# INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

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## EUROPEAN WORKERS AND YOUTH SAY

## "JOBS NOT BOMBS!"

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.

# Demonstrations against Reagan the warmonger

## Appeal by the Bureau of the IVth International

At the beginning of June, Ronald Reagan will visit several European capitals. While in France, he will participate in a summit meeting of the rich industrial countries at Versailles. He will attend the summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) at Bonn in West Germany.

These two meetings alone sum up a whole programme; the exploitation of the entire world by a handful of imperialist robbers, and the nuclear arms race directed against the freedom of the people of the world.

Ronald Reagan is the head of the most powerful imperialist country.

He stands for the siting of American nuclear missiles in Europe in the next few years.

He stands for a military budget of some 257 billion dollars this year, while 40 thousand children under five die of hunger every day throughout the world.

He stands for aggression against the liberation struggle of the peoples of Central America.

He stands for support to the bloody dictatorships in Guatemala and Salvador.

He stands for military pressure and harassment against the Nicaraguan revolution.

He stands for threats of bacteriological war against Cuba.

He stands for open support to British military aggression in the South Atlantic.

In October 1981, almost two million people demonstrated in West Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, France, in the Spanish state and in Portugal against the siting of American nuclear arms and against NATO bases.

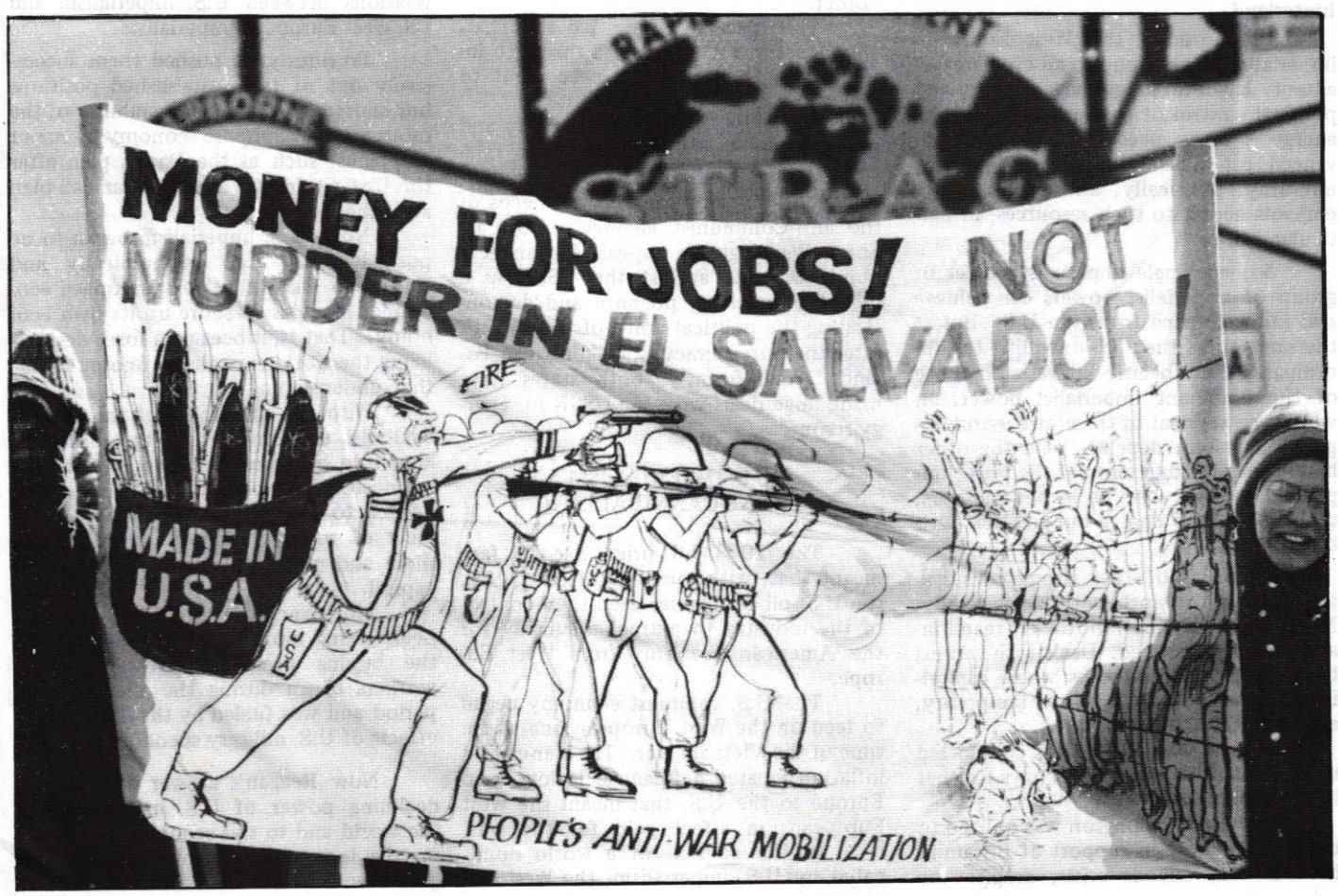
In June, the chief representative of imperialism must be greeted for what he is. Demonstrations are planned already for June 5 in Paris and in Rome, June 6 in London, and June 10 in Bonn. Another massive demonstration has been organised in the USA itself for June 12 in Washington. Hundreds of thousands of workers, young people, anti-imperialists will unite to flood the streets demanding:

-No to the nuclear missiles and NATO bases!
-Hands off the liberation struggle of the Central American peoples!
-Down with Reagan, the warmonger!

The sections of the Fourth International will increase their efforts to make the size of the demonstrations fit the importance of the event.

In demonstrating against Ronald Reagan, they will be demonstrating against their own bourgeoisies and political parties following the imperialist policy of rearmament and austerity.

*Bureau of the United Secretariat*
*of the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL*
*May 6, 1982*



# What is at stake in Reagan's trip to Europe

by Garret RUSH

The visit to the West European capitals in early June by U.S. president Ronald Reagan will be far more than a ceremonial tour. It will be a historic test of strength.

Reagan's problem is that he has to reorganize the imperialist alliance for a counteroffensive against the colonial revolution in the face of growing mass discontent in the imperialist countries themselves, including the U.S.

The Malvinas Islands crisis illustrates the difficulty of the problem. The only reliable allies that the U.S. has against the rise of revolutionary forces are the other imperialist countries. However, they were all decisively weakened by the outcome of the second world war.

The space no longer exists for the West European imperialist countries to fight a war against the workers states in Europe itself. They are too vulnerable, and the overturn of capitalism in Eastern Europe deprived them of their historic hinterland.

Furthermore, the West European imperialist powers, and to an even greater extent, Japan no longer have military and political control of the raw materials and energy sources needed to operate advanced capitalist economies. The U.S. militarily, politically, and economically controls access to such resources, in particular, oil.

So, no single imperialist power or group of imperialist powers can achieve real independence from the U.S. But at the same time, they are unwilling to subordinate their specific interests to those of the dominant imperialist power, on which the survival of the entire world imperialist system depends. On the other hand, however uncongenial the lesser imperialist powers may be as bed partners, the U.S. has no choice but to stick with them.

There is no other strong conservative force in the world with which to ally. Neocolonial regimes, however reactionary, are a slender reed. Deals with various bureaucracies in countries where capitalism has been abolished are temporary, and contradictory by nature.

That is why the U.S. is committed to Israel despite the price it pays for that in the Arab world.

It is why Washington was obliged to come out openly in support of Britain in the Malvinas Islands crisis, despite the tremendous price it will have to pay for this in terms of its own political needs and maneuvers in Latin America, a price that endangers its own vital interests.

Under the pressure of the world economic crisis, the smaller imperialist powers are increasingly inclined to make moves that go against U.S. interest, its interest both in the narrow sense and as the guarantor of the world imperialist system.

## THE INSTABILITY OF WORLD IMPERIALISM

It was because of the weakness of British capitalism, essentially, that the Thatcher government decided to launch a military adventure in the south Atlantic. The structural crisis of the British economy, the continued disastrous decline in the standard of living of the workers, and the growth of discontent have produced a situation in which the bourgeoisie needs a government that can look tough, that can seem ready and able to do what is necessary to restore social and economic "order."

This state of affairs led the Thatcher government to create a threat to international stability and peace and to drag Washington along behind it.

Moreover, both West Germany and France have developed economic relations with East Europe to an extent that conflicts with the political needs of the anti-Communist alliance. Both ignored Washington's appeals for an economic boycott against the USSR as a means of exerting pressure and demonstrating the political unity of the "West" after the bureaucracy's crackdown in Poland. Significantly, both states have made huge deals with the USSR for energy resources.

## U.S. IMPERIALISM TURNS CANNIBALISTIC

The 1973 oil price rise in fact meant that, with some help from OPEC, the U.S. oil companies used their control of the industry to extract a subsidy for the American economy from West Europe.

The U.S. capitalist economy began to feed on the West European one at the time of the Vietnam war. The war-caused inflation created a financial inflow from Europe to the U.S. that meant the West Europeans in effect paid for the war.

In the context of a world dominated by U.S. imperialism, the West European imperialisms have continued to gain economically relative to their big brother. In 1965, the U.S. economy was still nearly 25 percent larger than the economies of Japan and the four largest West European states combined. By 1979, the U.S. economy was nearly 35 percent smaller than its five largest rivals together.

In export markets, notably the Arab East, East Asia, and for the first time in Latin America, the U.S. faces serious export competition.

For the first time since World War I, the U.S. has begun to experience competition in its own markets. The weight of imported manufactured goods in the U.S. rose from 1.9 percent of the market in 1960 to 6.6 percent in 1979. In certain key sectors, foreign penetration was much greater. By the middle of 1980, Japanese automobiles accounted for 22% of sales in the U.S., and imported machine tools had captured 25% of the market.

Nonetheless, the Vietnam war period marked a historic turning point in the relations between U.S. imperialism and the West European imperialists.

Previously, it pushed them successively out of their established positions but shored up the general stability of the international capitalist economy by major aid plans, such as the Dawes plan after the first world war and the Marshall plan after the second.

Now, U.S. imperialism began to be pushed back itself economically and started to bleed the West European economies in order to shore up its own economy. That is, it became a force destabilizing the world capitalist economy rather than underpinning it.

With the deepening of the general capitalist economic crisis, this destabilizing role becomes more and more pronounced. The high U.S. interest rates, needed to counteract the inflationary effects of massive military spending, are more and more draining West Europe of capital.

Moreover, the inflation that has been eating more and more deeply into the buying power of West European workers began during the Vietnam war period and was fueled by the inflationary effects of U.S. military spending.

Now Reagan's answer both to the declining power of U.S. imperialism in the world and to the economic crisis is a massive increase in military spending that goes even beyond Vietnam war levels. It

means increasing inflation and increasing austerity for the West European working people, as well as the American.

Another effect of Reagan's imperial counteroffensive is the attempt to increase nuclear blackmail of the Soviet Union in the only area where it is possible for him to do this—in Western Europe.

The stationing of new U.S. intermediate range nuclear missiles in West Europe and the public discussion by U.S. and NATO experts of the possibilities for "limited nuclear wars" in Europe were designed to frighten the Soviet Union and keep the Kremlin from any temptation to aggravate the increasing problems of imperialism in the neocolonial world. The effect was to terrify the population of Western Europe.

In fact, regardless of the ultimate intentions of the U.S. decision-makers, the stationing of more intermediate-range nuclear missiles in West Europe objectively increased the danger of a nuclear war involving Europe.

So, Reagan's counteroffensive has already resulted in posing a threat of total destruction of West European society, which is what any kind of nuclear war would mean in such a densely populated, confined space.

## WAR AGAINST THE PEOPLES OF CENTRAL AMERICA

The threat of U.S. intervention against the peoples of Central America is the most obvious and immediate war danger represented by Reagan's attempt to mount an imperialist counteroffensive against the colonial revolution. This is the biggest threat to world peace and humanity at the moment. The U.S. is already supporting and becoming more and more directly involved in a war against a whole people in El Salvador and in Guatemala. And it is preparing war against Nicaragua.

The U.S. intervention in Central America is the most acute expression of the war threat created by Reagan's imperialist counteroffensive against the peoples of the neocolonial countries. But this threat is very much broader, and can break out in unexpected ways, as the Malvinas Islands crisis illustrates.

What Reagan's imperialist counteroffensive represents is the inability of the imperialist system in general, including the U.S., to offer any improvements for the neocolonial peoples. This also represents a historic turn.

In response to the Cuban revolution, the U.S. tried to build up stronger national ruling classes more closely tied to imperialism. The result was initiatives such as the formation of the Central American Common Market and the Brazilian, Chilean, and Argentinian dictatorships.

With the help of foreign loans that totalled 110 billion dollars by the end of 1981, significant industrialization was achieved in certain of these countries, oriented toward goods for richer sections of the population and increasingly toward exports.

By the beginning of the 1980s, however, the economic needs of U.S. imperialism were striking not only the weaker semicolonial economies but also some of the United States' most important allies in the semicolonial world.

In particular, the industrialization programs of the dictatorships funded by international imperialist loans had been based on the perspective of an expansion of world capitalist trade in which they would export.

## NOTHING BUT THE STICK FOR THE NEOCOLONIAL WORLD

Today, however, world trade is stagnant. There was zero growth in 1980, and probably a small decline in 1981. The gigantic economic problems this reflects and also creates are intensified by the extreme deflationary policies forced on the U.S. ruling class in its attempt to carry out its current military and economic policies. The result is that, since even the most industrialized neocolonial states are unable to compete with the imperialist centers in the current world situation, the growth of Latin America has come to a halt

Indeed, on the average, the Latin American economies shrank by 2% in 1981, with the fall in manufacturing in the major states being much greater. The hardest hit country in Latin America was Argentina.

Ironically, the two countries in both the imperialist and neocolonial world that have been hardest hit by the economic crisis that reflects the weakening of U.S. imperialism and centers around it have been driven into a sharp and unexpected collision in the south Atlantic.

The fact is that the weakness of U.S. imperialism, which Reagan's aggressive policy reflects, means weak regimes in the neocolonial world that have to rule more and more by means of terror, massive repression, and more and more unbridled demagogy.

Thus, the Argentine regime, finding itself rapidly losing its grip on the country, tried a demagogic nationalist stunt. It landed troops on the Malvinas to eliminate a vestige of British colonialism and a long-standing affront to the Argentine people. But this question was neither at the center of attention of the Argentine masses, nor was there any fundamental conflict between the Argentine and British governments. In fact, both had far more to lose than to gain from a head-on conflict.

But the move that the generals in Buenos Aires resorted to out of weakness made contact with the weakness of the British capitalist regime. And so it touched off a major crisis, which has further undermined the imperialist system in general and U.S. imperialism in Latin America in particular.

It is also ironic that such a demonstration of the political weakness of the world imperialist system preceded by only a few weeks Reagan's planned series of visits with his West European partners in crime. It highlights problems they will find it difficult to solve. There is no honor among thieves, or at least not much, especially when they find themselves in a tight corner.

Much more serious conflicts among imperialists could arise, for example, in the Pacific, where the economic structures built up in the 1950s and 1960s in response to the Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions are larger and have weaker foundations. The Japanese economy, for example, represents a tremendously explosive contradiction in today's world. The world's second biggest industrial producer has neither raw materials nor a strong home market of its own. And world trade is contracting. Furthermore, in a series of strategic East Asian countries—South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore—substantial manufacturing industries were built up in the past period, based on the expansion of the world capitalist economy and the strength of U.S. imperialism in the 1960s.

## THE CAPITALIST CRISIS UNDERMINES DETENTE

The bases of detente, one of the key strategies to which the U.S. imperialists turned after their defeat in Vietnam in order to try to restabilize their world system, has also been undermined by the capitalist world economic crisis and the weakening of U.S. imperialism. Of course, all sorts of pressures created by the capitalist economic decline have this effect in general, such as the development of sharper contradictions and social struggles in the neocolonial world.

But detente has been undermined in a much more immediate and direct say by the contraction of trade.

The perspective of detente involved the importation of Western technology into the workers states so that they could develop a modern industry oriented to the world market. This brought economic advantages for capitalists, in some cases, mainly access to East European and Soviet raw materials for the West European imperialist countries. But for the world imperialist system in general, the advantage was essentially political. It was a way of shoring up stability in the world. For the bureaucracies of the workers states, an important advantage was that they could offer the masses a perspective of increasing prosperity through a peaceful economic process that did not challenge bureaucratic control of the economy or the society.

In Poland, where the ruling bureaucracy faced the most militant and politically experienced working class in Eastern Europe, it put a decisive bet on the perspective for economic development offered by detente. It lost. The contraction of world trade meant that there was no market for the goods produced by the sector built up on the basis of Western technology. But to keep this sector

going, more and more imports were needed that had to be paid for by borrowing.

Every working class explosion produced a desperate new round of borrowing, plunging the economy into deeper and deeper crisis and then, more and more exasperating the masses. Finally, an uncontrollable working-class upsurge developed that upset the perspectives of both the bureaucrats and the capitalists.

It is another irony of history that Reagan's trip to the West European capitals coincides with the revival of the mass movement in Poland and the signs of the rise of a new and uncontainable anti-bureaucratic upsurge.

The bureaucratic crackdown in December was useful to Reagan as an example of totalitarian oppression that could be exploited to whip up anti-Communism and justify his belligerent stance toward the workers states and the spread of the colonial revolution.

A live and fighting workers movement for democracy in Poland and the other workers states is quite another matter. It no less seriously endangers the imperialist world order than the threats in other areas.

At a time when Reagan is coming to West Europe to reconsolidate the imperialist bloc to carry out a worldwide policy of repression and austerity, the resurgence of the Polish workers movement is a powerful reminder to the West European masses—who are hard hit by austerity and fearful of war—that they do not have to choose between Reagan and Brezhnev.

### THE HISTORIC STAKES OF THE REAGAN TRIP

Like the Polish workers, the masses of youth and working people in Western Europe can make history themselves, make the kind of world they want. Reagan's trip gives them the opportunity to show their opposition to the war drive and austerity that the survival of the imperialist system demands today. It will give them the chance to combine their voices with those of the struggling, suffering people of Central America, with the rising peace movement in East Germany, and with the undaunted Polish workers for a world without repression, war, and the threat of war—a world in which the peoples can look forward to prosperity and not grimmer and grimmer austerity. That can be the positive historic effect of Reagan's trip.

**The demonstrations against Reagan—the embodiment of a future of deprivation, war, and repression— can provide the focus for the first time of the forces that offer a solution to the problems that Reagan represents. It is up to all those who want to build a better future for humanity to make sure that this opportunity is not missed.** ■

# A million Hiroshimas

by Christian PICQUET

*This article was originally published in* Rouge, *weekly newspaper of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by* IV.

Two dates will dominate the upcoming tour of Europe by Ronald Reagan: the summit of the seven principal capitalist countries at Versailles, and the NATO summit on June 10 in Bonn. This last is itself a symbol of the insane arms race which the US is leading.

It is in fact at the Bonn meeting that the green light will be given for the installation of new American nuclear weapons in Europe.

- *572 Pershing and Cruise missiles.* Between 1983 and 1990, 108 Pershing-2s will be installed in West Germany. With a range of 1800 kilometres and an accuracy within 50 metres, they could reach the nearest Soviet silos in seven minutes. During the same period it is planned to install 464 Cruise missiles in West Germany, Britain, Italy, and The Netherlands. These are capable of evading radar detection and reaching their objective at 2,500 kilometres distance with almost complete accuracy.

But this is only one aspect of a global programme of rearmament that the principal imperialist fortress has undertaken.

- *1,200 N bombs.* Last August, Reagan announced his decision to start production of the 'neutron' bomb. This is a comparatively clean weapon in the nuclear arsenal, as it destroys all human life in a relatively contained area but causes no important damage to property or buildings. But by the same token, because it makes it possible to control to some extent the use of nuclear weapons, it considerably lowers the threshhold for unleashing a nuclear conflict.

- *The MX and B1 programmes.* The strategic intercontinental force bases in the USA are going to be equipped with 100 MX missiles. These are four-stage rockets with ten nuclear warheads which can be aimed at different targets. The MX programme will be accompanied by the application of the B1 programme. This proposes the construction of 100 nuclear bombers. These will have every latest American technological advance, particularly the 'Stealth' system which will allow the bombers to escape radar detection.

- *Trident submarines and missiles.* The United States navy will receive seven new Trident nuclear submarines, the biggest in the world. They will be equipped with a new strategic missile, Trident 2.

- *Gas warfare.* To complete its range of weapons, the White House has decided to develop studies of lethal gases and chemical warfare. Four billion dollars will be set aside for this purpose.

- *Modernisation of conventional forces.* As an aside, the Pentagon has ordered an enormous quantity of modern materials from the armament industry. The army, for example, will get 720 MX1 tanks, and the number of naval vessels will rise from 460 to 600.

- *Soaring expenditures.* In order to carry out this warlike policy, the military budget of the US has continued to grow. In absolute numbers of dollars, military spending doubled between 1977 and 1982.

Reagan intends to push this still further. *For the six years 1981-1986, the money allocated to the war effort will reach about 1,500 billion dollars.* That equals, in absolute numbers of dollars, the spending of the preceding 17 years, which includes the period of the Vietnam war.

Thus, the USA is in the process of spending more on military weapons than was spent during the Vietnam war. During this war, they spent—in figures adjusted for inflation—84.7% more than in World War I, and 56.8% more than during World War II.

To bring capitalism out of crisis and restore its position in the world, American imperialism wishes to raise its military potential to an unprecedented level. This is a grave threat to the people of the world. The Euromissiles, the N bombs, and the giant MX rockets by themselves represent more than a million times the force that devastated Hiroshima. ■

| *In billions of dollars* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *Total 1981-1986* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Expenditure authorised | 178 | 222 | 254.8 | 189.2 | 326.5 | 367.5 | 1638 |
| Actual expenditure | 158 | 184 | 221.1 | 249.8 | 297.3 | 336 | 1446.8 |
| *Increase in real terms (taking account of inflation)* | | | | | | | *Real growth annual average* |
| Increase in expenditure authorised (in percent) | 12.4 | 14.6 | 7.3 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 9.2 |
| Increase in actual expenditure (each year) | 7 | 6.2 | 11.3 | 6.1 | 12.15 | 7.4 | 8.4 |

# Growing opposition to war in Britain

by Penny DUGGAN

War hysteria in Britain reached a highpoint when the *Sun* newspaper—popular pro-Tory daily—accused the BBC, Independent Television News, and the *Daily Mirror* and *Guardian* newspapers of treason, for their allegedly 'pro-Argentine bias'. The *Daily Mirror* riposted by describing the *Sun* as being 'to journalism what Dr. Joseph Goebbels was to the truth....it has fallen from the gutter to the sewer.'

However, Henry Kissinger, interviewed on British radio, commented: 'If the US government had had the backing in Vietnam which the British government has over the Falklands, I would be the happiest man alive.'

The effects of the barrage of pro-Tory war propaganda were shown in the results of the local elections in Britain on May 7. These elections were held midway through the term of the most reactionary government Britain has had for years. The Thatcher government is responsible for unemployment standing at over four million, slashing cuts in living standards, and attacks on the organisational strength of the trade unions. Yet the Conservative Party held on to, and slightly increased, their strength in the local councils won four years ago under a Labour government. All political commentators attribute this success to the 'Falkland effect'.

Just before the crisis over the Malvinas—or the Falklands as they are known in Britain—broke out, the Tories commanded 35% of popular support in the opinion polls. Now their support has jumped 11 points to 46%.

The Labour Party leadership has failed to provide any alternative to the jingoistic warmongering of the Tories. Indeed, in the early days of the crisis, Labour outdid the Tories in national chauvinism. Even now, when Foot declares his 'refusal to give the government a blank cheque' he has in fact supported every military action.

However, despite this barrage of propaganda from all sides, there are increasing signs that support for Thatcher's war is only skin-deep.

While some 70% of British people polled for the television programme *Weekend World* on May 9 support the retaking of the Malvinas, only 55% would do so if it involved further British deaths. These figures represent a decline in the numbers prepared to go the whole way necessary to retake the Islands. It is now obviously impossible for Britain to win back the islands without loss of life. The loss of *HMS Sheffield* has begun to make an impact on British public opinion.

Since the beginning of the crisis, Tony Benn, the best known leader of Labour's left wing, has opposed the sending of the fleet and called for its return. He is supported by twenty other MPs, including Judith Hart, present chairperson of the Labour Party. While few of these MPs repudiate the British claim to sovereignty, their stand has aided mobilisations against the war.

*Arthur Scargill, recently elected president of the National Union of Mineworkers, made the following statement:*

**Britain has no right to start talking about sovereignty over islands 8,000 miles away. We are being used as cannon fodder in an international conflict that can only be resolved by diplomacy and negotiation.**

**There should have been no task force sent and it should be recalled. The matter should be resolved through the UN. We should take account of what the Falkland Islanders want and recognise dangers that will arise if we continue with this madness.**

**The Tories are generating jingoistic fervour on an unprecedented scale, aided and abetted by the capitalist press—who are besides themselves in attacking Argentina—and this sickens me.**

**Tragically, it may only come home to people when thousands of young men are killed. We have seen the price of British imperialism over the years. I thought we had learned the lesson in the labour and trade-union movement.**

**I want to see every trade union leader come out and condemn this Tory madness which could lead us into a nuclear holocaust.**

*This resolution was put to the meeting of the Labour Party National Executive Committee on Wednesday, April 29.*

**That this NEC, which has consistently, over many years, attacked and deplored the appalling denial of human rights by the fascist junta in Argentina, and the sale of arms to Argentina; while condemning the occupation of the Falkland Islands in clear breach of international law, believes that there should be an immediate halt to all British military action in the region of the Falkland Islands.**

**It particularly draws attention to those aspects of mandatory Resolution 502 which the Prime Minister ignores, namely, the preamble calling on the government of Argentina and the UK to refrain from the use of threats of force, and points 1 and 3, which demand: an immediate cessation of hostilities and that both governments seek a diplomatic solution.**

**It also believes:**

**1). That the proper response for Britain to adopt is to support all UN initiatives, including direct negotiations to secure a settlement which will safeguard the legitimate interests of the Falkland Islanders.**

**2). That the Falkland Islanders wishing to leave should be helped to resettle elsewhere with generous compensation.**

**3). That the question of sovereignty must be negotiable.**

**The NEC also wishes to make it clear that the Labour Party will not support the government in a war with the Argentine which could spread; would put innocent lives at risk; and isolate Britain in the eyes of the world. It therefore calls upon the government to suspend hostilities forthwith, by accepting a ceasefire and withdrawing the Task Force to South Georgia; and intends to launch a national campaign to win public support for this statement.**

**Tony Benn**
**Judith Hart**

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), which last autumn mobilised 250 thousand against Cruise missiles, has formed an Ad Hoc Committee to oppose the war. This committee, supported by left Labour MPs, has been holding weekly demonstrations, the last of which, on May 9, attracted over three thousand people. It has planned a major national demonstration for May 23.

In all the major local cities in Britain, demonstrations, meetings, and other activities have been organised in opposition to the war. The issue has become a focus in the actions already planned by the local CND groups and 'Reagan Reception Committees' in opposition to the visit of that other chief imperialist warmonger, Ronald Reagan.

Supporters organised around *Socialist Challenge*, (the newspaper sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International) have been in the forefront in organising and building these activities. The main thrust of the mobilisations has been to stop the war. *Socialist Challenge* has supported them on this basis although there has not always been clear support

for the Argentine claim to the Malvinas. For example, the CND Ad Hoc Committe calls for a settlement in the framework of the UN Security Council Resolution 502 which supports Britain's claim.

However, opposition to war hysteria is still in its early stages. And the reaction of the Labour leadership has created confusion inside the working class. This confusion centres on what attitude to take toward the Argentinian regime. But while British workers are revolted by these butchers, they do not want to find themselves allied with Thatcher and the Tory government who have never done anything for them. The beginnings of broad opposition within the labour movement thus allow real opportunities for winning further opposition to the war.

Local Labour Party and trade union bodies are beginning to pass more and more resolutions opposing Thatcher's war. Liverpool Trades Council was right on the ball on April 15 with the following resolution:

*We therefore demand of the TUC and Labour Party leaders that they stand by the principles of socialist internationalism with the policies*

*-Down with the war,*

*-Mobilise the working class to bring down the Tory government.*

*We recognise the sovereignty of Argentina over the Falklands and call for the withdrawal of the fleet!*

Most resolutions have been along the lines of that from Sheffield Trades council which demanded:

'Stop all preparation for war and withdraw the fleet.

'Seek a peaceful settlement through the UN in the framework of Security Council Resolution 502.

'Guarantee the safety of the settlers with compensation and the right of return to Britain.'

Already, an active minority of trade union and Labour Party militants are prepared to oppose the war. But the Foot leadership of the Labour Party have yet again squandered any claim to speak on behalf of working people. The growing movement in opposition to the war has to take on the task of challenging this leadership.

A victory for Thatcher over the Malvinas will immeasurably strengthen the position of the Tory government at home and increase its confidence to continue with attacks on British workers.

The initiative of Labour MP Ron Brown and *Socialist Challenge* in appealing for the British Trades Union Congress and the Argentine trade union federation to meet to discuss the question illustrates what is needed. In the early days of the conflict, a delegation from the Argentine CGT touring Europe asked to meet with the TUC to work out a way for the international labour movement 'to achieve a peaceful settlement'. The British TUC deny having received this request. However, the recent appeal has begun to receive some publicity. The Labour Party leadership, which claims to be concerned about the fate of Argentinian workers under the fascist junta, should also involve itself in this attempt to work out a socialist internationalist policy to resolve the crisis. ■

# Against Reagan & US intervention in Central America

The months of May and June are a period of intense international activity in defence of the Central American revolution and against the siting of American nuclear weapons in Europe.

During May, the 'European caravan against imperialist intervention in Central America' is touring Europe. It started in Britain at the end of April and is going through Sweden, Norway, and Denmark to West Germany. From there it is making a southern circuit through France, the Spanish state, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland to end at Strasbourg on June 2.

The caravan was organised by the revolutionary organisations of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. At each stop, solidarity meetings will be organised with Alejandro Perez of the FSLN in Nicaragua, Baltazar Lopez of the Salavadoran FMLN, and a representative of the National Revolutionary Union of Guatemala.

One objective of the caravan will be to get a massive number of signatures to a petition that is to be presented to the European Parliament at Strasbourg on June 5. This petition calls on the European Parliament to oppose the threats and active intervention of the USA against the Central American revolutions. In addition, it calls on the Parliament to recognise the FDR and FMLN in El Salvador as the representatives of the Salvadoran people and to condemn the dictatorships in Honduras and Guatemala.

As the caravan ends, a new wave of activity will start. Demonstrations have been planned in a number of European cities to oppose the visit by Ronald Reagan in early June.

-In France, the Socialist Party and Communist Party, who form the government which is inviting Reagan to Paris, are doing the best they can to avoid any mobilisations against his visit. Nevertheless, around fifty organisations have already put out a call for a demonstration in Paris on June 5. They include left groups, Latin American solidarity groups, the nuclear disarmament campaign, and immigrant and anti-racist groups. A number of well-known personalities have called for support for this initiative.

-In Britain, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), which last October organised a demonstration of 250,000 against Cruise missiles, has called a demonstration for June 6 in London.

In addition, 'Reagan Reception Committees' have sprung up to organise local meetings and activities. The national Reagan Reception Committee is organising a picket of the US Embassy on Monday June 7 and a lobby of Parliament when Reagan will be addressing them on Tuesday, June 8. At the same time, the Chile Solidarity Campaign is organising a Festival for Peace and Freedom across Parliament Square in Central Hall.

-In Italy, the Peace Committee, which organised the major demonstration last October, has called for a demonstration in Rome on June 5. This committee is supported by all the left organisations, including the Communist Party. The Socialist Party, which is in the government, has not officially backed it.

-In West Germany, the 800 organisations which drew 300,000 people to demonstrate against nuclear missiles in October 1981, have called for a demonstration in Bonn on June 10. On that day, in the same city, Reagan will be attending the NATO summit. Unfortunately, the organisations are divided with a minority who wish to include the demand for multi-lateral disarmament and a nuclear-free Europe. Nevertheless, up to a half-million people are expected to attend.

-And in the United States itself, there is a massive demonstration planned for June 12 in Washington.

The huge mobilisations that are expected will provide an excellent opportunity to build international solidarity with workers in struggle throughout the world, from Poland to El Salvador.

Reagan stands for every dirty trick in the imperialist and capitalist book. His visit to his cronies in Europe should be a signal for massive opposition. ■

# The Resurgence of the Mass Movement in Poland

by Gerry FOLEY

Over Warsaw's clandestine Radio Solidarity, Zbigniew Romaszewski, a member of the regional leadership of Solidarity and organizer of the station, spoke:

"We are broadcasting today on the eve of the working-class holiday, May 1. When we were looking for a theme song for our radio station, we realized that there was no tune loved by every Pole that had not been used by official propaganda. The society has been deprived of all its important symbols. They have all been taken by the regime. This is also true of May Day. We have decided to take back these symbols.

"Today is also the 31st anniversary of the death of one of the main leaders of the Polish Socialist Party, Kazimiez Puzak, who was tried in the Moscow trials and whose health was broken in the Stalinist prison at Rawicz, where he died.

"Every year, comrades faithful to Polish socialism put flowers on his grave and sing the old workers' song, *The Red Flag*. Let this tune be the theme song of our broadcast this May Day. Let it be a warning to all those who want to force the workers to their knees and terrorize the society. On their red flag, the one they will carry in their march tomorrow, is the blood of the workers of Poznan, of the Baltic Coast, the blood of those who have fallen in the war they declared on their own people."

* * *

The mass demonstrations in Poland on May 1, 3, 9, and 13 mark the start of a decisive test of strength between the underground movement for workers democracy and the bureaucracy.

Tens of thousands of people came out onto the streets in cities across the country in defiance of martial law and a regime that has shown its determination again and again to strike out violently against any attempt by the population to organize or protest.

The people are no longer afraid. That was the feature of the demonstrations that struck observers. For a regime that staked everything on an attempt to terrify and humiliate the population, the implications of such defiance are dramatic.

In the wake of the December 13 military crackdown, the workers at the giant Nowa Huta steel works in Cracow issued a statement that said:

"The battle is one of fear. Hiding behind their masks, their clubs, their riot shields (literally, the glass panes used on reptile cages), they are afraid of us! There are not many of them. Pistols, tanks, clubs are no good against a unified people. They are counting on fear....If we want to remain free, we must...conquer fear. Even if they go to the last extreme, our quiet courage will bring victory, today and foreover. We are not fighting for big words, we are fighting to remain human beings."

What the early May demonstrations indicated precisely was that the battle of fear has been won by the Polish workers. *Le Monde* of May 5 published the following eyewitness account of the way the May Day demonstration developed in Warsaw:

"At about 4:00 in the afternoon, on May 1, the crowd started to assemble on Castle Square, which soon filled with demonstrators who unfurled banners. Among the slogans was 'Give us back Lech!' There were also red and white Polish flags. The police surrounded the square, barring the adjacent streets. Soon another demonstration formed behind the police lines, the demonstration of onlookers who started shouting: 'Gestapo, Gestapo,' 'Down with the junta!'....

"From the top of armoured cars equipped with water cannon, the police called on the groups to disperse. As if with a single voice, the two crowds answered with shouts of 'Gestapo!' The police lowered the visors on their helmuts. They picked up clubs and a supply of tear gas grenades.

"At 4:22, the tanks began advancing toward the demonstrators. The crowd massed in Krakowskie Przedmiescie street. It answered the police again with shouts of 'Gestapo!' and whistling. Two lines of police now separate the two groups of demonstrators. One of the tanks points its water cannon at the crowd of onlookers.

"Ten minutes later, the order to go into action is given to the police. Tear gas grenades were fired at the onlookers, who retreat in disorder. The police attack the demonstrators with grenades and clubs and use their water cannon. Some of the demonstrators retreat toward the Old Market, others counterattack. At 6:00, two thousand people wearing Solidarity badges are still in the square. But the fighting is dying down. However, battles are still going on in other parts of the city."

*Le Monde* cited an AFP dispatch about the battle at the Old Market. "Several thousands of youth mounted an assault on the Old Market, where the ZOMO (the special police) were hiding behind their plastic shields from an avalanche of stones, bricks, and objects of all sorts. Armed with flag poles, the demonstrators charged the forces of order, who retreated under the pressure. The youth take the square. The flag of Solidarity flies over the Old Market square; thousands of hands raise in the victory sign."

Shortly after that, there was a huge traffic jam near the Old Market, with both automobile and bus drivers blowing their horns in a sign of sympathy for the demonstrators.

In Gdansk, where it was more difficult for foreign reporters to circulate, the correspondent for the Paris left daily *Liberation* watched the fighting from a distance. "When we left the cathedral, it took a half hour to reach the church of Saint Brigitta, the parish church of the shipyard area, also it is quite close. In every street, the same scenario was repeated. The police standing a ways off, and young demonstrators throwing paving stones at them. The most striking thing was the hatred and determination of the youths."

From the church, automatic weapons fire could be heard. One person came in and said that he had seen a group of young teenagers knock a policeman unconscious. A passerby protested: "No matter what he is, he's still human." The youth answered by kicking the cop in the face.

In Szczecin, a crowd reportedly burned down a ZOMO headquarters.

The regime arrested hundreds of people and made a major display of force in the attempt to head off the demonstrations planned to follow the May Day ones. Since those protests had a more passive character, it is harder to assess their effect from outside. But it is clear that the confrontation is continuing to develop.

Both the regime and the underground Solidarity leaders knew that a collision of this type was unavoidable. In a statement written in Bialoleka in February, Jacek Kuron, who was the main ideologist of the precrackdown Solidarity and an advocate of compromise with the government, wrote:


*May Day slogans in Poland "Democracy, Solidarnosc" (DR)*

"No appeal will prevent the youth who want to fight from doing that. If it is effective enough to deny them other means of fighting, it will throw them into the impasse of terrorism. No appeal can defuse the explosive combination of dispair and hatred that exists.

"Our poverty is a result of the state of war, as well as the terror. To the violence and poverty inflicted on it, a healthy society will respond by fighting. Today there is only one front. We are in Poland. In this country, as history teaches us, oppressors can establish calm only by blood and ruin lasting for a generation."

Wladyslaw Hardek, leader of the Warsaw region organization of Solidarity also favors a national accord with the government. But he explains that in order to be able to achieve such an agreement, Solidarity has to conduct confrontations with the regime on both the regional and national levels. "In the south, very diverse clandestine groups have arisen, which for the moment follow the decisions of the National Coordinating Committee, in the hope that coordinated actions will lead to results. But if the government takes these actions lightly, these groups may get out of our control, and we will see acts of sabotage and terrorism." (*Liberation*, March 11.)

In fact, over at least nine months before the bureaucratic crackdown, every time the Solidarity leadership appeared to have reached a *modus vivendi* with the government it found itself outflanked and forced to step up the level of its confrontation with the regime. The Bydgoszcz events in March 1980 and the hunger marches that started late in the summer of that year are cases in point.

Michnik, along with Kuron one of the most prominent historic leaders of the antibureaucratic opposition, lamented this in a statement he wrote in prison in February:

"The constant strikes provoked by the power apparatus wore out the society, which was already exhausted by the difficulties of daily life. The lack of positive results in terms of the quality of life led to a polarization....

"Some said: 'No more strikes, that is getting us nowhere.' Others said: 'No more indecisive strikes.' It is hard to say which were in the majority. But certainly the latter made themselves more heard.

"These people, most young workers from the big factories, demanded more radical action from the Solidarity leadership. And it became harder and harder to hold this back (although both Walesa and Kuron tried to)." (*Der Spiegel*, March 8.)

There has obviously been a lot of thinking going on both in the prisons and in the underground Solidarity organizations about the lessons of the crackdown.

In the March 15 issue of *Wola*, a Solidarity journal published in the Warsaw area, Krzysztof Piotrowski wrote that there had been stages since the crackdown.

In the first, most Solidarity members thought that the state of siege was only another in the series of confrontations between the movement and the government since August 1979. The second was a period of dispair. The third was the period of reorganization:

"This phase covers the entire month of January. It is the period of the formation of the clandestine groups. They were built up mainly on the basis of formerly existing trade-union structures. In certain plants, the leadership of these bodies was given to the union leaders, but more often it was given to less-known activists....

"Another element in the resistance was the building up of organizations in the housing projects. In the first case, it was the experience of the union structures that helped. In the second, it was the curfew that strengthened the ties between the people living in the big housing projects. It was in this phase that the printing and distribution of an underground press began."

The start of the fourth stage, that of expansion and consolidation of the resistance, Piotrkowski wrote, was marked by "the days of action in solidarity with Solidarity and the introduction of the price rises at the end of January and the beginning of February. These events led the different groups to coordinate their activities in order to build common actions with a mass character. The most important ones were the general strike on January 19 in Wroclaw, that affected 90% of the plants; the street confrontations that occurred in Gdansk on January 30; the mass demonstrations in front of the Poznan monuments on February 13; and finally the boycott of the television news that began in Swidnik, and then in Lublin, and Pulawy."

One of the factors in the development of the resistance was the spread of information about the scope of resistance to the crackdown.

"As information spread, not only did the illusions of the first phase disappear, but also the psychology of failure. It became clear that despite the lack of communication, the arrest of the Solidarity leaders, despite the threat of draconian penalties—including the death penalty—people in total isolation from each other reacted in the same way, by strikes everywhere. According to the most recent information, more than 80% of the plants were struck."

Solidarity had made an error before the crackdown, Piotrkowski wrote:

"December 13 showed the total lack of preparation by Solidarity in the fight against the violence of the regime. Although this was totally in accord with the principles and statutes of Solidarity, it nonetheless testified to a naive belief that it would be possible to prevent the state apparatus from resorting to violence, even when its rule was in danger. This reflected the illusion that the will of the entire society could impose democracy without the need for resorting to force.

"So, the opportunity to set up clandestine structures capable of organizing prolonged resistance while there was still relative freedom was wasted, and now we have to start form spuare one in immeasurably more difficult conditions. It was only in the Wroclaw region, and at the last moment, that preparations for work in underground conditions were made. The result of this, therefore, is particularly conclusive.

"This was an error identical to the one made in 1939. While people were aware of the unfavorable relationship of forces, nothing was done to prepare the way for the future resistance movement... and it was necessary to start from square one under the occupation."

However, the resistance to the "internal occupation" had developed more rapidly than the resistance to the Nazis:

"To realize the breadth of the resistance that is growing up, you have only to remember that at the beginning of 1940, there were about 200 resistance organizations in Poland. Today, on the basis of the number of underground journals published, there are 1,700 resistance organizations in the country."

Piotrkowski mentions that one of the illusions of the period immediately preceding the crackdown and the first week after it was that the army would go over immediately to the people. It did not happen just like that, although there were many cases of insubordination.

It is notable that the May Day demonstrators in Warsaw directed a lot of their slogans to the soldiers. In the May 14 issue of *Rouge*, the weekly paper of the French section of the Fourth International, Cyril Smuga pointed out: "The underground Solidarity bulletins are publishing more and more reports about what is going on in the barracks." He cited one such report from the March 22 issue of the Cracow regional leadership of Solidarity:

"Our correspondents in the paratroop regiment inform us that the soldiers have recovered from their first shock. After a period during which the soldiers were terrorized by the state of siege, informal groups of soldiers formed, which were subjected to active persecution by the officers. The commanders informed them informally that two soldiers were executed for refusing to obey orders."

The Cracow regional leadership also issued a leaflet for soldiers that began as follows:

"Polish Soldiers!

"There are orders that you must not carry out, even under threat of death!

"You do not have the right to knock down the walls of factories with tanks! You do not have the right to arrest Polish patriots! You do not have the right to lift your hand against workers! You do not have the right to fire on the working people! Refuse to carry out such orders."

The leaflet went on to explain how soldiers had refused to fire on workers in the 1970 strikes and how they dealt with officers who tried to force them to at gunpoint.

With the increasing explosiveness of the situation, the Catholic church authorities have expressed a fear that things could get out of control. For example, on May 2, Archbishop Glemp said to a crowd of a hundred thousand people in Cracow:

"We beg the Holy Mother that our youth will not go out in the streets with stones, that nobody will throw stones or other objects at anyone."

Glemp even suggested that the youth could be manipulated by unnamed clandestine forces, echoing the bureaucracy.

"We know how numerous are those who would be ready to give their lives for their country. But another which would exist inside our society may want to manipulate this patriotism."

The Western governments also could be expected to be worried by the May demonstrations, Leopold Unger wrote in the *International Herald Tribune* May 12:

"Western governments may soon learn that the psychological repercussions of the recent demonstrations are international, and that it was wishful thinking to imagine that 'normalization through force' could quickly—or ever—lead to business as usual." ■

# Interviews with East German peace activists

The first mass public demonstration for disarmament in the history of East Germany took place on February 13. About five thousand people demonstrated in Dresden.

This demonstration grew out of a petition drawn up a few months earlier by a Lutheran minister, Reinhard Eppelman. The statement raised demands such as abolition of compulsory military training for school children and military parades. It called for a nuclear-free Europe from the Urals to the Atlantic.

In recent months, the badges bearing the symbol of the peace movement have started being worn by thousands of East German youth. The emblem is a Soviet monument showing swords being beaten into plowshares. The wearing of these badges is looked on with very jaundiced eyes by the East German authorities, but banning it outright, for obvious reasons, would be embarrassing.

In a recent issue, the Stockholm weekly *ETC* did an interview with Eppelman, who said:

"The police have beaten up people wearing our peace symbol."

The reporter noted:

"That's absurd, to say the least. The badge shows a Soviet statute that... was a gift from Stalin to the U.N. headquarters in New York,"

Eppelman replied: "That doesn't keep the authorities from attacking us. They accuse us of being anti-Communist."

The pastor went on to say:

"Our peace work depends entirely on the antinuclear armament groups in the West, mainly in West Germany. If the government attacks us, then doubt will grow among people in the West. They will ask if it is meaningful to work for peace when the GDR does not permit such a movement. That would weaken the Western movement, which our rulers do not want."

The reporter talked with another activist in the peace movement, who said:

"We have to reform socialism from within. We have to have open debate. Work for disarmament is a step in the right direction."

The activist continued:

"Reagan's policy threatens the entire world....Both East and West Germany should demilitarize. Our goal is a neutral, disarmed, and reunited Germany....

"We can get Western TV. Their propaganda is as idiotic as ours. We are fighting for peace. The bourgeois press in the West wants to use us for their propaganda. What they say is false. No one is talking about introducing a capitalist system in East Germany."

The funeral of the well-known dissident, Dr. Robert Havemann, was the occasion of a gathering of peace activists. Eppelman gave the final speech:

"Havemann's faith in socialism and peace never faltered. His attitude to people who talked in the name of socialism but were interested in nothing but power was a different matter....

"He started what led to today's peace movement. His ideas will never die." ■

# Belgian youth: "For Jobs not Bombs"

*Tens of thousands of youth joined the fight against the austerity program of the right-wing Martens government in a march of more than 30,000 against youth unemployment in Brussels on April 24. The march was built by a walk of about 400 unemployed youth through the country.*

*The following is the article on the march published by* Rood, *the Flemish language weekly paper of the Belgian section of the Fourth International. It has been somewhat shortened. The translation is by* IV. *The article was written by a leader of the Socialistische Jonge Wacht/Jeunes Gardes Socialistes (SJW/JGS, Socialist Young Guard, the youth organization associated with the Belgian section of the Fourth International).*


*Belgian youth demand "No bombs, jobs damn it." (DR)*

A year and a half ago, the Socialistische Jonge Wacht launched a petition calling on "all youth organizations in the workers movement" to organize "a march against youth unemployment."

Today, after the impressive success of the April 24 youth march, it is clear to everyone that only a united fightback on a national scale of all youth and their organizations can mobilize the masses of youth against the crisis. The united front of the youth organizations around the trade-union common front of the two major labor federations in the country brought out almost as many as the giant Catholic union federation march of March 27.

A lot of workers in the plants saw the youth march as a way of continuing the fight against the government's special powers laws, since this fight has been quiescent for a month.

At the march, we saw a lot of factory delegations....The week before the march, the unemployed marchers visited a lot of plants.

These actions made it clear that the youth were not fighting in isolation, but wanted to march together with the labor movement.

The most striking fact in the youth march was that this united front had mobilized broad layers of unorganized youth. Many hundreds of high-school and unemployed youth marched for the first time in Brussels. Many hundreds of young workers who do not go to trade-union marches were also at the youth march.

The day before the March, on April 23, in Antwerp 2,000 high-school youth struck for jobs and against the government's cutbacks in education. They marched to the drydocks in Hoboken and chanted, "Reopen Cockerill, jobs for all."

On the same day, 2,000 high-school students in Luikse struck in solidarity with the youth march.

In Ghent and Louvain, smaller school strikes were organized on the day the marchers came by. Over the week before the Brussels demonstration, thousands of high-school youth participated in actions organized to greet the marchers and in local demonstrations.

Nonetheless, a lot of unorganized youth stayed home. The provocative attack by the police on the Antwerp high-school students and in particular on the FTGB youth action against the Martens government frightened a lot of people (which, of course, was their objective.) A lot of high-school youth did not want to demonstrate along with mom or dad, and many vocational school students had weekend training courses.

It was an enthusiastic demonstration with a lot of music and radical slogans. From the beginning, the slogans for jobs, money, and the right to education were posed more sharply against the government, and also against the arms race: "Martens to the dole queue," was shouted by various groups, including by members of the Catholic youth organization and union confederation. "Get the money from where it is," and "No bombs, jobs damn it!" became the dominant slogans, being taken up by thousands of people.

Here the discussions in the jobless contingents, in the 122 local committees over the last weeks preceding the march had an effect. In all the actions, the question came up spontaneously: "Where is the money going to come from to meet our demands? " What is responsible for the crisis? And van Vreven statements about the siting of nuclear missiles brought home to thousands of youth that the growing militarization is being paid for by cutbacks in social benefits and increased unemployment.

The agitation of the Socialistische Jonge Wacht also had something to do with the radicalization of the slogans. The SJW played an active role in the organization of the high-school strikes and the other preparatory actions for the youth.

The main slogans in the SJW actions were precisely "Martens to the dole queue," "No bombs, jobs damn it," and "Get the money where it is," along with "Forward to a general strike." The SWJ sold many hundreds of stickers with these slogans.

The SWJ papers *Tegenkrant* and *Barricades* (for the French-speaking youth) moved quickly. The SJW groups in various provinces are growing because a lot of youth have been attracted by our active intervention and our radical slogans.

More and more people are losing their jobs and having their unemployment benefits cut off. To fight this, we have to build a united front involving more and more workers and youth.■

# Growing fightback by Dutch workers against austerity attacks

by Rienke SCHUTTE

AMSTERDAM—Participation in the government is an old story for the Dutch Social Democracy. For decades, the Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA—Labor Party) has followed a rightist policy, both in government and out.

Since the formation of the latest coalition government, however, about half a year ago, the PvdA has not found it so easy as in the past to pull the capitalists' chestnuts out of the fire for them.

This government—which also includes the Christian Democrats and Democracy 1966 (D66, a liberal "modernist" formation), has been confronted with a resistance from the workers that is unprecedented in the Netherlands. On November 21, in Amsterdam, there was the largest demonstration in Europe against the installation of new missiles on the continent.

In February, the government was confronted with massive strikes and actions against its first big austerity operation, the attack to cut sickness benefits for workers. This opposition to the rightist policy of the PvdA leadership is growing.

At the November 21 demonstration, the PvdA spokesman, Wim Meijer, was hooted down. That was because no one believed that in this government his party was going to make sure that no missiles were based on Dutch soil. More and more workers have just as little faith that in this government, the PvdA is going to make sure that there are more jobs.

For a half year, PvdA leader Joop Den Uyl, minister of social affairs in the new government, has been saying that he is going to introduce a program to deal with unemployment. But at the end of last year, a poll showed that 70% of the party's voters and 77% of the trade-union members expected *nothing* to come of this. (*Elsevier*, December 31, 1981)

In the past two years, unemployment has *doubled*, reaching an official total of a half million (out of a total population under 14 million!), and no end is in sight.

PvdA minister, Den Uyl, is doing nothing about unemployment. Cutting the workweek would mean a row with the bosses, and he doesn't want that. What he does want is to take millions of gilders from the workers and hand them over to the bosses. That is what the proposal for changing the sickness insurance law amounted to. Sick workers would lose 14 million gilders, and this money would go to the bosses.

When Den Uyl unveiled this plan in January, the fat was in the fire. In the Netherlands, almost all contracts include a provision giving workers sick pay equal to full wages. This was won by long struggles. Den Uyl's proposal to reduce this to 80% of gross wages would victimize mainly workers working in unhealthy conditions, those on rotating shifts, and women. For sick workers, it would mean a loss of hundreds of guilders a month.

The Industrial Workers Union of the country's biggest labor confederation, the FNV (Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging—the Dutch Federation of Unions) reacted immediately by distributing leaflets against the plan in the plants. They were entitled: "Hands Off Our Sick Pay Before We Talk About Anything."

On January 25, the first strikes and actions began on the docks, in the printing business, and in about twenty industrial plants. In innumerable packed union meetings, demands rose for the union leadership to produce a plan for *quick* action, before this bill would come before parliament in mid-March.

The IKB (Internationale Kommunistenbond—International Communist League, Dutch section of the Fourth International) proposed working toward *a 24-hour general strike* in order to build an action front as broad as possible against this plan. In order to defeat the government, two problems had to be solved:

1) In the last big trade-union action, in March 1980, a series of mass rallies were abruptly called off. A lot of union members were not prepared to come out onto the streets again for actions without a clear purpose. They would only go out if the actions were carried through until the plans were completely thrown out.

2) In recent years, wage increases have been set from above by the government. This has meant not only a sharp decline in real wages (last year it was 3% and this year more than 6% ). This "restraint" by the union movement has also meant that the working class as a whole has had relatively little experience in action.

A *clear* and *decisive* perspective for action to force the *total* scrapping of the plan was therefore crucial. Preparing for a 24-hour general strike would provide an opportunity to build up unity through the distribution of informational leaflets, petitions, and the organizing of rallies.

Very quickly, it became clear that the union leadership did not have the leeway now to call off the actions as cold as it did in 1980. In February, strikes and actions spread throughout the country.

The idea of a 24-hour general strike gained popularity. In various rallies called by the FNV, it came to the fore. In fact, the national assembly of the government, in opposition to the proposals of the union leadership, decided to push for such a 24-hour strike.

Furthermore, from the beginning, the *political* nature of such an action was clear. The public service unions called on their members to demand that their political parties call special meetings. And most of them belonged to the PvdA. In the PvdA, a discussion took place, and not just on sick pay.

In Rotterdam, for example, sixty shop stewards put PvdA members of parliament on the spot. They said: "What do we care about the deals the PvdA has made with the parties of the right. The PvdA should get out of this government. We have had enough."

The fact that in this capitalist government, the PvdA was the *advocate* of austerity measures quite clearly undermined the possibilities for a united fight back. In particular, white-collar workers and members of the Catholic labor confederation took a hesitating attitude at first to the beginning of actions and strikes: "Shouldn't we give Joop Den Uyl another chance?"

The IKB was the only one of the workers parties that consistently argued that the PvdA must break with this government in order to help form the broadest possible workers united front to fight back against the austerity policy of the bosses and the government, to build the broadest possible *unity in struggle.*

However, from the outset, the union leadership came up with maneuvers designed to break up unity in action:

-On February 13, suddenly a new line was presented. The 100% sick pay could be retained by the bosses and would not be taken away by the government plan. Since the situation with contract negotiations differed from sector to sector, that meant that every industry in various conditions had to face this issue on their own.

The bosses played on this. For example, when the workers in the printing industry decided on a strike, they stalled the negotiations in the steel and engineer-

ing industry. The action front threatened to disintegrate.

-Other actions that would coincide with those on the sick pay issue were called off. For example, in public transport, a conflict had been going on for a long time on the question of extra pay for irregular shifts. Strikes were to begin on January 29. These actions, however, against the will of the great majority of the bus drivers, were postponed to April 1.

-In place of a 24-hour general strike, the union leadership proclaimed that a *national day of action* would be held on March 12. It would be a day of action for which the workers would get no strike pay and which was not organized in common by all the unions. The confederation organized nothing for March 12. The government workers' unions organized demonstrations; but there was, for example, hardly any solidarity with the striking plants.

These maneuvers could not keep a lot of strikes from getting off the ground—in the post and telegraph service, in the sanitation department, in the printing industry. At the center of this were the strikes that were to begin in a large number of plants for an unlimited period, especially in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, on March 8.

But on the weekend before these strikes were scheduled to start, the employers appealed to the courts. For twelve metallurgical works, the judges handed down injunctions against strikes. Nearly everywhere the union leadership complied with the no-strike orders. In only ten plants in Rotterdam and three in Groningen did strikes start on Monday, March 8. They lasted for 24 hours. Even the Communist Party decided that the struggle had now to be continued "by other means."

However, in two shipyards in Rotterdam, the workers did not accept the antistrike injunctions. In these workplaces, an indefinite wildcat strike started on March 8. After that, the bosses went still further. After the union was served with a no-strike order, the workers from the HVO and Wilton Feijenoord shipyards were taken to court as law violators. But the strikes continued.

It was thanks to the perserverance of these strikers that finally a breakthrough was made in the steel and engineering industry. There the bosses declared in mid-March that they were ready to continue to give 100% sick pay for the coming year as well.

*The Labour ministers have now walked out of the Dutch government. The other parties in the coalition agreed to further public spending cuts that the Labour ministers, with the masses breathing down their necks, were unable to accept. These cuts would have precluded the programme of jobs creation proposed by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment.*

The HVO strike leader told *Klassenstrijd* (the paper of the IKB) after the outcome:

"Even people who before the action were skeptical have now gained confidence in their own strength. I don't know what things are like in the rest of the country, but I know what they are like in HVO. Last year we were flexible, we sat and sulked about our loss of buying power. But with the self-confidence we have won now, we are not going to just sit back and complain the next time our cost-of-living allowance is taken away."

The HVO and Wilton Feijenoord workers have shown that it is possible to fight back against the austerity policy. The PvdA leadership is following the opposite course. It *remains* the foremost applier of this austerity policy. And it is paying for this.

In the local elections on March 24, the PvdA suffered its greatest losses in its history. It lost a million votes, holding 1.5 million. In percentage of the vote, the PvdA fell back to the level it attained in the first elections after universal suffrage was established in the Netherlands (in 1920).

The PvdA losses were particularly heavy in the working-class districts. The party's voters stayed at home. The main reason for this, according to a poll, was that "the PvdA no longer defends the interests of the workers."

Of course, the PvdA cannot defend the interests of the working people in a bosses' government, alongside the Christian Democrats and D66. The government's spring report published in mid-May, offered more austerity measures and more unemployment.

It is clear that the PvdA intends to stick to this austerity policy and this cabinet. Any criticism of Den Uyl's policy in the party leadership has been suppressed. Den Uyl has sacrificed a good deal of his support to solve the capitalist crisis.

The sick pay actions, however, have given a good start for further discussion in the workers movement about an alternative to the right-wing policy of the PvdA. In the union movement, more and more voices are being raised to say that the PvdA must break from the government of the right and fight back together with the unions against the capitalist attacks. ■

*Daniel Eskenazi and Fernando Redondo speaking outside Forest Prison just after their release. (DR)*

# Trade union activists released

A number of trade union activists were jailed in connection with clashes between steelworker demonstrators and police on March 16. Some of them have just been released, including Daniel Eskenazi, a member of the Revolutionary Workers League, Belgian section of the Fourth International.

In its May 4 issue, *La Gauche*, the French-language weekly of the Revolutionary Workers League, commented:

"The May 11 mobilization in Liege had something to do with this decision [the release]....

"In two weeks, more than 3,000 signatures were collected for the petition calling for the release of the comrades. This included a whole series of SP deputies....

"A lesson can now be drawn—struggle and unity pay off."

# Schmidt still in control of SPD but party majority supports peace movement positions

by Winifried WOLF

It was the convention of a party with a million members, the strongest party in the Second International, the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD—Social Democratic Party of Germany).

This gathering was awaited with intense interest in West Germany, Western Europe, Moscow, and Washington. Not only the Reagan administration but Ted Kennedy sent personal advisors. But the debates and decisions at the five-day affair (April 19-23) were rather a let down. They hardly seemed to justify the great expectations.

In fact, such modest results were in glaring contrast to the site of the deliberations. Under the vast roof of the futuristic Olympic Hall, the delegates shut their eyes to the darker days ahead, and offered no answer to the problems that already exist and those that are looming on the horizon—in particular unemployment and arms escalation.

Instead of responding to these big problems, they cobbled together compromise formulas designed to maintain the existing state of affairs, the SPD as *still the governing party.*

Thus, the convention was a success for Helmut Schmidt, the chancellor and vice-chairman of the party, and for the majority of the SPD leadership. But it was only a very preliminary one.

## SCHMIDT'S VICTORY— A BREATHING SPACE

The interest in the SPD convention focused on three questions:

1) Would the convention lead to a further undermining of the Washington-Bonn axis for U.S. and NATO arms escalation. That is, would the politically and militarily most important pillar of the U.S. arms escalation policy in Western Europe be seriously weakened?

2) Would this convention of the principal party in the government further undermine the coalition of the SPD with the FDP in Bonn? Would the results of this gathering make it easier for the Liberals to go over to the CDU/CSU and thereby carry out a change of government "from the top"?

3) How strong was the left wing of the party that in recent months has formed around Erhard Eppler and Oskar Lafontaine? Would it be possible to integrate this leftwing and end the "fraying of the party on the edges," as Willy Brandt so colorfully put it?

On all these questions, the party leadership grouped around Schmidt and Brandt won a preliminary victory, and gained a breathing space.

The decisive votes on the question of the "NATO double decision" produced a majority for the Schmidt position. So the SPD will continue to uphold the NATO decision. They are for negotiations for a reduction in intermediate-range missiles, and at the same time preparing to station more U.S. missiles in West Germany beginning in 1983.

On the other hand, this resolution said that there was nothing "automatic" about the stationing of more missiles. A new special convention of the SPD is supposed to discuss this question again in 1983 and decide on it. The question, of course, depends on whether the SPD is still in the government, which is highly doubtful.

A motion from the left-wing Schleswig-Holstein state organization of the SPD that called for rescinding the NATO decision was rejected. Also refected was the demand by the left-wing, representing a sort of minimum agreement, that preparations for the stationing of more intermediate-range missiles in West Germany be stopped for the period of the disarmament negotiations.

In the first vote, Schmidt's majority was 70 to 30 percent. In the second, on the missile moratorium, the division was 60 to 40. There was, however, no exact count. And at least in the case of the second vote, it seemed to me and many of my fellow journalists, that the actual vote was closer than that reported.

The left was unable to win on any point. It suffered another relatively narrow defeat on the question of a two-year moratorium on the construction of nuclear reactors.

So, the convention made no decisions that the FDP could wave around like a red flag. Of course, in those days, the Liberals were looking for something like that with a magnifying glass. After a week in which the SPD dominated the headlines, the Liberals needed some way to get a little coverage.

In any case, this search by the Liberals was a pointless and transparent undertaking, because both the FDP and the SPD delegates know that the soup that is put on the table inside the coalition is not as hot as that served up in party conventions.

Finally, the left wing was more strongly integrated into the party. Its leaders were reelected to the party leadership. With all the differences that were expressed, which were sometimes sharp, no possibility appeared for a more extensive process of organizational differentiation. The appearance in recent months of the new Democratic Socialists organization around former SPD members and Bundestag deputies Coppik and Hansen played no role in the discussion.

The left also clapped thunderously when Brandt referred briefly to the Democratic Socialists in his opening speech, saying that such a party to the left of the SPD had no chance, and that those who were leading it were not going to get anything in the SPD.

Before 1933, Willy Brandt was a member of the centrist Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei (SAP—Socialist Workers Party), and he pointed to this as a "personal lesson" for the delegates: "In 1931, I was in the minority (vis-a-vis the SPD majority), and I had another membership card in my pocket. Politically, I don't disavow anything that I did, but I drew the lesson from history that forming another organization (outside the SPD) leads nowhere."

## THE SPD CONVENTION AND THE PEACE MOVEMENT

In 1979, at the last party convention, a large majority voted for Helmut Schmidt's resolution that there should be negotiations with the USSR for limiting intermediate-range nuclear missiles stationed in Europe, but that at the same time new weapons of this type should be procured in case the negotiations did not lead to "equilibrium" between East and West in this sector.

A week after the 1979 SPD convention, the NATO ministers in Brussels adopted their infamous "double decicion." It took quite a different tack. According to this decision, the stationing of new U.S. intermediate-range missiles was by no means made conditional on the outcome of disarmament negotiations. The resolution made it crystal clear:

"The ministers have decided to modernize the intermediate-range missile potential of NATO by installing American ground-based systems in Europe. These systems include 108 launchpads for

Pershing 2 missiles and 464 ground-based Cruise missiles (GLMC)...."

The SPD convention in 1979 also expected that concessions to the right in the U.S. would be repaid by Washington signing the SALT II treaty. But the opposite happened. The new government headed by Reagan refused to ratify this agreement, which involved only a modest *limitation of the arms race*. And that was not all.

The Reagan government presented a program for arms escalation to congress that involved hundreds of billions of dollars. The core of it was producing new generations of nuclear weapons of mass destruction. This turn of events created a new situation.

The decisive change, however, since the 1979 Berlin convention, and the one that influenced the 1982 convention was the appearance of a peace movement of hundreds of thousands of people in West Germany and around the world.

A party such as the SPD *could not* fail to be influenced by such a development. You have only to recall the numbers of the peace demonstrations in West Germany. At the time of the 1979 convention, there was a demonstration of about 20,000 people. It focused on the SPD's support for building nuclear reactors and demanded that it be changed. Up to that time, the largest antinuclear demonstrations, such as those at the Brokdorf nuclear power plant outside Hamburg, drew about 100,000 people.

Since then, in 1981 alone, there were three demonstrations. The first was on the Lutheran church commemoration in Hamburg. It drew over a hundred thousand people. The second, limited to West Berlin, was for the visit of the U.S. Secretary of State, Alexander Haig. It drew 50,000 people. And finally there was the demonstration in Bonn, the biggest peace demonstration in West German history and one of the biggest for Western Europe as a whole. It was called by more than a thousand organizations, and brought out more than 300,000 participants.

A week before the recent SPD convention, "Easter Marches" against the arms race and for peace were held in all major West German cities and in many smaller places. About 400,000 persons are estimated to have participated.

One demonstration, on April 17, directly focused on the SPD convention. It was relatively modest in size. Some 50,000 demonstrators marched through Munich, which because of its rightist political climate is known as "the secret capital of Germany," protesting NATO's "double decision" and demanding that the SPD change its position on the armament question.

At the concluding rally, a giant balloon was launched by the Red Mole group, a youth organization close to the German section of the Fourth International. It pulled a huge banner that pointed to the next stage of the movement. The banner said: "See You Again on June 10 in Bonn."

*Schmidt—still in control (DR)*

It seems certain that hundreds of thousands of people will come to Bonn on that day to give a fitting reception to the U.S. president, Ronald Reagan, the personification of the U.S. arms escalation program.

It is obvious why the peace movement in West Germany has gotten such support—and why there is such great sensitivity on this question, in contrast with the backwardness of the West German workers' consciousness on most others by comparison with the other European countries.

On the one hand, the horrors of the second world war unleashed by Nazi Germany—ten million German dead, the destruction of all the country's big cities, and partition—have left a deep imprint on the consciousness and subconsciousness of the German people.

Moreover, both German states, West and East Germany, are the area where the most atomic warheads are concentrated, and would therefore be the prime target of U.S., Soviet, French, and British missiles.

If anything can be predicted with certainty about a nuclear third world war, it is that nothing would remain of either German state but perhaps a few survivors who would envy the dead.

What the new U.S. arms program and the cynical discussions about "a limited nuclear conflict" mean essentially is an atomic war concentrated on German soil. Moreover, the new Soviet SS-20 intermediate range nuclear missiles stationed in the USSR and aimed primarily at West Germany have aroused an awareness of this danger in millions of Germans, in both the East and the West; and hundreds of thousands of them have come into the streets to protest against the plans for arms escalation.

The 5,000 people who demonstrated on February 14, 1982, in Dresden, East Germany, for the same thing are an indication that the movement has spread to the East. It has continued to develop underground there, so that sudden, explosive developments are quite possible.

In the period preceding the Munich SPD convention, it became apparent that a *clear majority* of the SPD membership does *not* support the course of the Schmidt-Brandt leadership on the arms questions, but is much closer to the positions of the SPD left.

This was shown in the votes in the district committees, the grassroots organizations of the SPD. A majority were for a "Missile Moratorium," that is for stopping the installation of the new U.S.

intermediate-range missiles for the duration of the disarmament negotiations, and for demanding that the USSR reduce its SS-20 firepower to the level of 1978 (1). The fact that the left was able to get no "more" than 40% of the vote at the convention on any question is a result of several factors.

The first is the *insufficient coordination* of the left, and what might be called the superdemocracy of this convention. At first glance, the SPD is an extremely democratic party. Anything can be discussed. It is even possible to take part in demonstrations in opposition to the party leadership. In fact, Eppler and Lafontaine participated in the Easter marches shortly before the party convention.

The SPD local organizations can, and do, submit motions to the convention. The result was a 700-page memeographed bulletin with more than a thousand motions, which reached the convention delegates three to four weeks before the event.

Since all these motions come in without any coordination, many overlap. And there is no way delegates can arrive at the convention with clear views. This was reflected in the fact that *the left* suffered from a severe lack of coordination.

To be sure, there were meetings of the left, and such meetings are permitted. But they were strictly informal gatherings. They produced no concrete results. They led to no common platform. And least of all did they work out any common tactics for intervening in the convention.

This lack of coordination went so far that even the decisive motion, the one for a "missile moratorium"—the only one that had a chance of getting a majority against the Schmidt wing—was not drawn up before the convention but only during it, a day before the vote on this question. And it was introduced as a motion from the floor.

As a result, this resolution had so many weaknesses and ambiguities, that the right could pick it apart like an artichoke before the vote, and even undermine the remaining bastions of the left.

A second reason for the defeat of the left is the professionalism with which the party leadership operates. It was precisely the only force that was well prepared for this convention. It presented "main resolutions" on the three most important questions— armament, energy policy, and unemployment—that made some concessions to the left and were dressed up with a lot of progressive verbiage. At the same time, they avoided saying anything concrete that might be a stumbling block for the government's policy and the coalition with the bourgeois liberals.

The party leadership played on every psychological and demagogic string to influence the delegates. In fact, it is by no means true that the over 100 delegates all had hard and fast positions and, therefore, could not be influenced. Indeed, the preparation that the leadership made for this convention presupposed the existence of a significant number of delegates open to such maneuvers.

## THE FAILURE OF THE SPD LEFT

As important as the lack of coalition of the left wing and the professional factionalism of the leadership were for the outcome of the SPD convention, other factors also played a decisive role.

In its editorial on the opening of the convention, *Was Tun*, the paper of the International Marxist Group, West German section of the Fourth International, outlined the sort of policy that the SPD left needed:

*We have said, and we still say, that we defend the SPD against attacks from the right at the same time as fighting against Schmidt's policy. In 1980, we called for a vote for the SPD against Strauss (2). What today seems opportune for hundreds of thousands of former SPD voters has to be called opportunist in the case of an organization, that is, to avoid taking a clear position on the SPD.*

*An alternative SPD policy that would have to be supported by the left can be conceived of and outlined.*

*-Rejection by the Munich SPD convention of the arms race and the policy of making the workers pay the costs of the capitalist crisis.*

*-Support for a program that creates jobs in the public sector, defends social gains, that would wipe out unemployment by introducing the 35-hour workweek with no cut in pay, and which would involve mobilizing together with the trade unions to win all these things.*

*-A strategic reorientation toward fighting for an all-SPD government, for which the support of the Greens and the Alternative Slates supporters should be won.*

*With such an orientation, victories in Hesse and Hamburg would be as probable as defeats are now certain. And then in the event of a withdrawal of the DFP from the coalition, Bonn could call for new elections and campaign against a change in the government "from the top." In any case, only with such an orientation would the SPD have a chance to win the Bundestag elections in 1984.*

And it was precisely here that the SPD left dropped the ball. It did not take up the question of *unemployment* but concentrated exclusively on the question of armament and peace. Even the close link between armament policy and the "budget cuts policy"was not pointed out. And the party leadership exploited this failure with cold, precise calculation. It was the leadership that presented itself and "its SPD" at the Munich convention as a "workers party." It made "employment policy" the central question at the convention. (How demagogic this was is shown by the very term "employment policy," since the government's policy has led to 2 million unemployed and accepts that, or even objectively promotes it.)

It was because the left literally left the ground to them that the leadership was able to get away with this and make such an orientation seem relatively credible and to focus the attention of the media on this.

On Tuesday, the convention divided into essentially two work groups. The first dealt with "employment policy," the second with "peace policy." The whole SPD left gathered in the limited space allotted for the "peace workshop," while the "employment workshop" met in the main hall. It included the middle-of-the-road and right-wing SPD delegates and dozens of the most right-wing union leaders and members of factory councils who had been invited. They were right at home and "among themselves."

How seriously the party leadership around Schmidt and Brandt took the question of unemployment was shown by the fact that they were not in the hall. They did not bother to come to either workshop.

Obviously they used the time for more wheeling and dealing, that is, preparing for the following decisive day, when the votes would be taken.

Just as the SPD left handed the question of unemployment to the right, it had no answer or alternative to *the question of the leadership of the party*. It accepted Helmut Schmidt as chancellor and at the same time it accepted the coalition with the FDP as a long-term alliance of the SPD.

The leaders of the left never tired of stressing their loyalty to Schmidt. The SPD-FDP coalition was presented either as "the only conceivable parliamentary solution at the moment" or the question was simply elegantly sidestepped.

In the period before the convention, there had been statements by the SPD leftists that began to challenge this governmental alliance. For example, Oskar Lafontaine, leader of the Saarland SPD, which stands on the far left of the party and has done well so far in elections, said in an interview shortly before the convention: "If stepped-up armament is the price for the coalition, then it isn't worth it. We cannot make compromises on this (3)."

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1. In 1978, Brezhnev said that in the area of intermediate-range missiles there was "more or less a balance." The peace movement and the SPD left, to some extent, took this up, and started to call for the withdrawal of the SS 20s that had been brought in to reinforce the Warsaw Pact arsenal, and that at the same time there should be no more U.S. and NATO intermediate-range missiles put in place. The Soviet leadership gave new indications that it considered such a reduction of its own nuclear armament possible.

2. In the 1980 parliamentary elections, the CDU/CSU candidate for chancellor was Franz Josef Strauss, a rightist tainted by corcuption scandals. Strauss was able to mobilize a considerable number of votes for the CDU/CSU; it remained the strongest single party.

On the other hand, his candidacy on the CDU/CSU side, brought the working-class voters back to the polls to cast their votes for the SPD, making possible the formation of another SPD/FDP coalition government.

3. *Konkret*, No. 4, 1982.

Has the SPD been brought back "into line?" Was the process of differentiation frozen in Munich? Was this a Brandt-Schmidt convention? Such a balance sheet would be overly hasty. Similar conclusions may have been drawn in the top echelons of the party in the first days after the convention. (But even there, some may have found cause for dissatisfaction. Schmidt, for example, must not have been very happy that he got only 84% of the vote for the party leadership, while Brandt got 91%. Two years ago, Schmidt came in before Brandt [4].)

In fact, this convention did not produce any definitive results. The developments that appeared in the period before it will continue afterwards.

There is today an SPD *left* that has significant influence; and, on the question of NATO's stepped-up armament policy, an important issue for the Schmidt government, it has the majority of the party members behind it.

This left is quite prepared to fight in the party, and, partially, in the framework of the mass movements. The fact that it confines itself to, or concentrates on, the issue of peace and the arms escalation and avoids the decisive question of unemployment shows its weakness. This is also shown by its failure to present an alternative to the Schmidt-Brandt leadership. But such failings are typical of left wings in mass reformist parties of this type. And for West Germany the existence of such a left, no matter what its limitations, is a new factor.

The last time there was a left wing in the party was in 1959, in opposition to the Bad Godesberg Program, in which the SPD came out for a "social market economy." At that time, the left was in a defensive position; today it is on the offensive.

Moreover, the internal differentiation over the emergency powers laws that the SPD pushed through parliament in 1968 in its Gret Coalition with the CDU/CSU were not so far reaching as the present ones. In particular, no leading SPD members were involved in the development of left opposition tendencies. Today, it is quite different. There was a whole series of leaders in the left wing. There is Eppler, a leader of the Baden-Wurttemberg state organization; Oskar Lafontaine, a leader of the Saarland state organization; Matthiesen and Jansen, leaders of the Schleswig-Holstein state organization, and Ulrich Klose, a leader of the Hamburg organization.

Secondly, there is a *mass movement against arms escalation and for peace*, which initially put the spurs into the SPD left. This mass movement is a natural sounding board for the SPD left. Its mainly pacifist ideology makes it quite open to the positions of the SPD left, and it itself influences the SPD left.

This represents an important difference from the period 1969-72, when the SPD succeeded in extending its mass base significantly and in coopting the youth and student revolt into the party. In those days, the radical and partially revolutionary ideology of the "Extra-parliamentary Opposition"and its core, the SDS, stood in opposition to the revival of SPD reformism under Willy Brandt.

The SPD was able to carry out its coopting operation only on the basis of the defeat of SDS and its disintegration in 1968.

Today, fundamentally, there is only one decisive barrier to the SPD left and even sections of the party leadership finding points of agreement with the peace movement. The SPD is *in the government* and, therefore, shares the responsibility for this policy of arms escalation.

Even if the question of government is left aside, the peace movement in West Germany is going to grow; it is going into new mass mobilizations; and this is going to give impetus to the process of differentiation in the SPD and to help further strengthen the SPD left.

Thirdly, *the days of the SPD-dominated government seem numbered in any case.* The Munich convention did not change much as far as that is concerned. Objective factors are more and more undermining the SPD-FDP coalition.

The demands for a stronger "budget-cutting policy," that is austerity, are becoming more insistent. As a result of unemployment, the 1983 budget shows a deficit of 10 to 15 billion Deutschemarks. The FDP has repeatedly and sternly warned that it will not "take the responsibility" for any new increases in the national debt.

Thus, since the military appropriations are sacrosanct, this means further cuts in social welfare expenditures. And this is the best way for the SPD to assure that it will lose the coming state parliament elections in Hamburg in June and in Hessen in September, just as it lost the preceding ones in Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony this March. In those elections, the SPD vote fell by roughly 6% .

If the SPD loses these next two elections also, however, then the government in Bonn would be at least crippled. All indications are that this would mean that in one way or another the government will fall. This could happen either by the FDP switching coalition partners and forming a government with the CDU/CSU, or by new elections, in which the SPD would be doomed to defeat.

It is certainly premature to consider exactly how the SPD could develop in opposition. The only thing certain is that the view that this would lead to an *abrupt* leftward swing is not well considered. On the other hand, it also seems clear that in opposition, the SPD would tend generally toward the left and that it would be able to coopt more left currents and increase its base among the workers. But this would be after a phase of "regeneration" that would be marked by personal and factional clashes in the party.

Fourthly, there is class society and the capitalist crisis and their well-known dynamic. And in West Germany also, these factors are not just something that exists in theory but being felt in the most direct way! The 2 million officially registered unemployed testify to this. The real decline in real wages came in 1980-81 and further losses are in store in the current year. Most of all, there have been notable cutbacks in the "social welfare fabric." All these developments have left their first mark on the West German working class and its consciousness.

At the same time, there is a danger that in the next period the workers reaction might be channelled in a reactionary direction. That is particularly true in view of the beginnings of antiforeign-worker feeling.

(In West Germany, there are 4.5 million foreigners, of whom 2 million are wage earners. In the Schleswig-Holstein elections, in the northern Germany city of Kiel, a strongly antiforeigner slate got a relatively high vote, including up to 6% in working class neighborhoods. A similar racist slate is being put forward in the coming elections in Hamburg.)

Sharper conflicts between labor and capital are inevitable, and are developing in particular at the factory level, where they are taking the form of stronger responses by the workers to layoffs and closures.

Doubtless, this process will also have its effects on the SPD, and it is by no means predetermined that in that case the SPD left will remain within its present limitations as regards its ideology or the questions it is prepared to take up.

In any case, these objective factors improve the conditions for further processes of differentiation in the SPD and the present mass movement against the arms escalation and for the building of a socialist alternative to reformism and Stalinism. They also improve the conditions for a campaign of political propaganda focusing on the *class character* of the existing bourgeois society that will make it much more difficult for the SPD left to "overlook" this state of affairs, and much more difficult as well for the SPD leadership to divert attention from it, as it did in the Munich convention.

In his theses for this convention, Helmut Schmidt could still get away with saying: "Ever since human beings have existed, they have lived from the exploitation of plants and animals. From what else could they live?" (5). ■

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4. This changed vote relationship can by no means to interpreted as a matter of "personalities." Brandt presented himself at this convention as someone who at least wanted to identify himself with the basic elements of the reform policy that the SPD followed from 1969 to 1972. He stressed several times that a "renewal of the party" was needed.

In contrast, Helmut Schmidt represented a pragmatic course, the policy of his government. The difference from the preceding years was that faith in the self-correcting powers of the market—and therefore in the ability of the "operator" Schmidt to overcome or moderate the crisis—is vanishing.

5. *Vorwarts*, April 8, 1981. *Vorwarts* is the only party paper still being published by the SPD. It is a weekly with a circulation of about 60,000. And this is for a party with a million members.

# Mexican women's committes campaign for Rosario

BUILDING THE WORLD PARTY OF SOCIALISTS

by Fernando ZAMORA

For the first time in Mexican history, women are organizing as women in an independent participation in the electoral arena.

Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, presidential candidate of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party), Mexican section of the Fourth International is not just the first woman candidate for the presidency of the republic. Her campaign is the first campaign which openly identifies with and supports and popularizes the activities and demands of the womens liberation movement.

On March 14, hundreds of women packed the Cine Regis in Mexico City to constitute the Front of Women's Committees in Support of Rosario Ibarra.

Present in the presidium were, among others, representatives of women telephone and automobile workers; women's campaign support committees from various cities and peasant communities in the interior of the country; representatives of the Committee of Relatives of Political Prisoners, "Missing Persons," and Political Exiles of Guadalajara; as well as representatives of the PRT, the Union de Lucha Revolucionaria (Union of Revolutionary Struggle), and the Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo (Peoples Revolutionary Movement)—two far-left groups working with the PRT in the Unidad Obrera Campesina Popular (Workers, Peasants, and Poor Peoples Unity) electoral slate.

In addition, greetings were received from groups of Indian women; the Frente Campesino Independiente ((Independent Peasants Front) of Sonora, and important and combative peasant organization; various local women's committees in support of Rosario Ibarra; and from committees of telephone operators in support of the campaign.

In the rally, the speakers took up the question of the role of women in social struggles and the obstacles that women face in these struggles.

Susana Vidales, representing the Provisional Committee of the Women's Front pointed out that "the committees to support Rosario Ibarra have been established not only because...in our country the candidacy of a woman for president of the Republic...represents a way of confronting the view that women should stay at home or in the best of cases stick to 'women's issues'...(but above all) because of what is behind the candidacy of Rosario, what it represents...."

Rosario Ibarra was the final speaker. "Companeras and companeros" she said in part of her speech, "today the code of the three loyalities still exists: obedience to the father, obedience to the husband, and obedience to the brother or son. My own life, companeras and companeros, has revolved around the existence of three men—I was the daughter of Ibarra, later the wife of doctor Piedra, and later, I was the mother of Jesus Piedra.

"None of these three affiliations—so to speak—bothers me, none of them disgraces me...But when, companeras and companeros, did I start being Rosario the woman, Rosario by myself. When I began to struggle, when I began to transform myself through the struggle....Then I started to become Rosario the woman.

"The capitalists," she said later on, "the exploiters, our enemies, encourage some incorrect things. It is convenient for them that womens liberation is conceived of in a certain, special way. They want people to understand that women continue to be subordinate and men continue to have their feet on our necks, as they say. They are interested in saying that women seek liberation in order to do everything that men do in an unjust political system. These are lies, women aren't interested in this! We don't want to be filthy like the men of the capitalist class, like the men of the bourgeoisie of this country! We want actions that support equal rights for women, but we don't want to be equal to the corrupt men of this country or of this world.

The plan of action includes meetings of the women's committees in the course of the campaign, conferences on the situation of working women set for April 30, rallies in plazas and public market places in the provinces and a central rally in Mexico City on May 9, and a wind-up press conference of women candidates and women's committees on the development of the campaign scheduled for June 18. ■

# Celebrating 50 years of world revolution

by Paul LAWSON

'I never doubted that only the Fourth International could win the full socialist democracy that we fight for', said Charlie van Gelderen to the 150 people who came to pay tribute to him at a party last Sunday.

The party was paying tribute not only to Charlie's 50 years of activity in the Trotskyist movement, but to the other founders of the movement in Britain.

Many of these pioneers were recalled in a fighting speech by Harry Wicks, 78-year old veteran of British Trotskyism. Harry paid particular tribute to Starkey Jackson, secretary of the Trotskyist movement in the 1930s, tragically killed in the 2nd World War.

Harry also explained the role that Charlie van Gelderen had played in the struggle of the Trotskyists in the Labour youth organisation before the war.

Most of all, Harry Wicks paid tribute to Charlie's unceasing activity in fighting for Trotskyist ideas in the broad labour movement....

Hosted by Pam Singer and Stella Coyle with songs from Alan Freeman and Chris Gutherie, the participants followed the course of revolutionary struggle over fifty years.

Bringing greetings from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, Livio Maitan explained how isolated the Trotskyists were in the early days. He recalled speaking at an Italian Communist Party meeting as a young man. 'But', said the workers there, 'if what you say is right, then Togliatti is wrong.' And even more decisively: 'and Stalin must be wrong'! When he said yes, all the workers thought he was crazy.

Steve Potter, national secretary of the IMG, spoke of Charlie's role in helping to build the Trotskyist movement in Italy and South Africa as well as in Britain. As a young serviceman during the war, Charlie helped to organise the first Trotskyist group in Italy, and still possesses his membership card—member number one of the Italian Trotskyist movement.

Charlie himself said that the Trotskyist perspective of revolution had been fulfilled—the past fifty years had seen revolutions all over the world. Some people argued that your revolutionary fervour declined with the years, he said, but his hadn't. 'So don't betray, don't give up the fight' was his message.

Nonetheless, he expressed his pleasure at the founding of *Revolution Youth*. 'It is on your shoulders', he said to the young comrades present 'that the struggle will be carried forward.' ■

(From *Socialist Challenge*.)

# Turkish generals and West German bosses

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*"NATO=Torture in Turkey," Turkish workers in Germany (DR)*

West German and foreign workers, including many Turks, occupied the Rockwell-Goide engineering works in Frankfurt on April 16. In response, the management thought that it was a good idea to appeal to the Turkish consulate. They wanted to get the representatives of the military dictatorship to put pressure on the Turks to abandon this action in opposition to the layoffs.

The Rockwell-Goide bosses did the workers movement the service of showing that there is a connection between the support that West Germany, as a NATO member, gives to the brutal dictatorship in Turkey and the attacks on the rights of foreign workers and the growing antiforeignism in this country.

The interests of the West German banks and businesses are served not only by the fact that the generals have "restored order" in Turkey through torture and terror. The long arm of the military dictatorship is also welcome in this country, if it intimidates Turkish and Kurdish immigrant workers and keeps them from joining with German workers to fight back against the attacks of the bosses.

The suppression and persecution of the only independent labor confederation in Turkey, DISK, and of all the working-class political organizations in Turkey, and the terror unleashed against Kurdistan serve the same profit interests as the growing witchhunt against foreign workers and their families, the attempts to make them the scapegoat for the capitalist crisis, and to expell them from the factories and the country as an excess reserve army of labor.

Since the military coup of the NATO generals on September 13, 1980, more than 100,000 people have been jailed in Turkey. The junta's terror machine is being built up on the basis of repressive laws that were already in force when there was still a parliament in Ankara and legal political parties.

Articles 141 and 142 of the state security code, which were borrowed from Mussolini's 1937 constitution, ban associations that seek to "abolish any social class or overturn any of the economic or social foundations of the established order."

Any reference to the existence of the Kurdish nation amounts to "separatism." Torture and military courts have given these laws a new cutting edge. The 52 DISK leaders on trial in Ankara are being tried on the basis of the paragraphs mentioned above.

Since September 13, 1980, the military prosecutors have asked for the death penalty for 3,820 persons. Fourteen executions have been carried out. The regime claims that it is applying the law even handedly against both the left and the right. But in only 491 cases has the death penalty been asked against rightists, and only three have been executed. In the military prison in Diyarbakir on March 21, at least ten Kurdish prisoners were murdered. The prisoners were fighting back against the way they were being treated by means of hunger strikes and protest actions.

The conditions the prisoners were protesting against, according to a report by a Republican Lawyers Association that went to the spot in September 1981, included: exercise in lockstep; forced memorization of quotes from Ataturk; having to crawl for hours on hot concrete, 40 degrees celsius in the shade; and the burning of beards and other facial hair.

In its report, a delegation from the International League for Human Rights that visited Turkey at the beginning of this year cited the following case as an example of the systematic torture that is being practiced:

A local official of the textile workers union, Ismail Cengul, was arrested in Kayseri on January 8, 1981. He and other prisoners were tied to heating pipes and beaten for eight days with clubs. They were given electrical shocks. Their fingernails and toenails were pulled out. They were sprayed with both cold and hot water. (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, April 14, 1982.)

This terror serves to maintain economic "order" from which the International Monetary Fund expects repayment of Turkey's more than 20 billion dollars in foreign debt. It is to make the Western investments in Turkey profitable.

Together with the governments of other countries, Bonn has shored up the dictatorship with billions of Marks. Today, Bonn officially still considers that a state of law prevails in Turkey. The appropriation of 130 million Marks for 1982 was reapproved in November. Additional Turkish aid for 1982 is only "being held up temporarily."

Turks coming to West Germany in search of work and asylum find themselves facing conditions like those in Turkey. The international solidarity that was so much talked about on May Day has to have two sides. It has to involve opposing West German support for military dictatorships such as the one in Ankara. It has to include opposing a split in the working class between German and foreign workers, which in conditions of economic crisis and mass unemployment could dangerously undermine the fighting power of the unions. ■

# Turkish workers movement after 1980 coup

by Mehmet SÂLAH

*In a previous article, I discussed the development and struggle of the Turkish working class before the September 12, 1980, military coup.*

*In this article, I will outline the attacks on the working class by the junta after the coup and the junta's preparation of a new labor code. I will also try to give a general picture of the economic, social, and cultural situation of the militant Turkish working class, the largest in the Middle East.*

The coup that put the present military regime in power in Turkey on September 12, 1980, was carried out over the night of a Thursday and the early morn- of a Friday. In the morning a curfew was imposed.

Thus, the coup's organizers made sure that they would have three days in which the workers would be scattered in order to intimidate the working class. How successful they were became clear on the morning of Monday, September 15. Millions of workers, including 58,000 who had been on strike, quietly filed into the factories.

The new National Security Council banned activity by DISK and two other small confederations. The DISK leaders were detained. After a time passed, the national, district, and factory officials of unions affiliated to DISK were called on to surrender. This demand was projected in a muted but threatening way over TV and radio and through the press. The trade union officials were to present themselves on such and such a day at such and such an hour at the martial law command centers.

On the day in question, thousands of union officials and rank-and-file leaders formed long lines outside the martial law centers. This was much more the result of the weariness, demoralization, and atmosphere of disorderly retreat in the working class than it was of the junta's tactical flexibility.

Another emergency measure decreed by the junta was that all labor contracts were to include a 70% raise and that was to be final. If you consider that the contracts signed before September 12 included raises never under 100% and often 200% or 300%, it becomes clear what this raise amounted to. According even to the official statistics, prices had increased between May 1979 and May 1980 by 144.5%. Thus, it is obvious what sort of a blow a 70% raise over the next two years was for the workers.

On the other hand, the National Security Council announced through the martial law command centers that layoffs were frozen. It was also announced that those workers who resigned from one union could not join another until a further order was issued (this decision still remains in effect). The first decree did put layoffs under the purview and control of the martial law command centers. This very often led to complaints from the bosses. However, it was an important instrument in the junta's demagogic effort to present itself as above classes. So, the military may intend to apply it for a certain time.

The decree freezing trade-union membership was a different matter. It would have been relatively easy to force DISK members to resign and join TURK-Is. But this would have the effect of uniting the workers and lead inevitably to a revival of trade-union activity. Instead, the Junta chose to act to paralyze trade-union life completely. And it is indisputable that in this the junta was successful.

The September 12 Junta has declared on many occasions its determination to apply the economic measures that were adopted on January 24, 1980, in accordance with the directives of the International Monetary Fund. This program was aimed both at accomplishing conjunctural objectives—stopping inflation and achieving a stable equilibrium in the balance of payment—and at carrying out a broad capitalist restructuring of the economy.

## A NEW SYSTEM OF "LABOR RELATIONS"

In order to accomplish these aims in the short term, a new system of labor regulations was adopted. On January 4, 1981, pending the drafting of a new labor code, union contracts were to be handled by the high court. With this decision, labor relations in Turkey returned to the practices followed in the 1950s. A nine-person tribunal prepared all the contracts for millions of workers with bureaucratic slowness.

Hundreds of thousands of workers are still being paid on the basis of contracts signed in 1979. They are still waiting for their 1981 contracts. Some contracts for 1981 provide only for raises of 10 to 15%, with the back pay given only in periodic installments of 3,000 to 5,000 lira (respectively about US dollars 20 and US dollars 33).

These derisory wage increases represent an absolute decline in the buying power of workers since September 1980. Along with such low raises, the contracts drawn up by the high court contain provisions restricting time off, increasing the workday (by eliminating paid lunch hours, for example), and eliminating job security. They include provisions doing away with various social services.

Along with the immediate financial consequences of the new contract system for the workers, the junta has made a lot of changes in the "laws" relating to workers. For example, right after the coup, the workers' rights to seniority pay were severely restricted, and these measures were made retroactive.

Under the new social security law, pensions fell below the minimum wage, and pension fund deductions were increased. The retirement age was raised by five years. Deductions started being made again from workers wages for health services. By eliminating some legal holidays, the junta increased the effective work year.

After September 12, the minimum wage was set at 10 thousand lira monthly (about US dollars 67). Even the TURK-Is leaders walked out of the talks on the minimum wage, and the decision was made by the representatives of the government and the bosses alone.

## THE WILL OF THE WORKERS TO RESIST NOT BROKEN

From the great majority of the working class, there was no active response to these attacks. The whole development I described in my first article explains why a strong reaction could not be expected. But even with 100,000 people in prison, or rather in concentration camps; torture; the killings; and other such common practices by the state, the working class has raised its voice in a few places. Thus, in the summer of 1981, there were five unofficial strikes in Istanbul, and two in Izmir. These were also the vanguard areas of the workers struggle in the 1960s and 1970s.

In engineering plants and foundries, petrochemical plants, and textile mills, actions such as occupations, strikes, lunch boycotts, and work stoppages have been carried out. Some of these actions have

lasted only a few hours, some a few days. But they have involved significant numbers of workers.

These illegal strikes have come over demands for raises, work safety measures, reduction in work hours, and for the restoration of holidays. And they have all been successful.

The 10% wage increases in the 1981 contracts provoked protests in Istanbul, especially by many workers in plants that were in the front line of the struggle in the 1970s. They took the form of lunch boycotts (actions in which workers refuse to go to the lunchroom together at the designated time) and slowdowns.

None of these actions went beyond economic demands, and they all involved a very small part of the working class. In particular, they were short-lived "blow ups" really. These actions are by no means sufficient to indicate a new upturn in the workers movement. However, it can be said that these actions demonstrate that even in extremely repressive conditions, it has not been possible to break the determination of the working class to resist.

## THE GENERALS' NEW LABOR CODE

It is not clear how long or in what forms the military dictatorship will remain in power. But it is clear that it intends to restructure the society for a long period ahead, including after it itself passes from the scene.

The text of the new trade-union law was made public in December 1981. Along with the provisions regulating strikes and collective bargaining (which are to be the subject of future laws), this draft outlines the basic features of the new labor code that is being drawn up. It is framed to be the completion of the structural changes initiated by the 1980 measures.

The junta is not offering the prospect of a future without labor unions to a working class that has gone through twenty years experience of trade-union battles and of winning gains through them. The military's objective with the new labor code is to reduce the role of unions and subject them to bureaucratic machinery.

The features of this system can be summarized as follows:

-Contracts of one to three years duration. This is the same as the old law. But the new law introduced the "principle of contracts for an indefinite period," which would keep the price of labor the same for an undetermined period.

-It seeks to block the signing of contracts for individual workplaces. This procedure would increase the influence of the union bureaucracy. The aim is to prevent the more backward sections of the working class from following the example given by the more advanced and experienced workers through successful strikes and the winning of favorable contracts.

-To extend contracts signed by unions representing 25% of the workers in certain industries to the entire industry. This means that a few big unions, or more precisely a handful of trade-union bureaucrats, could make the contracts for millions of workers. (On the other hand, the result of this high degree of bureaucratic centralization might be to prepare the way for general strikes on an unprecedented scale. Time will tell.)

-Restrictions on resigning from, and joining, trade unions. (This meant severely restricting the rights of workers to change their trade union affiliation and consolidating the bureaucratic structure.)

-In order to be able to sign contracts, unions have to represent at least 10% of workers in an industry. (The aim is to prevent more than one trade union in the same work place. The old system has been criticized as creating "trade-union inflation" by the bosses.)

-Only a minimum of seven unions can form a confederation. (With this they are trying to form the conditions for a "single trade-union confederation.")

## THE POLITICAL EDUCATION OF THE WORKING CLASS

It is useful to take a look at some of the changes that have been developing in the last twenty years in the ideological, political, cultural, and moral life of the working class.

The leading cadres of the Turkish working class have played an extremely important role in the vast social struggle that has shaken the country over the past twenty years. On the basis of the rich experience of the economic, political, and ideological struggles of these two decades, the working class has risen to the threshhold of becoming an experienced proletariat with correspondingly greater capacity for struggle.

This degree of political maturity is not the result only of its own experience in struggle. It has learned lessons from the radicalization of broad layers of the petty bourgeoisie and youth.

In the last twenty years, there has been an extraordinary politicization and mobilization of the middle classes, the petty bourgeoisie, and especially the youth. These have produced an extremely rich experience. Hundreds of thousands of people, most often in the name of socialism, have participated in myriad forms of political struggle, from the most basic agitation to various forms of armed struggle, huge mass demonstrations, unofficial strikes, and occasional street battles. And in conditions of relative legality this experience represented a higher level of consciousness than the sort of struggles would have in illegal conditions.

Of course, illusions also developed, and there was disillusionment and demoralization. But despite that, all this rich experience will be an important factor in the future in the rise of the struggle of the working class to new heights.

The Turkish working class has been subjected to the same sort of ideological attack conducted by bourgeoisies throughout the capitalist world. It cannot be said that in the last twenty years much of an antidote to this has been produced. This, of course, is the result of the newness and weakness of the Turkish Marxist movement.

In connection with this weakness, a few things should be said about the relationship between the workers movement and the left currents. The workers' experience of general political organization lagged far behind the experience they gained in trade-union struggles.

The spread of political movements into the ranks of worker militants was essentially a development of the 1970s. But comparing the strength of the left political currents in general with the strength these currents had in the working class produces some interesting results.

*The Turkish military junta (DR)*

Before September 12, all the self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist groups can be said without exaggeration to have had periodicals with a total circulation of over 200 thousand. But the number of worker readers could not have been more than 10 to 20 thousand. Students, teachers, civil servants, and the unemployed ("unemployed" in the sense of not having worked yet, young people coming from various strata of the petty bourgeoisie) were incomparably far ahead of the working class in mass political action and organization.

This predominance of the middle layers was a feature of all political tendencies, including the left currents that existed in the working class.

I am not overlooking the fact that after 1975 the illegal Turkish Communist Party won a number of elements in the DISK bureaucracy as well as a not inconsiderable number of working-class activists to its ranks. Despite the great loss of credibility by the CP inspired current in the bureaucracy, and the general ebb in the workers movement this caused, the influence of the Communist Party among workers affiliated to DISK ( and at the same time in the bureaucracy of the DISK) is something that has to be taken seriously. Indeed, a lot of other vanguard workers joined various political currents.

But among the members and sympathizers of the Communist Party, as well as of the other big organizations and currents, workers were a small minority.

It can scarcely be said that, apart from acquainting the workers in a general way with socialism, all these political organizations and currents played a positive role in the political education of the working class. In particular, from a theoretical standpoint, these groups were sunk in ideological confusion, and cannot be said to have played a positive role.

In general, the public organs of the left currents, the union organs that were controlled by them, and the educational efforts of their militants within the unions remained within the framework of bourgeois methods of thought. But they did not fail to introduce the workers to new questions, new conceptions, and new

ideas. After a ten-year period of stagnation, this represented an extraordinary leap.

Moreover, with the big increase in the translation, publishing, and distribution of Marxist literature, a lot of Marxist works reached working-class readers.

The Turkish population is predominantly young. Some 60% of the population is under the age of nineteen, and this is also true of the working class. This youthfulness was one of the important factors in the openness of the vanguard to new ideas.

On the other hand, it would be correct to say that the working class represents a culturally advanced section of the society. Some statistics from eight years ago can give an idea of this.

Interviews with 56 thousand workers in the engineering and metals industry produced the picture shown by the following table:

| | |
|---|---|
| Unable to Either Read or Write | 3.69 % |
| Able Only to Read and Write | 13.68 % |
| Primary School Diploma (5 year course) | 69.27 % |
| High School (8 year course) | 6.05 % |
| Preparatory School (11 year course) | 6.79 % |
| University Education | 0.52 % |

In this industry in 1974, about 13% of the workers had been working for more than ten years. Today, these older and educationally more disadvantaged workers would be retired or about to retire.

So, even these statistics collected eight years ago among workers in big industrial cities showed an insignificant number of illiterates.

Moreover, beginning in the early 1970s, the number of preparatory school graduates who did not go on to university was every year in the hundreds of thousands. These masses of youth were destined for jobs in the technically advanced plants. In fact, a lot of plants are making a high school or preparatory school diploma a condition for employment.

All these indicators of the educational level of the working class show that there is a firm basis for the development of political maturity.

Furthermore, following the rapid growth of capitalist relations and institutions in the country and 55 years of secularism, the influence of religion on the working class (in particular in comparison with the more backward sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the peasants) has become weak.

An indication of this weakness of religion among workers is the fact that HAK-Is and MISK, the first a religious labor confederation and the second a fascist one, were able to attract only a few tens of thousands of workers. In the big cities in particular, "religious"workers are only a tiny minority. In fact, since the bourgeoisie was to a certain extent aware of this fact, religious themes and instruments have not been much used in the ideological attack on the working class.

## THE ROLE OF THE FASCIST MOVEMENT

The fact is that in the 1970s, the world's strongest fascist movement appeared in Turkey. The fascist party showed its ability to get more than a million votes. The fascist youth movement had thousands of members. The fact that in the last few years, this movement murdered about 3,000 progressives and radicals indicates how strong it was.

Moreover, for a period of more than two years following 1975, the fascist party was in the government coalition. So, it was able to root itself at various levels of the state machine. In particular, it gained not inconsiderable strength in the army.

However, despite all this, the fascist movement's assault on the working class was comparatively feeble. In the first place, the fascist movement was relatively weak in the big industrial cities. For example, the fascist party's overall vote potential was 10%, but it got only 3% of the vote in Istanbul.

The fascists had total control over a great many cities and towns in Anatolia, considerable organized striking power, and support by the state forces. But they were not able to extend their domination to Istanbul and most other industrial cities, outside of a few peripheral areas.

Of course, the fascist movement has been able to make serious attacks on certain positions of the working class, and in some places won significant influence. For example, in 1975-76, major fascist attacks were made on the 19,000 workers in the Iskenderun iron and steel works in southern Anatolia, the association of 6,000 workers at the Aluminym works in a town in central Anatolia, and the 7,000 workers at the Taris textile factory in the major industrial city of Izmir, and in the Bursa automobile factory.

In these attacks, about ten workers were killed. And the advanced union organizations in Iskenderun and the Aluminyum workers were defeated. But the successes the reactionary unions achieved in these areas with the help of the fascists were not followed up by other successes in the big cities. They were not a factor in the decline and demoralization of the workers movement.

The fascist movement's attacks on advanced sectors of the population outside of the industrial working class, however, were very extensive. The great bulk of those murdered by the fascists were students, white-collar workers, and teachers.

Since the fascist assaults were directed at targets mainly outside the trade-union struggles, to a certain extent the working class stood aside from the anti-fascist struggle. Thus, it can be said that in the area of struggle against fascism, the experience of the working class remained insufficient.

* * *

Thus, the September 12 military dictatorship is attacking a working class with a considerable tradition. Can it drive the Turkish working class, which despite its newness won unusually strong positions for a working class in a neocolonial country, back to the stagnation that existed before 1960, back to a low level of political consciousness?

Can this energetic and militant working class be kept penned up for a long period by repressive laws, oppression, and violence? To believe that, you would have to be an extremely optimistic dictatorship or an extremely pessimistic revolutionist. ■

# Against the rightwing offensive in the Japanese labour movement

by Yohichi SAKAI

In a previous article in *International Viewpoint*, I explained how the ruling Liberal Democrat Party (LDP) won a big political victory in the June 1980 elections. This victory allowed the right-wing company unions to take the initiative within the Japanese labour movement, displacing the reformist Sohyo federation leadership. This current had held a central position in the Japanese trade-union movement since the 1950s.

The present article will look at the political retreat of the reformist trade-union leaderships and the fight for an alternative class-struggle leadership in the Japanese union movement.

## RIGHT-WING COMPANY UNIONS TAKE THE OFFENSIVE

The company unions launched a vigorous campaign to 'unify' the trade-union movement under their leadership. In this project they had the full backing of the bourgeoisie and the LDP government.

To understand what this so-called unity project implied, it is necessary to look at the composition of the trade-union movement.

There are three major trade-union confederations. They organise 12.76 million workers from a total workforce of 56 million. There are 39.71 million wage earners, 11.35 million of whom are in manufacturing. These three confederations are: Sohyo (the General Council of Japanese Trade Unions), Churitsu-Roren (Coordination Conference of Neutral Trade Unions), and Domei (Japanese Confederation of Labour). The composition and relative size of these federations are illustrated in Table 1.

**Major Trade Union Confederations**
(1980/thousands)

| | |
|---|---|
| *Sohyo* : total | 4,551 |
| Public/government sector | 3,189 |
| Private sector | 1,362 |
| *Churitsu-Roren* : total (almost all private sector) | 1,357 |
| *Shinsanbetu* : total (very recently combined with Churitsu-Roren) | 62 |
| *Domei* : total | 2,162 |
| Private sector | 1,986 |
| Public/government sector | 176 |
| *The rest* | 4,625 |
| *Total Japanese unionists* | 12,757 |

The majority of the Sohyo bureaucracy is closely linked to the Socialist Party and the federation constitutes the trade-union base of the SP. The Communist Party forms a substantial minority current within the confederation.

The level of unionsation among public sector workers is very high, and this is where Sohyo has the bulk of its members. It is the dominant federation in this sector; organising in the national railways, the postal system, public education, and local administration.

In the private sector Sohyo organises mainly the smaller engineering plants and in private bus and railway companies. The right-wing company unions control the steel and chemical workers.

Within the Churitsu-Roren, the key industrial federation is that of the electrical and electronic workers. Although Churitsu-Roren is led by pro-management forces, it had a joint campaign committee with the Sohyo for the annual spring wage increase campaign throughout the 1970s.

The Churitsu-Roren unions support the right wing of the Socialist Party in elections. They organise almost exclusively in the private sector.

The Domei is a straightforward anti-communist, right-wing union federation. Its apparatus is closely linked to the Democratic Socialist Party, which is a right-wing social-democratic party. The DSP takes a strongly pro-US imperialism line and gives de facto support to the bourgeois LDP government. Like Churitsu-Roren, Domei is based mainly in the private sector. It organises primarily in shipbuilding, the car industry, shipping, and textile industry. The Domei is extremely weak in the public sector.

There are a number of cross federation organisations. The International Metalworkers Federation—Japanese Council (IMF-JC) and the Kagaku Rokyo (Conference of Chemical Workers Unions) are national consultative bodies. They organise the pro-management union forces in the metal and engineering, and chemical industries. The IMF-JC was set up in 1964, comprising the big company unions in shipbuilding, heavy engineering, cars, and electrical goods, across the trade-union confederations. It had 1.87 million affiliated membership in 1980. The Kagaku-Rokyo was formed in the same way in 1980. It has 655,000 workers.

From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s the Sohyo, the SP, and the CP formed a solid reformist bloc in the working class in opposition to the LDP government and the DSP. The right-wing DSP has always been a minority, and the SP-CP bloc the political majority, in the working class.

However, there is a discrepancy between the balance of forces in the trade-union organisations and at the electoral level. The social-democratic reformists in the Sohyo are entrenched in the public sector. The right-wing pro-management forces have their strongholds in the steel and chemical unions of the federation. Thus, within the trade-union organisations, there is a fifty-fifty split between the right wing and the reformists. However, as Table 2 reveals, within the working class as a whole, the Sohyo-SP-CP bloc is dominant.

**Parliamentary representation of the SP, CP, DSP, SDU**
(number of lower house seats)

| | 1958 | 1960(*) | 1963 | 1967 | 1969 | 1972 | 1976 | 1979 | 1980 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DSP | | 17 | 23 | 30 | 31 | 19 | 29 | 36 | 32 |
| SP | 166 | 145 | 144 | 140 | 90 | 118 | 123 | 107 | 107 |
| SDU(**) | | | | | | | | 2 | 3 |
| CP | 1 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 14 | 38 | 19 | 41 | 29 |

*(*) Between 1958 and 1960, the DSP (Democratic Socialist Party) split from the SP.*
*(**) The Social Democratic Union, a rightwing split from the SP in 1979.*

The right wing saw their chance to go on the offensive after the June 1980 victory of the LDP government.

In September 1980 the 'Committee to Promote Labour Unity' was set up. It included the presidents of five industrial federations in the private sector, and one national union, across the major federations.

This committee drafted a programme, that was straight class-collaborationism, in close collaboration with the top Sohyo leadership, for the projected new national trade union centre. The immediate objective of this move is to unify all the unions and federations in the private sector under a single national centre, and thus isolate the workers in the public and government sectors.

This move comes at a time when the government has made it a major priority to make cuts in the public sector. The right-wing company unions com-

pletely support this so-called rationalisation, having already collaborated with their own managements over rationalisation in the private sector.

If the unity move is successful it would isolate the workers in the public sector who are faced with massive cuts in jobs. These amount to the loss of about 575,000 jobs in the following sectors; rail 74,000 jobs lost from a total workforce of 420,000; 50,000 postal workers cut; 65,000 jobs lost in telecommunication; and 400,000 redundancies in local administration from a total of 1,950,000. Support for the 'unity' project in the unions from the top Sohyo leadership is a logical result of their capitulation to the bosses on this massive attack on their members' jobs.

The second objective of the right-wing campaign is to break up the traditional bloc of the Sohyo, the SP, and the CP, and to form a new right-wing social-democratic majority in the Japanese working class, which would radically change the character of the SP.

The president of the steel unions federation is one of the key promoters of this campaign. He has expressed their aims very clearly:

-to eliminate Marxism and the concept of the class struggle from the SP, particularly to destroy the Socialist Society faction, and transform the SP into a party like the German SPD, possibly leading to a fusion with the DSP;

-to promote nuclear power stations to rescue the country from an energy crisis;

-to abandon the struggle against rationalisation and the 'industrial restructuring' policy;

-to revamp the national railway and other unprofitable public corporations as capitalist concerns.

Opposition to the unity campaign and the proposed rationalisation of the public sector stimulated a process of political recomposition with the Sohyo-CP-SP bloc.

In June 1981, 'The Committee for the Promotion of Labour Unity' issued its public appeal for action, together with its class-collaborationist programme, as the basis of unity. Broad opposition movements began to develop in the ranks of the Sohyo unions in the latter half of 1981.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF OPPOSITION

July 1981: At the congress of the chemical workers federation, 120 delegates out of 314 opposed the unity move. Most of this opposition came from the small to medium-sized factories. At the annual congress of the private railway and bus workers, union delegates from the medium-sized companies expressed their opposition. The Sohyo annual congress could not decide. The CP-led unions and federations were strongly opposed, knowing that they would be sacrificed immediately to this 'unity'. The SP-affiliated leaderships were split. Opposition to the right-wing unity call came mainly from the small to middle-sized plants.


*Japanese workers in solidarity with Solidarnosc (DR)*

August 1981: Three advisors of the federation issued an open letter to the Sohyo leadership, opposing the right-wing trade-union unity call. These three were: M. Iwai, former general secretary, and leader of the Socialist Society in the Socialist Party; K. Ota, former president, represents the chemical workers opposition and leader of a small group in the SP with close relations with the CP; and M. Ichikawa, also a former president, and previously president of the union for employees at US military bases, who is a sponsor of the *Rohdoh Johoh (Labour Information)* fortnightly. This action represented the left-reformist opposition to the unity call.

The Sohyo union of engineering workers, Zenkoku-Kinzoku, was unable to agree at its congress on what attitude to take to the unity call, given the differences within the SP, and the opposition of the CP and the left wing.

September 1981: Six Sohyo federations—from the dock, shipbuilding, commercial and paper manufacturing industries and taxi drivers and printers—formed a bloc against the selective policy of the unity campaign, aimed at excluding CP-led unions.

October 1981: The private sector federations affiliated to Sohyo met to discuss the unity campaign. There was not an overall majority in favour. The vote went:10 for, 4 against, 10 abstentions. The four federations which voted against were CP-led. Those which abstained were dominated by left reformists in the SP. However, they were relatively small, under 20,000 members in each. In general, all CP or left-SP unions and federations organise workers in small to medium-sized plants, or are the minority unions in big companies.

November 1981: The national federation of teachers unions held a special Central Committee to discuss the unity campaign. The president of the federation is also the president of Sohyo. Out of 235 members who attended the special session, 165 were SP supporters and 70 were CP supporters. The SP supporters were split on the question with 117 for unity and 48 against. Together with the CP, this opposition was sufficient to defeat the unity proposal.

This outcome of the meeting has a significant effect among the Sohyo unions in the public sector. The national railway workers union and the federation of municipal employees took a 'wait and see' position. Thus, when Sohyo held a special congress on the question, the situation was totally confused and the congress could not come to a clear decision.

## SOHYO LEADERS MANOEUVRE

Between November and December the debate heated up. Meetings of union activists opposed to the right-wing unity proposal were organised in many cities by the *Rohdoh Johoh (Labour Information)* current. The bureaucratic leadership of Sohyo pulled out all the stops to manoeuvre the federation into accepting the proposal.

On December 7, an enlarged council meeting of the Sohyo was held at which the federation leadership forced through acceptance of the unity proposal despite strong opposition. One condition was made: that the selective exclusion of unions was rejected. Some Sohyo unions and federations were given the go-ahead to join the Preparatory Committee for Labour Unity. These comprised about 460,000 union members, in steel, chemicals, non-ferrous mining, telecommunication, sub-contracting, and forwarding agencies.

Thus, the Preparatory Committee for Labour Unity in the Private Sector was set up on December 14, 1981. It comprised 39 industrial federations and national unions across the three major trade union federations. After it was established, the engineering workers union, Zenkoku-Kinzoku; the private bus and railway workers union; and others also joined, despite the opposition of minorities in the unions. By February 1981, only the dockers union and the printers federation within Sohyo remained outside the committee along with the four CP-led unions/federations.

The project of the Preparatory Committee is to set up a confederation of national unions and industrial federations that would organise around 4.5 million private sector workers.

We have seen that, despite strong opposition, the overwhelming majority of the reformist Sohyo leadership have accepted the initiative of the right wing on trade union unity. This reveals the deep crisis of the Sohyo leadership, which it has entered into as a result of its suc-

cessive retreats in the latter half of the 1970s. The right-wing pro-management forces in the private sector are now on the offensive and the Sohyo reformists are unable to counter them.

The CP-led Liaison Committee of Trade Unions for Promotion of the United Front decided, at a congress held just after the establishment of the Preparatory Committee, to strengthen its own functioning. This Liaison Committee is composed of CP-led federations, unions, and union branches, mostly within Sohyo. The project of the Liaison Committee is to set up a 'working class and democratic national centre' for trade unions.

The current of union activists organised around *Rohdoh Johoh* (*Labour Information*) had opposed the unity campaign from the beginning. The start of the *Rohdoh Johoh* fortnightly journal in 1977, and the efforts to organise around it, represented a conscious attempt to build an independent class-struggle current that could respond to the rightward moves of the Sohyo leadership in the late 1970s.

### THE FIGHT FOR AN ALTERNATIVE LEADERSHIP

The *Rohdoh Johoh* current, despite its limited presence, intervened within Sohyo against the right-wing unity campaign and the capitulationist course of the federation leadership. During the latter half of 1981, a closer relationship was established between the *Rohdoh Johoh* current and the three advisors of Sohyo who had issued the open letter against the unity campaign. A number of actions were organised jointly by *Rohdoh Johoh* and the Sohyo left reformists.

The forces who organised these actions and the CP-led organisations in Sohyo became a de facto opposition bloc within the federation. During the latter half of 1981, *Rohdoh Johoh* became a recognised political current within the federation for the first time.

Despite this important gain, *Rohdoh Johoh* remains weak at the level of the national organisation. Only inside the engineering workers union, Zenkoku-Kinzoku, has it begun to be established as a nation-wide opposition to the reformist leadership. In this union, it has won support from 106 of the total 1,300 branches. The CP has support in about 300 branches.

The *Rohdoh Johoh* current has pockets of influence among shipyard workers, telecommunication workers, workers in the national and private railways, postal workers, municipal employees, teachers, dockers, etc. At its sixth annual conference, this year, 1,236 trade union activists were present.

There is a consolidation of the right wing in the private sector around the Preparatory Committee and the Sohyo leadership is continuing to pursue its class collaborationist course. However, struggles against the cutbacks in the public sector remain on the agenda, and opposition currents remain among the engineering workers, chemical workers, private bus and railway workers, and in other sectors.

In this situation, the traditional hold of the reformist Sohyo leadership is liable to fragment more and more. The task for the *Rohdoh Johoh* current is to intervene in this process to build itself as a national class-struggle tendency—a unified workers left opposition in the trade unions.

The orientation of the Japanese Trotskyists is to build the *Rohdoh Johoh* current as an alternative leadership for a current of class struggle workers through united front activity with the left in Sohyo and the SP. And to develop a bloc with the CP and its trade union activists against the right-wing and the class-collaborationists in Sohyo.

We fight to build the *Rohdoh Johoh* as an opposition movement not only within the trade unions but also at the level of all political struggles—the anti-militarist struggle, international solidarity activities with East Asian workers and peasants, and with the Polish workers of Solidarnosc. ■

# To our readers...

This is the eighth issue of *International Viewpoint* that has appeared, including our pilot Issue No. Zero. It is the second since we have gone over to a word-processing system.

We are still just beginning. This magazine is a political project, as we explained in the pilot issue, and that means we had to try to get ahead of ourselves at every stage, learn as we went, and learn from our readers. We had to move faster than we intended to keep up with events.

We have intended ever since the second issue to include a letters column, since from the very beginning we started getting letters from all over the world. But the pressure of international political events has always been too great to get such a column in; there were always too many other things.

But as we are improving our organization, we should be able to do a letters column in the next issue, if there is not a new revolution or a new war or other major new crisis somewhere before then. That is, there is at least a 50% chance that we will.

In the meantime, we can give a few samples from letters we have gotten.

A reader from Dublin wrote:

"I've just had a look through No. 1....I particularly like the thematic editorial linking the various articles with a common thread.

"It was encouraging to read of the third world reaction against the Polish Stalinists and the exemplary activity of many of our sections. We could do a lot more here than so far has been achieved, but I see the effort to push *IV* to a broader circulation here as part of that process."

A reader from New York wrote: "I have recently become acquainted with the publications of the IVth International (*International Viewpoint*, *Inprecor*). I would like to know if the International publishes a bulletin in Spanish also directed to the Spanish speaking countries....

"I am inquiring because I am in touch with many Latin American leftists who are only now acquainting themselves with Trotskyist literature. As you know, the Latin American left has mostly been ideologically and politically dominated by Maoism and Guevarism and the crisis in Poland has provoked a questioning of traditional currents, it is crucial that the ideas of the anti-Stalinist sectors become more readily available."

A reader from Montreal wrote:

"I want to congratulate you on the contents and design of *International Viewpoint*....

"I hope that you will have regular coverage of the women's movement, of the debates taking place within the socialist feminist movement, etc....

"I hope that in the next couple of issues there will be coverage of B. Devlin's electoral campaign....Irish support is quite significant in Quebec and English Canada."

We did have an interview with Bernadette on her campaign in the very next issue, Issue No. 1.

We also got letters from Israel, India, along with a number of other countries.

The letters were not all praise, either. One reader from San Antonio, U.S.A. took us to task for publishing an an article on Cuba in Issue No. 0 criticizing the limits of workers democracy there. We think that controversy is part of revolutionary politics. That, among other things, is why we are interested in articles that deal with the question of workers democracy. But more analytical articles are needed on this.

So, we hope that by now it is clear what we are trying to do with *International Viewpoint*, and how that suits the needs of revolutionary socialists throughout the world. Please write us and let us know what you think. ■

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