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WORKERS' STRUGGLE AND
PERMANENT REVOLUTION
IN EL SALVADOR

THE CARIBBEAN CAULDRON

SALVADOR

GUATEMALA COLOMBIA MEXICO

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EDITORIAL

Central American Peoples Face Imperialist Escalation Worldwide Mobilizations Against the Threat of War

Every day American imperialism takes another step in its military escalation in Central America.

It is continually increasing its financial support for the bloody dictatorships in El Salvador and Guatemala. It is openly prodding the Argentine army to intervene in El Salvador.

Already directly involved in the fighting through the military advisors it has sent to El Salvador, U.S. imperialism is now training 1,500 soldiers and officers of the Salvador junta in bases in the United States.

According to the Washington Post, the CIA is involved in financing harassment operations against the Nicaraguan revolution--the growing number of murderous incursions by reactionary gangs across the Honduran border and terrorist attacks carried out in the interior of Nicaragua.

The so-called Development and Military Aid plan for Central America that Reagan unveiled on February 24 is in fact a cover for increased military involvement. Out of the 350 million dollars appropriated, 60 are explicitly earmarked for military aid. This is in addition to the 26 million already included in the regular budget and the 55 million extended on February 1 for immediate replacement of the aircraft destroyed a few days before at the Ilopango airbase by Salvadoran guerrillas.

These expenditures are included in an unprecedented military budget, 216 billion dollars. And this huge increase in military appropriations comes at a time when the U.S. has ten million unemployed and when social spending is to be cut by 41 billion dollars over the next three years.

This imperialist escalation shows that it is too late for economic solutions in Central America. Desperately hanging on to their privileges, the local oligarchies are incapable of turning to reforms in time. The wearing out of these traditional ruling classes and the growing strength of the revolutionary forces frighten away potential investors. For the Pentagon, crushing the revolution is becoming the precondition for any political solution.

The attempt to use elections to give some semblance of legitimacy to the regimes in Guatemala and El Salvador has proved to be a total failure.

In Guatemala, General Guevara, the candidate of the military dictatorship, claimed victory in the March 7 election. His three rivals immediately raised the cry of fraud and are challenging the result, calling for a national day of protest.

In Salvador, with the approach of the elections for the Constituent Assembly scheduled for March 28, the decay of the junta is accelerating. The divisions in the bourgeoisie are deepening. The army itself is showing signs of cracking--corruption, indiscipline, desertions, soldiers refusing to fight.

None of the promises the junta made in exchange for international aid have been kept. According to church sources, in 1981 there were more than 12,000 documented cases of political murder of civilians, as against 9,000 in 1980, and more than 1,000 in 1979 (before the formation of the junta.)

The basic freedoms of expression, movement, and association are suspended by the state of siege. The agrarian reform, which has been interrupted, was only an additional pretext for subjecting the rural population to regimentation and terror.

In these conditions, how could the junta and its big brothers in Washington give any democratic credibility to elections after a 60-day campaign under the constraints of martial law and the state of siege and without the participation of any opposition force?

Of the 66 countries asked to send observers to assure the honesty of the March 28 elections, almost all refused, including Brazil and Canada. In Europe, only the reactionary government of Margaret Thatcher has given its endorsement to this farce. Less than two weeks before the date scheduled for the elections, it is still not certain that they will take place. That is because the Christian Democrats are afraid of finding themselves defeated by a fanaticized far right.

While the junta decays, the FMLN-FDR are increasing their authority day by day and asserting their claim to power.

The zones the FMLN controls cover a quarter of the country. The guerrillas' schools are constantly at work. A network of radio communication and broadcasting has been brought to a point of perfection.

The guerrillas have increased their pressure on strategic points, such as the Pan-American Highway and the coast highway. The armed struggle is moving back toward the urban centers, with a homefront consolidated in the rural areas. It is now penetrating into the suburbs of the capital city itself.

This advance of the revolution in El Salvador and the growing internationalization

of the struggle in Central America is being met with an escalation of imperialist threats.

The U.S. is already in fact engaged in a counterrevolutionary war. That is the meaning of its arms deliveries, the presence of its military advisors, the NATO naval maneuvers off the Salvadoran coast, the training of Salvadoran shock troops in the U.S., the financing of plots against Nicaragua, and the attempts to blackmail and threaten the Cuban workers state.

As at the time of the Vietnam war, a vast movement against imperialist intervention and most of all in the U.S. itself, can block Washington's criminal operations.

Active solidarity with the revolution in Central America has to be built up on a scale that corresponds to the real stakes in this growing confrontation.

In Europe, two million trade unionists and youth mobilized last fall against the installation of nuclear missiles in Western Europe and threats of war. A war has already begun in Central America. Mobilization against war starts with mobilizing against the imperialist intervention in Central America.

Reagan has made every possible effort to present his involvement in Central America as defending the Free World against Cuban and Soviet subversion. But public opinion in the U.S. is generally hostile to supporting dictatorships and still more to direct intervention.

Large demonstrations against imperialist intervention in Central America will take place March 27 in the U.S. and in Mexico on March 28, as well as in several West European countries. At the beginning of May, a joint delegation from the FSLN, the FMLN, and the Guatemalan URNG will tour a dozen West European countries. Massive new demonstrations are expected for Reagan's visits to France on June 5, England on June 7, and West Germany on June 9. In conjunction with this, a demonstration is planned in the U.S. for his return to New York on June 12.

The sections of the Fourth International will throw all their energies into this struggle.

Down with Imperialist Intervention in Central America!

Hands off the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenadian Revolutions!

Everything to Aid the Victory of the FMLN in El Salvador and of the URNG in Guatemala!

By Sergio Rodriguez

A Survey of the Rise of the Central American Revolution

MEXICO CITY--A key element in the growing confrontation between U.S. imperialism and the workers and poor masses of Central America is the Nicaraguan state, the only one on the isthmus in the hands of revolutionary and anti-imperialist forces.

The future of Nicaragua is linked in an immediate way to the struggles that are now advancing rapidly in El Salvador and Guatemala and to the growth of a revolutionary movement in Honduras.

In particular, this is because Nicaraguan society itself still reflects the struggle between old capitalist economic forms inseparable from imperialism and the rising aspiration of the workers and poor masses to liberate themselves and reorganize the economy in accordance with their own interests.

The pressures of the imperialist assault and the growing mass struggles in the area are pushing the Sandinista leadership to settle accounts with the local capitalists and take up the problems of building a collectivized economy faster than they intended. At the same time, this is complicated by the instinctive desire and need to unite the entire Nicaraguan people as firmly as possible against foreign military threats from the U.S. imperialists and their allies.

In the recent period, the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie has maintained some margin for maneuver. Some 80% of the land is still in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The bosses control 55% of industry. The ranchers have been clandestinely moving their livestock to Honduras and Costa Rica. The economy has also been hit by the typical problems of a colonial economy, falling prices for its major cash crop--coffee.

Nonetheless, the Nicaraguan economy achieved a growth rate of 11% in 1980, and price increases were kept to 35.5%, considerably lower than the 60.1% in 1979, and not grossly out of line with the rate of inflation in supposedly stable Latin American countries, such as Mexico.

In 1981, as the pressures in the region increased, capitalist economic sabotage was stepped up. There was a marked increase in capital flight and in the growth of a black market. The capitalists also sharply reduced the utilization of productive capacity.

The Sandinista government has carried out a series of very important measures that have helped it to maintain the mobilization of the masses on a very high level. It increased the real wages of the poorest strata of workers, and began to implement a policy of reducing wage differentials. It has also undertaken a massive program of building and renovating hospitals and schools and creating green zones. And this has had a major effect in cutting unemployment.

At the same time, the attempt by the

Sandinista government to meet the needs of the workers and the poor masses without directly attacking the basic capitalist economic structures is creating more and more difficult contradictions. This is particularly true in the agricultural economy.

Most of the state farms are doing badly. They continue to be overshadowed by the private sector of agriculture. But the organization the Sandinistas have created to mobilize the rural masses, the Asociacion de Trabajadores del Campo (ATC--Association of Rural Workers) has remained largely confined to the state farms.

The weakness of the ATC in the private sector is largely a reflection of the contradiction in the Sandinista policy. On the one hand, they call for increasing production and productivity, and on the other they are trying to organize agricultural workers.

But it is obvious that a large part of these agricultural workers are dissatisfied with the conditions prevailing on the big ranches and plantations. And the Sandinistas call on them not to strike. So, many of these workers see no point in joining the ATC, since it is regarded as an appendage of the Sandinista government.

In industry, there are also problems. Four separate union confederations exist, one led by Christian Democrats, one by the Stalinists, and the third by the Sandinistas, as well as a company-union confederation.

Given the sudden development of the insurrection that brought the Sandinistas to power, they took control of the state without an already strong and well-organized base in the workers movement. In this respect, the history of the revolution in Nicaragua is quite different from that in El Salvador.

Since the seizure of power, the Sandinistas have been trying to make up for this weakness. The Sandinista Workers Federation is clearly the strongest of the four labor organizations. But the Sandinista leadership has not presented a policy for unifying the workers movement. This leaves an opening for divisive maneuvers.

The declaration of an economic emergency on September 9, 1981, severely limited the right to strike. At the same time, an appeal was launched for increasing productivity. In these conditions, the non-Sandinista unions pushed immediate economic demands that have strong support among the workers. Therefore, while the Sandinista federation talks about increasing productivity, the others claim to be defending the right to strike. The dangers of this situation are obvious.

On the other hand, the imperialist threats, after the long experience of the U.S.-backed Somoza government, are a very powerful pressure for uniting the masses.

Moreover, the Soviet Union has finally decided to extend financial aid to Nicaragua. A series of loans have been decided on, and the Soviet Union is studying projects for long-term economic agreements.

With the increasing attacks by former Somozaite bands from across the Honduran border and the training of counterrevolutionists both in Honduras and Florida, and the mounting imperialist threats and economic attacks, the Nicaraguan leadership will have to move more and more rapidly and decisively to establish the second workers state in the Americas.

EL SALVADOR

The revolution in El Salvador has quickly become a clearer class confrontation than the insurrection against Somozismo was in Nicaragua. It is already far bloodier, and has involved a longer-term and more elaborately organized mobilization of the masses.

Since 1980, there have been more than 28,000 deaths in El Salvador. But the Salvadoran people and their vanguard have not been deterred even by that level of slaughter. By the end of last year, the masses began to resume their advance, which was only temporarily halted by the partial defeat of the January 1981 guerrilla offensive and general strike.

Between 1960 and 1978, El Salvador, the smallest country geographically in Central America, had an annual growth rate of 5.55%. After that, the economy went into a nose dive. Toward the end of 1981, the big businessmen presented an ultimatum to President Napoleon Duarte. Either he restored "order," or "private enterprise" was packing its bags.

In the period preceding the rise of the revolution and the economic crisis, economic dependence on the U.S. increased markedly. From 1970 to 1978, the medium- and long-term loans rose tenfold (for Guatemala and Nicaragua, the increase was threefold).

Private U.S. investment reached the level of 145 million dollars. Between 1953 and 1979, U.S. government aid increased by 218 million dollars. In 1961, U.S. military aid amounted to only 100,000 dollars. In 1979, it was already 16.8 million dollars. In addition to this, aid increased enormously from international financial bodies basically controlled by U.S. imperialism. Between 1953 and 1968, such institutions lent 24.7 million dollars to El Salvador. From 1970 to 1979, they lent 397.1 million dollars.

The Salvadoran government channelled a large part of this aid to military purchases. Most of the Central American countries, and Mexico as well, are big customers of

the Israeli arms merchants. In the case of El Salvador, from 1974 to 1978, the government purchased 25 Arave Stol "transport" planes, which were in fact used primarily for "anti-insurgent" operations. It also bought two hundred Uzi submachine guns, two hundred 88mm missile launchers, 18 reconstructed Dassault fighter-bombers, six IAL Fouga fighter training planes, and 18 Ouragans.

After the victory of the Sandinista revolution and the beginning of the Salvadoran revolution, the U.S. government stepped up military loans to the Salvadoran government. In January 1980, it sent 205,451 dollars in crowd-control equipment and made a grant of 300,000 dollars for military training in El Salvador.

In April 1980, 5.7 million dollars in military aid was given, and then a subsequent 5.5 million. In March 1981, the U.S. announced a loan of unprecedented size for El Salvador, 25 million dollars for military uses. By the end of the year, military aid amounted to 35.4 million dollars.

At the start of 1982, military aid of 66 million dollars was projected, and now the actual amounts have begun to mushroom.

But this huge escalation of spending for a tiny country has been unable to stem the revolutionary upsurge. That testifies to its power and the profound contradictions that gave rise to it. On the other hand, the progress of the revolution has not been a straight-line development. Its setbacks as well as its resumed advance offer important lessons.

Unlike in Nicaragua, where the Sandinistas remained a small nucleus until the very eve of the seizure of power, the Salvadoran revolutionary groups gained a major organizational base in the mass movement early on.

In 1980, it is estimated that the Bloque Popular Revolucionario (BPR--People's Revolutionary Bloc) had more than a hundred thousand members. At the same time, the Frente de Accion Popular Unificado (FAPU--Unified People's Action Front) is supposed to have had seventy thousand members, and the Ligas Populares 28 de Febrero (February 28 People's Leagues), 50,000. The MLP and the Communist Party had ten thousand each.

What these figures reflected was the undeniable reality that the revolutionary organizations had the support of the overwhelming majority of the working class, the majority of the peasants, the majority of the unemployed and underemployed, and almost all the students--that is, most of the population. It was this strength that enabled the general secretaries of the mass organizations to walk the streets of San Salvador in the midst of a revolutionary crisis.

Following the assassination of Archbishop Romero, it became clear that an all-out confrontation between the masses and the government was developing. The revolutionists prepared for their first insurrection in August 1980. This period represented the peak of the revolutionary

organizations' capacity for mass mobilization. For that reason, they sought to initiate the insurrection based on a general strike.

Days before this action was to begin, the FAPU announced that it would not participate in it. This broke the unity of the workers movement and greatly limited the possibilities for success, since at that time FAPU dominated FENASTRAS, the country's largest union confederation.

Despite FAPU's decision, the other revolutionary organizations decided to go ahead with the strike. It proved to be about 70% effective, and it led to an advance in the formation of united-front committees in the poor neighborhoods and rural zones. So, despite the failure of the FAPU to participate, the strike was a limited success.

However, several days after the end of the general strike, the FAPU called a general strike of its own, using its weight inside FENASTRAS and drawing in the most powerful single union in the country, the electrical workers organization (STECEL).

This action led to the jailing of the whole class-struggle leadership of STECEL and a military takeover of the unions. The whole workers vanguard in the unions disappeared. Many were imprisoned or killed. Others joined the guerrillas. The focus of the confrontation shifted from the cities to the countryside.

The division in the movement was subsequently overcome, when the FAPU came back into the Coordinadoras Revolucionarias de Masas (CRMs--Mass Revolutionary Coordinating Committees), which had been the original united-front structures. But a heavy price was paid for the split.

What led the FAPU to break working class unity was the belief that it could achieve an agreement with an important section of the Salvadoran military, the Majano current. At the same time, it believed that it had sufficient strength to dominate the process and make the other revolutionary organizations follow along behind it.

It was the very strength of the revolutionary organizations that kept them from understanding the importance of unity. In the Nicaraguan revolution, the rise of the Comites de Defensa Civil (Civil Defense Committees) opened the way for a process of self-organization of the mass movement. That is what led to unity in action. In the case of El Salvador, each organization promoted its own current within the mass movement. The different revolutionary groups fought for control of the union executive committees.

This experience in El Salvador showed once again that it is not enough simply to mobilize the workers; it is necessary to build united-front organizations to give consistency and form to the mobilizations. In the first phase in El Salvador, the process of mass self-organization did not move forward; therefore, the masses were not prepared for a decisive confrontation with the reactionaries.

The relative failure of the January 1981 strike is explained by the events of August

1980. Because after the latter date, the revolutionary mass organizations are out of the picture. After that time, people stop talking about the FAPU and start talking about the National Resistance. The BPR is replaced by the Fuerzas Populares de Liberacion (FPL--People's Liberation Forces), the Ligas Populares give way to the Ejercito Revolucionario Army), and (ERP--People's Revolutionary Army), and the MLP to the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores de Centroamerica (PRT-C--Revolutionary Workers Party of Central America).

The revolutionary organizations lost their connections with the workers, who had been the vanguard of the process. They almost abandoned their activity in San Salvador.

Then, when the FAPU returned to the CRMs, a correct balance sheet was drawn up about the past experience. The conclusion was that it was necessary to make a new step toward uniting the movement. The result of this was the formation of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), which came to take the place of the CRMs.

Nonetheless, it was not possible in certain sectors to rapidly regain the influence that had been lost, especially in San Salvador. This was clearly demonstrated in the general strike and attempted insurrection.

In San Salvador, the general strike had almost negligible effect. In the interior cities and above all in the countryside, far greater success was achieved.

A new stage in the revolutionary process opened with the January 1981 confrontations. It was clear that in the revolutionary organizations there would be a deep-going reassessment of the policies and methods employed up until now.

A process of political recovery began. On the one hand, the Salvadoran army proved incapable of liquidating the revolutionary army. On the other, the revolutionists began to renew their contact with the workers and people of San Salvador. They began to improve their methods of work in the mass movement and to understand the importance of united-front organizations.

Finally, the revolutionists have won the battle for world public opinion launched by the imperialists with their preparation of phony elections. In this respect, the Salvadoran revolutionists' proposal for dialogue was absolutely correct.

The conditions the FMLN put forward for dialogue cannot possibly be accepted by the government and the imperialists. They were for release of the political prisoners, lifting the state of siege, and ending military control of the trade unions. But all this seems reasonable enough to a considerable part of world public opinion. That is what made it possible to get a U.N. vote against recognizing the elections, when these conditions were not met.

The revolutionary mass movement has begun advancing rapidly in Salvador, but the ultimate outcome still depends very much on the development in the region as

a whole. In this respect, the advances in Guatemala are quite important.

GUATEMALA

The tradition of guerrilla struggle is already very long in Guatemala. It goes back for decades.

Of all the Central American countries, Guatemala has experienced the most rapid process of industrialization, although this has not led to the integration of the large Indian population into the growing economy. This country is also one of those that most benefited from the rise of the Central American Common Market, because it entered it with a much higher level of productivity than the average.

From 1960 to 1978, Guatemala maintained an annual growth rate of 5.8%. This was largely due to the level of U.S. investment. Of all the Central American countries, Guatemala has the highest total of U.S. investment--260 million dollars.

The Guatemalan revolution faced initial obstacles greater even than those in El Salvador. Since the Cuban revolution, the Guatemalan army has been well prepared for internal repression. It is also the strongest army in the region. The growth of state terror has reached incredible proportions. In the last two years, more than 30,000 Guatemalans have been murdered by the police, the army, or right-wing bands. The vast majority of those slaughtered have been Kekchi Mayan Indians.

Systematic assassination as a form of counterinsurgency was introduced by the government of Julio Cesar Mendez Montenegro that took office in 1966. Nineteen murder organizations were set up throughout the country. Then in March 1968, after the West German ambassador Karl Von Preti died in a FAR guerrilla action, the nineteen groups were replaced by a single one, called An Eye for An Eye (*Ojo por Ojo*), which escalated the murder campaign to new levels.

In 1970, the Arana Osorio government declared a state of siege, and there was a new escalation of the terror. It was primarily directed against the urban guerrillas but also against student and trade-union leaders. Thousands of people were killed, and there were more than 4,000 arrests.

Then under the Laugerud government which took office in 1974, the anti-Communist terrorist organization, *Mano*, reappeared. In a public communique it boasted of more than 30,000 secret graves of Indians.

Under the government of General Lucas Garcia which came into office in 1978, the *Ejercito Secreto Anticomunista* began to operate again, publishing a list of people it intended to kill. It then proceeded to assassinate student, trade-union, and peasant leaders, as well as members of political parties. The General Secretary of the Guatemalan CP was murdered.

Of those murdered by rightists between 1966 and 1976, 65% were rural workers and peasants, 7% were students; 43% owned no property, and 34% had only a single-family

dwelling; 67% had a monthly income of 50 quetzals or less and 17% from 50 to 100 quetzals (the quetzal is at parity with the U.S. dollar). Thus, the class character of the terror is obvious.

Few peoples have had to live with such a massive terror. But the Guatemalans have shown the capacity to beat it. This is demonstrated by the increasing weight of the guerrillas. Having maintained their activity for several years, the guerrilla groups have been able to win an important social base both in the countryside and in the cities.

The Indians are a key force in Guatemala, and the revolutionary movement has gained great strength precisely in this section of the population. For example, the *Ejercito Guerrillero de los Pobres* (EGP--Guerrilla Army of the Poor), the strongest of the guerrilla organizations, and the one with the longest tradition, has its base of operations in Indian areas--Quiche, Huehuetenango, and San Marcos.

The *Organizacion del Pueblo en Armas* (ORPA--Organization of the People in Arms) has its base in Solola, Chilaltenango, and Quetzaltenango. And the FAR has the bulk of its forces in the Peten region.

The mass movement experienced a new rise beginning with the strike against Coca Cola, which led to the development of the *Coordinadora Nacional de Solidaridad* (the National Solidarity Coordinating Committee). This is a united-front organization bringing together more than 150 organizations, trade unions, peasant and student organizations, political parties, women's groups, etc.

However, the development of mass movements and coordination among them is just beginning.

The Guatemalan revolution puts much more immediate pressure on the Mexican government than the others in the region. It is clear that both the Mexican government and army are getting very nervous. Toward the end of 1981, the Mexican government extradited 5,000 Guatemalan peasants, turning them over to the Guatemalan army. It follows a very tough policy of persecuting Guatemalan revolutionists who live in exile in Mexico. And it is obvious that there is very strong cross-border cooperation, of the type that cost the revolutionary leader Yon Sosa his life a decade ago.

HONDURAS

The biggest problem area for the revolution in the region is Honduras. The revolutionary process here is in no way comparable to what is happening in the surrounding countries. And the U.S. imperialists have special plans to convert Honduras into a counterrevolutionary fortress for the entire region.

For example, the imperialists completely rearmed the Honduran army after the Sandinista victory. That was because the weapons left behind by Somoza's National Guard made the Sandinista army better armed than the Honduran.

Honduras has had the lowest growth rate in Central America. Between 1960

and 1978, its gross domestic product grew by an average of 4.2%, then showed an overall decline of 1% in 1979.

Moreover, Honduras is the only Central American country where agriculture represents more than 30% of the gross national product. What is more, the growth of agricultural productivity between 1970 and 1978 was only 0.8%.

Of all the Central American countries, Honduras has the greatest percentage of the labor force in the countryside, 64%. It has the fewest tractors, 1,316. It exports 90% of the raw materials it produces.

Only 14% of the labor force are industrial workers; and they, moreover, suffered a 30% drop in real wages between 1974 and 1978.

However, American investment in Honduras is almost as great as in Guatemala, 250 million dollars. U.S. military aid before the current rise of the struggle in Salvador was 28.4 million dollars, which at the time was exceeded only by the military aid given to Guatemala--41.9 million dollars.

Honduras received the most aid from financial institutions--some 688 million dollars from 1953 to 1978.

Thus, the control of the Honduran economy by U.S. imperialism is almost total.

Now, after nine years of military rule, the authorities are proposing a return to civilian government and in fact to a two-party system. However, it is clear that the present Liberal government of Siles is a hostage to the army.

The imperialists' plans involve making Honduras an example of political stability, and to accomplish that they have to create a facade of parliamentary rule. To this end, the imperialists are following a two-sided tactic. On the one hand, they are making a series of loans, in an attempt to reverse the decline in the Honduran GNP. On the other, they are building up a stronger army for repression at home and intervention elsewhere in the region.

The revolutionary organizations in Honduras are weaker than those elsewhere in the region. There are three important left parties. There is the *Partido Socialista Hondureno* (Honduran Socialist Party, the Honduran branch of the Salvadoran PRT-C). It has been growing very rapidly, and is particularly strong among teachers and public workers.

There is the *Communist Party-Marxist Leninist*, of Maoist origin, and more or less linked to the Salvadoran PRS. It has strength among students and agricultural workers, especially in the Atlantic region.

The third group is the *Honduran Communist Party*. It is strong among the agricultural workers but weak among industrial workers.

All three of these parties, along with another smaller group joined in the *National Patriotic Front*, which gained legal status. But it disappeared when it proved unable to confront the major national tasks.

However, political experience and examples are spreading more and more rapidly through the region and are richer and richer and increasingly powerful.

By Jean-Pierre Beauvais

The Growth of the Liberated Zones in El Salvador

SAN SALVADOR--Night fell a few minutes ago. The darkness is almost complete, barely touched by dim moonlight and the fluttering flames of two modest candles.

In the "encampment," the center of organization for life in the zones controlled by the revolutionists, it is the time for "political discussion."

Arturo, the discussion leader, comments on the reports given by the FMLN radio--actions that took place the previous day throughout the country, failure of that offensive that involved more than two thousand government soldiers in the key area around the Guazapa volcano, reactions to Reagan's speech to the Organization of American States in Washington, international solidarity, and so on.

The radio station is decisive. In such a remote place, which can only be reached by following a torturous road and then continuing on foot for several hours, the radio keeps everybody aware every day that they are part of something bigger than an isolated nucleus, that their fight is part of a growing nationwide struggle, that they have the support of a vast movement of international solidarity. The radio station is the symbol of, and an extraordinary means for, consolidating the growing political authority of the FMLN and of its leadership.

Tonight there is to be a discussion of the directives broadcast to the population for March 28, the day scheduled for national elections:

"Evacuate houses close to military bases; these bases will be attacked. Keep away from military patrols; on March 28 they will all be targets. Travel as little as possible; many roads will be mined at strategic points. Assist the actions of the guerrillas by building barricades in the surrounding areas to obstruct the movement of the genocidal armed forces."

In practice, this concerns very few of the poor peasants who live in this tiny valley. What are elections? None of those at the meeting tonight have ever voted. Maybe their votes were cast for them at the military base in the nearest town, four hours away by foot. But they don't know anything about all that. Besides, for months no army patrol has ventured in here. So, March 28 will be almost just another day.

But it is important that they know what will happen outside, in the cities that some of them have never seen.

This is very important. Because, to a large extent, it is how they can begin to understand concretely that there are other forms of mobilizations, other forms of struggle, besides those that they are engaged in, other ways of fighting for the same objective.

This was the meaning of the astonishing discussion that followed in the more-than-half darkness. There were questions, interjections, more than speeches; short, spoken in a low voice, often hesitant, and broken by long silences.

Tirelessly, Arturo answered and explained. He told stories full of vivid images. They seemed to reflect the experience of someone born here but who had also worked in the city and been active for some time in a trade union. The picture he outlined for these peasants was simply the concrete reality of some of the most classical forms of working-class struggle.

Further on, the discussion became really animated. It had turned to the problems that had come up during the day and some special tasks that had to be carried out tomorrow, day-to-day organizational problems. There were also some petty personal conflicts. This was part of the whole vast--and extremely fruitful--effort to teach people to discuss all such things collectively, after a centuries-long tradition of individualism. That is, the individualism of small peasants, stooped over their own little plots of land, crushed down by the arbitrary authority of the local strongman.

Such night meetings have already become routine in the innumerable guerrilla camps like this one. And these circles of men and women sitting on the ground, as these people are this evening around Arturo, between a few hammocks and two tiny peasant huts with walls of dried mud, are the best illustration of the reality and the meaning of this struggle of an entire people.

You would need all the ill will, prejudice, and ignorance, and blind self-interest of a Reagan, Haig, and other such criminals to see in this "the hand of a foreign power."

It is not Cubans, Nicaraguans, or Russians that inspire the hopes that flash in otherwise timid eyes--eyes that contrast with the marks left forever on these people's faces by years of hunger, sickness, and resignation. The simple language spoken here reflects a conviction born out of a daily experience of superexploitation--a conviction that the old society cannot be

endured any longer, a conviction that there must be a revolution.

These liberated zones today cover a good third of the territory of El Salvador. But generally these areas are also the most remote, the most backward, and the least "useful" economically in this country, which is no larger than five French departments (or a couple of American, British, or Irish counties).

The existence of the zones and their constant extension reflects the advances of the revolutionists. They are the expression not only of the overwhelming popular support for the actions of the revolutionists but also of the massive incorporation of the population into the fighting.

This fact makes it possible to understand why the FMLN's military capacities have grown so considerably in these last months. It is what has made possible more and more audacious and more and more effective actions in areas that not long ago seemed to be securely held by the army.

Based on these liberated zones, the nuclei of guerrilla fighters have grown into the organized detachments of a "Revolutionary People's Army" that today comprises between five and six thousand well-trained fighters.

Rooted in the mobilization and organization of the people in the liberated zones, a militia of twenty thousand members is growing up. It is already able to organize the self-defense of sections of the masses, in coordination with detachments of the People's Army. And all this work is being directed with the perspective of preparing a general uprising.

In the cities, and notably in the capital despite the brutal repression that prevails there, this militia is being organized primarily among the workers, in the workplaces, and, whenever this is possible, within the framework of the trade-union structures that have managed to survive underground.

El Salvador is marked by very special economic, social, political, and geographical conditions. And the FMLN have demonstrated a real capacity to choose tactics that correspond to these conditions. But over and above that, some basic aspects of the revolutionary struggle there represent a considerable advance over many previous experiences in Latin America.

One such advance is the political and military interlocking between the rural areas where the revolutionists' control is well es-

established and the underground organization of the proletariat and the urban masses--based on their traditional organizations--for mass self-defense and with the basic perspective of preparing for an insurrection.

"When we called for a general strike last year, a lot of workers didn't follow us. But almost all of them consider that our struggle is also theirs. So, this gave rise to a lot of discussions. Our conclusion was that the attitude of the workers who didn't follow the call was the expression of a high level of politicalization. A good part of the working class, which has to face the military's repression every day, estimated correctly that we did not have the capacity to defend the strike." That was the way an FMLN cadre explained it to me. He added:

"Given the degree of repression that there is in the capital, the precondition for any major mass action is not just a real capacity for self-defense and protecting mobilizations. Besides that, the workers have to be convinced on the basis of their own experience that this capacity exists. The decisive thing in eliminating hesitations has been the growth of the territories under our control. This has enabled everyone to judge how the military relationship of forces has been shifting in our favor. It has also made it possible to accelerate the organization of militias in the cities."

The effectively liberated zones were described variously by the FMLN leaders I talked to as "rearguard bastions" and "strategic reserves." They are also areas in which certain basic points in the FMLN program are already being put into practice.

Agrarian reform, literacy programs, the organization of a new system of public health, setting up a network for collectivized distribution of goods--all this work is being carried on in conjunction with the tasks of self-defense and military training and organization.

"We are trying to improve the standard of living of all the poor peasants who live in this region as rapidly as possible but also to raise their cultural level and the level of their consciousness so that they can be more and more fully integrated into the struggle." That was what a member of the Consejo Farabundista in charge of economic matters told me.

These consejos, or councils, are designed to be "administrative structures and structures for organizing the activity and the life of the population." They have been established progressively in the areas where the FMLN is firmly in control. "Their purpose is to normalize civilian life in these areas and to supervise and administer resource utilization and collective production," according to a formula used by an FMLN comandante.

The councils are generally subdivided into four commissions responsible respectively for administration, economic life, religious questions, and self-defense. The heads of the first three commissions are elected by the population in the area administered by the council.

The administrative commission, for example, assumes some of the functions that have traditionally belonged to the mayors--the registering of births and deaths, the conducting of marriage ceremonies.

The tasks of the economic commission and the person who heads it are much more extensive. This commission has to organize agricultural production, and so it is also responsible for implementing the first agrarian reform measures and the first steps toward the collectivization of agricultural production.

Another key responsibility of the economic commissions is to assure a fair distribution of essential foods and to maintain price controls.

A few weeks ago, for example, there was a meeting of the heads of the economic

commissions of the various councils in the Central Front area (Chalatenango) to work out a system for controlling the prices of products that do not originate in the liberated zones.

The heads of the religious commissions are responsible for safeguarding and promoting religious life. This includes, for example, organizing discussion groups whose function is to "make faith a means for conscious integration into the revolutionary process," as it was explained to me by a priest who seemed quite comfortable in his role as a member of a consejo farabundista.

When there are no priests in the area, lay people are elected to head the religious commissions. The existence of these commissions is in fact the result of the crucial role that local religious communities have played in raising the consciousness of, and radicalizing, many people in the rural areas.

The heads of the self-defense commissions are also integrated into the command structures of the militia. In the sectors firmly controlled by the revolutionists, the members of the militia have many different functions. But their main task is educating and organizing the entire population to prepare them to meet incursions or invasions by the junta's forces.

This work goes from setting up a very discreet and effective system of lookouts, based on a perfect knowledge of the terrain, to the preparation of redoubts. With respect to the latter, the Salvadoran revolutionists have learned a lot from the Vietnamese experience.

Complex and extensive underground hiding places and tunnels have been dug and continue to be dug not far from inhabited places. The population can find refuge quickly from bombings; it can hide in these underground refuges and if necessary remain there for a long time. ■

THE GUERRILLA GUIDE

She was wearing jeans, sneakers, a flowered blouse, and an olive-green beret and carrying an automatic rifle and walkie-talkie. She was twenty-four years old but looked only eighteen.

Maria Isabel was waiting near a country road with a small detachment of fighters, armed with the most motley collection of weapons. They were assigned to escort us from the fluid, continually shifting border of this liberated zone to the first encampment we were to visit. It was a long way, and along the path we had long conversations.

For Maria Isabel, France was most of all the country of Francois Mitterand. "He's the president of an imperialist country but he has recognized us."

She was proud of her political and military responsibilities. Not for herself, she pointed out, but "for what this means for Salvadoran women."

Her brother was murdered. Her father was wounded and remains crippled. Two of her cousins are orphans. She was training to be a teacher, but her studies were interrupted. "There's nothing special about that. In my village and the surrounding area, every family has been touched by the war."

Why did she get involved in the revolution? It was natural enough. "Things cannot continue this way, so you have to fight," she said simply.

Then, very quickly she returned to the subject she was most interested in--Salvadoran women, their place in the revolution and in the future society.

"The situation of women remains very difficult. But real progress is beginning to be made among the fighters. There is a conscious will that is spreading more and more among the men themselves to combat male chauvinism, to stop thinking of us as

helpmates, subordinates, or just sexual objects. They are beginning to think of us as companeras. Gradually, the term macho ("he-man") is taking on a pejorative connotation. That's symbolic, isn't it?"

According to Maria Isabel, "more than 30% of the FMLN fighters are women, and the majority of them have children." And this percentage goes down "only slightly" as you go up the scale of responsibilities. In Latin America, this is quite an exceptional development.

"In the liberated zones such as this one, an immense effort has been made to educate the peasants, who support the struggle. It is extremely difficult to convince the peasant women that they should not limit themselves to their traditional women's role."

But Maria Isabel has no second thoughts about the possibility of winning them over: "This is one of the greatest challenges of the Salvadoran revolution." ■

By Fernando Zamora

MEXICAN PRT CONVENTION ATTRACTS 7,000 SUPPORTERS

The national electoral convention held February 28 in Mexico City by the PRT, the Mexican section of the Fourth International, and its allies marked a new high-point in the revolutionists' campaign for the general elections to be held in June.

The purpose of the convention was to nominate the first list of candidates for the Senate and for the Chamber of Deputies, as well as a slate for seats to be filled in accordance with proportional representation.

The convention, held in the Cine Variedades in the center of the Mexican capital, was not only filled to capacity but hundreds of people had to sit on the floors and stairways. Almost 7,000 persons attended the convention and the march that took place afterward.

The PRT is supporting the country's best known human-rights activist, Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, for president. It has sought to make the campaign a broad socialist alternative to the ruling demagogic nationalist party, the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional). In a bloc with the PRT are the Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo (MRP) and the Union de Lucha Revolucionario (ULR).

The convention presidium indicated the broad support attracted by the PRT cam-

paign. It included representatives of an Artists Committee supporting Rosario Ibarra de Piedra; trade-union activists; leaders of the peasant movement, such as Gregorio Paredes from Veracruz, Fausto Leon from Sonora, and Aurelio Vazquez Gomez from Chiapas (all of whom are PRT candidates); leaders of the gay movement and women's liberation movement; as well as leaders of the shantytown dwellers associations.

America Albaroa, a deputy in parliament, leader of NAUCOPAC, a slum dwellers association known for its combativity; and a former leader of the Morenista Partido Obrero Socialista, addressed the convention. He called on "all democratic and revolutionary forces, and in particular those considering themselves Trotskyist to unify their forces to fight for one single objective, revolutionary socialism." Abaroa is the PRT candidate for senate in the state of Mexico, one of the most important in the Mexican federal union.

A new development was pointed up by the presence of several ex-leaders of the Mexican Communist Party (now called the Partido Socialista Unificado de Mexico--PSUM). Led by Joel Ortega, a former CP Central Committee member, they came to express their support for the campaign.

Ortega told the convention that his new grouping, the Movimiento Comunista

Libertario, was formed "because we realize that the only way to continue the groundswell of unity that is developing today behind the candidacy of Rosario Ibarra de Piedra is to fight to build a movement that reflects the unity that the various political parties associated in this campaign are experiencing. This is a nonbureaucratic communist movement, built in particular in broad mass struggles, an organization that does not subordinate its policies and struggles to wheeling and dealing with the authorities."

Also represented at the convention was a dissident state committee of the Partido Socialista Unificado de Mexico.

The highpoint of the convention was a fighting speech by Rosario Ibarra de Piedra. She concluded by saying: "For us every vote represents a commitment to struggle, an activist ready to fight in the battles that will come in other areas after the elections. That is what we are mainly interested in."

The next major activity scheduled in the campaign after the convention was a meeting March 14 to form a Front of Women's Committees in support of Rosario. This will be the first time in Mexican history that women have organized as women to defend and popularize their struggles through an election campaign. ■

SAM GORDON DIES IN LONDON

It is with great regret that we announce the death of Sam Gordon. He died in Middlesex Hospital, London on Friday 12 March, after a long illness.

Sam joined the Communist League of America (Left Opposition) in 1928 after attending a meeting in New York addressed by James P. Cannon. He was a leading member of the SWP (US) for many years and wrote many articles and pamphlets under the name of Stuart.

He spent some time with Trotsky in Mexico and carried on a correspondence with him for many years.

In 1940 he became secretary of the Fourth International until he joined the Merchant Navy in 1941 as a means of maintaining contact with sections of the International during the war.

He managed to get into Europe at the end of the war, met comrade Jungclas (one of the founders of German Trotskyism) in Hamburg and played a big part in reconstituting the International in war-shattered Europe. With Michel Pablo, he became joint secretary of the Fourth International.

Sam translated Trotsky's Germany: the Only Road into English, and his most recent work was the translation of Rudolf Hilferding's Finance Capital.

He played an active role in the formative years of the IMG and although ill-health restricted his activities in recent years, he kept up a lively interest in the activities of the Fourth International.

We salute his memory and express our deepest sympathy to Mildred and David.

THE COLOMBIAN ELECTIONS; IS THE LEFT ON THE WAY OUT OF THE LABYRINTH?

About 5 million out of 13 million potential voters participated in the local, regional, and parliamentary elections in Colombia on March 14, that is, about 38%. This low vote actually was higher than that expected.

Because of the deal made long ago by the Conservative and Liberal parties to alternate control of the government, a strong and deeply rooted tradition of not taking elections seriously has developed in Colombia.

The workers parties and coalitions that took part in this election failed to achieve the momentum needed to present a clear political alternative. The total vote for left candidates was about 70,000. The Communist Party lost a considerable num-

ber of its seats in parliament and of its positions in the municipal and regional governments.

In the Bogota-Cunindarmca region, the CP slate got about 22,000 votes. The Unidad de Izquierda Democratica slate in which the PSR, Colombian section of the Fourth International, participated, got 4,000.

In his race for the senate, Gerardo Molina, the presidential candidate of the left got only 24,000 votes, and it is not likely that he will get a seat. This may seriously weaken his campaign for the presidency.

Despite the poor results, the PSR's participation in a broad campaign was an important experience for the Colombian

Trotskyists and a major step forward in building the party.

However, the prospects for developing a mass workers alternative depend now on the assessment of the campaign made by the forces involved in the attempt to develop working-class political independence and the conclusions they draw.

The traditional bourgeois majority party maintained its dominance on the electoral front. The official Liberal candidate, Lopez Michelsen, won 1,800,000 votes against its Conservative opponent, Belisario Betancur's 1,700,000. The dissident Liberal, Galan, got 530,000 votes, showing strength in particular in the Bogota area.

By A. Munoz

BOGOTA--General and local elections are to be held March 14 in Colombia. At the start of May, the presidential elections will take place.

These elections coincide with an extremely grave crisis of Colombian society as a whole. On both the left and the right, there is a proliferation of splits, regroupments, and new projects. But while the right can only play with worn-out formulas that differ only about how and how much the already very severe repression should be stepped up, on the left a certain light seems to be appearing at the end of the tunnel.

Colombia, the fourth most important country economically in Latin America, is going through a grave economic crisis. The gross industrial product showed a "zero growth rate" in 1981. Some 10% of the economically active population is unemployed, the majority is underemployed.

You can get some idea of the state of the productive sectors, if you consider that the narcotics traffic has begun to be called "an emerging capitalism." Narcotics exports to Western Hemisphere countries last year exceeded 2 billion dollars in value, not much below coffee exports (2.5 billion dollars). Moreover, Colombia is one of the centers of attention for the imperialist trusts, especially in the energy sector (coal, hydroelectricity, oil). And the Colombian bourgeoisie and government have fully integrated themselves in Reagan's counter-revolutionary policy, especially with respect to Central America.

The economic crisis combines with the crisis of the two-party system. It is significant that the ultrareactionary standard-bearer of the Conservative Party, Belisario Betancur, is trying to present himself as a "national-unity candidate" above his party. It is also significant that the Liberal Party, the majority party in the country, is running the risk of losing the elections by putting up two candidates--Lopez Michelsen (the official one) and Luis Carlos Galan (representing a "dissident" wing). This is the result of infighting between cliques more than of programmatic differences.

Galan is trying to present himself as a "populist nationalist," while carefully avoiding proposing any practical step that could harm any imperialist interest in the country. Lopez is promising that his party will join the Socialist International, which more and more is becoming a hospital for old Latin American bourgeois parties that are trying desperately to regain a mass base in the workers movement.

So, there is a point of agreement between the two Liberal candidates--the Liberal Party needs a face-lifting to survive. But such maneuvers cannot be crowned with lasting success. The aspirations of the Colombian people lead to other directions.

The Colombian Communist Party remains by far the strongest party on the left. It controls the CSTC, the third strongest trade-union confederation in the country, which has more than 130,000 members. It has connections with the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia--Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), which has a large peasant base. The party

is adroitly utilizing its relationship with the guerrillas to give a left cover to a thoroughly reformist policy.

However, the CCP is socially isolated. In the last elections, it got about 90,000 votes, which is roughly equivalent to the number of its members and organized sympathizers. It is quite unlikely that it can capture the massive aspiration of the Colombian working people for political independence.

For a period, the M-19 guerrilla group enjoyed broad popular sympathy, including in the workers movement, being seen in a certain way as a revolutionary alternative to reformism. With the passage of time, it has become locked in a private war with the army and the paramilitary organizations. The logic of militarism has led it to orient itself more in accordance with its own needs than with those of the workers movement. A typical example is its line calling for a boycott of the elections if there is no amnesty. So, the M-19 has lost most of the political capital it gained earlier.

So, where can the alternative come from? The workers movement and the revolutionary left are looking for such an alternative along roads that must converge. On the one hand, there is a growing strength of class-struggle trade-unionism. These unionists are radical in struggles but still confused in political activity. This milieu constitutes the essential culture medium for a mass workers party.

On the other hand, there is a process of clarification and evolution in the left. The FIRMES movement, for example, is a large heterogeneous grouping, mainly intel-

lectuals. It includes democrats, Social Democrats, and socialists. It has now gone into crisis and is unlikely to emerge united from the elections. Gerardo Molina's scheme of building a "socialist party" is interesting, but it seems to be still a rather confused notion politically.

Moreover, Molina's running for a Senate seat on a CCP-dominated slate is probably going to compromise his project seriously, since the Communists are the strongest opponent of such a "socialist party." This has already created conflicts with other sectors of FIRMES. The results of the March 14 elections and the following presidential campaign will decide the outcome of this conflict.

The crisis of the MOIR, the main political organization to the left of the CCP in the last years, and the appearance of the PTC (Partido del Trabajo de Colombia--Labor Party of Colombia) is one of the positive aspects of the recomposition of the left.

The PTC has broken with the Maoist sectarianism and dogmatism of the MOIR, and is seriously putting forward a policy of convergence with other revolutionary organizations, and especially with the PSR, the Colombian section of the Fourth International.

Finally, among the organizations that claim to be Trotskyist, the PST has begun to break up, as a result of the adventures of its "caudillo" on the national and international stage. Some of the activists who are leaving the PST are regrouping around a project of "socialist convergence," based on a class-struggle platform. This is a current that also merits attention.

This general panorama of the Colombian situation can give some idea of the difficulty of the PSR's work. The Colombian revolutionists in general and the Colombian section of the Fourth International in particular face an accumulation of grave and pressing problems. They have to advance the democratic struggle to the maximum and

fight within the movement to assure the hegemony of the workers movement. They have to take the lead of the class-struggle currents in the unions and give them an orientation of unifying the labor movement.

They have to intervene in those circles that are looking for a socialist party that would be independent of the bourgeoisie and an alternative to the CCP. And at the same time, they have to seek a convergence in action, as well as political agreement, among the revolutionary sectors.

The PSR, which is still a very new party, has demonstrated its ability to overcome difficult situations. It has shown its capacity for political initiative, especially in the fight for democratic rights, as well as its determination to link up with the real processes and the concrete experiences of the Colombian workers and poor masses. Today it faces the formidable task of accumulating the political and organizational strength to find a way out of the Colombian labyrinth. ■

UNITED ELECTORAL SLATE OF THE LEFT

For the first time in the history of Colombia, the main organizations of the workers movement are presenting a single candidate in the upcoming presidential elections in May 1982. Gerardo Molina, a writer, university teacher and leader of the FIRMES movement, will be the candidate of a coalition set up by his own movement; the PSR (Revolutionary Socialist Party), Colombian section of the Fourth International; the PTC (Colombian Labor Party), a Maoist organization; and the PCC (Communist Party of Colombia) which is pro-Moscow.

The candidacy of Gerardo Molina was put forward by FIRMES in June 1981 and was accepted without difficulty by the PSR and PTC. The PCC did hesitate before deciding because it would have preferred to support a popular-front candidate such as liberal Luis Carlos Galan. It only joined the other three organizations after Ricardo Galan rejected any kind of agreement with it.

Gerardo Molina has published a series of studies on the history of political thought in Colombia, including Synthesis of Political Ideas. He stands for socialism. In 1978, he was one of the founders of the FIRMES movement which is socialist-oriented. In April 1948, he was part of the Central Revolutionary Junta organized by supporters of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, the populist leader whose assassination in 1953 set off insurrectionary movements which were crushed by repression.

The candidacy of Gerardo Molina was formally ratified during a national gathering at the end of November 1981; it was also decided to name the four-party coalition, the "Union Democratica" (Democratic Union).



PSR Demonstration. (DR)

In the speech he gave at that time, Gerardo Molina stated: "In the economic field, the party will not be content with demanding a control over monopolies, as do the liberals; experience shows the monopolies pay no attention to controls. Our policy is different; we want to wrest the ownership and management of the country's basic industries from the private sector and transfer them to the control of the nation.

Concerning civil peace in Colombia, Molina said: "We are convinced that the current clashes between the army and the armed struggle groups cannot be ended by the victory of either of the sides involved. We recognize the need for honorable negotiations which will allow our compatriots who opted for armed struggle to return to civilian life. A general amnesty should be adopted."

"The state of siege should be lifted and the laws that restrict civil liberties should be rescinded," Gerardo Molina also spoke

out for the right of the peoples of Central America to self-determination. As for the border dispute between Colombia and Venezuela, he proposed that a conference of people's organizations of both countries be convened to discuss the issue.

The election campaign will be coordinated by a national committee which will include three members from each organization. In the department of Bogota, Carlos Bula, the FIRMES leader, will head the slate for the Chamber of Deputies; Socorro Ramirez, the PSR leader, will head the slate for the regional assembly; and Abel Rodriguez, the PTC leader, will head the slate for the municipal council.

The following interviews with representatives of the major components of the Unidad Democratica coalition were obtained by Angel Munoz in Bogota in the final week of February. They have been translated by IV. ■

Interview with Socorro Ramirez, PSR

Question. On the eve of the elections, how would you describe the situation in the workers movement and more generally in the mass movement?

Answer. After the failure of the paro civico nacional (the national general strike) of October 1980, we went into a downturn. It is clear that the failure of the strike was not the fault of the mass movement. The strike was not successful and an ebb set in, but it cannot be said that this was a decisive defeat. The struggles have continued. In recent days, the eight main factories in the Medellin region, which has been hard hit by the crisis, have issued a strike call. In these last days also, in the Santander region in the western part of the country, we have seen a unification of the four trade-union confederations. This was achieved against the opposition of the national leaderships of these confederations by class-struggle currents.

Q. The question of guerilla warfare has assumed a considerable importance in the present situation in Colombia. The M-19 movement has threatened to boycott the elections unless there is an amnesty. What is the position of the PSR on the guerillas?

A. In Colombia for more than thirty years guerrilla warfare has been a self-defense reaction by the peasants to the armed violence of the landlords and the army. The 1948 civil war gave rise to a Liberal Party guerilla force, which was the foundation of the FARC, the guerilla army now linked to the Colombian CP. Although there have been some manifestations of "focoism" here, this is not part of the Colombian guerilla tradition.

The appearance of M-19 created a new situation with respect to the guerillas. While the FARC generally carry on defensive actions, the M-19 staged primarily offensive operations. In the beginning, it won a broad popular sympathy. But over the last period, it has tried to precipitate a governmental crisis without trying to bring forward a working-class alternative. It has been making more and more tactical errors. Boycotting the elections, for example, would be an enormous error.

The M-19's policy is based on the belief that a prerevolutionary situation is about to open up in Colombia. From this, they draw the conclusion that the central task of the moment is to organize a "Rebel Army." We disagree totally with this analysis. But the PSR will be in the vanguard of the struggle for amnesty and support for the political

prisoners, most of whom belong to the M-19 movement. And we will struggle to mobilize public opinion against the torture that is being practiced.

Q. The question of repression and attacks on democratic rights has taken on a central importance today in Colombia. It is the axis of your election campaign. Could you explain in more detail what this means?

A. Well before we helped to form the Unidad Democratica coalition, the PSR waged a systematic fight against all forms of repression and for democratic rights. We strove to assure that this fight would be led by the workers movement, but we also tried to make sure that all sorts of bodies and personalities participated in it, including bourgeois ones, if they were ready, for example, to denounce the torture.

With the approach of the elections, we thought that it would be wrong to try to maintain this type of broad alliance in the general electoral field. Our orientation was to build a united front of workers organizations, clearly left parties, that would take up this essential fight for democracy within the framework of total independence from bourgeois parties, programs, and personalities.

The first important struggle for this was against the position of the Colombian CP, whose first move was to propose a list of seven possible candidates for the presidency. Almost all of them were bourgeois personalities, and none of them were acceptable as a candidate of a united front of the left.

We proposed that all the workers parties support the candidate put up by the FIRMES movement, Gerardo Molina, a patriot, a democrat, a socialist thinker, who has a long record in the struggle for democratic rights in this country. We built a national convention for the left parties, as well as the workers and people's organizations, to adopt a united-front platform for struggle. The sort of unity we called for, moreover, did not involve the various parties giving up their programmatic differences. An agreement was reached.

It was the PSR that most resolutely pushed for a united-front platform and which drew it up. It was agreed that the points on which the signatory organizations differed would not be used in agitation in the united-front campaign. But this left every party free to conduct its own campaign on such points. A case in point is solidarity with the Polish workers, to which the Communist Party is stubbornly opposed,

even though Gerardo Molina himself is the chairman of the Committee for Solidarity with Poland and has signed many declarations of solidarity with Solidarnosc.

The convention was held in November 1981. At that time we began the task of drawing up slates for the general election in March. They had to reflect support for the presidential candidate and for the common platform. But it was agreed that there should be wide latitude in drawing up the slates.

In several regions, such as Antioquia, del Valle, and Atlantico, we managed to put together common slates including all the components of the Unidad Democratica. In others, such as Caqueta and Elmeta, the Communist Party made deals with the Liberal candidate, Luis Carlos Galan, thereby violating one of the fundamental points of the agreement.

The most serious conflict occurred in the Bogota-Cundinamarca region. Before the adoption of Gerardo Molina as the candidate of the left, the PSR formed an electoral bloc, the Unidad de la Izquierda Democratica (Union of the Democratic Left--UDI), with the branch of FIRMES in the area and with the Partido del Trabajo Colombiano (the Colombian Party of Labor). This slate was completely in line with the general points in the agreement on which the Unidad Democratica was based. But the CP launched a big campaign to discredit it, aimed mainly against the PSR.

Q. I think that it is necessary to highlight some aspects of this campaign that I have been able to see personally. For example, on February 21, the CP staged a farce, presenting as the organizers of a central meeting an obscure Workers Party (Posadista) and an imitation PSR. For this maneuver, they were able to use three or four former members of the PSR, who are either just irresponsible or have lost all sense of revolutionary morality and dignity. How is the PSR going to react to this type of provocation?

A. We are concerned about this campaign, which is aimed at destroying the UID. It is important to understand that we had discussions with the CP in an attempt to arrive at a joint slate. Its only proposal was to demand that we back its own slates. Faced with this ultimatum, we maintained our right to play an active role in the election campaign in this region and to build our party here. If there is no united-front slate in Cundinamarca, the responsibility

for that falls on the CP. It used these former PSR members, who dropped out of the party, some of them more than a year ago, to stage last Sunday's farce.

We are going to ask the presidential candidate, Gerardo Molina, to assure that the PSR is respected and to try to get a public denunciation of the role these individuals are playing in this campaign attacking our party under the auspices of the CP.

Q. How do you characterize the bourgeois candidates?

A. Alfonso Lopez Michelsen, the official candidate of the Liberal Party, got the nomination by fraud, by organizing a convention made up only of Lopistas, his minions. He is running as "the peace candidate" and claims to be the only one able to assure that the country will not go down the primrose path to "Salvadorization," as we say here. What is more, he is promising to affiliate the Liberal Party to the Socialist International.

In this way, Lopez is trying to come up with an answer to the crisis of the two-party system in Colombia and to the tendency in the workers movement to seek unifying forms of organization and a more direct involvement in politics.

This "peace candidate" image is in complete contradiction to Lopez's own policy, the one that he conducted when he was president from 1974 to 1978. At that time, he maintained a special relationship with the military and then handed the power over to them, which they still hold today.

As the representative of the key sectors of the financial bourgeoisie, it was Lopez who introduced into this country neoliberal policies, the methods of the Chicago School, even though today he is carrying out a campaign of demogogy that goes to the point of talking about fighting the monopolies.

Alfonso Lopez Michelsen is extremely discredited in this country, since his previous term in office was marked by a major upsurge of mass struggles, including in the paro civico nacional of 1977. By his proposal for affiliating to the Socialist International, he is trying both to resolve the crisis of the Liberal Party and to increase the attractiveness of the country for European capital. At the same time, he is maintaining his old economic and political policies.



Socorro Ramirez. (DR)

Belisario Betancur, the candidate of the Conservative Party, who seems now to have a chance to win, also represents sectors of the financial bourgeoisie, and is getting special support from the circles that control drug traffic. As minister of labor, he conducted an ultrareactionary anti-labor policy. He is running as a "national unity" candidate, trying to rise above his party and take advantage of the discredit from which Alfonso Lopez Michelsen suffers.

Finally, there is Luis Carlos Galan, the Liberal Party "dissident." He is supported by the old oligarchy, notably the Lleras Restrepo family and the big press. He is trying to play the "populist" card, to look

like a nationalist. But his propositions are more and more right wing.

Q. I know that the PSR is studying Gerardo Molina's proposal for building a socialist party. Moreover, it seems possible that the UID will continue after these elections, and that would certainly influence our tactics for building the revolutionary party. Could you explain what the PSR's orientation is now on such questions?

A. We think that in the context of the Colombian situation today, Gerardo Molina's proposal is a very important one, and the PSR has responded enthusiastically to it. We are convinced that the proposals and efforts of all those who, like us, are interested in building a party to make the socialist revolution have to be combined. Many sections of the working class and poor masses, who are not even politically organized, have shown an interest in this proposal.

Given the conditions that now exist here, this party would not be a big mass party at the beginning, but it would certainly bring together many revolutionists, trade-unionists, and women and end the present scattering of forces.

We do not think that shortcuts can be found for building the revolutionary party. But we have to support the concrete efforts that the workers movement makes to free itself politically from the bourgeoisie and from reformism.

We think that great attention should be paid to the frequent signs of such strivings for political independence in the Colombian workers movement, a movement that fights but abstains in elections, which does not act politically. The biggest working-class party, the CP, represents only a tiny minority of the workers.

We also think that the UID is very important, and we think that it is possible to maintain this bloc after the elections, not only in the unions and in the struggles in

THE PROGRAM OF UNIDAD DEMOCRATICA

The following is a summary of the program of the Unidad Democratica coalition. It should be noted that the version published after the convention that set up this coalition in November was falsified by the Communist Party, which eliminated some important amendments that were proposed by the PSR and approved by the convention.

The original platform includes five points. The first, entitled "Democratic Rights and Amnesty," calls for the lifting of the state of siege that has been in effect for decades, abolition of the security statute, general and unconditional amnesty, and dissolution of the secret repressive and paramilitary organs. As regards the rights and demands of the workers movement, it explains the need for a democratic reform of the labor code, for a general wage increase for workers in the towns and the countryside, for support to workers strug-

gles, and for backing the united-front platform presented by the "Class Struggle" current in the unions.

The second point is entitled "Nationalize Natural Resources and the Monopolies." It denounces the government's economic policy and calls for the cancelling of concessions to imperialist enterprises, as well as the nationalization of all Colombian and foreign monopolies.

The third point, "Agrarian and Urban Reform," calls for confiscation of the big estates and giving the land to the peasants. It also calls for defending the rights of the Native Americans to their land, their culture, and their forms of organization. Along with this, it outlines an urban reform and demands a decrease in the price of public services.

The fourth point, "culture, and the rights of youth and women," calls for the democratization of culture, the improve-

ment of public education and nationalization of the private schools, support for the struggles of students and teachers. It demands equal rights for women and youth.

The fifth point, "An Independent International Policy," calls for winning and maintaining national sovereignty, support for the struggle of the working class and the peoples of the world for revolution, democracy, self-determination, peace, national liberation, and socialism. It includes support for the rights of the Palestinian people, as well as for the struggles of the peoples of Central America and the Caribbean against the local dictatorships and American intervention.

The platform ends by stating that its objective is to unite and mobilize the working people, and that in order to achieve the main objectives it puts forth it will be necessary to establish a political power based on the masses of workers and toilers. ■

the neighborhoods, but also in the fight for revolutionary unity, for building the "socialist party" for which we have to begin to open up the way.

Q. Let's talk about the case of the recent solidarity campaign with the PSR to win the release of Ricardo Sanchez, one of your leaders who was kidnapped by rightist commandos. This campaign fortunately was a short one because the problem was resolved quickly. But in the future, how can the International help the PSR?

A. We have always understood that building the PSR in Colombia required the closest possible links with the International

and in particular with its central bodies. The campaign for the release of Ricardo Sanchez was very important. Still today we are receiving messages of solidarity from all over the world. But the situation in Colombia is getting worse, repression is growing, especially against the PSR. We are going to continue to need active solidarity.

The International has helped us to solve our internal problems, especially in debates, where its experience was useful.

Finally, active internationalism, the campaigns that we are waging for example in solidarity with the Salvadoran revolution and the Polish workers, is very impor-

tant both for building the party in our country and because of the help we are giving to the Sandinista revolution and because of what we are learning from it.

The Polish campaign also is helping us to explain to workers who ask us why we don't join the CP what our differences are with the party with respect to the kind of socialism we are fighting for and with respect to our attitude toward workers struggles.

We think that in this way we are helping to make the International a mass International that will unite all revolutionists and offer an alternative for solving the crisis of leadership in the world workers movement. ■

Gerardo Molina, FIRMES

Question. On various occasions, you have said that political activity has to be based on the fundamental contradictions of the society, in particular the one between the poor and the rich. Why do you think your campaign is the only one that defends the poor?

Answer. Colombia is one of the countries where there is the most inequality. With the economic development of recent years, wealth has become concentrated in the hands of a very small minority, while the overwhelming majority of the population--more than 80%--are having difficulty surviving. The greatest problem in Colombia today is hunger. As long as there is hunger, there will be no peace nor any real democracy. The fight against hunger is the central objective of the poor people in Colombia, it is also that of our campaign.

Q. Everybody in Colombia says they want peace. All the candidates claim to be champions of peace. Do you think that rich and poor can struggle together for peace?

A. The peace the rich want is only quiet assurance that there will be no disorders in the country, based on the maintenance of the present social and political "order." The kind of peace that we want requires changing the economic system. This is why we say that the fight for peace is a long process that leads to establishing a socialism suited to the conditions of Colombia. We will not in any way be content with any peace imposed by the government. Such a peace could only be unstable and short lived.

Q. Thousands of Colombian workers see you as the alternative to the bourgeois candidates. What is your position toward these candidates?

A. I see them for what they are, candidates whose objective is to preserve the existing order, with certain slight differences among them. For example, Luis Carlos Galan is a bit better than Belisario Betancur and Lopez Michelsen, when he calls for fighting corruption and for the

establishment of full democratic rights. But like the other two candidates, Galan in no way supports real social change.

My campaign is the only independent one because it is the only one that rejects the present social system and status quo.

Q. Besides being a candidate for president, you are a leader of the FIRMES movement. What do you think about the role and future of FIRMES in Colombia?

A. It has now achieved its main original objective, that is, to serve as a catalyst to unify the left. That was what we formed FIRMES for in 1978. For the first time, the Colombian left is running a united campaign. Remember, four years ago, there were four left candidates in the presidential elections.

Now, FIRMES has a second and more far-reaching objective, the creation of a socialist party.

Q. Let's try to get a clearer picture of what that means. In recent months, you have talked many times about the need for building a "socialist party." In Colombia, there are several left parties that claim to represent the working class. Why do you think a socialist party is needed, and what sort of features would this party have?

A. For me, the starting point is the crisis of the Colombian two-party system. Both the Conservative and Liberal parties have started to break up, and I do not think they have a political future.

Of course, the Liberal Party is still a mass party. It is supported by the majority of the Colombian people out of tradition or sentiment. But since the structures of this party no longer correspond to the needs of the masses, they have been left politically orphans. So, the first task is to attract these masses that have been cast adrift, and secondly to reach the large numbers of people who do not identify with any party.

The CP has a long tradition and a section of the population follows it. But on the left, there is an immense area left uncovered by the CP. We think that the conditions exist today for forming a democratic

socialist party, which would therefore be different from the CP, and also completely distinct from the Social Democracy. We want to see FIRMES become a party that can accommodate not just its own members but those who work in other organizations, such as the PRS for example.

Q. Could you give us some examples in other countries of the sort of thing you want, to help us understand it?

A. The closest thing to it is probably the MAS in Venezuela. In Europe, there is nothing that corresponds very closely to what we want. We may have some common points with the French Socialist Party, although it is a Social Democratic party. On some points, it seems to be making a left turn. If the French process radicalizes, it might become a point of reference. On the other hand, if it stagnates, it will be very different from what we want.

Q. To conclude, what led you, a university professor who for long years was one of the most prominent figures in the Liberal Party, to reach the conclusion today that it is necessary to build a socialist party?

A. In the first place, a sense of social justice offended by the inequalities of Colombian society. For a long time, I thought that the Liberal Party--which after a defeat whose effects lasted forty-five years regained power in 1930 inspired by a strong spirit of reform--might meet the demands of the masses.

But when I was convinced by the facts that this party was not trying to be a party of the people but had become a representative of the Colombian bourgeoisie, I left it and began to work for the formation of a socialist party.

The objective bases exist today for such a party. This was not true so long as the Liberal Party seemed to the masses to be a "left" party. But today the masses are breaking with Liberalismo, and the political vacuum must be filled. Otherwise, there will simply be chaos. ■

Otto Nanez, PTC

Question. I know that the PTC came out of a split with the MOIR, which for a long time was the largest organization to the left of the CP in Colombia. What were the reasons for this split?

Answer. The PTC was formed in October 1981 by the fusion of the sector that left the MOIR at the beginning of that year, together with Causa Comunista and Corriente de Integracion Marxista. All three groups shared an adherence to "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought."

Our split with the MOIR was the culmination of more than two years of very sharp internal fighting. On the organizational level, the fight was over the application of democratic centralism. The MOIR leadership, in an antidemocratic, sectarian, and dogmatic way prevented the expression of different ideas, the formation of currents, inside the organization. This favored increasing isolation and sectarianism.

On the political level, the fight was around the question of alliances with revolutionary sectors and also with sectors of the opposition to the regime. In a situation where repression was being stepped up, the MOIR leadership was campaigning not just against the government but also against organizations that were being repressed.

On the ideological level, there were many differences. But perhaps the most important was the MOIR's conception of the USSR as the "main enemy" not only internationally but also in our country. This led it to adopt a conciliatory policy toward the U.S., and consequently toward the exploiting classes in Colombia. It also led it into opposition to the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions.

Q. The PTC is part of the Unidad Democratica coalition. Why do you think that this coalition is an effective answer to the problems that exist today in Colombia?

A. In Colombia, since the end of the 1960s, the left has been dominated by two opposing currents, the CP and the MOIR. Traditionally, the MOIR maintained a sectarian attitude toward the CP. However, we think that while the CP is a dangerous enemy, especially because of its relationship with the USSR, it has a large worker and peasant base. So, we have to work with the CP, even unite with it in action. We have to keep it from monopolizing the anti-imperialist feeling of our people and pushing the revolutionary forces to the sidelines.

The PTC accords an especial importance in this campaign to the Unidad de Izquierda Democratica (UID) coalition established in

the Bogota-Cundinamarca region, along with the PSR and the sector of FIRMES represented by Carlos Bula. There is a need for a revolutionary alternative to the CP in Colombia and we think that this experience of unity and its extension beyond the elections can make a major contribution to the development of such an alternative.

Q. You are no doubt aware of the proposal made by the presidential candidate, Gerardo Molina, for building a "socialist party." Do you think that there is any relationship between this proposal and the objective you outlined before of building a revolutionary alternative to the CP?

A. We don't think that Molina's proposal can be realized in the short term. This is not only because of the ideological differences that exist but for practical reasons. The CP is gaining influence in the section of FIRMES led by Molina, and it could sabotage the project.

Q. A difficult situation exists today in Colombia. In some rural areas there is a virtual civil war. There are rumors of an impending coup, and very severe police and parapolice repression. What sort of future do you see ahead for Colombia after the elections?

A. Since 1958, when the Liberal and Conservative parties agreed to form the so-called National Front and alternate control of the government, you can say that our country fell into the hands of big capital. This development has accelerated with the growth of the drug traffic, and the big accumulations of capital that it has led to. Four financial groups control the entire economy. Agriculture is bankrupt. The peasant masses are emigrating to the cities. This has given rise to the accelerated urbanization of recent years and the proliferation of shantytowns around the big cities. Everything indicates that the economic situation is going to continue to get worse.

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of today. Poor countries need foreign investment, and it must be made on the basis of respect for the national sovereignty of every country, taking account both of the needs of these peoples and a reasonable return to capital coming from other

This is reflected in the crisis of the traditional parties, especially the Liberal Party that has been the party of the bourgeoisie. The two factions of the Liberal Party represent the reactions of different bourgeois factions to the crisis--finance and speculator capital (Lopez Michelsen); and industrial capital (Galan-Lleras Restrepo).

The split in the Liberal Party may favor a victory by the Conservatives, who are the minority party and have an extremely reactionary past and present. If the Liberal Party wins, the banquet of big capital will go on, but the trend will be more and more toward reaction and repression within the framework of formal bourgeois democracy.

On the other hand, the Colombian masses have great traditions of struggle, especially in the recent years, with the national strikes. The economic crisis itself is forcing the workers to fight, and the yellow union confederations are going into crisis. If there is a coup, there is no doubt that revolutionary flames are going to spread in the countryside and that there will be a growth of revolutionary activity throughout the country.

However, in view of the threat of a coup, it is important to inform the world about the situation of the Colombian people and the revolutionary, progressive, and democratic forces. It is important that people prepare for a mass solidarity campaign.

Q. To conclude, what sort of balance sheet have you made of your work with the PSR?

A. We are working with the PSR in the UID coalition. We have worked together very well, and we are satisfied with the results so far. We have one very important point in common. That is, we want to create a revolutionary alternative. We also have a common interest in the democratic struggle in defense of human rights.

With respect to international issues, at the moment we are united by our understanding of the need for solidarity with the peoples of El Salvador and Poland. This has done a lot to bring us together. Because we think that in Latin America and throughout the world, we have to fight against the aggression of U.S. imperialism but also to defend the right of peoples to self-determination against the USSR. As regards Poland, we have engaged in joint actions and issued joint statements that have had a real weight in the political life of the country. This has had enough impact even to force organizations in the orbit of the CP, and therefore pro-Soviet, to demonstrate solidarity with the Polish people. ■

GUATEMALAN GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS FORM COMMON FRONT

(The following is the second part of the unity statement issued February 8 by the four Guatemalan guerrilla groups. The signatories are the Ejercito Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP--Guerrilla Army of the Poor), the Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR--Rebel Armed Forces), the Organizacion Revolucionario del Pueblo en Armas (The Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms), the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo-Nucleo de Direccion Nacional (Guatemalan Party of Labor--National Leadership Nucleus), the section of the Guatemalan CP that broke away from the rest of the party in 1980 to join the guerrilla struggle.

The translation is by IV.)

In the grave situation in which our people find themselves, facing the danger that imperialist intervention represents for the peoples of Central America and the Caribbean, the Guatemalan revolutionary organizations engaged in guerrilla warfare declare that Revolutionary People's War is the only road by which our people can win complete national and social liberation.

This is the only road by which the Guatemalan people can take power and establish a revolutionary, patriotic, democratic, people's government that will put an end forever to exploitation, oppression, discrimination, repression, and subordination to foreign powers.

In order to achieve this considerable objective, the revolutionary organizations are calling for the formation of a broad revolutionary and patriotic front. This front should represent an alliance of our entire people. It should be headed by the revolutionary vanguard of the Guatemalan people, pursuing the strategy of Revolutionary People's War. It will overthrow the power of the Guatemalan and foreign big owners that practice exploitation, oppression, and racial discrimination; and set up a revolutionary, patriotic, people's and democratic government.

The revolutionary political-military organizations that today proclaim this historic unity of the Guatemalan revolutionists hereby issue a fraternal appeal to the Guatemalan Party of Labor (PGT), which has not yet joined in the revolutionary war, to begin discussions to secure its incorporation in this revolutionary front. Its inclusion must be based on recognizing the validity of the strategy of revolutionary people's war and on practical involvement in work to achieve the fundamental

objectives of the program of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) as set forth in this document.

MAIN POINTS OF THE PROGRAM OF THE REVOLUTIONARY, PATRIOTIC, PEOPLE'S AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

The revolutionary, patriotic, people's and democratic government that we will establish in Guatemala pledges to the Guatemalan people and the peoples of the world to implement the following five programmatic points:

I. The revolution will end for ever repression against the people and guarantee citizens the right to life and peace, the supreme human rights.

The right to life and peace are the highest human rights. The revolution will end repression against the people and eliminate forever the political regime that has arrogated to itself the right to murder its opponents in order to hold onto power.

Since 1954, the government of the exploitative big owners has taken the lives of thousands of Guatemalans for political reasons. This blood is a debt that the revolution must repay by assuring freedom, peace, and respect for life.

II. The revolution will lay the foundations for meeting the fundamental needs of the great majority of the people by putting an end to the economic and political domination of the Guatemalan and foreign big owners who run the country.

The main cause of our people's poverty is the economic and political domination by the Guatemalan and foreign repressive big owners who run the country. The revolution will end this domination and assure that the product of the labor of all benefits those who produce this wealth by their creative efforts.

The holdings of the big owners will be taken over by the revolutionary government, which will make sure that this wealth will be used to meet the needs of the working people. The revolution will guarantee that a genuine agrarian reform will be carried out, giving the land to those who work it, either in the form of individual plots, collective farms, or cooperatives.

The revolution will guarantee the holdings of small and middle farmers and divide up among those who work it the land that today belongs to corrupt, greedy, and repressive high military officers, functionaries, and businessmen.

The revolution will guarantee the welfare of small and middle traders, and will promote the growth of national industry, which Guatemala needs in order to develop.

The revolution will guarantee an effective control of prices, for the benefit of the great majority, at the same time as a reasonable profit that does not harm the people.

In taking power away from the Guatemalan and foreign big owners, the revolution will create new sources of employment and will legally establish fair wages for all workers in towns and the countryside.

The passing of power into the hands of the people will make it possible to find solutions to the big problems of poor public health, bad housing, and unemployment that afflict the great majority of the Guatemalan people.

III. The revolution will guarantee equality for the Indians and put an end to cultural and racial discrimination.

The domination of the big owners is the main cause of the cultural oppression and racial discrimination imposed on the Indian population of Guatemala. To end cultural oppression and racial discrimination, it is essential first of all that the Indian population, an essential part of the Guatemalan people, have a share in the political power. The involvement of the Indian people in running the country, together with the non-Indian population, will enable us to meet the needs of the Indian population for land, work, decent wages, health care, housing, and public welfare in general.

Satisfaction of these needs is the first precondition for achieving equality between the Indian and non-Indian population. The second is respecting the culture of the Indian population and recognizing their right to preserve their identity.

The development of a culture that unites and combines the main historical roots of our people is one of the major objectives of the revolution. In power, the Indian and non-Indian people will decide freely how the future Guatemala will look.

IV. The revolution will guarantee the creation of a new society in which all patriotic and democratic sectors, all sections of the working people will be represented in the government.

The revolution will respect the right of the people to elect their local, municipal, and national authorities.

All citizens who by their work, their knowledge, or the capital they own can help to extricate Guatemala from poverty,

backwardness, and subjugation will have a place in the new society. Patriotic businessmen ready to help achieve this great objective will enjoy every guarantee, on the sole condition that they respect the interests of the working people.

The revolution will guarantee freedom of political association, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, and freedom of religious belief as forms that make it possible for all citizens to participate in the building of the new society.

The revolution will apply severe penalties against unrepentant enemies, the clique of top military officers and their accomplices, who adopted and directed the repressive course against the people.

The revolution will be magnanimous toward those who were ordered to repress the people, and will take note of those who did not carry out such orders.

The revolution will end forcible and discriminatory recruitment into the military service.

In the new Revolutionary and People's Army that the people of Guatemala will

build to maintain the security and defense of the country, there will be a place for patriotic officers and soldiers whose hands are not stained by the blood of the people.

In the new society, women will have equal rights with men, since they share the same obligations, and in fact have additional burdens because of their duties as mothers.

Children and old people will receive the protection to which they are entitled by their past or future contribution to the production of social wealth.

The revolution recognizes the Christian people as one of the pillars of the new society, inasmuch as their belief and faith are put to the service of the freedom of all Guatemalans.

V. The revolution will guarantee the maintenance of a policy of nonalignment and international cooperation. This is what the poor countries need to develop themselves today on the basis of self-determination of peoples.

Nonalignment with the big powers and international cooperation are a necessity

in the complex and interdependent world of today. Poor countries need foreign investment, and it must be made on the basis of respect for the national sovereignty of every country, taking account both of the needs of these peoples and a reasonable return to capital coming in from other countries.

For this, political stability is essential. Without political stability, there can be no international cooperation. When the right of peoples to self-determination is respected, international cooperation is not prevented by differences in ideology or political systems.

--Build the revolutionary unity of the entire Guatemalan people!

--Extend the People's Revolutionary War!

--Overthrow the system of exploitation!

--We must take power and establish a revolutionary, patriotic, people's and democratic government!

...Nuestro pueblo con anima fiero antes muerto que esclavo sera! (Our proud people would rather die than be slaves). ■

The Guatemalan Elections, Guerrillas and the Case of Two Flagpoles

GUATEMALA CITY--The fourth time I came into the little out-of-the-way bookstore in Guatemala to search through the shelves for second-hand books, the old bookseller invited me for a cup of coffee and began to tell me stories.

One of them that I remember best of all explains fairly well why the election was boycotted. The old bookseller some months before had gone back to visit his home village.

"I noticed that something had happened," he said. "The police were walking around without weapons and there were two flagpoles standing next to each other in the square, one a bit shorter than the other. On the tallest flew a red flag with Che Guevara's picture.

"It turned out that a few months before, a group of guerrillas from the EGP (Guerrilla Army of the Poor) had entered the town. They assembled all the people in the square, including the police and the mayor.

"They proceeded to hold a long session explaining how the struggle for land, for electricity, for better roads, for water--for all the things that the villagers had long fought for--was the same struggle that the guerrillas were fighting. As a symbol of the unity between the townspeople and the EGP, the organization's flag was hoisted up on the official flagpole in the square. 'Whoever takes that flag down, we know that he is a traitor and an enemy of the struggle,' the guerrillas said."

One day when the mayor realized that national independence day was approaching, a problem arose. Not for the townspeople but for him.

His problem became a subject of public discussion for a long time. He stopped shaving. His clothes started coming to pieces. He couldn't sleep anymore. He was seen pacing back and forth across the square, his eyes fixed on the flagpole. Then he struck himself on the head and sighed so deeply that all the wind seemed to go out of him.

His problem was that independence had to be celebrated as it always had been. That is, the national flag had to be hoisted with pomp and circumstance, the school children had to be assembled in the square, and he, the mayor, had to give his yearly speech. Then at sunset the flag had to be lowered while the police served as an honor guard.

But how could the flag be lowered without breaking the promise that had been made to the guerrillas, without the mayor being seen as a traitor and presumably dealt with as such.

The mayor was a tormented soul. And no one gave him any help. Instead the townspeople started betting on whether he would find an answer to his problem or not.

"He found one, all right, the old fox," the old bookseller laughed as he brought more coffee.

"Do you know what he did? He set up another flagpole. But the new one was a



little shorter than the old one. So, when independence day was celebrated, the guerrilla flag kept flying, a bit higher than the national flag."

I don't know whether the guerrilla flag is still flying in the old bookseller's village and whether or not there is still another flagpole there that is a bit shorter. But I do know that on March 7, neither the old bookseller nor the inhabitants of his home village will cast their votes, just like about 60% of all potential voters.

Unlike in the 1960s, the guerrillas are linked to the underground mass movement. The armed struggle in itself was not enough. It had to become, as it is now, an expression of the organization of the working people, of the workers and their unions, of the Indians who are fighting for their land, for the 70,000 agricultural workers who struck in 1980. ■

The elections that have been held in Guatemala over the last twenty-five years have never offered any real choice. All of the parties that are legal in Guatemala, and therefore all the candidates, represent the oligarchy, the interests of the big landowners, not those of the workers, the peasants, or the poor.

The incumbent president, General Lucas Garcia was elected in 1978. He was preceded by General Kjell Laugerud, who was elected in 1974, following General Carlos Arana Osorio. The man elected

president on March 7 will also be a general. Without any doubt, General Anibal Guevara will be Guatemala's new president.

Among the alternatives to Anibal Guevara there is Mario Sandoval, who is a leader of the grandiosely named National Liberation Movement, and who has proudly declared that he is the chief of the Secret Anti-Communist Army, one of the paramilitary groups responsible for the political mass murder that has gone on in Guatemala in recent years. Another can-

didate is Gustavo Anzueto. He is a founder and active member of Mano Blanca (the White Hand), another one of the paramilitary groups.

It is the experience of how the ruling class has acted when there were real attempts to improve the lives of the poor that lies behind the decision made by the old bookseller and the people of his town to fight by their own means to change the situation.

The March 7 election is not one of these means. ■

Building a World Party of Socialists

Senegal

LEGALIZATION OF THE OST

Combat Ouvrier (Workers Fight) is a legal newspaper which describes itself as a political information and opinion bulletin (temporary address: numero 1037, HLM IV, Dakar, Senegal); its latest issue comments on the application for legalization of the Organisation Socialiste des Travailleurs (OST--Socialist Workers Organization).

In an editorial entitled "The road to the revolutionary party," Combat Ouvrier writes: "On the basis of an analysis of the political situation in our country, and with the strategic perspective of building the revolutionary party, Senegalese revolutionary Marxists have decided to set up the OST."

In discussing the political framework of the democratic "opening" initiated by president of the republic Abdou Diouf--Leopold Sedar Senghor's successor--and imperialism, Combat Ouvrier notes: "We have no illusions about the current democratic opening. We know the government will move to end it--and even resort to bloody repression--as soon as it feels the level of militancy, organization, and consciousness of the workers and their vanguard is beginning to threaten the government." Nonetheless, Combat Ouvrier continues, "revolutionaries do not choose to function underground. They are forced to by the relationship of class forces. Each time a possibility of legal work appears, they must take advantage of it. This is the reason for the formation of the OST."

The OST did not appear out of the blue. "The fact that it exists today is the result of the Trotskyist movement's activity--under the auspices of the GOR (Groupe Ouvrier Revolutionnaire--Revolutionary Workers Group)--over several years of clandestinity."

Combat Ouvrier answers those who complain that the OST's legalization attempt comes after that of eleven other organizations: "For the Trotskyists, the party is first of all the program. The reason they constitute themselves as a distinct political orga-

nization is because they are convinced that their program--for the revolutionary conquest of power by the working class--is the only one that corresponds to the authentic interests of working people, the only one that can defeat imperialism. Asserting this is not an act of self-proclamation. Revolutionary Marxists still have the duty to demonstrate the correctness of their program in practice. This is a challenge which they accept."

Since the publication of the first issue (Issue No. 0) of Combat Ouvrier, three months ago, the OST has succeeded in getting legalized. It is now circulating a manifesto which, after a long analysis of its strategic perspectives, states: "The OST is in political solidarity with the fight of the Fourth International. For the OST this is a means to help bring about the Socialist United States of Africa, a component of the worldwide republic of workers and peasants councils."

One of the OST's first initiatives was to publish and distribute a statement at the February 13 rally of the Rassemblement Democratique National (RND--National Democratic Unity); this sets it off from the organizations that have already been legalized but have done nothing on behalf of the fundamental interests of the exploited masses. In this statement, the OST called on all groupings that claim to fight for the working masses to struggle for an "Action Front in Defense of Jobs and Buying Power."

Mexico

THE PRI ATTACKS

THE PRT CAMPAIGN

The Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT--Revolutionary Workers Party), Mexican section of the Fourth International, has been campaigning for Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, the leader of the FNCR (National Front Against Repression), for president. Systematic work in this election campaign is beginning to extend the party's base and influence. This has been enough to irritate

the government party, the PRI (Revolutionary Institutions Party).

The PRT has become the target of a violent anti-communist campaign, including a variety of attacks (anti-communist leaflets, ransacking of headquarters, systematic defacing of PRT posters and wall paintings).

Following the attack on PRT headquarters in La Paz, Baja California Sur, on January 21, leaflets were found at the headquarters and at the home of a party activist. They were stamped with a human skull and proclaimed: "Supporting Communism is treason against Mexico"; they were signed by the so-called FUEP (Student and Popular Forces). While this is the first time these initials have been seen in La Paz, they have appeared previously in Mexicali, Baja California Norte. In the purest anti-Communist vein, the leaflet dribbled on: "Communism means nothing but theft, death, hunger and slavery--these are not one but several reasons to fight Communism...." Quite likely, this propaganda is financed by the very people who hire thugs to cover up the PRT election wall paintings and posters with others calling on people to vote for the PRI candidate.

This has not been enough, however, to stop the election campaign of Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, which is conceived as a means of helping the working people to organize and defend themselves.

In early February, for instance, the PRT candidate was in La Paz, in southern Baja California, one day before the official trip of Miguel de la Madrid, the PRI candidate for president. And PRT activists managed to pull off the first activity of an opposition political party in La Paz.

Meetings were held in the villages of the region for the impoverished population, who ordinarily don't get any attention from the traditional political parties.

In Puerto Lopez Mateos, a small fishing village of 4,000 people, for instance, 200 workers gathered for a dialogue with the PRT candidate. In Ciudad Constitucion, the PRI and PRT are the only two parties running in the election, and a PRT meeting was attended by over 150 people, including many schoolteachers.

The support of the population of the region for the PRT was concretized in the

formation of committees to support the candidacy of Rosario Ibarra de Piedra. These committees assume responsibility for preparing meetings and propaganda, and they are being coordinated to organize the election campaign, and set up poll-watching teams to minimize irregularities in the forthcoming July 4 vote. At the same time, these committees are based on specific sectors like the peasants of Cuadano, the women of Cuadano, educational workers, the people of Puerto Lopez Mateos, etc, and they lay the basis for organizing workers in their respective sectors.

This campaign, which is both winning support for the PRT and building the organization of the poor masses, gives the government party, the PRI, every reason for concern.

We must therefore remain alert for possible new attacks against our comrades in the PRT who were granted legal status only reluctantly by the powers that be. ■

Peru

THE CONGRESS OF THE PERUVIAN PRT

By Angel Munoz

The Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT--Revolutionary Workers Party), Peruvian section of the Fourth International, held its second congress in Lima February 26-28.

The party has just come through a difficult period of sharp internal disputes. Despite this, the PRT has maintained its previously acquired assets--its mass influence focused on the personality of Hugo Blanco; and the dedication and enthusiasm of its activists in the factories, in the countryside, and in the pueblos juvenes (the shantytowns around the cities).

For example, at the beginning of last year, the slates headed by the PRT or including PRT representatives scored major successes in enterprises such as Moraveco, Centromin, and in the Municipal Workers Union (FENAOM)--all of which are among the most militant sections of the Peruvian workers movement.

At the congress of the largest engineering workers union, FETIM, out of 150 delegates 25 were members of the PRT. This was far more than the Union Democratica Popular (UDP--People's Democratic Union, a left centrist coalition, the most closely identified with the Cuban leadership of the Peruvian left parties). It had just five. Only the Maoists of the Partido Comunista Revolucionario (PCR--Revolutionary Communist Party) had more delegates than the PRT. They had 30.

The outstanding result of the second congress of the PRT was a change in the atmosphere within the party. Whereas a

year ago, a factional spirit prevailed, today there is a strong determination to create the conditions for a comradely and democratic discussion. A strong will to assure united and disciplined action by the entire party also clearly emerged.

The central moment in the congress was the adoption of the party's new program and the election of the leadership. Also, commissions elected by the congress discussed and developed reports on the political orientation and the organization of the party. These reports were referred to the incoming Central Committee, which was charged with carrying the studies further and adopting the recommendations.

The program that was approved represented an important step forward, especially on the peasant question. Other important questions were decided in general resolutions, which now need more thoroughgoing study. These include, for example, the policy of alliances that the party should follow in connection with the democratic and anti-imperialist tasks, a question that today is at the center of political debate in the Latin-American left.

The PRT leadership has undergone a far-reaching renewal. Some 70% of the CC are new; 25% are workers, and 15% are women (there were no women on the old CC). About 70% of the members of the Executive Committee are also new.

It would be foolish to think that all the PRT's problems have been solved or are going to be solved easily. But there is an opportunity to reorganize the PRT. The new leadership has the main responsibility for this task. ■

Antilles

TROTSKYIST WRITER SPEAKS IN HAVANA

Vincent Placol, a member of the Groupe Revolution Socialiste (GRS), Antillian section of the Fourth International, served in January as a member of the jury that awards the literary prizes of the Casa de las Americas, the Cuban publishing house. Placol is the author of several novels published in France.

In the speech he gave in Havana when the jury made its report, Placol stressed the role that intelligent and politically aware publishers can play in helping new generations of writers and thinkers mature and widen their outlook, especially in the colonial world, new generations that can give expression to the struggle of their peoples for self-consciousness and liberation.

The Casa de las Americas meeting was an appropriate place for these remarks, since the Cuban publishing house to a considerable extent has continued the

tradition of early Soviet publishing, and is distinguished by a hospitality to creativity and a nonsectarianism quite unlike the official publishing houses of the bureaucratized West European states.

The following are extracts from Placol's speech:

"We are still suffering the effects of the balkanization of our world by the old colonial powers, effects that are aggravated today by the well-known policy of the U.S. to divide the peoples in order to establish its rule. But there are also other reasons for this, especially in the French-speaking Antilles.

"Many of our young are abandoning French for Creole, which they consider more suited to our culture. This is a problem that the Casa de las Americas will face in the near future, I think; the problem of including works in Creole in this competition.

"Moreover, the idea of a specific Latin-American civilization, even though it is catching on in the heads of some of our intellectuals, is still very embryonic. In this respect, I have to note, not without some bitterness, that writers such as Aime Cesaire, who enjoys a great authority in our country, are not turning the attention of our young intellectuals towards the Americas, because they remain too attached to the virtues of European thought.

"I think that it would be very positive to promote the development of friendship societies with Cuba, like the one that already exists in Martinique, not only in the Antilles themselves but also in France and Canada, where there are large communities of French-speaking people of Antillian origin.

"Secondly, and I think that this is the most important point, I am convinced that Europe, and especially France, does not yet have a clear idea of our importance (I am speaking about Latin America and the Caribbean) in the formation of modern thought... It would take me an hour to list the major Latin American works that have never been translated into French. Think, if it were not for the courage and intelligence of a publisher like Francois Maspero, a work like Carlos Mariategui's Seven Essays would have remained unknown to my generation.

"I should also mention the basic writings of Jose Marti, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara's Episodes of Revolutionary War...

"Can you imagine that the world of Roque Dalton, Alfonso Reyes, and Onetti are almost unknown in France, and therefore in the Antilles...

"Comrade Retamar talked yesterday about books that have been able to exercise a political influence on a whole generation. To convince you of the importance of translations, do you know the book that most deeply influenced my generation, the generation of 1946. Far more than West Indies LMDT by Nicolas Guillen, far more than Reino de Este Mondo by Alejo Carpentier, it was the French translation of Bertillon 166 by Jose Soler Puig, who got the Casa de las Americas Prize in 1960." ■

ON THE EVE OF THE MILITARY CRACKDOWN: SOLIDARNOSC AND THE QUESTION OF POWER

(The following article was written by a member of the leadership of the Lodz region of Solidarnosc for the Swedish weekly ETC. The translation is by IV.)

* * *

After a long struggle, the radical currents supporting workers self-management scored a victory during the second session of the First National Congress of Solidarnosc. The congress rejected the compromise that the presidium of the union's National Commission (KK) had made with the Sejm on the Workers Self-Management Bill and the State Enterprises Bill.

The union assembly, however, did not consider that the fight over the question of the laws was over, even though it had led to a partial defeat for Solidarnosc, largely as a result of the compromise made by the KK.

As had been proposed by the delegates from Lodz, it was decided that the government's decrees to implement these two laws--which stood in flagrant contradiction to the positions of the union and the Movement for Self-Management--should be submitted to a referendum in the factories.

It was on this basis that the union was to fight for modification of the laws adopted by the parliament. Moreover, the congress clearly expressed its determination to continue the struggle for genuine workers self-management. And it committed the union to support the struggle of the workers, even if this led to violating the laws (1).

After this resolution was adopted, a section of the activists who were partisans of self-management went ahead, without waiting for the end of the congress, to start the preparatory work for a new expansion of the movement. This involved both stepping up its activity and moving to higher forms of organization.

The regional coordinating committee of self-management bodies in Upper Silesia, under the chairmanship of Jan Huzarewicz and with

Henryk Szlajfer as its advisor, decided to put into practice what the "Lublin Group" had been fighting for for several months already.

On the initiative of Upper Silesia, about a week and a half after the congress, on October 17, the delegates of seventeen regional coordinating bodies founded the Organizing Committee for a National Federation of Self-Management Councils (the KZ-KFS). This committee was to function as a provisional leadership until the holding of a National Congress of Workers Councils, whose task would be to achieve the conditions for "creating a self-management model for the economy and the state (2)."

Contrary to the Lublin Group, the Network of Solidarnosc organizations (the Siec), including seventeen big plants, had not up till then supported the idea of a vertical structure of the self-management movement. It was even rather hostile to this. Nonetheless, from this point on, the Network stopped opposing this perspective. One of its most well-known activists, Hans Szyc, was even elected chairman of the KZ-KFS.

It must be stressed, however, that the Gdansk regional coordinating committee joined the Federation only after a lot of hesitations, and that the Lower Silesia coordinating committee refused to join it. Both were under the influence of Network activists.

At the time of the congress, a section of Network activists opposed the resolution on self-management, even though the majority of plant committees belonging to the Network were taking part in the fight for workers self-management. But most of the Network's experts and some of the Solidarnosc activists under their influence were partisans of the market economy and competition among factories.

Thus, this element often took a hostile attitude to radical initiatives taken by the Self-Management Movement. Having more confidence in parliamentary democracy than the democracy of workers councils, they preferred to appeal to the technicians than to the workers

themselves. Nonetheless, the workers who made up the rank and file of the union clearly aspired to radical actions.

As the sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis noted, the gap between the ranks and many leaders was tending to deepen, insofar as it represented a difference of political vision: "I am afraid that the language of the leaders is not very convincing for the rank-and-file activists," she said. "Even the slogans of socializing ownership and self-management do not greatly appeal to the imagination of the masses. There is a reason why it is easier to give impetus to self-management by talking about the seizure of economic power, as I do; or by talking about active strikes (the workers taking over production), as Kowalewski does in Lodz (3)."

So, it is not surprising that the Solidarnosc leadership retreated soon after the second session of the First Congress. The KK, to start with, did not formally recognize the Federation as a partner. Without being, strictly speaking, equivocal, its position was not clear. While the Lodz delegation had explicitly demanded that the referendum be organized within a maximum of six weeks after the congress, the KK delayed taking the decisions that would have made it possible to organize the vote. The experts advocated two possible tactics--to postpone the referendum to the indefinite future or to minimize the implications of the vote.

In view of this situation, on November 13, the Lublin Group decided to draw up a draft of nineteen questions for the referendum (4), which it submitted to the Committee of the National Federation for Self-Management. The

1. Dokumenty Zjazdu, BIPS, Gdansk, 1981, pp. 124-26.
2. AS, bulletin of Solidarnosc for the Warsaw region, No. 45, October 13-18, 1981.
3. Niezalesznosc, No. 129, September 16, 1981.
4. AS, No. 52, November 12-15, 1981, p. 207.

latter accepted it. For their part, the KK's group of experts presented a draft limited to four questions, which testified to their determination not to go beyond a certain point in challenging the laws.

The group of experts claimed that a number of the controversial decrees on implementing the laws could be interpreted in a sense favorable to Solidarnosc, forgetting that only those who held the power--that is, the bureaucracy and not Solidarnosc--could do the interpreting.

Under the pressure of its radical wing, the KK finally adopted a resolution setting the first week of December as the date for the referendum. But it did not settle the questions either of the way the question would be formulated or the way the vote was to be organized. This date proved a fiction and could not be respected. In this same resolution, the KK nonetheless recognized the need for creating coordinating committees of self-management bodies on the regional and national levels. It committed the trade-union organizations to help set these bodies up (5). This decision clearly represented a success for the council activists. But it did not yet mean recognition of the Organizing Committee of the Federation.

Along with this, the situation for the self-management bodies in the factories was, while not always difficult, at least often very complicated.

It seemed in effect that the government intended to ignore the Solidarnosc congress resolution demanding that in nearly all the enterprises the managers should be elected by workers councils or councils representing the personnel. It was learned that the authorities wanted to maintain the exclusive right of the state administrative organs to name the directors of the 1,500 largest plants in the country, that is, those that had a decisive importance for the national economy. Clearly, the struggle to break the party nomenklatura was only beginning.

However, the most militant and conscious sectors of the Self-Management Movement refused to yield. Despite the difficulties, the struggle for the election of managers continued. An ever-increasing number of workers councils adopted the method for choosing managers worked out by independent experts, members of the Lodz branch of the Scientific Association for Organization and Management. That is, they called on qualified candidates to submit applications that would be passed on by the workers councils.

Since August, this method had been popularized by the Lublin Group (6). Ignoring the position of the authorities, the workers councils often invited the Lodz experts to come to help them organize the competition for the job of plant manager.

The policy of *faits accomplis* was not limited to that. The State Enterprises Law made it clear that the plant manager was to run the factory. The resolution of the Solidarnosc Congress, on the other hand, maintained that the plants should be run by the self-management bodies, and that the manager's job was to execute their decisions. Everywhere that Solidarnosc and the workers council considered the relationship of forces favorable, it was not the law that was followed but the position of Solidarnosc.

Nonetheless, it must be stressed that in most cases, the workers councils were not yet self-management bodies but organs of struggle for self-management and for supervision by the workers over the production process. "This supervision represents the main axis of transitional program for real workers self-management, and at the same time, one of the main ways of fighting for self-management. In the conditions in which we are working, this workers control involves above all a thorough knowledge of the enterprise and the right of veto over the decisions of the administration (7)."

Regardless of this, however, in a growing number of factories the self-management bodies and the commissions of Solidarity declared in the name of the workers their determination to end the subordination of these enterprises to the Industrial Associations, which are the intermediate bodies of bureaucratic management between the ministries and the units of production. The parasitical character of these Associations was particularly obvious.

Workers commissions set up in the plants worked out their own schemes for establishing democratic relationships, based on freedom of choice, between the enterprises. At the same time, regional and national organs of the Self-Management Movement developed and popularized similar schemes, which made it possible to take back the initiative from the bureaucratic apparatus.

THE REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEES

The role of the regional coordinating committees of the self-management movement was limited in general to helping the self-management bodies in the factories to develop and reinforce themselves. They had not yet reached the stage of exercising

social control over the economy. Nonetheless, there were some first steps that went in this direction. This was the case notably in Upper Silesia, where the authorities tried to get more coal mined by bribing the workers and by trying to increase the workweek.

Against the background of a worsening energy crisis, the regional coordinating committee developed a scheme for increasing production based on quite different approaches. In this plan, increasing the volume of coal mined and increasing efficiency in the use of coal were to be the "results of changes in the organization of work designed to 1) increase the productive work time in the workweek; 2) save on electrical energy consumption in the productive cycle (8)." It was shown that the productive work time in the mines was an average of 66% to 73% of nominal time, and that poor organization resulted in wasting energy equivalent to millions of tons of coal.

Nonetheless, the most important task was still to set up self-management bodies in as many plants as possible. The law adopted by the Sejm set December 31 as the cutoff date for forming self-management bodies in all state enterprises. Where the workers were not yet ready for the idea of self-management, this deadline could be used by the bureaucracy to set up councils regardless of the level of consciousness or activity of the masses. Where this level was low, the councils would fall under the political control of the bureaucracy.

Forestalling this danger required a considerable ideological and organizational effort by the leaderships of Solidarnosc and the regional coordinating committees of the self-management movement. But if these coordinating committees existed already in twenty-five regions at the end of November, at the same time it should be noted that outside the big industrial centers, the regional Solidarnosc leaderships were often not very active in building self-management.

In this struggle, the big factories played a key role. It was often in such plants that self-management got the most support from the workers. But it was in these enterprises also that it was most difficult to or-

5. AS, No. 49, November 2-4, 1981, p.302.

6. Samorzad (bulletin of the Lublin Group), No. 2, pp. 22-26.

7. Zbigniew Kowalewski, Solidarnosc i walka o samorzad zalogi, Lodz, 1981, p.23.

8. Henryk Szlajfer, S. Jablonski, W. Latoch, H. Nojman, Wzrost produkcji wegla kamiennego, Katowice, 1981, mimeographed.



Solidarnosc workers at Lenin shipyard in Gdansk. (DR)

ganize such a system because making workers democracy function was more complicated.

The law required that the workers council be elected directly. The Lublin Group had declared itself earlier in favor of indirect election, by delegates (9), which better suited the conditions in very large enterprises. But this idea did not get sufficient support in Solidarnosc and was not accepted by the law. The process of electing the council was not only more drawn out as a result but still more complicated.

This difficulty was aggravated by another factor. While the idea of building self-management from below--based on teams, brigades, and workshops--had been popularized since the beginning of 1981 by various activists and theoreticians (10), it aroused little interest among the workers. In the big factories, this did not facilitate the struggle against the division between manual and intellectual workers, and that made it more difficult to transform the relationships within the enterprises and to abolish the authoritarianism prevailing within them.

Nonetheless, the radical currents in the union did not present the referendum and the struggle for changing the laws as the only way to advance workers self-management.

THE TACTIC OF THE ACTIVE STRIKE

Beginning in August, the Lodz region opened up a big propaganda campaign around the question of the active strike, based on a plan that I worked out (11). The vice-chairman of the regional Solidarnosc, Grzegorz Palka, developed a proposal dealing with the tactics and strategy of the struggle for an economic reform based on workers self-management. The active strike had an important place in it.

Moreover, Andrzej Slowik, the chairman of the regional Solidarnosc, developed a scheme for setting up a second chamber of the Sejm and in the local government councils that would represent the economic power of the workers (12). Along with all this, there was the scheme for trade-union supervision over the rationing system and the distribution of consumer goods, which began to be put into practice in October (13). Thus, a strategy began to

emerge for the struggle to achieve workers power.

On October 23, the active strike was recognized by Solidarnosc as a method of trade-union struggle. In the resolution adopted on that day, the KK warned the government that the "union would be forced to prepare for and to undertake an active strike in certain sectors of the economy (14)," if by the end of October the government had shown itself incapable of taking energetic action to meet the needs of the population, if it continued to oppose social control of the economy, and if it did not end repression against the trade union.

A few days earlier, the chairman of the Journalists Association, Stefan Bratkowski, wrote a letter to the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) in which he said that the society might very well respond to the government's demonstrations of strength by an active general strike:

"Don't forget, Poles have an incredible capacity for self-organization. In a few days, a general strike could establish a spontaneous network of communication, a network of coordinating and mutual aid committees. The plants would continue to function during such a strike, production and exchange would continue. But the government would no longer have anything to say about it (15)."

The authorities were panic stricken. A

9. Cf the Plan for Workers Self-Management in Social Enterprises, the Ownership of the Entire People, which was drawn up by the Lublin Conference, July 14, 1981.

The workers councils were to be elected indirectly not by all the personnel but by an assembly of delegates. The members of the workers councils would represent workers councils in the various shops.

10. Zbigniew Kowaleski, op.cit., pp. 25-44; J. Strzelecki, "Rady robotnicze 1956-58" in *Robotnik*, No.73, 1981, p.4; Stefan Bratkowski, *Nowy Marsyliusz*, Warsaw, 1981.

11. Zbigniew Kowaleski, *O taktyce strajku czynnego*, Lodz, 1981.

12. Programmatic Proposals from the Presidium of the Lodz Regional Leadership

week later, during a session of the Sejm, Premier Jaruzelski warned those who might resort to active strikes about the risks they would run. Other PUWP leaders, including Central Committee Secretary Stefan Olszowski, made statements of the same tenor. The central organ of the PUWP, *Trybuna Ludu*, published a long commentary about the pamphlet *On the Tactic of the Active Strike*. It said that this work contained a scenario for the seizure of power by Solidarnosc and that it had to be opposed at all cost (16).

Despite its earlier decision, the KK did not begin preparations for active strikes. A concerted attack was in fact launched against this tactic within the circles of experts. In a discussion at Solidarity's Center for Social and Professional Research, some of these experts said: "It is very difficult to carry out an active strike, while it is quite easy to strangle one (17)."

Some of the technicians who favored a market economy expressed their aversion to the perspective of forming a centralized authority of the councils: "The seizure of economic power in an active strike, and the subsequent establishment of a government of workers councils, can lead to replacing one central bureaucracy by another, and one authoritarian system of distribution and central decision making by another (18)."

In a trade-union meeting in Lublin on December 4, one of the most influential of the KK's experts said that the concept of the active strike was "an idea launched by ultraleftists and Trotskyists, a term that has a nice ring to it but nobody knows exactly what it means." This irritated many of the workers present, who not only knew very well what an active strike was but who were working on concrete plans to put it into practice in their factories.

This was not an isolated reaction among the workers. In November and early December, the idea of the active strike was rapidly gaining popularity in the union, and particularly though not exclusively among the workers in heavy industry.

A sociological study carried out in early November in the Lodz region indicated that 65% of the union members favored active strikes, as against only 12% who were for the classical passive strike (19).

of Solidarity for the First Congress of Delegates of Solidarity.

13. Zbigniew Kowaleski, "Solidarite a la veille du coup de force ou la bataille du pouvoir," *Le Monde*, January 7, 1982.

14. *AS*, No. 46, October 19-25, 1981, p. 301.

15. *Ibid.*

16. A. Pawlowska, *Czynnie po władze*, *Trybuna Ludu*, November 2, 1981, p.2.

17. *AS*, No.48, October 29-November 1, 1981, p.205.

18. A. Krajewski, "Oglosimy strajk, bedziemy pracowac," *Przeglad techniczny*, No. 48, 1981, p. 8.

19. *AS*, No.50, November 5-8, 1981, p.401.

In a big modern plant in Lodz, Wifama, 85% were in favor of active strikes. The workers saw this method as an effective one by which the society could struggle against the crisis and the economic policy of the bureaucracy, which was contrary to their interests.

The chairman of Solidarnosc at the Manifest Lipcowy mine explained: "The only perspective is to impose social control over production.

And the only effective means that we have today for doing so is the active strike. It is a form of action that enables us to exercise control over the entire process, from the point of production in the factory to the point where the product reaches its consumer (20)."

In some regional bodies of Solidarnosc, preparations began for calling active strikes, and special teams were assigned to the project. This was the case not only in Lodz but also in Stalowa Wola in Warsaw. During the patriotic demonstration on November 11, the vice-chairman of Warsaw Solidarnosc, Seweryn Jaworski, called on the workers to prepare themselves to take control over the factories by means of active strikes.

On December 6, the chairman of Solidarnosc in Lublin, Jan Bartczak, launched a similar call. At the same time, the Upper Silesia regional leadership published a plan for setting up a trade-union center for distributing goods produced during future active strikes.

Grzegorz Palka, the person responsible for economic reform in the KK presidium, designated an informal coordinator in Lodz to direct preparations for an active strike on the national level. In fact, there was already a certain coordination in this work between Lodz, Warsaw, and Stalowa Wola. In Warsaw, Jerzy Dyner, a member of the presidium, who was at the same time an activist in the Lublin Group, had worked out a set of practical instructions for the active strike.

THE QUESTION OF "WORKERS DEFENSE GUARDS"

At the same time, the call for the creation of "workers guards," that is, self-defense militias of Solidarnosc, began to gain a certain hearing. On December 2, the Lodz presidium advanced a "proposition for action by the union--an active strike combined with the formation of workers self-defense guards." These guards were to "defend the plants and distribution network during the active strike."

Immediately afterward, in a meeting of the presidium of the KK in Radom, Grzegorz Palka demanded that the union issue a call for the formation of workers self-defense guards. On December 4, one of the trade-union leaders in Lublin explained: "If Solidarnosc does not prepare itself on this level, we will be taken by surprise and unable to resist. We must not only prepare for an active strike but make the preparations to defend ourselves against the attacks and provocations of the authorities."

The setting up of workers self-defense guards was becoming more urgent since the army's "territorial operational groups" were beginning to appear in the plants. This reinforced the suspicion that their objective was to gather intelligence in preparation for an assault on the factories.

At this point, the crisis already had an openly revolutionary character. In November, the authorities had explicitly abandoned the idea of introducing their own economic reform--a very limited one--in January. They postponed it to 1983 at the earliest. On December 3, the presidium of the KK wrote:

"The so-called provisional economic system for 1982 (Provizorium) in practice maintains the old system of managing the economy, while shifting onto the workers and the enterprises responsibility for decisions that remain in the hands of the central bodies. This amounts to making null and void the reform and the laws on self-management and the enterprises that were adopted by the Sejm. It threatens to force many enterprises into bankruptcy or to make layoffs. Along with the Provizorium, the government is projecting drastic price increases. It is demanding that the society pay for a reform that has not taken place. The union will not accept price increases without an economic reform. We will defend the workers against the consequences of these increases--factory closures, layoffs, and wage cuts--by all the means provided for in our statutes and in accordance with the legally established purpose of the union (21)."

The government's decision increased discontent in the working class. The workers had been expecting a lot from the economic reform, realizing that a reform was essential to combat the crisis. So, the determination to take things into their own hands and carry out a reform by their own means gained ground. The latest phase of negotiations between the KK and the government had produced nothing. It became clear to all that the authorities were only trying to gain time. They refused to yield on anything--either on access to the media for Solidarnosc, social control of distribution and economic policy, or price reform. The society began to feel threatened by this bureaucracy that was secretly preparing a special powers bill and an attack on Solidarnosc.

THE RADICALIZATION OF THE MASSES DEEPENS

The radicalization of the masses deepened rapidly, pressing Solidarnosc to fight the bureaucratic authorities. Alongside the call for active strikes, the demand for free elections to the local government bodies and the Sejm gained momentum. Under the pressure of the workers, the union leadership began to understand that a confrontation was becoming inevitable and that it was no longer possible to avoid the question of power, which had already been put on the agenda by the working class. There was no longer any way to resist this pressure.

Zbigniew Bujak, chairman of the Warsaw region Solidarnosc was one of the union leaders who realized the need for determined opposition to the government's tactics both with respect to the economic reforms and elections. He said:

"This involves a conflict with the authorities, virtually a final one, a conflict similar in dimensions to the one over Bydgoszcz (where police attacked union leaders in March), but this time with no concessions. We are convinced that this is the only road we can take. If we lose, the situation will hardly be worse than it is today. But we will be in a better position than if we yielded. Because giving way would mean disarming ourselves, it would mean falling back to purely trade-unionist positions."

Andrzej Slowik analyzed the situation in a similar way. On December 9, after the mass meetings that took place in the dozen biggest factories in Lodz, where the workers clearly expressed their support for the active strike and for forming workers self-defense guards, he told me:

"In March, after the Bydgoszcz provocation, we entered a revolutionary situation. We did not know how to take advantage of it. We made a compromise and called off the general strike. The situation has now become revolutionary again. If we do not act accordingly, we will betray the working class. It cannot wait any longer because it knows that the authorities are prepared to keep the society in a state of crisis, if only to maintain their privileges and defend their own interests. This is what the workers in the factories told me yesterday. I consider this a mandate, and it's on that basis that I have to go to Gdansk. There is only one alternative--either a bureaucratic dictatorship that crushes the society, or workers and self-management socialism."

In Lodz, it was decided to undertake the action that would deprive the bureaucracy of its economic power and establish a system of workers self-management by revolutionary methods. It was planned that the first active strike in the country would begin in our region on December 21, that the working class would take control of production and distribution. Along with this, workers self-defense guards would be set up in the factories.

Moreover, we had begun to study the question of social priorities and the principles of rational distribution of energy to industry. The union was preparing to assume control of the energy network in the region. This was an important feature of the preparations for a regional active strike. The feeling of the workers was indicated by the December 8 communique of the Lodz Center for Social and Professional Research:

"Some 88.3% of those questioned say that they will actively support the union leadership, regardless of the dangers, if

20. Statement of the chairman of Solidarnosc at a mine in Jastrzebie.

21. Kommunikat, bulletin of the Lodz region, No.294, December 4-5, 1981.

it decides to undertake actions involving confrontation with the government in order to achieve the demands of August 1980. Among the forms of confrontation that might occur, the active strike is mentioned most often (22)."

Within the Solidarnosc regional leadership, the belief was that a call for an active general strike would not be supported by the majority of the national leadership of the union. So, it was decided that if he ran into opposition, Andrzej Slowik would ask for a green light from the KK for an active strike action in his own region. It could be predicted that the Lodz region would draw behind it others that were also determined to undertake active strikes, and that sooner or later this would change the relationship of forces in the KK.

The tactics and strategy proposed by Solidarnosc to resolve the question of power could then be taken up by the union as a whole. Active strikes would have made it possible for the masses, who were looking for radical forms of action, to go onto the offensive. The consolidation of an economic power of the workers would have permitted the accumulation of forces necessary to resolve the question of economic power.

The growth of workers self-management through revolutionary action would have meant the emergence of local and territorial self-management and with it the liberation of the energy of millions of citizens. This would have given a solid basis to the demand for free elections. If the relationship of forces proved favorable enough to resolve the question of political power and therefore led to an extension of dual power, the Lodz region thought that a victorious active strike should lead to the formation of a self-management or socio-economic chamber of the Sejm and the local government councils. Such bodies should be democratically elected by all producers--wage workers, peasants, and individual artisans. They would concentrate in their hands all the economic power of the state.

THE LAST MEETING OF THE SOLIDARITY LEADERSHIP

The last meeting of the KK on December 12 showed that there was a convergence between the Lodz position and those of other regions (23). The representative of the Cracow region presented the following action program for Solidarnosc.

"a) In liaison with the National Self-Management Federation, the KK will prepare a body of bills and other draft legislation related to economic reform. It will submit the proposed economic model to a referendum in the factories in order to win the support of society as rapidly as possible.

"b) During the general strike, the union will begin to apply the economic program. This will be coordinated centrally by a National Social and Economic Council that will be set up unilaterally by the union.

"c) The union will declare the strike over when the economy begins to function

in accordance with the new principles on all levels.

"d) Achieving the preceding goals will be possible only if the union has access to the mass media. The KK will call an active strike on radio and television, in the newspapers, in the print shops, in the transport and distribution network for the press so that the means of communication can be put to the service of the society.

"e) The general strike announced in the December 3 statement of the presidium of the KK will not be necessary if the authorities of the People's Republic of Poland give up the idea of imposing special powers. Regardless of what happens, the KK will step up its efforts to achieve reform and abandon the ineffective policy of concessions and compromises that it has followed up till now.

"f) All negotiations by the union with the government will be broadcast directly over TV."

Seweryn Jaworski from Warsaw declared his support for active strikes as a continuation of the general strike that the union could not fail to call if a state of siege were instituted: "We cannot let a general strike go on for a long time, we are all perfectly aware of that. The active strike has to be organized immediately during the sit-in strikes."



Lech Walesa. (DR)

What is more, convinced that extremist groups in the government apparatus intended to resort to armed force, Jaworski said:

"I think that it is necessary to form workers self-defense guards in all regions, especially in the big plants. Even if they don't have any special material, we will certainly need them. They can constitute a force that the extremist groups that are ready for confrontation will have to reckon with."

The Upper Silesian delegation also took a radical position, although a different one. It thought that the union should concentrate all its efforts on the fight for special elections to the Sejm and the local government councils, as well as for the socialization of the mass media:

"We hope that the Sejm will make a positive gesture. And the only positive gesture that it could make to accomplish its historic mission would be to call special elections. Nonetheless, we can

scarcely count on that. That is why we have to organize these elections ourselves, without the Sejm and the authorities. Our union, along with all organizations and all citizens have only one aspiration--that power in Poland pass truly into the hands of the Polish people."

The moderate current put forward a different tactic. Its main spokesman was Jan Rulewski, chairman of the Bydgoszcz region. He said that the society and the government had entered a period of confrontation, which had sharpened since August 1981: "There are the signs here of a general confrontation, whose culminating point would be a general strike, an active strike." He maintained that this course had to be opposed. It was necessary to find a "political solution" for the crisis of power, based on the experience of the parliamentary democracies. "The Western societies, the democratic civilizations, have long provided a rational framework for political confrontation through the creation of institutions such as parliament, or the Sejm in our country."

Seeking to base himself on the workers who were calling more and more insistently for special free elections to the Sejm, Jan Rulewski said: "The union's strategy must enable millions of people to express themselves and that is why I would like to propose as a framework for this confrontation the organization of a referendum through which not only the union leadership could express itself but also the entire union, its ten million members, and if other forces joined in, the entire society. But--this is a little tactical maneuver--this referendum must not include only questions about self-management. It must be a basis for judging if the society gives its confidence to the present system of representation, to the Sejm, to this government and to the system of exercising power that is in force in our country."

A vote of no confidence in the system of exercising power through the referendum was to be the basis for Solidarnosc calling a general strike. As a result of this strike, if the government did not accept a political solution, it would be necessary to form a provisional government made up of independent specialists. This government would have the task of organizing free elections for the Sejm and the other representative bodies and thereby of establishing popular sovereignty.

The tactic proposed by the Bydgoszcz region had a number of weaknesses. First of all, it was not based on an analysis of the concrete political situation. This was contrary to the approach followed by the representatives of the Lodz region. They considered it essential to start from recognizing the existence of a revolutionary situation to determine what the activity

22. *Solidarnosc Ziemi Lodzkiej*, bulletin of the Lodz region, supplement No. 24, December 8, 1981, p. 4.

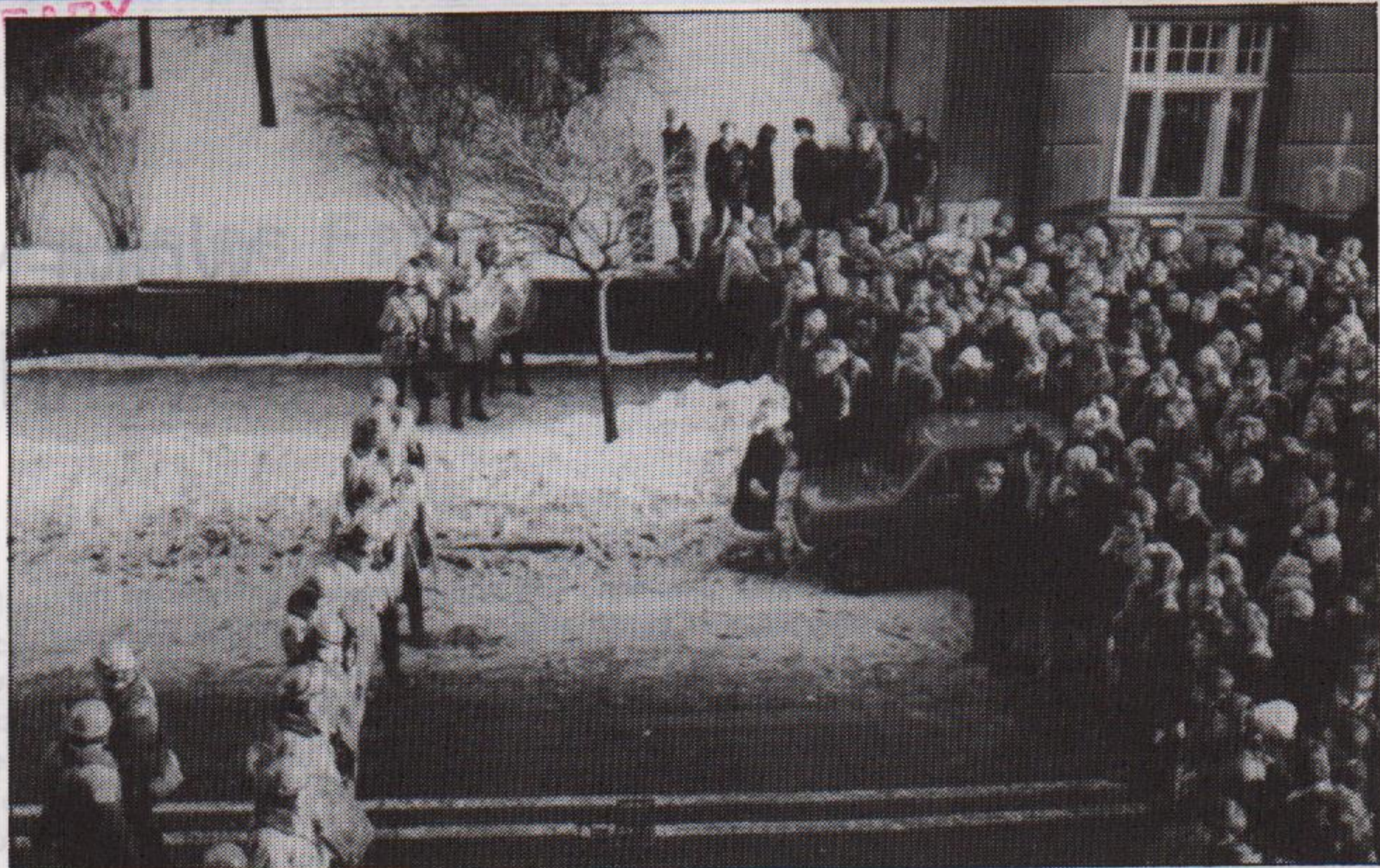
23. All the following quotations are from the tape recordings of the last session of the KK held on December 12.

of the union should be. In a situation where a confrontation between the government and society could occur at any moment. Jan Rulewski's proposal did not involve an immediate mobilization of the masses.

What was not clear was how it would be possible to take power from the bureaucracy without a direct confrontation, without a qualitative leap in the development of the counterpower of civil society that was represented by Solidarnosc. A passive strike, even a general one, would not make it possible to resolve this question. The tactic proposed by Jan Rulewski was based on illusions that had been rejected months before by the masses and were being abandoned by a growing number of Solidarnosc leaders.

The fact that it was parliamentary democracy that Jan Rulewski saw as the form of future government of the working people was not without its significance. The more radical currents, while they did not reject parliamentary democracy, favored combining it with the real democracy of workers councils.

The tactic proposed by the Lodz, Cracow, and Warsaw regions had a clear advantage over the one proposed by Bydgoszcz. Nonetheless, it had a weakness found in all the tactics put forward during the 1980-81 Polish revolution. In its struggle to resolve the question of power, even the most revolutionary current in Solidarnosc did not propose any policy for a



The bureaucracy cracks down. (DR)

"struggle to win the army."

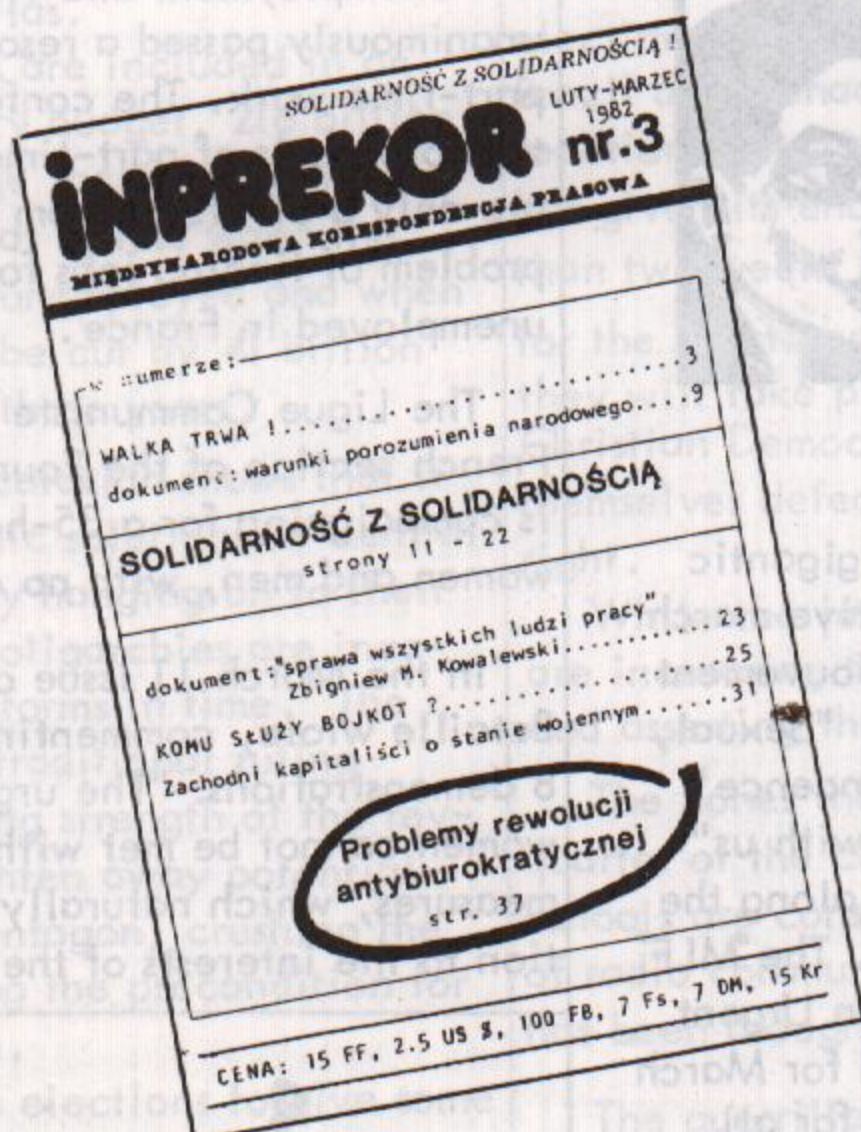
The feeling of power that emanated from the mass movement was so great that even the most politically conscious were victims of the illusion that this power would be sufficient to neutralize the army and that the problem of confrontation was not on the agenda. Solidarnosc and the mass movement as a whole had to pay dearly for this illusion only hours afterward.

The KK did not adopt any of the tactics proposed. It limited itself to calling for a

referendum on the system and mode of exercising governmental power, which did not conflict with any of the tactics put forward. The debate over how to resolve the question of power remained open.

Thus, Solidarnosc assumed a defensive stance at a time when it and the entire society were facing the threat of an attack from the government, when it was clear that whoever took the initiative and struck first would gain the advantage in the confrontation. ■

THIRD ISSUE OF POLISH INPREKOR IS NOW OUT !



The third issue of the Polish language magazine of the Fourth International has just appeared. Its small size is intended to give members of the security services in Poland a good excuse not to notice it.

The issue contains articles summarizing the facts of the resistance to the crackdown in Poland as well as solidarity actions in other countries. There are also articles detailing the lessons of the rise of Solidarnosc and of the bureaucratic attack on it.

To get copies or subscriptions or to give contributions to expanding this effort, send checks made out to PEC, to Inprekor, 2, rue Richard Lenoir, 98108, Montreuil, France. Single copies cost U.S. \$1, British 50p. Yearly subscriptions by surface mail, U.S. \$12, British £6.



WOMEN AND THE LEFT GOVERNMENT IN FRANCE

In France no less than four different demonstrations celebrated International Women's Day 1982. The occasion was officially recognized for the first time here by the new government headed by a Socialist Party president, Francois Mitterrand. In front of 450 women invited to the Elysee, Mitterrand announced a package of measures that primarily affected women, including the long-demanded reimbursement of payments for abortions. Some are to be repaid beginning September 1, 1982, by social security. Under the state medical scheme, payments for drugs and medical services are reimbursed from the treasury in accordance with a certain schedule.

Other measures include increases in family allowances, projected laws against sex discrimination, new tax status for farm women and women with small businesses, as well as a 30% quota for women candidates in city and regional elections.

However, the Socialist Party (SP) led trade union, the CFDT (Confederation Francaise Democratique des Travailleurs), declined to officially participate in any of the March 8 public actions.

"The Socialist government has taken steps in the right direction," commented one woman, "but this is not enough."

"I've come today because of the jobs question. It took me a long time to find a job and I think the government has to do more for women, especially school leavers," a young dietician said on the 2,000-strong March 6 demonstration.

"No to layoffs" and "One woman out of two--unemployed," many of the banners said, reflecting the economic reality in France today.

A spokesperson for the Coordinating committee of Women's Groups in Paris said, "What we expect from the left government is far-reaching measures that can change the economic situation for all women."

"French women, immigrant women--solidarity!" was a popular chant among the many international groups that took part, including abortion rights activists from Bilbao, Spain, Women and Ireland, Women in Solidarity with El Salvador, Turkish

women, Chilean Women in Exile, and the Coordinating Committee of Black Women.

The Union of French Women (UFF-Union des Femmes Francaises), a group close to the Communist Party, held a conference on March 6 and 7 of 1,000 women around the slogan "Assert yourself, act, win as women."

Several thousand, according to *Le Monde* of March 9, joined the Sunday demonstration; *L'Humanite*, paper of the French Communist Party, claimed 20,000.

There were two other activities on March 8. The CP-led CGT (Confederation General du Travail) held a march of several thousand. Four-hour work stoppages were called for by the CGT, but seemed to be intended primarily to gather women trade unionists, in order to "discuss, suggest, and act with the CGT."



Floats, balloons, music and gigantic colorful banners headed the festive march of 5,000 called by the "MLF" (Mouvement pour la Liberation des Femmes). "Sexual, political, and economic independence" and "Women--into the streets, with us" were among the favorite chants along the route that ended at the Bastille. The "MLF" has recently published their "Ten Urgent Demands" for women and called for March 8 to be declared a paid holiday for all women, and only women.

The "MLF" raises the demand for wages for house work. Other feminists criticize this, saying that it means keeping women in the home and maintaining the old sexual division of labor. They argue that the women's movement should concentrate on the problem of full employment.

The mobilizations were larger than in recent years. In part at least this reflects the increased confidence and higher expectations that French women, and especially working women, have now that a government is in power that they believe is "theirs."

However, the lack of unity and meager trade-union support limited the impact of the activities. A united demonstration by the women's groups and unions could have been far more powerful.

The second session of the conference on "Unemployment and Women" co-sponsored by the Paris region CFDT and the Coordinating Committee of Women's Groups is scheduled for April 17 and 18 in Paris. This is to open the second phase of a campaign to mobilize women on the issue of jobs and unemployment.

Under the left government in particular, one of the main strategies of French capitalists has been to increase the number of part-time workers. It is a way of introducing around-the-clock shifts, increasing the speedup, and cutting back the gains workers have made in work conditions. It especially affects women.

The 700 participants in the first session of "Unemployment and Women Conference" unanimously passed a resolution condemning part-time work. The conference considered that proposals of part-time work for women are only a diversion from the fundamental problem of finding jobs for the two million unemployed in France.

The Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International, is campaigning for a 35-hour week for all, women and men, with no cut in pay.

In the March 11 issue of *Rouge*, Claire Bataille wrote, commenting on the March 8 demonstrations: "The urgent demands of women cannot be met without radical measures, which naturally, are in contradiction to the interests of the bosses." ■



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