

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

28 JANUARY , 1982

ISSUE No 0



● POLAND ● THE NEW PEACE
MOVEMENT ● BRITAIN ● CUBA
CENTRAL AMERICA ● FRANCE

Special Introductory Price 40p, US \$ 1., FF 6, Skr. 6, Dkr. 8, ¥ 300, DM 2,5

INTRODUCING INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

The aim of this magazine is systematic reporting of world politics from the standpoint of revolutionary socialists. Therefore, our introductory issue also introduces as many as possible of what we consider the key themes and questions today. On these we will have continuing coverage.

One key question that we were not able to take up here is the development of the Iranian revolution. But we plan to devote special attention to this in the next issues.

A number of special features are introduced as well in this issue. We will have a regular column of selections from the press that is written for the workers and liberation movements.

Since the decisive issue for the last two months has been the attempt of the Stalinist bureaucracy to crush the Polish workers movement, this section is devoted to the responses of the left press to the struggle of the working people of Poland.

In view of the content of some of these selections, the title of the column might seem ironic. That is the irony of history, not something we intended.

For more than a hundred years, the workers and oppressed peoples of the world have been trying to create a press of their own. This

goal is obviously far from being attained.

But there is already a considerable experience, both positive and negative--of courageous and insightful revolutionary journalism, of shortsightedness, of dogmatism and demagoguery, and of political creativity.

In short, the press of the left reflects the advances, the difficulties, and the setbacks of the struggle to establish a society of justice, freedom, equality, and abundance.

So, the selections we publish are intended to illustrate this process, and in particular the oppositions of views and approaches that arise among the various forces in the workers movement and in the movements of the oppressed.

The column entitled "Building a World Party of Socialists" has a similar aim, although its framework is more immediately practical. It will report on specific steps in constructing an international party to lead the fight for socialism and democracy to its conclusion.

The column will be mainly devoted to the Fourth International, since this is the only international organization that has a coherent political life, based on internal democracy and on a long and many-sided experience, as well as on a defined program and strategies for achieving socialism and democracy.

But the development of the world revolutionary movement is broader than any single organization, and we will try to reflect this. That, among other things, is why the titles of these columns tend to be in the progressive tense, because they describe a process not yet completed.

This magazine also represents a step in the process. It is based on an international experience and an international team, rooted in an international movement.

Throughout the history of the socialist movement, there have been few such publications and they have been difficult to maintain. That was true even of the first *Imprecor*, the magazine of the revolutionary Third International, which left a tradition we are trying to carry on.

However, today we think that the need for a world perspective and a world organization is far more developed among socialists and liberation fighters. The possibilities for ongoing international collaboration are also greater.

So, although we are beginning in a very modest way, we think that this can be an important initiative. We hope to win the sympathy and support of revolutionary socialists wherever English is the first or second language in order to expand *International Viewpoint*, in conjunction with sister publications in other languages. ■

EDITORIAL

THE TEST OF POLAND

The hope created by the great mobilizations of the Polish working class over the past sixteen months has not yet been crushed. It poses a more and more urgent challenge to the workers movement throughout the world.

Solidarity's rise provided a political example, hope that the world could be changed and that the working class could do it.

The victories of the Polish workers movement in particular inspired the workers in the industrialized countries in which the decisive and final struggles of the world working class will be fought.

It is symptomatic that the half million American workers who marched in Washington in September against the capitalist offensive led by Reagan took as their symbol the struggle of Solidarnosc.

The workers at the FIAT automobile factories in Turin were also inspired by the Polish workers' example to fight back harder against the capitalist offensive, much to the discomfort of their Stalinist-led union, which favors a "historic compromise" with the bosses.

Solidarity's example inspired not only the workers in the advanced capitalist countries and the industri-

alized workers states and nations oppressed by the Kremlin bureaucracy.

For the first time in history, workers in the colonial and neocolonial countries have expressed massive support for a struggle against Stalinist bureaucracy. Among them are the steel workers of Sao Paulo, Brazil, the vanguard of a powerful and growing struggle for the basic rights of labor against one of the most brutal U.S.-backed dictatorships in Latin America.

The workers of Brazil, and of Mexico, where there have also been important expressions of support

for Solidarity, have fought long and bloody struggles for elementary trade-union and democratic rights. Constantly, they have to risk their lives and livelihood for them. It is natural that they feel a strong identification with the cause of Solidarity.

From China to Brazil to South Africa, more and more the new generations of workers are insisting that freedom and rights are not something for the advanced capitalist countries alone, not just a luxury for the rich. They want rights and freedom too. For them Solidarity can also be an inspiration.

The breadth of support for Solidarity around the world indicates that the Stalinism is becoming discredited among wider and wider sections of the world working class.

Massive sections of the world working class in the advanced countries of Western Europe which came under the influence of the Stalinist parties for various historical reasons were almost unmoved by the Hungarian revolution of 1956. But the Warsaw Pact armies crushing the Czechoslovak workers movement twelve years later sent most of the significant Communist parties in advanced capitalist countries into a deep and continuing crisis.

Because of the Communist parties' identification with totalitarian dictatorship, the new radicalization of workers in key countries, France in particular, has almost entirely bypassed the CPs. This explains why the demonstration called by the unions not run by the CP could draw many tens of thousands of participants, perhaps in excess of a hundred thousand, in Paris on December 14 and why the march had a clear socialist character. The Internationale was sung repeatedly from one end of it to the other, and one of the most popular slogans was "Socialism Means Power to the Workers." The bourgeois groups that have called demonstrations have mobilized very few people. And the reformist trade unions have also had difficulty in mobilizing

people on other issues even when it was important to them to do so.

The basic fact is that the struggle of Solidarity is immensely popular with the newly radicalizing French workers. They identify their own aspirations with it, and they are outraged by the brutal crackdown of the bureaucracy. The popularity of the fight for democratic rights explains also why the CP leadership of the CGT, traditionally the strongest union federation, is running into increasing opposition inside their own organization.

At bay, the CP union leaders have had to resort to publicly threatening the SP chiefs that if they did not take the heat off, the CGT might not give the government the cooperation it needs to get the workers to go along with austerity.

As both the crises of capitalism and Stalinism deepen, they are becoming more directly intertwined. This has been demonstrated in both the economic and political arenas, dramatically in the case of Poland. For the first time capitalists and their publications, and at least one of the more dishonest and truculent capitalist heads of state, Canadian prime minister Elliot Trudeau openly indicated that he supports Stalinist repression of the Polish workers, since unions always demand too much and have to be curbed.

The other side of this, is that even abject class-collaborationist bureaucrats such as the AFL-CIO tops feel the need to defend Solidarity against the charge raised in one way or another almost universally in the capitalist press that it provoked the military crackdown by going "too far."

With the progression of the capitalist economic crisis, the argument is being heard more and more from big business and its press that while it is possible to live with unions in normal times, when there are serious economic problems they have to be curbed by whatever means necessary.

In France, the protests over the suppression of Solidarity have in-

creasingly drawn attention to the suppression of the Turkish trade unions, the only mass independent trade-union movement in the Near East. The plight of the Turkish unions has up until now been shamefully neglected by the Western workers movement.

The greatest hope created by the rise of Solidarity and the resistance of the Polish workers is the first indications of the possibility of uniting the entire workers movement on a world scale in defense of the basic rights of labor, both trade-union and democratic rights. That hope is represented by the sign carried by dissident members of the French CP-dominated union, the CGT, that can be seen on our cover: "The CGT defends the trade-union and democratic rights of the Polish workers."

The fight for this hope is only beginning. It depends not only on the ability of the Polish workers but on the growing political class consciousness of workers in the advanced capitalist countries, the underdeveloped world, and in the bureaucratized workers states. It depends finally on the capacity of fully conscious revolutionaries to clarify the issues at stake for the great masses of workers and activists and begin to mobilize them. In politics there are no automatic processes. Historical opportunities become dangers if they are missed.

In action, the workers in the capitalist countries will learn the difference between their solidarity with the Polish workers and the hypocritical lip-service that the Western capitalist governments and trade-union bureaucrats give to freedom for the workers, and the Polish workers will learn it as well.

Like any other fighters, the Polish workers want real and immediate help. The workers movements throughout the world, and only they, can give it to them. That is the great hope in the Polish crisis, and why its challenge is so urgent. The freedom and future of the working people of the entire world depend on meeting it. ■

POLISH WORKERS STRUGGLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR DIGNITY AND SOLIDARITY

In the sixteen months between the August 1980 strikes and the unleashing of massive repression on December 13, 1981, the working people of Poland recovered their sense of human and national dignity, their confidence in themselves, their class, and their country.

"Poland is herself again," Solidarnosc activists told me in August. "We are the only country that kept its honor throughout the second world war. It was possible to impose totalitarian tyranny only because the country was totally destroyed."

One-fourth of the Polish population was killed in the second world war. After the heroic uprising of 1944, Warsaw was leveled, and its surviving population deported to Nazi concentration camps.

The war was followed by purges, terror, and continued penury. In August, a forester in the Carpathian mountains complained to me that he had not had a single easy day since the Nazi invasion.

After the workers forced the government, temporarily, to accept their right to organize and express themselves even in a limited way, a profound sense of dignity and consideration for other people, a determination not to be dehumanized and humiliated again, pervaded Poland. Not even increasingly desperate shortages could break down this intense feeling of human worth and solidarity. The Polish people were acutely conscious of the need at all cost to maintain relationships of dignity and mutual respect among themselves.

Now, the regime that declared war on its own people in order to stop the rise of the democratic workers movement has launched a ruthless campaign to destroy the sense of dignity and honor in the Polish workers and the Polish people.

That is why the regime is forcing the workers to do their jobs under the guns of the military. It cannot run an economy at gunpoint. But the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy



*Poznan Monument Commemorates Antibureaucratic Uprisings
Inscription: «For Freedom, Justice, Bread.»*

can only hope to survive if it can humiliate the masses of working people, destroy their belief in their own worth, and that of their fellow workers and their fellow Poles. Only then could the small minority of totally corrupt bureaucrats and their servants feel safe in Poland.

One of the bureaucracy's main devices is a familiar one in the history of the trade unions in most countries: - the "Yellow Dog" contract.

Workers returning to their jobs after the military crackdown were required to sign a declaration saying:

"I hereby state that I have taken cognizance of the note of the administrative chief of the cabinet of the Council of Ministers dated December 17, 1981, and I affirm that I am fully aware of the duty incumbent upon me to behave in accordance with the principles of people's legality.

"Taking as my guide the interests of society and the principles of building socialism, I pledge always to uphold the authority of the people's power and to execute scrupulously

the orders of my superiors, and to keep uppermost in my mind always the socialist development of the People's Republic of Poland and loyalty to the people's state.

"Considering that many leading organs of the trade-union Solidarnosc have openly acted against the constitutional bodies of the state and administration, seeking, on the basis of counterrevolutionary positions, to overthrow the socialist system, I declare that I have resigned from this union."

A government document smuggled out of Poland by Solidarnosc sets down the procedure for "interviewing" state employees. Among other things it says: "during the conversation, the special responsibilities of every employee of the central administration must be stressed and the interviewee should make a formal pledge to carry them out. . . .

"The following promise should be obtained, that the interviewee will not have anything to do with Solidarnosc, neither while it is suspended nor afterwards if this union is not permitted to organize among state administrative employees.

"Workers who do not give the required response cannot be maintained in the central state administration."

Like the late shah in Iran, Gen-Jaruzelski has carried his repression so far that he has made possession of camping equipment a political crime, according to a January 5 UPI dispatch. The general is especially interested in knacksacks. Solidarity activists use them to carry leaflets. In fact, the practice is so widespread that the underground union has called on Poles to carry knacksacks whenever they can so as to provide cover for its couriers.

The regime also has to try to intimidate the young people of Poland. One of the baying hounds of the degenerate regime, Anna Powloska, a writer for the party paper, Trybuna Ludu has taken up the prob-



(DR)

lem of the youth who "developed a taste for expressing themselves in strikes and protests."

In this context, the report cited in a January 8 *Prensa Latina* dispatch that "soldiers are taking part in meetings with students to explain to them why the state of siege was declared," assumes sinister implications.

After the military crackdown, callers to certain numbers found themselves being informed "this conversation is under scrutiny." The only purpose such a practice can serve is to create an atmosphere of fear.

All journalists are being subjected to special interrogation. According to a *Los Angeles Times* Service dispatch of January 12, about half the staff of *Kurier Polski* survived it. The questions included: How do you assess Solidarity? How do you assess the events of December 13? And: Should a journalist simply inform his readers or should he try to shape their opinions?

Such questions are obviously designed to make journalists crawl on their bellies. What they test is the flexibility of the "interviewee's" spine.

Even in the first days of shock and disarray after the mass arrests and military attacks on factories, the scattered leaders and activists of Solidarity began to fight this attempt to break the moral integrity of the Polish people.

In Katowice a Solidarity bulletin issued December 21, included the following point: "Don't distrust your neighbor--your enemy are the cops, the careerists, and informers." It also advised: "Shun the company of careerists, informers, and the commissars." It called on its readers to "help in

every way the families of those arrested, wounded, and murdered."

In an open letter circulated by the clandestine Solidarity, Zbigniew Janas, one of the leaders of the URSUS plant, wrote on December 17, to the new plant manager, a certain Stawoszykiewicz:

"I was surprised to learn that you have taken over Director Wilk's job since he was fired. I wrote him letters which he was unfortunately not there long enough to get. In the name of our past work together, I am writing you on the same subject. For some days, I have been pursued like a thief or a bandit simply because I wanted to rebuild our country after it was so efficiently wrecked by the Communist Party. But I am not afraid. I have been educated by the opposition and forged in the struggle against this inhuman and antinational regime. . . .

"Today they have put you in Director Wilk's place in the hope that you will be able to oppress people with sufficient force. I would not like to think that you were deceiving us these past months. I would like to believe that you remember all we talked about. Solidarity is not dead and will not die. The time will come when all of us will have to make an accounting and say what they did to help people, how many people they saved from losing their jobs. And no one will be able to justify themselves by saying that they were afraid and could not do anything.

"Remember that your duty and that of those working with you is not to prevent people from organizing to aid the families of those that have been arrested. It is your duty to make sure that these families get ration cards, even if you and your fellow directors have to give up your own."

Janas went on to say, "You should do what I have said, as a man and as a Pole. Do not forget that this

country cannot long be governed at gunpoint. The tears that are shed in my house and those of my friends, known and unknown, will turn into stones that will batter down the ambitions of the enemies of the people who know no tolerance but understand only force."

The January 15 issue of the Paris daily *Liberation* reported that the first time Western journalists were able to visit Poznan, a Solidarity leader, Zdzislaw Rozwalak, told them in front of party officials that he was renouncing the oath of allegiance that he made to the military regime on December 13: "I made it under duress before I knew what was really happening in the country." The dispatch said that in the Cegielski factory many workers openly wore Solidarity badges and sung even the initials "AE," which stands for "antisocialist element" and is worn to show contempt for Stalinist propaganda.

Thus far the government has been resoundingly unsuccessful in getting Solidarity leaders or activists to "confess" and "repent." In fact, it has been unable even to erase the symbols of courage and defiance.

"In front of the gates of the Wujek mine in Katowice where seven members of Solidarity were killed," *Le Matin's* special correspondent reported January 20, "A tall cross has been erected, and seven miners' helmets put with it. Many people come to place flowers there. The inscription on the cross remains untouched. It says 'they died for freedom.'"

Once the government succeeded in taking Solidarity by surprise, once it was able to cut off communications throughout the country and disorganize the union, the sit-in strikes in the strongholds of the workers movement had no chance of

success. But the desperate resistance of these groups of workers has left an example of courage. Some of the hardest and most prolonged fighting took place at the giant Nowa Huta factory in Cracow. The statement issued by the workers there is still circulating in Poland. Among other things, it says:

"The battle is one of fear. It is not surprising that we are afraid. We have families, wives, children, jobs. And we know what they are capable of, because we know the history of our country. But remember, they are more afraid than we are. Hiding behind their masks, their clubs, their tanks, their riot shields (literally, the glass panes used on reptile cages), they are afraid of us! . . . There are not many of them. Pistols, tanks, clubs are no good against a united people. They are counting on fear. . . . If we want to remain free, we must remain calm, dignified, we must conquer fear. Even if they go to the last extreme, our quiet courage will bring victory, today and forever. We are not fighting for big words, we are fighting to remain human beings."

The same theme was repeated

in a call for organizing a mass resistance movement issued by the underground leaders of Solidarity which reached the West late in January. "Clandestinity must not become a mask for fear. . . . From the beginning, underground activists must learn that arrest and interrogation are not the end of the struggle but the beginning of a new struggle, still harder and more lonely. . . .

"The regime thinks we are slaves. We will never accept that role."

The fact that after more than a month of a massive military crackdown and the reinstatement of totalitarian repression a national leader of Solidarity, Zbigniew Bujak, is still free and issuing political statements, testifies that the "quiet courage" the Nowa Huta workers talked about has not been broken. Such a thing would be impossible without countless acts of quiet heroism and sacrifice by thousands of ordinary people.

Even in their present state of disorganization and uncertainty, the Polish masses have been able to force the mad-dog Stalinist dictatorship of General Jaruzelski

to back off to a certain extent in its repression and attack on their standard of living.

That is the achievement and strength of Solidarity. It is the sort of power that makes revolutions in large and modern countries. Trotsky, the organizer of the first workers army, stressed this in opposition to the elitist and romanticists, to the high priests of Stalinist mythology.

However, this power has to be directed, focused, concentrated. This requires a leadership forged in struggles and having a clear perspective. It also requires a conviction driven deep into the masses that there is no hope but to fight for victory regardless of the cost. Before the struggle for workers democracy can be won, those basic moral and political victories have to be achieved.

The Polish working class and the Polish people have been well prepared by their history and the development of their country to emerge strengthened from this test and to lead all humanity forward to the achievement of their ideals of justice, dignity, and freedom.

By Jean-Louis Michel

THE NEW PEACE MOVEMENT

Two million Europeans demonstrated this fall against the increased danger of war brought about by the resumption of the arms race. In Bonn, Rome, Oslo, London, Brussels, Paris, Athens, Madrid, and Bern--to say nothing of all the places where smaller demonstrations were held--an unprecedented mass movement for disarmament took off.

A poll done in mid-November revealed how profound an impact these mobilizations had had on public opinion (1). Some 50% of the French, 59% of the West Germans, 52% of the British, and 79% of the Dutch said that "they agreed with the peace demonstrators entirely or tended to."

Millions of young people and workers are ready to take up the fight against the aggressive foreign policy of U. S. imperialism, which is relayed by its allies in capitalist Europe. This is a development of the greatest importance. The ruling circles in Washington have had to recognize this.

In Berlin in September, Alexander Haig launched a vicious attack against the antiwar movement, accusing it of being manipulated by Moscow. In the wake of the gigantic demonstrations of October 24 and 25, Haig's cohort, C. Weinberger had to take a more respectful tone in talking about a pacifist "menace" that was getting such broad support. He said that it was something that would have to be taken into consideration.

Now is a good time to review the essential features of this new antiwar movement, which will certainly undergo a new rise in the spring.

AN ANTICAPITALIST MASS MOVEMENT INDEPENDENT OF THE BUREAUCRACY

The movement's main feature is its anticapitalist character, regardless of the various levels of understanding that are inevitable in such a broad mass movement (2). This is an essential difference from the previous responses to war threats.

For example, in 1938-39 the masses supported the Munich "peace," which was based on a double capitulation by their leaderships to fascism and to the bourgeois regimes of the Western "democracies." This led Trotsky to write:

"The political awakening of the proletariat is proceeding at a slower rate than the preparations for a new war (3)." He explained: "The toiling masses of the entire world are weighed down by the terrible burden of the defeats they have suffered in Italy; in Poland; in Germany; in Austria; in Spain; and partially,

1. Conducted by Le nouvel observateur and published in its November 21, 1981, issue.

2. Neutralist currents of the classical type exist in several countries but nowhere are they dominant.

3. "If a New World War Breaks Out," Yale Review, July, 1938.

in France, as well as in a series of smaller countries (4)."

Today, the situation is quite different. Contrary to what happened in 1939, the "new peace movement" is arising in a context of sharpening class struggles against the background of a combined crisis of capitalism and of the bureaucratic dictatorship in the East. While in a still confused way, in mobilizing for disarmament against their own bourgeoisie, the masses are re-learning the old communist lesson, "the enemy is in our own country."

The attempts of Washington and the European capitalist governments to put over the idea that the rise of the peace movement is simply the result of the Kremlin's propaganda have fallen flat. This is not because there is some uncritical sympathy in Europe for Brezhnev's policy. The solidarity with the Polish masses proves the contrary. Rather the attacks on the antiwar movement have missed their mark because it is independent both of bourgeois forces and of forces linked to the Stalinist bureaucracy. This is an essential difference from the peace movement of the 1950s, which to a large extent was directed by the Stalinist parties.

The main force in the peace demonstrations today are the youth who have not experienced the dark days of the Cold War, when the U.S. officially preached the line of "better dead than red." They have known only the interminable palaver of detente on the theme of peaceful coexistence as well as the show conferences (5), which far from curbing the arms race, have systematized it, relaunching it at insane levels, to the greater benefit of Washington. While being free of the control of the Stalinist bureaucracies, the new peace movement is objectively fighting for nuclear disarmament of the imperialist bourgeoisies. And the dominant current of opinion within it is for unilateral disarmament. Therefore, it offers considerable possibilities for advancing the socialist revolution internationally. Of course, whether or not these are realized depends to a large extent on what revolutionists do in the movement.

CRUCIAL STAKES

Washington's resumption of the arms race in 1978-79 and the new aggressive and openly "interventionist" course of American policy since Reagan's election, particularly in Central America, are compelling reasons for international mobilizations. In fighting against the NATO decisions of December 1979 to station 572 new American nuclear weapons in Europe-- second-generation

Pershing missiles and Cruise missiles-- the peoples of capitalist Europe are also mobilizing against war threats elsewhere in the world, in the Middle East, and especially in Central America. The struggle against the expansion of NATO in Spain and Greece, at a time when the Turkish generals are brutally repressing the workers movement in a NATO country, also combines with the new antiwar movement. The same is true of the protests against Reagan's decision to begin production of the neutron bomb.

The development of the ability to focus nuclear destruction to a certain extent on limited targets means the creation of a potential new weapon against "subversion." Even if there is no likelihood that the conditions for its use will appear in the near future in Europe, it could be used tomorrow in Africa or elsewhere against advances in the colonial revolution.

Furthermore, at a time when millions of workers are being thrown out of work, when social programs are being cut to the bone, the constant growth of military appropriations becomes an intolerable outrage in the eyes of the broad masses.

All these factors make up the ingredients for an immense internationalist mass mobilization. A fight has begun that is vital for all humanity and for its socialist future, since the only guarantee of peace is disarming the imperialists in their main bastions.

By carrying forward the struggle that started against the imperialist war makers, the peoples of Europe can greatly aid both the peoples fighting imperialism in other parts of the globe and the American young people and workers, on whom the imperialists will have to inflict a decisive defeat before undertaking any nuclear adventure.

The emergence and growth of such a vast movement against the imperialist rearmament program has already produced effects important for both the bourgeoisie and the workers movement in the individual countries and internationally. It is still too early to make a thorough assessment, but the main lines are clear.

1. The thrust of American policy has been deflected to a certain extent by the need to take account of the hesitations of the European bourgeois governments, which are under the pressure of their own antiwar movements. This is what brought Reagan to the negotiating table in Geneva to launch a propaganda campaign around an "Option Zero" cooked up in Washington. Of course, this is a fraud, and nothing is going to come out of these rigged

bilateral negotiations. But Reagan was forced to go back on his determination not to open up negotiations until he regained the "margin of security" that he wants for American imperialism over the USSR.

2. Following the same pattern, several European governments have had to retreat from their initial intentions. After approving the NATO decisions in December 1979, the Norwegian and Danish governments have reversed engines, saying that they were not directly involved. The Belgian and Dutch governments have not given any definitive answer. The leaders of other countries directly involved have been showing a certain hesitation since the fall. They have started explicitly linking the question of basing Pershing and Cruise missiles in their countries to the outcome of the Geneva negotiations.

Only Thatcher and Mitterrand have expressed complete approval of the Reagan and NATO plans. On the other hand, Mitterrand has differentiated himself very clearly from the U.S. policy in Central America (e.g., the Franco-Mexican statement on supplying "defensive" weapons to Nicaragua). The result of all this has been a definite accentuation of the interimperialist contradictions that threaten the cohesiveness of NATO, and of the entire counterrevolutionary North Atlantic alliance.

3. In the workers movement, we are seeing not only the beginning of a massive antimilitarist youth radicalization but also a process of differentiation developing around these questions in the traditional workers parties, both Stalinist and Social Democratic. The latter in particular have been pushed into taking contradictory positions. Most importantly they have seen currents develop in their organizations that have challenged the official orientations and not hesitated to join in demonstrations against the orders of the leadership.

It is absolutely clear that, combined with the repercussions of the bureaucratic counterrevolution in Poland, the developing antiwar mobilizations will play a role in changing the political landscape in Europe. This should be demonstrated still more forcefully by a new growth of struggles for peace and socialism in the spring and fall of 1982. ■

4. Idem.

5. The Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) and the Mutual and Balanced Reduction of Forces (MBRF) talks.

THE OCTOBER PEACE DEMONSTRATIONS

Italy. More than 50,000 persons on November 27 between Assisi and Perugia; 300,000 in Rome on October 24 in a demonstration called by the PCI, the far-left organizations, the Radical Party, and environmentalists.

West Germany. Around 50,000 in Berlin in September at the time of Alexander Haig's visit. Some 300,000 in Bonn at a demonstration called by 900 organizations, including important sectors of the SPD.

Britain. About 250,000 in London on October 25 in a demonstration initiated by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. The Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress take a position for unilateral disarmament.

Belgium. Roughly 200,000 in Brussels on October 25, involving the Christian Workers Movement (MOC), the CP, far-left organizations and the FGTB, the Social Democrat-dominated main

union confederation.

France. Seventy thousand participants in Paris in a demonstration called on October 25 by the Mouvement de la Paix, the CGT, the PCF, and supported by the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International.

Netherlands. One hundred and fifty thousand in Amsterdam on November 21.

The Spanish State. A half million demonstrators in Madrid on November 15 in a march called by all the working-class organizations after the Cortes voted for joining NATO.

Greece. Some 300,000 in Athens on November 15 against "NATO, which means dictatorship and war." The demonstration was held on the eighth anniversary of the 1973 student rebellion.

There were also mass demonstrations in Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.

The Peace Movements of the 1950s

By Jean-Louis Michel

On February 25, 1949, seventy-five internationally known figures called the first world congress of supporters of peace. It was scheduled for April 20 of that year in Paris. The development of this movement into a permanent organization was bound up with the personal role of the French scientist Frederic Joliot-Curie, who was to preside over the World Peace Council until his death in 1958.

The movement, which was made up of "peace activists" from both East and West, served as a special instrument for supporting Soviet diplomatic initiatives in the darkest days of the Cold War in particular.

At the Paris congress, the two thousand delegates unanimously declared: "We are for a ban on atomic weapons and the other means for mass destruction of human beings. We call for limitation of the armed forces of the great powers and the establishment of effective international inspection to assure that atom-

ic power is used exclusively for peaceful aims to benefit humanity."

The maximum mass impact of the movement came with the Stockholm Appeal of March 19, 1950, which was signed by some 500 million persons throughout the world. Subsequently, it played an important part in the struggles in the 1950s and 1960s against German rearmament and the European Defense Community, as well as against the Algerian war, the various Indochina wars, and against the French force de frappe.

However, after 1968 the influence of the World Peace Council went into a marked decline in West Europe. There were two basic reasons for this. The first is the loss of credibility ensuing from a policy strongly tied to the USSR and which prevented the movement, for example, from taking positions of solidarity with the advances of the political revolution in the East European countries. The second reason is a result of the recomposition developing among the younger strata of the workers movement, in particular in the course of

the struggle for the victory of the Indochinese revolution. With its ties to the Soviet bureaucracy, the World Peace Council became the framework for an alliance between the bureaucracy and a number of neutralist and pacifist currents that in no way were working for a socialist revolution. In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the youth turned their backs on the World Peace Council, despite its repeated attempts to attract them.

Finally, in accordance with the reactionary orientations of the bureaucracy, the World Peace Council fostered the illusion that peace could be guaranteed by a "negotiated genuine mutual disarmament" under the auspices of the United Nations, which is as much of a "den of thieves" as the League of Nations was in Lenin's time. For revolutionists, to the contrary, the fight for peace is inseparable from the fight for socialism and the world revolution, and it requires an unrelenting struggle for the unilateral disarmament of imperialism.

EIGHT MONTHS OF THE LEFT GOVERNMENT IN FRANCE

Eight months have gone by since the defeat of the right in the French presidential and legislative elections. The change in government has led neither to economic catastrophe nor to social revolution, in contrast to the dire predictions of the right, which were designed to arouse the "silent majority". As a result, the SP and CP have no alibi for not meeting the demands of the working class.

In its first general assessment of the new presidency, *Le Monde* speaks rather of a "smooth transition," seeing in this proof of the solidity and democratic character of the institutions of the Fifth Republic imposed by the coup d'état of 1958.

MITTERRAND IS TAKING HIS TIME

However, such an analysis is superficial. The fundamental features of the new situation lie elsewhere:

o First of all, the depth and duration of the international economic crisis, which is forcing the employers to take drastic steps to restructure their operation at the expense of the workers.

o Secondly, the unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of parties that claim to represent the working class -- the presidency of the republic, with the extensive powers invested in it by the constitution, the cabinet, most of the big city governments and the parliament, in which the Socialist Party alone has a majority.

o Finally, the profound disarray of the bourgeoisie's political parties -- which were built up, and functioned for over a quarter of a century, on the basis of enjoying exclusive control over the state apparatus.

Clearly all these circumstances are tending to set the stage for a major test of strength between the classes. Nevertheless, Mitterrand's main argument today is that his government "can wait". Unlike previous experiences of left governments, this one is not going to be a brief episode, or a race against the clock. The president is elected for seven years and the parliamentary majority for five. Therefore, he claims, he can spread the payoff on his promises over a longer period and thereby avoid disrupting the economy and upsetting society.

The government leaders can only get away with talking like that because of the sort of situation that exists in the workers movement. The May 10th and June 21st, victories were the electoral expression of the relationship of forces between the classes. But they were not extension of mounting mobilisations. Since 1977, while the

workers movement has maintained a strong underlying militancy, it has been weakened by the divisions between its major component organisations, both on the political and trade-union fronts.

In 1980, the number of strike days was the lowest since 1953. Over the last four years, the largest trade-union confederation, the CGT, has lost nearly half its membership, dropping from 2.3 to 1.2 million.

Since September, the electoral victories have been reflected in a new rise of struggles in the workplaces to force reinstatement of fired trade-union militants, to regain lost buying power, and to defend job security. But unlike June 1936 (1), there has been no tendency toward generalisation and centralisation of these struggles.

The most conscious worker militants have learned from the experience of the general strike of 1968 (a general strike without a political solution) and of the Union of the Left (an electoral coalition without a united mobilisation of the ranks). They understand the stakes that such a generalised movement would immediately involve. It would mean a head-on confrontation with the bosses in order to force through solutions to a structural crisis of the system that are in the interests of the workers.

Before starting down that road, a new accumulation of experience is necessary. The illusions that several million workers still entertain about the new majority have to be dispelled. But above all, what is needed is a reorganisation of the most advanced workers on the trade-union and political levels. This lag is what Mitterrand is trying to turn to his advantage when he says his government can "wait."

In this, the bourgeoisie can only agree with him. It too needs time. It is using the weight of the established institutions to obstruct the government's policy. The bosses are exercising a continual pressure of blackmail. Their political spokespeople never miss an opportunity to raise a hue and cry about a new Social Democratic Gulag in France. But it would be wrong to conclude from this that the bourgeoisie is looking for a confrontation in the near future. It has first to re-organise its political forces. It cannot afford to remain politically naked for too long, with the employers organisation (the CNPF) acting as its main instrument.

The capitalists' noisy complaints make it possible for the government to seem to take a tough tone, while being nothing if not obliging on matters of substance.

The government's measures with respect to the length of the workweek are symptomatic. The legal workweek will be reduced from 40 to 39 hours. But in return for this cut, the bosses will be granted concessions that they had been unsuccessfully trying to obtain since 1978. While those wage earners on the bottom of the scale will not have to take corresponding wage cuts, the others probably will. Moreover, the bosses were given the right to take a whole series of steps to reschedule working hours over the period of a year in order to achieve a better utilisation of machinery and a closer adjustment of working hours to the ebbs and flows of production. The result will be the growth of night shifts and employment of part-time workers and other such practices.

THE TIME OF DECISIVE CHOICES IS APPROACHING

This is the context and relationship of forces that have conditioned the policy of the Mauroy government.

Mitterrand has been trying hard to present his policy as different from that of traditional Social Democracy. At a time when the economic crisis is making it difficult everywhere to keep up faithful administration of the welfare state, he claims to want to focus on extending the nationalised sector and democratic planning.

On closer examination, what is the balance sheet of the first months of the new government? In the area of democratic rights, the new cabinet and parliament have taken a number of impressive steps. They have abolished the death penalty. They have re-established the right of asylum (although Basque political refugees continue to be subjected to house arrest). They have abolished special tribunals such as the State Security Court (but not the military tribunals). And they have repealed a number of vicious repressive laws.

While these measures have created a favourable disposition toward the new government, the real test lies elsewhere -- on the issues of wages and jobs.

For the last six months, the inflation rate has been 15.5%. The yearly average has been 14.1%. The net result is that the steps taken to improve incomes

1. After the election of the Popular Front.

have at best only held off a decline in purchasing power.

The number of jobless has passed the two million mark. Of course, the increase in unemployment is essentially due to the crisis and to what is generally called the "legacy" of the previous government. But none of the steps taken so far offer any prospect of improving the situation. Cutting the workweek to 39 hours will not in fact create any new jobs, given the gains in productivity.

The nationalisations voted by parliament would expand the nationalised sector to include 30% of sales and 25% of wages in the industrial sector. But so far firms dominated by foreign capital have been set aside. The compensation promised for those holdings that are to be nationalised has been described as "fair" by the bosses' own representatives.

The concessions extended by the government will enable firms such as Matra to re-organise their operation around their most profitable divisions. At the same time, the government has no control over private investment, which remains at a very low level.

For the time being, therefore, the government has been content to stimulate a moderate recovery by slightly upping the real incomes and social benefits of the most underprivileged as well as by increasing the budget deficit. For 1981, the deficit has climbed from 29 to 76 billion francs. In 1982, it will reach 95 billion.

This policy of mild recovery is designed to gain time and prepare the conditions for gearing into an international upturn. The latest predictions of the OECD -- always on the optimistic side -- assume an average growth rate of 1.25% in 1982 for the EEC and 2.5% for France. This slight recovery will merely allow France to avoid the worst but not to reabsorb unemployment. The time is drawing near when the decisive choices will have to be made -- either take on the bourgeoisie or set about carrying out a "left" austerity policy.

Seeing the handwriting on the wall, the government is planning a series of measures designed to divide the collective-bargaining and arbitration process into a number of separate steps at different levels. Its aim is to block the possibility that the hyper-centralisation of the institutions of the Fifth Republic could serve to focus demands on the government.

This is the reason why the government was so quick to come up with a decentralisation bill that will give regional assemblies new responsibilities in administering the unemployment problem. This is also the meaning of the bills being drafted on the rights of workers in enterprises. And more generally, it explains the official advocacy of a policy of working out agreements at all levels -- management-labor negotiations on the workweek, creation of local tripartite committees on jobs, including represent-



(DB)

atives of labour, management, and the government, mutual understandings (2) between the national government and the municipalities, and so on.

THE WORKERS MOVEMENT IS REORGANISING

What will be decisive in this situation is the reorganisation that has begun in the workers movement.

The Socialist Party came to power as an electoral machine, not a party rooted in the masses. There is an enormous gap between the nine million people who voted for it and its 200,000 members. Its success so far has not led to a big influx of recruits, and it remains quite weak in the workplaces. The SP wants to extend the advantage it has gained over the CP in the electoral field onto the trade union level, hoping to relegate the CGT to second place after the CFDT. But it is wary of a massive influx of activists, which could lead to increasing areas of conflict between the party and the government.

Up until two months before the presidential elections, the Communist Party was counting on a victory for Giscard. It paid the price for its policy of division, losing between 4% and 5% of its vote. Under the circumstances, the CP then opted for signing an accord for forming a government in which it would participate. At the same time, it tried to keep a more militant image, on the basis of tough talk and some formally more radical positions taken by the CGT.

However, the bureaucratic military coup in Poland will certainly quicken the pace of the crisis, both in the CP and the CGT. It brings out sharply the contradiction between the CP's allegiance to the USSR, which was reaffirmed at its last congress, and the party's growing integration into the national state machinery. This contradiction is tending more and more to cut across the party apparatus itself.

In its first stage the crisis of Stalinism has benefitted Social Democracy. An example of this is the spectacular success of the Socialist Party in the legislative elections. It can also happen on the trade-union level, temporarily, as the CFDT gains from its actions in solidarity with Solidarnosc. But what in the last analysis will be decisive is the attitude the masses of workers take to the key problems -- jobs and wages.

On these questions, both the CP and the SP, and both the CFDT and the CGT agree about the need to treat the bosses with consideration. This is why the crisis of the workers movement is not taking the form of a simple straightline shift away from Stalinism towards Social Democracy.

Rather, what is developing is a broader process of regroupment, marked by the emergence of opposition currents in the trade unions as well as in the CP and possibly in the SP.

The Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International, held a congress in early January to develop its answers to this new situation.

They revolve around the following three axes:

1. In response to the deep crisis, it is necessary to formulate immediate and transitional demands that point the way toward solutions that are in the interests of the working class. Given the centrality of the jobs issue, the LCR is involved in particular in a campaign to pressure the government and parliament to adopt a law reducing the workweek to 35 hours without loss of pay and without the workers giving anything in return.

2. To overcome the crisis, the workers movement has to be led to break with the bourgeoisie. This involves both a firm counterattack against the bosses' blackmail and maneuvers and a rejection of the straitjacket represented by the institutions of the Fifth Republic (both the Constitutional Council and the Senate have been trying to stall changes by dragging out procedural points). It means rejecting the demands of the military hierarchy and the imperialist systems of alliances. On the latter point, Mitterand has come out openly for deploying Pershing missiles in Europe. Moreover, the decentralisation bill does not recognise the right to independence of the colonies in New Caledonia and the Antilles.

3. The need for a strong revolutionary party rooted in the industrial working class, as the essential mainspring of the process of political clarification within the working class and in the emergence of a vanguard. ■

2. Agreements by which the government grants early retirement to civil servants, with the understanding that the municipalities will hire an equivalent number of younger people.

THE BALANCE SHEET OF THATCHERISM

In December 1981 the results of two elections symbolised key features of the political situation in Britain. However, at first glance they appeared to point in opposite directions.

The first was the Crosby parliamentary by-election. The newly formed Social Democratic Party (SDP) won a massive victory. Even more significant in a period of rising hostility to the Tory government of Thatcher, the traditional party of the working class, the Labour Party, received a humiliating 9.5 percent of the vote.

Later in December the result of the Presidential elections of the National Union of Miners (NUM) was announced. The left-wing candidate Arthur Scargill, who, of all trade union leaders, has probably come under the strongest attack from the capitalist press, achieved a landslide victory, getting over 70 percent of the vote.

During the same month, in one of the most serious industrial fight-backs for a long period, and after years of defeat, the British Leyland workers at Longbridge in Birmingham staged a four-week strike against productivity attacks--an event that clearly indicated a rising combativity in important sections of the working class. This came after a prolonged period of setbacks and its significance as an indicator was confirmed by other events that will be gone into below.

How can this combination of events be accounted for? How is it possible to explain a coming-together of revival of trade-union struggles after serious economic setbacks suffered by the working class in the last period, and at the same time a string of major SDP-Liberal election victories and Labour setbacks? To explain the combination of all these events--not ripping individual ones out of their context but seeing their overall development and dynamic--must be the test of any serious analysis of the political situation in Britain today (1).

These SDP gains and Labour losses cannot be accounted for by any facile explanation on the theme of 'the middle classes deserting' which are sometimes to be heard on the left in Britain. Firstly, no one with

the slightest knowledge of the country's class composition could believe that only 9.5 percent of the population were working class even in a normally safe Tory constituency such as Crosby. Even leaving this aside, however, the Crosby election result was in fact no exception. The SDP-Liberal electoral alliance has averaged 45 percent in the three Parliamentary by-elections in which it has stood. It has won nearly half the municipal council seat elections contested since its formation. Furthermore, in July 1981 the SDP came within a tiny margin of winning the normally ultra-safe Labour seat in the massively working class constituency of Warrington.

THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE CLASSES IN BRITAIN

In reality the present situation becomes readily understandable when the basic historical features of the two main classes in British society are taken into account.

The British ruling class exists in a totally proletarianised country, facing the oldest and probably the most powerful trade-union movement in the world. It is socially and economically extremely weak compared to its working-class enemy. This ruling class, however, has an unbroken 300 year continuity of capitalist state institutions and dominates one of the historically most right-wing labour bureaucracies in the world. The ruling class is therefore politically very strong in relation to the working class.

The working class, in contrast, is socially and organisationally powerful--with over 11 million trade union members for example. But with an unbroken 130 year history of mass reformism, and domination by British imperialism, politically it is very weak in comparison to the ruling class.

It is this contrast--a socially and economically weak but politically very strong ruling class, and a socially and organisationally strong but politically extremely weak working class--that has dominated the development of British politics since the rise of British imperialism in the mid-19th century (2). This contradiction continues to work itself out and to determine the political situation today. Its present political result is a breaking up of

the historical two-party system in Britain.

In this article, we will look at one side of this process, that of the new developments in the ruling class and their meaning for the working class.

THE ECONOMIC FAILURE OF THE THATCHER GOVERNMENT

The immediate context for the crisis and the impending end of the two-party system in Britain is the failure of the Thatcher government. This administration began with an integrated economic and political plan for solving the problems confronting the ruling class. Economically the policy was to launch an extreme deflationist monetary policy with the aim of pushing up unemployment rapidly to a point above even that dictated by the international recession. This line was supported initially, but for different reasons, by all the three major sections that make up British big capital--banking capital, the old sections of industrial capital that are based on foreign investment and home sales, and the modern industrial sectors built up between the first and second world wars which are heavily based on exports.

Banking capital welcomed the high exchange rate of the pound, high interest rates, and decontrol over investing abroad. Bank profits under Thatcher reached an all time record high, and Barclay's became at least temporarily the largest bank in the world, overtaking even its American rivals.

Industrial capital initially supported Thatcher because it was calculated that a spiraling of unemployment would cause a dramatic and permanent shift in the relationship of forces between labour and capital and a sharp increase in productivity. As a result Britain would be in a better position vis-a-vis its rivals in the next world economic upturn. For this reason industrial capital was prepared to accept the short-term risks and problems entailed by Thatcher's policies--cutbacks in output, bankruptcies of smaller firms, and contraction of the internal market.

Politically the aim of the Thatcher offensive was to increase its electoral support inside the working class, and force through its reac-

tionary policies by 'outflanking Labour from below'--that is, hammering away on the themes of 'fighting state bureaucracy', the evils of trade unions, the problems supposedly created by Black immigrants, and the need for 'law and order'.

This strategy was used quite successfully in the period leading up to the May 1979 election itself. In South-East England and the West Midlands, attracted both by the promise of lower taxation and Tory demagoguery of the type outlined, significant sections of skilled workers voted Conservative.

Thatcher's policy, however, has since suffered crucial defeats on both the economic and political fields. Economically it is clear that, thanks in particular to the deflationary policies of Reagan in the United States, any world economic upturn will be far smaller and later in coming than foreseen by British industrial capital. Consequently, the deep downturn in the British economy will last far longer and be deeper, than they had anticipated. Indeed, the decline in British manufacturing output under Thatcher was more rapid than even in the period at the beginning of the 1929 slump.

More significantly still, despite the economic downturn, and despite some undoubted gains for the employers, the recession did not succeed in breaking the resistance of the working class to anything like the degree required for Thatcher's strategy to succeed.

Profits of British industry rose by 10% between the second and third quarters of 1981 compared to a 0.5% increase in gross domestic product; real family income has fallen 5½% since the high point reached in 1979-80; and days lost in strikes fell to around 4 million in 1981 compared to 12 million in 1980. But these gains are still totally inadequate for the needs of British capital, as significant working-class resistance has not been crushed. The defeat of workers in British Leyland in November, when a national pay-strike move was sabotaged by the trade-union bureaucracy, was resisted by a very large proportion of the workers and a big majority of the shop stewards. It was followed almost immediately by the four-week strike at the British Leyland Longbridge plant against the company productivity attack. Scargill's massive victory in the election for president of the NUM was followed by the executive and delegates rejecting a 9.1 percent pay offer from the National Coal Board. At Fords in January 1982 the company wage offer was only accepted by the smallest margin, despite a huge campaign

in its favour by the union leadership. The government's declared 4 percent wage limit in the public sector was broken almost before it was announced by an offer of 7 percent to the local government manual workers. Strike struggles are being waged over productivity and pay by the train-drivers union and are threatened by the miners.

Meanwhile on the economic field, the inflation-feeding Public Sector Borrowing Requirement is higher than even under the Labour government; and there is little, or no, likelihood of the government achieving its target of reducing the annual rate of price increases to under 10 percent. Working-class and trade-unionist resistance to the government has risen and not fallen in the last months--as shown by British Leyland, Fords, the train drivers, and the miners.

Under these conditions two things are clear about the economic policy of the Thatcher government. Firstly, in a recession significantly deeper and more prolonged than was foreseen by industrial capital, it has not succeeded in breaking the resistance of the working class to anything like the extent anticipated. Moreover, big industrial capital is facing huge problems of sagging sales, lack of markets, massive repayments to banks owing to high interest rates, and problems in exporting due to the high exchange rate of the pound. It is therefore clear that any attempt to carry through the original Thatcher project simply by increasing unemployment would result in such a decline of production, accompanied by, say, five million unemployed in real terms (four million on the official figures), that it would cause profound long-term structural damage to the economy and threaten to create an uncontrollable situation on the political level. Under these circumstances industrial capital is demanding, and Thatcher has already started to a small degree, some reflation of the economy to increase output.

But this upturn is not sufficient, nor is it designed, to cut unemployment. The industrial bourgeoisie seeks an increase in output and sales, and therefore profits, and not a reduction in the number of jobless. On the contrary, unless this creates dangerous political consequences, the more out of work the better, as far as industrial capital is concerned, because this intimidates those who are employed. To increase output without increasing employment is the goal of the most powerful sections of capital today and of forces such as the Heath wing of the Tory Party--regardless of their rhetoric about 'concern for the jobless'.

The way to attempt to achieve this policy is through an upturn in production, accompanied by a simultaneous massive productivity and speed-up drive, which will have the effect of increasing the rate of exploitation and keeping up the level of unemployment. This is why the ruling class today is accompanying its attacks on the wages front with precisely such a productivity offensive, and why working-class struggles, as in British Leyland, Ford, and the railways, have developed in defensive actions around this question.

GAINS THREATENED

The failure of the Thatcher government to crush completely working-class resistance through unemployment interrelates with this new turn required by industrial capital to constitute the second key economic failure of the government.

The point is that precisely because the Thatcher government has failed to break the working class during the downturn there is no guarantee that whatever economic gains have been made will be maintained during any upturn--even one limited in scope. While unemployment will not fall, nevertheless in any upturn those workers who have jobs will find that there will be a cut in short-time working. They will see that there are longer order books and production runs, that the management will be keener to produce products for sale, and that it will have less stocks of unsold goods.

In short, regardless of developments on the political field--which can affect the pace of this--the relationship of forces will tend to move a bit more in favour of labour.

Even if today direct working class struggles are at a lower level than for some time this is not guaranteed to last. Today struggles are essentially defensive ones against productive and de facto wage cuts. But even a limited economic upturn can alter this.

What is possible was shown most graphically in British Leyland and Fords. The workers in British Leyland, especially those in its largest plant at Longbridge, have suffered an almost uninterrupted series of major defeats for several years. The company mounted a well-planned offensive that had not only a general but a specific aim in Longbridge. It was intended to prepare the way for introducing the new model the Metro - the one really attractive, and therefore potentially profitable, part of the British Leyland car range and one of the keys to its financial future. This is produced at the Longbridge plant--hence the particularly severe assault by the employers there prior to the introduction of the model.

The company was aided in this attack by the policy of the Communist-Party-dominated factory leadership in the plant. On the best 'Euro-communist' model, the CP leaders had adopted an utterly bankrupt (literally as well as metaphorically) policy of collaborating with the company to make British Leyland profitable. In some other factories in the company in contrast, notably at its other big assembly plant at Cowley, there was a more militant factory leadership. Therefore, for example whereas in Longbridge Communist Party, senior shop steward Derek Robinson was successfully victimised by the company, in Cowley a management offensive against deputy senior shop steward Alan Thornett has been successfully resisted.

Leyland's 1981 wage offer was among other things designed precisely to set different groups of workers against each other. It offered a low increase in the basic rate of pay, which is all that most workers would get. But it left space for bigger money payments for productivity and output--which the Longbridge workers were told that they had the chance for. Despite this, however, there was initially huge opposition by the workers to the pay deal (around 95 percent voted against at mass meetings). However a determined campaign by the national union bureaucracy, and a feeble line by the Communist Party in Longbridge, finally forced through acceptance of the company offer. At Cowley, however, the offer was rejected.

What happened at Longbridge, however, when the management attempted to implement the first part of the productivity measures was the immediate outbreak of a four-week strike. Coming just before Christmas, this action indicated a real militant mood among the workers. The strike ended in a draw, but for the first time for a long period the Longbridge workers had waged a major struggle against the famous productivity 'plan' of company chairman Edwardes.

A somewhat similar development occurred in the Ford motor company. Here again, a great unevenness among the factory leaderships has existed. The Merseyside Halewood plant has historically had a militant leadership and a strong bargaining position inside the company. In contrast, the London Dagenham factory had a Communist Party-dominated leadership and a history of severe defeats. During the company's productivity offensive in the last years Halewood has waged significant successful struggles, while Dagenham suffered defeats.

In the case of this year's pay offer, therefore, such unevenness

showed up again. Halewood voted decisively against the company proposal, and came out on strike. But Dagenham accepted the offer.

But what was most significant this time was the closeness of the result. As in British Leyland, the national trade-union bureaucracy accepted the company offer and put its full weight behind forcing it through. Despite that the margin was extremely narrow.

These struggles, show processes occurring in important sections of the working class. Despite at times severe setbacks, the essential core of factory and trade-union leaderships remain intact and have begun to undergo an important recomposition. There is a rising temper of hatred and resentment against the policies of the employers and the Thatcher government. All that has been missing is the workers feeling that they can win. Even a small sign of economic upturn, and resulting shift in the relation of forces between the workers and capital, could start important sections of the working class thinking that the time has come to fight to defend themselves and perhaps to regain some of what they have lost in the last two years.

The signs of any upturn in trade-union militancy are therefore particularly ominous for the bourgeoisie economically. They show that despite Thatcher's savage attacks the workers' ability to fight back on the trade-union level, which is rooted in their social and organisational strength, has by no means been destroyed. Without some important new moves in other fields, therefore, Thatcher's launching even a limited economic upturn could lead to the working class blowing up economic gains made by capital in the last period and to the emergence of the elements of political crisis.

Thus it is quite clear that the economic policies of Thatcher have both reached a total impasse and failed as a policy for the bourgeoisie. The key sections of industrial capital are obviously distancing themselves from Thatcher and her policies. This is reflected by the actions of the Heath wing of the Tory Party, which has started some 'Parliamentary rebellions' and by the backing that is being given to the SDP-Liberals.

THE POLITICAL FAILURE OF THATCHERISM

On the political field, as opposed to the economic, the situation for the bourgeoisie is, however, not so bleak. It is true that Thatcher herself, and in a more fundamental sense, the Tory Party have undoubtedly failed. The real political kiss of death was put on her policies by the major ghetto explosions of the summer of

1981. Prior to the 1979 election Thatcher took 'law and order' and cries of alarm about Blacks and immigrants as one of her theme songs. So the 'Black riots', as the popular press massively portrayed the events of last year, should have been the perfect chance for the 'get tough' Tory brigade.

Indeed at the technical level the government did make significant advances in repression. For the first time the use of plastic stun bullets, riot trucks, etc. was authorised in Britain (after being long in use in the North of Ireland). But politically the events were disastrous for the government. Its policies of massive unemployment had so antagonised the population that a majority considered the government's economic doctrines and policies in significant part responsible for the situation. A not insignificant number of people actually expressed sympathy for the 'rioters'. The official Scarman enquiry into the events was forced to make verbal criticisms of the police--while of course supporting them overall and preparing the way for future repression.

The ruling class was not particularly scared by ghetto explosions in themselves. But it was seriously concerned that the Thatcher government could not mobilise public opinion against them. It was furthermore concerned that such violent protests, the most explosive in Britain since the second world war, might spread to wider sections of the population--above all the labour movement. The combination created the general spectre that Thatcher's policies might lead to uncontrollable social conflagrations.

In addition to this political disaster the government has also suffered another set of serious problems. In the North of Ireland the campaign in support of the H-Block hunger strikers undermined the authority of the reformist political leadership of the Nationalist population and shook political stability in the neocolonial South of Ireland. Opposition to British nuclear arms also reached an unprecedentedly high level, with some of the largest antiwar demonstrations in British history.

Most unacceptably of all for the ruling class, however, the effects of the Thatcher government's policies were fueling a major radicalisation of the cadres of the Labour Party. The product of this, 'Bennism', has become famous and has been the subject of other articles (3). The consequence of this for the ruling class was, however, clear. It meant that the Labour Party appeared too unstable, and therefore weak, a force to be allowed to form a government by itself. This deprived the ruling

class of its normal alternative government under the British two-party system. Having an unstable Labour Party as the only alternative to the failing Thatcher government was obviously too dangerous for the ruling class. Something therefore had to be done about it.

Both the problem and the solution was foreseeable. Traditions of respect for bourgeois state institutions, of racism, lack of real solidarity with particularly oppressed layers of the working class, have been driven deep into the British working class and its labour movement by British imperialism and the reformist bureaucracy that the latter created. This is what Thatcher placed her bets on.

But there is one tradition which is even deeper and more profound than these. This is that for almost two centuries the majority of the working class in Britain has regarded the Tory Party as the enemy. The working class built up its first embryonic organisations in struggle against the Tory governments during and following the wars against the French revolution. It rioted against a Tory government to secure the passage of the first electoral reform act of 1832. After briefly moving towards class independence under Chartism, it then moved in its majority to support the Liberals against the Tories during the whole second half of the nineteenth century. Finally, when the working class had succeeded in establishing the Labour Party as a mass electoral force after 1918, it once again found the Tory Party as its major Parliamentary opponent.

The identification of the Tory Party as the most central historical enemy by the working class is, from the point of view of revolutionary socialism, one of the most basic problems which must be overcome. It is the Labour bureaucracy, not the Conservative Party, which is the backbone of the political system of British imperialism and the capitalist class. From the point of view of Thatcher, however, it is an insurmountable obstacle. The Tory Party, since the Labour movement became a mass force, can rule by fear and as a result of huge defeats of the working class--as it did after the first world war in general and after 1926 and the defeat of the General Strike, in particular. It can govern in a period of major prosperity through concessions to the masses that isolate the vanguard of the working class politically--as it did from 1951-64. But it cannot win the bulk of the working class to any stable historical allegiance or support for 'the Tories'. No matter what short-term gains she made on other particular issues Thatcher was always

bound, in conditions of social crisis, to smash herself on this political obstacle. This she is duly doing--as did Edward Heath in a different way in 1970-74. Hence the risk of a dangerous situation for the ruling class.

But the same elements of the situation that create the problem create the obvious line of attempted solution for the ruling class. That is, to create another capitalist party, preferably one with a more left-wing image--which is not the one of the hated Tories, or of the historical rump the Liberals had become--but nonetheless a party that carries out the political line of the bourgeoisie. Then, the very identification by which the mass of the working class makes 'the Tories' the central enemy, and which creates such problems for the Thatcher government--would work in favour of the ruling class. Educated for decades by the bureaucracy to regard not capitalism but the Conservative Party as the enemy, the working class is left open to a massive attack on the Labour Party by the SDP.

This is in fact precisely what is occurring in Britain, and it explains the apparently contradictory elements of the present political situation in Britain that we outlined at the beginning of this article. The reality is that because the British working class is socially and economically so strong but politically so weak, a large section of those workers who are wrecking the economic and political policies of Thatcher can, and will, vote for the SDP. What the rise of that party represents above all is not the shift of the 'middle classes', but the total political failure of the historical political perspectives put forward by Labourist reformism in the 80 years of its existence. Refusing to engage in a real struggle with capital, confining itself to a struggle with the 'Conservative enemy', the Labour bureaucracy has opened itself, and the working-class movement, to huge political blows from a capitalist party and the ruling class.

Furthermore, this process is not nearly finished. The aim of the SDP and Liberals is not particularly an SDP-Liberal government after the next election. Both they and the ruling class calculate that no single party and in particular, no single party of the capitalist class, is strong enough to govern Britain by itself against the present labour movement. Without a fundamental change in the political system, an SDP-Liberal government would be just another capitalist administration. Its popularity would wane rapidly, leaving a potentially left-wing Labour Party to rally the

disillusioned.

The real goal of the SDP-Liberals, aided by the Heath section of the Tory Party, is to change the entire political structure in Britain, smashing the existing two-party system, through instituting a system of proportional representation in elections. Because the Labour Party has never received 50 percent of the vote in Britain, and can never get near it with its present reformist line, this will allow the Labour bureaucracy to fight for the line inside the working class that there are 'only two alternatives'. The first is 'remaining permanently in opposition'. The second is accepting a coalition government with the SDP--justified on the grounds of 'keeping out the Tories'.

Such a government would of course be a catastrophe for the Labour movement. The Labour Party would have to take the chief responsibilities for policing the austerity policies that such a government would be based on and its vote would drop even below its present historically low levels.

It is precisely such a Labour-SDP coalition government, however, that is the sole political perspective of core sections of the Labour bureaucracy. Ex-party leader Callaghan has already publicly floated the idea. It is in fact the policy of a powerful wing within the trade-union bureaucracy--that of the Duffy-Boyd leadership of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW) and Frank Chapple of the Electricians Union (EPTU). Others will doubtless be won over in due course. Naturally, they will declare their distaste for the 'traitors' of the SDP, but explain that at all costs the Tories and Thatcher must be kept out of government.

Whether the bourgeoisie itself will opt for such a government depends on a whole series of questions that are not at all decided yet. This could be an extremely useful option if there is an increase in working-class struggles, and if a direct alliance with the bureaucracy seems useful to halt them. But who the bourgeoisie will favour to form the next government also depends on a whole series of international, economic, and other political questions which are not yet answered. It depends on the working class and not just the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, before this type of government could emerge as a credible possibility, it would take something like a civil war in the Labour Party. So it is not immediately on the agenda and will not be until other political goals are achieved.

However, even before the ruling class has to decide what governmental option it wants to fight at, and after, the next election, creation of the SDP gives the ruling class a whole number of important advantages. It gives the Labour and trade-union bureaucracy a powerful boost in its attempt to swing the labour movement to the right. The SDP's electoral gains are used to justify a major witch-hunt against the left inside the Labour Party, while policies are moved once again further to the right under guise of 'avoiding extremism'. If the next government should be an SDP-Liberal, SDP-Liberal-Tory, or even purely Tory government, then right wing Labour policies will be 'justified' on the basis of the need to 'detach the SDP from the Tories', or to 'prevent the SDP forming a coalition with the Tories that will keep them in power' etc.

It is not the Tory Party but the SDP that is today the central tactical political instrument for the bourgeoisie. The SDP is its chief tool for altering the relationships of forces in the workers movement, strengthening the power of the labour bureaucracy in general and its most right-wing sections in particular, and finally for confronting and defeating the entire working class. Quite independently of who forms the next government--which is an entirely secondary question in comparison with the longer-term perspective--the cornerstone of the bourgeoisie's political policy is the SDP and the introduction of proportional representation to consolidate this party's existence. This is a basic fact which must be grasped in British politics today.

To this attack, which will finally reshape British politics from top to bottom, the Labour bureaucracy

has no workable answer whatever. The positive part of the situation, the politicisation of an important minority of the working class under the impact of the crisis, must be the subject of another article. ■

1. The most influential collection of such essentially one-sided left-wing assessments is The Forward March of Labour Halted?, London, Verso, 1981.
2. For an analysis of this see J. Ross J. Ross, "British Politics in the 1980s" in International Vol. 6, no. 1
3. See A. Freeman, Benn and British Socialism in International Vol. 6, no. 3

By Sergio Rodriquez

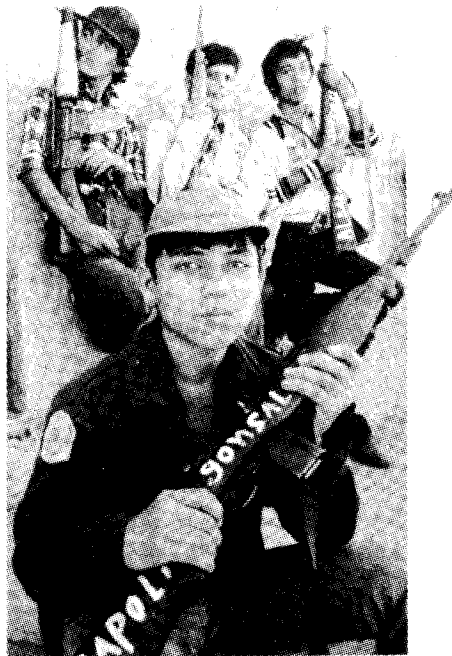
THE EXPLOSIVENESS OF CENTRAL AMERICA

Mexico City--The sudden welling up of an uncontrollable mass insurrection in Nicaragua in the fall of 1979 and the development of a full-scale war of liberation in El Salvador reflect the accumulation of particularly explosive contradictions throughout this strategic region.

The derogatory name given to these countries, "Banana republics," became a byword for the most abject form of neocolonialism. It indicated that they were inserted into a very narrow niche in the capitalist world market--that of agricultural exporters specializing in the production of bananas, coffee, sugar, cotton, and other tropical products. Their economies were plantation economies whose produce was bought and marketed by a few large U.S. trusts.

The sort of economy that existed in the Central American countries favored the development of a land-owning oligarchy extremely dependent on U.S. imperialism, with very little political maneuvering room. In this situation change and reforms were blocked. In Central America, the bourgeois political parties that were dominant in Latin America--the Liberals and Conservatives--survived as living fossils. This is because for eighty years there was no change in the pattern of economic development.

Given the extreme political weakness of the oligarchies, they have



depended to an exceptional degree ever since the formation of national states in the region on using the military to accomplish the basic political and organizational tasks.

In El Salvador, for example, the army played the essential role in the creation of the big landed estates. In 1882, the ejidos, the communal lands that had existed from the time of Native American rule, were abolished by means of heavy military force.

With the increasing mechanization of agriculture, the concentration of land in the hands of a small oligarchy was not reduced but increased. In Guatemala, 2% of the landowners own 70% of the land; in Honduras, 3% of the landowners own 27.4%; in El Salvador, 1% of the landowners hold 57% of the land; and in Nicaragua, 1.5% of the landowners own 41.2%.

Such increasing concentration of the land in the hands of a few, the conversion of the great majority of the peasants into semiproletarians, the introduction of chemical fertilizers and labor-saving machinery, and the systematic attacks of the oligarchy on the Native American communities have been accompanied in recent years by a certain development of manufacturing and service industries. The result has been the growth of big urban centers and a significant shift of the labor force away from the countryside. The following table shows the decline in the percentage employed in agriculture over the past two decades:

	1960	1978
Honduras	70	64
Guatemala	67	57
El Salvador	62	52
Nicaragua	62	44
Panama	51	31
Costa Rica	51	29

The shift of the workforce from the countryside to the cities has increased the potential for mass explosions in a twofold way. Unionization has spread among peasants and most of all agricultural workers. The landlords no longer have the sort of reserve army of labor that they had before to intimidate or crush such organizations. At the same time, the migration of former peasants and agricultural workers to the cities has transferred the accumulated grievances and problems of the rural population into the urban areas, where they become combined with the typical problems of the working class and recently urbanized populations in a political and social setting dominated by a lawless and primitive oligarchy totally subordinate to imperialist trusts.

The oligarchy as a class has remained quite incapable of developing the countries they rule. Some elements have shifted part of their profits from agriculture to industry, but this is an extremely small sector. What industrialization has taken place is explained rather by the fact that the imperialist trusts have become more interested in developing certain industries, particularly those that produce consumer goods. Thus, the new industries have developed entirely within the framework of imperialist domination.

In 1970, direct U. S. investment in industry amounted to 12% of total investment in the region. By 1978, this figure had risen to 33%. Manufacturing is becoming the most attractive area for American investors. As a result, from 1960 to 1970, the industrial sector grew 5.7% in Honduras, 4.3% in Guatemala, 6.7% in Nicaragua, 3.0% in El Salvador, and 5.7% in Costa Rica.

The expansion of industry created the conditions for the development of increasingly important trade unions with greater political weight. This tendency was reinforced by the growth of the service sector. The following table shows the new employment pattern:

SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORKFORCE
(in percentages)

	INDUSTRY		SERVICES	
	1960	1978	1960	1978
Honduras	11	14	19	23
Guatemala	14	20	19	24
El Salvador	17	22	21	26
Nicaragua	16	15		
Panama	14	18	35	47
Costa Rica	19	23	31	48

There has also been a marked proletarianization of workers in the service sector. In fact, because they are salaried rather than on an hourly wage, they have suffered even more than industrial workers in the region from rampant inflation. In 1970-77, the average-price index rose 74%, in comparison with only 13% in the two decades between 1950 and 1970. This is one of the main reasons for the radicalization of the unions in countries such as Guatemala and El Salvador in particular, and, to a lesser extent, in Honduras, Costa Rica, and Panama.

However, along with this, there is the rebellion of the unemployed. In the region as a whole, the level of unemployment approaches 50%. Particularly hard hit are youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four.

The rebellion of the unemployed and underemployed has turned the slums into revolutionary hotbeds. The youthfulness of the revolutionary organizations, the fact that a very large percentage of their cadres come from the seething slum areas, and the level of organization attained in these neighborhoods--committees of women, students, tenants, defense committees, and even popular militias--all this, contrasted with the ossification of the oligarchy, explains why mass revolutionary formations have gained such weight in several cities of the region.

DIVISIONS IN THE RULING CLASSES

Facing the buildup of such explosive pressures, sectors--mainly the small, new industrial bourgeoisie--of the ruling class are looking for a political means to forestall a blowup. This explains the appearance of groups linked to the Social Democracy and the parallel rise of Christian Democratic parties. Thus, a split has developed in the ruling class, as well as a division among the imperialists themselves, since the Social Democratic and Christian Democratic groups are generally linked to West German imperialism.

The U. S. imperialists also, since their capacity for direct military intervention has been limited by the so-called Vietnam syndrome, have also tried to foster the development of "intermediary governments," that is, governments with some mass political base.

The radicalization, however, has already reached such a pitch, that "moderate" parties that have had a certain social basis can quickly lose it if they enter repressive governments. The popularity that the Christian Democratic party enjoyed a few years ago in El Salvador has

now turned almost exactly into its opposite.

It should be remembered that in 1970, Napoleon Duarte, who now fronts for the blood-stained Salvadoran junta, was the candidate of the united opposition, and it is generally believed that he actually won the elections but was cheated of victory. Because of their lack of any solid social base, the so-called reformist governments remain hostages of American imperialism and the military agents of the oligarchy.

Aside from the immediate difficulties it is causing for Washington, the Social Democracy in the region represents a second line of defense for imperialism. But it is a weak reed. In the first place, even the German Social Democracy has suffered divisions over this policy, with conflicts occurring between Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt, for example.

Secondly, the Social Democratic groups that have arisen are feeble and clearly have their essential roots in bourgeois liberalism and not in the working class.

In Guatemala, two organizations claim the mantle of the Socialist International, the Frente Unico de la Revolucion (FUR) and the Partido Social Democrita (SDP). Both organizations are new and weak. The political project to which they devoted most of their efforts was the attempt to make the Frente Democratico contra la Represion (Democratic Front against the Repression) into a mass united organization like the Salvadoran FDR. However, the revolutionary organizations opposed this, apparently because they differed with the Social Democrats over what immediate steps were necessary. Without the support of the revolutionists they could get nowhere.

In El Salvador, the Social Democratic organization, the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario, did have a certain weight in the past. It was one of the component organizations of the Unidad Nacional Opositora (MNR-United National Opposition), which for a good while was backed by the majority of the population.

Immediately after the coup against Romero, and in accordance with Washington's policy of fostering "intermediary governments," the MNR and the Salvadoran CP were asked to join the government. MNR leaders did participate in it. But they soon recognized how far the radicalization of the mass movement had gone and that the government they were in was not going to forestall the revolution but provoke it. So, they walked out immediately and joined the FDR. However, even more clearly than in Nicaragua

gua, the Social Democrats do not play a dominant role, since they are not included in the political-military command (the FMLN).

In Nicaragua, despite the attempts made by some bourgeois forces immediately after the Sandinista victory, the Social Democrats still have no party of their own. In practice, they work with the FSLN.

In Honduras, the Social Democrats have a faction in the Liberal Party, but it has little influence. If they do not break rapidly with this party, they are going to be implicated in the repressive policy that the Liberal President Siles will undoubtedly apply.

In Costa Rica, two parties have links with the Social Democracy. One is the Socialist Party of Costa Rica, whose essential base is among public workers and a large section of poor peasants. Along with the Communist Party and the Partido Revolucionario del Pueblo (PRP), it ran in the February 1978 elections and won three seats.

The PRP is the other party that has links with the Social Democracy. It represents the interests of the new technocratic bourgeoisie, along with key sectors of the sugar growers and ranchers. In fact, the PRP held office for several years, but it lost the last elections to the Partido Unidad which represents the more traditional sectors of the bourgeoisie.

Experts of the Mexican government party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, managed the PRP's campaign.

Thus, the defeat of this party was a serious setback for the Social Democracy. The party that took over the government is totally subordinated to the interests of Yankee imperialism.

In Panama, the Social Democrats work directly with the government, although since Omar Torrijos' death, this relationship has been breaking down.

Another aspect of the activity of the Social Democrats in the area is their relationship with the Cuban government. Castro's speech of July 26, 1979, in fact marked the resumption of the Cuban government's relations with a considerable part of the Latin American Social Democracy. It is obvious, of course, that Castro is trying to use the Social Democrats as a lever against American imperialism. But it is no less obvious that the Social Democracy is using the prestige of Fidel and the Cuban revolution to enhance its image in the eyes of the masses in the region.

The Social Democracy on an in-

ternational scale clearly understands that American imperialism is now unable to control the situation in key areas of the world. And its links are with the West European imperialisms. Therefore, it is trying to promote an alternative based on their specific interests. While we cannot speak of a head-on confrontation between the various imperialisms, they are clearly backing different tactics. Central America is a clear example of this conflict developing in an area where a crucial battle against imperialism and capitalism in general is shaping up.

The Second International's objective in Central America, as explained by one of its leaders, Pierre Schori, is to promote the development of governments not dominated by the U.S. and thereby provide a safety valve for the tremendous anti-American sentiment that exists in Latin America. He pointed out that such governments must also be able to counter pro-Communist or pro-Cuban currents. The model is governments such as that of the PRI in Mexico or that of Romulo Betancourt in Venezuela, that is counter-revolutionary governments of the democratic type that display a certain independence from U.S. imperialism.

THE ROLE OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT

The Second International's policy in the region is closely tied up with the Mexican government, which has maintained strong links with the Social Democracy. This is not just a convergence based on the Mexican government's attitude to Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Belize. It is thanks to the political activities of the Mexican government that the COOPPAL could be organized, bringing the great majority of Social Democratic parties in the region and creating a challenge to the traditional forms of U.S. imperialist domination.

Obviously, the Mexican government has supported the Social Democracy for the sake of its own interests. Some sectors of the Mexican bourgeoisie seek to win a position of strength in Central America, including control of some markets. Mexican investment is increasing steadily in the area, and the PRI government realizes that American policy could destroy these commercial outlets.

However, when PRI president Porfirio Munos Ledesma hinted that the party might join the Socialist International, he was immediately ousted. It is fundamental for the Mexican governing party not to weaken its identification with the revolution of 1910-17. Entering the Socialist

International would only bring problems and offer no benefits. For this reason, the PRI preferred to stand back and maintain an independent role. In fact, it is seen by the bourgeois oppositionists as an example of what the future of the Central American countries should be.

It remains to be seen of course whether or not the Social Democrats will be able to influence significant sectors of the leaderships of the rising mass movements and deflect the upsurge. But it can be said that so far the leaders of the revolutionary movements have managed to handle the Social Democrats rather well.

The revolutionary organizations have the advantage that they are immensely strong both politically and militarily. They are powerful enough to make impossible any repetition of the sort of intervention the U.S. was able to carry off in Santo Domingo. If Washington sends in military forces, they will face well-prepared and well-rooted revolutionary armies, and the political and social result will be a spreading of the flames of rebellion. This would also probably touch off the biggest mass mobilizations in the history of Latin America.

Furthermore, in this context, the tactical differences of the Social Democrats and the stronger Latin American bourgeoisies with U.S. imperialism benefit the revolutionists. It is true that U.S. imperialism has had more success in isolating the revolutionary struggles in the cases of El Salvador and Guatemala than it did in that of Nicaragua. It is true that Washington has been able to achieve more of a consensus on the ruling-class side to oppose these revolutions. But it has not succeeded in getting the support of the specific solution it proposes.

That is, while they are clearly against the spread of revolution in Central America, governments such as those in Brazil, Venezuela, and Peru, to say nothing of Mexico--where Reagan's war moves could cause deep internal problems--are against U.S. intervention in the region. Even in the OAS, at the last meeting, the U.S. was not able to achieve its objectives. Thus, politically Washington finds itself in a qualitatively worse position in the region than in 1965, when it succeeded in crushing the revolution in Santo Domingo.

Nonetheless, in view of the inability of the oligarchy to change and the weakness of the more modern sections of the bourgeoisie, combined with the political and military strength of the revolutionary organizations and the accumulated social explosiveness in the area,



the U. S. imperialists have no alternative but to try to intervene militarily. They are continuing their preparations for this despite the fact that this threatens to bring them into conflict even with the youth and the working class in their own country, to say nothing of Europe and Latin America. There should be no doubt about their determination and their ruthlessness.

All the conditions for a revolutionary crisis, which were first outlined by Lenin and Trotsky, the leaders of the victorious Russian revolution, exist in Central America. The ruling class is divided. It has clearly lost confidence in itself. It has no viable political plan, and it cannot continue ruling in the same way. The working masses are exasperated by the brutal and stupid forms of oppression they have suffered. Despite certain errors in the past by the revolutionary organizations, it has been possible to build united-front organizations committed to struggle.

At the same time, sections of the middle classes are being drawn toward the workers and peasants by an advancing process of proletarianization, the brutality of the repression, and a deteriorating quality of life.

The revolution that is beginning in Central America cannot be confined to any one country, even if any of the revolutionary organizations wanted to do so. The region-wide character of the conflict is being determined not just by the extension of the radicalization but by the imperialist response. The imperialists know that the logic of this revolution makes a limited response impossible. The only way to halt the Sandinista revolution is by defeating the struggle in El Salvador and Guatemala, and so on.

We would be mistaken if we looked only at the situation in Nicaragua for an explanation of why the imperialists are cutting off their loans or why they are rearming Honduras. Likewise, we would be mistaken if we looked only at the situation in El Salvador for an explanation of the buying of Israeli fighters, or the training of 300 Salvadoran officers at the American base in Panama.

Imperialism is trying to divide the revolutionists, to make them think that if they act independently of each other, it will not intervene. But it is building up its response on a regionwide basis, and direct U. S. intervention in any one country would only be a prelude to an intervention throughout the region. The experience of the Indochinese wars confirms this. Whether or not the conditions exist for unity of the revolutionary organizations throughout Central America, greater coordination of these vanguards is both necessary and desirable. The course of the struggle, moreover, is putting unification of Central America on the agenda, a task the bourgeoisie could not accomplish.

As a result of the objective conditions in the area, the growth of the working class, the weight of the peasantry and of the middle layers in Central America, the nature of the leadership of the struggle and its objectives, this revolutionary process is developing along the lines of a democratic, anti-imperialist struggle of the broad masses of the poor and alienated population. In the circumstances of Central America, it is hardly likely that a revolutionary struggle could begin immediately as a socialist revolution. The weight of basic democratic questions is too great.

Moreover, while it is possible to skip over stages in the historic development of peoples, it is impossible to jump over stages in the development of the consciousness of the workers and peasants. In a rather empirical way, the Salvadoran revolutionists have understood this, and therefore they have won the confidence of the exploited and oppressed of Central America.

Thus, those who accuse the Central American revolutionists of class collaborationism, are analyzing the revolution in a schematic and sectarian way.

The struggle has taken a primarily military form precisely because the primary and immediate political and organizational instrument of the ruling classes and the imperialists are the Central American armies, with the shadow of the U. S. military forces looming up behind them.

Therefore, the rebels against such dictatorial rule came to the conclusion that in order to counter the instrument of the rulers, they needed revolutionary armies.

However, the experience of the Russian revolution and the last sixty years of world revolution shows that it is impossible to achieve national liberation, or agrarian reform, or democratic freedoms, or to break loose from imperialist domination without establishing a workers and peasants government, which requires the destruction of the bourgeoisie's basic apparatus of coercion, the army. This has always been one of the main tenets of the world Trotskyist movement. But it is more and more clearly understood by a broad sector of the Central American vanguard.

This revolutionary vanguard is drawing the conclusion, empirically, if you like, that the revolution must grow over into a socialist one, that it is necessary to combine with the tasks of achieving national liberation, socialist measures and steps to extend the revolution.

Moreover, the methods of action and struggle of the Central American revolution are becoming more and more proletarian. We are seeing a combination of armed struggle and mass organization, of trade union struggles and struggles by the Native American communities, of struggles in the cities and the countryside.

Above all, it is important to remember the youthfulness of the main forces in this revolution. The ranks of the revolutionists are made up overwhelmingly of young people from the ages of twelve to eighteen. They have not experienced the betrayals of Stalinism. They are learning for themselves in action. These youth are the heirs of the best traditions of the revolutionary nationalist struggle but they no longer believe in the values of the ruling classes.

The advancing revolutionary struggle in Central America is a resounding demonstration that the world youth radicalization has not waned but has continued to expand, spreading from the youth in school to the working class.

By Fred Denfert

"PEOPLE'S POWER" IN CUBA

In a transitional society, the masses have to be involved in the exercise of power on two levels. One is direct involvement in making policy decisions on all the central options in the building of a socialist society, including the formulation of the national economic plan. The other is effective monitoring of the administration of the various institutions and the management of enterprises, as well as of the implementation of the plan.

The Soviet bureaucracy's ideologies generally pose mass participation in the exercise of power from the standpoint of "involvement in administration." Thus, in Victor Turovtsev's work People's Monitoring in the Socialist Society--which was distributed to the delegates to the 1975 congress of the Cuban Communist Party (CCP)--there is a long section on how to "involve the masses in the administration of the state." Such considerations are a clear reflection of the ideological contortions demanded of a bureaucracy that has expropriated all power from the workers but continues incessantly to proclaim the "leading role of the working class."

Turovtsev writes: "It is necessary to teach the workers the art of administration, to find the most practical ways for them to play a part in it and to exercise supervision over it. . . . The main thing is to assure that all levels of administration are open to monitoring by the people, and that every citizen is involved in one form or another in democratic inspection. But at the same time, interference cannot be permitted in administrative processes that demand a specific mandate and individual responsibility. To fail to understand this would result in undermining leadership, and tolerating disorder, indiscipline, and anarchistic methods. It would foster an attitude of irresponsibility cloaked in empty phrases about democratic and collective decision making (1)."

This notion of a "specific mandate and individual responsibility" expresses concretely the bureaucracy's monopolization of power and the exclusion of the masses from any real involvement in the exercise of power or monitoring of it. This monopoly of decision mak-

ing is implemented through the single bureaucratized party, which controls all the "responsible" posts (that is, the Nomenklatura).

This role of the single party was codified in Article 126 of the Soviet constitution of 1936. It is defined even more clearly in the new Soviet constitution adopted in October 1977 (2).

THE LEADING ROLE OF THE SINGLE PARTY

From a constitutional and institutional standpoint, the Castroist conception of the participation of the masses in the exercise of power combines traits similar to those of the system existing in the USSR, with some other very distinctive features of its own, in a context where the great majority of the people remain attached to their revolution and to its historic leadership.

Thus, we find in the Cuban constitution of February 1976, the following affirmation of the principle of the role of the single party:

"The Communist Party of Cuba, the organized vanguard of the working class, is the supreme leading force in the society and the state, whose common efforts it directs toward the achievement of the lofty aims of building socialism and advancing toward the communist society (3)."

This concept is not a new one in Castroist thinking. In 1961, Fidel Castro said: "I sincerely believe that of all the political systems conceived of by humanity throughout its long history, the best system of government is one based on a state directed by a democratic revolutionary party with a collective leadership (4)."

The Cuban constitution was largely modeled on the Soviet one, as Raul Castro clearly says: "We see for example in Article 126 of the 1936 constitution of the USSR that it states that the CP is the 'leading nucleus in all workers organizations, both social and governmental'. . . . This is another fundamental principle for us to observe today when we want to implement and institutionalize our dictatorship of the proletariat. That is, the principle of the leading role of the party in all governmental and social activities. . . . In order to exercise its leading role throughout the society,

the party bases itself on the state, the mass organizations, and--if necessary-- on direct mobilization of the working masses (5)."

The role assigned to the party therefore requires that there be only one. The possibility of having more than one party, even parties that would defend the basic economic and social gains of the revolution, is never considered. To the contrary, the official theory is that of a one-party state.

Of course, in a single-party system the problem of internal democracy within the single party takes on a great importance. Internal democracy would mean the possibility of expressing positions different from those of the leadership, being able to present these to the membership as a whole, to raise them in the leadership bodies if necessary, and finally being able to form groupings around a political platform in order to be able to defend such divergent positions.

To be sure, there have been discussions running through the various leadership bodies of the CCP, especially after the turns carried out on both the domestic and international fronts. To be sure, the leadership has shown itself capable of making critical balance sheets of its activities and its options, of explaining these to the masses, and of mobilizing the masses.

However, it is equally true that the whole functioning of the party rests largely on a high concentration of basic decision-making at the top level, and on a very clear opposition to any concept of democratic centralism that would involve the right to form tendencies and factions. In substance, democratic centralism is seen as the operation of criticism and self-criticism within the framework of a monolithic party (6).

The Cuban CP leadership has made a dogma out of the temporary ban on factions adopted by the Tenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party in March 1921. In Stalinist tradition, this decision became a rule of party functioning that forbids ideological tendencies as well as factions.

So, in the Political Orientation Course for 1973-74, subtitled The Leninist Party, which was supposed to be the basis for preparing the cadres to participate in the First Congress of the CCP in 1975, it says:

"The Marxist-Leninist conception of party unity was most precisely formulated in the resolution adopted by the Tenth Congress of the CP (b) of Russia, which was written by Lenin in 1921. It notes that all conscious workers must understand clearly the harm done by all sorts of factional activity, which cannot be tolerated, since in practice they lead inevitably to undermining collective work (7)."

Further on, in order to clarify this point and to characterize anyone who might oppose these conceptions, it is explained: "In Russia, it was the Trotskyists, the right-wing capitulationists, and other enemies of Leninism who promoted the theory that it was possible for various currents and factions to coexist in the same party, and who tried to undermine the party in its struggle against the class enemy (8)."

In the Castroist conception, affirming the leading role of the party in all spheres does not mean that there is no recognition of the need for a division between the party and the state. The existence of the People's Power bodies reflects, to a certain extent, a partial separation. Raul Castro explained to the party cadres: "Never forget in your activities that the party does not administer, and that it must not in any case interfere in the day-to-day work of the organs of 'People's Power' and their administrative apparatuses (9)."

Nonetheless, this principle of separation is severely limited. Andre and Francine Demichel indicate (10): "If there are no party members in the trade-union leadership, the party can get itself invited to meetings of the union executive. Likewise, in administration for every institution there is a list of positions that the party must monitor. Party approval is necessary for all professors, researchers, and cadres concerned with teaching Marxism."

In this regard, it should be noted that the preamble to the constitution states that "Cuban citizens are guided by the triumphant doctrine of Marxism-Leninism."

Further on in their book, Andre and Francine Demichel write: "This relative osmosis between the party and the state is reflected also in the composition of the party. While the category 'workers carrying out tasks of administrative and political leadership' accounts for 7.7% of the employed population, it is 42.1% for the party (11)."

THE MASS ORGANIZATIONS

All the mass organizations were set up during the period of large-scale mobilizations in 1959-62, which was marked by the growing

over of the revolution into a socialist one and the defeat of imperialism in the attempted landing at Playa Giron (April 17, 1961).

In 1960, the Committees to Defend the Revolution (CDRs), the Cuban Federation of Women (FMC), the Association of Young Rebels (the future UJC--Young Communist League) were founded. In 1961, the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) was set up. Only the Cuban Workers Confederation (CTC), the single labor confederation, predates the revolution, having been founded in 1929. But it played a leading role in the 1958 general strike.

The history of the Cuban mass organizations is inseparable from that of the mobilization of the workers and their allies and of the advances of the revolution. In every test, they have answered specific needs of the masses, not only as organs of defense and vigilance but also as instruments for social transformation. This is what has given them their legitimacy in the eyes of the masses. This characteristic differentiates them fundamentally from the "mass organizations" in the USSR, which are designed to be instruments of control over the masses in the context of the expropriation of political power by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In Cuba, the mass organizations are frameworks for active participation, to varying degrees of course, in a great many areas of social life, such as vigilance, the management of social services, health and educational campaigns, and so on. Thus, by their very nature, they were acutely affected by the extreme administrative centralization of the mid-1960s. Most of them came out of this period in a weaker condition. One of the objectives set by Fidel in the aftermath of the ten-million-ton zafra (1970)--this went hand in hand with denouncing the bureaucratic excesses--was to try to revitalize these organizations within the framework of "People's Power." But their functions were never extended to the point of making them into real organs of workers self-management.

Andre and Francine Demichel point out: "It is true that at the start, when neither the party nor the state were fully constituted, the mass organizations--especially the CDRs--played a particularly important role. But they never held 'People's Power.' It is also true that the consolidation of the party and then of the state have reduced the role of the mass organizations. In a nutshell, the mass organizations are not and have never been organs of self-managing democracy (12)."

In the Castroist conception, the mass organizations are intended to be transmission belts transmitting the authority of the party into the masses. They serve as a liaison between the party and the masses, and are subordinated to the party and to the state:

"The mass organizations are considered in a practice as 'transmission belts' for the party. This transmission is supposed to go in both directions. It is important to make the party aware of the needs and demands of the masses. Conversely, it is necessary to disseminate the party's slogans and orientations among the masses, to assure that the revolutionary ideology generated by the party is assimilated (13). The mass organizations cannot have a political line of their own that might differ from that of the party (14)."

For this reason, one of the criteria that the mass organizations have to meet is to be sociologically as representative of the entire population as possible.

In 1975, the CDRs included 80% of the population over the age of fourteen (4,800,000 persons) and the FMC 80% of the women (2,127,800 persons). The CTC, ANAP, the University Students Association, (FEU), and the High School Students Association (FEEM) included almost everyone in their respective categories.

Since these mass organizations do not have an orientation of their own, the selection of their cadres is under the control of the CCP: "There is an appointments list of cadres chosen by the party (14)."

The theses of the First Congress of the CCP specify that the leading positions in the mass organizations are to be taken by party members at the various levels:

"It is necessary to establish a register of posts in every body and institution defining what basic positions must be filled by the party, both in the party bodies and in the UJC, the state and the mass organizations. . . It must be determined what posts have to be included on the Central Committee's nomenklatura, as well as those of the party's provincial and municipal committees. It is necessary to assure that the key posts in every body are filled from the party register at each corresponding level (15)."

Finally, it is important to note that the CTC shares the same characteristics as the other mass organizations. The workers do use it as an instrument for collective defense against the administration. The local delegates are, for the most part, elected by the ranks. The CTC also has a certain monitoring role with respect to the mana-

gement of the enterprises. But the union federation is constrained in its activity by the fact that it is closely associated with the overall management of the economy. It has to push the implementation of the plan, it has to strive to reduce absenteeism and increase productivity. In practice, this means that the union leaders and the plant managers work closely together constantly (16). On the ideological level, this is codified by the formulation that "the CTC and the unions have the task of teaching the workers the communist attitude to work and social property (17)."

The unions, thus, are not "self managed" and independent of the state and the party. They serve to a certain extent as transmission belts between the party, the state, and the masses. Nonetheless, they capture the real activity of the masses, the demands that the workers raise. And the union leaders in the party bodies further transmit these demands and concerns. There is not the division between the union organization and the masses that exists in the "People's Democracies."

At the beginning of the revolution, the mass organizations played a larger role than today. To a certain extent, "People's Power" has taken over their former functions.

PEOPLE'S POWER

The failure of the campaign for the ten-million-ton zafra in 1970 revealed the explosive contradictions that had been built up by the hypercentralization of the economy in the 1960s, the lack of central planning and the lack of organs of power enabling the masses to play a part in a series of important decisions. A grave economic crisis went hand in hand with rising mass discontent in the face of the emergence of a stratum of negligent functionaries and intermediary cadres, who abused their powers and enjoyed privileges.

The strength of the Castroist leadership was its ability to recognize the alarm signal given by the masses. It responded to this questioning of economic disorganization and of bureaucratic management by proposing a profound reshaping of the institutions of the workers state. The plan for this was worked out from 1970 to 1975, and tried out in Matanzas province. It was later extended to the rest of the country. The reform was called poder popular.

In 1976, a new constitution was adopted, replacing the Fundamental Law adopted in February 1959. It is worth taking some time to see how it was drawn up, and then ratified by the masses, as well as to point up the changes that it introduced with respect to the Fundamental Law.

The main lines of the constitution were laid down in 1974 by the Political Bureau of the CCP and the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers (CECM). On the basis of these, a first draft was prepared by a commission composed of members of the Central Committee and the government, presided over by Blas Roca. The first draft was re-discussed by the Political Bureau and the CECM before being published and discussed by the party, the UJC, and the mass organizations.

"Then in the party the amendments coming from the ranks were discussed and sifted. During the summer of 1975, the CCP's commission on consolidation and organization studied the amendments, and retained a certain number. After that, the final draft of the constitution was drawn up at the First Congress of the CCP (December 17-22, 1975). It was published on December 27.

"The draft was finally sent to the people for adoption. The referendum was held on February 15, 1976. All citizens above the age of sixteen voted. There were 5,602,973 ballots cast, 98% of the number registered to vote. The constitution was approved by 5,473,534 votes (97.7%) against 54,070 (1%). It was adopted on February 24, 1971 (18)."

In the absence of any extensive opportunity for public debate on the national level, this kind of democracy is quite formal. It is a good reflection of the paternalistic and didactic nature of the Castro leadership's relations with the masses. The balance sheet of the two-year long process by which the constitution was drawn up and adopted is in fact eloquent.

a) "By comparison with the first draft, the final one had relatively few changes, and those were essentially technical (19)."

b) "In a meeting of the twenty members of the editing committee, it was said that the hand and thinking of Fidel could be seen in almost all the articles of the first draft. . . . It was he who introduced the largest number of adjustments and modifications. . . . In fact, a third of the changes were results of proposals made by Comrade Fidel (20)."

The new constitution, however, contains a number of new elements that could have been the subject of a major national debate.

The Fundamental Law, adopted in the aftermath of the seizure of power, was a bourgeois democratic constitution. It proclaimed respect for private property (Article 24), and for freedom of the press, assembly, and association (Article 33). In particular, it recognized

both the right to strike and the right to lockout (Article 71). It provided for elections and a multi-party system (21).

Leaving aside the points already highlighted regarding the role of the party and the mass organizations, it must be noted that in the new constitution all democratic rights are made conditional on conformity to the objectives of the socialist revolution. There is no mention of the right to strike. In view of the role that is accorded to the single party, this constitution could only lead to a limited conception of "People's Power."

In his speech of September 28, 1971, Fidel Castro left no ambiguity about the nature of "People's Power", explaining that it was intended to "carry through a deep-going administrative decentralization, to put under the control of the communities all those activities that, because of their regional nature, they can monitor, direct, and administer." Article 102 of the constitution adopted four years later contains almost the same formulation.

However, it is probably in Fidel Castro's July 26, 1977, speech on "People's Power" that the definition is clearest, and it is worth quoting it at length:

"The key principle (of 'People's Power') is that every productive unit or service facility that provides goods or services to the community must be managed and monitored by the community." This was to apply to the municipal, provincial, and national levels. "This means that the schools, treatment centers, stores, bars, factories, movie houses, leisure centers, and all other centers are and will continue to be managed and administered by the 'People's Power' body in every locality. There will no longer be in Cuba a single movie house, store, or school managed centrally from Havana. . . . They will be monitored and managed by their own community. . . . There will be certain activities and units which because they work for the entire country will be monitored centrally by the national 'People's Power'--the merchant marine, heavy industry, the banks, the fishing fleet, the railroads. . . . But all other activities will be run by the municipalities and the provinces."

"This decentralization does not mean, however, that every community or province is going to be on its own. . . . They will have to follow certain norms in order to avoid inequalities and disparities from developing around the country. The

services offered have to be similar. A municipal hospital, for example, cannot do what it pleases; it will have to maintain standards similar to those in the rest of the country. . . . But aside from this, the local 'People's Power' will be the unit of government responsible for what goes on in this hospital, for the way in which it is run and the way its personnel responds to the needs expressed by the population. . . . The members of the community will be responsible for everything that happens in this hospital. In the previous period of the revolution, the community was served by the hospital or the polyclinic. But these facilities were administered by the Ministry of Health. Henceforth, they will be administered by the community (22)."

The "People's Power" thus represents administrative decentralization, putting activities of a regional character under the control of the communities. Up to the municipal level, the delegates are chosen and elected by the local population. They are subject to recall at all these levels.

But the decision-making process remains highly centralized and not subject to direct control by the masses, and the same goes for the management of enterprises of national importance, banks, and so forth.

The Theses of the First Congress of the CCP, clarify this latter aspect further: "The decentralization process involves transferring to the local organs of 'People's Power' activities, productive units and service facilities, as well as the creation of enterprises subject to local control. It must be accompanied by a reinforcement of the planning and systematic inspection functions that belong to the central organs of the state (23)."

Centralization is assured by the structure of "People's Power." It consists of a series of municipal and provincial assemblies rising in a pyramid towards a National Assembly, the "highest legislative body." This assembly names the Council of State, which has a chairman, Fidel Castro. He is also chairman of the supreme executive and administrative body, the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers, whose members he nominates for ratification by the National Assembly.

"The successive delegations of authority from the National Assembly to the Council of State and from the Council of State to the chairman can lead to a concentration of powers, as is now the case, in the hands of the Executive Committee

of the Council of Ministers. The latter body will probably be, as it is now, composed essentially of members of the Political Bureau of the Party (24)."

What is more: "All the members of the Council of Ministers, except the chairman, are named by the National Assembly of 'People's Power' on the recommendation of the chairman of the Council of Ministers elected by the Assembly. He accepts the resignation of members of the Council of Ministers and nominates their replacements for ratification by the Assembly or the Council of State (Articles 7 and 9) (25)."

Andre and Francine Demichel draw the conclusion: "In Cuba, there is a certain one-man rule--which might be considered a step backward--in the executive organs, since the chairman of the Council of State, who is also the chairman of the Council of Ministers, has powers detachable from the bodies over which he presides. From the standpoint of theory, such a situation cannot be justified, not even by the need to tailor the constitution to fit the special role played by Fidel Castro (26)."

The process of drawing up the plan illustrates this extreme concentration of decision-making power over which the masses have no control, but which is accompanied by an administrative decentralization that provides some room for real mass activity.

All the basic decisions are made in the Political Bureau and Secretariat of the CCP, and then ratified by the congress of the CCP, following the same stages that preceded the submission of the draft constitution to a national referendum.

On the basis of the general outline drawn up by the Political Bureau and Secretariat of the CCP, JUCEPLAN (the Central Planning Board), whose chairman is a member of the Council of Ministers, works out the first draft of the national development plan, after consulting with the plant managers, the mass organizations, groups of specialists, and so forth. This plan is then submitted to the National Assembly, which can amend it and, theoretically, either accept or reject it. Up until now, it has never rejected it, and it is hard to see how such a thing could happen since CP and UJC activists strongly predominate at all levels in the structure of "People's Power."

The delegates to "People's Power" bodies are only nominated and elected directly up to the level of the municipal assemblies. Moreover, it is not the members of the municipal assemblies who choose the candi-

dates for the provincial assemblies or for the National Assembly but a nominating commission presided over by a representative of the party.

The nominating commission can propose persons who have not been elected by popular vote for municipal assemblies. It is by this mechanism that representatives of the activists in trade unions and enterprises vital to the national interest that remain outside the sphere of the local "People's Power" bodies are included in the structure of "People's Power," since the electoral unit is not the workplace or school but the neighborhood.

The filtering-out mechanism is thus extremely effective. It is so much so that in 1976, 72.2% of the locally elected delegates were members of the CP or the UJC, and this percentage went up to 96.7% of the delegates to the National Assembly (91.7% were members of the CP and 5% of the UJC).

Since the party members have already approved the orientations in the CCP congress, their contributions are always limited to amendments of a technical order. This in fact is the reason why they are chosen. Because of the existence of a single party that does not recognize the right of factions and tendencies, there is no possibility of an alternative at the national level.

Nor does the control of the press by the party and the mass organizations linked to it leave any room for debating orientations and ideas. This deprives the masses of a fundamental tool of workers democracy. In fact, the delegates are not elected on the basis of their political positions but of their personal abilities to defend the key decisions and carry them out in practice. The National Assembly cannot therefore in reality play the role of the supreme body of "People's Power." Indeed, the network of "People's Power" organs has a dual function:

--Firstly, to better adjust the central choices to possibilities and needs, because the delegates transmit innumerable and incessant complaints from the workers.

--Secondly, to curb bureaucratic tendencies and administrative red tape on the local level, that is, in the area that touches the masses directly and where they are rightly very sensitive.

The way in which the masses have taken on the task of solving the immediate local problems posed for them through the organs of "People's Power," and the struggle they are waging in the neighborhoods and municipalities against bureaucratic snarls are the best demonstration of their capacity for action

and their devotion to the revolution. At the same time, this gives an indication of greater possibilities, if the masses had real organs of socialist democracy at the regional and national levels instead of the present bodies which serve only as a means for applying pressure and for expressing their feelings. The experience accumulated by the Cuban workers over these last twenty years of the revolution provides an important springboard for such a transformation.

1. Victor Turovtsev, El control popular en la sociedad socialista, Havana, 1975, p. 92.

2. Article 6 of the Soviet constitution of 1977 says: "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) is the force that directs and orients Soviet society, it is the central element in its political system and in all state and social organizations. The CPSU exists for the people and based on the people. Drawing its inspiration from Marxism-Leninism, the Communist Party sets the general perspectives of social development, the guidelines of the USSR's domestic and foreign policy. It directs the great creative activity of the Soviet people, and provides a planned and scientific basis for their struggle for the victory of communism."

This article is very similar to Article No. 5 of the Cuban constitution. By comparison with the Soviet constitution of 1936, it marks a reinforcement of the "leading role of the party." This is reflected, as in the Cuban constitution, by the fact that the "leading role of the party"

is put in the first chapter of the constitution and not as it was in 1936 in Chapter 10, which deals with the "Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens." Cf. Guy Desolre, Les Quatre Constitutions sovietiques--1917-77, Savelli, Paris, 1977.

3. Patrice Gelabrol, "Cuba: le Processus d'institutionnalisation," Notes et Etudes documentaires, February 15, 1977, p. 14.

4. Fidel Castro, la Revolution cubaine, Vol. 1, Maspero, Paris, 1969, p. 226.

5. Curso de orientacion politica 1973-74, El partido marxista-leninista, Departamento de orientacion del Comité Central del PCC, Havana, 1973, p. 73.

6. Ibid., p. 66.

7. Ibid., p. 64.

8. Ibid., p. 79. In an explanatory note on "Trotskyist," the manual informs the reader as follows: "Trotskyism, an opportunist current in the RSDRP. It was defeated in the 1920s. The Trotskyists rejected Lenin's doctrine on the possibility of building socialism in one country and opposed the party resolution that called for taking the road of building socialism in the USSR. They underestimated the importance of the alliance of the workers with the peasants, which they considered a reactionary force, one that would sooner or later turn against the workers. With respect to internal party life, they were partisans of the right to form factions and groupings."

9. Cited in la Nouvelle critique, Carlos Serrano. "L'experience de Matanzas," April 1975.

10. Andre and Francine Demichel, Cuba, 419 pp. Librairie generale de droit et de jurisprudence (LGDJ), Vol. XXXI, Paris, 1979, pp. 120-121. These two authors are members of

the French CP and avowed sympathizers of the Cuban revolution. In the introduction to this work, which investigates essentially the institutional and constitutional aspects, they say:

"This book is not neutral in the meaning given to the word in classical juridical and political ideology. We have taken up the study of Cuba with a feeling of great sympathy. But we never intended to make any systematic apology for Cuba, which would be neither scientific nor credible (p. 13)." On the basis that there was no "pluralist" tradition in Cuba, Andre and Francine Demichel defend the principle of the single party. Likewise, they echo the traditional thesis of the CPs about "democratic centralism."

11. Ibid., p. 128 and First Congress of the CCP, Tesis y resoluciones, Havana, pp. 19 and 23.

12. Andre and Francine Demichel, op. cit., p. 102.

13. Ibid., pp. 103-04.

14. Ibid., p. 103.

15. First Congress of the CCP, op. cit., p. 77.

16. Cf. Marta Harnacker, Los protagonistas de un nuevo poder. Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, Havana, 1979, p. 43.

17. First Congress of the CCP, op. cit., p. 245.

18. Andre and Francine Demichel, op. cit., p. 143.

19. Ibid., p. 145.

20. Harnacker, op. cit., p. 94.

21. Patrice Gelabrol, op. cit., p. 12.

22. Fidel Castro, July 26, 1977, Speech, Granma, Havana.

23. First Congress of the CCP, op. cit., p. 181.

24. Patrice Gelabrol, op. cit., p. 17

25. Ibid., p. 24.

26. Andre and Francine Demichel, op. cit., p. 291. ■

**SUBSCRIBE TO
INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT**

REACTION TO THE REPRESSION IN POLAND

BRITAIN

Socialist Challenge

The weekly newspaper supported by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International, wrote in its editorial January 7, 1982:

"The significance of the struggle in Poland for the workers of the whole world was that Poland in 1980 and 1981 represented the highest point of the world revolutionary process, the most politically advanced struggle taking place anywhere.

"The struggle of Solidarity against the bureaucratic system gave rise to forms of organization and struggle which contained lessons for the workers of every country. Control over hiring and firing; veto rights over workers managers; democratic organization of strikes and unions; access to the media; direct access by tens of thousands of workers to the negotiations between party leaders; massive use of factory occupations; and the extension of Solidarity's membership and influence into every sphere of Polish society—all these things represented a threat not only to the bureaucracies in Eastern Europe but also to the capitalist system in the West. Despite the crocodile tears, Solidarity's radical actions had few friends in the Western governments...

"The defeat of the Polish workers would be a defeat for the workers of the whole world, especially if a Soviet invasion occurred.

"The effects of such a move would be incalculable. Anti-communism and anti-socialism would be strengthened everywhere. Movements like the CND in the West would be completely undercut by the ideological impact of such events.

"Already the crackdown on the Polish workers has put the peace movement in West Germany on the defensive, opening it up to demagogic attack from government leaders. If the Polish workers are defeated a similar process will take place everywhere with the right wing being strengthened in all the trade unions and mass workers' parties. The Stalinist suppression of the Polish workers would immensely strengthen the hands of U.S. imperialism, giving it much more room for manoeuvre, especially against the revolution in Central America.

"Never has the interaction between the international and national class struggle been more clearly demonstrated. Never has the silent but real community of interests between Stalinism and imperialism in

the face of mass workers struggles been so clear.

"The defense of the Polish workers is the single most important task for socialists everywhere. Public meetings, collections of money for the Polish resistance and trade union delegations to visit Poland should all be planned. Poland must be raised in every workers' organization—and those like Tony Benn who hesitate to speak up in defense of the Polish workers must be forced to act".

In an accompanying article, the British revolutionary paper described the problems of building a solidarity movement in the United Kingdom:

"There are difficulties in the Polish situation'. That was one comment miners' president Arthur Scargill made just after the military crackdown.

"Scargill also maintained his support for 'free independent trade unions in every nation', but added, it is clear that Solidarity is not a trade union in our accepted sense of the word. It is, I suspect, a political movement.'

"The 'difficulties' Arthur Scargill appears to have in standing full square with the Polish workers are shared by a number of leading personalities in this country's labour movement.

"Even worse, it is left wingers who have tended to react most cautiously to the Polish events.

"Tony Benn, for example, has said virtually nothing in public since the imposition of martial law. The majority of the Labour Party's national executive refused to support a call from Eric Heffer for a Labour Party demo on 20 December in support of the Polish workers..."

However, the paper pointed to some hopeful developments:

"...strong statements have come from Communist Party member Mick Mc Gahey, president of the Scottish miners. On 29 December, he offered to go to Poland as an expression of his support for the miners there.

"He explained that Scottish miners 'are calling for the freeing of all those who have been detained arising from resistance to the imposition of martial law...'

"The TUC /Trade Unions Council/ and general secretary Len Murray were also quick to condemn the crackdown. Murray has applied for a visa to visit Poland, a

point he made when he and other members of the TUC General Council visited the Polish ambassador in London on 27 December.

"The delegation, said Murray, voiced 'very strongly indeed the revulsion of the British workers and the TUC about what has happened in Poland'.

Statements like that give the Labour movement in the country something to build on in establishing real and active support for Solidarity.

"But this will not happen if the right wing in the Labour Party and the TUC is seen to be giving the lead in condemning Polish authorities..."

"It is true that many of the larger meetings and demonstrations in this country which have been held in protest over the events in Poland have been dominated by cold war rhetoric.

"But that is inevitably the case if the left muffles its voice, or prattles on about the 'difficulties' in giving one hundred per cent support to Solidarity".

FRANCE

Rouge

"The only possible answer to the repression in Poland," the weekly paper of the Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International, wrote in its December 24, 1981 issue, "is the international solidarity of the working class. The bourgeois and the bureaucrats have frontiers that they respect in order to maintain themselves in power. The workers have no frontiers but common interests.

"In France, as in many other countries, the workers have shown that they want to mobilise... They have understood instinctively that the struggle of the Polish workers is a fight for a true democratic socialism without bosses or bureaucrats."

An article on the center-page said: "Over the past ten days, an enormous wave of solidarity has welled up in France, as in other countries, in support of the Polish workers and their union, Solidarnosc...."

"The only way... to unite the protests, to focus all the indignation expressed by hundreds of thousands of workers who have gone out to demonstrate since the proclamation of the state of siege is to form a national action committee of the

workers movement in support of Solidarnosc."

On the back page Cyril Smuga wrote: "An entire people has risen up to resist the bureaucratic terror..."

"In this struggle, the aid of the European workers movement will be decisive for the resistance. It can launch inquiries... It can give material aid so that Solidarnosc can reconstitute its network. It is our duty to help. As the Polish revolutionists of the nineteenth century said, the fight is for 'Our Freedom and Yours'".

U.S.A.

The Militant

Under the headline "SWP maps solidarity effort to defend Polish workers", the January 1 issue of *The Militant*, the weekly paper that reflects the views of the Socialist Workers Party, one of the main founding parties of the Fourth International, reports on a speech by party leader Larry Seigle at a forum in New York City on December 18.

"Seigle said that it is impossible to defend Solidarity without understanding that imperialism is the deadly enemy of the Polish workers, as it is for the working people of the world.

Further on, the paper continued:

"In fact, Seigle said, everything that 'strengthens the position of imperialism, that covers up for imperialism, paves the way for imperialist aggression'..."

"Referring to the top AFL-CIO officials, the speaker said: 'They don't have an independent program. They follow the domestic policy of big business. They follow the foreign policy of big business.'

"This explains why the AFL-CIO officials are 'so enthusiastic' over the so-called solidarity campaign with Poland, Seigle said. 'Because it's just what imperialism is doing. It fits right in. They can join the orgy of anticommunism and do it all in the name of the workers' struggle, in the name of the unions, in the name of union democracy and union rights....'

"Just as socialists campaigned to spread the truth about the Iranian revolution in the face of reactionary, proimperialist propaganda during the hostage crisis, Seigle said, the primary responsibility today is to 'tell the truth about what Solidarity is fighting for in Poland, to explain what our stake is here, and to mercilessly expose the hypocritical campaign coming out of Washington, and Paris, and London, and the other capitals of imperialist countries'.

"If we do this, we will get a hearing. We will win over young workers, militants, whose instincts tell them that when Douglas Fraser and Lane Kirkland (top union bureaucrats) start to campaign alongside Ronald Reagan, it's time to look a little deeper into what's going on.

"We will win to our ranks young people who want to defend the revolution that is

advancing in El Salvador, in Central America, and in the Caribbean.

"If we tell the truth about Poland and about imperialism in meetings like this-- and where we work, on radio, television, everywhere-- that will be the kind of solidarity that we owe to our brothers and sisters in Poland,' Seigle said."

Intercontinental Press

In the December 28 issue of *Intercontinental Press*, published in New York, Larry Seigle, SWP leader, explained the way to build solidarity with the Polish workers:

"The most immediate effect of the suppression of Solidarity, however, is to heighten the danger of U.S. military action against Cuba, Nicaragua, Grenada, and the advancing revolutionary movements in El Salvador and Guatemala. Under the protective cover of the imperialist propaganda drive against Soviet 'imperialism', preparations for such a military move are being intensified.

"Internationalist consciousness of the working class, both within the workers states and within the portion of the world remaining under capitalist rule, is essential to the defense of the workers states against imperialism..."

"Such proletarian internationalism, however, cannot be fostered by the suppression of workers democracy. Rather, workers democracy and proletarian internationalism go hand in hand..."

"The inseparable connection between workers democracy and proletarian internationalist consciousness can be seen in Cuba. It is no coincidence that the most democratic workers state in the world, revolutionary Cuba, is also the land where the toiling masses have achieved the highest level of political consciousness, including internationalist consciousness. It is the most politically advanced working class in the world.

"And it is this understanding that makes Cuba an unshakeable defender of the Soviet workers state and at the same time places Cubans shoulder to shoulder with revolutionary fighters throughout the world --from Indochina to Nicaragua..."

"...The imperialists view with horror the prospect of a successful political revolution in Poland. Despite their hypocritical statements of support for union rights in Poland, they understand that a victory for the Polish working people would open the possibility of bringing to power a revolutionary government, like the one in Cuba. And the thought of a Cuba in Eastern Europe is a horrifying one for them."

He continued further on:

"These views, however, did not prevent the imperialists from having an international field day of anti-Soviet and anti-communist propaganda.

"One of the 'civilized' world's leading union busters, Britain's Premier Minister Margaret Thatcher, expressed unwavering support for union rights in Poland..."

"In France, the imperialist propaganda campaign carried out under the guise of 'solidarity' with Poland reached unrivaled heights. In Paris, the Socialist Party leadership, along with the SP-led unions, organized a protest march against the actions of the Soviet and Polish governments. The major bourgeois parties held a demonstration at the same time and same place..."

"In the United States, the bureaucracy of the AFL-CIO trade union federation jumped into the anticommunist campaign with a vigor noticeably missing when it comes to defending the rights of workers against capitalists.

"Their moment of glory comes when the rulers encourage them to play a more prominent role in carrying out imperialist policies, as they have done with their phoney solidarity campaign around Poland.

"Thus, 'AFL-CIO' demonstrations against the Soviet Union have been organized throughout the United States, promoted by the news media and hailed by the capitalist politicians.

"These reactionary demonstrations have been mirrored by actions called by 'left-wing' anti-communist groups, such as the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, (DSOC), which is affiliated to the Second International. DSOC joined with other groups to hold a 'solidarity' action in New York City December 16..."

"However their real priorities were indicated by the fact that the location chosen for the protest was not some symbol of American imperialism, but the Polish consulate..."

Workers Vanguard

The fortnightly newspaper of the Spartacist League, a small group that claims to be the only orthodox Trotskyist organization in the U.S., hailed the crackdown in Poland. The evolution of this group is interesting. Its main leader, James Robertson, was a leader of a "third camp" socialist tendency in his youth and led a split from the SWP in 1963, arguing that it was not sufficiently critical of the Cuban leadership, which he considered a bureaucracy not qualitatively different from the Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe.

In its January 8 issue, this paper writes:

"Encouraged by Radio Free Europe and the Polish pope, it was clear that Solidarnosc was moving to overthrow the Warsaw regime and break with the Soviet Union. As we pointed out last issue, Jaruzelski's counter-coup came at the last possible moment as a move from a position of power. Secret government sponsored polls in 1980-81 showed that only 3 percent of the population would vote for the Communists in a free election; another 20 percent for socialists of various sorts and 43 percent for Christian Democrats--i.e., for capitalist counter-revolution in the name of the pope and (bourgeois) democracy.

"The International Spartacist Tendency drew the conclusions last September as Solidarnosc took up the Cold War propaganda themes of 'free elections' and 'free trade

unions' throughout Eastern Europe. 'Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!' before it is too late, we said. And, for now, the power grab by this 'company union for the bankers and the CIA' has been blocked. After the initial methodical roundup of Solidarity leaders, the flurry of resistance has died down... The immediate danger of counterrevolution has been checked."

The Spartacists rejected arguments that the capitalists and their governments tacitly accepted the crackdown.

"A lot of liberals and rad-libs, in order to justify their support to Solidarnosc, are fabricating the notion that Western bankers are supporting Jaruzelski's crackdown. Recently Cold War liberal James Wechsler, in a column entitled 'Bankers Battle Hymn' in the *New York Post* (23 December 1981), claims there is a cabal of 'Western bankers and American communists and trotskysts incongruously united in apologetics for the ruthless crackdown by the Polish commissars and their Kremlin sponsors'. By Trotskyists, he means the Spartacist League and cites the headline of the last issue of *Workers Vanguard* 'Solidarnosc Counterrevolution Checked.'"

AFL-CIO News

The weekly paper of the AFL-CIO began its article December 19, 1981 by quoting a statement by the U.S. trade union confederation:

"By imposing martial law, banning the activities of Solidarity and its affiliated unions, and jailing many of their leaders, the Polish government is seeking to deprive the Polish people of their strongest instrument of democratic progress and to stamp out the spark of freedom."

"Amid this new assault on Polish liberty, the American workers reach out to their brothers and sisters in Poland. We renew our pledge to assist Solidarity and its members by all the moral, financial and physical means at our disposal."

The paper continued: "AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland said that in its support of the Polish workers the federation will cooperate fully with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and all other associations and members of the international free trade union movement, in taking every possible legal action in support of Solidarity. The ICFTU immediately filed a formal complaint against the Polish government with the International Labor Organization..."

"As a signatory of ILO conventions No. 87 and 98, the Polish government is committed to respecting union rights of freedom of association, organizing, and collective bargaining."

The article went on to quote a speech by the Secretary Treasurer of the AFL-CIO, Thomas R. Donahue, at a rally at the federation headquarters:

"Donahue also lashed out at media commentators who have pictured Solidarity as the culprit in the current confrontation with the Polish authorities."

"That is sheer nonsense," he said. Solidarity has demonstrated... great so-

phistication about its bargaining tactics and a patience and a willingness to compromise that few in the western democracies or in the Eastern European dictatorships expected...

"The government's provocations, on the other hand, have surely not shown the same degree of flexibility. The threat to pass a law banning strikes and further regulating trade union activity were indeed the final straws--not the other way around."

The paper also carried extracts from the speech of the Chairman of the AFL-CIO Committee on International Affairs Martin J. Ward at the same rally:

"In all of our actions in support of Solidarity, we have made it clear that we have no wish whatsoever to interfere in Solidarity's policies or to give any political or economic advice. Solidarity has not asked for our advice in such matters, and we have not offered any."

"The workers of Poland alone can decide what they need and want to do. Our job is to provide fraternal support and encouragement and to provide the materials they need."

CANADA

Socialist Voice

The fortnightly paper of the Revolutionary Workers League-Ligue Ouvriere Revolutionnaire, Canadian section of the Fourth International, reported in its January 11, 1982 issue:

"Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau had a grim Christmas message for Polish and Canadian workers."

"Any effort to prevent a civil war is a positive step. If a military regime has the effect of preventing a civil war, then I can't inherently say it is bad," he told a pre-Christmas press conference.

"Amid the uproar that these comments provoked, Trudeau maintained his position. In his annual end-of-the-year interview with CTV's Bruce Phillips, he added: 'We see unions in Canada are always asking for more. I don't suppose the union movement in Poland is very different, they would want more, but at some stage it was obvious that the government couldn't give anymore... hopefully the military regime will be able not only to keep Solidarity from excessive demands but keep the Communist government from excessive repression.'"

CUBA

Granma

The January 8th issue of the Cuban Communist Party daily carries a compilation of dispatches from the official press service Prensa Latina on the situation in Poland. It reports, among other things:

"A regional tribunal in Katowice sentenced a group of Solidarnosc agitators who tried to promote a strike at the Huta Katowice steel plant after the proclamation of the state of siege."

"These provocateurs were also sentenced for publishing a bulletin, entitled, the 'Free Trade Unionist,' in which they instigated the murder of members of the Polish United Workers Party."

A correspondent of Prensa Latina, Nelson Marcos Garcia, reported from Warsaw:

"Other news is that all the primary and secondary schools are functioning normally and that the army is aiding in carrying out educational tasks."

"The soldiers are taking part in meetings with the students to explain to them why the state of siege was declared and helping to transport children who live far from school."

The dispatch also summarizes an article in the Soviet daily *Krasnaya Zvezda*, as follows:

"The daily... rejected the threats made by the U.S. against Poland and noted that this country is neither Texas nor Oklahoma."

"The legitimate authorities in Poland, it adds, have taken measures to restore order in the country, which does not violate any international treaties or constitute a threat to anyone."

"The daily comments that the only rights affected in Poland are those of the agents of Solidarnosc to prepare a coup and set up gallows for Communists."

Under this compilation of dispatches there are a series of messages of congratulations for the twenty-second anniversary of the Cuban revolution. The first is from the Jaruzelski government.

NICARAGUA

The Ministry of Propaganda and Information sent a circular to journalists advising them how to cover the events in Poland. It recommended, among other things:

"Stressing that the exceptional measures adopted by the Polish party and the government are designed to get the country out of the crisis caused by the violation of the principles of socialism by certain leaders of the Polish CP (today in prison) and by the way these errors were exploited by counter-revolutionaries in the service of imperialism... In Poland it is not the working class that is being repressed but counter-revolutionary elements who wanted to deliver Poland to imperialism... It should not be stressed that strikes are banned. What should be said is that the regime demands that the economic crisis be solved."

"The positive elements of the situation should be stressed -- the calm, stability and order."

Barricada

In its December 30 issue, the official organ of the Sandinista National Liberation Front carries a summary article on the events in Poland, which begins as follows: "1981 began with a continuation of the economic, social, political and ideologi-

cal crisis in Poland. It ended with the government taking drastic steps to overcome the crisis....

"The tension reached its height when the Solidarity congress was held...where a line was drawn that called for using strikes to take political power....

"The new government headed by General Wojciech Jaruzelski...exposed these conspiratorial plans....He decided to form a Military Council of National Salvation...

"At the beginning of the new year, the situation was slowly improving, with increased productivity in industry and the services....

"General Jaruzelski outlined a new policy to preserve socialism."

SPAIN

Combate

In its editorial January 15th, the weekly paper of the Revolutionary Communist League, section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state, says:

"The unions must take united and decisive initiatives, they must take the lead of the movement of solidarity with Solidarnosc... It is necessary to send trade union investigating committees to Poland to find out what conditions the 'interned' Polish trade unionists are being held... It is necessary to understand in terms of practical solidarity that the defense of the trade union rights of the Polish workers is a duty for workers in Spain, as well as for the Brazilian, French or Rumanian workers. It is necessary to understand that any socialism worth fighting for has to be based on the power of the workers themselves, in Poland as well as here."

BELGIUM

La Gauche

(Belgium)

The French-language weekly of the Belgian section of the Fourth International, the Revolutionary Workers League, writes in its January 8, 1982 issue:

"The reason for the passivity of our trade-union federations with respect to Poland is simply the fear inspired in all bureaucrats throughout the world by the example of fighting democratic trade unionism given by Solidarnosc.

"The militant trade unionists in the FGTB and CSC/the Social Democrat and Catholic union federations respectively/must assume their responsibilities -- demand a balance sheet on the demonstrations of solidarity with Solidarnosc. They must explain that a union movement that is incapable of mounting a serious defence of a trade union with ten million members (out of a total population of 35 million) ... cannot put up a serious fight either against cutbacks in social welfare."

NETHERLANDS

Klassenstrijd

The January 14th issue of the weekly paper of the Dutch section of the Fourth International says in a lead article:

"Now it is possible for all Dutch workers to support our Polish brothers and sisters. The Dutch trade union movement is organising a mass solidarity action. It is unfortunate that the FNV and the CNV (the Social Democrat and Christian union federations, respectively) have not joined together to build a united protest. It is the trade union movement that must take the lead in supporting Solidarity, as Z. Kowalewski, the Solidarity leader from Lodz has said...

"While it is unfortunate that the union federations have not been able to unite this time, we hope that they will continue to move forward. The actions of the FNV and the CNV can now form the keystone of the entire solidarity movement in the Netherlands."

GERMANY

Was Tun

The weekly of the Gruppe Internationaler Marxisten, German section of the Fourth International, has a lead article on solidarity with the Polish workers in its January 14th issue. It explains:

"Heinrich Boll has accused the left of ignoring the Soviet prison camps in the past and now remaining silent about Poland. Generally he is right, but he overgeneralizes. Thus, he himself ignores the support for Solidarity by sections of the left. There have been and continue to be many actions and protests by the left against the Jaruzelski putsch. But these leftists run up against a stone wall, in particular against the idea tacitly pushed that 'the Poles --Solidarity--went too far!'"

For January 30th, representatives of Solidarity in exile and the IBFG called demonstrations. A national demonstration is planned for the end of February.

"What is decisive is getting the DGB, the West German union confederation, to offer concrete solidarity. Hopeful signs here are the initiatives of a active trade unionists in Wolfsburg...Russelsheim, and Frankfurt... Here preparations are being made for concrete solidarity with Polish fellow unionists. For example, the Wolfsburg and Russelsheim workers are discussing twinning their plants with similar ones in Poland. The most pressing task at the moment is to get the DGB to send a delegation to Poland to find out where the arrested trade unionists are being held and to demand their immediate release."

DENMARK

Klassenkampen

In its editorial January 7, the weekly paper of the Socialist Workers Party (SAP), Danish section of the Fourth International, said:

"The workers of Poland have only one ally in both the West and the East--the working class. We very much hope for your solidarity as trade unionists and we appeal to you to declare this openly. That is no interference in the internal affairs of Poland, it is workers helping other workers.' This is the appeal made by a delegation from the Lenin shipyards in Gdansk to the German steelworkers union (I.G. Metall) immediately after Jaruzelski's coup.

"Solidarity of workers with workers is what is needed. There must be public protests, broad workers demonstrations for the ending of the state of siege and the release of the imprisoned members of Solidarity."

AUSTRIA

Die Linke

In its January 20 issue, the fortnightly magazine of the Revolutionary Marxist Group (GRM), Austrian section of the Fourth International, publishes an open letter to the Austrian peace movement. It begins as follows:

"Political forces in the West are seizing on the Polish events as an excuse for increased armament of NATO. The U.S. is building up a military presence in El Salvador and more and more openly threatening direct intervention against Nicaragua and progressive forces throughout Central America. Begin decreed the annexation of the Golan Heights of Syria, thereby taking a dangerous step towards a new Mid-East war similar to the one launched in 1956 after the crushing of the Hungarian revolution."

The letter continues further on:

"Solidarnosc was not only a union but also the biggest peace movement in the Eastern Bloc.

"Solidarity with Solidarnosc must not be left to those who want to use it as a pretext for their own great power politics and war preparations. Only if the peace movement itself actively organizes support for Solidarity, can these forces be prevented from making political capital out of the Polish events.

"Those who today want to promote detente by remaining silent about the Polish resistance are not strengthening peace but the unbridled power politics of the rulers in both blocs....

"Anyone who fails to protest the military suppression of an independent union of nearly ten million members and massive arrests of workers and intellectuals, will lose all credibility--and rightly so--in the eyes of the workers in the West who would defend their organizations against state of siege decrees, military putsches, and war preparations."

By Ernest Mandel



THE ROOTS OF THE POLISH ECONOMIC CRISIS

The economic crisis afflicting Poland is the most severe ever experienced by a postcapitalist society after it has achieved a modicum of stability, that is, outside of phases of war and civil war. For three consecutive years, the level of production has dropped. In 1979, it declined by 2%, in 1980 by 4%, and in 1981 by no less than 17%. This is not of course a capitalist crisis of overproduction, which is marked by a piling up of uninvested capital and unsaleable commodities, leading to mass unemployment and a decline in incomes. It is rather, as we have stressed on many occasions, a crisis of underproduction of use values. The result is shortages of all sorts of commodities, leading to the progressive disorganization of the entire productive machine, but with the incomes of the population remaining relatively high. However, this is only a capsule description of the crisis in Poland, not an explanation of it.

What are the economic roots of this crisis? And what are the connections between these roots and the peculiar structure of postcapitalist society "frozen" in its transition toward socialism by the dictatorship of the bureaucracy? To what extent could such a crisis be avoided under a system of socialist democracy and planned workers self-management even if, in the absence of victorious socialist revolutions in the main imperialist countries, the pressure of the world market continued to bear on a country where such a democratic system existed?

Answering these questions takes on a still greater importance when you consider that the symptoms of similar, although much more limited crises are already showing up in Romania, Hungary, and even in Czechoslovakia and the USSR. New breakdowns as massive as in Poland are not likely, but a marked decline in growth rates can already be seen. Semistagnation for one or several

years is quite probable in these countries.

The immediate cause of the present crisis is the "new course" set for the Polish economy after Edward Gierek took power, that is, after 1970-71. Alarmed by the Baltic port strikes of 1970, the new leadership of the Polish bureaucracy, with the Kremlin's backing, sought to achieve a social consensus embracing the majority of the urban population, as well as a section of the peasantry, above all the well-to-do peasants. This was to be based on an accelerated modernization of Polish society and its adaptation to Western-style consumption and life. The plan required a veritable "explosion" of productive investments devoted to the creation of a "second Polish industry," or a "second Poland." Massive borrowing in the capitalist countries was to make it possible to finance this gigantic effort without lowering the living standard of the working people (which in any case was impossible in the context of the new relationship of forces created by the 1970 strikes).

The internal logic of Gierek's program called for the following steps:

- o "Priming the pump" by increasing imports of consumer goods or semimanufactures from the West.
- o To achieve sustained development by building up new industries (automobiles, plastics, electrical equipment, agricultural machinery, chemical fertilizers, petrochemicals, aluminium, and ultramodern steel).
- o To import technology, machinery and if necessary semimanufactures and spare parts for these industries from the West.
- o On the basis of these industries to assure a steady and more abundant supply of the home market, which in turn would stimulate the workers and peasants to work harder, while maintaining "social peace."
- o To repay (sooner or later) the foreign debt generated by this policy by increased exports coming both

from the agricultural sector (including the food processing industry) and the new industries, which under the new stimuli, would produce quality goods saleable on the world market.

In itself this was not a crackpot scheme, as some claim today. (Notably, the very people who dismiss it today gave it a vote of confidence before, that is the experts in Comecon circles, the Warsaw technocrats, and the Western bankers). But it was shot through with dangers, since it tended to accentuate all the imbalances and distortions inherent in bureaucratic planning and management.

Worst of all, it dangerously magnified the basic disequilibria that had been present in the nationalized Polish economy since the 1950s. One of these was the imbalance between economic and social investments. The impact of the latter has been gravely underestimated by all economists educated under Stalinism. The others were the imbalance between heavy and light industry, between production and distribution (the underdevelopment of services and the distribution network is one of the aspects of the systematic neglect of social investments), and so on.

The entire economy was shaped by the material incentives of the bureaucrats, which were the only motive force in realizing the plan and all economic projects, including Gierek's program. That is, it was marked by the absence of socialist democracy, by the absence of social control over economic life. In this context, the Gierek plan led to a considerable aggravation of these disequilibria. Imbalances appeared within and between the various industries, which means clearly a partial breakdown of planning.

Every bureaucratic clique--they seemed to form mainly on the basis of the various regions--wanted to build its own model plant, its own pole

of development. This created a lot of new jobs for high paid "professionals," a lot of new emoluments, a lot of new sources of excessive privileges and power, to say nothing of the impact that these new enterprises had on the economy as a whole.

The close connections between this "second Polish industry" and Western credit obviously provided another source of corruption. Relatively easy access to foreign credits increased the tendency to import goods rather than produce them at home (1). Bribes from Western firms were an excellent means of persuading the Polish bureaucrats to step down the primrose path to which in any case their natural inclinations directed them. A whole parallel market (a quasi-legal if not legalized one) (2) developed in Poland for consumer goods that could be bought only for dollars or gold. The "material incentives" (a "Communist principle" that might be disputed only by "petty-bourgeois equalitarians") thus came to distort even the flow and composition of productive investments.

On top of this, the "gigantomania" inherited from Stalin definitely tipped the nationalized Polish economy toward chronic and generalized imbalances. A giant steelworks such as the one in Katowice did not have a sufficient supply of energy. The URSS tractor factories had to import spare parts from the West that cost more than the finished product itself. Coal mines stopped working because of the lack of engine belts that "someone" had forgotten to include in the import plan, and which anyway would have had to be paid for with the coal that had not been produced and therefore was not exportable. And so on, and so on.

Imbalances got worse from year to year, or even from one half of the year to the next. The delays in getting new plants into production grew longer and longer. This imposed increasingly heavy burdens--fixed costs and overhead costs not repaid by additional production--on the economy. There was a dangerous drop in the rate of utilization of productive capacity because of the lack of certain use values necessary to realize this potential (the current rate of utilization is estimated at 75%). The economy was clearly heading for disaster sooner or later.

Competent Polish economists raised the alarm before the summer 1980 strikes (3). The strikers themselves raised an outcry against this downhill slide. Far from having caused the crisis, the strikes were a spontaneous response of workers trying to stop this course toward disaster before it was too late. To blame the workers for the crisis, as the Soviet bureaucracy does, along

with its agents and lawyers, as well as the habitual opponents of strikes in the West is shameless mendacity. Altogether, strikes cost the Polish economy the equivalent of three or four workdays of overall production since the summer of 1980, that is, less than electrical powercuts caused by bureaucratic waste and shortsightedness, and were insignificant by comparison with the sum total of 60 workdays per capita of the economically active population that were lost in 1980-81.

WORLD CAPITALIST CRISIS

The catastrophic consequences of the Gierek program were magnified by the impact of the international capitalist economic crisis on the Polish economy. More precisely, the Gierek program, as well as the "Common Program" of the Union of the Left in France, like all the "theoretical" projections of the Stalinist bureaucracy at the beginning of the 1970s, was based on the assumption that there would be no further crises in the international capitalist economy, of at least no grave ones. In general, the bureaucracy expected the capitalist economy to continue to grow at a rate comparable to that of the 1960s. This projection involved two assumptions that were disastrous for the Gierek program.

--It was believed that there would be a market for quality Polish goods in the West continuing to grow at the same rate as the sales of these products did in the 1960s. But only one sector of Polish industry chalked up serious success in this regard--the shipyards. In all the other sectors, in the climate of the crisis, exports grew much more slowly than foreseen. As a result, the balance of trade and the balance of payments with the West steadily deteriorated.

--It was believed that the terms of trade would remain more or less the same as in 1970. But the abrupt in-

crease in the price of petroleum and other energy sources after 1972, as well as the rising prices of certain semimanufactures structurally undermined the balance of payments, because the "second Polish industry" depended fundamentally on an increased flow of such imports.

The first reaction of the bureaucracy was to divert a large part of production that had been allotted for domestic use (in particular, coal and meat) toward the export sector, in order to soak up the increase in the balance of trade deficit, and to appeal for additional foreign credits in order to reduce the burden of the debt on production and current revenues, and to allow depletion of the country's economic reserves (4). But these three remedies proved worse than the disease.

The reduced supply of coal to the electric power stations and to the homes of the workers and peasants during the winter of 1979-80 began to depress both industrial and agricultural production. The increased foreign debt brought a mushrooming of interest payments, which in the end absorbed almost all the currency obtained from current exports.

What exactly are the implications of this analysis? The capitalist economic crisis did not cause the Polish crisis. The Polish economy was capable of continued growth while production was dropping in the West (this is in fact what happened in 1974-75). To the extent that the Polish economy is not governed by the law of value, it can avoid crises of overproduction. It can enjoy a more or less stable rate of investment and growth year in and year out. To the extent that the Polish economy continues to be influenced by the law of value (whose effects are transmitted both by trade with the capitalist countries and through exchange with the private agricultural sector in Poland), it

1. According to Josef Kuzmieriek ("What I Knew," Krytyka, No. 3, winter 1979-80), quoted in an excellent article by Cyril Smuga in Issue No. 1 of the Polish Imprecor (the article includes a valid critique of the technocratic reform of the Polish economy prepared by the bureaucracy), these scattered initiatives led to simultaneously purchasing eleven different kinds of foreign trucks for the international transport enterprise PEKAES and various other heavy transport services. And this led to wasting foreign currency and frequent breakdowns due to the lack of spare parts.

2. While private holding of foreign currency and gold was always officially prohibited, the Polish state bank

minted gold pieces and sold them privately on at least two occasions, in 1976 and in July 1980, at a price of 3,000 zlotys per 8-gram piece, that is below the market price for gold! (Kurier Polski, February 1, 1981).

3. See especially the already famous declaration of the DIP and Rakowski's article in Polityka of July 5, 1980, and the previously cited article by Josef Kuzmieriek.

4. Two examples of this depletion of reserves are that mining output was increased without the necessary maintenance being kept up in the mines; and fishing boats built with large-scale inputs of goods bought for dollars were sold for rubles inconvertible to Western currencies.

clearly cannot escape certain negative results of the capitalist crisis, such as, for example, the failure of exports to meet expectations. But these effects only took on the catastrophic scope that they did in Poland because of a wrong economic policy, because of excessive dependence on trade with the capitalist countries, and because of the interlocking of these factors with the general and structural results of bureaucratic management.

THE LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF A STRUCTURAL WEAKNESS

In the course of the "Gierek Era" a structural weakness of the Polish economy inherited from the "Gomulka Era" began to have graver and graver repercussions in increasing the imbalances and as a source, at first potential and then active, of a crisis of underproduction. It was the survival in Poland of the largest private agricultural sector that exists today in any postcapitalist society, including Yugoslavia. Since Gomulka's "counter-reform" in 1956, 80% of the land in Poland has been in the hands of private farmers.

In itself, this "counter-reform" was unavoidable, inasmuch as in the "Bierut Era" the collectivization of agriculture was carried out against the will of the peasants. All of Marxist tradition, from Engel's famous articles on the French and Italian peasantry in 1894 to the theses of the Left Opposition in the Soviet Union, is opposed to any attempt to collectivize agriculture on a large scale without the conscious support of the peasants. The forced collectivization carried out by Stalin in fire and blood produced an economic, social, political, and moral disaster so great that to this day, a half century later, the consequences have not yet been overcome in the USSR. By comparison with such a catastrophe, even the present Polish economic crisis is clearly a lesser evil.

In reality, however, there is no need to choose between these two evils, a "great" disaster and a catastrophe limited in time. It is necessary to understand the operation of the economic and social contradictions that underlie the problem, the interconnection between rate of growth of nationalized industry and the living standard of the workers and that of the peasants, the growth trends in cooperative and collective agriculture and in private agriculture. Out of these five variables, it is possible to work out equations for solving the problem, if it is understood that these contradictions are real ones for which solutions have to be found and no attempt is made to

hide them for the sake of encouraging political passivity or a false sense of security.

However, far from undertaking a policy designed to progressively eliminate all these contradictions, Gierek chose options that led to a considerable worsening of these problems.

By accentuating the imbalance between investments in industry and investments in agriculture, the "Gierek course" increased the lag of agriculture behind industrial production, thereby endangering the plans for export and for supplying the urban population. An irrational policy of underinvestment in private agriculture (which, remember, represents 80% of the land under cultivation) further increased the tendency toward stagnation in agricultural production.

The reaction of the bureaucracy to the flareup of workers struggles aggravated the problem of price scissors. In order to forestall new explosions of working-class anger, the sale prices of agricultural products were in effect frozen, while the farmers' production costs rose sharply in response to the increase in the price of energy. More than ever, building materials and industrial consumer goods were diverted from the villages. A vicious circle developed. This policy literally drove the peasants to increase their consumption of their own products, resulting in a slowing in the growth of production and a crisis of supply in the cities.

Since the collective and cooperative sector of agriculture has a pitifully low productivity, it could hardly compensate for this structural weakness of the Polish economy. The weakening of the agricultural economy rapidly prepared the way for the collapse of Gierek's program. Given the relative stagnation in agriculture, after 1976, the bureaucracy continually faced the imminent danger of a crisis of supply, and rising discontent among the workers with an accompanying decline in their willingness to work. The whole gamble on creating a "consumer consensus" was lost. The "Gierek Era" failed to prevent a ripening of the crisis of bureaucratic dictatorship. In fact, finally, after 1976 it led to an acceleration of this crisis, having been able to delay it for only four years.

However, every new attempt to "go around" the peasantry by speeding up the development of the collective-cooperative sector ran up against the political and social awakening of the peasantry, which, with a certain lag, accompanied that of the working class after 1976; and against the emergence of a sponta-

neous sympathy, or even alliance, between the workers and peasants against the bureaucracy. Gierek, no more than Kania or Jaruzelski have, dared come down on the peasantry the way Bierut or Rakosi did, to say nothing of Stalin. They knew all too well that they were facing the danger of a generalized social explosion. So, after 1976 the crisis of agriculture deepened, aggravating in turn the endemic crisis of the economy as a whole and finally becoming one of the main factors touching off the economic catastrophe of 1980-81 (5).

THE CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF BUREAUCRATIC MANAGEMENT

However, the ultimate cause of the Polish economic crisis lies in the nature itself of the bureaucratic system of management that has directed the nationalized economy in Poland from the start. The problem is reduced by the advocates of "market socialism," by those who equate self-management with financial autonomy for the enterprise, by those who favor a general reliance on market mechanisms, to the evils of overcentralization. This is a false oversimplification, although the ills of overcentralization are undeniable. Such a partial and therefore incorrect analysis offers no valid solution to the problem, either from the standpoint of the interests of the workers or from that of achieving genuine rationality in the planned economy.

In fact, from the standpoint of the imbalance and crisis it generates, the bureaucratic system of management is a witch's brew of overcentralization and overdecentralization. In the absence of socialist democracy, that is, of all-pervasive inspection from below, any overcentralization, far from "reinforcing the plan," reinforces the growth of a "gray economy," the tendency for under-the-table operating by plant managements. It makes "planning" more and more unreal in the literal sense of the word. The planners lose their grip on reality and "plan" in a vacuum.

What the Polish economy needs is not less planning, that is less coordination between investment decisions,

5. For the sake of objectivity, it is necessary to note the serious floods in 1978 and their effects on agricultural production. But these floods in turn were at least partly due to negligence in maintaining the dikes, which resulted from the imbalance between investment in heavy industry and investment in agriculture and in the economic infrastructure.

between production and consumption. It needs increasing coordination. That is, it needs to replace half-blind, inefficient, and partially unreal planning with real coordination. But this can only be done on the basis of the workers themselves getting involved in the planning, in making the decisions, and consciously expressing choices. Only planned, coordinated and democratically centralized workers self-management can lay the foundations for a truly planned socialized economy. Anything else leads to arbitrariness, waste, incompetence, and to certain failure.

The economic experts and trade-unionist circles in Poland attach great importance to "price truth." They stress that the present system of subsidies that cannot be kept account of makes the whole picture of the economy obscure. It is impossible to know if an enterprise is really covering production costs by its sales or to what extent. They are right. No serious planning is possible without a system of true prices and without a stable monetary standard.

However, it by no means flows from this that "true prices" are a precondition for economic recovery, that is, that before there can be economic recovery the consumers of today and tomorrow, beginning with the poorest, must pay for the damage caused by the mistakes of yesterday's bureaucrats. Still less does it flow that the precondition for economic recovery is "rationalization of employment" (since "excess manpower" in the factories is considered one of the major sources of their "unprofitability").

What is involved here is not a technical question (at what level should equilibrium be reestablished and the distortions eliminated, at the level of the individual enterprise, or of the individual branches of industry, or at the level of the economy and the society as a whole). It is a social question. Who is to pay for the bureaucratic waste? Is the working class to pay, through cuts in its standard of living and level of employment? Is the petty bourgeoisie to pay, by a cut in its incomes? Should the bureaucracy pay, by a drastic reduction in its emoluments and privileges? Which fund has to be cut? The one for productive consumption (that is, consumption by the workers and working farmers)? The investment fund? The one for unproductive consumption (the cost of administration, the state apparatus, the bureaucracy)?

If all three funds are to be reduced at once, in what proportion and at what social and political price? The threat of reintroducing unemployment--the figure of one to two million layoffs following the

granting of "full financial autonomy to the enterprises" has been floated-- is a step to weaken and demoralize the working class. It is easy to foresee what the social and the economic impact of this would be.

Bureaucratic management is harmful and aberrant not only because it undermines planning and gives rise to manifold imbalances and contradictions. It is also the fundamental cause of the low productivity of labor and the declining return for investment. While it proclaims the principle of "material incentives," what bureaucratic management in reality represents is universal irresponsibility raised to the level of a principle, a general incentive for making the least possible effort and taking no initiative. The very multiplicity of bureaucratic authorities, which neutralize each other and give rise to constant administrative bottlenecks in the name of carrying out decisions (although their real function is more often to keep them from being carried out) in itself produces such a situation (6).

But here, another factor has to be put into the picture, which arises from the peculiar nature in a nationalized economy of the relationship between the social superstructure and base. In such an economy, the return on investments is determined less by their absolute size and their "technical" composition than by two external social and economic factors. One is, the increase in the well-being of the workers, the link that develops in their eyes and in their consciousness between their work and the measurable and visible effect of this work on their daily lives (7). The other is the level of social morality (or social justice). That is, the link that develops in their eyes and in their consciousness between

6. There are no less than forty different agencies devoted to "social inspection" and tracking down "economic crimes." All together they produce derisory results. Only 5% of economic crimes committed are discovered (according to Jamita Frey's article "The Inspectors and the Inspected" in Tygodnik Demokratyczny, May 11, 1980).

7. This effect is not measured so much in money income but rather in the satisfaction of real needs, both through the purchase of the desired goods and by access to quality social services--housing, laundries, and restaurants, health care, nurseries, education, cultural facilities, free time, travel, and last but not least decent public transport in the cities.

8. Thus, the "special stores" for bureaucrats were closed after Gomulka rose to power, and then reopened, notably in the form of "reserved

their work and the effect of this work on the extent of inequality and of privilege and arbitrariness in the society.

The lower these two indexes drop, or the longer they remain at a relatively lower level, the less the workers will work, the lower will be the return on investments, and the greater will be the investments needed to achieve even a marginal increase in the national income. The workers can be atomized, demoralized, and depoliticalized. But nothing and nobody can force them to work enthusiastically and reliably for a slave driver or for a bureaucratic overseer like Kania. This is the Achilles Heel of the bureaucratic dictatorship in all the bureaucratized workers states. But when the workers are no longer atomized, the seemingly all-powerful leviathan finds itself paralyzed.

From its inception the bureaucratic dictatorship has been characterized by growing social inequality and mass cynicism. While these tendencies were held in check to a certain extent under Gomulka, at least at the start of his "era," (8) they grew considerably in the "Gierek Era." Corruption, the black market, hypocrisy, and careerism flourished with hardly an attempt being made to conceal them. Bureaucratic privileges increased (9) substantially, notably becoming intertwined with the expansion of the "free market" and the "parallel market," with private trade and private small-scale production, and with the increased role played by trade with the West.

Over the last two years, the Polish press has published so many concrete examples of this phenomenon that there is no need to belabor the point. The salaries of top functionaries are three times the average wage and

shops" in stores, like the third floor of the Centrum, the biggest department store in Warsaw (Kurier Polski of November 21-23 and December 9, 1980).

9. One of the biggest scandals was the appearance of whole neighborhoods of luxury villas, called "Bermuda" by the masses (near Wyszki), "The Hilton" (in the Bielsko-Biala area), the "Ponderosa" (near Wroclaw) etc.

In Przybrodzin, the settlement consisted of 71 villas, costing from 800,000 to 1.5 million zlotys per unit (the average annual wage of an industrial worker is 85,000 zlotys--Slowo Powszechne, January 17, 1981).

Jaroszewicz, who was premier under Gierek, took over a castle near Cracow for his private use, although it was officially classed as a national monument.

eight times the per capita subsistence income (the respective figures are 20,000 zlotys, 6,000 to 7,000 zlotys, and 2,500 zlotys per month, and were current at the end of 1980 and the beginning of 1981) (10). But with their enormous nonmonetary benefits, the special stores, special hospital and medical care, villas, and special "second homes," their opportunities for traveling abroad and for dealing in foreign currency and goods, the real income of the high bureaucrats could easily be two or three times higher than their salaries (the jaundiced say four times). This creates a disparity in living standards of one to seven with respect to the average wage earner and one to twenty-one with respect to the minimum-wage earner. In these conditions, could anyone be surprised by the contempt, the universal hatred that the Polish workers have for the corrupt and incompetent gang that has ruled them? Should anyone be surprised by the universal contempt that exists for a "doctrine" that uses the formula of the "leading role of the party in building socialism" to paint up this scandal? A fine sort of party and a fine sort of socialism indeed!

At bay, the bureaucracy has sought excuses, pointing to managers of craft workers cooperatives, small private entrepreneurs, and rich peasants earning 100,000 zlotys a month. Aside from the fact that such cases are a great deal rarer than those of highly remunerated top bureaucrats, the reference is in itself revealing. This "Communist morality" that rejects "petty-bourgeois egalitarianism" measures the incomes of its devotees and their standard of living not against those of the workers but against those of the well-to-do petty bourgeoisie. It was not for nothing that Lenin predicted that the high salaries paid to bourgeois specialists would be a source of demoralization for the proletariat and that no party member could be permitted to collect such a salary.

As long as this climate is not eliminated, it is illusory to think that the deeper roots of the crisis have been removed. An excessive reliance on the market mechanism -- a limited reliance on them is inevitable in conditions of scarcity -- will increase such demoralization, corruption and cynicism, not eliminate them. Because it will increase inequality and create unemployment. And these evils do serious harm to the cohesiveness and class consciousness of the proletariat, promoting an attitude of "every man for himself," undermining solidarity, and obstructing all the mechanisms needed to make a socialized economy work. The generalized system of

irresponsibility, hypocrisy, and cynicism, of concealing true social costs can be consolidated by a "market economy" just as it has been by overcentralized bureaucratic management.

Only the most extensive and most uncompromising workers and public inspection, having access to all the mass media, can effectively and thoroughly expose all the abuses, pillory all privileges, and uncover all the stocks that have been diverted or concealed, prevent double-jobbing and waste, and make it possible to effectively measure the effect of work on the living standards of the masses as a whole, of the entire nation. But this means socialist democracy, political power for the workers, democratically centralized self-management. It means neither the dictates of the bureaucrats nor the demands of the market but producers and citizens themselves consciously and deliberately assuming control over all economic and social life.

A DISASTROUS MINIREFORM

Along with the structural factors that caused the Polish crisis, it is necessary to list an immediate one -- the disastrous effects of the minireforms, of the absence of coherent economic management since the summer of 1980. These minireforms were the result of a chain reaction of events over which the bureaucrats had lost control, their reluctance to set up a "new system of management," and their desire to block the revolutionary rise of the Polish proletariat by shortages and hunger, that is, by economic sabotage.

The steps taken by the regime after the summer 1980 strikes reflect total economic incoherence. On the one hand, the incomes of the workers and the peasants were in-

creased. On the other, the imports of raw materials, spare parts, and semimanufactures were drastically reduced, owing to the drop in exports (especially coal) and the ensuing lack of hard currency, as well as to the reluctance of the Western creditors to grant additional loans (11). The reduction of imports led to a fall in production. The final result was spiraling inflation, a widening gap between supply and demand, leading to a virtual breakdown of the market. The inflationary overhang is evaluated at 1,000 billion zlotys.

Speculation and hoarding developed on a large scale (semiofficial sources estimate that 30% of the meat produced was sold through the "parallel" market). And this to a large extent undermined even the possibility for a just rationing system. Since the government announced that a "real" economic reform would go into effect on January 2, 1982 with "real" increases in prices, both the private farms and the state enterprises had an interest in piling up "concealed" stocks and keeping their current production off the market in order to profit from the projected increases. (The desire to weaken Solidarnosc by keeping long lines outside the stores was certainly part of the bureaucrats' calculations, which were not solely economic.)

Moreover, the lack of spare parts sometimes not even very expensive ones, (12) was enough in itself to produce sharp declines in production in some key sectors, such as coal mining and the electric power industry which had repercussions on the economy as a whole. The effects of this in themselves explain a large part of the grave decline in production in 1981. This occurred despite a good

10. Statement by deputy minister Piotr Karpiuk to Dziennik Polski of February 16, 1981. The average monthly wage is cited by Tribuna Ludu of February 5, 1981.

11. The Western banks have agreed to discuss rescheduling of the debts falling due in 1981 and 1982, being, however, slow to move on this. But, veritable Shylocks, they have insisted on getting every cent of interest due on these debts. They have increased rates on the rescheduled loans and even seized Polish holdings abroad in order to assure payment. In this way, they have blocked imports vital for Poland, since there was no currency to pay for them. (See especially Winfried Wolf, Der lange Sommer der Solidaritat, volume 2, pp. 339-342, ISP Verlag, Berlin, 1980. Also see the American

magazine Fortune (September 7, 1981), the West German weekly Wirtschaftswoche, November 1981, and the Neue Zurcher Zeitung of 5-6 December, 1981.

12. According to the Warsaw daily Zycie Warszawy of November 4, 1981, the production of automatic washing machines in the Predom-Polar in Wroclaw had to be stopped on November 3. The result was the loss of 1,400 machines valued at 16 million zlotys. Production had to be shut down because of a lack of preprogramming chips that were generally furnished by the Predom-Termet factory in Swiebodzice. The latter had to stop supplying these chips because of a lack of bimetallic ribbons that had to be imported -- at a cost of a few thousand dollars.

harvest and the presence of a greater volume of cereals, potatoes, and sugar than in 1979 and 1980.

The effect of the incoherent "mini-reforms" of 1980-81 compounded those of the structural crisis to produce the economic disaster that is now afflicting Poland. But the background against which this disaster--which in any case is a temporary one--has emerged, can never be lost sight of. The Poland of today is a major industrial country, certainly the tenth major industrial producer in the world. It has a developed industrial infrastructure, potentially one of the richest agricultural economies in Europe, and a working class that is far more numerous, far better educated, far more skilled than that of the prewar or immediate postwar period. These are big advantages that remain for moving toward a solution of the crisis and toward socialism, if the economy and the society are freed from the bureaucratic dross.

THE CRACKDOWN

In November 1981, after months of shilly-shallying, hesitating, negotiating, and trying to make deals, the bureaucracy suddenly indicated what sort of a general reform it intended to replace the "minireforms."

While if formally maintained the "self-management" projects, they were largely voided of content, since raw materials and semimanufactures would be allotted and distributed cen-

trally at prices set by the central authorities.

In announcing these measures, Professor Sadowski, undersecretary of state for economic reform, said that the shortages of convertible currency ruled out any other kind of reform, and that it would take "years" to arrive at "price truth(13)."

These statements were a dash of cold water both on the trade unionists and the "liberal" technocrats. They clearly meant retention of extreme bureaucratic centralization (since democratically centralized self-management was furiously rejected by the bureaucracy as a whole).

What this reform meant for the society was made clear by the government at the beginning of January 1982. It announced a 300% to 400% increase in the prices of essential goods and services and a drastic devaluation of the zloty, along with a modest increase in basic wages and family allowances, as well as in bonuses to workers doing physically hard jobs (14).

The objective was to wipe out the black market by raising the official prices to par with it. With this new price-wage relationship, the real wages of Polish workers would be dropped to the same level as those of the Black miners in South Africa, the equivalent in buying power of \$180 to \$200 per month.

The drop in the standard of living would, of course, be less. It has

to be taken into account that the most working-class families earn two or more wages a month. Furthermore, during the last thirty years, working-class families have accumulated household goods on a large scale.

While one should not fall into vulgar materialism and underestimate the importance of the political challenges that the bureaucracy faced, it would be safe to say that these measures shed light on the meaning of the December 13, 1981, crackdown (15). It is obvious that with an independent union movement and an active working class, it would have been impossible to announce such price hikes, much less implement them (they have still not been put into effect, by the way).

Clearer than ever, the dilemma remains in all its force. Either a bureaucratic dictatorship blocking the advance of Polish society toward socialism, or workers power, which will clear the way forward and solve the crisis. ■

13. Zycie Warszawy, November 9, 1981.

14. Le Monde, January 3-4, 1982; Christian Science Monitor, January 11, 1982.

15. See the articles, statements, and resolutions of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International published in Inprecor.

Building a World Party of Socialists

IRISH SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

At its congress at the end of November in Dublin, the Irish revolutionary socialist organization People's Democracy voted to join the Fourth International.

The group is the product of a fusion in 1978 between the former Movement for a Socialist Republic, which was a section of the Fourth International and whose members remained individually in the ranks of the International, and People's

The prefusion People's Democracy became well known during the rise of the mass civil-rights movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Some of its leaders at the time, such as Bernadette Devlin and Michael Farrell, became national figures.

Under the impact of the mass movement, its successes and failures, the old PD moved toward a more consistent Marxist approach. But the fusion between the two revolutionary organizations was on the basis of a common strategy toward the mass movement, whose validity

was demonstrated by the rise of the H-Block struggle.

Although still small, the fused organization was able to play a significant role in the greatest mass mobilizations in Ireland since the period of the war of independence. Its political proposals were taken up by very broad forces. That was illustrated when two PD leaders in Belfast, John McAnulty and Fergus O'Hare were elected to the Belfast city council in the May 20 Northern Ireland local elections, humiliating the most prominent bourgeois machine politicians in the Catholic ghetto.

FRENCH TROTSKYISTS REGISTER GROWTH

The Fifth Congress of the Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International (LCR), held December 16-19, marked substantial growth both in the size and influence of the organization.

In the past eighteen months, the LCR has grown by 11%. Some 88%

of its membership is in trade unions, 30% in the CGT, 26% in the CFDT, and 22% in the teachers union, the FEN.

More important than these statistics, LCR trade unionists have led significant struggles, and made a political impact on their unions. They are playing an important role for example in the debate inside the CGT on Poland, as well as in building the mobilizations in support of Poland in the other unions where they are.

During the congress, the LCR weekly Rouge reported: "Solidarity with the Polish workers was omnipresent. On Sunday, December 13, the day of Jaruzelski's coup, in many cities the LCR held local congresses to elect delegates. From the minute that the news came over the radio, initiatives were taken everywhere, united-front meetings, communiques, and leaflets started to be prepared. The agenda of the national congress was changed to allow delegates to participate in the demonstrations."

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

28 JANUARY , 1982

ISSUE No 0

Fortnightly Review of News and Analysis Published Under the Auspices
of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

Contents

Introducing International Viewpoint	3
Test of Poland	3
Polish Workers Struggle to maintain their Dignity and Solidarity <i>By Gerry Foley</i>	5
New Peace Movement <i>By Jean-Louis Michel</i>	7
October Peace Demonstrations <i>By Jean-Louis Michel</i>	9
Peace Movements of the 1950s <i>By Jean-Louis Michel</i>	9
Eight Months of the Left Government in France <i>By Daniel Bensaid</i>	10
The Balance Sheet of Thatcherism <i>By John Ross</i>	12
The Explosiveness of Central America <i>By Sergio Rodriguez</i>	16
« People's Power » in Cuba <i>By Fred Denfert</i>	20
Selections from the World Press of the Workers and Liberation Movements	25
The Roots of the Polish Economic Crisis <i>By Ernest Mandel</i>	29
Building a World Party of Socialists	34

News closing date 24 January

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors. Unsigned articles reflect the positions of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

How to Subscribe

Before May 1 you can subscribe for six months at the special introductory price of L 6, US \$ 13, Skr 70, FF 70, DM 30 Dkr 90. AIRMAIL for North America, Latin America, Sub-Sahara Africa — US \$ 18. Australia-New Zealand, Asia — US \$ 20. Middle East, North Africa — US \$ 16.

Normal Subscription Rate for one year is L 16, US \$ 31, Skr 175, DM 70, Dkr 225. AIRMAIL for North America, Latin America, Sub-Sahara Africa — US \$ 42. Australia-New Zealand, Asia — US \$ 47. Middle East, North Africa, — US \$ 37.

Make out bank and postal Cheques (checks) payable in FF to PEC and mail to International Viewpoint, 2, rue Richard-Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France. Postal orders to PEC, Postal cheque account No 2 322 42 T Paris.

Send the following slip (blank) with your cheque (check) or postal order.

Please fill it in capital letters

Name _____

Address _____