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MALVINAS CRISIS
WHAT POSITION FOR SOCIALISTS?



WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS WOMEN AND THE FIGHT AGAINST AUSTERITY

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

BRITISH HANDS OFF THE MALVINAS !

Declaration of the Fourth International Bureau

A state of war exists around the Malvinas Islands. The conflict is not between a "democracy" and a "military dictatorship." It is between an imperialist power and a dependent country that is still semi-colonial.

The Malvinas were seized by Britain from Argentina as part of its policy of armed colonial expansion. They were used by British imperialism as its chief naval base to guard the passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic oceans. They also provided a base for military action against the Latin American mainland.

What is at issue in this conflict is not the right to self-determination of the inhabitants of the Islands as Mrs. Thatcher claims. It is:

- * the survival and credibility of the reactionary Thatcher government;
- * the resources of the Antarctic;
- * the strategic position of the Malvinas in the South Atlantic;
- * the oil that has been discovered around the Islands.

That is what British imperialism wants to keep hold of. Its blatant hypocrisy is demonstrated by the fact that it has supplied the Argentine military dictatorship and in part even helped bring it to power. To a large extent, it will be British-supplied arms which will be firing on British ships.

In this conflict, the international workers and revolutionary movements must give their full and entire support to Argentina. Argentinian sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands must be definitively established and internationally recognized without any reservations. British imperialism's war is a totally reactionary war. We must work for it to end in defeat.

The IVth International calls on the workers of all countries to give their support to the Argentinian nation in this conflict. The imperialist war drive must be fought head-on by the working masses everywhere and above all in Argentina and in Latin America.

The IVth International calls on European workers to force their governments to end the blockade measures and economic boycott against Argentina. In the present conflict these measures do not target the military dictatorship. They are aimed against the Argentinian nation. The Argentinian masses or the victims of repression will not benefit from them. The benefits are drawn by the British imperialists. The European working class has no interest in supporting in any way whatsoever the international imperialist alliance, the alliance of its own exploiters against the Argentinian nation.

The IVth International calls on the British workers and their organizations to resolutely oppose the chauvinist hysteria. They should demonstrate in tens of thousands as they did during the Suez conflict in 1956 to stay the criminal arm of the City's warmongers. Not a drop of blood should be shed for the cause of the *Falkland Corporation*, for the sordid interests of the plunderers of the ocean beds.

The people who are leading this conflict are those who are responsible for three million unemployed in Great Britain, for dismantling the social security system and causing a large increase in poverty levels throughout the country. The natural allies of the British workers are the Argentinian workers and the Argentinian nation, not the British capitalists.

The IVth International calls on the Argentinian workers to defend the just cause of Argentinian sovereignty over the Malvinas by sustained class action and by class struggle methods. While working for the victory of Argentina in this war, workers will not give up for an instant their intransigent opposition to the bloody military dictatorship. They will continue their ef-

forts to overthrow it and replace it by a workers and toilers government, which is alone capable of finishing the task of liberating the country from the imperialist hold, of definitively ensuring democratic rights for the broad masses and resolving the serious economic crisis in the interests of the working masses, by taking the socialist road.

DOWN WITH BRITISH IMPERIALISM'S DIRTY WAR AGAINST ARGENTINA!

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

DOWN WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY OF BIG CAPITAL WITH THE CITY OF LONDON!

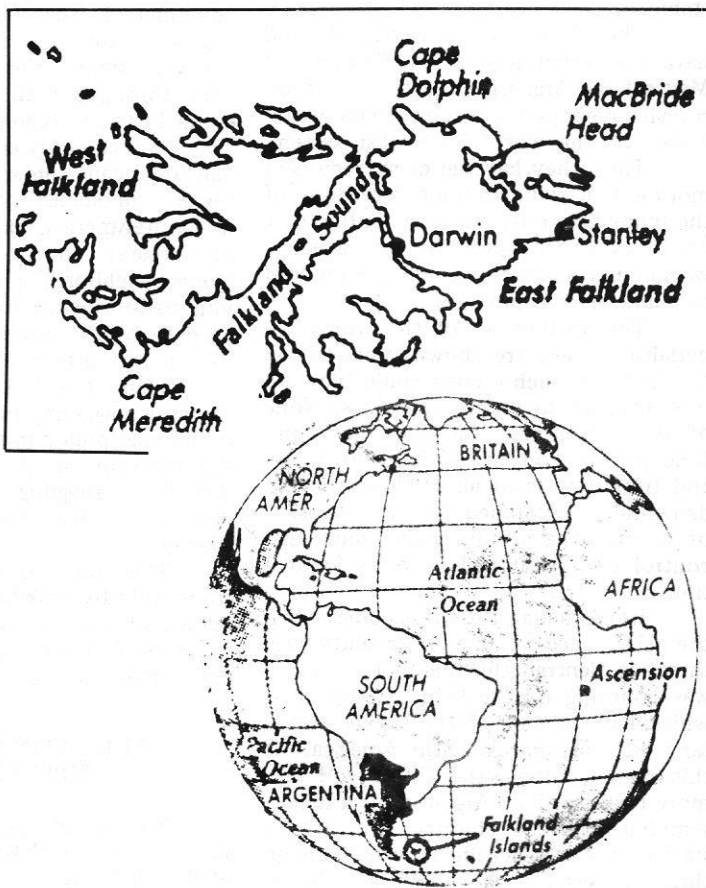
DOWN WITH IMPERIALIST ECONOMIC BOYCOTTS AGAINST ARGENTINA!

NO ARBITRATING ROLE FOR THE USA, NO INTERVENTION FROM THE UNITED NATIONS! WASHINGTON HANDS OFF THE MALVINAS!

LONG LIVE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS SOLIDARITY WITH THE ARGENTINIAN WORKERS AND NATION!

May 1, 1982

United Secretariat Bureau of the Fourth International



Malvinas War Moves Show Imperialist Threat to Humanity

By its response to the Argentine government's moves to assert sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, the British government has already endangered the lives of thousands of people, threatened an entire oppressed nation with humiliation and slaughter, squandered hundreds of millions of pounds that could have relieved mass deprivation in Britain, and increased the dangers to world peace and therefore to the lives of tens of millions of people.

In all the bloody annals of British imperialist arrogance, there are few, if any, crimes so reckless and insensate. But these crimes are not simply the responsibility of the reactionary Thatcher government in particular or British imperialism in general.

The dominant world imperialist power, the United States, has thrown its weight behind them, offering even logistic support to the British task force. And the other imperialist powers have backed the British action. Thus, the Malvinas war represents a response of the world imperialist system as a whole. This is a dramatic sign that in its decay, imperialism is becoming not only more murderous but more and more dangerously unstable.

The clashes of powerful air and naval forces that began in the first days of May off the Argentine coast have already revealed great political and material weaknesses of the world imperialist system.

Thus, they have set deep tremors in motion that will continue regardless of the immediate outcome of a conflict that has escalated unexpectedly into a major world crisis, and which could quickly lead to much larger explosions.

The weaknesses of the world imperialist system are shown precisely by the fact that such a crisis could blow up over an issue such as the Malvinas. None of the governments involved have any fundamental conflict of interests there, and the interests of all of them are fundamentally threatened by the explosion of a crisis that could shake imperialist control of a vital region to its foundations.

In particular, this crisis comes when the U.S. faces a major revolutionary threat in Central America, and obviously was counting on the help of Argentina, which has had one of the stronger military dictatorships in Latin America. If this regime falters, the U.S. could lose more than an ally. Argentina is a major, semi-industrialized country, and at the start of the last decade it went through three full-scale urban uprisings. More-

over, the Brazilian dictatorship, right next to Argentina, which has been the other main bulwark of reaction in South America, has been breaking down in recent years, and faces the development of a new mass revolutionary workers movement.

Why, then, has the move of the Argentine government to assert sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands touched off a major crisis for imperialism?

Two years ago, in fact, in the so-called 'Ridley Plan', the British foreign office recommended to negotiate Argentine sovereignty over the islands in return for a lease-back agreement. Provided the oil surrounding the islands is exploited by American and British oil companies, as it would be, this would not have threatened basic imperialist economic interests.

Today, however, the British imperialists have responded to what was originally a token Argentine occupation by sending a massive military machine to the South Atlantic and initiating armed actions that could have the most far-reaching consequences on international military lineups and domestic politics.

Some of the most modern military equipment in the world is being used to attack the forces of a semi-colonial country, with which other semi-colonial countries throughout the region have been compelled to express their sympathy. The U.S.'s carefully constructed facade of Pan-American solidarity, its main diplomatic and ideological cover for intervening in Latin America, has been shown to be utterly false. It is left without a rag of 'good neighborly' pretence to cover its imperialist operations. It even felt obliged to offer logistic support to the British military offensive.

Thus, the U.S. has been obliged to pay a staggering price as regards its international policy in the Continent. And the position of the peoples of Latin America struggling against imperialist domination has been greatly strengthened.

This course of events can be understood only by looking beyond the immediate moves in this conflict to the whole situation in Latin America and the general crisis facing imperialism today.

THE LATIN AMERICAN POWDER KEG

The Argentinian military dictatorship retook the Malvinas after 150 years of British occupation as a direct result of

its own deep internal crisis. With mounting discontent coming to a head in the powerful demonstrations of 30 March in Buenos Aires and other cities, the dictatorship sought to gain popularity by satisfying the long-felt just demand of the Argentinian people for undisputed control of their national territory.

But the crisis of the Argentinian dictatorship is only one of a whole series that are developing in Latin America. The 'economic miracles' of the 1970s achieved by the iron-fisted procapitalist policies of the Latin American dictatorships have staggered to a halt amid 110 billion dollars in foreign debts. Latin American Gross Domestic Product fell by 2% in 1981, after rising by an average of 5% a year from 1977-80.

This crisis hits not only the weakest but also the most powerful Latin American states. Gross Domestic Product in Brazil fell by 3.5% in 1981, after an average rise of 6% in the preceding three years, and industrial production crashed by over 9%. Estimates for the Chilean economy predict an absolute decline in production for 1982, after an average 8% annual increase in 1977-80. The Uruguayan economy grew by only 1.3% in 1981, and will probably shrink this year, after an average 5% a year expansion in 1974-80. Mexico has been severely hit by the oil price fall.

In Argentina, this general economic crisis has been worst of all. In 1981, the economy as a whole shrank by 6% and manufacturing production fell by 14%. Inflation, at over 130%, is the worst in the world.

As this crisis has deepened, the revolutionary movements in Central America have continued a rapid political and military advance.

Under these circumstances, the policy of U.S. imperialism under Reagan was clear. Washington made a double-or-nothing bet on military dictatorship and repression.

In this respect, the Argentina junta was a key card. For months, the U.S. has been trying to prepare the way for the use of Argentine troops in El Salvador, either alone or as part of a wider international force. It was to try to save the Argentine dictatorship from the consequences of its action in the Malvinas that Haig made his mammoth shuttle diplomacy between Buenos Aires and London.

But the junta knew that it was too weak at home to risk an unpopular joint military operation with U.S. imperialism in Central America. It desperately

needed to justify itself and its massive military spending by using its high-priced hardware for something that it could hope would be popular among the Argentine masses.

It is poetic justice that Galtieri and his military butchers have got themselves into big trouble by their illusions in the strength and flexibility of imperialism, in the self-confidence of the imperialists in today's world.

The only reason that the junta dared to risk retaking the Malvinas was that they believed that Britain would make only a formal protest, or at most display a little token sabre rattling. It assumed apparently that the British government was strong enough and self-confident enough to take an insult from a subordinate regime that needed to look tough to its own people in order to continue doing its job for its imperialist masters. From the British lords of capital, their parvenue partners, the gangster generals, expected noblesse oblige.

But if the British government no longer had the old imperial confidence, if the lion's tail had become too sore from frequent twisting, then the U.S. presumably could be relied on to bring the British to their senses. After all, it had an enormous stake in the Argentine dictatorship, as the preparations for using Argentine troops in Central America showed.

However, on the one hand, Britain remains one of the most powerful and ruthless states in the world. It possesses the third most powerful navy of any country. It is quite able and determined to defend its own interests first, and worry about its imperialist allies, even the much more powerful U.S., afterward. And there is no honour among thieves.

On the other hand, British imperialism was too weak to be able to tolerate the sort of affront represented by the Argentine landing in the Malvinas. The country has three million unemployed. It has the lowest standard of living of any country in Western Europe after Portugal, Spain, and Ireland. Its traditional economic structure is collapsing. The British masses over the last decade have suffered continual and drastic declines in their standard of living.

In this situation, the British capitalists need a government that can look tough, like it is firmly in control and will put things in order regardless of the price.

The Argentine takeover, therefore, was a severe blow to the reactionary Thatcher government. From the first day of the crisis, Thatcher knew that if she did not do something drastic to restore the tough image of her government, her whole political project was in danger of collapsing.

So, for the sake of the credibility of a reactionary government, British aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines were sent 8,000 miles to bring death and destruction to the South Atlantic.

For a century, a British population many, many times the number of the few hundred on the Malvinas have lived peacefully in Argentina.

The British aggression now endangers not only the inhabitants of the Malvinas but the British community in Argentina. The Argentine population will be enraged by this insult to their country. The generals could continue to look for relatively easy targets. And the fact of the matter is despite the British government's attempt to do a replay of the siege of Lucknow in Star Wars style, despite even the fact that the British military could wreck a considerable part of the world, British imperialism is quite incapable of maintaining a foothold 8,000 miles from the home island in face of the hostility and bitterness of an entire continent. There is no way now that the Malvinas can be kept British. Pearls of far greater price had to be relinquished by the British Raj in the face of far less odds.

The Thatcher government's claim that it is defending democracy and law against a lawless dictatorship is also absolutely untrue. That doesn't mean that the generals are not dictators; far from it. But their action had a democratic effect. It represented the aspirations of millions and millions of Argentines and tens of millions of Latin Americans. Moreover, it divided the forces that maintain the oppression of the Latin American masses.

After five years of one of the most brutal and total dictatorships in the history of Argentina, the masses of people got a chance to come onto the streets again to demonstrate for something that is their democratic right. And this can create a tremendous power that will push the dictatorship further into conflict with the very forces that it depends on for its life, the imperialists.

THE RESULTS FOR BRITISH WORKERS

The Argentinian retaking of the Malvinas struck a great blow in the interests of the British working class. For a few days, Thatcher stood on the brink of falling. It was the greatest crisis of her government since its election.

In fact, the Thatcher government needs to look tough mainly to press the attack on British workers. So, any successful defiance of the Thatcher government, any defeat of its arrogance rebounds directly to the benefit of British workers, whether the blow comes in Britain, the North or Ireland, or the south Atlantic.

In this respect, the support given to Thatcher in this crisis by the right-wing leadership of the British labour movement is a continuation of the criminal policies by which it allowed her to come to power in the first place. But now these crimes become an obvious and dramatic outrage.

The Thatcher government was in crisis. And what did the leaders of the

British Labour Party do? They started to rebuild the credibility of this government. They supported the sending of the aircraft carriers. Dennis Healey, the deputy leader of the party, openly hailed the bombing of the Malvinas.

With this total capitulation of the Labour leadership, the Conservative government soared in popularity. A Tory administration that stood at only 33% in the opinion polls at the beginning of April had reached 40% by April 26. By May 1, the Tory Party stood at 43%, as compared to Labour's 30%.

This setback was not at all inevitable. Despite all the chauvinist hysteria, less than 15% of people asked in the opinion polls said they were prepared to sacrifice 100 British lives for the "Falklands." Some 18% already supported a position "like Tony Benn's" of opposing the military action.

The policies of the Labour Party leadership in supporting British imperialism have already brought disaster after disaster to the British working class, the lowest standard of living of any of the developed capitalist countries. Now they have helped sustain in its moment of crisis a vicious and reactionary government which is just as great an enemy of the British working class as it is of the Argentinian.

As we go to press, however, the first clear signs of resistance to this line are appearing in parts of the British labour movement. While not accepting Argentina's just claim to sovereignty over the Malvinas, Tony Benn, the best known leader of the Labour left, and Judith Hart, chairperson of the Labour Party are increasing publicity for their opposition to the dispatch of British forces.

The Wales Trades Union Congress voted to condemn the bombing of the Malvinas.

Following the local government elections on May 6, which at present are preoccupying many Labour Party activists, opposition inside the Party to the line of Foot and Healey can be expected to mount. But there should be no disguising that it will be a hard uphill fight in Britain against the line not only of imperialism but of the Labour leadership.

Nonetheless, for the workers and socialist movement in Britain and throughout the world, the Malvinas crisis means great opportunities, as well as great responsibilities. It shows how fragile the world imperialist order is, and how precarious also is world peace. It shows the threat of mass murder that hangs over every people in the neocolonial world who demand the least democratic right or concession. It shows the increasingly reckless displays of military power in which the capitalist governments capable of destroying the world feel obliged to indulge in order to maintain their decaying credibility.

The movement in Britain and the rest of the world must mobilize to defend the Argentinian people and themselves, to defend all humanity and its possibilities for the future.

Workers' Spring Begins in Poland

by Cyril SMUGA

May Day in Poland was marked by the first massive demonstrations against the bureaucratic dictatorship since December, when the rulers launched an attack to beat the population back to its knees. Tens of thousands marched in both Warsaw and Gdansk.

These demonstrations showed in a dramatic way the revival of the mass movement. The marchers appealed in particular to the soldiers: "The army is with us," they chanted.

The following article, written before the demonstrations, describes the failure of the crackdown.

Almost six months after the military crackdown in Poland, led by General Jaruzelski, the bureaucracy is still far from claiming victory:

'The situation is extremely complicated. We are still very far from celebrating victory. We could still find ourselves faced with things, with events, phenomena that we can't even imagine just now. Comrades, anything is still possible.'

'Comrades, what you say is terrifying.'

This extract is from a recording of a meeting between the military commissar for Polish radio and television and the party members who work there. It is a better testimony than any long explanation to the disarray of the military junta which took power on December 13. The same commissar continued: 'The state of war will continue in Poland until the Party is renewed. I am not talking about the Party bureaucracy, which can come back quite fast, but the situation at the base in the big enterprises.'

The Party, the essential instrument for controlling the society, has been disastrously weakened. Since August 1980, it has lost more than two-thirds of its members. In the plants, it is more and more limited to managerial personnel and paid officials. Today, its mass base is increasingly concentrated in the state apparatus.

The attempt to rebuild social organisations under the boot of the bureaucracy have gotten nowhere. The 'Social Commissions', established in the enterprises to fulfill what the bureaucracy considers are the functions of a trade union—to distribute potatoes in winter and organise holiday camps—have been unanimously boycotted.

Attempts to get the activists elected to the workers councils before the crackdown to explain to workers that although

their standard of living has gone down, they are now going to get a voice in the management, a very limited one, have also failed. The bureaucracy cannot get anyone to do this.

There are more goods in the shops now. After a 300% price rise, the workers cannot afford to buy much. But production has fallen to catastrophic levels. The Central Statistics Office reports that the big enterprises have only reached 40 to 45% of the projected targets. This is partly owing to the passive resistance of the workers. For example, in Silesia, 50% of the workers have followed the union instructions to sabotage production. But this drop in production is also a result of the disorganization created by the state of siege restrictions. Many enterprises are closed two out of every three days because they lack the necessary parts and raw materials.

This inability to 'normalise' the situation has increased differences within the bureaucracy.

These differences stem from the contradiction which has existed since December between the old and the new power structures. All State structures have been paralleled by military structures. There have been conflicts between the old State and Party apparatus, anxious to hold on to their privileges; and the military apparatus who see the opportunity to get new privileges in their new functions. The old Party apparatus has succeeded in establishing armed groups under the name 'Political Self Defence—PUWP' which are independent from the repressive apparatus of the military regime.

RESISTANCE IS GROWING

The army, put at the forefront of the political scene, is becoming demoralised. Desertions are growing among soldiers who are in their third year of service and for whom the end is not yet in sight. At Elblag a deserter opened fire on police. It took two hours for a battalion of police to overcome him. Solidarnosc has embarked on work among the soldiers. Their leaflets are widely distributed, calling on the soldiers to refuse to carry out orders that they disagree with. Equally significant, bulletins of the union report the formation of informal groups within army units.

Solidarnosc, which was badly disorganised by the first wave of repression, is reorganising within the enterprises and the local neighbourhoods. The Socialist Resistance Circles (KOS), formed by five

people who develop others in a pyramid structure, are growing. More than 1,700 clandestine journals appear regularly. Strikes and work stoppages are growing in number. Every month between the 13th (anniversary of the coup) and the 16th (anniversary of the killing of miners at Wujek last December) demonstrations take place throughout the country. The roads, factory walls, workrooms are regularly 'decorated' with slogans hostile to the junta. The militia has formed special teams to remove them every morning. The collective boycott of the television news, started in Swidnik, has been extended to the other towns nearby. Elsewhere Solidarnosc has organised other forms of protest that cannot be repressed. For example, in the armaments factory, Walter, at Radom, the workers have decided to all leave by the same door, which contributes to developing a feeling of strength and solidarity among the workers.

In other ways Solidarnosc is reorganising. A National Commission of Resistance has been formed, so that proclamations are now signed by leaders known in different regions. Provisional regional leaderships have been formed in other regions. The results of this have not taken long to come. On April 13 the call to stop work for 15 minutes was widely followed in at least 10 regions.

Discussion on strategy and organisation for the movement have moved beyond the regional level, which has contributed much to the depth of the discussion.

So, Solidarnosc continues. And, more than ever, Polish workers need international solidarity from other workers. According to official reports 10% of the population only survive because of outside aid. That fact, among others, is proof to those struggling in Poland that their fight has caught the imagination of workers throughout the world.

Solidarity with Solidarnosc is still an important task for militant workers and revolutionaries, for all workers.

(1) Cf. *Le Monde*, April 15, 1982, 'Secrets of a Military Commissar'.

The Struggle for Women's Rights and the Trade Union Movement

The largest International Women's Day demonstration in Europe took place in Belgium on March 6, 1982. It brought together women from the women's movement with wide layers of the trade union movement around a common set of demands. This marks an important new stage in the development of the struggle for women's rights and their eventual liberation we look to see carried forward elsewhere.

The effects of the economic crisis in Europe have fallen particularly heavily on women. The attempt by the bosses to make the working class pay with its jobs and living standards for the capitalist crisis has threatened to reverse the gains won by women over the last twelve years.

From the late 1960s a new wave of feminist radicalisation developed throughout the advanced capitalist countries which permeated every layer of society. Increasingly the demands and actions of this new women's movement became intertwined with those of the labour movement as feminist activists became militants of the trade unions and mass parties of the working class.

This process had important effects. It engendered a new

by Ida DEQUECKER

Twelve thousand women demonstrated for International Women's Day on Saturday March 6 in Brussels. The demonstration was organised by the co-ordinating committee 'Women against the Crisis'. This group brings together groups from the autonomous women's liberation movement (socialist-feminist groups known as 'Fem-Soc', women's cafes, women's centres, battered women's refuges, etc.) with women's organisations from the two main trade-union federations, the socialist General Workers Federation of Belgium (FGTB-ABVV) and the Christian Democrat trade-union federation (CSC-ACV). Also involved are the women's sections of the Socialist Parties, the LRT-RAL and JGS-SJW (Belgian section of the Fourth International and its youth organisation) and the Belgian Communist Party and the Workers Party which is Mao-Stalinist. In addition are the women's sections of the two trade-union mutual benefit societies.

The platform for the demonstration demanded the right to work, the right to unemployment benefit, the maintenance of buying power, and women's economic independence. It was openly opposed to the Liberal-Christian Democrat government's policy of cutting social spending; taking up such slogans as 'Keep the index' (the automatic linking of wages to the price index), 'No to discrimination against women', 'Down with the Martens government'.

The weight of the labour movement within the demonstration was striking compared with the previous year when the women's groups had been the dominant element. Thus, the demonstration was clearly within the framework of the workers mobilisation against the all-bourgeois parties government that

emerged from the elections of November 8, 1981.

The two demonstrations 'Women against the Crisis' for International Women's Day in 1981 and 1982 took place in the context of increasing opposition to the austerity policies of the government and the employers. These austerity policies have been significantly stepped up since Autumn 1981. They combine a general attack on wages and social security with measures that particularly affect more vulnerable social groups such as women, youth, and immigrants.

In autumn 1980 the Christian Democrat government wanted to impose a freeze on all wages. Two measures particularly affected women. One was a change in the rules of unemployment benefit to create a new category of 'cohabitants' (someone living with someone else who has a job). Such 'cohabitants' have a reduced right to unemployment benefit. Secondly, there was an adjustment in the procedures relating to long-term unemployed aimed at depriving them of their right to unemployment benefit. The majority of unemployed women are of course 'cohabitants'. And the majority of the long-term unemployed just happen to be women as well.

Today 78,151 women have been unemployed for more than three years, compared to 28,397 men. After the change in the rules regarding benefits for the long-term unemployed 9,000 women and 400 men were deprived of their unemployment benefits in 1981.

Only women put up any real resistance to these measures. The opposition of the workers movement to wage cuts (the FGTB organised a rally of 100,000 in Brussels on January 24, 1981) was ended by a cross-sectoral agreement

stage of feminist radicalisation among working women and stimulated far-reaching debates on tactics and strategy within the women's movement, particularly on the question of what alliances to forge in the struggle for women's rights.

Under the impact of the initiatives of the women's movement the labour movement was forced to adopt policies and then to take action for women's rights. Some notable successes were won at this level. For example, in 1979 the British TUC, in calling a demonstration against proposed anti-abortion legislation, became the first national trade union federation in the world to call a mass national demonstration in defence of women's rights.

The fightback of the workers movement against the austerity measures of the bosses has been forced to take up the specific defence of women's rights as workers. Increasingly it is becoming obvious that the workers movement cannot defend itself unless it defends the interests of all the most vulnerable groups within it.

These three articles look at how this process is developing to a greater or lesser extent in Belgium, France, and Britain.

in February 1981 in which the two main trades unions agreed to accept a partial wage freeze for two years.

The first 'Women against the Crisis' demonstration on March 7, 1981, mobilised 7,000 people. Even though it was the product of the struggle of the whole labour movement, it was unable to win any broader support for the specific demands of women. This was partially due to the fact that the Catholic trade-union federation, the CSC-ACV, did not participate because demands on abortion were included in the platform. But the underlying reason was that the reformist trade-union movement does not in practice take up women's demands, and the trade-union bureaucracy looks askance at autonomous women's mobilisations. The Social-Democratic leadership of the FGTB fought to the last minute against the participation of the FGTB women's commissions in this demonstration. Their case was helped by the fact that the CSC did not participate.

The Liberal-Christian Democrat government, which came to power in November 1981, took 'special powers' to lower wages through attacking the automatic indexing of wages to prices and devaluing the Belgian franc. Another of its targets was social security. These measures hit women twice. There was a further reduction of unemployment benefit for 'cohabitants', and social security was cut down on the basis of the composition and income of the household-which strongly resembles the introduction of a 'means-test'. In addition, they encouraged the extension of part-time work in both the public service and the private sector. The justification of these measures is that they are 'a policy that promotes family life'.

The governmental measures, combined with the attacks of the bosses against wages and jobs, met once more with resistance from the workers movement. However this resistance has been fragmentary, developing unevenly in Flanders and the Walloon country. This fragmentation is a product of the divisive policies of the Flemish Catholic labour federation, which is linked to the governmental Christian Democrat party. It has rejected common action with the FGTB.

It is characteristic of the trade-union struggle that the bureaucracy has only organised action to get into negotiations and it is ready to accept austerity alongside the government and bosses. But it has not offered any perspective to the workers struggles that have erupted since the beginning of 1981 and which have already involved conflicts with the line of the bureaucracy.

This division in the trade unions gives the government ample room to pursue its policies. Therefore unity in action remains a central question which is decisive for the outcome for all struggles and demands.

workforce. More and more women base their expectations on getting jobs, being independent, and running their own lives.

This deep-seated conviction that women have a right to economic independence was shown notably by the fact that the women of the Christian Democrat union, the CSC, who are traditionally more influenced by the notion that 'women's place is in the home', stated at the press conference for the March 6 demonstration: 'Women will no longer accept being pushed into a position of dependence on their husbands...Economic independence is a precondition for the equal treatment of women and men'.

In Belgium, as in all advanced capitalist countries, a new wave of radicalisation among women developed during the 1970s. This was part of the worldwide social crisis that opened up in 1968. This new autonomous women's movement developed outside the organised workers movement through women's centres, women's cafes, battered women's refuges, etc. But a socialist feminist current also developed, 'Fem-Soc'. Although today these groups lack perspectives they con-

for women. Today the total unemployed stands at 450,000. Women are much more likely to have their right to unemployment benefit removed. There are now five job vacancies for every 100 unemployed. From June 1980 to June 1981 the number of job vacancies went down by 80,000. There is no hiring, and even the Minister of Labour cannot pretend otherwise: 'One cannot be very optimistic about the creation of jobs in the classical sense. There will always be a greater demand for work than can be met. This is because, among other factors, women are increasingly presenting themselves in the labour market.'

Thus, radicalisation is developing in a new layer of working and trade union women. They see their gains being attacked, and that the response of the trade unions is inadequate. In some instances, for example in the big shops, the unions even share responsibility for the discriminatory measures against women, like part-time work.

The trade-union bureaucracy, with the limited actions that they organise, do not offer even the shadow of a perspec-



The demand for abortion remains a major debate in Belgium (DR)

The 'Women against the Crisis' mobilisation this year reflected this complex character of the workers resistance to austerity. There is a growing radicalisation of women, and a desire to struggle. This led to the formation of a united front of women from the FGTB and CSC, which was completely supported by the national leaderships of the two unions. Indeed, the General Secretary of the FGTB-ABVV, Debunne, attended the demonstration. The declaration for the demonstration clearly stated that women's demands are an integral part of the workers struggles. But despite this women's struggles remain relatively isolated, partly due to the scattered patterns of social struggles.

Women's growing realisation of their situation is the product of a number of factors. The objective material base is the rise in the number of women in paid employment. In 1971, some 928,905 women worked, making up 31% of the workforce. In 1979, despite the economic crisis, this number had risen to more than 1,004,720. Today women are 36% of the

workforce. But under the weight of the crisis they will stagnate without the support of women from the workers movement.

Nonetheless, it is the activities and initiatives of the women's movement, which often have a broad impact, that have allowed feminist ideas to permeate every level of society. For the last ten years a Women's Day has taken place in Belgium on November 11, which brings together women from all parties and unions.

The economic crisis has brought into sharp relief the contradiction between feminist objectives that the establishment claims to support (with laws like the law on equality of treatment at work), and the actual situation of women.

One of the first and most obvious consequences of the crisis is the rise in female unemployment. Of those totally unemployed on January 30, 1982, 255,992 were women and 173,461, men. The rate of unemployment for men has only just begun to rise faster than that

for women. Yet the rate of unionisation for women is as high as that for men—around 80 per cent.

There exists therefore a layer of women throughout the unions who are ready to get involved in actions around their specific interests; a layer of young feminist women, women who have trade union posts. Within the FGTB, although the women's commissions have only a consultative role, they have grown in number; and every proposal to establish a new one is immediately successful. In the CSC-ACV it is the white-collar women, who have better structures for organising activity, who are radicalising first.

At present, this layer of women in the unions looks to forces outside the workers movement to take initiatives, in particular to the socialist feminist current 'Fem-Soc', in which the revolutionary Marxists, the LRT-RAL (Belgian section of the Fourth International), are active. Moreover, it is this current who have initiated the unified actions of the last three years, which have been the culminating



Belgian 'Women against the Crisis' demonstration (DR)

points of the women's struggle in Belgium. Two days before the March 6 demonstration this year the daily newspaper *De Morgen* quoted the spokeswoman of the FGTB women's commission as saying: 'We have everything to gain from collaboration between the FGTB and the socialist feminist groups.'

UNITY DOES NOT FALL FROM THE SKY

The impact of the dramatic sharpening of austerity policies, under the pressure of the deepening crisis, has created the conditions for these unified initiatives. One of the factors in their success has been that they seek to involve women from both the main trade unions. This has only happened as the result of a political battle in which the socialist feminist groups and the LRT-RAL have played a central role.

The original manifesto of 'Women against the Crisis' contained the demand for abortion to be decriminalised. This placed a barrier in the way of involving women from the Catholic trade unions, despite their willingness to become involved in these initiatives in action directed against government policy.

This lesson was learnt after the 1981 International Women's Day demonstration. The new manifesto no longer contains the demand on abortion. However, this entailed a long debate with the radical feminist current who did not want to 'sacrifice' a women's demand for the sake of unity, which they thought over-emphasised the struggle against the effects of the economic crisis.

It was also necessary to argue against the sectarianism of the Social Democrat-dominated trade unions, where there was a tendency to use the abortion question to exclude the CSC-ACV. The

women from the Brussels Socialist Party federation refused to sign the appeal because the demand on abortion was not included.

Victory on the abortion question requires a battle for the political independence of the Catholic workers movement which is linked politically and ideologically to the Christian Democrats (CVP-PSC) --the biggest party in Belgium.

At the 1982 'Women against the Crisis' demonstration the slogan 'Abortion out of the Penal Code' was widely taken up, with the agreement of all the sponsoring organisations, although it was not in the appeal. This was particularly important as a number of court cases on the question are in progress, after a de facto suspension of criminal prosecution for a number of years. Abortion is automatically penalised in Belgium. A proposal to suspend all cases for two years was recently rejected by the Chamber of Representatives.

The existing platform of 'Women against the Crisis' lays out an almost complete set of demands relating to women. It will be appropriate for the foreseeable future and will lay the basis for further activity.

PERSPECTIVES

The demonstration on March 6, 1982, was the biggest women's demonstration in Belgium for at least ten years. Decisive new forces, those from the workers movement, are being won to the struggle for women's rights. They already constitute the most powerful mobilising force. Another important gain is that the two main trade unions have formally signed a platform of women's demands, which is the first step in a fight to force them to act on this commitment.

A perspective for future actions on this platform now exists. Certainly the women who participated in the March 6 demonstration saw it that way. We can expect further actions against government policy in the very near future. ■

The Women's Movement Under Mitterrand

This article was written by the Women's Secretariat of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International. It was first published in the LCR's monthly review, Critique Communiste. The translation is by IV.

The victory of the Socialist Party in France on May 10, 1981, came at a time when a number of questions were posed for organised women's groups. What would be their future, their forms of activity, their structure?

The term of the outgoing president, Giscard, who represented the bourgeois parties, had corresponded with the emer-

gence of the deepest feminist radicalisation France had known. This radicalisation, a delayed result of May '68, penetrated in different ways through all sectors of society. It forced the bourgeoisie to concede some progressive measures on divorce, abortion, equality legislation. In addition, it compelled the reformist bureaucrats to pose as defenders of women's rights.

Women's organisations developed in the shape of women's groups, women's trade union committees, feminist magazines. Although not mass organisations, they represented a real political force. Within this movement, bourgeois feminism had no significant expression.

A number of factors interacted to slow down the progress of this first wave of feminism. The economic crisis demonstrated that in any period of fundamental restructuring of capitalism the bosses will try to take advantage of the vulnerability of the female workforce. The bourgeoisie, running short of reforms, turned back to traditional attitudes.

The divisive infighting from 1978 to 1981 between the traditional workers parties and the trade-union leaderships associated with them, as well as the wait-and-see attitude among the rank-and-file workers all contributed to reducing the number of organised women and the poli-

tical space for feminist groups which, moreover, were very divided among themselves.

However there was neither a step backwards in feminist consciousness nor in the ability to mobilise. On the contrary, the two demonstrations that highlighted the abortion campaign, October 6 and November 24, 1979, showed it was possible to have massive demonstrations.

On the other hand attempts to structure an ongoing movement, that could bring together the various elements of the radicalisation and focus the collective strength of women in the political arena, seemed to have reached an impasse.

There was, however, one point of agreement between all the feminist groups--the need to kick out Giscard. The *Psychoanalyse et Politique* group (who have copyrighted the name 'Women's Liberation Movement') called for a 'useful' vote for the Socialist Party, despite the Social Democrats vague electoral promises on women's issues. The currents that abstained in the election--arguing that 'women don't have any interest in men's political fights'--were very weak. This constituted a proof of the depth of class polarisation in France and that feminists, albeit in a confused way, consider themselves as part of the working class.

THE 'NEW COURSE' AND WOMEN

In the weeks following the May 10 victory of the Socialist Party, it was difficult to know exactly what were its policies for women. Mitterand had made a number of promises at the Forum organised by the *Choisie* group (a socialist-led pro-choice group). These were: to limit the extension of part-time work, to repay the cost of abortions by social security, to build 300,000 daycare and pre-school places for children over two years old, to make men and women absolutely equal before the law....

There were some ministers, deputies, and militants who did not have any idea about what to do. On the other hand, there were feminists in the Socialist Party who were certain that big changes were about to take place.

Nine months later the SP and the government still do not have any overall political project for women, let alone any theory. Mitterand himself stated at a recent press conference that he was above all a 'pro-natalist', that is in favour of an increasing birth rate. And this was right in the middle of a big publicity campaign on contraception!

The government is pursuing a two-faced strategy. The Minister for Women's Rights can take action on judicial reforms, contraception, and symbolic measures. But austerity policies, for which women bear the cost in jobs and social services, are being extended. The government obviously could not afford to disillusion outright the fringe of the electorate, like some SP and CP members, who

expected big changes.

The Minister for Women's Rights has put into motion judicial reforms that will become law during the 1982 parliamentary session. The most interesting law, in terms of potential activity, seems to be the possibility for feminist groups to take up civil cases on sex discrimination. The current publicity campaign on contraception is also positive although it would be reasonable to expect that there would be a wider distribution of information in all public places.

But the big changes that were expected have not happened. In fact, there is simply a continuation of the policies that the right-wing bourgeois governments have pursued for the last 23 years. Reimbursement for the cost of abortions was announced in March. However, minors will still need parental permission, and women who have passed the legal limit will only have the 'right to choose' between continuing their pregnancy, going to England, or having an illegal abortion.

Getting rid of the Veil-Pelletier law, which very strictly limits abortions after the twelfth week of pregnancy, is so far down the list of priorities that the Family Planning association recently felt forced to point out that they did not want to have to continue clandestine activities under a left government!

The promise of 300,000 state-financed daycare places has been reduced to 10,000 places for which the parents will have to pay more for a lower standard of care.

On the jobs question, the situation is even clearer. In September 1981, the Prime Minister, Mauroy, announced policies encouraging part-time work in both the private and public sectors. The laws on part-time work passed under Giscard are far from being repealed.

Indeed, the decrees of March 1982, further enshrined the existence of part-time work in the laws relating to employment.

The government's self-justification for this move is remarkable for its hypocrisy. They argue that part-time work also affects men. This is true in theory but not in practice. It is women who take care of the children and therefore are more likely to take up part-time work and accept low wages as a supplementary income for the family.

The government also argues that it is better to have a part-time job than none at all and that these measures are in fact designed to benefit the unemployed.

When one looks at some of the features of part-time work the necessity of opposition to it is obvious. It can mean anything from working a few hours a week, to having Wednesdays off (when the schools are shut--to look after the children), to working 38 hours a week. In the private sector, at least, it has been used to reduce the number of employees, for example in the commercial sector where three-quarters of the employees are part-time. It has also been linked to a rise in productivity.

The government decrees on work hours contain other scandalous provisions. Lifting the legal limit on work hours--presently 40 hours per week and 8 hours per day--and on weekend work, affects primarily sectors where the female workforce is concentrated. In these sectors--the garment trade, commerce, etc.--the bosses need a lot of flexibility in how they use their employees, given the cyclical fluctuation of trade.

The measure which has caused the most debate is undoubtedly repeal of the prohibition on women doing nightwork. Krasucki, leader of the CGT, voiced his confederation's disapproval of wiping out this gain for women, just after the July agreement with the bosses on work hours. The CFDT approved the measure, basing their attitude on rejection of sexist discrimination. So is it a step backward of not?

It is a step backward insofar as it is part of a series of concessions to the bosses on the question of the workweek. It is also a step backward because nightwork will be imposed on women. We are against nightwork for men as well as for women, when it is not justified by social needs, as in health or transport, or for technical reasons, machinery that cannot be stopped, etc. But these are not the government's criteria. They advocate nightwork for women for the sake of the bosses' profits, as in those sectors faced with strong international competition.

Thus, overall, the balance sheet is a negative one. It could not really have been otherwise, despite the good intentions of Socialist Party members who have been catapulted into government.

The economic crisis does not leave any room for manoeuvre in this area once one has undertaken to manage the economy without attacking the bosses' profits.

When white-collar workers or peasants begin to act, the government can always scrape the bottom of the barrel and distribute some crumbs. But there aren't any crumbs for women because their superexploitation is integral to the functioning of capitalism. This is even more true in a time of crisis than expansion.

There are already two million unemployed, and forecasts by the employers predict massive redundancies, especially in the service sector. German sources estimate that in this sector redundancies could reach 40 percent. In this situation talk about equality only serves to hide the fact that women are used, as they have been traditionally, as a reserve pool of labour.

A government that states it will stake its credibility on the jobs issue, and that it will respect the laws of profit, has put itself into the framework of reconstructing capitalism. One of the chief props of capitalism is, of course, the structural divisions in the working class.

The current situation is a remarkable illustration of the pivotal role played by women's labour. This cannot just be reduced to a policy of returning women to the home, although this is an important aspect. The bosses test new forms of

work on women, with the deskilling process that goes with it. They use subcontracting, temporary work, part-time work to increase productivity, revival of home-working using computers....And they are waiting to extend these 'modernisations' to men, who have always been convinced that they would only apply to 'the girls'.

Thus, the fight for women's right to work is not a secondary or sectoral demand. In the current political situation, it is a key element in the defence of workers interests, in opposition to redundancy and part-time work, for the 35 hour workweek, and for the extension of social services.

This demonstrates the importance of fighting for women as an oppressed group and the absurdity of the argument that a campaign for women's right to work would be economic, that it would prioritise the struggle against the exploitation of women as workers over the struggle against their oppression as women. One cannot fight one without fighting against the other.

Opposition to part-time work is a logical consequence of rejecting the arguments for it; the kids, the housework, the idea that women provide only a supplementary income for the family. In addition, we know there is no sexual, political, or even symbolic independence for women without material independence. Without a job--or worse with the increasing attack on even the right to work--the material basis of women's radicalisation is being brought into question. The roots of the rise of feminism in the 1970s were in a generation of women that drew its strength from being women in higher education in the late '60s and having access to relatively highly-skilled jobs.

Lastly, we recognise the importance of the demand for the right to work because it throws into sharp relief all the other questions, such as the social services, the question of housework, discrimination in job training, and the traditional image of women.

THE CRISIS OF THE 'WOMEN'S SECTOR'

Although the Communist Party, the Socialist Party majority, and the government have policies very similar to those the bosses would like, that does not imply that all communist and socialist militants agree with them. This presents a big contradiction for parties and trade unions who have won over a layer of radicalised feminists. They cannot turn back to the traditional excuses. But they still have to manage the capitalist crisis.

The political parties seem to have little imagination on women's issues. The Socialist Party is particularly badly placed to distinguish itself from the government's policies. The feminists in the SP did not produce anything of significance for the most recent national conference and many of them are waiting for an upturn in activity....from outside the party.

Although it describes itself as the 'party of women's liberation' the Communist Party has little presence in the women's movement and instead promotes the Union of French Women (UFF) as a cover, as it did for the March 8 demonstration. Some dissidents within it have adopted radical feminist positions, like *They See Red (Elles Voient Rouge)*. Others are organising with the CGT women's section. The women in *Weekly Communist Encounters (Rencontres communiste Hebdo)* have real feminist concerns and sent greetings to the national meeting on women and work in November 1981.

The most refined reformist strategy for dealing with the demands of women seems to have been elaborated under the leadership of Edmond Maire, head of the CFDT. The aim is threefold; to gain acceptance for the current policies, not to lose the feminist militants, and to build the CFDT at the expense of the CGT. This is put in the framework of the so-called policy of "new priorities" (*recentrage*).

Discussion on the virtues of women at home has been replaced by discussing the advantages of increased leisure time, which is more important than money for the development of modern women. And who is better placed than women,



with their 'pin-money' incomes to accept the decrease in purchasing power which, according to Maire, is a necessary corollary of the reduction in working hours?

So, the CFDT leadership has accepted the principle of part-time work and is fighting, rather half-heartedly, over conditions--for the same rights for full- and for part-time workers.

Thus, demanding the repeal of the governmental decrees on part-time work inside the CFDT runs into conflict with one of the main points of the policy of 'new priorities'.

Women's work is a testing ground for the reformist trade union leaders as well as the bosses. If part-time work for women is generalised there would be a lot of pressure to reduce wages for the whole working class. Furthermore, given the sectarianism of the CGT, the leadership of the CFDT is opening up to feminism. For example, there is ongoing work with the Family Planning association, and the Paris region CFDT is participating in the planning meeting for the Conference on Women and Employment scheduled for April 24/25.

The leadership of the CFDT could accept women's self-organisation quite easily as long as it was not inside the

trade union and that such groups did not have a set of demands. This policy is not without difficulties. Some branch federations--in the garment, leather and textile industries, the Post Office, and the banks--have already registered their opposition to part-time work. Feminists in the rank and file are not really convinced by the arguments of the Maire leadership.

Within the CGT the crisis is much sharper, and the women's section has recently been pulled back into line in the most traditional of ways, with resignations, reorganisations, and reassertion of control over the union's women's magazine, *Antoinette*. This crisis reflects the inability of the federation leadership to resolve the contradictions, which are different from those inside the CFDT but nevertheless pose difficult problems.

The leadership has always tried to channel the developing consciousness through a certain verbal radicalism, and sectarian self-intoxication. This verbal radicalism has been muted since May 10 and the installation of Communist ministers in the government. CGT leader Krasucki, while criticizing nightwork, has become silent on the question of redundancies and part-time work.

As for the sectarian policy, the nature of 'women's work' makes it more difficult to carry this out than in other sectors. It is difficult to make people believe that the CGT is the feminist union par excellence. It is difficult to explain that the struggle is weakened by joint activity with the CGT and women's groups.

So, as the women's sector had become one of the sectors where opposition to the federation leadership existed, it had to be reshaped. Exit C. Gilles, whom the bureaucracy had booted during the Study Day on women and labour. Enter J. Leonard to join the editorial board of *Antoinette*. And for March 8 a big sectarian initiative to restore the feminist image that had become rather tarnished.

The problem for the leadership is that a lot of women, although they agree with the leadership on many questions, have been educated in the necessity of specific work on women's questions, and the need to fight on all aspects of women's oppression as *Antoinette* used to do. A narrowly economic orientation, that refuses to have discussion, goes against the feminist convictions of women members, and forces women who feel let-down by the CGT's attitudes into independent activity.

So, for example, *Le Manifeste* has now been set up. It was initiated by the editors of *Antoinette*, and women historians and journalists in the CP, among others. It presents demands very similar to those which came out of the November conference on women and work.

It is almost trite to say that May 10 opened up a new political situation for women in France. The new situation is not, as we have seen, that demands will be met. Very little has changed as far as

the demands that have to be raised. But the conditions for action have changed.

FEMINISTS AT A CROSSROADS

It is a new situation to have political parties in power that have been shaken up by the feminist radicalisation, which have made definite promises but have no intention of keeping them.

On the one hand this makes the call for an independent women's movement much more credible. On the other hand it makes the approaches of the existing women's groups towards women in political parties and trade unions much more necessary.

This is the aim of the Conference on Employment and Women scheduled for Paris on April 24/25. To allow women from different experiences to discuss demands and proposals for action.

There is also a new situation as regards possibilities for action. The new rights in the factories and the anti-sexist laws, allow feminist groups to go beyond simple propaganda. The 'institutionalisation' of the movement does not mean surrendering principles to the state but rather lays the basis for actions aimed at the masses of women.

Why don't the factory women's groups have bulletin boards, a meeting place on the premises, and the right to distribute leaflets? There ought to be a person from the Family Planning service available during working hours in the factories.

But with such possibilities opening up women's groups in France have rarely been so divided as they are now. *Psychoanalyse et Politique* has the virtue of having understood what is at stake, and realising how to occupy this political space created by the continuing radicalisation of women. These women also have the advantage of a certain ideological coherence. Since they say 'we are a people', the struggle is conceived as a national liberation struggle. This means total political independence from the dominant force, cross-class unity of the 'people' against anti-women attitudes, and reassertion of oppressed culture smothered by imperialist models.

In this perspective the call for a women's strike 'independent of political parties, independent of trade unions' for March 8 this year was logical.

It was impossible to be involved in these initiatives which are always presented by *Psychoanalyse et Politique* in a 'take it or leave it' fashion. The demand for March 8 to be a paid holiday is not so silly. In today's situation it could be seen as a recognition of women's struggles. That is, it could if their conditions were modified a little. Limiting this right to women is questionable, if only from their own standpoint. Who would look after the children during the day? The innumerable male childminders and teachers?

Over and above that point, the call for a women-only strike directly weakens the relationship of forces between the

workers and the bosses, and undermines the meaning of a strike. That is, an organised confrontation of the workers with the state or the employers.

A more serious problem existed in the platform of demands belatedly produced by *Psychoanalyse et Politique*. Alongside correct demands on abortion and childcare, there was the demand for 'priority for women for jobs'. Yet nowhere do they call for shortening the workweek or fighting redundancies. This comes down to accepting the framework of managing austerity policies but simply reversing the bosses priorities.

Worse still, because this simply continues women's oppression, they demand 'the creation of payment for domestic work, registered on payslips'. This new version of wages for housework would apply to all women, even if they worked outside the home. This is the point of difference with the rightist politician Debre, who wanted to limit such family allowances to 'mothers in the home'. So, having got the money, the idea is, we could demand the division of household tasks, the provision of social services, and struggle against the housewife image...! This is where verbal radicalism covers up the most blatant opportunism.

Besides the group *Psychoanalyse et Politique*, the most active women's group in France is the one which organized the 14-15 November 1981 Conference on Women and Employment.

This conference was called by the Coordination of Local and Factory Women's groups and attracted women from many different trade unions, from feminist magazines, from the Family Planning association, many nonunionized women and women from the group *Choisir* and women from the General Confederation of Families as well as international representatives. Some 54 percent of the women present were in trade unions.

There was general agreement on the demands for jobs, training courses, social services and the right to abortion. There was also an awareness of the need for feminists to be seen as a political force, and a recognition that there are struggles to be carried out that only women can lead.

At the November conference a decision was taken to have a follow-up conference in April on employment, which would be open to all, trade union and political party representatives included. The list of conference participants includes: four regional bodies of the CFDT, including the Paris regional union; the CGT; Emancipated School (the class struggle current inside the teachers union, the FEN); the FEN; the PSU (United Socialist Party); the LCR (French section of the Fourth International); the JCR (the youth organisation of the LCR); the CCA (Communist Committee for Self-Management); etc.

Since November, objections to the decision for a mixed conference have been raised. Some women have suggested

that it would be too soon to have men at a conference on women and employment. They argue that we have not worked out our positions yet, that we see men often enough, especially men in political parties and trade unions, who betray women's demands, etc.

The exasperation of trade-union women who have to put up with daily harassment is totally valid. But this is not the problem. In the current political situation, we cannot just talk shop among ourselves. Feminists must show they can carry out a campaign, convince other women to join in, and build a collective political force.

The conference is not a forum for 'seeing men', but rather a chance to see and meet with other women, who came because a broad spectrum of organisations support the conference. The November conference showed to everyone, political and trade-union leaders, men and women, that organised feminism is a reality in France and it posed questions about the politics of these same leaders.

There is nothing contradictory between this initiative and the desire to build an independent women's movement. The question of women-only events is tactical. Women, as an oppressed group, need an organisation in which they are the leaders and one which fights against their specific oppression. But it is an organisation that women need, not an empty formation.

Building this kind of movement today implies confronting the main problem of women: employment. We cannot construct such a movement by trying to go round the trade unions. In many cases these struggles will take place in the factories and involve the mobilisation of women who are part of the workers movement. The women involved will need the support of an independent women's movement to make gains inside the trade unions.

It is true that for a campaign to succeed, it is not enough to set up a permanent organisational structure. But regrouping women around the initiative of a general conference and beyond that around the struggle to win the main demand for jobs is a first step.

Another step forward would be to try to get beyond the current divisions among the feminist groups which is an obvious cause of weakness and lack of credibility. Undoubtedly it is difficult to find common ground with *Psychoanalyse et Politique* or with some other radical feminist currents. But the political situation creates a reasonable possibility for a process of political recomposition among other forces that have had different experiences in the past. The November conference proved that.

It is an urgent necessity for the women's movement to discuss the fundamental questions: capitalism and patriarchy; the functioning of the movement and the question of internal democracy; the tactics for moving forward women's demands. ■

British Labour Movement Takes Up Women's Demands

by Judith ARKWRIGHT

'If God had meant there to be equal rights to work then he would not have created men and women.' So said Patrick Jenkin while he was Minister for Social Services in the present Tory Government in Britain.

The first woman Prime Minister in Britain is presiding over a government whose policies are forcing women back into the home and removing many of their hard-won gains. Margaret Thatcher herself promotes this concern for 'strengthening the family'; expressing concern about 'latch key children'—those who come home from school and have to let themselves into the house—and stating that women have to be at home to look after the old, the sick, and children.

This anti-woman campaign is not simply ideological. It fits in absolutely with the economic policy of the government. The cutbacks in social services mean that women have to take over the functions of the welfare state. Unemployment stands at over 3 million, and women are losing jobs twice the rate of men. Because women in their, often part-time, jobs are considered to be only working for 'pin-money' they are treated as expendable, as a reserve army of labour.

Tory policies towards women are so vicious that even their friends in the Common Market are critical. Together with Belgium and Italy, Britain is currently being taken to the European Court of Human Rights for violation of the Treaty of Rome with respect to the equal pay and social security provisions.

On the equal pay question. Despite the Equal Pay Act of 1970, which became fully operational in 1975, in April 1981 average weekly earnings for women were only 60 per cent of men's earnings. This is a lower rate than in 1975. But it is hardly surprising when you consider that under British law a successful application for equal pay must prove that a woman is doing 'the same or broadly similar work to a man'. Most women do not work in jobs that could be compared to a man's; and courts have been ruling against the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

Norman Tebbit, the Minister for Employment, has denied the EEC charges. But the facts speak otherwise. During the five-year period between the passing of the Equal Pay Act and its implementation employers were able to manoeuvre in order to regrade women so that their work would not be comparable to a man's. Jobs have been designated

'men's work' and 'women's work', bringing about a situation of virtual jobs apartheid in Britain.

Over 40 per cent of women workers work part time. Part-time workers are not entitled to pro rata payment, that is, the same hourly rate as full-time workers. This has been another factor in the failure of the Equal Pay legislation. In April 1980 average hourly earnings for part-timers were £1.67, compared to £2.87 per hour for full-time workers.

It is widely recognised in the labour movement that the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts have failed. Why? Job segregation and women's role as a reserve army of cheap labour are the main

trated. The union agreed. The women themselves did not and claimed this was a case of discrimination. They won their case and in the end no redundancies were made. This shows that if women can be used as a reserve pool of labour the bosses' job is a lot easier. But if women stand up and fight this can be to the advantage of all workers.

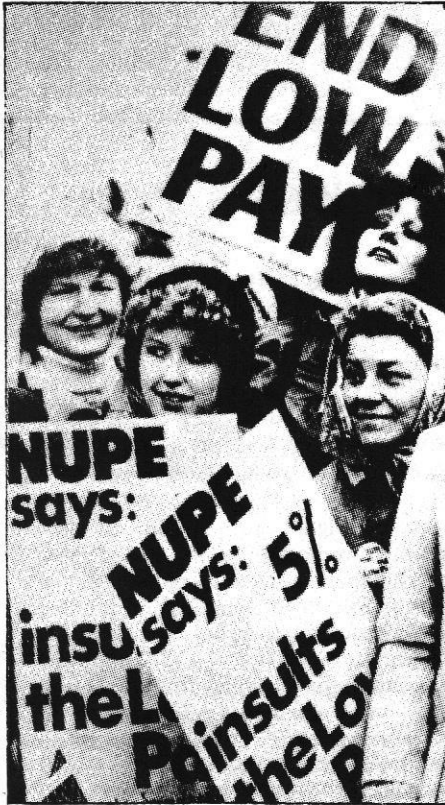
Indeed, this example also shows the changing mood of women in the labour movement. They will no longer accept so readily these moves to shunt them in and out of jobs. Despite the shortcomings of the equality legislation they have come to expect equal rights.

In the last year there have been three factory occupations in Scotland led by women workers fighting for their jobs. The case of the women workers at Le Jeans became internationally known because of the tenacity and determination of these workers. Many were themselves the breadwinners for their families, and the vast majority were 21 years old or younger. To such women the very idea that women only work for 'pin-money' or that they do not have the same right to a job as men is a joke. Their fight was an example to the whole labour movement, women and men.

The rise of the women's movement over the last ten years has brought about big changes in the labour movement in Britain. The demonstration against anti-abortion legislation called by the Trades Union Congress in 1979 was a watershed. All subsequent attempts to attack abortion rights have been thrown back because the labour movement now responds so quickly and automatically to such attacks. Even unions like the National Union of Mineworkers, with very few women members, sent delegates to a recent special TUC conference on women's rights.

Women are joining unions at a faster rate than men, and most unions now have women's committees, special schools for women, and have adopted policies on abortion rights and women's right to work. The Women's Conference of the TUC, and the TUC, have even taken up policies on issues like violence against women and rape.

Next month the Labour Party is holding a national festival for women's rights, which also has trade union sponsorship. It is expected to be a massive event, around 50,000 people are expected to attend. This action contrasts rather strongly with the early days of this century when the newly-formed Labour Party refused to support the campaign for



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answers to this question. Although women make up 42 percent of the work force they are only found in one-quarter of the occupations. These are, moreover, precisely the jobs which are going to the wall first—in the public sector, in small non-union firms etc. Both the bosses and the unions think that women's jobs are more expendable and women are more flexible as a workforce.

One recent example of this approach was the Hoover factory in Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales. The management demanded three hundred redundancies—mostly from the unskilled workforce where women are concen-

votes for women. Now the Labour Party, like the trade unions, is under pressure to do something for women.

Ironically, it was a Labour government which introduced the legislation that is now so strongly criticised. Labour is therefore faced with the prospect of having to provide an alternative to its own previous policy. The growing demand for new and better policies on women within the Labour Party reflects the general developing political discussion within the Party. Women have a lot to gain from linking up with the left in the labour movement and fighting for women's demands as part of an alternative set of policies. Women's sections in the Labour Party, that used to be simply for organising social activity and fund-raising, are now growing in strength and awareness.

The principle behind the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts was the notion of providing equal opportunity. That is, removing barriers which prevent women going into certain jobs or getting decent pay. Now the labour movement is talking about 'positive action', or affirmative action as it is known in the USA. This is seen as the next step towards women's equality.



Wide support exists in the British labour movement for women's abortion rights (DR)

This policy aims not just to remove the barriers to women's equality but to take positive steps to overcome job segregation, and get women into non-traditional areas. This is important because job segregation is now widely recognised as the fundamental issue in achieving women's equality, and fighting the specific aspects of women's unemployment.

Such a policy, which the TUC have recently adopted, would mean legally enforceable quotas for jobs and training. Thus women would be encouraged to enter jobs like engineering, mining, shipbuilding, where the pay is higher and the

trade unions stronger. This type of policy could be a real way forward for women since it begins to challenge the idea that women are a reserve army of labour—and argues that women have the same right to a job as men.

It is these sort of radical policies which are clearly going to be the future of the women's movement in the 1980s and 90s—a women's movement which is organised within the labour movement itself—and fights to win the labour movement to active opposition to the sort of divisive policies exemplified by this Tory government, and to take up the interest of all the oppressed. ■

Chilean Strikers Need Help

In the revival of the Chilean workers movement, the strike at the Panal textile factory assumed a particular importance. For this reason, concrete international solidarity with these workers is especially needed.

Panal is one of the largest textile factories in Chile and also one of the oldest. The unions in this plant existed for more than 32 years. Over many years of struggle, they won important gains, including functional and well-equipped headquarters.

Nonetheless, the Panal workers have been subjected to repeated attacks on their standard of living as well as many layoffs.

In response to this, at the beginning of 1979, the most conscious and militant workers at this factory began a campaign among the rank and file to dump the yellow union leadership imposed by the Pinochet government and to replace it with a democratically elected one.

After several attempts, these militants were successful. A majority of workers demanded the departure of the government-imposed union leadership, which then went into crisis. Several of its members resigned, opening up the way for electing a new leadership.

Despite threats and attempts at fraud and corruption, the new leadership that was elected has maintained itself. With the support of the overwhelming majority of the workers, it launched a strike in October 1980.

According to the military dictatorship's labor laws, after the first fifteen days of a strike, the bosses can hire scabs to work for the duration of the strike. And after sixty days the workers have to accept the bosses' last offer and go back to work, otherwise they are automatically fired and lose all their rights and seniority.

The fight for replacing the government-imposed union leadership with a democratically elected one played a decisive role in opening up the way for other trade-union struggles.

The unity among the ranks and the democratic organizational forms achieved by this union enabled 1,500 workers to stay on strike for 59 days. They were an example for the entire Chilean workers movement.

This strike also became a national test. The conflict rapidly went beyond economic demands to challenge the government's labor legislation as a whole and the dictatorship itself. The forms taken by the strike also had this effect. The ranks were mobilized on all levels of action. Delegations were sent to other factories, to the poor neighborhoods, and other regions of the country.

The strike was seen as a national test by many workers organizations. The leadership's conception of mobilizing the masses in the streets and all the work done to win the solidarity of the working class with the strike transformed the Panal union headquarters into a center of

political activity, not just for organizing the strike but for a series of other activities of national and local importance.

On the sixtieth day of the strike, the workers voted to go back to work in order to avoid the severe repression that would have ensued. However, they went back united and with a high morale.

Immediately afterward, the factory management demanded and got authorization to close the factory and lay off 1,177 workers. While the factory closed its doors, the union has maintained itself.

Since it is illegal to keep a union functioning for a factory that no longer exists, the Panal workers have organized a mutual aid association to continue the struggle and to organize unions and other struggles in the region.

The most immediate problem that faces the Panal workers is the threat that their union headquarters will be confiscated. Large debts that piled up during the strike threaten the existence of this headquarters, whose loss would be a major setback for the entire Chilean workers movement.

The union leaders have therefore launched an appeal for international solidarity to save their headquarters. To do this, they need a very large sum. The unions in the imperialist countries have a particular responsibility to help pay this debt. Checks (cheques) can be sent to Samuel Bermeo, Cuenta corriente numero 39659468, Banco del Estado, Sucursal Renca, Santiago, Chile. ■

Down With the Bourgeois Coalition Government

The following is the editorial from the paper of the Luxembourg section of the Fourth International on the March 27 mass protests and the April 5 general strike in the Grand Duchy. It is taken from the April 13 issue of Klassenkampf. The translation is by IV.

by Robert MERTZIG

Forty thousand demonstrators on March 27! Eighty thousand strikers on April 5! Not in decades has Luxembourg seen anything like this mobilization of workers, trade unions, and the other working-class organizations.

The bourgeoisie and its government have been thrown on the defensive. Such a concentrated, massive protest by the workers against the direct attacks of the bosses and the bourgeois government has put all social and political questions on a new level.

The reformist trade unions moved late, but not yet too late. They were stuck in class collaboration, tripartite negotiations (among the so-called social partners, the bosses, the government, and labor). Finally the pressure of a more and more angry rank and file forced them to take the initiative for a national mobilization.

In very broad, the broadest, sections of the working people, this day of action triggered basic class reflexes. It led to militant actions, the beginnings of new forms of organization, and confrontations with the hierarchy, the bosses, and the government.

The massive pickets, occupations of border crossings, occupations of highways, massive actions against the strike-breaking intimidation and provocations of the government mafia expressed an unsuspected combativity.

The special role that the unions play as the organizing force of the producers to defend their interests once again become clear. The special role of the government, the state apparatus, and the police as the organizing force of capital against the working class was also made clear, in many strike-breaking attacks and provocations.

In other words, after many years of growing conflict between capital and labor, the class struggle has once again come out into the open as a clear fact of everyday life.

For years, the reformist class-collaborationist policy conducted by the Labor Party helped to get the workers to

go along with capitalist rationalization and austerity. That was the logic of the tripartite commissions. They helped the bosses and their government systematically shift the costs of the capitalist crisis onto the shoulders of the workers.

The turn by the trade-union leaders to mobilization and the massive response of the workers shows the falseness of the tripartite notion, like any class collaboration.

So, it is essential to reject any such attempts by the bourgeoisie and the government to tie the hands of the workers. The working class has shown its power. Its organizations and parties must now join in a united front and make a definitive break from class collaboration, tripartite commissions, and compromises behind closed doors.

The bourgeois coalition had decided beforehand to go for double or nothing. On the very day of the strike, it rammed its miserable austerity program through the parliament.

In the face of the direct democracy that was expressed clearly and unmistakably on the streets of Luxembourg city April 5, forty-one reactionary backwoodsmen, bureaucrats, and bourgeois careerists, hiding behind cops and riot police, decided to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. And they did so, of course, in the name of the "people."

The task of the workers movement is now to move in a unified and decisive way to take advantage of the mass antagonism to the government. In the factories and the unions, there must be democratic and open discussion about more mobilizations, more militant actions.

The reactionary gentlemen are going to push more and more austerity measures stubbornly and mercilessly. The capitalists want more, a lot more, and the government is their servant.

The combativity of the workers must not be allowed to flag or to be used by the union leaders simply as a card in negotiations. What is on the agenda now is not some illusory game in parliament (as the CP proposes since it has no general political alternative). It is not an atomization of the concentrated power of the workers movement in a referendum. What is on the agenda is to drive the bourgeois coalition from office! A united front of the trade unions and all the workers parties must focus in a united and uncompromising way on this target. This is the only way to force the capitalists and their stooges to retreat from their austerity projects. ■

Iranian Socialist Weekly Banned

The Revolutionary Workers Party (Hezbe Kargarane Enqelabi—HKE), one of the three organizations in Iran that adhere to the Fourth International, has been subjected to a campaign of harassment in recent weeks.

On March 16, by order of the Islamic prosecutor, the HKE's paper, *Kargar*, was seized. Just before that, the person responsible for the shop that printed the paper, Mohammed Bagher Falsafi, was arrested.

On March 26, the revolutionary Islamic court banned *Kargar* for "defamation of the Islamic republic of Iran, as well as publication of lies and slanders against the judicial authorities."

Before, on March 12, a rally organized by the HKE to commemorate the anniversary of the oil nationalizations under the Mossadegh government in 1951 was banned.

These attacks against the HKE come in the context of a more and more sweeping policy of persecution, arbitrary imprisonment and arrest by the bourgeois government.

In December 1981, a member of the HKE Political Bureau, Bahram Ali Atai, was arrested and jailed without any formal charge in Teheran's Evin prison. Following a defense campaign, he was released on March 3.

On March 8, *Kargar* published an interview with Comrade Bahram Ali Atai, in which he described the abuses committed in the prison by the guards and officers. He highlighted the brutality to which the 6,000 prisoners in Evin are subjected.

Nearly 80 persons are confined in every cell. These cells measure six meters by six meters. The prisoners are often beaten, and Bahram Ali Atai estimated that 10% of them had undergone severe torture.

During his first weeks in the prison, secret executions took place two nights a week, with 75 prisoners being shot each time. Atai's account was reported in the prominent French daily *Le Monde*.

The HKE appealed to the Supreme Court against these violations of democratic rights. It stressed that since the overthrow of the monarchy, HKE activists have served 115 months in prison, without even being formally accused of any crime. The HKE has always taken a position of defending the revolution against imperialism, and its members have served in the voluntary militia. Some of them have been killed on the front in the war against Iraq. ■

The Return of the Sinai and Begin's Plans

by Jeannette HABEL

Right up to the deadline for returning the Sinai to Egypt, the Begin government stalled about applying the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. What in fact most worries the Israeli leaders is the period after April 25, 1982.

For months, Menahem Begin and his team have prepared for this test. After purely and simply annexing the Syrian Golan Heights at the end of 1981, Begin put the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under Israeli civilian administration, and on April 21 the Israeli government launched an aerial attack on Lebanon at Damur, ten kilometers south of Beirut.

In its April 23 issue, *Le Monde* noted, "these raids were especially serious, above all because of their exceptional violence." Twelve Israeli planes were involved in the bombing, which killed at least twenty-five people.

In returning the Sinai to Egypt, the Begin government did not want anyone to get any ideas that this evacuation would be followed by any other concessions. The Israeli government has been worried by the overtures that Egypt has made to the other Arab states and the remarks that Yasser Arafat made on May 17 ("President Mubarak will be a friend of the Palestinians...the political map of the Near East will be changed this year...with the return of Egypt to the Arab world."). Because such moves could open up the way for a revival of the Saudi Fahd plan and negotiations over the creation of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories.

What the Zionist government wants to get across to the Arab states, the PLO, and the Palestinian masses is that the only choice is one between war and a negotiated capitulation in the style of the Camp David Accords. That is, the Arabs would have to recognize the Zionist state, not in its original frontiers, as the European bourgeoisies want, making such a step by the PLO a precondition for negotiating for the creation of a Palestinian state, but in the framework of a Greater Israel, including the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights. That is Menahem Begin's avowed intention 35 years after the creation of Israel.

To accomplish this end, it is necessary to crush the Palestinian resistance both inside and outside of the Zionist-held lands. That is the reason for the bombings of south Lebanon and the

bloody repression against the Palestinian masses in the occupied territories.

Cynically, the Israeli government has leaked what its plans are. According to a dispatch to the State Department from the U.S. ambassador in Israel, Samuel Lewis, reproduced in the Israeli press (the *Jerusalem Post* of January 15, 1982), the Israeli government was considering ten "surprises" to be carried out before the evacuation of the Sinai. Some of them already have been. These included: failure to evacuate all the Sinai; transfer of the premier's offices to East Jerusalem; an invasion of southern Lebanon; an air attack against the Syrian missiles in the Bekaa valley; the extension of Israeli law to all the occupied territories; refusal to return two islands in the Tiran Strait to Israel; an intensification of the Israeli attacks on the PLO offices, including in Europe; and even bombing of the Libyan and Pakistani nuclear installations under construction.

Supplementary to all that, the Begin government did not fail to stage some diplomatic maneuvers to neutralize or divide the Arab states and to give the Western bourgeoisie some excuses to justify their "moderation." One example is the ceasefire in Lebanon that was signed on July 24, 1981 under the auspices of the U.S. and which today is being blithely violated. Another is the "commitment" Menahem Begin made in front of Francois Mitterrand in order to get the French president off the hook for visiting Israel. This promise was violated a few weeks later, which shows how little Menahem Begin cares about diplomatic speeches and agreements.

However, such a policy is full of dangers for all the conservative forces involved in the region. For the Arab states, even those with the most reactionary governments, following a policy of a separate peace with Israel and of capitulation to the Zionist state are, in the long term, incompatible with maintaining domestic "social peace." The example of Egypt and the assassination of Anwar Sadat have shown this.

Such a policy endangers the most conservative regimes and the stability of this strategic region. This is understood both by the Saudi monarch and the Jordanian regime as well as the European bourgeoisies. They are all seeking a negotiated solution that would not be a sim-

ple repeat of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty or the Camp David Accords. They all understand the ineffectiveness in the long term of trying to impose the kind of peace that Washington and the Zionist state have in mind—an Israeli military protectorate under a cover of "autonomy" for the occupied territories.

The rising resistance of the Palestinian masses, its spread to all sections of the Arab population, and its unification foreshadow what will happen if Begin's policy is continued. There is already a gap between the PLO's diplomatic maneuvers abroad and the mobilization of the Palestinian population with the Israeli-held lands. The fear of the Arab petty-bourgeois leaderships is that this gap may continue to grow and in time threaten their hold.

But Begin is not worried about that. His plan for a Greater Israel requires crushing the resistance and expelling the Palestinian masses from their lands. This plan obviously cannot be reconciled with the perspective of creating a Palestinian state, even one limited to the West Bank and Gaza, since this would mean giving back these territories, and that, according to Begin, would constitute a mortal danger to Israel.

But sooner or later such a policy will undermine the ground under the feet of the Begin and Sharons. The young Palestinians, the youths and children, who have demonstrated with bare hands and stones against the Israeli army are showing once again that no occupation army can wipe out a people who are fighting for their land and liberty.

For the first time, this is beginning to be understood by sections of the Israeli population and leading them to reject war.

The only way to solve the crisis in the area in the interest of all the working people is for the Palestinian and Israeli masses to fight together against Zionism, for the return of the occupied territories, an end to Israeli attacks on Lebanon, and halting the preparations for war.

For the first time, such a mobilization appears as a real possibility, as shown by the demonstration of tens of thousands of persons on March 27 in Tel Aviv against war and the occupation. ■

Begin Still Seeks War in the Middle East

by Michel WARSCHAWSKI

Although a number of Israeli ministers tried right up to the end to make withdrawal from the Sinai conditional on a series of new concessions by Egypt, Premier Menahem Begin laid down the law. And from Monday, April 25, the Egyptian flag was to fly again over the entire Sinai peninsula.

Geographically, Israel is once again the little country it was before the June 1967 war. Doubtless this will have its effect both on the military situation and on the psychology of the Israeli masses.

The accomplishment of the withdrawal from the Sinai represents the conclusion of much more than a stage in the application of the Camp David Accords.

The problem facing the leaders of the Zionist state today is how to turn around, or at least stem, the deterioration in the overall relationship of forces for Israel.

This is the standpoint that the recent Israeli movements in the occupied territories of the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights have to be seen, as well as the Begin government's unconcealed desire to launch a new military adventure against Syria and Lebanon.

Both the annexation of the Golan Heights and the setting up of a "civilian" administration on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip were intended to push the situation beyond the point of no return in the territories that Israel considers now to be an integral part of the Jewish state.

It was not by accident that reference was made to 1948 when these actions were taken. That was the year that the Jewish state was created in the wake of a military victory over the Arab armies and several hundred thousands of Palestinians were driven out.

The openly avowed dream of some Israeli leaders is to "do a repeat of 1948." That means creating a situation in which it would be possible to break the Palestinian national movement politically and militarily and substantially reduce the number of Palestinians in Israeli-ruled territories.

It is this perspective, and not an attack of madness, that has motivated Begin and his defense minister, Ariel Sharon; which makes it possible to explain the extreme gravity of the measures that the Israeli authorities have taken in recent weeks in the occupied territories.

The annexation of the Golan Heights was to be a purely formal action. The Syrian inhabitants of the area number no more than 13,000, and over the

last fifteen years they have been distinguished by an apparent passivity. However, the almost unanimous refusal of the Golan population last fall to accept Israeli identity cards should have been a warning to the Zionist authorities.

Nonetheless, under the pressure of the Jewish colonies in the Golan area, in December 1981 the Begin government tried to make the Arab inhabitants de facto citizens of the state of Israel.

Confronted with the unanimous refusal of the population and after finding that administrative detention of 11 so-called ringleaders did not solve anything, the government decided to put the four villages concerned under a state of siege, to cut off the telephones, food supply, and medical services, in an attempt to starve out the general strike of the Golan Arabs and break it by military repression.

Although dozens of the villagers were wounded by gunfire, several dozens more were arrested, and the local people's livestock herds were decimated, the Zionist government could not break the Arab population. Their unprecedented heroism today has forced the government to backtrack.

The spokesman of the Golan Jewish colonies and head of the "Don't Lose the North" movement, Yehuda Har'el, said:

"I can't claim to be an expert on the Druzes any more (the Golan Arabs belong to the Druze community). I was completely wrong....When the Golan law

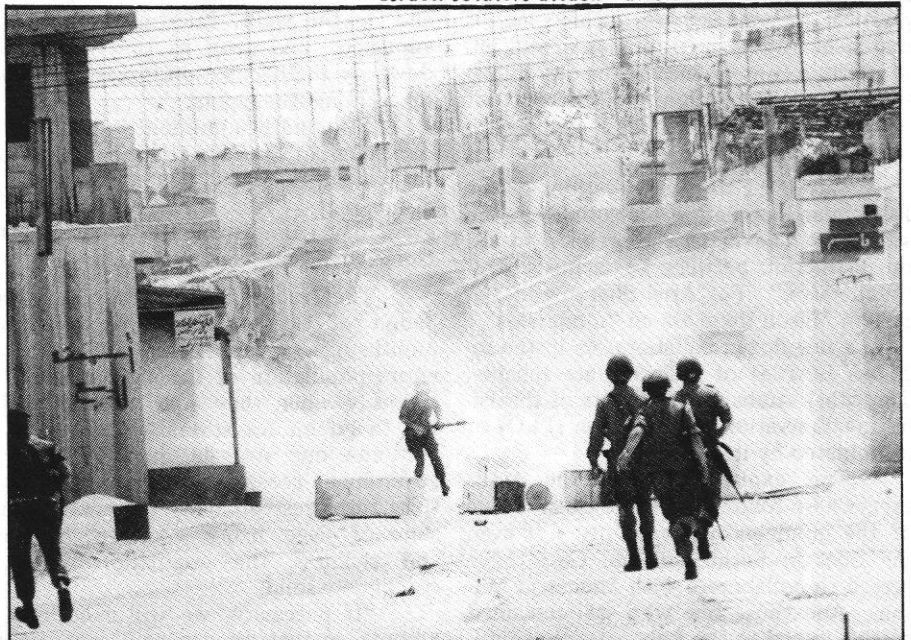
was passed, I was certain that there would not be any Druze problem. I was wrong...I thought that the arrest of four pro-Syrian leaders would be enough. I was wrong again. They started a general strike. We told the government--No problem, let them strike for two years. But that also was bad advice." (*Haaretz*, April 13, 1982.)

Today, the Jewish colonies in the Golan are sending delegations and flowers to the Arab inhabitants, whose strike is continuing with greater determination than ever. But this did not keep Yehuda Har'el from going on to say:

"These Druzes are putting themselves at risk, in my opinion. If a war breaks out, and who can believe that there is not going to be a war, they are very close to the border. Any battalion commander could decide to drive them out."

On the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, the people's almost total opposition to the civilian administration of Colonel Menahem Milson brought on still more violent repression. The removal of the mayors of El Bireh, Naplus and Ramallah; the closing of the University of Bir Zeit and, in fact, the University of Bethlehem; the repeated shutting down of Arab newspapers; censorship; and the jailing and house arrest of several dozen Palestinian leaders represented only the first phase of the new wave of repression.

Israeli soldiers attack Palestinian refugee camp (DR)





Thousands protest in Tel Aviv (DR)

These actions were followed by the placing of several towns and refugee camps under a state of siege; the arrest of hundreds of persons charged with involvement in demonstrations, some of whom have been sentenced to heavy fines or jail terms; and the murder of several dozens of people, either in demonstrations, or in circumstances that as yet have not been clarified.

For the first time, the army got orders to fire on crowds, and it did not hold back. Those wounded by gunfire number in the hundreds. It is as if General Ariel Sharon wanted to push the Palestinian population into an uprising that could open up the way for a qualitative escalation of reprisals, creating a dynamic leading to the expulsion or exodus of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians.

STUBBORN RESISTANCE BY THE INHABITANTS OF THE OCCUPIED LANDS

The bloody repression on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is the result of a political scheme whose ruthlessness is matched only by its utter lack of realism. It is also a consequence of the determination of the population and the scope of its mobilizations against the Begin government's new measures.

Day after day, new sections of the Palestinian population are joining in the struggle. The massive repression makes no distinction between "extremists" and "moderates." For Ariel Sharon and Menahem Milson there are no "moderates"—only a few dozen collaborators in the so-called Leagues of Villagers are reliable. The other Arabs are all agents of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) or intimidated by it.

This explains why all the Arabs everywhere follow the strike calls. None of the municipal governments, not even the ones in Bethlehem and Gaza, have agreed to collaborate with Menahem Milson. And those few who still remained passive joined in the fight after the crimi-

nal attack on the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem.

What is striking is the absence of fear. Most of the demonstrators are young, often born after the Israeli occupation of these territories in June 1967. For them, the occupation is not an episode but the only reality they have ever known. When they pass the army blockades, they do not conceal their hatred, and in the face of the soldiers they stand their ground.

Despite the censorship, the Israeli press has reported dozens of cases where soldiers have been forced to flee by a few dozen school children. More and more military patrols are being attacked with Molotov cocktails. In some neighborhoods and many refugee camps, the army cannot enter unless it mobilizes major forces.

The Palestinians have given a clear answer to Menahem Milson's statement that the war is not against them but against the PLO: "We are the PLO." Everywhere, on the schools and on the mosques, in the windows of the houses and on the walls, Palestinian flags have appeared. As soon as they are taken down by the occupation forces, they pop up again in other spots.

Still more admirable is the heroic resistance of the 13,000 inhabitants of the Golan Heights: "Better death than dishonor." This phrase can be heard every day from morning till night in the Golan area and it is no theatrical slogan.

The calm determination of the people of Golan, after more than two months of a general strike, has forced the entire population of Israel to take them seriously when they say: "Even if this has to go on for several years, we will continue our struggle until the Israeli government accepts our demands." Despite the arrest of many leaders, a total state of siege, many wounded, hunger, and sickness, the population remains completely solid.

"If necessary, we will make a big kibbutz so that we can help each other

hold out," one of the now jailed leaders told us a few months ago. In fact, a few days ago the strikers decided to let the farmers start cultivating their land again. They will give a quarter of their harvest to the workers.

"I envy them," Rasiq Halabi, a well-known Druze journalist working for Israeli TV and a reserve officer in the Israeli army, said recently, "they at least have an identity, I don't."

Honor, identity—that is also a question of land. Immediately after the passage of the annexation bill, the Israeli land surveyors appeared on the Golan Heights. The new Ministry of the Interior official for the Golan had explained: "According to the Israeli law in force today, 90% of the land on the Golan plateau belongs now to the Israeli state."

The story is told that a few days before the strike, the prefect of the northern region, the infamous Israel Kenig, went to meet with the leading people on the Golan Heights. They asked him to reconsider applying the new law. His answer was that he had not come to negotiate with them, but to tell them what was expected of them: "I am Israel Kenig," he added, "and if you haven't heard of me, ask the Arabs in Galilee."

The local leaders replied: "We are the Druzes of Golan, and if you don't know about us, ask the Turks, the French, the English and the Syrians."

Now, there is no one in Israel who does not know the Druzes of the Golan Heights and what they are capable of. This has helped to change the attitude of the entire Israeli population toward their struggle.

GROWING OPPOSITION TO THE POLICY OF REPRESSION

The Golan provocation touched off a wave of protest that has continued to mount against the Begin-Sharon government's repressive policy. Driving a population that had been distinguished by its apparent resignation to Israeli occupation, driving the Druzes of Israel—the last politicized in the Palestinian population—to solidarize with their brothers and sisters on the Golan Heights, sparking an example of organization, of determination, and of tactical adeptness for the population of the West Bank and Gaza—that was too much, even for the Labor Party.

Every day, more personalities have been joining the chorus of protest against the barbarous methods of repression used in the attempt to break the people of the Golan Heights. This includes even the inhabitants of northern Israel, who are suffering from the lack of Arab labor.

A recent example of this growing opposition to Menahem Begin's policy on the Golan is the position taken by the most famous judge of the Supreme Court, who is now retired, Judge Haim Cohen. In a press conference that made the front page of the Israeli papers, he confirmed one of the accusations made by the Civil Rights Association and the Committee

for Solidarity with the Arab Population of the Golan.

Haim Cohen said that it was not Israeli law that was being applied on the Golan but a law of the jungle and practices that trampled on the most elementary human rights.

The long answer to this statement made by the army spokesman and the crude denunciations hurled at the former judge by Menahem Begin have not at all lessened the impact of Haim Cohen's accusations.

In the midst of the Golan crisis, the government decided to launch a repressive offensive against the Palestinian population that involved an armed confrontation with more than a million people. In a month's time this policy led to hundreds of casualties, including about twenty dead. It showed that the only thing that the new Sharon-Milson strategy can lead to is bloody repression against the entire Palestinian population in the occupied territories.

This policy is not only criminal, it has shown itself to be completely ineffective and counterproductive. Never before has the Palestinian population been so united in its resistance, never have the collaborators been more isolated, never has the mobilization been so determined.

As the former head of the Israeli security services, Avraham A'haituv, wrote: "The ministers of defense succeeded (in the past) in applying a policy that could be called one of 'calming the situation.' It is obvious that such a policy is in contradiction to the determination to impose a different sort of rule in the territories. By definition, imposing something means provoking unrest."

After showing that the policy of the big stick only reinforces resistance, Avraham A'haituv concluded:

"It is possible to calm the waters. This is difficult, but there is only one method that will produce results—maneuver and patience. I am afraid that the tough method is getting us further away from this objective." (*Haaretz*, April 16, 1982.)

A'haituv's thoughts reflect feelings that are largely shared by the Israeli population and many establishment circles. What is more, the impact that this criminal policy in the occupied territories will have on Israeli society, the future that it is preparing, are clear to those who still dream of a Zionism "with a sound mind and clean hands."

In the last two months, the newspaper *Haaretz* has become the voice of this general criticism of the government's policy toward the occupied territories.

Revelations about the crimes perpetrated daily by the occupation forces are compelling more and more people to come out clearly in opposition to the government. This explains why the Labor Party has rejected the proposal for a government of national unity. If it had accepted, it would have faced a split.

It is why the Peace Now movement, which had disappeared from the political scene for several months after refusing to

take a position on the question of the occupied territories, finally decided to mobilize against the repression there.

The Peace Now movement had always deliberately limited itself to supporting the Camp David Accords. It mobilized tens of thousands of persons only to press the government not to let slip the opportunity offered by President Anwar Sadat's initiative.

With positions close to those of the Labor Party and largely led by members of Labor Party Kibbutzim, Peace Now refused to take any stand, even a limited one, against the occupation. In this respect, the March 27 demonstration in Tel Aviv called by Peace Now marked a qualitative turning point (see box).

Three days later, it was the turn of the Israeli Palestinian population to express its solidarity with its brothers and sisters in the occupied territories.

After the massive mobilization in solidarity with the Golan population, including even the Druze village leaders in Israel who have traditionally been close to the government, from 70% to 80% of the Arab population in Israel responded to the call for a general strike issued by the National Committee for the Defense of Arab Lands and the Israeli Arab Mayors Committee.

Although it was less spectacular than the Day of the Land on March 30, 1976, the mobilization on March 30, 1982, was the most massive and most united one the Palestinian population of Israel has known since 1948.

However, the resistance to the Begin-Sharon policy has not been limited to the Palestinian population or the moderate Zionists close to Peace Now. The Likud government has also run into very widespread opposition among the Jewish masses to the general thrust of its policy,

that is, the attempt to provoke a new war in the Near East.

VERY BROAD OPPOSITION TO BEGIN'S AGGRESSIVE MANEUVERS

Menahem Begin wanted a war before the completion of withdrawal from the Sinai. His own ministers leaked this to the press in an attempt to get the newspapers to embarrass the government and prevent it from throwing itself into a bloody adventure.

But for Begin and Sharon the war was only postponed. There have been more and more statements indicating this over these last two months. Moshe Aremis, Israel's ambassador in Washington, has talked about "pre-emptive war." The minister of foreign affairs, Shamir, has promised to "crush the terrorist organizations and their leaders in their home bases."

Every couple of days, Ariel Sharon says, "We may launch an action." The chief of staff, General Eitan, has said, "Israel will take the initiative; from Israel's point of view there is no cease-fire."

Menahem Begin has pledged that if a single Jew is killed, there will be war. Every incident, such as the attack on the Israeli embassy or the infiltration of commandos across the lines on the Jordan front is played up and used to reinforce the military buildup on the frontiers and to whip up a war atmosphere in Israel.

The government has not even hesitated to fabricate stories about commando infiltration in order to justify the chief of staff's statement that the cease-fire no longer exists.

For the moment, what ties the hands of the Israeli government is first

30,000 Protest in Tel Aviv

In the midst of a head-on confrontation between the government and the army and the Palestinian and Syrian masses in the occupied territories, about 30,000 persons mobilized on March 27 in Tel Aviv to demand that the Begin government end its repression in the occupied lands.

The presence of about twenty Labor Party deputies explains the very moderate tone of the official slogans—"Sensible Zionism!" "More Moderation!" It also explains the failure to explicitly attack the civilian administration set up in the occupied territories and the refusal to defend the ousted Arab mayors.

But the participation of these Jewish members of parliament also showed the relative isolation of the government and its supporters in the Labor Party. At least as important as the official theme of the demonstration were the slogans adopted by the Peace Now movement demonstrators themselves. The slogan "Down with the occupation!" which for twelve years has been raised exclusively by anti-Zionists, was taken up this time by tens of thousands of persons. This showed the real feelings of the demonstrators and the context in which they saw the mobilization and their participation in it.

Moreover, the Committee for Solidarity With the University of Bir Zeit succeeded in gathering several thousand persons behind its banners, despite the opposition of the march organizers. Its leaflets and badges were also popular among the demonstrators. This confirms the fact that above and behind the considerations of the representatives of the Peace Now movement and the official slogans of the demonstration, the tens of thousands who mobilized in Tel Aviv were demonstrating against the occupation.

of all the American veto of any military adventure, at least before the end of the withdrawal from the Sinai. But it is also the lack of a national consensus among the Israeli population for such a war.

If a war were to break out, for the first time in the history of the Jewish state, the Israeli people would not be united behind the government.

One of the most prominent Israeli news commentators, Yoel Marcus, said recently: "The main reason why Israel has been so publicly on the brink of war twice is that there is no military threat and no military justification, direct or even indirect, for starting a war.

"If there were any reason to start a war now, there would not be so much talk about it. The preparations would be underway secretly and it would be launched by surprise. In the four wars we have gone through, two were provoked by the Arabs and two launched by Israel."

Marcus continued: "Now the situation is very different. Not only the most moderate doves but even the military specialists see no need for any large-scale military action. The heating up of the atmosphere if therefore artificial, and designed to prepare the ground for an essential political operation.... This is the reason for the skepticism and fears of a new war that are permeating the country, including the ministers." (*Haaretz*, April 13, 1982.)

In the same article, Yoel Marcus talks about a group of top officers and ministers around General Ariel Sharon who are pushing for a new test of strength: "This group regrets having had to sign a ceasefire (with the PLO) that ties Israel's hands and lends respectability to the terrorists. It is no accident that this is already the second time since Sharon became defense minister, not yet a year ago, that Israel is on the brink of making a military move that has no apparently military justification. This is simply because Sharon sees the destruction of the PLO, the erasure of the PLO from the map, as a miracle remedy for the political dangers threatening Israel."

It is precisely on this question that the Israeli government finds itself in a minority. There are fewer and fewer people who believe that there is any miracle remedy. Fewer and fewer people believe that a war could solve anything. The proof of this is the petition circulated by the inhabitants along the northern border, which says that the Palestinians have punctiliously respected the ceasefire and that there is no reason for Israel to end the calm that prevails in the North.

The people who are circulating this petition are the same ones who less than a year ago acclaimed Menahem Begin when he boasted that he was going to wipe out the Syrian missiles in Lebanon in a few hours. The sentiments that the inhabitants of these northern communities are expressing in a direct and active way are

largely shared by the working people, although passively.

This is one of the reasons why Menahem Begin so much needed a government of national unity. It is also the reason that the Labor Party leader Shimon Perez refused to go along. Menahem Begin wants to create an atmosphere of national union at the top in order to try to extend it to the masses.

Shimon Perez knows what the feelings of the masses are. And so he wants to take his distance from Begin's adventurist policy, even if in fact the differences between the Labor Party and Likud are not over fundamentals but only a matter of style. He says that he is prepared to join the government only once war has been declared, indicating that when the fatherland is in danger there is no longer any room for public expression of differences.

TOWARD A BROAD MOVEMENT AGAINST WAR AND THE OCCUPATION

The bloody repression in the occupied territories and the preparations for a military adventure against the PLO and Syria are two faces of the same policy. The utopian aim of this policy is to turn the course of history back and bring the political situation back to what it was in the 1950s and 1960s. It seeks to smash the Palestinian nation and break the political and military power of the Arab states, as well as to restore the faith of the Israeli Jewish population in the future and omnipotence of Zionism.

The Zionist establishment and the Israeli bourgeoisie are not mistaken in their estimation of the gravity of the crisis and the need for finding radical solutions. But the Jewish masses of Israel are more farsighted in their assessment of the real relationship of forces in the region. This is the reason for their refusal to mobilize behind the war-mongering campaign of Menahem Begin and for the fear that the idea of a new war inspires in most Israelis.

This fear of a new war and this refusal to pay the price once again for a military adventure that could not improve the situation of the Israeli masses, either from the standpoint of security or living conditions, is the objective basis for the emergence of a vast antiwar movement.

A recent resolution of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist League, Israeli section of the Fourth International says:

"The number one objective for the progressive forces today is to do everything possible to assure that the desire of the working masses for peace is translated into a mass movement against war and the occupation. The essential thing for the movements that are mobilizing against the occupations and warlike maneuvers but are still relatively small and isolated from the working masses is to appeal to broader sections of the popu-

lation and offer them an alternative for resisting the policy that in the last analysis unites the Zionist parties against the interests of the working people. All the left forces, both Zionist and anti-Zionist, must do everything possible to orient the antiwar movement in this direction."

For the first time, Israel is not united in the face of its enemies. For the first time it is heading toward war with the bulk of its troops dragging their feet. This is a decisive turning point in the history of Zionism. ■

Death Threat to Colombian Trotskyist

Socorro Ramirez, leader of the Partido Socialista Revolucionario, Colombian section of the Fourth International and a recent candidate for the regional assembly of Bogota on the Democratic Union slate, has received a death threat from the ultra-rightist death squad, *Muerte a los secuestradores* (Death to the Kidnappers—a paramilitary group linked to the police dedicated to "fighting terrorism").

Ramirez, who previously has been a presidential candidate of the PSR, received a funeral wreath from the MAS at her home.

This death threat came at the same time as those against Dr. Alfredo Vasquez Carrisoza, president of the Permanent Committee for the Defense of Human Rights; Senator Humberto Ciales; defense lawyer for various political prisoners, Miguel Antonio Cano; and Jesuit priest Alejandro Angulo Novoa, director of the Centro de Investigacion y Educacion Popular (CINEP).

The MAS recently claimed responsibility for the murder of Dr. Luis Enrique Cipaguate Galvez, a lawyer who had defended political prisoners.

The Colombian government has done nothing to curb the activities of the MAS, who openly boast to having ties with the police.

The threats against Socorro Ramirez were widely reported in the Colombian mass media. Articles appeared in regional newspapers such as *Vanguardia Liberal* of Santander and *El Colombiano* of Medellin, as well as over the wires of Colombia news agency.

Women and the Salvador Revolution



The following report of an interview with a representative of the Salvadoran rebel women's organization AMES who is now touring Sweden has been taken from the April 29 issue of *Internationalen*, weekly paper of the Swedish section of the Fourth International. It has been slightly shortened.

El Salvador is a country in the midst of civil war. Actively or passively, a large majority of the population are against the government. It is also a country where the majority of the population are women.

Traditionally, women in El Salvador have had at best a subordinate role in politics.

The struggle against the oppressors has forced a change in that. Women are participating on all levels—in the political parties, in the armed struggle, in the work to organize coordination and supply of the movement.

"But there is a danger that women may come under pressure to go back into the home when the struggle is over. AMES is working to raise the consciousness of women's ability to take on important tasks, to learn professions, for example, technical ones."

That is the way Ofelia Chavez described the long-range goals for which she and her numerous revolutionary sisters are working for in the women's organizations.

"If we did not think that women should continue to be active in society, there would be no reason for AMES."

Internationalen met Ofelia one afternoon last week. She is a young, purposeful person, who has clear ideas about the future of her country and of the women in it. She also gives a clear view of the needs of the struggle right now.

She is a living contrast to the sadistic, maddened rightist government that now rules the country with violence and terror. To be more exact, it rules parts of the country.

In fact, a larger and larger part of El Salvador is a liberated one. A million or

more of the total population of 4.5 million live in the liberated areas.

Besides the liberated zones, there are zones that the liberation movement calls "controlled." There the people are organized in various ways to support the liberation struggle. But this organization is not as all embracing and open as it is in the liberated zones.

AMES works in both the liberated and controlled zones. It is also active in the cities, where most of its work is clandestine. AMES stands in full solidarity with the FMLN-FDR, and carries on its work in the framework of this mass liberation front. Many of the women who led AMES's work have been murdered by the regime.

It all started in 1978, when a number of women in San Salvador—housewives, workers, and teachers—joined together to help the refugees who had come to the capital city. Then, as now, a great many of them were children.

"There are 4,000 orphans in El Salvador," Ofelia Chavez said. "They are in bad shape, both physically and psychologically."

The AMES women quickly found that they could not deal with the big problems. They turned to the various parties and to the liberation organization and asked for help. That led to a difficult but necessary discussion.

"There was a problem of male chauvinism, even among the organized comrades," Ofelia said.

The discussion that developed was over the respective responsibility of men and women for children and other things, that is, for housework and doing the marketing, for taking care of the family, and participating in the armed struggle.

There was also a discussion over the respective opportunities for men and women to participate in political life.

AMES strove through its work, which quickly went beyond just helping the refugees, to activate more and more women, and thereby to strengthen the revolution. It became a mass organization that today has about 15,000 active members in the country and many others in the refugee areas outside it.

"AMES is a broad, democratic organization. There are various political currents and tendencies within it. But there are also many women who belong to no organized current. That is important, because our main aim is to bring in women who have not been active before."

In the cities, special women's committees have been set up parallel to the

people's committees that are the base organizations of the FMLN-FDR. Both kinds of committees work underground.

"The women sometimes take both baskets of fruit and communiques to families.

"A lot of women work in the women's committees doing tasks that are closer to what they learned in the home. Later on, they can get involved in more and more tasks of the people's resistance.

"Women work in all areas of the liberation struggle, both political and military."

In the liberated zones the situation is qualitatively better than in the cities.

The entire population is organized and elects its leadership.

A liberated zone may embrace a hundred thousand people. In every town, the inhabitants chose a representative to the central leadership.

"All those in leadership positions in the liberated areas are elected by the people except those responsible for the military struggle. They are appointed by the FMLN-FDR.

"But those appointed are people that we know and trust."

The revolution has its strongest centers in the countryside. But at the same time the farmers are often very conservative and find it hard to imagine their wives should not return to household tasks after the victory.

AMES has commented on this problem, which is by no means limited to the countryside, in a document that says:

"The advance of the revolutionary process can be measured by the extent to which women are involved in revolutionary tasks. This point has great importance, because the aim of the revolution is to build a higher kind of human life, to revolutionize people and overcome the alienating aspects of life that make them into objects and reduce the exploited class to commodities. Under capitalism, women are doubly oppressed. Their total liberation is possible only to the extent that the revolution advances and deepens. There cannot be any real revolution as long as women remain oppressed and on the sidelines."

AMES is for the right of women to contraceptives and abortion. That is a demand that can be met when the country's resources are used in other ways. The government's attitude toward women can best be shown by the fact that there is only one women's clinic in the entire country, in the capital. ■

What Lies Behind the Trials of Turkish Unionists?

by Mehmet SÂLAH

At the end of 1981, sixteen months after it came to power by a military coup, the Turkish dictatorship put 52 trade-union leaders on trial. The defendants all came from the DISK (Turkiye Devrimci Isci Sendikalari Konfederasyonu--Turkish Confederation of Revolutionary Workers Unions), the country's second largest labor confederation.

In an indictment that took 70 days to read, these union leaders were accused of "attempting to overthrow the established order by force and violence and establish a Marxist-Leninist system." The prosecutor asked for the death penalty.

Lower-level trade union leaders, shop stewards, and workers are to be tried in a separate but related case in connection with various authorized and unauthorized strikes.

In fact, the DISK leaders did not do what they are accused of. Right up to the day of the September 12, 1980, coup they never went beyond standard trade-union activity.

These officials did play a certain role in carrying out the function of trade unions, that is, fighting to reduce the exploitation of the working class and lower the percentage of surplus value extracted from them. But they saw the fight for real workers democracy both in Turkey and in the world as a threat to their special interests. Therefore, they moved to sabotage any development in this direction.

However, the military dictatorship is demanding the death penalty against these trade-union leaders. Is this an accident or a mistake? Of course, it is not from the generals' point of view.

These officials are leaders of DISK, and this organization has played a very important role in the struggle of the working class over the last fifteen years.

By charging the DISK leaders, what the junta is trying to do essentially is to intimidate the working class as a whole. But that is an objective it cannot openly avow.

On September 12, 1980, all activity by DISK was banned. No such step was taken against the country's biggest labor confederation, Turk-Is. But despite the fact that the general secretary of this organization became a minister in the military government, its trade-union work has in fact been curbed. Moreover, the military government has banned union members from resigning from their organizations and joining others.

In this situation, roughly 300,000

workers regard themselves as members of DISK, and are following the trial of the union leaders faced with the death penalty.

Over the last twenty years, all these workers have been through at least one strike, that is, they have been through all the experiences of trade unionism and trade-union struggles. They are the first section of the working class to have become familiar with socialist ideas. They are the core of the working-class movement. If they could be intimidated, this could not fail to have a chilling effect on all the working people. This is why the dictatorship chose to risk the possible reactions of world public opinion to put the DISK leaders on trial for their lives.

Of course, the trial of the DISK leaders is not the only instance of the junta resorting to prosecution, arrest, and torture in an attempt to intimidate the workers. A lot of people are facing charges related to unofficial strikes. In particular, tens of thousands of persons linked to several revolutionary organizations are being prosecuted, and a high proportion of them are workers.

Thus, the dictatorship is waging a ruthless offensive against the gains the workers have won over the last twenty years, such as the right to strike, vacations, retirement pay, healthy working conditions, health services, and a relative improvement in the standard of living. The DISK trial is the crowning touch to this rollback operation.

THE RISE OF THE TURKISH WORKERS MOVEMENT

What the military dictatorship is trying to do is reverse the historical rise of the workers movement that has continued for two decades and represents fundamental changes in Turkish society. This constitutes a historic tragedy for the country and for the masses of working people. Let us sum up what is involved in this.

Going into the 1980s, the Turkish working class had attained considerable numerical strength. According to the statistics published at the end of 1981, the number of insured workers in Turkey was 2,154,000. However, that figure represents only a part of the Turkish industrial proletariat, because it does not include workers who have not claimed social insurance coverage as a result of pressure from the bosses, in particular the threat of losing their jobs. Such workers

are to be found especially in the very widespread small companies related to the building industry, and they certainly number in the millions.

For example, according to the official statistics, the number of workplaces where workers are not covered by social security is about half a million. That gives an idea of the number of workers in small industry.

Moreover, the 2,154,000 workers mentioned above do not include the hundreds of thousands of workers in state agencies or related operations who, pursuant to a series of regulations issued since 1975, have been put in the category of civil servants. Likewise, the large numbers of workers temporarily employed in mine prospecting operations and seasonal industries are not included in that figure.

If all these categories are taken into consideration, the industrial working class can be estimated to account for more than 25% of the economically active population in Turkey. In view of the growth of industrialization in Istanbul and the major regional industrial centers, this percentage must be even higher.

Moreover, if we add the semiproletarians, who have never been counted but must number in the millions, and the 1.5 million civil servants, the proportion of wage workers in the economically active population must be over 50%.

UNIONIZATION

The process of unionization among these masses of wage workers is as follows. The uninsured industrial workers and agricultural workers are unable to join unions. That is true de facto for the first two categories. Civil servants are banned by law from joining unions.

However, a large majority of the 2 million insured workers do belong to unions. Of the two big union confederations, Turk-Is has about a million and a half members. DISK has about 300,000. The fascist MISK (Milliyetci Isci Sendikalari Konfederasyonu—Confederation of National Trade Unions) and the Islamic HAK-Is have been able to recruit only a few tens of thousands of workers. In addition, independent unions can be estimated to have hundreds of thousands of members. (Since the membership figures given by the unions themselves cannot stand up to the slightest examination, I have made a rough estimate, allowing for the exaggerations in the official statistics

which is certainly much closer to the truth.) The membership figure given for DISK by the leadership varies between 800,000 and a million.

The biggest danger involved in such exaggerations is that they tend to show the Turkish workers struggle as weaker than it is. If DISK had had a million members in the period before September 12, 1980, the conditions leading up to the coup would have been very different.

The 300,000-strong section of the working class organized by DISK was in fact a small minority but it assumed a major role and raised the level of the entire working-class movement.

WORKERS MOBILIZATIONS IN MODERN TURKEY

In comparison with the Western countries in particular, strikes, unions, socialism, and so forth are relatively new concepts and experiences for the Turkish working class. They have in fact become part of the daily lives of the workers only in the last twenty years. If you go further back than that you find quite a different picture.

The founding of the Turkish republic and "Modern Turkey" in 1923 brought no notable acceleration of capitalist development. For decades after 1923, Turkey remained an agricultural country with an insignificant industrial sector. In a few centers, there was some notable growth of the working class, mainly workers employed in food processing, mining and textiles.

In 1934, in workplaces covered by the industrial development law there were 66,247 workers. (Of course, workers at workplaces not covered by this law are not included in this figure, but it corresponds to the category of insured workers today.)

In the period between the two world wars, there were no unions but various workers clubs built up organizations embracing tens of thousands of workers. Although strikes were outlawed, they nonetheless took place from time to time. The period of Kemalist one-party rule from 1923 to 1946 was one in which the workers movement was subjected to heavy pressure and legal coercion. It generally remained in a stagnant state. But this stagnation was a reflection of the general torpor of the society. For example, from 1923 to 1950, the relationship between the urban and rural population did not change by more than one percent.

Nonetheless, in this thirty-year period, there were occasional workers upsurges. For example, in the beginning of the 1930s, Izmir, the country's second biggest industrial center at the time, became the scene of big workers mobilizations.

In 1946, there was a second big upsurge in the workers movement. The destruction of fascism on a world scale and the advance of the workers movement could not fail to have an impact even on a relatively sluggish country such as Tur-

key. The "working-class clubs" that had existed up to that time were abolished. In a few months time, tens of thousands of workers began to organize in unions.

However, this spring was a short one. After six months in which there was freedom to organize trade unions, martial law went into effect. All the unions and the two left parties were banned. The leaders and a section of the members were arrested, charged, and given heavy sentences.

In 1947, a new "trade-union law" went into effect. It was made legal to organize unions. But it took 16 years before the right to strike was granted by law.

In 1950, the 27-year period of one-party rule came to an end. The following period was one of rapid capitalization of agriculture and urbanization. At the same time, although it became rapid after 1960, industrialization showed only relative growth. In this period, Turkey's economic, political, and military ties with imperialism became stronger. The inflow of foreign capital increased. Turkey joined NATO and the Bagdad Pact (CENTO), sent soldiers to fight in Korea, and so on.

At the beginning of this period, the largest labor confederation, TURK-Is, was founded. In 1946, after the first rise of unionization was beaten back, unions were formed under government and police control. A trade-union bureaucracy was formed out of U.S.-educated trade unionists, labor police, and lumpen proletarians. Then, in 1951, TURK-Is was founded as a national labor confederation in close collaboration with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

However, there was a contradiction in the tasks assigned to the gangster unionists. Just as an army that is used against the people can find itself forced to teach the working people how to use weapons, the trade unionists of the 1950s found themselves obliged to bring workers together and give them an impetus to learn trade-unionism. The working class was to take this unity seriously. By 1963, 30% of the insured workers were members of trade unions.

However, the 1950-60 period was still a relatively quiet one for the workers movement. There were strikes but only occasionally. But an upturn began building up before 1960. An increase could be seen in strikes and attempted strikes, as well as in labor conflicts in general.

For example, from 1939 to 1950, only 41 labor conflicts were taken to the High Court (the Yuksek Hakem Kurulu); in 1954 alone 160 conflicts were taken to the High Court. In the following six years, an average of 110 conflicts were taken to the court annually. Although these figures reflect only one side of the economic struggle of the working class, they show that broader and broader sections of the working class were becoming involved in struggle.

In this period also many labor laws were passed. A labor minister was esta-

blished, a Labor and Workers Institute, and laws were enacted on healthy working conditions, retirement, and one providing for yearly and weekly days off as well as lunch breaks.

At the time these laws were passed, their application was limited to a rather small minority of the working class. After 1963, they were extended to broader sections of the working class.

TOWARD FULL-SCALE CLASS CONFRONTATION

For the country as a whole, the coup of May 27, 1960, was a historic moment, opening the way for economic, political, and social changes. However, most of the young officers involved in the coup were unaware of the many-sided and far-reaching changes that it made possible.

This coup could be said to be in conformity with the general character of the army's involvement in politics in Turkey. For example at the beginning of this century, during the Ottoman empire, the army, especially the young officers, played the decisive role in the bourgeois democratic currents that developed and also later in the founding of the republic.

The 1960 coup determined the course of the society for the next 21 years. The avowed intention of the 1980 coup was likewise to determine the future course of social, economic, cultural, and political relations by giving a new content to the social institutions. The coup of March 12, 1971, that came between the May 1960 and September 1980 coups can be described as a trial run for the recent military takeover.

The May 27 rebels did not have any clear program. They were relatively independent of the social classes and outside the hierarchical chain of command. In contrast, the military men who carried out the September 12 coup were in the high command. From the first days, the makers of the latter coup unhesitatingly applied the program of local and international finance capital. However, the May 27 revolution led to the 1961 constitution.

The new basic law established by the May 27 rebels introduced the right to organize and strike, and thereby created a new sort of relationship of forces between the bourgeoisie and the working class. By establishing relative freedom of speech, thought, expression, assembly, and organization, it gave a new form to political, cultural, and social relations in the entire society. For the next twenty years, up until the time that it was broken, this constitution provided the legal framework for social developments.

The sort of labor relations defined in general by the 1961 constitution were enacted by a series of laws passed over an approximately two-year period.

Then, after power was handed over to the first of a series of civilian coalition governments in September 1961, a strong peaceful workers movement developed.

Workers participated in a number of what for the first time were legal activities, such as strikes, sit-in strikes, marches, rallies, "beard-growing strikes" (refusal of the workers to shave in accordance with the regulations in force since Kemal's modernizations), and circulating petitions. For the first time in Turkish history there was a mass meeting for workers rights, to which more than 100,000 workers came. All these actions demonstrated that the working-class was determined to force the implementation of the rights established on paper in the 1961 constitution.

Although the laws that were passed had important limitations, the workers movement was given a new momentum. Trade-union organization spread rapidly. By 1963, about 300,000 workers were members of unions. Five years later, union membership was approaching a million. Town square demonstrations and strikes began to increase.

But alongside the strikes, new forms of action going beyond the laws appeared, unofficial strikes and factory occupations. In the conditions of Turkey, such actions had a special meaning. In order for a strike to be considered legal, a very involved process of giving advance notice had to be followed. This obstacle diverted the workers toward actions outside the law.

So, in assessing the post-1963 workers mobilizations, the number of unofficial strikes is as important as the number of official ones, and sometimes more so.

In this period, workers undertaking actions faced the loss of their jobs, arrest, trial, and so forth. This was especially true for the vanguard workers. Moreover, unofficial strikes always involved the possibility of clashes with the police and gendarmes.

Between 1963 and 1968, some 40,000 workers were involved in 320 legal strikes. In the same period, about 70,000 workers were involved in 38 unofficial strikes. (Like the figures for official strikes, those for unofficial strikes are not very accurate. They certainly understate the real numbers.)

This period of the first sustained rise of the workers movement was one of hard struggle. For example, in 25 of the conflicts mentioned above, there were confrontations with police and gendarmes. There were two unofficial miners strikes, the first involving five thousand workers in 1965 and the second in 1968 involving 25 thousand. In both, clashes occurred with police and gendarmes and four workers in all were killed.

It was in this period, moreover, that DISK was formed as a reaction against the gangster unionists of TURK-Is. In 1968, the Turkish Workers Party (TIP—Turkiye Isci Partisi) was founded, and it, together with the workers vanguard, founded this second union confederation.

At the start the new organization had 25-35 thousand members, all of whom worked in private concerns. The

private sector was to remain the base of DISK for long years.

Since the 1950s, TURK-Is had been well entrenched in the state concerns. Important factors in this were the continuing tradition of the state bureaucracy, the relatively backward production technology, and the fact that a large proportion of these state enterprises were scattered outside the main industrial centers.

The growth of private industrial enterprises was a phenomenon of the 1950s or 1960s. These were concentrated in the big cities, such as Istanbul and Izmir. Such plants had a relatively advanced production technology.

Along with these features, in private enterprises there were continual layoffs of workers, that is reduced job security, as well as an intensification of labor, a general push to increase the absolute surplus product. (These two features were nonexistent or much weaker in state enterprises). Thus, the conditions in private industry were a strong incentive to unionization and to higher forms of union activity. And as the workers in such circumstances came into contact with unions, they invariably turned toward DISK.

Within a few years after it was formed, DISK began to grow rapidly, and it was the engineering workers in private enterprises that formed its backbone.

On the political level, this acceleration of the working-class movement was shown by the rapid growth of the TIP. In the 1965 parliamentary elections, it got about 3% of the vote. Benefitting from a relatively favorable electoral system, it got 15 seats in parliament.

But despite the relatively rapid growth of the left, knowledge of Marxism remained confined to a handful of 1930s-generation radicals. In fact in this period the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin began to be published for the first time since the 1930s. But this was on an extremely small scale in comparison with the turbulent rise of workers actions. Table I gives an indication of this.

Year	Works of Marx, Engels and Lenin published
1962	1
1963	0
1964	1
1965	2
1966	7
1967	8
1968	5

In the same period, one book each by Kuusinen, Baby, Politzer, and Plekhanov were published. That was the sum total of Marxist literature available up to 1968. (The publication of Marxist periodicals and other original works began in 1970-71 but only really began to grow after 1974. The publication of Trotskyist literature in Turkish essentially belongs to the period after 1974.)

In the 1970s, factory occupations began to appear, alongside the other actions. In 1968, of the 40,000 workers

who participated in actions, 80% were involved in unofficial strikes and occupations, and only 20% in legal strikes. In the following year 23 thousand workers participated in occupations and unofficial strikes. The number involved in official strikes was about the same as in the previous year. But the workplaces affected by occupations and unofficial strikes had an average of more than 1,500 workers. Moreover, a large majority of those involved in such actions were engineering and mineworkers.

The year 1970 marked the high point of the post-1961 workers movement. In this same year, the mass movement of the student youth attained a great momentum. A hundred thousand teachers participated in a first attempt at a general strike. The unionization of civil servants accelerated. For the first time in the history of modern Turkey, a peasant movement appeared. This was also the year of the third great devaluation in Turkish history. In August 1970, the value of Turkish money dropped by 70% (The previous big devaluations were in 1946 and 1958.)

The balance sheet of the workers mobilizations for 1970 is indicated in Table II.

	Number of Workers	Number of Workplaces
Unofficial strikes	60 000	41
Occupations	6 000	12
Official strikes	25 963	111

The level that the workers movement had reached is also indicated by the big workers demonstrations of June 15-16, 1970. On that famous date, more than 150 thousand workers came into the streets to protest a change in the law that would hinder DISK's organizing. In Istanbul, workers assembled at various places to march. At a lot of points, police and army barricades were broken up. All of Istanbul was swept by an unprecedented working-class explosion.

This two-day-long wave of demonstrations was halted by a declaration of martial law in two cities, Istanbul and Izmit, followed by arrests, prosecutions, and mass firings. But even such repression was able to halt the workers movement in the Istanbul region only for a period.

On the eve of the March 12 military coup and the declaration of martial law in eleven provinces in April of that year, more than twenty thousand workers participated in unofficial strikes. Moreover, in the first four months of 1971, the number of workers involved in official strikes was close to that figure.

Besides their numerical strength, the workers mobilizations rose to a higher qualitative level. In this period, the workers movement showed a dynamic that was going beyond the framework of trade-union activity.

In DISK, the union bureaucracy

had not yet established firm control and domination over the workers. Moreover, the bulk of active workers had a strong sympathy with the youth movement that was on the rise in this period. The years 1968-1971 were marked at the same time by campus occupations and the adoption by the advanced sections of the working class of factory occupations as a major form of struggle. The influence among the workers, of the students who began to carry out occupations, must not be minimized. The fact is that factory occupations were virtually unknown in the workers movement before 1968 and were relatively rare after 1971. That is the index of the influence that the revolutionary student movement of the time brought to bear.

Over the decade after the May 1960 coup, the working class had been able to transform many of the rights it was given on paper into realities. Examples are the extension of the eight-hour day, an increase in paid vacation time, regulation of working conditions and regularization of health services for workers, an increase in real wages, and so forth.

The March 12, 1971, semimilitary dictatorship made a number of exertions to roll back these working class gains. But since the relationship of class forces in the country was not favorable for that, it did not succeed.

THE WORKERS MOVEMENT IN THE 1970s

In the period 1971-1973, the workers movement literally came to a standstill. In this period, thousands of revolutionists were jailed. The revolutionary struggles they had led were extinguished. Three revolutionary students were executed. In comparison with the extent of the terror after the September 12 military coup, this wave of repression was relatively limited. But it dealt a severe and lasting blow to the sort of movements that were developing in relative freedom during the previous ten years.

After remaining in power for more than two years, the semimilitary dictatorship retired. It put an end to this period by calling general elections, which resulted in the CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi—Republican People's Party, Ecevit's party) gaining a large plurality but less than what it needed to form a government by itself. The CHP formed a coalition government together with the MSP (Milli Selamet Partisi—National Salvation Party, an Islamic populist party).

A partial political amnesty coincided with the military occupation of northern Cyprus. When the workers and left movements were just beginning to revive, the occupation of northern Cyprus brought Turkish chauvinism to a crescendo. It also provided an excuse for a new period of martial law. Strikes were postponed, banned. Despite this in 1974, workers mobilizations achieved a considerable scope. More than 80,000 workers took part in official and unoffi-

cial strikes. Once again the average number of workers in workplaces affected by workstoppages was over 1,500. In the case of official strikes, the average was around 350.

In 1975, in particular, there was a jump in the number of unofficial strikes. More than 60,000 workers participated in 105 unofficial strikes.

A feature of this new wave of unofficial strikes was the activation of the masses of workers outside the big industrial centers. Those sections of the working class that had been the most backward before 1971 went into action to catch up with the gains that had been won by the workers in the big private enterprises. Thus, in these unofficial strikes demands for job security and the right to choose your trade union were put ahead of demands for higher wages.

On June 16, 1975, TURK-Is organized a small general strike in Izmir, in which 60,000 workers participated. This development indicated the extent to which the ten-year-long struggle of the working class had succeeded in turning the gangster unionists toward classical trade unionism.

The mid-1970s brought a further acceleration in the growth of the left currents and parties. The sort of revolutionary mobilizations that had developed in the period leading up to March 1971 in cultural, economic, and political centers like Istanbul and Ankara, spread to the small industrial and regional centers, in a sense to the countryside and the provinces.

But this extension of the movement had a drawback. It meant a lowering of the political level. On the national scale, it was the most backward, the most ideologically confused groups, those that reduced all questions to a few slogans and formulas, that showed the most extensive organizational growth. This backwardness of the revolutionary movement was a major reason why when at the end of the 1970s the working class was emerging from its illusions in the CHP, instead of turning in a positive direction it fell back into demoralization.

One of the most active years in the 1970s was 1976. In that year about 500,000 persons participated in the May Day commemoration and more than 200,000 in official and unofficial strikes. More than 100,000 participated in a general strike against the establishment of the State Security Courts.

In this period, the great majority of the strikes were victorious, raising the morale of the workers movement. Once again, in 1976, the number of workers involved in official strikes was a small proportion of those engaged in all forms of collective action.

In the following year, 1977, however, the proportion of official strikes increased relative to unofficial ones. In all, some 93,000 workers engaged in strikes that year. However, the death of 37 people as the result of the provocation staged at the May 1, 1977, demonstration in Istanbul was a severe shock.

At the time, also, Turkey was in the midst of a turbulent election campaign. In the big industrial cities, the CHP rallies in fact were workers rallies. The working class saw putting in a CHP government as the culmination of the preceding ten years of struggle.

THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT GOES INTO DECLINE

The installation of a CHP government in January 1978 marked the beginning of a certain ebb in the working-class upsurge that had been going on since 1974. By comparison with the previous year, the number of official and unofficial strikes dropped. The primary reason for this was that people thought that anything that they might win in a struggle would be given anyway by the CHP government.

In its short time in government, the CHP managed to disillusion the workers. And this was an important factor in the slowdown and decline of the workers movement. About a hundred thousand workers did participate in a two-hour protest strike called by DISK against the killing of seven students. But aside from this, the number of workers participating in official strikes was only about 10,000.

In these years, among the workers affiliated to DISK, distrust of the union bureaucracy increased considerably. This core of the working-class movement, which had gone through ten years of experience in hard-fought strikes was starting to turn against the bureaucracy. Among the relatively backward sections of workers, disinterest in trade-union activities and a feeling of alienation from the trade unions grew.

However, the potential for the development of a revolutionary opposition in the unions was diverted. As a result no serious challenge to the union bureaucracy emerged.

It became clear that in trade-union assemblies and actions and even official strikes, the workers were less active, less militant, less enthusiastic. The militant workers were unable to lead the struggle in the full sense, that is, give direction, but they did not abandon it either. Thus, they left the leadership to a large extent to the trade-union bureaucracy.

The most eloquent indicator of this evolution was stagnation followed by decline in the membership of DISK. In fact, in the engineering industry itself, breakaways from DISK occurred.

These breakaways did not result in a corresponding increase in the membership of the other confederations. In any case, an internal struggle was accelerating in many unions affiliated to TURK-Is.

Thus, independent unions limited to one workplace became an alternative, though hardly a new one. However, I would stress again that since this period lasted only a short time it did not open up the way for any new situation or change in the relationship of forces. It was significant in that it represented a shift away from the tendency that ap-

peared among the workers in the late 1960s to look beyond the individual workplace and trade to a movement of the working class as a whole. In some places, they turned away from the trade-union organization of whole sections of the working class, becoming trapped in the four walls of the factory, in a narrow one-factory outlook.

This general evolution was an important factor in the dispersion and demoralization of the revolutionary forces on the eve of the September 12 coup.

Most importantly, the workers saw that after a certain point in economic struggles the bureaucrats always retreated. Especially after 1974, with the end of the semimilitary dictatorship, the bureaucracy found itself in a good position to stabilize itself.

Since this stabilization of the bureaucracy coincided with a sharpening of the class struggle, the reactionary character of the bureaucracy could not fail to make itself felt, no matter what kind of revolutionary or Communist trappings the bureaucracy assumed or what radical sounding names it called itself.

The workers saw that these trade-union bureaucrats and the left politicians they controlled could not tolerate democracy. They saw them irresponsibly dividing workers. These bureaucrats tried to keep workers with dissident views out of trade-union activities (sometimes using the ubiquitous label of "Maoist-Ultraleftists"). Sometimes they worked together with the bosses to get such workers out of the workplace. They kept them out of the leadership of DISK.

Moreover, as the economic crisis deepened, and the workers faced increasing economic difficulties, the luxury and waste indulged in by the union bureaucrats became more glaring.

This material luxury, on the other hand, to a high degree went hand in hand with an elevated social status. The trade-union leaders in the left political currents enjoyed considerable credibility, even though they were not entitled to their privileges according to the union rules.

Even in conditions of a very sharp class struggle, a very advanced class consciousness, serious organizational monitoring, and democratic rules are necessary to prevent workers leaders from acquiring such a material and social position. But the DISK bureaucracy, on the contrary, armed themselves with a highly undemocratic body of statutes. All the trade-union officials were united in support of this framework, whether they were Communists, Social Democrats, liberals, or just gangsters.

In fact, even currents that proclaimed their hostility to the trade-union bureaucracy did not fail to use these statutes in order to increase their influence in certain areas in the trade-union movement.

In the area of democracy, the trade-union bureaucracy was in tune with the traditional antidemocratic attitudes of the Turkish revolutionary movement and was able easily to sidestep any attacks on

its own practices. Moreover, on this ground, as on many others, the bureaucracy never failed to demonstrate tactical flexibility.

On the other hand, the illusions that had been sown by the CHP trade unionists and their allies about the CHP rebounded against the bureaucracy, becoming an important factor in the rising hostility and distrust toward the union leaders.

As soon as the CHP government started carrying out an economic policy that was not out of line with the directives of the IMF, freezing wages, and taking a neutral position toward the fascist attacks, the workers rapidly lost their illusions. Naturally, this rude awakening had an effect on the way the workers saw the trade-union bureaucracy.

However, the average workers, who despised the bureaucracy, still thought that the workers could not do without it. The currents not directly tied to the bureaucracy were new and lacking in tradition. They could not inspire confidence among the workers. In particular, the great majority of the basic cadres of these currents were outside the working class. Their feeling of identification with the workers had a very weak material base. Since there was no revolutionary outlet for the reaction of the workers against the bureaucracy, the way was opened for demoralization.

All these developments in DISK were to find an echo in the working class as a whole.

ON THE EVE OF THE COUP

In the last months of 1979, the CHP government was nearing its end. The reaction of the working masses against the CHP government's actions over the preceding twenty months was reflected in a series of local elections and senate by-elections. The support of the working people for the CHP declined considerably.

For example, in the 1977 elections in Istanbul the CHP got 981,000 votes, but this time it got 493,000. Moreover, in Istanbul the combined vote for the left parties was a derisory 56,000. What is more, in the last elections the highest percentage of participation was 55%.

In these months, despite the state of siege proclaimed in December 1978 in a large number of provinces, unofficial strikes continued. The number of workers who participated in official strikes in 1979 was 40,000.

In Istanbul, ten thousand workers in the state tobacco factories and breweries, the decisive part of the state sector, went on an official strike demanding "safe-guarding of life against fascist attacks." In Izmir, nearly 5,000 workers occupied the Taris textile factory. Once again the reason for this action was that the factory management had tried to bring fascists onto the premises. And the fight against this had gone on since 1975. These struggles indicated a new upturn, but it did not last long.

After the street demonstrations that occurred in some parts of the city in support of the Izmir Taris occupation were mercilessly suppressed, the movement came to an end.

An openly rightist bourgeois government was formed in December 1979, under the premiership of Suleyman Demirel. In January 1980, it announced new economic measures, which were in fact to be applied fully later by the junta that came to power on September 12 of that year.

These measures constituted a violent economic attack on the working class and all the toiling masses. It did not take months or even weeks before the effects were felt by the workers in their daily lives.

Inflation reached its highest level in recent years. Even the official government statistics showed that the workers' real wages fell considerably. On the other hand, according to the 1978 statistics, 581,000 workers were getting the minimum wage. This represented 27% of insured workers. And the minimum wage was the maximum wage for the millions of uninsured workers.

In these conditions a powerful wave of official strikes developed. Unofficial strikes were considerably less numerous than in previous years. This reflected the retreat in the workers movement. But despite all its dispersion and demoralization, as a last resort, the working class clung to the weapon of the legal strike.

In the eight months before the September 12 coup, strikes involving 122,000 workers were declared, but then the government and martial law authorities imposed a postponement. Of the 78 strikes postponed, 28 were frozen for the first time. These were especially in the petrochemical and engineering industry.

Of the strikes postponed, 35 were declared by unions affiliated to TURK-Is, and 42 by unions affiliated to DISK.

As September 12 neared, 54,200 workers were on strike. Some 48,491 of them were affiliated to DISK. The great majority of the strikers were engineering, foundry, and textile workers. But these strikes were extremely weak from the standpoint of organization and morale.

Both the bosses and the bureaucrats, who kept saying that the union coffers were empty, could just wait for the workers' patience to be worn out and for the moment when they were ready to accept a bad contract.

In these months, unions involving nearly a million workers were in contract negotiations. Finding these talks a blind alley, hundreds of thousands of workers affiliated to TURK-Is—in particular, auto workers, railroad workers, and textile workers—seemed on the verge of striking. It was in this situation that the military resorted to a coup.

How effective have they been in breaking the workers movement, one of the most powerful and experienced in the underdeveloped world? That will be the subject of a subsequent article. ■

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