharper and sharper: "Why do the Warsaw leaders, such as Zbigniew Bujak and Wiktor Kulerski, associate the passive resistance they advocate with weak organization? Because, unfortunately, in their conception, passive resistance is action of a symbolic character."

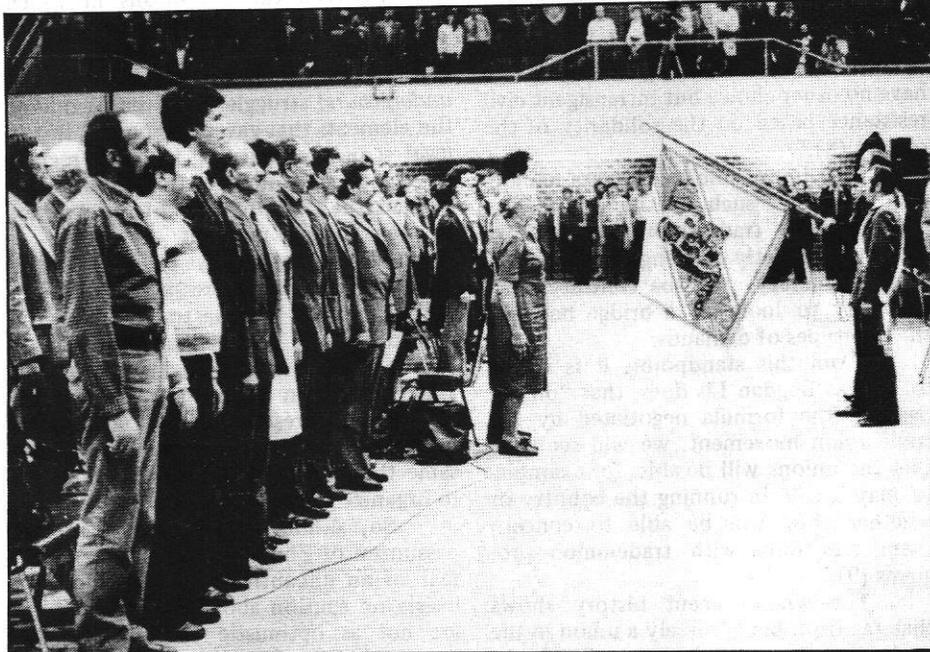
In the same bulletin, it says, referring to Zbigniew Bujak's strategy: "It is based on the idea of symbolic actions, but people consider it sterile," because they are convinced that "the time for making gestures is past and what is needed now is to strike real blows. They are looking for proposals for action that can really hurt the enemy (14)."

"The leaders and the experts are calling on the ranks to practice self-organization, to undertake symbolic actions that do not bring on repression and to observe self-imposed limits. But the rank-and-file activists are demanding that the leadership offer them a program and directives for action and organization."

At the same time, "the forms of resistance implemented since December are no longer satisfactory. The trade-union press, paying unions dues, helping those persecuted and their families, forming nuclei of resistance—all this is insufficient. Networks for coordination including numbers of plants have started being set up from below. The workers in the plants have begun to demand more determined actions on the part of the clandestine regional leaderships (15)."

The point of view expressed by these activists illustrates what Leon Trotsky said in 1935 polemizing against the leaders of the French Communist Party:

"The masses of workers understand what the 'chiefs' do not, that is, in the



Solidarnosc Congress (DR)

conditions of a very great social crisis, limited economic struggle, which demands enormous efforts and enormous sacrifices, cannot produce serious results. The workers are ready to participate in mass demonstrations and even in a general strike, but not in exhausting little strikes without perspectives."

And he adds: "It must not be thought, however, that the mass radicalization will continue on its own, automatically. The working class is expecting initiative from its organizations. When it has reached the conclusion that its expectation is in vain...the process of radicalization will break up into expressions of demoralization, protests, isolated explosions of despair (16)."

The Solidarity leaders have shown that they are sensitive to the demands of the masses and capable of changing their position. They expressed their doubts about the proposals to accelerate the setting up of national coordination and calling national actions. But after that they decided to form a Provisional Coordinating Committee, and they themselves, by means of leaflets and Radio Solidarity, called the May 3 and 13 demonstrations.

#### ACTIVE STRIKES AND THE QUESTION OF POWER

The activists who wrote in the underground bulletins voicing their disagreement with certain leaders did not display any extremist tendency. They did not propose calling a general strike right away, but wanted to know how to advance toward coordinating initiatives.

After listing the kinds of actions immediately possible—demonstrations of the existence of Solidarity, fighting the "collaborators," mutual aid, information and a clandestine press system, political debates, etc.—the author of one of these contributions says: "The goals and tasks

for which we have to organize ourselves in the new conditions will continually widen (17)."

The editors of the bulletin *Karta* have expressed their opposition to the tactic advocated by Zbigniew Bujak, which they call passive. They propose "a system of escalating collective actions with the presentation at each step of certain demands and the threat of new actions if these demands are not met (18)."

Of course, these proposals do not exhaust the debate on the methods of struggle by which the movement can progress in the present situation.

Strikes, in Poland as elsewhere, remain the most natural way for the workers to create a more favorable relationship of forces vis-a-vis the bureaucratic regime. But at the same time, their reluctance to engage in strikes in the first months after the military crackdown shows that the Polish workers do not want to use this weapon in any and all circumstances.

They refuse to do this because they do not see the effectiveness of resorting to strikes all the time but also because strikes of the traditional type, even with occupations, pose a specific problem in the bureaucratized workers states. In capitalist society, strikes are not only a means that the proletariat can use to create the political conditions for advancing its daily struggle but also an instrument directly threatening the economic interests of the bosses.

But it quickly became evident to the Polish workers that in their case strikes could be a two-edged sword.

13. Quoted in the *Bulletin d'Information*, No. 17, published in Paris by the Comité de coordination du syndicat Solidarnosc en France.

14. *CDN*, bulletin of the network of 40 plants in Warsaw, No. 3, April 25, 1982.

15. *Przetwornie*, No. 15, May 7, 1982.

16. Leon Trotsky, *Once Again, Whither France?*

17. *CDN*, No. 1, March 31, 1982.

While they make it possible to undermine the bureaucratic regime, it is the working class much more than the bureaucracy that has to pay the price for the economic difficulties that can be brought on by halting production.

This is why the concept of the active strike, one of the fundamental gains of the Polish revolution, is so important. It makes it possible, without paralyzing the economy, to impose workers control over production and the distribution of the goods produced. However, even more than a general strike with a passive occupation of the factories, an active strike poses the question of power.

In the case of a prolonged general strike, the paralysis of the factories, of transport, and communications in general means that the state power remains suspended in mid-air, and that it has to break the working class by force or by hunger, or give way to it.

A generalized active strike goes still further because it in fact results in the bureaucracy losing control over the economic and political organization of the country. In one of the clandestine bulletins, it was pointed out that in 1981 in Poland "it became evident that a civil society bound together by solidarity and organization is capable not only of interrupting production for a period but also of resuming production on its own and on new bases."

It was the threat of such active strikes, embracing several regions and with a perspective of spreading these actions to the entire country that made the bureaucracy decide, the bulletin says, to go into action: "Without any further hesitation, it prepared to establish a state of siege and crush Solidarity by force (19)."

The determination that the workers have demonstrated over the last five months shows that they are far from having given up the demands they were pressing before December. The problem now is how to prepare the way for the transition from the immediate objectives, on which it is correct for the movement to concentrate its forces, on to the more general objectives that have underlain the whole struggle of the Polish working class for what will soon be two years. They come together in the fight of the working class to take control of their own affairs, that is to regain the power that has been usurped from them.

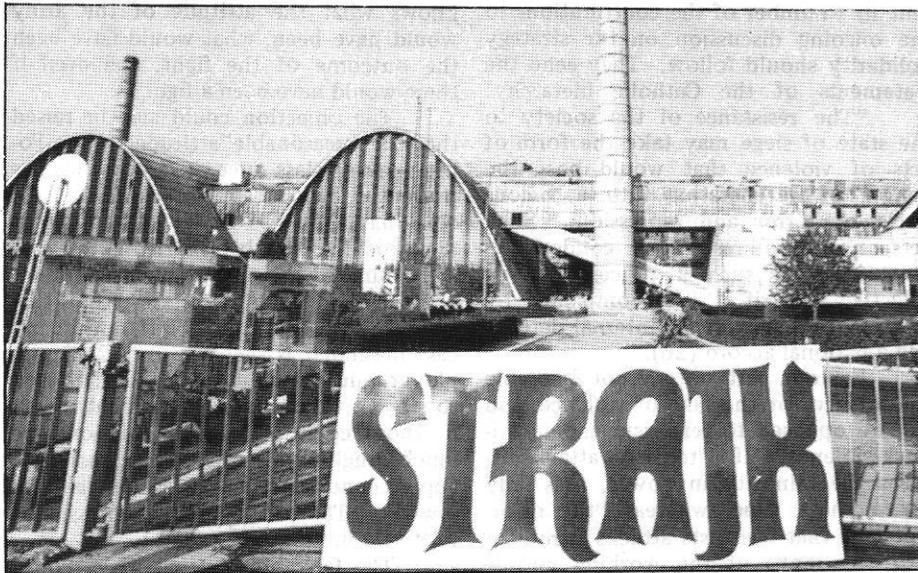
Over and above the debate on the tactical means and the method of struggle to achieve this objective—and the many possible steps between strikes at selected points and a generalized active strike—there is a question that Solidarity will have to answer if the movement is to avoid being driven back to a purely defensive position, as was the case on December 13. That is the fight to win the army.

## WORKERS GUARDS

General Jaruzelski's crackdown should have opened the eyes of those

who believed that they could count on the Polish army because it was made up of "sons of the people." Of course—and this is particularly true in Poland where the ranks of the army are conscripts—close ties exist between the soldiers and the working class, ties that count in a period of struggle such as we are going through.

However, as in the capitalist countries, in the bureaucratized workers states, the army is primarily a repressive apparatus. It obstructs, keeps close check on, and tries to limit to the greatest possible degree relations between the conscripts and their families, that is, with the society. It is a war machine that carries on a constant propaganda campaign around so-called patriotic ideals, which are designed in fact to preserve the authority and privileges of the ruling caste.



"Strike!" (DR)

No matter how sharp the internal battles may be between the military apparatus and the administrative apparatus and the apparatus of the Polish Communist Party, the junta in power is no less a faithful defender of the interests of the bureaucracy in general. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that 90% of the higher officers in the Polish army are members of the Communist Party and that a number of them have gone through Soviet training schools.

Jacek Kuron expresses the hope that "the movement will undertake immediate and by all possible means agitation among the soldiers and the police. They must be urged to build coordinating committees and contact has to be established with these committees."

Kuron is correct on this point, and he is right as well when he says that a mass uprising against the military dictatorship will only be effective if the resistance movement secures the cooperation of an important section of the troops. Solidarity had an important stake in this before December 13. After the crackdown, many activists were prompted to draw a critical balance sheet of the Solidarity leadership's attitudes on this question.

However, it is worth noting what Leon Trotsky said on this subject: "It would be childish to think that it is possible to win over the entire army by propaganda alone and thereby to make the revolution in a general sense unnecessary. The army is heterogeneous, and its disparate elements are welded together in the iron ring of discipline (20)."

"It is perfectly illusory to think that the 'army going over to the people' can happen as a peaceful simultaneous process. The ruling classes facing a matter of life or death never give up positions of their own accord under the influence of theoretical reasoning about the composition of the army. The political attitude of the troops, this great unknown in all revolutions, can only become clear when the soldiers find themselves face to face with the people (21)."

Trotsky also pointed out that the decisive sections of the army can only go over to the proletariat if the workers demonstrated to the soldiers "their real determination and capacity to struggle for power to the last drop of blood. Such a struggle necessarily presupposes the arming of the workers (22)."

The question of workers guards (militias) arises here. Such guards, to be really effective, have to be armed. They can be formed on the basis of strike pickets. "In every strike and every street demonstration, it is necessary to popularize the idea of the need for forming self-defense detachments (23)." "A general strike is a partial strike generalized. A workers militia is strike pickets generalized (24)."

Among the Solidarity leaders, voices are being raised today that testify

18. *Karta*, No. 12, March 26, 1982, Warsaw bulletin.

19. *CDN*, No. 1, March 31, 1982.

20. Leon Trotsky, *War and the Fourth International*.

21. Leon Trotsky, 1905, Editions de Minuit, Paris 1969, pp. 236-237.

22. Trotsky, *War and the Fourth International*.

23. Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Program*.

24. Trotsky, *Once Again, Whither France?*

to an understanding of the need for forming workers guards clandestinely and for them going into action at the moment of decisive confrontation between the working class and the military dictatorship. Bogdan Lis pointed this up clearly recently: "Our struggle is leading to a general strike and, in contrast to December 1981, we will be obliged to take the decision to defend the plants on strike (25)."

A large part of the membership of Solidarity has always upheld—and many continue to uphold—the idea of passive *resistance*, in the sense of refusing to respond by violence to violence. The whole strategy of self-limitation put forward by the majority of the leadership and of the experts in Solidarity is based precisely on the idea that bloodshed has to be prevented at any cost. This idea remains present in a number of the contributions to the ongoing discussion on the strategy Solidarity should follow. They echo the statements of the Catholic hierarchy:

"The resistance of the society to the state of siege may take the form of acts of violence that would pose the danger of degenerating into a vicious circle of terror and repression. Such acts must be resolutely condemned. Opposition to such a process will be effective only if it is accompanied by progress in achieving an internal detente and a national accord (26)."

For our part, we are not favorable to violence for the sake of violence, and we are opposed to terrorism and individual violence. If a terrorist attack disturbs the minority in power, it is only for a short time, whereas "the disorientation that terrorists attacks introduce into the ranks of the working masses themselves is much more deepgoing. If all you need to accomplish your objective is to get a revolver, what is the purpose of all the exertions of the class struggle (27)?"

The only way of convincing the workers who are tempted to engage in terrorist actions of the ineffectiveness of individual violence is to offer them methods of struggle that enable the masses to resist the assaults of the regime and win victory, including on the military level. They cannot be convinced by preaching passivity to them.

We reject the doctrine of the pacifists who reject the use of violence *in all circumstances*, because this inevitably means the defeat for the working class at the hands of a minority that has arms and is determined to use them to preserve its power. The whole history of workers uprisings in the so-called socialist countries demonstrates this. Therefore, the appeals launched by the church to "resist the temptation to hate" are useless.

"We turn to the church in the expectation that it will tell us what to do, how to defend ourselves. And what do we hear? 'Do not let yourselves hate'... When the church warns us against the use of force, it is appealing much more to society than to the regime, since it admits—and correctly so—that the latter,

which rests on force alone cannot renounce it...But can society—the workers and the youth—renounce it (23)?" This question was posed by an activist full of doubts about the attitude of the church.

The objection will be raised that for 16 months the workers were able to find a path that enabled them to avoid shedding blood, and that this was essential in view of the trauma left by the bloody suppression of the workers uprising in December 1970.

But to arm to defend yourself does not mean immediately opening fire. The use of force is less necessary to the extent that you have force—in this case, arms—on your side. If the workers guards, which began hastily to be set up the very week before the crackdown, had been able to resist the tanks of the police with something more than bare hands, who knows what the attitude of the army would have been, what would have been the outcome of the fight, and even if there would have been a fight?

The objection could also be raised that the "reasonable" attitude of the Polish working class since the crackdown has prevented bloodshed, by contrast with what has happened under other military dictatorships, notably in Latin America.

But, as the author of a document circulating in Poland stresses, "the situation in those countries is different in any case inasmuch as the state is not the employer, and the military regime is obliged to stop at the factory gates. That is why in those countries, police sanctions are much tougher, because it is impossible to apply economic sanctions against labor as a whole. That is why police repression is relatively limited here (29)."

The fact remains that if the Polish working class decides to go openly onto the offensive, as it began to do in early May, the military regime will not hesitate to use force and arms. The workers cannot wait passively in the hope that the enemy will also demonstrate "reasonableness."

Of course, setting up workers guards may seem insufficient in the face of military forces armed to the teeth and with very advanced technical means. But if such units have the support of the entire working class and the society, they will be a decisive element in opening the way for revolutionary fraternization between the people and the army, by demonstrating to the soldiers that the workers are determined to resist the shock troops of the regime. And the workers will have added an invaluable ace to their hand for winning over to their armed struggle "this great unknown in all revolutions."

More and more Polish trade unionists agree that the errors made by Solidarity before December 1981 must not be repeated: "The Polish revolution was supposed to triumph in legality, without violence, without resorting to force," we read in an underground bulletin. "We all shared the conviction—naïve as it seem today—that recourse to force could be avoided (30)."

Before December 13, Jacek Kuron declared himself in favor of nonviolence. Today he says: "It has to be acknowledged that violence yields only to violence, and it has to be said clearly that the movement will not refuse to use force."

What should we think, therefore, about the arguments that such a strategy is inapplicable in Poland inasmuch as it would increase the risks of Soviet intervention? It cannot be denied that such a danger exists. But has it not been shown by experience that the USSR is determined to intervene—even indirectly—in the Polish situation in order to try to force acceptance of subjection?

If the Polish workers are not prepared—and they are not—to renounce their aspirations, they have to continue to search for a way that will enable them finally to take control of the affairs of the country. And it is obvious that it will be hard to win such a victory if they remain isolated, if the workers in the other countries dominated by the Kremlin bureaucracy do not follow their example, if their struggle is not actively supported by the workers movement in the capitalist countries.

However, unless the objectives put forward by Solidarity since August 1980 are *explicitly* abandoned, there is no other way out but to try to build up a more favorable relationship of forces. And this has to be done on the basis of the understanding that the best way to make the enemy retreat is to make them feel your strength, relying on the fact that the Polish workers are not the only ones who aspire to the establishment of a radically different society.

In an article published clandestinely, we can read: "Not only in Poland, but also in other countries in our camp, the demand for thoroughgoing reforms in the management of production and directing public affairs has been ripening for a long time. To be sure, the economic crisis in Poland is particularly deep. But this crisis is manifested in all the countries in the Eastern bloc (including the USSR) by declining production, increased indebtedness to the West, and technological underdevelopment.

"In certain countries, embryonic forms of an independent trade-union movement have already developed. And, while for the moment it does not seem that the Polish revolution has found imitators, it is no less true that East Europe has entered into a period of profound transformation, which may of course be delayed but cannot be stopped by force. And it is in this perspective that we must consider the events in Poland (31)."

25. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 11, Warsaw, April 28, 1982.

26. *Theses of the Social Council of the Primate of Poland*.

27. Leon Trotsky, *The Stalinist Bureaucracy and the Kirov Assassination*.

28. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 9, April 6, 1982.

29. "Tentative d'analyse de la situation du pays," published by the *Bulletin d'information*, No. 28, Paris.

30. *CDN*, *op cit*.

31. *CDN*, *op cit*.

# "War of position"

The dominant idea of Jacek Kuron's article is, in my opinion, contained in the affirmation 'If you do not want war, prepare yourself for war!' This text is an important element of the discussion on a programme of action. Jacek Kuron, eminent pedagogue, specialist in social problems, is endowed with a rare faculty for foreseeing the effects of events which he analyses. However, I do not myself subscribe either to the theses contained in his article, nor to the conclusions he draws.

All the reasoning of Jacek Kuron is founded on his conviction that a social explosion is inevitable, given the extreme poverty, the violence, and the absence of other forms of effective action for the struggle. In my opinion, society in its entirety is convinced that an explosion could not resolve the problems with which it is faced, but on the contrary, increases the risk of brutal utilisation of the internal forces, and even of an external intervention. The clarity, the discipline, and the organisation of society are the only way to avoid an explosion.

The population is responding to the terror of the regime by elaborating other forms of action than those based on violence. This is the direction in which they must orient their efforts in elaborating a programme of action. We must try all methods of action before employing the ultimate weapon.

This is why I consider that the creation of a resistance 'prepared to liquidate the occupation by an organised mass uprising' is inappropriate. I estimate that, in addition, such an undertaking is impossible, above all because of the military-police structure of the state, perfectly adapted to the dismantling and liquidation of organisations of this type. The fact that the occupier talks the same language, acts on known terrain, can only facilitate infiltration. What is more, we are surrounded by states based on the same regime.

I would equally like to cast doubt on the statement that only an organised resistance movement could stop the wave of terrorism. In my opinion this schema is upside down: a centralised movement must receive and carry out directives; if these are lacking, or appear inadequate, it can happen that the organisation takes the road of terrorism. Such a structure can only follow the spiral of terrorism, if that happens.

I am a supporter of a strongly decentralised movement, which will use the most diverse forms of action. Only such

a movement, multifarious and undefined, will be unassailable and difficult to combat. Its unity will be guaranteed by the common agreement on aims: abolition of the state of war, release of the internees and prisoners, and restoration of trade union rights and rights of association.

Furthermore, I do not agree with the statement that a centralised clandestine movement could, by the threat of a general strike, exert strong enough pressure on the supporters of compromise in the government's camp to force them to actively argue for an understanding.

I think that such a threat would, on the contrary, lead to the unity of the governmental camp around the project of destroying our movement. Only the faction of the apparatus which wants an external intervention would emerge stronger. And Moscow could be interested in such an intervention, if it would allow it to hope for a definitive elimination of 'troublemakers' and 'anti-socialist elements'. The existence of an organised, centralised, active, resistance movement would make such an elimination more probable.

One last argument against the centralist conception of resistance: the division of this organisation—and it seems very difficult to avoid it—would be a new blow against Solidarnosc and the hopes of society. We cannot pay such a price.

To sum up: the creation of a Solidarnosc movement in the form of a monolithic movement, which is prepared for a decisive struggle, carries the danger of provoking a new attempt to pacify the people by the internal security forces. Even if we are able to defend ourselves, we could be faced with an external intervention. I consider therefore that we must start from the position of avoiding an overall confrontation with the regime, because that would expose the country to too great a danger and our chances of success—as I have tried to show—are slight.

I am a supporter of a war of position—allow me to use this military expression—which, in my opinion, has the advantage of at the same time being effective and secure. This is the type of resistance that I would like to propose. The different social groups and milieus must construct a mechanism of resistance against the monopolist actions of the authorities in all areas of social life. In basing itself on the existence of an organisation as massive as Solidarnosc, of the independent unions of the peasants, artisans, and students, this resistance could

be massive enough to allow the creation of a social structure independent of the authorities.

Within the workplaces, the primary form for this will be the struggle to seize the right to carry out trade union activities. Thus, it will be necessary to carry through these activities, that is to say to defend the rights of the workers, by all means, including strikes, (but without leaders). One of the essential tasks must be, particularly, in the present economic situation, the struggle for raising wages, and family benefits, given the rise in the cost of living. That will only be possible if the workers defend active militants in different ways.

Other important elements in the creation of an independent social structure could be: the creation, in liaison with the parishes, of committees for social welfare to help those who need it most and ensure means of subsistence to the unemployed (that will limit the impact of the economic blackmail exercised by the regime); the development of an independent press and publishing system (each important enterprise should have its own journal, in each town there should be an independent publishing house); the creation of councils of national education, culture, and sciences in the intellectual milieu (artists, teachers, intelligentsia) which would allow the free acquisition of knowledge and experience; the establishment of a network of workers universities, with a view to forming cadres of the trade unions, the movement of territorial councils and of workers. It is evident that this list will lengthen as we go forward in our activity.

It is certainly not a quick or easy route to success, because it demands long and patient work, and mobilisation supported by a large part of society. But Solidarnosc, a trade union with several million members, with almost a million cadres, lives and acts despite the state of war Solidarnosc therefore has made gains which allow us to think that the way forward proposed is realistic. As for the insurrection, if it turns out to be necessary it will be the final phase of the struggle for the realisation of a national programme for reconstruction of the economy, science, education and independence. ■

Zbigniew BUJAK  
*Tygodnik Mazowsze* No. 8  
Warsaw, 31 March 1982

# "The third alternative"

What will happen if the authorities come to consider that economic underdevelopment and disturbances are less costly than a compromise? If local incidents do not grow into a nationwide revolt? If the occupation lasts a long time, even though in less spectacular forms?

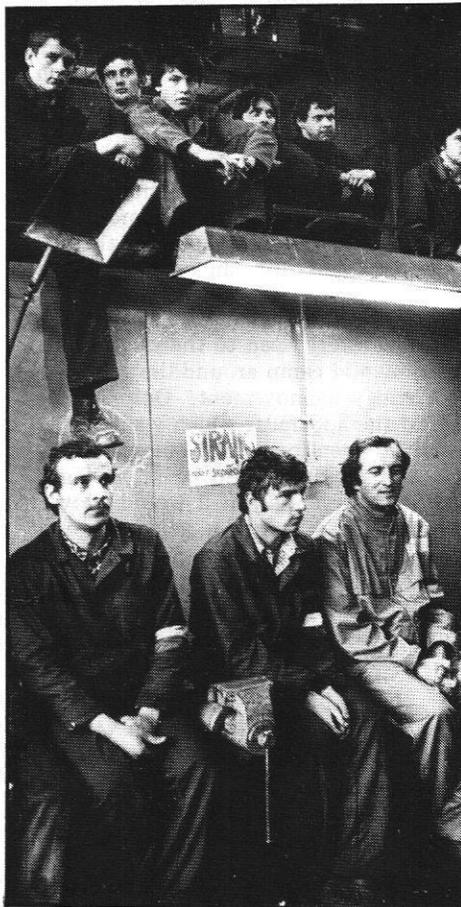
History has known numerous examples of a slow decomposition of power combined with an enduring resistance of society, even, and perhaps above all, when society is faced with famine and poverty. Do we have to prepare for such a possibility, an evolution and not a revolution? If so, what evolution? That depends on society.

Thus, we do not stop at the alternative put forward by Jacek Kuron, the choice between compromise and revolution. We will examine a third possibility: a slow decomposition of the system, accompanied by gradual changes, which could lead to society regaining influence over its own destiny.

If the evolution is to move in this direction, then it is necessary to organise a clandestine Society rather than a clandestine State. That means not to establish a centre which exercises a strict discipline, but a many-centered movement, decentralised, informal, composed of groups, circles, committees, etc., which are independent from each other, largely autonomous, and with freedom of decision. Their role should be to guarantee long-term and effective aid to all those who are persecuted by the regime, to develop the circulation of independent information and uncensored thought, to create a network of social information, and to guarantee self-education. In this way, it will give moral and psychological support to everyone.

This system will lead to a situation where the regime will control empty shops but not the market; employment, but not the means of subsistence of workers; the state-owned mass media, but not the circulation of information; the printing presses, but not publishing; the post and telephones, but not communication; schools, but not education. This self-organisation of society could lead—with time—to a situation where the regime will only have control over the police and a handful of incorrigible collaborators.

Then there will no longer be a third possibility. That would imply that the re-



*Striking Polish workers (DR)*

gime would be overthrown, that the barriers separating it from society would be opened little by little, and that society would gradually rid itself of its chains.

No spectacular compromise, but a gradual return to the rights of citizens, self-management, and at last participation in society and continuous broadening of the scope of decision taking, above all on the economic, cultural, and social life of the country. The prospect of the restoration of liberty should weigh more heavily in the balance than the risks run in participating in the clandestine society.

Only when it is possible to re-establish social control over society will the attraction of the clandestine society diminish, in equal measure to the progress of the re-establishment. The price the regime would have to pay to re-establish its influence would be democratisation and progressive liberalisation.

Long-term mass clandestine activity in a nationwide organisation is impossible

in a modern police state, which is surrounded by similar regimes, and like them all, watched over by a great neighbouring power. Therefore, to create such a centre would be loaded with danger of a premature explosion, or its destruction, which could be a defeat that we cannot allow ourselves. This is why only a smaller group can take the risk of constituting the embryo of a 'National Centre', and, better, regional centres. This embryo of a clandestine state can thus only be a potential supplementary threat for the regime. Its influence could grow in the clandestine society, at the point where it turns out to be necessary.

Thus, it is only in the final phase of the struggle that the clandestine state will find its life and its support in the clandestine society. Until then, the clandestine society should be autonomous and avoid too frequent contact with the central structure. This will allow it at the same time to strengthen the protection of that structure and protect society from defeat. For then, even the destruction of the clandestine state would only be a setback. The clandestine society would continue to live and could rebuild that which is destroyed.

This third possibility particularly merits more attention because another danger is taking shape. Empires, shaken by internal conflicts, hit by crises, threatened from without, have often resorted to raising the stakes by moving to the offensive and to aggression. Such a policy allows a rapid growth of military potential, without counting the cost, and closing the ranks of masses around the regime and turning their attention away from the tragic situation of society. To say in our situation, like Jacek Kuron, that 'armed intervention would be the last act of the USSR' is small consolation. ■

Wiktor KULERSKI  
*Tygodnik Mazowsze* No. 8  
Warsaw 31 March 1982

**SOLIDARNOSĆ**

# "You have an historic chance..."

As we saw in the polemic published in *Tygodnik Mazowsze* No. 8, between Zbigniew Bujak and Wiktor Kulerski on the one side, and myself on the other, there are important differences in our appreciation of the political situation, and which methods of activity to choose. This is not in itself a bad thing. But, if as we hope, the discussion is to be useful, then we must understand each others arguments fully.

If I have understood properly, your proposal is to build a movement in the image of that we called the 'social self-defence' movement before August 1980. That is, a movement based on the organisation of people in different milieus which allows them to come together to resolve the problems that they face. This self-organisation can serve as a basis for the development of more general activities, publishing, education circles, programmatic discussions. In my article *Reflections on a programme of action* in 1976, I insisted that this type of movement must be based on the full autonomy of local and sectoral action groups. Forgive me for this self-advertisement, but I want to emphasise how close your ideas are to mine. The truth of this was demonstrated in the lead-up to the August 1980 victory, which is already an irreversible victory. Thus, I am not surprised that this idea is now meeting with wide support. In searching for historical analogies we look at everything, and try to base ourselves on experience. But we must not forget that we are discussing methods of action, and these are dependent above all on the conditions of struggle, and these are very different today from August 1980.

What are the indispensable conditions for the development of a self-defence movement? I see three:

- each person must be able to act;
- this activity must be able to reach success;

- the social system within which we are building the movement must have resources, even minimal, to allow it to develop.

The system existing under Edward Gierek, from 1970, fulfilled the first two conditions. That team wanted to govern by basing itself on the social consensus. This is why it forced the apparatus to concede to pressure.

Today, the generals and the secretaries have decided not only to bypass the consensus of opinion but even to govern against it. The basis of their power is

their ability to break up demonstrations, to smash strikes, to arrest, to intern, to beat up, to shoot....The generals and secretaries are so strong in this sense that they will not move an inch under pressure. All this has already been said and shown in practice. We should not be under any illusions. We should also point out that they cannot move under pressure because they do not have any room for manoeuvre.

They cannot lower wages, sack workers nor reduce food rations. And as you know, any social movement—at least one that considers itself the co-manager of the country—cannot give up economic demands. We cannot stop the growing economic agony of our country without a true national reconciliation. My *Theses...* begins with a justification of this assertion, which unfortunately you overlook in your polemic.



Thus, in these conditions of a state of war, we can only hope that a self-defence movement, or another form of social movement, would be able to bring about gradual change, by the sole fact of its existence.

There is a mass movement developing underground, within which it is possible to organise publishing, educational, and—most importantly—other forms of activities which express the aspirations of society. Is this why people take part in the movement, despite the risks? I do not think so. *A mass social movement is always a response to great aspirations*

*which can be achieved through united action, and can only be achieved in this way.*

Education is possible without such a movement. Publishing activity, as an end in itself, only involves a tiny minority of society. Demonstrations cannot lead to any immediate success. They are, of course, very important for morale, inasmuch as they show the strength of the movement. But, if this strength is used only to raise morale, it will eventually become powerless.

At the moment a number of people are absorbed in organisational tasks. They are building mass organisations which tend to take on tasks linked to the realisation of the desired aims. The most limited, and most popular, aim today is to get conditions which will allow people to live normally. The tasks that you put first cannot, any more than any other local or sectoral activity, bring us more than a millimetre nearer this aim. No clandestine activity alone can get there. Because clandestine activity is always a preparation for something. If you do not explain practically what you are preparing for then there will be an organisation without aims, but with deception, discontent, and hate....From this hate, terrorism is born.

An organisation with a central leadership could, within certain limits, prevent unproductive acts of aggression and despair, if it exists effectively and is able to reach all layers of the movement. But such a leadership will lose all its influence if it does not seem to have a programme for getting out of the present situation. Let us note, by the way, that organisational activity at the moment will naturally lead on to centralising the movement. If the leaders of Solidarnosc, or only one section of them, try to slow down the movement then several centres will appear, which, among other conflicts, would produce ideal conditions for a provocation.

You say that the people can hold on longer, and you refer to historical experience. On that we disagree on the facts. Last year national revenue dropped by 13 per cent. This year, if we obtain significant aid from the East, and some Western credits, then the national revenue will drop by 17-22 per cent *more*, according to the officially published experts' forecasts. Leaving aside the fact that there will not be significant aid from the East, and that to obtain Western credits at least requires some guarantee.

Let us take only this new reduction of 20 per cent. This is a catastrophe unknown in Western society. No one is able to predict the political, social, and psychological effects.

On what precisely do you base your belief that the Polish people will be able to calmly support such a catastrophe? In a situation, moreover, where the government continues to provoke them by its arrogance, and by the terror it exercises? On the fact that they have been patient from January up till now? Let us leave on one side the fact that life is going to get worse in the future. On the contrary, let us note that the maturity of Polish society, on which we all agree, is nothing less than the confidence that they have in Solidarnosc. That is to say, in you and in the resistance movement.

The people are keeping their despair, their anger and their rage to themselves because they have thrown themselves into activity, to which you have called them (or to which they think you have called them). They think that you know the way, and will lead them to victory. But, they will realise very quickly that the slogan 'stay underground' is the most costly way to defeat.

Then what will happen? Perhaps the government will be able to prevent a national explosion. Perhaps there will be a whole number of explosions, more or less local, put down in a more or less bloody manner. Let us add to this the social and political effects, and effects on morale, of an economic catastrophe. Even without a foreign intervention we might witness the destruction of the nation. I do not know if Solidarnosc can allow itself another defeat. But I do know that we cannot escape defeat by refusing to fight.

As its leaders we have taken a tremendous responsibility upon ourselves by organising Solidarnosc. We cannot run away from it today by refusing to put forward answers to the central questions. I am ready to announce maximum concessions from society, in order to avoid the catastrophe which this state of war is bringing to Poland. But these concessions cannot be counterposed to the essential condition for a social compromise. The creation of a situation where the regime will make an agreement with society, and not with the State, even under different names and represented by different personalities. In other words, the indispensable pre-condition for compromise is that society is organised independently from the state power.

We cannot base our programme on the hope that the generals and secretaries will willingly accept a compromise. We have to acknowledge that violence only retreats in front of violence. And to openly state that the movement itself will not refuse to use force.

For me it is necessary to make this statement more precise, by saying, for example, 'in the summer', or 'in the autumn'. This is the best way to prevent acts of desperation or aggression. From that moment on all the demonstrations of



mass feeling in the country—lighted candles, minute's silences, hunger strikes, common articles of clothing, work stoppages—would recall the threat, and show that the movement is ready.

I imagine that the movement will start agitation among the soldiers and police militia immediately. We have to call on them to co-ordinate their activities among themselves, and keep in contact with their co-ordinations. In my opinion, this is the principal task of the movement.

The uprising thus announced could well take the form of an indefinite general strike. But in doing that we would give the generals and the secretaries the ability to attack in places of their choosing, and thus concentrate their superiority of men and materials in a given place. Therefore, if we are not sure that the majority of the soldiers and police militia will co-operate with us, it would be necessary to combine the strike with attacks on specific centres of information and power. In agreement with those soldiers who declare themselves ready to come over to our side. We could equally well announce that such an attack will take place where factories on strike are threatened.

The belief that the attitude of the secretaries and generals is hardened by fear of an uprising could be well founded, if one thinks that anything else other than fear leads to concessions. You deceive them by declaring that the movement will not use violence. They think that they are safe and will not give up.

The authorities have undoubtedly had discussions with the Church hierarchy, on national conciliation and social agreement. But they have only done that to give a cover to a practice that is quite contrary to that.

From the moment that it becomes a real danger the Church will cease to be a spokesperson and become a mediator. You have seen how the moderate proposals of the Social Council of the Polish

primate are now considered as extremist because they are the only alternative to the official ones. When you are considered as spokespeople these proposals could be a real platform for compromise. It is true that if such a compromise was made those who terrorise would be on the margins of social life. Too bad.

I do not ask you to proclaim the offensive. On the contrary, I ask you to organise the centre of the movement, and an effective information network. It is important to emphasise that this will not undermine the authority of different sections of the movement. But it will limit the danger of provocations, and thoughtless actions. Because certain actions should be the exclusive responsibility of the centre.

I call on you to declare that, if the authorities do not listen to society; if they refuse to comply with its will, expressed in different ways; if they do not take action to save the country from catastrophe; if they do not accept conciliation with society; the movement will be obliged to use violence.

Lastly, I call on you to undertake agitation among the soldiers and police militia. You will find a good reception among them, and that alone would be a mortal danger for the regime. And, above all, it is necessary to have a programme which is agreed by all the principal leaders of the resistance.

Forgive me for this lecturing tone. I know that you work hard, and you have had important successes. But we find ourselves in a situation from which there appears no way out. Although we are not prepared we have to confront it. It is up to us to indicate a way out from this situation which appears to be an impasse.

You would not have chosen such a burden, but you could not shirk it. You have an historic opportunity....

Jacek KURON  
*Tygodnik Mazowsze* No. 13  
Warsaw, 12 May, 1982

# Czechoslovak bureaucrats fear spread of the Polish example

Anna LIBERA

A little more than three years ago, the Czechoslovak authorities arrested fifteen members of the Committee to Defend the People Unjustly Persecuted (VONS). Six of these were sentenced to prison terms in October 1979. Vaclav Havel and Petr Uhl are still serving their sentences in extremely difficult conditions.

These arrests marked the beginning of a police offensive clearly designed to silence every expression of opposition—underground publications, Charter 77 statements, or the activity of VONS.

This repression, which has not relaxed in three years, as well as the quickness that the Czechoslovak leaders have shown since the beginning to denounce what they call the “Polish counterrevolution,” appear in a new light if they are looked at in connection with the worsening of the country’s economic situation.

\* \* \*

With a zero growth rate, 1981 was the second worst year in the history of the Czechoslovak economy since the emergence of the People’s Republic. It was exceeded only by 1968, during which an absolute decline in industrial production (-2.2%) promoted the big debate on economic reform that was to pave the way for the Prague Spring. The parallel stops there, and this crisis is in no way comparable to the one in Poland or in Rumania. But the economic situation is serious enough to absorb the attention and the efforts of all the leading circles in Prague.

## POLAND IS CLOSEBY

The reactions of the Czechoslovak leaders to the events in Poland have been swift and drastic. Already on September 4, 1980, the editors of the Czechoslovak CP organ *Rude Pravo* fulminated about imperialist plots and local reactionaries in the sister country across their northern border. On this occasion, they reminded their readers of the “Lessons of the Development of the Crisis in the Party and Society After the Thirteenth Congress of the Party in 1971,” that is, the lessons drawn by the normalized Czechoslovak Communists.

The “Lessons” focused in particular on the forms under which the counterrevolution concealed itself in

social demagogy, imprudent demands, wildcat strikes, the fight for independent unions. The parallel with Poland was clear, and the editors concluded, moreover, that these lessons were not restricted to Czechoslovakia: “The international Communist and workers movement has added them to the reservoir of revolutionary experience (1).”

A few days later, Vasil Bilak, the ideologist of the Czechoslovak CP, noted, referring to Poland, the doctrine of “limited sovereignty” of the countries in the “Socialist Camp,” (2), a doctrine which cost the Czechoslovak workers dear, but was the basis on which Bilak and his like were put in power.



(DR)

In a speech to the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak CP in October 1980, Bilak expounded this doctrine once again in detail. Basing himself on the criteria laid out in the “Lessons,” he characterized the Baltic strikes as “counterrevolutionary.” After expressing his hope that the Polish Communists would be capable of regaining their footing, he concluded: “We do not hide the fact that what is going on in Poland concerns us deeply—politically, ideologically, and economically.”

“The Czechoslovak Communists and our people are for progress. The cause of socialism is dearer to them than anything else. This is particularly true when a socialist country is involved. Our Polish comrades can always count on the aid of our party and our people (3).”

The Czechoslovak CP leaders have never resorted to the prudent language that the Polish leaders have been forced to adopt. A few weeks before General Jaruzelski’s crackdown, in a discussion over Radio Prague, a party ideologist denounced any perspective of “national unity” with Solidarnosc, and put forward “his own” solution—a deepgoing purge of the Polish CP (which after that could really launch a process of normalization) and total confidence in the army, whose organ was one of the only remaining unbreached bastions of “Marxism—Leninism.”

## A CAMPAIGN WITH TWO TARGETS

The Czechoslovak leaders obviously fear that an advance of the class struggles of the Polish working class would revive old demons in their own country. Even if for the time being, the strikes developing on the other side of the border did not touch off an open movement of sympathy among the Czechoslovak workers, the discontent aroused by the economic difficulties worried the Czechoslovak CP leaders, who were preparing to impose a rigorous austerity policy.

This worry came to a head when the economic results for 1981 were announced. The growth rate was 0.2 percent, in contrast to the 2.7 percent projected by the annual plan. Industrial production grew by 2 percent relative to 1980, but this was 25 percent lower than the initial projections of the plan, and 15 percent lower than the revised projections made during the year.

In mining and construction, growth rates were negative—respectively -2.4 percent and -2 percent. The worst result was in agriculture (-3.4 percent relative to 1980, but relative to the targets set by the plan in 1981, the result was -230 percent).

The signs pointing to economic difficulties had been visible for several years but the Czechoslovak leaders proved unable to respond. At the start of 1980 already, they were obliged to admit that many of the projections in the Sixth Five Year Plan (1976-80) would not be achieved, in particular in the realm of energy and construction.

1. *Rude Pravo*, September 4, 1980.
2. *Rude Pravo*, September 13, 1980.
3. *Rude Pravo*, October 14, 1980.

At that time, the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak CP, followed by the government, adopted a series of "new measures to improve economic management." These called for strengthening centralized planning, changing the attitudes of plant managers and workers, more autonomy for the enterprises in the framework laid down by the plan, and better utilization of resources (raw materials, energy, labor, and investment) (4).

These very timid steps remained in large part on paper, since the very word "reform" makes the present Czechoslovak leaders freeze in their tracks. But, most of all, these steps did not in any way get to the sources of the economic difficulties.

The root of the problem above all was the option made in 1970 for an investment policy stretched out over too long a period. Thus, enormous amounts of capital and resources were locked up in uncompleted projects. And the planners were unable to readjust their projections in time, when alarm signals began to appear and petroleum prices went up.

In a document on the economic situation published in March 1982, Charter 77 gave a series of significant examples, based on the official statistics given to the members of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak CP.

In western Slovakia, out of nine key projects scheduled for completion during the 1976-80 plan, only one was actually finished in 1980. In southern Bohemia, out of 140 building projects included in the plan, only 8 met their schedules. In 1980, there were no less than 119 projects on which no work had been done (5).

Therefore, for the entire post-1968 period, if you consider all sectors of the economy, the volume of capital locked up in unfinished projects exceeded the

volume of additional national revenue created annually.

This situation has been further aggravated by a series of errors and wrong choices by the planners. Thus, they pushed the development of steel production at the very time when this industry was dropping steeply. On the other hand, the electronics industry was largely neglected. Here we see one of the effects of the choices imposed by the pressures of various factions of the bureaucracy.

Moreover, the waste of raw materials has weighed heavily on the economic results. Thus, for the period of the 1976-80 plan, waste of metals cost 10 billion crowns (about US dollars 900 million at the official exchange rate). With this amount 460,000 Skoda cars could have been produced, or 120,000 apartments built (this is still according to the figures reproduced in the Charter 77 document).

The nonfulfillment of the plan's targets in all sectors, in particular in the engineering industry, the main exporting sector (6) gave rise to a shortage of convertible currency that in turn made it more difficult to import the raw materials needed to complete the projects underway.

This problem is made worse by the fact that the Czechoslovak leaders are trying to avoid increasing their debts to Western banks (these remain at the relatively low figures of 3.8 billion dollars).

Within the framework of COMECON, import restrictions have been decided on. The same goes for imports from capitalist countries. These restrictions apply, for example, to petroleum and to livestock feeds, even if this endangers the growth of the herds.

In these conditions, the Czechoslovak CP leaders cannot try to stimulate one sector without automatically affecting investment in another. So, in an ef-

fort to make economies, they have adopted a recovery plan that amounts to a rigorous austerity program for the workers. It provides for severe cuts in investment in the social services, which are considered unprofitable.

In the health sector, investment has been reduced by 10%, and similar cuts have been made in education and culture. Savings are projected in the public transport sector. And apartment rents, as well as the cost of heating and electricity, are to be raised.

In October 1981, the price of gasoline, diesel fuel, and heating oil were also increased. In January 1982, there were increases in the price of meat, meat products, fowl, game, fish, rice, cigarettes, rice, alcohol, wine, and similar products.

Even though people continue to have more money than goods to spend it on, given the scarcity of goods, real wages have declined over the past two years and this is getting worse. For the first time since 1968-69, the regime can no longer guarantee rising living standards or even the maintenance of the existing one, although what it offered "in exchange" for the elimination of democratic rights and freedoms was material well being.

#### REPRESSION REMAINS THE FAVORITE WEAPON

Confronted with this economic balance sheet, the Czechoslovak CP leaders

4. *Rude Pravo*, March 14, 1980. See also *Cahiers des pays de l'Est*, Paris, May 1981.

5. Charter 77, "Informations et questions sur certains problèmes économiques relatifs à l'augmentation des prix des produits alimentaires de base," March 1982, *l'Alternative*, Paris, May-August 1982.

6. In 1981, exports to the COMECON countries increased by 0.7% as against the 4.3% projected. Exports to other countries increased by 0.8% as against the 4.5% projected.

*Paris demonstration in support of Czech political prisoners (DR)*



are striving at all cost to prevent a political destabilization. They are acutely aware of the growing discontent of the population, which is especially critical of the pay-off artists and the various speculators who are profiting from the scarcities.

Between the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Congresses of the Party, 47,515 letters and complaints about such abuses were made public (7). In the party itself and in the trade-union movement, more and more voices are being raised against the incompetence of the leaders (8).

Of course, the Czechoslovak CP leaders orchestrate their speeches about this in a demagogic way, talking about "improving the functioning of socialist democracy on all levels" and criticizing "those who abuse their positions to gain personal advantages." There has even been an article by Alois Indra saying that the Czechoslovak CP leadership "lost contact with the masses," and that the party itself was not in the best shape (9).

At a recent congress of the trade unions, the Czechoslovak CP leaders appealed to the leaders of the Revolutionary Trade Union movement to devote themselves more to defending the workers interests. In the light of the economic difficulties, it is easy to understand why such declarations are being made at a time when the leadership is appealing to the masses to make "greater efforts."

However, for safety's sake, the bureaucracy relies first and foremost on suppressing every voice of opposition that might strike a cord in the latent discontent that is appearing in various areas.

The eighteen months that have gone by since the Polish summer have been marked by an unbroken string of arrests, jailings, and daily threats and harassments against oppositionists. The authorities have been stepping up 48-hour detentions as well as trials.

On September 6, 1980, thirty signers of Charter 77 were arrested right af-

ter they had drawn up a message of solidarity with the Baltic strikers. They were released after the expiration of the legal limit of detention. But at the end of the month, twelve other persons were arrested when they were going to a meeting of the VONS. Since then the authorities have kept the Chartists under constant surveillance, increased the physical attacks on them by "unknown persons," and systematically applied harsh techniques in interrogating them.

The objective is twofold—to prevent any possibility for meetings and to break the resistance of the oppositionists one by one. The authorities also launched a full-scale offensive against the underground publishing carried out under the name of *Pellice* (Padloc Press). In February, they seized a lot of manuscripts in the home of the writer Lucwik Vaculik, one of the main movers in the underground publishing. They also staged raids against a number of the people who typed the manuscripts and seized many typewriters.

In May 1981, in connection with the arrest of two young French people who were transporting books to Czechoslovakia, the authorities arrested and charged sixteen Czechoslovaks with "ideological conspiracy." Ten were immediately jailed. Among those charged were some of those most prominent in the intellectual debates of the 1960s (10). These people are still awaiting trial. It keeps being postponed because of the lack of evidence against them.

Another significant event was the recent search of the home of Jaroslav Sabata. The authorities seized only one thing—all the notes that he had been accumulating for a year to write a book on Poland.

There has also been a particular increase in repression against Catholics, to an extent not seen since the 1950s. This is certainly one of the effects of Poland. But it seems also that the Czechoslovak authorities are seriously worried

by the growing influence of the church among the youth.

Karel Hruza, head of the government's Secretariat on Church Affairs did not conceal his concern in an interview with the *New York Times* at seeing the youth turn toward the church "in search of a new aim in life." But here the authorities' first reaction is to repress. On September 28, 1981, in Olomouc, six Catholics (two priests and four lay people) were sentenced to two years in prison for circulating such "subversive" religious publications as the Catechism and Pope John Paul II's latest encyclical.

Facing this systematic persecution and growing difficulties in their daily lives, the oppositionists remain unyielding. The long document on the economic situation just published by Charter 77 shows how much they are trying to focus their attention on the problems of the workers. Previously, Charter 77 had centered its activity essentially on the defense of democratic rights.

This indicates that currents in the opposition are also drawing the lessons of Poland and are stressing the need to make a linkup with the concerns of the working class. Another indication of this was the announcement about a year ago of the formation of a Committee for Free Trade Unions.

In this difficult struggle, the Czechoslovak oppositionists need all our help. At a time when the Polish workers are defying the state of siege to reassert their rights, it is essential to include support for the Czechoslovak oppositions in all solidarity actions. ■

7. *Courrier des pays de l'Est*, Paris, May 1981, p. 41.

8. Charter 77, *op. cit.*

9. Alois Indra, *Nove Slovo*, March 11, 1982.

10. Eva Kanturkova, Jirina Siklova, Jan and Jiri Ruml, Jaromir Horec, Jiri Muller, Jan Mlynarik, Karel Kyncl, Miroslav Kusy, Milan Simecka, Jiri Hajel, Ivan Havel, Josef Jablonicky, Karel Holomek, Zdenek Jicinsky, and Mojmir Klansky.

## Petr Uhl—political prisoner

Petr Uhl has been in prison since his arrest in May 1979. He has been sentenced to five years under the toughest regulations. This imprisonment follows an earlier imprisonment of four years from December 1969 to December 1973.

Peter Uhl is married to Anna Sabatova who herself was imprisoned for two years. She is now bringing up their two children alone; Sacha born in March 1977, and Pavel born in September 1975. Anna's father Jaroslav Sabata has served a seven-and-a-half year sentence.

The conditions of Petr Uhl's imprisonment are:

**Visits:** He is allowed two hours per year, that is one hour every six months. During the visit two guards are present and take notes. At the last visit, in May 1982, his wife was told she was not allowed to kiss him.

**Letters:** He can send a four-page letter every fortnight. He can only receive mail from his wife or parents-in-law. (His parents are dead.)

**Parcels:** He can not have books. He is allowed only two photographs of his wife and children, which can be changed twice a year if the prison authorities permit.

Twice a year he can receive one four-pound parcel, plus

two pounds of fruit or vegetables or vitamins. He can get all the soap he wants!

For eighteen months he was not allowed to receive anything. This was a punishment for having, as chief of his cell (an appointment by the authorities), allowed a fellow prisoner to lie down during the day, which is forbidden.

**Money:** He earns approximately 2000 crowns of which he can spend only seven per cent. This is spent on the newspaper "Rude Pravo" and on food in the canteen; the choice is very limited. He does a very unhealthy and totally uninteresting job.

**Literature:** He is allowed to read only books from the prison library. Other prisoners are usually allowed to study or read books in foreign languages. He was refused permission to do this and to keep up his French and German.

**Isolation:** He is totally cut off from his comrades who were sentenced in the same trial. He shares his cell with four to seven other prisoners. In the daily walk he is not allowed to make contact with other prisoners.

Other VONS prisoners are not quite so badly treated. They receive four visits per year, and can have a parcel at each visit. But, most importantly, they can see each other.

## New success for PRT in Mexico

The election campaign of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT-Mexican section of the Fourth International) had new successes in April. During this stage of the campaign all the states on the Atlantic coast, from Tamulipas on the American border to Yucatan and Quintana Roo on the border with Belize and Guatemala, were visited.

This sixth phase of the electoral campaign took place in a region where the PRT's work has begun just recently. However, from the point of view of both the number of people attending the rallies, and those activists who have asked to join the PRT, the results were very pleasantly surprising.

Two rallies were organised in the state of Tamaulipas—in the border city of Matamoros and in Ciudad Victoria. Some 600 people attended the first, and around 500 the one in Ciudad Victoria, despite a torrential downpour. On the basis of the organising work for these rallies the PRT has developed important political work in the poor neighbourhoods, and in the state peasant organisations. In addition, a PRT regional committee was established in the state.

The campaign had its greatest success in Veracruz. Here rallies were organised in six different cities in a period of four days. In Jalapa some 500 compañeros attended a rally, and fifteen activists, former members of the Communist Party, formed a sympathizers group. In the petroleum centre Poza Rica, a small town of 50,000 people, some 2,000 attended the campaign rally. Previously there was only one PRT comrade there, but after the rally 25 others, mainly oil-refinery workers, asked to join. One thousand people attended the rally in Orizaba, less than half the size of Jalapa. At this rally a Catholic priest from a working-class neighbourhood, who spoke in support of Rosario Ibarra de Piedra's candidacy, had to remove his cassock not to contravene the Mexican law which forbids priests to engage in partisan political activity.

Palamarillo is a small peasant community with a long tradition of struggle, where the PRT plays a leading role. During the rally here over 25 agrarian communities and more than 10 trade unions formed the Worker-Peasant Alliance of Veracruz. This is an important step forward in the process of centralizing the movement and is just one example of how the PRT is carrying out its commitment to build the mass movement through its election campaign.

The PRT made further growth in Minatitlan and in Coatzacoacolas, where some fifty and thirty compañeros respectively asked to join.

In the state of Tabasco, where previously there was not a single PRT member, 600 people attended the meeting. A Tabasco regional committee of the PRT has been formed with some 25 activists.

This leg of the campaign was ended with a rally of 400 in Yucatan, and finally a rally of 100 fishermen was held in Isla Mujeres Quintana Roo. Here Rosario was received by the compañeros in their boats.

To close this phase of the campaign the PRT, together with Naucopac, an organisation of the poor neighbourhood residents of Naucalpan, decided to participate in the official trade-union demonstration for May 1. This participation challenged one aspect of the character of the demonstration—support for President Lopez Portillo, and the PRI government.

During the demonstration more and more trade unions showed their discontent with the government and the PRI. The metro workers from Mexico City opened the way, allowing the PRT-Naucopac contingent into the March, shouting slogans of workers unity. As a result, the PRT-Naucopac contingent of over 3,000 spent almost five minutes under the Presidential balcony shouting anti-government, pro-worker slogans. The PRT was the only left organisation in the demonstration, in which the bulk of the working class took part.

This is the way in which our campaign is advancing and the process of party-building going forward. Special mention should be made of the comrades who organise the rallies and undertake the agitational activity of the campaign. This mobile brigade of twenty full-time comrades who travel the length and breadth of the country both preparing the rallies and consolidating the PRT's new contacts has done an excellent job whose effects will be long-lasting. ■

## Belgian Trotskyists congress

The Ligue Revolutionnaire des Travailleurs/Revolutionnaire Arbeiders Liga (LRT/RAL, Belgian section of the Fourth International) held its sixth congress, since its foundation in 1971, at the end of May.

The conference came at the end of the most important strike wave since the general strike of the winter 1960-61, which shook the bourgeois government of Winfried Martens throughout the months of January, February, and March. Thus the conference came at the appropriate

time to draw the lessons of this movement and equip the organisation with a coherent political line.

The congress discussed a central political resolution which endeavoured to define the changes taking place within the mass workers movement, social-democratic and Christian, at the trade-union and political level. The discussion mainly concentrated on the political intervention in the period which has just opened. A wide majority emerged in favour of an orientation which placed at the centre of its strategy the fight for a common front of the social-democratic and Christian trade-union federations, the FGTB and CSC, on the basis of anti-capitalist demands. This was placed in the perspective of a general strike and its prospect: a workers government based on the mobilisation of the 2.5 million worker members of the FGTB and CSC.

There were two very small minority currents which put forward the embryos of alternatives. One advocated a priority orientation towards the SP-PS, the other a more propagandist position, giving much greater weight to criticism of the reformist leaderships.

The majority of the delegates placed themselves within the framework of the report presented by the outgoing leadership and made a certain number of corrections and improvements to this.

Another resolution, complementing the central political resolution, drew a balance sheet of the trade union work of the LRT/RAL over the last two years, and made an important correction on this point. The premise was that there is a trade-union left in Belgium, composed of thousands of workplace delegates, who struggle independently from the trade-union apparatuses, and for whom it is necessary to immediately mark out perspectives for struggle and centralisation. This led the LRT/RAL to prematurely favour inter-trade union and cross-sectoral regroupments, on very advanced platforms, but in fact outside the trade union structures. This led to an underestimation of the united front, immediate demands, and the struggle to consolidate trade-union oppositions within the trade union structures.

The congress approved a resolution on party-building which unambiguously approved the turn to industry decided at the XI World Congress of the Fourth International in 1979. This question had opened a major political and organisational crisis in the LRT/RAL at the time of its fifth congress in 1980. At the same time the congress gave an important role to the building of a revolutionary youth organisation, Jeune Garde socialiste/Socialistische Jonge Wacht.

The congress also approved a resolution on the former Belgian colony of Zaire, as a result of anti-imperialist work on this very sensitive question which, as the Third International said before its degeneration, must be the 'point of honour' of a revolutionary organisation. ■

# INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

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