

# International VIEWPOINT

ISSUE No 70

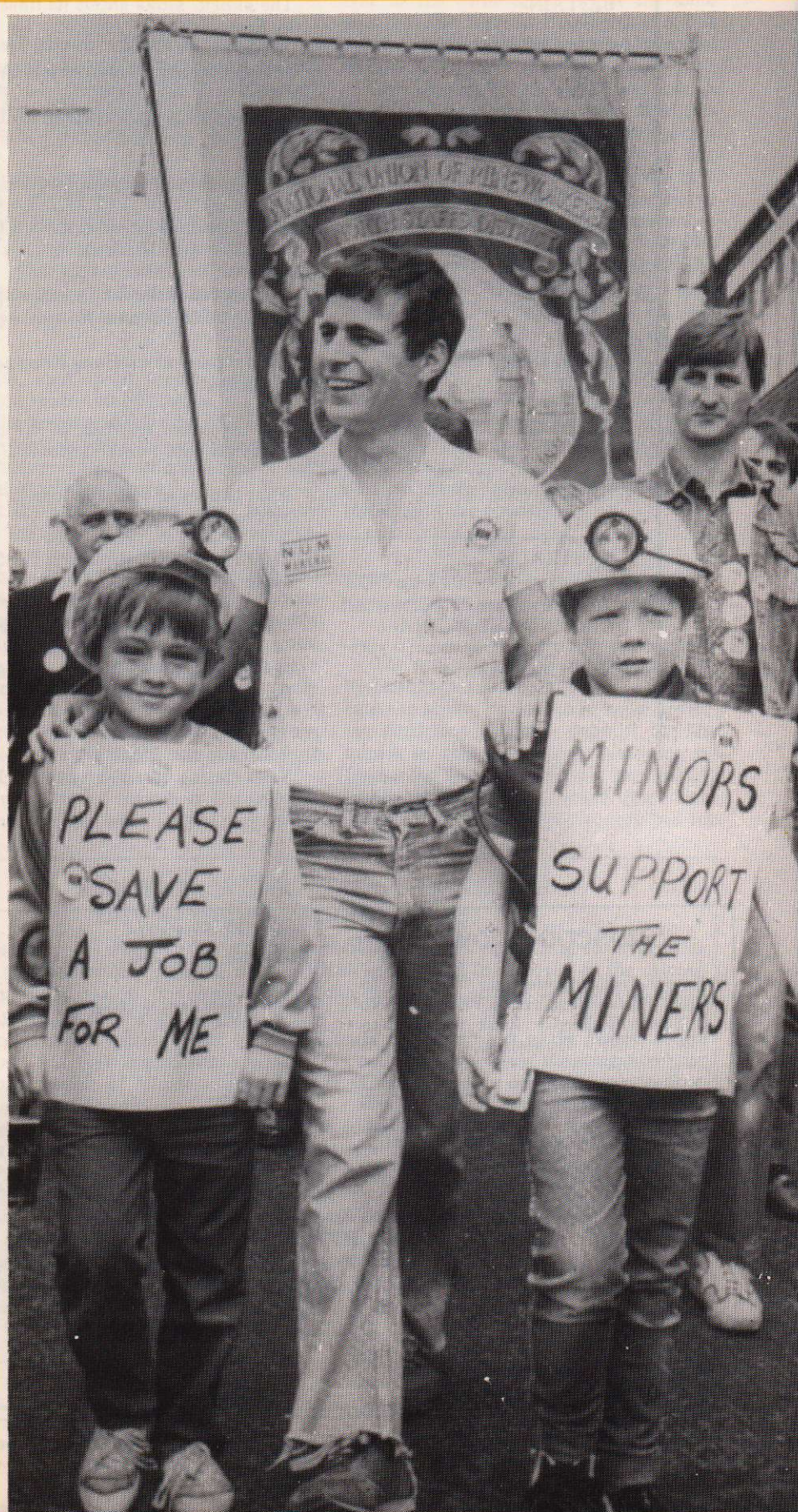
25 February 1985

**British miners  
fight on...  
backs to  
the wall**

**Yugoslav  
dissidents win  
partial victory**

**Indian politics  
after Congress-I  
landslide**

**Hong Kong's fate:  
an internationalist  
position**



# International Viewpoint

ISSN: 0294-2925

Fortnightly review of news and analysis published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

BRITAIN	The miners' strike enters its final phase by <i>Steve Roberts</i>	3
	Fourth International discusses the miners' strike	4
YUGOSLAVIA	Belgrade trials mark setback for the repressors by <i>Branko Krizman</i>	6
	Interview with <i>Pavlusko Imsirovic</i>	8
INDIA	Rajiv's landslide, how much did it change? Interview with <i>M. Navid</i>	11
JAPAN	Women denounce fake equal employment opportunity law from <i>AMPO</i> , Saitama Women Against War	15
HONG KONG	Joint statement on Hong Kong accord Document	19
LIBERATION THEOLOGY	The 'revolutionary virus' of the gospel Interview with <i>Father Antoine Gisler</i>	21
UNITED STATES	What happened to the unions in 1984 by <i>Frank Lovell</i>	22
AUSTRALIA	Fighting war and poverty in 1985 by <i>Steve Painter</i>	24
AROUND THE WORLD	El Salvador, Italy, Kurdistan, the Netherlands	26
NEW CALEDONIA	For self determination for the Kanak people Document	28

News closing date February 18, 1985

## Subscribe now!

French francs preferred. Cheques to PEC. Postal transfers to PEC, CCP No 2 322 42T Paris. Bank transfers to PEC, BNP Robespierre, Account 230179/90.

Sterling: Cheques to International Viewpoint. Bank transfers to Williams & Glyns Bank, Account 14612874, Code 16-00-58, Islington, London.

Mail all subs to: IV, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES :	6 months	1 year
Surface mail, all countries	95FF	175FF
Air mail		
Europe, Middle East, N. Africa	105FF	195FF
The Americas, Africa	130FF	240FF
Asia	145FF	270FF

### Exchange rates :

FF	95	105	130	145	175	195	240	270
£	9	10	12	14	16	18	22	25
US dol.	16	19	22	25	31	37	42	47
Can dol.	19	21	26	29	37	40	49	55

### BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

LAST NAME ..... FIRST NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... COUNTRY ..... CODE .....

RENEWAL

SUBSCRIPTION

## 1983 collection

There are a few 1983 collections of *International Viewpoint* left. Rush your orders now! We are starting to prepare the

## 1984 collection

of which there will only be a very limited number. Please send your orders now.

The cost for each collection including surface postage is 100 French francs. Send orders to:

IV, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France.

# The miners' strike enters its final phase

The struggle continues

The British miners' strike is entering its final phase. After 11 months on national strike against pit closures the possibility of victory has faded. Instead the miners' leaders demand is for an 'honourable settlement'. However, under pressure from the Thatcher government, the coal employers are refusing negotiations. The British prime minister is aiming to crush the National Union of Mineworkers.

A complicated series of moves has begun allegedly designed to promote a negotiated settlement to the dispute. The NUM has made concessions for example agreeing to propose amendments to the National Coal Board's proposed agenda, rather than rejecting it outright, since it contains the principle of the Board's 'right to manage.' The union still got no answer and Scargill used that to show that the government is not interested in negotiating.

Steve ROBERTS

The challenge represented by the union was clear enough. Ten years ago the miners had brought down the Conservative government of Edward Heath. From the 1972 and 1974 strikes a new layer of militants emerged, dedicated to using the industrial strength of their union not only to defend their own jobs, but also to bring about more general social change in society. Of these militants Arthur Scargill was the most prominent, winning the post of national president by a 70 per cent majority three years ago.

The announcement of the closure of 20 pits and the loss of 20,000 jobs was the signal for the beginning of national strike action on March 12, 1984. The courage and determination of the miners and their families has made this the longest industrial dispute in Britain, drawing in widespread national and international support.

Today, however, most striking miners are pessimistic that their goal of a total withdrawal of the pit closure plan can be achieved. This assessment is reflected in the NUM leadership's demand for an honourable settlement and for negotiations to begin 'without preconditions'.

However, the National Coal Board (the employers in the nationalised industry) are refusing negotiations until the NUM has given a written undertaking that it will respect the NCB's right to close down uneconomic (that is, non-profitable) pits.

The Coal Board are well aware that such an undertaking would amount to a complete surrender by the NUM. The union has opposed such closures on the basis that the profitability of the industry has to be assessed as a whole and that state subsidies should be used to keep such pits open. Such subsidies would be less than the social costs (unemployment

benefits, start-up of replacement industries, etc.) incurred by closure.

If the union concedes the NCB's point, the present closure list could be extended to a further 75 pits with the loss of half the industry's workforce.

But the union is under heavy pressure from the 'back to work' movement, which has seen its numbers swell to a probable level of 60,000 out of 180,000 miners, back at work. The exact figures are very difficult to calculate since double counting by the NCB is common and miners who have returned to work have since rejoined the strike. Likewise, only in the areas where a majority of miners have gone back to work, like Nottingham and Leicester, are significant quantities of coal being mined.

More worrying though is the growing tendency of the areas in which working

miners are in a majority to break away from the NUM. While it is doubtful that even a majority of the working miners support such break-aways, they pose a grave threat to the integrity of the NUM, since there have been persistent reports that if the NCB can claim a majority of miners back at work, it will simply declare the strike over and start to negotiate with the scabs.

Such a development would repeat the experience of the miners after their defeat in the 1926 strike when the same area of the union, Nottingham, led a break-away to form the so-called 'Spencer' union.

This is clearly an experience which Thatcher would like to repeat. But how has the miners' union come to face such a desperate situation? In October of last year the NUM had just received the support of the TUC and the unconditional solidarity of the Labour Party conference.

Since then there have been sporadic actions, largely inspired by rank and file workers in solidarity with the miners such as the strike by railwayworkers on January 17, and the 'day of action' on February 11, organised by the local regions of the TUC. (See *International Viewpoint*, No 68, January 28, 1985.) Equally strong support has come from the rank and file of the Labour Party which has played a leading role in setting up the 400 plus solidarity committees which exist throughout the country.

## TUC and Labour Party leadership have tried to suffocate the strike

The role of the TUC and Labour Party leadership has been, however, to suffocate the strike: on the one hand providing sufficient financial support for the miners to hold out, but on the other, refusing the industrial action, particularly in the power stations, which could have brought cuts in electricity supply and the

### Declaration of the Fourth International on the British miners' strike

*Militants of the Fourth International gathered at this Twelfth Congress salute the long and determined struggle of the British miners and the women in the mining communities against the closure of pits and against the attacks on workers' rights led by the Thatcher government.*

*Every effort is being made by the militants and supporters of the Fourth International and their organisations in over fifty countries to explain the struggle of the National Union of Mineworkers and their allies to workers and oppressed people throughout the world.*

*We are proud to identify ourselves in solidarity with your struggle, which we know has inspired millions of working people throughout the world.*

*We recognise the crucial part played by women in the mining communities, who have provided vital support and inspiration.*

*Your determination has given new confidence to working people in many countries to continue and step up their own battles against oppression. Your struggle in itself is already a great victory for the oppressed.*

*We are committed to continue our efforts to mobilise the labour movement in political and material solidarity with you.*

*Victory to the miners!  
Down with the Tory government!  
Workers of the world unite!*

certain victory of the strike.

The Labour leadership too has played a hypocritical role, 'supporting' the miners' demands, but at the same time condemning the methods by which the miners have attempted to make their strike effective through picketing.

The combination of these efforts has meant the virtual isolation of the miners as far as industrial action has been concerned.

Few miners would blame Scargill for the sorry state that the strike finds itself in today. From the beginning he has warned his rank and file against any reliance on the TUC to win victory, counterposing the necessity for the miners to rely only on their own struggle. This type of class-struggle strategy represents a complete break with the class collaboration practised by British trade union leaders for the last 60 years.

But it has its own weaknesses too. The NUM leadership did not give priority to building the cross-sectoral organisation of the left before and during the strike which could have brought concerted pressure on all the union leaderships to take action in the strike. An all-trade union left conference has been organised by the Broad Left Organising Committee, but it will take place in March, too late to save the strike.

Similarly absent has been any serious challenge to the Labour leaders who both locally and nationally have so shamefully betrayed the strike. This aspect will become more important in the period ahead.

Whatever the result of the strike, struggles still lie ahead. Starting in March, local authorities controlled by the Labour Party and municipal workers will enter into struggle against the government's attacks on local autonomy and finances. Still other battles will erupt as the Thatcher government tries to apply its draconian new trade union laws.

Inevitably, many workers' eyes will turn to the general elections due in 1988 as the only way to remove Thatcher. The question of elections has also been raised in relation to Thatcher's disastrous handling of the economy. This has now led to a dramatic rise in interest rates in an attempt to keep sterling stable in the face of falling North Sea oil revenues. This rise in interest rates threatens to throttle the pitifully weak degree of economic recovery of the British economy.

Under these circumstances the new left wing in the British labour movement, called into being by the miners' strike, can respond by presenting an alternative to the class collaboration of the present leadership of the Labour Party. Such an alternative would support all the present and future struggles against the Thatcher government, reject any alliances with other bourgeois forces and present anti-capitalist policies such as those fought for by the miners in the course of their dispute. One result of such a campaign would be the entry of a whole number of new deputies into Parliament including those from the far left of the Party.

The essential condition for any polit-

ical advances of the left must be its organisation from top to bottom inside the labour movement around a class struggle programme. This could be one positive outcome of the miners' strike. The miners may not at this stage be able to achieve the total victory they have

been hoping for, but the left in Britain must live up to the example they have set and continue the fight. Nationally and internationally, the labour movement must continue to fight to defend the NUM in its battle for jobs and for trade union freedoms. ■

## Fourth International discusses the miners' strike

At its recent congress the Fourth International held a special meeting on the British miners' strike to discuss the current stage of the strike and the international solidarity campaign.

Supporters from all over Europe gathered to hear a report on the present stage of the strike and an assessment of the solidarity campaign. Below we reprint the text of that report and following that some extracts from the discussion which followed outlining the impact of the strike in different countries and the work that has been done.

I will start out by reminding people of some of the facts of the dispute. Approximately 147,000 miners have been involved in this strike in a union comprising 180,000 members. During the period of the strike there have been in the region of 20,000 arrests and 9,000 of those have already been found guilty. As a result, 600 people have been sacked because of the charges. Ten thousand remain to have their cases heard, including, unfortunately, three young miners on a murder charge. In the course of the strike six miners have died.

Just these statistics reveal how important this strike has been within the class struggle. From the point of view of the British class struggle this strike is the most important since the 1926 general strike, though this was under different circumstances.

The most important feature of the strike has been the role of the Scargill leadership of the NUM because unlike in every strike of major national significance in recent years, this is a leadership of a national union that genuinely wants to win the strike and pursues every possible means to that end.

Although there have been some debates about the precise tactics in the strike, the one accusation that no one can make against Scargill is that he has tried to sell out the strike. Whatever the outcome, whether there is a defeat or a victory, it will not be because Scargill betrayed the strike. This is very important for us. It means there is a section of the leadership of the labour movement which plays a class struggle role. Our perspectives, therefore, are very straight forward: we want to generalise the kind of leadership that exists within the NUM to the whole of the labour movement and to every issue that confronts the working class in its immediate struggle. The existence of such a class struggle leadership on this issue inside the British labour

movement means that an important element in building a class struggle left wing is clearly in place. Our orientation to the leadership that has led this strike is one of complete non-sectarianism, one of complete solidarity and support and is one of linking ourselves and our political current to the struggle that they have waged and to the alternative they have put forward. We seek with them to generalise that to the whole of the labour movement.

This will continue to have an enormous impact on the labour movement after the strike because all those who are supporting the strike will draw a very simple lesson out of the strike. The issue that is posed in the British labour movement is do you want a leadership of the likes of Kinnock [the Labour Party leader] and Willis [the present leader of the Trades Union Congress] or do you want to fight for a leadership like that of Arthur Scargill?

### The choice that divides the labour movement

That is the choice that divides and will continue to divide the entire British labour movement and the Labour Party itself. Because when a balance sheet is drawn of the strike, it will ask was Scargill correct in his answer to Thatcher and to the austerity drive of the ruling class? Was he correct to answer that we have to wage the most ferocious class struggle and the most ferocious industrial struggle to turn this round? Was he correct and was the strike leadership correct? Or, were Willis and Kinnock correct when they said we should negotiate, we should talk to the Tories, we should avoid class struggle; it is doomed to failure?

The next most important aspect of the strike, in my view, is the role of women in relation to the strike. The fact that when this strike began nobody

would have believed the mobilisation of the women that occurred in support of the strike. In fact one of the things which the government quite clearly gambled on and has traditionally gambled on is the fact that they thought the wives of those on strike would act as a pressure and could be mobilised in a way that we have seen in the past in the British labour movement, to pressurise their husbands to go back to work.

On the contrary, within the first few weeks of the strike the miners' wives organised themselves as miners' wives and as women's groups of the NUM even though they were not members of the NUM themselves.

Not only have the women been mobilised around the strike in their traditional role (though organising meals and food parcels has involved tremendous sacrifices) but also they have played the role of speaking at meetings, mobilising and organising their own demonstration and pickets.

This activity has had a tremendous impact on women in general and one finds in many areas a miners' solidarity committee and, as a sub-committee or a parallel to it, a women's solidarity committee which mobilises all the women's organisations in a particular area in support of the strike. It also has had a tremendous impact on the labor movement in general and on the NUM itself. There is no doubt that the general sexist attitude which existed among miners and which exists amongst most working class men, was prevalent, with sexist slogans being used on demonstrations, etc. In the first few months of the strike this was ruled out.

In fact this strike has had an impact on all social layers. We have seen the mobilisation of black people, the setting up of black groups in solidarity with the strike, different sections of the unions supporting the strike and also the mobilisation of gay people in support of the miners. The social layers mobilised behind the strike on the explicit understanding that the victory of the strike would take their own struggles forward. That understanding has begun to bring together chief elements of a class struggle left wing in the labour movement of which one began to see the first elements at the Labour Party conference last October.

### Black people campaign for separate caucuses

The NUM waged a successful struggle to get the Labour Party to support the NUM. What was important was that it was women, gays and blacks who mobilised around that idea and the NUM responded by, throughout the conference, sometimes being the only union to support the demands of those oppressed groups. On the question of women, it supported entirely their demands. Black people in the conference had been arguing the right for separate black caucuses in the Labour Party. The NUM

supported that demand and, I think I am right in saying, it was the only union to do so. The NUM also sent messages of support to the gays organising in the conference.

In the context of the strike the question of solidarity is vital. As supporters of the Fourth International in Britain, we have played a leading role in the solidarity movement. We have waged the fight for that solidarity to be implemented at a national level and generalised. In this context the role the European sections, in particular, have played in building international solidarity is very important.

The strike today is at a very difficult stage. The situation is on a knife's edge. There is no doubt that without action from major sections of the labour movement this strike cannot continue for much longer. In that context, we fight for action from the rest of the labour movement but we also have to have a

realistic grasp of the situation. While we have been at this congress, in Britain the bourgeois press have been saying that the discussion on the NUM executive is whether to return without a settlement because they think it is impossible for them to make any settlements accepting pit closures.

This indicates that the situation of the strike is very serious indeed.

The point I want to stress is that after being on strike for 11 months, even when they go back, the hardship in the communities will be intense. You cannot recover from a year with no income in a matter of weeks. Therefore, where there are possibilities for continuing the solidarity work internationally, it should be continued whatever happens. Whatever can be done by the international workers' movement in the next months will be vital in the task of confronting the problems after the strike, and the task of rebuilding the NUM in Britain. ■



Dutch women's band plays for Kent miners (DR)

The discussion which followed this introduction illustrates the tremendous rank and file support from workers across Europe with the struggle which the British miners are waging. Many workers, especially in countries like West Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands with right-wing governments, understand the need to fight Thatcher's government and have expressed the desire that their own trade-union leaders should fight back in the way that the Scargill leadership has done. In Sweden more and more workers are afraid that the right-wing policies of the Social Democratic government will pave the way for a Thatcher-type government.

This rank and file support has consisted of thousands of pounds being collected for the miners — in West Germany the DGB (the general trade-union confederation) and IG Metall (engineering union) launched a campaign for an hour's wage and in Denmark over £300,000 has been raised — and of solidarity committees being set up in all the major towns across Europe. This has been matched by the extreme reluctance of the trade-union bureaucracy to take similar action. In the discussion it was suggested that perhaps they too have noticed the example of Scargill and are afraid that workers will want them to do the same!

The speaker from the German section of the Fourth International, the GIM,

confirmed that this was the case in West Germany. Here the right-wing miners' union stated that they disagreed with the aims of the strike and explained that when their industry had been ailing, they had been prepared to make sacrifices (that is, sacrifice people's jobs). They felt that Scargill, too, should help the bosses out.

### Arthur Scargill not welcomed by trade-union bureaucracy

Other union leaderships in West Germany had also been reluctant to give support but had had to accept that rank and file solidarity committees have been established. In fact, at a local level such committees have received official backing and IG Metall in particular have been forced to allow factory tours by British miners.

Such a welcome was not accorded to Arthur Scargill, however, when the NUM representative in West Germany tried to organise a national meeting with him as a speaker. The meeting had to be called off because German trade-union and labour leaders threatened a boycott.

Another place where Scargill was unwelcome was in Sweden where again rank and file trade unionists at the Volvo car plant invited him over to speak and

the meeting was sabotaged by trade-union leaders in collusion with management.

The perspective of the GIM in West Germany throughout has been to try to centralise the campaign at a national level, something which has involved constant conflicts with the trade-union bureaucracy despite rank and file support.

Supporters of the Dutch section of the Fourth International, the SAP, explained that they had two main aims in the campaign of solidarity; firstly to centralise all existing committees round the country and establish a national solidarity paper and, secondly, to try to campaign for a coal boycott.

Dutch trade-union officials have stated that they are willing to boycott but in practice have done nothing about it. In fact, two weeks ago the national headquarters of the FNV (the general trade-union confederation) was occupied by more than 100 angry trade unionists demanding a boycott. In West Germany trade-union leaders met with the TUC (British trade-union confederation) and signed a public statement pledging a boycott but have since declared that it was only to give support to the NUM and could not be done in practice. Still some dock workers have been picketing the Rhein port of Duisburg in particular to try to stop the coal.

Swedish supporters outlined their plans for organising a specific women's tour which had been so successfully achieved in West Germany and the Dutch representative remarked upon the fact that it was the women's union in the Netherlands which had first taken up solidarity with the miners and forced the tradeunion bureaucracy into action. The speakers noted that the strike had also attracted young people and in particular the squatters' movement in Amsterdam.

There is no doubt that despite the hostility of many trade-union leaders, sections of the European workers' movement identify very strongly with the British miners and understand what is in store for them if the miners lose. Everyone agreed that international solidarity was paramount.

There were suggestions from the Spanish and Danish representatives in particular that tours and solidarity actions be organised to coincide with the anniversary of the strike on March 12. In Denmark a day of action is being proposed and this could become a day of international action. In Britain activities will be organised on March 6 to commemorate a year of the strike which will also coincide with demonstrations of miners' wives for International Women's Day.

Another proposal was that an international appeal be launched to fight the hardship which the miners and their families are enduring and will continue to endure long after the strike is over.

The miners' strike has united sections of the European workers' movement behind it and the Fourth International pledged itself to continue the international solidarity campaign. ■

## YUGOSLAVIA

# Belgrade trials mark setback for the repression

As the presiding judge, Zoran Stojkovic, began on February 4 to give the grounds for the verdict of guilty against the film maker Miodrag Milic, the sociologist Milan Nikolic and the journalist Dragomir Olujic, a large part of the public demonstratively walked out of the packed court room in the Belgrade Palace of Justice.

While the sentence of one to two years in prison for "hostile propaganda" represented a compromise in the top circles, as Milan Nikolic explained in response to the decision, it aroused no less indignation among critical intellectuals in Yugoslavia.

Branko KRIZMAN

More than 300 friends and sympathizers of the accused had come to hear the verdict. The crowd was so big that the court was moved from the hall where the trial had been conducted for three months to the biggest available hall in the building. This was something that had been refused before despite appeals from the defense lawyers and the public since the start of the trial.

Deployment of large numbers of police in and around the Palace of Justice showed that the authorities feared that there might be street protests.

Undoubtedly many friends of the accused had been quietly hoping that they would be released. In recent weeks, the course of the trial made it appear possible that the upper hand in the party leadership had been gained by the forces that wanted to repair the harm that this case had done to Yugoslavia internationally.

In mid-January, the state prosecutor, Janilo Nanovic dropped the charges of "forming counterrevolutionary groups" and "attempting to overthrow the social system" that had originally been made against the six defendants in connection with the "Free Universities."

The translator Pavlusko Imsirovic was cleared of all charges. The case against the previous chief defendants, Vladimir Mijanovic and Gordan Jovanovic was separated out. And the three remaining defendants were now "only" to be tried for "hostile propaganda."

All of the nineteen witnesses, except one, who the defendants said was a police spy, entirely absolved the defendants. The court refused to accept the defense witnesses. But over three months, which is a very long time for a political trial in Yugoslavia, the state prosecutor could not produce even a shred of evidence of the purported "conspiratorial" nature of the Free Universities.

The remaining three defendants were sentenced finally for statements made in discussions and in manuscripts seized by



Milan Nikolic (DR)

the police from their desk drawers. In the case of Milan Nikolic this involved a three-year-old doctoral treatise in English on "Social Structures and the Overcoming of Conflict in Yugoslav Society" for the well-known Marxist sociologist Ralph Miliband, as well as an article by a British author on the Kosovo problem from the London magazine *New Left Review*. [Kosovo is where the Albanian minority is concentrated.]

Miodrag Milic was working on a "History of the Yugoslav Revolution." He got his two-year sentence for parts of the text in which he described the Yugoslav Communist Party before 1948 as Stalinist and criticized aspects of its policy in the antifascist liberation struggle.

Olujic's "crime" was that he supposedly talked about the possibility of a wave of strikes in the present crisis in Yugoslavia, and advocated the strongest and freest trade unions.

In the summary for the defense, the defendant's lawyer stressed that the charges had to do strictly with crimes of opinion, that there was no evidence that the accused had conducted any real "propaganda" based on these views.

The accused themselves rejected all the accusations and defended themselves politically. All three described themselves explicitly during the trial as "socialists and Marxists."

"I thank the state prosecutor," Olujić said ironically in his final statement, "for explaining to us how the power of the working class can be undermined by the idea of free trade unions."

In his one-hour-long final statement, Milan Nikolić outlined a veritable program for socialist democracy. He warned of the danger of a Stalinist or capitalist restoration in Yugoslavia, and pointed to an evolution toward socialist democracy as the only acceptable solution to the present social crisis in the country.

"Socialist democracy," Nikolić said, "must be more developed than bourgeois democracy. The persecution of critical intellectuals must stop. Blue-collar workers, farmers and white-collar workers need freedom for political initiative, freedom to criticize the leadership, freedom to organize themselves and to defend their interests. Genuine self-management in the economy and the state favors the abolition of any sort of organizational or ideological monopoly." Copies of this speech are circulating today throughout Yugoslavia.

### Committee for the Defense of Freedom of Thought and Opinion

However, it would be false to describe all the intellectuals critical of the regime who have come to the defense of the accused in past months as socialists. On the basis of a defense of human and civil rights, an alliance developed between socialist oppositionists standing in the tradition of the journal *Praxis* and the 1968 student movement, and personalities of a humanitarian and liberal orientation. The expression of this common front was the formation last fall of a Committee for the Defense of Freedom of Thought and Opinion in Belgrade.

If it was the objective of the "hard" wing of the Yugoslav leadership grouped around the Slovene Stane Dolane and the Bosnian Branko Mikulić to silence the critical intellectuals by means of this trial, then the attempt was a fundamental failure. In fact, there was even a new session of the Free Universities in Belgrade at the end of January.

On the day that the charges against him were dropped, Pavlusko Imsirović issued an invitation, in front of the state prosecutor and the court, to a series of lectures on "civil liberties, crimes of opinion and the trials underway" in his home. Thirty people came to the session, and the discussion lasted throughout the night.

However, this affair is far from ended. The former chief defendants, Vladimir

Mijanović and the student Gordan Jovanović, still formally face the old charges of "organizing counterrevolutionary groups," and it cannot be excluded that there will be a second trial.

The three defendants sentenced have filed an appeal and they remain free. But they have declared that if they are jailed, they will immediately go on hunger strike. ■

## 'I am a critical Marxist, a communist, a Trotskyist'

### Interview with Pavlusko Imsirović

We publish below an interview with Pavlusko Imsirović, one of the original six accused in the Belgrade trial.

In a surprise announcement on January 23, shortly after Imsirović had announced his intention of going on hunger strike in protest at the conduct of the trial, all charges against the author and translator were dropped.

This interview was conducted in late 1984 when the charges against him were still pending. It is taken from the winter issue of *Gegenstimmen*, published in Vienna.

*Question. You are one of the six in the trial of intellectuals in Belgrade who participated in the 'free universities' movement'. At the beginning of the trial the defence was mainly raising issues of procedure. You challenged jury members for partiality. Can you explain your reasons for this?*

*Answer. It was important to know whether the jury members were going to be guided solely by the law or whether they felt bound by other considerations coming from the decisions and discipline of the party.*

My question on this issue got no response with the judge announcing that such questions were not allowed. I demanded the exclusion of all judges and members of the jury who did not want to reply to this question. They did not follow up my demand and told me that we would have to give the names of all those who we were demanding be excluded for bias.

*Q. You also raised a question concerning all those in the jury who could have been members of the political police?*

A. Yes, I did. I asked whether there was in the jury anybody who had been or still was a member of the security section of the state apparatus. The reply was that the judge did not know of anyone.

*Q. Have you or your defence council had any information on people serving on the jury?*

A. No, there is no way you can get information of this kind. I do not know any of the jury members. When we asked for information, the judge refused to give it to us.

*Q. In other words you just get to know their names and that is it?*

A. Exactly, nothing more.

*Q. You have already been before a tribunal, ten years ago?*



Pavlusko Imsirović (DR)

A. Yes, before the same tribunal and on the same charge in the penal code of 'setting up an association against the people and the state'. This was also a trial for crimes of opinion and expression. I was active in the student movement, with my companion and other colleagues. Those accused alongside me were my future wife, Jelka and the sociologist Milan Nikolić, who is also with me at the tribunal today.

*Q. Were you found guilty at that time?*

A. Yes, of course. Yugoslav tribunals always find you guilty, at least in political trials. I was sentenced to two years in prison, which is what I served.

*Q. How would you compare the way in which this trial is being conducted with the previous one. Are there any differences? There must have been some changes in the last ten years?*

A. You can't see much fundamental difference from that point of view. In fact the judge at the time was also very

liberal, though the prosecutor was more aggressive than this one today. But that doesn't mean anything fundamentally. Of course, the political situation is different and our experience is different from what it was at the time.

*Q. Does that mean that the apparently liberal approach of the judges which you can see in most political trials in Yugoslavia today is only a facade?*

A. This liberal-mindedness is only employed in well-publicised trials. It has no significance when it comes to the actual judgement.

*Q. How is the situation different as far as the climate of public opinion is concerned?*

A. There the differences are more obvious, because in intellectual circles and among the critical intelligentsia there has been a lot of movement and development towards a higher level of consciousness.

*Q. And ten years ago you did not have such support?*

A. Exactly, I did not have so much support because people still had too many illusions in getting a compromise, an acquittal. It's not the same anymore.

*Q. It is amazing to see the visitors gallery full to the brim with people all sympathetic to the accused. Has there ever been anything similar at a political trial before?*

A. Yes at our first trial, 12 years ago, it was like this. But this tendency developed in a particular way at the trial of the poet, Goiko Djogo, two years ago in Belgrade. This was the occasion for a huge mobilisation of the critical and independent intelligentsia.

*Q. What was Goiko Djogo charged with?*

A. It was about a song. He wrote several songs in the form of animal fables. There was one about a huge wild bear in the forest. The prosecutor decided that the huge bear in the forest represented an attack on Josip Broz Tito. There was a scandal about it.

*Q. But in the case of Goiko Djogo, did solidarity action do any good?*

A. Yes, although he was, of course, sentenced to two years in prison but because of the support, he was released and his sentence was dropped.

*Q. What do you think of the way in which the media in Yugoslavia have portrayed your trial?*

A. For the most part, and unfortunately this is the most significant, there has been a savage and hysterical campaign against us. We are presented as anti-communist, as puppets of foreign interests, although the forces abroad or the things we are supposed to have done are never defined. In the written press they talk of spies. According to them we

were only pawns in somebody's else's game. But this is a false accusation. All the defendants in this trial are Marxists, socialists. We are fighting for socialist democracy. Me personally, I am a critical Marxist, a communist, a Trotskyist.

*Q. What does that mean in relation to the concrete situation in Yugoslavia? According to your outlook how do you think the current crisis will be resolved?*

A. An important precondition is the broad mobilisation of all those who create the wealth, of all the creative forces in society and a broad and radical democratisation of society. I think that should be different from the system of the plurality of parties. Or at any rate a different type of political pluralism. Since we still don't have an exact view of our real situation, there is no political force that has a precise programme to put forward. A thorough-going analysis of the situation is required in order to elaborate a programme which offers a solution, a resolution of the current crisis.

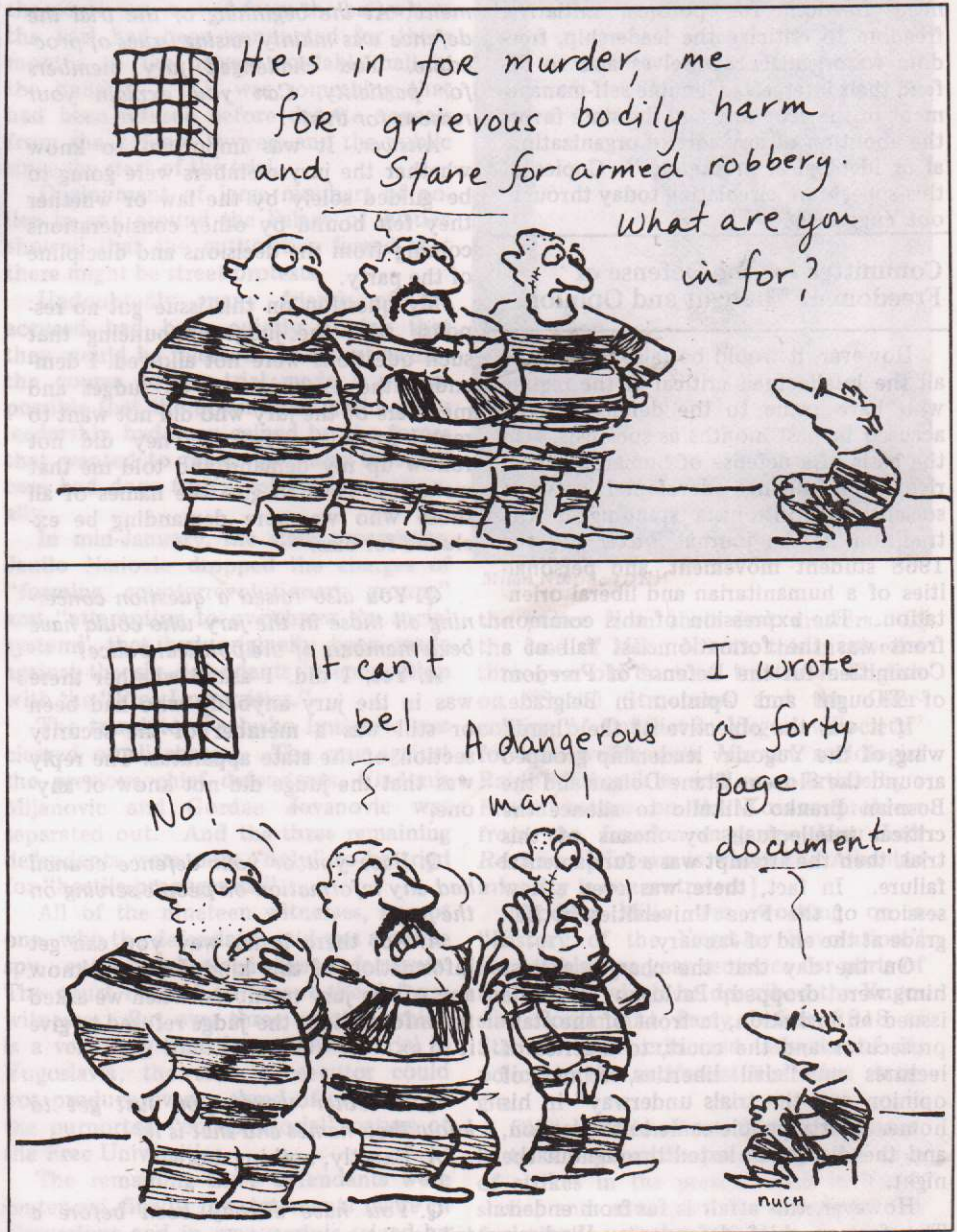
*Q. You say that you are Marxist, revolutionary and Trotskyist. These sort of*

*ideas came forward at the height of the student movement, in other parts of the world. Today, 15 years later, many people would see them as out of date. At any rate, people who put forward these ideas are isolated. Where do you stand? Do you not think that what is known in Yugoslavia as the 'new left' is rather isolated, or does it correspond to the aspirations of the masses?*

A. These ideas have always been current in the workers movement. At least in part, they have always constituted an element within the movement and within student and intellectual circles. These ideas always carry some weight when the movement goes through a wave of mass mobilisations. But at the moment I am personally isolated within these circles.

*Q. In discussion with Yugoslavian friends, I always get the impression that there is an overriding rejection of the heritage of Marxism because despite everything Marxist ideas are associated with the dominant social relations.*

A. It's an old, old problem. It's the same in Yugoslavia as in the rest of the world workers movement, people identify





these ideas and these tendencies with socialism as it exists and with the practice of the socialist and communist parties. That is why these ideas and these movements are discredited. But solidarity and the fight for socialism and democracy throughout the world are the only way to break with this false alternative, created by Stalinism, which has thwarted the world workers movement. Stalinism and capitalism are not the only alternatives. The real choice is between Stalinism and capitalism on the one side and democratic socialism on the other.

*Q. The Yugoslavian Communist Party [League of Communists of Yugoslavia — LCY] is a product of the Stalinist tradition. But it broke with Stalinism in 1948. The political system is different in some important ways from that of the traditional Stalinist countries.*

*There is workers' self-management, there exist certain democratic openings, certainly more than you would find in Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union. Would you say, despite everything, that we are still talking about a Stalinist regime?*

A. No. I do not think that the Yugoslav Communist Party has remained a Stalinist party, heading a Stalinist regime after the break with Stalin and Moscow. It has shown itself to be bureaucratic and of a similar social character, but not of the same political character. The Yugoslav bureaucracy has a special place in world politics and even has special tactics in internal politics. Self-management is one of these, it is above all a form of economic policy.

*Q. It was on the basis of the break with Moscow and Stalin that these differences with the traditional Stalinist model emerged. Do you think that the social relation of forces and the balance of forces between the working class and the bureaucracy are better in Yugoslavia than in other Stalinist states, because of workers self-management and the particular tradition of Yugoslav communism?*

A. The origin of these changes has two roots. One is a product of external politics and the situation in Europe. The other is related to the relation of forces inside the country and the extent to which the LCY had behind it a large revolutionary movement which they controlled and dominated. But they also had to make constant concessions to this movement. Self-management was one of those concessions. On the social level also, there were numerous examples of democratisation, mostly between 1950 and 1958. This period began one or two years after the Fifth Congress of the LCY and reached its height in the Sixth Congress, known as the Djilas Congress. The period lasted until the Eighth Congress in April 1958 when the party adopted a new programme.

*Q. Where do you place yourself as a critical socialist vis a vis the national question in Yugoslavia? I have found a*

*very strong national consciousness amongst several intellectuals in Serbia.*

A. The problem of the nationalities is also a difficult one for the Yugoslavian democratic movement. My position is a classical Marxist one, that is for the unconditional right to self-determination, which does not always mean a struggle for the separate existence of this or that nationality, but can bring about a struggle for an association of nationalities on the basis of absolute freedom of choice.



Dragomir Olujić (DR)

*Q. But support for the right to self-determination and for a separate state which is contained within the traditional Marxist view, does not resolve the issue for very heterogenous regions, from a linguistic point of view, like Bosnia or Hercegovina for example, where there are several nationalities on one territory. Also what about the parties in Kosovo?*

A. It is certainly true that one of the essential questions is to know whether it is even possible to form national states in Yugoslavia in order to resolve the national question following this model. But I believe that with a cultural policy which is flexible and democratic it is possible to achieve some balance between the different nationalities.

*Q. What does this mean in relation to Kosovo?*

A. In relation to Kosovo that means that in my view, Kosovo should have a strong dose of autonomy. But what form that autonomy should take, only the inhabitants of Kosovo can decide. It is their right and every one else has an obligation to help them.

*Q. What are your proposals for resolving this problem? Through a referendum?*

A. Freedom for political tendencies,

freedom of propaganda of aims and programmes and the possibility, among others, if someone wants it, to fight a campaign for a referendum. But I cannot state categorically that this issue should be resolved in such and such a way. Only a truly democratic dialogue can bring about a satisfactory solution.

*Q. So you are opposed to the trial which took place in Kosovo and against police repression of the so-called 'irredentists'. (1)*

A. Yes, of course, I have met some of these people. I know them and I know that they are not 'irredentists', they are not, as some allege, supporters of Enver Hoxha [a leader in the Albanian regime]. On the contrary, Hoxha and his supporters are very much afraid of the Kosovo movement. Kosovo could swallow them up. In the Balkan region the Albanian question has a similar importance to the German question in Europe.

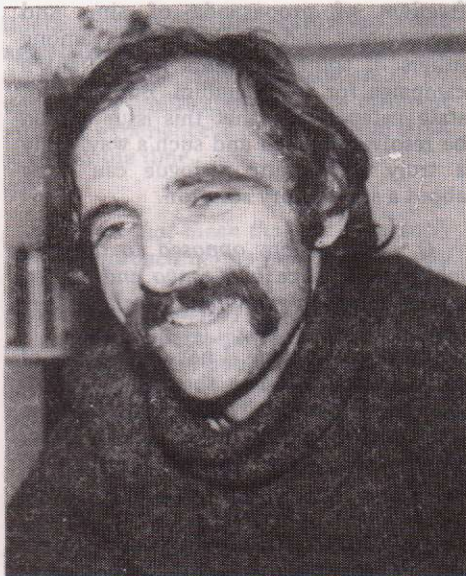
*Q. What is your assessment of the possibility of reforming the economic situation? Amongst many critical intellectuals the idea still exists that by strengthening the mechanisms of the market economy one can achieve a stabilisation of the economy.*

A. No one is opposed to the simple recognition of economic laws. But it is entirely a matter of interpretation. There are some people who favour a market economy of a classic type, that is 'laissez faire'. But in reality this does not exist anywhere. Others with whom I agree are more favourable to the policy of a planned economy with the mobilisation and centralisation of all the productive forces. We have not yet mobilised all our resources. What about, first of all, people who have no job and therefore play no role in the development of the country. I am therefore for a centralisation of the economy but for political decentralisation, that is democratisation.

*Q. What do you think of the stabilisation programme of the Yugoslav government?*

A. I do not understand what this programme corresponds to. These are only stop gap measures. In my view, these kind of measures are not adequate to resolve the current problems. It is necessary to attack the fundamental issues which are always left hanging in the air. There are many issues involved like, for example, that of foreign trade. The state needs a unified policy in relation to the world market. It is impossible and absurd that each economic unit can adopt its own policy with regard to the world market and that you can have conflicts between nationalities for economic reasons. Such a levelling out, a unification of economic interests and economic policies is not possible, and I repeat, outside

1. Albanian so-called irredentists are accused of favouring the separation of Kosovo from Yugoslavia in order to make it part of Albania.



Vladimir Mijanovic (DR)

of a widespread process of democratisation.

**Q. Where do you see the base for the self-organisation of the working class to start from in Yugoslavia? Could this come about within the unions, the workers councils involved in self-management or through a democratisation of the party?**

**A.** Some such tendencies have already emerged through wild cat strikes in several factories. But such tendencies are also appearing within the LCY, within the youth organisation and within the student organisation. In a one party system all the social contradictions are constantly coming to the surface within the monolithic organisations. These tendencies come out inside the political system at all levels. This was the case for example with Rade Koncar's proposal to the last party congress, that the party should essentially be organised in the workplaces on the principle of the centres of production and not on a geographical principle. This proposal is based on an old Marxist conception, with its roots in the workers movement. It was a very significant question which Branko Mikulic and the leadership of the Bosnia Party attacked violently.

**Q. Are there forces within the party who are in favour of such a turn towards the working class?**

**A.** Such a potential does exist and Rade Koncar's proposal did get an echo and met with a lot of sympathy.

**Q. How do you see the dynamic of the Yugoslav situation? What is the dominating factor? A tendency towards repression, a strengthening of the weight of the state apparatus, or a tendency to resist?**

**A.** In my position it is very difficult to give an accurate assessment. But the results of this trial could perhaps provide an answer to your question.

**Q. How do you view the different situations in the different republics? In the**

*last few months we have seen many polemics between the leaderships of the Croatia and Serbian parties. In the international press there is always the question of a liberal wing within the leadership who is often identified with the leadership of the Serbian party and of a hard line group identified with the Bosnia party. And many intellectuals put their hopes on the liberal wing.*

**A.** I don't think you can make a clear division within the party between the hard liners and the liberals. But it is true that the leaderships of the Bosnian and Serbian parties show visible signs of a tendency to take a hard line. This is mainly to do with Mikulic and Hamdja Pozderac in Bosnia. I don't know of any other names, because we don't have public political debates. I can only draw my conclusions from the most obvious indications. In Croatia there is Josip Vrhovec. Stane Dolanc from Slovenia is another one, who, as a member of the national leadership carries a certain political weight in the Croatia party but none where there is a more liberal policy.

**Q. Who do you see as representing a more liberal position?**

**A.** In my view, you can include in this Franc Poppit, Mija Ribicic, Franc Setnic and Anton Vratusa who all originate from Slovenia.

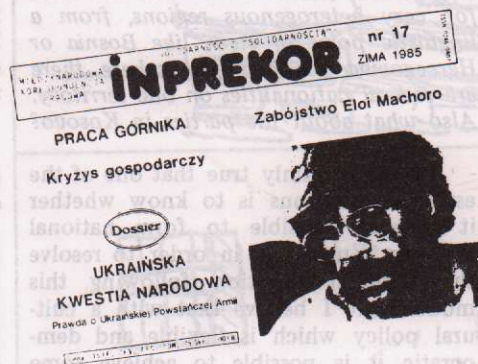
**Q. And in Serbia?**

**A.** In Serbia, there have been no particularly clear statements for any ten-

deny. But it is possible to guess that there is a group with or around Ivan Stambolic, who is more or less a liberal. What basically gave him his liberal reputation was that he simply failed to come out clearly for political repression. The representatives of this tendency which you could call liberal, are trying to work out a workers' economic programme. In Serbia you have to take account of a special peculiarity. The Serbian leadership has always favoured a high degree of centralisation and the problem is that all the others [national party leaderships] are opposed to the notion of centralisation because they are afraid of the idea of the unification of the Yugoslav state. But a united democratic state would not threaten national freedoms or the rights of nationalities.

**Q. How are things presented in Serbia, in relation to the nationalist formations? Is the development of a nationalist consciousness amongst Albanians seen as a threat? Stage plays featuring the nationalist Serbian groups were performed in Belgrade in recent years. Do you think there is a real danger?**

**A.** Yes, there are some real prejudices against the Albanian people. It is important to fight against these prejudices. But aggressive Serbian nationalism is not very widespread, it doesn't often come out in a sharp way. But I do think that errors and prejudices come out in many areas. However, in the framework of a democratic discussion you could oppose such tendencies. ■



*Inprekor* is published every two months as a journal reflecting the point of view of the Fourth International. It addresses itself to the debates that are going on in the Polish workers' movement and mass struggles in other countries.

Issue No 17 is out now with articles on the situation in the Ukraine, the Polish economic crisis and an interview with a Solidarnosc member in the mines in Silesia. There is a thorough analysis on the situation in New Caledonia following the death of Eloi Machoro.

*Inprekor* can be obtained by writing to PEC, 2 Richard Lenoir, 93100 Montreuil, France. The subscription rate for one year (six issues) is £8, 12 US dollars or 75 French francs. Make cheques payable to PEC - Polish *Inprekor*. To support *Inprekor* is to support the emergence of a revolutionary Marxist current inside Poland.

## Polish *Inprekor* is out now!

Since Polish *Inprekor* was first published in October 1981 sixteen issues have appeared.

## Rajiv's landslide how much did it change ?

The following interview was given to Gerry Foley in Geneva on February 4 by M. Navid, a leader of the Indian section of the Fourth International, the Inquilabi Communist Sangathan (Revolutionary Communist League). Comrade Navid has not been able to review the edited text of the interview.

*Question. What did the landslide victory of the Congress Party-Indira and Rajiv Gandhi in the December 24 general elections actually represent?*

*Answer.* I think it was the result of a complex of three or four factors. One was the sympathy vote that Rajiv Gandhi got after the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. The second was the disarray of the opposition. The opposition was unable to agree and come together on a common platform and present one candidate in the various constituencies. The third factor is that this election was not fought on the basis of program. There was no program that distinguished the various opposition groups.

In fact, the only program the opposition had before the assassination of Mrs Gandhi was to get rid of her. The bourgeois opposition parties had no alternative program. Nor did even the mainstream Communist parties, the Communist Party of India (CPI, the old pro-Moscow party) and the Communist Party-Marxist (CPM, which began as a pro-Peking split). All they proposed was getting rid of the authoritarian force represented by Mrs Gandhi through an alliance of the "left and democratic" opposition, meaning an alliance of the mainstream left parties with the bourgeois opposition forces, with the exception of the right-wing communalist Hindu party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party, the political front of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh - RSS - National Volunteer Corps).

However, there is another factor that is more fundamental than all these. Historically, the Congress Party (I) has based itself electorally on the so-called Core Minorities - the Muslims, who constitute about 12% to 13% of the population, about 90,000 million people; the Dalits [Oppressed], or Untouchables, who constitute about 110 million; and the Tribals, who are about 45 million. Altogether these minorities make up about 33% of the population and roughly the same proportion of the electorate.

Historically, the Congress (I) has always come to power with a minority of the votes, less than 50%. The vote that Rajiv Gandhi received this time was the closest that they have ever come to an absolute majority, something like 49.6%. Generally, the Congress (I) has gotten

between 38% and 45%, and this has been based on the solid, en bloc, support of the Core Minorities, plus a certain section of the Hindu vote, say from the Brahmins [the top caste of the Hindus].

However, the majority of the Hindus, who make up 85% of the population of the country, falls into the Middle Castes, that is, the castes that come between the Untouchables and the small section represented by the Brahmins and the "Forward Castes" (the non-Brahmin high-caste Hindus). These Middle Castes are also known as the "Backward Castes."

The Middle Castes account for the bulk of the Hindu vote, and what they represent in class terms is urban traders and landowning farmers, rich farmers, aspiring capitalist farmers.

The important thing in this election is that for the first time the Congress Party (I) got solid support from the Hindu middle class, which had previously supported either the Dalit Mazdoor Kisan party [Oppressed Working Peasants' party] of Charan Singh or the BJP-RSS, which has been the party par excellence of the urban traders.

Rajiv Gandhi got a still sizable section of the vote from the Core Minorities in these elections. But the historic trend is a decline in the support of the Core Minorities for the Congress. This is why Mrs Gandhi decided to move toward wooing the Hindu caste vote, and it explains the active Hindu communalism of the Congress Party (I) in recent years.

Basically Rajiv Gandhi won his landslide because he got a solid bloc of support from the Hindu middle class, and he got it by exploiting the shock created by Mrs Gandhi's death, by claiming that the unity and integrity of the country was at stake and that only the Congress Party (I) could preserve this unity and integrity.

You remember that anti-Sikh pogrom in Delhi and elsewhere that followed Mrs Gandhi's death. After that, Rajiv Gandhi made the unity and integrity of the country the focus of his election campaign, claiming that the country was faced by forces out to destabilize it, both international - i.e., Pakistan, which was accused of supporting the Sikh movement, the Akali Dal - and, more importantly, domestic forces. He gave his campaign a strong and clear anti-Sikh bias.

This is why he focused attention on the Anandpur Sahib resolution, the program of the Akali Dal party. And this paid him dividends.

In fact, we saw an odd contrast. The traditional Hindu communalist party, the BJP-RSS, raised a hue and cry about the Congress (I) organizing the Delhi riots, about the failure to rehabilitate Sikhs, and about the need to bring alienated Sikhs into the national mainstream. Rajiv Gandhi made no such statements.

*Q. So, how do you explain the support that the Congress (I) got in the South and among the minorities?*

*A.* In Kerala, where there is a sizable Christian and Muslim minority, Rajiv Gandhi got bigger support than the Congress (I) has gotten before because of his line that unity and integrity of the country were in danger. Obviously, this had an immediately frightening effect on the minorities. In Tamilnadu, the most southern state, the support for the Congress Party (I) was directly related to its alliance with the AIADMK, the All-India DMK [the Dravida Munetra Kazahgam party began as a Dravidian nationalist party and has since gone through several avatars]. Both parties gained from this alliance. The AIADMK is headed by the film star, M. G. Ramachandran, who also got a sympathy vote because he had been fighting for his life in an American hospital.

There is a clear political division in India between the North and the South, in the sense that the Hindu caste vote is particularly important in the North, the Hindi-speaking belt, which is also known as the "Cow Belt." Up to 1980, the Congress Party (I) had come to power nationally because of its support in the North.

In the 1977 landslide against Mrs Gandhi and the Congress Party, the only parts that held out for Mrs Gandhi were parts of the South. (1) This trend was reaffirmed in 1980, when the Congress Party (I) regained national dominance based on the support of the South.

However, the South is also divided. There is the Upper South, consisting of the two states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh; and the Lower South, consisting of the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The former tends to be more favorable to all-Indian parties, the latter to regional parties.

In these elections, however, the Congress (I) suffered one of its few setbacks in Andhra Pradesh. This was the result

1. In 1977, the Congress Party suffered a disaster at the polls in backlash against Indira Gandhi's attempt to restrict democratic rights under the state of emergency she declared in 1975. In his book, *Nehrus and the Gandhis, an Indian Dynasty* Tariq Ali argues that the reason the Congress did not suffer such losses in the Dravidian areas was that the greater resistance of the local political forces to arbitrary rule from the center meant that there were less concrete grievances against the state-of-emergency government and hence less of a backlash. -IV.



Indira Gandhi (DR)

of very specific factors, the undemocratic attempt by the central government to oust the government of the regional Telegu Desam party headed by former film star Rama Rao. In other states where Mrs Gandhi made similar attempts, Sikkim and Kashmir, the Congress (I) also suffered defeats.

*Q. What effects do you think the Congress (I) landslide will have on Indian politics now, besides promoting communalism?*

A. The first and most important impact of this election is the devastation of the bourgeois opposition and the very substantial defeat of the small left opposition, represented by the two mainstream Stalinist parties, the CPM and the CPI, between them in the previous elections, they got 49 seats. This time, they got between them, 36. The CPM lost 14 seats and retained 22. The CPI dropped from 13 seats to 6.

The bourgeois opposition was shattered. The DMKP, the party of Charan Singh, a class-based party of the rural rich, ran something like 169 candidates and elected only three. The BJP, which ran around 226 candidates throughout the country, elected two. The Janata party (People's Party, the main bourgeois opposition party) got only nine seats.

The blow suffered by the main bourgeois opposition parties was a devastating, possibly fatal one. It is hard to see a revival of strong opposition to the government coming from this quarter.

But one thing is certain; that there will be a reemergence of opposition in some form. That is because the central problem for the bourgeoisie in India remains. That is the crisis of bourgeois political leadership, the crisis of endemic political instability.

This crisis arises basically because the Congress Party (I) is no longer able to play the role that it has historically as an effective instrument for mediating conflict in Indian society, both those within the ruling bloc and those between the ruling bloc, or sections of the ruling bloc, and the oppressed classes.

Rajiv Gandhi's victory will not reinvigorate the Congress Party (I), whose turn to communalism represents its historic exhaustion. What the new government does have is a certain breathing space, a period of some months in which Rajiv Gandhi's authority will be unchallenged and in which he can do virtually anything he likes.

Indeed, the tremendous majority for the Congress Party (I) in the legislature has not strengthened the role of that branch but rather of the executive. What Rajiv Gandhi has already done is to make the prime minister's secretariat the most powerful secretariat that has ever existed since independence. That is, he has established a body outside the control of the legislature that will be the key center of decision making.

Because of the inability of the Congress Party (I) to play its historic mediating role. Rajiv Gandhi will build up the role of the executive and the civil apparatus. This is also in tune with his own proclivities, his lack of ideology and his capitalist, technocratic managerial approach to the problems of running the country. In this sense, Rajiv is less political than his mother who because of history and experience took a much more political approach of balancing between the various social forces. This reality will obviously impose itself on Rajiv. But he is starting out with the idea that the country's problems can be tackled by managerial techniques.

*Q. What policies specifically do you expect him to follow?*

A. His basic purpose now is to carry out a capitalist modernization of the Indian economy. The Congress Party (I) now has a clearly right-wing economic program with virtually no concessions to the populist welfarism of the "Congress socialism" days. This change appeared first in the 1980 elections, when in her manifesto Mrs Gandhi did not even mention the word "socialism," which in the Indian context has a special meaning, a populist meaning. But nevertheless, in her campaign she talked about populist welfare measures.

In this election Rajiv not only did not mention the word "socialism" in his manifesto but he did not invoke it in any of his campaign speeches. At the very most, he would talk about the importance of economic growth with justice. So, the old hegemonizing ideology of Congress socialism is finished.

What this means is that Rajiv Gandhi is going to go all out to promote the forces that are for capital accumulation at any cost.

*Q. So, you expect an Indian version of Thatcherism?*

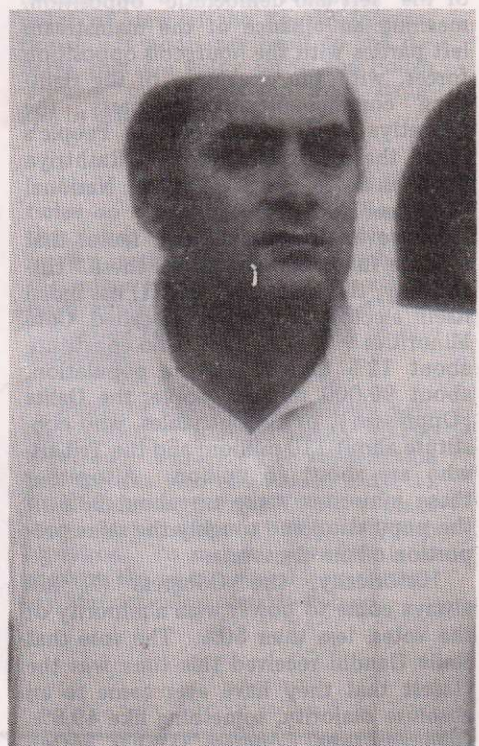
A. I would be hesitant to make that equation. But you might make such a comparison insofar as it means that Rajiv Gandhi is determined to allow the market and the market forces of the private sector to play the leading role. Actually this already started under Mrs Gandhi. In fact, pressures developing within the Indian economy began to move the country along this road beginning in the mid-1970s. The difference is that unlike his mother Rajiv Gandhi carries no historical baggage of populism, so he can throw himself more fully behind these trends. He will pursue economic liberalization, the opening of the Indian economy to market forces, to the importing of technology, to greater opportunities for Indian firms to enter into collaboration for importing technology and perhaps for importing consumer goods, finished consumer goods. There is a considerable margin for this since India enjoys a comfortable balance-of-payments situation.

Rajiv Gandhi is under very strong pressure to introduce the electronics age in India. One of the first things he did after becoming prime minister was to revamp the administration of the telephone system, which has been one of the worst in the world.

The new government's second concern is raising efficiency, because one of the problems of the Indian economy, in fact also a barometer of its difficulties, has been the very high capital-output ratio, which is today something like 6.1. That is, you need 6.1 units of capital to get one unit of output. So, Rajiv Gandhi will try to reduce the capital-output ratio through introducing more modern managerial methods.

Secondly, he will bring in more computerization, reduce staffing and rationalize, which will lead to redundancies especially in the public sector. The

Rajiv Gandhi (DR)



bourgeois economists claim that overstaffing in the public sector because of relative security of employment there and other advantages for workers, is one of the reasons for the high capital-output ratio in the public sector and on the average throughout Indian industry.

Another area where Rajiv Gandhi will try to make big changes is the educational system. In fact, the Indian educational system is a very top heavy one, in that there is insufficient attention paid to the primary and secondary sectors and an overemphasis on the tertiary sector, that is, higher education. The result of this is what I would call mass miseducation, apart from a few universities and colleges that produce students of a relatively high standard. You have large numbers of people coming out of higher education who cannot find satisfactory jobs. At the same time, India has a literacy rate of 36%, which is quite shameful in comparison with the extent of investment in education and by comparison with China, where the literacy rate is 76%.

Rajiv Gandhi is not going to change this top-heavy structure. That could not be changed without making other fundamental changes in Indian society. But the system will be redirected toward producing the technical and scientific cadres he needs for the sort of modernization he wants to carry out. At the same time, this will in fact increase the top-heaviness of the educational system.

*Q. What will Rajiv Gandhi's victory mean for the masses of workers and poor peasants?*

A. Despite Rajiv Gandhi's massive victory, a victory that he could not have won without getting a substantial vote from the workers and peasants, there is no doubt that we will see a rise in working-class and rural struggles in the near future. Over the last ten years, we have been seeing a rising trend of rural struggles, in fact. What has happened in the Indian countryside, as a result of the Green Revolution, is an increasing polarization of Indian rural society between agricultural laborers on the one side, who form close to 30% of the rural population, and rich and aspiring capitalist farmers, who comprise between 15 and 20 million families. Counting five per family, you can calculate that the latter stratum amounts to about 75 million people.

In between the landless laborers and the rich farmers is a layer getting squeezed out of farmers who have some land but are forced to work for wages part of the year or are unable to make the transition to becoming capitalist farmers.

The number of aspiring capitalist farmers is thus very large in India because capitalist farming in our country is based on relatively small farms.

Rajiv Gandhi's agricultural policy is bound to reinforce the tensions that have developed because his basic policy is one of extending the Green Revolution. That means bringing more land under

irrigation more fertilizers and more high-yielding seeds as well as promoting multiple-crop systems.

Indian agricultural growth has stabilized since the early 1960s at a truly remarkable level. The average rate of growth in Indian agriculture is 2.6%, which is remarkable by any historical standards. If you look at the history of the US or Britain, countries that industrialized over many decades, a century or a century and a half, you will not find a comparable period of something like 15 years in which they sustained agricultural growth of 2.6% a year.

This is one of the reasons that the Indian economy has been able to register an average growth rate of over 4% in the last ten years and why even the most pessimistic economists believe that during the life of the Seventh Five-Year Plan, from 1985 to 1990, the average growth rate of the Indian economy will be about 4.5%.

Such development has meant that India has achieved self-sufficiency in food. But that is not the same thing as people having enough to eat. Some 50% of the population of India do not, because they lack the buying power.

Given the importance of the capitalist farmers, who produce most of the marketable surplus, the landless laborers have to fight hard to get basic minimum demands such as security of employment, minimum wages, etc. So, tensions are going to continue to rise. These have very often been reflected in the past and will continue to be reflected in caste conflicts since almost all agricultural laborers are Untouchables, although not all Untouchables are agricultural laborers.

Another area where there will continue to be tensions is that of relations between the all-India government and the states. The rich capitalist farmers find themselves much more capable of exerting influence at the level of the state governments than at the level of the central government. Although the central government is committed to promoting the interests of the rich farmers, it has to look after the interest of the ruling bloc as a whole and so cannot give them all that they want. This conflict can express itself particularly in a conflict between the central government and the states, with the latter demanding more resources than the all-Indian government is prepared to give.

Another important contradiction is that India is a bourgeois democracy,

which means that the acceptance by the oppressed in some way of the rule of the oppressor is of more immediate significance than the element of coercion. The bourgeoisie has been able to rule India because it has been able to convince a substantial majority of the oppressed to support bourgeois rule and the bourgeois parties in parliament. To do this, it has had to have a hegemonizing ideology. Up to the early 1970s, that was Congress (I) socialism. This was successful because the pattern of Indian economic growth from 1947 to the early 1970s did result in certain partial but nevertheless real benefits for the majority of the people.

Already before Mrs Gandhi's death, Hindi nationalism began being pushed as the new hegemonizing ideology of the Indian state. This will continue to be pushed with varying intensities, depending on social tensions and the extent to which Rajiv Gandhi is able to achieve an even partial solution to the Punjab [Sikh] problem. But it will continue to be pushed. And this carries very important dangers because Hindu nationalism means the promotion of a sanscritized Hindi language, with all the problems that involves in the South [whose predominant Dravidian languages are grammatically unrelated to the Indo-European languages of the North] and in West Bengal [Bengali was the first of the Indian vernaculars to develop a modern literature and has become the basis of a strong cultural nationalism].

*Q. What does the Congress (I) victory mean for the left?*

A. It has simply reinforced the already existing trends, that is, the decline of the mainstream Stalinist parties, and the stagnation and decline of Maoism. The biggest factor in the decline of the CPM in particular is its history of rule in West Bengal. Formally, it is the Left Front that is in power, but the CPM is the dominant component, an absolute majority in the front. So, the CPM have been in power in West Bengal since 1977. And the record of the CPM in this time has just about destroyed what credibility it had left as a revolutionary party, even the idea that it held a centrist position between reform and revolution.

The effect of eight years of rule in West Bengal has been to strengthen the bureaucratized structures of the party and to strongly reinforce its reformist character. During this period we have seen the CPM wooing multinationals and private investors and with some success. Its objective has been to try to hold back the decline of Calcutta as an industrial center, and the best it has been able to do is slow this.

In fact, Bombay and Maharashtra are the most important industrial areas in India today. And the fastest growing industrial city is Bangalore in Karnataka. And Gujarat is the third fastest industrializing state in India.

West Bengal and Calcutta are stagnating or losing out. Of course, West Bengal cannot become deindustrialized because

**SUBSCRIBE TO  
INTERNATIONAL  
VIEWPOINT**

Calcutta remains an important port for the jute industry, as well as others. But they are losing out by comparison with other areas.

So, the CPM has been trying to stave this off in classical reformist manner by encouraging multinationals to invest in West Bengal. And its part of the bargain has been to assure tranquility on the labor front. This has obviously taken its toll on the party's working-class base. The loss of support has not been reflected so much in a decline of the Centre for Indian Trade Unions [CITU, the CPM-dominated confederation], which has shrunk slowly, because of lack of alternatives for workers in Bengal. But even here there has been some hemorrhage. In fact, I would not be surprised at all if INTUC [The Indian National Trades Union Congress, the confederation dominated by the Congress Party (I)] gained a lot of ground.

However, the shrinking of the CPM's working-class base has shown up most dramatically at the electoral level. In the recent elections, while the CPM managed to hold its rural support, it suffered stunning losses in the urban areas. In the urban areas of Calcutta the Congress won five out of six seats. Those urban areas with a very high working-class composition voted for the Congress Party (I).

Even in the rural areas, the margin of victory for the CPM was much narrower than in the previous election. On the all-West Bengal level, the CPM won 16 seats and the Congress about eight. But in fact only 60,000 votes separated the two parties.

Moreover, the CPM failed in its project of making a breakthrough in the Hindi heartland, states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and so on. It had hoped to maintain its base in West Bengal and through overtures to the CPI — since the CPM now lines up almost entirely with Moscow on foreign policy questions — be able to use the CPI bases in Bihar and in other parts of the Hindi heartland as a springboard for making a breakthrough. But it failed.

So, the CPM remains a regional party, which has been gravely weakened in Kerala, where it had a regional base, and substantially weakened in West Bengal. There does not seem to be much of a future for the electoralism to which the party has committed itself. It might make a turn back toward class-struggle methods. I think that will depend on the outcome of the West Bengal state elections, that is, it is more likely if the CPM finds itself in the opposition. But even then, it would have to contend with tremendous pressures from the Soviet Union on both Communist parties to accommodate to Rajiv Gandhi because of the Kremlin's perspective of alliance with the progressive bourgeoisie and support for Rajiv Gandhi's postures of "nonalignment."

*Q. Given the declining credibility of the CPs, what do you see growing up to*

*the left of them?*

A. The elements to the left of the CPM have also become substantially disillusioned with the Maoists. We find a variety of small groups which are hesitant now to characterize themselves as the revolutionary party or the nucleus of the revolutionary party. They say that they have to come together with a whole series of groups — including local ones that may not even be known on the all-India level — to form the nucleus and foundation of a mass revolutionary party. That is one way the far left has gone.

The other main way the far left has gone in the last five to ten years is into nonparty political formations, groupings around magazines, documentation centers, cultural groups, groups concerned with deforestation, women's groups. Along with this, there has been the rise of small united-front movements taking up various issues, democratic rights, women's questions, ecology, for example the question of Bhopal (See *International Viewpoint*, No 68, January 28, 1985).

The reason for the development of such fronts is twofold: first, the mainstream parties have neglected such questions; second, where they have constructed fronts for dealing with such questions, they have kept tight control. This has alienated activists, who have then grouped themselves in united fronts.

The growth of these fronts is an expression of the fact that the far left is no longer attracted by CPM politics, and so the CPM has come to regard it as a real threat. They have launched a big ideological campaign against such groups raising a big hue and cry about their purported misuse of money and links to foreign organizations, such as international charities, etc.

*Q. What about the Lal Nishan [Red Flag] party in Maharashtra that supported the Bombay textile workers' strike. Did they run in the all-India elections?*

A. No. They supported Datta Samant [the leader of the union that conducted the strike]. For these elections, he set up what was called the Workers Front which ran candidates in Bombay. But only Datta Samant was elected.

The Lal Nishan is a Maharashtra party with a social base among the working class in Bombay and Poona, the two main industrial cities of the state, and a very substantial base among the landless laborers. During the textile strike they took the position, which was correct in our view, of supporting the textile strike from within the MGKU [Maharashtra Girni Kamgar Union, or the Maharashtra State Factory Workers Union], that is, the trade union of Datta Samant. As a result of its work in the strike, it has gained ground, its trade-union base is stronger today. Its ideological positions are quite bizarre. They combine rejection of the idea of a progressive bourgeoisie with acceptance of the two-stage theory of revolution. In practice, it's quite flexible, and yet in its ideological

positions it is strongly Stalinist — which doesn't mean that it works easily with the other Stalinist parties, the CPI and the CPM.

*Q. What is the situation of the workers' movement in Bombay after the defeat of the textile strike?*

A. The long-term trend in Bombay is that we are getting a young militant layer of trade-union activists, who are not ideologically inclined but in some respects have a stronger class consciousness than their predecessors because their umbilical cords to the countryside have finally been substantially cut.

This is a younger, more self-confident, assertive working class in middle industry. And this self-confidence reflects itself in an increasing disloyalty to the union leaderships. These workers do not yet have the ability to run their own unions but they have the confidence to say to the different union leaderships that they will not stick with them if they cannot deliver the goods. This phenomenon explains the massive shifts on the part of the Bombay working class in the last ten years from one maverick trade-union leader to another. It was in this context that we had the rise of Datta Samant as a maverick union leader, and he is now the single most important unionist in Bombay. The victory for Datta Samant in the election was, of course, a protest vote against the government's handling of the textile strike.

On the other hand, the defeat of the strike has meant that the best militants in the MGKU are finished as far as employment is concerned in Bombay. They cannot get employment anywhere in industry in Bombay. They are marked people. You have a demoralization created by the defeat of the textile strike, which has reflected itself in the rise once again of communalist forces.

The MGKU has no real organized structure. This was a strength in some ways during the strike because it allowed for the creative initiative of the workers. But now the weaknesses of this are more evident. Furthermore, with the best activists blacklisted, there has been a decline in the standards of dedication of the activists, and a resulting disillusionment with the union, to some degree, among the workers. So, it seems that the pattern of shifting loyalties on the union front in Bombay will continue.

*Q. What position did the Indian section of the Fourth International, the Enquillabi Communist Sangathan (Revolutionary Communist League) take toward the elections?*

A. We called for a vote for the workers' parties in general outside of West Bengal. There was agreement on that. In West Bengal, a majority was opposed to calling for a vote for the CPM, considering the record of the CPM in the state and that the election was a straight clash between the CPM and Congress (I). In these conditions, they thought it was best to call for a boycott. ■



## Women denounce fake Equal Employment Opportunity Law

In 1975, the United Nations (UN) declared a decade for women. The decade is drawing to a close and very little has been achieved in concrete terms. In 1979, the UN launched a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women with 130 countries supporting it. Today very few countries have implemented even the limited demands it contains.

If any governments have started to implement legislation for women's equality, it has largely been to suit their own requirements or those of the capitalist class. The example of Japan is a good illustration of this.

\* \* \*

Since the beginning of the 1980s, an autonomous women's movement has again been gathering momentum in Japan. There was a rise of the women's movement, composed mainly of young women, as part of the general youth radicalisation in the early 1970s but the movement lost its momentum in the mid-1970s when the Japanese far left was thrown into general disarray.

Throughout the latter half of the 1970s and the early 1980s, especially after the deep economic depression of 1975-76, the inferior and discriminatory position of working women was reinforced by a pro-

In 1982 women in Japan successfully obstructed the government's attempt to revise a law to control and regulate a women's right to choose abortion. They organized the "Women's 1982 Coalition to Stop Reversion of the Eugenic Protection Law," stating that "It is not the state but women who make the decision whether to give birth or not. This is the right of women." Since 1983, Japanese women again have been uniting together, this time to fight against another government attempt to enact an equal employment opportunity law.

On May 20, 1984, more than 2,000 women and trade unionists from different sectors gathered at a rally in Tokyo to express their anger at the proposed "Equal Employment Opportunity Bill." What is wrong with the bill? To understand this, one has to see the government's intent behind this bill, and the actual situation of working women in Japan.

In 1979, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against women was adopted and agreed to by 130 countries. So far 54 countries, including Japan, have signed the Convention. Thus, the Nakasone government is now forced to ratify the Convention and to institute a domestic law connected with it by 1985, the final year of the UN Women's Decade. In-

stead of promoting equality, however, the government is trying to utilize this opportunity to reinforce discrimination against women by deleting protective clauses in the Labor Standard Law. Of course Nakasone has to do something ostensibly in favor of women's rights, and his government has therefore drafted a token "equality" bill.

gram of intensive capitalist rationalisation and the traditional, mainstream, left reformist and trade-union movement failed to give any backing to working women, thereby deepening the alienation of the mass of working women from the trade unions.

From the beginning of the 1980s, the capitalist government of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the bourgeoisie started a serious programme of rationalisation and attacks on the public sector. Because of the weakness of the trade-union movement they were successful in this and are now campaigning for new changes in the various labour codes. The Equal Employment Opportunity Bill, proposed by the government in response to the UN convention is currently under debate in parliament and is, in fact, part of the campaign to change conditions of labour.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, the autonomous women's movement has been gaining momentum again recently outside the traditional framework of the workers' movement. There are various currents and tendencies within it and the focus at present is the campaign against the Equal Employment Opportunity Bill.

Saitama Women Against War, the author of the following article is an independent feminist group in the Tokyo area. This article was first published in *Ampo* magazine, No 3, Vol 16, 1984.

**'Women constitute half the world's population, perform nearly two-thirds of its work hours, receive one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one-hundredth of the world's property.'**

**United Nations Report, 1980.**

According to the "Labor Force Survey" conducted by the Prime Minister's Office in 1982, there were 14.18 million female workers, constituting 34.6 per cent of the entire labor force. That is nearly double the 7.38 million of 1960. However, half of the increase over the past ten years has been due to the increase in part-time workers. At present, 2.84 million women are part-time work-

ers, constituting 20.2 per cent of all women employees. Part-time workers have particularly none of the rights or security of regular workers. It may be easy for them to find work, but they are dismissed just as easily. In general, the salaries of women are about half that of men, but part-time workers receive no more than about half of what full-time working women receive. The fact that the number of part-time workers is rapidly increasing despite such poor conditions points to the difficulty women have in finding any other kind of job. Part-time jobs are certainly not considered desirable for women who want or need to have a dependable, steady job.

In the following survey of the situation of Japanese female workers, it is important to keep in mind that the universally-held concepts in Japanese society about sex role divisions places the double burden of housework and child care exclusively on women.

Japan is unrivaled among the industrially advanced nations in the unwillingness of its industry to employ female graduates of four-years university. According to a 1981 survey by the Labor Ministry, 70.9 per cent of corporations hire only male university graduates.

The same survey also showed that many companies make special requirements for the women that they hire, such

as insisting that they live with their parents or extracting pledges to quit their jobs when they marry. In all, 24.3 per cent of the companies surveyed replied that they set different conditions for hiring men and women high school graduates, while 37.8 per cent did so for university graduates.

The Labor Standards Law says nothing about discriminatory conditions applied at the stage of hiring. It is clear from the results of the above survey alone that an effective Equal Employment Opportunity Law would have to outlaw discriminatory procedures at the stage of hiring. Later on, we will offer other examples that make this point even more powerfully. Indeed, we will show that the absence of such provisions in the bill now before the Diet [parliament] makes the proposed law not only weak but almost completely ineffective against sex discrimination.

Until 1978, the gap between men's and women's average wages had been closing. Taking average wages for men as 100, women's wages were 56.2 in that year. However, from 1978 on, this differential has instead been increasing, so that in 1982 women were receiving only 52.6 per cent of what men received.

A 1975 decision by the Akita Regional Court ruled that separate wage scales for men and women were a violation of Article 4 of the Labor Standards Law. However, it would be a great mistake to overestimate the efficacy of this ruling. Unquestionably, it is a major landmark, but it is important to realize that discrimination is not so easily abolished. All a company need do to perpetuate the system of wage sex discrimination is to have different scales for different job classifications. Many companies do just that, making artificial distinctions between "general" and "clerical" jobs, the former classification referring to jobs dominated by men, the latter meaning jobs allotted mainly to women. Another ploy is accepting men as *seisha-in* (regular employees) while women employees are classified as *shokutaku* ("special commission," i.e., hired to do one specific job and not eligible to broaden their job skills). Another distinction is between regular employees and "part-time" workers, which does not necessarily mean that the employees do not put in a full working day. It only means that they receive minimal wages.

Looking at the overall breakdown of jobs held by women, the biggest class is office workers, who amount to 4.71 million (33 per cent). This is followed by skilled industrial or line workers: 3.71 million (26 per cent); specialists, such as teachers, nurses, doctors and engineers: 1.87 million (13 per cent) and sales personnel: 1.69 million (12 per cent). With the exception of a relative handful of highly qualified specialists, the vast majority of women workers are confined to supportive, secondary work, with low wages and other undesirable workings attached. Denied opportunities to increase their job skills, women are



*Sohyo activists at peace demonstration (DR)*

then penalized financially in companies using different pay scales for different jobs. One reason sometimes given by industry for women's low wages is the relative short hours that they work. This is the logic of a business world accustomed to the long hours of "voluntary" overtime of its workers, often for inadequate compensation or even no compensation at all. Claims such as this show that women's struggle against exploitation by industry is really an inseparable part of the struggle of all Japanese workers.

### Gap between men's and women's wages accelerates

As it now stands, the Labor Standards Law prohibits late night labor for women. It cannot be denied that there is a sprinkling of women taxi drivers or women with jobs in the mass media who claim this restriction places them at an unfair disadvantage, and want protective legislation for women abolished. Perhaps even these women might agree it is the prevailing low wages for women that are behind their desire for late night work. But these cases are hardly central to the very serious issue of protective legislation. They are cited most often by the very ones with the least concern for women's welfare, for example, *Keidanren* (the Japanese Federation of Economic Organizations), which, failing to quash the very idea of an Equal Employment Opportunity Bill, has done the next best thing by hamstringing the bill offered by the representatives of labor on the drafting committee.

In the area of pay rises, the gap between men's and women's wages widens at an ever accelerating pace with the number of years on the job. For example, in one trading company, men's pay rises automatically in five stages, while there are only three stages for women. Furthermore, it takes an average of 11 years

longer for women to reach the third stage than it does for men.

Women also are discriminated against in the area of special allowances, which constitute a part of the salary. According to a well established "social principle," married men are "heads of household." For this reason, they alone are considered eligible for family or housing allowances, etc. Few married women receive such allowances.

Thanks to a number of judicial decisions, there has been a reduction in the number of companies with rules for discriminatory retirement ages or forced retirement of female employees when they marry, become pregnant or give birth. But even if it has become unfeasible for companies to have rules such as this, there are still many companies resorting to harassment tactics aimed at making life intolerable for women who attempt to remain at their jobs in defiance of "company custom." Even without this kind of overt discrimination, Japanese society, which puts all the burden of child care on women alone and does not provide adequate day care facilities, all too often very effectively discourages women from continuing their jobs after they have children.

The ongoing computerization of office work in recent years and similar micro-electronic innovations has also been a powerful factor in promoting early retirement for women. The new technology is being introduced at a faster pace than measures for the protection of employees' health. The vast majority of office computer operators are women. Working conditions are often harsh, with the result that women find themselves unable to continue the jobs more than 2-3 years. Companies cheerfully accept their resignations and employ more young women at minimal wages.

In 1980, 21.3 per cent of Japan's civil service workers were women. Although the civil service field operates according to a supposed principle of equality of the sexes providing, for example, the same



salaries for all workers in a given job, sex discrimination is just as much a reality of life here as in private industry.

We have seen that there are all sorts of ways in which hired women suffer discrimination. Court decisions and the expanding female labor pool notwithstanding, discriminatory practices are actually on the increase. The most exploitative tactic by industry by far in recent years has been the hiring of women as "part-time" workers to do essentially the same work that regular employees do. This practice is now showing a remarkable rate of growth. The "part-time" designation is used as an excuse for giving minimal wages and no benefits or job security of any kind; it does not necessarily signify short working hours. According to a survey conducted by the Prime Minister's Office, around 70 per cent of "part-time" workers put in 6-8 hours a day, and more than half work 6 days a week. For this, the part-time workers only receive an average of 55.3 per cent of the wages of female "regular employees." Among companies employing part-time workers, only around 40 per cent provide some kind of workers compensation, while around 40-60 per cent give allowances, pay increases or bonuses. Less than 10 per cent give retirement bonuses.

For an equal employment law to be effective, it must prevent discrimination at the stage of hiring. The Equal Employment Opportunity Law that is now in the process of being adopted has no such provision. The inevitable result will be to encourage current hiring practices whereby women are forced to settle for low paying jobs with no job security or employee benefits.

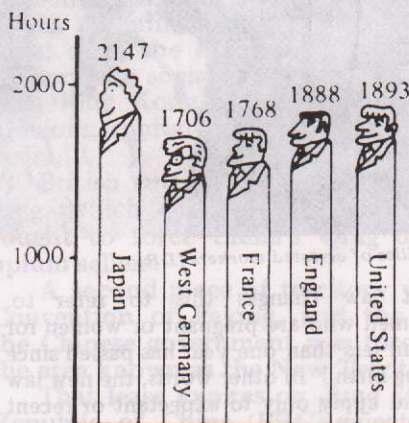
Of course, no law can cover all the ways women may be subjected to discriminatory treatment. However, even the present Labor Standards Law, which only deals with wages in the area of sex discrimination, is often ignored by Japan's industries in its application to male as well as female workers. From this fact, it is clear that sex discrimination is part of a general pattern resulting from the generally weak position of all of Japan's workers. Existing laws are completely inadequate to deal with strongly rooted institutions of sex discrimination. It is lamentable that the Equal Employment Opportunity Law now under consideration does not provide the means necessary for true implementation of the UN Convention against sex discrimination.

It should be noted that Japan's signing of the Convention was a reaction to certain pressures, which of course included the various women's movements within Japan. However, far more decisive was an awareness of the criticisms from Europe and the United States of the long working hours with inadequate compensation put in by Japanese workers as a contributing factor to economic friction. (See Table 1) The Japanese government felt that signing the convention would be one way of placating that criticism. Thus, the sin-

cerity of Japan's commitment to equality of the sexes was open to question from the beginning. Now that we have seen the government's proposal for an equal employment opportunity law in response to the provisions of Article 11 of the Convention, its intentions are quite clear. The female workers of Japan are to have equal opportunity in name only. In fact, the proposed law arms industry with ample loopholes to continue their exploitative use of female labor if they so choose.

Table 1

Only workers in Japan work more than 2000 hours a year



Source: Ministry of Labour, "Statistics of Labor" (1983)

The process of producing the draft Equal Employment Opportunity Law now before the Diet began with deliberation by the Women's and Minor's Problems Council, an advisory panel to the Labor Minister. This council consists of representatives from three sectors: management, labor and 'the public weal'. It soon became clear that management and labor were poles apart in their views. The enormously powerful Japan Federation of Economic Organizations threw all its weight against labor's attempts to create a law with teeth. At the same time, a coalition of women's rights groups staged a series of sit-ins at the Labor Ministry to demand a law. In February, 1984, the Council presented a draft plan to the Labor Ministry.

The bill which emerged from this consists of two parts. Part one is concerned with the revision of the Working Women's Welfare Law and the second part with the revision of the Labor Standards Law. Thus, the first most striking point is that the government has no desire to create any new laws. Instead, it wants to revise for the worse the Working Women's Welfare Law, renaming it the "Law On Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, the Securement of Equal Treatment of Female Workers in Labor and Other Fields and The Promotion of the Welfare of Female Workers" (unofficial translation). In other words, the Japanese Government has made the problem of sex equality into a problem of welfare. In so

doing, it is dispensing with a fundamental concept of the Convention, that of ensuring "the right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings" (Article 11, Paragraph A).

The first part of the bill deals with recruitment. It states that with regard to hiring, job assignment and promotions, employers "must endeavor to deal with women on a basis of equality with men." However, the Convention that Japan signed aims for a lot more than an "obligation to endeavor." Article two, Paragraph B of the Convention provides that signing states agree, "to adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women." Japan's proposed law provides no penalties for employers who discriminate. Nor does it provide an effective course of appeal to women who have suffered discrimination. To this date, the only path that is open to women seeking to legally challenge discrimination is in the courts. Thanks to a few courageous individuals, some important battles have been won since the 1970s. They were won only after many years, at great financial cost and incalculable personal anguish. These suits were all based on one law, specifically, Article four of the Labor Standards Law, which deals only with wage discrimination. Despite the fact that the Constitution bans sex discrimination in general, there are no other laws besides this one that deal with sex discrimination. This means that there is no effective ban on any of the many other types of job discrimination (e.g., discrimination in hiring, promotion, dismissal, training, etc.) because, according to Japanese legal procedure, the Constitution itself cannot be invoked in suits involving private contracts. The proposed new law with its absurd "obligation to endeavor" offers no mechanism with the power to compel compliance and is therefore no help at all.

The draft says that there shall be no discriminatory treatment in the areas of job training, welfare benefits, retirement age, resignation or retirement. However, by its failure to provide against discrimination at the stage of hiring, employers are as free as ever to hire women for specific "women's" jobs, enabling them to deny women's training for other jobs that may be more responsible, better paying, or lead the way to advancement. The painfully won battles in the areas of discriminatory retirement ages and forced resignations still stand. However, this does not mean that these practices have been effectively abolished. Quite the contrary, instances of discrimination in these areas are still to be found. What is needed is a law that would provide for penalties of sufficient weight to discourage employers from discriminating. The draft plan does not do this. With this law, working Japanese women will be no better defended than they ever were. Indeed, they will be in a worse state.

The bill will establish a series of

"Labor Opportunity Arbitration" Committees at the prefectural level as a means for resolving disputes. However, there are two conditions attached to these committees: firstly, they will not handle disputes concerning recruitment practices or conditions attached to hiring (what jobs will be placed open to what applicants) and secondly, arbitration can only be carried out when both the complaining party and the employer agree to the arbitration. Thus, all the employer need do is give a refusal, and there will be no arbitration. Neither are the Committees empowered to deal with discrimination at the stage of hiring. This constitutes perhaps the biggest loophole of all for the benefit of the employer. He or she need only create different job classifications (with different wage scales, of course) for men and women at his/her convenience in order to continue the customary pattern of sex discrimination, all within the spirit and letter of this toothless law.

In short, the arbitration committees are perfectly hamstrung at the outset. They are prohibited from dealing with fundamental areas of discrimination to begin with, and they don't have any power of enforcement anyway.

The second part of the proposed law revises a portion of the Labor Standards Law. Specifically,

- It abolishes restrictions on labor outside of regular working hours or on holidays for women who work at jobs requiring special skills;

- It removes the rule for two hours of overtime a day for industrial jobs. At present, the overtime limit is 12 hours a week and 150 hours a year. This means that overtime can be demanded up to a maximum of 14 hours per day.

- Concerning other kinds of jobs, the present limit of 150 hours a year will be changed according to the following wording. "Time to be determined by order, within a range of more than 150 hours and less than 300 hours". If a limit of 300 hours is set, that would provide for just double the amount of overtime now permitted.

This final point raises the possibility that long working hours will be forced on the individual or even that agreeing to customary overtime could be made a condition for hiring. This is an extremely dangerous situation for men as well as for women. Japanese workers are already putting in 300-400 hours a year more than Americans and Europeans. This law aims to widen the gap even more.

The draft permits late night hours (from 10 pm through 5 am) for female workers in:

- Supervisory jobs and specialist jobs;
- Part-time jobs whose nature requires late night duty;
- Other jobs for which approval has been received from the appropriate government agency on the basis of a request from the individual.

Concerning dangerous jobs, the present law is addressed to the "protection of minors and females," but the



Families of arrested workers (DR)

draft law changes this to refer to, "women who are pregnant or women for whom less than one year has passed since giving birth." In other words, the new law would apply only to expectant or recent mothers. At present it is not yet clear what exactly will constitute "dangerous jobs," but from the government's present stance, it can probably be expected that it will continue its relaxation of protection for workers under the Labor Standards Law.

**'The society that we envision will not prescribe work according to sex roles. Men and women will both have the right to work. Each individual will be able to lead a life in which she or he can realize their own potential. This is the meaning of true equality.'**

It is quite clear that if the Equal Employment Law and revision of the Labor Standards Law package proposed by the government is adopted, working conditions for women will become much worse than they are now. As long as this "Equal Employment Law" does not prohibit discrimination at the stage of hiring, industry will be free to seek different qualifications in the men and women they hire and hire them for different jobs. The disclaimer that women were hired for different reasons hardly serves as a reasonable excuse for discrimination. But the draft Equal Employment Law will encourage this kind of discrimination at the very outset.

For manufacturing industries on the three-shift system, incorporation of women into the late-night shifts would

be a way of cutting costs, because statistics show that women receive an average wage of only 43 per cent that of men in Japan's manufacturing industries. The law of course will remove restrictions on overtime and late-night work not only in manufacturing, but in all industries. The trend for more and more working hours for women is nothing less than the answer to the prayers of the computer industry, which relies largely on female labor as it continues to gain ever-increasing importance in Japanese society. In this field in particular, it is entirely possible that the future will see long hours of overtime forced on women as is customary with men.

With an equal opportunity law that only specifies that employers "shall endeavor to avoid discrimination in recruiting, hiring and promoting," there seems little prospect that present day discrimination will be corrected. It is more likely that discrimination will spread, with minimal wages paid for long working hours.

At the same time, there is no reason to expect an overnight reversal of the custom of placing the entire responsibility for housework and child care on women. The result will be highly deleterious to the physical well-being of women who work overtime or late-night hours. Most likely, the ultimate effect will be that women will not be able to continue working. Once a woman is forced out of her job, and then later seeks to work again after the children no longer require constant attention, the only route that will be open will be low paying part-time jobs.

As we have seen, the intention of the government with its draft law is a far cry from the effecting of a truly equal society. Rather, it is regarded as a necessary concession to maintain Japan's place among the advanced countries of the

West for the sake of its overall rightist policy. As a means of furthering that policy, the law is intended to reinforce, not abolish, sex role labor division. Thus, the government's policies towards women in recent years are diametrically opposed to the intent of the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. The government is trying to paper over this contradiction, to present the trappings of sex equality before the world, while in fact it perverts the principle to its own ends. It goes without saying that we cannot accept the resulting "equal employment law." The government's draft law offers nothing to women, but instead opens the way to more discrimination than ever. Our conclusion: This law must be absolutely scrapped.

The society that we envision will not prescribe work according to sex roles. Men and women will both have the right to work. Each individual will be able to lead a life in which she or he can realize their own potential. This is the meaning of true equality.

Regarding the drafting of an equal opportunity law, our demands are as follows:

- The law must include penalties and ban all discrimination in recruitment, hiring, promotions, training, employee benefits, retirement and termination of employment.

- A body that is independent from the government with the power to provide speedy and effective redress to victims of discrimination must be created.

- Article 3, paragraph 1 of the Labor Standards Law, which bans discrimination, must be amended to include sex discrimination.

- The Labor Standards Law must be amended to include men under the restrictions on overtime work and work during holidays and the ban on late-night work now applied to women.

Finally, we would like to note that there are many changes that will have to be effected before Japan can achieve a truly equal society. Some of the issues that must be dealt with are sex discrimination in education in which, for example, home economics is a required subject for girls only, "Turkish bath" massage parlors and the many other permutations of the sex industry, etc. The fact is that there are more varieties of sex discrimination prevalent in Japanese society than we can enumerate here.

Even more important than fulfillment of the Japanese government's pledge to ratify the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women by 1985 is the elimination of the belief in woman as an inferior, weak being and the adoption by the government of a truly effective policy against sex discrimination. This is our earnest desire.

We believe that the attainment of a truly equal society is the most important thing to ensure that humanity will survive. For the sake of freedom, equality and peace, we will continue our women's movement. ■

## HONG KONG

# Joint statement on Hong Kong accord

On September 26, 1984, the governments of China and Britain signed an agreement to restore Chinese sovereignty over the British colony of Hong Kong on July 1, 1997.

As of that date, Hong Kong will become a Special Administrative Region of China, with a large measure of internal autonomy.

In an annex to the agreement, the Chinese government stipulated "that after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the socialist system and socialist policies shall not be practiced in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and that Hong Kong's previous capitalist system and life style shall remain unchanged for 50 years."

British rule over Hong Kong dates back to the 1842 Treaty of Nanking, which ended the first of the infamous Opium Wars that Britain fought to force China's Qing dynasty to open the country to British opium sellers.

A second piece of territory was taken by the British under the 1860 Convention of Peking, and the largest part was seized in 1898, when the Chinese government was forced to grant the British a 99-year lease on the area known as the New Territories.

That lease expires on June 30, 1997. The government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) rejected British calls for an extension of the lease.

Of Hong Kong's 5 million inhabitants, 98 percent are Chinese.

The following "joint statement on the draft agreement between the PRC government and the UK (United Kingdom) government on the future of Hong Kong" was published by the Hong Kong Trotskyists. The statement was issued October 12 by the publications *October Review* and *Combat News Monthly* and by the Revolutionary Marxist League.

The translation from the Chinese is by the statement's authors.

1. The decision of the Chinese government to recover sovereignty over Hong Kong is of historically progressive significance. Over 140 years of British colonial rule is to be gone forever. Therefore, the recovery of sovereignty over Hong Kong by the Chinese government should be affirmed and supported by all the people of China (including the people of Hong Kong).

2. The Chinese people have always considered Hong Kong a part of Chinese territory; the three unequal treaties that Britain forced the Qing court to sign must be unconditionally abrogated; the British imperialists and their colonial regime must unconditionally withdraw from Hong Kong.

However, the Chinese government agreed with the British imperialists to recover sovereignty over Hong Kong only beginning 1 July, 1997. This is not only a recognition of the unequal treaty which leased the New Territories, but is also in practice recognition of the legality of British rule of Hong Kong based on the unequal treaties. This is a serious political mistake.

3. In fact, the British imperialists are not willing to return Hong Kong. In the Introduction of the White Paper pub-

lished by the UK government, the UK government admitted that it had tried to persuade the Chinese government to allow its continued occupation of Hong Kong. When this attempt failed, the British, under the pretext to "maintain the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong" and through secret negotiations, sought to intervene in Hong Kong's internal affairs after the return of sovereignty.

The strategy of the British imperialists is to have the Chinese government state in detail in the Joint Declaration policies that can extend British influence and economic interests. The British imperialists further demand that the Chinese government sign "a legally binding international agreement" to commit itself to the British in the practice of the related policies.

4. The British government is obviously extorting the Chinese government with the condition of returning sovereignty over Hong Kong in order that Britain, after it is obliged to return sovereignty over Hong Kong, can have the legal basis for widely interfering in Hong Kong's internal affairs and maintaining certain economic privileges.

The British government at the same time threatens the Hong Kong people

that "the alternative to acceptance of the present agreement is to have no agreement." It requires the Hong Kong people to accept the agreement "as a whole." The British imperialists are making use of the Hong Kong people's fear of CCP [Chinese Communist Party] bureaucratic rule to cheat the Hong Kong people to accept an international agreement that allows Britain to legally intervene in China's internal affairs.

5. On August 18, we sent a Memorandum to the State Council of the PRC via the Hong Kong New China News Agency, in which we urged the Chinese government to stand firmly on the principle of independence of sovereignty, and demanded that the Chinese government refuse to sign with the British imperialists any agreement that includes Hong Kong's internal affairs after the recovery of sovereignty.

In the Memorandum, we solemnly pointed out that the Chinese government should mobilize the strength of the Hong Kong masses and assist the Hong Kong people to convene a generally elected, full powered Hong Kong General Assembly to end colonial rule and to practice democratic rule of Hong Kong by the Hong Kong people.

6. Now, the Chinese government puts in detail, in the Joint Declaration (in effect an international agreement) and the Annexes, its policies regarding Hong Kong after the recovery of sovereignty. The Chinese government further declares that it will enact a Basic Law of Hong Kong based on the related content in the Joint Declaration and the Annexes.

We consider that this not only violates the country's sovereignty but also deprives the Hong Kong people of the right to democratically decide Hong Kong's future social system and policies. Therefore, we solemnly state that:

A. China's policies towards Hong Kong after recovery of sovereignty over Hong Kong belong entirely to China's domestic affairs, and must not be intervened in by the British imperialists; the British imperialists must withdraw from Hong Kong unconditionally.

B. The Chinese people possess full autonomy from any intervention of foreign countries, and the full right at present and in the future to decide the domestic affairs of China.

On the question of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong people possess the democratic right to decide the policies in Hong Kong. The Chinese people absolutely reject the Chinese government's inclusion of its policies towards Hong Kong in an international agreement, which allows the British to intervene in China's domestic affairs.

7. Since the British imperialists have long been practising colonial rule in Hong Kong, British capitalists occupy monopoly positions in Hong Kong's important sectors such as the financial, monetary, air travel, electricity, communications, and public transport sectors, and dominate Hong Kong's economic lifelines.

Therefore, the Chinese government's

agreement to guarantee that the prevailing social and economic systems in Hong Kong will remain unchanged for 63 years, and its enactment of various concrete policies to ensure that the "economic interests [of the United Kingdom and other countries] in Hong Kong will be given due regard," will help the economic privileges of the imperialist countries to persist.

As a result, although sovereignty over Hong Kong belongs to China, Hong Kong will, with the approval of the Chinese government, be open to the economic plunder of the imperialist countries. The latter can also make use of their economically superior status to influence the international affairs of Hong Kong.

8. Under British colonial rule, the Hong Kong people have long been under oppression. The people's political freedoms are suppressed. They are deprived of basic democratic rights. The mother language and culture are discriminated against. The right to education for students is seriously restricted. Mass actions of workers, residents, and young students to defend their rights are frequently repressed.

Now, the Chinese government uses the pretext of "maintaining stability and prosperity" to flagrantly express support and "give its cooperation" to the illegal and repressive rule of the colonial regime.

We consider that the wrong policies of the Chinese government seriously violate the dignity and interests of the Chinese (including Hong Kong) people.

9. Under the protection of the British colonial regime, monopoly-capital corporations seize huge profits relying on the very low profit-tax system and the laissez-faire policies on foreign currency and finance. On the other hand, social welfare and public services are seriously insufficient; employment and livelihood of the labouring people are not safeguarded; the gap between the rich and the poor widens.

Therefore, the continuation of the capitalist system without change means in effect defense of the monopoly and exploitation by the established interests. For the labouring people who constitute the great majority of the population, the policy of the Chinese government to defend the capitalists will make it more difficult for them to get rid of the oppression and exploitation.

10. We consider that the aim of the Chinese government's recovery of sovereignty must be to assist the Hong Kong labouring people to obtain liberation. Therefore, the Chinese government, at the same time that it recovers sovereignty over Hong Kong, should assist the Hong Kong people in the convening of a generally elected Hong Kong General Assembly so that the Hong Kong people have the full right to decide on how to recover sovereignty and carry out various social changes.

In this way, the aid of the Chinese people and the mobilization of the Hong Kong masses will force British imper-

ialists to unconditionally withdraw from Hong Kong. The Hong Kong people will, in this course, establish a democratic, self-rule people's government and decide Hong Kong's political, economic, and social systems, and the relationship with mainland China.

11. The Chinese government has refused to adopt the above correct policies; this is the result of the Chinese Communist Party's one-party dictatorship and bureaucratic rule. The bureaucratic rule has constituted a serious obstacle to China's socialist construction and to the liberation of the Hong Kong masses.

The CCP fears that mobilization of the Hong Kong people to recover sovereignty will very probably impel the Hong Kong people to go on the road demanding class liberation and democratic self-rule. The CCP fears further that the independent, autonomous mobilization of the Hong Kong masses will stimulate the struggle of the people in China to fight for socialist democracy and to get rid of the CCP's bureaucratic rule.

12. In order to alleviate the Hong Kong people's skepticism and fear of the CCP bureaucratic rule, the Chinese government is obliged to concede and "promise" limited self-rule for Hong Kong. From the Tien An Men Event (1) to the democracy movement in China, to the recent CCP policies to carry out economic readjustment, and limited improvement of the people's livelihood, it has been shown that the strength of the masses cannot be slighted. The Hong Kong people should grasp the opportunity to mobilize and strive for democratic self-rule.

13. Political democratization of the whole country is an indispensable prerequisite for the unification of a nation. At present, the National People's Congress is not produced by general election. It is an instrument of rule by the privileged bureaucracy. It cannot represent the wishes and will of the Chinese people (including the Hong Kong people). Only through a democratically elected National People's Congress and through the practice of socialist democracy and legal system, with the people as master of the country, can the firm basis be laid for the unification of the nation.

Therefore, we appeal to the people of China (including Hong Kong) to:

A. Oppose all articles of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Annexes that violate the principle of sovereignty and that breach the interests of the Chinese (including Hong Kong) people.

---

1. Thousands of people gathered in Peking's Tien An Men Square on April 1, 1976, to commemorate the death of Prime Minister Chou En-lai. They were soon joined by other Peking residents with grievances against the government's policies, and for several days the crowds grew larger and larger.

On April 5, 1976, the government ordered police to remove wreaths and posters from the square. An angry crowd gathered, swelling to more than 100,000 at its height. Throughout the day, demonstrators battled police trying to clear the square. Thousands were assaulted and arrested.

B. Demand that the Chinese government assist the Hong Kong people to convene a generally elected, full-powered General Assembly, recover sovereignty as soon as possible, and practise democratic self-rule of the Hong Kong people.

C. Compel the Chinese government to at once carry out radical democratic changes, abolish one-party dictatorship and bureaucratic privileges, practice socialist democracy and legal system, and return the government to the people.

We also appeal to the Hong Kong people to:

A. Organize and take the initiative to con-

## LIBERATION THEOLOGY

# The 'revolutionary virus' of the gospel

Interview with Father Antoine Gisler

On January 28, Pope John Paul II began his sixth visit to Latin America, his aim, amongst others being to stem the tide of the so-called liberation theology which is causing deep divisions inside the Catholic Church.

Addressing Venezuelan bishops shortly after his arrival he denounced liberation theology on the grounds that it sought 'an illusory earthly liberation'. The pope wished to make it quite clear that he is not 'only for the poor' and that he does not as pope represent any particular class, as the Episcopal Secretariat of Central America and Panama emphasised before his last visit.

Liberation theologians, on the other hand, make it quite clear that they are for the poor and in the following interview conducted by *La Breche*, the paper of the Swiss section of the Fourth International, Antoine Gisler, a leading proponent of liberation theology explains this. Father Gisler is a spiritual missionary who lived for 15 years in the Antilles and four years in Senegal.

*Question. What do you understand by liberation theology?*

*Answer.* Liberation theology is at the moment mainly a phenomenon of the Third World. It was born in a context of oppression and the struggle against that oppression; it is identified as an element of that struggle. It has been nourished in the field of the practice and experience of Christians in the Ecclesiastical Communities at the Base (CEB). Anyone who wants to understand it must understand these organisations.

A CEB meeting discusses very down-to-earth issues: problems of drinking water; or the repair of a road; vaccinations; redundant workers. CEB members also read the Bible and discuss it. In it they find a God who takes the side of the oppressed. They feel growing inside them the idea of liberating themselves through common effort. They have caught the 'revolutionary virus' as Charles Maurras (1) once called the gospel.

Apart from all this they try to understand, to analyse and get to know the causes of exploitation which the Third World countries are the victim of. So they find out about how it works; about the mechanism of the market, and other socio-economic structures. They are witnesses to the existence of social classes and their antagonistic nature. Members of the CEBs are mainly involved in action, in self-help, in trade union work

vene a generally elected and full-powered Hong Kong General Assembly, end colonial rule, and democratically elect a self-rule government.

B. Actively start the discussion on the drafting of the Basic Law, strive for the democratic enactment of the Basic Law by the Hong Kong people, and realize the democratic rule of Hong Kong by the Hong Kong people.

C. Be closely concerned with the political economic and social developments in China, join forces with the people in the mainland, and struggle together for the practice of socialist democracy in China. ■

---

*The campaign against liberation theology does not emanate only from the Vatican.*

*In 1980 in Washington the Institute for Religion and Democracy was established under the direction of Peter Burger, a protestant sociologist and Michel Novak, a catholic journalist. This hallowed institution was specially set up to stop aid going from North American christian groups to the popular church in Latin America and to proponents of liberation theology.*

*This institute is financed by several organisations some of which are not a million miles away from the Republican Party. The ways of the Lord certainly are very mysterious...*

---

etc. The fundamental aim, as the saying goes, is not to interpret the world but to change it.

*Q. And where does theology come in all of this?*

A. We are fully involved. In thinking about biblical texts or about the God you find there and his role in the history of mankind, CEB members are developing theology. They do need — and they are the first to recognise it, fraternal help from a professional, that is a theologian. But that person has to get involved with them and stand with them in their fight

for liberation. If not they will almost certainly not be understood.

*Q. Why does the Church react so negatively to liberation theology?*

A. I cannot give you a definitive answer. But I would like to underline certain aspects. The response from Rome is not wholly negative; but it is mainly negative. Subjectively speaking, there is a real anxiety on the part of the Vatican to safeguard the integrity of the faith. But the way that this anxiety is expressed and the positions which flow from this demonstrate, in my view, a misunderstanding of what liberation theology is all about.

This misunderstanding is very likely explained by the distance which Roman officials have from the struggle against oppression. For it was in this context that liberation theology was born and continues to grow. These ideas are proved in struggle. Leonardo Boff (one of the main proponents of liberation theology who was interrogated by Rome last September) it seems invited his hosts in Rome to accompany him to Brazil to see the CEBs at work and to see the favelas (the shanty towns in Brazil).

*Q. Exactly what are the stakes involved in liberation theology?*

A. It's a question of God and the Bible. It's a matter of knowing that the poor and the weak will no longer submit to oppression, that they will be treated according to the dignity which they have in the eyes of God. This is important because Christians are aware of this and are turning their hopes towards Nicaragua, for example. They see good reasons to get involved in the revolutionary process underway in this country. By the same token they note with alarm the silence of Rome in the face of the aggression which Nicaragua is being subjected to when all it is trying to do is to build a more brotherly society, in fact one more in conformity with God's will.

*Q. The influence of Marxists is one of the things main accusations made by Rome against liberation theology. What does this recourse to Marxism consist of and why does Rome attach so much importance to it?*

A. Marxism for liberation theology provides a useful tool for understanding the mechanisms through which oppression is transmitted to whole populations, mainly in the Third World. To put it simply, what we borrow from Marxism is the method of analysis of society. However, Marxism as an atheist philosophy is explicitly rejected.

On the other hand, Rome considers that it is not possible to separate Marx's method of analysis of society and his philosophy. The theologians of liberation take an opposite view, and one which is also held by many Marxists themselves.

---

1. Charles Maurras was a leader of Action Française before the Second World War in France and a right-wing theoretician.

## What happened to the unions in 1984

It was not a good year. From the start the employers appeared to have the advantage and kept pushing for more wage cuts and fringe takebacks than the year before. In December 1983, after a six-week strike in which the rank and file fought hard and well, the Greyhound bus drivers accepted deep pay cuts and a two-tier wage structure, dictated by the company and agreed to by top officials of the Amalgamated Transit Union. One picket was killed, run down by a scab driver. Nearly a hundred others were fired, accused of "damaging company property." The brutality and draconic terms of the employers and the agencies of government involved in this strike were thought by many workers to be signs of things to come, foreshadowing the new year.

Frank LOVELL

The Phelps-Dodge copper miners in Arizona, threatened with drastic wage cuts and continuous lay-offs, were forced to strike in July 1983. Almost immediately the company tried to bring in scabs. At the start of 1984 these strikers were still out. By mid-year they were being driven from their company-owned homes by state police — facing riot sticks, gunfire, and tear gas.

They were told by officials of the United Steelworkers that mass picketing and demonstrations could not stop the scabs, and would imperil the successful outcome of the strike. The "union strategists" urged reliance on the good offices of Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt, a liberal Democrat reelected in 1982 with AFL-CIO endorsement. It was Babbitt's Department of Public Safety that clubbed pickets, shot them with wooden bullets, broke up union meetings, and tear-gassed women and children demonstrators and bystanders.

As 1984 closed the copper strikers were still holding out, and their union representatives had devised "new strategy" — a threat to withdraw USWA deposits from banks and insurance companies that continue to lend money to Phelps-Dodge. But by this time the company was closing its mines, cooling the smelter furnaces, and furloughing the scabs who had been hired at cheap wages to keep the whole unprofitable operation going.

The copper industry was not typical of US industry in 1984. Employment and industrial production rose during the year. The temporary economic recovery failed, however, to bring back jobs in heavy industry (steel, coal, and auto) that were lost in the 1979-82 depression. Auto, for example, profited dramatically, boosting investor dividends and executive salaries to new highs and producing a near-record output of motor cars and other vehicles. But the number of auto

workers employed in 1984 remained at more than 100,000 below peak-employment years. This resulted from automation and new production processes, a transformation that has occurred over the past decade with devastating results for workers and their unions in an increasing number of organized industries.

### No lack of rank and file militancy

The cumulative effects of automation in industry, combined with the steady rightward shift in ruling class politics, began to disturb the complacency of the union bureaucracy. Union membership continued to decline steadily if not drastically in absolute numbers (it remains around 19 million), but in relation to the population it has slipped to no more than 17 percent from a high of 25 percent 30 years ago. Union organizing drives in 1984 failed to meet expectations. The anti-union offensive of the employers continued to press decertification elections. There were few outright union victories, and it began to seem as if more strikes were lost than won. AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland blamed the NLRB (1), and other top union officials hinted they might support repeal of the National Labour Relations Act. It began to dawn, however dimly, that the capitalist government is not a friend of labor and labor legislation was never intended to encourage the growth of unionism. Some even said that the new anti-labor policy of the most powerful employers, embraced by the Reagan administration, was skillfully designed to destroy the union movement. Given this economic and political climate the best survival strategy the union bureaucracy could devise was to concentrate on organizing public and clerical workers where there were signs of success, and try to defeat the Reagan administration in the general election.



Friendly fire? (DR)

The prospects for the union movement were not so bleak as the union bureaucracy thought or pretended to think. There was no lack of rank-and-file militancy in every major strike during the year, beginning with the Greyhound drivers and the copper miners and including the hotel and restaurant workers in Las Vegas, the UAW strikers at the AP Parts plant in Toledo, the hospital workers in New York, the clerical workers at Yale University, and the Chicago teachers near the end of the year.

The two major wage settlements in basic industry where strikes were expected to develop and did not were in auto and coal. In both industries the workers looked for a more favorable outcome, and were prepared to conduct a determined struggle if properly represented. The employers held the initiative from the beginning, and they convinced the UAW and the United Mine Workers negotiators that it would be mutually beneficial for the unions and the employers to settle on the existing terms, with neither side making concessions, in exchange for a period of "labor stability and union/management collaboration."

This turn of events seemed to contradict the popular perception, encouraged by the earlier statements of Kirkland and others in the AFL-CIO hierarchy, that the employers are out to destroy the union movement, seeking unconditional surrender in a war of extermination. The truth is that the employers are not opposed to unions that do not fight very hard for the needs of their members and that provide a more stable industrial workforce than would other-

1. NLRB - National Labour Relations Board which administers US labour legislation.

wise be available. The employers prefer no union or company unions, but a reasonable approximation will do for the present.

At year's end it must be recognized that the union movement was not destroyed despite the dire predictions about Reagan's reelection. Nineteen million organized workers remain a potentially powerful social and political force.

During the year the question of labor's future was raised in many circles, including academia, the government (both the constituted branches and departments and the advisory groups), the union officialdom, and the radical political parties and others in and around the union movement. This was prompted by the open anti-labor stance of the Reagan administration and by the hesitation and uncertainty of the union leadership. The wide range of interest in this question produced a large body of opinion — books, articles, lectures, letters, etc. Most of those on the employer side hailed the demise of the unions, but the more sober view from this quarter saw the "social need" of the unions.

Those around the union bureaucracy recognized the need for a "revitalized labor movement." Leo Perlis, a retainer to the union bureaucracy who served from 1955 to 1980 as AFL-CIO director of community services, thought the unions at their "weakest point in 50 years" and urged "organizing the unorganized, educating the organized, developing a participatory rather than an adversary approach to business, and greater involvement in community affairs." In other words, Perlis urged the union bureaucracy to do what he had failed to

do for 25 years when he was hired to win political friends for the union movement among Blacks, women, small business people, dirt farmers, and other potential allies of labor. He forgot to mention how this should be done and to examine why he had failed.

The common theme in nearly all analyses of the present ills of labor, whether friendly or hostile, was the primacy of the so-called free enterprise system. Employers provide jobs. Workers need jobs to enjoy the good life. Therefore, labor and management must collaborate in the development and expansion of privately owned industry. But there were some dissenters, mostly among radicals who recognize that the troubles of the union movement as presently constituted are but a small part of the crisis of the capitalist system.

### Debate over how to bring the unions into fighting shape

Within the radical movement a debate began to crystalize in 1984 over the perennial question of how a new socially conscious radical leadership will develop in the mass movement of the working class, and how the present unions will be transformed from working class institutions within the capitalist structure into organizations of class struggle against the inequality and injustice of capitalism. One side of this debate was stated in a general way by Steve Early, a labor journalist and activist lawyer, who contended in "A New Generation of Labor Lefts" (*The Nation*, May 5) that not much will happen in the unions without conscious leadership. "It took

conscious action and in many cases organizational commitment for New Leftists to enter the ranks of labor and play the role they have," he said. "It will take additional bold initiatives to expand their following and political influence in the years to come."

The other side of the argument was advanced rather accidentally by Norma Best, a former AFL-CIO union official and teacher of labor history at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, in a critical letter on workers and state power (*Monthly Review*, September). Best wrote: "Before US trade unionists can regain the power of the 1930s, they must regain the ideological independence of the 1930s, when production-for-use concepts and laws to increase people's influence in the capitalist state were a part of everyday political dialogue." This succinctly expresses the belief that social pressures must produce a new mass radicalization before changes occur within the union movement, failing to recognize that struggles within the unions and other working class organizations are a necessary part of the mass radicalization.

These are not isolated examples. The debate, only beginning and not yet clearly defined, continues to grow in the radical press. The left social democrats (Democratic Socialists of America), the Stalinists (Communist Party), and some other radicals who are or seek to become active in the unions subscribe to the view that a conscious left wing leadership can find support and begin to develop under present conditions in the unions, leaving aside the question of how this will be accomplished.

The Socialist Workers Party, most radical sectarian groups, and others who criticize and oppose the evils of capitalism on moral or religious grounds take the opposite view that the unions will be drawn into the vortex of social struggle by outside forces. Then, and only then, they say, will a new leadership emerge.

A correct analysis must understand the connection between the objective forces that will move the masses, and the development of a vanguard which can help to organize and give direction to that motion. It is true that the present anti-union offensive of the employers is bound to collide with the self-interest of millions of workers, and that the workers will become convinced in this way as no amount of preaching can convince them that there is no way out but to fight. Under such conditions the prospect of big class battles is most likely, and the unions will undergo great change. But that does not negate the need for radicals who anticipate these battles to begin arming themselves and others in the union movement for the coming struggle, as many are trying to do. In fact, the emerging debate over how the union movement will be brought into fighting shape, and related questions, is only one manifestation of the new interest and activity in the unions. ■

Miners demo (DR)



## Fighting war and poverty in 1985

**SYDNEY, Australia** — Australian politics is likely to continue polarising in the coming year, Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jim Percy told delegates to the Australian Section of the Fourth International's tenth national conference, held in early January.

The deteriorating world economic situation and the resulting increasingly war-like policies of the major capitalist powers have contributed to the growth of a mass peace movement as a powerful new political factor.

Formation of the Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP) to contest last December's federal elections marked an important turning point in Australian politics, according to Percy. The NDP threw a sever fright into the ruling Labor Party (ALP), capturing up to 9 per cent of the vote and electing one senator, Jo Vallentine from Western Australia.

The political polarisation this reflects is likely to continue, largely because this changed situation has not led any section of the Labor Party's leadership to change direction, Percy added. Abandonment of many of Labor's traditional policies at the July 1984 ALP national conference in Canberra was the main immediate factor that sparked the emergence of the NDP, and there is no sign of any movement to reverse the anti-worker decisions taken by that conference.

Prime Minister Bob Hawke's direction is very clear said Percy, "He has to drive ahead on the course he has chosen. He can't respond to what happened in the elections. He's not going to move back towards the centre, bringing in some welfare programs. He's going to drive to the right.

"We don't expect the election results to bring a shift by the Labor left either. They're not going to say, 'Well, the mistake we made was to compromise on uranium mining, on nuclear power, or the mistake we made was to support the accord.'"

The mainstream left of the labor movement is unlikely to change. "That means the situation we're facing now is likely to be relatively the same for the next year." Only a sharp leftward swing by Labor could diffuse the impact of the new developments, in particular the emergence of the Nuclear Disarmament Party.

"Labor's concern is simply how to win the votes back, not how to change course. The problem for the Labor left is that the election revealed that traditional approach to be completely inadequate. The situation has gone beyond that.

Rhetoric is no longer enough, fakery is no longer enough.

"Behind the rhetoric about Hawke's economic miracle, behind foreign minister Bill Hayden's nuclear disarmament rhetoric there lies a rather grim picture. No one says there's going to be any return to the employment levels and living standards of the 1950s and 1960s. The question is: at what pace will our living standards deteriorate?"

"Everyone admits that there's structural unemployment of around 10 per cent. No one pretends they can do anything about that any more. And on top of that, the war drive is a permanent fixture.

"But the elections showed that the fight's not over," millions of people are by no means resigned to accepting war and poverty as inevitable, and they're prepared to break the mould of traditional politics in their search for alternatives.

War and poverty: Fighting one means fighting the other, was the theme of the conference, the SWP's highest decision making body, which also elects the party's national leadership.

### "Struggles for national independence are linked to struggles for peace"

The packed agenda kept the delegates and observers busy at Sydney's Chevron Hotel from early morning until late at night for six days. Discussion ranged over topics such as new trends in women's liberation, youth in politics, the relevance of Marxism in the West, and much more.

Besides a number of reports on national and international questions, the delegates adopted a major resolution on the world political situation and the Struggle for Socialism in the Imperialist Epoch. The resolution, printed in book form, was discussed along with other material in the SWP branches for about three months before the conference.

The evenings were given over to large public gatherings. A highlight was Kanak union leader Louis Uregei's public meeting on the struggle for independence in Kanaky (New Caledonia).

Uregei, a political bureau member of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front, spoke on behalf of the provisional government of independent Kanaky.

The French government could be expected to propose some sort of neo-colonial solution which would preserve French interests in the region, said Uregei. "However," he added, "the FLNKS will not be tricked. Nothing will shake our intransigence for Kanak sovereignty.

"The struggle we have undertaken since our massive active boycott of the recent elections has shown us that independence is not something you beg for."

Struggles for national independence are intimately linked with the struggle for peace, said national committee member Peta Stewart, reporting to the conference on the peace movement: "The rise of national liberation struggles since the Second World War has diverted the United States from fully pursuing its drive to war against the socialist states.

"The current rearmament program of the US would now be much further advanced had it not been for the victory of Vietnam in its struggle for independence. Defending national liberation struggles then, is an integral part of winning peace."

National independence struggles were a subject of considerable discussion by the conference delegates. As well as Louis Uregei the conference was addressed by a national liberation fighter from the Philippines. There were also sessions on Vietnam and Central America.

There was considerable discussion on how socialists can strengthen their solidarity work with the important struggles now taking place in Central America. The outcome of these struggles is likely to have at least as much impact on world history as did the victory of Vietnam.

"The fight for peace necessarily raises many issues" Peta Stewart told the conference. "What is war? Who profits from it? Everyone claims to be against war, so why does it happen? Is it an act of god? Is it because human beings are inherently aggressive?"

"As people consider these issues, more and more are concluding that there's something wrong with the social system, the economic system we live under, something about it that generates war. The fight against war becomes the fight for a new social system.

"Humanity can never have peace until it rids itself of the social system that generates war: the capitalist system. Marxists are sometimes accused of not being genuine peace activists, of attempting to use the movement for our own ends. In fact what we do is to point out that to end war the peace movement has to change society."

Jamie Doughney took up the question of the trade union movement's social contract (prices-incomes accord) with the Labor government.

"The federal government-Australian Council of Trade Union's prices-incomes accord has meant a real decline in living



# War and poverty: Fighting one means fighting the other Socialist Workers Party



Campaigns of Australian SWP (DR)



standards for people in Australia," said Doughney. "A recent report in the *Melbourne Herald* described the situation in that city's western suburbs as a depression. The unemployment rate is 13 per cent.

"Fifty per cent of people living in the western suburbs have incomes below the poverty line. That gives some idea of what's happening to wages in Australia today. Wage restraint is driving down workers' living conditions.

"There are now 300,000 people who have been unemployed for more than six months. That's 120,000 more than when Hawke took office. And 100,000 of those people have been unemployed for more than two years.

"The accord's only success story can be summed up in a simple seven letter word: profits. In the first six months of 1984, 169 major companies recorded a

45 per cent increase in profits. The banks have been recording massive profits. There was BHP's record 622 million [Australian] dollars in the last financial year. The accord has meant a massive redistribution of wealth away from the working class in this country.

"The facts completely destroy the central premise on which the accord was sold to workers: that wage restraint means more profits, means more investment, means more jobs, means less poverty."

Doughney pointed out that there is considerable unrest over the wage cuts of recent years. This will lead to increasing conflict. However, he said, the accord was likely to hold during 1985, mainly because the ACTU has taken on the role of industrial cop for the Labor government. The weight of virtually the whole of the top trade union leadership is likely

to be enough to continue to demoralise and intimidate militant workers in the near future.

## Developments towards left unity taking place

This SWP conference was the largest yet held, attracting over 450 participants. It was also the first opened to observers from other left parties. Representatives from the Eurocommunist Communist Party of Australia and the pro-Moscow Socialist Party of Australia (SPA) observed some sessions. The pro-Peking Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) sent apologies. SPA general secretary Peter Symon presented greetings to the conference. Supporters of the Melbourne-based Turkish Democratic Group were seated as delegates, and members of the Socialist Party of Croatia also participated.

Another guest at the conference was John Trinkl, a journalist for the *Guardian*, the most widely read socialist paper in the United States. Trinkl addressed a well-attended public meeting on US politics under Reagan.

Reporting on prospects for socialist unity, SWP Melbourne branch secretary John Percy surveyed the present fragmentation of the organised left. Including the various left-wing migrant organisations, the Australian left is divided among at least twenty different groups.

"Why is the left so divided?" asked Percy, "Big political questions," he continued, "have led to the divisions. Thorough political discussion and clarification will be needed before these divisions can be overcome or bypassed.

"Developments towards left unity are taking place on two levels: Firstly, there's discussion and secondly there's action. A third level, organisational unity, is not on the cards at the moment. Obviously that's a goal for the future, but that will be based on success in the first two areas.

Most groups on the left now recognise that discussion is necessary and possible, Percy added. "The forms of the discussion and the topics are wide open, and the participation should be as broad as possible. Naturally, we in the SWP have some firm views on the most urgent topics for discussion: Assessment of the ALP, its role in government and its accord; and the attitude socialists should take to the Nuclear Disarmament Party are two of the most important issues, in our opinion. But we're open to suggestions.

"That's one of the reasons we threw this conference open, inviting representatives and members of other left parties to observe our discussions. We wanted to set a precedent, so that dialogue gets extended, the process of discussion gets speeded up."

The conference heard messages from a number of international organisations, including the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) of Nicaragua and the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.



## Communique to the Salvadoran people from the FDR-FMLN

*The current talks between President Duarte and the FDR/FMLN in El Salvador appear to have reached a deadlock.*

*At a press conference on January 23 president Duarte rejected any notion of continuing the talks, blaming the so-called intransigence of the FLMN-FDR. In fact all that Duarte could offer was participation in the elections in March, 1985....in exchange for the putting down of arms by the rebel forces.*

*Guillermo Ungo, president of the FDR was quoted in the February issue of Latin America Weekly Report as saying that Duarte's offer was simplistic and comparing it to 'tying a basketball players hands and inviting him onto the court to play....With a permanent state of seige.....These elections are a bloody masquerade, by the right and for the right.'*

*The following communique on the state of the talks at that time was issued by the Executive Committee of the FDR general command of the FLMN on December 7, 1984.*

The Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) and the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN) of El Salvador use this medium to communicate to the working class and peasantry; to teachers and students; to the honest military of the Salvadorean Armed Forces; to activists and revolutionary combatants and to all the Salvadorean people, the following points of our positions on the dialogue with the government of El Salvador:

### 1. The Meeting in Ayagualo

The second dialogue meeting, which took place on November 30 in Ayagualo constituted a step forward in the difficult process in the search for a Global Political Solution to the conflict which our nation is living.

In Ayagualo we faced a more complex and difficult situation than that of La Palma given the confrontation of two resolution projections based on different analyses of the national problems and the discussion of the first concrete agreements in the search for peace.

### 2. The Perspectives of the Dialogue

The precipitate attitude of Engineer Jose Napoleon Duarte in rejecting our proposal for a political solution based on an inconsistent and summary judgement of unconstitutionality over-shadowed the possibilities for peace and reinforced the positions of the more reactionary sectors of private business and the army.

Engineer Duarte's refusal to admit that at that same point in the process the problem of the two presently existing armies of El Salvador must be addressed is contradictory to the recognition, which in multiple forms has made the existence of the revolutionary army a fundamental reality of the situation in the country. Refusal to accept such a powerful reality would deny the very existence of the war and, therefore, deny the REAL possibilities in searching for peace.

Engineer Duarte's pretence to reduce the dialogue to an imposition of his 'offer' of peace which evidently does not take into account the more urgent realities of the war, nor the most important problems in the country is negative and also contradictory. After La Palma, with a more constructive attitude, Duarte had indicated that none of the parties could impose his proposal unilaterally.

For their part, the oligarchy has begun to let loose all their resources against the dialogue. To do this, they have reprinted the old argument of defending the constitution — which they have always violated — and defending the army, which they have always orchestrated. But in reality — now as in the past — the only thing they are interested in is defending their unjust minoritarian privileges. It is no accident then that D'Aubuisson congratulates Duarte on his rejection of our proposal.

Nevertheless, the will and strength of all the national sectors that support the dialogue are imposing themselves on the minoritarian interests that are creating obstacles to the search for peace.

We hope that Engineer Duarte understands that with this abundant popular strength backing the dialogue, it would be an historic error with very serious consequences to continue looking for the viability of process for a political solution through concessions and subordination to the ultra-right and fascist oligarchy.

In fact — despite all the difficulties — since La Palma and Ayagualo, the

dialogue process has been strengthened as the path to peace.

### 3. The Will for Peace on the Part of our Fronts

In this difficult moment when the confrontation between understanding and the difficulties about the possibilities has been emphasized, our Fronts (FDR-FMLN) consider it opportune and necessary to reiterate to the Salvadorean people the sincere will for peace that is motivating us.

We have introduced a proposal for a solution which addressed the central problems of the country without ambiguity or evasions; in that proposal, we have expressed our disposition to compromise within a solid framework of guarantees of popular interests; we have proposed a gradual and realistic beginning to allow all the fundamental aspects for its realization.

In Ayagualo we reached agreements — small but of great historical significance — with the government delegation.

In fulfilling these agreements, in concrete fashion we communicate the following to the Salvadorean people:

On Thursday, December 11th, we will turn over to the Catholic church 42 soldiers who were taken prisoner by units of our army on December 1st in the proximity of El Salto in the department of La Paz.

### 4. Call to all National Sectors

The installation of the dialogue is a conquest for our people, at the same time, the success and direction to a successful termination of the dialogue process is an aspiration of all the democratic and patriotic forces of the country.

Our Fronts consider that only through organized and active participation of all people will we be able to move ahead in the dialogue process.

The proposals of the government and of our Fronts (FDR-FMLN) have already been made public. We call upon all organized sectors of the country to demand their participation and freely express their positions on the political solution to the national crisis.

Our Fronts reiterate their irrevocable decision to make every effort to move the dialogue forward towards producing concrete and progressive results in such a way until peace with independence and justice, so strongly desired by our people, is achieved. ■

## Protest against persecution of 87-year-old Bulgarian Trotskyist

The following is a statement issued in Paris, France, in January 1985, condemning the persecution of Dimitar Gatchev, Bulgarian socialist. (See International Viewpoint, No. 8, January 21, 1985).

Founder of the Bulgarian Communist Party and then of its Trotskyist opposition and the driving force behind the League for the Rights of Man in Bulgaria, Dimitar Gatchev is today a new victim of persecution in his country. Certain 'unknown assailants', whom the police in Plovdiv in fact know very well, attacked him in the street and ransacked his apartment. Once again the Bulgarian regime is trying to break an opponent.

Now aged eighty-seven, Dimitar Gatchev has paid the price of his support for freedom and for socialism with 23 years in detention. From 1925 to 1932 he was incarcerated by the reactionary Tsankov dictatorship and in 1942 until 1962 he was in a Stalinist prison camp. He has never repudiated his beliefs.

We the undersigned,  
— demand that the Bulgarian authorities put an end to the persecution of Dimitar Gatchev.

— request that Francois Mitterrand, the president of the Republic, on his forthcoming visit to Bulgaria, should obtain from his hosts an assurance that the persecutions against a man whose past history and age should protect him from such treatment, be ceased.

Signed: Simone de Beauvoir, Daniel Bensaïd, Claude Bourdet, Jeanne Brunschwig, Alain Brossat, Julien Desachy, Jean-Jacques de Felice, Daniel Guerin, Felix Guattary, Jean-Francois Godchau, Pierre Halbwachs, Alain Krivine, Georges Labica, Arlette Laguiller, Denis Langlois, Pierre Naville, Gilles Perrault, Yvonne Quiles, Bernard Ravenel, Irene Terrel. ■

## Kurdistan ahead

A new bulletin with information, news and articles on the Kurdish struggle has just been launched by the Collective for Setting up the Solidarity Committee with the Kurdish People, in Canada.

The first issue contains articles on the Iran-Iraq war, the plight of Kurdish refugees in Pakistan and on the execution of Kurdish militants in Turkey.

Copies available from PO Box 135 stn. St. Henri Montreal, PQ H4C 3M3, Canada. ■

## Youth protest repressive legislation in Italy

The Italian Revolutionary Youth Organisation (OGR), in sympathy with the Italian section of the Fourth International, recently launched a new youth campaign against a reactionary bill proposed by the government, supposedly against sexual violence.

In reality the legislation amounts to severe repression of youth sexuality, in particular for those under 14.

As a protest against this legislation and to demand the right to sexual freedom for all young people, very original sorts of protests were organised throughout Italy, in Brescia, Milan, Turin and Rome.

Young people went out onto the streets and had a mass 'kiss-in', because the law will prevent young people under 14 years of age from kissing in the street. The penalty for an adult who kisses someone under 14 will be three to eight years imprisonment. This law is clearly not designed to protect women from male violence.

The next stage of the campaign will be in March when the bill will become law. Young people will descend onto the streets again to make their protest 'kisses'.

Attacks on youth sexuality are not confined to Italy. In Britain, Victoria Gillick, mother of ten, recently won a high court case to compel doctors to inform parents if young people under the age of 16 apply to them for contraceptives or for abortion advice.

A campaign against this infringement of democratic rights has also been launched in Britain by the National Abortion Campaign and other organisations. ■

## Dutch CP paper reassesses Trotsky

The November 8, 1984 issue of *De Waarheid* (The Truth), daily paper of the Dutch Communist Party, carried a major article challenging the official Soviet version of Trotsky's role in the revolution.

For the first time, the Communist Party daily gives a fundamentally accurate account of Trotsky's role in the October Revolution and in the civil war period. On the question of the social fascist policy pursued by Stalin from 1929 to 1933, and Trotsky's call for a united front in opposition to the view of the Communist Party of the time, *De Waarheid* sides with Trotsky.

Trotsky's analysis of the character of the Soviet Union, in *Revolution Betrayed*, was also fundamentally correct, according to the Dutch CP.

The final section of the article dealt with the Moscow trials. 'Trotsky and the other accused,' says *De Waarheid*, 'were said to have worked with Hitler and the Japanese Mikado in organising industrial sabotage and poisoning Russian workers.'

'An impressive list of left wing intellectuals, writers and politicians, such as Ehrenburg, Khruchov, Feuchtwanger, Dimitrov, Aragon and the Gandhi-admirer Romain Rolland, issued public variations on the theme — Shoot the Mad Dogs!'

'Trotsky submitted himself in Mexico to a public trial — and was found innocent. But this fact received no international recognition. And to this day Trotsky has not been rehabilitated or given his due honour in the Soviet Union.'

'His books are still forbidden. And not a single West European Communist Party has protested against this', *De Waarheid* concluded. ■

## ANZUS and democracy

The following is the text of an editorial from the February 13 issue of *Direct Action*, the paper of the Socialist Workers Party - Australian section of the Fourth International.

The brutal February 8 assault of South Korean government security forces against returning opposition leader Kim Dae Jung bears a striking resemblance to the assassination of Filipino oppositionist Benigno Aquino.

Kim, like Aquino, had flown into his homeland to assist the struggle for democratic rights. Both had been jailed for "political crimes" against military dictatorships before being exiled.

While the result of the attack on Kim at Seoul airport was not immediately as tragic, the political framework is very similar.

Both the Chung and Marcos regimes are imperialist-backed military juntas, brought to power to suppress the democratic and national liberation struggles of the Korean and Philippines peoples.

While both regimes are beholden primarily to US imperialism, the Australian ruling class also has a direct stake in preserving the security of its investments there — and crushing the rising movements of workers and peasants.

This is the real meaning of ANZUS — joint military cooperation between the US, Australia, and New Zealand, not fundamentally to defend the "security" of the three countries, but to counter national liberation movements in Asia and the Pacific.

About 100,000 people turned out to greet Kim, making the biggest anti-government demonstration for at least five years. The labor movement should press for an end to Australian aid to the repressive Marcos and Chun Doo Hwan regimes. ■

## For self determination for the Kanak people

The Kanak people's struggle for independence has speeded up greatly in the last few years. The founding congress of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front in 1984 was, in this context, a further step forward in the radicalisation of the struggle of the oppressed Kanak masses. The electoral boycott of November 18 last year then demonstrated a new relationship of forces on the ground and at first forced the French imperialist government of Francois Mitterrand to make certain verbal concessions. However, this latter is still committed to finding a neo-colonial solution that would deny the Kanak people's rights to self determination and guarantee the preservation of the interests of French imperialism and the white settlers.

It is in this perspective that the Pisani plan was developed. This desire of French imperialism has led it to increase repressive actions against the Kanak population and the activists of the FLNKS (the murder of Eloi Machoro and of Marcel Nonarro, disarming the Kanaks, house to house searches among the tribes). This stepping up of brutal colonial repression has also been signalled by the installation of a state of emergency, the application of which is in general oriented to stopping the mobilisations of the Kanak independence forces and sending new military reinforcements.

International solidarity is more than ever an important factor in achieving a change in the relationship of forces in favour of the Kanak people.

The Fourth International calls for the building of a mass movement of solidarity with the struggle of the Kanak people for independence. Many activities can be undertaken: petitions; delegations to French embassies; united demonstrations; official statements of the workers' and democratic movements; a campaign to denounce French colonial and military policy in the Pacific....

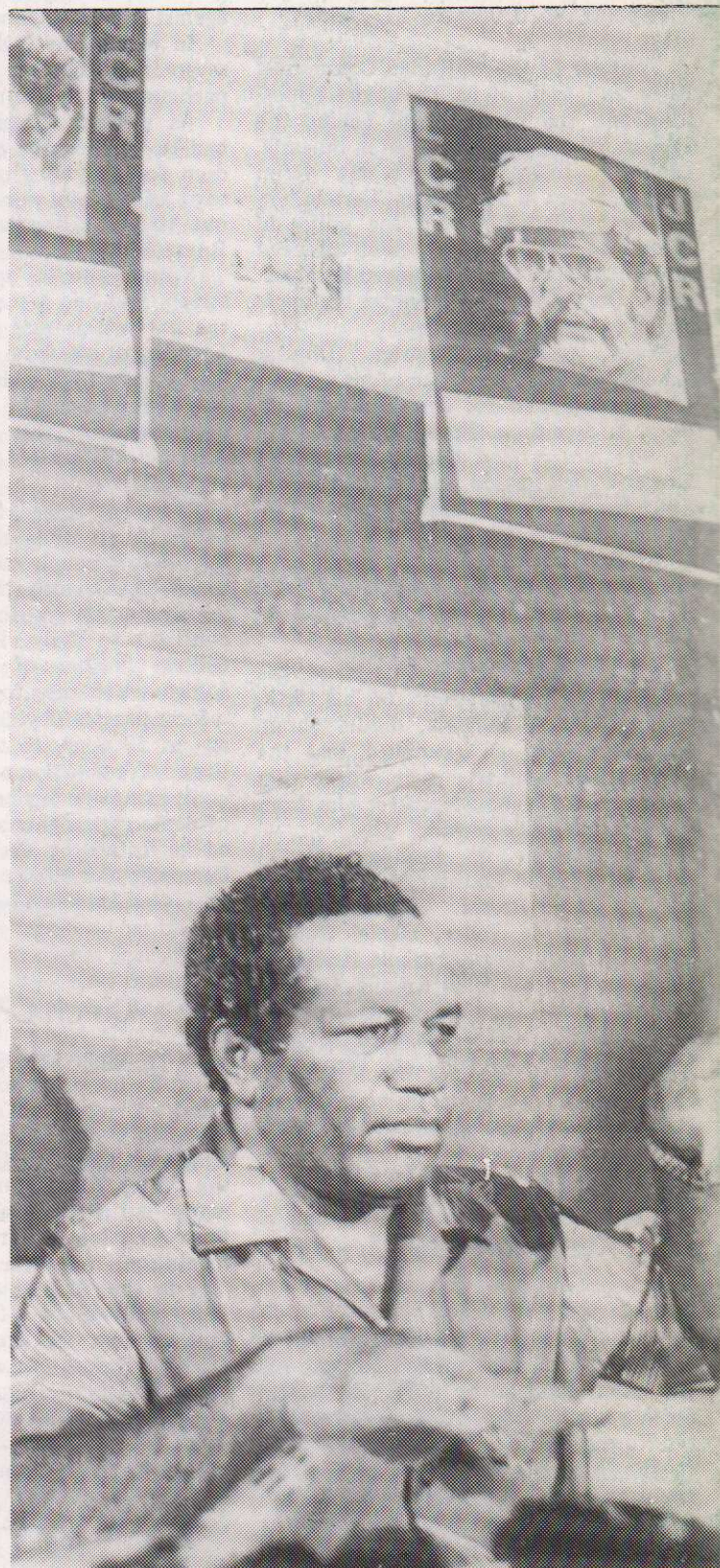
We call for the immediate withdrawal of French occupation forces and support for the FLNKS demand for complete and immediate independence of the Kanaks. ■

No to the continuing colonial war!

Stop the repression!

Victory to the Kanak people!

International Solidarity with the struggle of the  
FLNKS and the Kanak people for independence!



Tjibaou — president of the provisional government of Kanaky (DR)