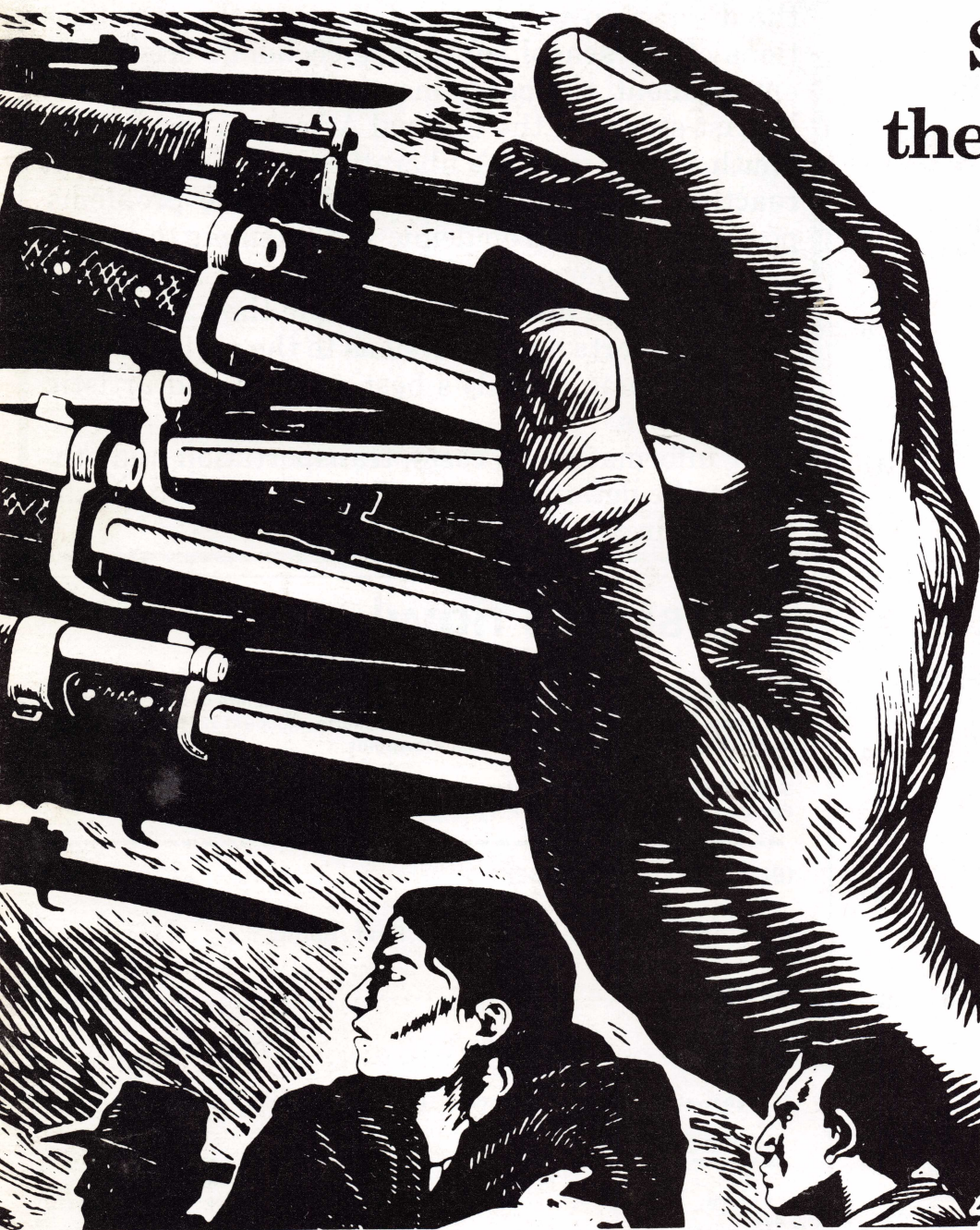


International VIEWPOINT

Issue No. 119

4 May 1987

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**Salvador:
the struggle
widens**

**South Africa's all-white election
British assault Irish funerals
New generation of rebel youth**

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

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

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Fourth International Youth Camp

THE FOURTH youth camp of the European sections of the Fourth International will be held from Sunday, July 19, to Saturday, July 25, in La Verna, in the Tuscany region of Italy, 70 kilometers from Florence and 30 from Azzese. The major themes of the discussion will be the following: the mobilizations of the school youth, the economic crisis, unemployment, the peace movement and the antimilitarist struggle, the Central American revolution, South Africa, women's liberation and sexuality and reaction (including a discussion of the problems posed by the AIDS epidemic and attempts to exploit it for reactionary purposes).

The program also includes ample time and provisions for sports and excursions to the region, which includes some of Italy's best scenery and artistic monuments.

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Palestinian land

THE REVIVAL of resistance on the West Bank in recent months has shown again in an increasingly dramatic way that in 20 years of occupation and repression, the Zionist rulers have not been able to definitively smash the Palestinian people. The occupation looks more and more like a time bomb for the international capitalist order, like apartheid in South Africa.

The Palestinian mass resistance has been focused around the question of defending the land. Eleven years ago, on March 30, 1976, Palestinians successfully fought back against the expropriation of land by the Jewish state. That battle was seen as marking a turning point, when Palestinians refused to be pushed any further.

Since then, the anniversary of that struggle, March 30, the Day of the Land, has been the major political date in the Palestinian political calendar. This year, in the context of the new rise of the resistance, it took on special importance as a test of the mood of the Palestinian people.

It also coincided with a hunger strike of Palestinian prisoners (see back page) for such demands as the establishing of an international commission to investigate the conditions of their confinement, removal of asbestos and metal plates from prison windows, freedom of movement between cells and prison blocs, an end to collective punishments, the making of provisions so that prisoners do not have to sleep on the floor, regular medical examinations, the right to books and newspapers, and an end to the confiscation of creative works by prisoners.

The following is an article by a correspondent who attended the Day of the Land Commemoration in the Galilee region of the Israeli state, the area of the strongest Palestinian population within the pre-1967 Zionist borders.

KJELL OSTBERG

On March 30, 1976, five Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded when Israeli police and soldiers opened fire on unarmed protestors in the towns of Sakhnin, Abrava and Dein Hanna a few miles north of Nasareth.

The Palestinians had been demonstrating for several days against confiscation of cultivated Palestinian land in the region by the Israeli military with the obvious aim of turning it over to a nearby kibbutz.

The unexpectedly strong opposition forced the military to retreat, and marked a renewal of the Palestinian struggle against Jewish land confiscations.

"They come like thieves in the night and steal our land. But the movement like the one that started up here in the towns around Sakhnin 11 years ago is of great importance for the Palestinian resistance. It

showed us and the entire world that the Palestinians are not going to let the Jewish settlements spread without putting up a hard fight."

The mayor of Nasareth, Tawfiq Zayed got a standing ovation from 20,000 to 30,000 Palestinians who had come to the small town of Avraba to take part in the commemoration of the Day of the Land.

They came in tens of thousands from the nearby towns, in busses from Nasareth and Akko, from the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem to honor the memory of those who were murdered 11 years ago and to show the continuing power of the resistance to the land thefts.

Music, flags and banners made the rally into a big people's festival. The speech by the popular mayor and poet, Tawfiq Zayed was the high point of the demonstration.

We came with people from the neighboring town of Dein Hanna. In a trailer hitched our host family's tractor we went on the field that was fought over 11 years ago. It was a dizzying ride past the beautiful hills of Galilee with an overwhelming view.

Down in the fertile valleys, the wheat was already tall, while the big olive groves on the hillsides were still awaiting their fruit. From mountain side across the valley the bedouins had driven their goats down to the town pond to water them.

"People tried with the usual methods here," Karam said. "First the army came and blocked off the area 'for military use.' They they usually cut down the olive trees and let the land go fallow again.

"Then the military suddenly find that they do not need the land. Since the land is no longer cultivated, according to Israeli law it reverts to the state.

"Then they naturally thought about giving it to the kibbutz up there," Karam said, looking toward the bunker-like buildings strategically placed along the crown of the hill.

"We naturally had no intention of giving up the land voluntarily. It was not 1948, when many Palestinians became demoralized for a long time. In 1976, our fighting spirit had come back, and it took the Israelis completely by surprise.

"The whole town went out to drive away the intruders. We had no weapons. We used stones and homemade Molotov cocktails.

"The soldiers opened fire and in our town alone more than 20 were wounded. My brother had a bullet go right through him, and remained in a serious condition in the hospital for three months.

"But we did not give up. We got reinforcements when the people in the nearby town also took up the struggle. Finally, we won, and our struggle took on a great importance for the entire Palestinian people. We are not broken."

The big rally in Avraba had been going on for hours, but masses of people kept streaming in. When contingents came in from the occupied Golan Heights, there were no limits to the rejoicing.

Students from Bir Zeit University also got great applause. This "center of Palestinian intellectual resistance" has been closed for several months during the winter by the Israeli occupation authorities.

What Karam and his neighbors did on March 30, 1976, the Day of the Land, will never be erased from Palestinian history. It made an impact that went far beyond these Galilean towns. □

“Why don't they let them bury this poor guy?”

THE MACABRE harassment of the funeral of Larry Marley over a period of a week by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) has provoked the most widespread mobilizations of the nationalist community in Belfast since the Anglo-Irish agreement was signed.

REDMOND O NEILL

Thousands upon thousands of people lined the streets of West Belfast and followed the funeral cortege of Larry Marley on Wednesday, April 8. They braved RUC batons and a massive paramilitary police presence, including dozens of armoured cars.

The *Guardian* newspaper described it as the ‘highest display of Republican support since the hunger strikes. In scenes reminiscent of the mid-1970s, old women shook their fists at soldiers leading a column of 35 landrovers in the front of the funeral procession up the Falls Road. Patients at the Royal Victoria Hospital came out onto the streets to give support...’

They were there to express their condolences for the Marley family and their outrage at the RUC's attempts to terrorise and demoralize Republican families trying to bury their dead in peace and dignity.

The nightmare for the Marley family began when Larry Marley was murdered in his home by a loyalist death squad. Gerry Adams, a leader of Sinn Fein and the local Member of Parliament, accused the RUC and the British army of collusion in the murder: “No less than two weeks ago, a British army major told him that he would make sure that Larry Marley would not live much longer and if they couldn't do it then they could ‘get others’ to do it for them.”

At the time of the murder the Greater Ardoyne area, where Marley lived, had been saturated by RUC and British army units — yet the gunmen escaped by the only route not covered by the patrols.

Marley was murdered just after 9pm on Thursday, April 2. By the following day, RUC landrovers had surrounded all of the approaches to the Marley home. This siege was

maintained throughout the weekend.

On the Monday morning, scores of armoured RUC vehicles took up positions at all of the access points around the Marley home. Large forces of RUC, in full riot gear, surrounded the hearse. Another force stood six metres from the front door. As the coffin was carried out of the house just after 10am, baton-wielding cops moved in around the hearse.

Explosion of anger

Just before 1pm the family announced that the funeral would be postponed and announced: “We are asking the Cardinal to intervene with Tom King [Tory secretary of state for Northern Ireland] on our behalf so that the funeral can continue tomorrow peacefully.”

A statement by the Belfast brigade of the IRA explained that the IRA had already paid its last respects to Marley when three men fired a volley of shots over the Republican memorial in Ardoyne on the Sunday night. Local clergymen, on behalf of the relatives, also made clear to the RUC that the family intended only to drape the coffin in the Irish tricolour [national flag]. So the RUC's claim that its massive show of force at the funeral was to prevent an IRA salute to Marley was simply a pretext.

That evening, 2,000 people took part in a silent protest demonstration in West Belfast. Fermanagh district council adjourned its meeting in protest at the RUC's action.

The following morning, the RUC doubled its presence around the

Marley home. As the coffin was carried to the hearse, the RUC surged forward, encircling the coffin and the hearse, and hand to hand fighting broke out. The body had to be carried back to the house a second time, and once again the funeral was abandoned.

That evening, 3,000 people took part in a protest rally in Ardoyne. Omagh district council decided to halt business for a week in protest at the RUC's behaviour.

Larry Marley's funeral finally took place, at the third attempt, on April 8. The cortege was preceded by more than 30 armoured landrovers, with another 40 parked near the cemetery and a massive RUC presence. It took seven hours, under constant RUC harassment, to escort the coffin from the Marley home to the burial site. All along the route thousands of Belfast residents turned out in protest at this latest degrading harassment of the nationalist people of the North of Ireland.

The explosion of anger at the treatment of the Marley family follows a gruesome RUC campaign of harassment at Republican funerals which has steadily built up over a period of three years. Between December 1983 and April 7 this year the RUC attacked mourners at 25 funerals. This included batoning the mourners, firing plastic bullets at them, brutal police charges in order to seize the tricolours draping the coffins and so on.

For the nationalist people of the North of Ireland, the supposed ‘benefits’ of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which it was claimed would “end the nationalist nightmare”, have been sharply exposed by the grisly scenes of the past few weeks.

Not only do no-jury Diplock courts, strip-searching of women prisoners and massive discrimination against Catholics remain — but those who oppose these sectarian monstrosities cannot even bury their dead with a minimum of dignity!

What could more clearly show to the world the grotesque character of that colonial anachronism, the Orange statelet of “Northern Ireland”, than the report in the *Sunday Telegraph* newspaper: “The pictures went around the world: of helmeted policemen with raised truncheons attacking a funeral procession. American CBS news called the BBC Belfast office to ask, ‘Why don't they let them bury this poor guy?’”

Not only are the opponents of the Orange statelet denied the most minimum standards of justice in the courts and the prisons, but even their funerals are the objects of vindictive efforts to subdue and crush them. □

[From the British newspaper, Socialist Action, April 24, 1987.]

Unions unite against the multinational Caterpillar

AN INTERNATIONAL committee has been formed by trade unions organized in the multinational firm of Caterpillar-Europe. The move was precipitated by the recent occupation at Caterpillar in Scotland, aiming to stop the closure of the Glasgow factory.

The agreement was signed at Charleroi in Belgium on March 10. Delegates participated from the CGT and the CFDT unions from the Grenoble factory in France, from the Scottish unions at the Caterpillar plant in Glasgow and from the Belgium union, the FGFB, representing workers at the Gosselies factory.

The trade unionists at the French and Belgium factories have had some contact for three years. Previous closures of Caterpillar plants in Britain and the United States had already led to two international meetings attended by Members of the European Parliament. But it is the threat to close the Glasgow factory which has given a new boost to international cooperation.

The closures of Caterpillar's factories at Newcastle in the north of England, and at Davenport and Dallas in the US only created a small stir. For the first time, at Glasgow, Caterpillar workers said "no" to closure, and occupied the factory. The 1,250 Scottish workers at Glasgow have been fighting since January 14 to save their jobs.

The Glasgow workers are disgusted and revolted. They have good reason to be. Last December, just one month before the closure announcement, the multinational even announced — to a big fanfare of publicity — an investment of 62.5 million pounds and a guarantee of employment until 1990! Then the axe fell. A terrible blow for the local population where unemployment is already 20 per cent, and for a region where the possibilities of finding another job are almost nil.

For the management, there is no question of rescinding the decision. The parent company has announced that they can move 98 per cent of the Glasgow factory's production elsewhere.

"One experiences a feeling of disgust and revulsion, a chill in the spine." So Jean-Marie Vanderputten, a union representative from Gosselies, summarized the feelings of his work-

mates. Michel Daffe, who led a solidarity delegation to Glasgow, continued: "Two weeks before the closure, they were still hiring young workers. Over there I saw new technology that we don't have here at the factory."

"We can't fight with stone-age weapons"

The creation of the European committee appeared to be a necessity, an obvious thing to do:

"We can't fight a multinational with stone-age weapons," continued Michel. "It is no longer possible, at Caterpillar, to demand guarantees for jobs only at the factory level. Evidence of this is that the international management told the Americans in the group that the D6 built at Glasgow would go to them. They told the Grenoble plant that they would inherit the Scottish production, since their work is in the same range. They also promised us some of the fallout. They told our comrades in Glasgow that the production would be transferred either to Korea, Indonesia or Japan. A good manoeuvre to divide us, to dump the Glasgow workers! What a con! The previous closures in the US did not mean a single extra job for Gosselies or Grenoble!"

The European committee has set itself a number of tasks. It will present a unified front to demand regular information on the economic and financial strategy of the multinational, its employment policy and production transfers. Michel Daffe believes that the committee must also put on its agenda the question of control over the new technologies, and adopt a common strategy in the face of their introduction. "We don't oppose new technologies," he said, "but in return we must demand job and wage guarantees."

The committee also decided to approach the European Parliament.

It wants the directive of the Vredeling Commission to be brought back to the light of day. The directive concerns the right to information about multinationals, control over public subsidies and a veto over closures.

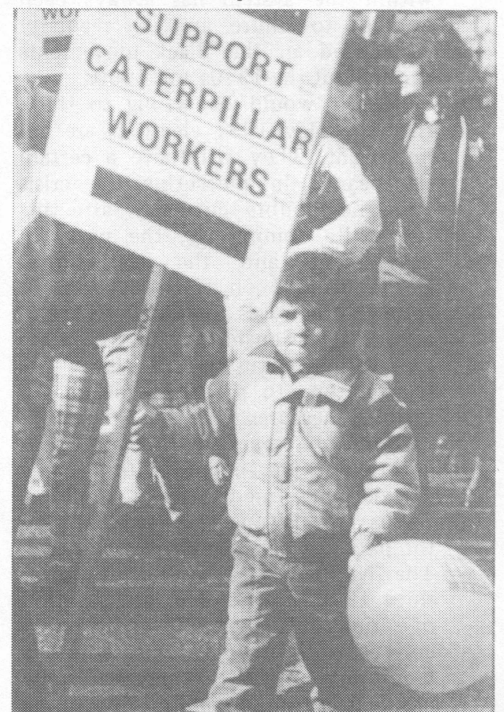
The setting up of the inter-factory Caterpillar committee directly at the shop steward level is exemplary and opens up some good possibilities. Because the bosses' words cannot be taken at face value, they must be judged on results. To ascertain the truth, workers have a tool: workers' control on the job, in the company and in the workplace. Production low and orders dropping? Find out the truth on the job! Control, note and assemble our own information.

The inter-factory committee can have at its disposition an effective tool for exposing the multinational's manoeuvres in time by organizing inside each plant with the workers and militants; with control over production, employment, the work pace, flexibility; and by centralizing information on an all-European level.

In terms of solidarity with the Glasgow occupation, workers at Grenoble have had a work stoppage, and a collection has been organized at Gosselies. The inter-factory committee, which is insisting on recognition from Caterpillar, has demanded that the multinational suspends the closure decision and starts negotiations with the workers.

"Defending the jobs of our Glasgow comrades is defending our employment at Gosselies," Michel Daffe concluded.

[From La Gauche, the newspaper of the POS/SAP - Belgian section of the Fourth International.] □



On the eve of the white elections

THE SOUTH AFRICAN president, P.W. Botha, decided to call general elections two years early for the white parliament. To be held in May, these elections are evidently only for the white electorate. Such is the rule of apartheid, which denies the non-white majority of the population the right to vote.

PETER BLUMER

Coloureds and Asians in South Africa now have their own chambers, while Africans still have no right to "national" representation. Coloured and Asian representatives sit in the white parliament buildings in Cape Town, but separately. (1) Moreover, the President's Council, composed of members of the three chambers nominated by the president, is a consultative body for Botha.

This is therefore a parliamentary facade. While class inequality in general makes the representative bourgeois democracy a formal democracy, racial segregation and the omnipotence of the police apparatus make it a farce. The Black mass movement will never be able to change this society through its parliamentary institutions. The policy of pressure within the system has always been doomed to failure, and this regularly radicalized all the Black movements throughout the 1940s and 1950s.

Yet it would be wrong to think that the May 1987 elections are unimportant. They will have a certain significance in measuring the crisis and the doubts currently affecting the white community, the party in government and the institutions. Botha decided on early elections in spite of this crisis. He wants to evaluate the relationship of forces inside the white community. He also wants to win time to prepare some constitutional measures.

For three years the South African government has shown itself incapable of defining medium-term policies. By its indecisiveness, it has exhausted the patience of a part of its electorate. The National Party (NP), in power since 1948, has entered into a period of serious difficulties. It would be incorrect to think that this is just a temporary crisis, owing to some political errors committed by Botha

and his team. On the contrary, it is a large-scale crisis which reflects the cracks developing inside South African society today.

Botha is not only looking to gain time in the conflict against the racist society and with the Black mass movement. He has also to find a solution to the crisis that is rending the white community, between liberals and nationalists, between reformers and conservatives. These divisions have now reached into the government's cabinet itself, and there are now dissidents inside the National Party, although still on a modest scale, who are nicknamed the "New Nats" — new nationalists.

The Nationalists' worst crisis in history

Without doubt, this is the most serious crisis that the party has ever gone through. Having had a split some years ago with the most right wing elements who would not accept Botha's projects for "reform", now it is the more reformist wing who are making themselves heard. However, it must be stressed that many of these people are recent converts to reform. They are still far from being comparable to the bourgeois liberals of the Progressive Federal Party (PFP). But whatever their basic political position, they represent an additional element in the crisis of bourgeois rule in the country.

For the moment, no one is expecting any election surprises. Various polls give between 49 and 58 per cent to the National Party. (2) But there are quite a lot of unknown factors in relation to the urban

vote.

Lastly, this crisis in the ruling party will have consequences for the credibility of the institutional projects that Botha has been proposing for some years to his electors, and also to the various non-white political groupings. For example, the (Asian) Workers' Party is currently experiencing a deep crisis, inasmuch as some of its members are beginning to have doubts about the future prospects of their shameful collaboration with the regime.

So, for some months there have been spectacular happenings in the ranks of the NP. The most well-known is the resignation of the British ambassador, Denis Worall, who reproaches the government for being unable to offer the country a new historical vision of the future. He announced his intention to stand as an independent candidate with financial backing from businessmen. (3) Although he is formally in favour of democratization in South Africa, he nevertheless estimates "that there are many grounds for viewing with extreme scepticism the prospects of an all-embracing consociational democracy [for a democracy inclusive of all the various communities] in South Africa."

Worall was, in fact, the chair of Botha's constitutional committee, and, as such, in 1982 he defended the principle of excluding Africans from the electoral reform. So it's possible to appreciate the limits of his "radicalization"! Moreover, he was to say about the mass movement: "I accept that the involvement of the African National Congress (ANC) — and other groups — is essential for the resolution of our problems. But that can only happen when there is a process into which they can merge".

There are other influential dissidents. Wynand Malan, a member of parliament, resigned to protest against Botha's defence of the Group Areas Act. (4) He also came out for discussions with the ANC. Another,

1. Many things were not planned, notably that they would have the right to eat in the same canteen as their white counterparts. Various protests and confusions ensued.

2. At the same time the extreme right could not succeed in making a common front. The negotiations between the Conservative Party and the Herstige National Party failed despite the intervention of the neo-nazi group, Eugene Terre-Blanche's Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging.

3. These backers are an important group from the Natal sugar industry, with a vested interest, moreover, in the "Indaba" operation (see further on in the article).

4. The Group Areas Act is the law on racially segregated living areas that Botha has always considered as indispensable, along with the law on segregated schooling. There exist, however, many proposals to reform this system, but the government until now has rejected the terms.



MAWU women demonstrating in Durban, shortly before a police attack in which one was killed (DR)

Albert Nothnagel, said that it was a myth to think that the crisis could be solved without the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela.

In the Cape region, the NP's crisis is very severe, notably focused around Esther Lategan, an ex academic who today owns a chain of stores. At the Stellenbosch university, near the Cape, there are also a number of professors known for their support for the NP who have made a big splash about splitting with the party.

Denis Worall, Wynand Malan and Esther Lategan published a manifesto in which they explain that: "Black politics must be freed so that it may become properly organized . . . Action against politicians and political organizations must cease". But the whole thing remains completely vague, despite its pretentious goal of infusing "a new spirit into our country".

Just as indicative of the general crisis of "Afrikaner" values is the fact that the Broederbond itself is now wracked by the reform dilemma. This movement, often likened to a sort of Afrikaner masonic lodge, was founded in 1918, and all through its history was the symbol of "Christian and white" values. Very influential in the social, economic and ideological spheres, the Afrikaner Broederbond provided a large number of political leaders. Behind all the National Party governments loomed the shadow of this movement.

In 1968, at the 50th anniversary of the Broederbond, one of its leaders explained its role: "Since the Afrikaner Broederbond got into its stride, it has given the country its governments. It has given the country every Nationalist prime minister since 1948. It has given us the Republic, even though indirectly. It has given us two state presidents. What would have happened to the Afrikaner volk [people] if the Broederbond had ceased to exist? Our nation depends on the Broederbond." (5)

Doubt penetrates Afrikaner bastion

But doubt is now gripping this brotherhood. In an internal document there now appears what would have been an unthinkable heresy a short while ago. "Neither a black head of state nor a government in which blacks predominate are in themselves a threat to Afrikaner survival, but according to this document this only applies if that broader system of government should be structured to prevent the domination of one racial group." (6)

Still more spectacular is the fact that the Broederbond agreed to meet ANC representatives last year

in New York. And its current president, Pieter J. de Lange, explained that his movement could serve as a "contact agency" for a multiracial dialogue. While these positions have had little effect they can only further aggravate the disarray inside the white community.

International Viewpoint has often carried articles explaining the reasons for the current crisis in South Africa. Two essential factors interact: the growths of the Black masses' revolutionary movement and the crisis of the mode of capitalist accumulation under apartheid. This is why, at all levels of the white population, there is a profound unease, which may take a more frustrated or more sophisticated form depending on the social milieu concerned.

Evidently, most of the whites do not understand the objective reasons for what is happening at the moment. But in a vague way some of them realise the risks inherent in maintaining the present system. Hatred of Blacks transforms itself into fear of a revolution or civil war. The need for a compromise is invoked

5. See 'The Super-Afrikaners', by Ivor Wilkings and Hans Strydom, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 1978. According to the authors, the Broederbond had 12,000 members in 1977.

6. Johannesburg 'Weekly Mail', February 6, 1987.

to prevent such a "catastrophe". But, unfortunately for them, whether the choice is to go for reform or to stick to the status quo — and this is what explains Botha's hesitations — the threat of a social expulsion remains the same.

For many decades Afrikaner morale was comforted by seeing the West and foreign companies make a common cause with South Africa against the "communist menace". But today these friends of yesteryear are extolling reform and denouncing the Afrikaners' way of looking at the world.

A recent book describes clearly the objective and subjective mechanisms of apartheid's crisis: "Botha's policies now had no real consistency. At the end of 1985 he had come very close to releasing Mandela under pressure from Western governments and bankers; six months later he switched 180 degrees, slammed the door on Mandela and declared a more ruthless Emergency. With such changeability no one could confidently claim that the Afrikaners were immune to pressure. Their government was visibly confused, indecisive and inconsistent, their reforms prompted by international demands." (7)

The liberal current, beginning with the Progressive Federal Party, is delighted with this situation. Very much a minority up until now, because of being traditionally based among English speakers, the supporters of democratization have today the impression that they have a serious card to play. Their hope is to substantially increase the number of seats that they hold in parliament and then, in alliance with the "New Nats", to be able to provoke a real crisis in the regime. A pact has been made with another "liberal" formation, the New Republic Party (NRP), which voted in 1983 with the nationalists during the constitutional referendum.

The PFP's optimism rests on the idea that part of the Afrikaner electorate is now favourable to some real structural reforms. Paul Malherbe, a member of the PFP, wrote in the *International Herald Tribune* last January 31: "Yet now the climate is right as never before for a change of government. A poll in mid-1985 found that 63 per cent of whites do not believe apartheid will last another 10 years. And in a survey published last month in a South African weekly, 42 per cent of white voters indicated that they favoured a non-racial constitutional alternative along the lines advocated by the PFP, while only 27 per cent preferred the present government's policy of 'power-sharing' within an 'ethnically based' constitution." As a result of these

calculations, the PFP envisages in certain cases not presenting its own candidate if a "New Nat" is standing.

All this will not be without problems. The PFP itself is far from being homogeneous. It is currently having debates on which constitutional path to advocate, between a federalism giving some rights to particular "minorities", or total "non-racialism". Evidently, behind all that looms the question of the ANC and relations with it. On this, also, there are question marks on to the extent of relations and discussions with the clandestine movement. (8)

Moves by the bosses

South Africa is experiencing a slight economic upturn. The main mining groups made very big profits in 1986, which is not without its effects on the general economic balance. But this observation must be considerably qualified by noting the persistence of structural problems: strong inflation, absence of political stability and investment confidence and the external debt. It is true that 1986 was so bad for the economy that even the least optimistic thought there would be an improvement in 1987.



Denis Worrall (DR)

All this is not unrelated to the big political debate mentioned previously. For the bulk of large South African capital, the problem is not only to find a solution to the growth of the mass movement, but at the same time to solve the problems of South African capitalism. Here the deregulation extolled by the employers has a

"liberal-democratic" tone, because it calls for eliminating bureaucratic ponderousness, economic compartmentalization and the financial cost of apartheid.

Tony Norton, executive president of the Johannesburg stock exchange, recently explained: "We are optimistic. We are building across the road to develop and expand because we believe a post-apartheid society is going to be significantly wealthier and more productive than the one we have now." (9)

The political changes going on inside the National Party are not unrelated to the growing authority of the employers in the large-scale manoeuvres underway. Both internationally and in relations with the ANC, "businessmen" now wield important means for action. (10)

The departures of foreign companies are favouring greater monopolization of the economy, reinforcing a bit more the institutional weight of some big conglomerates. Recently it has been noted that companies such as Sanlam have encouraged foreign firms to quit because that provides an opportunity to buy them at a low price.

When the British bank Barclays decided to pull out of South Africa at the end of 1986, some parts of Barclays-SA were bought up by the South African giant, the Anglo-American Corporation. AAC now controls 60.1 per cent of the total shares on the Johannesburg stock exchange. The four "giants" — AAC, Sanlam, SA Mutual and Rembrandt — now control 83.1 per cent of shares. In 1986, 70 new companies were quoted on the stock exchange, representing a growth of 21.6 per cent in capitalization, but the four "giants" already controlled 43 per cent of this.

It is understandable in these conditions that some ministers were worried over the growth of monopolies, since they also represent a strong political lobby. It is really a very curious situation because the state itself has a monopoly position

7. Anthony Sampson, 'Black and Gold', Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1987.

8. Van Rensburg, a local PFP member, resigned, denouncing the equivocal attitude of the party towards the ANC/Communist Party alliance. According to him, the PFP gives the impression that it has decided that "the ANP will win".

9. 'Weekly Mail', January 30, 1987.

10. A detailed account of the meeting in September 1985 between the ANC's leadership and representatives of the most important employers was a timely confirmation of that. In the London 'Observer' of January 18, 1987, Anthony Sampson explained in detail the relaxed atmosphere of the meeting and how Gavin Relly, the leader of the Anglo-American Corporation, declared that "it was one of the nicest days I've ever spent". The press has also become a propaganda outlet for the liberal employers' current.

in certain sectors: it represents 24.6 per cent of the global assets of 137 of the largest companies in the country. (11)

This strong monopolization of the economy generates constant inflationist pressure. Inflation was 18.6 per cent in 1986, and it is expected to be lower this year. Apartheid excludes the majority of Blacks from mass consumption. On the other hand, unemployment is expanding. This is why inflation only narrows the internal market still further, much to the regret of industrialists and large foreign companies. In 1986, for example, car sales were at their lowest level for ten years, but prices rose by 35 per cent during the year. What is left of the car industry is working at 13 per cent of its capacity.

It is in this context that the "business world" is getting more involved in political activity. It is behind the "New Nats". It is also behind "multi-racial" operation in the Natal ("Indaba"), which aims at economically integrating the KwaZulu Bantustan and its business class, the Indian bourgeoisie, and white industry and commerce. Those involved plan to establish new institutions bringing together representatives of the different communities. The personality of Chief Buthelezi, the leader of the KwaZulu, is not unimportant in this affair. He is one of the cards that imperialism, and a section of the South African liberals, hope to be able to play one day to get a negotiated settlement. The Pretoria government has rejected this project, but the local employers have announced their willingness to finance a local referendum in order to demonstrate its credibility.

In many interviews, the employers explain explicitly that now what is at stake is saving capitalism and private enterprise, a line which brings to mind the concerns of US diplomacy.

The National Party's crisis is not unrelated to the course of the various imperialist governments, beginning with the United States. The West's grand plan is in fact to bring off a negotiated settlement that would definitively put a stop to the radicalization of the mass movement and break the present unified momentum. To do that, it has to combine two things: establishing a consensus between the liberals and a section of the NP on the one side, and on the other finding moderates who are able to speak for the Black population.

This project is still very complicated in South Africa's conditions. First of all, there is the fact that a section of the liberals seems hardly conscious of the dangers of an explosion due to a rapid process of reforms. In the present circumstances,



Black ANC members at funeral (DR)

workers' demands in the factories would compromise the whole project. Additionally, there is the fact that the "New Nats" are in too much of a minority at the moment. It would be necessary for a substantial section of the party to swing over to opposition.

Speculation about the ANC

Then comes the problem of the Black movement. Until now, the cards held by Western diplomacy come down to Chief Buthelezi and possibly Bishop Desmond Tutu. (12) To advance towards a negotiated settlement there has to be a realignment inside the ANC. But in the union movement, and in some parts of the UDF, we have seen rather a radicalization of the "Chartist" current in the last year. (13) Although it is difficult to know what is being discussed in the ANC's exile leadership at the moment, all the indications are that in the present period the imperialist project of "a split in the ANC" remains very hypothetical.

In the United States, the Consultative Committee on South Africa re-submitted a report to George Shultz on February 10 that proposed negotiations between the Botha government and representative leaders of the Black majority, with a view to establishing a non-racial, democratic regime. The US government persists, however, in its scepticism about the effectiveness of this, since for the

moment it does not believe there will be a turnaround by the ANC.

But according to the *Weekly Mail* on March 20, a US state department document estimates that "serious policy differences (between the nationalists and the communists) could surface within the ANC" if relations between the ANC and the western powers could be improved. (14)

The US government's hesitations and doubts are not unrelated to the various reactions of the multinationals toward South Africa. Some have announced that they intend to stay and that in doing so they are better able to put pressure on the government. (15) But others preferred to leave, either selling their holdings or negotiating a sub-contracting agreement. US investment exceeded 2.8 thousand million dollars in 1983, 1.3s thousand million in 1986; 40 US companies left the country in 1985, and 48 in 1986. (16)

All this obviously impels the various lobbies to speed up the search

11. "Nationalisation, socialisation and the freedom charter", by Robert Davies, *South African Labour Bulletin*, January 1987.

12. Desmond Tutu is absorbed in the democratic opposition movement. He is a member of the United Democratic Front (UDF). But he took a certain number of initiatives and made some declarations which momentarily discredited him, notably among the youth. Unquestionably, he remains ready to make a deal with the United States.

13. A reference to those who claim allegiance to the Freedom Charter, the ANC's programme.

14. Article by Pipa Green reporting from the US.

for a solution. The near-general acknowledgement in the chancelleries of the central role played by the ANC has a very precise significance: this solution is to come about through a swing to the right by the ANC. The time has ended when the ANC was portrayed as simply a small terrorist group. George Shultz received Oliver Tambo in Washington a few months after the British government met ANC representatives officially for the first time. But what chance of success does Western diplomacy have in this attempt?

The ANC has won a considerable social base in recent years. It now reaches into all the more disadvantaged social layers up to the small Black employers and the democratic white milieu. Imperialism knows that this strength could perhaps be a means for influencing the political course of the ANC, obliging it to reconcile the contradictory demands of these diverse layers. Imperialism wants to force the ANC to choose a moderate path, or to retreat into a long-term radical strategy, all the more difficult since nobody can see a military solution in the South African context.

All this talk about the hope of a break between the nationalist current and the ANC and the Communist Party rests on this hypothesis. Between hope and reality there is a large gap: a great number of factors today are acting adversely to the hopes of imperialism. But against this what seems to stand out is the ANC's desire to utilise to the full opportunities for isolating the Botha regime and to take full advantage of the National Party's crisis. Oliver Tambo's trip to the US had this as its main function, and he sets his sights explicitly on the business milieu.

The United Democratic Front (UDF) which today very largely reflects the ANC's tactical choices, has taken a position on the coming elections. It has made a clear choice to take the side of one camp against another inside the white electorate. Its appeal addresses itself directly to the government's supporters, to the "New Nats", to the PFP liberals and to the employers.

In the name of the UDF, the Front's secretary Murphy Morobe calls the electors "to contribute to end racism and minority domination". At the same time, Blacks, who obviously will not be able to participate in the voting, are asked to build a campaign denouncing the elections: "Down with apartheid elections". In relation to the future and to the democratic regroupments which may appear, the UDF says: "All those genuinely opposed to apartheid, black and white, will be

welcomed into these organizations as fellow South Africans committed to the liberation of our people".

To Botha's followers the UDF demands that they "realise that a break with outdated political loyalties must come . . . The majority of South Africans say to you: pressurise the National Party and its MPs into addressing the real problems of this country; demand that the government abandons its present course; demand that it faces up to political reality and addresses the legitimate demands of the majority".

The UDF's appeals to employers

The UDF asks the employers to "do more than advertise social programmes and talk loosely of reform initiatives . . . It is insufficient to talk to the ANC one month and stand silent while the State of Emergency is declared another month". Finally, Morobe questions the PFP liberals on their constitutional project: Majority rule, or not?

This obviously is going to revive the debate over the orientation of the UDF, and consequently, of the ANC. Are they not going for an implicit front, bringing together a section of the liberals, employers and the UDF? Are they not heading for negotiations? These are the problems that currents most critical of the ANC will not fail to ask.

However, the question is more complicated than it would appear. The position of the UDF, broadly, is not wrong in itself. To play on the crisis of the ruling party - now in power for 39 years - and to aggravate the differentiations inside the ruling class can be an entirely necessary objective for anyone who poses the question of power. There remain, however, many other problems just as important.

The first is knowing where the real strategic line of march of the movement now lies. Is it the perspectives of a governmental crisis in the medium-term, allowing the regime to be transformed, the ANC to be legalized or something else of that sort? Is it the line prevailing in the ANC's journal, *Sechaba*, which is still committed to the idea of a sustained insurrectional situation and a revolutionary uprising? It is obviously preferable to have more than one iron in the fire. But the forecasts about what will happen in the next two or three years have consequences in the way in which the mass movement will be mobilized and organized.

The second problem is relations

with the employers. The union movement, for its part, does not want to make the slightest concession to them. Here, it is hardly a question of having a pedagogic language for businessmen. The recent strike at the OK Bazaars stores illustrated well the impossibility of reconciling workers' demands and the interests of the large liberal employers. (17)

Trade unionists do not have the same concerns as Morobe when he appealed to Blacks to "confront your employers, fellow workers and white friends on the real election issues. Tell them of your support for a non-racial and democratic future. Tell them of apartheid repression and the reign of terror in the townships and homelands".

This is no longer an appeal to the liberal employers, but the proposal of a task for Black workers. At the same time the COSATU unions are reaffirming more and more their choice for socialism and their break with capitalism. Now a number of liberals are asking which line will prevail in the mass movement in a few months time. (18)

Will the tactical necessity to deepen the regime's crisis prevail over more radical objectives? No one can really answer this question today, because too many factors enter into the equation. COSATU has consolidated itself as a force that cannot be bypassed, and the positions it takes are pulling the whole mass movement towards the left. Its congress, planned for July this year, will no doubt reveal the state of its political convictions, its longterm objectives and the level of unity of the different currents within its leadership. (19) Nothing therefore indicates that we are on the eve of a great turn, of a third possible path for the mass movement. □

15. This is the case with Shell, who regularly publish some inserts in the press saying: "Shell supports the free press".

16. *Investor Responsibility Research Centre, Washington. Cited in the 'Cape Times', March 5, 1987.*

17. For a report of the strike, see 'International Viewpoint' No. 113, February 9, 1987. In an article on the strike, the magazine 'Work in Progress' headlined it: "Anti-apartheid bosses are not our friends". The recent congress of the mineworkers' union, the NUM, was held under the slogan of "socialism means freedom". The preamble to the resolutions declared that "apartheid and capitalism are two inseparable evils that must be smashed".

18. The February 20, 1987, issue of the 'Weekly Mail' said: "While the standard UDF position is that there should be a blanket boycott of 'apartheid institutions' - as reflected in its opposition to the tri-cameral elections in 1984 - there have been a number of indicators recently of a less clear cut position on the white election". The UDF seems to be "sending a discreet 'don't-say-we-said-so-but' message to its white supporters".

19. These are mainly various currents coming from the traditional trade-union left and from the Chartists.

Duarte at an impasse

THE ATTENTION of the world was suddenly drawn back to El Salvador by the spectacular guerrilla assault of March 31 on the key military base of El Paraiso, 60 kilometers north of the Salvadoran capital, in which for the first time a US military advisor was killed in battle. An estimated 800 FMLN guerrillas took part in the attack.

The operation at El Paraiso followed two other major assaults in January and February. On January 4, the FMLN attacked Osicala in the north-eastern province of Morazan. On February 12, it hit the nearby town of Delicias de Concepcion. Both are in the defence system surrounding San Francisco Gotera, the capital of the department.

These events were clear indications that the regime of the highly touted "reformer" Jose Napoleon Duarte has been unable to contain, much less drive back, the guerrilla forces. At the same time, on the social and political fronts as well the regime is sinking rapidly amid growing difficulties. The following article describes the dilemma of US imperialism today in El Salvador, and the growth and organization of a vast movement against rulers and owners unable to reform, even with the considerable help of their anxious American big brother.

ARNOLD BERTHU

Duarte's inability to make real reforms, especially a radical agrarian reform, and assure a minimum of economic and social progress for the masses has created a fully-fledged crisis of confidence among the ranks of the Christian Democracy itself. This was aggravated at the start of 1986, when the government imposed a series of austerity measures that hit the workers directly. Its objective was to cut the budget deficit. The financial problem was the result of the enormous drain represented by military spending, which amounted to 25 per cent of the budget in 1987.

In order to regain part of his base of popular support, in October 1986 Duarte took a series of new measures, some of which shifted part of the burden for the war onto the Salvadoran capitalist class. These included notably a "Tax for Defence of National Sovereignty," in other words a war tax on inheritances, profits, exports, property and so on.

This brought a sharp counter-attack from the bosses. On January 22, 1987, the employers staged a one-day strike against the government's

policy, effective in 70 per cent of private enterprise. The National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), the class-struggle trade-union that was reformed in February 1986, refused to associate itself with the bosses' protests. And, on this occasion Guillermo Ungo, spokesperson of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), declared that the protests of the right were distinct from, and opposed to, those of the popular and revolutionary sectors, because "they represent the interests of an oligarchy."

At the same time, the two main far-right parties, the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) of Major Roberto D'Aubuisson and the National Conciliation Party (PCN) went on a prolonged parliamentary strike. This boycott prevented Duarte from getting the two-thirds vote of the deputies necessary to renew the state of siege that has been in force since 1980. According to Decree No. 50, which was adopted in February 1984, it has to be reimposed every month. (1)

General Blandon, chief of staff of the armed forces, severely criticized this suspension: "The possibilities for inquiries against presumed guerrillas will be affected. Those arrested will be able to call in lawyers during the investigation, and we will not be able to detain such terrorists for more than 72 hours."

Finally, a political crisis threatened the government as a whole on February 12. Duarte backtracked under the pressure of the employers. He substantially revised the measures taken in October 1986, lightening the property and income taxes that were supposed to finance a part of the war. To put icing on the cake, he announced at the same time a liberalization of the rules on trading in coffee, which has been controlled for seven years by a state body, the Coffee Institute (INCAFE).

Offensive against the reforms

Not content with this success, the big coffee producers then demanded total elimination of the state monopoly on the export of coffee. A week later, on February 20, the parliamentary right and the National Association of Private Enterprise (ANEP) got total capitulation from Duarte, inasmuch as the Supreme Court handed down a favorable ruling in a case brought by an industrialist belonging to ARENA and declared the income and property taxes unconstitutional.

This decision put the Duarte government in a very difficult financial position, since the army had already spent 120 million colons [1 dollar = 5 colons] of the income that the war tax was supposed to bring in! The 1986 budget was estimated at 900 million colons, and the cost of the war, outside US aid (see box) represented 1,500 million colons.

Duarte's position could be further undermined by the fact that El Salvador, like all the other Central American countries, has been hit by a drastic fall in the price of coffee on the world market. The resulting shortfall of income has been estimated by the Central Bank at 250 million dollars for 1987.

1. Decree No. 50 does not confine itself to restricting or annulling all rights or guarantees. It also gives military courts jurisdiction over "all crimes against the existence or organization of the state or against the public peace" and makes it possible to detain for up to two weeks any persons that the armed forces consider suspect, without bringing them before the courts. What is more, the decree makes the constitutional rules against confessions extorted by force legally inoperative.



American aid for the Salvadoran people (DR)

Facing this offensive by the extreme right, Duarte is trying to rebuild a certain popular base. A few days before he made his concessions to the oligarchy and then gave in entirely, the Christian Democratic Party called a demonstration of popular support for his policy. All the civil authorities were enlisted to mobilize civil servants and the unemployed who had been given work on projects to clear the capital from the damage of the earthquake.

In these campaigns, to get a large participation, the Christian Democratic Party's "hustlers" offered 15 to 25 colons, far more than the daily wage of an agricultural worker.

At the same time, the right called on people not to take part in the demonstration, and the FMLN organized a transport strike on the day, while UNTS called on workers not to join in the demonstration.

Finally, on February 7, more than 50,000 came out in response to the Christian Democrat's call. This figure is far from negligible, even if it is less than the organizers counted on.

Duarte certainly seems to be caught in a blind alley, but it would be premature to predict that he is liable to fall, because for the moment the United States has no other political card to play.

In 1981, 1982 and 1983, the United States supported Duarte's Christian Democrats and the extreme right represented by ARENA and the PCN, calling on them to come to an understanding and rule the country together in close collaboration with the armed forces. In 1984, the Reagan administration revised its policy.

Washington put its money on the Christian Democrats, to the detriment of ARENA and the PCN. Duarte was therefore able to get aid from the powerful European Christian Democracy, in particular the Germans and the Italians. (2)

Washington's plan

The US project, for which Duarte was indispensable, combined four elements — elections, reforms, selective repression and war against the FMLN. In that way, Washington thought it could stabilize the situation in El Salvador and undermine the social base of the revolutionists.

If you add up the results of this scheme today, they are hardly brilliant for the Reagan Administration:

* Elections. They undoubtedly helped to give international legitimacy to the Salvadoran government, a legitimacy and an audience that open dictatorships could not claim. But internally, while the Duarte project gained a certain popular support at the time of the elections in 1984-85, the illusions of some sections of the masses were quickly dissipated.

* Reforms. They have been blocked. The second phase of the agrarian reform has not really been implemented. The government is backtracking on the nationalization measures concerning trading in coffee that were carried out by the military junta at the end of 1979 and the beginning of 1980. Above all, the

standard of living of the popular strata has deteriorated very sharply.

Duarte is caught in a vise between the populist concessions he needs to make and the intransigence of the owning classes, which have no intention of yielding an iota of their privileges.

* Selective repression. While the massive and bloody repression has been sharply reduced in the cities, there is still selective repression. In 1986, the (non-governmental) Human Rights Commission counted 1,821 murders, 213 disappearances and 1,100 political prisoners in the Marióna and Ilopango jails. But this selective repression has not been sufficient to keep the organized mass movement from gaining strength and radicalizing. (3)

* The war against the FMLN. A total fiasco. The Front has expanded its armed forces and increased its capacity for military action, extending it to the entire country. It has regained important strength in the cities. The FMLN has managed to create a situation of geographical dual power — two armies and two authorities face each other in the country. And Duarte had to initiate dialogue with the revolutionists in La Palma in October 1984, without the latter giving up their arms and ceasing their operations.

In February 1986, the UNTS was formed. It sealed an alliance between the class-struggle current that developed in 1984 on the one hand and, on the other, the People's Democratic Union (UPD), the Confederation of Cooperative Associations of El Salvador (COACES) and the National Association of Salvadoran Natives (ANIS), which had constituted an essential part of the Christian Democratic Party's electoral base in 1984-85.

This unity testified to the growing organization of the masses — workers, civil servants, peasants, students and so on — and to their radicalization. The UNTS had 35,000 members. To meet its challenge, the Christian Democrats, aided by the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD, linked up to the CIA) formed the National Workers' and Peasants' Union

2. In 1986, aid from the German Christian Democracy amounted to 42 million dollars. An agreement was signed in February bringing this up to 70 million dollars for 1987. Negotiations are underway to grant 30 million dollars more in aid to El Salvador. These funds are essentially used in the framework of the "United to Build" plan, and in assistance to small private enterprise, the objective being to rebuild a social base for Duarte.

3. In February 1987, the FMLN forced the release of 99 political prisoners, including 52 guerrillas and 47 unionists, in exchange for Colonel Avalos, who was taken prisoner by the Front in October 1985.

(UNOC) and stepped up their pressure on the leadership of the UPD in an attempt to rebuild the Christian Democratic Party's social base.

In November 1986, the UPD leadership decided to withdraw from the UNTS, explaining that it was taking too radical positions. This defection was a victory for Duarte. Nonetheless, COACES and ANIS, which were initially linked to the UPD, have remained in UNTS. And it seems that a part of the ranks of the UPD have also decided to stay in UNTS.

To judge by the capacity for mobilization that UNTS managed to demonstrate in January 1987, despite the departure of the UPD, it seems that the movement has not been greatly affected by the split. More than 35,000 people demonstrated in San Salvador on January 17, in response to a call from UNTS, despite of the fact that UNOC called on its supporters not to demonstrate, and the army stopped about a hundred carloads from joining the demonstration.

Despite the repression, firings, seizures of trade unionists and murders, the number of strikes remains high — 150 as against 172 in 1985. Moreover, working-class solidarity made it possible to win the release of Febe Velasquez, international relations secretary of the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS) and member of the executive of UNTS. He was seized by the army and accused by the Ministry of the Interior of belonging to the National Resistance Armed Forces (FARL), one of the five components of the FMLN.

In August 1986, Duarte himself justified the seizure of trade unionists when the general secretary of one of the unions in FENASTRAS was arrested: "The guerrillas infiltrate everywhere . . . That is why the security bodies are encharged with investigating this. That is why this unionist was taken in."

Finally, to deal with strikes, the Duarte government has frequently resorted to militarizing the workplaces.

The year 1986 was marked by the trying out of the "United to Build" plan, designed to overcome the army's isolation from the population. "The war is 90 per cent political, economic, social and ideological, and only 10 per cent military" (*Proceso* Number 269). That is what the Salvadoran military strategists say today. The "United to Build" plan is aimed at winning this war.

The plan was drawn up in Washington and consists in particular of reinstalling in the countryside populations that were displaced or who fled

US intervention

US aid to El Salvador (millions of dollars)

1979	9,590	1980	58,549
1981	149,258	1982	277,611
1983	329,045	1984	531,331
1985	452,048	1987	770,000

Between 1979 and 1987, US aid to El Salvador multiplied 80 times. It has reached more than 2,500 million dollars, more than El Salvador's total foreign debt of 2,120 million dollars.

According to a study done in 1985, the US congressional committee overseeing arms and foreign policy established that 75% of this aid was destined for the war. If you taken into consideration the fact that the "Unite to Build" plan launched in 1986 allows the army to use US funds earmarked for reforms, public infrastructure, health and schools, you can see the grounds for the FMLN's statement that the Salvadoran army is getting two million dollars a day.

In recent years, El Salvador has become the top US aid recipient in Latin America, although the country only has a population of 5 million! On the world scale, El Salvador comes in fourth position in the hit parade of countries getting the most US support, after Israel, Egypt and Turkey.

The US military presence in El Salvador is small (there were 40 US soldiers in 1980 and 100 in 1985), but there is no doubt about the fact that the strategy and tactics of the Salvadoran armed forces are directly controlled by the United States. Moreover, you have to take account of the fact that thousands of Salvadoran military men have gone through US military schools and that they regularly train with US and Honduran soldiers in Honduras.

Joint US-Honduran maneuvers are particularly important (The United States keeps 1,800 soldiers in Honduras, whose numbers are swelled by contingents of special intervention forces during the many maneuvers). These maneuvers are conducted a few kilometres from the northern zone of El Salvador, near the FMLN bastions of Morazan and Chalatenango.

Moreover, the American magazine *The Nation* has just revealed in its March 1987 issue that AID allotted a part of its budget, amounting to 3.5 million dollars in 1986, to El Salvador to get the UPD to withdraw from UNTS.

The Nation said that the general secretary of the UPD, Ramon Mendoza, got an initial sum of 3,000 dollars in November 1986 in exchange for his breaking with UNTS.

The main intermediary in this affair is the American Institute for Free Labor Development set up by the AFL-CIO in 1962 in close collaboration with the CIA.

from the war and the bombing. The army is the means through which economic and logistical aid is channelled to civilians who set themselves up again in the countryside. In this way, the armed forces substitute for the local and national civilian authorities in areas that considerably exceed the latter's "normal" functions — housing, public facilities, health and so on.

The financial aid appropriated by the army comes in large part from the Alliance for International Development (AID) a US body linked to the CIA. In the new villages, the army is trying to form civil defence units to serve as a human barrier between it and the FMLN. This operation is akin to the "development zones" that the Guatemalan army started establishing in 1982 and to the "strategic hamlets" set up in Vietnam at the beginning of the 1970s.

It is hard to get a clear idea of the effectiveness of the "United to Build"

plan's effectiveness, but it is clear that the military are incapable of genuine dialogue with the population, even if they are being put through courses in public relations (!). On the other hand, Christian base communities inspired by liberal theology have organized a significant part of the rural population living in the war zones.

Finally, the FMLN has managed to create an impossible situation for the army and the legal civilian government in about a hundred localities.

The country's small size and its population density, along with the weight of the Salvadoran army and the means of repression available to it (bombing and so on), have prevented the formation of permanent liberated zones in which social relations could be reorganized in a stable way. The FMLN, which has about 10,000 guerrilla fighters, has to fight in a special way, different from the Chi-

nese, Vietnamese, Yugoslav, Cuban or even Nicaraguan models.

One of the FMLN commanders, Anna Guadalupe Martinez, has specified what is meant by an FMLN-controlled zone:

"What we have done is to keep the Christian Democratic Party or any other right-wing party from having mayors in the zones in which we operate. For a year and a half we have either been taking them prisoner, or they have fled to the main centers in the departments concerned. But we have not replaced them with new authorities, because they would be murdered if the army came in. The people, seeing that there are no longer any authorities, have tried to organize themselves and create elements of legal, legislative and other powers to deal with the problems of the population.

"Obviously the individuals who take part in this 'power' know that they cannot do anything against the interests of the people and of the FMLN. This is not because we would set up new authorities. No, it is the population itself that organizes in neighborhood committees and town councils demanding water, electricity, medical facilities. This is self-management by the population which asks to be respected by the army and the FMLN. What is more, the population raises the flag of neutrality. That means that the army cannot liquidate these authorities, and we have to respect the organization that comes from the people themselves. This is what has happened in nearly a hundred villages in the country, from which we have driven the mayors and the civilian authorities. This is dual power." (*El Nuevo Diario*,



Elite Salvadoran troops (DR)

November 12, 1986.)

Since 1981, when the FMLN launched its general offensive, the army had not made the sort of military effort that it did in 1986. In five years, the Salvadoran army has tripled its numbers from 17,000 to 50,000. This is thanks to US military aid, which today amounts to more than two million dollars a day. In 1986, the army tried in vain to inflict a strategic defeat on the FMLN by conducting very large scale operations.

For example, Operations Phoenix directed against ones of the FMLN's bastions, the Guazapa region, lasted six months, from January to June 1986. During that time, the bombing was constant. A thousand people were displaced, 500 were imprisoned. The Salvadoran army combined aerial bombardment with massive assaults of elite troops, given great mobility by the simultaneous use of 60 transport helicopters.

FMLN stands up against massive attacks

This operation led to the almost complete depopulation of the region, and seems to have forced the FMLN to retreat momentarily. Since then, it has regained control of the region. The Salvadoran army tried to repeat this scenario in another region, Chalatenango, but with much less success.

In September 1986, when the third meeting in the FMLN-Duarte talks was to take place in Sesori, the army mobilized 30,000 men.

Overall, the FMLN managed to meet the attack, and even succeeded in dealing the Salvadoran army some very severe blows. For example, on June 19, 1986, it attacked the country's main military base, San

FMLN/FDR communique

WE INFORM the Salvadoran people, the peoples of Central America, and international public opinion that on November 30 our respective fronts, represented by the Executive Committee of the FDR and the General Command of the FMLN, signed a political pact bringing up to date the terms of the revolutionary democratic alliance.

This political pact sums up the experience of our alliance over these last six years of revolutionary people's war, its advances and the points scored by our people in the struggle against the pro-imperialist dictatorship and for the triumph of the revolution.

We declare:

1. The FDR and the FMLN are pursuing the same objective -- defeat of the counter-insurgency scheme of US imperialism and its allies in El Salvador and the triumph of an anti-imperialist, anti-oligarchical democratic revolution.

2. The FDR and FMLN are fighting for political power in El Salvador in order to be able to lead Salvadoran society to achieving their national, pluralist and nonaligned project, expressed today in the platform for a Revolutionary Democratic Government (GDR), which has given life to their alliance.

3. Our alliance is a strategic one because of the concrete conditions themselves in which people are fighting. Only through a joint effort by our fronts and the organizations that make them up will it be possible to win and maintain the objectives we have set.

4. We are a pluralist and democratic alliance, which involves mutual respect and the broadest possible debate, without sectarianism, dogmatism or hegemonism.

5. In view of the pluralist nature of our alliance, the FDR is not the political arm of the FMLN, nor the latter the military arm of the FDR. They are two different, separate organizations, that are closely linked and coordinated and have common objectives.

6. The FDR and the FMLN will discuss together the political and military line to be followed and together will work out common strategy and tactics and the plan of action. Decisions will be made by consensus.

7. The FDR and the FMLN will inform each other and consult in an ongoing way and agree to set up the mechanisms and instruments necessary for this task.

8. Differences that cannot be overcome through discussion will be left to be decided in accordance with the autonomy enjoyed by all components of the alliance, with the possibility for divergence and constructive public criticism being left open.

This pact is the expression of a new level of development reached by our organizations and of their commitment to the struggle. It represents a step forward for our people on the road to freedom.

Mexico, December 15, 1986
Press Bureau of the FMLN-FDR



Miguel, and occupied it for several hours, inflicting 200 casualties, dead and wounded, on the army.

At the end of the day, the overall military balance sheet for 1986 was not favorable to the army. The FMLN demonstrated its operational capacities in the country's various regions. It controls about 25 per cent of the territory. By stepping up its activities at the end of the year, it managed to inflict more than 6,000 casualties on the Salvadoran armed forces, while at the same time, according to the army itself, the FMLN's casualties were lower than in 1985 (863 dead in 1986, as against 1,147 in 1985).

In 1986, the FMLN reportedly succeeded in imposing seven road-transport and railway strikes, which scored an important success, as in previous years. During the coffee and cotton harvests, the FMLN also managed to force the landowners to pay decent wages to the agricultural workers.

The year 1987 began with stepped up FMLN attacks in the course of the "Heroic January" operation. This action was so successful that it was prolonged for a month, during which assaults were staged against major bases in middle-sized towns. The FMLN's offensive obliged the armed forces to make counter-attacks in nearly all of the country's departments.

The counter-insurgency scheme relying on the Christian Democracy has thus definitely been stymied. But there is no other one that can be put in its place in the near future.

The personnel can be changed. Duarte can be replaced by another Christian Democrat. The candidate in the best position to step into his shoes seems to be Abraham Rodriguez, one of the most right-wing of the Christian Democratic Party leaders. There was a hint of this during the January-February political crisis.

However, the 64 dollar question is whether the United States can afford to set up an open military dictatorship again or put parties to the right of the Christian Democrats in power, either by elections, or through a ministerial crisis combined with a right-wing split away from the Christian Democracy. (In fact, up until now, the United States, as well as the Salvadoran armed forces, have assured Duarte of their support.) Such an option seems quite impracticable, much more risky than prolonging the life of a Christian Democratic government, even if the latter is in an impasse.

Why does such a solution seem so improbable? Because the Salvadoran army cannot with its own forces alone, even they have tripled, fight on two fronts, against the guerrillas and against the mass movement. The US army would find itself compelled to intervene more and more massively, sending thousands of men into battle, with all the repercussions that may be imagined on the home front and in international politics, at a time when the USSR is playing the detente card to the fullest. From 1984-86, the FMLN managed, through its proposals for dialogue and negotiations, to regain the political initiative and cut the ground out from under Duarte's feet. While increasing the military pressure, it succeeded in creating a space for political struggle for the reviving mass movement.

After it was crushed and broken up in 1980-82, the mass movement

could not be recomposed in the cities and in the countryside on the basis of support for the revolutionary armed struggle waged by the FMLN. To fight openly for such a perspective would have been a suicidal policy for the cadres of the people's movement and meant their isolation from the masses.

The "dialogue" proposed

The dialogue proposal launched by the FMLN opened up a political perspective for the mass movement — pressure to throw Duarte on the defensive so that he would really engage in negotiations with the insurgents with a view to bringing about peace.

"We are the ones who have to wage the fight to show that there is a just political solution in El Salvador. If we reject dialogue, not only will we lose our credibility, but above all we will create frustration among the people who are suffering from the bombing and the repression," FMLN commander Ana Guadalupe Martinez pointed out. For a time, Duarte himself used the dialogue proposal in an offensive way in order to score points with the Salvadoran population and to backup his international propaganda operation.

However, the FMLN's military pressure and the more and more

Profile of the economy

Population: 4,772,000 in 1985. Very high population density. Agriculture is the principal employer and produces most of the wealth. It is also the sector in which workers are most exploited. The three main products are coffee, cotton and sugar cane.

Industry accounts for 15% of the economically active population. Ownership is very concentrated. Sixty families control 84.5% of all capital stocks, both in agriculture and industry. These families are the core of the capitalist oligarchy in El Salvador.

The agrarian reform, nationalization of the banks and coffee trading carried out at the end of 1979 and the beginning of 1980 to contain the mass movement have not modified the concentration of capitalist economic power.

GNP in 1985 was 20% lower than in 1978, barely reaching the level of 1973. Per capita GNP has been plummeting in recent years. In 1986, it had fallen to the level of 1965.

Trend of real wages (base 100 = 1970) (minimum wage)

	1980	1984
Agricultural workers	82.9	57.9
Factory workers	115.8	96.5
Commerce workers	105.8	88.2

Inflation and unemployment rates

	1979	1982	1984	1985	1986
Inflation	15.9	11.7	11.7	22.1	30
Unemployment	6.7	30	30	30	35

massive support for the dialogue proposal made by them forced Duarte to sit down twice at a negotiating table with the revolutionists, and thereby recognize that they have an unchallengeable legitimacy and representativeness.

Martinez explained: "When we put forward the possibility of a political solution through dialogue, we oblige the Salvadoran government to take a stand, to say whether it is favorable or not to dialogue and to reveal its policy, which is to crush the FMLN militarily. For a long time, Duarte did not want to engage in dialogue, and the world condemned him. When he realized that he was paying a political price for this, he decided to adjust his position, using dialogue in a tactical way, not to seek a political solution to the conflict, but to gain legitimacy."

FMLN sows no illusions

The FMLN carefully avoided spreading the slightest illusions about the possibilities for real alliances with Duarte, the army or the oligarchy. It constantly used the weapon of dialogue to show that Duarte, like the army, like the oligarchy, were allies and transmission belts of US imperialism.

"For Duarte, the banner of dialogue is merely a political game that has a temporary usefulness as a cover for his project. Duarte and the Christian Democracy are not a power in themselves. Their role is limited to being mere instruments of the Reagan government's policy." (4)

The FMLN has put into practice a strategy combining armed struggle (in less than ten years it has built a fully-fledged revolutionary army); political struggle for winning hegemony over the masses and accelerating the crisis of bourgeois rule; international solidarity; diplomatic initiatives; and, finally, an overall vision of the American revolution.

The FMLN has managed to bridge the gap that opened between it and the masses from 1980-82 as a result of the massive and bloody repression directed against the popular movement. It avoided the deviation of giving priority to the military factor to the detriment of mass organization.

"In a people's war, the military factor is not absolutely predominant. What is decisive for a revolutionary movement is whether it has achieved an accumulation of military forces that, combined with political forces, enables it to change the relationship of forces. In 1983, while the FMLN's military blows pushed the army to the

brink of collapse, the absence of a rising mass movement kept these military victories from leading to significant changes in the relationship of forces." (5)

Likewise, the FMLN has also drawn the lessons from the overestimation that it made at the time of its "final offensive" in 1981 of the masses' capacity for insurrection when they had already suffered very severe blows. In these last years, the FMLN has paid great attention to struggles for concrete demands and to strengthening the organization of the masses.

Finally, the FMLN has been able to advance different political proposals in accordance with the needs of the time. For example the proposal for a Government of Broad Participation (GAP) made in January 1984 was used essentially as a political weapon to gain mass support and to throw the Duarte government into a crisis at a time when the Christian Democracy still enjoyed a certain popular support. In this, no ambiguity was left about the FMLN's revolutionary perspective.

"In the present social struggle, what is involved is not the demand for a liberalization or reformism measured out by the Americans and accepted by the oligarchy. What is involved is challenging the system as such by demanding deepgoing changes . . . In our country, we will be able to talk about elections after there has been a recomposition of the structure of military, economic and political power.

"The Salvadoran social, economic and political forces that are convinced of the need for introducing structural changes in our society to achieve peace constitute the majority . . . A negotiated solution cannot be envisaged to avoid social changes but, on the contrary, it must make it possible to achieve them within the framework of a national consensus. (6)"

On December 15, 1986, the FDR and the FMLN included in the document renewing their alliance the perspective of a democratic revolutionary government as the fundamental axis of their fight on the political level. The platform of such a government was adopted by the Salvadoran revolutionary organizations in February 1980 and by the FDR in April 1980.

There is no point in harping on the fact that the democratic revolutionary government was reaffirmed and the GAP put aside. The overall coherence remains. While firmly maintaining a revolutionary perspective, the FMLN may be led, as it was not long ago with the GAP, to put forward tactical proposals linked to the concrete conditions of the struggle.

As regards the coming tests of the

struggle, the FMLN remains cautious. It notes that the mass organization has reached a high level, but does not draw from that fact alone a perspective for an insurrection in the short run. The task of the hour is accumulating forces both in the guerrilla war and in the mass movement, an accumulation that combines with political and military initiatives. And the tightening of the unity of the forces that make up the FMLN now underway is also one of the keys to the future. □

Position of the workers' movement

A LEADER of the independent union movement in El Salvador for 14 years, Bernabe Recinos is a *bete noir* for Duarte, as he was for the country's successive military governments. Imprisoned from 1980 to 1984, he was only released as a result of the international pressure brought to bear on Duarte. He is a member of FENASTRAS and in the leadership of UNTS. We have translated the following interview with him from the February 1987 issue of the Nicaraguan magazine *Pensamiento Propio*.

Question. In view of the war situation, what are the objectives of the Salvadoran workers' movement?

Answer. From our standpoint, the main problem in the situation is the government's refusal to respond to demands for dialogue and the policy it has followed since 1981, which consists of stepping up the war

4. Joaquin Villalobos, "The present stage of the war and its perspectives," 1986.

5. *Ibid.*

qualitatively and quantitatively. As a condition for opening up dialogue the government is making the absurd demand that the FMLN lay down its arms.

It is clear that the guerrillas are not going to do that, because they are an army, just like the one that they face. In El Salvador, there are two armies, and neither of them can demand that the other surrender.

This intensification of the war has resulted in a growing aspiration on the part of the Salvadoran people to be able to live in peace. The people are demanding peace, but the call for dialogue is not an isolated demand. It is wrong to think today that if there were dialogue it would soon be followed by peace.

This demand by the people is reflected by popular organizations at all levels, in the same way as the people chose other forms of organization after having been denied for many years any way of expressing themselves by electoral means.

If the rulers do not let the workers choose, the latter are forced to resort to violence, because violence is the government's only answer to the workers. As the workers improved their organization, the government responded by stepped-up repression.

For the workers, therefore, the question is one of self-defence, of a better form of organization. And in El Salvador, there is a tradition and an experience of armed defence of the masses. It is hardly surprising, then, that in view of the denial of any political road and of the increase of repression, workers' militias are reappearing in the urban zones.

Q. The government accuses UNTS of being terrorist, a characterization that it also makes of the FMLN. What are the possibilities today for the development of the workers' movement?

A The economic crisis is very grave in El Salvador. It is hitting the workers directly and hard. With this worsening of the crisis, poverty is on the increase, but along with this, more and more demands are being made on the government.

The workers' movement has grown stronger, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and its united efforts are reflected in the formation of UNTS. The political consciousness of the workers' movement is increasing because this government's political alternatives have brought nothing for the people.

The government has always tried to discredit the united organizations of the workers' movement in the opposition, trying to portray them as mere appendages of the FMLN. This campaign has no other aim

than to justify the repression.

We think that the government is stepping up repression against the trade-union movement because its political plan has failed. If it has any room left for propaganda on the international level, it can't be much. But despite that, UNTS is a strong alternative, able to compete for the Christian Democrats' social base.

Our policy is to seek alliances with other organizations around common objectives and thus to reinforce the unity of the workers' movement. With the UPD, which left UNTS for reasons of organizational independence, we maintain unity in action around a platform of demands.

We also have broad points of agreement with UNOC, which is close to the Christian Democracy. From our standpoint, the decisive element is the gravity of the situation, which is the same for all working people.

Q. How do you see the Salvadoran crisis ending?

A. With the earthquake, the crisis grew still worse. Economically, we have fallen back to the level of 1961, 25 years ago! The country is "consuming" more foreign currency than comes in. The United States is giving 300 million dollars a year in arms, and the war costs the country 2 million dollars a day. Last week, capital flight reached about 5,000 million dollars.

The closing of a lot of factories after the earthquake made conditions worse for the workers. Their buying power has fallen by nearly 30%. All these facts show the urgency of finding a solution to the conflict that El Salvador is experiencing.

Such a solution has to be sought in an agreement with the FDR-FMLN. All sections of Salvadoran society have to take part in the search for a consensus, and the solution would be to arrive at a government of national consensus.

Q. Are there real possibilities at the present time for establishing dialogue?

A. For the moment, we see no possibility of dialogue. But we think that in view of the deteriorating position of the Christian Democracy in El Salvador, the Reagan administration is going to try to recompose the political power by giving more room to private enterprise and the agrarian oligarchy.

The Christian Democratic government is in a grave state, since it no longer represents anything in the country, and internationally it is completely discredited. It is going all out to inflict a military defeat on the FMLN, which is out of its reach. In the working class, among the working

people, this attitude on the part of the government can only increase organization directed at achieving dialogue.

Q. Besides the government and the guerrillas, the two belligerent parties present, people talk about a "third force." Could it be a political alternative?

A. The third force is not a political option, but it is important for broadening alliances, giving impetus to action platforms and enriching the political life of the nation. But since it has no definitive program and since it does not represent a military force, it cannot offer an alternative in the war, because in El Salvador the situation is polarized between the armed forces and the United States on the one side, and the FMLN-FDR on the other. □

Political prisoners in El Salvador

POLITICAL PRISONERS in El Salvador are held in two prisons, Mariona for men and Ilopango for women. Mercedes Sanz, from the Socialist Workers Party (PSO), Swiss section of the Fourth International, was able to visit Mariona prison. She describes conditions there in the following interview given to Arnold Berthu on March 20, 1987.

Question. You managed to get into Mariona prison. Can you tell us what its main features are?

Answer. The prison has several sections. There is section C, the psychiatric wing. That is where they keep the prisoners who are considered "mentally ill." There are about 50 of them, and they cannot move around freely. Section 2 is where the political prisoners are held. There are 800 to 1,000 of them. There is a section for common-law prisoners, where about 2,000 people are being

held, including members of the death squads. There is the "pre-trial" section, where you find military men facing trial in military courts.

The prison is located approximately four kilometers from the center of San Salvador on the road leading to Quetzaltepec. There is a big iron gate blocking the road that leads to the prison building. At the gate, the guards ask visitors to leave their passports or their identity cards, and note the name of the prisoner who they want to see. They then search the food parcels for the prison. Finally, men and women are separated and very thoroughly searched. Once this administrative part is finished, you go into the prison and end up in the common-law prisoners' courtyard.

On visiting days, groups gather around some of these prisoners, who make speeches. It was explained to me that they talk about their personal cases — that was true of a woman who was shouting — or they preach on behalf of some religious sect.

From there, we went into the political-prisoners' wing. There is no door separating the common-law prisoners from the political prisoners. It, like the doors of the cells, was taken away after the October 1986 earthquake for fear of further tremors. Nonetheless, there is not much interchange between the two sectors. The political prisoners are afraid of informers infiltrated among the common prisoners. The informers come essentially from the pre-trial section, where there are military men on whom punishments have been imposed.

Q. Are the political prisoners organized?

A. Since September 15, 1980, the "politicals" have had a committee. Its task is to get better conditions of imprisonment and to defend the prisoners' rights. There is also a *Junta Directiva* (Leadership Council). It is elected at a general assembly and coordinates the activity of the following commissions:

— The Culture, Propaganda and Education Committee. It organizes courses on reading, literature, philosophy and politics (when "professors" are available). It is prisoners themselves who do the teaching.

— The Sports Committee. For example, they have formed a football team, named after Farabundo Marti. The politicals have won the right to play in tournaments outside the prison, and travel about with up to 200 prisoners as supporters.

— The Social Assistance Committee, which takes charge of the clinic, hygiene and maintenance problems (electricity, water, etc.)

— The Discipline Committee, which settles problems that may

arise among prisoners.

There is also a legal aid bureau organized entirely by the politicals. It gives legal advice. Finally, there is an internal bureau that maintains an up-to-date list of prisoners, with a series of vital statistics (date of entry, and so on).

The prisoners have organized a series of actions, including hunger strikes. The longest one lasted 57 days in 1985.

Q. Can you give an example of such actions and tell us what it produced?

A. They won the right to get conjugal visits from their companions for up to 12 hours, once a week.

At first, the prison authorities demanded payment. The prisoners rejected this system, went on hunger strike and refused to go back to their cells at the fixed hour, 6pm. That way, the guards couldn't call the roll. Their action paid off.

Furthermore, the action on October 9, 1986, on the eve of the earthquake, seems to me to be especially important. On that day, the political prisoners decided to ban armed guards from coming into the section of the prison reserved for politicals. They barricaded themselves in their section. The Discipline Committee took charge of the roll call and handed over a report to the guards.

After that action, they got the guards to agree to come in unarmed and accompanied by a member of the Discipline Committee, who called the roll.

Now, the prisoners go back to their cells at 9pm, and the doors and bars have been removed. The rest of the time, they move about freely in their section.

Q. The political prisoners seem to have managed to impose a sort of "dual power" within the prison. Can you explain what happens before imprisonment?

A. Some 75 per cent of the political prisoners are from peasant backgrounds. Many of them have not taken part in FMLN activities, but they are considered to be part of its social base and therefore are accused of collaborating with, or membership of, the FMLN.

According to Decree No. 50, in force under the state of siege, the army or the police can detain a citizen they suspect of belonging to the FMLN for two weeks.

During that period, the detainee has no right of defence. This time is used by the security forces to force confessions through torture. Such confessions are extrajudicial inasmuch

as the detainees are taken to make a deposition before their captors instead of before a judge.

If, through torture, they get a confession, it is considered sufficient to justify preventive detention, which can last up to 121 days. This period of preventive detention is served in Mariona prison. Within 60 days, the prisoners have to be brought before a military investigating judge. At that time, they can confirm or deny the statements that they made to the repressive forces. They can say that it was obtained through torture.

In August 1986, after the prisoners formed the Legal Aid Bureau, the military authorities changed their tactics. After two weeks detention, the detainees are immediately brought before a military investigating judge without going through Mariona. The pressure on them is thus greater, inasmuch as they may be tortured or "disappear" if they refuse to confirm their confessions.

It should be added that defence of the prisoners by lawyers is made difficult, as the latter are threatened with death by the paramilitary groups or accused of the same sort of offence charged against their clients.

Some lawyers who get their clients off through their ties with the military judges exact high fees. A member of the Human Rights Committee was released on October 1, after his family paid 6,600 colons. The average monthly wage of a worker in the capital is 450 colons; an agricultural worker gets 240.

Q. On January 13, the right-wing parliamentary opposition refused to vote for renewing the state of siege that has been in force for several years. Duarte has not been able to get the two-thirds vote necessary, at least for the time being. What is the situation of the political prisoners at this time?

A. Any individual arrested and charged with a political crime can be held for 72 hours by the security bodies. But, recently this limit has not been respected.

The situation is complex, because nearly all the political prisoners, whether they are in Mariona or Ilopango, have been jailed under Decree No. 50 of the state of siege. Not long ago, one of Duarte's stooges, Ricardo Acevedo Perola, announced that a bill is going to be submitted to the legislative assembly to replace Decree No. 50. Its context is not known.

Personally, I think that they are going to introduce reforms reflecting the international pressures brought to bear in the United Nations. They are going to alter the facade without changing the content. □

A new generation of youth is radicalizing

A NEW RISE of youth mobilizations has occurred over a wide spectrum of countries over the past couple of years. At the end of 1986, a number of major movements coincided. Two major European governments, the French and the Spanish, were thrown on the defensive. After a decade of pronouncements by the bourgeois press and pundits that the youth revolt was a thing of the past, a new rebel generation has clearly come on the scene.

CLAUDE GABRIEL

Very broad mobilizations of youth have occurred in the recent period in Western Europe. This happened first of all in France, where struggles by highschool and university students reached a level unprecedented since May 1968; and then in Spain, where the youth are dealing a serious blow to the social democratic government's credibility. The mobilizations in Greece and Belgium should also be noted. This "agitation" on the part of youth in school was preceded in 1985 by a powerful movement of Italian highschool students against austerity.

Outside Europe, in Quebec, the student movement reacted in October against the government's free-enterprise project and obstructed its implementation.

Virtually the same austerity policies have been advanced in the dominated countries, provoking the same sort of student mobilization. The best example is the Mexican student movement. (See *International Viewpoint*, April 6, 1987.) But many others have taken place over the last year against the university austerity plans prompted by the IMF, for instance, in Senegal, Madagascar and Brazil.

All of this is no coincidence but rather represents a systematic attack by the governments against certain educational gains. The objective is to cut state spending and apply an austerity policy to the educational system as a whole. As always in such cases, the very prosaic aim of cutting social spending is being dissimulated by hypocritical talk about improving education, adjusting it to the "modern world" and the need for admission standards.

In some countries, youth, high-school students and university stu-

dents have fought back massively against these often similar attacks. However, the political circumstances are far from being identical everywhere. The Italian movement in 1985 came after several grave defeats for the working class, in particular the failure of the factory councils movement in 1984.

The mobilization in France marked a notable initial change in the social situation, and was not without an effect on the railway strike that followed it. The Spanish movement also started up in a difficult period for workers' struggles.

Relationship to workers' struggles

These youth movements have, therefore, developed in very different national contexts, and their relationship with the struggles of the working class is the more contradictory for that. While in Belgium, the wave of workers' strikes in recent years could serve as a school for the youth mobilizations, elsewhere the relationship has not been so automatic. On the other hand, in France and Spain at least, the youth mobilizations took the lead and favored a revival of workers' struggles.

Despite this diversity, all these mobilizations were massive and were occasions for important debates or experiences regarding united democratic organization of the struggle.

The idea that young people in general were fighting back "everywhere" against the attacks started to develop among the youth. And

this gave rise to certain internationalist concerns about solidarity and even internationalist identification, especially with the French movement of December 1986.

However, these struggles were not confined to fightbacks against governmental attacks. They also reflected a radicalization that has been underway for several years among youth. People have begun to talk about a "new generation." This term should be used with circumspection so as to avoid improper interpretations. But it does reflect a certain number of special features of the social and political experience shared by these young people.

When austerity started to be imposed in most European countries in the mid-1970s (with the exception of Italy), there were no great youth mobilizations. The first wave of bourgeois attacks had only a very marginal impact on the school system. And youth unemployment was barely beginning, except again for Italy. Finally, the first sections of the working class to be hit by the capitalist crisis suffered major defeats, and this created a great uncertainty among wage workers in general and youth about how to respond to the austerity measures.

The "generation" of the late 1970s was, in its way, a reflection of the doubt and confusion of a large part of labor in the same period.

If today's youth seem to be taking quite a different attitude, that is not the result of an abrupt change in behavior. First of all, the governments have decided now to mount much more serious attacks against education as a whole. Secondly, a lot of these youth see nothing ahead of them but the economic crisis.

Up until now, the youth did not understand that it was possible to fight together and to confront the state successfully. But for three or four years, there have been signs of a radicalization of the new generation. For example, there was the massive involvement of young people in the anti-war, environmental and anti-racist movements. In Spain, the anti-NATO movement opened up the way for a blossoming of structures for mobilizing youth. In France, the marches against racism mobilized essentially young people from the highschools and the working-class neighborhoods. In the Netherlands, on November 1, 1985, there was a strike of 150,000 highschool students against the missiles.

However, with the Italian high-school movement of 1985 and then the big French and Spanish mobilizations in 1986 and 1987 something new appeared. The youth went into the streets in a completely indepen-

dent way, without any relation to the slightest initiative, committee or call initiated by adults. It mobilized around immediate demands, even if very quickly discussions emerged about a new type of school and therefore a new society.

The struggles around the environment, peace and racism appear to have a broader social scope, but they are not necessarily more radical because of that. The mobilizations for concrete demands concerning the school system have been impelled by the democratic and egalitarian values that have come to the fore in these actions. But they can also favor the development of a clearer political consciousness when they give rise to new more united, more massive and more democratic forms of organization, and when they lead to an immediate confrontation with the government.

Preparatory work by revolutionary youth organizations was not much of a factor in these struggles. All the far left currents working in this area had very small forces and a negligible influence. A very great spontaneity has marked these mobilizations, especially in Spain.

It is generally accepted that today's youth reject "official" policy and the "establishment," one of the first consequences of this being a rejection of the parties or even of the unions. When the "establishment" sought to impose its ideas, its schemes and its arrogance on them, this more or less confused rejection could turn into a militant consciousness. So, the schools became a battlefield. In fact, the educational system represents complex stakes for the bourgeoisie, at once economic, social and ideological. And for the young people, it is one of the main arenas, if not the main one, of social experience.

It was on the basis of these empirical facts that the existence of a "new generation" with its own cultural references, models, sensitivities and new forms of political action has been pointed up. Over and above the interpretation of "mentalities," the materialist explanation of this phenomenon rests on the patterns of change of our societies — growth of the proletariat, growth and crisis of the educational system, rebound effects of the capitalist crisis and so on. In other words, a very large part of the youth share a common situation and little by little are developing a solidarity based on recognizing this.

Although the term has a descriptive value, it cannot be used as a general principle for approaching all the problems of today's youth.

The political and social behavior of young people are not independent of the changes underway in the

workers' movement. The slow and complex recomposition of the latter is reflected by a youth "in transition," which expresses a break from the past but does not yet exhibit the forms that are to come. The youth of the 1980s reflect the sociological changes that have been occurring for 10 to 15 years in our societies, in the world of labor, in the family, in living patterns and so on.

While it is important to point up the specific features of youth, it is just as important to understand that these phenomena do not come from nowhere. This, however, is what bourgeois politicians and sociologists have tried to do over recent years. Youth were portrayed as favorable to free enterprise and the individual adventure of capitalism. "May '68, don't know anything about it," became the slogan of those who had the job of creating an image of the new generation.

The experience of today's youth

A lot of people with very different motivations let themselves be taken in to some extent by this analysis, and came to lose hope in the youth, as if there had been a total break from the preceding "militant" generations. There was a very great temptation to look on this new generation in a detached way, merely as spectators.

Contradictory elements govern the experience and action of today's youth. In the first place, it reflects the political changes that have occurred within the workers' movement since the end of the 1960s — weakening of the grip of the reformist leaderships, new social gains for women, the prolonged existence of far-left organizations. But at the same time it is not a direct heir of great struggles, because in the middle of the 1970s in a number of countries there was a pronounced downturn of class struggles.

The austerity policies that were introduced in the 1975-1977 period and the first local defeats that they inflicted on the workers represented partial failures for the generation of 1968-69. The heritage could no longer be transmitted simply through a continuity of struggles and social action bridging the generations. There was no organizational heritage either. The big student unions — or their equivalent, depending on the country — disappeared at the beginning of the 1970s, or at least declined until they were no longer representative of the student population.

The acceleration of the crisis of the traditional parties, starting with the Spanish and French Communist Parties, or the "readjustments" of the social democratic parties, cut these parties off from young people. (1) Many of them, with the exception of the Italian CP or the Christian workers' movement in Flanders, long ago dropped the attempt to build mass youth organizations in favor of noisy demagogic operations aimed at capturing the youth vote.

All this is not merely the result of the period. It is the reflection of a deepgoing change in the social fabric, to which the traditional workers' movement is adapting badly. In a country like France, for example, the crisis of the textile industry, of steel, of mining and auto has brought about a lasting decline in the French Communist Party's base of support.

Some studies are starting to be done that take account of these developments. In France, for example, before and especially after 1975, there has been a "low breakdown of the group in a whole section of the working class — a weakening of the bastions, opening up of education, changes in skills . . . In many working-class families, the father's professional and technical experience is no longer being transmitted . . . The forms of reproduction of the community have been hit by these shifts, since the material frameworks of collective memory as a whole have been shattered. This effect is increased by the fact that a new labor process is going hand in hand with new forms of urbanization, based on the break-up of segregated living patterns." (2)

These changes affect political and trade-union traditions, thereby accentuating the break from past generations. The more the big cities grow to the detriment of the middle-sized ones, the more the traditional working class community, centered around factory-neighborhoods, are tending to disappear. The youth are, thus, emancipating themselves more quickly from their parents' social experience, and this phenomenon is being reflected in the crisis of the

1. In France, the Socialist Party tried to capitalize on the December 1986 struggles, using small currents that came from the far left and which had decided to operate fundamentally as currents in the SP rather than as independent groups. These were the following: *Convergence socialiste*, which came from a split in the Internationalist Communist Party (PCI, the Trotskyist group led by Pierre Lambert); and *Questions socialiste*, including the leaders of the major anti-racist organization, *SOS-racisme*, who came from the Revolutionary Communist League (French section of the Fourth International).

2. Gerard Noiriel, "Les ouvriers dans la société française", Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1986.



Demonstration during French December upsurge (DR)

traditional organizations of the working class.

Finally, today's young people are beginning their social lives and their political thinking without ever having known anything but crisis. They are *par excellence* the generation of the capitalist crisis, without any memory of what went before.

What we can call a "new generation" is therefore essentially the product of the social changes in progress. The youth are reflecting in a special way, with or without spectacular struggles, the transformations of our time and the new adjustments, which sometimes create a clear desynchronization between the struggles of the older generation and theirs.

The environment of youth has changed gradually over recent years. Along with the schools and, even more so the family represents the first social experience for young people. In this sphere also there have been certain changes. The average size of households has declined, and certain relationships within the family have altered under the impact of the overall changes in the society. (3)

In particular, the position of young women has changed. Not only do they mostly expect to be workers in the future but their mothers already offer them a model of working women. In fact, since the middle or end of the 1970s, a majority of married women have become wage earners. In the same way, contraception is now an experience that can be trans-

mitted by mothers, despite the family taboos that remain on these questions.

But relationships within the family have also begun to change under the impact of changes in education. The greater the access of young people to prolonged and general education, the less dependent they are on their parents' store of knowledge. The evolution of education is thus gradually changing the atmosphere in the family, to say nothing of the relationship of forces.

Most of all, this new generation, like that of 1968, is being marked by a growing number of students and an expansion of general, non-specialized education. If you take the age group from 15 to 24 in France, in 1975 two million of them were in highschools and universities, and in 1982 it was over four million. In seven years, the number of school students more than doubled, and 33% of 20 year olds are still in education.

In France, in 1950 there were 130,000 university students. In 1968, the number was 510,000. Today there are nearly a million. (4) In Belgium, 45.7% of youth under 25 years of age are still in school. (5)

This prodigious expansion of education is due first of all to demographic growth. But it also comes from the prolonging of the period of compulsory education and a desire to continue study in order to gain better qualifications. Despite the capitalist crisis that began in 1973 and despite the fact that it is trying to gradually

raise the hurdles for university entrance, the bourgeoisie needs to raise the general level of qualifications.

These contradictions in educational policy have led to the present "reforms," but over ten or twelve years they have operated to expand education. And this was helped along further by the fact a mobilization such as that of May 1968 in France was able to establish a certain kind of relationship of forces in this area. (6)

This massive growth and prolonging of education has given rise to a legitimate feeling that there is a right to knowledge. But today the ruling class wants to put this gain up for grabs, and as a result it is running into very strong resistance from youth.

More numerous, youth in school are also more concentrated. Academic and general highschools with more than a thousand students are now the

3. In France, the average size of families dropped from 3.33 in 1962 to 3.15 in 1982. But above all the numbers of families with four children has dropped sharply, falling from 17.2% to 7.6%. (INSEE Bulletin, November 1984, Paris).

4. "Problemes politiques et sociaux," No. 542, La Documentation française, Paris.

5. "Werkgroep Arbeid," 1985, Document d'étude de l'université de Louvain. These youth break down as follows: 75.3% in primary and secondary education, 14.3% in non-university higher education and 10.4% in university education.

6. The Edgar Faure Law, passed shortly after May 1968, opened up access to the universities, reflecting the momentary inability of the bourgeoisie to restrict entrance.

rule. School populations of two thousand more are not uncommon. The university campuses concentrate thousands, if not tens of thousands of students. Most of the big cities have a university where a considerable number of people — students, teachers and workers — live and work together. (7)

Thousands of young people in a well defined institutional space cannot remain outside social conflicts for very long. If there have been periods of scholastic peace between 1975 and 1985, varying according to country, that does not at all mean that the schools have ceased to be focuses of radicalization and struggle. In today's conditions, educational institutions cannot but be arenas of periodic confrontations between a section of the youth and governments.

While there has been a numerical growth of the student population, that does not in itself mean that the daughters and sons of workers have easy access to education. Despite a slow growth of students from working-class and poor white-collar families, they still only total 12.6% of students in France, and 7% in Spain. In fact, it is the children of the middle classes who have benefited from the opening up of the universities. (8) However, that does not mean that their relationship to educational institutions is the result of a "class interest."

It has been known at least since 1968, when the composition of students was more "petty bourgeois," that a certain number of other factors are involved that can bring a majority of the students into a political confrontation, either with an educational institution or with the state.

On the other hand, one of the big social changes that has occurred over the past 20 years concerns secondary education, where the number of children of manual and clerical workers has increased considerably. Working-class families have sought to adapt to the changes in the world of work, and despite all family conservatism, many of them have tried to give their children, at least the boys, an education that would enable them to get out of the working class. But more generally the governments themselves have also sought to prolong general education. (9)

This has not changed much as regard the class-conditioning of individuals' chances for scholastic success. The professional or social level of the parents remains an important factor of inequality. Likewise, despite important gains for women, men continue to hold a clear advantage. For the first time in France in 1981, female students became a majority in the universities, but the further up

you go in higher education, the more their numbers decrease.

The most significant social changes have been registered, therefore, in secondary education. The young high-school students going into the streets today represent a whole different spectrum than 20 years ago. A lot more of them are children of working-class families, a lot more of them are women. They are from popular backgrounds, whose educational demands are more ambitious than in the past. This explains why in Italy and Spain, but also in Belgium, young people from the high-schools have occupied a more important place in student demonstrations than those from the universities.

Closer links between students and workers

This fact has not failed to alter considerably the social impact of the mobilizations. Unlike May 1968, the link between school students and workers is being made more easily in the framework of the family. Twenty years ago, it was necessary to go to the factory gates to explain the struggles of youth, because the bulk of workers' children were in short-term vocational schools and were barely touched by the confrontation in education.

Today, the situation is totally different, as has been seen both in France and in Spain. In most working-class families, one or several children are attending academic high schools, and so the family becomes a center of working-class solidarity with young people. The linkup between the struggles of youth and the working class can now be made more quickly.

In France, there was a strong desire for a big demonstration in the factories in common with the youth, and the union leaders had a hard time finding ways to divert it. The Chirac government made no mistake in withdrawing the Devaquet project on the eve of a united mobilization.

All these elements show the growing importance of the high-schools and universities in the independent mobilizations of youth. The constant potential for struggle here raises the question of mass student unionism or some other form of organization, as well as that of an organization of high school students.

The role of revolutionary organization among the youth will continue to be decided to a considerable extent within the schools, although that does

not mean that they will be the only places young people will mobilize. Unemployment, but also struggles against racism and against the nuclear threat, will remain important factors in the coming struggles.

Today's youth are the youth of the capitalist economic crisis. Once they leave the school system, their main problem is not choosing a job but finding one. In the 12 principal countries of the OECD there are today 10 million unemployed youth. A section of the bourgeoisie is putting forward a policy of encouraging people to have more children in order to stave off a long-term ageing of the European population, but this society does not know what to do with its children! Unemployment is hitting young people much more than the rest of the economically active population. In the OECD as a whole, the youth unemployment rate is on average three times higher than that for adults. (10)

Over the last 15 years, the number of economically active people under 25 has declined. Part-time work is very commonly the job status of youth. Precarious employment has become a very common situation for workers under 25.

Youth are being brought into productive life in an intermittent way and in low-skilled jobs. Companies now have the practice of giving steady jobs to people with qualifications much higher than those required for the positions to be filled. As a result of this trend, those less qualified and those who have interrupted their studies hardly have a hope of finding a job.

The labor market has become chaotic and anarchic. In France, among so-called unskilled workers, a third have a Certificate of Professional Aptitude (CAP) for a profession other than the one in which they work. In France, 60% of the youth in TUC (*Travaux d'utilites collective*

7. In downtown Paris, the Jussieu faculty of sciences concentrates more than 8,500 wage earners and 60,000 students! In Belgium, the Louvain La Neuve campus concentrates 17,000 students and Louvain itself, 22,000.

8. A distinction has to be made here for the case of Britain, where there has long been a strong social division among universities and a deeply rooted elite character to some university curricula. In 1975, in France, only 5% of wage workers had gone through higher education. In the United States, on the other hand, in 1982, 20% of wages workers had at least four years of higher education.

9. In France, if you add together the statistics for private and public education, in 1961 children of working-class families represented 24.7% pupils in the second form of academic high schools (two years before the baccalaureat). In 1981, they represented 41.9%. B. Charlot and M. Figeat, 'Histoire de la formation des ouvriers,' Editions Minerve, Paris, 1985.

10. Prospects for Employment, OECD, September 1985 and September 1986.

youth training schemes) have some sort of diploma — 9% have their baccalaureat, 37% have leaving certificates from short-term technical schools. (11)

All European governments have set up schemes for “fighting youth unemployment.” This rather demagogic concern is intended to channel the discontent of youth in order to stave off revolt. In many cases, however, these plans are more gimmicks than real remedies. Moreover, they often give plant managements an additional opportunity to reduce their social costs and provide them with cheap labor for a few weeks or a few months.

In Britain, there is the Youth Training Scheme; in Sweden, the Youth Law. In Italy the government has decided to set up 40,000 training contracts, as well as to aid cooperatives that claim to create jobs for young people. The Italian government has also decided to hire 10,000 unemployed youth to “upgrade cultural monuments”! France has no less than seven kinds of training course and on-the-job training.

Youth and discrimination

Finally, whatever the formula of the job or training scheme they are put in, a lot of these youth go back to being unemployed after this interlude.

All these measures change nothing in the structure of the job market, which is affected by many other needs and contingencies than these miserable governmental measures.

The wind of privatization that is blowing over the European Economic Community, pulling considerable finance into stock-market operations, is unfavorable by its nature to productive investment. The highly speculative character of the financial markets indicates clearly that the ruling class has no short-term project for expanding employment. Youth unemployment is an initial result of this.

In every country, the bosses claim that youth unemployment is a result of the fact that their education is out of line with the demands of the jobs available. The fact is that for millions of job seekers the companies offer only a pitiful number of positions. The type of professional training is only a secondary effect of the present crisis of the labor market. The main cause of this chaos is the fall in productive investment.

The number of workers under 25 has declined in France by 19% overall, and by 35% in industry alone. Most industries are closed to youth. Young people are being concentrated more

and more in construction, services and commerce, where unsteady jobs and limited-term contract jobs are proliferating. In most industries, plants have concentrated their workforces in the 30 to 40 year old range.

This is why as consciousness is developing slowly of the need for linking the right to study to the right to a job. With respect to both of these demands, the youth are expressing first of all their rejection of discrimination and forms of social exclusion.

Within youth unemployment itself reappear the traditional forms of discrimination against women, immigrants and Blacks, youth of the more disadvantaged regions, and so on. In Italy, where youth unemployment is one of the highest in the OECD, there is a gaping difference between the situation in the north and the one in the south. The rate of unemployment for men over 29 in the north is 1.7%. The unemployment rate for women under 29 in the south is 50%! And in southern Italy, unemployed youth are a reservoir of easy recruitment for the Camorra and the Mafia.

In Spain, differentiations of the same sort divide the youth of the various regions and nationalities.

The parallel economy, which is becoming a substantial part of economic life, is taking on the aspect of a real racket exploiting available young labor power. Internal immigration from disadvantaged regions to industrial ones obviously subjects the young people involved to double disadvantage.

There is another problem. In France, 57% of those who apply for training and retraining courses are young women. Only 34% of them actually get into retraining projects. And only 27% actually get professional training.

All this undoubtedly has reinforced the role of the family as the material support of young people. Youth, especially young women, tend to stay longer with their parents. A refuge at the start, the family is quickly reverting to a straitjacket. Young people who have to postpone their economic independence are finding themselves trapped in the institution of the family, which once again is serving as a crutch for a society incapable of meeting the needs of the working population.

In France, 40% of immigrant families have been affected by youth unemployment, as against 12% for the population as a whole. For these youth, the situation is all the more difficult because the family often represents an additional obstacle to their social integration in the broader sense. Confronted with a racist atmosphere outside it, within the family they are often subjected to

the most oppressive effects of patriarchy. The violence of fathers and brothers against girls, taboos, religious prejudices and so on are the price that has to be paid by those unable to emancipate themselves economically.

“Second generation immigrants”

Youth has, therefore, been particularly hard hit by national and racial inequalities. The wave of immigration in the 1960s and 1970s is producing today what is being called a “second generation” in some countries. This is a false term because they cannot be considered “immigrants.” They are and feel themselves a stable community: “The former *metro, boulot, dodo* [“subway, job, sleep”] immigrant was invisible in public. They were only labor power in its basic state. But the children have gone to school, they have sat alongside other children, and so quite naturally they have emerged onto the French public scene.” (13)

Many European countries are now confronting the problem of the arrival on the labor market of hundreds of thousands of youth born of immigrant parents. Their situation is all the more precarious because they also suffer from the effects of racism and the difficulties or social marginality of their parents. This instability and doubt are expressed in the dilemma between the “right to be different” and the “right to equality,” because this society is incapable of meeting both demands.

Within this “second generation,” not all are in the same situation. This disparity, reflects the unevenness of the forms of imperialist domination over their countries of origin. A West Indian youth of French nationality is in a different position and has different rights from an Arab youth, who is considered a foreigner.

Likewise, many young Blacks in

11. See “TUC: utiles pour qui?” *Alternative économique*, October 1985, Paris; “Jeunes sans travail dans la tourmente de la crise,” by Michel Rafoul in *Le Monde diplomatique* of March 1987.

12. In Italy 60% of the unemployed are youth, 1.5 million people. Some 35% of youth between the ages of 14 and 25 are unemployed. Unlike other countries, those with diplomas have also been hit by unemployment. In 1985, 6.3% of the population without diplomas or with only a primary education were unemployed, while 13.2% of those with secondary school diplomas were unemployed and 6.3% of university graduates. *Etudes économiques* (OECD, July 1986.)

13. Abdelkader Dieghlou, an Algerian sociologist, in *Revue M*, February 1987, Paris.

Great Britain are British by nationality but find themselves denied the possibility of integration. The scope of the "second generation" phenomenon is linked to the policy of "reuniting families" adopted in the past by various governments, which were always very restrictive in Switzerland, very liberal in Sweden, and more or less easy in France, depending on the period. These policies have had special consequences for the development of a second generation, and they have in part determined the new social problems that are arising now.

In Britain, the turn of 1973, which marked the limit for acquiring British citizenship for a great many West Indians and immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, shaped a certain kind of "second generation" for the 1980s.

In Germany, in 1975 already, 60% of the Turks entering the country were children (as against 5% in 1965). Some 60% of these immigrant children were boys, which suggests that they were pre-immigrant workers sent to Germany by their families with that idea in mind.

Today, the proportion of youth among the immigrant population in West Germany is considerable: 33.8% of the Turks and 21.8% of the Yugoslavs are under 15, while the average for the population as a whole is 16%. Every year more than 60,000 young immigrants reach the age for professional training without any guarantee of a professional future. (14)

All these problems are not without their consequences for anyone who wants to unite the political movement of the youth. In France, we saw during the anti-racist mobilizations that the question of unity was not always an easy one. For the young *Beurs* [the name adopted by the French-born youth of Arab families], this struggle was something that concerned them immediately and very materially. For French youth, it represented a moral demand and a democratic aspiration.

While these mobilizations depended essentially on the involvement of the young *Beurs*, the movement encountered difficulties in organizing and structuring itself, inasmuch as it also had to serve as a bridge to the rest of the youth, and because these circles had very little experience in collective struggles.

With the appearance of SOS-racisme and the formation of an anti-racist movement in the high-schools, the questions of unity and organization of the mobilizations became a bit easier. The nature of the high-schools as places of concentration and mixing favored this progress

very well. The composition of the highschool corteges during the December 1986 struggles reflected deepgoing unity and a deepgoing amalgamation of French youth, *Beurs* and immigrant youth from many origins.

The crisis has favored a pronounced ageing of employed workers in many industries. Any important change in this trend would involve massive introduction of the new technology by the bosses, that is investment, to create not only new jobs but also to bring in young workers able to adjust easily to the new organization of labor. We are far from that.

Young workers

The working class, therefore, does not today have a strong contingent of young workers under the age of 25, ready for a lot of battles, as was the case for a whole period. There are evidently still young workers in the plants, but the existence of a working-class youth as a "new proletarian generation" in many industries is something much more problematic.

The question remains of the so-called pre-worker youth, those being trained for working-class jobs. It is hard to make generalizations about their situation in Europe. Their place in the school system, their place in the working class and therefore their consciousness depends on the specific conditions of technical and vocational education.

In West Germany, for example, there is a long tradition of "dual education," with the bosses playing an important role in the education of young workers. In France, on the other hand, this task has long since been taken over by the state, involving the integration of technical training into the general educational system. It is for this reason that in France there is a common curriculum for all pupils up until the fifth class, that is, up until the age of 12 to 14.

Depending on the country, this pre-worker youth will take part in different ways in the struggles that concern it exclusively. For the same reasons, it will integrate itself more or less directly in the struggles of the rest of the school youth.

Finally, a not unimportant part of the youth is neither in the high-schools nor in vocational education but unemployed. Most studies point up the danger that a section of these unemployed youth may end up as outcasts from society, inasmuch as most of them have no link with the traditional workers' movement. Is a

movement of unemployed youth possible in these conditions? For the moment, experience has shown that it is very difficult.

In Europe in general, there is little if any organization of the unemployed, and the unemployed play little organized role in mobilizations. For the youth, the family often offers some security and partially dilutes the spirit of rebellion. It is likely, on the other hand, that groupings of unemployed youth will appear in various forms. But unless the trade-union movement takes on board this question, it will always be difficult to generalize and stabilize these local experiences.

This new political radicalization of youth may be a blessing for the future of the workers' movement. One of the features of the new experience of this generation corresponds exactly to the big changes that are underway in the workers' movement.

Two problems are going to arise. The first concerns the conditions in which the struggles of youth and of older workers can reinforce each other. The second concerns the new activist layer that has arisen in the recent mobilizations and the far-left organizations that were built essentially on the generation of 1968.

The recomposition of the workers' movement will depend largely on the capacity of revolutionary organizations to attract this new activist layer. For many years in a number of countries, the average age of these organizations has been rising. Any qualitative step forward in building the revolutionary movement in Europe would obviously involve the integration of hundreds or thousands of youth who will not have experienced the defeats and confusion of the past and will be all the more ready for political struggle to the extent that they believe that they are contributing something new to the experiences of the preceding generations.

It is important, of course, to observe the recent struggles very carefully. They have not, for the moment, matched the great wave of 1968-69. But they are not a passing storm either. □

14. Karen Schober, "The minority that grew: Problems of training and employment for the second generation," *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte*, Cologne, July 1982. Young foreign born under 25 represent about 42% of the foreign population in nine European countries (France, West Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg), or 4.7 million out of 11.2 million. This is in a general context of a declining birth rate and ageing of national populations, where the proportion of those under 25 amounts to only about 35% ("Economic and social problems," *La Documentation Française*, No. 530, 1986).

AROUND THE WORLD



Belgium

Belgian abortion trial

ON FEBRUARY 27 the three defence witnesses were heard in the Ghent abortion centre trial, in which 60 people are charged. These witnesses put the debate very clearly on the level of a general political discussion about the legalization and practice of abortion in Belgium. The quality of the witnesses and the figures they cited ensured that the press gave significant coverage to the matter.

Seventeen centres and several hospitals in the country practise abortion in excellent conditions, and in spite of the legal ban. Thanks to the work of these centres there are now practically no deaths resulting from backstreet abortions.

What is more, the "ad hoc tourism" to the Netherlands continues. Doctors send women for the operation itself just on the other side of the frontier whilst the accompanying preliminary and follow-up treatment take place in Belgium. The centres are non profit-making and guarantee good information on contraception. So they have an equally important preventive role — with the goal of reducing as much as possible the need for abortion.

Particularly in the Catholic environment, abortion continues to be a social taboo. Sixty-eight per cent of women deciding to have abortions, however, declare themselves to be Catholics.

If other courts were to apply the same methods as the courts in Ghent, hundreds of doctors, including Catholic institutions, would be prosecuted for having helped women to obtain abortions in safe conditions. In 1985, 7.7 per cent of pregnant women sought abortions.

Renee Coen and professor Lambotte, in their capacity as witnesses, openly admitted to performing abortions without being prosecuted.

On March 20, eleven doctors are due to appear before the court at Ghent, accused of false declarations. Their insurance counterfoils said only "consultation" where an abortion had been carried out.

At the same time as defending women and doctors accused under the outdated abortion laws, the women's movement and a certain number of political parties are supporting the proposed more liberal law put forward by the Socialist Party member Lallemand and Herman-Michielsens of the bourgeois liberal party the PVV. □

South Africa

Black strikers need support

THE SARMCOL strike in Howick, Natal province, over trade-union recognition was the culmination of thirteen years of bitter struggle against the giant British-owned BTR multinational. This company is renowned for its anti-unionism and willingness to use the institutions of the apartheid state to oppress and exploit cheap black labour. BTR, both before and after the strike, has refused to meet union officials and shop stewards to negotiate a settlement of the dispute.

The strikers have suffered enormous hardship since their dismissals — ten activists (including their children) have been shot and killed by the police and Inkatha supporters. Individual homes have been burned, disease and malnutrition is rife among children in the community, the police have taken over the township and strike leaders are subject

to constant harassment.

But despite all this the Sarmcol strikers have carried on meeting weekly, planning and coordinating campaigns to sustain the strike and to get BTR to the negotiating table or out of South Africa.

The Sarmcol Workers Cooperative (SAWCO) — which is supported by the metal workers' union MAWU — was set up in 1985 in the wake of the mass dismissal of nearly 1,000 striking workers. One of five current SAWCO projects is the T-shirt and Button Coop, which employs 20-40 strikers, depending on demand. It sells T-shirts and badges to the trade-union federation of COSATU, MAWU and a range of progressive organizations.

You can help support the Sarmcol strikers by buying badges and T-shirts from the cooperative. Details and price lists can be obtained from SAWCO, c/o 22 Shaftesbury Road, Coventry CV5 6FN, Great Britain (Tel: 0203-78877); or direct from SAWCO, PO Box 156, Howick, Natal, South Africa 3290 — please send all air mail by registered post. □

Netherlands

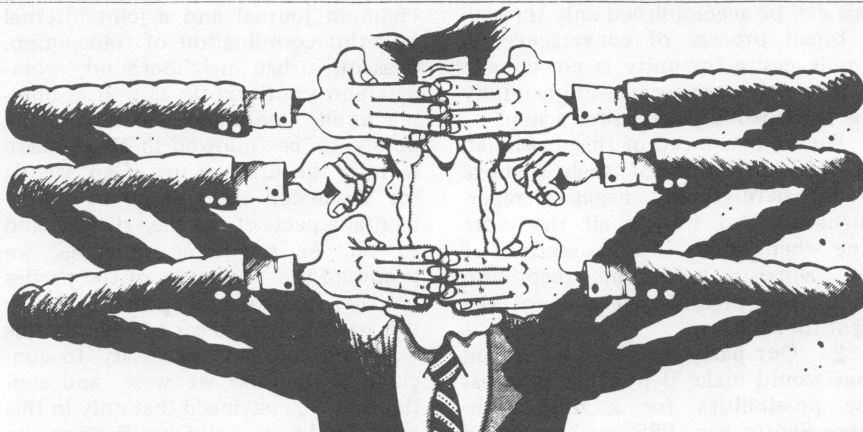
Revolutionists campaign

ELECTIONS were held on March 18 in the Netherlands for the 12 provincial parliaments. The provinces are subdivided into election districts.

In general there was little interest in these elections. Less than a year before, on May 21, 1986, the national parliament was elected. In that vote, the right held its majority, and thus the right-wing parties, the CDA (Christian Democrats) and the VVD (free-enterprisers), were able once again to form the government. Since then, the Lubbers II government has continued its cutbacks and its attacks on social security.

But the March 18 elections were not a test for the government. The Christian Democrats deliberately opted for a campaign in which the policy of the national government played little role. Premier Lubbers refused himself to take part in a TV debate on the eve of the elections because the vote was not a national one.

The biggest opposition party, the PvdA (the Labor Party), was not ready to make the state parliament-



WE'RE USING ALL AVAILABLE HANDS TO DEAL WITH SOUTH AFRICA...

ary elections into a test of strength with the government. The social democrats want to return to the government in 1990, alongside the CDA or even the VVD. A polarized campaign and strong opposition did not fit in with that objective.

So the non-voters were the biggest party on March 18, representing 34% of the total. The two government parties lost by comparison with the 1986 elections, and together got well under 50%.

The PvdA also lost by comparison with the 1986 elections, somewhat unexpectedly. Because of the party's weak role in opposition, many traditional PvdA voters failed to go to the ballot box in these elections. And some tens of thousands voted for one or another of the smaller parties to the left of the social democracy. These parties gained by comparison with the 1986 elections, which were disastrous for them. At the time the Communist Party itself went out of the parliament altogether. (See IV No 109, November 24, 1986.) So, some sort of a comeback for them was expected.

The Socialistiese Arbeiderspartij (SAP -- Socialist Workers' Party, Dutch section of the Fourth International) ran candidates in 23 of the 96 election districts and gained votes by comparison with 1986. At that time, 4,000 people voted for the SAP nationwide. This time, in a small part of the country, it was almost 3,300 representing a significant advance.

In Deventer, the SAP got 0.3% of the vote; in the Hague, 0.2%; in Rotterdam, 0.2%; and in Eindhoven, 0.3%. In the Hague, it got a good vote in three traditional working-class neighborhoods. Like the other parties, the SAP opted for a modest campaign.

Nonetheless, 125,000 papers were distributed free in the neighborhoods, in actions, factories and institutions. Posters were put up, and some tens of thousands of pamphlets distributed.

On March 7, together with the youth organization Rebel, the SAP organized a successful national rally in Rotterdam. The motto was "Let the rich pay for the crisis!" That was the central slogan of the SAP's campaign. About 150 people took part in forum discussions with left parties (including a PvdA member of parliament) and trade-unionists. This was followed by speeches by the docker Jan Viola on the recent dockers' strike, by Sandew Hiri from the Surinam Left Movement (BFL) on the situation in Surinam, and by Edgardo Sanchez of the Mexican section of the Fourth International (PRT) on the student actions in Mexico. □

"Left unity must be forged in the class struggle"

FIVE Mexican left organizations have just confirmed their decision to fuse into a single organization in May. The main ones are the Mexican United Socialist Party (PSUM, the Communist Party) and the Mexican Workers' Party (PMT). The three other formations are smaller -- the Revolutionary Patriotic Party (PPR), the People's Revolutionary Movement (MRP), and the Union of the Communist Left (UIC). A section of the PMT, the so-called Rank-and-File Current, has refused to associate itself with this fusion, which has in fact been carried out quite quickly. The PSUM only made the proposal in July 1986.

The Mexican section of the Fourth International, the Revolutionary Workers' Party (PRT) has refused to participate in this accelerated unification, which is far from being the product of political convergence and common mass work.

For example, the student movement that shook Mexico in December-January showed the breadth of the differences existing among the various organizations. From the outset, the PRT were involved with students engaged in the struggle and in the University Student Council, the leading body of the strike. But the PSUM and PMT denounced the students' demands as reactionary and petty-bourgeois.

The following is a statement of the Political Committee of the PRT issued at the time of the official announcement of the fusion of the five parties.

As has been made known publicly, the Revolutionary Workers' Party, has decided not to participate in the present unification process being conducted by five left political organizations:

1. The PRT considers that progress in a process of unification by a major sector of the Mexican left could have a considerable significance. For that very reason, we think that this can be accomplished only through a broad process of convergence. A simple desire for unity is not enough -- it is necessary to measure carefully the real possibilities for such a step.

We are convinced of this, inasmuch as the frustration of such a move would have totally negative repercussions. And this is all the more true when we see in some sections of left activists a certain skepticism about the present relevance of the fight for socialism.

2. Our party proposed a method that would make it possible to assess the possibilities for a unification. Since September 1986, we have noted

that the formation of a federation of parties with its own organizational structure, but leaving a certain autonomy of functioning for each organization, could be a basis for deciding whether it was possible to form a unitary political organization.

We proposed the formation of a collective leadership to orient the process; joint functioning on a state and municipal basis; publication of a common journal and a joint internal bulletin; coordination of trade-union, peasant, urban neighborhood, women's and youth work; as well as holding public conferences to discuss the policy to be followed in all of these sectors; the drawing up of an agenda for discussion on a series of fundamental aspects of the class struggle and so on. As a guiding principle, we proposed that the ranks of the parties be the fundamental protagonists in this process, regardless of whether this extended the time necessary to conclude it. Because we were, and continue to be, convinced that only in this way could a solid unification be

achieved, in which the members of the parties involved would not find themselves limited to reading the daily paper to find out about the development of the unity process.

3. This proposal on method was based on a fact that seems to escape some people today. The left organizations have functioned separately for many years. This has not happened simply because of the sectarianism of some of them, but because of a lack of political and programmatic convergences. Today, under the slogan of "modernize or die," some left activists want to wipe out these differences by fiat.

The PRT does not suffer from confusion on this score. We know that there are a myriad of political differences, some of them very important. They are not, as some have claimed in an attempt to discredit our position, over what happened decades ago or about everybody's ideology. They are different judgements about the type of party that is to be built.

From our point of view, we need an organization that not only guarantees minority rights but also guarantees the usefulness of the party in the class struggle, a party whose members do not find themselves on opposing sides in a conflict, some supporting the movement and others the authorities.

We have no reason to hide the fact that there are differences over how the various forces assess the relationship that the party should have with the mass movement, and over the significance of political independence from the PRI [the governing party in what to a large extent is a one-party state] its currents and the bosses and so on.

4. Despite all that, the PRT's proposal was based on another real fact - the Mexican left has begun to overcome its cannibalism, and thus it was possible to initiate a process enabling us through joint work and serious discussions to test the possibilities for unifying the left into a single party.

5. Five left organizations have decided to go ahead with another method, and we respect their decision. However, we want to point out in brief our differences with it. We think that under the pressure of approaching elections the parties involved in this fusion have turned the mechanisms for unification upside down. In their congresses, the five organizations are going to decide to fuse in May. They will legally register the new party with the Ministry of the Interior. Then they are going to discuss what policy this party will support in the mass struggle, and decide on what its analysis will be of

what is happening in our country.

These questions will not be decided upon until the new party's first congress, but it will have existed as a party legally since May. The PRT thinks that these questions are key to knowing whether it is possible to form a new party since this involves not merely tactics of a secondary importance but central political questions.

Problems

A single example suffices to demonstrate this. Recently a trade-union congress was held by the five fusing parties and the PRT. This conference discussed industrial reconversion and the strategy of the left in the workers' movement. On the first question, only the PSUM and the PRT expressed a point of view, since the other parties indicated that they did not have a position on it (and we are talking here about a fundamental problem for the Mexican workers).

However, the most revealing discussion was on the question of strategy. Here the PSUM proposed trade-union collaboration with the bureaucracy of the Congreso de Trabajo [Congress of Labor] as the key element. The MRP argued that the Mexican left should form a union confederation outside the Congreso de Trabajo, as has been done in other countries in Latin America. The PPR maintained that in view of the crisis it was essential to offer an answer along lines similar to that put by the oil workers union (the Quinista bureaucracy, no more, no less). And the PMT argued that the basic element of strategy was to form party com-

mittees in the unions.

It may be expected that if similar conferences are held for each of the sectors of the mass struggle, the result would be the same. It could not be otherwise when you have a discussion on the recent student movement at the University of Mexico in which some of these forces think that the University Students' Committee (CEU) raised reactionary demands and fought for privileges.

6. The PRT wants to reiterate its conviction that unity is the fundamental element demanded today by the class struggle. Calls for such unity arise in every struggle that is waged against the PRI regime's rightist policy. The unity that is needed is unity of the mass movement, unity around the struggle of the CEU to transform the university and to ward off attacks on the students' just gains; unity in the struggle of the Mexican Electrical Workers' Union against the state policy of wage restrictions; in the struggle of the education workers against the undemocratic methods of the union bureaucrats; in the struggle of the Ford-Hermosillo workers against the starvation-wages policy of this transnational company and so on.

It is these struggles that will reveal what is consistent and what is sectarian. This is where we propose that unity of the left be forged; otherwise we would be reduced to an apparatus unity. It is to this struggle for unity that the PRT has devoted its efforts, as it has to its proposal to offer the people of Mexico a single democratic electoral alternative through the formation of a coalition of all the left for the 1988 federal elections. These are the roads to be followed and the challenges that face the Mexican people. □

Counter-austerity demonstration (DR)



Hunger strike by Palestinian prisoners

A NEW UPSURGE of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation seems now well underway. It was a predictable result of the failure of the Zionist army to accomplish its objectives in Lebanon. Repeated protests by Palestinians and clashes with the Israeli repressive forces have brought the West Bank repression back to the attention of the world. In recent weeks, the Palestinian resistance has been inspired in particular by a hunger strike of Palestinian political prisoners. The following documents explain the motivations and the demands of the hunger strikers. They are taken from the March 31 issue of *News from Within*, a bulletin the Israeli authorities want to suppress.

APPEAL of the lawyers of Palestinian political prisoners currently on strike in prisons in Israel and the occupied territories, March 30, 1987:

We, the undersigned, lawyers from the occupied territories and from Israel, appeal to you on behalf of our clients who are waging a hunger strike in the prisons in order to improve the conditions of their confinement.

The modest demands put forward by the prisoners as the twentieth year of occupation comes to a close are solely intended to vouchsafe the most basic human rights, long recognized by the nations of the world.

There is nothing more painful for a prisoner than to be forced to employ the means of a hunger strike, to fight with his body — his last fortress — to ensure that he be allowed to live as a human being. The situation is such that from time to time Palestinian prisoners must put their lives in jeopardy to receive what is legally theirs in the prisons of the occupation.

We lawyers often stand helpless in the face of the brutality and callousness of the authorities in regard to granting the elementary rights of Palestinian prisoners at a time when the Jewish Terrorist Underground prisoners are practically enjoying hotel-like conditions in prison.

The only response to their demands thus far has been the threat to use force against them. This should not be treated as an idle threat as it has been voiced by a prison commissioner with a "battle record"; its threaten-

ing resonances also awaken difficult and bitter memories about those Palestinians who fell during the 1980 Nafha prison hunger strike.

In the final decades of the twentieth century and in the final months of the twentieth year of occupation, a Palestinian population of thousands behind bars has been forced to fight for something which appears so simple and which is taken for granted by every person of conscience.

We call upon you, in the name of the defence of human rights, to raise your voice on their behalf and to use your influence to bring about the fulfilment of the just demands of the Palestinian prisoners.

Signed by: Attorneys Felicia Langer, Fouad Mansour, Fathi Shbeit, Walid Fahoum, Adnan Shu'aibi, Ali Ghuzlan, Muhammad Kiwan, Samih Haskaiya, Raji Surani, Dov Heinin Amal Sa'adi, Said Attili, Ossama Oudeh, Ibrahim Barghouti, Muhammad Na'amneh, Lea Tsemel, Abed Assali, Shafer Arouri, Adnan Abu Leila, Jawad Boulus, Andre Rosenthal, Abdel Jawad Haj Yahyah, Hussein Abu Hussein, Abraham Melamed, Ibrahim Nassar, Ibrahim Arshed, Nidal Taha, Mousa Shukri Habas.

STATEMENT BY PRISONERS

This statement of clarification is addressed to all our steadfast supporters inside the country and abroad, to all defenders of human rights and to all those with a human conscience. We wish to expose the false claims and rationalizations made by prison commissioner David Maimon

that completely contradict our actual experience behind the prison walls and inside closed cells. We hope that with your support we will be able to put an end to the daily violence, terror and humiliation to which we are subjected in all the prisons. Prison Commissioner Maimon claims that our hunger strike is political, that our living conditions are good, that our demands are not practical, and that our real aim is to gain recognition as prisoners of war. He has also claimed that our hunger strike is partial. These falsehoods are being used to cover up the brutal tactics employed in the attempt to stop our hunger strike by force.

The facts are as follows: in recent months our living conditions have deteriorated and have become an unbearable hell. The prisons administration has withdrawn most of our former rights which had become an integral part of our daily lives. For example, we are now prohibited from visiting prisoners in other cells and in other sections. We are kept in small rooms for twenty-two hours each day, and the break is given to each room individually so that prisoners of one cell cannot see the prisoners of another cell in the same section. More than sixty prisoners were beaten severely for no particular reason during the past two months.

All these measures have been taken in order to implement the iron fist policy which David Maimon has declared against us. We have sent Maimon many letters demanding improvements in our living conditions to a basic humane level. But the response was always more violence. We are not asking for more than what we previously asked of the Minister of Police and the former Prison Commissioner, Rafi Suissa, who met our demands. The demands for hot water, sunlight, visiting rights, medical care and so on — can hardly be considered political. And the response to them with an iron fist policy and increasingly violent treatment has forced us into a position where we would rather die through voluntary hunger than continue living in this hell.

Maimon's declaration that our strike is only partial is willfully disingenuous, as he knows that the prison administration checked our cells carefully and saw that there is no food there at all.

We are calling on you, our families and supporters, as our only hope under these difficult circumstances. Let our slogan be "Stop killing and repressing our prisoners." We promise to remain steadfast until we achieve all our basic human rights.

The prisoners of the Palestinian revolution in Jnaid and the other prisons, March 26, 1987.