

# International VIEWPOINT

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economic  
reform ?**

**Nicaragua:  
state of siege**

**Salvador's  
fighting unions**

**Thatcher sets  
fifth column  
against NUM**



**INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT**

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

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*IV is growing all the time, even if we have not been able to increase the number of pages for a while. We made this space so that we can keep our readers informed of what we are doing and what we propose to do.*

*The first thing we have to report is that our initial fund drive to finance free copies of IV and subscriptions for fighters who could not pay because of victimization was a success.*

*The contributions we received paid for IV's sent to British miners during the NUM strike and later to some imprisoned activists. We have begun sending copies regularly to political prisoners in Ireland, and with the next issue we will start sending a free subscription to a long-serving political prisoner in Turkey.*

*The only sour note in our prisoners' fund campaign is that the consciousness of the needs of victimized fighters remained so uneven. We got a number of contributions, for example, from Ireland, but there was much less*

*of a response from the larger and better off countries where the bulk of our readership is concentrated. One very generous contribution from England saved the honor of revolutionists in the big and developed countries. We hope that the next time we have to ask for contributions for prisoners, our readers in such countries will be more aware of the problem. That, after all, is part of our job.*

Gerry Foley



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# What lies behind the state of siege?

ON OCTOBER 15, Sandinista president, Daniel Ortega signed a controversial decree extending for a further year a state of emergency in Nicaragua. The state of emergency had been introduced in March 1982 but eased in July 1984. He explained that the new measures were necessary because of 'the US government's criminal and aggressive policy'.

We publish below an interview with the Nicaraguan ambassador in the Netherlands, Carlos Arguello, who replies to some of the criticism of the measures in the bourgeois press, explains the background to the new measures and what they will mean in practice. The interview was given to *Klassenstrijd*, the paper of the Dutch section of the Fourth International.

*Question. The bourgeois media have been trying to argue that the measures taken in Nicaragua are a further step towards totalitarianism or even that they stem from internal party problems. What is your comment on this?*

*Answer.* The measures were not taken as a result of internal party problems. They were taken because of a very serious situation originating in the war of the United States against Nicaragua after the Reagan administration got the green light from congress for what they called humanitarian aid — 27 million dollars worth. Whatever they call it, the fact remains that congress politically approved Reagan's plans for Central America and the war against Nicaragua.

That green light, which was given in June, was followed two or three weeks later by the first large offensive against Nicaragua. It wasn't so much that the money was needed for that but Reagan was holding back until the congress had approved the continuation of the war. The plan was to take an important city like Esteli in northern Nicaragua and the region round about. They made attempts to take over an important piece of Nicaraguan territory. This failed. The main thrust of the contras, militarily, was crushed. The alternative if this failed, that is if the contras failed to take over a piece of territory that could be declared free and then recognised by the United States or whatever; the alternative plan was to create as much destruction inside the country as possible, in order to destroy the economy. The contras withdrew from that region and started going in small groups inside Nicaraguan territory.

This creates a different situation than simply defending a military objective where you can more or less limit the measures you take in order to protect the country. The fact that the contras started going into Nicaragua with orders to blow up bridges and factories, changed the picture. So the measures had to be taken. The Nicaraguan authorities, through their services, were able to determine that plans were being made to blow up certain targets even inside Managua. So the only way to stop this plan was for the government to have the necessary legal means to detain people involved in these plots against Nicaragua. This has occurred, together with plans by businesses in Nicaragua, that are against the government, to disrupt the economy and create economic havoc. This is together with certain left groups that feel that the revolution has not gone far enough or quick enough and were planning certain strikes. Finally even the Catholic hierarchy was planning certain activities, which were not religious but were plainly political, including the publication of a newspaper without permission from the authorities, without fulfilling any of the legal requirements for publishing a newspaper in Nicaragua.

So all this, the internal plans of certain groups to create economic havoc, the military efforts of the contras to destroy certain economic targets all made it imperative to take measures that affected Nicaragua internally. That's the reason why these measures were taken.

*Q. But you knew before that this was going to happen?*

*A.* Of course we knew, and we

know that unfortunately the Reagan administration is bent on destroying Nicaragua. We knew this a year ago, but we are trying to take the measures only when they are strictly needed.

*Q. Did you foresee, then, that these kind of measures would be necessary?*

*A.* The thing is that in Nicaragua we are always living with a sword over our heads. The state of emergency really has never been totally repealed. A year and a half ago when the elections were held in Nicaragua, in order to facilitate the campaigns, most of the restrictions contained in the emergency legislation were lifted. But the emergency decree remained.

*Q. What is the actual content of the measures. The bourgeois press says that many democratic rights like the right of assembly and the right to strike have been suspended. They say also that people can now be detained without trial. Is this true?*

*A.* Yes, the right to strike has been suspended and the right to meetings has been limited, in the sense that you cannot have public rallies. This includes us — it includes everything. That doesn't mean that you cannot have political meetings, but not mass rallies that could lead to other situations. The right to *habeas corpus* has been suspended.

*Q. Why is that necessary though. Can't the courts decide?*

*A.* In normal circumstances, yes. But even the international laws on human rights permit governments to take emergency measures when circumstances dictate. All the rights that have been suspended are allowed by international law to be taken by a country in a situation of emergency.

Now what happens is if you have a plot by five people somewhere, like here in the Netherlands, of course they can be judged and tried without any problem. But when you have an army, financed by a super power, disrupting the life of the country, you have to take measures because you can't go public in a trial, at least not immediately. When a country is at war — if Holland were at war you can be sure that nothing that the military was doing would be taken to trial at the minute. Unfortunately that always happens in war. Even if you compare it to situations like when Great Britain was at war with Argentina, although the Malvinas were 12 thousand miles away anything related to the Malvinas was banned from the press in Britain. I am not justifying that Britain did this. I am just trying to point out the case of a small country that is under attack

by a super power — that this is an abnormal situation and certain things have to be done, unfortunately.

*Q. You said that the ban on public rallies also includes the mass organisations and the FSLN? Could you explain the purpose of this? The*

*Sandinistas have always impressed everybody by stressing the importance of the mass movement.*

A. Yes but how can you have a rally in these circumstances — get 100,000 people together, when you don't know if somebody is going to throw a bomb in there? These type

of situations are very easily disrupted. They could create havoc. Many times plans have been discovered like this, plans to wreak havoc in Nicaragua.

For example, two or three years ago for the July celebration, a group of people were detained because they were in possession of dynamite and planned to blow up the platform where the authorities were going to be. When that kind of thing is compounded by an army helping from the outside, it's a very difficult situation.

As an individual I have a comment to make. At the moment it is being openly discussed in the Netherlands for example, about placing missiles in this country — the most destructive weapons in the world. And this in a situation in which Holland is not at war. If you compared it to Nicaragua, it would be as if Holland had 150,000 armed men inside its territory, hitting economic targets and killing people. Even this comparison would not be exact because the society in Holland is completely different — it's an organised society. Ours is a very poor country, and we are, for the first time, trying to be free and independent.

The level of culture and preparation in Nicaragua is very limited. People have been kept in ignorance for centuries. Even then, the comparison would not be exact. But to try to compare the Netherlands at peace with Nicaragua at war — it's out of proportion.

*Q. Yes, but the reason that people on the left want to know more is because they are fearful that things may happen in Nicaragua like they happened before in Russia. That is why people are concerned at what is taking place in Nicaragua.*

A. If we were looking for excuses to have a totalitarian state in Nicaragua, I think the excuses were given a long time ago. The war against Nicaragua started the day Reagan assumed the presidency. There have been plenty of excuses.

It has to be pointed out that under these restrictions normal life will continue in Nicaragua. These measures do not change the day-to-day life. All they do is give the government the legal capacity to take important measures immediately without going through a lot of red tape, in this emergency situation.

*Q. Can you explain more clearly what is behind the restrictions on the right to strike? What about in factories still owned by the private sector for example. How will it work?*

A. We are fighting for survival. It is normal that we cannot permit

## The international reaction

DANIEL Ortega, elected president of Nicaragua by an overwhelming majority in August 1984, declared a state of emergency on October 15. The response from the big capitalist press in the major imperialist countries was an outcry that the Sandinistas had started down the slide to totalitarianism.

In its October 17 issue *Liberation*, the French daily, for example, carried a commentary by Christian Martin that argued: "In fact the ideal of the Sandinistas has never been a democracy of the Western type. Cuba remains their model. The Managua leaders have barely concealed that they held elections a year ago to please their European friends more than out of democratic convictions. Since the elections did not discourage US aggression, the people in Managua wonder the game was worth a candle. Why continue on the democratic path if there are no dividends?"

The central underpinning of this argument is absurd, that is Martin's claim that the Sandinistas were foolish enough to think that formally correct elections would stay the hand of the CIA. No one in Latin America believes that after the coup in Chile, least of all the Sandinistas, who could have hardly won power in the first place if they were so naive.

Nicaraguan Minister of the Interior Tomas Borge answered questions about public and religious freedoms after the declaration of emergency in the October 26 *El Pais*. Among other things, he said, "I want to stress that the people's liberties have not been restricted. We have freedom to meet, to whatever leisure activities we want, to work, to express ideas and criticisms, absolute religious freedom, freedom even for sectors that oppose the revolution, who have not been subjected to any limitations beyond those established by the emergency law, which requires prior authorization to carry out political activities.

"But the rather Manichean notion has been created that the emergency limits the freedoms of the people. Of course, that would mean colling the support of the people. But to the contrary, the emergency has been broadly supported by the people. It in

no way limits the freedoms of the people but is rather a shield protecting them."

Borge was asked specifically whether the government intended to do anything against the counter-revolutionary head of the Church, whom he compared to Reagan. He answered:

"In our country, where priests have traditionally been respected, no priest has ever been arrested by the revolution. We have tried to neutralize the political activity of Monsignor Miguel Obando on the level of ideas and ideology ... I see no possibility that he will be restricted in his movements or his liberty."

In fact a state of emergency was declared in 1982 and renewed every six months up to the time of the August 1984 elections, when it was suspended. It was the same decree that was reinstated on October 15.

In a statement on October 22, the Paris Comite de Solidarite avec le Nicaragua summed up the provisions as follows:

"1. Suspension of Habeas Corpus (permitting arrests without proof and the right to a lawyer), limited to crimes against state security ... This measure is designed to prevent communication with support networks outside the country.

"2. Restriction of the right to travel about in the war zones and where the harvest is being collected.

"3. Demonstrations, rallies, and strikes are banned without prior authorization.

"4. Prior censorship of the press."

The Committee noted that many people visited Nicaragua in 1982-84, when the emergency was in force before and testified to wide margins of liberty. But there is no question that great pressures are being brought on Nicaragua and that today problems of all sorts are growing. The conclusion of the Committee was: "We do not have to approve these measures. We are for freedoms. But we think that the best way to defend them ... is to stop the aggression against Nicaragua and assure it the means for survival. That is why the campaign to assure the survival of Nicaragua is more important than ever."

action that would close down certain industries that are necessary for the survival of the country. In Nicaragua, everything is lacking. When you talk about closing down a factory that manufactures shoes, that means that people can't wear shoes. The demands of workers, of course, can still be discussed but the right to strike means that you can close an industry down, and that right at this moment is not permitted.

*Q. Have there been a lot of strikes?*

A. No, there haven't been many. But, as I was saying, it's not because at this moment a strike is going on that we want to stop. At this moment what we want to do is to legally ban, and a strike is only one thing that could happen, any possibility of this occurring at this moment, in this situation.

*Q. But surely the right to strike is one of the most basic rights that workers have?*

A. Certainly, and we see that as true in Nicaragua. Since the revolution, the number of unions has increased by a hundredfold in Nicaragua and this points to the fact that the government is aware of that. But you have never been in a war. These are not normal measures. The normal way of things is for strikes to be permitted and people to be able to publish whatever they want.

*Q. The right to publish was already restricted. Will it be more restricted now?*

A. Yes.

*Q. In other words, then, you see these measures as contrary to the Sandinista strategy to mobilise the people? Do you think they will have a negative effect?*

A. Well, the grass-roots organisations in Nicaragua will continue and the reports that we have been getting from the organisations in Nicaragua points to the fact that people are aware of the situation. Nobody wants these emergency laws, but people know that it is necessary.

*Q. You mentioned that there was a kind of three-pronged attack — the Church, the military and the political right.*

A. Yes, well the political right is represented by businessmen in COSEP. It is very easy when you own factories and there is a private industry in Nicaragua, and it is easy for the owners to disrupt the economy. An important sector of the economy is still in private hands in Nicaragua.

*Q. Wasn't it to be expected that at some time or another there would*



*Daniel Ortega in the crowds (DR)*

*develop a conflict with the private owners?*

A. Yes, but it is something that we had tried to avoid because we feel that in Nicaragua we have to continue with the principles of the mixed economy, with which we started the revolution. A lot of facilities and help has been given to the private sector. But obviously there are special interest groups within this sector who want the privileged situation in which they found themselves under Somoza.

*Q. Are there links between these groups and the contras?*

A. At this moment I can't talk about links. The only thing I could tell you is that there is a coincidence of declarations and a coincidence of activity, whatever that implies, you have to draw your own conclusions. When Reagan says something about something that would be good for Nicaragua, this is repeated inside certain circles, and then most of that speech is carried out.

*Q. You spoke of certain groups to the left who are in opposition?*

A. As I said there are groups in Nicaragua that feel that the political project of the revolution has not gone far enough. They feel that the fact of the situation that Nicaragua is in at the moment, the impossibility of reaching an agreement with the Reagan administration that would let Nicaragua, and its political project survive, they feel that all this points to the fact that the maintenance of the original project of the revolution is leading nowhere and that Nicaragua should go out for a total revolution. There are different ideas of what that means. This even happened earlier on in the revolution, we had certain groups that felt that the revolution should go further than it

had gone. But some of these elements are now part of the Nicaraguan parliament.

*Q. What kind of measures will be taken against them?*

A. Well, yes we do have to discuss with them. No, they are not the same as the first three groups I mentioned. Let me give you an example. I mentioned that at the beginning of the revolution we had problems of this nature. At that moment the actual fighting, the actual war had not started. There were obviously groups of right-wing businessmen who felt that by its very nature the revolution was going too far and there were others who felt that the revolution should go farther. This was in late 1979, early 1980. Some of the businessmen were jailed and so were some people from these other groups. Of course, the press only picked up on the fact that businessmen had been jailed. But the fact is that the law has to be applied to everybody. This in itself is revolutionary, because the law has never been applied to businessmen before.

*Q. Does that mean to say that these left groups also have plans to bomb etc.?*

A. Not necessarily. I don't have the police information or whatever on what exactly the plans were. But if anyone were to start a strike at this moment, the government has the legal possibility of saying 'no, you can't go on strike', or, 'no, you cannot have a rally somewhere.' If you read the reports of human rights organisations three years ago, when these measures were in effect, nobody can say that even under those strict emergency laws that anything like killings or torture happened in Nicaragua, never. People were detained and set free. □

# The rebuilding of the mass workers struggles

A TRADE-UNION movement independent of the dictatorship and the bourgeois parties is in the process of organizing itself in El Salvador, uniting its forces to mobilize the workers in defense of their economic and democratic demands. This movement for immediate demands is being sharpened by the economic crisis and the dictatorship's policy.

The following interview is an exceptional testimony to the recomposition of the Salvadoran union movement. It was given on July 31 to Pascal Rene, a West European solidarity movement activist, by four leaders of the Workers Solidarity Coordinating Committee (CST), which organizes workers in the private sector and is actively involved in the May 1 Committee.

The Salvadoran urban mass movement had its best days at the time of the gigantic mobilizations in 1980. Since the relative failure of the general offensive by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), the regime and its armed forces were able to impose a reign of terror on the cities. For nearly two years, the trade-union movement was forced to retreat almost entirely into underground and conspiratorial work. It was very hard hit by the repression.

A number of trade-union activists and leaders were arrested, murdered by military commandos, or fired. The union headquarters were destroyed. The mass fronts of the revolutionary organizations disappeared in the cities, which were in the grip of the dictatorship, as the confrontation took on the dimensions of a civil war.

The shift in the relationship of forces in the main urban zones made trade-union activity extremely difficult. While the repression made it impossible for the revolutionary-led unions to have any public presence, the Christian Democracy (DC) tried to take advantage of the situation to build a social base through the People's Democratic Union (UPD) and the unions under its control.

The revival of the union movement over the year 1983 was the result of a long and difficult struggle to survive and rebuild the union structures. Little by little, links were reknitted between union activists, and the number of strikes grew. This gave rise to a recomposition of the trade-union movement

and to rich experiences of working-class unity in action.

Throughout this period, innocent occasions — festivals or trips to the sea shore — were utilized to maintain a minimum trade-union activity, to organize meetings. It was also necessary to hide hunted union leaders and protect their families.

Of course, those times are not entirely over, but today the trade-union movement has regained an accepted place. Meetings, congresses, street demonstrations, and strikes are developing despite the repression. Important breaches are opening up in the DC's control of the mass movement. The FENASTRAS congress November 7-8 will be another important test of the movement's ability to work openly. (*Messages of support can be sent to the Union at Avenida 29 de Agosto, Plaza Barrios No. 29, San Salvador.*)

\* \* \*

*Question. We know that the mass movement in El Salvador has undergone a certain reactivation, but we do not have precise information. In particular, we are unfamiliar with the present configuration of the movement and the process of unification that is underway. Could you tell us about that?*

*Answer.* Starting in 1979 and even before, there was a formidable mass movement that gave expression to the unity, or more exactly, to the militancy of the working class, which demonstrated in the streets and struck fear

into the regime. In reaction, a coup d'etat by the younger military officers overthrew the regime of General Carlos Humberto Romero on October 15, 1979.

In 1979-1980, organized by unions, neighborhood committees, and a series of other structures, the people's struggle continued. The regime decided, then, to launch a repression, which by October 15, 1979, had resulted in the deaths of 60,000 people, murdered and "missing."

The union headquarters were sacked and destroyed, the union leaders were jailed, murdered, "disappeared," or were assassinated.

Massacres were carried out during demonstrations, as in the case of the march organized by the Mass Revolutionary Coordinating Committee in which more than 500,000 people participated on January 22, 1980.

In those days, there were searches every night in the neighborhoods, people disappeared or were murdered by death squads or by the army. These conditions pushed the workers into retreat.

Starting in 1981, there was a retreat by the trade-union movement in the face of this repression and the climate of psychological warfare created, for example by appeals for people to inform. Thus in 1982 and at the beginning of 1983, the people were terrorized by the violence of the government and the regime.

However, the more and more desperate economic crisis, ruinously low wages, and underemployment drove the working class back into struggle. So, in February 1983 there was what we call the beginning of the reactivation of the mass movement. A series of strikes broke out. Unions arose and entered into struggle for their own demands.

It should be pointed out that the repression had reached such a degree that the leaderships of many unions were no longer in the workplaces. But the solid organizations never gave up the struggle. Their leaders did not retreat, but their methods of action changed.

The regime's intention was to drive the union movement underground in order to justify the repression. But we refused to give way to that. We stood up in front of the TV cameras, the press, and even the security bodies. We blocked this tactic by the regime.

Then, in 1983, we set the objective of celebrating May Day by holding a mass rally in a union headquarters. We held a national assembly in which delegates from the various federations were present. In this way, we managed to end the retreat. We invited the national and interna-

tional press. On May 1, at 6.00 am, two hours before the rally was scheduled to start, the security forces cordoned off the union headquarters. But the people came in despite that.

However, it was in 1984 that the reactivation really got underway. In 1983, there were strikes, to be sure, but very few. In the small strike wave of February 1983, which signaled the revival of the mass movement, there was the struggle of the General Union of Bank Workers (SIGEBAN), the People's Credit Bank workers, the workers of the National Association of Aqueducts and Water Mains (ANDA), and those by workers at other enterprises.

Among ourselves, we said that February had been the most important month thanks to these struggles. In 1984, we decided to go back onto the streets. On May 1, we responded to the call of the United Trade-Union Movement of El Salvador (MUSYGES), a group made up of representative trade-union organizations. However, the government portrayed it as an appendage of the FMLN.

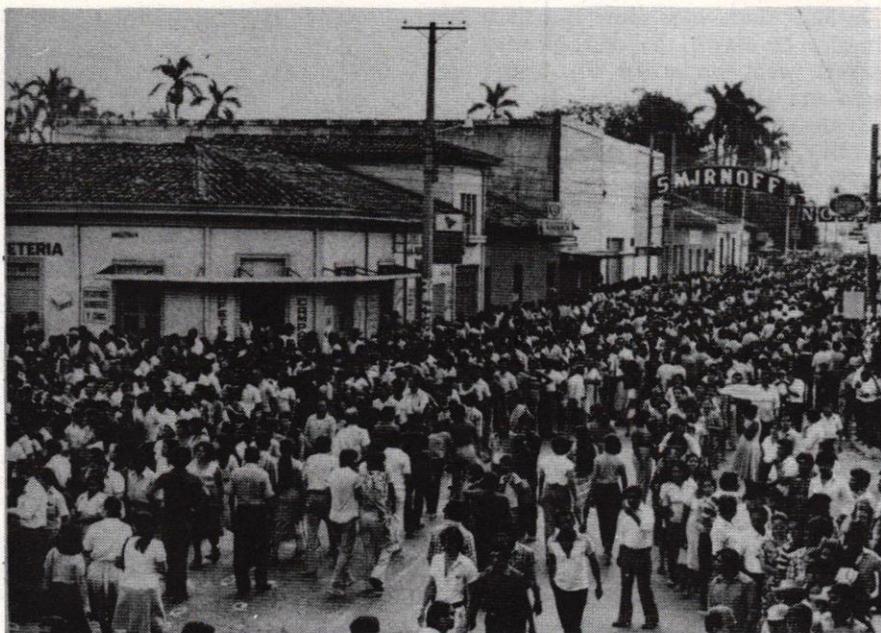
Then, on September 15, 1984, we went onto the streets again. At that time a major strike was underway, the action by the International Sports Club (CDI), which lasted for more than a hundred days. This strike served as sort of a lever for beginning to build a new united organization, the Workers Solidarity Coordinating Committee (CST).

How did that happen? The CDI is a service business. So, shutting it down could not deal severe blows to the oligarchy, because what they spent on it was to serve their amusement, not their productive investments. While the CDI was on strike, the members of the oligarchy could simply go to the Hotel Sheraton for a drink or go swimming in other clubs.

Therefore, a number of unions met to study how they could help their brothers and sisters. So, as the weeks went on, through discussions, information campaigns and economic aid, work stoppages in solidarity, visits to the cathedral, to the presidential palace, etc., the CST was born.

Today, this coordinating body embraces about thirty unions. So, on September 15, 1984, we demonstrated in particular to win the release of the leaders of the Electrical Workers Union (STECCEL) (1) and other political and trade-union prisoners. On November 5, we went onto the streets again to demand the continuation of the dialogue between the FMLN and the government.

In this connection, it is necessary to make a bit of a detour to explain how the rulers operate. The



On the outskirts of San Salvador, the day of the March 1982 elections (DR)

demonstration in question was called by the MUSYGES with sufficient time to build it. But the day before it was to be held, a communique supposedly signed by the MUSYGES appeared saying that the action had been called off. This was a maneuver by the Armed Forces Press Committee (COPREFA).

Despite everything, the march took place. It drew greater participation than on the previous occasions, because, little by little, fear was diminishing. Of course, the fear of the workers, who had seen their parents, wives, and children murdered in the street, was not going to disappear overnight. But the economic crisis and want kept bringing us back onto the streets. So, we consider that 1984 was really the year when the movement became reactivated.

In 1985, the workers are already surer of themselves, more conscious of the role they have to play. A series of struggles have taken place, and a process of unification is underway. Already, on December 29, 1984, the CST had taken its first steps in the street, with a demonstration marching to the presidential palace, where we presented Duarte with a list of demands concerning several disputes that we wanted to resolve.

On March 24, at the same time as the Mothers Committee, we commemorated the death of Monsignor Romero. Then in April, the organizations already mentioned formed the Committee To Celebrate May 1. On April 17, we called the media to a press conference to announce the demonstration. On April 29, we called a second press conference, to confirm that the demonstration was going ahead. On this occasion, teams came from TV Channels eight and 19, which belong to the Ministry

of Education but seem to be more in the service of the Christian Democracy than the ministry.

That evening, these two channels and other private ones presented excerpts from our news conference, interspersed with statements by a captured guerrilla, Miguel Castellanos (2), who said that all the union federations, the FUSS, FESTIAVCES, FENASTRAS (3) were appendages of the FMLN.

This maneuver was designed to undermine the mobilization, but it failed. We brought out 40,000 workers. Some comrades even said that there were 50,000. We were in the streets alongside teachers from the National Association of Teachers of El Salvador (ANDES-June 21), public and municipal workers from the Coordinating Council of Government Workers and Municipal Employees (CCTEM), and peasants.

That is, we achieved the broadest sort of unity. This was a disciplined march in which men, women, and children carried white flags, symbols of peace. Starting at 8.00 am helicopters flew over the route of march to intimidate the participants, but this did not work. The people wanted to knock the helicopters down, they waved their flags. It was a grandiose sign, a triumph.

1. The Electricity workers union, whose general secretary, Hector Bernabe Recinos, and other main leaders were released in November 1984.

2. Miguel Castellanos, commander of the People's Liberation Forces (FPL), one of the components of the FMLN, gave himself up to the armed forces in April 1985.

(3) FUSS — United Trade-Union Federation of El Salvador. TESTIAVCES — Federation of Unions in the Food, and Textiles Industries. It includes eight unions. FENASTRAS — National Trade-Union Federation of Salvadoran Workers.

In May, there were some very hard struggles. On May 6, the social security workers went on strike for higher wages and other union demands. The comrades of the Anda company did the same, as well as the workers at the Martin factory.

In El Triunfo, the conflict at Pesca SA had already been going on for several months. The Ministry of Education workers and those of ANDES-June 21 also presented their demands. However, certain conflicts stood out as more important, and the workers solidarized with the Anda and Social Security struggles.

The Anda workers were the first to conclude their strike, but they signed the protocol of agreement under strong pressure. It was no longer the Ministry of Labor or its representatives that was doing the negotiating but the national police in the person of its chief, Colonel Rubio. That gives you an idea of who decides things here.

Despite everything, even though the workers were under pressure from the military, they got a raise. Moreover, in signing the accord they broke in practice with Decree 296, which prohibits strikes by employees in the public sector, and with the decree establishing the state of siege. They also managed to get the reinstatement of 45 Anda activists who had been fired during the struggle.

So, this conflict ended, but the Social Security struggle and several others continued. The Social Security workers demonstrated great solidarity, striking for four to eight hours at least two or three times a week. On June 3, several police were killed in an assault on the Social Security General Hospital.

In fact, while helicopter-borne troops landed on the roof, dressed in black and wearing hoods, other troops came in the emergency doors in civilian clothing, before taking out their guns. At the same time, the electricity was cut off. With this adding to the confusion, a crossfire started, resulting in the deaths of four police in civilian clothes. The general secretary of the union, Guillermo Rojas, and another leader were arrested.

In order to block the demonstration scheduled to head the next day for the legislative Assembly, the COPREFA and the government announced that the march had been banned, and that the demonstrators would be dealt with on the basis of the decree that established the state of siege. For three quarters of an hour, the TV stations broadcast announcements threatening those who might take part. There was the same thing on the radio every ten to 15 minutes. In the papers, whole pages



Workers at Radio Venceremos somewhere inside El Salvador (DR)

were given over to announcements of the ban on the demonstration.

On that day, the response of the people was heroic. Despite all the threats, more than 15,000 workers demonstrated, ready to face whatever came. Despite the security cordons, the people were there. On the same day, 22 unions went on strike in solidarity. Around the rally in front of the Assembly, the soldiers set up very tight barriers. But instead of being afraid, the people shouted: "Decent soldiers, your place is with the people!" These struggles and these strikes made it possible to win the release of our two comrades.

So, in May, every three days on the average, there were activities. On May 20, for example, the comrades at the Labels and Elastics Factory went on strike. There were three demonstrations for the Social Security conflict. Then the Anda struggle flared up again, because the agreement was not respected, in particular as regards the ouster of corrupted officials. Some of the latter were only shifted to other posts. The raises were only given selectively, to the Christian Democracy's people. The attitude of Perdomo, the head of Anda, hardened. The workers went on strike again to get him thrown out as a corrupt and repressive manager.

As regards the conflict at Labels and Elastics, it ended in a victory after 37 days on strike. The workers got 65% of pay for the hours they lost in the strike, small wage increases, and other benefits. But the greatest victory is that now these workers are supporting the activities of the CST, and, for example, two days after they went back to work, they came out onto the streets again in solidarity.

On June 20, the May 1 Committee organized a national assembly, at which there were 65 delegations from

various unions and associations. We had reserved the hall of the National Charity Lottery. At the start of the proceedings, the president of the lottery association was called to a ministerial meeting by President Duarte. He was ordered to halt the assembly. He came back and tried to stop the meeting on the pretext that there was no authorization for it.

His attitude got people heated up. They told him a thing or two, and stayed put. He threatened to clear out the entire building, to open up the way for the forces of order to come in. But on the other side of the street were the Anda workers supporting the assembly. Then, he took up a megaphone. But ours was more powerful, so he had to let the meeting go on.

We had drawn up a national list of demands — a 100% raise for all, no increase in the fares on public transport, nonpayment of agricultural debts for the peasants, a budget for the national university, and the release of all the trade-union and political prisoners. This list, including the demands of all sections of workers, was presented to the Legislative Assembly. A response was to follow in two weeks.

As regards Perdomo, the head of Anda, the Legislative Assembly promised to summon him, because the Anda workers had presented proof of his corruption. For example, it was shown that he had bought a picture he presented to Duarte with Anda money. Today, we know that Perdomo did not appear. And the fact that the Assembly accepted this is a way of backing him.

In fact, the ouster of Perdomo would be an encouragement to the Ministry of Education workers to demand the removal of their minister, Buendia Flores. It would arouse

the fury of all the top functionaries who have had their snouts in the pork barrel. The people haven't seen any of the economic aid that El Salvador has been given. It all goes to the army or into the pockets of the Christian Democratic high and mighty, the coffee growing oligarchy, etc.

*Q. We have talked mainly about the capital. But what is happening in the other cities?*

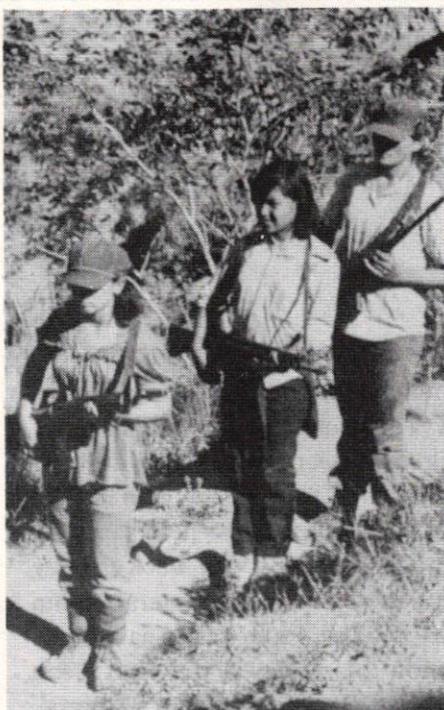
*A.* In fact, the country's main industrial concentration is in San Salvador. So, it is there that we have seen the biggest growth in the strength of the trade-union forces. However, in the interior departments, in the cities there, there are also industries and organized workers.

In the western part of the country, in the cities of Santa Ana, Sonsonate, and Ahuachapan, there is a united body called the Western Committee of Workers Affiliated to the ISS (COTAISS). This structure was created to win an improvement in social benefits. But its aims were subsequently broadened.

In Santa Ana, there is also the Association of City-Hall Workers (ATRANSA), which has fought hard struggles and won victory on certain demands. Here the contradictions between the National Republican Alliance [ARENA, the extreme rightist party led by the sinister Major d' Aubuisson] and the Christian Democracy have come out into the open. ARENA holds the city government, and the Christian Democracy controls the Ministry of the Interior. So, the workers have not been getting their wages, and each authority has blamed the other. Through their struggles, the workers have gotten their wages paid.

In Sonsonate, there are other unions, such as the one at the Salud Creamery and in transport. In the banks, such as the Salvadoran Bank, the Credit Bank, and others, SIGEBAN has locals that are affiliated to the COTAISS. In Ahuachapan, there is also a union in the Salvamiel enterprise. In the eastern part of the country, there are several unions, one is the fishing industry, one on the docks, and others.

At the end of 1984, the third legal strike in our country took place. It was led by the comrades in the Multipesca enterprise in La Union. The comrades at Pesca in El Triunfo have been on strike since January 1985. This strike has affected the economy of the port. It was not simply a concern of the company involved but of the entire locality, because the port is the motive force in the local economy. On several occasions, these comrades have come to the capital, to the Ministry of Labor. Also, several



*FMLN fighters (DR)*

deputies have gone to El Triunfo. But no solution has been reached.

There is also the union in the coffee industry, which has sections in Berlin, Santiago de Maria, etc. So, the trade-union movement is also growing in the eastern part of the country, but that is a war zone, and so the features are different. For this reason, the struggle in La Union was a legal strike. The legal authorization lasted almost a year.

In San Salvador also, workers and trade-union leaders operate legally. We go to the Ministry of Labor to discuss a legal framework, but we are also aware that the whole thing is rigged against us, and after a certain point we put legality aside, and the workers go on strike even if their action is illegal.

In conclusion, it can be said that the trade-union movement is present throughout the country, in the eastern and western regions as well as in San Salvador.

*Q. Is the mass movement influenced by the People's Democratic Union (UPD) still important?*

*A.* The social base of the Christian Democracy is beginning to break up. Its main forces are in the UPD, which includes the majority of the unions and associations under the influence of the DC. The first split produced the General Workers Union (CGT), and a second gave rise to the Democratic Workers Confederation (CTD).

At present, the CTD gets its funds and its orientations from the Institute for Free Trade Unionism [IFTU]. It seems that the US embassy is trying to raid the DC's base so that it can

have an alternative when the DC is no longer useful to Reagan. Apparently the DC has become aware of this maneuver, and is trying to wrest its base away from the IFTU.

The UPD belongs to the Latin-American Confederation of Labor (CLAT), which is Christian Democratic in orientation. Its social base is eroding, in particular because the UPD has signed a social pact with the DC, and its leaders are fighting over government posts. For example, on June 20, the UPD had scheduled a peasant march, but it did not bring out anybody because of its lack of organizational capacities. The leaders are, moreover, in conflict with their base, who advocate a refusal to pay farm debts. The leaders say that they have to be paid!

As regards the Agricultural Development Bank, while the peasants in the part of the rural economy affected by the agrarian reform, as well as in the part not under the reform, are demanding more credits, the leaders, who, moreover control these funds, argue that the Bank does not have the means. And on June 20 also, we held a national assembly of the May 1 Committee, and the university mobilized en masse to demand the adoption of a university budget.

*Q. What relations do you have with the various sections of the UPD?*

*A.* We have relations with the Confederation of Salvadoran Workers (CTS), which was present at the June 20 assembly when the list of demands was approved. With the leaderships of the UPD themselves, our relations are not very well developed, because this confederation is too closely linked to the DC. In practice, the ranks of the UPD are discontented, because even the social pact signed with the Christian Democracy has not been respected in practice.

We also have certain contacts with the Federation of Building Trades and Transport (FESINCONSTRANS). During the Social Security struggle, the CTS and FESINCONSTRANS came out against the military intervention. After they issued their communique, the leaders of the latter organization were called to order. We hope, however, that we can get united actions with them, whatever political current they attach themselves to, because our concern is the interests of the workers and not of the politicians. We have already moved closer to them in some respects. But we are still in the stage of testing the ground. Sometimes they help us with a communique, sometimes they reject us. The process of unification has only begun. □

## Despite defeat miners resist

**EIGHT MONTHS** after the end of their historic strike British miners are still counting the cost of defeat. The workforce which stood at 172,000 at the beginning of the strike has been reduced by 16,000. Important motions were passed by both the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress (TUC) demanding a future Labour government review all the cases of miners imprisoned and sacked, and pay back money taken from the miners union. But today six hundred miners remain victimised for their trade union activities and sixty are in jail. Most importantly of all the National Union of Mineworkers has been split by the establishment of the 'Union of Democratic Mineworkers'. The split, which has been fully backed by the coal industry employers, is not only a deadly threat to the NUM, but to the unity of the British working class movement as a whole.

### STEVE ROBERTS

Since the end of the strike the National Coal Board (NCB) has pushed home its attacks relentlessly, announcing its intention to close 29 pits with the loss of 10 million tonnes of production and 23,000 redundancies. Pit mergers will probably mean the loss of a further 1,500,000 tonnes of capacity. These measures are approximately treble the reduction in production announced at the beginning of the strike in March 1984.

But Andrew Glyn, an economist who has been advising rank and file miners on fighting closure, says that it would be a big mistake to conclude that if these closures are accepted by the miners the industry would stabilise. Writing in the *Militant* newspaper, Glyn predicts that the closures and productivity drives in the pits could have the effect of reducing the number of miners from 180,000 before the strike to 115,000 in early 1987. Glyn thinks that this is only the first step towards a rationalised industry which earns sufficient profits to make it a tempting target for the privatisation drive of the Thatcher government.

Huge profits have been made for City of London financiers through the sale of government holdings in telecommunications and through future sales of British Airways and the nationalised gas and water industries. On October 30 the government

announced further sales of state assets in an effort to meet a decline in North Sea oil revenues and overruns in public expenditure.

But Glyn argues that the government's arguments for pit closures take no account of the costs of unemployment in terms of benefit payments and taxes lost. 'To close sixty pits would cost the government some £900 per year,' he argues, 'two and a half times the "subsidy" required to keep them open.'

Of course the government's considerations are not only economic. Central to their efforts is the need to destroy the national Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the left wing leadership of its president Arthur Scargill.

A series of trials since the end of the strike have attempted to add to the total of sixty miners who are in jail for sentences ranging up to life imprisonment. In most cases these trials have ended in acquittals as fabricated police evidence has disintegrated, such as those connected with the mass picketing of the Orgreave coke depot in May 1984. But two miners, Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland, were tried and found guilty of murder after the accidental death of a taxi-driver who was driving scabs to work. Subsequently the charges have been changed to manslaughter and their

sentences reduced. The aim of these trials is to attempt to smash the combativity of the predominantly young pickets and union activists who form the most important part of Scargill's base in the union.

But the most major threat now facing the union challenges its very existence. On October 19 miners in Nottinghamshire and South Derbyshire voted to break away from the NUM. In Nottinghamshire the result was 17,750 votes for the breakaway Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM) with 6,792 against. In South Derbyshire 1,286 voted to break away and 1,260 voted against. In the Durham area a further smaller group of workers voted by 90% to join the breakaway. The 72% vote in the Nottingham area contradicted the estimates of NUM leaders who had predicted a close result, although the margin was the same as that during the strike. However in Leicestershire miners rejected affiliation to the UDM.

But despite the Leicestershire result the UDM does not intend to confine itself to local areas. Their project is to build an alternative to the NUM. This became clearer after miners at the Agecroft pit in Lancashire voted by 325-190 to leave the National Union. Agecroft was another pit where production continued during the strike. Similar ballots are due in other pits.

The new scab 'union' has the full support of the NCB. On the eve of the Nottinghamshire ballot the employers offered the UDM a preferential wage deal in advance of the NUM claim. The UDM has declared itself in favour of the incentives scheme promoted by the Coal Board which gives rewards to pits with high productivity. The scheme, opposed by the NUM, has meant an increase of accidents in the pits as miners chase production as well as a heightening of the divisions between areas with different geological conditions for the mining of coal. Two days after the ballot the employers withdrew recognition from the NUM in the area along with all its hard fought rights to organise in the Nottinghamshire pits.

Responding to the ballot result Scargill said: 'The decision by the Nottinghamshire and South Derbyshire miners will prove disastrous, I call on all miners to stay with the national union. It is the only way that we can prevent pit closures and job losses while protecting wages and conditions.' The NUM president refused to call the UDM a union, calling it only a 'breakaway organisation'.

Scargill also called for the entire trade union movement to boycott the UDM and on the Labour Party

to refuse membership to any MP or councillor who joined it. For their part the UDM have said that they want to affiliate to the TUC and to the Labour Party.

For the TUC the UDM poses an acute dilemma. It was the TUC who played the major role in bringing about the defeat of the NUM, refusing to bring pressure on the power unions to support the strike by refusing scab coal or alternative energy supplies to the electricity generating stations. The TUC bureaucrats have made no secret of their intense hostility to Scargill and the militant alternative strategy he offers in contrast to their own collaboration with the bosses and government. At the same time they fear that recognition of the UDM could spark similar movements at the base of their own unions.

If on the other hand the TUC refuses the UDM affiliation rights this could increase the dynamic towards a split in the TUC itself. At the TUC conference of September a major crisis erupted when a number of unions declared that they were going to continue their policy of breaking TUC policy and accept government money offered to unions who conducted postal ballots on their internal affairs.

### Neil Kinnock's dilemma

Electricians' union leader Eric Hammond, the leader of the 'new realist' right inside the TUC, threatened to establish an alternative to the TUC if unions like his own were expelled from the confederation. Already the UDM is linked to the right wing of the TUC through the Mainstream group of trade unionists. The TUC leaders fear that the UDM could be an important part of an alternative confederation to their own.

If anything Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock faces an even sharper problem. Kinnock used the October Labour Party conference as a platform to launch a massive attack on Scargill in a speech that was widely acclaimed by the media, despite the Party conference going on to back the NUM over the issue of a future Labour government reimbursing the union for the fines and costs it incurred in the courts during the strike and reviewing the cases of sacked and imprisoned miners. The speech marked the culminating point of a turn to the right by the Kinnock leadership, originally elected with left credentials.

No union can affiliate to the Labour Party unless it is affiliated to the TUC. But the seats in the Nottingham area are extremely margi-

## Miners amnesty campaign

FOLLOWING the pledge by this year's Labour Party and TUC conferences to support miners sacked or imprisoned during the miners' strike, the campaign for amnesty has been given a new boost. A fringe meeting at Labour Party conference was organised jointly by the Campaign Group of left wing MPs, the journal *Trade Union Briefing* with the support of the NUM itself.

The aims of the campaign are —

— To support the NUM resolutions to the recent TUC and Labour Party conference.

— To raise support for the sacked and imprisoned miners and raise funds for the NUM's National Solidarity Fund

— To publicise the Amnesty Bill (introduced by the Campaign Group of MPs).

Sponsors of the campaign include Ray Buckton, general secretary of the train drivers union, ASLEF; Jimmy Knapp secretary of the railworkers union, the NUR; Phil Davis, president of FTAT, the furniture workers union; Alan Sapper of the ACTT, media workers; MPs Jeremy Corbyn, Bob Cryer, Joan Maynard, Clare Short, Dennis Skinner, Tony Benn; and many others.

For more details about the campaign and what is being asked from international supporters write to; - 49 Milner Square, London N.1. [Monies to Miners Solidarity Fund, St James House Vicar Lane, Sheffield].

nal ones and could be decisive in the general election scheduled for 1987. Already two Labour MPs (Members of Parliament) with seats in the area have declared their support for the UDM. So Kinnock is desperate to come to an understanding with the Nottinghamshire miners without upsetting his TUC backers.

The solution agreed on by the TUC and Kinnock is an attempt to bring the NUM and UDM into a single federation. However this course would certainly be rejected by Scargill who would correctly see it as a virtual dismembering of the national union. Neither is it clear that Nottinghamshire UDM leader Roy Lynk is willing to do anything that interferes with his stated goal of establishing an alternative to the NUM.

The NUM is fighting back against the breakaway union at the rank and file level. In Nottingham 4,000 of the 7,000 miners who voted against the scab union have pledged themselves to remaining members of the NUM. Branches of the NUM are being organised at every pit. A similar organisation called the 'Spencer union' was established after the defeat of the miners in 1926. It took 11 years to smash Spencer and restore a single national union for all coal face workers. Few NUM loyalists believe that the UDM will be easier to defeat than Spencer.

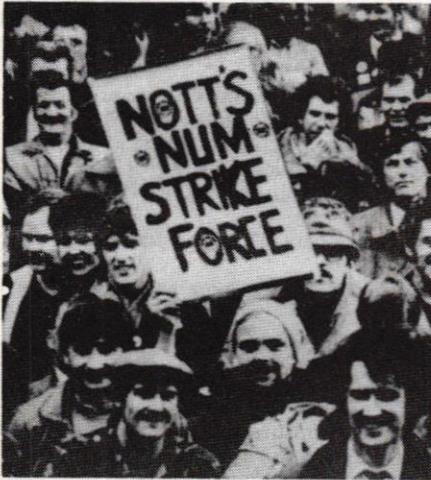
Scargill has remained intransigent in the face of these attacks. However the same cannot be said for the majority of his executive or most of the powerful area leaderships of the union, many of which are dominated by the Communist Party. Since the strike several of these leaders have attacked Scargill for his conduct of the dispute, most notably for his refusal to hold a ballot and his encouragement of mass picketing.

Until very recently Scargill has been able to defeat his critics and continue to determine the policy of

the union. A significant exception to this pattern came with the decision of the NUM executive to apologise for its conduct during the dispute in order to regain control of funds seized by the courts during the strike. The decision was the product of an alliance between 'left wing' leaders of the Welsh and Scottish areas along with 'moderates' on the executive. The new majority in the NUM NEC marked a victory for the pressure that Kinnock and the TUC leaders have been urging on the union. The long term significance of the new alliance is not yet clear. In a special delegate conference held in London on October 28 the day after the executive meeting, the union decided to call a demonstration outside parliament to call for the reinstatement of the 615 miners who remained sacked.

But the lack of determination shown by the area leaderships on the executive has also extended to a failure to fight over pit closures. While a number of pits have accepted closure since the end of the strike, including Cortonwood where the national strike started in March 1984, others are fighting back. St. John's in South Wales, Tilmanstone in Kent, Bates in Northumberland, Horden in County Durham, Darfield Main in Yorkshire and Bold in Lancashire are among those who have so far rejected the alternate financial threats and inducements of the NCB and referred their pit to appeal procedure.

The fight to build for the necessary action to defeat pit closures after the end of the strike is of course an uphill one. At Bold colliery for example, an action committee has been established to fight the closure, with representatives of all the unions concerned at the pit. Public rallies are planned with speakers from the national union leadership and the Labour Party. Economist Andrew Glyn has drawn up reports showing



These miners will fight to keep a national union (DR)

the social costs of closure for St John's pit; a similar survey will be conducted by Bold.

But in the face of the defections to the UDM in Lancashire, such as that of the nearby Agecroft colliery and the weak response of the area leadership, area wide and national organisation has already been necessary. Representatives of Bold pit have visited other pits faced with closure. And in the area itself a rank and file paper *Lancashire Miner* has been able to organise militants from other pits around it. The paper has been campaigning on the twin themes of unity and amnesty — unity against any attempt to introduce the UDM into Lancashire, amnesty for the sacked and imprisoned miners like *Lancashire Miner* editor Dennis Pennington. (see page 14). The paper attracts between 25-30 militants to its monthly meetings as well as representatives from the still active Women Against Pit closures group.

Another national focus for the fightback has come with the launching of the Miners Amnesty Campaign by the Campaign Group of MPs supported by the NUM. The Campaign Group is a group of forty Labour MPs including Tony Benn, who split from the traditional left wing Tribune group after its solid support for Neil Kinnock's leadership. With only a few exceptions the Campaign Group took the side of the NUM in the bitter clashes that have occurred between Kinnock and Scargill. The MPs have proposed a parliamentary measure that would amnesty all the sacked miners. But their challenge to Kinnock's leadership goes wider than this including publishing other bills calling for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, on democratic rights and social policy.

The political consequences of the miners' strike are now becoming more evident. The defeat of the miners was not a victory for the government. On the contrary since

the beginning of 1985 the popularity of the Thatcher government has been in more or less continuous political crisis. Discontent with the state of the economy has expressed itself in a deeply pessimistic report of the House of Lords, the second chamber of parliament, which predicted a rapid decline of Britain's economic fortunes after the drying of Britain's oil reserves unless immediate measures were taken to reflate and rebuild Britain's manufacturing capacity. The political consequences of the high rate of unemployment also have placed a serious doubt in many Tory MPs minds as to the possibility of winning the next general election under Thatcher's leadership. Despite mutinous rumblings within the party no serious challenge to Thatcher has yet appeared, nor is it likely to until after the election. Under these conditions it is the SDP/Liberal Alliance who have been the gainers among the bourgeois parties. Most projections from opinion polls now give the Alliance the balance of power in any general election.

Within the Labour movement there is no doubt that the defeat of the miners had a salutary effect on other groups of workers. In particular the rail workers who were widely expected to challenge Thatcher's plan for the rationalisation of the rail system voted narrowly not to fight.

#### Building a class struggle left wing

However it is not the right wing who have made the greatest gains as a result. The fact that many of the rightwing leaders openly expressed their desire for the Tories to defeat the NUM, and actively assisted the Tories in that defeat did not enhance their appeal for many workers who will face similar attacks in the future.

Instead many workers have now put their confidence in returning a Labour government as the only way to halt the attacks of the Tories, and to undo the effects of six years of Thatcher. Consequently the Kinnock leadership of the party has gained immensely since the end of the strike, consolidating its position with its attacks on the left at the last party conference. (See *International Viewpoint* No 85, October 28, 1985).

Kinnock's attempts to make the Labour Party once again trustworthy enough to rule on behalf of capital have undoubtedly made some steps forward, attracting to his side previous supporters of the 'hard left' such as Ken Livingstone, the leader of the Labour majority on the Greater London Council. As a result the

Labour and trade union 'hard left' has undoubtedly shrunk in size.

Neither has the left been helped by the debacle of *Militant* supporters' leadership of the fight of Liverpool City Council with the government which played into the hands of the trade union bureaucrats with its 'tactic' of making 30,000 of the council's employees temporarily redundant.

On the other hand the left has started to clarify itself on a number of issues which will be vital for the debate around the next general election. There is a growing understanding of the necessity of a real assault on the major financial institutions if unemployment in Britain is really to be tackled. The Campaign Group has published a pamphlet by Andrew Glyn *A million jobs a year*, which proposes taking the banks and other finance houses into immediate public ownership as a necessary step towards overcoming 4.5 million on the dole.

Significant too is the fact that the recent Black uprisings in Britain's inner cities found expression in statements by Black people on the Labour left such as Bernie Grant, the Labour leader in Tottenham, the north London suburb in which some of the most serious police-youth clashes took place. Arthur Scargill too took an unambiguous stand when he said at a recent NUM rally in Barnsley, Yorkshire 'The vicious attacks on our Black comrades in Handsworth and Tottenham were the same as those made on our members during the strike.'

As the Communist Party now places its support behind the Kinnock leadership both in its political pronouncements and its activities in the unions it is this Labour left which represents the only credible alternative for workers who want to fight back against the Tories — not only in terms of its size and influence, but also in the growing radicalism of its policies. This is not to argue that it is not possible to build revolutionary organisations outside the Labour Party. The Socialist Workers Party in Britain has managed to maintain many of its members during the Thatcher period — but only at the cost of a growing isolation in the labour movement.

The problem for revolutionary socialists today is how to link up to, and politically and organisationally strengthen the left that despite defections and a certain shrinking of size, still remains the first approximation to a class struggle left wing in the British labour movement.

The defeat of the miners' strike has not changed that task, but on the contrary has underlined its urgency. □

# Scandinavian conference of trade-union fighters

THE FIRST all-Scandinavian conference of militant trade-unionists in the memory of the post-1960 radical generations was held over the weekend of October 26-27 in Goteborg, Sweden's second largest city and industrial center. It was initiated by the trade-union opposition at the Volvo plants in Goteborg, and by a group of forty trade unionists in Denmark. More than two hundred union activists attended. In addition to participants coming from the length and breadth of Sweden, a large group came from Denmark and a smaller one from Norway. Members and sympathizers of the Fourth International predominated, but there were also activists from other organizations, such as the Left Socialists (VS), the Revolutionary Socialists (RS) and the International Socialists (IS) from Denmark and the Workers Power Group (AMG) and the International Socialists from Norway.

## GERRY FOLEY

GOTEBORG, SWEDEN — Reporting on the conference in its October 28 issue, the *Goteborg Post*, one of the largest dailies in the region, quoted Gote Kilden, a leader of the Swedish section of the Fourth International and Volvo trade-union opposition: "One of the ideas of the meeting was to exchange experience with each other, because the normal trade-union channels are so clogged." The Volvo union leader referred to some of the discussions:

"We got information about the struggle that the Danish scaffolding workers are involved in, and this was something that we had not heard about before in Sweden. On the other hand, the Danes did not know anything about the struggle here against asbestos or the cleaners' strike.

"We also learned how people in Norway are pushing the demand for a six-hour day and how people are fighting racism in other countries."

The *Goteborg Post's* account concluded by quoting Kilden on the importance of links among workers throughout the region:

"Today, it's not just Gyllenhammer who's talking about Nordic cooperation. This conference is a first step toward a workers' link in the North, a link that will function to defend jobs and to stop the destruction of the environment." Gyllenhammer is the boss of Volvo and the muscle behind the proposal to build a new highway in the Goteborg region called the "Scandinavian Link." The Volvo union militants are supporting the fight against this project, and the conference offered its facilities to the environmentalist coalition "Motlaenken" (Against the Link) to explain the importance of this struggle.

The traffic in the Goteborg area does not justify a new highway. Furthermore the forests in the area are already threatened by exhaust fumes, among other things.

The "Link" is part of a project to reorganize the road network in Western Europe centering around the industrial heartland of West Germany. The big capitalist combines involved are strong enough even to blackmail national governments.

However, the conference did not discuss only Scandinavian or even West European problems. It was opened by a speech by Kilden on the struggle against austerity and for fighting democratic trade unions. But the second speaker was Jorge Alberto Hernandez from the Salvadoran union federation FENESTRAS, who appealed for support for the struggle of workers in his country.

Representatives from other countries described their struggles and appealed for solidarity. They included Dennis Pennington from the British National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) and a spokesperson from the African National Congress, who, among other things, stressed the working-class dynamic of the struggle in South Africa. A collection was taken up for the NUM, the ANC, and the Danish building workers, as well as for the Swedish cleaners.

A good deal of time was devoted to discussing the experience of the aborted Danish general strike at Easter. Ardan Johansen from the printing workers union in Copenhagen gave a report on it in a plenary session and there was also a workshop on this subject, as well as on the fight for the 35 hour week in Denmark in general.

On Sunday, there were a series of workshops on trade union work in the various industries, in particular mining, steel, and shipbuilding. One workshop was on the ten-year history of the trade union opposition at the Volvo plants in Goteborg. Another was on trade-union work in the social services sector.

Especially the Saturday workshops covered a very wide range of issues. There was one on the problems posed by the new technologies, along with one devoted to the fight against plant closings in crisis-hit industries. A leader in the later discussion was Harry Isaksson, the best known figure from the wildcat strike at the Malmerget iron mine in the far north of Sweden in 1969-70, which first pointed to a new rise of militancy in the Swedish labor movement.

Isaksson personifies long traditions in the Swedish labor movement, and his presence, among other things, helped to put the conference in historical perspective. He told me that he had been particularly inspired by the rise of Solidarnosc in Poland. He thought that was the example of the rank-and-file trade-unionism he wants to see in his own country.

There were also special workshops on the fight against cutbacks in the public sector, the fight against discrimination against women in the workplace and the unions, and on building solidarity with other workers struggles. The last was led by Dennis Pennington from the British NUM. There was a workshop on the fight against racism and xenophobia and on the "struggle of youth for jobs, training, and trade-union organization."

In the workshop on youth, Kent Johansson from the Kontaktnapptet for Arbetsloesa i Sverige (Swedish Contact Network for Unemployed) described the problems of the so-called youth jobs schemes that have proliferated in his country. Jacob Nerup from the Laerlingarnas Landsorganisation (Apprentices National Labor Organization) in Copenhagen gave an outline of the great variety of associations of young workers in Denmark.

In fact, the presence of a number of energetic young workers from Denmark did not fail to make a mark on the conference, as well as on the evening festivities.

The conference was well organized and welcomed all trade-union activists and socialist political groups. In particular, it testified to the capacities of Fourth Internationalist workers in Sweden and the growing regional profile of the trade-union opposition in Volvo-Goteborg, which is now in a majority in the two major plants in the area. □

## Rank and file trade unionists speak

WE REPRINT blow extracts from speeches by two of the speakers at the all-Scandinavian conference of trade unionists — Dennis Pennington from Great Britain and Harry Isaksson from Sweden.

*Dennis Pennington, of Bold National Union of Mineworkers in Lancashire, Britain. Dennis is editor of the Lancashire Miner, a rank and file newspaper and a supporter of Socialist Action, a revolutionary socialist newspaper.*

...Our dispute was not a simple industrial dispute but a question of ideology. The dispute was caused by our refusal to accept a closure programme and challenged the logic of the capitalist system, challenged the drive for profits, whilst capitalism is in the throes of a worldwide recession. We asked the question, 'who determines our futures. Those who believe in the market forces, that is the capitalists, or ourselves the workers, those who produce the wealth of the nation?' ...

During the strike, 11,000 mineworkers and their supporters were arrested, over 900 men were sacked and almost eighty men were jailed. Two men were killed on a picket line and three others died as a direct result of the strike, digging for coal on the coal tips ...

The reason [for our defeat] was our isolation. Other trade union leaders would not heed to the demands of Arthur Scargill to offer full support to miners, to broaden the action throughout the left against the British government and its policies.

Now the strike is over the Coal Board, which is the agent of the government, is accelerating its pit closure programme, which we believe will lead to privatisation of the most profitable pits. Against this is the drive for profit in a time of economic recession.

They have refused to reinstate the vast majority of sacked men — only a very small number have been reinstated ... There is a concerned effort by the government and the Coal Board and right-wing organisations to form a new union, the so-called Union of Democratic Mineworkers. Its often reported in the British press that there is a split in the mineworkers' union. This attempt by the government to form a union is not an attempt to split the mineworkers' union, its an attempt to destroy the NUM

completely.

Last week the National Coal Board announced that in Nottinghamshire it would not recognise the NUM. The NUM does not exist in Nottinghamshire, according to the National Coal Board.

So the main programme of the NUM is to prevent the disintegration of the union, to win reinstatement of the dismissed men and to halt the closure programme ...

At my own colliery, Bold, the Coal Board announced its closure three weeks ago. This was because my colliery was the most loyal, the most militant section in my coalfield to the National Union of Mineworkers. The Coal Board wished the men to close the pit itself by voting not to oppose the closure. A vote was held and at my pit the men voted by two to one to oppose the closure. This is despite the constant propaganda from the Coal Board to the workforce that they would lose redundancy payments, they would lose social security payments if they did not leave the industry immediately. Unfortunately on one of the coal faces at my pit a team of scabs are mining coal and these creatures decided that if the pit didn't close they would go on strike to close the pit and they went on strike last Wednesday. They sat in the canteen for the full shift and the management paid them their wages. Therefore it was an NCB [National Coal Board] strike and the NCB wages were strike pay to them. These creatures answered the call of the Coal Board in November last year, when the Coal Board constantly sent letters to striking miners urging them to return to work ...

Despite the fact, that as I have repeatedly said, the strike was a defeat, the strike did have positive results. There was a political awakening of the ordinary rank and file workforce which resulted in fact in ordinary miners printing their own newspapers to counter the coal Board propaganda. There was a recognition of the problems of other oppressed minorities notably the immigrant communities in Britain and the population of Northern Ireland.

There was joint action with these people because we realised we were in the same struggle against this reactionary government.

Of course there was the rise of the women's support groups which still exist. Women recognise that their position was at the side of the men, not in the background, and there was a great political awakening by the women. In fact I believe if the women had not become active, the strike would have ended after a few months.

Finally, there was the international solidarity which we won during the dispute. This is the reason why I'm here of course. With the seizure of our union's assets, with the government's attacks on the state welfare system, on the family allowances, we've had to go across international borders and ask people for this support which we've received willingly ...

*Harry Isaksson, a leader of a well-known wildcat strike that took place at the Malmberget iron mines in Sweden in 1969-70, a strike which turned out to be a milestone in Swedish labour history.*

For an entire year, the British miners waged their heroic struggle against a united ruling class and its repressive apparatus. They faced twelve months of organized slander campaigns from Margaret Thatcher and her stooges, twelve months of concerted splitting operations and naked police violence.

But we also remember the twelve months of organized resistance by the miners. We remember their endless sacrifices, their untiring efforts to get support from other groups of workers for the common interests of all workers.

In the six months since the miners' strike ended, the fight has continued in another form, a fight to win reinstatement for those fired and persecuted for political reasons and to regain the union funds confiscated by the authorities, and to stop pit closures.

In a year and a half of intensive struggle, the British miners earned all the support that the international workers movement can offer. They became a guiding star for our common struggle against the shutting down of workplaces and antilabor legislation. The Nordic Workers Conference has had the chance to hear Dennis Pennington from Bold tell about what is going on now. It sends back with him heartfelt greetings to the British workers. Your struggle is our struggle. Victory for the British miners in the fight against closures is a victory for a future worthy of humanity. Long live international workers solidarity! □

# Economic reform against the workers

THE OCTOBER 1984 Central Committee plenum decided to introduce in a bolder way the process of economic reform started up at the end of 1978 (1) in urban and industrial life. Having first been applied to the peasant world and having profoundly transformed the life of the villages through decollectivization, the reform was now to be applied to the social groups in the cities.

The aim first of all of the economic reform was to change the modes of economic life and therefore of social life. But the tempo, detours, and re-routings owe a lot to the mute or more open pressures of the various social groups concerned.

What explains the desynchronization in the application of the reform in the countryside and in the cities is the difference in attitude, expectations, fears, and resistance in these two worlds, the urban and the rural. (2)

In this article I will present first the major features and stages of the economic reform, and then show what is at stake in this for the working class.

ROLAND LEW

The need for reforming the economies of "actually existing socialism" is making itself felt everywhere. But the Chinese reform would not be what it is — with the radical transformations in the countryside and the hesitations and delays in making changes in the industrial sector — if it were not for the influence of the Maoist legacy.

The least that can be said is that this heritage presents a great liability. These negative features are, first of all, intrinsic to the economy of "actually existing socialism." It is a commonplace to say today that Maoist China was — and China still is today — a very typical economy of the Soviet type. But not so long ago, the recognition of this fact was a great surprise for Western observers, so great had been the insistence on the originality of Maoism.

The balance sheet of post-Maoism puts China in the same boat with the other "socialist" economies, with their advantages and problems. While the advantages are striking at the outset, bringing rapid growth, the difficulties come progressively to overshadow the economic horizon, a commandist economy, rigid, top-heavy planning,

and so forth. In the Chinese case, the economy has been threatened with asphyxiation. Simply to give an indication, without going into detail, while in the first five-year plan 1.68 yuan were needed to increase the national economy by one yuan, in the current five-year plan (1982-1986), 2.74 yuan are required.

There is a hypertrophy of heavy industry, which in 1978 accounted for 41% of the GNP, as opposed to 27.8% in 1952. The economic system

1. The various measures projected by the new Chinese economic reform were presented in the following way in 'Le Monde' of October 13, 1984: (a) A change in the relations between the enterprises and the state, with the latter no longer having to turn over their profits to the state in return for an annual financial appropriation; henceforth they are to pay a tax, and will be able to do as they please with what is left over. (b) A reform in the plan reducing the number of sectors subject to direct planning. (c) Reform of the system of employment creating looser conditions for the recruitment of personnel and a differentiation in the status of workers. (d) Reform in the status of intellectuals and specialists giving greater responsibilities to factory managers and tending to give rise to an increase in the wage spread. (e) The establishment of a responsibility system in the plants similar to the contracts that exist in agriculture. That is, "the base

has been divided into such watertight compartments that relations between the various industries have been possible only through the top. So, the center has presided over the most minute aspects of economic life. All these problems and a good many others flowing from them call for deepgoing reforms.

I do not propose to deny the weight of Maoism or its specificity. But while Maoism had different effects, often disruptive ones for economic life, it did not put an original stamp on the system's modes of functioning. For example, although Maoism came out of a revolution conducted by the peasants in the countryside, it did not accord the peasants and agriculture a favored place in economic development. To the contrary, the countryside (80% of the population) was the ugly duckling of economic development during the Maoist period. The rapid collectivization carried out in 1955-1956 put the peasant world in a vise to force it to make a big contribution to rapid industrial accumulation. With little motivation, the countryside in fact stagnated.

The urban scene was much more active. It was in the cities in fact that the regime sought its new allies. The working class, which was numerically small at the outset but expanding rapidly with industrialization, became the regime's special ally. This working class responded positively to the regime's solicitations inasmuch as it gained unquestionable advantages in return — an improvement in its living standards; job security; and even, in the initial period of the regime, a genuine social advancement. (3)

When Mao died in September 1976, the balance sheet of Maoism seemed to the population to be negative overall. The Great Helmsman's successors have faced a society fraught with tensions, in which the usual ills of rigid social and economic regimentation were compounded by the effects of reckless attempts to alleviate these problems. An economic

units, the 'shops', will sign production contracts with the management and get more money if they exceed their quotas." (f) A modification of wages and prices in the direction of adapting them to the criteria of the market, productivity, and profitability. (g) A reform of the trading system.

2. For a more detailed analysis of the evolution of the economic situation, see Pierre Goussset's article "Developpement et avatars de la nouvelle politique économique en Chine," which appeared in 'Inprecor' ('IV's French-language sister publication), No. 69, February 7, 1980; and Ernest Mandel's article "La crise économique en Chine," which appeared in 'Inprecor', No. 94-95, February 16, 1981.

3. On the situation of the workers see 'The current state of the Working Class' by Zhang Kai in 'International Viewpoint' No 35, August 1, 1983.



Street vendors in Peking (DR)

reform was necessary, but what sort of reform and in what stages?

While transformations were necessary, the new leaders were uncertain about what means should be used to accomplish them. Immediately after Mao's death, the press was full of articles about the changes that had to be made in economic life. But it took two years for solutions to begin to be applied.

These two years were needed to get a certain consensus in the leading team and for Deng Xiaoping to get out ahead of the pack and start to push aside Hua Kuofeng, Mao's anointed crown prince.

Then the reform started off on its sinuous course, in which markers were laid down by two important plenums — the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Congress in December 1978, which launched the process; and the Third Plenum of the Twelfth Congress in October 1984, which relaunched the reform, extending it systematically to the cities and the industrial system.

### The Zig zags of the reform

In order to follow the zigzag movement of the reform, produced by advances and retreats, by abrupt lurches forward in the countryside and the putting on of the brakes in the cities first, followed by acceleration in the urban areas, I will utilize essentially the typology proposed by W. Zafanulli, a researcher at the CNRS [the French National Centre for Scientific Research]. In his view, the six years of reforms can be broken down into three phases. (4)

In the initial phase of readjustment in 1979 (opened by the December 1978 plenum), there was a return, under the aegis of the veteran leader Chen Yun, to the methods that he himself had advocated in the 1950s.

What this meant was improving the classical system of centralized planning without really changing it, adding an element of market relations that was to play a marginal balancing role. The market was only there to respond to demands not satisfied by the plan, it being understood that the plan should be directed toward meeting all demands.

So the stress was placed on a better realization of the plan. But the operation was conducted on the micro-economic level, that is, on the plant level, and in an experimental way. The province of Sichuan was the testing ground. In 1980, the experience was extended on the national level to 6,600 enterprises, representing 16% of all enterprises but 45% of production and 60% to 70% of profits.

The enterprises were pressed to achieve the targets of the plan. They could keep a part of their profits (from 10% to 20%, varying according to the location). They were, moreover, encouraged to produce a surplus over the plan to meet demand not covered by the plan. The logic of the planning remained unchanged, but it was hoped to remedy the inadequacies of the plan. It was a small reform, which was not extended immediately to all the enterprises.

Limited to the most profitable sectors in 1979-1980, the reform enabled the industries concerned to increase their profitability. In reality, the dynamic set in motion made its impact elsewhere. It was not the timid industrial policy but a considerable upset, a veritable "silent revolution" (5) that radically transformed the countryside in a short period of time. It was here that the market logic that was introduced as a supplementary element in the economy took off.

What at the outset was a "responsibility system" designed to displace a form of payment, calculated in

labor points, equal for all and bearing no relation to the work actually done (the "one big pot"), (6) led rapidly to complete decollectivization of the countryside, a de facto distribution of the land, and a return to the family farm.

By 1981, the rural economy consisted of 180 million small family holdings. And this was only the beginning. Among the various types of contracts between the peasants and the state, the most popular is the one that goes furthest in privatization. It is the system of "the lump," which requires of the family unit only that it make the compulsory deliveries and pay the agricultural tax. In everything else, the peasants are free to manage their business as they please.

We are, therefore, seeing a rapid and far-reaching social differentiation in the peasantry, and the emergence — accepted if not actually desired — of a rich stratum that is concentrating land ownership in its hands and accumulating capital through the sale of its products to the cities (that is, the part that is not requisitioned or consumed at home). This capital, moreover, can be legally invested in specialized activities not directly concerned with tillage and husbandry.

Quite recently, the government has even eliminated compulsory deliveries of produce to the state, making possible greater private sale of the products of the land. This revolution in reverse has been fueled by the success of these measures. They have been successful with the peasantry, who remain attached to the family unit. They have been successful also in terms of agricultural policy, bringing with them a growth rate of 7.5% a year in farm production after 1978. Above all, they have been successful from the standpoint of peasant incomes, which have doubled since 1978 (in current prices), while in 1977 the standard of living had not yet risen above the 1955 level. Such great success, with so few apparent disruptive effects gained a consensus of support among the leaders. The reform was sort of carried forward by its own momentum.

A second phase of the reform then came into play. In industry and in the cities, however, the logic of the market and of profitability came into conflict with a system that is alien to them. While we are seeing in fact a shifting of the balance away from heavy industry toward light industry,

4. See W. Zafanulli, "La réforme économique en Chine," to be published in the magazine 'Est-Ouest', Paris.

5. Claude Aubert, "Chine rurale, la révolution silencieuse," 'Projet', September-October 1982.

6. By the expression "eat out of one big pot," the Chinese describe the egalitarianism that resulted in unproductive workers getting as much as those who really worked.

with the percentage of the former in GNP falling from 41% in 1978 to about a third in 1982 and a fall in the rate of accumulation from 36.5% in 1978 to 29% in 1982, in other respects the industrial system continues to show the same deficiencies.

The marginal effectiveness of enterprises remain sharply diminishing. The quality of products remains poor. The rate of utilization of equipment does not exceed 50% to 60%. Prices remain arbitrary, if not outright irrational. At bottom, the little reform of 1979-80 only provided for a certain relaxation of the rules. It simply legalized what the old black market was already doing without any concern for the rules. And what remained illegal continued to be done surreptitiously.

## Resistance

What is more, the threatened sections of the apparatus (for example the central trading agencies endangered by the reform) have often successfully laid down an obstacle course to the application of the new measures. And when poorly controlled reform has led to inflation (around 10% to 20% for the period 1979-1981 for consumer goods) and to a grave budget crisis (owing to investments getting out of hand and the growing weight of subsidies on food products for the cities), a sharp brake has been put on the process in the industrial sector. Heavy industry, the big provider for the state budget, has resumed its rapid growth rate.

Nonetheless, the reform is continuing to advance in a modest way. For example, in order to deal with the extent of urban unemployment, a private economy in the cities has been authorized (although with a number of legal and other restrictions). By 1983, there were 2.3 million people "working for themselves."

Even in the industrial system, elements of reform have been introduced. For example, the share of the profits that was turned over to the state has been replaced by a single tax (in principle this is 55% of gross profits, plus possibly a tax adjustment to compensate for windfalls created by the pricing system).

Moreover, enterprises have been authorized to engage in subcontracting, which offers flexibility in the management of the wage fund and helps to break the "iron rice bowls," a problem to which I will return later.

Nonetheless, it was possible to make the observation in 1983 that

"two years of reforms followed by two years of consolidation do not seem to have changed the functioning of the system profoundly." (7)

In the very recent period, 1983-1985 (especially 1984), we come to the third phase of reform. This is the time when a certain agreement emerged in the leadership for going further in the logic of the market, profitability, and privatization. But this did not come off without difficulties. At the end of 1983, in fact, we saw an attempt to limit the process. It was "the campaign against spiritual pollution," that is, pollution coming from the capitalist West.

The reformist constellation reacted by pushing the reform further, in the hope that while Deng Xiaoping was still alive, it could create irreversible facts, reach a point of no return. Over the year 1984, up to the culminating point at the CC plenum in October of that year, the reform was launched in the industrial sector in successive waves.

In May 1984, administrative tutelage over the enterprise was loosened. Their autonomy was increased. What is more, the enterprises now got the right to decide on their sources of supply and outlets for distribution. They also got the right to hold on to 70% of their amortization funds. Plant managers gained the sole right to run their enterprises (they are no longer, at least in theory, under the local party secretaries). This represents a return to the system established in 1951 and abolished in 1956 in favor of direct control by the party committee.

The managers have the right to hire and fire and to inflict penalties. Their new powers are considerable. It remains to be seen how they will be used. It may be doubted that the party secretaries will easily relinquish their authority. In any case, at the end of 1984, only 2,900 enterprises were applying these new principles.

The October 1984 plenum, with its resolution on "the reform of the economic structure," codified the changes. The watchword was increasing productivity. There was talk about introducing truth in prices, prices that should come into line progressively with demand and production costs. Changing the pricing system, however, is a vast program. It does not seem that they have gotten very far today in this regard. It has to be said that they had a long way to go. To give two examples that indicate the two extremes, the petroleum sector has a pricing system that makes possible a 70% profit, the coal industry had one that involved 0.7% profit. So,

there is a range of one to one hundred in prices set by the government.

The October plenum also decided that the enterprises were to be separated from the overall administration of the economy. Small unprofitable enterprises are contracted out to collectives of workers, or even to private persons. The volume of wages is to be tied to the results of the enterprises and the wage scale open ended. So, the elevation of equality over criteria of productivity was out.

The reform was taken onto the macroeconomic level with the reorganization of planning. The economy is to be divided into three sectors. In one sector, embracing the major industries (in particular heavy industries), the targets of the plan will remain binding. This system will extend to 1,020 big enterprises, accounting for 52% of profits and of taxes.

In another sector, which has still not been very clearly defined, the plan will operate only indirectly (through credits and budgetary appropriations). They are talking in terms of a sector that would include 48.6% of light industry and 72% of its production.

The third is to be a privatized sector, which is still largely embryonic. This privatization applies to 4.2 million enterprises in the cities employing 54 million persons. But this sector *could* extend to a part of collective enterprises that presently employ 27 million persons, which, because they often run in the red, are subject to privatization.

However, we should not extrapolate. It should be noted that the state retains "control of the main sources feeding the economic circuits." (8) In the words of a Chinese author, the "visible hand" of the plan will not substitute for the "invisible one" (the market), but will operate at the source by regulating economic flows. It is still too early to make a practical balance sheet of the reform project. Let us try rather to assess its consequences for the workers.

The Chinese "Communist" regime came out of the military conquest of the largely passive cities (and thereby of the urban proletariat). But it immediately accorded a relatively privileged place to the working class.

It can even be said that the working class occupied a privileged place in the system of alliances set up by the new regime to consolidate its power.

First we should ask what this working class represented numerically then and what it represented now. The

7. Yves Chevrier, "Les politiques de la demaioisation (1977-1982)," *Revue d'etudes comparatives Est-Ouest*, Vol. 4, No. 3, September 1983.

8. W. Zafanoli, *op. cit.*

statistics do not distinguish between blue and white-collar workers. What they give is the number of urban wage earners, that is practically the entire economically active population of the cities, from ministers to postal workers, to clerks in state stores. We know that there were 100 million blue and white-collar workers in 1978, of whom 67.1% were men. In 1982, the number was 112.8 million of which 63.7% were men (17% were women in 1957).

In the industrial sector properly speaking, the number of blue and white-collar workers rose from 2.446 millions in 1952 to 13.480 millions in 1957 and 44.367 millions in 1979.

In order to get a clearer idea of the size of the proletariat, for the cities you have to add transport, telecommunications and the building industry. In the first two sectors, the number employed in 1952 was 1.129 million; in 1957 it was 1.669 million; and in 1979, it was 6.725 million. In construction, the number was 1.048 million in 1952; 2.714 million in 1957; and 8.093 million in 1979.

In a nutshell about 60% of the 100 million urban wage earners in 1979 belonged to the productive apparatus (blue and white-collar workers). They represented about 15% of the total workforce. It should be added that about three quarters of this workforce are agricultural producers. It should be specified, moreover, that in 1979, the metal industry accounted for three million workers (blue and white-collar), mining for 3.8 million, the mechanical industry for 9.175 million, and the textile industry for 2.740 million.

Also to be taken into account is the presence of a proletariat in the countryside. Half peasants, half workers, they amount to around twenty million wage workers (and perhaps more). In total, therefore, it seems that 30% to 35% of the economically active population in China are wage workers.

These figures show a considerable growth in the numbers of the working class and its central place in the cities. An indisputable social mobility for the working class has made it possible for a not insignificant number of workers to start to go up in social scale (becoming plant managers and trade-union cadres). This could be seen in particular in the early years of the regime. But it is less important than the more durable advantages acquired by the working class.

In exchange for its support for the regime and its participation in the industrial process, the working class has gained various benefits. First of all, they got iron-clad job

security, the certainty of never being fired (the famous 'iron rice bowl'). An eight-level wage scale was established, assuring regular raises for seniority, as well as for calendar age.

The educational level was sharply increased. In 1957, 20% of urban workers (blue and white-collar) were illiterate. This figure fell to 1.6% in 1982. In 1957, 19.1% only had a high-school diploma. In 1982, this figure had risen to 72%. These figures are much more favorable than the corresponding ones in the rural areas.

The most privileged blue and white-collar workers are in the state sector, which accounted for three quarters of urban wage earners in 1978 and almost three quarters of industrial wage earners (thirty million as against 12 million in the collective sector).

### Workers' advantages

Moreover, especially in the state enterprises, the workers have enjoyed numerous indirect benefits, to the extent that the state sector, accounting overall for less than 20% of the total economically active population received almost all the social subsidies and benefits. In 1978, it could be calculated that the subsidies and indirect benefits accruing to those employed in the state sector amounted, on the average, to 526 yuan, which corresponded to 82% of the average wage. On top of this, these workers get some other advantages that make their indirect wage at least equal to their direct one.

Such benefits do not, however, exist for the peasantry. And while the direct urban wages were three times the incomes of peasants in 1978, the extent of the various benefits accruing to the workers probably doubled this gap.

What is more, since 1978, there has been a major growth in social benefits, exceeding that of wages. Thus, despite the extent of the increase in peasant incomes, the gap between the cities and the countryside remains marked, as Table 1 shows.

TABLE 1

Year	Annual Income (in yuan)		
	State sector	Collective sector	Peasant income (collective part)
1957	637	—	43.40
1978	644	614	88.53
1983	865	826	169.00

The improvement in the condition of the blue and white-collar workers is also shown by the increase in the consumer durables owned by urban households. (Table 2)

TABLE 2

### For every hundred urban families

	1982	1981
sewing machines	73.10	70.41
washing machines	16.09	6.34
refrigerators	0.67	0.22
bicycles	146.65	135.90
radios	103.04	100.52
TVs	73.00	57.65
tape recorders	17.99	12.97
cameras	5.57	4.29

One can see the stagnation of workers' incomes between 1957 and 1978 and then a rapid increase, with a gap persisting between the workers' incomes and those of peasants. But as regards the latter it is also necessary to add the growing share of income from private activity, which little by little has come to absorb all farming.

A more detailed sector-by-sector study shows a wage spread going from a top average annual wage of 948 yuan in construction to 909 yuan in transport, to 860 yuan in research, only 819 yuan in administration, and 852 in light industry. In general, the corresponding wages in the collective sector are 15% to 25% less (738 yuan in construction in the collective sector as against 948 in the state sector; 644 yuan in the collective sector of light industry, as against 852 in the state sector).

However, the absolute level of wages and indirect benefits only partially reflects the privileges of urban wage earners, and of blue-collar workers in particular. Because these strata have access to what is literally unobtainable elsewhere — running water, a real sanitary system, quality primary and secondary schools for children, movies, and so on.

Moreover, in order to deal with the considerable urban underemployment that was creating social tensions in post-Maoist China, workers have been allowed to take early retirement

and to leave their jobs to one of their children. Thus, out of eight million new workers hired in 1979, 3.3 million of them inherited their job from a parent (this is the so-called substitution method).

These impressive advantages by comparison with the life of the peasants involved the workers' submission to the regime and more directly to the authority of the plant managers (in fact, to the party secretaries). This submissiveness was all the greater because the benefits were directly linked to the industrial unit. Workers could not be fired from the enterprises (unless they committed some grave offence), but they could not change enterprises either.

While workers' wages stagnated (especially during the Cultural Revolution), the low productivity of labor and the indirect benefits accorded made the position of state factory workers one of the most envied (leaving aside of course the very privileged positions of the top leaders).

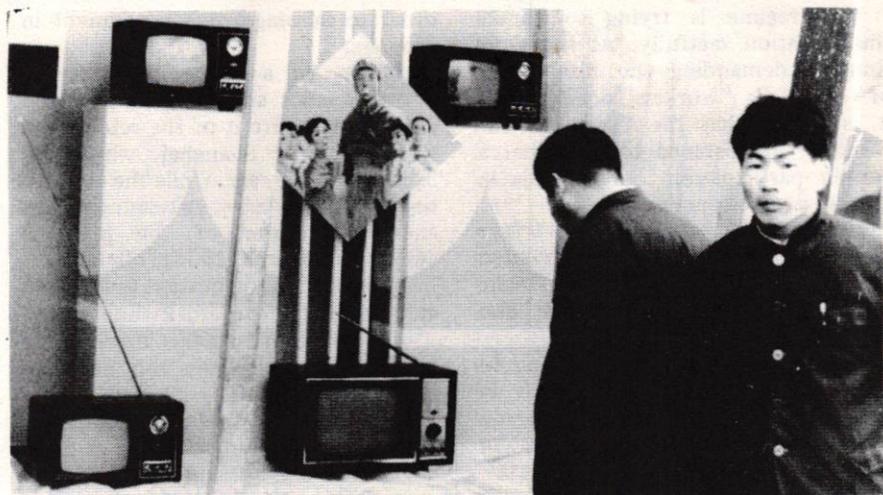
This status was so envied that it was not accessible to all workers. Apprentices, who were paid on various limited scales and could be assigned to any job (and often pushed around) and who did not enjoy all of the indirect benefits were excluded from it. But at least the apprentices could hope to enter into the central ranks of the working class and aspire to the famous "iron rice bowl." Temporary workers were not so fortunate. Becoming numerous after the onset of the Great Leap Forward, they were peasants rented by industry for a given period of time from their people's communes. Paid less than the regular workers, they enjoyed no indirect benefits, and they were sent back at the end of their contracts to their people's communes, which collected a part of their wages.

Despite all this, the temporary workers earned more than they got from their work in the fields. There was also a less well-known category of temporary workers who were of urban origin. They were often wives of very unskilled workers. They seem to have gotten the status of workers in the 1970s, but there is little information about this.

A good part of the tensions in the working class, especially during the Great Leap Forward and before the Cultural Revolution, were generated by conflicts of interest between the privileged and underprivileged sections of the working class.

In any case, the better part of the working class identified with the real egalitarianism that marked the situation of the regular workers during the Maoist period.

One of the objectives of the economic reform underway is to



More workers can afford consumer goods now (DR)

break the "iron rice bowl," that is, to eliminate the gains of the workers and above all the guarantee of a job for life.

Of course, caution is *de rigueur*. Although they are often attacked and denounced in the press, the so-called economically harmful effects of the "iron rice bowl" have so far not prompted a head-on assault on the privileges attached to the status of workers in the state factories.

In fact, challenging the gains of the workers and egalitarianism, to which they are clearly favorable, would mean attacking one of the two main pillars of the regime (the other was the regimentation of the peasantry through the collectivization that has today been abandoned.)

Unlike the peasantry, the workers have shown that they can react otherwise than silently. There are limits to the submissiveness of the workers when it comes to defending their gains.

The logic of the reform, nonetheless, pushed in the direction of a greater mobility of labor, which is incompatible with the rigidities of the past. This means nothing less than letting go — firing — excess workers in the enterprises. Moreover, it calls for introducing a process of differentiation within the working class by permitting the widening of the wage spread, adjusting bonuses to the real productivity of the workers and the enterprises. (9)

Two methods have been proposed. The first is a new hiring policy. To replace the old "labor and personnel services," of which it has been said that they were "bodies operating in the 1980s with a mentality of the 1960s that functioned in the framework of a 1950s planning system," new organs are being formed. They are the "Labor Services Corporations," which are to place workers on the basis of contracts.

The contracted workers get the same wages and the same benefits as

their regular counterparts, but they no longer have a lifetime entitlement. During the interval between contracts, the Labor Services Corporation takes charge of paying the workers.

According to *Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*) of March 8, 1983, in the future all workers are to come under the contract system. But that is still very far away now.

In the meantime, the regime is trying to outflank the resistance of the workers. The unions are being pressed into the breach to prevent strikes and educate the workers in the new course. This is not at all easy.

In fact, such an important gain as a lifetime guarantee of a job, which is probably the major advantage offered by "actually existing socialism" in the various countries where it prevails, will not be easily given up.

Working class resistance is fierce. We are seeing work stoppages and demonstrations of hostility toward the new contract workers. There is strong pressure on the managerial and technical professionals in the enterprises, who often have the same reactions and the same interests as the workers.

In its February 27, 1984, issue, *Renmin Ribao* wrote, "to be a managerial or technical professional [cadre] in these times is like sitting on a volcano." This shows how strong the pressure is from both above and below. (10)

9. An example, no doubt an extreme one, has been given recently that also indicates the competition among enterprises to get skilled workers. Thus, a small firm offered four highly skilled Shanghai technicians 10,000 yuan in compensation for making the move, 600 yuan for moving costs, monthly wages of 250 to 300 yuan, an initial bonus of 2,000 yuan, and one percent of their future profits. The aim was to create a new enterprise. And 1,000 yuan a year is considered a good wage!

10. More significant still, the Chinese press notes that during the first quarter of 1984, wages increased more than productivity, which is just the opposite of the aim of the economic reform.

The regime is trying to handle this situation tactfully. At the same time as demanding the dismantling of so-called "workers democracy," it is urging that the "voice of the workers" be listened to, and that a certain participation of workers in management be encouraged.

This is so that, as the *Workers Daily* of August 15, 1984, pointed out — the workers will "make suggestions to the management and not problems for them."

Moreover, the regime is trying to convince the workers that it is in their interests to change the old situation. Is not the present system of eight wage grades very rigid, it asks.

Statistics provided for the Tenth Congress of Unions in October 1983 showed that 71% of workers are on the bottom of the scale (incomes of less than 35 yuan a month), only 2% are at Grades 7 and 8 (incomes three times higher, respectively 90 and 120 yuan).

Overall, caution is in force, and managers are far from having complete freedom of maneuver. They are counting on reform of wages to move things forward and to induce people to drop overly egalitarian traditions.

The tendency is toward the granting of bonuses in a flexible way without restrictions, while penalizing through taxes bonuses that exceed the rise in profits.

Moreover, they are trying to introduce "penalties" for nonfulfillment of quotas. But in this case as well, it is not clear that these measures are being really applied. What is more these rules are applicable to state enterprises. The situation is still more uncertain in the collective enterprises.

The tendency and the logic of the reform are to increase the spread of wages and to seek to link bonuses to productivity (which is not easy given the ingrained habits). Furthermore, the different types of enterprises are creating working-class strata with different statuses.

As in the West, we are seeing the emergence of a multitrack society, with the appearance of a "privatized" stratum, temporary statuses in the collective enterprises, and changes in the situations in the state enterprises depending on the successes and failures of each enterprise.

Of course, this differentiation is only in its beginnings. There is strong resistance. The automatic payment of bonuses to all is a tradition deeply rooted in the minds of workers.

What is more, a large part of the industrial apparatus and sections in the higher echelons of the central apparatus are too incapable or too ignorant to adjust to the new rules and may continue to rely on the old usages in

order to sabotage the experiment in progress.

There is a marked difference between cities such as Peking, which are in the forefront of the reform and those such as Shanghai, which are bringing up the rear. While the authorities in Peking have just launched an energetic reform of the planning system (in March 1985), Shanghai is being subjected to constant pressure to catch up with the reform in other cities.

The delays in Shanghai are certainly owing to the elderliness and inertia of the local apparatus, as well as the aging of the industrial plant. But they also reflect the traditions and gains of a great working-class metropolis. Moreover, this city represents by itself alone 11.1% of the total industrial product and 16.6% of the state's revenues.

So, nothing is yet decided. But overall the direction is toward a decline in the influence, prestige, and status of the workers. The era when managerial or technical professionals got their children a "place" in the factory to keep them from

being sent off into the countryside or to assure them a comfortable life is rapidly receding into the past.

When you look at the legal (to say nothing of the extensive extralegal possibilities) powers of the new managers, you can understand the lack of concern for the conditions of workers.

We are far from the era when the new ruling elite recruited its new members in part from the working class. The modernist techno-bureaucracy that is to be the agent and the beneficiary of the new reform draws its members from the children of apparatus and party families.

The surge of urban growth today is going hand in hand with a weakening of the working class. It remains to be seen whether the workers will stand by passively and just watch this evolution happen. Nothing could be less sure. And the caution, even delay in working out an urban NEP [New Economic Policy] can also be traced to the regime's uncertainties about the workers reactions. □

## The democracy movement in China 1978–1981

FIVE YEARS AGO, Solidarnosc announced its formation. At the same time, in the People's Republic of China, the national Association of Unofficial Publications of China (NAUPC), a coalition of 21 unofficial publications all over China, also announced its formation. The NAUPC published an organ named *Duty*. It was a milestone in the development of the democracy movement which had been unfolding, with frequent interruptions, since the end of 1978. *Duty* continued publication first every two months, and then fortnightly, until the national clampdown in April 1981. The following article traces the development of the democracy movement. It was first published in the August 1985 edition of *October Review*, a revolutionary Marxist journal published in Hong Kong.

### LISI

The democracy movement of 1978–81, usually referred to as the Beijing Spring Democracy Movement, developed from the 1976 Tian An Men Square Riot in which over 100,000 people spontaneously gathered at the square in the capital to express their indignation for the ruling regime. (1)

Similar riots took place in other cities such as Nanjing and Zhengzhou.

1. On April 5, 1976, more than 100,000 people came out onto the streets on the occasion of the Day of the Dead, to pay homage to the memory of Zhou Enlai who died in the January of the same year.

The historical significance of the riots is that they were spontaneous mass mobilisations directed against the whole bureaucratic rule, unlike the mass mobilisations during the Cultural Revolution which were controlled by different CCP [Chinese Communist Party] factions and served factional needs and interests. Yet, the riots were violent emotional outbursts but lacking clear programmatic goals, organisation or a nucleus. That was why the riots were quickly and brutally repressed. Still, the mass rejection of the ruling regime indirectly brought about the downfall of the so-called Gang of Four — Mao Zedong's proteges.

By the end of 1978, the Deng Xiaoping faction gained control of the top leadership. A series of rehabilitations took place, which included the official recognition of the Tian An Men Square Riot as a revolutionary, spontaneous mass action. While the Deng Xiaoping faction attempted to use a certain mass support to consolidate its power in the top leadership and to seize power in lower level leadership positions, the people also made use of the opportunity to voice their grievances and put forward their demands. Wall posters began to appear on the Xidan Wall in the capital, mass political discussion meetings took place (some with thousands of people participating), and unofficial publications began to appear. By the beginning of 1979, tens of unofficial publications had surfaced all over the country. The unofficial publications, despite repression, survived until April 1981 when a national wave of arrests of the editors and chief contributors put an end to their semi-legal existence. The movement was forced to go underground from then onwards.

From November 1978 to April 1981, titles of unofficial publications known to the outside world numbered over 120. About two dozen were from Beijing, and the others from most of the provincial capitals. Some were able to sustain themselves for over forty issues, some were repressed after the founding issue. Some issues were over 100 pages, some were of four pages, and many ranged from forty to eighty pages. Since the state controlled all means of publication, the unofficial publications had to be mimeographed on low quality paper. Because of technical limitations, most of the issues were published in several hundred copies, though a few managed to secure support from some printing presses and were able to put out more copies. For example, *Beijing Spring* got the support of the Foreign Language Press and printed 10,000 copies of its combined No 1 and No 2 issues. Then there was pressure from



Demonstration in Peking (DR)

above and no more printed copies came out. *Our Generation*, a joint project by the students of 13 universities all over China, also encountered the same problem. Its founding issue only had half of its contents in printed form, and pressure from above forced it to come out in incomplete form and even forced a stoppage of publication after its founding issue.

Due to a conservative Publication Ordinance of 1952, (which made application for legal publication impossible), unofficial publications attempted in vain to get legally registered. Hence, they had to remain "unofficial".

### The Beijing Spring Democracy Movement

The unofficial publications were characteristic of the Beijing Spring Democracy Movement. They served as political and organizational centers grouping together young activists. The unofficial publications were of two main types. One type contained mostly political essays; the other type contained mostly literary pieces. Most of the publications of the first type were published by young workers who had been the red guard generation during the Cultural Revolution; they felt they had been betrayed by Mao and after a period of re-thinking, they came out with clear demands for democracy and a legal system. They formed the core of the Beijing Spring Democracy Movement. The second type was mostly published by students or young workers with literary pursuits, but they had close links with the first type and also some writers in official literary publications.

The Beijing Spring Democracy Movement was in the beginning

rather atomized. Activists with similar viewpoints regrouped around a certain publication for discussion of political ideas and propaganda of their viewpoints. Yet, there were few links among the publications. The inexperience and lack of conscious pursuit of unity was part of the reason for this, but the organizational division stemmed mainly from the different ideological trends of the publications. Roughly speaking, in Beijing, *Exploration*, with its chief editor Wei Jingsheng, was the most radical of all for it advocated democratic election of all leaders and democratic self-management by the producers. It was very critical of the "liberal" stance of Deng Xiaoping. *Beijing Spring*, which grouped together mainly heroes of the 1976 riots, most of whom had been recruited into the party or the youth league, served more to support the Deng Xiaoping faction against Mao Zedong's supporters. *April 5 Forum* was more moderate than *Exploration* for it assessed the Deng Xiaoping faction as reformers, but it also stressed the importance of mobilizing the people for democratic demands. *Human Rights in China* demanded respect for human rights and expressed aspirations for western style democracy. These differences in assessment of the Deng faction and in the radicalness of the demands led to organisational divisions and lack of cooperation. Yet, the objective situation compelled a regroupment of the forces fighting for democracy.

In March 1979, Deng Xiaoping changed his stance on the democracy wall. A few months before, he had said that the democracy wall was useful and that it could let the people voice their grievances. However, in March, he said that the democracy wall was a source of instability.



Democracy wall in Peking (DR)

Wei Jingsheng at once reacted by posting up a wall poster titled 'Democracy or new dictatorship' in which he called for the people to beware of Deng becoming a new dictator. Wei was promptly arrested. Before Wei, several others had been arrested, including Fu Yuehua, a woman who led thousands of peasants on a parade in the capital on January 8, 1979, with the central slogan 'against persecution, against hunger, for democracy, for human rights'. Two members of the Human Rights Alliance had also been arrested. The change in the political atmosphere in March caused a re-evaluation of the Deng Xiaoping faction's sincerity and readiness for democratic reforms. The need for more coordination among the activists was also being felt.

In December 1979, the trial of Wei Jingsheng took place. Though his radical ideas were not popular, his right to freedom of thought and expression was supported by the activists. Wei Jingsheng, for his dissidence, was given a sentence of 15 years in jail. Liu Qing, editor of *April 5 Forum*, was arrested for distributing a transcript of the 'open' trial. Liu Qing's arrest helped bring together more activists. In August 1980, 16 publications joined together to form a National Committee to Rescue Liu Qing. This quickly grew into the National Association of Unofficial Publications of China composed of 21 publications, and more joined later.

The formation of the NAUPC was a significant breakthrough. It took less than two years from the emergence of unofficial publications to arrive at their nationwide coalition.

Such a rapid development was not a surprise. The downfall of the Gang of Four and the rehabilitation of the Tian An Men Square riot were the result of strong pressure from the masses. The Deng Xiaoping faction carried out its half hearted reforms under serious economic difficulties and ideological crisis of the CCP. When the Deng Xiaoping faction began repressing the people's democratic rights, discontent quickly grew. Certain illusions in the reforming faction broke down. Repression of the democracy movement forced the divided publications to draw together for more support and strength in order to counter pressure from the regime. At the same time, since most of the activists had gone through the Cultural Revolution years, they were experienced in various methods of struggle. When they discarded illusions in one wing of the bureaucracy, their critical appraisal of bureaucratic rule, and the social contradictions caused a further radicalization. While they continued to carry out political and theoretical debates among themselves, they consciously opted for closer organisational unity. The Polish example was another source of stimulus. The democracy movement greeted Solidarnosc with enthusiastic fraternity, reprinting the 21 demands and the Charter of Workers' Rights, and assessed that the Polish workers movement had tolled the death knell for bureaucratic rule and set the beginning for a pluralistic party system. The need for international links was much emphasized.

At the end of 1980, when deputies to the county level People's Congress were for the first time open to

election, many students (such as Tao Shen, Hu Ping) and worker activists (such as Fu Shenqi, He Defu, Gong Ping, Wang Yifeng) ran as candidates to use the campaign as a forum for political debates. Interventions by the authorities were then exposed to show the hypocrisy of such elections.

In early 1981, the party central issued several circulars preparing for a clampdown of the 'illegal publications' and 'illegal organisations'. The activists also started to prepare forming political parties. Starting from April 10, arrests took place on a nationwide scale. Those arrested and known to the outside world numbered over thirty, including Wang Xizhe of *People's Voice* (Guangzhou), He Qiu and Wang Yifei of *People's Road* (Guangzhou), Xu Wenli, Yan Jing and Chen Erjin of *April 5 Forum* (Beijing), Lu Lin of *Exploration* (Beijing), Fu Shenqi of *Voice of Democracy* (Shanghai), Sun Weibang of *Sea Waves* (Qingdao), Xing Dakun of *Forum of Fraternal Comrades* (Qingdao), Liu Liping of *Correspondence of Ideals* (Changsha), Zhang Jingsheng of *The Republican* (Changsha), Chun Yongmin and Zhu Jianbin of *The Bell* (Wuhan), Zhong Yueqiu of *Voice of the Masses* (Shaoguan), Yang Zaixing and Chun Xiaoxiang of *Enlightenment* (Guizhou), Peng Guangzhong of *Biweekly Review* (Guizhou), Liu E-an of *Brick of Democracy* (Tianjin), Ye Zhongwu of *Zhi River* (Hangzhou), Zheng Yulin of *Shouts* (Wenzhou), and other activists like Tao Shen (Changsha), Xu Shuiliang (Nanjing), Yang Guoliang (Beijing), Yu Huimin (Nanjing), Yang Xiaolei (Hangzhou), etc.

#### Attempts to form political organizations

The democracy movement activists were detained without trial for about a year. Later, it was known that Wang Xizhe and He Qiu were sentenced on May 28, 1982 to 14 and ten years imprisonment, and Xu Wenli was sentenced on June 18 for 15 years. It was also reported that Chen Erjin was sentenced to 12 years, Fu Shenqi to seven years, and Yang Zaixing to five years.

The court verdict on Xu Wenli revealed that Xu Wenli was leader in coordination with Wang Xizhe, Sun Weibang, Liu E-an and Fu Shenqi to form Alliance of Chinese Communists in June 1980 and later the Association to Promote Democracy and Unification in China in the spring of 1981. A draft programme of the latter organisation had also been drawn up.

In December 1981, Liu Shanqing, a supporter of the Beijing Spring Democracy Movement from Hong Kong, went to the mainland to visit relatives of the arrested activists, and was himself arrested and sentenced to ten years imprisonment.

The Beijing Spring Democracy Movement was suppressed with naked force. Yet, it was a significant development of the movement for democracy in China. In 1957, during the Hundred Flowers Bloom Campaign, the one million critics of the CCP policy were largely intellectuals. The fervent red guards that radicalised in the later years of the Cultural Revolution (represented by the 17-year old red guard Yang Ziguang's manifesto "Whither goes China?") were mainly secondary school pupils. The 1974 Li Yi Zhe Wall Poster (Wang Xizhe being one of its writers), a manifesto demanding democracy and a legal system, symbolised more independent thinking than the red guard generation but it still had illusions in Mao Zedong. The 1976 Tian An Men Square event was a prelude to the anti-bureaucratic political revolution, in which tens of thousands of people participated, yet it was unorganized. The Beijing Spring Democracy Movement represented a more profound development in programmatic positions and organisational practice. Just before it was repressed, it had arrived at the stage of drawing up a programme, developing into a political party, and the vanguards, mostly young workers, began to be conscious of the need to go into the masses. Participation in the election campaigns and conscious links with worker struggles (such as the strike of 3,000 Taiyuan steel workers) in late 1980 were the first steps. As for the political programme, the demand for socialist democracy and Paris-commune type workers control over production and distribution was the predominant trend. This socialist alternative is quite distinct from the dissident movements in the Soviet Union, for example.

With its outstanding activists still in jail, the democracy movement stays underground. Now, the consequences of Deng Xiaoping's reforms, especially the offensives on the living standard of the urban working class, are becoming clear. The objective conditions favour a revival of the democracy movement. It can be expected that the new stage of the democracy movement will see a more mature political consciousness and a closer link between the vanguards and the masses. □



## The SWP(USA) rejects the organisational demands of the Twelfth World Congress

THE following statement was adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, at its meeting on October 5, 1985.

— At the end of 1983 the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the United States expelled from the party the majority of the members who, within the National Committee and the party branches, opposed its political orientation and its challenges to the programmatic foundation of the Fourth International, particularly concerning the theory of permanent revolution for the countries dominated by imperialism and the necessity of anti-bureaucratic political revolution in the bureaucratized workers states.

This political purge, carried out in a brutal and anti-democratic fashion, lost the SWP more than 150 members, including a number of former leaders of the fraternal section of the Fourth International in the United States. These comrades, organised in Socialist Action (SA) and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT), appealed against their expulsions to the SWP convention in August 1984. The convention rejected their appeal, and on the same occasion refused to allow a delegation of the United Secretariat to participate in its deliberations.

In January 1985, the Twelfth World Congress of the Fourth International receiving a collective appeal from the expelled comrades, adopted by a majority of almost 90 per cent the following motions:

'a) The World Congress upholds the collective appeal of the expelled SWP members now regrouped in SA and FIT.

Whereas these expulsions were carried out in bare-faced violation of the statutes of the Fourth International — of which the SWP is the fraternal organization in the USA — and whereas this political purge made mockery of the rights of minorities inside the SWP,

the World Congress demands the collective reintegration of all the present members of SA and FIT who were expelled from the SWP, into membership.'

Vote:

	for	against	abstain	not voting
Delegates	97.5	5	1	0
Fraternal	3	9	0	0

'b) Whereas the new members of SA and FIT who are not expelled former members of the SWP or who resigned from it in relation with the expulsions or who resigned on the basis of the programme of the Fourth International and whereas they would have been members of the SWP if the latter had not carried out these unjust and undemocratic expulsions,

the World Congress supports the SA and FIT request that all their members be collectively integrated into the SWP with all the rights and duties stemming from the organizational norms of democratic centralism.'

Vote:

	for	against	abstain	not voting
Delegates	97	5	1.5	0
Fraternal	3	9	0	0

'c) Given the situation that has been created in the United States by the undemocratic expulsion from the SWP of those who opposed the orientation of its majority leadership,

and noting that as a result Fourth International adherents are now divided into three separate organizations when they should all be members of the Fourth International in the United States, the SWP,

the World Congress rules that, as long as SA and FIT are not collectively reintegrated into the SWP, the entire organized membership of SA and FIT will be considered as full members of the Fourth International with all the rights and duties prescribed by its statutes, and within the limitations imposed by reactionary US legislation.'

Vote:

	for	against	abstain	not voting
Delegates	98	5.5	0	0
Fraternal	3	9	0	0

In August 1985 the delegates of the twenty-third convention of the

SWP, on the recommendation of the Political Committee, rejected all the demands formulated by the World Congress and reiterated at the convention by the United Secretariat representative present.

— These decisions openly violate the overwhelming majority demands of the World Congress. If carried out by an affiliated section they would make a nonsense of the elementary norms of functioning for an international organisation. While the SWP is prevented by reactionary US legislation from being affiliated to the Fourth International, it has the political and moral obligation to give the greatest weight to World Congress decisions, if it takes seriously the fact of being the fraternal section in the United States.

The statutes of the International leave a broad area of sovereignty to the national sections in determination of their national political line and the choice of their leadership bodies, but they fix a minimum of obligations and norms of functioning that make it possible to have the broadest possible exchange of ideas and positions within a common programmatic and organisational framework. The decisions of the SWP convention, if adopted by a section, would be a complete negation of even the simply moral and political authority of the sovereign body of the International: its World Congress. In so doing, a section

would be refusing to abide by the spirit of our statutes, and thus put itself outside the common framework of our norms.

The International has the duty to state clearly and publicly that the SWP, fraternal section of the Fourth International in the United States, is not, because of its own decisions, the only organisation identifying politically with the Fourth International in the United States.

In conformity with the resolutions adopted by the Twelfth World Congress (and because of the division of Socialist Action into two distinct groups) there are now in the United States, four totally separate organisations of fraternal members with the same rights and duties: the Socialist Workers Party, the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, Socialist Action and Socialist Unity. Each of these organisations is sovereign over decisions concerning its political line and composition of its leading bodies. While deploring their division, which is the outcome of the crisis in the SWP and the anti-democratic purge of those in opposition, the United Secretariat defends the right of each of these organisations to attempt to build the revolutionary party in the United States but does not support the orientation of any one group against the others.

— All the steps taken by the SWP leadership, if taken by a section of the Fourth International, would show

the section's desire to deny in practice the minimal functioning of the International, at the same time as it is turning its own party into a monolithic faction, accommodating itself to the formal framework of the International only on condition that it does not respect a single obligation and gradually emptying this framework of all programmatic content.

No revolutionary party, particularly in the bastion of imperialism, will be built by trampling on the democratic traditions of Bolshevism and the Communist International, which the Fourth International was formed to defend, with the valuable collaboration of the SWP, against Stalinism. Through its own weakening in the United States, the SWP is already paying the price of this orientation, in striking contradiction with its past and with the internal regime of the Fourth International and its sections.

In fighting for the World Congress demands to be respected, the United Secretariat is convinced that it is fighting for the defence of one of the basic principles of the revolutionary Marxist programme: freedom of discussion within the revolutionary organisation, in the framework of the discipline and centralisation necessary for effective action in the class struggle. The Fourth International stands adamant on this principle and this programme. □

October 5, 1985

## Out now Polish Inprekor No 20

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# A subversive novel for a socialist Germany

Stefan Heym; Schwarzenberg. Pub; Bertelsmann, Munich, 1984.

Peter Bartelheimer

"YOU NEED the most powerful sort of telescope, the polished lens of utopian vision, to see even what is directly ahead." (Ernst Bloch)

Both German states, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), are the fruits of a liberation from fascism what was not accomplished by their people with their own strength. Neither occupier brought the freedom it promised. Both imposed their own sort of liberation and for their own ends.

Forced to flee Germany in 1933 to escape Hitler, Stefan Heym returned as an officer in the US forces in 1945. Then, after the Korean War, he went to the GDR. Thus, he chose his side consciously. But, while a prize winning author in the GDR, he has never ceased to quest for a political alternative to "actually existing socialism."

Heym's novel on the East Berlin workers uprising on June 17, 1953 (*Fuenf Tage im Juni*, "Five Days in June"), his literary settling of accounts with the Stalinist past (*Collin*) and with Stalinist falsification of history (*Koenig-David-Bericht*) have never appeared in the GDR. His most recent book, a novel subversive of both German states, *Schwarzenberg*, returns to the question that he left open in the novel he published in 1948, while still in the United States, which was entitled *The Crusaders* (*Kreuzfahrer von heute*). The question is the following. What might have happened if the Germans had been able to take advantage of the military collapse of fascism to liberate themselves?

The former District of Schwarzenberg in the Erzgebirge, today divided into four districts in the GDR, is the site of an historical utopia. The factual peg for the story is that for a few weeks in May 1945, Schwarzenberg was left unoccupied, as a result of a misunderstanding between the Soviet and American general staffs. During this time, it was administered by a provisional German civil authority. On this Heym builds a utopia in which fictional characters tell the "history" of the "Republic of Schwarzenberg"

and their own attempts to create democratic socialist relations on German soil.

Stefan Heym's utopia is concrete. It starts out from the actual situation at the end of May 1945 and is built up without shining heroes. Everyone stands by and looks on as the Nazi functionaries flee. Everyone waits for the occupation, and hopes for nothing but from the occupiers. For occupation is "good for the spirit, a just punishment well merited." Moreover, a foreign power saves you from "a confrontation with yourself." (P. 246) Most people pin their hopes on the Americans, who "brought more supplies with them" than the Russians, "as poor as they are uncivilized and unrestrained, and vengeful too."

"The possibility that no occupier at all would roll in is something no one thought about." (P. 11)

Only two men had an idea about what to do with the power that was literally in the street. They are the big rivals in the short-lived republic. Max Wolfram, the author of a "Comparative Study of Utopian Thought," was freed from a death-row cell in a Nazi prison by the bombing of Dresden. He has returned to his home town, where his Jewish parents died.

On Wolfram's initiative, the Social Democratic and Communist workers assemble to form a common Action Committee. "On liberated soil, but without any pressure from foreign powers," he calls on them to take over the factories and the administration of the area.

Already at the first meeting, Erhard Reinsiepe, a Communist Party functionary before the war, starts to play his role. He speaks in obscure allusions of his "party work" in exile and about his excellent relations with the "Soviet friends" in the neighboring district. He also speaks in favor of forming an action committee, "not to couple socialism with democracy" but to hand over the district in good order to the coming occupier.

The Action Committee only has to threaten the Nazi mayor with its single machine gun to turn him out of the cityhall and lock him up together with the district leadership of the Nazi party. The district president, Wesseling, however, who still wants to obey the Nazi government of Saxony, which has fled, while at the same time pleading with the US army

to march in, is left in office for the time being.

This bloodless "seizure of power" is portrayed by Heym as "a modest example for future experiments" in a country in which "people have not yet managed to lead a revolution to victory on their own power." In other places in the district, other action committees are formed which recognize the one in Schwarzenberg as authoritative.

A situation of dual power has arisen. In the district, the Action Committee confronts not only the district president, who for the time being presents himself as neutral," but also the "Stuelpnagel Fighting Group," a marauding gang left over from the defeated Hitler Wehrmacht, and the industrialist Muenchmeyer, who is hiding the wife of the fled Nazi party district leader.

On the Western "border" is Lieutenant Lambert of the US military government who wants to see "what these Germans can make of themselves and their country if they are left to themselves." (P. 96) But he shrinks from taking any responsibility. As a pragmatist, he knows that the American military authorities would "rather" support "any adventurer" than the Action Committee. (P. 238)

Cynically, he sneers at anybody like Wolfram because "he still sees a logic in historical development." (P. 118) He sentimentally limits himself to looking for a Jewish girl that he was in love with before the war as a student in Dresden.

On the Eastern border also, the "Schwarzenberg Republic" has only uncertain "allies." Captain Vorkutin, a Soviet officer faithful to the party line, is directing the activity of the Stalinist functionary Reinsiepe in the neighboring district.

On the other hand, Major Bogdanov, "the product of those dangerous years in which Soviet citizens, especially if they were functionaries or members of the intelligentsia, could not be sure where they would wake up in the morning — in bed, where they lay down to sleep, or in a cell in the nearest police station" (p. 209) — sympathizes with the Schwarzenberg experiment.

"One thing is clear for me, on the basis of what Lenin once said in fact, that revolutions cannot be exported. Every people must go its own way. We cannot impose a course of development on them, however practical that might seem." (P. 242)

In order to save Schwarzenberg's "independence," Bogdanov even meets Lieutenant Lambert secretly. Finally, a bullet from the "Stuelpnagel Fighting Group" saves him from the fate of being arrested by his own people as an agent.

In its short life, the Action Committee makes astounding accomplishments. The Gauleiter [Nazi district leader] is tracked down in the mountains and arrested. The foreign workers in the camps are organized. Their journey home ends in most cases, however, as we learn later, in new camps, this time Stalinist ones. The mail and the railroads are put back in operation. The products of the few factories are traded with the farmers. Food supply is organized.

Finally, even a police action against the "Stuelpnagel Fighting Group" is prepared jointly with the Soviet army. The action fails, however, because the "friends" do not want to share the military command with the Action Committee. When the Red Army later breaks up the Stuelpnagel gang, this is only the overture to the occupation of Schwarzenberg.

Opposing the State of War in Poland and the suppression of Solidarnosc, Stefan Heym said at the beginning of 1982: "In general, it has to be considered what kind of socialism it can be when the army and other security bodies are sent to use armed force against the working class ... And since there is no reasonable alternative to socialism ... it should be considered what changes should be made in the structure of this socialism so that finally a genuine socialism could emerge from what actually exists, a socialism with which the workers could identify." (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, January 14, 1982).

In the center of the novel is a chapter in which Wolfram drafts a "Constitution of the Republic of Schwarzenberg." Here the influence of the first Solidarnosc program is as unmistakable as the biting criticism of the state's "socialism" in the GDR.

Wolfram knows that once again he is writing a "utopian work." But he goes about this not as an intellectual but as a socialist in action. It is part of his "new tasks." (P. 81) His "Republic of Schwarzenberg" is to be ruled by a "Council of Deputies," whose members are elected by the Action Committee and subject to recall. (P. 141)

The new administration is supposed to have no chairpersons, no parades, and no bureaucracy. "Offices remain offices, and desks and the chairs behind them, along with their conveniences and privileges mould people much more than any other tools of work." (P. 55)

Therefore, equality plays a big role in the constitution: "There are no small privileges, neither in the use of public property nor of state power. Citizens in public service regard themselves as servants of the people, not as its masters. And their remuneration

in no case exceeds that of workers in production." (P. 139)

Instead of a professional army and a professional police, there is only a workers militia. The factories are to be administered as social property by elected factory councils (which in turn will elect the factory management and together with it order the internal affairs of the factory, regulate wages, and supervise production." (P. 145)

Large land holdings are also to become community property. Small and middle peasant holdings, however, will remain private property until the peasants themselves voluntarily form cooperatives.

"Everyone has the right to join with others to further his or her legitimate interests. The right to strike must remain inviolate. All must be free to travel where they choose." Judges are to be elected, and court hearings are to be open to the public. "The privacy of correspondence is guaranteed, and there is no censorship."

Reinsiepe counterposes his Stalinist credo to Wolfram's utopia: "One thing this Hitler has shown. It is that the people's instinct is not to be trusted. Therefore, it is the duty of those who do have true consciousness to bring this people under discipline, Unerring and undivertible, they must lead it and drive it constantly forward, even with a club when the power of reason fails." (P. 251)

Finally, the real starting point of contemporary German history reasserts itself. The Soviet army puts an end to Schwarzenberg's independence. The ceremonial transfer of powers takes place in the villa of the industrialist Muenchmeyer, where the

district president, Wesseling, pledges to collaborate loyally with the occupiers. Vorkutin and Reinsiepe arrest Wolfram, after he has rejected an offer from Lambert to leave with the Americans.

Today, Schwarzenberg is in the firm grip of Wismut, who under strict security regulations and the command of a Soviet general director mines uranium for the Soviet Union. As Stefan Heym says with an ironic hint in his preface: "When I think how differently the history of the republic could have been if the Americans had known what lay under the ground of Schwarzenberg." (P. 10)

With the same irony, he presents Wolfram in his epilogue as a professor at the University of Leipzig. In his seminar on "Social Structures in Utopian Societies," is the son of a colleague from the Schwarzenberg Action Committee. Wolfram has given in. Socialism has "finally developed from a utopia to a science."

"Schwarzenberg was a great illusion."

His student contradicts him. "No one is asking you, Herr Professor, to wave any flag, after all that you went through in prison, in a cell on death row, and in the long time that you spent out there with our friends. But leave us the dream — and the flag."

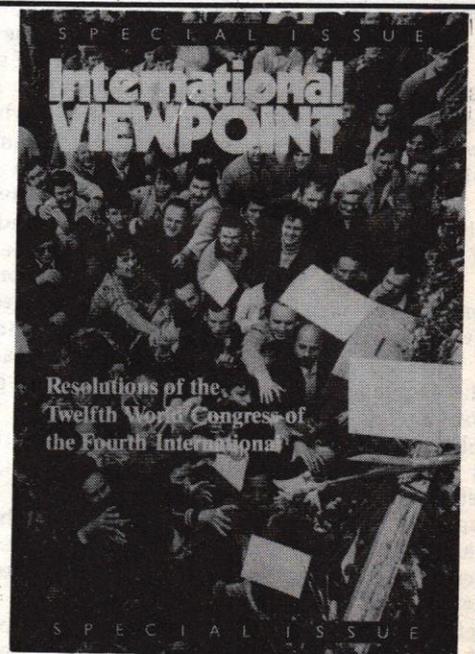
"You are a utopian!" Wolfram answers. And he laughs ambiguously: "If we don't stop here, things could become unpleasant." (P. 310)

Needless to say, this novel by Stefan Heym could not be published in the GDR. Needless to say, Wolfram's question to Reinsiepe remains intolerable: "Who will be judged in the right by the inexorable court of history?" (P. 296) □

## Twelfth World Congress resolutions now available

This special issue of *International Viewpoint* contains the resolutions adopted by the Twelfth World Congress of the Fourth International in January/February 1985.

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# AROUND THE WORLD



Greece

## Cops trap themselves

IN THE latter part of September, the Greek minister of the interior announced on TV with great fanfare the arrest of three persons suspected of belonging to a terrorist network. According to the government, these arrests were to lead to the dismantling of all the "terrorist" groups operating in Greece today.

It was only 48 hours before a big scandal broke out. The police services in the Athens region had in fact arrested a vulgar tout and provocateur in the hire of the Greek secret services (the KYP), a certain Krystalis, who admitted his real role. Arrested at the same time were two old classmates of his, Tsitsilianos and Behrakis. The latter two claimed that they had nothing to do with the offenses charged against them and no relations with Krystalis other than having remained on friendly terms with him since their school days.

It should be noted that Krystalis has had quite a checkered career over the last ten years, having belonged to several left organizations. For a certain time, he even managed to become general secretary of the youth organization of the EDA [the Union of the Democratic Left] — the party of Manolos Glazos, a hero of the resistance against the Nazi occupation, who has been elected to parliament on the slate of Andreas Papandreou's PASOK party. After that Krystalis became a TV reporter. During all this time, in fact, he was an informer working for at least five different intelligence services.

For a week, the press kept bringing out more and more the real dimensions of this case — bombings perpetrated by the secret police, competition among the various secret services, surveillance of journalists and left groups by the police. In a nutshell, these reports showed in a striking way that the government, whatever it may claim, has not managed to get its own intelligence and police services under control. The affair will certainly lead to new scandals because the arrested informer has already declared his readiness to make revelations illustrating the way the police operate.

Krystalis' codefendant, Tsitsilianos, belonged to the editorial board of the magazine *Marxistike Sispironi* ("Marxist Regroupment"), in which there are also activists who declare

their sympathy for the Fourth International. Tsitsilianos is accused of "Inciting to violence," a charge for which a letter found at his home is offered as evidence. The letter was an anonymous one sent to *Marxistike Sispironi* in response to articles on the question of individual terrorism. The editorial board of the magazine considered this letter infantile and devoid of interest and therefore refused to publish it.

Tsitsilianos is also charged with a bombing perpetrated in Athens at a time when he was on an island far from the city.

The third person arrested, Behrakis, is accused only of "participating in the creation of a gang," on the sole evidence that four refill cartridges for a camping stove were found in his home.

So, the government of the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) has become implicated now itself in sinister cases of police provocation in which no one can say where the deception ends and the truth begins, nor for whose gain and for what reasons such operations have been mounted.

It is not surprising that the PASOK has today become so deeply mired in this kind of sordid affair, because it has adopted the institutions left to it by the right. It has made itself the prisoner of these institutions and of the state repressive apparatus in the same way as the French Socialist Party has, that is, without any scruples or hesitations.

It is therefore necessary and urgent to launch a broad campaign to demand the immediate release of Tsitsilianos and Behrakis. At the same time, it is necessary to campaign for the dissolution pure and simple of the secret services, which divert important sums from the state budget and have no function but to spy on the workers movement and mount provocations against it.

[From Greek revolutionary Marxists] □

Britain

## Gillick defeated

LAST WEEK a decision in the House of Lords overturned an Appeal Court judgement in favour of Victoria Gillick. Gillick's campaign had been the latest in a series of attacks on women coming from the right, and had looked like being successful when it culminated in the favourable appeal court ruling last December.

After that ruling it became illegal

for doctors to give any advice on contraception or abortion to young women under 16 without the consent of their parents. Predictably the number of under 16s attending family planning clinics fell dramatically, and the number forced to go through the trauma of unwanted pregnancy rose correspondingly. All this, Gillick assured us was done to 'protect' young women.

Last week's law lords decision, however, had the immediate practical effect of restoring the situation to the 'pre-Gillick' position. In fact, the ruling goes further in that it at least begins to recognise the rights of young people to make decisions about their own lives.

The law lords, who are not normally noted for being the most vehement supporters of women's rights had clearly noticed the strength of feeling against Gillick, from doctors, social workers, and especially (although the press often neglected to mention it) from women themselves. A concerted campaign, including a national demonstration, had shown that women were determined to reject 'Victoria's values'. □

Britain

## Anti apartheid demonstration

AN ESTIMATED 100 thousand demonstrators marched through the streets of London on Saturday November 2 to denounce apartheid in South Africa and to call for stiff economic sanctions against the Pretoria government.

This will be seen as a big blow to the policy of the increasingly unpopular Thatcher government, which has refused sanctions till now.

The demonstrators were addressed by, among others, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, former presidential candidate in the United States and Oliver Tambo, leader of the African National Congress.

The demonstration was marked by the presence of newly formed local anti-apartheid organisations and other groups. In particular members of the Broad Water Farm defence committee, scene of the recent riots in Tottenham, London were present. The people there were eager to make their links with the people of the South African ghettos.

Police profile on the march was heavy, especially near the South African embassy where scuffles broke out and an alarming 140 people were arrested. □

# Solidarity with Moraveco workers

**WORKERS AT the Peruvian metal factory of Moraveco have been on strike against militarisation of their factory since August 1, 1985. They have issued an appeal for international solidarity and it is essential that such an appeal should not go unanswered.**

Last year the industry and investment bank, COFIDE handed over one of the Moraveco units, which makes arms and military transport, to the Peruvian army. The new company was called the Etramsa (Enterprise for military transport and Equipment SA) and it began business on July 30. The company's first act was to instruct the 456 workers in the unit concerned to sign new, individual work contracts — in order to bypass gains made through previous collective agreements and codes of practice.

As one of the secretaries of the metalworkers union, Wilfredo Sanchez, underlined, 'with the transfer of ownership of Moraveco they are

trying to impose conditions of work on the employees which have nothing to do with our status as civilians'. He explained that it represented a real negation 'of basic rights which we had gained in the 23 years which our union has existed and which are also enshrined in the bourgeois constitution of the state.'

## The workers response

The workers at the Moraveco factory, whose union is affiliated to the Federation of Workers in the Metal Industry (FETIMP -CGTP), responded to this attack with an all-out strike and an occupation of the militarised

production unit. It was their military bosses who intervened, with the aid of the police, to remove the strikers from the occupation.

In order to force the armed forces and thus the new government of Alan Garcia to negotiate, the workers have now decided to occupy another unit of the company, which still belongs to COFIDE and on September 23, they began a hunger strike. This strike comes at a bad moment for the Alan Garcia government and for the liberal and popular image which he is trying to project compared to previous rulers.

In an attempt to wear out and discourage the workers, who, of course, have very little means of survival, the president of the chamber of deputies, Luis Negreiros, has appointed a commission of congress whose main object will be to drag things out as much as possible in order to force the Moraveco workers to give up their fight. A measure of the lack of seriousness with which this commission is viewed is illustrated in the fact that Etramsa's manager, General Sineco Jarama Davila, has not even bothered to participate. What has happened, though, is that the army and the police attacked the occupied COFIDE factory on September 26, using tear gas, at the very moment when the workers were protesting against the uselessness of the commission by blocking the streets of Lima.

The Moraveco workers are maintaining their mobilisation, for they do not intend to give in on such basic demands. On September 30, they reaffirmed their determination to pursue their hunger strike until they got a satisfactory result. In the appeal for solidarity addressed to trade unionists and activists around the world, they stated; 'we are aware that the attacks that the bourgeoisie is making on us are political and it is with the same weapon that we will reply until the victory of our struggle. But our strike and occupation require international support from other workers in the metal and car industries etc. in order that we can continue this fight and at the same time forge greater class consciousness amongst the workers of our country, which will lead us, in the not so distant future, to the socialist revolution in Peru.'

Letters and telegrams demanding trade union rights and adherence to collective agreements at the Moraveco factory should be addressed to Alan Garcia, president of the republic, Palacio de Gobierno, Lima and to the Ministerio de Trabajo, Lima Peru. All financial contributions to the strikers should be sent to Enrique Heriz, Avenida Alfonso Ugarte, 1228, 308, Lima 5, Peru. □

CGTP demonstration on May 1, 1980 (DR)

