

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

5 July 1982

ISSUE No 10



NO TO AN IMPERIALIST SOLUTION IN LEBANON

Document: Youth Organisations

8 FF, British Pound 0.65, Irish Pound 0.70, Skr 9, Dkr 12, Nkr 10, Ikr 17, US dollars 1.50, Canadian dollars 1.70, Australian dollars 1.35, DM 3.50, Dutch fl. 3.25, Austrian schillings 24, Drachmas 14.8, IS 25, Mexican Pesos 40, Cypriot Pound 0.65, Yen 400, Leban. Piastres 6, BF 65, SF 2.5, Portuguese Escudos 90, Rand 1.30, Pesetas 145, Italian Lire 1 700.

The hour of decision in Lebanon

While we write this article tens of thousands of people are leaving Beirut. Despite the cease-fire, the Zionist army is bombarding the town, causing hundreds of victims and greater and greater destruction. There is not a shadow of a doubt that Begin and Sharon will not hesitate to launch their forces into an assault on the Lebanese capital, if they do not obtain the complete capitulation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

In its new war of aggression, the Zionist government has been able to count on extremely favourable conditions, notably the isolation of the Palestinian resistance, and the support of American imperialism.

This reality has appeared more and more clearly, in the eyes of the whole world, day after day. The new Egyptian government, prisoner of the Camp David agreement, and satisfied to have regained the Sinai, has not made any correction to the traitorous policy of Sadat. The Syrian regime, essentially preoccupied with maintaining its power, has done its best not to be involved in the war, and has limited itself to occasional and timid responses to the most murderous attacks of the Zionist army. All the other Arab states, apart from more or less demagogic declarations, have not moved at all. Iran has only made a symbolic march, which could not have any effect on the course of events. As for the Soviet Union, it has rivalled the Arab states in passivity, while polemicising against them for their attitude, and is only concerned with the fate of the Syrian regime, the only ally in the region on which it can count, even though this may not amount to much just now.

On the other hand, the United States has completely supported the Zionist state, whose aims it shares. Their official representatives have not hidden

their wish to see the Palestine resistance destroyed, because they estimate, correctly, from their point of view, that crushing the PLO would signify an evolution of the relationship of forces favourable to reaction in the Middle East, and considerably increase their room for manoeuvre. If it is necessary to raze the Lebanese capital to the ground to achieve this aim, those who bombarded Vietnam for ten years, or who are now engaged in a struggle to exterminate the Salvadoran people, will not hesitate to support Sharon and his army!

The states of capitalist Europe, for their part, have contented themselves with hypocritical declarations, or diplomatic manoeuvres, for show. It is significant that, while they did not hesitate to take economic sanctions against Argentina, guilty of 'aggression', at the time of the Malvinas affair, they have not done the same against Israel, which has unleashed a veritable war in occupying a part of Lebanon.

The progressive Lebanese forces are bogged down, through Joumblatt, in the so-called 'Committee of National Salvation', aiming to bring about a type of 'national unity'. It was evident from the start that such a national unity could only lead to the desertion of the Palestinians. In fact, it has led to the paralysis of the progressive forces, their renunciation of any autonomous political initiative. The Committee has finally broken up, but the Falangist right has been able to profit from the operation. While the Committee could not undertake anything, Israel developed its attacks against the Palestinian positions which was certainly not to displease Gemayel and his gang.

Thus, the Palestinians found themselves and will find themselves confronted with a dramatic choice: either to give up

their arms and incur at the same time a very grave political defeat, or to risk a massacre in the ruins of Beirut in the hope of politically preserving their future.

If they find themselves cornered in this situation the responsibility also falls on the workers movement and the anti-imperialist forces of the whole world, who have only mobilised in derisory numbers, at the same time that huge demonstrations against rearmament have shown that the potential for enormous mobilisations exists. It is imperative that there is an effective rise in consciousness about what is at stake—the risk of genocide and a victory of the most reactionary forces in a crucial region—and that we make a radical turn.

The workers and anti-imperialist movements throughout the world must assure their help to the Palestinian resistance and their solidarity to those in Israel who have taken to the streets to oppose the criminal policies of Begin. Time is running out and we cannot lose a single day!

We must demand:

- an immediate halt to Zionist aggression and the unconditional withdrawal of Zionist troops from Lebanon.
- the withdrawal of all occupying forces from the occupied territories.
- the re-establishment of Lebanese sovereignty.
- the right of the Palestinians to maintain their positions, their arms and their organisations.
- military and economic aid from the workers states to the Palestinian resistance and to all the Lebanese forces who are fighting at the side of Palestinians.

Fire and destruction near Beirut (DR)



Declaration by four revolutionary organisations in the Middle East

Once again the Zionist regime has launched a criminal war against the Arab world. Its objective is to reaffirm its hegemony over the Arab East by the destruction of the Palestine national movement and speed up the involvement of the Syrian regime in a negotiated solution with imperialism.

This aggression flows from the expansionist nature of the Zionist state which, from 1948 until today, through the wars of aggression of 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1978, has continually extended its frontiers and its field of action. This aggression is also the direct extension of its policy of annexation, colonisation, and mass terrorism against the Palestine population in the territories occupied since 1967.

This new war confirms the real nature of the Camp David agreement, which far from aiming to establish some kind of peace in the Middle East, aims to break up the Arab nationalist movement, to widen the domination of US imperialism in the region, reinforce the role of the Zionist regime as policeman and leave them a free hand to savagely attack any force which dares to oppose imperialist domination, in the first place the Palestine national movement.

In this American plan for domination of the region Israel knows that it can count on the passivity or the complicity of most of the Arab regimes, which are either already part of the imperialist alliances, or are looking for a better price for their integration. The social instability which characterises all of them can occasionally oblige them to give partial support to the Palestinian resistance, but straightaway, because of their social nature, which only aims to defend their own interests, they concentrate their forces on defending their own regimes. And thus they leave the field open to Israel to carry out its policy of genocide against the Palestinian people and their organisation. (...)

The attitude of Syria has been in keeping with this regime: dictatorial towards the Syrian masses, and passive towards imperialism. The retreat of the Syrian army faced with Israel is a new crime to put to its account.

We denounce this war which follows from the plan negotiated by imperialism, the reactionary Arab regimes, and Israel,

which aims to liquidate the Palestinian resistance and achieve an imperialist solution.

We salute the heroic and determined resistance of the Lebanese and Palestinian militants.

We call on all international forces to mobilise actively alongside the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese resistance, to form a united front of support for total freedom of military and political action for the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance.

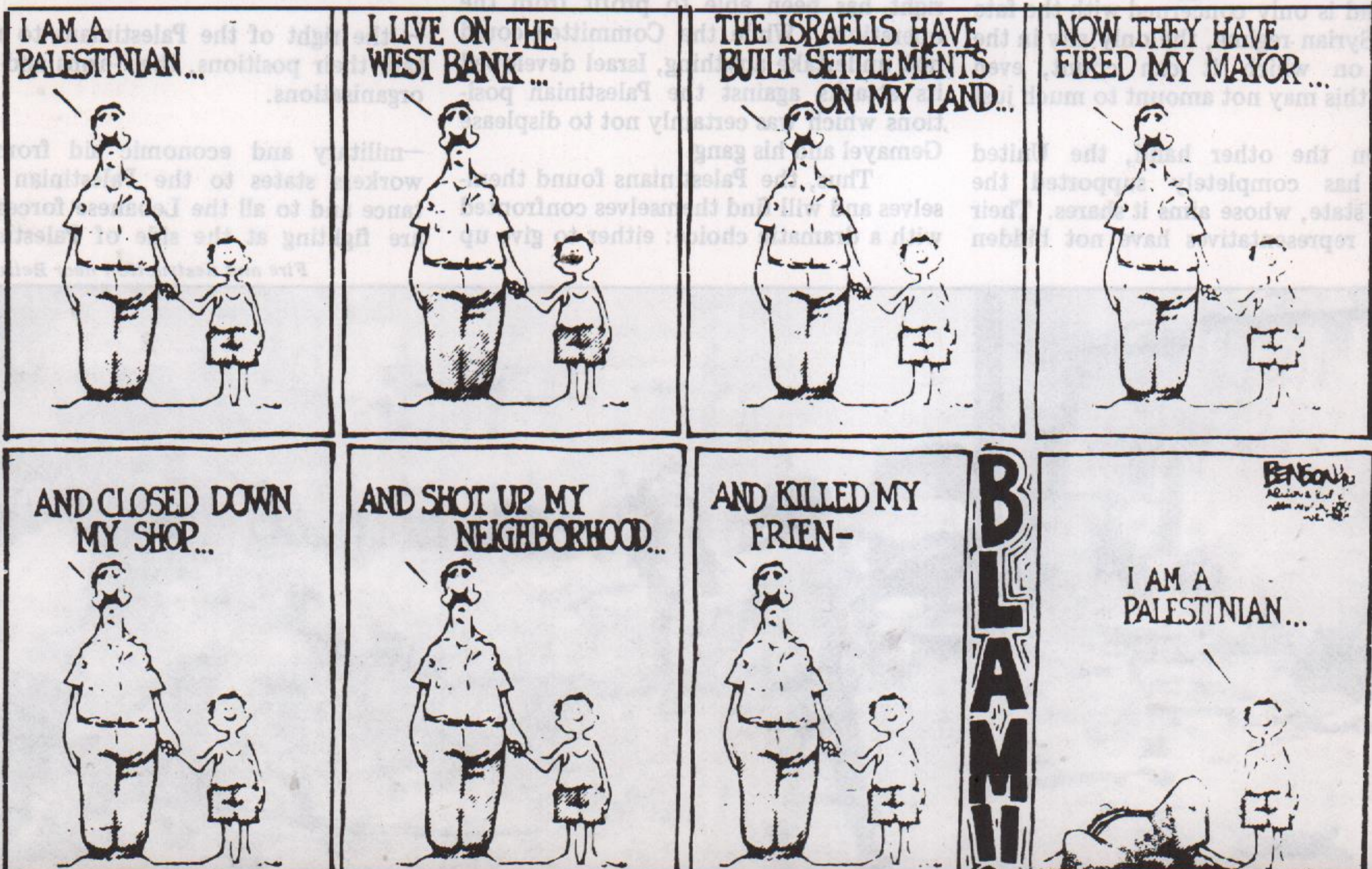
We demand:

- Support to the PLO, representative of the Palestinian people in their fight against Zionist aggression.
- The immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli army from Lebanon and the occupied territories.
- Support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the sovereignty of Lebanon and for the right of self-determination of the Lebanese people.
- Refusal of any imperialist-Zionist plan.
- The institution of a united, free, democratic, and socialist Palestine on the destruction of the state of Israel.

Party of Communist Action in Syria
 Egyptian Communist Party (Conference)
 Revolutionary Communist League (section of the Fourth International in the state of Israel)
 Revolutionary Communist Group (Lebanese section of the Fourth International)

The Party of Communist Action in Syria is the principal revolutionary organisation in Syria. Following its activities opposing the regime of Hafez el Hassad more than 100 of its members are presently in prison.

The Egyptian Communist Party (Conference) is the product of a split in the early 1970s of the official Communist Party. It argues for a congress of the different revolutionary groups and organisations in the country.



Beirut under siege

Jean Pierre BEAUVAIS

This article first appeared in Rouge, weekly newspaper of the LCR, French section of the Fourth International, No. 1021, 18 to 24 June 1982. The translation is by IV.

Fifteen thousand killed and wounded. This is the outcome of Monday June 14 in the encircled and bombarded neighbourhoods of Beirut reported by a spokesperson of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The resistance of the Palestine fighters is unrelenting. 'To resist or to die is our only choice' one told a special correspondent of *Liberation*, the Paris daily, in a statement full of determination, revolt, and bitterness.

Ten days after the beginning of the invasion of Lebanon by the Israeli army, the military and political isolation of the Palestinian forces is dramatic. Never before has it reached such a degree. Not even in the worst hours of Black September, in Jordan in 1970.

'The rapid progression of the Israeli forces is not only explained by their crushing military superiority. Nor by their tactics which have consisted in leaving pockets of resistance behind them, as in Sidon. It is also explained by the Syrian refusal to resist their progress, by the attitude of the Lebanese army who have hardly fired a shot against the invaders, and by the attitude of Walid Joumblatt (1) and his troops who have done hardly anything to slow down the progress of the Israelis in the mountains of Chouf, to the south of Beirut,' explained comrades of the Revolutionary Communist Group, Lebanese section of the Fourth International, interviewed by telephone.

They recounted the heroic battle of the Palestinian forces, retrenched in the Lebanese capital, with whom they are fighting shoulder to shoulder. 'In south Lebanon numerous pockets of resistance exist. Sometimes they have even been reformed after the passage of the bulk of the Zionist troops. The main one is at Sidon. The town is continually bombarded. The Israeli troops have already made eight assaults attempting to seize it. Without success up till now. Tyre is occupied. But the situation is not as stable as the occupiers try to make us believe!'

Concerning the situation in Beirut itself, they emphasise the degree of organisation of the resistance. 'In nu-

merous places it is not exaggerated to talk of real little Communes'. It is on this basis that they called, in a leaflet distributed Tuesday June 5, for the setting up of 'councils' in the neighbourhoods of the town to broaden the organization of the resistance and to organise the life of the population.

'The general feeling is that to take Beirut will be much too bloody an operation for the Israeli army', they explained, 'Neither the tanks nor the airforce can operate effectively. This is the reason why the tactic of surrounding the town, accompanied by harassment and bombing of the Palestinian camps on the periphery, is being followed. What's more, there are too many interests in certain areas of the town, from the point of view of the Lebanese bourgeoisie, to launch an operation which, in the present circumstances, would mean still greater and more indiscriminate destruction.'

The objective of this tactic is to completely isolate the resistance in the capital. To weaken them, and to play upon the divisions that have already appeared about the terms for an eventual ceasefire. The conditions will then be met for the Christian militia, and the Lebanese army, who from now on will collaborate openly with the Israelis, and are camped to the north and north-west of the town, to penetrate into it. Then there will be a dual perspective which will have to be negotiated under the Israeli guns. On the one hand: 'the reconstitution of a pro-American Lebanese state under the control of the Christian Falangists of Gemayel, the Lebanese army, and eventually the Joumblatt forces if they agree to enter into this operation.'

On the other hand: 'The creation of a demilitarised zone in the south of the country placed under the authority of commandant Haddad (2) and controlled by international surveillance forces of the type which have been stationed in the Sinai. A zone under the constant threat of Israeli intervention.'

1. Walid Joumblatt is the leader of the Druze community and a charismatic figure of the national liberation movement.

2. Haddad is the head of the Christian militias which for several years, with Israeli aid, have controlled a stretch of Lebanese territory along the border with Israel.

The Revolutionary Communist Group, Lebanese section of the Fourth International, who are taking part in the defence of Beirut, have issued an open letter to the combatant Lebanese organisations which has been read on the radio and published in the newspapers. Against the wheelings and dealings—under the supervision of the American special envoy and under the threat of the Israeli guns—for the installation of a pro-Western government in Lebanon, the RCG proposes the formation of a government of those fighting, excluding all bourgeois forces who refuse to oppose the entry of the Israeli forces. We publish below an extract from this document.

...Comrades and Brothers,

The only way to preserve the sacrifices of both our peoples, and prevent them being uselessly wasted; the only way to preserve our patriotic army and political liberties; the only way to make the Begin-Reagan campaign against our national cause miscarry; and the only way to defeat their offensive—this sole way is represented by the following measures, which we call on you to put into operation in the name of the blood spilt by thousands of martyrs:

1. Continue the struggle to the end against the Zionist army of occupation, to prevent it having a minute's respite and to make it pay very dearly for each minute of occupation of our land.

2. Refuse entry to non-allied armies, either those of the legal traitors, or the armies of imperialist states, or from states that are agents of imperialism.

3. Refuse all formulae concocted by the USA and Saudi Arabia, because of the Zionist occupation and with the complicity of the traitorous legality.

4. Consider all institutions of Lebanese 'legality' as traitors. Set up a National Resistance Government composed of all the forces who are really fighting the Zionist enemy.

5. Put into operation the project of local councils (1) so that these councils can organise the resistance in Beirut in all its forms.

6. Unify all the military forces and centralise them in a national guard to increase the capacities of these forces and prevent the use of the arms by certain suspect groups for objectives that have nothing to do with national resistance.

7. Demand from anti-imperialist states and forces in the world, notably the USSR and Cuba, an immediate military intervention on the side of the Lebanese-Palestinian resistance, until the total and unconditional retreat of the Zionist army from all Lebanese territory....

*Executive Bureau of the
Revolutionary Communist Group
Lebanese Section of the
Fourth International
June 15, 1982*

Revolutionary activity in Israel

The following interview was given to Gerry Foley in Paris on June 11 by Mikado, one of the leaders of the Israeli section of the Fourth International, the Revolutionary Communist League. It has been translated and edited. The section of the interview dealing with the Lebanon war was published in our previous issue.

* * *

Question. Could you give me some idea of the growth of the Israeli section over the past period?

Answer. Our paper in Hebrew appears monthly and sells between 300 and 400 copies. For example, in the June 5 demonstration to mark the fifth anniversary of the occupation, in which two to three thousand people participated, we sold 120 copies of the Hebrew journal.

Of our Arabic paper, also monthly, we sell between a thousand and 1,300. We have always sold more of the Arabic journal than the Hebrew one.

We began publishing in Arabic in 1971, putting out an Arabic supplement of our journal *Matzpen*. In 1973, we made our paper bilingual. Since 1979, we have been publishing separate journals in the two languages.

Q. In what circles are you recruiting?

A. We recruit essentially Jewish youth. Although there are a number of Palestinian vanguard elements that are very close to us politically, they see the Revolutionary Communist League as a Jewish organization. The radicalization and politicization of the Palestinians takes place through their national organizations.

We think, therefore, that the Arab-Jewish revolutionary party will not be built essentially through our recruiting Arab militants, although we do recruit some. We think that it will be built through a process of fusion coming out of political differentiation within the Palestinian movement.

Q. What work does the Israeli section do in the workers movement?

A. What we do now is essentially propaganda work, and that is relatively new. There is an economic crisis, and that is reflected in the consciousness of the workers. The national unity is breaking down. The verities of Zionism have been very badly shaken since 1973, especially in the last three years. That makes it possible to put forward very

radical positions without running into violent reactions.

Q. To what extent is there a workers movement in Israel independent of the Zionist state organizations?

A. There are workers committees. Every factory with more than fifty workers by law must have an elected workers committee. But they have very limited room for maneuver. To be legal, strikes need prior authorization from the Histadrut, the Zionist labor organization. There have been cases where the overwhelming majority of the workers in a plant wanted to strike but could not get authorization from Histadrut, and so if they wanted to act it had to be in defiance of the law.

There have been and continue to be wildcat strikes in this situation. But more important now is the formation of a coordinating committee of thirteen of the biggest workers committees in very important enterprises, such as the electricity company, the merchant marine, the docks, aviation, airports, and the potassium mines.

This could be the beginning of a restructuring of the workers movement independent of Histadrut. It is no accident that Histadrut has declared a war to the death against this committee, even though most of the committees are led by Labor party members, some of whom hold high positions in Histadrut itself.

Q. Has the economic crisis led to the formation of other mass organizations?

A. Tenants committees have appeared in some working-class neighborhoods. Often this is the response to cuts in the social budget. Often it has been in response to Likud's urban renewal plans, a major part of its platform. These schemes have become big sources of corruption.

Sometimes the demand has been raised that the communities themselves should be allowed to administer the funds. Sometimes this has involved Jewish communities abroad, because there is twinning between Jewish communities in Israel and abroad. The Israeli communities have demanded that they get the money from their twin communities abroad and administer it themselves.

These committees are often interesting because they are independent of political parties, even if these try to manipulate them. They represent a continuation of the Black Panther Movement [an

oriental Jewish radical movement] that existed ten years ago. It left its mark. The poor neighborhoods, of course, are the oriental Jewish ones.

Q. Then the radicalization is developing mainly among oriental Jews?

A. That depends what radicalization you are talking about. The deeper one, yes. The more political, or ideological one, remains confined to the European Jews, an intellectual elite. In the Peace Now demonstration in Tel Aviv in March for example, there were virtually no oriental Jews, or very few.

There have been some representatives of the neighborhood committees in peace demonstrations who have taken up the slogan we launched, "Money for the Poor Neighborhoods, Not for the Colonies."

Q. Is it possible for the Israeli section to do open work in these committees?

A. That depends on the communities. In the one where I live, we have very good contacts. But they have asked us not to participate, saying that we could help better from the outside. Since we are well-known anti-Zionist activists, they were afraid that our presence would be exploited for a campaign against them.

Q. But they do not have a gut antipathy to anti-Zionists?

A. No. But their attitude is paradoxical. They are emotionally pro-Begin and very radical. They see Begin as the antithesis of thirty years of Labor Party rule, the society they hate. That notion is a myth, but it has its force. For example, they are capable of shouting both "Long Live Begin" and "Long Live Yassar Arafat" to express their hatred of the police, when they are sent by the Begin government.

Q. What impact does Arab TV have on the oriental Jews, whose language is Arabic?

A. It could have a lot of impact if it offered an internationalist message. The propaganda on Arab TV is generally very cheap, and easily becomes counterproductive, destroying the credibility of everything that is said. Arab TV could be a fearsome weapon against Zionism if it were in the hands of a conscious leadership.

The success of our Arabic journal on a very small scale is an indication of the need for a principled militant press in Arabic. ■

The austerity policies of the Mitterrand government

Daniel JEBRAC

On Wednesday June 8 President Francois Mitterrand held his second major press conference since his investiture. He claimed to be steering the same political course and left the government's projects in a vague sketch.

On June 13 the Finance and Economy Minister, Jacques Delors, announced after the Brussels meeting the devaluation of the French franc by 9.59 per cent in relation to the Deutschmark and the Dutch florin. This latest devaluation, eight months after the devaluation of 8.5 per cent in October 1981, signifies a decrease in value of the franc by 60 per cent in relation to the Deutschmark since 1975.

All the ministerial efforts to establish a continuity between these measures and the presidential speech are scarcely convincing. In his June 8 speech Francois Mitterrand proposed a national meeting for an exchange of views between the 'social partners', the government, the employers, and the trade unions, 'in July' or 'in September' to avoid any *fait accompli* being forced on either side.

Yet the workers have indeed been presented with a *fait accompli*. From Monday June 14, the government has announced, there will be 'accompanying measures' to guarantee the benefits of devaluation: a freeze on prices, except for petrol and certain agricultural products, and on wages, except the minimum wage, for four months; holding down the social benefits (particularly family allowances); a new demand on the state employees who have security of employment in the name of 'national solidarity' to increase the unemployment fund.

At the same time, the government has announced that its policies are moving into a new stage, and are leaving the flat for the mountain (on the eve of the Tour de France cycling metaphors seem most appropriate): the attempts at reflation through increased consumption tried in 1981 must give way to increased help to investment.

The Socialist and Communist ministers have more than one trick up their sleeve, and more than one word in their dictionaries: they talk with eloquence and severe frowns of solidarity, effort, and patience...But all workers who prefer to call a spade a spade know what that means: a naked austerity policy. At least they had the decency to wait un-



Striking workers from Talbot (DR)

til after the Versailles summit to present the bill.

THE TEST OF AUSTERITY

This turn is going to put everyone to the test. First of all, how to apply the price and wages freeze?

A law of 1950 establishes free wage negotiation. To freeze wages is would be necessary to either modify the law by legislation or to obtain the agreement of the 'social partners', not just at the national level but also at the factory and branch level where wage rises are negotiated. Thus the 2.5 per cent rise planned for Renault on July 1, and at Citroen and for the state employees on September 1. It will be necessary for the trade unions to renounce the agreements they have already signed.

It is a long time since the Confederation française démocratique de travail (CFDT) anticipated the appeal for austerity, and its congress last May had mandated its leadership to collaborate actively with this type of policy, even if a strong opposition was expressed.

The announcement of these governmental measures came at the same time that the CGT was holding its own congress in Lille, the town of the Prime Minister. Over and above the habitual refrains on the necessity to make the rich and the privileged pay, notably by the device of

tax reform, the congress heard the bad news with remarkable placidity. It is necessary to say that the French Communist Party, installed in the government and anxious to preserve its position in the negotiations on the preparation for the municipal elections for next year, while denouncing the responsibility of the employers for the economic difficulties, remained in solidarity with the government.

On the employers side the first warm reaction of the boss of bosses, Yvon Gattaz, president of the National Council of French Employers (CNPF) had been most benevolent, promising active co-operation, in the name of public-spiritedness, in the general mobilisation against the crisis. But, from the next day, the tone of the employers, determined to push their political and social advantage, went up a notch. They denounced the disastrous effects of the price freeze on their profit margins, and above all demanded the postponement of the Auroux laws on the new rights of workers and trade unions in the workplaces.

Finally, the employers announced a campaign of assemblies of employers, which will culminate in December by the holding of a national assembly of 14,000 employers, in order to keep up the mobilisation of opposition to, and pressure on, the government.

THE EXPLOITED WILL PAY THE BILL

The quack remedies of the government do not reach the root of the problems.

The Socialist and Communist leaders can blame to a greater or lesser extent: the responsibility of the United States, the bosses refusal to invest, the transfer of capital. Their only solution is fiscal reform, whose ability to hit the rich, we know, is only ever relative.

As to the wage freeze, the left, when in opposition, denounced its injustice each time that a rightwing government proposed similar measures. Wages can be well and truly frozen, and social benefits effectively reduced, while the bosses have a thousand ways of bypassing the price freeze, by launching new products for example. At the same time there is no way of controlling investment and stopping the transfer of capital.

In the final account the balance sheet of the last year is not so bad for the bourgeoisie.

The government has put into operation decentralisation and reform of planning, intended to make the ultra-centralist and rigid institutions of the Fifth Republic more flexible, and to increase the levels of negotiation and dialogue.

Nationalisations have been well compensated and allowed a movement of centralisation and redistribution of private capital.

The trade union leaderships seem, in their majority, to be ready to help put into operation an 'austerity of the left.'

Nevertheless there remains a major difficulty. This is not the mandate that the overwhelming majority of the workers have given to the Socialist Party/ Communist Party government. This is not what they are waiting for. And, since May 10, 1981, the big reformist parties in the government and the trade unions have not increased their strength, nor reinforced their control over the working class, to the point where they can guarantee a disciplined acceptance of the new governmental policy.

ON THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW SITUATION

Until now the new government has benefited from what Francois Mitterrand has called 'the state of grace', which was also a period of observation.

The heavy defeat of the right in the elections of May 10 and June 21, 1981 expressed very well the social relationship of forces. But it came, for a number of workers, as a divine surprise, not as the result of a mobilisation, but after three years of deep division in their ranks, decline of struggle (1980 saw the lowest number of strike days since 1953), and the crumbling away of trade union strength. This is why the initiative has stayed in the hands of the President, the

government, and the parliamentary majority, in the form of the great reforms announced by the candidate Francois Mitterrand: decentralisation, nationalisation, television and radio, housing, democratic liberties.



Part-time work equals part-time unemployment (DR)

Workers have led local struggles to defend their jobs or their wages, to put an end to the bosses despotism in certain enterprises. But overall, they have maintained a wait-and-see attitude towards the

reforms although it may mean intervening vigorously if they attack the gains they already have, as in the case of the law on the 39-hour week.

Now, the policy of reflation has failed. The string of reforms is finished, the fiscal reforms remain to be approved. The hour of austerity has arrived. And the things to be decided upon, such as social security, will become new demands for sacrifices. There are still two million unemployed, and the figure continues to climb.

The government can count on the summer months to swallow the bitter pill. But the results of the medication are uncertain, and the appointments of the autumn will mark a change in the terrain of the social struggle. After that the municipal and regional elections in spring 1983 will bring the first judgement on the policies of the SP/CP majority.

Revolutionaries will participate in the battle under their own flag. The government asks for time and delays to succeed in the 'new course' in the meantime. The changes are still very slight. The course of time will bring new concessions to the bosses and demand new sacrifices from the workers. This policy is deceiving those who voted against the right and is preparing the way for the return in strength of reaction. This policy is laying the basis for future defeats.

This is why these policies must be firmly and clearly rejected. ■

The Other Bookshop

328 Upper Street London N1
Telephone 01 226 0571

Open 10-6 Mon Tues Wed Sat 11-7 Thurs & Fri



**For all your Socialist,
Feminist, Black Struggles,
Third World, Gay Liberation,
Literature, Posters,
Postcards etc**

Poland—six months after the crackdown

Jacqueline ALLIO

Six months after the military crackdown of General Jaruzelski the breadth of resistance to the military junta has been demonstrated once more; in the mobilisations of June 13 which took place at the end of Mass in different towns throughout the country.

The determination of the Polish workers has been proved once again in the strikes and demonstrations of the beginning of June following the mobilisations of May, which had expressed the desire of the working class to do battle with the 'occupiers'.

Until then most of the well-known leaders of Solidarnosc were more than hesitant towards the attempts—which they judged premature—to co-ordinate the movement on a regional and national scale. More than one cast doubt on the possibility of undertaking the preparations for a general strike (1).

All the same, on the day after May 13, the regional executive committee of Solidarnosc in Warsaw (RKW), noting the worsening of the material situation, the rise in unemployment, and the fact that one could detect 'no sign of good will on the part of the authorities', stated that, 'all this will lead inevitably to a radicalisation of the workers and a general strike. Some tens of big enterprises of the Warsaw region have already asked us to fix the date of this strike' (2).

This was a way of responding to the numerous articles which have appeared in the clandestine bulletins, which reproach the leaderships for not having given a clear enough lead to the militants to permit really effective action. 'The responsibility rests on you, members of the leadership of Solidarnosc, unanimously recognised, to indicate to us the forms and the methods of action worthy of Solidarnosc. Our problem is that, in our opinion, you have not sufficiently taken on these responsibilities during the last few months. The proof of this is the numerous contradictory initiatives around May 1' (3).

Some militants insist especially on the 'need to construct a self-defense/trade-union stewarding force which will both warn of the actions of the political police (SB), and assure the protection of those who carry out different tasks' (4).

These demands have been heard, if one reads the declarations of Zbigniew Romaszewski, one of the leaders in Warsaw, in a recent interview, 'We have to prepare a general strike. We have little time. The strike must begin in the au-

turn of this year, before the Brezhnev-Reagan talks. The perspective of these talks should be to prevent the USSR taking the decisive step. The strike will put the question of Poland at the centre of world affairs. It must be a general strike of the whole country, with active defence of the enterprises. In Warsaw the active strike will involve twenty to thirty factories, and the others will support them by a stay-at-home strike. The demonstrations and processions will further occupy a part of the forces. If the situation is really serious, not only can the authorities not count on the army—in my opinion—but not even on the police. When one single battalion refuses to fire.... That was the case in February 1917 when one little unit of Cossacks passed over to the side of the demonstrators, and at the end of a month there was no longer a Tsar' (5).

The successful escape of the well-known militant J. Narozhiak, from the hospital where he found himself imprisoned, thanks to the initiative of the 'operational groups of the inter-factory workers committee of Solidarnosc', shows that significant progress has already been accomplished on the road to self-defence. It also shows that the conception of active self-defence is beginning to prevail in practice over the conception of passive self-defence which the Solidarnosc leadership has defended for a long time, of which the workers had been convinced, and which left them disarmed and with bare hands to face the tanks in December 1981.

Asking himself if December 1981 had managed to shatter the 'myth of the factory-fortress' on which the leaders and militants of Solidarnosc based their confidence, 'within the precinct of the factories they were untouchable, no one would dare to burst into the sanctuary', the author of a contribution to the clandestine press stated, 'The spring of 1982 takes place in the streets, in the sun and the wind, accompanied by the explosions of firecrackers and in the stink of tear gas. It is very improbable that the demonstrations can have a decisive influence. They are undoubtedly a comfort to all the open—or more often secret—opponents of WRON (the Military Council for National Salvation). They show new groups of activists in the fight against the regime, they mobilise those who are passive.... The central fight will nevertheless start where the previous struggle started: within the enterprises, there, where flow the vital sources of the independent workers unions.

'In the background, behind these spectacular demonstrations, the process of re-establishing the confidence which will bring a solid strike has begun and will continue. Confidence in the strength which comes from the walls of the factories and the people which they enclose' (6).

Which enclose them.... But which give them the means to co-ordinate between themselves, to construct a real front against the enemy, as Romaszewski said in the interview already cited: 'It is necessary to create cells to organise the strike in all the enterprises. They must prepare for the defense of the enterprise and inform the RKW when they are ready for the strike. There are enormous technical problems to solve: radio-phone links. We will have to construct ultra-short-wave transmitters and receivers, so that the factories can communicate between themselves, and short-wave transmitters-receivers for inter-regional links. We have to count on the fact that communication will be totally cut and build a transmitter which can ensure information on the progress of the strike. In principle that should not pose a great problem. If the Gdansk shipyard workers barricade themselves in we can make the antennae we want. In basing ourselves on the experience of Radio-Solidarnosc, we are in the process of working towards a complex programme of connections with a view to a general strike.'

And to the editor who asked him if he was not fearful of taking the responsibility for such a decision Romaszewski replied, 'My responsibilities—I took them on when I accepted election to the national and regional leadership. I am not only responsible for this or that decision, but also for the absence of decisions. For the fact that Solidarnosc risks being condemned to paralysis and our country to 'normalisation' in the Czech model. I am responsible for disorganised actions which can end bloodily and which are of no use.'

More than ever the role of the working class will appear decisive in the struggles in the months to come.

1. *International Viewpoint*, No 9, June 21, 1982.
2. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No 16, June 2, 1982, reproduced in *Bulletin d'Information* No 23, June 7, 1982, edited in Paris by the Committee for Co-ordination of the trade union Solidarnosc in France.
3. *Tygodnik Mazowsze* No 14, reproduced in *Bulletin d'Information*, *ibid.*
4. *Przetwianie*, No 17, Warsaw, May 18, 1982.
5. *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, No 16, *ibid.*
6. Reproduced in *Bulletin d'Information*, *ibid.*

A victory for Thatcher but crisis continues

Richard ROZANSKI

The British military victory in the Malvinas by no means brings to an end the conflict in the region. The Tory government must now decide on the future of the islands. It seems likely that they will garrison the islands, the so-called 'Fortress Falklands' policy. This, they hope, will give them the trump card in the inevitable negotiations that will follow.

The presence of a British garrison will signal a clear warning to the workers and peasants of Latin America that imperialism will not tolerate any encroachment of its right to exploit them. Thus British imperialism is storing up future bloody conflicts in the South Atlantic that will make the Malvinas war look like a tea party.

It is necessary to redouble our efforts against this imperialist aggression, and fight for the withdrawal of the British military presence from the South Atlantic. However, now is also a good time to assess the impact of this war on the political situation.

Undoubtedly the Tories' aggressive response to Argentina's just claim over the Malvinas has raised the stakes in the international class struggle. By going to war British imperialism was reasserting its right to exploit vast areas of the underdeveloped world, and keep hold of the few remaining colonial possessions not yet formally independent.

Yet the results of the war have been contradictory and, in some cases, laid bare incipient inter-imperialist rivalries. The US government was reluctant to back Britain because of the price it would pay in Latin America. Already Argentina, the principal actor in the US's counter-revolutionary project in Central America and the Caribbean, has withdrawn its military forces from the region, and even granted Nicaragua ten thousand tons of grain. The Rio Treaty, whose purpose was to block the spread of revolution in the American continent, is on the rocks, and there is no short term possibility of the US imperialists enticing other Latin American repressive regimes into intervention against El Salvador or Nicaragua.

The US government will try to make sure that it is part of any negotiations over the future of the Malvinas, with the aim of squeezing concessions from the Tory government. If Thatcher is completely intransigent then it will make the rebuilding of the counter-

revolutionary alliances across the American continent immeasurably more difficult.

This concern of US imperialism is not difficult to understand, and explains the friction between Secretary of State Haig, who saw the need to back Britain, and Jeanne Kirkpatrick, their ambassador to the United Nations, who maintained the primacy of rolling back the Central American and Caribbean revolution. The reason for Argentina's involvement in these plans in the first place was the huge political price that Reagan would pay for any direct US military intervention in the region. While Britain's war did serve to partially erode the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome, the US rulers are worried that the political price is still too high. But at the same time the class struggle in Central America shows no sign of ebbing back. Indeed every possibility exists of consolidation of the struggle in Guatemala and Honduras, posing the eruption of a regional revolutionary war.

While this consideration will eventually outweigh domestic considerations, US imperialism is still desperately trying to avoid having to send in something like the Rapid Deployment Force. Hence its desire to rebuild its alliances with the Latin American dictatorships.

The war also brought to the surface differences between the ruling classes in Western Europe. While the Common Market ministers initially voted for trade sanctions against Argentina, they did not backpedal on the continuing differences over Britain's Common Market contributions. As the conflict wore on the Italian parliament went on record in support of a ceasefire, the Irish government lifted sanctions against Argentina, and support from other governments became lukewarm.

The military defeat for Argentina brought the inevitable fall of General Galtieri, quickly turned into a scapegoat for the defeat by his fellow officers. Following furious debates in the military hierarchy, his successor was named: General Reynaldo Bignone. The new junta is seen as an interim administration, while a more permanent governmental solution is worked out.

Whatever the outcome, it is clear that the new government's main task will be to break up the self-organisation of the Argentine workers conceded by the junta in its attempt to 'unite' the nation behind the war effort. The workers' movement was quick to distinguish on the one hand

vigorously if they attack the gains they already have, as in the case of the law on

its support for Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas and the war against British imperialism, and on the other its opposition to the military junta, which they explained had no legitimate status as rulers of the country. Opposition bourgeois circles also tried to increase their room for manoeuvre through the coalition formation called the 'Multipartidaria'.

The inherent contradictions in this situation were revealed in the rioting that broke out in Buenos Aires and the brutal response of the junta when the full scale of the military defeat became clear. Following six years of harsh military rule a new orientation is needed if the Argentine bourgeoisie is to break up the workers' movement.

It is also clear that many of the top-ranking military officers associated with the war and its defeat will find it very difficult to pose as serious alternatives to Galtieri in front of the Argentine people. This suggests a possible military-civilian administration involving forces from the right wing of Christian Democracy and the Peronist movements in alliance with a section of the military hierarchy.

Now that the Malvinas have been recaptured by Britain, the imperialists will once again be able to turn their attention to helping any new Argentine government solve this problem, even finding the necessary ways of supplying military equipment to replace that lost during the war. Ironically this may well involve using channels like Israel, who for its own reasons supplied military aid to the junta during the war itself.

While the Tories may have succeeded in sparking off widespread condemnation of the war from many other governments, they have scored a significant political victory in Britain itself.

The leaders of the Labour Party, Foot and Healy, gave what amounted to a blank cheque for the Tories in Parliament, despite their protestations to the contrary. Michael Foot again displayed a remarkable talent for placing Labour in a position where it could only lose much electoral support. Foot, a classic social-democratic pacifist, was totally belligerent during the war, and then turned around following the British victory to demand a full inquiry into the 'tragedy of the Falklands war'. Many potential Labour supporters saw no reason why they should not support the Tories, who were prosecuting the war quite efficiently.

While attacks were made on some of the television coverage, Henry Kissinger, ex-US Secretary of State, remarked that if the US government had had the same support from its press during the Vietnam war, then the eventual result might have turned out altogether differently.

It must be admitted that the Tories were able to win widespread support inside the working class for this reactionary war. History shows that, at least in the initial stages, this is to a degree inevitable, especially when the leaders of the working class give full support to the ruling class. But what is very dangerous is that the Tories will now seek to drive home this political advantage against the working class in Britain.

The working class has once again displayed its chief characteristic during this war. The support for the war, whipped up by Foot and Healey, shows the historic political weakness of the British labour movement. But at the same time the working class has also displayed its tremendous organisational strength. In the midst of this reactionary war, the health workers have achieved a remarkable degree of unity in a fight against a derisory pay offer from the government. They have won significant support from industrial unions, with miners, dockers, and many other workers striking in solidarity with them, and joining the health workers on picket lines outside the hospitals.

The rail workers are also set for a big confrontation with the government over pay, the introduction of new work practices, and management plans for the running down of the whole industry. The rightwing bureaucrats in the National Union of Railwaymen have set June 28 as the date for the start of a national rail strike, and the Tories have replied by saying that they will simply shut down the whole rail network if the strike goes ahead.

Militant workers have realised that these strikes are crucial if they are to be successful in resisting new legislation being brought in by the Tories aimed at smashing up their organised strength—the trade unions.

To help in this project of launching of new attacks against the working class, the British ruling class has turned to its principal pillar of support: the labour bureaucracy. The latter is currently planning a witchhunt of the left inside the Labour Party, aimed precisely at breaking up working class unity and rolling back gains made in the last few years on policy such as unilateral nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from the Common Market, and inner-party democracy.

However, the Malvinas war has also seen a very positive development among a small section of the labour movement. Many Labour Party branches were disgusted by the stand taken by Foot and Healey, and took positions in opposition to the war and demanded the recall of the British Task Force. This development was headed by the left's leading figure



Tony Benn. His position, taken up by many of the above-mentioned branches, was tied to the reactionary notion of support for a negotiated settlement through the United Nations and a failure to understand that the essence of the conflict was one of an oppressed nation fighting an imperialist oppressor nation.

However, despite this confusion, what was remarkable was the way in which people like Benn remained intransigently opposed to the war despite the tremendous pressure coming from the press, the ruling class, and the right wing of the labour bureaucracy. This opposition inside the Labour Party was strengthened by similar opposition inside some of the trade unions: the miners, tobacco workers, and firefighters. In particular Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers, spoke out against the war and endorsed Argentina's claim to sovereignty.

This opposition to the war has convinced some of the Labour left around Tony Benn that now is the time to stand and fight against the Foot/Healey leadership. They see this as a long term struggle, possibly until the second general election from now, around 1988/9. Thus they are declaring their intention not to concede on any of the advances of the last few years, either around policy or around party democracy. As a starting point they are considering new alliances with forces opposed to the war, understanding that this is a crucial line of divide inside the labour movement, and declaring firm opposition to the right wing's witchhunt.

A number of anti-war demonstrations were organised by a committee set up by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. This bodes very well for the future, as many people pointed out that a

disarmament movement sincerely fighting for peace had to take a resolute stand against any war being waged by the Tory government. This response was highlighted by the Youth CND's decision to end its conference early so that it could participate in the first anti-war march and its National Committee's subsequent call for an end to Thatcher's war and the recall of the British Fleet.

The huge 250 thousand turnout against Reagan on June 6 confounded those who said that CND would fail the test of this war. Despite the CND leadership's attempt to concentrate attention on the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in New York, speaker after speaker at the rally following the march condemned the Tories hypocritical war in the South Atlantic.

The British disarmament movement has reached a crucial cross roads in its development. In the recent past more and more national trade unions have voted to affiliate to CND and support unilateral nuclear disarmament. CND must now either root itself into the real world, committing itself to a campaign based on the labour movement, and take a resolute stand against US intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, or it will become dominated by pacifist notions, combined with an individualistic strategy of 'non-violent direct action' against the bases where Cruise missiles will be deployed.

The massive demonstration on June 6 is an important indicator for the possible success of the first strategy, but a serious fight in this direction is still required.

The British military victory resolved none of the long-term problems for the ruling class, neither in the South Atlantic, nor its principal problem in Britain, the organised strength of the working class. The longer it takes to defeat the working class, the more difficult it will be to maintain the support they won around the war.

Thus, while the present leadership election for the Social Democratic Party has received less attention because of the war, the SDP retains its long-term use with which the ruling class can prevent an outright victory for the Labour Party in the next General Election.

The full impact of the Malvinas war has yet to unfold in Britain. The war has raised the stakes in the international class struggle, which due to the historic decline of British imperialism will begin to have an increasing impact on the British working class. The ruling class will find it more and more difficult to stave this off as it has been able to do previously with its Empire's profits. This can only make the task of raising the consciousness of the British working class in an anti-imperialist direction immeasurably easier. The forces of the Fourth International in Britain—the International Marxist Group and Revolution Youth—will in the coming months and years throw themselves into this task with all the resources at their disposal. ■

Repercussions of the Malvinas war

Daniel JEBRAC

After two months the British colonial expedition has succeeded in reconquering the Malvinas. The conflict became a real war, with hundreds of victims on both sides, and at a cost of over two billion dollars on the British side alone.

But most of all the Malvinas war has clearly illustrated certain characteristics of the world situation: the warlike tendencies and, above all, aggression against the colonial peoples, which flow from the economic crisis and the imperialist arms race; the lack of an uncontested political leadership in the imperialist camp and the inability of the United States to impose their arbitration; but also the determination of declining imperialism, like British imperialism, to answer all challenges to its domination with the support of all its allies.

The Argentine junta underestimated these facts when it thought it would find the cement of national unity, at limited risk, in the expedition to the Malvinas. This miscalculation is now going to weigh heavily on Latin America in general and Argentina in particular.

As forecast, Galtieri fell at almost the same time as the Malvinas. His fall was inevitable. It clears the ground but resolves nothing: all the political solutions envisaged beyond the interim of the generals Nicolaidis and St. Jean seem equally unstable and uncertain.

One section of the army is tempted by the repetition of a 'great national agreement' between the military and civilians. The war could help to forge it. This sacred union today would have to face up to the terrible economic crisis and expunge the humiliation of the defeat. But the obstacles on this path are of

While the war continues and the population remains powerless faced with the political manoeuvres of the dictatorship, the trade union leaders who conform to the regime continue to ignore the demands of their base and increase their contortions to adapt themselves and face up to the dangers of the immediate future.

As we can remember, the General Workers Federation (CGT) had organised a demonstration hardly three days before the Argentine landing on the Malvinas and the massive response of the workers as well as the brutal reaction of the government had put a general strike on the agenda. The other section of the trade union bureaucracy, the National Confederation of Workers (CNT-20), which is openly collaborationist and for the last six years has received favours from the junta and opposed all attempts to struggle, was obliged to announce a 'general strike of no fixed date' the day after the CGT demonstration.

After that came the landing, the mobilisations in support, and, finally, the war. The bureaucratic leaderships, in particular of the CGT, supported the re-

conquest of the islands while trying to differentiate themselves from the government. For six weeks the CNT remained prisoner of the situation and was only able with difficulty to keep its identity faced with the CGT.

'NEO-PERONISM'

The government, or at least one of its component parts, has launched itself into a project which, to give an idea to the reader, we can call neo-Peronism. The Minister of Labour, General Porcile, claims nothing less than to have ranged behind him the two sections of the bureaucracy, to have spoken on May 1 as the representative of the workers with the support of the CGT as well as the CNT-20. In accordance with this plan, while the British troops were invading the South Georgia islands, he held a meeting in front of the government building, supported by the CNT-20 and CGT. The meeting, despite the unitary appeal and the climate of euphoria, drew hardly more than five thousand people, most responding to the appeal of the left organisations. Worse still, the meeting transformed itself into a demonstration

a different scope than in 1972. It would not be enough to bring back the ashes of Eva Peron and authorise the return of the banned Peronist leaders: the 30,000 'disappeared' constitute a more bloody barrier to national reconciliation! Finally, the bourgeois opposition parties will surely not be either enthusiastic or unanimous to come and take their place in ruination.

Another sector would like to speed up a process of democratic opening and re-establish electoral mechanisms in order to allow the army to return to its barracks, and to keep it as a last resort. These military fear that the direct exercise of power in crisis conditions can only end in dividing the army itself, and weakening the main guarantor of the state. The latest developments can only have confirmed their fears. But the difficulty in this undertaking is in how to control the workers movement. After six years of dictatorship, the blows to the traditional prerogatives of the Peronist trade union apparatus have left an organisational vacuum in the workers movement. No one can say what force will be capable of controlling the millions of workers exasperated by the crisis, and speaking in their name.

Finally, a new hardening of the dictatorship appears as the only immediate solution to a third sector. It will not resolve any of the political, social, or economic contradictions accumulated over the last ten years, and will add to the balance sheet of the Malvinas war an increased social isolation of the junta.

To illustrate the contradictions of the situation in Argentina we publish an article on developments in the trade unions during the Malvinas war. It is taken from the Brazilian newspaper *Em Tempo*, No 151, June 3, 1982. The translation is by IV.

of opposition to the dictatorship.

This event added to the internal quarrels of the bureaucracy, and, because of the irremediable political weakness of the government, the May 1 project was aborted. The CGT denounced Porcile and informed the CNT-20 that holding a meeting under the auspices of the dictatorship on the day of the workers holiday 'constituted a flagrant violation of the principles of the workers movement'.

The CGT called its own meeting and the facts of the situation came out, hardly 1,000 people responded to the call. This setback for the CGT modified the axis of the movement for unification of the bureaucratic leaderships. The CNT-20, which had had to accept the perspective of unification under the hegemony of the CGT, considered that an offensive tactic, counting on the support of the government to help it exercise absolute control over a unified CGT, had become viable.

The government proposed to implement a four-point plan: to abolish the law banning the CGT; to lift the military intervention in the trade unions; to reinstitute the medical and health service

assistance to the trade unions; and to call a parity assembly. Given the reaction of the CGT, and their weakness demonstrated on May 1, the Minister for Labour began the application of this plan in agreement with the leaders of the CNT-20.

On May 17 Porcile called a plenary assembly of the general secretaries of the legal unions, that is, excluding the unions under military intervention, the majority of which are organised in the CGT. The ostensible purpose was the election of a delegation to the annual meeting of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). But in reality it was to constitute a new CGT. At the time a unity commission of representatives of the CGT and CNT-20 was functioning, preparing the fusion at the top level. According to the subsequent revelations of Jorge Lujan, secretary of the glassworkers union, right up to the eve of the meeting there was an agreement between the two sections on how to divide the responsibilities in a new single confederation. Nevertheless, some hours before it was held the CGT denounced the assembly.

Two leaders of the CGT, of the paper and insurance industries, went to the meeting with three second-tier unions to propose a postponement to avoid the unity breaking up. But their motion received only the support of 16 unions, with 10 abstentions, against 59 unions voting against. The way was then open for the formation of a new federation, led by the most collaborationist sector, with the blessing of the government, and without the participation of the 'orthodox Peronists' organised in another section.

The new organisation, which took the name CGT, claimed the former building of the workers federation in Azopardo street, and is now known as the CGT-Azopaldo. Three of the twenty leadership positions have been given to dissidents of the old CGT, today known as the CGT-Brazil, after the street where it is sited, which ensures representation for 31 unions ready to go over to the CGT-Azopaldo.

THE MOVEMENTS OF THE TRADE-UNION BUREAUCRACY

The place where the CGT-Azopaldo first saw the light of day—an assembly called by the government—clearly shows what its leaders are made of. One week after its formation the new leadership was received by General Galtieri, who declared, 'Since April 2 I feel myself a new president', and confessed that he would not 'make the same kind of speech as when he had become president'. He promised to meet the trade unionists again after the ILO meeting to discuss, 'some changes which are going to take place in the country on the economic and social level' and to establish responsibility for 'what has been done well or badly.' It is considered almost certain that the CGT-Azopaldo will receive as a bonus the four-point plan outlined above. It could



Security forces hold back angry demonstrators in Buenos Aires (DR)

then present itself to the workers as the true workers federation.

The lawyer Antonio Baldassini, general secretary of the post and telecommunications federation, a typical representative of the bourgeoisie at the service of the bourgeoisie, has presented a programme entitled 'Workers unity and national unity'. The total unification of the CGT is presented there as a preliminary step. It proposes 'trade-union recomposition' on the basis of 'the repeal of all the legislation of the dictatorship against trade unions and trade-union activity', the 'immediate re-activation of the economy', and an end to 'the political marginalisation of our people'. It proposes a

'political solution which takes into account the aspirations of all the sectors.' It does not demand that elections are held because its plan for the time being consists of support for the government in transition of the 'new Galtieri'.

The CGT-Brazil, for its part, has lost the initiative and its strength has melted away massively. Introducing a new method of workers struggle, it sent a telegram at the end of May to the President to ask him to change his economic policy. It has launched an appeal for the holding of public meetings to oppose 'the governmental project of creating subservient and dependent trade unionism', and to resist 'the pursuit of anti-national policies'.

At the same time, Lorenzo Miguel and Ubaldini, the principal leaders of the CGT, have declared that 'if a special political situation, internal or external, demands it', they will be ready to 'sign for unity in 72 hours'.

THE LIMITS OF THE MANOEUVRE

The reality of the Argentine workers movement, however, is going in a different direction.

The factions of the bureaucracy are stronger or weaker, depending whether the sections of the bourgeoisie and the military to which they have linked their fate are winning ground. But at the same time both are cut off from the base. They are even cut off from the middle layers of the bureaucracy.

The leaderships do not have a clear project, because the bourgeoisie does not. And it cannot have. It could well take advantage of the lack of independent workers organisation. But this game also has its limits. The outcome of the war, whatever it will be, will not change the main direction of the latest manoeuvre of the bureaucracy: the workers movement has regained an enormous political space and it is about to be granted legalisation of the CGT, and the recognition of the unions and union activity. This is the penalty for the defeat the plans of the dictatorship, which will have to extend to the defeat of the bureaucracy and the formation of a workers party. ■

THE ARGENTINE TRADE UNIONS

After the coup d'etat in 1976 most of the trade unions were placed under 'military intervention'. However, thanks to the docile bureaucracy, some have continued to function. In most major factories all forms of independent workers organisation (shop stewards, internal committees) have been disrupted. Since then there has been a constant process of reorganisation of trade-union activity in the enterprises. In certain cases, this activity has been supported by the trade union bureaucracy. In others it started from the rank and file to regain the ground lost in the factories.

Nationally the bureaucracy is divided into two fundamental tendencies—the National Workers Confederation (CNT-20) and the General Workers Confederation (CGT).

The first represents the bureaucracy ready to make any agreement with the military dictatorship. It is searching for the space for a stable agreement with the dictatorship. We should remember that it was the principal collaborator of the armed forces in the struggle against 'subversion'.

The other, the CGT, represents 'Justicialista' Peronism. Its principal leader is Lorenzo Miguel. This sector of the bureaucracy is not inclined towards any sort of agreement with the dictatorship. It tries to present itself within a dynamic which, without being open opposition, tends to make it appear the most combative in order to impose the best conditions for negotiations with the military.

In Evin prison – a prisoners account

In the first week of March, Kargar, the weekly newspaper of the Iranian Hezbe Kargarane Enqelabi (HKE—Socialist Workers Party) published an interview with one of its leaders Bahram Ali Atai, who had been subjected to detention for a prolonged period without charges. He described conditions in Evin prison, a major center for political prisoners.

On March 15, the printer of the paper, Mohammed Bagher Falsafi, was jailed. On March 26, the newspaper was suppressed. On March 29, Atai was re-arrested.

The HKE is one of the three Iranian groups that adheres to the Fourth International. The world Trotskyist movement has appealed to all anti-imperialists and supporters of democratic rights to send the following telegram to Hojatolislam Mousavi Trabrizi, the General Prosecutor of the Revolutionary Islamic Court, Tehran, Iran:

“As a supporter of the Iranian revolution and an opponent of the U.S. government’s threats against it, I urge you to release the anti-shah, anti-imperialist fighters and supporters of the Iranian revolution, Bahram Ali Atai and Mohammed Bagher Falsafi, who are being held without charges at Evin Prison in Tehran.” A copy should be sent to the newspaper Jomhuriye Eslami in Tehran.

The following are excerpts from Atai’s interview published in Kargar that deal concretely with his treatment and that of his fellow prisoners. The introduction is abridged from the one in Kargar.

Freeing Bahram Ali Atai after eighty-two days of illegal detention in Evin Prison is a victory for workers’ parties’ political rights and the advance of the Islamic revolution of Iran against Saddam’s aggression, American imperialism, and Zionism.

WHAT HAPPENS IN EVIN PRISON?

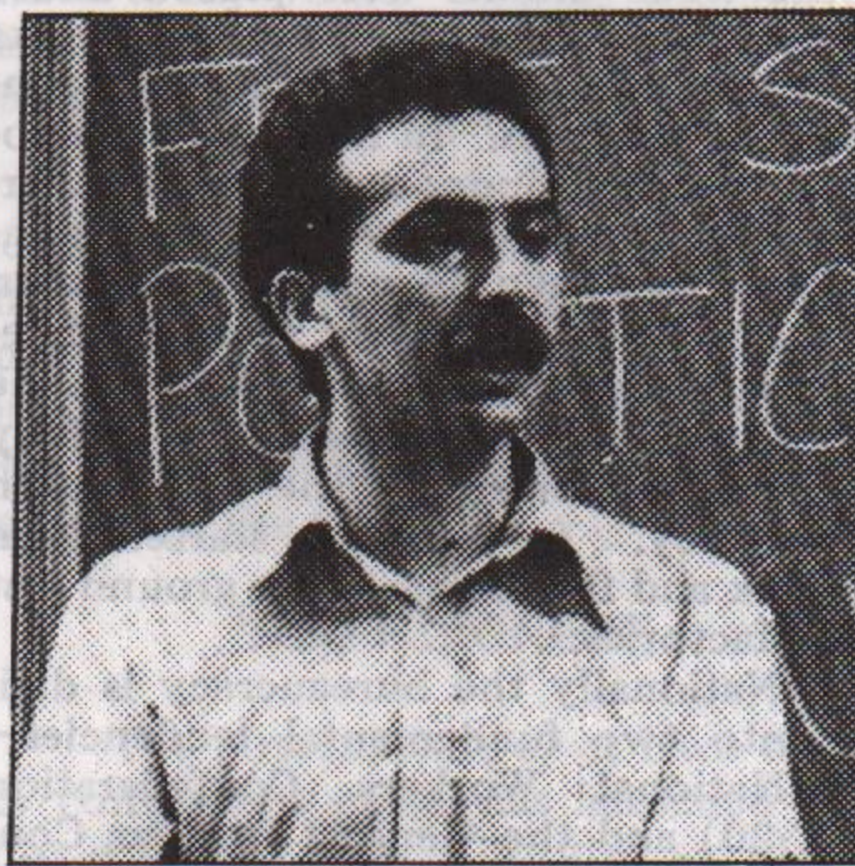
Bahram Ali Atai, former worker in the Iranian National factory and member of the political bureau of the Revolutionary Workers Party (Hezbe Kargarane Enqelabi—HKE) was freed from prison on Thursday, March 3, 1982. His release is a victory for the political freedoms for workers parties, the strengthening of the organizations of the toilers and the ad-

vancing of the war against Saddam’s aggressive forces.

Bahram Ali Atai was illegally arrested by officials of the Revolutionary Prosecutor for distributing materials calling for justice for his comrade-in-arms and co-thinker, Brother Mostafa Seifabadi (who had been wounded in the war and is a worker fired from Dopar factory) along the way to the place where services are held during the Friday prayer.

Brother Atai, one of the founders of the Iranian revolutionary socialist movement, has a record of ten years of vigorous struggle against Pahlevi’s oppression and American imperialism while he was in exile.

Brother Atai is also one of the former workers at Iran National who, in the first days of Saddam’s imposed war, in Anjoman [factory committees], played an important role in organizing the Mobilization and military training of the workers and, along with the rest of the worker volunteers, was sent to the front and served with the irregulars of the Martyr Chamran Headquarters in Ahwaz.



Bahram Atai (DR)

But after a while, the management of his factory called him back from the front and he was fired for the crime of having socialist ideas and his activities in the military mobilization of the factory. Brother Bahram Ali Atai’s release occurred in the context of many leaders of workers’ unions in Europe and America as well as defenders of the Iranian revolution all over the world, bearing witness to his record of struggles against Pahlevi’s oppression and American imperialism. They called on the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran to free him....

During his 82 days of illegal detention in Evin Prison, Brother Atai had a

first-hand view of the conditions of the prisoners, the way officers of the court conducted interrogations, and the prisoners’ demands.

In a recent message, the Imam has said that it is necessary for the Supreme Court to look into the activities of the Prosecutor and the prison conditions. In view of this, Bahram Ali Atai’s eyewitness account is useful, particularly so considering his record as a fighter against the oppression of the Pahlevi and a fighter in the war against Saddam. Even the Prosecutor has not accused him of carrying out illegal acts against the Islamic republic. So, we consider it necessary to present this testimony in written form to the honorable office of Imam Khomeini; the office of Hojatolislam Khamenei, the president of the republic; the honorable Supreme Court; and the representatives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly. We also think that all these facts should be made available to militant workers and activists in the movements—the Revolutionary Guards, the Jihad for Construction and the Literacy Campaign, as well as the fighters at the front....

ARREST

Question. Brother Atai, please tell us about how you were arrested.

Answer: On Friday, December 11, 1981. I and a few other members of the HKE and supporters of Kargar went to where the Tehran Friday prayer is held, to distribute an appeal for justice for Brother Mostafa Seifabadi addressed to Hojatolislam Rafsanjani. Brother Seifabadi is a worker who had been fired from the Dupar factory. In the first days of the war imposed by Iraq, as a reservist, he went to the front and served for six months. He was wounded. After being treated for his wounds, he returned to the front. When Brother Seifabadi returned to his factory after his term of service expired, the manager of the factory instead of defending him because of his sufferings at the front in the war in defense of the Islamic revolution, fired him along with a few other workers from the factory, like Brother Hamdollah Khodakarami, a worker Moslem and representative of the Islamic factory shora. Our brother was distributing this appeal for justice to the worshippers on their way to participate in the Tehran Friday prayer services. We

distributed thousands of these appeals among the worshippers and were met with a great deal of acceptance.

After distributing the appeals, I was heading towards Revolution Square when two people approached me and asked me to come along with them. I asked them "Where are we going?" They answered, "To the Komiteh's patrol car." I went with these two towards the car and realized that it was the Seventh Precinct Komiteh's patrol car. On the way, they told me that the Headquarters in Charge of Holding the Friday Prayer Services (Setade Bargazariye Maraseme Nemaze Jomeh—SBMNJ) had asked them to detain me. When we got to the Seventh Precinct Komiteh, it was noon, and no one was present. But a young brother was there and he briefly interrogated me and asked me a question about the statement and the organization connected with it. I explained to this brother that I am a member of the HKE and the statement was an appeal for Brother Seifabadi and that a few others were also distributing this appeal at the Friday services, but no one troubled them, and only I had been brought over here.

Anyway, the Komiteh of the Seventh Precinct didn't know what to do with me and said that they had to get in touch with the Central Komiteh to get a suggestion. They got in touch with the Central Komiteh and apparently someone in the Central Komiteh had said that they should bring me there. Since it was Friday and no one was there, they said that I should be brought over on Saturday. We stayed in the Komiteh of the Seventh Precinct until 6:00 p.m. and finally, they gave me permission to go home under my own recognizance, to come back Saturday. It became clear to me that this illegal arrest was not incidental but that it had been planned.

Saturday morning, I presented myself to the Komiteh of the Seventh Precinct and I, along with several others, who were said to have been accused, were brought to the Central Komiteh. In the interrogation section of the Central Komiteh, I talked with Brother Motahhari, with whom I had previously been in touch and spoken about the activities of the HKE and *Kargar*, and who I knew. And I explained about the problem of distributing the appeals for Brother Seifabadi and the fact that those in charge of the SBMNJ and the brothers of the Sixth Operations Staff of the regional Komiteh had long been aware of our activities, like selling *Kargar* to the worshippers on their way to prayer. But this time, Brother Motahhari's behavior was different from what I'd seen in the past. He told me I was "making a provocation". I asked "What do you mean, provocation?" Brother Motahhari said that distributing leaflets like Seifabadi's appeal was a provocation. Of course, for me it was interesting how a man in charge of the Central Komiteh became more Catholic than the Pope in defense of the illegal firing by an idolatrous manager in the Dupar factory. In reply, I said, "Brother Motahhari, dis-

tributing this appeal isn't creating a provocation, but part of the religiously sanctioned and legal activities of the HKE. They are activities which necessitate the intensification of the contradiction between the Iranian revolution and imperialism and its agents in Iran." Mr. Motahhari answered that Mr. Bani Sadr created the same provocation, and then turned his head from me and said that we had determined to struggle against the "American line," and in fact, labeled the legal activities of the HKE and *Kargar* as the "American line". Of course, this too was interesting: Mr. Motahhari decided to struggle against the "American line", the essence of which is illustrated by support for an illegal firing by a factory manager! Mr. Motahhari concluded his remarks saying that, anyway, we've become tired of your political activities and we want to present you to the Islamic revolutionary prosecutor. They then blindfolded me and kept me in the makeshift interrogation place of the Central Komiteh.



Executioner at work in Iran (DR)

About 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, they took me out of the cell and briefly interrogated me in a room and then, in another room, they took my picture, and finally blindfolded me and, along with a few others, put me in a line. Then, someone who I didn't know put his hand on my shoulder and said to someone else, "Is he one of the ones to be executed?" The other said, "Yeah." This brought me up short, because they brought me from the Friday prayer to the Central Komiteh, blindfolded me, and now, without even telling me what I'm accused of, consider me one of the people to be executed. In the course of what followed, it became clear to me that such talk and activities were quite common....

Anyway, I and several others rode in a car like a minibus without windows, used to carry people charged with crimes, and left the Central Komiteh. I asked the two accused who were on both sides of me, what their crimes were to get a feel for the situation I was in. They both told me their crimes were "heavy." They told

me that no doubt, my crime was "heavy" too because I was sitting with two such "heavy" people. Anyway, after driving around for a while, the car went down a steep grade and I figured we were going to Evin Prison.

ENTERING EVIN AND INTERROGATION

Q. Brother Atai, when you got to Evin, what happened?

A. They marched us out of the car, wrote down our names, and we were turned over to them. Later, we were brought to the second storey of the building, which I later found out was the Revolutionary Prosecutor's building in Evin Prison. We were seated in a hall. There was a large number of others, about 100-150, also sitting in the hall. It was lunchtime, and they were about to give out food. (I could only guess at all this from the voices around us, because we were blindfolded all this time.) They also gave

me a little dish of food and, with our eyes blindfolded, they said "Eat." All this time that we were sitting in the hall, there were ear-shattering screams from the rooms on both sides of the hall, loud voices saying things like: "Oh, don't beat me, let me go, I'm telling the truth, I'm telling you everything, don't beat me." Just like that, the sound of loud and ear-shattering screams reached us from the rooms. It was like a lot of people being beaten. I'd never heard anything like it, and I was a little shaken by it all. I didn't know who was being beaten or who was beating. The voices of a few women also came out who, they said, were also blindfolded, and they said, "I can't take it any more, brother, bring me back to prison." Later, when I'd been transferred to my section of prison, I understood that these screams were the screams of women who had been brought out of their section for interrogation to the prosecutor's interrogation building and, since they were upset by the cries of the other prisoners who were being

beaten, wanted to be returned to their cells. After a few hours, they brought us, blindfolded, from the hall inside one of the rooms, in which there were some thirty people. Later, I realized that these thirty people were like the other accused, who were either in the prisons or from outside the prisons like me, and taken to the prosecutor's building for interrogation...

Anyway, I was in that room for three or four days, blindfolded, and only occasionally did they take us to the bathroom and give us food, and no one asked us anything. Finally, on the fourth day, Thursday, someone came and called my name. I was glad that some one called me by my name and would no doubt tell me with what I had been charged. He called my name and personal details and said, "You're going to your section." I asked, "What do you mean, section?" He said, "Section of the prison." I asked him with what was I charged and why I hadn't been interrogated? He answered that there were a lot of men there, and "for the time being, you're going to your section."

The issue of blindfolding in Evin prison began after the time of the explosions, and imprisoned socialist comrades Faranak Zahrai and Monavar Shir Ali talked about a practice of trying to create a battlefield atmosphere by blindfolding in Evin. This method had been extended to a bizarre degree.

Thus I was transferred down to Section One of Evin prison, Room Six, and in this section, for the first time, I was able to open my eyes. When I opened my eyes, I saw I was inside a room, the likes of which I'd never seen. The layout of the room shocked me a great deal. The room was about six meters by six meters, and there were some seventy people inside. The crowding was so great that it was impossible to budge.

Q. Then were you interrogated in prison, and please tell us about it.

A. About one month of my detention had passed, and I remained in the same room with the rest of the prisoners, when one day, they called my name, blindfolded me, and finally brought me to the prosecutor's building in Evin. It was there that, when I was entering Evin, they took me. Later, I noticed that in the prosecutor's building in Evin, there were many departments of the prosecutor's interrogation. I was in the fifth department. They made me face the wall, sat me on a chair, and undid my blindfold. They told me not to ever look behind me. Then the interrogator told me that I'd better tell the truth for each question, or else there is ta'zir, i.e., the whip. I told him "I'm glad you're interrogating me, because I want the truth to come out and to know the charges against me."

The interrogator showed me a picture on which was attached a printed form, and told me to write my name and personal information on it. I looked at the picture and saw that it wasn't a picture of me. I told the interrogator that

this picture is not a picture of me. The interrogator asked: "This isn't your picture?" I said, "No." He said, "Why do you lie?" I said "I'm not lying, look here, compare this picture with me and see if it is my picture or not." The interrogator separated the picture from the paper and told me to write my name and personal information on the paper. After I'd written my name, address, and other personal details on the paper, the interrogator looked at the paper, and asked, "Why did you change your handwriting?" I told him, "By Allah, I've always written like this." The interrogator insisted for a while that I was lying, and then conceded that, yes, it was indeed my handwriting. Talking and being in contact with other prisoners showed me that this tactic is practically standard in Evin....

All during the interrogation and while I was going through the hall, loud, ear-splitting screams came from the interrogation rooms. I later noticed that these screams came from prisoners being whipped. Ordinarily, when a prisoner enters his section, he heaves a sigh of relief because he is saved from the ear-splitting and upsetting screams of the prisoners in the revolutionary prosecutor's building, which come from the beatings, and he can be delivered from the evil of blindfolding. Because some people, when they go for interrogation to the prosecutor's building, are there for days, the screams and blindfolding really get to them.

I became aware of a duality of behavior in Evin. It was a behavior which, after every threat or whipping, affected a grace and brotherliness, and a helpless person sees that not only is he in prison, but an atmosphere of schizophrenia and dualism pervades all. I don't mean to get into a psychoanalytic question by bringing this up.

THE CONDITIONS OF THE PRISONERS IN EVIN

Q. Brother Atai, what sort of people were in Evin Prison, and in what circumstances were they?

A. As I said, I was in Section One, Room Six. There were various kinds of people in my room of about eighty people. There were two skilled workers from the Tehran oil refinery, who were connected with no particular political group, and were arrested only for the refinery's internal problems, and fortunately, one of them was freed from prison the same time as I was.

There was a brother from the Municipal Bus Company named Asghar Kaheh, a maintenance worker in the Narmak borough of the Municipal Bus Company, and a member of the Islamic Shora. Brother Kaheh had been arrested some nine months ago, and in the meantime, his case was being looked into. There were several workers from a textile factory, National Shoe, and Iran National.

Of course, the workers among the roughly eighty people in there were a minority. About half of them in the room

had been arrested on charges of having relations with or sympathizing with the Organization of People's Mojahdeen (OPM), the other half were charged with sympathizing with or having relations with so-called 'leftist' groups like Peykar, People's Fedayeen (Minority), Razmandegan (the Fighters), People's Fedayeen (Majority), Tudeh Party, or groups like "Hadad" and "Prophets," the names of which I never even heard of. There were one or two who were arrested in connection with Bani Sadr.

An interesting number of people, about fifteen, were doctors, physicians, skilled specialists, and students in the final year of the university, who had been arrested, for the most part, for their relations with political groups in the past, or for their relations in the last two years with the student group of the Mojahdeen called the Organization of Islamic Students, or the student organization of the Fedayeen, called Vanguard. Their ages started at seventeen or eighteen and reached to over forty, but most of their ages were between twenty and thirty. Most of them were in the room for no apparent reason, that is, either they were being interrogated or their interrogation remained half-finished or they were not being interrogated at all. But about 90 percent of those in the room were people who didn't believe in participating in armed actions. There were also several who were arrested arbitrarily or for no apparent reason. For example, there was a member of the OPM whom officials of the Prosecutor's office were after, and since he got away, the Prosecutor's officials arrested every member of his family, like his son, his mother, his father, and his sister and brother; and the brother was in our room, and his sister was still in the women's prison.

As for the supporters of the Fedayeen Majority, who are one of the country's legal political groups, they were all arrested and detained for peaceful and legal political activities, like passing out statements or putting up posters. There were even two supporters of the Majority who were among the 25-credit students and were arrested on the first day that they went to the university and brought to Evin Prison. At that time, they of course had high hopes of being released as soon as possible.

As for Shokrollah Paknezhad (a leader of the Democratic National Front), I must add that in the few days I was in the same room as he, I had the opportunity to talk to him for a while. Just when I entered Room Six, several people gathered around me to see what was going on outside. While talking, I noticed that the features of one of them were very familiar. I asked him, "who are you?" He said "Paknezhad." All at once, I noticed that, yes, I had...before the revolution, I had seen his face. I said, "Mr. Paknezhad, I participated in activities to free you from prison outside the country during the years of Pahlevi's oppression, how strange it is that now we meet for the first time in here." Anyway,

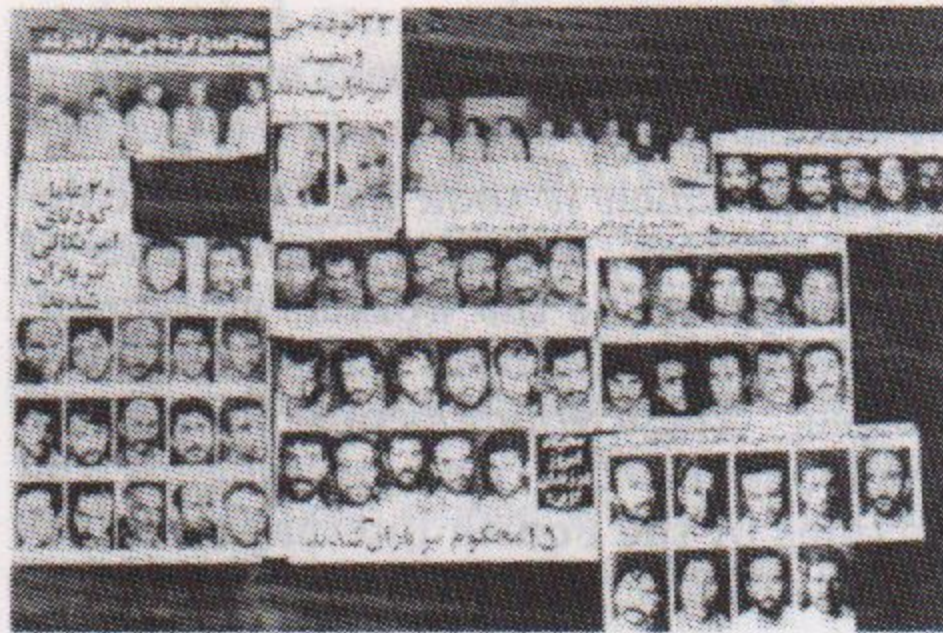
he believed that with the accusations leveled against him in court, he would surely be executed. And he said he was worried the imperialists had succeeded in defeating this revolution. When I had the opportunity to explain about the struggle to free intellectuals like Mostafa Rahimi and Reza Baraheni, he asked me if his name was also among those who, on the outside, were being defended. I said, as far as I knew, no, because even I didn't know of his arrest; and he became very despondent. One day, at dawn, his name was called; and they asked him to come with all his things. He said goodbye to everyone, and said, "Be brave." The interesting thing to note is that Paknezhad said he had never participated in any armed actions....

Q. Is it possible to say something about your experiences in Evin in regard to executions?

A. The prosecutor levelled twelve charges against Paknezhad. Six of them concerned the National Democratic Front, several were about Kurdistan and connections with the Mojahedeen, and another one was essentially "deceiving the young generation," and they took him off and shot him.

There was also an 18 year old youth who secretly helped plant a mine, and he was shot. Several others from the room were shot before I got there. My cell-mates told me about it. Generally, shootings occurred between six and eight in the evening, so we knew that when, in the afternoon, they came and said so and so with all your things, everyone knows he is to be executed. Moreover, during the first weeks of my imprisonment, once a week, the sound of the executions and shootings were heard. The prisoners would be quiet and count the number of shots, and sometimes they would reach fifty, sixty, or even seventy, and these shootings were never reported in the daily papers we got in prison and examined.... (Atai told of beatings of prisoners to extract information.) ...four days blindfolded in that hall, and when someone always as his eyes blindfolded, he doesn't even feel good when it is time to eat. So the procedure on prisoners in the Revolutionary Prosecutor's building is far and away more than that in the rooms in the jail. Something which upset many prisoners at the Revolutionary Prosecutor's building is the cries of those who are being whipped in interrogation chambers and their screams and cries have a terrible effect on the prisoners. Of course, it is then that the prisoners who are being interrogated at the Prosecutor's are being whipped. Of course, the brothers at the Prosecutor's building call this whipping "ta'zir," but ta'zir is when someone's crime has been established, and the religious judge sentences someone to religious punishment by whipping. But in the Prosecutor's building, the prisoners are whipped before their charges and crime are confirmed and they still haven't gone to the court, i.e., when interrogation has just begun and the detainee still doesn't know with what he is charged. I

knew people, and I'm ready to give their names to the official in charge to review this, who were whipped simply to get information to the person carrying out the interrogation, as long as the prisoners didn't give any information which the brother interrogator was looking for, until they talked. The screams of "Don't hit me," the voice of the interrogator saying "Talk," and then very loud screams.



Some of the hundreds executed in Iran (DR)

Q. Do the officials at the Prosecutor's building use other techniques to get information from prisoners?

A. Yes. In the jail where I was, I came face to face with people who had had two kinds of illegal things done to them, the effects of which could still be seen on their bodies. One is hanging from a nail, and the other is weighted handcuffs. In "hanging," they handcuff the prisoner's hands in police handcuffs and then raise the prisoner's hands above his head and hang the cuffs from a nail, so that the prisoner's whole body is being suspended from a nail and only the tip of the prisoner's toenails touch the ground, and this goes on for hours. The handcuffs put pressure on the wrists, and the skin and muscles of the hand are injured, or they reach near the bone, and a scar of two centimeters stays on the wrist. "Weighted handcuffs" is like this: they raise one hand above the head towards the back, and they raise the other hand, from below the waist and both hands are hooked behind his head and handcuffed so that the hands totally bend back the spine, and the prisoner is forced to relieve his back from pain for several hours and then his waist for several hours...The whippings which regularly happen in an interrogation or to obtain information or to get a prisoner to confess involve 40 to 45 strokes and aren't limited to the soles of the feet, but are also applied to the back. Usually, a prisoner who is whipped, his feet swell from the ankle down, and sometimes they swell to up to twice their usual size. Of course, I use the word "whip" and it is a way of whipping with a thin and strong woven strip which is very painful. The soles of the foot get huge blisters and layers of pus. I have seen many cases of these prisoners, in the room and in the Revolutionary Prosecutor's yard with my own eyes, and of course, there was no dressing or medicine which they needed to heal them. Of course, they also beat women as well as men, for the voices and screams of both women and men could be heard from the interrogation chambers, and in the

halls one could see under the blindfolds women and men, their feet swollen or wrapped in dressing, limping along...

Q. Were you whipped, too?

A. Yes.

Q. Tell us about it.

A. On the second or third day, I was sitting on the floor and waiting in the room in the Prosecutor's building along with about twenty others. Everyone was blindfolded as usual. Around afternoon, my legs were getting extremely tired. I stood up to shift my place when my head got a little dizzy and, to keep my balance, I put my hand on someone's shoulder. Just then, my blindfold slipped and got a little out of place. At that point, a man of about twenty-six named Brother Morteza, who was in the hall and rooms on the second floor of the court building in Evin doing various things like giving food to the detainees, stopped outside the door and shouted: "Hey! Didn't I tell you a hundred times not to loosen your blindfold?" Then he called me and two others sitting beside me and said: "Each of you get five lashes." Of course, these two didn't do anything, and apparently Brother Morteza thought that all three of us had loosened our blindfolds. Immediately, we three were brought to a room which was at the end of a hall. He told all of us to take off our shoes and socks and one by one to lie on our stomachs on the bed so that the soles of our feet stuck out a little over the bed. Then he gave each of us five lashes with the whip. The whip was about two or three centimeters around and was made of nylon thread, braided together, and was about sixty or seventy centimeters long. Of course, they say there are cable whips used, which I never saw.

Q. What did the whipping feel like?

A. The first blow feels very strange, particularly for someone like me who never had been whipped and it is like everything that one hears about the feeling of being whipped all of a sudden comes to mind, concentrated. One compares what he's heard with what he feels so quickly with the first lash. The second blow tears a person's thoughts apart and something called pain occupies every thought the man has. The third blow is like the motion of a wave from the sole of the foot where it takes off with the whiplash, traveling quickly so the teeth feel the lash on the sole of the foot. The next blow, which starts from the same place the first did, unleashes a pain which fills the body and reaches the skull, intensifying in all places, and is like a wave which ripples over the whole body, from the sole of the feet to the head, and inflames the nerves with pain. Suffice it to say that my reaction to these blows was a very painful cry from the bottom of my heart. Of course, someone who regularly gets no less than 45 blows knows that this many blows leads to the soles of the feet developing running, putrid sores and swelling blisters, and gives pain to the feet for weeks. Of course, when one not only gets his feet whipped, but his back, the same thing happens to his back. ■

Building Revolutionary Youth Organisations in the Imperialist Countries

The following document was adopted by the May 1982 meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International.

1. In the last period, the Fourth International has made progress in party building in two fields.

o the beginning of the ability to seriously root our organizations in the working class and its organizational consequences in the turn to industry.

o starting to take up more generally the political importance of the youth in the class struggle and the organizational steps which have to be taken to relate to these young people through the building of revolutionary youth organizations.

This is a process of changing the FI and its sections in their fields of work, as a pre-requisite for their future tasks. These two organizational steps are not separate but interrelated.

The aim of the present document is to indicate how we should go forward in this process in the imperialist countries in regard to the question of youth.

THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE

2. In the class struggle the decisive role is played by the working class leading its allies. Within that framework a crucial role is played by the youth from these layers. This is demonstrated not only by historical but by contemporary experience.

This crucial role played by the youth of the working class and oppressed is directly reflected in the building of the revolutionary party itself. Although a revolutionary party has more experienced forces in its leadership and cadre the majority of its membership will be young people. While of course precise analogies must not be made it is worth noting that the average age of the Bolshevik Party in 1917 was 23, the FSLN in Nicaragua in 1979 24, and the German Communist Party when it was a mass revolutionary party had an average age in its early 20s.

The new wave of politicisation in the imperialist countries also began in the 1960s with young people—particularly starting in solidarity with the colonial revolution. Following the May/June general strike in France this politicisation increasingly affected layers of the working class and greatly widened the range

of issues which it took up. In the colonial revolution, and in the movements of opposition inside the workers movement, a crucial role has been played by young people. These young people formed the backbone of the strengthening of the sections of the Fourth International since the late 1960s.

However, young people radicalize with great speed and have the ability to go in a very short time from lack of experience and campaigning on a single question to accepting a full revolutionary programme. Furthermore the pattern of radicalization of young people often differs in important aspects, and often has its own rhythms and forms compared to that of older layers. This creates the need for an additional different type of organization to the party to win the maximum number of young people to revolutionary politics, i.e. an organization without the same level of political experience and requirements as the party for initial membership and wide open to radicalising young people. Today the Fourth International has important openings to construct such revolutionary youth organizations in the imperialist countries.

3. The question of constructing revolutionary youth organizations is inseparably connected with the question of building the revolutionary party. Once a youth organization is created, this does not relieve the party of one of its sectors of work. On the contrary it increases the responsibilities of the party. For the first time the problems posed by the existence of the youth organization begin to be confronted practically. None of the major problems confronted by the youth organization can be solved simply by that organization itself but they are above all problems which must be confronted by the party. All the errors and weaknesses of the party will reappear in the youth organization in an even larger form than in the section of the Fourth International itself.

A youth organization is only possible with a major allocation of resources to it from the party, and if it is seen as one of the priorities of the section. *Adoption of this document therefore indicates that the Fourth International considers that a high priority today should be given by its sections in the imperialist countries to building revolutionary youth organizations.*

BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY TODAY

4. Strategy and tactics in building the revolutionary party and youth organizations are not timeless but must be derived from the objective situation and tasks confronting the working class. We may summarize these briefly in the present period as follows.

i. The situation which is developing today is decisively one of an *international* crisis of capitalism, imperialism and Stalinism. This is shown dramatically in the revolutionary struggles in Central America and the Caribbean, in Poland and in the anti-missiles and anti-nuclear weapons movement. This increasingly direct international crisis must be built into our perspectives in every country and is fundamental in building both the Fourth International and national parties.

ii. Within this framework the *economic* offensive of the bourgeoisie will deepen and widen. The first generalized post war recession of 1975, and the second of 1979-81, are only the first stage in a deepening crisis. A continual and intensified attack to impose 'austerity' policies, and weaken and destroy the organizations of the most important sections of the working class, will be more and more necessary for capitalism.

iii. There is a permanent general social crisis of capitalism—and also in a different form one affecting the bureaucratized workers states. This hits with particularly great severity against the most oppressed layers of society—women, blacks, young people—but its effects strike the working class as a whole.

iv. The outcome of all these struggles inside the imperialist countries will be long and difficult. We are only just at the beginning of the great struggles which will take place in the imperialist centres. Only the strongest forces on either side can hope to gain victory in this struggle. Neither can do so without developing the strongest possible all-round political strategy and without using the strongest social forces available to them. This means the bourgeois state and reaction on the one side and the industrial proletariat and its organizations on the other. It is this political framework, and the social conclusions that flow from it, which determine the tasks in building the revolutionary party. As an aspect of this it also determines tasks in building the revolutionary youth organization.

5. It is often the case historically that a new wave of radicalisation starts outside the core of the working class among students, white-collar, and intellectual layers. This was the case in the 1960s with the movements of solidarity with the colonial revolution. The dynamic, however, is for this radicalisation to increasingly touch the most decisive layers of the industrial working class and for this to become increasingly the backbone of the struggle on all political questions.

Within this framework of an intensification of political crises and developments the present international situation therefore also sees an increasing tendency for the working class to play, conjuncturally as well as historically, a more and more leading role in the class struggle. This has been the increasing trend inside the imperialist countries since the May-June 1968 general strike in France. From this flows the chief organizational task of the Fourth International in this period, with tactical implications flowing from it, the turn to base itself inside the industrial working class. This includes the need to transfer forces into industry so as to gain a majority of our members inside the industrial working class.

From this political situation and its social dynamic flows the type of parties which we have to build. *Parties socially based inside the working class but capable of taking up all the issues of the class struggle.*

6. While the new radicalization has already penetrated into the industrial working class this necessarily continues to be extremely uneven. The defeats imposed by Stalinism, the long post war capitalist boom, the continuing weight of the reformist apparatuses, mean that the masses, and even most of the older organizing cadres of the working class in the capitalist states, continue in all except a few countries, to have reformist illusions. These will only be overcome through a whole series of massive struggles on a scale far greater than those we have already seen.

The dynamic of the class struggle, however, necessarily drives towards an increasing conflict between the orientation of the masses and those of the reformist leaderships. This poses the task of the construction of the revolutionary party, of a class struggle left wing. This process, however, is one of a prolonged period of the class struggle and we are only just at its beginning today.

7. This process of working class radicalization and differentiation inside the workers movement does not take place in a gradual or even manner. It develops abruptly around particular issues, layers or specific struggles. Furthermore, it is fundamentally uneven by age. Contemporary and historical experience confirms once again that young workers are the layer which moves decisively to take up the issues of the class struggle and to reject the line of the reformist leaderships.

This shows precisely the decisive layer for building revolutionary parties today. The revolutionary organizations of the Fourth International will recruit individual experienced worker militants of 30 or over, and each such member is of tremendous importance, but there will not be in the next period large-scale gains from this layer. The overwhelming numbers of those who can and will be won to a revolutionary organization in the next period are much younger—starting in their mid-teens and going up to 30. *Building parties socially implanted in the working class capable of taking up all the issues of the class struggle means above all today orienting to the recruitment of young workers.* It is recruiting these layers, educating them in the workers movement, creating a class struggle left wing, that is the basic perspective on which the sections of the FI must base themselves today.

8. It is from this point of view of the dynamics of radicalization and recomposition inside the working class that it is possible to understand the present tasks of building the revolutionary party and youth organization. It means the party concentrating and orienting its work, and especially in the factories, *towards the young workers.* This is in the perspective of two processes reflecting the same underlying development.

i. There is the continual process, accelerating in the future, of young workers coming forward to recompose the rank and file leaderships of the working class in its everyday struggles. This is an inevitable product of the deepening and intensification of the clashes between the classes.

This development in the factories and unions is paralleled by similar processes outside, with different forms, in which young and particularly oppressed layers are forced to engage in serious struggles to defend even limited rights, to force back deprivation of their minimum social needs and oppression by the state, etc. This also brings to the fore young militants in the struggles and movements of blacks, women, oppressed nationalities, and other layers.

ii. Periodically movements based primarily on young people outflank altogether the reformist leaderships. The youth rebellions in Britain in summer 1981, the struggles over housing in West Germany in 1980, represent the extreme examples of this development.

Often, however, a 'united front' with sections of the reformists can be imposed by the weight of the social forces involved and we fight for this. But even within this development the youth represent by far the most active component and dynamic force and one that can often tend to take on specific forms of organization within the general movement. This was the case, for example, with the big actions of the Anti-Nazi League in Britain in 1977-79 and is generally the case with the movement against remilitarisation and nuclear weapons, as well as

in solidarity with Central America, in the imperialist countries today.

It is in this process of recomposition of the workers movement and working class leadership that the question of building the revolutionary youth organization is posed from two key angles.

The first is to intervene in and gain from the process whereby significant layers of young people move to outflank, come into conflict with, and break from the reformist leaderships.

The second is as a tactic in the construction of the revolutionary party.

These two are tied together by the basic dynamic of the class struggle and pattern of radicalization.

9. This process means understanding that the youth tend to radicalize even more than any other section of society around *the most burning political questions.* They are more willing to engage in political action, because they are less influenced or controlled than other layers by the apparatuses of the reformist bureaucracies or the institutions of the bourgeois state. It is this which gives the possibility to take the most burning political questions directly into the working class via the young workers and recruit from this layer. This also helps to create a real force for intervening in the differentiations inside the reformist organizations—an effective intervention towards which cannot be achieved simply by propaganda but only if we have a real *organization* for this work. It is these tasks which form the basis for building revolutionary parties today and within which framework building youth organizations must be posed.

THE NEED FOR A REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH ORGANIZATION

10. Within the framework of constructing the revolutionary party the task of building youth organizations in political solidarity with sections of the Fourth International is an important part of tactics for achieving this goal. It is not sufficient to rely only on direct recruitment to the party—although of course many people will be directly recruited to the sections. The youth organization helps answer two questions simultaneously. Firstly, it reaches wider layers of youth and organizes them in big struggles on youth and working-class issues. Secondly, it is a field of recruitment for the party of the best militant youth.

The developments of radicalization in the last period have posed the question of the construction of youth organizations with an increased importance and in a new context. In the mid and late 1960s, youth organizations supported by the Fourth International existed in North America and in France with the JCR, and there was a movement in that direction in Italy. They however did not exist in the majority of Western European countries.

This policy was changed at the Ninth World Congress and a general decision taken to build youth organizations.

This decision however only had a short period of application in the majority of European countries. The old sections of the International in general were fused with the youth organizations to create qualitatively new organizations of the Fourth International.

It is only in the later 1970s that a number of FI sections in Western Europe started from their own initiatives to build independent youth organizations. This trend is correctly being more and more taken up today.

Results available from the different countries strongly confirm that this represents a correct orientation for building organizations of the Fourth International today.

The general strategic need for youth organizations therefore today comes together with the conjunctural possibilities to show that the sections of the Fourth International in the imperialist countries should put as one of their key priorities at the present the building of independent youth organizations.

11. This importance is confirmed by experience of attempting other solutions than building organizationally independent youth organizations. Where these do not exist, and there is simply a 'youth sector' of the party, major problems are encountered. When the organizational orientation of the party is no longer almost exclusively to youth, as it was in the late 1960s, and when the party starts to do work in the labour movement as its center of gravity, there is a serious danger of youth work becoming marginalized in the party. It creates difficulties not only to centralize and lead youth work, but as well to be in the position to grasp new opportunities of youth radicalization.

The inadequacy of a youth sector of the party will become more and more obvious as the party turns to industry. All evidence shows that the turn to industry and the building of youth organizations are totally linked. A turn to industry not accompanied by the building of youth organizations will not succeed in utilizing the possibilities for party building which exist. Building a youth organization among working-class youth is however impossible without the turn to industry of the parties themselves.

12. In the framework of the political tasks of the sections, the building of revolutionary youth organizations has two decisive aspects—to take action and educate militants, and as a tactic in party building.

i. The youth organization and action and education of militants.

a. A youth organization which is organizationally independent of the party but politically in solidarity can attract radicalizing young people, workers and those in the education system who have not yet made up their minds about joining a revolutionary party or adopted a perspective of becoming lifetime revolutionaries, but who are willing and ready to participate in a broad range of political

actions taken through their own organization and together with the revolutionary party and its members.

b. Youth, precisely because it is young, because it has not known the defeats, the disillusion of the past, is more combative, more ready to fight, than older layers. It therefore needs an organization which corresponds to this instinctive readiness to fight.

c. The youth organization is above all an organization for action, for struggle. The best way to learn Marxism is not by learning by heart books on the history of the workers movement but by engaging in struggle. People learn through action. Youth must have the right to

few individual young people who are open to new ideas, ready to fight, disgusted with capitalist society and wanting to change it. There is a relatively large phenomenon of radicalization among youth and this provides the possibility of winning significant layers of youth to revolutionary Marxism and to the party. This requires a different organizational answer than simple 'contact work'. If the party takes the initiative to build an independent youth organization, with a real organizational independence, including on occasion contrary to the party, this is precisely because it is the only form of organization which can correspond to the needs of young people.



Youth militia in El Salvador (DR)

make its own mistakes because it is only through taking initiatives and responsibilities, through determining its own tactics, that they can become real cadres.

ii. The youth organization is a party building tactic.

The tasks outlined of a youth organization in no way cut across, but interrelate with, the fact that one of the chief aims is to recruit from it to the revolutionary party.

Obviously it would be possible to reach certain numbers of very militant youth and try to recruit them directly to the party through consistent contact work. But the sections are faced with another situation. It is not a relatively

Within this framework a youth organization not only educates young people for the class struggle but also to become members of the revolutionary party.

a. The youth organization operates in the direct sense of education, learning Marxism and its principles, and what constitutes our program. We explain to all the youth who are disgusted with this society that it is only under the flag of revolutionary socialism that we can end its evils.

b. The youth organization is a school of education because its solidarity with the party gives to the youth the opportunity to meet, work together, learn

from its members, i.e., trained cadres devoted to the cause of their class, professional revolutionaries. This does not overturn the organizational autonomy of the youth organization but indicates its political relation to the party.

c. We are building definite political organizations of young people and not 'movements'. This necessity for a clear political profile, programme, and structures means also that we fight for such youth organizations even where they contain other forces, to be in political solidarity with the sections of the Fourth International and the International itself.

d. From the above flows the correct conceptualization of the difference between the youth organization and the party.

In order to play its role of political vanguard in the struggle the revolutionary party, against the pressures of capitalist society, requires of its members a definite level of understanding and activity far higher than a reformist party, an understanding of the basic programmatic positions of Marxism and their application. All of this takes some time to absorb. The party therefore guards its 'frontiers' carefully.

The youth organization is, however, an organization of a different type. A youth organization must be able to reach out to a wide layer of young people who are rebelling against several aspects of capitalist society but who do not yet necessarily understand all the ways these are related. This explanation of the whole nature of capitalism and all the strategy for how to fight it is a task inside the youth organization and not a precondition for membership. In the words of the founding congress of the Fourth International, "The youth organization...in deciding for itself its actions in line with its program, in taking the task of educating the toiling youth on that program, poses no conditions for joining other than a general agreement, even of sentiment, with the goals pursued by the Fourth International and its methods of struggle. It is the expression of the instinctive revolt of young workers against super-exploitation, of the young peasants chained to the land, of the young intellectuals, of millions of declassed young unemployed, and is the expression of their enthusiastic support for the revolution. In that sense it is an organization wider than the party."

The distinction youth organization/party therefore should not be seen chiefly as one of age but of *different type* of organizations.

A CAMPAIGNING YOUTH ORGANIZATION

13. It is not possible to separate the building of a revolutionary youth organization from the building of a revolutionary party. It is the strategy for building the party that is the framework in which the youth organization operates. Indeed, considerations in building the

party show up most dramatically inside the youth organizations.

Our tasks and priorities in building the revolutionary party flow from the fact that increasingly *central political questions*, national and international, will dominate the situation. Above all, the party will be built up by means of centralized political campaigns on the most central issues of the day. This is reflected, as a political and not merely an organizational, concept of building a *campaigning party*.

Naturally in certain sectors, factories, etc., sections of the Fourth International may assume positions of leadership which force them to give answers on all questions. Indeed the very uneven development of the situation, and of the sections of the FI, means they may of course have specific *tactics* in different sectors. However, it is false to conceive of building parties 'sector by sector'—particularly in terms of taking up the issues specific to that sector of work.

14. This aspect of political campaigns in building revolutionary parties applies with particular force to youth organizations. At the centre of the work and building of youth organizations must be political campaigns.

The central political issues confronting society today—war, direct and indirect effects of militarisation, austerity, suppression of democratic rights—touch *all* layers of the youth. It is therefore increasingly possible and necessary, for both our youth organizations and sections, to carry out campaigns aimed at all these layers of youth and in particular at young workers. Where we have established sections and youth organizations which are only in the process of making the turn to industry, this can express itself in a sense in a double turn—of the sections towards the youth, including utilizing already acquired working class implantations for this, and a turn of the youth organizations towards the young workers. Where our organizations are strongly making the turn to industry, this comes together in the common priority orientation for building the party of an orientation to the young workers.

This type of campaigning work must be carried out together with permanent activity in certain mass structures which organize the youth (trade unions, youth sections of unions, student unions, etc.). Such work of course demands specific tactics. However, such work must take as its starting point the political struggle in society as a whole and not issues conceived of as 'internal' to these structures.

Finally, this centrality of political campaigns in building youth organizations reflects the fact that young people, even more than older people, are oriented to action. Even more directly than with the 'adult' party, a high level of activity gained through campaigns, is decisive in building the youth organization.

15. The nature of the crisis facing society, the tasks in constructing a revolutionary party, and the objective needs of young people determine the types of campaign which our sections and youth organizations should prioritize. These campaigns must correspond to the objectively most central and important questions of the class struggle—*austerity, militarism, division of the workers movement, anti-imperialist struggle, racism, etc.* Naturally the tactics and particular emphasis of the youth organization may have different forms compared to those of the party, but the essential themes of the political situation to which the two organizations respond must be essentially common.

The differences in activity between the party and the youth organization are differences in tactics and specific emphasis at particular points in time (e.g., the LCR in France campaigning most centrally on the 35 hour week during the latter part of 1981, and the JCR on reduction of military service to six months). These differences flow essentially from the differences in patterns of radicalization of young people, compared to that of older layers, already discussed. *But both organizations must be campaigning on different aspects of the most central political questions confronting society.*

16. These general questions of the character of youth organizations are reflected also in its launching—a state several of our sections are still going through. There is of course no exact blueprint for starting to build a revolutionary youth organization. Precise tactics have to be decided upon in light of the concrete situations in each country where the work is started. Nevertheless, there are basic patterns for starting the work which flow from general considerations and reflect the concrete experience of most sections. Two are crucial.

The first is the launching of a youth paper. This really only becomes effective when it is a *national* paper.

The second is the establishing of groups (circles) in particular around the paper.

It is in general this combination of national paper and local groups i.e., a first accumulation of cadres, that creates the organizational framework around which the youth organization can be built.

Linked to these organizational steps, however, there are in general two key *political* preconditions to actually launch the organization.

The first is that the newly emerging organization's members must be able to project, and themselves have, a sense of political identity with a national organization. This requires firstly, key central political campaigns as already discussed, carried out on the national scale, and types of national events—rallies, nationwide meetings, etc. These begin to give the youth involved the sense of really belonging to an organization.

Secondly, the organization has to have and discuss a programme. This is

crucial in creating a political homogeneity out of young people attracted out of different campaigns and with diverse experiences. It is in this process that the youth organization so to speak chooses its flag, and its cadres begin to get a sense of the organization's historic political identity—in this case the Fourth International.

Finally, the actual launching of the youth organization must be built as a major initiative of the organization and of the party as a whole.

THE REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH ORGANIZATION AND THE TURN TO INDUSTRY

17. The building of a revolutionary youth organization, while a permanent, long-term goal of the revolutionary party, acquires different forms and different priorities at different phases of the class struggle and the development of the revolutionary organizations.

Today, considering the objective tasks confronting our sections, the turn to industry, and our necessities in building the party, we can see clearly our priorities in building the youth organization. We are building a youth organization which is open to and aimed at all layers of youth, whatever their social origin, who accept its programme. However, there are key priorities within that framework. *Our parties and youth organizations today have above all to be oriented towards young workers.* To grasp this we must analyse the general conditions of building the revolutionary party and the building of the youth organization in the present period.

18. Since the Second World War, capitalism in the imperialist countries has undergone important social transformations which touch in a major way upon the situation of youth. The most important of these, deriving from the need of capitalism for a more trained labour force and a massive expansion of the state sector, is a massive expansion of the education system and the clear incorporation of new layers into the labour movement (outside of the United States where this is more limited).

This incorporation of new white-collar and public sector layers into the labour movement is a permanent and important strengthening of it. Student layers also have not only an increased numerical weight but, because they incorporate a far wider social range of destinations than previously, will not become again the essentially rightwing elitist political force which existed prior to World War II.

These social transformations however, while altering the quantitative elements in the working class, do not alter what constitute qualitatively the most decisive forces of the class struggle. It remains the central bourgeois state and its political apparatuses on the one side, and the strongest sections of the working class on the other, that alone have the weight to really polarize and lead the other social layers. This becomes increasingly



JCR France demonstrate against Giscard, May 1981 (DR)

true as the class struggle intensifies and social forces polarize.

This does not mean that these layers of youth in the education system do not engage in struggle anymore but they do so increasingly as *part* of more general political struggles whose leading forces are often elsewhere. At the same time, the depth of the economic, social, and political crisis forces the radicalization increasingly into the core of the working class. This pattern of development of the class struggle and the working class, and the tasks in building our organizations which flow from it, is reflected inside the changed pattern of youth radicalization itself in the last few years.

19. This new pattern of youth radicalization is of course uneven and differs in its precise forms from country to country. Its general trend however is very clear.

Although there continues to be a radicalization in most countries among certain layers of students, the youth radicalization is today no longer *led* by these layers. This is a key change which has to be noted since the 1960s and the last major experience of most sections in building youth organizations. It brings to the fore the point that the majority of the youth is not only an ally but also a *component part* of the working class.

20. The broadened social composition of the youth radicalization is not however by itself the only reason, or sufficient, to understand why it is primarily to industrial young workers the Fourth International turns as the most decisive layer. In no country are the majority of young people in industry. On the contrary, in some cases those in industry form quite a small minority of young people.

However, the importance of a layer is not decided simply or even primarily by its numbers but by its social and political weight. To take extremes, the millions of old age pensioners in a country like Britain do not have even remotely the same weight in the class struggle as

250,000 miners. It is social weight, capacity for struggle and organization, which is decisive. This is why, for example, that it is the struggle, or lack of it, of the industrial working class in Europe which has been decisive in determining the class relationship of forces in that continent since 1968. This is why it is the industrial working class, and above all the young workers, which is the decisive layer in building the party and, within this framework, the guiding axis in building youth organizations.

This naturally does not mean that our youth organizations should or will be built only among young industrial workers. A large part of young people will always be in the education system, in job training, in layers outside the industrial working class, and our organizations are open to all those who accept its program. We are building a broad, open, youth organization which will therefore have many layers of young people in it and not a 'small party of youth'. Nevertheless, this does not alter the fact that the *decisive* layer we aim to win over is young industrial workers and that, to embody this as with the party itself, special and particular measures must be taken to ensure that this is achieved.

21. Although all experience shows that at least in the countries in which the class struggle is most developed there are important possibilities today to build a revolutionary youth organization among working class youth, these opportunities will not be taken advantage of simply spontaneously. Furthermore, this is particularly the case given the social composition of our sections as they *start* the turn to industry. Experience in a number of countries shows that a campaigning youth organization can fairly readily attract young workers around it. Without conscious measures, however, we will retreat back into those layers which were the traditional base of our sections. Experience shows that conscious steps therefore have to be taken to maintain, or turn around, the social composition of the organization. Every organiza-

tion left to spontaneous developments recruits in its own image socially—a student based organization spontaneously recruits students, a white-collar based organization recruits white-collar workers, etc. In order to reach out to working-class youth an organization has to take *specific* measures—allocation of comrades, from other sectors of work, to do work among or directed towards working-class youth, comrades moving into industry and industrial areas where there are important concentrations of workers, etc.

This therefore provides the basic combination through which we have to build up our youth organizations today: central political campaigns that can touch all layers of the youth; specific organizational measures to take these campaigns into, and gain from, the young workers. It is on this basis that we will build youth organizations.

ORGANIZING THE YOUTH ORGANIZATION IN THE TURN TO INDUSTRY

22. In aiming to win layers of young industrial workers, the decisive role in the youth organization, as in all other questions, is played by the party. In the revolutionary party it is the question of whether the leadership makes and leads the turn which will decide whether the policy will be carried out or not. In relation to the youth organization, it is above all the party as a whole, as well as its elected bodies, which constitutes the leadership of the organization. Whether the youth organization will succeed in orienting itself towards young workers will depend upon whether the party as a whole, and the party members inside the youth organization, succeed in this task.

This latter point is of considerable importance as an extremely dangerous situation will result if one section of the party is carrying through the turn to industry and another is building the youth organization in quite different layers. What will then happen is that relations between the party and the youth organization will become strained to the utmost.

This also requires that the turn is an *organized* process. As with the section, a situation where the turn is left as an individual responsibility of comrades will not work. This involves special measures inside the youth organization itself and clear links between the youth organization and the section.

23. Naturally there are significant differences in practice between the turn of the party and the turn of the youth organization. A large part of young people will always be in the education and training system, there are legal limits on the age at which young people can commence work, etc. Some of these layers are very important and working class in composition—for example, in France there are 600,000 young people in technical colleges of whom 80 percent go to the working class. Given that there continues to be a significant radicalization among stu-

dents and in high schools, a youth organization must be built which has a presence in these layers of youth, i.e., they must be organizations of the whole of youth. However, this does not alter the fact that our aim is a clear priority to working-class youth and to gain a big majority of our organizations in the working-class youth with the existing social composition of the sections, specific measures must be taken in regard to this. Each country requires a specific combination of these but general steps can be indicated.

i. Above all, the building of the youth organization and the turn to industry must be seen as part of an integrated perspective of building the party. They are not different tasks, but different *tactics* in the same task of building up a party *implanted* in the working class and capable of taking up all the key political issues of the class struggle. This means the sections and the youth organizations must have specific tactics and organizational forms, but the same political issues must be confronted and campaigned on, in different ways, by both. It also means they must be built essentially in the same layer—inside the working class. Young people, in the section and the youth organization, can play an important role in leading the turn to industry. However, if these youth are to be recruited to the organization, and if young workers recruited are to be maintained in the organization, then the party itself must be making the turn to industry.

ii. The party members in the youth organization must be participating in the turn to industry. A major crisis of leadership will develop if the party makes the turn to industry, but the youth organization is left to build essentially among students and high school layers. In that case, the youth organization will be peripheral to the thinking and concerns of the party, no serious attention will be given to it, and a crisis of leadership will develop.

iii. As with the party, and in links between the two, the turn must be an organized process. This involves special measures inside the youth organization and in the structures (e.g. jobs committees) leading the turn in the party. Special measures such as conferences of young workers or those prepared to make the turn may be useful in the youth organization. A situation where the turn is left as an individual responsibility of comrades will not work.

24. The situation inside the reformist youth organizations shows great unevenness from country to country and no general tactical orientation can be adopted. The following trends, however, can be noted:

-In those European countries in which there were mass Communist Parties, the youth organization of the Social Democracy had, for a long period, been moribund, and no significant field for work existed. In these countries, there are not today important openings in the youth organizations of the reformist

parties. The building of open independent youth organizations is the crucial task.

-The situation is more complicated in those states where mass social-democratic parties dominate the workers movement. The youth organizations of these parties were also greatly weakened by the upsurge leading to and surrounding 1968. However, in most countries, they continued to maintain at least a minimum of forces and therefore an ability to rebuild themselves to some degree in the period of crisis of the centrist left from the 1970s onwards. There is still a qualitatively different relation of forces between the independent revolutionary and centrist forces and the reformist youth organizations than existed prior to 1968 but the latter continue to be of significance and have undergone a certain revival in some cases. This poses in a new way the question of systematic work directed towards or inside these organizations.

This is particularly clear in Britain where the youth radicalization of the 1960s was less broad in its scope than in some other Western European countries and where the Labour Party enjoys historically an unchallenged hegemonic position within the working class. Here a definite revival of the Labour Party Young Socialists occurred from the 1970s onwards. This today is an important field of intervention for revolutionary Marxists in Britain.

In West Germany the weight of the centrist organizations created out of the youth radicalization was greater than in Britain. It is the phenomenon of the 'alternative lists' in West Germany which today attracts young people primarily. However, the youth organizations of the SPD, in particular the Falken, possess in certain areas significant forces of radical young people. Work by revolutionary Marxists inside this organization on a locally decided basis is one of the tasks of youth work in West Germany today.

In other countries, attention must be paid to developments inside the reformist youth organizations. A prolonged crisis hitting young layers of the working class in some countries leads to an increased participation in the reformist youth organizations.

25. In the framework of our general orientation towards the young workers two specific areas stand out as posing particular tasks and problems.

i. In certain countries, our youth organizations can make a priority of work directed towards immigrant workers. Experience in a number of Western European countries indicates that, as one would expect, the youth form the most combative layer of immigrant workers. The youth organization in some countries where legality is not the decisive question (e.g. Britain) can be a particularly suited instrument for intervening in this layer. This is specific from country to country. It must be judged concretely in each case.

ii. Work to support movements in the army. There is an experience of this in a number of countries. This has under-



Revolution Youth oppose British imperialism (DR)

gone a revival around the question of struggle against missiles and nuclear weapons (Holland) and demand for reduction of military service (France).

26. The building of a revolutionary youth organization gives particularly important opportunities for recruiting young women to the revolutionary movement. As with every oppressed layer, it is when they are young that women will become most easily involved in organized struggle against capitalist society and its effects on them.

In every country there are major specific laws reinforcing the repressive role of the family and to repress youth sexually—for example in Britain the laws forbidding all sexual relations under the age of 16, in France abortion rights are forbidden to young women under 18. Young women are systematically deprived of rights to training for jobs, for educational opportunities, and other needs to develop for themselves their lives. It is not only young women but also young men who feel concerned and can be mobilized on issues of women's oppression—and also young women radicalized around these issues can be won to rapidly expand their politicization to a challenge around all aspects of capitalism.

This means immense opportunities not only for recruiting young women but also building up real cadres and leaders among young women. For example, in France the proportion of women in the youth organization in 1980 was 40 percent compared to less than 25 percent in the LCR. In Revolution Youth in Britain, 45 percent of the National Committee and 50 percent of the Political Committee elected after the 1980 conference were women.

This recruitment of young women is important not merely in itself but for the whole future of our organizations. It gives the possibility to train a whole layer of women cadre and leaders for the or-

ganization. In cases where crises or negative developments in the sections have led to a major loss of women from the organization, youth work is by far the most important means for redeveloping the work on women's liberation of the organization and winning a layer of women members.

27. It is within this overall framework that the Fourth International's work among students is posed today. These continue to face increasingly sharp attacks due to the economic crisis, lack of jobs upon ending their studies, and the general economic, social, and political contradictions facing society. Layers of students will therefore continue to be propelled into action both around the more narrowly conceived interests of students and more importantly around all the big social and political, national and international issues of the day.

However, compared to the period of the late 1960s, students are more conscious of the unfavorable relation of forces which exists between them as a social group and the bourgeoisie. This means they look more to political organizations based on the labour movement and working class for leadership and linking up to the mass organizations and the movements of women and oppressed for struggle. Students are in general less inclined to launch struggles by themselves and more dependent on the political dynamic of struggles waged by the labour movement than at the time of the radicalization of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

This situation naturally means revolutionaries participating in all struggles of students and within the education sector giving particular emphasis to high schools, technical schools, and trade schools, but integrating these in our overall political work.

Except in the very initial period of disruption as we make the turn to indus-

try, this does not imply that we are orienting away from political work aimed at students. On the contrary, with a political line and campaigns taking up the key political issues of society and an organization based inside the labour movement and industrial working class, we will in fact be a more attractive organization to revolutionary-minded students in the big class battles which are coming. If, on the contrary, we do not succeed in building real working class organizations, then in addition to general political orientation the actual attractive power of the organizations of the Fourth International for students will decrease. An organization implanted among young workers and the labour movement will on the contrary, be increasingly attractive to students and over the longer term our ability to recruit students will increase.

PARTY/YOUTH ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONS

28. Overwhelmingly, the single most decisive element in all aspects of building and functioning of the revolutionary youth organizations is the positions and attitude taken to it by the party. These above all of course are based on all the *political* aspects discussed previously, and the correctness of the line taken by the party in each concrete situation, but also have, flowing from these, certain significant organizational aspects which can aid or hinder the resolution of the political questions and tasks. These will of course differ greatly in different situations, stage of building of the two organizations, etc. but certain general questions are posed.

i. The attitude of party members to the youth is of key importance and should not be underestimated. The party must maintain the principles of organizational independence and right to take

their own decisions for the youth organization as the best tools for education. 'The young worker needs leadership from the party. But this should not be leadership by command. When at every step coercion is substituted for persuasion, the breath of life disappears from the organization, and with it, the people'. (The Bolshevik Leninists and the Youth Organization). This must be translated into organizational measures otherwise it amounts to only calling on 'good will' of comrades within the party.

ii. The relations between the youth organization and the party must above all be transparent and open. Even the most vigorous open *political* intervention by the party is better than any form of back stairs manoeuvring, cliquist relations, two standards in the transmission of information, etc. Young people are not fragile. They are quite capable of withstanding and enormously developing from strong criticism, their own mistakes, differences, and so on provided it is genuinely designed to convince and not to destroy or manipulate. It is the latter which will breed the deadly disease of cynicism, the antithesis of young people, and lose forces and weaken or wreck organizations. It is this which must provide the basic point in all party/youth relations from formal aspects right down to tone and personal manner of conduct.

iii. The most crucial of all is that the organizational independence of the youth organization must be *real* and not fictional or formal.

This means that the party has the right to attempt to *persuade* the youth organization to adopt a certain course by political argument. It has no right to impose a line on the youth organization. The latter is in all matters self governing. 'The congress of the youth organization is sovereign. In the case of political divergences between the youth organization and the party, the latter cannot bureaucratically impose its politics on the youth organization. In such a case, the task of the leadership of the party is to appeal to the militants of the youth to show them in what way their positions are false and to lead them to change their positions by their free decisions.' (The Bolshevik Leninists and the Revolutionary Youth Organization).

iv. Most important of all for practical party/youth relations, in particular given the real organizational independence of the youth, is that the section must put major resources into *in practice* building the youth organization. If the party is seen as the decisive force really practically aiding, both in political line and activity, the building of the youth organization this can lay the basis for correct party/youth relations. If, on the contrary, the party is *not* seriously building the youth organization then this will inevitably be perceived by the members of the youth organization. Under such conditions, moods and currents opposed to the party, showing themselves in developments such as opposition to affiliation

of the youth organization to the section, will inevitably arise.

v. In this framework, links between the party and youth should be between the organizations as such and not be individualized ones. A system which relies on the fact that members of the youth organization are also members of the section, and that individual leaders of the youth organization are also members of leading bodies of the section, is not adequate. This means steps such as representatives of the youth organization attending Central Committee and Political Committee of the sections with voice or vote, official observers from the party at leadership meetings of the youth organization, etc. Similar measures should be applied at levels such as branches, town leaderships, jobs committees, and other structures where it is suitable.

vi. This question of clarity also determines the question of discipline of party members inside the youth organization. It must be quite clear that the members of the party are under its discipline in all fields of work—including the youth organization. However, at the same time this formal aspect of discipline should be utilized to the minimum possible extent—in the sense every time it has to be used, which will occur, it is a defeat.

vii. The youth organization should be closely linked to the party in the question of the turn to industry and work in the unions. Naturally there are particular concerns of the youth organization. In general it is necessary to have a system where there are clear representatives of the youth organization in the party jobs committees in the areas. Similarly it may not generally be useful for the youth organization to have its own separate trade union fractions, but trade union fractions should be held jointly or, where more appropriate, comrades from the youth organizations should be invited to the trade union fractions of the party.

viii. The organizational independence of the youth organization from the party must be a *real* one. This means that while there will of course, particularly in the initial stage, be material aid from the party to the youth organization, the latter must, right from the beginning, have real independence, to educate a real cadre and leadership, clearly have its own finances, control over its journals, creating the resources for its own full timers, etc.

The chief support the party should be giving to the youth organizations is its militants *building* the youth organization in their activity, selling its journals, building its meetings, etc., and not in the form of centralized subsidies, full timers, etc. There will always be an element of the latter but it should be kept small if the youth organization is to have its own real internal equilibrium.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK

29. The eventual organizational aim of our youth work is to create a Revolutionary Youth International. We are however today a long way from this goal and much more limited steps in that final eventual perspective are what are posed today. The most important of these at present are:

i. Increasing internal activity, and education, on the question of youth work and youth organizations.

This must be undertaken chiefly in the national sections but can be significantly aided by the International through international meetings, centrally published material, and above all by adopting a new international resolution on the question, with the debate preceding it at the IEC and World Congress.

ii. Systematic international work towards young people and youth organizations.

Internationalist traditions among young people are one of the strongest, most progressive, and most important parts of their politicisation. This developed even under the Second International, was extended during the First World War—which most of the youth organizations of the Socialist Parties opposed, and was continued with the Youth Communist International.

Today there are important openings in this field. The organizations leading the revolutionary struggles in Central America, and where they exist their youth organizations, are extremely open to contact with revolutionary youth organizations—in some cases more directly than with our sections. Youth organizations which attempted made good contact with developments in Poland. Given the prominent role played by young people in all movements of revolt, extending our work and contacts in this field is one of the most important areas of work of the youth organizations of the Fourth International.

iii. Regular international youth meetings of the Fourth International. Taking into account the restraining elements such as finances, experience indicates that such international meetings should be regular and carefully prepared in advance so as to limit the element of exchange of simply national experiences actually in the meeting and having the maximum of international discussion.

iv. Coordination through the Bureau of the United Secretariat. It is unrealistic at the present stage to believe that the coordination of the youth work can be carried on by the youth organizations themselves. For the foreseeable future youth work must continue to be coordinated through the international centre and Bureau of the United Secretariat.



Defence of Iranian revolutionaries (DR)

THE NECESSITY TODAY OF A CENTRALISED PRIORITY OF WORK AGAINST WAR AND IMPERIALIST MILITARISM

30. A revolutionary youth organization is based on a programme of struggle against all aspects of human exploitation and oppression. It must develop propaganda work against racism and the oppression of women, against national oppression, against all denials of democratic rights. The youth organizations in solidarity with the Fourth International have the same fundamental programme. The key issues of this in each situation must be transformed into central political campaigns of the organization. These priorities must of course be decided in the light of concrete conditions which prevail. Certain of the important of these however flow from the *international* political situation and around these we can and must develop centralised international coordination of work and initiatives.

In the present situation the decisive axis along which such work must be developed is that of the campaign against imperialist militarism and against imperialist intervention in Central America. This corresponds to a key objective necessity—the military drive is together with austerity one of the two chief axes of the imperialist counter-offensive—and to the state of our forces. It should be the priority of work of our youth organizations in imperialist countries today.

The sections and youth organizations in each country will of course have other priorities in addition.

The precise axes of struggle against imperialist war and militarism will of course change in different situations and different countries (e.g. for solidarity with El Salvador, for unilateral disarmament in Britain, against joining NATO in

Spain, against the draft in the USA) but the basic themes are dictated by the nature of the imperialist policy.

The aim of the present imperialist drive is not a military attack on the Soviet Union or the Chinese workers states—although the Cuban and Vietnamese states do today face military threats. *The United States and its allies are above all carrying out and preparing themselves for a counter-offensive against the colonial revolution.* At the same time they are building up a military superiority against the Soviet Union which they can use to threaten or prevent the latter giving physical and military aid to unfolding revolutionary processes. The key direction of work and initiatives which must be taken up are twofold—and of course interconnected.

i. Direct solidarity with colonial struggles threatened or attacked by imperialism. This includes, in particular, general solidarity with El Salvador, Nicaragua, Grenada, Cuba, Vietnam, but also struggle against French imperialism in Africa, generalised solidarity with Southern Africa, against the British occupation of the North or Ireland, etc. Given the generalised nature of the imperialist counter-offensive and the continuing struggles in the colonial revolution there is a certainty of new developments and needs for solidarity in this field and our sections, and the International as a whole, must be prepared both for sudden, rapid, and further long-term campaigns in these fields.

ii. Direct struggle against militarism inside the imperialist countries. This in particular includes struggles against nuclear weapons (USA, Britain, France), deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles and the Neutron bomb (West Germany, Holland, Belgium, Britain, France, etc.), against conscription or for reduc-

tion of military service (USA, France). In particular we should aim to link this struggle to the one against austerity around slogans, themes, and campaigns of the type, 'Jobs not Bombs', demanding abolition, or as a partial step, elimination of specific elements (Trident programme in Britain, seventh nuclear submarine in France, MX missiles, etc.) of military expenditures, and a mass programme of public expenditure to create jobs and improve social conditions; we can campaign for full civil and political rights in the armed forces, etc.

In terms of immediate ways to internally centralise these campaigns there are not, both for objective and subjective (material resources) reasons, major coordinated initiatives that can be taken. However, certain immediate steps can be undertaken: i) Placing struggle against militarism regularly on the agenda of international youth meetings. ii) Exchange of information and press articles, common leaflets, etc. organized centrally, internationally, and bilaterally. iii) Organization bilaterally of exchange of speakers, messages of solidarity, etc. At a later stage it may be possible to take bolder initiatives (international meetings, campaigns, etc. against militarism). But we should start now with what is practical and will help to homogenise our work and increase consciousness, including internationally, on these questions.

By these means we can take up key objective tasks, stimulate our youth work, and by giving an international profile somewhat increase the attractiveness of our national youth organizations, and use it as a way also of increasing the international links and consolidation between our sections and youth organizations. ■

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

ISSUE No 10

5 July 1982

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

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Hour of Decision in Lebanon Editorial | 3 |
| Declaration by Mid-East Revolutionaries Document | 4 |
| Beirut under Siege by <i>Jean-Pierre Beauvais</i> | 5 |
| Revolutionary Activity in Israel Interview by <i>Gerry Foley</i> | 6 |
| Left Austerity in France by <i>Daniel Jebrac</i> | 7 |
| Six Months after Jaruzelski by <i>Jacqueline Allio</i> | 9 |
| Victory for Thatcher but Crisis Continues by <i>Richard Rozanski</i> | 10 |
| Repercussions of the Malvinas War by <i>Daniel Jebrac</i> | 12 |
| In Evin Prison Interview with <i>Bahram Ali Atai</i> | 14 |
| Building Revolutionary Youth Organisations Document | 18 |

News Closing Date 28 June 1982

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors.

To save us high clearing charges, please try to pay in bank drafts or postal orders payable in francs. If you pay by check in other currencies, including dollars, add at least 5%. Make out checks and postal orders to PEC and mail them to International Viewpoint; 2 rue Richard-Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France. Postal cheques to PEC, Acc. No. 2 322 42 T Paris.

For one year, the surface mail is £16 Sterling, \$31 US dollars, Skr 175, DM 70, Dkr 225. Airmail for North America, Latin America, Sub-Sahara Africa—42 US dollars; Australia-New Zealand, Asia—47 US dollars; Middle East, North Africa—37 US dollars.

BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

LAST NAME FIRST NAME

ADDRESS

CITY COUNTRY CODE

RENEWAL

SUBSCRIPTION