

International VIEWPOINT

ISSUE No 81

29 July 1985

**Solidarnosc at
a crossroads**

**Peasant upsurge
in Mexico**

**Dominican
revolutionary
forces unify**

**UN Women's
Decade, what help
against worldwide
reaction ?**



International Viewpoint

ISSN: 0294-2925

Fortnightly review of news and analysis published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, in conjunction with the French language *Inprekor*, which appears on alternate fortnights.

| | | |
|--------------------|---|----|
| PEACE MOVEMENT | European movement meets by <i>Jacqueline Allio</i> | 3 |
| WOMEN'S LIBERATION | Governments step up attacks on abortion rights by <i>Judith Baker</i> | 4 |
| BRITAIN | 'Scab' miners desert the national union by <i>P. McDermott</i> | 6 |
| MEXICO | The peasant movement fights back by <i>Margarito Montes Parra</i> | 8 |
| DOMINICAN REPUBLIC | Regime in crisis as the revolutionary forces unite Interview with <i>FID representatives</i> | 13 |
| POLAND | A crisis of perspective and of leadership from <i>Inprekor</i> | 16 |
| AROUND THE WORLD | Canada, Belgium, Fighters Fund | 27 |
| MEXICO | Big cracks in the US's show case of Latin American democracy from <i>Bandera Socialista</i> | 28 |

News closing date 22 July 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 120FF 200FF

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|
| <i>Airmail</i> | | |
| Europe, Middle East, N Africa | 135 | 245 |
| The Americas, Africa | 165 | 300 |
| Asia | 185 | 340 |

Exchange rates:

| FF | £ | US Doll |
|-----|-------|---------|
| 120 | 9.50 | 16 |
| 135 | 12.50 | 19 |
| 165 | 15.00 | 22 |
| 185 | 17.50 | 25 |
| 200 | 18.00 | 31 |
| 245 | 20.00 | 37 |
| 300 | 27.50 | 42 |
| 340 | 31.20 | 47 |

International Viewpoint

1984 collections of *International Viewpoint* are now available in limited numbers only. Please send your orders in now. The cost for each collection including surface postage is 100 French Francs. Send orders to: IV, 2 Rue Richard Lenoir, 93108, Montreuil, France. ■

BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

LAST NAME FIRST NAME

ADDRESS

CITY COUNTRY CODE

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

RENEWAL

SUBSCRIPTION

European movement meets

The fourth convention of the campaign for European Nuclear Disarmament (END) took place on July 3 to 6 at the free university in Amsterdam. More than 1,200 people from Western Europe and other areas attended. The official peace committees from Eastern Europe, no doubt remembering what they went through in Perugia the year before, refused to participate in this meeting (see *International Viewpoint* No 61, October 15, 1984).

Furthermore, many independent peace activists from Eastern Europe were refused visas to come to the conference. Like the previous meetings, the conference gave only a very distorted picture of the reality of the peace movements, with many activists, unconvinced of its usefulness failing to turn up.

Jacqueline ALLIO

Having said all this it is true that this convention came at a time when all the peace movements in Europe are beginning to redefine themselves following the deployment of the missiles, a process which highlights the international character of the anti-war movement.

In the opening session, apart from speakers from the two countries who symbolise resistance — the Spanish state and the Netherlands — the floor was given to an independent peace movement activist from Hungary and to a representative from the Marshall Islands who was a spokesperson of the movement for a nuclear free and independent Pacific.

The latter speaker insisted that a determined mobilisation could roll back the US government's offensive and gave the example of the successful anti-nuclear movement in the Pacific region, which, created in 1982, had managed to force the US to close down some of their bases in the region and to stop nuclear testing. The movement is following this up by stopping boats transporting nuclear arms.

Each day of the convention was organised around a central theme. The first day was given over to the peace campaigns in the West. The introductions brought out once more the heterogeneity of the different movements. For example, the scepticism of one activist from West Berlin was rebuffed by the combativity of the representative from the Madrid Anti-NATO Commission. One activist from the US recalled how much the mobilisations in Europe affected the anti-war movement in her country which was axised both against nuclear arms and against intervention in Central America. Explaining her lack of faith in anything coming out of the summit negotiations, she insisted on the need to develop a movement at the base, around concrete actions, which is 'the only thing that Reagan will ever understand'.

The spokesperson of the British CND, as with most of the other participants stressed the new challenge

posed by the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) for the future of the movement (see *International Viewpoint* No 75 May 6, 1985). This concern, which was reaffirmed in the debates in the commissions was not, however, translated into proposals for action on this theme as also happened on the NATO issue. This was left to the Dutch movement, who have decided to organise a conference in the Netherlands with the anti-NATO movement for December 14.

The second day of the convention on relations between the peace movements in the East and the West left many feeling dissatisfied, partly because of the difficulty of taking the discussion any further in the absence of those mainly concerned. But there were some interesting forums, for example on the type of solidarity that the western peace movements should develop in relation to Solidarnosc. It turned out that efforts made since the previous year by peace activists of several countries including West Germany, France and Italy, in particular had begun to bear fruit. This was due to several bilateral meetings between the underground Solidarnosc, Charter 77, the Hungarian Dialog group, and the Moscow Group for Trust. This was shown by the number of written contributions sent by various groups to the convention and in the response to the Prague Appeal launched by Charter 77 last March. This text examined the significance of a nuclear free and democratic Europe within the framework of the existing social systems.

Following the forum which took place in West Berlin last February a further meeting is envisaged in Milan in February, 1986 with the object of discussing the role of the Helsinki agreements to which peace activists in Eastern Europe are always referring. The aim is also to draw up a platform on the main points of agreement for the establishment of a European peace movement, East and West.

The third day, given over to relations between the western peace movements

and the Third World, was the most interesting especially because of the contributions from peace activists in the Philippines, South Africa and Nicaragua who were present at the convention. A decision was taken to set up an 'embassy' of the peace movement in Managua as well as a coordinating structure on the issue of Central America within the peace movement. Peace activists from Norway have launched an appeal for a peace march in Central America for the end of the year.

Overall, however, it is important to draw attention to the timid approach of many of the members of the liaison committee (which organised the conference) who were guided by a pessimistic view of the situation although several of them did pose real questions about the future of the movement and the need to broaden their field of activity. The problem was that for them 'activity' means discussion and not action as such.

On the other side it is important to stress the very dynamic role played by the women throughout the convention. In an address to the convention, they stressed the need to link the struggle for peace with the struggle against austerity especially given the enormous expense of the Eureka and SDI projects. They also talked about their disagreement with the way the debate had been conducted so far. They decided to organise a network of peace movement women and delegates from the Mediterranean countries will be organising a meeting in Rome next December around the theme of the social effects of militarisation.

Altogether the number of initiatives proposed showed that most of the participants in the convention want to go far beyond the simple exchange of ideas proposed by the organisers. The trade unionists present set up a permanent coordinating group and will be publishing a bulletin under the auspices of the CND trade union group. The youth decided on a week of action from 21 to 27 October, 1985, under a common banner with Youth CND taking on the publication of a liaison bulletin. The varied nature of these proposals is partly a reflection of the richness and heterogeneity of the movement at the international level. But it is nonetheless true that it ought to have been possible to map out perspectives for action, even limited ones, around the theme of Star Wars or in support of the movements in the Netherlands and the Spanish State faced with important challenges which will have repercussions for all the peace campaigns.

Another convention will be held in 1986. Its usefulness will depend a great deal on the ability and above all the willingness of the organisers to plan discussions in such a way that the convention can come out with joint actions to mobilise all the different movements.

Governments step up attacks on abortion rights

This year, 1985, marks the end of the United Nations decade for Women (see *International Viewpoint* No 71, March 11 1985). Governments are meeting in Nairobi, Kenya to discuss how much they have supposedly done for women in the last ten years. Of course, the reality is that anything women have achieved, they have won through struggle and collective action.

The last few years has seen growing attacks on women's rights and in particular on women's right to abortion and her right to control her own body. In the following article we examine the right-wing offensive on abortion rights, one of the most basic of democratic rights which reveals just what some of these governments have really been doing for women.

Judith BAKER

In the context of an economic crisis governments across the world are seeking to strengthen the family unit and women's role within it. Control of women's right to abortion and contraception, at any rate in the metropolitan countries, fits in neatly with this strategy. Women's role as child bearers must be emphasised so that the family can act as a buffer in the capitalist crisis and women can provide a cheap pool of labour.

It is in this context that under an extremely reactionary Pope, the Catholic Church in many countries has placed itself at the head of a campaign against women's abortion rights.

'Governments are urged to take appropriate action to help women avoid abortion which in no case should be provided as a method of contraception...' This was the final wording of a resolution passed at the International Conference on Population Control held in Mexico City last August, with Sweden the only country voting against. (1)

Whilst not decisive in itself the conference came at a time of renewed attacks on abortion rights in certain countries. Such attacks fall into two main categories; a mounting campaign by right-wing and Catholic fanatics with the implicit or explicit support of the Church hierarchy against abortion rights, which is now involving violence and abuse; and secondly either approval or capitulation by governments or government representatives to such campaigns, which also include pressure for changes in legislation.

In Europe, moreover, there is a growing debate on population control which has taken on racist connotations. In April 1984 a proposal was adopted by the EEC (from the French 'socialist' government) to investigate ways of promoting a baby boom in Europe because of the

declining (European) population.

Attacks on abortion rights have not gone unanswered however, as the following examination of the situation demonstrates.

In the USA... the issue is indeed becoming urgent. In 1984, there were an estimated 300 attacks on abortion clinics with at least thirty of those involving fires and bomb attacks. Doctors and nurses working in abortion clinics have been harassed as have the women using them, in a tactic which has become known as 'sidewalk counselling'. Women who have had abortions have been telephoned in their own homes and called murderers. Few convictions have been made as a result of these activities but Catholic priests and Catholic-sponsored organisations are known to have been involved. In Alabama recently one Reverend Markley was finally convicted, after two previous acquittals, of attacking the Birmingham women's clinic with a sledgehammer.

Such extreme activity is the work of a whole network of small pro-life groups such as the Pro-Life Action League, the Pro-life Non Violent Action Committee, the Vietnam Veterans against Abortion, Catholics United for Life, People Expressing Concern for Everyone (PEACE), Feminists for Life and Women Exploited by Abortion (WEBA). There are also broader organisations including the Pro-Life Action League and the Right to Life League and the March for Life. The latter group aims to introduce an amendment to the US constitution which would say that the 'paramount right to life is vested in each human being at the moment of fertilisation, without regard to aid, health or condition of dependency'.

Whilst condemning violent activity, important figures in the Catholic hierarchy have recently become more involved in the public debate. John O Connor, the archbishop of New York,

for example, has made statements comparing the 'murder of one and a half million unborn human lives...' to Hitler's holocaust. He does not of course mention that the Nazis outlawed abortion and contraception, reducing women to the status of breeders for the nation.

The campaign against women's right to choose was given a tremendous boost earlier this year when president Reagan himself spoke by telephone to over 70,000 anti-abortion demonstrators in Washington (the largest number of anti-abortionists ever assembled in the capital) assuring them that he supported an amendment to the constitution. He has also sponsored the film, the *Silent Scream* being used to convince congress members against women's abortion rights. This film, which is now being used around the world has even been condemned by anti-abortion doctors as thoroughly distorting what abortion is really all about.

The demonstration in fact marked the twelfth anniversary of the legalisation of abortion in the US. Since that time abortion rights have actually been eroded away without any votes being taken on the issue. In 1976 government funding for abortion was stopped and today 80 per cent of all the county and city hospitals do not perform abortions. The clinics currently under attack are therefore of vital importance for women.

Moreover, young women have been singled out for attack. Legislatures in 12 states, are considering passing bills that would require women under the age of 18 to notify their parents or get consent before a clinic, hospital or doctor can perform an abortion. Parental notification statements are already required in eight states. Such measures highlight the hypocrisy and irresponsibility of a society which deems that a young woman can be forced into an unwanted pregnancy (with all the tremendous responsibility that that implies) but that she is too young to make up her own mind about whether she actually wants a child.

The women's movement in the US has not let such attacks go by without a response. Vigils have been organised at 25 of the clinics most constantly under threat and escort services have been set up to take women to and from the clinics. Demonstrations and other activities have also been organised by groups such as the Abortion Rights Action League and the Coalition to End Clinic Violence as well as local chapters



1. See *International Viewpoint* Nos 70, 71, February 25 and March 11, 1985.

of the National Organisation of Women (NOW).

In Canada ... the main issue facing the women's movement at present is the defence of abortion clinics set up by Dr Henry Morgentaler in direct defiance of Canada's abortion law which stipulates that abortions must be performed in hospitals with the consent of three doctors. Morgentaler has just been acquitted for the fourth time on charges in connection with this. His acquittal was due to the massive campaign launched by the women's movement in Canada which has given them tremendous confidence for the battles ahead.

Similar violent attacks on abortion clinics have been launched by right-wing extremists and, as in the US, such attacks form the backdrop to potential legal threats to abortion rights in different states. This is particularly the case in Quebec which provides the best abortion service of any state under its present provincial administration. This administration may shortly be replaced by anti-abortion supporters.

In Australia ... the pro-abortion movement has been facing attacks on several fronts ... most notably from the forces of law and order themselves ... the police.

The six Australian state governments have adopted different abortion laws in the past. Victoria and New South Wales allow abortion on social grounds. Other states (especially Queensland) are more restrictive. It was in Queensland then, that on May 20 of this year, police launched a massive raid on two abortion clinics. Women's medical files were seized and two doctors were arrested.

This activity by the state itself has coincided with renewed activity by 'right to life' campaigners who have been picketing clinics in other states.

It also coincides with the current passage through parliament of Brian Harradine's private members bill to outlaw experimentation on human embryos. This bill is modelled on a similar bill discussed in the British parliament and implies a definition of 'human life' which could eventually make abortion, and some forms of contraception, illegal.

Australian women are campaigning against such attacks and groups in Queensland in particular have issued a special appeal to women internationally for messages of support. They can be sent to *Children by Choice*, 237 Lutwyche Road, Windsor, Queensland 4030, Australia.

In New Zealand ... violence is also being used to prevent women obtaining safe legal abortions. In November 1984 there was an arson attempt at the Auckland Medical Aid Trust hospital (a private abortion clinic) and more recently on May 7, this year, a molotov cocktail was thrown at a building in Christchurch which is currently

being converted into a free standing abortion clinic. A group named Christians for Life had previously picketed the local hospital board when the decision to set up the clinic was first taken.

In Great Britain ... the offensive of right-wing Catholic pressure groups has been given a tremendous boost by two recent events. The first was the high court decision to ban the issuing of contraceptives and abortion advice to under-16 year olds without parental permission. The second was the attempt by right-wing member of parliament, Enoch Powell to introduce a bill banning all experimentation on human embryos on the grounds of protecting the 'right to life.' Although the bill fell, the government itself has now pledged to introduce legislation on this issue, based on the report of the Warnock committee. This committee recommends that experimentation could be permitted before 14 days thus giving its definition of when human life begins. This in the context where abortion services are suffering anyway because of cutbacks in public spending.



The debates and discussions on embryo research seek deliberately to pit women's interests against those of the so called 'unborn child'. It is clear that people like Enoch Powell have no concern whatsoever about the quality of women's lives, nor in the controlled use of research for the benefit of women and children alike.

The National Abortion Campaign and others have mounted a response to this and have pinpointed the importance of the women's movement developing their own response to these type of debates.

In Switzerland ... a recent attempt to introduce a change in the country's constitution to protect the rights of the foetus has recently been defeated by a two to one majority in a referendum. However, the right wing were able to use the opportunity of the referendum to launch a massive propaganda offensive on the issue. In its platform address the 'Right to Life' committee, which launched the initiative, labelled women seeking abortions as 'selfish', saying that any woman who wanted 'to control her own womb' was no more than a 'modern day witch'.

In Belgium ... there have been trials of doctors in Brussels, Bruges, Furnes and Ghent. In Ghent, an abortion clinic was recently raided by police supposedly investigating tax frauds. Women patients in the clinic were haras-

sed and interrogated in an attempt to get them to admit to having an illegal abortion. The attack on abortion is also coming from the top levels of government. A government minister has appealed against the acquittal of Doctor Van Haelen from the town of Nivelles, accused of procuring illegal abortions. The doctor was acquitted of this charge on grounds of a 'situation of moral distress'. If the appeal is upheld other doctors will find themselves in an increasingly difficult situation.

In Spain ... the socialist-dominated government was elected on a promise of liberalising abortion. It has still failed to do so because it has capitulated to the right-wing offensive despite the highly active campaign by the women's movement. In 1983 the Cortes adopted a bill allowing abortion in cases of damage to the health of the woman or the foetus and in cases of pregnancies brought about by rape.

It is calculated that this would help only 3% of Spanish women, the majority of whom have to, either suffer unwanted pregnancies, or go abroad to procure abortions.

A constitutional tribunal consisting of one woman and 11 men recently challenged even this inadequate proposal, saying that it did not guarantee enough rights for the foetus [see *International Viewpoint* No 76, May 20, 1985]. The women's movement has thus had to take up the cudgels against both the government's thoroughly inadequate proposal and the attempts by the tribunal to prevent anything that would further the cause of women.

In Greece ... the PASOK government, recently re-elected, has similarly failed to introduce promised legislation despite a massive campaign by feminists who have signed a petition stating that they have had an (illegal) abortion.

This type of hesitation by social democratic governments has allowed the extreme right to get the upper hand on this, as on so many other issues, and has done the most tremendous disservice to women. In Brazil for example the left-wing governor of Rio de Janeiro Leonel Brizola, recently gave in to pressures from the Catholic church not to make abortions more easily available. Such examples are manifold and only serve to contribute to the worldwide offensive on women's abortion rights and on their right to control their own bodies.

If the women's and labour movement worldwide lose the battle on this, one of the most basic rights that women must have, then the prospects for any advance for women in this decade or the next will begin to look very grim indeed. What is required, is not polite discussions in a luxury hotel in Nairobi, but an international campaign to defend abortion and contraception rights worldwide and to make a reality the universal demand of the women's movement — 'Not the Church, not the State, Women must decide their fate.'

'Scab' miners desert the national union

The July annual delegate conference of the NUM (National Union of Mineworkers), was followed by the formation of a breakaway scab union — a development which will polarise the British labour movement. At conference itself there had been an overwhelming vote of confidence in the national leadership and its conduct of the year-long miners' strike. An attempt by the Nottinghamshire area delegates who worked through the strike to censure the NUM executive was overwhelmingly defeated.

Rule changes which give the national union more control of the local areas and remove the necessity under the Conservative government's anti-union laws for Arthur Scargill, the left wing NUM president, to

stand for re-election next year, were endorsed by conference. However, the proposal to grant associate membership to the miners wives support groups was defeated by one vote — a real blow to the solidarity that was developed during the strike. This defeat was mainly a result of opposition from Communist Party-led areas of South Wales and Scotland.

But the most significant development at the conference was the removal from national office of Roy Lynk and David Prendergast, two leaders of the scab miners in the Nottinghamshire area who worked throughout the strike. It was this decision, combined with the rule changes, which provided the excuse for the area to form a breakaway union.

P. McDERMOTT

The National Executive had recommended that only Lynk be sacked and Prendergast suspended. But Ken Capstick from the Yorkshire area successfully moved the sacking of Prendergast — a position which reflected Scargill's own. The breakaway union is a very important development in the British class struggle which will have far-reaching consequences for the labour movement.

It is quite clear that the National Coal Board (NCB) and employers' organisations were determined to push through a split in the NUM. They will now devote major resources to ensuring its survival. It will provide the NCB with a much improved opportunity to push forward the restructuring of the industry.

In addition to the 20,000 redundancies already announced in the industry, management have not denied reports that a further 50,000 redundancies will be announced in the future. It could help to lay the basis for a decentralised industry, and create the conditions for eventual privatisation. In the shorter term it could lead to a restructured pay system, with greater emphasis on wage differentials and bonuses. The NCB met representatives of the breakaway two days after its formation and pledged recognition, and is even talking about paying Notts scabs a 'loyalty bonus'. This is clearly aimed at encouraging other right wing areas, such as Leicester and South Derbyshire, the Colliery Workers and Allied Trades Association (a breakaway in Durham) and the white collar section COSA to join with Lynk.

For the TUC and Labour Party leadership the breakaway poses a major problem. Notts area has 27,000 miners of whom 15,000 voted with Lynk against the rule changes, and

6,500 with the NUM. At the meeting which decided on the breakaway, the vote by NUM branch officials was 228 to 20.

The Notts area has long been affiliated to the Labour Party as a right wing influence within it. One Labour MP [member of parliament] backed by Notts miners, Don Concannon, has already attacked Scargill and declared that he is 'still a Labour MP'. The formal position of the Labour Party is that only TUC affiliated unions can affiliate to the Labour Party. But for Neil Kinnock fighting the 'Scargill Factor' is the overriding political concern. The link between the left of the NUM and the left of the Labour Party was clear in the strike. It has been made clearer by the decision by the Bennite wing of the Party to draw up a Bill for a future Labour government to grant amnesty to all imprisoned miners, reinstatement for miners sacked for union activities, compensation to the union for the fines and losses it incurred through the courts, and compensation to individuals for losses incurred through fines, imprisonment, and loss of earnings through sackings.

The conference of the miners coincided with the final week's campaigning in an important by-election in the Welsh constituency of Brecon and Radnor. Labour came second to the SDP/Liberal Alliance. The Tories came third, with their worst by-election result for many years. The Tories electoral popularity has been in continuous decline since their handling of the miners' strike highlighted their lack of concern for the problem of unemployment. But Kinnock promptly blamed Scargill's call for a Labour government to pardon imprisoned miners and sack the existing NCB management for losing Labour votes.

The Notts breakaway has said that it wishes to remain affiliated to the Labour

Party. If Kinnock openly rejects their affiliation, the media will present this as an endorsement of Scargill.

The TUC has similar problems. The trade union bureaucracy has a healthy sense of self-preservation. It is very reluctant to endorse breakaways — and has never done so in the past. But it also has an interest in defeating 'Scargillism'. It is therefore likely to attempt to play a mediating role, to try and 'heal the breach'. It will certainly not take the stand that it should — for all-out war against the scab union. Instead it will take an even-handed approach. This will allow TUC leaders to link up with those forces who remain in the NUM who are hostile to Scargill.

These forces are already developing around the Communist Party. The rule changes on associate status for women were rejected with the support of the CP. The CP were also opposed to other rule changes. Indeed the South Wales and Scottish leadership both considered voting with the right against the changes. However it was clear that the price for linking up with the splitters against Scargill would be far too heavy, and would not result in the Notts-area staying in.

George Bolton, vice-president of the Scottish area, has stated that, 'It is not a uniform view that miners must go on strike to save the industry.' Instead the CP is turning towards a campaign of publicity to win 'public opinion' against pit closures, rather than the mass action proposed by Scargill. The CP and the right also succeeded in watering down a motion to TUC congress in September for a call for a future Labour government to grant amnesty, to a call for a 'review' of all cases. A link-up between the Labour and TUC leaders and these forces in the union would be a serious threat to the Scargill leadership.

The real problem for these forces

is the NCB's intransigence, and the thoroughly rotten nature of the Notts leadership. But the political aim of the exercise will be as much to isolate and defeat Scargill, not to provide any solu-

tions for re-uniting the miners union.

Socialists must have the clear stand of calling on the Labour Party and the TUC to wage war on the scab union with all means possible. ■

Interview with Notts miner

At the end of the week-long July Annual conference of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), leaders of the Nottinghamshire area announced their decision to walk out of the national union and form a breakaway union, saying they did not agree with the rule changes agreed by the conference. The majority of the Notts area had scabbed during the year-long miners' strike. It is estimated that some 7,000 miners in the area will remain with the national union with approximately 10,000 in the breakaway union led by David Prendergast and Roy Lynk. An estimated 5,000 had already left the union altogether.

This action by scab miners was a repeat of that taken in the Nottinghamshire area 60 years before, after the British general strike. It led to the setting up of the so-called 'Spencer' union, which, unlike today, involved the Notts region as a whole. This scab union collapsed within 11 years. International Viewpoint spoke to a member of the Nottinghamshire area of the NUM, who remained with the strike till the end, about his reaction to the news. Paul Galloway of the Thoresby branch of the NUM and a supporter of Socialist Action, a British revolutionary Marxist newspaper, described how he hoped that the new scab union could be defeated in less time than it took to get rid of the 'Spencer' union.

Question. What happened at the conference itself?

Answer. The Nottinghamshire delegates walked out saying they would not accept the rule changes. They had conducted a ballot before the conference in the region in which 72% had voted against the rule changes and in favour of pulling out of the national union in the event of the changes being passed. At the conference itself, the Notts region were very isolated. For example they put a motion condemning the national leadership's conduct of the strike at one stage and they couldn't even get a seconder for it.

Q. What will be the situation of people like yourself who wish to remain in the national union?

A. Today [Sunday July 7], the left strike leaders in the Notts area had a meeting in Sheffield (the location of the national headquarters of the union) with the national leadership. At this meeting they decided that there should be new officers' elections since Prendergast and Lynk had been sacked. We also want an undertaking from the Labour Party and the TUC that they will not recognise the new union. The NCB, at the moment are pledged to negotiate only with one union, but Ian MacGregor has been trying for a while to be allowed to negotiate with non-TUC affiliated unions.

Q. Do you think that any other regions like Leicestershire or South Derbyshire who scabbed during the strike will follow the Notts path?

A. These regions have no history of union breaking in the same

way so I wouldn't think they would go down that path although Nottinghamshire will try to get them.

Q. Did you expect this to happen?

A. Yes, but we never wanted it to happen. We were never in favour of expelling the Notts area or any scab areas. But if you are not prepared to abide by the rules of the union then you can't be in the club.

This is very very serious indeed for us. It means refighting the fight of our grandfathers. I was in the welfare club the other day and people were talking about it and an old man, about eighty years old, he said that my grandfather had refused to join the Spencer union and that was good because 'Spencerism' was just a tool of the bosses, he said. It took eleven years to defeat Spencer, and we have to do it in less time than that.

Q. What are your chances?

A. If the LP and TUC aren't mealy-mouthed like they were in the strike and if they stick by their affiliated membership and if the left like *Socialist Action* put their whole weight behind defeating the breakaway union, then we can make it.

Q. What's it been like at work since you went back?

A. We hold our own. The scabs accuse us of being too politically minded, of bringing politics into the trade unions. But the point is the government are the ones who bring in politics through their anti-trade union legislation. The breakaway union will only help the government in that respect. ■

SOLIDARITY WITH VICTIMISED MINERS

In the aftermath of the miners' strike forty miners remain sacked and nearly eighty are still in prison, many serving harsh sentences. So far 173 sacked miners have been reinstated though many of them have technically been reemployed, thus losing the benefits of many years of previous service. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) national conference has now convened a special conference for October to discuss industrial action, if there hasn't been a significant reinstatement of sacked miners. Along with the left wing campaign group of Labour MPs (members of parliament) it has launched a national campaign for victimised miners will hold a major rally at this year's annual Labour Party conference. We reprint below the text of the appeal issued by the NUM and call for a campaign of international solidarity to be taken up.



'In the wake of twelve months of industrial dispute some 700 miners have been sacked by the National Coal Board. Despite all reasonable arguments by the National Union of Mineworkers and representations to the House of Commons, Ian MacGregor refuses to reinstate them. Most have been dismissed for trivial or no offences and the majority are union branch officials whose crime was to fight for jobs and mining communities. Other miners languish in jail on charges arising directly from the dispute.

The Union is pledged to assist all our members, to provide support for their families and to seek their reinstatement. The Miners' Solidarity fund is the only authorised body to work with the Union in providing financial support and only by all donations being sent direct to the Miners Solidarity Fund can a fair distribution of resources be ensured.

We welcome the assistance of the Campaign Group of Labour MP's in bringing this message to you and trust that you will continue to show solidarity with the miners and give generously and regularly to provide support for the victims of the strike.

ARTHUR SCARGILL (President)
PETER HEATHFIELD (Secretary)
MICHAEL MCGAHEY (Vice-President)
Send all monies to *Miners Solidarity Fund, St. James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield.* Cheques and postal orders made payable to *Miners Solidarity Fund.* ■

The peasant movement fights back

The peasant demonstration that took place on April 10, 1985, was an extra-ordinary event in Mexican political history. Organized by the "Plan de Ayala" National Coordinating Committee (CNPA), the Independent Federation of Agricultural Workers and Peasants (IOAC), and the Red Federation of Workers and Peasants of Mexico (UGOCM-Roja) this national mobilization culminated in a march on Mexico city from all over the country and in a demonstration that assembled more than 50,000 persons. At the same time, more than seventy regional peasant demonstrations were held around the country. According to the media, these various initiatives mobilized about a million peasants nationwide.

Margarito MONTES PARRA

The April 10 demonstration was an effective counterattack against the government's antipeasant offensive that was accelerating in the days that preceded this initiative. On the very day of the peasant mobilization, the secretary of state for agrarian reform, was obliged to issue a statement, published as a paid advertisement in the national papers, in which he said that the peasant movement had no cause to mobilize, that the action was not a genuinely peasant mobilization, that the motivations for the protest did not in any way correspond to the peasants' demands but rather reflected the electoral objectives of the political parties supporting this initiative.

The breadth of the mobilization of Mexican peasants clearly refuted the government's claims that the April 10 demonstration was not genuinely representative of the peasant population.

It should also be noted that April 10 is a significant date in Mexico, representing to an extent what May 1 does for the international workers movement. It was on April 10, 1919, that Emiliano Zapata was assassinated in Chinameca in the state of Morelos. This murder marked the end of the cycle of the Mexican revolution, and the government has always sought to appropriate Zapata's prestige to consolidate the regime's official ideology.

So, every year, the government organizes demonstrations to pay homage to Zapata. But since 1979, the regime has lost its ability to wrap itself in Zapata's banner. In the past, it was the president himself who honored Zapata on this occasion. But as the CNPA grew and pushed a policy of opposition to this exploitation of the memory

of the revolutionary leader, the official ceremonies lost a lot of their impact.

In recent years, for example, the speeches were no longer given by the president but only a secretary of state. This last April 10, it was an undersecretary of state who gave the address, showing the extent to which this official ceremony has lost legitimacy.

So from the ideological standpoint also, the April 10 demonstration was a big success, inasmuch as it removed any credibility from the government's attempt to steal Zapata's mantle.

Another aspect of this demonstration was its clearly national character. It represented a confluence of a peasant movement that is developing at the same time in various regions of the country but not always in an even way. The April 10 march focused peasant discontent throughout the country, giving it a national and simultaneous expression. This represented an advance in the development of the peasant movement.

The divisive role played by some forces in the peasant movement that were clearly manipulated by the press and the government has to be pointed out. These forces tried to create the impression that there were two CNPAs, one of them independent and the other controlled by the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), the Mexican section of the Fourth International.

This operation was a total failure, because the peasant organizations that went along with this maneuver were unable to assemble more than 3,000 or 4,000 persons, despite the fact that they had very considerable means at their disposal, while the three peasant organizations mentioned before brought out nearly a million peasants throughout the country.

These results represent a major victory for the independent peasant movement in several respects. First of all, despite the repression suffered by the peasant movement, with more than 130 peasants arrested and a systematic refusal to meet the demands of the peasant mobilizations, the movement has grown considerably in strength over the past 15 years.

The April 10 demonstration was the expression of this slow accumulation of strength, as well as of the organizational level of the peasant's fighting structures and the extent of the unity achieved among the peasant forces. This action was an historic event, since it is the first time in recent years that such a large number of peasants have mobilized in this way.

The failure of this maneuver was a setback for sectarianism in the peasant movement, and it opens up new possibilities for consolidating the unity of the movement and broadening it.

A people's agrarian law

From the programmatic standpoint, the peasant march represented a significant advance for the movement. In addition to the traditional demands for the land, increases in the prices guaranteed for peasant products, cheap credit, and the release of the political prisoners, the peasant movement posed two important axes for the demonstration. The first was for equal rights to the land for peasant women, that is, the inclusion of the demands of peasant women in the demonstration. This was something new.

Secondly, the peasants demanded an alternative agrarian reform law. Nearly a year ago, PRT activists began raising this slogan, and today it has become one of the principal axes of the peasant mobilizations.

At the second congress of the CNPA, which was held last November, it was proposed that the peasants themselves draw up a new agrarian law designed to break with bourgeois legality in the countryside. It was not to be a simple alternative bill to be presented to parliament but an initiative coming from the peasants themselves.

It was for the peasants to say how they wanted the campaign organized, what the limits of private ownership of the land should be, what sort of legal relationships should prevail, what the rules should be for the functioning of the peasant organizations, how the

native people should be dealt with, etc. They had to decide all these questions to come up with an agrarian law that would break radically from the present legislation.

Today, the agrarian laws provide for the exploitation of the countryside by the cities, the exploitation of the peasants and agricultural workers by the capitalists, and for state control over the native communities. The present legislation maintains a situation where the courts try Indians in Spanish and not in their own languages. Moreover, it institutionalizes discrimination against women as regards rights to the land, to work, and as regards the rights of peasant women relating to production and family life.

The Alternative Agrarian Law, on the other hand, was to be the result of a discussion starting at the grass roots of the peasant organizations, because the laws that presently govern the situation in the countryside were not drawn up by the peasants, and, by this fact alone, could not reflect their interests.

In order to gain legitimacy in the eyes of important sections of the peasantry, this Alternative Agrarian Law has to begin to be put into concrete operation immediately in the countryside through peasant mobilizations,

independent even of their official representatives in parliament.

The Indian communities are a very important factor in the peasant movement. For example, in the state of Chiapas, the Totzil, Tojolabajales, and Zeltales communities are structured in the Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organisation, which is part of the CNPA. In Michoacan, the Purepecha Indians are organized in the Union de Comuneros Emiliano Zapata. In Oaxaca, the Zapotec Indians who live on the isthmus of Tehuantepec are grouped in the Workers, Peasants, and Students Coordinating Committee of the isthmus, which also includes members of the Triqui Unification Movement, which represents the Triqui native communities.

Indians form the backbone of the movement

So, a number of sections of the native peasants have formed their own organizations for representation and defense which join in mobilization massively with the other peasants defense organizations. For example, the Independent Revolutionary Peasants Coordinating Committee (CCRI) mobilizes members of the Nahuatl communities in Copalillo and San Francisco-Acutlapan. These two communities, which are located very near Mexico City, are fighting

to regain their communal lands.

In general, in the April 10 demonstration most of the corteges coming from the south, the southeast, and the north of the country were from Maya and other Indian communities, notably from Buay Siacobe. So, there was a very large representation of the native communities in this demonstration.

In fact, it could be said today that the native communities are the backbone of the Mexican peasant movement. They are, perhaps, the sections of the peasant population that have gone furthest toward rebuilding independent peasant organizations, such as the National Confederation of Peasants, which is linked to the government party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

The organizations that have grown up in the Indian communities have managed to build autonomous leaderships and to find methods of expression and organization based on community cohesion and solidarity, which represent very important advances. Their first demand is for the restoration of their former communal lands. This is a special interest of theirs and distinguishes them from the rest of the peasant movement.

While the other peasants who want the land are demanding the expropriation of the big land owners in order to distribute their holdings among the

The PRT and the peasants movement

The Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Mexican section of the Fourth International, has been an integral part of the Mexican peasant movement. Its activists work within it in various ways. The first and most important way is by participating in the leadership of various independent peasant organizations on both the regional and national level. A good number of the first-rank leaders of the peasant movement are members of the PRT. At the same time, the PRT Central Committee includes a large number of these peasant leaders. The PRT leaders and their many supporters participate in united work with other political currents in the activity and leadership of the "Plan de Ayala" National Coordinating Committee (CNPA).

The political ideas and proposals of the PRT have gained a lot of ground in the CNPA. At the Second Congress of the CNPA, the PRT put forward three axes — greater organizational centralization of the CNPA based on democratic methods; building alliances in the peasant movement; and the need for a programmatic advance through drawing up a democratic and people's Alternative Agrarian Law, worked out by the peasants on the basis of their platform of demands.

This political orientation has been adopted, first by the various peasant organizations that belong to the CNPA and then by the Second Congress of the CNPA. The proposal for an Alternative Agrarian Law has been taken up today by other peasant organizations outside the CNPA and was adopted as a central slogan in the April 10, 1985 mobilization.

The PRT has also linked its electoral campaign to the peasant movement. It has made a very broad election agreement with various peasant organizations, some of which are members of the CNPA and others not. Notable in this respect are the agreements concluded with the Independent Mexican Peasants Coordinating Committee (CCRI), the Organization of Highland Villages (OPA), the People's Defense Committee (CNP), the Triqui Organization for Unity and Struggle (MULT), the Regional Union of Communal Lands and Communities in the South of the State of Puebla (URECSEP), the Independ-

ent Peasant Union (ICI), the Mixteca Auxaquena Union of Villages (UPM), the Mexican People's Agrarian Vanguard (VAPM), and various local groups of peasants.

Moreover, an agreement was also reached in several states with the party of the Socialist Revolution (PRS), a recent split from the United Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM, an organization based on the CP), which has essentially a peasant base.

These accords provide for common candidates in the elections for federal deputies and for elected representatives in several states. A number of plans for common campaigns have been worked out. In turn, these common campaigns can strengthen the peasant organizations by building their regional and national implantation and making them known as an alternative to new groups of peasants in their regions, and so forth.

Finally, the PRT as a party is waging an extensive campaign in support of the peasant movement and its demands. It has integrated these demands into its electoral platform, its national propaganda, its presentations on radio and TV. At the same time, it is participating actively in the peasant campaigns and mobilizations.

With this policy, the PRT has gained a major role in the peasant movement, to the extent that the government thinks that the PRT completely dominates the CNPA. This is false. The PRT works together in a united way with other political forces in the leadership of the CNPA. And, more important, the PRT respects the organizational and political autonomy of the CNPA and all the regional peasant organizations. It respects their decisions and their leaderships, whether or not those involved are members of the PRT.

The PRT puts forward its political orientation through its activists, but it does not try to impose it on anyone. If the peasant organizations adopt it, the PRT activists devote themselves to carrying it out. If it is rejected, they respect this decision, because this is the best way to maintain democratic political relations between these mass organizations. ■

peasants, the native communities start from the fact that their ancestral communal lands have belonged to the Indians since time immemorial. To back up their claims, these Indian communities have produced communal land titles that are very old, dating from the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries.

These peasant communities express themselves through forms of organization that are bound up with the cultural traditions of the native people. They communicate in the languages of the Indian communities and identify with these languages and cultures. They argue that within the peasant movement the Indians make up a sector that is not only exploited, like the other peasants, but also oppressed.

The Indians are repressed not only as peasants mobilizing for the land but also because they are Indians and therefore subjected to another sort of discrimination. So, they are fighting for recognition as communities with special features of their own.

The Indian communities every day are more clearly aware of their own identity, of the oppression that they suffer because of what they are, and the repression that prevents them from vindicating their identity. But it is interesting to note that in Mexico we have not seen the development of an "ethnicist" consciousness. There is of course a growth of ethnic consciousness, but this has not led to a separatist attitude toward the rest of the peasant movement.

Indians defend their land

To the contrary, the native communities always proudly claim their place as a leading force in the reorganization of an independent peasant movement in which they participate on the same basis as the other peasants.

In the peasant movement, we have always striven to make sure that the program clearly included the demand for the autonomy of the Indian communities and defense of their internal organization and their communal and organizational structures relating to their own land, their language, and their culture.

After the April 10 demonstrations, very violent clashes occurred between the police of the state of Mexico and the Santiago Tequisquiác community, a community that lives about an hour's drive from Mexico City, and which holds titles dating back to 1595 to lands that have been stolen from them.

This community saw its right to the ownership of these lands reconfirmed by Zapata's army on December 5, 1914. It has been fighting now for more than 65 years against expulsion from its lands. Recently, a land owner of Spanish origin took over 180 hectares belonging to this community, very good land with



Indian women are mobilising (DR)

irrigation facilities and well suited to intensive stock raising. The Indian community mobilized to regain its lands.

Police repression was very violent. Some 800 policemen were sent in, along with a helicopter that spread teargas. But the people were not passive in the face of this assault. They fought back, and 13 police were wounded. The Mexico City chief of police went into a coma.

After this attack, after the community had taken care of its wounded and buried its dead, it reorganized to build a march on Mexico City. In fact, today in front of the State Secretariat of Agrarian Reform, there is a picket of 500 peasants demanding the release of the prisoners, calling on the government to take responsibility for the care of the wounded, to punish those responsible for this repression, and to confirm their titles to their communal lands.

The government has been obliged to negotiate on these demands, whereas formerly it purely and simply denied the rights of Indians against whom it launched this violent repression. The power of the community organizations rooted in tradition is so imposing that they have managed to force the government to sit down to the negotiating table to seek a settlement of the peasants' demands.

New attacks on the horizon

Despite everything, the peasant movement is going to face grave difficulties, like the workers and people's movement. The economic crisis is hitting the mass movement with full force. In applying its austerity plan, the PRI government has resorted to severe repression against the workers movement. It has suppressed the right to strike, attacked collective bargaining, and laid off tens of thousands of workers.

This offensive is designed to break up the cohesion of the workers movement in order to undermine its capacities for resisting the austerity policy. The working class movement, has in fact, been very hard hit, and is unable to respond union by union, factory by factory to the government's attacks.

We have seen massive expressions of discontent, such as last May Day, when nearly a million workers raged at the president, hooted at him and whistled at him. (1) But no union on its own can fight back effectively against the regime. Unions such as the Mexico City subway workers, the telephone employees, and the electrical workers have suffered major setbacks.

Moreover, the movement of the "colonos," the people of the poor neighborhoods of Mexico City, have also come in for severe blows. They have been attacked violently by the police, encircled, and expelled from the land that they occupied. The government has tried to break up the coordination of the urban people's movement.

In this context, through the CNPA and the alliance established with the CIOAC and the UGOCM, the three organizations that initiated the April 19 demonstration, the peasant movement is the only section of the masses that has been able to organize a national mobilization. And the government wants to break its cohesion, it wants to deny it any legitimacy by claiming that it is not based on genuine demands and that its only objective is to create conflicts in the countryside.

So, it is no accident that there have been so many murders of peasant activists since April 10. The government is trying to hit every organization separately on the regional level in order to intimidate them, to disorganize them, to keep them from mobilizing. It wants to make

1. See 'International Viewpoint' No 52, May 7, 1984.

the CNPA a hollow shell without a social base. The peasant march on April 10 was an initial response to the government's offensive. It has opened up possibilities for new forms of coordination attracting other peasant forces into a solid and broader alliance.

However, we have to remain conscious of the fact that in the coming months we are probably going to see another government offensive like the one last year against the peasant movement. It may be an even stronger one. The government this time may even escalate its attacks beyond the regional level and hit the CNPA as a whole, that is, strike at the heart of the movement.

In fact, during the wave of repression in Tequisquiatic, the government tried to go after several key members of the "Plan de Ayala" National Coordinating Committee by accusing them of attacks, conspiracy, violation of property rights. If these accusations were pressed in court, they could lead to sentences of 12 to 40 years for these peasant leaders.

In the past, the government has already resorted to such means against other peasant leaders. To take the case of the CIOAC, Comrade Ramon Danzos Palomino, a veteran peasant leader, was accused of the same offenses in 1973 and jailed for a year. The government's aim was to disorganize the peasant movement. From that standpoint, it suffered a total failure, because the movement reorganized outside the CIOAC itself, and what is today the CNPA gained strength.

However, it would not be surprising if today the government wanted to strike at the head of these organizations in order to break them, combining this with local repression against the peasant movement.

The Mexican peasant movement is becoming a real beacon for the poor masses of the country. The conditions have been assembled for developing a broad democratic alternative representing a united response by the peasant organizations. This can be done by building a national peasant assembly to discuss the Alternative Agrarian Law and a plan of struggle for the peasantry as a whole.

A National Peasant Assembly

If such a national peasant assembly can be held in conditions similar to those that marked the April 10 mobilization, this would represent a qualitative leap in the advance of the peasant movement toward establishing still broader forms of unity and centralization.

While repression may put the independent peasant movement in a very difficult situation, it has already attained a level of experience and strength that



The banner of the PRT held high (DR)

should enable it to continue the struggle even if it finds itself facing more trying conditions in which to operate.

Today, the Mexican peasant movement is not something that can be easily disorganized. Even if a very harsh repression is launched against it, it will be able to confront these new conditions, perhaps by different forms of struggle. If the present mobilizations manage to modify the relationship of forces to the advantage of the peasant movement, it will then be possible to build real mass action in the country.

It seems possible now to set up permanent, structured coordination among the various peasant groups. This may not at the beginning embrace the majority of the peasantry, it will be less than a single peasant union. But it will be coordination on a scale sufficient to give firm and consistent backing to the local or partial demands of the peasants.

For example, on the April 10 march, for the first time, specific questions were raised, such as the demand for application of the presidential resolutions concerning awards of land. In fact, this land has not yet been given to the peasants, although the decrees granting it have already been promulgated.

Discussions with the government have begun for the release of the imprisoned peasants. Negotiations have gotten off the ground with various government authorities, which may give the peasant movement an opportunity to strengthen its position. Interestingly, it was after the April 10 march that top-level officials began meeting with peasant leaders. That never happened before.

In the same week, the government met with representatives of the CNPA. It was the government that proposed that

the peasants submit their demands to various state agencies — the Secretariat for Agrarian Reform, the Secretariat for Agriculture, the director general of the Rural Credit Bank, the director of Agricultural and Stock-Raising Insurance etc.

Thus, the demonstration had enough impact to force the government to try to channel the peasant discontent by meeting with the leaders of these movements and listening to some of their specific demands.

If the mobilization manages to combine political, economic, and agrarian demands coherently in a single framework, this could give a very powerful expression to the peasant movement. There is no guarantee, of course, that things will develop this way. But there is a real perspective for that.

In the present situation, it is in fact possible, with a policy that makes it possible to respond to what is taking place, to achieve major advances in mobilizing the peasants. In this regard, we must not rest content with the capacity for mobilization that already exists, nor can we remain passive in the face of the government's attacks, which are certainly going to recur. Because the regime is not going to confine itself to negotiating with the peasants.

Historically, the Mexican government's response to the demands of the peasants has always been two sided. It has involved both repression and partial concessions. This will probably happen again. On some points there will probably be concessions, while other demands will be met with repression. So, it will be necessary to be able to take advantage of the concessions to strengthen the peasant mobilization so that it can resist the various forms of repression that will be unleashed against the peasant movement. ■

Regime in crisis as the revolutionary forces unite

Alongside a process of unification and strengthening of the revolutionary and popular organisations, the ruling power in the Dominican Republic, the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) has been going through an ever deepening crisis. This crisis has been unfolding under the double impact of developments in the Caribbean as a whole and as a consequence of the economic crisis and the pressures being exerted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the government of president Salvador Jorge Blanco.

While class confrontation has been on the increase, so has the pace of developing unity between revolutionary organisations. The years 1970 to 1981 had already seen discussions leading to the unification of three organisations, the Socialist Workers Movement (MST), the Nucleus of Communist Workers (NCT) and the Socialist Party (PS) which were to fuse to form the Bloque Socialista (BS). This revolutionary regroupment, then, whose first actual congress took place in June 1984, became the motor force for a much larger process of unity in action within the working class and popular movement.

The debates between the various political currents continued during this time and culminated in the formation on June 14, 1983 of the Dominican Left Front (FID) which grouped together workers and peasants organisations from the left including BS, the Dominican Workers Party (PTD), the Movement for Socialism (MPS), the Anti-imperialist

Patriotic Union (UPA), members of the United Left (IU) and the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), a sympathising group of the Fourth International which subsequently joined the Bloque Socialista. (1)

In 1984, the agreement imposed by the IMF in exchange for renewing a loan of 450 million dollars brought huge price rises in basic goods and provoked a virtual social explosion lasting several days and beginning on April 23, 1984. (2) This resulted in massive repression in which dozens were killed and wounded. The paradox of the situation was that these hunger riots took place on the day of the nineteenth anniversary of the uprising by supporters of ex-president Juan Bosch and the military constitutionalists that US imperialism had drowned in blood through the intervention of 42,000 GIs.

Following the hunger riots in April 1984, new activities around new demands began to take place at the beginning of 1985 and this led to the organisation of a 24-hour general strike on February 11, 1985, in the preparation of which the FID played a key role.

In May of this year a delegation from FID were in Europe. We spoke to comrades Antonio Aquino, Carmen Sanchez, and Enrique Pichardo about the developments in the political situation in the country as well as the developments towards unity of the revolutionary forces. The following is a summary of that discussion.

Question. How was the Dominican Left Front (FID) first set up?

Answer. The policies of the Dominican regime gave way to increased social tensions and a significant denial of basic democratic rights. Up until June 14, 1983, all the strands of the revolutionary movement had been divided into two main fronts. But seeing the depth of the crisis of the regime and the social chaos which exists and recognising the enormous concern felt amongst the Dominican people, they reached the agreement to set up the FID. Of course this came about after innumerable discussions. This political event raised great hopes among the Dominican people but it also created a huge panic among the forces of reaction.

But in any case, this unitary initiative is now irreversible. Revolutionaries today are convinced that without unity, they have no strength with which to achieve possible victory. This recognition of the need for unity has meant that Dominican revolutionaries have been able to put the discussion on the actual situation in the region to the forefront in the joint debates — going beyond any ideological and political differences on the situation of the international communist

movement and the international situation in general.

This does not mean to say that we deny the differences which exist between the different components of the FID. Every organisation can put forward its view within the FID, in the way they think best and as each event comes up. But the FID does not aim to deal with such problems within its terms of reference. The main thing is that there is agreement on the fact that we cannot continue under the presence of foreign monopoly businesses, nor in the position of a neo-colonial country and that we cannot tolerate the fact that the proletariat and the impoverished masses in the countryside continue to live under the yoke of oppression and exploitation. So, in that case it is a duty for us to unify ourselves and unite the people.

Strengthened by these two elements, we are certain that no force in the whole world can hold back the Dominican revolution. Our revolutionary perspective however, is not a long term one. It is our generation that has the task of leading the revolutionary and people's movement to overthrow oppression; of liberating our people; of making our

country prosper and of creating the conditions for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the short term. These are our objectives and it is around these that we are united.

Q. The unification of organisations with different political and organisational traditions must pose some problems. How have you sought to resolve the problems of working within the FID and also the question of the relations between the FID and the mass movement?

A. In the first place, within the FID we all share the same views on the analysis of the current situation and on the path that revolutionaries should take. So any problems which may arise are always secondary to this. Also there exists a very good spirit of cooperation between revolutionaries of different organisations. Sometimes in practice, it is impossible to tell who is a member of the Dominican Workers Party the Dominican Communist Party, the Bloque Socialista or the Patriotic Union.

1. See 'International Viewpoint', No 76, April 22, 1985.

2. See 'IV' No 53, May 21, 1984.

This does not at all mean that all the problems are resolved. They still exist and come out in occasional vanguardist or sectarian behaviour. But we usually attribute such behaviour as coming from the past. It is predictable, but it is not the behaviour of the majority current of the FID. It is rather the behaviour of a current in historical decline.

There is a further problem inherent in the structures of the FID. Up until November 1984, the FID was a loose coordination and not really a revolutionary front. Delegates from each of the different organisations were represented on the different bodies of the FID. As a result, very often only 15 to 20 per cent of their energies were given over to the FID, the rest of their activity being carried out within the framework of the political organisation they came from. It was impossible to carry on like this, at least not without believing that the FID was only a passive movement of agitation and propaganda. In order to transform FID into a revolutionary movement, organisational measures had to be taken which corresponded to this political decision.

It was also a question of linking the front with the working class and popular masses. This was another important element. The majority of the mass organisations, which over the years have played an important role in the popular struggle, are today under the political influence of the FID.

Some steps forward in relation to the structuring of the FID were taken with the creation of a unified leadership in the form of an executive commission which was a real political leadership, equipped to take decisions without recourse to a plenary assembly. This political commission is the only body which functions on the basis of consensus, all the others being based on majority decisions. In the political commission, the principle of consensus was adopted because if we had pushed for majority decisions, this would have bred mistrust in certain quarters.

At the moment the FID does not have a fixed spokesperson. It has a journal called *Abril*. The political commission has a spokesperson, but as the leadership of the FID is made up of members of different organisations, the role of spokesperson is rotated every month to a representative of a different organisation. Such a method of organising exists more or less in all the other bodies, but it is not the result of a political decision that has to be implemented at all levels. There are therefore some regions and local committees which do have full-time spokespeople. Such local representatives of the FID are elected by an assembly of members of all the organisations in the area, the provinces or the region. These individuals then have both the real and moral authority necessary to fulfill the functions of leaders of the



Women peasants demonstrate in Santo Domingo (DR)

FID in those areas. This has allowed us to make great progress at the level of effective action. Nobody challenges the political origins of a secretary of a local committee any more, or of a town or provincial committee.

In fact often, up until last November when we wanted to take any decisions, we had to first get each organisation together separately. Now the political leadership of the FID, the national leadership and the regional, provincial and local leaderships and even the mass fronts, have become collective structures.

It is also important to note that we have created a national department for the mass fronts. This department is subdivided into sub-departments made up of activists responsible for clearly defined areas of intervention: peasants, workers, youth, culture etc. Also before we had no programme or model. Now we have a political project and we know at each point what we want and how we are going to get it.

For many revolutionaries in Latin America, the mass movement is everything and the overall objectives, nothing. That is why we have committed so many errors. In the Dominican Republic, we too have known difficult times because we wanted to give into spontaneism and improvised solutions. We came to the conclusion that it was impossible to act politically on this basis. Of course this reflects a certain political maturity. But the most important thing is that we have succeeded in building an organisation of revolutionaries and in linking that through the umbilical cord of great tactical and strategic capacity to the workers and peasants movement and to the masses in general. The intermingling of the mass movement and the movement of the politically aware has

brought about a strengthening of both the mass movement and the revolutionary movement itself, in such a way that it is now impossible for one to develop without the other. This inter-relationship has made it possible to achieve unity between the mass movement and the revolutionary movement.

The FID is not merely the sum of the political groups which form a part of it. Dozens and dozens of people who were not members of political organisations have joined the FID. That is why the FID cannot simply behave as if it were a grouping of different organisations any more.

Q. In April 1984, the Dominican Republic saw a huge wave of social unrest. The popular masses came out onto the streets to protest against the IMF plan being implemented by the government. What role did the FID play in the political direction of this movement of popular protest?

A. At that time the FID had not reached the degree of coordination and development that it has today. Nevertheless from January to March 1984, we were able to initiate broad mobilisations across the country. The denunciation of government policies and the mobilisations against the IMF agreements created the basis for the people's reaction in April 1984. Of course this reaction was also spontaneous but, it was originally organised and decided on by the political leadership of the FID. At that point the FID was not convinced that this movement, which had begun in the localities, would have a national character. It is in this sense that we can talk about a spontaneous movement, without negating the existence of a political leadership of that movement.

The two elements were both present.

During this 'popular insurrection', fought with stones, the Dominican people did not fire one single shot. The Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) government, however ordered the repression which resulted in more than one hundred deaths, five hundred wounded and 5,000 in prison. For the government this did not appear to matter, since on April 26, 1984, the president congratulated the guard and the police on radio and television, for their 'exemplary' conduct.

The events of April 1984 created a new situation in the country. The relations between the classes were greatly changed. The people began to realise that they could not continue to live as they had been. This is what so totally changed the Dominican political scene. From now on was created what we called a pre-revolutionary situation.

The crisis of the regime is very acute and even conservative elements, like, for example, the Catholic Church, are searching desperately for a solution which could ease social tensions. At the moment the Catholic Church is acting as a mediator between the different right wing organisations, so that in the 1986 elections, if they take place, the right can present a united candidature.

The other objective which the right and the Church are pursuing is the signing of a pact between the main union confederations, the government and the bosses. Their intentions certainly don't lead them to hide the reactionary nature of this pact. It is reactionary in the first place because the majority of the Dominican people are not included in it. Roughly 32% of the active population is unemployed with 58% either unemployed or underemployed. All these people are ignored by the right wing who are only interested in an agreement with the minority, to the detriment of the majority. So, even if they get a pact which means adjusting wage levels, that will not significantly alter the position in society of the vast mass of the Dominican people, and still less will it alter the economic situation. Moreover, no self-respecting union confederation, which

takes the views of its members into account could sign such an agreement. It is impossible to reach agreement between the bosses, the unions and the government today because the contradictions in society are too sharp. The forces of reaction are trying, therefore — not to prevent a social explosion, but to postpone it, in order to use the extra time to pull off some other manoeuvre.

Q. What were the political and organisational lessons for the FID of the April 1984 events?

A. Our view is that the revolutionary movement was not, unfortunately ready for an insurrection, and that was painful for us. We came across thousands of people in the town quarters and in country areas who had decided to transform this 'protesta', which was originally organised to protest against hunger and misery, into a real insurrection that would do away with the representatives of imperialism and with the Creole reaction. But we were not sufficiently prepared and that is the main lesson we have to draw from this situation.

It is not a matter of complaining about this state of affairs but of being aware of the real problems posed. Up until then we had been talking about revolution as something abstract, as if it was just a simple theory. We did not realise in talking about revolution that the reality meant so much more than we had been able to speak about. And everything that we had said until then were merely absurdities or exaggerations in comparison with the responsibility with which we were faced. With all our faults we are the only ones who can take that responsibility. When we saw that the moment had come but that we were not ready to confront the situation, we realised then that this is the worst predicament that can ever present itself to a revolutionary.

Nevertheless, we were able to draw our experiences together. We knew how to pick ourselves up after the fall. We were able to go through that defeat, recover from it and go forward again. That is why we do not see the death

of dozens of our comrades in April 1984 as representing a defeat, but as an important political lesson. We realised that we could not cease to assume the historic responsibility which I mentioned before. That is why we were able to make progress as a result. There is no doubt that another spontaneous outbreak like that which occurred in April 1984, is impossible. But so that no one has any doubt about the new situation that we are helping to create; it will be one of massive confrontations!

The editor of the Santo Domingo newspaper *Listin Diario*, recently looked into the influence of revolutionaries in the *protesta* on February 11, 1985. He was speculating as to why big business in Santo Domingo and the rich property owners of the Conde Street, of Duarte Avenue, of March 30 Avenue, who certainly did want revolution had supported such a protest movement. What happened, and what this gentleman cannot understand, is that this was a new situation and everyone wanted to get a look in, even the guards and the police. We are no longer merely the little group of young hotheads they used to see before. People cannot accuse us of being young, because we are all over 35 years old and politically, we have matured and that is the most crucial thing.

The February 11, 1985 strike was the result of this development. We organised a general strike, prepared through partial, local, regional and sectoral strikes. Our immediate aim now is to prepare for a second general strike, of greater social scope. We don't want to organise another 24-hour strike, but a much longer strike. Our aim is to draw the *protesta* movement together at the national level in order to gradually convince the people that the future lies in their hands. From this point of view, the Dominican Republic is not like other countries in Latin America. For example, in Bolivia, we saw a general strike which lasted more than one week. If such a strike had taken place in the Dominican Republic the government could not have continued to hold on to power. No government could survive such a strike, because the Dominican people would not be content just to go on strike. They would be out in streets to settle accounts and get justice.

Q. The establishment of the FID has had consequences for other political forces who exercised or are still exercising an influence among the popular masses. What orientation did the FID adopt in order to win over the popular masses who were still under the influence of these bourgeois formations?

A. We see an important role of the National Coordination of the masses which is in the process of being set up. With 300 organisations at the national level and an implantation in the ten main provinces in the country, this organisation will not simply group the left together.





Oligarchy or the IMF, which is worst?

In fact, the majority of people who make up the organisations of the Coordination are not left-wing. In the provinces where provincial coordinations are in existence there are Christian organisations or organisations influenced by the 'official' current participating. (3) Such ideological influences still have a hold, but on the political level the masses feel increasingly represented by the FID. On the ideological level we are conducting a campaign amongst the population, in which we are trying to convince them that their future and their destiny is in their own hands.

Class differences have widened and this has provoked indignation among the people which is pushing them to act. I do not want to imply by this that all the masses are under FID influence. We are conducting a campaign to change the way people think and we hope we can win out in the short term.

Q. The mass mobilisations of January 1985 put the FID to the test. What balance sheet would you draw of these activities?

A. On this subject we published a text called 'A balance sheet for action.' In fact, it is more than a balance sheet because it defines the political orientation we intend to follow in the future. The mobilisations at the beginning of 1985 were a success. They represented the response of the Dominican people to anti-working class policies.

On January 28, the partial work stoppages began. The government gave the order for repressive measures,

thinking that the events of April 1984 were about to repeat themselves. But we were not about to do anything foolhardy. Of course we wanted to lead the people to take power, but we were not going to do so on January 28.

We wanted to articulate our *protesta*, to strengthen our degree of organisation and build on a series of elements which existed already in order to approach the decisive moment of the seizure of power. That is why, when the government sent troops into the streets, we replied through work stoppages. The troops couldn't find anyone to fight because they had been sent to fight people who were not even in the streets. The work stoppages and mobilisations ended in a 24-hour strike on February 11. This was an important political event.

It is difficult to paralyse 90 to 95% of the economic activity of a country. But in Santo Domingo, trade and industry ceased to function. Even the tourists, who before the strike were ensconced in hotels, now deserted. The January-February mobilisations were a shot across the bows from the Dominican people, announcing the beginning of a long period of struggle against their oppressors.

The first task now is to take forward the mass struggle against the IMF, and in order to conduct it successfully, we must have a precise orientation. The next goal is another national strike, much longer and more broad in scope than the previous one. This action should bring in new social layers who became involved in the recent strikes. Partial, even local, regional or sectoral strikes can serve to prepare the second national strike, so that it can be more widely taken up and can last longer.

At the level of demands, we need to focus on expropriation or on state control of finance capital and not the whole of capital. Today that means nationalisation of the banking system and control of currency. All the popular organisations should join the National Coordination of the masses. Organisations should be established at the base of this Coordination at municipal, regional and national level. Finally, we are aiming to take up this mobilisation within the framework of a process of accumulation of forces and radicalisation of the struggle.

Q. The radicalisation of the popular movements in the Dominican Republic is undeniable. But twice now you have described the pre-revolutionary character of the current situation. Could you tell us what aspects of the situation have led to this characterisation on the part of the FID?

A. There are several factors involved. The most important are those which we have insisted on throughout this interview, that is to say the progress that has been made in coordinating and organising the masses as well as the influence that

the FID has gained. But there is also something else. The dominant groups, for example, the party in power, the PRD — have been deeply discredited in the eyes of the masses and the other upholders of the system are in an even more lamentable state. This is a political aspect of great significance and that is why the Church is intervening as a mediator, without being able to get an agreement between the different political formations of the regime. They are hoping that we will be content with an electoral contest with the right. This is the trap that they think we will fall into. The FID has not yet discussed this question. But we would prefer not to have to discuss it at all, our most cherished wish being that the final confrontation will take place before that date. But if this confrontation does not come and we are forced to discuss the election issue, we will do it later. For the moment, this discussion is not a priority for us.

The ecclesiastical hierarchy has reappeared on the political scene and this is the real proof of the weakness of the regime. Of course, the Church is an ideological power within the system but in general it prefers to keep a distance from politics in order to better deceive the people.

Moreover, the main structures of the regime, that is the chamber of deputies and the senate are going through a permanent crisis. Last year, two months went by when these bodies were unable to sit because they could not even get agreement on choosing a secretary. For a whole period there were even two presidents in each of the chambers. Since November 1984, a proposed budget has been before the chamber, but the elected representatives have not yet managed to get a quorum to discuss it.

The Dominican Republic is drifting, nobody has any confidence in its institutions and even those who defend the regime are getting worried by the situation. The level of corruption and decay that this regime has reached is unbelievable. It has no authority any more. In the town of Santiago, for example, the governor has not been fulfilling his functions for some time. Also, the central bank has simply become an accounts office. It does not control the issuing of money. The ruling groups are coming up against another basic problem; that of a people rising up against an anti-national and anti-popular agreement with the IMF; and of a revolutionary movement with a real base amongst the masses. These are the objective factors which have created the new situation. That is why we say we are in a pre-revolutionary situation. Everyone agrees that the regime is on the verge of a total collapse. ■

3. The 'official' current consists of mass organisations which, like the General Union of Dominican Workers (UGTD) are linked to the official ruling party, the PRD.

A crisis of perspective and of leadership

Poland was one of the few European countries where the May Day mobilizations this year were massive and militant. In response to the call of Solidarnosc, several tens of thousands of workers demonstrated, despite violent attacks by the riot police on the marches. Significant also was the fact that there were demonstrations not only in the underground union's traditional bastions, such as Warsaw, where 15,000 people marched, or Gdansk and Gdynia, where there were 10,000 or Cracow where several thousand participated, but also in such small cities as Plock, Siedlice, and Radom. In the first, 3,000 people came out; in the second, 1,500, and in the third, 2,000. This is no small thing when you consider all the blows the underground movement has suffered over the last three years.

Parallel to this, the proposed higher education law abolishing self-management of the universities is running into resistance from the students and intellectuals. Rallies have been held in several cities on the initiative of university councils, and masses of names have been collected on petitions in university circles. At the same time, the bureaucracy is trying to eliminate oppositionist intellectuals from university chairs and the Academy of Sciences, as indicated by the case of Professor Leszek Nowak, known for his links with the Poznan workers, and that of Bronislaw Geremek, Lech Walesa's former main adviser.

The price rises, which have not yet been introduced in every case, are arousing protests in the factories. The increase in the price of meat, initially scheduled to be into effect in June, was imposed on July 1. It was a real blow for the population. It will come following three years of decline in living standards. According to the official figures themselves, household consumption has dropped by 13%. "Here and there 'I'm fed up' is replacing 'there's nothing you can do about it,' as you might expect from the grumbling in factories and the threats of strikes and initial strike action that workers driven to despair are starting to resort to." This was reported recently in the Paris daily *Le Matin* by that paper's correspondent in Warsaw, the Polish oppositionist intellectual Krzysztof Wolicki.

General Jaruzelski's dictatorship responded to this new rise in social tensions by taking a harder line. Since 1982, few strikes have led to satisfaction of the workers' demands. But the bureaucracy is taking a particularly intransigent stance today, as indicated by the long struggle at the Rosa Luxemburg factory in Warsaw. But finally this struggle, like the strikes of the female workforce in Zyrardow ended in partial victories, showing that the regime fears economic strikes.

Moreover, the repression is coming down again. This is symbolized by the sentencing of Frasnyniuk, Lis, and Michnik, three personalities in the Polish social movement. In the first five months of 1985, the number of political prisoners rose to nearly 200 persons. During that period also, the police can boast

of dismantling several underground print shops and arresting a number of leaders and activists of the underground movement. Finally, the regime has shown its ability to exploit every hesitation by the underground Solidarnosc leadership to tighten its grip and occupy the ground left vacant by the social movement.

Today, Solidarnosc is going through a particularly grave crisis of leadership. This is dealt with in the following article by the editors of *Inprekor*, the Polish magazine of the Fourth International. It was published in the spring 1985 issue (No. 18) of that journal. The crisis is tending to weaken the union organizationally. In a discussion shortly before his arrest, Wladislaw Frasnyniuk, while noting Solidarnosc's strongpoints today — the existence of many underground journals with a large circulation, as well as extensive underground publishing of books and pamphlets, the expansion of trade-union education and its impact, etc — pointed out the weakening of one of the links in the union's chain, "which until recently were its mainstay." He was referring to the factory committees and the information networks in the enterprises.

However, the organizational picture of the union remains uneven. A weakening in some bastions, such as Wroclaw, comes at a time when renewed activity can be seen in Upper Silesia, in Torun. Finally, the fact in itself that the underground press has a circulation of several hundreds of thousands of copies and that there are between 800 and 900 regularly appearing journals indicates that the organized resistance to General Jaruzelski's junta is still massive.

While the general did not hesitate to proclaim in a long interview published recently in the French Communist Party daily *l'Humanite* that he has gotten everything in hand, the fact remains that three and a half years after his coup, the Polish regime still has not managed to normalize its rule. Despite being thrown on the defensive, pursued by repression, and disoriented by the failure of the self-limitation strategy that has prevailed within it, the Polish workers movement continues to demonstrate an astonishing vitality.



Around the end of 1984 and the start of 1985, the social movement went through two difficult moments. The first was in October-November 1984, following the murder of the priest Jerzy Popieluszko. The second was at the end of February 1985, when there was a new wave of price increases.

The totalitarian regime forced the movement to demonstrate its capacity for self-defense against the crimes of the authorities and the attacks on the workers' standard of living. Solidarnosc did not pass either of these tests with flying colors. To the contrary, it suffered defeats that may cost it dearly.

The way has been opened for the regime to mount new attacks. In particular, it is threatening to go after a basic historic gain of the workers movement, the eight-hour day. Moreover, it is doing everything possible to wipe out what remains of the self-management gains of the revolution of 1980-81, liquidating university autonomy and sharply restricting the prerogatives of the workers councils to the benefit of the official unions.

The offensive is also being pursued on another front. The penal code and the code of procedure in penal cases are being changed. Penalties are being increased. And a streamlined procedure of convicting people "caught in the act" is being introduced in matters related to opposition activities, opening up the way for the authorities to define offenses as they choose.

The prisons are filling up again, starting with the most prominent trade-union activists and oppositionists. This is testified to by the trial of Wladyslaw Frasnyniuk, Bogdan Lis, and Adam Michnik, who, ironically enough, were charged with calling a strike that their comrades decided finally not to hold.

The regime has managed to drive the social movement into a tight corner without touching off counterattacks.

More and more, Solidarnosc is displaying an inertia and incapacity that do not inspire confidence in its instinct for self-preservation.

This very disturbing situation is above all the result of a prolonged grave crisis of leadership in the social movement, which was glaringly revealed again in the tests mentioned above. It is obvious that the movement is adrift, and that it is the leadership that sent it off course. We have long thought, and we have said so in our columns, that this crisis of leadership is the reflection of a crisis of strategic orientation and therefore also of program in the movement.

In the past, we considered that the January 1983 programmatic statement of the TKK [the underground leadership] of Solidarnosc, entitled "Solidarnosc Today," reflected in a positive way the attempt of a part of the leadership to overcome this crisis. In our opinion, the success of the boycott of the regional elections in June 1984 and the winning of a broad amnesty in July of the same year represented important victories for the social movement.

However, the advances in the struggle which all that involved have not been put to good use. Instead of being developed, the potential that the social movement continues to represent has been dispersed. In some sectors, it has even disappeared for whole periods. It has been frittered away in ineffective actions, and, in other words, it is weakening. It is time, therefore, to sound the alarm.

The response to the Popieluszko murder

Confronted with the abrupt sharpening of social tensions provoked by the kidnapping and murder of the priest Popieluszko by political police agents

on October 19, 1984, the Solidarnosc leadership reacted symptomatically by damping down the flames. The role that Lech Walesa played proved decisive. The TKK was conspicuous by its absence from the political fray.

Remember Walesa's famous statement on October 28, 1984, in St. Brigitta's church in Gdansk: "One of us has done us all a dirty trick, from the premier to the man in the street. And this someone wants us to transform ourselves into cannon fodder without thinking about it ... in order to open the way for shifts in the government ... We will not let ourselves be manipulated, and we are not going to get involved in struggles for power, because we never wanted to take power."

But that was not at all the issue then, as a building technician in Gdansk said quite rightly in the underground press:

"I cannot at all see why we should sit back and thereby strengthen Jaruzelski against his factional adversaries, who, the government suggests, provoked this affair in order to oust the general from the chair he occupies. If they had done another sort of a provocation and drowned Urban, or Siwak, that would have been their affair. Bandits fighting for power eliminate each other. But in this case they murdered one of us." (1)

As the masses spontaneously felt, this murder, which was not the first, proved the need for energetic action, not just against the repression in general, but also against political murders directed against the social movement.

"Silence must prevail during the burial, a silence charged with mourning and hope," Walesa said at the time. "We will all be there, and we hope that all those who hope for dialogue will be there too. Let this silence open the way for dialogue." It did not, of course.

Unfortunately, the Solidarnosc regional leaderships echoed Walesa's appeal. For example, the Regional strike committee (RKS) of Lower Silesia called, October 30, 1984, on "its members and the entire population of Lower Silesia to tighten their trade-union discipline and close ranks around the president of our union, Lech Walesa, around the national and regional leadership."

The only proposals for action this RKS presented were to "help" the Social Defense Committee Against Violence that was being set up and to "provide protection for persons who could be in danger," as well as to "disseminate in the

Szczecin naval shipyards during the 1980 general strike (DR)



1. "Solidarnosc" Gdansk, No. 18/120, November 15, 1984. Jerzy Urban, minister and government spokesman, is linked to Jaruzelski. Albin Siwak, a member of the Political Bureau of the Polish United Workers Party (the CP) and the spokesman of the neo-Stalinist faction of the apparatus, called "The Reinforced Cement."

press and publications suitable examples of a social attitude toward the security apparatus." (2)

Given the absence of any initiative by the union leadership, calls for symbolic actions began to spread, such as for "changing the name of Paris Commune Square to Jerzy Popieluszko Square," or to erect a stone monument in front of the Church of St. Stanislaw Kostka, as the interenterprise group Unia did in Warsaw. (3)

Let us look at the sort of political analysis that was made at the time by the circles close to the leadership of Solidarnosc. In this respect, Jacek Kuron's can serve as an example. At the end of November, he admitted that it was likely that a faction of the regime with influence in the political police was behind the crime, and that the murder was perpetrated in order to impose a more repressive policy.

We also think that this crime was the reflection of factional struggles. In his polemic with Kuron, Jan Litynski, a member of the Warsaw regional leadership of Solidarnosc since the beginning of 1985, questioned the usefulness of analyses of this sort on ethical grounds and because they contribute nothing. Everything depends, however, on what purpose they are intended to serve from the political point of view.

If such analyses "are the expression of submission, a means of projecting one's own impotence on the society as a whole," if they serve to conceal the fact that the responsibility for this crime falls on the regime in its entirety and if they serve to revive the myth of the "liberals," as Litynski suggests, then he was clearly right. "In a gang," he writes quite correctly, "there can be differences over whether you should liquidate the enemy or buy them off, or intimidate them. But there is no reason for the people to support one element over another." (4)

On the other hand, such analysis can and must serve to point up the contradictions existing within the regime, the extent of cohesion or disintegration in its ranks, its strong points and its weaknesses, and thus to assess the relationship of forces between the regime and the social movement and work out a tactic whereby the latter can alter this relationship in its favor, either radically or just a bit, depending on the circumstances and its opportunities.

Nonetheless, it is necessary to guard against illusions of the sort that can be summed up in the idea "if they are fighting, let them kill each other and let's stay out of the business."

Another dangerous illusion is the one expressed by Kuron, when he wrote that if "the police apparatus, which is not under anyone's control, is not only certain of impunity but also so assured of its domination that it acted alone, without any decision at the top" — and Kuron stresses that such a

hypothesis is unlikely, although it could not be totally excluded — "this would mean that in fact there was no longer a government in the country."

However, if the police apparatus had that sort of impunity, it would mean that the government was a police dictatorship, and not that it did not exist. The fact is that Kuron has a strange notion of what a government is.

In arresting the murderers, Kuron considers, Jaruzelski "definitively aroused the hostility of his adversaries in the apparatus, that is his police and those who hide behind them. He has two solutions — to retreat and try to reach an agreement with his adversaries within the state apparatus, which is no longer possible because it is too late for that, or to try to reach an understanding with the society." (5)

This second solution, Kuron explains, will be "very difficult, if not impossible, for the perpetrator of the December 13 operation." But, in an interview given to Agence France-Presse, Kuron assessed the situation as follows: If Jaruzelski "continues to establish order in his own ranks, he will have to come to an understanding with the society." (6)

Reading such explanations, which influence the policy of the leadership of the social movement, simply makes you tear your hair. This whole "second solution" is purely a mental construct, because neither the totalitarian state apparatus as a whole nor whatever faction may dominate within it at a given moment is ever going to accept any "understanding with the society," for the simple reason that this regime is undermined by its internal contradictions.

The regime could accept a tactical compromise with the social movement, if the latter forced it to, but that could only happen in a situation that would be at least prerevolutionary.

So, what does Kuron think should be done on the basis of this wrong and naive political analysis? Since Jaruzelski had opened up a struggle against his apparatus — people were able quickly enough to see what this "struggle,"

also a figment of Kuron's imagination, amounted to — then, what had to be done was to put pressure on the government in such a way as not to lead it to resort to terror but to "force it to concede something to the society."

Kuron declared: "Everything that has happened up till now is a form of pressure — mass participation in masses, night vigils, the immense social mobilization, the burial itself .. In this atmosphere of seriousness, meditation, and prayer, there was a clear demonstration of the determination of the society." (7)

However, what Kuron did not say is that this mobilization and determination of the masses once again proved ineffective and the potential was wasted. The only thing the government "conceded" was a show trial of those directly involved in the murder of Popieluszko, in other words, next to nothing.

The Polish episcopate and especially its leader, the primate, Glemp, brought all possible influence to bear to assure that the Popieluszko murder affair would be settled in a way that would not upset the regime, and he threw its weight into the balance hard to hold back the rise in social tension.

This attitude by the bishops, moreover, gained them no recognition. To the contrary, it emboldened the dictatorship, which did not waste any time in stepping up its attacks on the church. We also know what the reaction of the mass of believers was to this. We have been seeing a sharp decline in the authority of the primate and the bishops.

In appealing for calm, Walesa found an ally and a prop in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. But in expressing his confidence in the primate and declaring that "the Church always provides leadership for the nation in crucial moments," he also chose that particular time to go against the dominant feeling of the masses.

It would be hard to find a clearer expression of the crisis, or even the abdication, of the Solidarnosc leadership than those words of a union leader ready to turn the leadership of the social movement over to the ecclesiastical hierarchy! Kuron echoed this opportunistic orientation, backing up Walesa: "In Poland, the Church is the entire nation," he explained in an interview given to Agence France-Presse. He also said, "the episcopate is the highest moral authority in the country."

Solidarnosc demonstration in Ursus (DR)



2. 'Z Dnia na Dzień', Wrocław, No. 38/340, November 11-17, 1984.

3. 'Wolna Trybuna', Warsaw, No. 39, November 7, 1984.

4. 'Tygodnik Mazowsze', Warsaw, No. 110, December 13, 1984. Jan Litynski is a veteran member of the KOR, former editor of the bulletin 'Robotnik' ('The Worker'), and an expert for Solidarnosc. In 1985, he joined the underground leadership of the union for the Warsaw region.

5. 'Tygodnik Mazowsze', No. 107, November 22, 1984.

6. 'Liberation' Paris, December 1-2, 1984.

7. 'Tygodnik Mazowsze', No. 107.



Solidarnosc on the streets (DR)

When the leadership of the social movement loses its authority, it should do everything possible to regain it, and not try to hide behind another institution.

Rising criticism

To judge from some articles in the underground press, a number of activists were not convinced that a lessening of social tensions — by means of appeals for calm or declarations that the social pressure had already brought victory — could lead to anything.

A part of the underground press took account of manifestations of discontent with the attitude of the *Solidarnosc* leadership, of the sometimes violent criticisms and frustration that it engendered. The poll conducted by the editors of the Gdansk *Solidarnosc* revealed this clearly enough. Here are some of the responses it got:

A welder said, "Jaruzelski and his cronies are criminals all right, but we ourselves are responsible for Popieluszko's death. What did we do about it when the union activists were kidnapped before? We were thrown into a quandary ... The lack of reaction from the society gave the government enough nerve to go after the priest. It's time to realize that any one of us could be the next."

A clerk said, "These appeals coming from every direction for 'reconciliation around Father Jerzy's coffin' are something I can't accept. You can't compromise with evil. The fact that such appeals are also coming from the mouths of Church representatives set my teeth on edge. It's

one thing to forgive the guilty in accordance with Christian morality (and by the way the guilty have not shown the slightest sign of repentance). It is another thing to call for sitting down at the same table with murderers."

A teacher gave this response: "All these appeals from the president of the union for calm have done as much harm as good. Because in this way Walesa blocked a lot of spontaneous initiatives, such as student protest meetings and general assemblies in the factories organized by the self-management councils." (8) To this list, we could also add the strike for which preparations were underway at the Huta Warszawa steelworks. It was finally called off after many interventions from the union leadership.

This same publication in Gdansk reported that "the organized response of the society after the priest's death was not very energetic, although indignation was at a peak. This indignation was not used to make the government understand once and for all that such acts do not pay. The only somewhat serious warning was given in Gdansk.

"On November 6, in response to the call from the Regional Coordinating Committee (RKK), 15-minute work stoppages took place, in particular in the northern port, in some sectors of the Gdansk shipyards, in the Gdansk naval repair yards ...

"On the other hand, contradictions appeared. Walesa appealed for calm. Gwiazda and Walentynowicz called for a strike. The RKK called for a 15-minute stoppage. As for the TKK, it did not have the time to meet after the

announcement of Popieluszko's death. There was such disorganization that we have a right to wonder whether our leaders are prepared to offer a common solution to the problems that will arise in the future.

"Several struggles are looming up in defense of the present working hours, for self-management, for wage raises to match the coming price increases, etc. Does Lech have a clear and thought-out position on these questions? Is the TKK capable of foreseeing events, or at least meeting in time? In any case, masses for the 'repose of the soul' or 'for the fatherland' will not be enough, especially since for a lot of people they are beginning to become a routine taking the place of any concrete activity."

The journal continued: "Thanks to the union's inconsistency and to the appeals for calm that relaxed the social tension, it was Jaruzelski who profited from this tragic death ... In this way the system got out of a difficult situation, which it itself provoked, unscathed. Alas, the society was not so fortunate. It suffered grave shock and frustration, without preparing itself for the next blow." (9)

Wyzwolenie ("Liberation"), a Warsaw workers journal, wrote the following about the demonstration at the burial of the murdered priest: "This crowd was not an anonymous mass without any will of its own. This crowd knew why it had assembled and what convictions it wanted to demonstrate by its presence. This is why the primate's sermon expressing yet again his belief

8. 'Solidarnosc', No. 18/120.

9. *Ibid.*

In defense of trade union democracy

We publish below an article written under the name of Oskar by the president of the Provisional Commission of Co-ordination of Coal Mines (TKKG), of the Solidarnosc trade union in the region of Upper Silesia. This text was published in the March 1985 issue of Glosno, the monthly journal of that organisation.

Within the trade union movement, we often see small and cohesive groupings of leaders who begin to be separated from the mass of workers and who develop outside of mass control. The reason this occurs is because within a trade union, as within any mass organisation, a certain division of labour is necessary. Within this framework there are certain duties which bring with them greater involvement in decision-making, better access to information, contacts with people, in other words, which involve exercising a wider influence. This division of tasks tends to reproduce itself because too frequent changes in allocation of key duties run counter to the need for greater efficiency.

The appearance of such groups of leaders, acting in an antidemocratic way is greatly encouraged by the fact that some people in positions of responsibility do sometimes try to make themselves indispensable, to concentrate all decisions concerning the region into their own hands or into the hands of a small group of people in whom they have confidence. The fact that such militants have a certain influence on decisions taken, and the lack of democracy can lead to a situation where these leaders begin to act in their own interests and not in the interests of those who elected them.

But this is not necessarily always the case. A leading section of the union can be forced to act effectively in the interests of the members, if only because, if they do not, the members might start leaving the union.

In our region, we began to see a tendency toward the development of groups of leaders cut off from the base. But Solidarnosc can overcome such developments because of the special situation we are in: those people who are concerned with analysing and developing a critique of the trade union movement and in other places are outside of the movement are members of Solidarnosc here and are able to intervene in order to ensure that the debates on all the key problems can be conducted in the best possible conditions. And insofar as such a discussion takes place within the trade union itself, then a democratic character for the discussion can be retained.

It is always useful to recall the essential conditions for the maintenance of trade union democracy; such as the right to criticise any body; the right to freedom to act and react to any attempt at censorship of the independent underground press and finally, the guarantee of the facility and not only the abstract right to create groups and oppositions within the trade union on condition that such groups respect the statutes of the union.

To speak out in opposition within the trade union is seen by many as showing a lack of feeling. But such oppositions exist in the real world and have done since the creation of our union. The proof of this is the critical voices which are raised against the decisions and behaviour of some of our regional leaderships, the leaderships in the factories or at the national level. Evidence of this is also shown in the increasing

willingness of some people to put their own conceptions into practice, to take responsibilities in such and such a field of trade union work, or to convince others of the validity of a given point of view. This type of attitude is sometimes mixed in with personal ambitions or with differences of opinion or ideology or with both at the same time. The important thing is that this comes out into the open, because if these differences are kept behind closed doors, that will greatly increase the risk of manipulation and violation of the statutes. In contrast to this, an open struggle by bringing to light the different tendencies and orientations within the union, can force the members to declare their own views on this in full knowledge of the different motives.

On the above, opinions are divided. Some think that the lack of democracy in the functioning of the union constitutes a mortal danger in the current situation. Others argue that it is precisely the discontent of the activists, especially among leading members, which poses a threat to the union. In my opinion this discontent and the conflicts which result are proof of the strength and vitality of the union. Who can seriously believe that such internal tensions represent a danger for Solidarnosc? On the contrary, they are a condition of democracy because they encourage a critical approach in relation to overall aims and methods of action. There exists amongst us people of many different opinions and uniformity, silence and absence of conflict can only be achieved by papering over real differences and thus changing the union into some kind of mutual admiration society.

When we examine the different internal conflicts within the union, we could be tempted to adopt the view of one particular section, for example that of the intermediary layer, or that of the regional leaders. Now, as I have personally come to realise, violations of the statutes take place at all levels of the union, from the workplace level right through to the TKK. To adopt the view of the intermediary layers could lead to an exaggeration of the radicalism of the trade union masses. It is understandable that the regional leaders should emphasise this radicalism in order to strengthen their own position, as much in relation to the TKK as to their 'protectors'. Furthermore, their popularity can grow if they base themselves on the opinions of the most active minority, who are often the most radical. However the results of opinion polls which I have managed to gain access to are far from showing a growing radicalism amongst Solidarnosc supporters. They show rather that the latter are expecting [from their leadership] both an intransigent attitude to the regime and a capacity for compromise. If therefore, we cease to look from the standpoint of the discontented regional activists and if we accept the existence of differences leading to conflicts and tensions within the union, if we accept the underground structures which are already in existence and the possibility of creating new ones which are also autonomous, it will be apparent that the current situation of the union is not so bad.

Perhaps the best situation would be precisely the one with which no one — neither the 'activist troublemakers' or the 'dictatorial regional leaderships' or the 'silent TKK' at first will seem satisfied. Yet these are the people who can help to combine a union which is both effective in practice and democratic in character. ■

that Poles will meet around a table for genuine dialogue, dialogue that the Church has always wanted and has not ceased to call for, met with silence. Fifteen minutes later, this same crowd interrupted Walesa with shouts of 'Solidarity, Solidarity!' and pledged its dedication to the union.

"The government understood the mood and convictions of this crowd better than some opposition leaders and

experts. The militia [police] were pulled back and stationed around the outskirts of the neighborhood. The Zomo [riot police] did not intervene, even when a demonstration of several tens of thousands of persons reached the center of Warsaw. It was there that the demonstration dispersed. They had not been told how and why to fight. Neither Lech Walesa nor, the TKK told them that. Everyone was afraid of an imaginary

'provocation.' They did not understand that the only way to avert provocation was to reunify the scattered structures of the union by basing them on the activity of the masses ...

"The next day, everything was back in order. The directors of the big plants reported the accords with the "unionists who represent the workers," whom no one knew. The deputy premier, Mieczyslaw Rakowski, declared that



Lech Walesa received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983 (DR)

while the members of the government had gone through a difficult period, Solidarnosc was not and never would be accepted by them as an interlocutor. Rakowski knew very well that it would soon be the government that would distribute the cards. The differences and divisions in the state apparatus were adeptly displayed in the knowledge that some opposition leaders would fall for this maneuver and call for limiting activities in order to make it easier for Jaruzelski to combat the advocates of extreme methods and the hard line.

"This enabled the apparatus to minimize the social costs of its crime. A veil was cast over the other murders and crimes, from the murder of the student Stanislaw Pyjas in Cracow in 1977 to the murder in 1984 of the peasant Piotr Bartoszcze. The three assassins of the priest Popieluszko were portrayed as black sheep who happened to turn up by chance in the good family of the police and security forces.

"Everything was back in place. On the one side was a compact group of figures and pawns representing the government, on the other were some isolated pawns in the guise of the Committees to Defend the Law and Legality. The government had achieved its ends. It was once again dealing with a small group of 'public oppositionists,' a little group that can be easily controlled and held back. The fact that the 'public opposition' itself sought such an outcome changes nothing in the affair" (10)

Finally, in the Lenin steel plant in Nowa Huta, the information service

of the underground workers committee said that 'since we were paralyzed by appeals for calm from the bishops and from Walesa we found ourselves unable to protest.' It raised the question, "When will we finally stop being afraid of the word 'provocation,' which paralyzes us so effectively and which destroys our instinct for self defense?"

The statement continued: "We need be a little less docile if we want to stop this chain of unpunished murders, 'die on our feet rather than live on our knees,' as we like to sing, but only sing. Only Gdansk on October 21 (in a demonstration in front of the monument commemorating the December 1970 uprising) and the traditionally militant Wroclaw dared protest. But as early as October 28, those with authority in Gdansk were calling for calm.

"On October 25, after the traditional mass in Mistrzejowice church, the calls for a demonstration near the Arch were considered a provocation. The same thing happened in Warsaw on October 28, after the mass in Zoliborz, when a large group of youth from Nowa Huta wanted to demonstrate their feelings more energetically.

"Is the absence of a calculated and coolly-made decision a reason to paralyze spontaneity? The belated initiatives, which were more apparent than real, of some Nowa Huta leaders (soundings for a symbolic strike in the steelworks without any leadership being given!!!) will not make good the weaknesses in

organization and liaison, which are still quite amateurish.

"Can anyone tell me why nothing stood in the way of calling a demonstration on June 17, 1984 [the date of the local elections boycotted by Solidarnosc] and why this was impossible today? When will we finally admit and say it openly that our structures cannot respond quickly and in an organized way, and that not even the most fervent prayer can make up for this weakness?"

"If we have decided to fight, then let us fight with the understanding that we are fighting to win and you cannot fight without taking losses. There will be losses. What we have to worry about is making sure that they are not for nothing. If we have accepted the leadership of this struggle, let us lead it without being afraid to take the responsibility for decisions, otherwise we will be condemned to sit in despair, waiting for a miracle." (11)

The most violent criticism of the attitude of the Solidarnosc leadership took after the murder of Popieluszko was in *Hutnik*, which is also published in the Lenin steel plant. "Exhibiting his suffering and taking advantage of his martyrdom has nothing to do with trade-union action any more than hiding under the cassocks of the clergy and talking nonsense about the power of the union structures in the shadow of the sacristies. Show us, if you please, gentlemen, that these structures exist by their activity and that they are based on your work. Let the rank-and-file activists get some feeling of this work at the top. Let them see and feel that this structure is not some astral body but at part of the union Solidarnosc ...

"We rank-and-file unionists are looking to you leaders, and in the meantime we are doing what we can. We hope that the confidence we placed in you when Solidarnosc was working openly will not be disappointed. It may still not be too late. But it is high time to stop resting on you laurels and to undertake serious work, and serious reflection. And if any of you do not want to do that, so much the worse for them. Every organization has its sacred cows. Solidarnosc is, doubtless, no exception to this rule." (12)

Ineffective actions

The call for a 15-minute strike on February 28, 1985, was not followed by euphoria in the factories. First of all, the workers realized that such an action was only symbolic and could not lead to a change in the government's policy. They also feared that it would be followed by repression, since this sort of strike makes it easier for the political police to arrest the activists.

10. 'Wyzwolenie', Warsaw, No. 3, December 1984.

11. 'Solidarnosc Zwyciezy', Nowa Huta, No. 21/66, November 2, 1984.

12. 'Hutnik', Nowa Huta, No. 20/92, November 6, 1984.

Last but not least, this strike call was a surprise for everybody, and the workers feared that it would not be a success. "The decision to strike was met first with skepticism by the activists: 'Who will see that it takes place? What good will it do? Is this going to be effective?'" That is what appeared in the commentary of the Inter-enterprise Council of Solidarnosc in Poznan, although the authors added that "with time the readiness to protest increased." (13) Did the same happen in all the plants in the country? Certainly not!

Nonetheless, leading up to February 28, tension did mount in a series of big and smaller enterprises. And there were some more or less large actions in a number of them, despite the rescinding of the strike call. This was the case notably in a shop of the Rosa Luxemburg factory in Warsaw, the Huta Warszawa (a quarter of the workers in shops W-47 and W-48), at Ursus (the ironworks, a part of workers in the repair service and the ZPT sector), at FSO (in units nos. 5 and 7, to which can be added the cutoff of the current in factory No. 6, where the majority of the workers are soldiers), and so on.

At the Rosa Luxemburg factory, the short strike was the start of a longer struggle for a wage increase of 2,000 to 3,000 zlotys a month.

However, over all, there were not a lot of actions, and in some regions, such as Upper Silesia, there were none at all. Moreover, where strikes took place, they affected only part of the workers, those in certain shops, and often only part of the workers in those shops. Was this because the strike call was rescinded by Walesa and Bujak? Or did it testify to a loss of confidence by more and more sections of the working class in the Solidarnosc leadership and a growing skepticism about the generally ineffective forms of action proposed by this leadership? Both factors undoubtedly weighed in the balance.

The Solidarnosc leadership assigned a not inconsiderable importance to the February 28 strike, although it was supposed to be very limited and in fact only symbolic. Nonetheless, it seems that it was supposed to open the way for winning an economic reform that even the legal Solidarnosc, with capacities for action of another magnitude, had proved incapable of forcing through.

Moreover, it should have been clear for a long time that a genuine economic reform, one in the interests of the workers, that is, one involving self-management, can only be put into practice by the social movement itself. It can, therefore, only be put through in opposition to the regime. But Bujak again presented the all-too-familiar illusions, declaring: "As long as the government can get out of its difficulties by raising prices, we cannot expect an improvement in the economic situation. It is only when it no longer has that possibility that it



Solidarnosc members participate in official demonstration on May 1, 1983 (DR)

will start to look for other solutions, that it will be forced to carry out reform. Thus, stopping the price increases is very important, if only for that reason. Scattered economic strikes, even victorious ones, can wipe out the effects of the price rises only for given social groups; they will not bloc the economic policy. It is for this reason that we are calling today for a mass action." (14)

To justify rescinding the strike, Walesa and Bujak claimed that the preparations for a national action have achieved their goal; they have forced the government to make a tactical retreat. (15) And Walesa was quick to add his traditional commentary: "If the government is prepared to understand the majority of society, we will place all our powers, both physical and intellectual, on the alter of the fatherland." (16)

The commentary of the editors of *Tygodnik Mazowsze* was in the same vein: "Lech Walesa and the TKK have called off the strike, because the government suspended the decision that provoked it. Now we must demonstrate our good will and wait for the next steps. At worst, the price rises in question will go ahead with some small modifications and spread out over time. In that case, we will be obliged to call another strike." (17)

This issue of *Tygodnik Mazowsze* reached most of its readers at a time when no one any longer had the slightest illusion about the "success" achieved. Moreover, when the vanity of the hopes that the government had "understood" the "majority of society" became glaringly apparent, Walesa did not offer a word of self-criticism. To the contrary, he said: "We did not have any choice [i.e., he and Bujak]. On the other hand, a

lot of enterprises did not play the game and got involved in strikes. The workers had the right to do this, and they were right, because the government acted in a cynical way." (18)

So, to sum it up, Walesa was right, and the workers who did strike, taking no account of his "game," were also right. Where is the logic in all this?

Henryk Wujec explained the attitude of the two union leaders in the following way: "The government's decision [to suspend some price rises] seemed to be an important concession. Formally, it was taken under the pressure of the official unions, but in reality it came about because of the pressure brought to bear by Solidarnosc. In the face of a prevailing feeling that the question was settled, it would have been wrong to maintain the strike call ...

"It was only on the evening of March 1, when the government explained its decision in detail, that everyone felt deceived, really everybody ... Now people think that calling off the strike was a mistake. Some even go so far as to compare the situation with that of March 1981. I think that this state of discontent is a favorable factor, that it will bear fruit in the future, when another big protest action is called." (19) In other words, the mistakes of the Solidarnosc leadership will have positive results!

13. 'Komunikat', Poznan, No. 6, March 1985.
14. 1985.
15. 'Tygodnik Mazowsze', No 119, February 28, 1985.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. 'Z Dnia na Dzień', No 10/354, March 17-23, 1985.
19. 'Tygodnik Mazowsze', No. 120, March 7, 1985. Henryk Wujec, a former member of the KOR and editor of the journal 'Robotnik', was elected to the regional leadership of Solidarnosc in Warsaw and to its presidium in June 1981.

In the magazine *z Dnia na Dzień*, a reader wrote that "The wish to see a bad master become a better one is the wish of a slave. If we want freedom, we all have to aim at setting up our own power, a power that serves the people." (20) This conviction has been building up for a long time now, although it has not yet reached the leading circles of Solidarnosc. But it is certainly not the sort of "success" achieved on February 28 that will make this objective seem like a realizable goal.

The structures of the social movement that are less tightly controlled by the TKK did not consider it useful for their part, to try to pull the wool over anybody's eyes. The Provisional Committee of Solidarnosc in the Bydgoszcz took its distance from the decision of the national leadership, arguing that "the announcement of a monetary suspension of the government's project was only an apparent concession, in particular since the official communique on this question said nothing about the projected increase in working time."

In a statement cast in a rather ironic style, the Bydgoszcz leadership said:

"We ourselves do not see any reason to call off the scheduled action, and so we leave the decision to those who initiated it." (21)

The organ of the Interenterprise Workers Committee of Solidarnosc (MRKS) in Warsaw, went right to the point, saying: "We've been had." (22) The main union journal in Poznan wrote: "Facing such an attack by the regime, we can only defend ourselves by fighting in a determined and consistent way. Retreating even an inch is certainly not the best way to resist, any more than is attributing to the government honorable intentions dictated by a concern for the good of society. This can only make easier the job of the Communists, who are trying to 'soften us up.' I don't mean to say by this that a strike is the best form of struggle, but the calling off of the strike revealed the indecisiveness of the Solidarnosc leadership. And it cannot afford that. It could cost too dearly, and it is once again the society that will have to pay the price." (23)

The Poznan section of the Fighting Solidarnosc Organization stepped up the tone: "Once again we have the proof that we can count only on our own strength. We cannot count on any good will or desire for an understanding. We paid a high price for abandoning the tactic that had been decided on, we will pay a still higher one in the future." (24)

Despite appearances, by issuing a strike call first and then taking it back, the union leadership did not change its tactics, while it did make a turn about. The strike was called "in a cold way," taking, not only the masses of workers, but even the union activists by surprise. Henryk Wujec admitted this after the fact by acknowledging that

"the announcement of the strike was a shock for everyone." (25)

A section of the activists, inspired by a spirit of militancy and solidarity, took up the call, trying to assure that the strike gained the greatest possible success. In so doing, they showed a greater sense of responsibility than the TKK that called this strike. A 15-minute work stoppage, even nationwide was by no means the sort of action that could change the relationship of forces in favor of the workers. It could at the most help to prepare a more prolonged action, and that is no doubt the way that it was understood by the workers at the Rosa Luxemburg factory.

However, no larger scale preparations were underway for such an action. The strike, at most, could show that Jaruzelski has not yet succeeded entirely in bringing the workers to heel, but everybody knows that. So, what did the TKK expect to gain by calling this strike? Undoubtedly, it hoped once again that the government, prompted by an unwarranted fear, or worse, an imaginary good will, would make a gesture that could be interpreted as a first step to the "understanding," which is in fact impossible.

This is why the TKK took the government's cynical maneuver as a gesture of good will, and why Walesa and Bujak immediately called on the workers to reciprocate and "await the next steps" of the regime. This is why Bujak and Walesa directed a retreat, without even consulting the other members of the TKK. In fact, this led to a serious mixup, because the next day 33 union and opposition leaders, including Janusz Palubicki, Grzegorz Palka, Jacek Kuron, Lech Dymarski, and Marek Edelman, called for going ahead with the protest action on the scheduled date. This is also why the only conclusion that Walesa and the underground leadership of Solidarnosc could come to was to say that General Jaruzelski was not an honorable man, as if everyone did not know that well before February 1985, at least since December 13, 1981.

In their eagerness to conduct an orderly fencing match with the general, the TKK yielded ground, and this had an influence on the relationship of forces, which they have no right to trifle with, since it was won by the action of the social movement as a whole. It is not a pawn on their private chess board. The price that has to be paid for this setback is a weakening of the workers ability to mobilize in defense of their interests, a weakening of the feeling of solidarity, the growth of a feeling of impotence. You cannot change the policy of a regime or alter the mood of the masses by magic calls and false interpretation of events.

What we said about the slim chance of success for the strike called for February 28, 1985, does not mean that it was not necessary to respond to the price rises decreed by the government and that it was not necessary to prepare

the conditions for a struggle. It means first of all that what was needed was less talk and more action, and consistent action implies serious preparation.

— First of all, there should have been the broadest possible consultation of the union membership. This should, even in underground conditions, have been started early enough to give sufficient time. The trade-union press could have helped in this regard. The government, in any case, knows what sort of initiatives the Solidarnosc leaders propose, and it would be illusory to think that they could organize a mass action that would take it by surprise. To the contrary, it is of the highest importance that the greatest possible number of trade-union activists and readers of the independent press be informed of what is being prepared.

— Secondly, the action should have been built by mounting massive information campaigns sufficiently far in advance, explaining in leaflets, etc. why and how to struggle.

— Finally, what was needed was to build a strike that would be more than purely symbolic in some big factories where the conditions are most favourable, factories that could hold out a few days, even if they were isolated in the action. And a campaign of support for the struggle in these factories should have been built through leaflet distributions, street demonstrations, etc. in order to spread the strike.

That is the way to respond to the government's new price rises, which will not be long in coming. A general strike, even a short one, could be called if there were a powerful legal union, as there was before December 13, 1981, and if the working masses were conscious of their power. On the other hand, in a situation of retreat, where the workers movement is on the defensive, general actions have to be built patiently and the workers have to be convinced that such action is possible. They will be persuaded not simply by the statements of the movement leadership or articles in the underground press but by the example provided by the sections of the working class that are ready to fight.

This is not speculation but the lessons of experience, confirmed by February 28, because it was on that day that the struggle of the workers at the Rosa Luxemburg factory in Warsaw started, to the surprise not only of the national leadership but also of the regional leadership of Solidarnosc. This struggle lasted for several weeks, stopping and starting as one or several sections of the factory went on repeated strikes for a

20. *Z Dnia na Dzień*, No. 9/353, march 3-9, 1985.

21. *Informator Bydgoski*, Bydgoszcz, No. 75, March 1, 1985.

22. *CDN-Głos Wolnego Robotnika*, Warsaw, No. 105, March 8, 1985.

23. *Obserwator Wielkopolski*, Poznan, No. 90, March 1985.

24. *Solidarnosc Walczaca*, Poznan, No. 5/32, March 10, 1985.

25. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No. 120.

few hours. The demand was for a wage increase of 2,000 to 3,000 zlotys a month.

This demand was certainly a popular one in a lot of factories in Warsaw. What was the attitude of the regional leadership of Solidarnosc (the RKW)? It did not make a statement on the struggle in this factory until March 18, to say nothing of the additional delays before it could be published in the clandestine press. It told the workers at Rosa Luxemburg: "You can count on the help of all the Solidarnosc structures active in your region." (26)

By all accounts, the RKW's support was purely verbal, and the workers got no help in their fight from the regional leadership. There was no massive leaflet distribution to point out the strike at Rosa Luxemburg as an example and call on the workers in other plants to support it by undertaking their own strikes for the same or similar demands. There were no posters, no slogans on the walls, although there has been no lack of this sort of thing in Warsaw in recent times. In a nutshell, there was nothing but a routine attitude.

If we take seriously the statements by Walesa and Bujak about "effective preparations for a national action" set for February 28, how are we to explain the fact that a few days after this action was called off, the RKW, led by Bujak himself, proved unable to offer more than verbal support to the workers in a factory on strike? Less was done to support this struggle than the KOR managed to do in July 1980 when a strike broke out at Ursus. But the possibilities are incomparably greater today, or at least that is what Bujak says.

Was it reasonable to hope that the strike would spread? It is impossible to answer that question, but when the first strikes broke out in July 1980, we did not know either that in August they would touch off a wave of strikes affecting the entire country. The possibility should have at least been tested, but this opportunity was not utilized. The workers at Rosa Luxemburg remained isolated, although they appealed for solidarity.

The Solidarnosc Workers Committee at the factory made a statement saying: "In response to the price rises, the workers at the Rosa Luxemburg factory staged repeated strikes over the month of March. On March 26, the strike was maintained for four hours to demand that the management carry out its promises to increase wages. The government did not give in. Today, it is persecuting and firing those workers who give it trouble. Nonetheless, the government is afraid!"

"The government is trying to black out news about the strikes at 'Rosa.' It does not want others to follow our example, and for the whole world to see that the 'normalization' in Poland is pure fiction. Despite everything, our

strike had an impact in the country and abroad. We call on all the workers, especially the women in Zyrardow, Lodz, and other cities [the 'Rosa' workers were mainly women] to demand wage increases that will fully compensate for the rise in the cost of living. This is the only way to force the government to retreat and to protect our children from poverty. We in 'Rosa' will not give up our demand for wage increases of 2,000 to 3,000 zlotys. We demand real reforms that can get us out of this crisis!" (27)

Time running out

In the past, the editors of the Polish *Inprekor* have often taken a critical attitude toward the underground leadership of Solidarnosc. At the same time, we have believed that criticism should be serious, well thought out, and objective. We continue to hold that position. We are aware of the difficulty of leading a mass movement that has been forced underground, and that it cannot be judged by the same standards as a party of cadres.

There are very few precedents in history of underground social movements lasting a long time, and so there is little experience to which the Solidarnosc leaders can refer as a guide for coordinating the action of the movement, for building leadership bodies, and for assuring that they operate effectively. If anyone thinks that there are easy answers to these questions, they are gravely mistaken.

However, the present situation of the social movement in Poland, especially its crisis of leadership, cannot be explained by the objective situation alone. Subjective elements also play a very important role.

What is going on inside the TKK? In September 1984, shortly after taking the leadership of the Gdansk Regional Coordinating Committee of Solidarnosc and after joining the TKK, Bogdan Borusewicz gave an interview in which he said quite a few important things about these problems. (28) Here are some significant excerpts.

"For a long time, by its existence alone, the TKK has exercised a brake on the social movement. Without the TKK, from which the people expected a call to rise up, such an explosion could have taken place several times during

the State of War. The classical example of the braking role we have played is the strike of October 1982, after our union was outlawed. (29) But there were other moments when the level of social mobilization was very high. However, since there was a group that was supposed to give the signal, people waited. Up to the middle of 1983, the society was expecting decisions that the TKK was unable to make." Why was it unable to make them? "Because it was incapable of assuming the responsibility for a possible failure."

From what did this fear of responsibility spring? First of all, the TKK has seemed not to realize that you can suffer losses not just if you fight, but above all if you fail to respond to the attacks of an adversary and let them get what they want without mounting any resistance, or offering only symbolic opposition.

Borusewicz's interview, moreover, is filled with despair and defeatism. Of the TKK, he says: "With its present makeup, no view predominates, so the attitude that prevails is an idea of holding out, of doing something, of a long march. [He did not explain what the other views were. — *Inprekor*.] But a march has to have a destination."

The journalist interviewing him noted that in the consciousness of society, there was only a vague idea of the goal. "In our minds also," Borusewicz continued. "So, we hold out, we build the press, and that's all. The social resistance will flag. Normally, a revolutionary wave never lasts more than two or three years. Here, it is ebbing a bit more slowly. The social movement can only defeat the state apparatus in a confrontation concentrated in time. We have to know how long we have to hold out."

Looking at the TKK's activity from this standpoint, Borusewicz said laconically and brutally: "If we stopped issuing declarations, we would no longer have any reason to meet." He added, nonetheless: "As I said, the activity will flag, up until a certain point when it mounts suddenly again toward a new explosion." (30)

But the social movement is not the sea, and its leadership bodies are not bits of driftwood carried to one level or another by the tide, independently of their will. The level of organization, the tactic employed, the strategy laid out are also factors that influence the

26. Statement of the Regional Executive Committee (RKW) of the Solidarnosc union in the Mazovian region (Warsaw) issued on March 18, 1985.

27. 'Solidarnosc Walczaca', Poznan, No. 7/34, April 7, 1985.

28. Bogdan Borusewicz, one of the founders of the KOR, later an inspirer of the fight for free unions on the Baltic coast, one of the inspirers of the August 1980 strike in Gdansk, was later removed from the Gdansk regional leadership of Solidarnosc. He went underground on December 13, 1981, played a major role in organizing the underground union in the region, and took the leadership of it after the arrest of Bogdan Lis in June 1984.

29. A spontaneous strike broke out then

in the Gdansk shipyards. Actions were on the point of breaking out in other big industrial centers. Mass demonstrations and clashes took place in Nowa Huta, in particular. Instead of calling on people to support and spread the strike, the TKK issued an appeal for a symbolic general strike for November 10, more than a month later, thereby demobilizing the workers. Finally, the two strikes, the one in Gdansk that lasted four days in isolation and the one called for the following month, which failed to bring the workers out, ended in defeats. On several occasions, when there have been tensions, the TKK has called for preparing for a general strike some time in the future, without these appeals ever leading to concrete action.

30. 'Kultura', Paris, No. 11/446, November 1984.

dynamic of the social movement, which help to determine the ebb and flow of the tide. The social movement is not a disciplined army that can be sent into combat, regardless of the mood of the masses, by means of a militant slogan.

Moreover, these two extreme ways of viewing the reality of the movement are often taken at different times by the same leaders who make up the TKK, leading them from passivity to adventurism and vice versa.

To go back to Borusewicz's prognostication about a low point in the activity of the social movement after which it will suddenly begin to rise again toward a new explosion, it is to be feared, given past experience, that the TKK will not be able to take the responsibility for a possible defeat at that point, and that it will again play the role of a brake. Why is this so? First of all, because the Solidarnosc leadership remains attached to the idea of a "self-limiting revolution," as we have pointed out several times in *Inprekor*. But in the context of an ebb in the revolutionary wave, there is less revolution and more and more self-limitation in this strategy, which resembles a house of cards.

The perspective of a social explosion, real or imaginary, is seen as threatening to bring a collapse of the present regime and bring on inevitable military intervention by the Kremlin. Bujak sometimes goes as far as saying that he considers himself part of "the generation that will bring down this system once and for all." But this is not a coherent political line.

The political orientation of the TKK, of Lech Walesa, and the dominant currents in the intellectual circles that influence the Solidarnosc leadership goes in the direction of an understanding with the totalitarian regime with the aim of achieving the "common" task of getting the country out of the economic crisis. And this would postpone to better days, if not forever, any structural change in the system of political rule. The only life preserver, therefore, is supposed to be reformism in a nonreformable regime, "the construction of a self-managed society within a totalitarian state," as Kuron is fond of saying.

But this is not all. There is also and above all the fact that the present leadership does not know what the social movement should aim for and where the revolutionary dynamic that Borusewicz refers to delicately as the "tendency to explosion" leads. For the TKK, the problem is to cushion this danger, or even prevent it, because an explosion without political perspectives in the short or long term could easily lead to defeat.

Before going any further, it should be noted that this argument is not all that convincing, because historical experience has shown, even recently in Poland, that during an explosion of mass struggles, the social movement can rapidly define the political perspectives that are essential for its

political activity in the intermediate term. And it is possible that longer term perspectives could be worked out on the road. At least, that was the tendency in the Solidarnosc movement during the revolution of 1980-1981.

A program to solve the crisis

During the period of revolutionary upsurge between August 1980 and December 1981, the Polish social movement reached general conclusions about its aspirations and strategic objectives. Over and above defending the rights, the dignity, and the material and moral interests of the workers, as well as seeking a guarantee of broad democratic freedoms, it aimed for a genuine socialization of the means of production and the state, that is, a system of rule based on the principles of democracy, pluralism, and wide-ranging workers and social self-management.

The program of the Self-Managed Republic outlined in the resolutions of the first national congress of Solidarnosc and given concrete expression in union work and self-management activity was not the application of any doctrine. It expressed the natural aspirations of the working class for political and social

liberation, which little by little took on a conscious form. It was, it is important to remember, the collective product of the working class itself, open to the contributions of other social groups with which it allied itself in the struggle against the totalitarian regime and whose legitimate interests it was prepared to guarantee in accordance with its democratic sentiments.

These programmatic gains have been more and more eroded after the introduction of the State of War, in the difficult conditions of underground work. To a large extent, the working class has no longer been able to express its will and its collective aspirations, in any case, not in a concentrated way. This would undoubtedly have been different, if political organizations had formed before December 1981, based on the workers' self-organization and self-management current, and then gone underground.

The state of the underground press today illustrates this problem. On the one hand, we have, to speak in general terms of course, an atomized press, limited to individual factories, and often of a narrow political scope. On the other hand, we have a nonfactory press published by intellectual circles generally cut off from the working class. To this day, the press of the pro-self-

Just out - Polish Inprekor

In this issue; an analysis of the crisis of leadership within Solidarnosc (a follow up to the article in *Inprekor* 18 which is reproduced here): On the repression against the left in Yugoslavia (with the positions of R. Radovic, P. Imsirivic and M. Nikolic, three of those facing repression): Special dossier on the Ukraine (including articles on national oppression and the social structures in the Ukraine, dissident workers speaking; and resistance and repression in western Ukraine): Statement from peace activists in the East and the West: Special on Nicaragua including an article on imperialism versus democracy; the revolution and underdevelopment; free elections, a conquest of the revolution; the issue of the Indian Miskitos and the Church divided.

To order Polish *Inprekor*, write to PEC, 2, Rue Richard Lenoir, 93100, Montreuil, France. One copy; 2.5 dollars or £1.20. Subscription (six issues); 12 dollars, £7.50. Cheques/postal orders should be made payable to *International Viewpoint* and marked 'for Polish *Inprekor*'.

MEDZYNARODOWA KORESPONDENCJA PRASOWA

SOLIDARNOSC Z "SOLIDARNOSCIA" 1

nr 19
LATO 1985

INPREKOR

W NIKARAGUI



Dossier

REWOLUCJA I DEMOKRACJA

KRYZYS

RUCHU SPOLECZNEGO (2)

"Linia fabryk" wczoraj i dzisiaj

•

UKRAINA

pod moskiewskim zaborem

...i ruch oporu na Zakarpaciu

•

JUGOSLAWIA

Lewicowa opozycja

O demokracji robotniczej

Cena 75 zł 15 FF, 2,5 \$, 7 FS, 7 DM, 15 Skr, 100 FB



The Polish junta tries to stop a social explosion (DR)

management current has not stabilized, at least on a scale where it could have a real influence. It is, however, such a press that must maintain the continuity of the most important working-class programmatic gains of Solidarnosc, popularize them, systematize them, and develop them.

The way in which the underground leadership bodies of Solidarnosc are functioning today is fostering a fragmentation of the aspirations of the working class and diffusing its determination. None of the underground factory committees of Solidarnosc is capable of expressing this will and these aspirations. At the same time, there are almost no coordinating bodies at the national and regional level that are the emanation of these factory structures, unlike the situation in certain regions in 1982.

The conditions of underground work favor the opening of a gap between the ranks and the regional leaderships and the TKK. Today, when the leading bodies of the social movement are not a direct emanation of the working class and are not under its control on a day-to-day basis, and when there are still no working-class political organizations, the programmatic gains of Solidarnosc are being pushed aside by various ideological currents based on quite narrow circles. In the absence of anything else, these small groups can present themselves as the voice of the people, while the social forces of the working class cannot express their views of them.

"If the still vague vision of a self-managed republic could have been developed and made concrete, in a few years we would have an independent Poland, a Poland of modern democratic socialism," Professor Tadeusz Lepkowski wrote justly. But, he added, more than once we have seen in the Polish revolutionary ideological phenomena alien to it. He cited "strong and stubborn anti-Russian feelings, an outdated anti-

Communism in the worst tradition of the Polish extreme right, and, more widespread, a backward hostility to the ideas of the left."

Lepkowski went on to say that it could be considered a "tragedy of our revolution that it has been invaded by political traditionalism, often mixed up with obsessions and phobias engendered by the policy of the regime or inspired by it." (31)

Along with these negative aspects, we also have to note the present tendency to look for hope in Ronald Reagan's imperialist policy, because it is anti-Soviet and anti-Communist, to look for hope in the Pershings, because they are aimed against the USSR, and more generally to look to "the West," seen as an ahistorical abstraction devoid of all class content. This is leading Poles to turn their backs on the liberation struggles in the West and the national liberation movements in the Third World.

In contrast to the overwhelming dynamic in the revolutionary period of 1980-81, "ideas" of reprivatizing the means of production and restoring capital are surfacing here and there. And some circles are trying to organize politically around this sort of a perspective, fouling the ideological atmosphere in Solidarnosc, already confused enough.

To a certain extent, the leadership of Solidarnosc has contributed to the development of these phenomena, and partially it is yielding or remaining passive in the face of the pressure they exert. In the statements of the TKK and in the press it controls or influences directly, the concept of the Self-Managed Republic is being emptied of the content that Solidarnosc gave it in the past and being given a meaning that makes it hard to discern what it originally meant.

So, it is not surprising that this leadership is disoriented when the question arises of where to lead the movement in order to prepare it for new revolutionary confrontations.

We will of course come back to the features of the crisis in the Polish social movement and the political conclusions that flow from this. But what has to be said at this point is that immediate and long-term actions have now to be undertaken as rapidly as possible to stop the movement from sinking deeper into crisis and at the same time to foster alternative tendencies.

To indicate what sort of actions are needed in a general way, we might say first that an energetic effort is necessary to restore what was the driving force of Solidarnosc in 1981, that is, a program of struggle for political democracy and workers self-management based on a genuine socialization of the main means of production.

Moreover, these actions should offer practical support to the struggles waged by the workers in some factories in defense of their material and moral

interests and which have been left isolated, such as the strike at the Rosa Luxemburg factory. Because building up and spreading such struggles is today the main, if not the only, chance for a new rise of struggles that could open the way for a new phase of the Polish revolution.

It is, therefore, necessary that the enterprise and interenterprise structures most conscious of the immediate and strategic interests of the working class, as well as their press organs, try to establish direct coordination among themselves. Such "alliances" should, of course, be open to all the trade-union structures of intellectual circles ready to support them or cooperate with them, as well as to any political group that stands for a consistent working-class policy, which implies support for the ideals of self-organization and self-management, as well as of workers solidarity, both on the national and international scale.

Such alliances should have both a trade-union and political character and work for the development of tactics and strategy for the social movement that will offer an alternative to the orientation of the present leadership of Solidarnosc.

In the beginning, such alliances would have to operate independently, both as regards defending the programmatic gains of Solidarnosc through their press, workers education circles, etc.; and as regards the tactical tasks of defending the rights, dignity, and interests of the working class in all the enterprises in which they are active.

These alliances will also have to focus social pressure on the Solidarnosc leadership in order to get it to modify its orientation, or at least its attitude toward the immediate needs of the social movement. Finally, they will have to defend the working-class principles of union democracy that are part of the tradition and heritage of Solidarnosc. In this way they will help to counter the dangers posed by alienation from the underground national and regional leaderships by applying these principles within them.

At the same time, it is necessary to defend firmly the unity of the workers and of all working people within the framework of Solidarnosc as a single, pluralistic union movement. Differences over tactics, strategy, the action program, and even the program for building the Self-Managed Republic, may arise among these workers alliances and other currents and structures in the leadership of Solidarnosc. But these differences must not be erected into barricades. The barricade that is needed has to be built by everyone working together, whether they want to or not, against the totalitarian regime.

31. T. Lepkowski, 'Myśli o historii Polski i Polaków' ("Thoughts on the History of Poland and the Poles"), 'Zeszyty Historyczne', Paris, No. 68, 1984, p. 152.



AROUND THE WORLD



CANADA

Tories toppled in Ontario

Forty-two years of Conservative rule in Ontario (Canada's most populous province) ended on June 19 as the Liberal and New Democratic Party opposition combined forces in the Legislature to pass a vote of no-confidence.

The ouster of the Progressive Conservative government was a consequence of the surprising results of the May 2 Ontario provincial election that reduced the Tories to 52 seats, from 72 at dissolution.

The equally big business-dominated Liberal Party proved to be the major beneficiary of disaffection with the Tories, catapulting from 28 to 48 seats, and actually taking a larger share of the popular vote (38%) than did the Conservatives (37%).

The labour-based NDP climbed slightly to 25 seats (24% of the vote), up from 22 seats.

The deceptively dull and quiet election campaign took place against a backdrop of growing dissatisfaction with the Tory cutbacks, wage controls and poor environmental policies. The ascendancy of a more-right-wing-than-usual Ontario Tory leader, Frank Miller, and the government's decision to fully fund the Catholic Separate School system, proved to be the undoing of the well-entrenched Tories.

The Liberal Party, still reeling from its stinging defeat at the federal level last September, ran an aggressive, issue-oriented campaign that promised reform.

The NDP posed as the party of moderate change, focussing its criticism on the Conservatives and their new Leader, and letting the Liberals off the hook.

The Liberal-NDP move to dump the Tories enjoys wide popularity, especially among working people.

But the pact signed by Ontario NDP Leader Bob Rae on May 28, with Liberal Leader David Peterson, is fraught with dangers from the standpoint of labour.

The NDP is pledged to maintain the Liberal minority government in power for the next two years — no matter what. In exchange, according to the negotiated agreement, there is to be reform in such areas as: equal pay for women, job creation for youth, an end to extra-billing by doctors, 'first contract' labour law, and tenants rights.

Unfortunately, most of the proposals are just vaguely worded promises of future legislation. No details. No timetable.

In fact, the new government's only firm commitment, its "top priority", is the extension of funding to separate schools, despite the fact that a majority of Ontarians oppose it.

And all legislation is "to be implemented within the framework of fiscal responsibility" — codewords for over a decade of cutbacks, wage controls, and concessions to big business.

When the new Ontario Liberal government implements such policies, as did the Trudeau Liberal regime in Ottawa, the NDP will take the flak from the labour movement, while the Liberals consolidate their electoral hold.

Perhaps in anticipation of this eventuality, there's now more and more discussion within the ONDP of a full-fledged coalition with the Liberal Party, complete with NDP Cabinet Ministers under a Liberal Premier.

This will require quite a selling job. Members of the NDP are deeply suspicious of both big business parties, and correctly cling to the idea of independent working class political action.

But the coalition promotion campaign is underway. Legislative caucus members have fanned out across the province to speak on this theme. The ONDP leadership, and some private sector union leaders hope that the idea will enjoy majority NDP membership support by the time the two year pact with the Liberals runs out.

In the meantime, rank and file, left wing NDP'ers are organizing to present an alternative view. BW. ■

BELGIUM

International anti-fascist meeting called

In September the AFF (Antwerp Anti-Fascist Front) is planning an international demonstration against racism and fascism under the title 'Projekt 1945-85, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Antwerp at the end of the Second World War. This demonstration will take place on the week-end of September 6 and 7 on the same date as the traditional festival organised in the town.

The AFF is hoping to be able to welcome groups and individuals from anti-fascist and anti-racist movements in all the EEC countries. On Friday September 6 there will be a symposium on the struggle against racism and fascism in Western Europe. The following day will be given over to workshops on the following themes; education and fascism; racism and fascism; the media and fascism; attacks against democratic and trade union rights and fascism; lesbians, gays and fascism; the 'new right'; case histories. The day will end in an international anti-fascist rally.

The initiative of the Antwerp anti-fascist front will be useful for establishing links between the different committees, groups and organisations in Western Europe who are active on the issues of fascism and racism. The readers of *International Viewpoint* are invited to assist in building for this initiative by publicising it among interested organisations in your area.

For further information contact: Anti Fascistisch Front, c/o Sanderusstraat 15, 2000 Antwerpen, Belgium. Tel. 03/237 60 43. ■

Support the Fighters Fund

Contributions to *International Viewpoint's* fund for free subscriptions to fighters who cannot afford to pay have begun to come in from around the world. Readers in New Zealand sent in 500 francs, and other contributions have come from West Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Ireland, Canada, and Denmark. So, we now already have a bit of leeway for meeting the need for free subscriptions. But that is far from saying that we do not need any more contributions.

One of the signs of the time is that there are more and more victimised fighters who need the sort of coverage *IV* offers but cannot pay. We expect that there will be a steadily growing number of requests. So, the fighters fund will remain a permanent feature of our work. And there are a lot of countries that have not yet made it into our honor roll of contributors, including, strangely enough, those where the largest number of *IVs* are circulated, the United States, Great Britain, and Sweden.

Please send checks and money orders to *IV* at the address on our masthead, accompanied by a note explaining that they are for the Fighters Fund. ■

Big cracks in the US's showcase of Latin American democracy

One of the most telling measures of the impact of Nicaragua's free elections is Richard J. Meislin's "News Analysis" of the Mexican elections for the *New York Times Services*. Meislin wrote "It was the type of election that had it occurred in El Salvador in 1983 or in Nicaragua in 1984 would have produced worldwide headlines declaiming fraud and would have led to grave questioning of the credibility of the elected governments there." (*International Herald Tribune*, July 17, 1985.)

Meislin went on to say that it was only "elections as usual" in Mexico. In one sense that is true. The country has what amounts to a bourgeois one-party system, where the official party has long maintained its power by gangster methods. But in another sense this massive fraud was an important event. It marked the failure of the Mexican bourgeoisie's attempt to clean up its act, to create a facade of respectability for its rule. As Meislin's comparison with Nicaragua showed, it badly needed to do that.

With our country gripped by acute crisis on all levels — economic, political, and social — the political parties have had considerable difficulties in putting across their programs. In these conditions, although these elections are for the federal parliament, they have not focused the attention of the masses. Most of the population are concerned primarily with coping on a day-to-day basis with the consequences of the crisis.

The official party, the PRI [Institutionalized Revolutionary Party] has only been able to hold a few rallies and has given priority to house-to-house canvassing. It has put all its energy into building an apparatus for rigging the elections, badly disguised as a campaign to get out the vote. For this purpose, it has utilized all the resources of the government agencies.

The PAN [National Action Party, the major bourgeois opposition party] has not waged as strong a campaign as you would think, to judge from its triumphalist tone. Sonora and Nuevo Leon are its main centers of support, especially the latter, where it has the backing of a major section of the bourgeoisie.

In Chihuahua, Eloy Vallina, one of the most powerful businessmen in this state, a previous backer of the PAN, went back to supporting the PRI. This indicates that some sections of the bourgeoisie have withdrawn their support from the PAN.

The PAN has worked out a strategy for giving the impression that it was going to win the July 7 elections, so that afterwards it would mount violent actions against the election fraud that the PRI is obviously preparing. This is

indicated by the preparations of shock groups and the training that the PAN is giving its poll watchers in the Top Security Commands (Comas) in Chihuahua.

On the left, it is the PRT that has most striven to mobilize sectors of the population. Using the opportunities offered by the election campaign, it has promoted the organization and independent struggle of the workers and peasants. The results are indicated by the March of the Bottom Dogs [named after *Los de Abajo*, a famous novel of the Mexican revolution that describes how the fighters were cheated of the fruits of their struggle]. This ended by bringing 30,000 people to the PRT's windup rally.

The PSUM (the Mexican CP) has basically devoted itself to holding forums using marketing techniques to project its image over the media. Only in a few isolated cases has it called mobilizations.

The Mexican Workers Party (PMT), after making triumphalist statements that it was not competing with the left but was aiming for power, settled down to a routine campaign relying on advertising slogans.

The other so-called left parties fell back on arguing for support to the government. That is the case of the PST, the PARM, and the PPS, which offer only slight modifications in the PRI line.

In this campaign, the manipulation of the media has reached grotesque levels. The TV and the press only project the image of the PRI. The polls that are being played up in the media are also forms of manipulation.

In these circumstances the vote on July 7 will enable us, with all its limitations, to measure how much the two

The outrageous fraud in the July 7 elections reflects the rapid erosion of the credibility of the official party in the face of the economic crisis. It is obviously afraid to leave any real space for legal opposition. In particular, the PRI government is afraid of revolutionists offering a national focus to the mass struggles against austerity and for democratic rights. So, it is already boasting that the PRT, the Mexican section of the Fourth International will lose its ballot status, getting under 1.5% of the vote.

However, unofficial tallies in Mexico City, where fraud is most difficult, credit the PRT with 3.5% of the vote in the country's main population center. The PRT vote has been estimated at even higher averages in some of the northern states of the Mexican union. It seems clear that a campaign will be necessary to defend the PRT's rights.

The following is an edited version of the PRT's statement summing up the experience of its campaign. It is from the July 14 issue of the party's paper, *Bandera Socialista*.

contending classes have politicalized the crisis and to what extent they identify with the various parties. We will see if the voters continue to identify with the PAN as a democratic alternative to the PRI, or if they are able to see that it stands at the head of the reactionary right. We will also be able to see to what extent the PRI's control has eroded.

One thing we are sure of now is that the votes cast for the red rectangle of worker-peasant unity presented by the PRT will be a vote for struggle, a vote for protest, a vote for independent organization.

Starting right now, we are calling for a broad movement in defense of honesty in the elections. We will defend the people's vote and first of all the vote for our party, not only against the PRI's fraud but also against all the parties that overtly or covertly are trying to push us out of our rightful place. We know that we can defend the vote if we prepare our forces and have the firm backing of all our allied organizations and of the sections of the population that have offered us their support. ■

