

# International VIEWPOINT

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## International Viewpoint

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## EDITORIAL

# The British murder machine

WHEN the brutality and arrogance of the British authorities were already undermining the attempts of Irish bourgeois politicians to collaborate in repressing revolutionary nationalists, the imperialist forces demonstrated unmistakably that they are still following a policy of field executions.

Three IRA volunteers — Daniel McCann, Sean Savage and Mairead Farrell — were gunned down on March 6 in Gibraltar, where they had gone on a military mission. Subsequent reports in the British press made it clear that the imperialist services had had them under surveillance for a long time. The operation was described as follows by an eyewitness, Mrs. Celesia, who was quoted in the March 13 *Guardian Weekly*.

"I was watching a couple walking down the road in the direction of the border, when I saw a blond man come up behind them and without any warning, he shot at them. The woman, who was carrying a large shoulder bag fell to the ground immediately. The young man... staggered towards the service station. The man fired at him four or five times more and he collapsed with blood all over the place." Then she said a police car roared up and took the killer away at high speed.

This was clearly a "counter-insurgency" assassination, and no police operation. It was exactly the same sort of thing as the incidents of the so-called shoot-to-kill policy which set off an outcry some years ago and led to the Stalker affair when the Northern Irish police tried to cover it up. In those cases, not only were republicans known to the imperialist forces shot out of hand, but a boy with no political connections was assassinated when he happened to walk near an IRA arms dump.

In response to questions raised by left Labour MPs and the Irish government about the shootings, Thatcherite politicians and the English gutter press have been whipping up a lynch-mob feeling against "Irish terrorists," in fact, against all Irish people who refuse to lie down. In so doing, they once again exposed the fact that they have no interest in a negotiated settlement, only in crushing Irish national aspirations. That opens the way for a new broadening of the anti-imperialist movement. But it also shows what the Irish people are up against: an imperialist murder machine forged in genocide. International solidarity with the Irish people also has to be revived and widened. ★

# Soviet Armenian masses mobilize

"FOR THE first time, the Soviet 'transmission belts' turned in the opposite direction," Basile Karlinsky wrote in the March 7 *Libération*, "the unions, local party organizations, and so on — started for the first time to run from the bottom to the top, after 70 years of transmitting Moscow's orders to the peoples. You have to go back to the period between February and October 1917 to find a similar situation."

He was referring not only to an unprecedented example of a local Soviet making a decision of its own in response to mass pressure, but demonstrations of up to a million people out of control of the bureaucracy.

GERRY FOLEY

**G**ORBACHEV had been forced to turn to an unofficial organization to keep the mass demonstrations in Armenia under control, Karlinsky claimed, thereby accepting "a dual power situation." The organization in question was the Organizing Committee that led the mass mobilizations in Armenia after February 22, culminating in a rally of up to a million people on February 26, after which it called a month-long truce.

The major source of information about the organization of the Armenian actions has been Sergei Grigoriants, editor of the unofficial journal *Glasnost*, who seems to have been allowed by the Soviet authorities to move around freely and communicate by telephone with foreign journalists.

In a telephone interview with Karlinsky, published in *Libération* of March 11, Grigoriants reported "The radicalization is proceeding very rapidly." He went on to say that the local Communist Party organizations "have been bypassed and are paralyzed. The leadership is trying to infiltrate the Organizing Committee in order to take control, but without much success because the Party has lost all authority."

Armenians living in at least one nationally mixed area did not rely on the bureaucratic institutions for defence. The Soviet spokesperson, Gennadi Gerasimov complained that "groups of activists" were keeping guard night and day over the main streets and squares in Stepankert, the capital of the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh. He publicly admonished the local authorities: "The leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh must take urgent measures to improve the situation." On February 12, the soviet of the region had voted in favor of incorporation into the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia.

Moreover, although the overall leadership of the movement passed to the Organizing Committee, led by the moderate Igor Muradian, the Union for National Self-Determination (UNS) led by the much imprisoned nationalist Piruir Airikian seems to have continued to play an initiating role. Sergei Grigoriants explained in an interview published in *Libération* of March 11 that the latter organization had distributed leaflets calling for the mass rally on March 8 at the monument to the victims of the genocide in the Armenian capital of Yerevan.

## One-hour general strike call

According to Tamara Grigoriants, 300,000 to 400,000 people attended the rally (the total population of the Armenian republic is under 3 million). A mass meeting held in Opera Square after the march reportedly decided to call a one-hour general strike for Friday, March 11.

On March 12, Boris Karlinsky reported in *Libération*: "A one-hour general strike paralyzed Armenia yesterday. It was decided on by the Organizing Committee that has been at the head of the demonstrations for a month during a stormy session on the night of Wednesday-Thursday [March 9-10]. Some would rather have immediately called a three-day strike, but this was postponed until March 26." (There is an apparent contradiction in the reports about how the strike was called. This may well reflect a real democratic political process that could be expected to be complex. Why, for instance, did the Organizing Committee decide to support another mass action before its month truce was over?) This report also

was based on information from Grigoriants, who also said that students had pressed the committee to demand a special session of the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian republic to call on Moscow to transfer Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.

The students are supposed to have gone to all the deputies of the Supreme Soviet to ask them to sign the demand for calling such a session. Up until then, according to Grigoriants, no deputy had refused, and it seemed likely that a quorum would soon be attained. The students reportedly issued a call to the population to withdraw their mandates from those deputies who refused to sign.

It was the UNS, according to Karlinsky, that launched the petition for the re-attachment of three territories separated from Armenia in December 1923 at the time of the formation of the Caucasian Soviet Socialist Republic (which was later abolished, giving way to republics based on the main nationalities of the area). Two of the territories were accorded to Azerbaidzhan — Nakhitchevan, which borders on Iran, and is surrounded by the Armenian SSR and Nagorno-Karabakh, three-quarters of whose population is Armenian but which is surrounded by the Azerbaidzhan SSSR. A third territory was turned over to Georgia.

### Conflict with Leninist nationality policy

The most important of the three was Nagorno-Karabakh, an area that now has a total population of about 150,000, of whom about 126,000 are Armenians. In both Georgia and Azerbaidzhan, there are Armenian minorities of about half a million, equalling about one-third of the population of the Armenian SSR.

In fact, the present Armenian SSR is only a tiny part of the territory historically inhabited by Armenians. The Turks cleared large areas of Armenians both during and after the first world war. In its March 7 issue, *l'Unità*, the Italian Communist Party national daily, published a resumé of, and quotations from, a document that it claimed had been submitted to Gorbachev along with the petition for return of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.

The document said that Nakhitchevan was ceded to Azerbaidzhan specifically in response to Turkish pressure, because the Azerbaidzhanis were a Turkish and Islamic people. "The interference of the Turks in the internal affairs of Soviet Russia was due to the anti-Russian policy of the Western powers. For example, in the accord between Russia and Turkey signed on March 15, 1921...at the explicit request of the Turks, Nakhitchevan was separated from the Soviet Republic of Armenia and transferred to another Soviet republic, Azerbaidzhan."

**4** In the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, the document claimed, the decision to give it to



Azerbaidzhan was taken directly by Stalin in contradiction to earlier decisions by the Soviet government. "On July 5, Stalin managed to get agreement that the question would not be referred to Moscow, and in the meeting of the Caucasus Political Bureau personally took a decision openly in conflict with the Leninist nationality policy." The document also accused the Azerbaidzhani authorities of attempting to wipe out Armenian culture in Nagorno-Karabakh.

"The 80 per cent of the population that is Armenian does not even have the possibility of receiving TV broadcasts in Armenian...It is not even possible to send literature and text books in Armenian directly into Karabakh, even though there are more than 180 Armenian schools in the area. The Armenian teachers' institute was transferred from Baku to Stepankert...For graduates of the Yerevan institutes from Karabakh, it is impossible to return to their country because, according to the indications of the plan, all Nagorno-Karabakh specialists are assigned only by Baku."

In fact, the statements made by the Communist Party authorities after the onset of the mass mobilizations in Armenia acknowledged that the cultural rights of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh had been honored in the breach. For example, on March 5, *Pravda* carried a TASS interview with the new first secretary of the Nagorno-Karabakh party committee, Genrikh Pogolian (by his name an Armenian, as was his abruptly ousted predecessor), who said, among other things: "I want to point out that owing to the fault of the former leadership of the party regional committee, unnecessary difficulties were created with respect to cultural exchange, support for

literature and textbooks in the native languages and for the traditional ties of the working people of Nagorno-Karabakh with brotherly Armenia."

Since most of the population, including the formally elected officials are Armenian, as shown by the vote of the Autonomous Region Soviet on February 12, it is peculiar, to say the least, that such a state of affairs could have come about. It is possible that one factor is the Soviet doctrine that national differences should wither away as a result of the operation of economic forces. The region is dominated economically by the Azerbaidzhani capital of Baku. The other obvious factor is the "verticalism" of the Soviet system, in which the descending links are more subject to pressure from above than from below, in this case more from the Azerbaidzhani republic authorities than from the Armenians they were supposed to represent.

Nonetheless, the Armenian leaders seem not to have blamed the Azerbaidzhani authorities but the all-Union bureaucracy. For example, in his interview with Sergei Grigoriants in *Libération* of March 11, Karlinsky asked: "Are the testimonies given at the meeting last Monday at the Armenian cemetery in Moscow on the atrocities committed by the Azerbaidzhanis credible?"

Grigoriants replied: "Yes, but they underestimate the reality, which is much more terrible. The most regrettable effect of the anti-Armenian pogroms in Azerbaijan is that the Armenians have now lost confidence in the Russians. They say that the Azeris have been manipulated, while they have not, and will not, let themselves be provoked. It is dangerous to continue to talk about this question over the telephone."



Alexander Adler, a usually well-informed and perceptive Soviet watcher, has speculated that the conflict between the Azerbaïdzhani and Armenian authorities was paralleled by a conflict within the all-Union apparatus: "Gorbachev sent Lieutenant General Trushin, the number two official in the Minister of the Interior (the MVD), a sort of rival police of the KGB, to Azerbaïdzhani. The chief of the MVD, Alexandr Vlasov, is a loyal follower of Gorbachev who was installed in office at the beginning of 1986. Trushin immediately announced that everything would be done to find those responsible for the anti-American pogroms. It recognized for the first time publicly that the city of Kirovabad had been affected by the troubles.... But if Kirovabad had not been previously mentioned, it is because it is a 'closed city,' where major KGB facilities are located.

### Power struggle within all-Soviet bureaucracy

"It will be noted that the national head of the KGB, Viktor Chebrikov, did not take part in the working meeting in Moscow, when the work of his service was explicitly questioned in an issue of *Moscow News*."

Adler went on to point out: "The fact that the maintenance of order has been entrusted to the MVD, even though it is a normal procedure, could indicate a certain mistrust of the local and national KGB, where the former boss of Azerbaïdzhani, Haidar Aliev, still holds influence."

A power struggle within the all-Union institutions of bureaucracy could explain why the central state has seemed relatively paralyzed during this crisis. But, at the same time, a massive repression could discredit Gorbachev's liberalization. Moreover, even before Gorbachev, Brezhnev himself retreated in the face of demonstrations of tens of thousands in Armenia and Georgia against attempts to degrade the status of the local languages in the new Soviet constitution adopted in 1978.

The most detailed account in the international press of the events leading up to the February-March crisis seems to be in the reporting of Karlinsky and Adler in *Libération*. It differs on one substantial point with report of two *New York Times* Service correspondents in the March 12-13 *International Herald Tribune*, who attribute the leadership of the petition campaign for re-attachment of Nagorno-Karabakh and the initiative for the mass movement to Igor Muradian. In his telephone interview with Karlinsky, Grigoriant described Muradian as "a man who has always stayed away from the dissidents and the underground nationalist movement."

According to Karlinsky, the UNS launched the petition in August. He also reported that the UNS had been able to take the leadership of the ecological committees that were forming in protest against extraordinary air pollution in the Yerevan

area blamed for a catastrophic increase in foetal malformations and miscarriages. In October, the Azerbaïdzhani police roughed up some Armenians. The UNS organized a demonstration of 10,000 on October 10 in protest, but Nagorno-Karabakh itself remained quiet. But in early February, the burning of an Armenian primary school by Azerbaïdzhanis touched off mass protests in the disputed region itself. There was a spontaneous rally on February 11 in front of Communist Party headquarters in Stepankert and a spontaneous strike by primary and high-school students. On February 12, the Nagorno-Karabakh Soviet voted a resolution calling for re-attachment to the Armenian SSR.

On February 15, a series of demonstrations began against the project to build a rubber factory in Abovian, a city near Yerevan. "Combining ecological and national demands," as Karlinsky wrote, the UNS-organized demonstrations in Abovian and Yerevan. In the following days, the number of demonstrators continually increased, reaching 10,000 for the February 20 rally.

On February 21, the Communist Party youth paper, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published an article favorable to the ecological demands but saying nothing about the national ones. The demonstrations grew still more. The university and the factories went on strike. The local party units and the unions jumped on the bandwagon.

On February 22, the all-Union CP Central Committee adopted a resolution saying that Nagorno-Karabakh would remain in the Azerbaïdzhani SSR and blaming the Armenian protests on "extremists." The protests widened beyond the UNS. The leadership was taken over by the Organizing Committee, a group of intellectuals from which the Communist Party was absent, that began to take form on February 17. It led the movement until February 27, when it called a one month truce. The movement reached a peak on February 26, when more than half a million demonstrators gathered in Yerevan. The head of the Armenian CP, Karen Demritchian, was booed when he called for an end to the demonstrations. But the Organizing Committee's truce call was obeyed the following day.

On February 25, Gorbachev had received two representatives of the Committee in Moscow, and sent them back with a message for the Armenian people. By this action, Karlinsky said, he had gone over the head of the local party authorities and de facto accepted a dual power situation.

In the March 12 *Libération*, Karlinsky wrote that the Organizing Committee consisted of more than a thousand people representing base committees established in all the Armenian cities and factories. He reported on a news conference given by Grigoriant in Moscow in which a film of anti-Armenian pogroms was shown. It included pictures of Armenians wounded in a "punitive expedition" by Azerbaïdzhanis against Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh at the

time of the big demonstrations in Yerevan. Grigoriant's collaborator Andrei Shilkov showed pictures of the Armenian quarter of Sumgait, an Azerbaïdzhani town near Baku. The 16,000 Armenian residents had been evacuated.

The conference relayed alleged denunciations of "criminal manipulation" from the Organizing Committee. It said that Politburo representatives Dolgikh and Kukyanov had tried to set Armenians against Azerbaïdzhanis. Sent to Yerevan in late February, they had "warned the population" that the Azerbaïdzhanis would react violently to the Armenian demands. Moreover, printed leaflets were distributed in Nagorno-Karabakh that were designed to frighten the Azerbaïdzhanis and incite them to flee. They promised that they would be given jobs and housing in Azerbaïdzhani.

The housing was provided precisely in Sumgait, massacres of Armenians started on February 28, the same day that the deputy general prosecutor Katushev spoke over Azerbaïdzhani TV recounting the troubles in Nagorno-Karabakh. He placed the blame for the troubles on Armenians and mentioned only Azerbaïdzhani victims.

Two political facts stand out from these dramatic events. The first is how rapidly mass explosions can occur once the totalitarian bureaucracy loosens its grip even a little. The second is that when there is real conflict, *glasnost* is honored in the breach. A political process involving an entire nation actively, millions of people, was only faintly reflected in the all-Union press.

### Fundamental democratic questions raised

There was a series of soporific tales by local bureaucrats about the beauties of brotherly love among the peoples, exemplified by the opportunities a multinational union had offered them. But there was absolutely no discussion with those involved in demonstrations of hundreds of thousands, not even with the local party officials who supported the Armenian demands.

Another fact that the Armenian developments seem to show is that even a national movement not challenging Russian domination, not demanding independence or even a greater degree of autonomy, still raises fundamental democratic questions. A great number of very different national questions remain in the USSR, but that they all seem to have in common. Only honest and open discussion can offer possibilities for solving them, and that is in the interest of all the peoples and people of the Soviet Union.

Moreover, the linking of the ecological question and national feeling also indicates the underlying democratic issue. Such pollution was possible only because the feelings of the local people as individuals and as communities were ignored by bureaucrats acting behind closed doors. ★

# The causes and consequences of Bukharin's rehabilitation

A WHOLE series of factors contributed to the penal rehabilitation of the third Moscow Trial defendants by decree of the USSR Supreme Court on February 4, 1988.

ERNEST MANDEL

**A**BOVE ALL, there was strong pressure for a review of all the Moscow trials from two sectors of public opinion.

The first were survivors and descendants of Stalin's purge victims, who identify the cause of the accused in these trials with their own, that is, with unqualified condemnation of the purges. There are tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of them. In contrast to the era of "de-Stalinization" under Khrushchev, they are no longer limiting themselves to individual, private, actions. They voice loudly their indignation and their demand for justice in public meetings, many of which have already brought together thousands of people. This pressure has struck a chord with the pro-Gorbachev liberal intelligentsia.

More and more, it is becoming an unavoidable problem for the resolute defenders of *glasnost*, of openness. For them, "openness" about the current situation is not credible, if not impossible, without "openness" about the past, without the re-establishment of the historic truth.

The second sector of public opinion that is on the same track is the young historians. The archives are now mainly — although not completely — open to them. Because of this they know the truth about the 1930s, and are, to differing degrees, determined to broadcast it. Here also, the difference of mentality and behaviour from the years 1956-62 is striking. This young generation is much more independent from the regime (but that does not mean totally independent) than the generation of Khrushchevian liberals.

We should remember that in the USSR, because of the still upheld dogma of the "leading role of the Communist Party", all questions concerning the history of this party are relevant to today. Study of this history is compulsory for millions of young people. By the same token, the content of history books is an eminently political mat-

ter. All these text books are being rewritten. Once again, it is becoming increasingly difficult to do this and sidestep or minimize the question of the 1930s purges and the Moscow trials.

This pressure coincides with a demand by a strong sector of the middle layers of the bureaucracy for a much stricter application of the principles of "Soviet legality", in other words for restricting the arbitrary police manipulation of the juridical apparatus. Going far beyond the human rights campaign of a small layer of "dissidents", this demand expresses an evident desire for self-protection on the part of the bureaucracy's middle layers, which include millions of people. Gorbachev is looking for political support in these strata. For the time being they are divided between the "reformers" and the "conservatives". Gorbachev is hoping to win them over, among other things, by offering them protection against any threat of radical purges. But this also leads to obligations to denounce the illegal character of past purges.

Alongside these not unimportant social forces there is the deeper political interest of Gorbachev's "frontline supporters".

For the radical supporters of the *perestroika* (restructuring) of economy and society, the economic model of development supposedly advocated by the main defendants in the third Moscow Trial, Bukharin and Rykov (Lenin's successor and head of the Soviet of People's Com-

missars), is a direct inspiration for their own model of development: building socialism in a very gradualist way; protection and extension of the private sector; deliberate support for the greed and the desire for private enrichment of large layers of the population; much greater recourse to market mechanisms; franker and more open encouragement of social inequality (this happened in a rather more illegal manner under Stalin and Brezhnev, but was clearly encouraged and stimulated by the bureaucratic dictatorship).

So, it is now politically useful for these reformers to politically rehabilitate Bukharin and his co-thinkers. And such political rehabilitation is impossible without a juridical rehabilitation.

## Conservatives continue to hail Stalin period

Gorbachev — a pragmatic political leader worlds away from Khrushchev's impulsiveness — has long hesitated to heed the clamours of his own most committed lieutenants. This is not only to protect his back, or to ensure that there will not be too violent an opposition from the conservatives, who continue to hail the Stalin period. It is, above all, because he understands perfectly the inextricable contradictions of a juridical rehabilitation solely of the accused in the third Moscow Trial, without juridical rehabilitation of those of the second trial (Piatakov, Radek and their comrades), and those of the third trial (Zinoviev, Kamenev, their comrades and, explicitly, Leon Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov).

Juridically, the non-rehabilitation of all





these Old Bolsheviks and of Trotsky is logically untenable in light of the rehabilitations of the accused in the third trial. Gorbachev and his associates are confronted with this problem today, after the decree of the Supreme Court in February. This decree, indeed, explicitly quashes the verdict of the third Moscow Trial.

But that verdict stated that practically all the main crimes attributed to the defendants had been carried out "under the instructions of the enemy of the people, L Trotsky". This applies notably to the accusations of collusion with foreign spy networks, of agreements to break up the USSR, terrorist activity, the decision to assassinate leaders of the state and the party, sabotage and other diversive activities and the assassination of Kirov, Menzhinsky, Kuibyshev and Gorky. Bukharin was also accused of having organized a conspiracy with Trotsky to overthrow Lenin's government in 1918, at the time of the Brest-Litovsk peace talks.

These accusations were to a large extent the basis of the verdicts made in the first and second Moscow Trials, and of the claim in the first trial's verdict that Trotsky and Sedov were guilty of crimes of terrorism, sabotage, assassination and so on. They have now lost all juridical value. Moreover, an attentive reading of the "debates" and verdict of the third trial confirms that Trotsky was the principal defendant.

But politically, a rehabilitation of Trotsky and Sedov — indeed of Zinoviev, Radek and their friends — seems difficult to conceive of for Gorbachev's supporters, to say nothing of Gorbachev himself.

## Trotsky personified an alternative to Stalin

Indeed, Trotsky and his friends in the Left Opposition and the United Opposition personified an alternative to Stalin and the Stalinist dictatorship, with which the reformist wing of the bureaucracy has nothing in common: an orientation to the working class, nationally and internationally, towards more power and rights for the workers as against the managers; an orientation to greater equality, based on the democratic freedom of public inspection and exposure; an orientation towards international revolution (not the "revolutionary war" falsely attributed to Trotsky), based on the possibilities and resources of the proletariat themselves in each country, and not towards "socialism in one country" or "campism", which subordinate the interests of the international revolution to those of the USSR.

Can Gorbachev grant juridical rehabilitation to Trotsky, Zinoviev-Kamenev, Piatakov-Radek, while still condemning them politically? This is not impossible, but it is very difficult.

Judicial rehabilitation would lead to some extremely embarrassing practical le-

gal consequences for the Soviet regime. How could it oppose free access to the writings of Trotsky and the Opposition, once they were no longer regarded as "counter-revolutionaries" and "enemies of the people", but as honest communists who erred politically? How could it prevent in the future free access to these writings and their republication, even selectively?

But this is all political dynamite in the USSR today. Such republication would immediately expose the fact that not only the "criminal" charges of the Stalin period, but even the political charges wheeled out today by Gorbachev and his cronies, are mostly slanderous and would not stand up to even a cursory reading of the documents of the era.

These writings would show that, as early as 1923, the Opposition denounced the bureaucracy and called for socialist democracy in terms often identical to those used by

Gorbachev today (something Bukharin by no means did). They would show that the Opposition was opposed to any forced collectivization of agriculture. They would show that the Opposition fiercely defended the rights and powers of workers against the bureaucracy. They would show that the Opposition demanded freedom for young people, women's rights, cultural pluralism.

All this immediately raises the question: is it accidental that Stalin made Trotsky and Trotskyism his number one enemies? All this cannot fail to awaken and stimulate widespread sympathy for Trotsky and Trotskyism among critical layers of the Soviet masses. This is an additional reason for us to expand our campaign and the action of the whole international workers' movement for a total and complete juridical rehabilitation for all the accused in the first and second Moscow Trials, including comrades Leon Trotsky and Leon Sedov! ★

## Clear the names of the accused in all the Moscow Show Trials!

*The following is the text of the appeal to rehabilitate the victims of the Moscow Trials. IV has regularly published signatures from around the world supporting the appeal. The campaign is appealing for further signatories of individuals or organizations, and financial donations. You can contact the Moscow Trials Campaign c/o Michel Löwy, 34 rue des Lyonnais, 75005 Paris, France.*

**"IT IS NOW over fifty years since the infamous Moscow Show Trials. It is astounding that at a time when the Soviet government is at pains to emphasize its concern with 'human rights' and proclaims the need for *glasnost* (openness), the accused in these trials, with a few exceptions, are still considered guilty of being paid agents of Nazism and other crimes.**

**"Among these men were numbered several who played outstanding roles in the Russian revolution of 1917. The reputations of founders of the Soviet state like Zinoviev, Radek, Trotsky and Bukharin were besmirched or expunged from the history books. Today, no-one doubts that the 'confessions' at the trials — the sole basis for the prosecution — were utterly false. Seven defendants in the third trial, Krestinsky and others, have been both judicially rehabilitated and politically exonerated. So have the military leaders, Tukhachevsky and others, whose military trial in 1937 was held in secret. But the admittedly false evidence against these men was inseparable from the charges against all the other accused.**

**"None of the accused, of course, is alive today. Many were executed immediately after their trials. Others died in prison or camps. Leon Trotsky, the chief accused in all three of the trials, was murdered in exile in 1940. However, families of some of the defendants are still living in the Soviet Union. Some have also suffered imprisonment and exile. It is worth recalling that a review of all these cases was promised by Khrushchev, but this promise was broken.**

**"We therefore call on the Soviet government to re-examine the cases against all these victims of the perversion of Soviet justice, as took place with Krestinsky. We are confident that all those accused in the trials of 1936-38 will be shown to have been innocent. They should immediately be rehabilitated, their honour restored, their families compensated and their graves marked." ★ November 1, 1987**

# Waldheim must go

**THE POLITICAL BUREAU of Socialist Alternative (SOAL), the Austrian section of the Fourth International, issued the following statement on February 19.**

**K**URT WALDHEIM's political downfall was announced by the report of the international commission of historians. Although the statement was formulated in moderate terms, the commission came to the conclusion that Waldheim was an "important collaborator of the leadership centre." In plain language, that means that the man sitting in the president's chair today was involved in the organization of war crimes committed by the German army, including the "transfer" of Greek Jews to Auschwitz.

So, Waldheim was a pen-pusher criminal, a pen-pusher murderer, who built a career after the war and could not remember anything. "He was anxious to have his military past forgotten, and when this was no longer possible, to explain it away. In the commission's view, this forgetfulness is so fundamental that it would get no clarification from Waldheim to help in its work."

While essentially the report only confirms what Waldheim's critics have said, politically and psychologically it represents a breakthrough. It has now been documented, so to speak, just what sort of person is sitting in the presidential palace. At the New Austria rally, which was called

at short notice for February 14, 6,000 people spontaneously marched to Waldheim's residence and called loudly for his resignation. High-school women acted to "demolish" Waldheim themselves, taking down his picture from their classroom walls.

Amongst the social democrats, the number of those demanding Waldheim's resignation is growing rapidly. Simon Wiesenthal is fed up with "the man the world trusts," and has stripped him of the last of his moral credibility in the bourgeois camp. Finally, out of fear of getting detached from the "Western world," even the industrial boss Herbert Krejci has argued that Waldheim should vacate his post. It is certain that in new presidential elections, Waldheim would suffer a severe rebuff.

Despite the change in mood, the social-democratic leadership and the union leadership in its train still have not had the nerve to call openly and directly for Waldheim's resignation. Vranitzky [the social-democratic premier] is, of course, taking more and more distance from the president ("further clarifications are necessary"). And the social-democratic national secretary, Keller, has taken to indulging in a certain kind of humor, "Austria can do without Waldheim but not without Vranitzky," which nonetheless indicates an unambiguous demand for the president's resignation.

## Waldheim digs in his heels

So as "not to endanger the work of the government" — that is, dismantling nationalized industry, turning back the clock on pensions, freezing spending on social welfare and education, as well as the sidling up to the Europe of the monopolies — the next step is being left in the bony hands of the resident of the presidential palace.

Waldheim, however, continues to dig in his heels and rail at his critics — in his dreadful TV speech, for example, as "liars



Drawing by Plantu

and slanderers." Therefore, the maximum pressure has to be brought to bear so that Waldheim will slip away as quickly as possible, hopefully before the March days [the anniversary of the Nazi occupation of Austria].

Concretely, the following needs to be done:

- Build committees focused on demanding Waldheim's resignation.
- Public demonstrations and actions to "get the rage out of your gut."
- Resolutions addressed to the social-democratic and union leaderships calling on them to speak out forthrightly and unconditionally for Waldheim's resignation and to work for it.
- Continuing and creatively developing the "Waldheim demolition action" of the high-school women.
- No "state ceremony" with Waldheim on March 11. The broadest possible mobilization for protest rallies and demonstrations on March 11 and 12.

Waldheim must resign. Of course, it will not all be rosy after that, but the general conditions for the left would improve. It would give a great boost to a critical confrontation with Austria's fascist past.

## Relentless exposure of historical guilt needed

The possible deal among the big parties to run a common conservative or "neutral" candidate for president has to be answered with the presentation of a candidate of the progressive forces. What is needed is not "patriotic damage limitation," that is, class-collaborationist togetherness, but relentless exposure of the historical guilt that until now has been "collaboratively" swept under the rug, and solutions for the most acute social problems facing all those who have to sell their labor power.

If Waldheim falls, then the game is also up for Mock and Co. [the People's Party, the main bourgeois party]. The demand for ending the Great Coalition [between the People's Party and the social democrats] would fall on more fruitful ground. New elections would be on the agenda, with some chance for a parliamentary majority (not a coalition) for the social democrats and Greens. ★





# US campaign to get rid of Noriega

**DETERMINED** to oust General Manuel Antonio Noriega, chief of Panama's Defence Force, who has gone out of favor in Washington, the US administration is resorting to its usual methods of intimidating regimes in its "backyard." It has set in motion a plan of economic strangulation.

The official Panamanian accounts in US banks have been frozen, tying up about \$800 million of Panamanian government funds. Washington has also announced that US payments for Panama Canal operations will be deposited in a special closed account.

## RODRIGO O'FARRELL

**T**HE OBJECTIVE is clear. In a small country like Panama, which uses the dollar as its national currency and whose main income comes from the Canal, such measures will lead rapidly to economic asphyxiation. Moreover, it has been announced that 7,000 US soldiers will begin "routine maneuvers" in the Canal Zone.

At the same time, in the Panamanian capital, the right-wing opposition, which takes its cues from Miami, has declared its readiness to unite around Eric Delvalle, a well-heeled owner of a TV station who was put into the presidency in September 1985 by Noriega and removed by him on February 26.

For his part, George Bush warned from Washington that General Noriega would soon be arrested for his crimes and brought before a court. The destabilization program is rolling.

Accusing the United States of committing the "worst kind of aggression, economic aggression," Panama's strongman responded that the only way he would leave the country was "dead," because he had an "alliance of blood" with his people. Manuel Solis, the new president put in to replace Delvalle, also condemned the US freezing of Panamanian funds, and ordered the closure of all the banks, awaiting regularization of the supply of dollars in the country.

From Havana, Fidel Castro appealed to the Latin American governments not to abandon Panama at a time when it was being besieged by imperialism. At the same time, the Nicaraguan president, Daniel Ortega, renewed his unconditional support for the Solis government.

The White House and the Pentagon, which from Richard Nixon's time seem to have had good relations with General Noriega, and who up until a few months ago acknowledged that he had served them

well, are now determined to get rid of him. The real causes of this change of attitude are a well-guarded secret in Washington (the alleged reason is that he is a corrupt military officer). But some specialists consider that all this is linked to a growing unease in Washington about the type of governments that have been taking form in Panama (unstable civilian administrations under the tutelage of nationalist military officers), and their unsuitability for the role they are called on to play in the recent evolution of the crisis in Central America.

In the conditions of the Esquipulas II accords (see IV 135), Panama is expected to play a more active role in Washington's military plans. Another, and no less important element, is the approach of the date when the September 7, 1977, Torrijos-Carter agreements are supposed to go into effect. They call for transferring sovereignty over the Canal Zone to Panama on December 31, 1999.

The offensive against Noriega went public in June 1986. The US secret services passed to the press several documents indicating that the general was a champion of

"double dealing." According to them, he had carried out espionage activities for the CIA and the Drug Enforcement Agency but also for Cuba and the USSR. Moreover, he was supposed to have served as a middle-man for Colombian drug traffickers, laundering their money. He was also supposed to have helped get arms for the Colombian guerrilla organization, M-19.

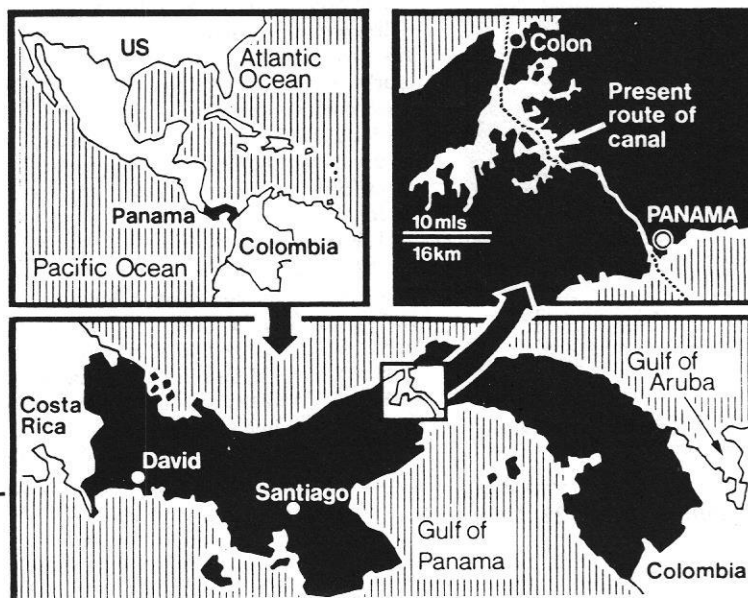
## Accusations of arms and drugs trafficking

Initially vague, these charges gradually became more definite. Witnesses testifying before a federal court and a US Senate subcommittee in recent months have claimed that Noriega also sold arms to the Nicaraguan contras at the same time as supplying weapons to the Salvadoran rebels. It was also said that the general had a million dollar bank account filled with payments made by the Medellín Cartel of drug traffickers, and that he had transferred high technology to the Eastern Bloc countries. Among all these charges was one that he had permitted the opening of an Aeroflot (Soviet airlines) office in Panama.

Three "key" witnesses — Steven Kalish, Ramón Rodríguez and Floyd Carlton — are implicated in drug trafficking. Carlton made his statement from under a hood. But Noriega's other accusers are not so shadowy. José Blandón, former Panamanian consul in New York, claimed that the general collaborated with Oliver North in the Iran-Contra affair. Colonel Diaz Herrera, former commander of the Panamanian armed forces, said that Noriega had rigged the 1984 elections, that he got money from drug traffickers, and gave the order for the assassination of Hugo Spadafora, Panama's deputy minister of health, whose decapitated body was found on September 15, 1985.

Gabriel Lewis, a fervent partisan of Omar Torrijos (he was one of the drafters of the Canal treaty) and former ambassador to Washington, has repeated these accusations. From his office in Washington, with the help of two US advisors, he has given impetus to the campaign against the Panamanian strongman.

Long-standing rumors against Noriega



intensified in particular after General Rubén Darío Paredes, Washington's candidate for succeeding Torrijos, was pushed out of the decision-making center of the former National Guard by Noriega, who was the deceased leader's real confidant. The White House then tried to manipulate the wily "Pineapple Face" (as General Noriega is known by his detractors), using both bribery and cunning. But it failed totally to keep "its" man under control.

At least once in this period, an attempt to assassinate Noriega was contemplated. The US news weekly *Time* has reported that in 1972 a federal narcotics agent proposed, in view of the general's "criminal trajectory," that he be physically liquidated. The idea was rejected.

Noriega and various of his collaborators have always denied the grave charges. "The United States," the general says, "is trying in this way to to put in question the Canal treaties." On February 8, four days after he was indicted by a Florida court, he demanded the withdrawal of the US Southern Command and of the 10,000 US soldiers stationed in the country.

The Defence Force demanded that Eric Delvalle shut down the US bases in response to the United States' "ruthless political and economic aggression," a position that demonstrated the support Noriega still has among the Panamanian military.

President Delvalle did not believe the charges against Noriega either. Eight months ago, he rejected Colonel Diaz Herrera's claims, saying that the whole thing was part of a vile US plot to trample on the 1977 accords. This loyalty vanished when a US court indicted the general. From that time on, the Panamanian president was caught up in the operation to oust Noriega mounted by Elliot Abrams, US undersecretary

## The importance of the Panama Canal

THE INTER-OCEAN canal is vital to US economic and military interests. Some 40 per cent of US trade with Asia and the Pacific passes through it. In only eight hours, US warships can cross from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Today, there are nine US military bases in the Canal Zone — five army bases, three air bases and one naval base. There are 35,000 US personnel, of whom 10,000 are in the military forces at the disposal of the Southern Command, which "centralizes all the activities of US troops in Central and South America." A battalion of "Special Forces" and a brigade of "Green Berets" are permanently based in Panama. The air forces include A-7 Corsaire fighter bombers, AC-130 reconnaissance planes and assault helicopters. The naval forces have nine warships.

Up until 1984, the School of the Americas operated in Panama. This was the center for training Latin American officers in counter-insurgency warfare. Panama is an essential way station for CIA agents and has been the launching pad for many clandestine operations. It is said that Nicaraguan contras were trained in Panama, and that some of the US soldiers that invaded the island of Grenada came from units based in Panama. ★

tary of state for inter-American affairs, .

Under the pretext that he was visiting his cardiologist, Delvalle met in Miami with Abrams and came to the conclusion that the commander-in-chief of the Defence Force had to be removed. On his return to Panama, he summoned the general to his office and asked him to resign as a "contribution to the peace of the fatherland." Unmoved, Noriega told him that he "was not accepting advice from such a low-ranking messenger."

### Radicalization in response to imperialist pressures

Over television, the president asked Noriega to relinquish the high command, which led to the top ranks of the Defence Force uniting behind the general and agreeing unanimously to remove the civilian official. Manuel Solis Palma, a left politician, who opposed General Torrijos in his time from a Marxist standpoint, was appointed as the new head of the executive.

Delvalle, confronted with the failure of his maneuver and the impotence of the strike called by the right-wing employers, fled from his residence through a window. He was believed to have put himself under the protection of Arthur Davis, Reagan's ambassador in Panama.

The Solis government reflects the radicalization that is taking place in Panama in response to the imperialist pressures. It marks a clear change from the previous governments of de Royo, de la Espriella, Barletta and Delvalle, in which there was an uneasy equilibrium between representatives of the oligarchy and Torrejista nationalists.

The contradictory formula fostered by the 1983 constitutional reform, giving rise to weak and unstable governments, satisfied no one. The Panamanian oligarchy has been trying to regain total control of the government by destroying the democratic resistance. And the imperialists intend to stay on in Panama after the year 2,000.

Moreover, a visible movement in the

armed forces, known as the "Torrijos Rectification," has given the White House another cause for alarm. The leaders of this movement argue that in view of the nationalist military officers' failure, "owing to their romance with the oligarchy," and in view of their continuing loss of credibility, they should resume "the strategic course marked out by Torrijos," and make the Defence Force a "real democratic army of national liberation."

It is in this general context that the charges surfaced about the alleged corruption of the Panamanian strongman.

The "civilian" protests against Noriega's stubbornness have a clear class meaning. The strikes have been sponsored by the industrialists' association (SIP), the chamber of commerce (Conep), and the oligarchic right, sectors that talk about restoring democracy without offering the slightest program for solving the problems of the masses. The broad masses of the people have therefore shown little interest in these days of action.

Noriega's supporters in the Partido Revolucionario Democrático are denouncing the "imperialist plot" and opposing the bosses' strikes with the slogan "a plant on strike is a plant seized."

The country's economic crisis, aggravated by the freezing of its funds, makes it impossible to stabilize the Panamanian situation. In view of the failure of Delvalle's operation, the US will play other cards and step up its pressures. That is certain.

General Noriega, of course, is no innocent. As happens in armies trained by the United States, corruption is common among the officers. Nonetheless, Washington has shown itself not to be above using slander as a political weapon. Fidel Castro and the Sandinistas have also been accused of being accomplices of the drug traffickers. The present propaganda campaign against Noriega seems designed more to eliminate a nationalist leader and set up a regime readier to accommodate to the Pentagon than it is to clean up the Panamanian political scene. ★



**10** General Noriega — known by the nickname "Pineapple face" (DR)



# The Polish Socialist Party: an attempt at rebuilding a workers' party

THE IDEA of forming a socialist party has surfaced many times within the Polish opposition. Before 1980, some activists in the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR) who raised the question of rebuilding an independent workers' movement were interested in a party that would hark back to the tradition of Polish independent socialism at the beginning of the century, of the inter-war social democracy and to that of the resistance, in which the Freedom-Equality-Independence socialist party (PPS-WRN) played a key role. In fact, the first worker's bulletin published at the initiative of members of the KOR in 1977 took the title of the organ of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), *Robotnik*.

CYRIL SMUGA

THE LIGHTENING growth of the independent union Solidarnosc in 1980-81 as a united mass movement relegated the question of forming political parties to the background. The few hundred oppositionists active before August 1980 melted into the masses. The way of thinking about political questions was turned upside down. From that time on, political parties could develop only out of differentiation within Solidarnosc, based on the experiences of successes and failures for the union. Moreover, in view of the massive revulsion against the party form of organization, which most union activists identified with the PZPR [Polish United Workers Party, the official CP] and the ideological confusion prevailing in the mass movement, such differentiations would have to take new forms.

It is significant in this respect that in 1981, when the first differentiations appeared, they were expressed in movements such as the "Network" of the big factories or the National Self-Management Federation. There was no lack of attempts to launch parties (at least six "parties" were formed trying to claim the socialist or social-democratic tradition). But they quickly fizzled out.

General Jaruzelski's coup d'état in December 1981 reshuffled the cards again. The tasks of rebuilding the union structures underground and the pressure of the masses for unity pushed ideological differences

into the background. It was only after a series of failures for Solidarnosc, the most serious of which was the underground leadership's inability to seize the opportunity of the spontaneous strikes in early October 1982 after the official banning of the union, and then the fiasco of the general strike called without preparation for November of the same year, that activists began raising the question again of forming political parties linked to Solidarnosc or operating alongside it.

## "A challenge of historic importance"

Within the left wing of the movement, this question reappeared in the underground weekly *Robotnik* in the form of a proposal to rebuild the old Polish Socialist Party (PPS). (*Robotnik* is published by activists in the Warsaw Inter-enterprise Workers' Committee and should not be confused with the bulletin of the same name that was published from 1977 to 1981 by activists of the KOR [Committee to Defend the Workers, an organization of oppositionists set up after the 1976 Ursus strike]).

Beginning in 1983-84, *Robotnik* regularly published articles devoted to discussing the contours and form that such a party should have. In January 1984, an article by a staff writer noted, "the question of whether, and when, to revive the Polish Socialist

Party is under discussion in many social milieus," and that "the formation of political parties will undoubtedly be the natural road for developing the democratic and libertarian ideals of August." It went to say that a new PPS "will need at least a few thousand members, leaders, as well as a widely known program, in order for it to have the necessary strength and political authority."

The article warned against a premature proclamation of the PPS, and concluded that "an open, public presentation of the socialist alternative by people enjoying social respect and known for their commitment to democratic socialism will in itself be a challenge of historic importance."<sup>1</sup>

## Early proposals did not strike a chord

In an article published shortly afterward, another staff member presented the ideological outlines of the future party as follows:

"Our task, the task of Polish socialists in the 1980s, is political and economic struggle in the union and in political parties; it is to revive the slogans and ideals for which Ludwik Warynski and Janek Wisniewski died, as well as the workers of the Paris Commune and the Polish workers at the 'Paris Commune' naval yard.<sup>2</sup> The first step on this road was to take back our May 1 workers' holiday. The next step will be the formation of socialist groups that, through discussion and struggle, will determine the forms of the Polish socialist movement."<sup>3</sup>

At the time, *Robotnik's* proposals did not strike much of a chord. Solidarnosc had gone into a latent crisis. And *Robotnik's* proposals failed to offer immediate political perspectives that could seem to provide an alternative to those formulated by the union leadership. Therefore, the project was not attractive, even for activists who might have been tempted by an organization that claimed clearly to stand on the left.

With these difficulties, in 1984-85, the group around *Robotnik* evolved to the right. Conceptions appeared that even denied the existence of the working class. The majority of the workers were characterized as an amorphous and passive "industrial class." The protagonist of revolutionary change, according to this conception, was supposed to be a "new class" made up of skilled young workers, technicians, engineers,

1. Article by Jan Morawski in *Robotnik* 44, January 2, 1984. An English translation of this article appeared in *IV* 66, December 4, 1984.

2. In 1882, Ludwik Warynski founded Proletaryat, the first Marxist workers' party in Poland. Janek Wisniewski was a worker assassinated in December 1970 in the Baltic port of Gdynia. His body was carried around the city by demonstrators, and he became the symbol of the workers' struggle against "actually existing socialism."

3. Article by Igor Lewy in *Robotnik* 45, January 30, 1984. An English translation of this article appeared in *IV* 66, December 4, 1984.



teachers, creative workers, professionals and students.”<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the journal portrayed the situation in Nicaragua as a “struggle between democracy and communism.” It published an interview with Arturo Cruz, leader of the so-called Democratic Coordinating Committee, who was presented as a “Nicaraguan freedom fighter.”<sup>5</sup>

A very relative liberalization of the regime convinced a wing of this group that, in the context of the second stage of the economic regime that was being prepared, the bureaucracy was vulnerable to democratic pressure. These activists saw a positive evolution in the government’s economic projects, although one that was still hesitant and incomplete. They chose to support those aspects of the economic reform that seemed to them likely in the long run to break the bureaucratic monopoly over the economy.

A diametrically opposite option was followed by the “trade-unionist” current, influential in particular in Lower Silesia and western Pomerania. Recognizing that the second stage of the economic reform involved first of all a sharp rise in prices and a worsening of working conditions — in short, increased exploitation of labor — the “trade-unionists” put forward the need for reinforcing or rebuilding the union structures in the plants in order to mobilize the workers around material demands. The *Robotnik* editorial board reached similar conclusions, and the activists grouped around this journal tried to formulate a program for immediate action in the plants.<sup>6</sup>

A convergence began between *Robotnik*’s proposals aimed at giving the factory activists “something to do” and those that stressed building public Solidarnosc organizing committees in the factories in order to bring into trade-union activity a new generation of workers, who had not known the legal Solidarnosc and were not finding their way to the underground union commissions in the factories. It was this convergence that laid the basis for refounding the Polish Socialist Party in November 1987, whose central organ became *Robot-*

*nik*. It also enabled socialist oriented oppositionists not involved in either of the two founding currents to join the PPS.

When the PPS was established, a general orientation document was adopted, “The Political Statement of the PPS,” was adopted.<sup>7</sup> (See box on page 13.)

In keeping with their conception of a public party led by personalities and which would link up with the tradition of the historic PPS, the founders of the PPS tried to involve the survivors of the historic PPS and the outstanding personalities of the Polish opposition. The leadership structure of the PPS reflected this effort. On the one hand, they set up a Presidium made up in large part of the historic personalities of the opposition and heirs of the socialist tradition, whose functions were to be both ideological and representative. On the other, they set up a Central Executive Committee (CKW), made up of activists on the ground, which was supposed to lead the party day to day; and a General Council, made up of the members of the first two bodies, plus regional party delegates elected by the ranks. Given the frequent interference by the political police, which prevented the holding of meetings by arresting a part of the activists, this ponderous structure could not really play its role.

Since its founding, the party faced continual pressure from the political police. Its congress was interrupted after a few hours by the police picking up a large number of its participants for questioning. As a result, some documents had to be adopted in committee with certain leaders absent. This was the case, notably, with the “Political Statement of the PPS,” the party’s main reference document, which was adopted when some of the members of the CKW who had proposed alternative drafts were in jail.

Following November 1987, the PPS experienced significant growth. In a February 4 telephone interview, Jan Jozef Lipski estimated the number of those applying for membership at about a thousand. It managed to set up clubs in some big factories, and its militants played an active role in building the factory press. For example, they organized a “factory press week” dur-



ing which they distributed the underground journals at the factory gates. These activists also helped to set up Solidarnosc organizing committees in the factories. After the February price rise, PPS activists played an important role by spreading information about protest mobilizations and by trying, to the extent of their strength, to help organize them.

In this situation, according to Piotr Ikonowicz, a member of PPS Presidium interviewed by telephone, “there was a strong pressure from our working-class base to publish a statement that would distance us more clearly from the regime and the PZPR than the one adopted at the congress.” Differences appeared in the PPS leadership over this.

### PPS leaders arrested before General Council

The draft “Statement of Principles for Action” submitted to the party Presidium on February 3, 1988, and the proposal for transforming this meeting into a General Council (owing to the number of observers), ran into opposition from several members of the Presidium, who thought that this was a rather cavalier way of operating.

On February 7, several party leaders — including notably Jan Jozef Lipski, Wladyslaw Goldfinger-Kunicki, Jozef Pinior and Marek Nowicki — were picked up by the police and could not take part in the meeting of the General Council. Nonetheless, the other members of the Council adopted the disputed document, and this was interpreted as a maneuver by leaders who opposed some of the formulations contained in it.

Interviewed by telephone, Jozef Pinior (one of the party’s two vice-presidents) explained why there had been this response: “I think that the police thought that our arrest would be enough to paralyze the meeting, and that there would be no need to try to pick up the other leaders. The comrades who remained free wanted to go ahead with the meeting, fearing a police attack on the party. Some of them had just got out of Wroclaw jail. They tried to give the party a political backbone.”

That is also the impression of Piotr Ikonowicz, who was at the meeting. “When the congress’s political statement was adopted, I was in prison myself with several of my comrades. It was adopted by those who were arrested on February 7. In a way, the roles were reversed. The only thing was that we did not realize was that when we adopted this new document the situation in the party was already very different.”

This incident provoked a crisis in the PPS leadership. Four members of the party Pre-

4. Article by Igor Lewy in *Naprzód* 2, 1985.

5. *Robotnik* 69, August 19, 1984.

6. The debates in Solidarnosc were described in *IV* 125, September 14, 1987.

7. Concerning the political positions of the PPS, see the interview with Jozef Pinior in *IV* 133, January 25, 1988.



## Political statement of the PPS

**T**HE POLISH Socialist Party (PPS) was founded 95 years ago. This party organized Poles for the struggle for independence and social justice. In the period of bondage, it took an active part in the armed struggle for an independent Poland. At the beginning of the inter-war period, thanks to the leadership of this party, workers won progressive social laws. Moreover, this party, in concert with the peasant movement, opposed the authoritarian tendencies. In World War II, the PPS confronted both aggressors, fighting for Freedom-Equality-Independence.

Forty years ago, the Communists destroyed the democratic socialist movement. Many socialist leaders perished in Polish and Soviet jails. Others spent long years in them. But the PPS kept them from erasing it from history and social consciousness.... Today, on the anniversary of the Paris congress, we are rebuilding the Polish Socialist Party in full awareness of the tradition with which we are renewing our links. We are building a public and legal party with its place in the constitutional order. Its legal right to existence flows also from the international juridical norms ratified by the authorities of the People's Republic.

We are aware that the world "socialism," which has been appropriated by the Communists, is not a popular one in Polish society. It is identified with the regime. Through our work, our struggle and our creative thought, we will re-endow the word with its proper meaning and the values linked to it. On several occasions, Polish society has expressed its support for these values — making human beings subjects and not objects in society, the dignity of labor and the independence of the nation. Polish workers did the same in the August 1980 upsurge. These values were present in the activity of the independent forces between August 1980 and December 1981, and they found expression in the Self-Managed Republic Program adopted at Solidarnosc's first national congress. Polish socialists fought for freedom, democracy and social justice in the opposition structures of the 1970s and 1980s.

We are founding the PPS at a time when the rulers are declaring their determination to restructure the economy

and democratize society. However, while the economic program presented contains a series of proposals recommended earlier by the opposition and a series of independent intellectuals, it is a rickety construction and, above all, it threatens the rights and interests of the majority of workers. In this situation, the key question is the independent movements winning a real influence in the political life of the country. We think that it is possible right now to carry on real political activities in opposition to the regime.

Our program will be open-ended and formulated in such a way as to be receptive to new developments and the realities of life. We do not want to base it on a rigid doctrine. We do not want either to tie ourselves to any philosophy, although we do not hide the fact that today the social teachings of the Catholic Church, and above all the teaching of John Paul II, are closer to us than Marxism. Philosophy must be the domain of interested individuals and specialized institutions and not of political parties. Religious convictions are a private affair, and the PPS places no restrictions on its members in this regard....

The PPS aspires to cooperation and friendship among all the nations of the world and above all to the overcoming of the conflicts and tensions with our neighbors through recognition of the right of all to self-determination. We want to act with a view to guaranteeing the free national, cultural and religious development of all the national minorities in Poland....

Without ignoring political reality, which can and must be changed, the PPS wants to exert an influence over the way in which the power is exercised in Poland. It will do so by initiating and developing democratic changes, by organizing social monitoring of the activities of the branches of government, by supporting the reviving trade-union movement and collaborating closely with it. We will fight for respect for human rights, and in particular the right to live in an independent and free country, freedom of organization and political pluralism....

We call upon all Poles who identify with the ideals of the democratic left to join the ranks of the PPS. ★

sidium — Jan Jozef Lipski (chair), Wladyslaw Goldfinger-Kunicki (the other vice-president), Andrzej Malanowski (secretary) and Marek Nowicki — then issued the following public statement:

"After December 1987, the activity of some members of the General Council of the PPS was marked by manipulations of a police type. They had the objective of introducing unjustified, artificial divisions among the members of the leadership. At the same time, there was an attempt to paralyze the party's programmatic work. Recently, this activity was raised to a new level. On February 3, 1988, an attempt was made, in disregard of the statutory rules and without informing the members, to transform a meeting of the Presidium of the General Council into a session of the Council itself with the aim of forcing the adoption of an ultra-left Trotskyist programmatic resolution.

"Just before the meeting of the General Council called for February 7, the Security Service selectively arrested those members of the General Council who were opposed to the adoption of such a resolution.<sup>8</sup> The

character and the course of the arrests indicated that they were intended only to isolate the persons concerned for a few hours. A group of General Council members took advantage of the arrests of these comrades to sign a statement that characterized the party as revolutionary, and, what is more, did not reject violence.

### Accusations made of police infiltration

"There was an attempt to disseminate this statement as a resolution of the General Council of the PPS. This provocation was designed to compromise the PPS in the eyes of its sympathizers in the country and abroad and in the eyes of the parties grouped in the Socialist International. This was to serve indirectly to compromise the reviving socialist movements and currents in Poland.

"Being unable to determine how extensive the infiltration is, and unwilling to take the responsibility for the future effects of such a situation, we have decided to leave

the leadership of the PPS. We reserve the decision about our membership in the party until we see whether or not the remaining leadership of the party, which for the moment is going along passively with this manipulation, will be able to purge itself. If it cannot, we see no possibility of continuing our activity within the party. On the contrary, we would see that as a danger to society. We remain faithful to the tradition of the PPS and to the ideals of socialism."<sup>9</sup>

The twelve other members of the General Council of the PPS present at its February 14 session adopted a draft statement of principles to be submitted to discussion within the PPS. According to Piotr Ikonowicz, whom I questioned about this on the telephone, this document was a corrected version of the disputed document of February 7. (Notably, any reference to the revolutionary character of the PPS was eliminated.)

Speaking about this document, Piotr Ikonowicz pointed out: "With this document

8. SB, the political police.

9. Statement taken over the telephone from Jan Jozef Lipski.

we wanted to come out of a sort of reserve in which the regime wants to confine the opposition. We are breaking with a sort of tacit compromise, by which the government will not repress too harshly oppositionists who hold back from questioning it too clearly. We reject such an attitude, which is inspired by the tactic of the Indians who limited themselves to protesting about the misdeeds of the colonists in petitions sent to the viceroy. At the same time, we show that those who maintain this reserve do so not because it is impossible to do otherwise, but because that is their choice."

Commenting on the resignation of four of its members, the General Council said: "In the statement justifying this action, there appears a grave claim about infiltration by the political police. This is a very serious accusation. We are astonished that the statutory possibility for a hearing before the Fraternal Tribunal (articles 11, 12 and 13 of the Provisional Statutory Principles of the PPS) was not used.

"This is all the more morally reprehensible since, in Polish conditions, the charge of collaborating with the Minister of Internal Affairs involves total ostracization. The tribunal's task would also be to decide where discussion of political differences ends and gratuitous charges begin.

"The raising of such grave charges with-

out utilizing the statutory procedure, and when the PPS has only been in existence for three months, can only raise the question of maneuvering. In the light of the difficult conditions in which the PPS is operating and the discredit attached to the word 'socialism' in Polish society, the accusation made in the statements of the four General Council members puts in question their commitment to the PPS. Until the programmatic congress, the positions vacant in the Presidium of the General Council will remain so."<sup>10</sup>

In a press statement they issued on the resignation of four of their comrades, it was said that "the General Council considers this as an attempt to divert the discussion about program into the sphere of personal conflicts."<sup>11</sup>

A conciliation procedure, involving a commission made up of activists not implicated in the conflict and known for their "impartiality," is to be set in motion.

Regardless of the outcome, this crisis testifies to the immense difficulties of building a workers' party in a country where Stalinism has succeeded in breaking the continuity of the workers' movement. ★

10. Statement taken over the telephone from Jozef Pinior.

11. Op cit.

## Principles of action of the PPS

*THE GENERAL COUNCIL of the PPS invites all the structures of the party to begin the discussion on program. To this end, the General Council is submitting the following draft principles for the activity of the party in the period extending until the statutory congress for discussion by the members and sympathizers of the PPS. It calls on the members and sympathizers to make comments, amendments and alternative proposals. It asks the party structures to complete the discussion by March 31, 1988.*

**1** The Polish Socialist Party was founded with the aim of taking up the defence of the socially oppressed groups in order to arrive at the economic and political liberation of the workers and an end to the exploitation of labor. This goal can be achieved only by taking the fruits of the workers' labor, the tools and means of material production of goods away from the nomenklatura in order to return them to the workers.

In the view of the PPS, such re-appropriation by the workers, combined with the establishment of institutional and political guarantees for this change, are the way to put the Polish economy back on its feet. In order to achieve this goal we are forming a public and legal party in accordance with the norms of international law, there being no appropriate legal norms in this regard in the People's Republic of Poland (PRP).

**14** This party will seek to change the constitution and judicial order in PRP, and in par-

ticular to abolish the domination of the United Polish Workers' Party (PZPR), as well as the leading role of any party, which stands in contradiction to the tradition of democratic socialism. We are aware that achieving these goals can involve an open conflict with the power apparatus and judicial system of the PRP, which have been designed for the best protection of the regime's interests. The Communists govern Poland not by the will of the society but by virtue of a diktat imposed by a foreign power. This is why the aspiration that the society should be able to freely choose the system of opinions that suits it fully justifies resorting to methods of civil disobedience.

**2** With respect to the deepening of the economic crisis and of the attitude of the authorities who are conducting a more and more anti-working class and anti-socialist policy, the right of self-defence is a natural right of the workers. The force and violence of the forms of protest remain in proportion to the blows dealt to the workers' interests and rights. The PPS will not limit itself to giving moral support to social demands. The party's task is to take part in actions around concrete demands, to inspire them and organize them. In the present dramatic social situation, the place of PPS members is among the striking workers, in Solidarnosc organizing committees, in workers' self-management bodies, at the side of the oppressed and exploited.

**3** The PPS considers it a particularly important task to support Solidarnosc's factory organizations. Solidarnosc is the main weapon in the struggle for the workers' rights. It can be said without exaggeration that the union's strength depends on the prosperity and well-being of the great majority of Poles whose livelihood is not based on profit or on involvement in the power apparatus, but on their labor. This is why we think that it would be disastrous to water down the trade-union character of Solidarnosc and transform it into a social movement or a political party.

**4** Abolishing the Communist regime in Poland is possible only with the cooperation of the democratic movements in all the Eastern Bloc countries. The domination of the party nomenklatura in the states of Central and Eastern Europe is buttressed by cooperation within the Warsaw Pact and COMECON. An effective struggle for freedom, independence, democracy and justice, therefore, involves coordinating the struggles of the oppressed societies. The societies and their independent organizations can be partners in discussions with the PPS and allies. The Communist power elites in Poland, Rumania and Hungary, but also in other Communist countries, are trying to save themselves by utilizing brutal methods of exploitation inspired by the primitive stage of capitalism. They are selling off natural resources cheap and trying, at any cost, to attract foreign capital by offering cheap labor.

**5** After long years of existence in emigration, the PPS has been rebuilt in the country. The PPS in exile was part of the Union of Socialist Parties of Central and Eastern Europe. We hope that, like the PPS, socialist parties will be rebuilt in the other countries. The PPS will support activities toward that end with all the means at its disposal.

The capitalist world and the Communist countries are separated by an immense technological gap. This is reflected in the state of development of the economy and in the social structure. Therefore, a series of problems facing the socialist and social-democratic parties in Western Europe are questions of the future for the PPS. Our present political and economic problems are more readily comprehensible for third-world parties. But the PPS always played a significant role in the labors of the international socialist movement. We think that today we can find a place once again in the world family of the socialist parties. The PPS thinks that it will be able to take part in the programmatic discussions among the European socialist parties, continuing the contribution made by such Polish socialists as Niedzialkowski, Ciolkosz, Gross [the author of a work on the second technological revolution] and others to the work of the Socialist International. ★

*The General Council of the PPS: Zbigniew Chedoszko (Szczecin); Zuzanna Dabrowska (Wroclaw); Piotr Ikonowicz (Warsaw); Grzegorz Ilka (Warsaw); Artur Koszykowski (Cracow); Andrzej Kowalski (Wroclaw); Agata Michalek (Cracow); Cezary Mizejewski (Warsaw); Jacek Pawlowicz (Plock); Jozef Pinior (Wroclaw); Malgorzata Poszulak (Wroclaw); Tadeusz Rachowski (Warsaw)*

Warsaw, February 14, 1988.





## Aquino attacks the workers' movement

TRADE-UNION ACTIVITY has been able to develop more freely since the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in February 1986. Nonetheless, the situation has not been easy for a workers' movement that has to fight daily for the right to exist.

According to the K MU (Kilusang Mayo Uno, May 1 Movement), from Aquino's victory to the putsch on August 28, 1987, 46 workers have been killed in labor conflicts, ten have "disappeared," 274 have been wounded and 263 arrested.

Over the last months of 1987, the regime's policy hardened notably on the social front, as in other domains. Corazon Aquino has never abrogated the anti-union laws left over from the Marcos regime. Today, she is flaunting these "laws" inherited from the dictatorship to make head-on attacks on the militant and independent unions.

PAUL PETITJEAN

THE CELEBRATED compassion of the Philippine president is first of all for the rich. In a now famous speech on October 20, 1987, to an assembly of businessmen, Corazon Aquino promised that the potholes would be filled in the streets of the capital and that the garbage would be collected weekly. The poor and the not-so-poor probably appreciated the effort pledged. But she mainly condemned, and very violently, actions by the workers, threatening to forcibly disperse strike pickets "illegally" blocking access to enterprises. The 1,300 bosses gathered in the luxurious Manila Hotel were not sparing with their applause.

This was the president's response to the week of strikes organized nationally from October 12 to 16. This mobilization was substantially united. It was organized by the Labor Advisory and Consultative Council (LACC), which includes several trade-union confederations. While the K MU supported the mobilization for the five days, the most moderate confederation, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) was forced to join in the action at the end of the week. The unions demanded an across-the-board increase of 10 pesos (about \$0.50) in the daily wage.

### Around 1,000 workplaces affected by general strike

Unlike what happened last August, the transport workers did not take part in the strike, nor did government employees. But the mobilization was extensive in industry. On the first day, 350 to 400 workplaces and about 250,000 workers were affected.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the week, the number of workplaces involved probably exceeded 1,000.

This general strike was organized when a fully-fledged anti-union campaign was continuing in the country. "Dole [the Department of Labor and Employment] has strengthened its ties with the military" since September with a view to forming "a team of police and military personnel specifically trained in dealing with pickets."<sup>2</sup>

Ernesto Herra was president of the TUCP under martial law, when the confederation was very officially recognized by the Marcos regime. Today he is a senator. He has called for reinforcing repressive measures against a militant workers' movement — arrest of activists and withdrawal of the registration of unions guilty of "destabilizing efforts."<sup>3</sup> As chair of the Senate Labor Committee, he is charged with investigating workers' organizations suspected of subversive activities, above all the Kilusang Mayo Uno.

1. According to *Philnews*, 344 workplaces were paralyzed on October 12. The workers' demands were accepted by the management in at least nine cases, including Asia Brewery, Magnolia (Luguna) and Philsteel. *Solidaridad II*, Vol. 11, No. 4, October-December, 1987, p.9. Bigger figures are given elsewhere.

2. José Galang, "Summer of discontent," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 15, 1987, p.77.

3. *Solidaridad II*, *ibid.*

In fact, subversion is the charge that is supposed to justify every form of repression. Corazon Aquino herself, in her October 20 speech, fell back on the threadbare theme of "political conspiracy" — "I will not allow an unruly minority to use the rights of labor to improve the conditions of labor to achieve a communist victory instead. The way to power is the ballot, not the strike."<sup>4</sup>

There is no need, however, to look for a communist plot to understand why the Filipino workers were fighting in the autumn of last year. After several years of recession and stagnation, the country's economy grew in 1987 by more than 5%. But the workers' standard of living did not stop falling.

In July 1987, the nominal wage of workers in industry had risen only 1.5% over 1984. The officially recognized drop in real wages was 15.4%. The nominal wage of agricultural workers had risen by 1.15%, and their real wages had dropped by 7.13%.<sup>5</sup>

### Millions of children work for derisory wages

The official minimum wage is often not respected by the bosses. Nonetheless, it represents barely more than that necessary to support a family of six just above the poverty line. The overall social situation is deteriorating, as attested to by prostitution and child labor. According to a study of the Bureau of Women and Young Workers (BWYW), the number of children employed in industry and agriculture is growing and has probably reached 5 to 7 million.

The daily wage of adults is supposed today to be around 60 pesos in industry (about \$3). According to the data collected by the BWYW, children employed as machinists earn 16 pesos (less than a dollar), 13 pesos sewing on buttons, 12 pesos as smockers and 5 pesos (about 25 cents) as folders or stockers. A number of children working in agriculture are not getting any wage of their own, since the employers consider that they are just helping their parents.<sup>6</sup>

Filipino workers often have to confront hard bosses who are both very little about respecting the workers' human or legal rights, and an administration in active complicity with the capitalists. Even if the government has agreed to a nominal increase of 10 pesos in the minimum wage, it is not ready to send its police against the many bosses who have never paid any attention to the legal wage levels. The attention of

4. Corazon Aquino, "Speech before businessmen at the Manila Hotel," October 20, 1987, *Chronology of Events* 38, October 1987, p.11.

5. Figures from José Galang, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, *ibid*.

6. *Business World*, December 28, 1987, p.2. *Chronology of Events* 40, December 1987, p.6.

7. Corazon Aquino, *ibid*, pp.11-12.

the "forces of order" is reserved for the have-nots.

While she called on the police and the army to break "illegal" strike pickets, Corazon Aquino limited herself to appealing to the noble sentiments of these bosses who disregard workers' legal rights. To the 1,300 businessmen in the Manila Hotel, the president preached a short and sweet sermon on Christian charity:

"Our laboring class is very poor, and their lives are truly hard. It amazes me how they survived. I ask you to search your minds and hearts, and probe your pockets, to share with our brothers and sisters in the labor sector the gains you make....Labor has its right as much as you have yours. But

in the end, what will work is not the mutual enforcement of rights so much as the mutual commitment to growth together in prosperity." As a realist, Saint Cory noted that this was a "vision" of the future.

In the meantime, "our policy has been very clear from the start — growth must take priority."<sup>7</sup> Too bad about the rights of labor.

The Filipino labor movement knows that it has to rely on its own struggle rather than on the moral sense and brotherliness displayed by the bosses! The year 1988 will be a very important one for preserving and consolidating the gains scored in the recent years by the militant Filipino trade-union movement. ★

## The example of Camarin

**A CONCRETE picture of day-to-day labor struggles is given in the following article. In August 1987, the author was able to spend some time with trade-union activists in a locality on the outskirts of the Manila urban complex. This area also offers good examples of the new forms of organization that are being tried.**

**PAUL PETITJEAN**

**A** FOREST of umbrellas under a dim street light, a road shining with rain disappearing off into the rice fields. A storm threatens. Night has fallen. The workday is over. An activist speaks over a loudspeaker. This is a union meeting in Camarin, on the outskirts of Metro Manila.

It is a locality of about 5,000 inhabitants. Today, Camarin is integrated into the immense urban complex of the Philippine capital. Nonetheless, you would think rather that you were in a small provincial town. Carabaos, the Philippine water buffaloes, are ambling around peacefully, blocking the main road. Several small- and medium-sized enterprises have been established there, both in the town and out in the country.

Island Biscuit produces packaged pastry and employs about 500 workers, 95% of them women. The union official speaking is a man. The president of the union is a woman worker. With rare exceptions, such as the Philippine Belt factory which produces transmission belts and where the workers are 80% men, Camarin's industrial working class is female.

The meeting is to discuss the Island Biscuit Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The speaker reports on the negotiations in progress. They are difficult, but the stakes are high. CBAs, where they exist, determine working conditions, pay and representation. They are renewed every three years and are voted on. The union that wins, if there is more than one organization in an enterprise, will be the only one legally recognized for the following three years.

All the regular workers will have dues deducted from their pay packets for that union and will be considered members of it by the labor administration. This procedure is dangerous when "yellow" [bosses'] unions, with the help of the management, win the elections. But it also guarantees an organizational and financial base for union activists who are able to win sufficient support. "All the workers benefit from the provisions of the CBAs won by the union's action," an activist noted. "It is natural for everyone to pay dues"

### "A real capitalist godfather"

The adoption of a CBA, therefore, is very often a critical moment in trade-union struggles, the culminating point in a long campaign of mobilization. This is particularly true here. The factory has been functioning for ten years, and this is the first time a CBA has been negotiated. The union itself has only existed since 1986.

Organizing is not easy. You have to fight the bosses, who do not look favorably on the formation of a union. You have to strike. You have to fight "black propaganda" mounted by the management to demoralize the workers and isolate the activists. Finally, you have to overcome a psycholog-



ical heritage that too often paralyzes the workers where there is not a long tradition of struggle — a “culture of submission” that makes it hard to reject the authority of a superior or someone wearing a uniform.

But still, nine years seems a long time for a union to take form. Up until last year, Island Biscuit was the only factory that did not have a workers’ organization. The boss is known as an exploiter. “He is a real capitalist godfather. He builds up his image, gives money to schools and to good works in his local community, but he treats the workers in his factory like slaves.” The minimum wage is only 37-46 pesos a day (around \$2), counting the cost-of-living allowance that is generally added onto basic pay.<sup>1</sup> When the order books are full, the management imposes workdays that go on forever. The workers cannot leave until the production plan is met.

### “People are less afraid than before”

In the view of a trade-unionist at Pioneer Texturizing Corp. (the biggest factory in the locality, with 500-600 workers), Camarin is living through a time of “strong-arm capitalism.” Moreover, the road leading to the factory has a bad reputation. A whole section is unlit. Unidentified corpses have been found in the ditch. Union leaders never walk there alone after dark.

The shadow of repression always hangs over the place. The memory of a visit to a shantytown in August 1986 springs to mind. In the shantytown of Sauyo, not far from here, 2,000 families are squatting on 400 hectares. We asked activists in Kadena, a youth organization belonging to the National Democratic current, what had changed for these people since the fall of Marcos.<sup>2</sup> The answer came quickly:

“Nothing, life has not changed.” And then, after a pause, “Yes, one thing. People are less afraid. There is still a lot to do to help the population organize here. Before, when we held a meeting in the center of the shantytown, it was illegal and people stayed home. Because of the sound system we had, they listened, but discreetly. The walls of the homes are so thin that you can hear everything. Today, they come out and gather openly at the foot of the mango tree. They take part in the meetings and make their opinions known.”

The fear only receded a year ago. It is coming back now. The activists working out in the open are under a constant strain. Camarin is not a particularly “hot” spot. There are much worse. Nonetheless, the threat is there — the strong-arm men.

With hard-fisted bosses trying to wear the workers out, strikes often stretch out endlessly. This was the case in August at the Pioneer Texturing Corporation. The signing of the CBA was an important test of strength. Although better than at Island Biscuit, wages there were still below the legal minimum. After a marathon initial nego-



tiating session of 13 hours non-stop, an agreement was reached on September 16, 1987, as a result of a compromise between the union and the management.

The contract included a raise of 10 pesos, legal recognition and protection of the union, 22 paid holidays and sick leave. Wage increases for seniority were established (they rise from 0.50 pesos for two to four years of service, to 2 pesos for 15 years and more), as well as other measures concerning mainly medical assistance, release time for union officials and working conditions. This is not what the union wanted, but it was a first step in the struggle.

In August also, at E. R. Angeles (ERA), a factory employing 70 workers that produces bricks and tiles, a strike had been going on for five months, accompanied by a lock-out. The boss wanted to avoid recognizing the union at any cost. The workers were fighting to get an acceptable CBA. The pay here is 35 pesos a day. They were demanding a raise of 19 pesos to catch up with the official minimum wage, which more than half of the factories in the area royally ignore.

Lawman Industries, a textile and clothing plant with 400-500 workers has been closed since 1984. A strike with pickets has gone on for three years. This is an example of the way the bosses get around the law and of the way the administration lets them get away with it. This labor conflict went to the courts. The unions went all the way to the Supreme Court and won their case. An order was given to the Dole (Department of Labor and Employment) to implement the court’s decision. The boss just changed the name of his factory, and the whole administrative procedure had to be started again from scratch. Lawman became Libra Garment and then Dolphin Enterprise. Today it is called “Garment.” This is a recurring,

tragic farce.

The courts do not often rule in favor of the workers. When this happens, nothing is done in practice. “Dole is not the Department of Labor,” a trade-unionist at Lawman laughed. “It is the Department of Management.” A worker, Nolino Pala, was shot down on August 27, 1985. It is well known who did it, but the murderers have never been bothered. Neither are the police neutral in class conflicts.

### “Illegal” pickets attacked by Aquino

The president of the union at the Galaxie factory in a locality near Novaliches cites another glaring example: “Very often our capitalists are so aggressive that they would rather lose money than accept an independent trade-union organization.” For more than two years, strike pickets have blocked entry into the factory. Eight families have set themselves up in wooden and canvas shelters. That is the only way pressure can be put on such bosses, blocking the entry of strike-breakers, stopping the machines, vehicles and stocks from being taken out. These are the “illegal” pickets so violently denounced by Corazon Aquino — the last peaceful recourse for workers with their backs to the wall facing a savage capitalism.

Corazon Aquino preaches the most radical sort of free-enterprise capitalism — that is, she wants to free the bosses from administrative constraints, reduce the role of the state as much as possible. Refusing to legislate in this area, she left re-evaluation of the

1. Around 20 pesos = \$1.

2. Kadena, “Chain,” is an acronym of Kabataan para sa demokrasiya at nasionalismo, “Youth For Democracy and Nationalism.”

minimum wage to the individual enterprises. This prompted a wave of strikes in the country's factories. In Camarin in August, five strikes were kept up simultaneously by the local inter-union network.

This was an enormous burden. The strike funds were exhausted. In front of every picket, the workers collected money constantly, day after day, appealing to the solidarity of passersby and motorists. Pedestrians, truck-drivers, people riding in jeepneys (the main collective transport) all gave money. The coins clanked into tin cans. But the amounts fell well short of what was needed.

On Sunday, the workers spread out through the capital to expand the collections, going to the church gates. But that was still not enough. The workers did odd jobs or fell back on the families in the country, waiting for the factory to reopen. It takes a lot of energy to keep strike pickets going night and day for weeks, months, or even years.

The pickets become places for socializing. Lawman (sorry, it's now called Jade) and Pioneer are neighboring factories. For the two picket groups, sheltered from the weather by tarpaulins, a kitchen has been set up in a shed. We shared the strikers' dinner — rice, a green vegetable, finely sprinkled with gniling (a chopped meat). Rice and fish form the basic diet.

A local cultural group, Makatao, helped to cheer up the pickets.<sup>3</sup> It sang, with guitar accompaniment, "Harang Bayan," a "serenade" for the house-to-house collection of funds; "Lupa," ("This Land Is Ours"); "Nagkakaisang Hanay" ("Unite in Line"), in which I suddenly recognized the melody of an old German workers' movement song that has become internationally known; "Manggagawa" ("Workers") and many others.

Mutual aid among the unions and local solidarity are part of the response of the Camarin activists to the bosses' intransigence. The unions in this locality belong to different confederations. Lawman, Philippine Belt, ERA and V.C.A. (V.C. Angeles, which makes bricks like its sister factory) are organized by the KMU.<sup>4</sup> Pioneer and Island Biscuit are organized by the FFW.<sup>5</sup> El Buen Ascenso y Cia (which makes plastic sheets and bags) and Norco Steel (which assembles Jeepney bodies) are organized by the TUCP.<sup>6</sup>

The coordination established among such a gamut of unions is one of the special features of the experience here. It goes beyond Camarin. On August 28, a Strike Forum was organized in Novaliches that brought together nearly 500 workers from these two localities, most of them women. Rep-

resentatives of striking factories described the state of their action. The cultural group Makatao was also there, as well as a group of young people who did a satire based on TV weather reporting. There were clergy, and Paterson Menzon for the LMLC union confederation.<sup>7</sup> Even some foreigners, as well as Francisco Nemenzo for the socialist organization Bisig, came to the platform to offer support to the strikers.<sup>8</sup> This forum gave the workers in the region an opportunity to assert real workers' solidarity collectively at a time when difficult struggles were continuing in Camarin, as well as in Novaliches. That, perhaps, was its most important aspect.

A network of militant workers, Kamao, is playing a particularly dynamic role in Camarin.<sup>9</sup> It comes from the so-called Soc. Dem. or SD current, standing for social

democrat. Contrary to what this name might suggest to Westerners, it is a current of Christian origin. Kamao has radicalized more and more, in concert with Krus — the Kristian Union Toward Socialism — which works among youth, sectors of the urban poor and in industry.<sup>10</sup> After breaking with the Social Democrat movement, the Krus cadres took part in founding Bisig in 1986.

Kamao works in five zones of Metro Manila — Camarin, Novaliches, Mandaluyong, Marikina and Cainta-Taytay. Bisig activists collaborate with independents and activists of Pandayan, the left-wing of the Social Democrat current, which has a presence especially in the last two of these localities.<sup>11</sup>

"We are not trying compete with other movements," a Kamao cadre noted. "We are trying above all to broaden and consolidate mass organization. In Camarin, no other activist network is able to carry out the task we have taken on. We are working here with unions affiliated to several na-

tional federations. In other places, it is mainly independent unions, or those that for the moment have joined up with the LMLC."

Kamao has advanced the concept of cross-union and popular local alliances, despite the opposition of various federation leaderships, which limit themselves to giving legal support from the top to their local organizations in labor conflicts (except for some federations, such as the NAFLU, which also contribute to the political education of the workers).

Kamao's basic idea is that it is necessary to link organizing workers in their workplaces and in their communities, instead of systematically separating these two fields of action. The objective is to unite workers, their families, their friends and the neighborhood in which the workplace is located behind the same multi-sectoral cause, and in that way to reinforce popular unity and the power of the working class. This is a difficult goal, and it has not yet really been achieved. The alliance built in Camarin is centered on the factories in the locality. It does not really take in friends and neighbors.

Nonetheless, there is community work in Camarin, notably in the health field, in liaison with the factories. An activist explained to me that Likas is concerned above all with primary healthcare for working people, with prevention more than cure, in contrast to the orientations followed by the official health services.<sup>12</sup> This organization is trying to combine the contributions of Western medicine with those of traditional (herbal) medicine and oriental medicine (acupuncture).

## Community work and women's groups

The aim is to form a cooperative health service. Seminars on working conditions in the factories are beginning to be organized — *sama-talakayan*, that is "small discussion groups in which workers examine their situation. This is an opportunity for consciousness-raising. It becomes possible to inform people about laws that are supposed to protect the workers but are almost never



3. The acronym Makanao means "humanist."

4. The Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), or May 1 Movement, was founded in 1980. It is the most militant union confederation. The unions at Lawman and Philippine Belt are affiliated to the National Federation of Labor Unions. Those at ERA and VCA are affiliated to the National Federation of Labor. The KMU is not affiliated to any world confederation. It is recognized by a series of national federations in Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Italy and other countries.

5. The Federation of Free Workers (FFW), organized in the 1950s by American Jesuits, is affiliated to the Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unions (BATU) and the World Confederation of Labor, which are Christian unions.

6. The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) was the confederation recognized by the Marcos regime. It is a member of the WFTU, World Federation of Free Trade Unions.

7. The LMLC (Lakas Manggagawa Labor Center) was established in December 1986. It has 40,000 members.

Paterson Menzon, a lawyer, is its president. It includes independent unions and federations that at present are unwilling to join any of the existing confederations.

8. Bisig ("The Arm") is an acronym of Bukluran sa Ikaunlad ng Sosyalistang Isip at Gawa, "Union for the Development of Socialist Theory and Practice." Francisco Nemenzo is its president.

9. Kamao ("The Fist") is an acronym of Kristiyanog Alyansa ng Makabayang Obrero ("Christian Alliance of Nationalist Workers"), founded in 1983.

10. Krus ("The Cross"), is an acronym of a name that mixes English and Tagalog orthography, Kristian Union toward Socialism.

11. Pandayan ("The Forge"), or Pandayan para sa Sosyalistang Pilipinas ("Forge a Vision of a Socialist Philippines"), stands to the left of the two "classical" Soc. Dem. groups, the PDSP (Philippine Democratic Socialist Party) and Kasapi (Kapulungan ng Sandigang Pilipino, "Filipino Forum for Basic Ideas").

12. Likas ("natural") is the acronym of Lingap sa Kalusugan ng Sambayan ("Care for the People's Health").



respected by the bosses.”

More study is necessary of the concrete conditions of existence, both in the factories and in the community, in order to be able to act effectively. This work is only in its early stages.

“The activity begun in the health field, as well as in family-planning, can be an opportunity for injecting feminist ideas, for starting up a women’s movement. Male trade-union officials often complain that their companions do not understand the importance of the work they are doing. But the women are generally left at home, and therefore cannot fully develop their personalities. We are trying to form women’s groups where their own problems and aspirations can be better defined.”

This type of community activity can help to organize new sectors and penetrate into the factories, where there is still no real trade-union organization.

### Alliance of workers, urban poor and peasants

“We want to help to forge an alliance between workers, urban poor and peasants,” a Kamao cadre explained to me. “We are convinced of the need for a socialist solution, for a socialist project for society. In line with this overall perspective, we want to combine effective trade-union activity with a real political capacity of the workers’ movement, and thereby overcome the traditional division between narrowly economist unions and ultra-political ones. As Christians, we advocate a militant faith, inspired by liberation theology.

“In giving impetus to local ‘alliances,’ we are also organizing various kinds of seminars — basic trade-union education seminars or specialized ones (on contracts and so on), political education seminars (structural analysis of the crisis, comparative study of ideologies), socialist education seminars (minimum and maximum programs, socialist ethics, political line).

“In recent times, all our energies have been absorbed by the strike wave, but we hope to revive this educational work soon, which we think is absolutely indispensable. Unfortunately, we suffer from a cruel shortage of financial resources. The break with the Social Democrat movement cost us dear! The organizations endorsed by Soc. Dem. get financial aid, for example from the Dutch Christian union federation, the CNV. Those that are out of favor find their funds cut off.”

Camarin is a very ordinary corner of the Philippines, on the fringe of an immense urban complex of 6 to 8 million inhabitants, swollen by the exodus from the land. It is the ever present image of blocked human development.

The struggle is a hard one. But the social gap between the haves and the have-nots is so wide, leaves so little hope for the disadvantaged, that the bosses may one day pay very dearly for their arrogant brutality. ★

## European anti-racist actions on April 23

**A WEST European-wide conference of anti-racist groups was held in the Swedish capital in early February. The results are described in the following article from the February 11 issue of *Internationales*, the paper of the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International.**

### MARIANNE HJORT

**T**HE RUNDOWN dance theater in Skeppsholmen in Stockholm was the scene of a historic conference last weekend [February 5/6]. The 21 delegates from six countries took on the task of uniting all the anti-racist forces in Western Europe for the first time in common actions against racism and fascism.

They came from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, France, West Germany and Great Britain, representing a range of forces from the big French organization SOS Racisme to small West German and Danish groups. The sponsor of the meeting was the Swedish Riksförbundet Stoppa Rasismen [National Association to Stop Racism].

The target date for launching Europe-wide collaboration was carefully chosen. On April 23, Le Pen and his fascistic National Front will be standing in the presidential elections in France. Independent opinion polls are giving him 10 per cent.

The conference’s most important objectives were to achieve unity around a common statement and, on the day of the French elections, to hold big mobilizations against racism and fascism throughout Europe. The debates were often heated, even chaotic, where different viewpoints and lines collided for the first time. But when the common statement was finally read out, applause welled up.

“I am very happy that the congress got results,” said an optimistic Graeme Atkinson from Britain. “We cannot overlook the

fact that there are differences, but we should not let them get in the way of our building broad mass organizations.”

Just as optimistic, Karin Lundberg from the National Association to Stop Racism said: “It was very exciting to see how it could all work. Everyone wants continuing collaboration. This is not going to be a one-off event.”

### “The situation in France is frightening”

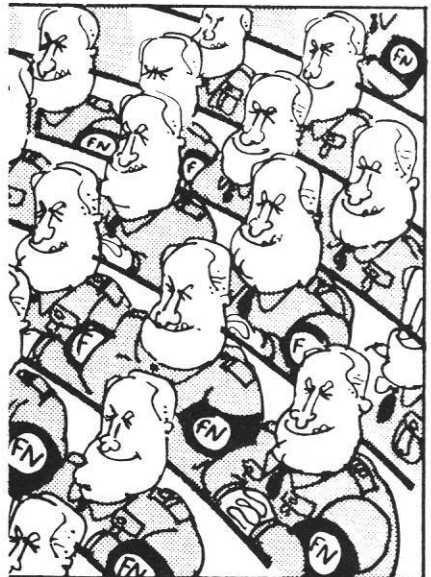
The conference proclaimed the objective of winning a majority of young people throughout Europe to an anti-racist current. Local committees are to be formed in the schools, universities, neighborhoods and factories. The first opportunity for common efforts will be on the anniversary of Sharpesville on March 21, when protests against apartheid in South Africa will be combined with opposition to racism in general.

In the fall, the organizations in the three Scandinavian countries are calling a new conference. An international anti-racist journal in which experiences can be exchanged has already started to be planned.

“The situation in France is frightening,” Karin continued. “It is striking the way similar developments are occurring in various countries. Everywhere, the refugee laws are being toughened. The racist and fascist organizations are also getting more militant and beginning to organize themselves more.

“There were very different views at our conference. But we pulled it off. All the various anti-racist groups *could* cooperate!”

On April 23, demonstrations, mass meetings and rock concerts will be held in a series of West Europe’s biggest cities against racism and fascism and for a Europe with open frontiers. ★



FN = Front National, Le Pen's party — Drawing by Plantu

## New anti-abortion bill threatens women's right to choose

ON JANUARY 22 parliament passed a new anti-abortion bill through its second reading, thus paving the way for one of the most serious setbacks for women's abortion rights since abortion was made legal under the 1967 Abortion Act.

The new bill — the fourteenth attempt to amend the Abortion Act — was supported by a majority of only 45. It is sponsored by a Liberal Party MP, David Alton. Its aim is to amend the 1967 Act to make the legal time limit for abortions 18 weeks instead of the current 28 weeks.

LEONORA LLOYD

**A** NUMBER of legal changes relating to "sexual liberation" took place in the late 1960s — divorce was made easier, relationships between homosexuals were legalized and abortion law liberalized. They were part of a climate in Britain at that time, known as the "swinging sixties", in which fashion and pop music were important factors in changing Britain's image and attitudes.

The important legislative changes occurred during a Labour government administration and were to have a profound effect on ordinary people's lives. The political and moral climate has changed considerably since then, although in contradictory ways. There has been much talk of a "return to Victorian values", and there has certainly been a return to Victorian hypocrisy, with plenty of appeals for strengthening of the family and monogamy, attacks on single motherhood and abortion, while fewer people get married, more "illegitimate" births are registered, the abortion rate continues to rise, and the Tory party is regularly rocked with sexual scandals. Meanwhile, public opinion polls seem to show that, despite the evidence of people's actual behaviour, they agree with the politicians that such things are deplorable. The gutter press gets worse and its readership increases, and yet a recent poll indicates that the public thinks there is too much sex in the popular press! The British seem to be seized with collective schizophrenia.

The government, despite evidence that the majority of parents want their children to get sex education in schools, is now seeking to severely limit it by two measures in particular. One, in the Education Bill, restricts sex education unless a major-

ity of parents have given permission (see *IV* 131); and the other, in the Local Government Bill, prevents local authorities (who also have responsibility for education) from "promoting homosexuality", which has been widely taken to include teaching that it even exists (see *IV* 135).

This, then, is the climate in which the anti-abortionists are making their most serious and dangerous attack yet on Britain's abortion laws, in the shape of the Abortion (Amendment) Bill, promoted by a Liberal MP who happens to be a Catholic, David Alton.

### 1967 Act promoted by Liberal leader

The 1967 Abortion Act was also promoted by a Liberal, party leader David Steel. As a privately-sponsored bill dealing with a highly contentious issue, it stood little chance of getting enough parliamentary time to succeed, any more than a number of similar attempts before it had done, but the then Labour government gave it extra time. All the attacks on the '67 Act since then have also been in the form of private members' bills, and all have fallen because no government has been prepared to give any extra time for its passage through parliament. Without doubt, the enormous campaign mounted to oppose such attacks have been a factor in this, but it is also the case that the Conservative government does not want a return to backstreet abortion, nor to see a big increase in the numbers of disabled babies being born, at a time when the National Health Service (NHS) is under enormous strain already (see *IV* 136).

In 1967, the Act represented a big leap forward, and Britain's law seemed very liberal compared with most other countries. It allowed abortion on a variety of grounds — the woman's health, the effect on her existing children and for foetal abnormality — so long as two doctors agreed. One of the grounds allowed an abortion if it was safer than full pregnancy. With so little knowledge of the effects of legal abortion, it had been assumed that abortion was a dangerous operation, but it was this clause that in practice allowed doctors with a liberal attitude to grant permission, in effect, to give abortion "on demand".

### Society for the Protection of Unborn Children

That was certainly not parliament's intention. Abortion was seen — and to a large extent still is, even by some pro-choice supporters — as a "last resort" needed only by inadequate women: the poor, the mentally incompetent, the feckless and so on. Abortion, in this scenario, is seen always in a negative way, something that is always a "difficult decision", that is almost certainly going to result in some regrets, even whilst being seen as inevitable.

The possibility that some women positively choose to use less dangerous methods of contraception, for health reasons for example, knowing that they have the backup of abortion, is not considered, any more than the idea that other women have made the decision not to have children and know in advance that they would terminate any pregnancy, under any conditions, without regrets. For other women, the decision to have an abortion may be the first one they have ever made on their own and may mark a positive turn in their lives towards personal independence, maturity and liberation. That we now hear on pro-choice platforms the language of "regret" and "depression" is a measure of the success of the anti-abortionists' campaign.

Even as the Act was going through parliament, its opponents were organizing to defeat it, in the shape of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC). It was largely Roman Catholic and this was seen as a weakness, so in 1970 a more specifically Catholic organization, LIFE, was formed, leaving SPUC as the supposedly "non-denominational" group. In practice, these two groups overlap considerably in membership, not merely with each other, but with other groups on the right concerned with "morality" and "family" issues.

From the beginning, the way in which the Act worked attracted criticism. The enormous demand for legal abortion had in no way been anticipated, not even by those who supported liberalization, and the NHS could not cope. As a result, women who had been involved with the campaign before 1967 took steps to provide a service by setting up charities, which they saw as tem-



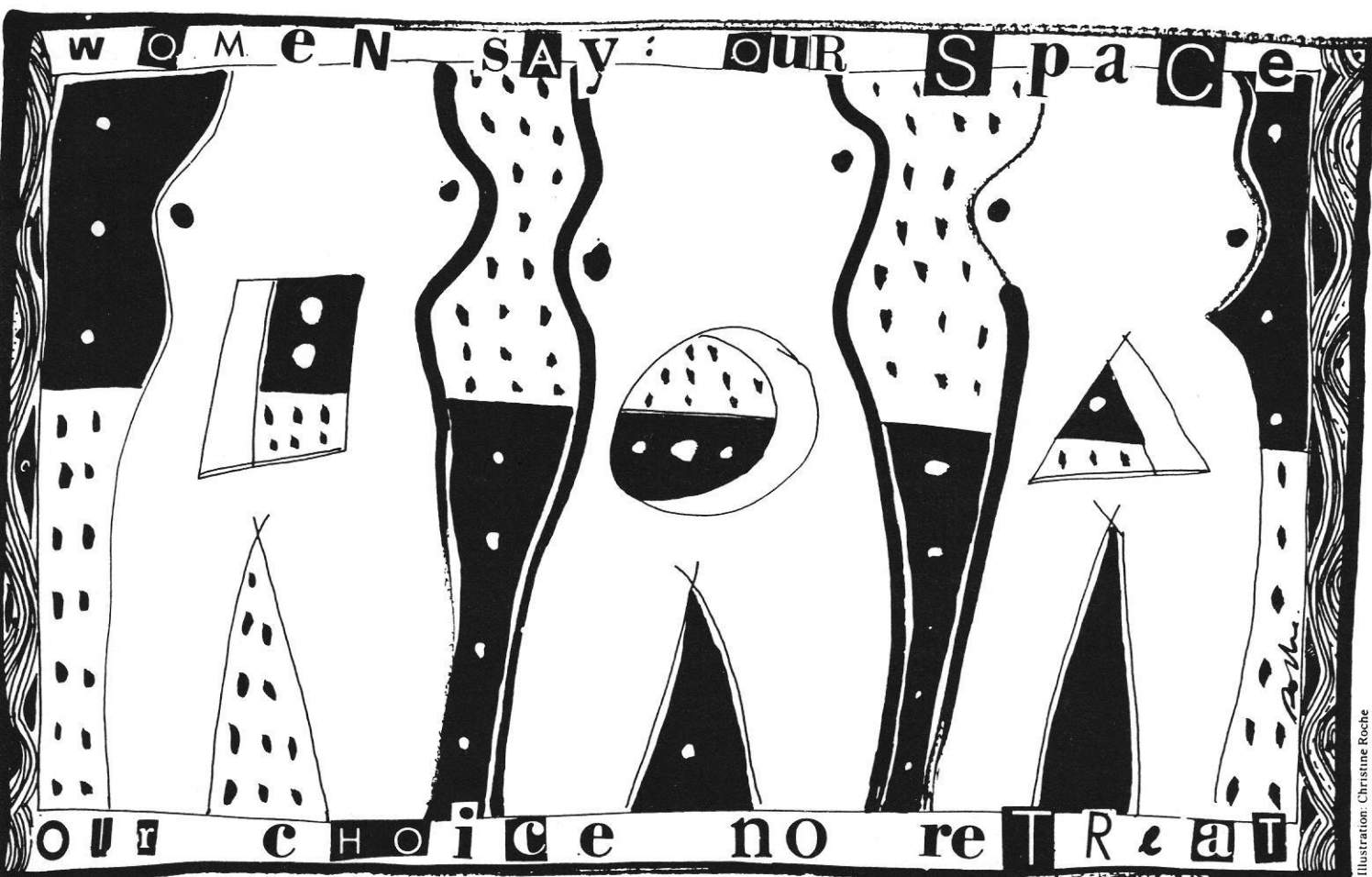


Illustration: Christine Roche

porary measures until such time as the Health Service could cope with the demand, and, of course, the private sector was not slow to take advantage of the situation.

It took a little while for women and doctors to become aware of the new legislation and to start to use it. In 1969, the first full year in which the Act operated, there were 54,157 abortions, 4,990 of them on "non-resident" women (that is, those not from England or Wales, but including women from Scotland and Ireland). This represented a rate of just over 5 women in every 1,000 aged 15-44. In 1971, 126,774 women had abortions, including 32,207 non-residents — a rate of just over 10. The abortion rate rose, with some fluctuations, to just under 13 per 1,000 in 1985, and then to nearly 13.5 in 1986. (The rates apply only to resident women.) In the meantime, the numbers of non-residents reached a peak in 1973, with 56,400 women coming to England for abortions, dropping to 24,589 in 1986. This change reflects the increasing liberalization of abortion laws in the rest of Europe during that period.

The large numbers of foreign women coming to London for abortions, together with the rising number of British women seeking terminations, led to increasing criticisms of the Act, orchestrated by the anti-abortionists. The press carried stories featuring plane-loads of women coming from other countries for abortions, being met by

taxi drivers who had arrangements with abortion clinics. Undoubtedly, this did happen — there were big profits to be made out of women's desperation. Internally, the NHS continued to be unable to meet women's needs, and in some parts of the country it proved almost impossible to find a doctor willing to give consent, or a consultant prepared to do abortions. It was, indeed, the consultants who were of most importance — an anti-abortion consultant in a key position could ensure that his whole hospital, or even a whole local health authority, refused to do abortions.

### Question of time limits a key issue

The increasing criticisms led in 1971 to the setting up of a committee to examine the workings of the Act, led by one of the few women judges, Justice Lane. SPUC, who had campaigned for this, were jubilant and were sure that the personnel of the committee would ensure a favourable result. When the Lane Committee reported that the Act was generally working well and had "relieved a vast amount of individual suffering", SPUC and LIFE suddenly discovered that the members of the committee were pro-abortion and therefore bound to be biased.

The Lane Report was never debated in

parliament. While it had been generally favourable, with several good proposals for improving the service, it accepted that the decision should be the doctor's and also suggested a reduction in time limits from 28 to 24 weeks.

In fact, there is no time limit in the 1967 Abortion Act. The time limit comes from a much earlier law, the Infant Life Preservation Act of 1929, passed at a time when abortion was still completely illegal. This Act made it an offence to kill a child capable of independent life and was designed to fill the gap between abortion and infanticide, in that it applied at the moment of birth, while the child was still attached to the mother by the umbilical cord. The child was deemed to be "viable" by 28 weeks gestation at the latest. When the 1967 Act was passed, this was taken to be the limit for abortion also.

In every parliamentary attack since then, the question of time limits has been a key issue. In the first, a bill sponsored in 1975 by a Scottish Labour MP, James White, one of the proposals was to reduce the time limit to 20 weeks. It also attempted to restrict the grounds for abortion and to attack both the private/charitable sector and the right of foreign women to get abortions in England.

In 1977, Conservative MP William Benyon proposed an amendment which again included a reduction in time limits to 20 weeks, and in 1979 another Conservative,

John Corrie, included a similar amendment in his anti-abortion bill. It was this amendment which proved to be one of the stumbling blocks for the success of his bill — the anti-abortionists could not agree on a time limit. To accept a limit of 20 weeks seemed tantamount to accepting abortions before that time. Between the campaign mounted by the pro-choice side in and out of parliament, and the dissension on his own side, Corrie's Bill failed as the others did.

### Series of anti-abortion publicity campaigns

Despite the growing acceptance of abortion reform, evidenced both by the successful campaigns to defend the Act and by opinion polls among both the public and the medical profession, the anti-abortionists were determined to deal a body-blow to the Act. They mounted a series of publicity campaigns. Around the time of the two millionth abortion since 1967, they had a series of advertisements in the national press showing a pregnant woman cut in half to show the foetus inside here. "If women had glass tummies", they asked, "would they have abortions?" The abortion rate continued to rise. Perhaps someone told the anti-abortionists that ultra-sound, which allows doctors and women to see the developing foetus, was being used routinely in most maternity units, and was not affecting the number of late abortions. At any rate, they dropped that particular campaign.

Last year saw both the 20th anniversary of the 1967 Act and the three millionth abortion. For this, the anti-abortionists were hoping that one of their supporters would come high in the draw for private members' bills, and they prepared a bill with just one clause in it — on time limits

— which was taken up by David Alton.

The Alton Bill is only about reducing time limits. The anti-abortionists have learnt from their previous defeats that it is not possible to attack the Act wholesale and have decided to compromise on the issue. For it is undoubtedly a compromise. Hardline anti-abortionists would prefer a bill along the lines of the previous ones, given that they cannot do away with legal abortion altogether. They see the introduction of more restrictive time limits as the thin edge of the wedge, getting rid of the Act bit by bit.

The anti-abortionists have fought a dirty, no-holds barred battle. Their propaganda has been centred around an attempt to prove the humanity of the foetus, using a photo of an 18-week "unborn child", which has adorned millions of postcards sent to MPs (sometimes hundreds in the same handwriting), posters and double-page ads in the quality press — a picture which now turns out to be of a natural miscarriage, taken in 1955, and of doubtful gestational age. Alton has described a method of late abortion in very gruesome detail, omitting to mention that it is used before 18 weeks, but not after, as support for his proposed cut-off point.

### Debate on disability and abortion

Some MPs have even claimed that an 18-week old foetus is viable, and since the Bill passed its second reading, there has been a report of a 21-week foetus "left alive for several hours", which Alton will pursue in parliament and with the police. This sort of horror story is common when anti-abortion bills are being discussed.

Over the last few years, the aim of the anti-abortionists has been to steer the debate away from women's rights and towards the supposed rights of the foetus. To some extent they have been successful in this; women have certainly not stopped going for abortions, but have begun to ask doctors if the "baby" will feel pain during the operation. Another tactic has been to claim that women will suffer "post-abortion trauma", and that this can happen at any time. So if women claim that they feel nothing but relief after an abortion, they are warned that trauma will strike in years to come.

The third main strand of their campaign has been directed at the rights of disabled people, which they say are undermined if abortions on grounds of foetal abnormality are allowed. They have always claimed that abortion allows society to ignore the problems which, they say, are the reasons for women wanting abortion — poverty, lack of child-care, housing and so on (rich women only have abortions for reasons of convenience, of course, because they are going on holiday or it would spoil their figure). In the case of disability, women are stated to want abortions only because of so-

ciety's lack of help for disabled people.

There can be no question that all these tactics have been partially successful and that the response from sections of those who support abortion rights has been inadequate. In particular, parliamentarians and the medical lobby have concentrated on the 8% of abortions after 17 weeks done on grounds of foetal abnormality, and the hardship that would result to women forced to continue unwillingly with their pregnancy in such circumstances. Only a few have tackled head-on the question of "non-resident" women, supporting the right of women from Ireland and Spain in particular to come to England for private abortions, in the same way as others come for private medical treatment.

Some people have floated the idea of a "trade-off" — accepting some reduction in time limits in return for an amendment allowing abortion at 12 weeks on demand. There are a number of problems with this. First, and most important, 12 weeks on demand is not on offer and would almost certainly be voted down by the current parliament. Second, without a statutory requirement for all health authorities to provide adequate facilities, the law would be a dead letter. Lastly, it would still restrict the present flexibility allowed to doctors and women.

All public opinion polls show that, in general, people support the current law and think it works reasonably well. The problem is, of course, that women do not find out otherwise until they themselves need the service, and many of them just want to forget about it afterwards — shown by the numbers who admit to having abortions (one in ten), compared to the statistical reality (one in three or four). But there is genuine uneasiness about late abortions, and it is on this that the anti-abortionists are relying for success in their campaign.

### Fighting for abortion to be decriminalized

Those opposing SPUC and LIFE have come together in the Fight Alton's Bill campaign (FAB), which was set up by the National Abortion Campaign. NAC wants to see abortion on demand, the decriminalization of abortion, and adequate facilities available to allow all women to have NHS abortions. It has been campaigning for this since 1975, but since the defeat of the Corrie Bill in 1979, it has been battling with the problem of apathy — so long as the law is not actually under attack, only a few people realize the importance of maintaining the campaign.

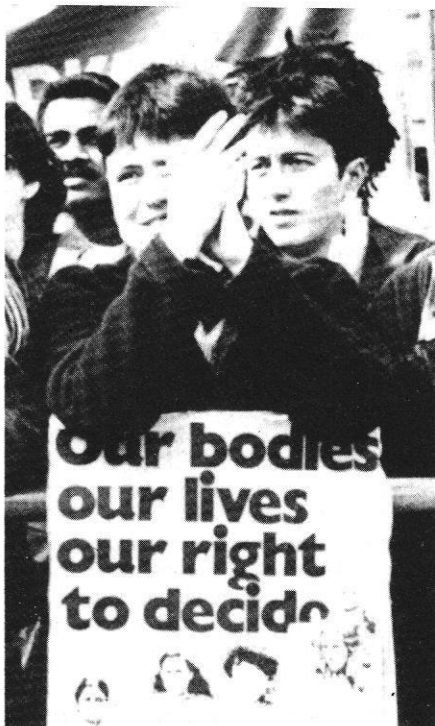
Since 1984, however, when a split took place in NAC, it has been steadily working within the labour movement and has more than doubled the number of trade unions affiliated at national level, and greatly increased the number of local union branches and Labour Party and women's sections in its membership. In particular, it has stepped

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Women are faced with a new threat in the shape of David Alton's bill (DR)



Second, a substantial number of MPs voted for the Bill because of Alton's promise to amend it in its committee stage, by raising the time limit to... well, here he was vague, it could be anything; or by making substantial exceptions for "hard cases" such as rape victims or severe handicap. Third, and most crucially, 36 Labour MPs voted for the Bill and a further 19 abstained, despite clear party policy in support — not merely in support of the 1967 Act, but for abortion on request. A substantial number of these MPs represent Scottish constituencies, where abortion has traditionally been a more contentious issue, because of the influence of the Presbyterian Church.

### Fight to implement Labour Party policy

Women within the Labour Party are therefore mounting a strong campaign calling for the party whip to be put onto MPs for the third vote, and for the de-selection of MPs opposed to party policy. Traditionally, there is no whip on private member's bills, but the government has recently broken that tradition in order to ensure the defeat of a bill to amend secrecy legislation.

Since the vote, Alton has drawn back on all the promises of amendments, saying that to increase the time limit and to allow exemptions for disability would emasculate (sic) the Bill. On rape, he has said that women would have had to report their rape by a certain time (before they could be sure they were pregnant) in order to be able to get an abortion on that ground (at present, rape is not a ground for abortion, although usually allowed on the grounds of the woman's health).

The two sides are unevenly matched. The anti-abortionists have money and the church. Their advertisements in the national press, costing nearly half a million pounds, were paid for by a "philanthropic" businessman, and they have now announced that they are to launch a £1 million campaign of advertising and propaganda material. On the pro-choice side, the strongest card is the involvement of the labour movement and the personal commitment of many thousands of women feeling themselves under attack.

At the end of the day, the issue will be decided in parliament, with its less than 5% women membership. There can be no question that the anti-abortionists are in a minority and that if they have their way there will be an appalling price to pay. In selecting the limited issue of time limits, they have posed the hardest task yet for the pro-choice lobby.

If Alton loses, it may be some time before the anti-abortionists dare to try again. If they win, even if in a limited way, we can be sure that it will just be the start of a long, hard battle to erode women's abortion rights, sex education, and even contraception. At stake are women's lives. The pro-choice movement cannot afford to lose. ★

up its educational work, to counteract the influence of LIFE and SPUC in the schools.

NAC set up the Fight Alton's Bill campaign to draw in the widest possible support, on the basis of defence of the 1967 Abortion Act and no reduction in time limits. Within FAB, it continues to campaign for its programme, as a result of which membership is increasing at a faster rate than usual. FAB has involved all the pro-choice groups, as well as members of all political parties, including the Tories, and very broad sections of the labour movement. It has succeeded in getting sponsorship of its major demonstration — to be held on March 19 — from both the national Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party.

FAB has also attracted all the far-left groups, only one or two of which have a consistent record of work in NAC (namely, those supporting the Fourth International). But some of these groups have played a very disruptive role. The British SWP, for instance, has disregarded the decisions of the organizing committee, alleging that it represents nothing. From the beginning they failed to recognize that setting up a campaign with limited demands was the best way to involve the broadest possible layers in fighting the immediate threat of the Alton Bill, counterposing instead NAC's full demands. There were also attempts to sabotage the one women-only event the campaign organized — a torch-lit procession on the eve of the second reading of the Bill, which nevertheless attracted over 6,000 women — on the grounds that abortion is a class issue, not a woman's issue (it is, of course, both).

However, the two central problems come from other directions. First, there is the em-

phasis on disability as the main reason for wanting to retain late abortions, which leaves the campaign open to the charge that they are ignoring the 92% of post-17 week abortions done for other reasons, and that they are discriminating against the disabled. The second central problem is the role of the medical profession and some MPs, who want to see a reduction to 24 weeks.

### No reduction in time limits

The response to this has been to carefully explain why there must be no reduction in time limits at all, not least because this would be seen by the anti-abortionists as a victory, however limited, which would lead the way to further attacks, and to put the emphasis back to the woman and her right to decide whether or not to continue with the pregnancy. That this approach is succeeding is shown by public opinion polls, which have indicated a steady dropping-off of support for Alton as the weeks go by.

Within parliament, the attack of the campaign is directed mainly at Labour MPs. Alton got a majority of 45 on the second reading. This was a lot less than at the second reading of any of the previous anti-abortion bills, but the overall vote for both sides was the highest ever on this issues, and one of the highest ever recorded for a private member's bill. He got his majority with the help of three groups in particular that the campaign against him will be highlighting.

First, all but one of the Northern Ireland MPs voted for him, despite the fact that the 1967 Act does not apply to the province.

# Abortion victory in Canada

**"THE MOST important victory for women's rights in Canada since we won the vote." That is how the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) has described the January 28, 1988, Supreme Court decision that declared the Canadian abortion law unconstitutional.**

**ANNE MacLELLAN  
BRUNELLE**

**T**HE DAY of the decision was bitterly cold but there were pro-choice supporters out in front of the Morgentaler Clinic from 7am to await the announcement. It came at 10.30am. Chants of "We've won" and "The people have spoken, the clinics will stay open" could be heard blocks away. The activists were aware that five judges in Ottawa are not the people of Canada, but this decision was imposed on the court by mass pressure. The ruling was not given lightly, it was wrested from them. The movement had indeed won.

In 1969 the Trudeau Liberals passed a law under the Criminal Code of Canada which declared that abortions were legal only if done in a hospital and if a Therapeutic Abortion Committee (TAC) deemed that the life or health of the woman was at risk. The TACs were made up of three doctors who met in secret and had no direct contact with the women whose lives they were affecting. The decision of the TAC could not be appealed. This law was called an "historic compromise" between the demands of the anti-choice forces who called for all abortions to be illegal, and the pro-choice forces who were calling for full access to free abortion.

For a time the different Federal and Provincial governments were able to win the battle for public opinion by presenting themselves as the sane middle between two fanatical groups at opposite poles. As time passed, however, the message of OCAC and other pro-choice groups across the country got through: it is not fanatical to demand that a woman have the right to

control her own body, her own reproductive capacity, and the right to decide when and if to have children. And that must include the right to terminate a pregnancy.

## Access to abortion still restricted

While this Supreme Court decision — analogous to the Roe and Wade decision in the United States, which stated that legal restriction of access to abortion is a violation of the right to privacy — has given the women of Canada the right to make their own choices on abortion, it does not guarantee access in terms of funding or location.

Several provincial governments have already moved to limit access. In Alberta and Nova Scotia the governments have stated that they will only fund abortions that are done in hospitals that have functioning Therapeutic Abortion Committees, even though they face court challenges as to the legality of this regulation in the face of the Supreme Court decision.

In British Columbia, right wing Social Credit Premier VanderZalm has gone one step further. He has declared that BC Medicare will not fund any abortions unless the woman faces death and she demonstrates a need for financing. He flatly refuses to see that this is a return to the two-tiered health-care system wherein women with money are able to get safe, medical abortions and working women and poor women end up at over-crowded emergency rooms, or are forced to have babies they do not want or cannot feed.

In Prince Edward Island the problem is somewhat different. The provincial government has accepted that abortions can be performed, but the hospitals in the province have refused to do them. To date, no doctor has offered to set up a free-standing clinic.

## Call for constitutional "rights for the foetus"

In Ontario, Health Minister Eleanor Caplan has announced that Ontario Medicare (the Ontario Health Insurance Plan, OHIP) will pay for abortions done in hospitals and in free-standing clinics, like the ones run by Doctors Henry Morgentaler and Robert Scott. Unfortunately, the OHIP payment that will be made will only cover the doctors' services. It will not cover counselling, nursing care and so on which are covered in the regular funding of a hospital. (If a woman who does not have OHIP coverage chooses to have an abortion in a hospital, it will cost her approximately C\$1,000; if she has the abortion at the Morgentaler Clinic her cost will only be C\$300, and she knows she will be cared for in a completely non-judgmental, supportive environment.)

On the federal level, right-wing lobbyists and politicians have been calling for new legislation to restrict abortion. This has tak-

en several different routes. One, similar to the current threat posed by the Alton Bill in Britain [see accompanying article], is a call for a limit on the number of weeks of pregnancy during which an abortion can be performed. Other anti-choice forces have demanded that the federal government use the "notwithstanding clause" of the Canadian constitution to override the Supreme Court ruling and enforce the old law. However, the biggest threat is the demand to enshrine in the Constitution the "rights of the foetus", which will subordinate the rights of women to the rights of the "pre-born".

The women's movement in Canada has always called for fully-funded, community-based women's clinics, where a wide range of healthcare needs will be met, including abortion. As it is apparent that the Supreme Court decision did not grant us this, it is good that we have more than twenty years experience to show us the way forward in continuing the struggle.

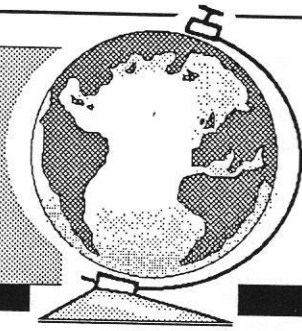
## Building alliances with the workers' movement

There have been many debates about how to go about winning abortion rights. Many different strategies and tactics have been put forward in the movement. Some groups have favoured lobbying and writing letters to politicians. Others have put their faith in the courts. There were groups that recognized that both politicians and judges can, and must, be forced to make reforms that are advantageous to the working class. These are the women that have advocated the strategy that was used in Quebec in the 1970s and again in Toronto over the last five years: mass action. Without minimizing the importance of Dr Morgentaler's heroic contribution, (he challenged the law by opening up his "illegal" clinics), the victory was won by getting as many working people as possible into the streets for rallies, demonstrations, pickets and tribunals.

This strategy has taken the abortion rights movement into the Ontario Labour Federation and the Canadian Labour Congress, into the anti-racist movement and into women-of-colour groups, into groups of disabled women and the women's health-care movement. It has shown the movement's ability to find and win allies in all sectors of the workers' and women's movements.

With the pro-choice struggle entering a new phase, it is now essential that the lessons of the recent past not be forgotten. Pro-choice forces must go back into the streets to demand full access and funding from all the provincial governments, demand that the federal government keep its laws off women's bodies and not pass another law that will restrict choice on abortion in any way. Victories for the women's movement and the workers' movement may be few and far between these days, but a victory for one is still a victory for all. ★



AROUND  
THE  
WORLD

## BELGIUM

**Historic victory for women's rights**

FIFTY DEFENDANTS in the "monster trial" against a Ghent abortion center were acquitted at the end of February. This was the first time that a Belgian judge has declared outright that the 1867 law on "crimes against the family" is antiquated and that the abortion centers offer a solution to women's problems. Moreover, the judge acknowledged that women did not seek abortions for the sake of "convenience" or "egotism."

It was recognized that the Ghent center functioned in an irreproachable way and that the doctors do their job without any concern for money. The judge even said that a judgement against the defendants would have been harmful to public health and a source of "agitation."

In the March 1 issue of *La Gauche*, Marijke Colle commented: "This judgement is an argument in favor of changing the law along the lines of the Herman-Michielsens-Lallemand bill. This proposal will not decriminalize abortion, but it would legalize the present practice of abortion in Belgium."

"The abortion centers in Flanders, in Brussels and in the Walloon country, the abortion committees and all the women's groups and organizations should be happy with this judgement. Even if the prosecutor appeals, it will be an encouragement to new initiatives for a definite change in the legislation." ★

## PERU

**People's Assembly**

A COLOMBIAN far left publication, *A Luchar*, in its December issue gave the following account of an important attempt to unify workers' and popular struggles in Peru:

MORE THAN 3,000 delegates representing trade-union, popular, student and peasant organizations, as well as student centers, intellectuals, deputies, senators and activists of the left political forces in Peru met in November to form the National People's Assembly (ANP). It is to serve as an instrument for centralizing struggles, and, according to its organizers, as "an alternative instrument of power for the popular masses."

Delegations came from the most remote parts of the country, from Cuzco, from the villages of Ayacucho, as well as from the

Lima suburbs. For four days, they discussed the central problems posed by the new period opened by the deepgoing crisis of the regime of Alan Garcia. All the analyses tended to show that despite the elections that the Aprista government was able to create at a certain time, now broad sectors of the masses consider it a fundamental enemy, the representative of capitalism and imperialism. The National People's Assembly called for a general civic strike for February against the government's policy of hunger and repression.

The delegates also participated in a fraternal debate about the platform of struggle that should be adopted by the meeting. There was a need for a popular and national alternative for solving the country's crisis and fundamental questions such as national sovereignty and the expropriation of the imperialist monopolies; peace based on social justice and the elimination of militarization and the "dirty war"; an anti-imperialist and non-aligned international policy; solidarity with all peoples struggling for their liberation.

Another problem quite widely discussed was the organizational leadership of the ANP. What bodies should be part of it. What forms of delegating power and representation should it adopt.

On this point, it was decided to form a standing representative body made up of 37 representatives of trade-union, peasant, popular and regional organizations, coordinated by a presidium of seven members.

The Peruvian National People's Assembly reflects not only a step forward for, and growth of, the people's struggle, but also an advanced process of centralizing the different social sectors. For example, the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers (CGTP), the Peasants' Confederation of Peru (CCP), the Cross-Union Confederation of Public Employees (CITE), the United National Union of Teachers (SUTEP) and many other organizations are participating in the centralization of this process.

The left political forces, such as the Peruvian Communist Party, the Mariategui Unification Party [PUM], the Red Fatherland Communist Party and the People's Democratic Union (UDP), as well as smaller groups are also actively involved in the ANP. The Assembly thus reflects a growth and consolidation of the radical left, especially of the PUM and the UDP, which gained by far the most support from this meeting.

The most interesting debate because of its timeliness in Latin America was wheth-

er the ANP was a governmental alternative or only a mechanism for centralizing the masses. During the debate, positions did arise that sought to limit the more reactionary aspects of the ANP. But a great majority agreed on characterizing the ANP as an embryo of people's power that would be reinforced, built and counterposed to the bourgeois government. Finally, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement sent its greetings to the Assembly, pledging to support and advance its conclusions. ★

## USSR

**Perestroika and women**

A CRITICAL NOTE was included in the speech by ex-astronaut Valentina Tereshkova, the top Soviet spokesperson on women, to the official Women's Day rally in Moscow's Bolshoi Theater on March 5. She began by placing the question of an improvement in the situation of women at the center of the *perestroika*.

"Further democratization of the life of the society is unthinkable without increasing the role of women in society, and this depends largely on their working and living conditions and possibilities for leisure. It is true that women today work without discrimination. But what is important is something else — to what extent are they satisfied with their profession, what real, and not just proclaimed, possibilities do they have for advancement, for raising their general educational, professional and cultural level?"

"In industry, agriculture and the building trade today, many women still do low-skilled, heavy work. The introduction of new machinery in production is far from always being accompanied by upgrading of the skills of women workers. The new management methods make it possible now for the enterprises to devote part of their incomes to improving conditions for, and protection of, women workers. But in fact they are reducing spending for these things." ★

## CHINA

**Protests in Tibet**

THE BIGGEST Tibetan religious festival, the Great Prayer Festival, held in early March, led to anti-Chinese protests in the country's capital, Lhasa. Following the riots last fall that were severely repressed by Chinese forces, the latest demonstrations by monks demanded "freedom for Tibet," the return of "his Holiness, the Dalai Lama" (forced into exile in India in 1959), and protested against "Chinese oppression." Several people were killed in clashes between police and demonstrators.

With a heritage of feudal theocracy and virtual self-sufficiency in the high Himalayas, the Tibetan people have a fierce determination to regain the independence of their country. Against the background of centuries of resistance of Chinese efforts to assimilate them, 40 years of incorporation

into China counts for little. The Chinese presence, which is mainly administrative and military, is seen as foreign occupation by a people whose language and religion divide them from China.

The Peking regime has a very bad record for Tibetans. Since its troops went into the country in 1951, anti-Chinese incidents have multiplied. In 1954 and 1956, the People's Republic enduringly alienated the local population by terrible military repression. In 1959, the Tibetans' aspirations were again trampled on. Thousands of people were killed and arrested, the "God king" was forced into exile, temples were destroyed, the scriptures of the Tibetan religion, Lamaism, were confiscated.

Long repressed by the Chinese authorities, Lamaism is the ideological crucible of resistance to assimilation. Repression has reinforced this role and marks the failure of the Chinese policy of integrating Tibet into China. On many occasions, history has shown that people's cannot be separated from their historical religious traditions by brutality.

To avoid getting mired in Afghan-style quicksand within their own republic, the Chinese will have to recognize the right of Tibetans to their religious, linguistic and cultural identity and discuss with them what political forms real respect for this autonomy should take. ★

[From the March 10 issue of Rouge, paper of the French section of the Fourth International.]

SENEGAL

Appeal by Landing Savane

AS A CANDIDATE in the February 18 presidential elections, I appeal to all progressive forces and democrats throughout the world. Democracy in Senegal is gravely threatened because of the irresponsibility of the Abdou Diouf regime.

Already toward the end of the election campaign, Diouf, frightened by a general mistrust of his regime by the masses, began to make public threats against the opposition parties. He went so far as to call their leaders "highway men." Deliberately aiming to put in question the freedoms won by a hard struggle of the Senegalese people, he promised to "clean up democracy" and "pull out the weeds."

After perpetrating massive vote frauds, amounting to actual electoral piracy, Diouf had official results of the February 28 vote proclaimed that gave him an overwhelming victory in both the presidential and legislative elections. The entire Senegalese people and all the informed observers agree that no credit can be given to these rigged, preposterous results.

Abdou Diouf himself is so well aware of these outrageousness of these results and of his own unpopularity that he decided before having them proclaimed to close the University of Dakar, along with all the other schools. Finally, on Monday, February 29, he decreed a state of siege and curfew

throughout the Dakar region "until further orders."

Already leaders of the opposition have been arrested. The repressive forces have invaded the university campus, and savagely attacked the students, wounding dozens of them and making arbitrary arrests. The entire city of Dakar is being heavily patrolled by the army, the riot forces and the police, who are attacking the people, especially the youth, with grenades and clubs. They are detaining and arresting more and more people.

All these events have exposed to the world the real face of the highly touted "Senegalese democracy," which some people have wanted to portray as a model and a rare pearl in Africa. In these grave moments, I appeal to all democratic forces concerned about peace and justice, especially those that identify with the ideals of socialism and democracy, to raise their voices and demand that Diouf and his "socialist" party lift the state of siege, stop the repression and respect the popular will. ★

[See page 28 for report on the aftermath of the Senegalese elections.]

SANTO DOMINGO

Protests against austerity

TURMOIL has been growing in this country since the end of February. The "liberal" president, Joaquin Balaguer, has been using force to repress mass discontent. The source of the crisis is austerity measures that have been hitting the workers. The demonstrators are demanding a substantial decrease and at least a two-year freeze of the prices of basic foods and medicines and a minimum monthly wage of 700 pesos (\$100).

Inflation in Santo Domingo has exceeded 40% for the past six months. Prices are continuing to climb, and speculation is rampant. Wages and social benefits have been frozen, health has become a luxury for workers and the petty bourgeoisie. To deal with the economic crisis, Balaguer has not been able to come up with anything more original than following the method of

the IMF.

However, the protest movement is spreading in a country with a strong-trade-union tradition. The National Conference of People's Organizations, which includes neighborhood committees, as well as other mass organizations, is organizing the protests.

The police repression has already caused five deaths and several hundred casualties. The demonstrators are using the methods available for self-defence. Stores are being sacked. Most of the cities are experiencing demonstrations, and the unions have launched a call for a general strike, together with the people's organizations.

Balaguer has begun to make concessions, announcing an increase of 120 pesos in the lower wages. The social-democratic opposition led by former president Bosch is supporting him, saying that taking power today is inconceivable.

Nonetheless, the governmental repression is likely to have a hard time in putting out the fires. ★

[Abridged from the March 10 issue of Rouge, paper of the French section of the Fourth International.]

INTERNATIONAL

Moscow Trials campaign

LATEST signatures for the appeal to rehabilitate the Moscow trials' defendants (see page 7):

France: Prof. Maxime Rodinson, Sorbonne.

Israeli state: Tuvia Shlonsky, Jerusalem Univ.; Tivka Parnass, Jerusalem Univ.

Sweden: Hans Göran Franck, lawyer and MP; Agneta Pleijel, author; Johan Lönnroth, Gothenburg Univ., VPK (Communist Party) councillor; Matts Nilsson, unionist, Socialistiska Partiet; Prof. Kjell Jonsson, Umeå Univ.; Asst. Prof. Ingvar Johansson, Umeå Univ.; Prof. Daniel Kallós, Umeå Univ.; Hans Levander, historian; David Gaunt, Umeå Univ.; Staffan Ling, TV producer.

★





# 4 NEWS FROM THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

## MIDDLE EAST

### Support the Palestinians' struggle

THE PEOPLE of the occupied territories have been confronting the occupation forces directly since December 9, 1987. We are witnessing an actual insurrection of the Palestinian people for their national rights. This uprising has been backed by massive participation of the working people and traders in the general strike.

The occupation forces are stopping at nothing in order to break the mobilization — the “beatings policy,” repeatedly opening fire on demonstrators, searches of entire neighborhoods, arrests of thousands of people, “systematization of torture.”

To date, dozens of people have been killed, and hundreds wounded, including many women and children. Doctors report dozens of cases of miscarriages of pregnant women affected by a new gas that the occupation forces have been firing into homes.

Curfews on neighborhoods, villages and towns have become the main method used to break the population's will to struggle. In the Gaza Strip, 350,000 people have lived under a curfew for around three weeks. The town of Nablus and its surrounding area (200,000 people) have been subjected to a curfew for two weeks. Some refugee camps have been under a curfew virtually since the start of the events more than two months ago. One of the aims of the curfews are to starve the population.

On February 7, the mayor of the town of Tulkarem made an appeal for help. Because of the curfew imposed on his town, the population lacked bread and milk. Moreover, the population of the refugee camps, which has been in the front rank of the general strike, suffers from chronic malnutrition, and this has been aggravated by the curfews. To counter the curfew policy and maintain the strike, the struggling population urgently needs financial aid. An international campaign is necessary today!

Committees to fight the occupation have been formed in several places in Israel, and are developing many activities to support the population of the occupied territories — distribution of leaflets in the big Israeli cities, fund collections, sending shipments of food and medicines into the refugee camps, organizing demonstrations, publicizing the acts of brutality committed by the occupation forces.

These committees are made up of Arab and Jewish activists belonging to new polit-

ical organizations, as well as of activists of the Sons of the Village movement and the Revolutionary Communist League [the section of the Fourth International in the Israeli state]. These committees have taken on the task of delivering all the funds collected to the popular committees that are organizing the struggle in the occupied territories.

The Committees to Fight the Occupation can be contacted through the following addresses: Rémy Mendelzweig, 20a Sport St., 34574 Haifa (Tel: 972-4-384965); Marcello Weksler, Post Box 26163, Tel Aviv (Tel: 972-3-658567). ★

## NETHERLANDS

### Dutch youth congress

THE ACTION PLAN of the outgoing leadership, entitled “Advance Against the Stream” was adopted at the recent congress of Rebel, the Dutch Fourth Internationalist youth organization. The congress chose a new leadership consisting of seven men and seven women.

An important part of the Action Plan is organizing international solidarity. In the coming months, Rebel will conduct a fundraising campaign for Sayco, a South African mass youth organization. In the summer months, the central task will be support for the Nicaraguan youth organization, the Juventud Sandinista.

Another important part of the plan consists of activities to improve the position of young people in the Netherlands. For April 11-15 a national week of action against the Deetman's educational policy is planned. In May, various branches are organizing evenings on the draft.

Finally, the Fourth International youth camp is on the agenda. It will be held this year in France. Rebel is organizing a campaign to build for the summer camp.

Rebel would not be Rebel if it were not up to its neck in other actions. Some examples — Pink Saturday, the national anti-apartheid demonstration around June, women's day, the national demonstration against nuclear energy on April 23 in Gasselte.

Guest speakers were a representative of the JGS, the Fourth Internationalist youth organization in Belgium, the Palestinian Ibrahim al Baz, and a representative of the Juventud Sandinista. ★

[Abridged from the March 2 issue of *Klassenstrijd*, paper of the Dutch section of the Fourth International.]

## ITALY

### 1968 — Twenty years on

THE TWENTIETH anniversary of 1968 has stimulated a series of debates in Italy that will probably go on throughout the year. The daily and weekly press, both of the bourgeoisie and the workers' movement, have devoted many pages and supplements to the argument. (For example, *Il Manifesto* has begun publishing a special monthly supplement that will continue until December). Moreover, innumerable debates, lectures and roundtables have already been held.

The Lega Comunista Italiana (LCR, Italian section of the Fourth International) published a supplement to the February issue of its paper, *Bandiera Rossa*, and has organized a series of meetings to discuss the significance of the crisis capitalist society went through at the end of the 1960s and the prospects for revolutionary struggle in capitalist Europe 20 years later. This initiative has achieved a notable success, one of the most significant scored by the organization in recent years.

Very well-attended meetings have been held in around 50 cities and university centers, in particular in Turin, Bologna, Lecce and Rome. In many cases, representatives of other organizations in the workers' movement and left intellectuals have spoken. For example, in Rome, the chair of the Democrazia Proletaria parliamentary group, Franco Russo, was among the speakers. In Turin, Costanze Preve, a Marxist philosopher spoke; and in Bologna a member of the Regional Council elected in the Green slate.

The campaign culminated in the meeting held in the great hall of the Milan Center on February 28, which was attended by more than 500 people. The introductory report was given by Lidia Cirillo from the Political Bureau of the LCR. Livio Maitan gave the concluding summary. Other speakers included: Alain Krivine from the French LCR; Luigi Vinci from the leadership of Democrazia Proletaria; Rocco Papandrea, a FIAT worker; and Piergiorgio Tiboni, from the Milan Secretariat of the CISL [Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Liberi, Italian Confederation of Free Trade Unions] metalworkers' union, the FIM. ★

# REBEL

# State of emergency declared after electoral fraud

ENJOYING A special economic partnership with France and led by a grouping belonging to the Socialist International, Abdou Diouf's government has always been smiled on with the same indulgence by the Matignon and the Elysée [residences of the right-wing French prime minister and the social-democratic president]. The media have been similarly unanimous, quick to praise Senegalese "democracy". It is therefore not surprising that the press, with few exceptions, has minimized the recent popular uprising.

VINCENT KERMEL

**"E**LECTION without violence", proclaimed *le Figaro*, untruthfully. "A calm election", the *Quotidien de Paris* noted in three lines at the bottom of a page. As for *Le Monde's* editorialist, he lectured Abdou Diouf for his easy going attitude toward his opponents, "in an Africa where the image of the 'chief' must be strong and authoritarian".

Supposedly, in this case, electoral fraud or a state of emergency do not have the usual dictatorial meaning. Since the continent has accustomed us to worse, this is just a lesser evil, and it would be advisable to resign ourselves to it!

For the past months, the opposition has demanded that the Electoral Code be modified [see IV 130 and 133]. This Code is generally acknowledged to have favoured the 1983 electoral frauds. A committee has been set up to demand such basic guarantees as the right of parties on the ballot to choose their own representatives at polling stations, identification of voters by means of identity cards, the use of individual polling booths, counting the vote in the presence of the opposition and so on. But Abdou Diouf quickly reneged on his promises to clean up the electoral lists.

The campaign for the presidential and legislative elections on February 28 was therefore, as foreseen, tainted with attacks on freedom of expression, censorship of radio and TV speeches supporting the students' struggle and so on.

Despite these manoeuvres, despite his enjoying the facilities of state institutions, as well as the support of chiefs of the Muslim religious brotherhoods and from support committees set up by various ministers, Abdou Diouf was afraid of losing.

For the first time in many years a movement emerged that opposed his policy and sought to defeat it this time around.

It is the candidate of the bourgeois opposition, Abdoulaye Wade of the Democratic Socialist Party (PDS), supported by two pro-Moscow parties, who will gain the most from the discontent with the election. But part of the discontent will also benefit the popular and revolutionary candidature of Landing Savane. Savane is a member of the And-Jeff movement [of Maoist origin], whose candidature was also supported by the Workers' Socialist Organization, the OST, Senegalese section of the Fourth International [see his statement on page 26]. His campaign, centred around denouncing the policy imposed by the IMF, unemployment and the educational reform, gained a wide hearing in the towns and among young people.

## Nobody believes the official election results

The ruling Socialist Party found it difficult to compete with the opposition in the field of mass initiatives, however it has not given up its shows of strength. The SP's action committees are groups that intimidate the opposition. That is what provoked the confrontations in Thies and Dakar.

As the campaign unfolded, the threats of Abdou Diouf's "grand democracy" became more precise. In fact, the electoral fraud was so gross that the results must be systematically re-evaluated. While all the observers noted a very high turn-out for the opposition, the minister of the interior, usurping the prerogative of the Supreme Court, announced a score of 77% for Ab-

dou Diouf and only 21% for the PDS. It was this that set the tinder alight and caused the population to take to the streets.

Nobody believes the official figures. They have no more authenticity than those of the electoral masquerade in Haiti, and which vary according to convenience. Credited with 21% of the vote on February 29, the PDS were given 24% a day later... after the riots.

## University campus stormed by police

When it was challenged, the government answered with the police and decreed a state of emergency and a curfew in Dakar. The university and the high schools were closed, and the campus was stormed by the forces of order. Armoured vehicles patrolled the streets of the capital. The candidate and the whole leadership of the PDS were arrested, as well as the leader of a pro-Moscow organization, the PIT. Young demonstrators who were stopped and questioned had their hair cropped on the spot. A government party leaflet distributed in Saint-Louis went as far as to call for firing on demonstrators. The opposition is in practice threatened with being outlawed.

Nonetheless, the sporadic and spontaneous clashes continued in the popular districts. Some petrol pumps were set alight, and some militants or well-known members of the Socialist Party were targets.

It has been demonstrated that this regime will only tolerate the opposition when it does not constitute a real threat to the ruling party. When it becomes a catalyst for popular discontent, the regime takes out a big stick against both the opposition and working people.

The movement challenging the February 28 elections expresses a profound upsurge of discontent with government policy.

Abdou Diouf's regime has been incapable of attacking the economic and social crisis. Following exactly prescriptions of the IMF and the World Bank, it has contributed to increasing unemployment and to reducing peasants' income. The "new agricultural and industrial policies" have meant the "freeing" of the economy and the working class from "protective measures". Some of the Work Code's guarantees are being called into question. The peasantry is thrown on the mercy of the private merchants, as in colonial times.

But there is no austerity for the dignitaries of the regime. Widespread corruption is growing through the clientelist networks of the Socialist Party. This regime has no credibility with the mass of the Senegalese people. It has no right to boast of its democratic practices in order to cover up its misdeeds. The regime still benefits greatly from a complicit silence. This silence must be broken. ★

[From the March 3 edition of *Rouge*, newspaper of the French section of the Fourth International.]