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Readers' Survey

THE results of our readers' survey will be published in the next issue of *International Viewpoint*, and not this one as advertised, due to pressures of space.

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Workers challenge Jaruzelski's "normalization"

A NEW ASSAULT was launched on the living standards of working people in February, when the bureaucratic regime decreed staggering price rises. Social and political tensions have risen sharply. On April 25, public transport in the cities of Budgoszcz and Inowroclaw was paralyzed by an all-out strike. After 12 hours, the workers won a 69% wage increase. On the following day, a prolonged strike began in the gigantic Lenin steel complex in Nowa Huta, in the suburbs of Cracow.

The Cracow student movement launched a broad movement of solidarity with the workers. A week later, workers in the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk declared a sit-in strike. Material demands were combined with calls for trade-union freedom and political democracy. General Jaruzelski's regime faced its biggest test of strength since the defeat of the political revolution in December 1981.

The following is a reconstruction of the history of the first two weeks of the dramatic struggle of the workers and students in Cracow, based on information obtained from activists in several Polish independent organizations.

CYRIL SMUGA & ARTHUR WILKINS

IN THE MORNING of April 26, Andrzej Szewczuwaniec, a 38-year-old worker, set off the alarm in his department. It was not because of an accident or a breakdown. It was a call for a strike. Shortly afterwards, 700 other workers in the Lenin steel complex rolling mill downed tools. The strike quickly spread to the other departments. By 2pm in the afternoon, 4,000 workers were involved; by 5pm, more than 8,000 workers were on strike. On April 27, the steelworks was shut down — more than 20,000 workers were in the factory grounds. The official union, the OPZZ, fiercely opposed it, although it was to try to negotiate with the management behind the strikers' backs.

A central strike committee was elected. Quite naturally, it was chaired by Andrzej Szewczuwaniec. At the start, it included nine members, all Solidarnosc activists. As more and more departments went on strike, additional members were added until the number reached 18 in the evening of May 4. Three of those elected were former leaders of Solidarnosc in the factory. They had been fired at the December 1981 coup d'état, but had come back to join the strik-

ers. They were Jan Ciesielski, Mieczyslaw Gil and Stanislaw Handzlik.

"We have to prepare for a long strike"

The strike started to become organized. It was decided that each team would spend 16-hour stretches in the factory followed by eight hours of rest. It was not properly speaking a sit-in strike. In particular, the strikers did not control the entrances to the factory. But the workers were to keep up the pressure by maintaining a permanent massive presence.

When the management closed the canteens on April 30, the strikers issued an appeal to the population. Quickly, they were flooded with food. On May 3, confronted with the management's stubborn refusal to negotiate, the strike committee declared: "We have to prepare ourselves for a long strike."

Commissions were elected to take charge of supplies, dissemination of information, dealing with sabotage attempts by management stooges, secretarial functions

and technical organization of the strike. Each one was headed by a strike committee member.

Some of the strikers' demands resembled those that have in general been formulated during the strikes that have been occurring since the beginning of the year — a 50% increase in base pay, full payment for days on strike, an increase in bonuses linked to working conditions. Others, however, harked back to the tradition of the August 1980 strike, and testified to the steel complex workers' determination to extend the movement to other categories of workers.

For example, they demanded a doubling of the wage compensation for the February price increases (from 6,000 to 12,000 zlotys a month) for all workers in industry, health care and education, as well as for pensioners. They also demanded a sliding scale of wages for all workers, a natural response to the increasingly galloping inflation.

Demand for reinstatement of 1981 activists

Finally, they demanded publication in the media of information about the strike (in August 1980, publication of the terms of the agreement signed at the Gdansk shipyard was a major step forward in the emergence of Solidarnosc) and a guarantee that the strikers would not be subjected to repression. As a concrete token that there would be no repression, they demanded that the Solidarnosc activists fired since 1981 be reinstated, and in particular the leaders of the Nowa Huta Steelworkers' Commission.

Moreover, the strikers decided that after the end of the action, the strike committees would be automatically transformed into organizing committees of the workers' own union in every shop. This posed the question of the legalization of Solidarnosc, although indirectly.

Extending the strike was at the center of all the strikers' concerns. At the beginning, every message of solidarity was greeted with outbursts of joy. When we telephoned the strike committee, a member of the information commission told us, "If the strike does not spread, we will be swept away. We are sick of messages of support. We want news of strikes!"

In the first days of the action, it seemed that the strike would spread naturally. Strike actions broke out in the Stalowa Wola steelworks, in the Domel engineering factory and in the Pafawag railway equipment plant in Wroclaw. They quickly came to an end after big wage increases were granted. Only in the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, the cradle of Solidarnosc, did the sit-in strike launched on May 2 become consolidated.

After a day's delay, Lech Walesa joined the strikers. Unlike August 1980, the action did not spread to the other Baltic coast enterprises. Since May 5, the shipyard has

been surrounded by large forces of riot police and cut off from the rest of the city. All day long on May 6 the management issued appeals to the strikers, calling on them to leave the yard and threatening them with intervention by the police forces.

In Cracow, the students mobilized rapidly and on a larger and larger scale in solidarity with the Nowa Huta workers. The first demonstration of a thousand students took place on April 28. Representatives of the various opposition organizations spoke at it — from the Independent Student Association (NZS), the Freedom and Peace movement (WiP), the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) and the Independent Poland Confederation (KPN). They called for supporting and extending the strike. The police forcibly dispersed the demonstrators.

On May 1, in response to a call from the PPS, supported by the NZS, the KPN and various Solidarnosc structures, a march of a thousand people started out from the Kalinowe neighborhood in Nowa Huta toward the Lenin steelworks. It was flanked by police.

An hour and a half later, the police attacked it violently. At 6pm, outside the church after a mass for the strikers, PPS activists organized a new march of two thousand people toward the steelworks. It was broken up even more brutally.

On May 3, the anniversary of the proclamation of Poland's first democratic constitution in 1791 and the former national holiday, the provisional coordinating committee of the groups for Polish independence in the Cracow region (which includes several Solidarnosc structures, along with the KPN, the PPS and other political groups) organized a big demonstration to support the steelworkers and call for an extension of the struggle.

Some 10,000 people joined the demonstration coming out of the mass. The police managed to encircle the head of the demonstration. Plain clothes police beat people indiscriminately. Besides clubs, they used brass knuckles. The clashes lasted for three hours. The fighting then shifted toward the student dormitories, where it continued until 5am.

"An enormous escalation in the repression"

THE VICE-CHAIR of the Central Executive Committee of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), Agata Michalek, a political sciences student at the Jagellon University in Cracow, gave the following description of the political situation in Poland in a telephone interview with *International Viewpoint* on May 6.

For the first time since the anti-working-class crackdown in December 1981, the repressive forces have launched a punitive operation against workers inside a factory. Since 1982, the police had only attacked street demonstrations. What happened in Nowa Huta is an enormous escalation in the repression, a step toward mass repression within the factories. It was carried out with the maximum violence short of using firearms. In Nowa Huta, the way has been opened for a new, extremely dangerous dynamic of repression.

For that reason, the student youth in Cracow, along with our party and other independent organizations, consider that the top-priority task today is building firm and broad protest against the repression in Nowa Huta. We have to do everything possible to keep mass repression from spreading, from hitting the Lenin shipyard workers in Gdansk and the strikers in other enterprises or the student movement. It is clear that the regime wants to provoke premature social explosions in order to crush them with all the violence it can muster and thereby "pacify" the society.

This worries us enormously. The Solidarnosc leaders Stanislaw Handzlik and Mieczyslaw Gil sent us a message before the police attacked Nowa Huta. They recommended that we should not organize a sit-in strike in the faculties but use other forms of protest in order to avoid the regime launching physical repression inside the university and crushing our movement.

Yesterday, we could see from experience that Gil and Handzlik were right. During the big assembly, large contingents of police surrounded the university, including units of the Anti-Terrorist Brigade that had stormed the Lenin complex a few hours before. They were seeking a violent confrontation. They wanted to clash with the monitors organized by the Student Self-Management Committee.

A unit tried to break into a school, but they were driven back by the students. They tried to force the doors. They pulled back 50 meters only after a very energetic protest by the rector. Rector Koj and Vice-rector Grodzicki have conducted themselves with great dignity. They support the student protest. They have asked us to use intelligent forms of struggle, because they are afraid that there is a desire to crush our university, which is the country's most important center of academic life and is leading the student mobilization. We have abandoned our original plan of occupying the schools. Together with the teaching personnel, we have declared a stay-away strike [in the schools] and an occupation strike in the student dormitories. This is also the position of the Regional Workers' Committee of the PPS. It is necessary to strike where possible to extend the mass protest, without exposing ourselves to mass repression. ★

The students built barricades and defended themselves by throwing various things out of the windows of the buildings. The police arrested a lot of people, who were given big fines. A student, Zbigniew Glebocki was badly beaten by the police, jailed and charged with assaulting policemen. He risks getting a prison sentence.

Anti-terrorist brigade storms steelworks

However, the bureaucracy seemed to be adopting a conciliatory attitude toward the striking steel workers. It had accepted a mediation mission. Formed on the initiative of the Catholic hierarchy, the group of mediators went to Nowa Huta. Negotiations between the manager and the strike committee, in the presence of the mediators, were to begin at 8am on May 5. But this was only a smokescreen to get the activists to lower their guard.

Six hours before, at 2am, the Anti-terrorist Brigade of the Ministry of the Interior stormed the steelworks. It broke into the rolling mill, where the headquarters of the strike committee was, by using an armored car to break down the steel outer door. Twelve members of the strike committee were arrested. Six others, including Andrzej Szewczuwaniec and Stanislaw Handzlik, managed to get away. The total number of arrests is not known. But there is information on about fifty strikers held in two jails in Cracow.

The police made a frenzied assault on the workers. The ones they managed to catch were forced to kneel and then beaten with clubs. Others who fell to the ground were trampled on and beaten.

Those who refused to go back to work were forced to run a gauntlet between two long rows of police. One worker had both legs broken by club blows. Another suffered a fractured skull. Dozens of others had fractured collar bones, head wounds and other grave injuries. Maciej Mach, vice-president of the strike committee, was seen lying unconscious, covered with blood.

The police then threw them into ambulances like bloody sacks. At least 42 people were hospitalized with serious wounds outside the department of Cracow. After the Anti-Terrorist Brigade left, units of the riot police (ZOMO) occupied the grounds, demolishing the strike committee headquarters, wrecking toilets, smashing windows and doors, as well as a computer command center. The police attacked the strikers again at 7am, 9am and 11am the same morning.

Despite this ferocity, the strike was not broken. Twice, at 7am, led by Andrzej Szewczuwaniec, and then at 9am the strikers marched through the plant. Each time they were brutally attacked by the ZOMO. A lot of workers did not go back to work, observing the strike committee's decision that workers should stay home if the police

cleared out the plant. Some of them have presented sick-leave forms for injuries resulting from the police action.

In five shops, the workers continued the strike despite the presence of the police. In all, about 12,000 workers remained on strike, out of a total workforce of about 30,000. A six-member underground strike committee was formed. Centers for aid to the strikers and information on the strikes were set up in two churches in the city. Collections of medicine, food and money were organized. To replace the strikers, the management brought in workers from the Huta Katowice steelworks, as well as prisoners.

The students' solidarity was not broken either. At the Jagellon University in Cracow, the Student Self-Management Committee organized a rally, during which 4,000 students, along with the rector and his deputies, adopted a statement saying, "In the spirit of the solidarity of the intelligentsia with the workers, we express our unreserved support for the strikers at the Lenin steelworks and other enterprises and universities in the country. In particular, we want to express our appreciation of the fact that they have demanded an improvement in the material situation of health and education workers.

"For trade union and political pluralism"

"We protest against the use of force against striking workers and students....We demand the immediate release of the people who have been arrested and suffered repression for their opinions. We consider the following as the bases for getting out of the present crisis: a real extension of democracy through the establishment of trade-union and political pluralism, the implementation of real structural reforms in the economy and the guarantee of autonomy for the universities."

At another meeting held on the evening of May 5, the students at the Jagellon University elected a strike committee that declared a stay-away strike at the schools and a sit-in strike in the dormitories. The students at the School of Mines and Steel Technology (AGH) joined this strike on May 6. The declaration adopted on the previous evening at the Jagellon University was adopted by acclamation at a rally held in the AGH.

The striking students decided to send emissaries to other universities in the country, in order to invite them to join in protest action and solidarity with the workers, as well as to co-sign the Cracow declaration. They also decided to fight for the release of the student Glebocki, in order to keep him from being tried, since that would be a dangerous precedent.

In the meantime, in several other universities rallies and strikes took place, notably in Warsaw, Poznan, Wroclaw and Gdansk. ★

"For a sliding scale of wages"

SINCE THE beginning of the Nowa Huta strike, the activists of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) in Wroclaw have concentrated their efforts on broadening the movement. On April 28, they organized a rally in front of the Dolmel factory, where on April 29, after a day-long strike, the workers won a substantial wage increase and a guarantee that there would be no repression.

On May 5, Jozef Pinior and three of his comrades were arrested as they tried to enter the factory. (Pinior, Czeslaw Borowczyk, Jolanta Skiba and Aleksandra Sarata have been indicted for assaulting a police officer at the factory gate, an extremely serious charge.) The police also raided the apartments of party members. The following is the text of a leaflet distributed by the Wroclaw Regional Workers' Committee of the PPS on May 5, 1988:

"The Communist regime is trying to maintain itself by means of an anti-working class pseudo-economic reform. Exploitation is increasing. Wages are a smaller and smaller part of production costs, the working week is increasing, workers' rights are being throttled.

The new labor code that is now being drafted is intended to carry this further. Soon parliament will grant special powers to the government.

"No wage increase, no matter how large, will offer us a guarantee against the effects of inflation. This is why we have to demand the establishment of a mechanism of automatic cost-of-living increases — that is, a sliding scale of wages.

"The aim of strikes that are breaking out now is not getting more bank notes printed that will not have any material counterpart. Their aim is to force the regime to recognize the workers as subjects [as opposed to objects] of economic and political changes. Their aim is to win the following demands: re-establishment of trade-union pluralism, release of political prisoners, establishment of a sliding scale of wages and reinstatement of the fired Solidarnosc activists.

"The stand of the Nowa Huta workers should be an example for all the workers of Poland!" ★

Statement of the Lenin Steel Complex Strike Committee

"WE BEGAN the strike in the Lenin steel combine at 9am on April 26. We are demanding an increase of 12,000 zlotys in price-rise compensation for all workers in industry, health care and education, as well as for retirees. In our list of demands, we also include an automatic permanent scale of wage increases tied to price increases for necessities.

"The economic policy of the authorities of the People's Republic of Poland has brought millions of workers and their families to the brink of destitution. We refuse to tighten our belts under coercion. Our confidence in the reforms promised by the party is exhausted. In boycotting the November referendum, we paid them back with their own coin. We responded to contempt and humiliation with contempt.

"We are demanding an increase of 50% in the basic wage for all workers in the complex. We also want to regain the right

to an eight-hour day, which was won a long time ago. We want wages that will assure us and our families a decent life and a well-earned rest after work.

"We will not abandon these demands, because they represent the will of the workers who have elected us as their representatives. Life has shown once again that the delegates elected by the official union in steel do not represent the interests of all the workers. Our negotiations with the management of the combine are difficult. But we are hopeful of reaching an accord.

"We declare that the management's attempts to intimidate us by the threat of police intervention are an expression of the administration's arrogance. Our answer is that, with our full sense of responsibility, we striking workers in the combine are prepared to offer our jobs to our 'guests.'

"We thank all those who have supported us actively with their solidarity actions. We thank you, Lech, for the words you sent us when we set out on this course. Stand with us, as we do with you, for better or for worse." ★

Nowa Huta, 10pm April 27, 1988.

Mitterrand wins second term

THE RIGHT was by no means reconciled to losing this election, despite Mitterrand's reorientation to a coalition with the bourgeois moderates. That was made abundantly clear by a whole series of adventures in the final days before the vote, the most notable of which were a deal with Iran for the release of French hostages held by Islamic fundamentalists in Beirut and the massacre of Kanak nationalists in New Caledonia (see page 28). It was also made clear by the evident bitterness of right-wing spokespersons on TV following the computer projection pointing to Mitterrand's victory.

Conversely, the defeat of an aggressive right touched off explosions of joy by "the people of the left," in particular young people and immigrants. Philippe Seguin, minister of social affairs in Chirac's government, one of the sharpest political observers on the right, stressed sardonically that Mitterrand was going to have trouble with "the people of the left who are now in the streets."

GERRY FOLEY

THE SINISTER figure of Chirac's minister of the interior, Charles Pasqua, cast a lengthening shadow over the campaign of the right for the second round. He was the protagonist of the prime minister's last minute dramatic strokes. He was also a bridge to the extreme right National Front, having created a sensation by telling a magazine interviewer shortly after the first round that Chirac's party shared the same "values" as National Front voters. On the evening of the first-round elections themselves, he included the National Front in the family of the right.

In fact, the National Front leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, seemed to be leading the right wing by the nose in the campaign for the second round. On the strength of his breakthrough in the first round, Le Pen became major political personality, appearing very frequently on TV. He pressed the government in strident tones to go for a military solution in New Caledonia, and even accused Mitterrand repeatedly of "high treason" because the president advocated negotiations with the Kanak nationalists.

With the notable exception of Marseilles, however, most of the working class votes gained by Le Pen in the first round seem to have gone to Mitterrand, despite the National Front leader's appeal to his followers not to give a "single vote" to the socialists. This result gives the lie to the statement by Charles Pasqua after the first round that the

Le Pen vote represented a "national upsurge against socialism."

The working-class vote for Le Pen was generally a negative, rather than a positive one. Le Pen offered working people nothing positive. His economic program was simply a more strident version of the free-enterprise policies of the "respectable right."

On the electoral level, Mitterrand apparently gained from a situation that remains stable overall but is marked by growing feelings of unease among the population. He presented himself as the candidate of institutional "continuity" plus "generosity," "openness," and so on. On the level of the real forces in society, his majority and his strategy are extremely contradictory.

For example, the polls carried out immediately after the presidential election show

a large majority in favor of new legislative elections. However, Mitterrand's prospective centrist allies are very much opposed to a dissolution of the parliament, as Simone Weill, one of the most liberal of the centrist leaders, made clear on the night of May 8. They are also demanding that the president prove himself in "deeds" before they will accept any alliance with him. The deeds they are looking for are not likely to be to the liking of the left voters encouraged by Mitterrand's victory.

Growing cracks in stability of status quo

The most lucid representatives of the "respectable right," such as François Léotard of the centrist UDF, expressed fears that the political debate in France will now tend to be polarized between the Communist Party and the National Front. In fact, it is quite probable that the soft-center consensus Mitterrand sought, and to some extent got, will begin to break up quite rapidly under the pressure of the deepening world capitalist crisis. The real alternatives will re-emerge.

Communist Party representatives stressed that a number of important strikes continued during the election campaign, apparently unaffected by it. That does represent a change from the period leading up to the victory of the left in 1981, when the workers waited for a left government to solve their problems. But this attitude has two sides to it. It also reflects a loss of political confidence in the established left parties. And despite the Communist Party's attempt now to appear as an opposition left alternative, its political credibility has collapsed. A credible left alternative is still to be built, and the time is growing shorter.

The election, won on the slogan of "the unity of France," in fact was marked by growing cracks in the stability of the status quo. To some extent, already, Le Pen's breakthrough has destabilized the traditional parliamentary game. The following articles, from the April 28 issue of *Rouge* — newspaper of the LCR, the French section of the Fourth International — take up the changes in French politics revealed in the first round. In a forthcoming issue we will have further coverage of the political situation opened up by the election results. ★



PIERRE JUQUIN

Still a long way to go

ON APRIL 24, there was not enough of a "movement" to allow Pierre Juquin to create a surprise. But disappointment should not carry the day because, within a very gloomy overall context, a detailed study of the results reveals some promising phenomena.

CHRISTIAN PIQUET

"FOR movement on the left!" — this was the theme of Pierre Juquin's campaign. In the aftermath of April 24, which registered deepgoing changes in the political map of France, it is possible to measure how far we have to go.

While not derisory, the candidate's national score fell short of what had been hoped for given the impressive attendance at his election meetings, the hundreds of action and support committees all over France and the thousands of people involved in them.

From this point of view, who could deny that something has "moved" during these last six months? The proposals that were put forward, and the defence of left policies that simultaneously rejected the neo-liberalism of social democracy and the suicidal sectarianism of the Communist Party (CP), gained an unprecedented hearing. The "Juquin effect" was to multiply the forces involved in this principled battle, enabling activists with different origins and experiences to work together, often for the first time.

All the same, this phenomenon did not have a commensurate impact on the national electoral picture. In other words, although the National Front (NF) polarized 15% of the electorate to the right, the supporters of a radical change did not succeed in making the sort of breakthrough that could have shaped a new perspective to the left. Only the Greens, in a strong position with their 3.78%, created a surprise, in spite of what was a weak campaign, to say the least.

Three reasons can explain this situation. First, in the context of the economic crisis and the disarray among sections of work-



ers, the polarization has principally been to the right. The revival of social struggles remained too limited to give a decisive push to the recomposition of forces in the workers' movement. This was to be the biggest handicap of the campaign.

Movement too new to win credibility

Next, the regroupment around Pierre Juquin was too new for him to gain enough credibility to change the terms of one of the most formidable tests in French political life in his favour. Before the voting, the forces involved in this battle did not have the time to prove themselves in struggles and win the confidence of a significant part of the workers' movement.

Lastly, many people noted that the errors committed in the final run up to the election did nothing to give the campaign a boost. The candidate's ambiguous or ill-considered proposals regarding whether or not he might participate in the government created confusion about his intentions. And the vagueness of some of his television appearances, where he referred to a "a society of a third kind", could not meet the expectations of his potential electorate: critical militants in the CP and the Socialist Party; unity-minded, class-struggle trade unionists; youth drawing the political implications from their participation in the winter 1986 strikes and so on.

Best results were in working-class departments

For all that, when studied closely Juquin's results did not lack some promising indications. In 80 departments, he exceeded his national average. Leaving aside Haute-Vienne where, with 4.06% of the poll, he gained from the reaction to the national party's bureaucratic offensive against the local Communist federation, he got over 3% in Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, Ariège, Corrèze, Haute-Corse, Haute-Garonne, Hérault, Puy-de-Dôme, Hautes-Pyrénées and Essonne. But this was not the most important thing.

The scores of the ex-CP spokesperson were less "consistent" than those of Lutte Ouvrière's candidate, Arlette Laguiller. This confirmed once again that she has a small, relatively stable, electorate. Juquin's best scores most often came in areas where there are big concentrations of workers and where there is still a steadfast militant tradi-

1988 Presidential election results

| SECOND ROUND | | | |
|---|-------|------------|---------|
| | % | Votes | (1981) |
| François Mitterrand | 54.02 | 16,676,335 | (52.22) |
| <i>Socialist Party (SP)</i> | | | |
| Jacques Chirac | 45.97 | 14,192,937 | (47.77) |
| <i>Rally for the Republic (RPR)</i> | | | |
| FIRST ROUND | | | |
| | % | Votes | (1981) |
| Mitterrand (SP) | 34.10 | 10,326,369 | (25.9%) |
| Chirac (RPR) | 19.90 | 6,025,376 | (18%) |
| Raymond Barre | 16.55 | 5,010,577 | (28.3%) |
| <i>Union for French Democracy (UDF)</i> | | | |
| Jean-Marie Le Pen | 14.41 | 4,363,603 | |
| <i>National Front (NF)</i> | | | |
| André Lajoinie | 6.78 | 2,053,764 | (15.3%) |
| <i>Communist Party (CP)</i> | | | |
| Antoine Waechter | 3.78 | 1,145,502 | (3.9%) |
| <i>Greens</i> | | | |
| Pierre Juquin | 2.10 | 636,761 | |
| <i>Independent Left</i> | | | |
| Arlette Laguiller | 2.00 | 604,524 | (2.3%) |
| <i>Workers' Struggle (Lutte Ouvrière)</i> | | | |
| Pierre Bousset | 0.38 | 116,474 | |
| <i>Movement for a Workers' Party (MPPT/PCI)</i> | | | |

tion. A study of the electoral map shows an essentially urban and socially-distinctive vote.

In the capital and the Paris region, Pierre Juquin obtained some quite good results, with scores overall well above the national average. There were other significant results in the provinces, such as 3.77% in Grenoble, 3.94% at Saint-Egrève, 5.1% in Bastia (Corsica) and 3.5% or higher in a number of towns like Clermont, Rennes, Montpellier, Brest, Toulouse and so on.

With few exceptions, the candidate did best in the traditional bastions of the Communist Party, where he evidently captured an electorate who, while critical of the CP leadership's orientation, do not intend to throw the baby out with the bath water. It is also in such areas that the *rénovateur* current has its strongest implantation. In Brest, for example, only 13 votes separated Juquin from the CP candidate, André Lajoinie. The results in the Finistère department, where the local Communist federation was recently the victim of a "normalization" procedure, also confirm this phenomenon.

In Blenod (Meurthe-et-Moselle), where the *rénovateur* Alain Amicabille was a candidate in last year's cantonal elections, Juquin got 10.6%, while Lajoinie trailed far behind with 6.9%. In the same region, similar results turned up in workers' towns like Homécourt (8.8%) or Auboué (6.9%).

Total far left vote was the biggest ever

In some departments, Arlette Laguiller came in front of Juquin. But, even in these instances, the tendency that I just described was confirmed. Juquin was clearly ahead of the other "far left" candidates in the big industrial towns, with scores much higher than his national average.

Although obscured by the evident failure on the national scale we can still see a real recomposition at work here. It remains in its very early stages. But it nonetheless represents a basis for building a new anti-capitalist force, the lack of which is cruelly felt today. This is why we should not allow ourselves to be discouraged; the outcome of this campaign must be analyzed in a balanced and responsible way.

Despite the frightening score for Le Pen, the first round of this presidential election has revealed another reason for hope, one that escaped most of the political commentators. The total vote for Juquin, Laguiller and Pierre Bousset [Lambert] came within a whisker of 4.5%. A threshold that has never before been reached by the far left, as was underlined by a clear-sighted and worried *Figaro* editorialist on April 25: "The dynamic created by Jean-Marie Le Pen in the name of a fully-fledged ideological rearmament, in reaction, given a boost to 'the left of the left'."

8 This observation should make everybody stop and think, and help to dispel the sectarian bluffing that has cost us so dear. ★

JEAN-MARIE LE PEN

Beyond the shock

IT WAS the shock of April 24. With four and a half million votes, the fascistic leader was hot on the heels of the two classical right-wing parties. The threat is sufficiently serious for a close-up study of this new electorate and for conclusions for action to be drawn.

LAURENT CARASSO

WHERE DID the National Front's votes come from? There are a number of pointers to begin to understand this new phenomenon. The first is that Jean-Marie Le Pen's vote "shattered" the classical right. Between this election and the 1986 legislative election, the extreme right won 1.6 million votes and the right lost 1.5 million.

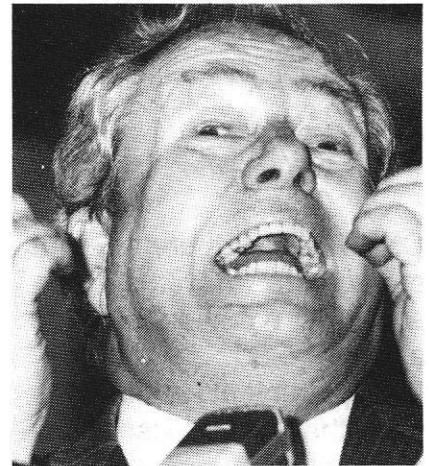
Looking at the national results, the left appeared to have been spared from the surge for Le Pen since the left candidates' vote grew by 1.4 million votes, essentially profiting Mitterrand and, marginally, the extreme left. Even if assuming that this was the case, the essential fact remains that the vote for Le Pen was a massive vote for a candidate who openly defends an ultra-reactionary programme....

The second thing to note is that in general there was not a simple shift from the right to the extreme right, even if this occurred in a few departments.

Le Pen won substantial working class vote

Even a superficial analysis of the comparative results between 1986 and 1988 in the "red belt" departments of the Paris suburbs, or working-class towns like Bouches-de-Rhône, shows clearly that Le Pen continues to eat into the working-class electorate.

The third point is that Le Pen's vote has become national. In 1986, Le Pen received less than 10% in 65 departments and only went over 20% in two of them. Today,



there are no more than 20 departments where his score is less than 10%. He got over 20% in 8 departments. From this it is clear that Le Pen's vote does not only include that of the "marginalized, unemployed and de-classed", or of the "poor whites" in the urban suburbs protesting against immigrants.

Many factors taken together prove that, in four years, the National Front has stabilized an electorate essentially won over from the traditional right. This has been achieved on the basis of a programme advocating tough anti-labour solutions in hard times, and putting forward "law and order" themes that pay off inside the petty-bourgeoisie.

Within this, Le Pen has won a good part of the previously Gaullist electorate that the RPR has not managed to hold onto. This combines with the gains he has made from the crisis inside the workers' movement, another reason for his success.

"Anti-establishment" image

While the three principal candidates said that everything in the garden was rosy, while cohabitation has ensured that the masses paid for the economic crisis, while they showed disregard for unemployment and the high cost of living, Le Pen was allowed to cultivate his "anti-establishment" image.

With his popular rhetoric he managed to appear sensitive to people's concerns, even though he encapsulated the most anti-working class programme there is, and even though he would be the first to reduce taxes on the rich....

The ball is therefore now in the court of the workers' movement, and in particular with those who want to fight the social-democratic management of austerity and the declining spiral of the CP. They have a role to play. They have a huge responsibility to map out a way forward that is credible to workers and youth and that can really change the situation. ★

How the cancer spread

THERE ARE many examples to confirm the various breakthroughs made by Le Pen. In Alsace (Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin), Le Pen beat Raymond Barre, coming ahead of all the other right-wing candidates in the two departments with scores of over 20%. Here it was neither the high immigration rate nor the CP's slide (they got less than 6% here in 1981) that can explain Le Pen's result.

There was a clear polarization, marked on one hand by an increase for Mitterrand — who got the highest score in the two departments, unlike in 1981 — and on the other hand by the dizzy fall of Barre. While Chirac's vote held up, Barre lost more than 50% of the votes previously won by Giscard d'Estaing. So Le Pen's vote here was a politically reactionary one, coming from the centre right. In Vaucluse, a rich agricultural department, the National Front also saw its vote climb, essentially to the detriment of the Barre current.

Beyond this trend, the most spectacular "effect" was obviously in the industrial areas, where Le Pen won votes from the traditionally Gaullist and left electorates.

In Seine-Saint-Denis, a large part of the CP's vote fell into the pockets of Le Pen and Mitterrand, with Le Pen also winning votes from the traditional right. Here also, Le Pen was the leading right-

wing candidate. In the traditional Communist stronghold of Saint-Denis itself, Le Pen won 6,000 votes, beating the CP candidate Lajoinie by 600.

This phenomenon was identical in all the working-class Paris suburbs. In the Val-de-Marne, even if the CP could hold its head high in Ivry, in CP leader Georges Marchais' home town, Champigny, only 300 votes separated Lajoinie and Le Pen.

The other determining factor is obviously in the decimated industrial regions. In Moselle, for example, Le Pen won many new voters, getting 20% or 40,000 votes in a region that has been successively abandoned by both the governments of the left and the right. In Hayange, in 1981, the CP's candidate came top of the list with 27.48%. Today, Le Pen got 20% and Lajoinie only 11%.

In Bouches-de-Rhône, this trend continued — a trend that has been noticeable since 1983. In traditional Communist municipalities like Gardanne en Septèmes, Le Pen beat the other candidates.

In Marseille, a town symbolic of the Front's growth, the traditional right lost 50,000 votes as did the CP, with Mitterrand and Le Pen respectively winning 30,000 and 40,000 votes in comparison with 1986. So, in most departments one can trace the various sources of Le Pen's score. The only regions where Le Pen got less than 10% were Poitou-Charentes, the Massif Central and Brittany, but even here his vote increased.

Finally, the National Front is now well-rooted in the departments around the Mediterranean coast, due in part to the number of repatriated French Algerian voters and the consequences of massive unemployment. In Var, for example, where the left vote held up, Le Pen got the most votes of all the candidates. The same was true for La Seyne, where Marchais came first in 1981, as well as for traditionally reactionary towns like Fréjus, Hyères and Saint-Raphaël. ★



ANDRE LAJOINIE

CP continues its decline

A NUMBER of critical CP members voted for their candidate, André Lajoinie, to "save the party". Now, all the leadership's quibbling cannot



hide the irreversible nature of the CP's decline. The day of reckoning is here.

GEORGES VILLETIN

"THE REAL influence of the Communist Party is much greater." CP leader Georges Marchais' remark on election night will only reassure the blind, but certainly not the tens of thousands of Communist militants crushed by Lajoinie's result. The wishful thinking of those who are presiding over the CP's decline cannot hide the realities: the party lost three points compared with the national assembly elections in 1986 and half of its 1981 presidential

election score.

In nearly all departments, CP candidates were beaten by Mitterrand. The same goes for most of the municipalities run by the party. Sometimes, they were even overtaken by Le Pen in the historic bastions of the previously "red suburbs" of Paris, like Montreuil or Saint-Denis. Depending on which electoral system [proportional or first-past-the-post] is in force, there is a big risk of the CP losing most of its municipalities and parliamentary representatives in the future. Lastly, it is interesting to note that, in a significant number of towns, the combined votes of Juquin and Laguiller equalled, if not surpassed, those of the CP.

Historic and irreversible collapse

This historic and irreversible collapse is not linked to the contents of the programme defended by Lajoinie, but to the credibility of the party itself. The many zig-zags by the Marchais leadership — which has defended one thing and then its opposite with identical self-assurance — have discredited the party so much that most of its old electorate will no longer listen to it. After each new turn, more and more supporters are left behind. The one thing the different political lines have often had in common is having no relation with the demands of social mobilizations....

Naturally, this crisis also profoundly affects the 19,000 elected CP officials, who are facing a growing marginalization because of the national electoral results of their party. It is still difficult to predict the scale and the results of this new stage in the crisis which will be, in part, determined by the attitude of the leadership. But, already, on the evening of April 24 the ex-federal leadership of Meurthe-et-Moselle and the deputy Colette Gueuriot called on their comrades "to think deeply and draw the lessons of these elections", because "they should not be satisfied with the national leadership's explanations".

In the face of their party's decline, tens of thousands of Communists are striving to understand what is happening and, like us, are not prepared to abandon the struggle against capitalism. Our proposal to them is that we discuss and act together, to help in the building of a revolutionary party. ★



Bitterness and disappointment

TWENTY-FIVE towns, 25 Communist Party fiefdoms, 25 disasters! Ivry is the only one of the CP's municipalities, won in the heroic age, where Lajoinie came ahead of Mitterrand. But Mitterrand won twice as many votes as the CP in Nanterre, Montreuil and Choisy. The same was also nearly the case in the most symbolic area of all, Saint-Denis [a working-class and Communist stronghold for half a century].

ALEXIS VIOLET

IN MONTREUIL, Colombes and Saint-Ouen something much worse happened: Le Pen beat the CP, with close to — or sometimes more than — 20% of the vote. The only slight breathing space was in the southern Parisian suburbs of Ivry and Vitry where the Communist candidate lost 11 thousand votes compared with the 1981 presidential election. All the same, this was less tragic than Saint-Denis, where he lost 8 thousand votes out of the 13 thousand won in the legislative elections in 1981.

This is nothing less than a real, and often understandable, catastrophe for those members who lived through a time when the CP made it easily into the second round. For these members, over a number of decades, these municipalities were real liberated zones.

The working-class electorate has given its verdict. Their response was menacing when, in their rage and disappointment, they voted for Le Pen. It was pragmatic when they judged that the CP was no longer revolutionary and that, therefore, it was better to vote for the biggest reformist party. It was encouraging when they expressed a continuing attachment to the communist ideal, in spite of the errors of the CP leaders, by voting for Juquin.

In some big towns where the CP controls the town hall, the results are similar. In the biggest, Le Havre, they lost 10 points in comparison with the legislative elections in 1981. The CP was even beaten by Le Pen, and came 22 points behind Mitterrand. The figures speak for themselves! In Le Mans, Lajoinie got under 10%, with a vote a quarter that of the Socialist Party and half that of Le Pen. Only in Alès did the CP keep a narrow lead over National Front. At Vénissieux, a working class town near Lyon, and at Echirolles near Grenoble, Le Pen also overtook Lajoinie.

A general phenomenon that the CP leadership can no longer cover up is that a part of the CP's electorate voted in 1988 for the extreme right. After the "glory" of Stalin, it is the appeal of anti-fascism — in the ascendant in 1934-36 and under the occupation and the liberation — that is collapsing. The repercussions will be profound, and this will undoubtedly be a new factor aggravating the CP's crisis.

In Longwy, Lorraine — a town that is a symbol of the iron and steel industry crisis — the CP fell from 26% to 12% from one presidential election to the next. If Le Pen is growing in this region as well it is because the CP did not appear as a real defender of the metalworkers in the last big fight for jobs. A final point: in towns like Rouen or Clermont-Ferrand, the combined votes for Juquin, Laguiller and Bousset overtook that of the CP!

But we should keep a clear head. Elections always give a deformed snapshot of reality. The skin of the bureaucratic bear is not for sale; we have to build an alternative. But it is sure that, in light of the depth of the CP's crisis and its foreseeable developments, a number of municipal post-holders are going to hesitate for some time before choosing between the official line of the leadership and what they judge to be best for defending their own local interests. The municipal elections in 1989 will be a test of that. ★

Fighting against the "bigot's charter"

IN THE last four months, three of the biggest ever demonstrations on lesbian and gay rights have been held in Britain. On January 9 in London, 12,000 took to the streets; 20,000 people marched in Manchester on February 20; and a massive crowd of up to 50,000 demonstrated through London on April 30. What has sparked off these incredible mobilizations is the introduction of an amendment to the Local Government Bill, Clause 28, that threatens to criminalize any positive images of or practical support for lesbians and gays.

Finn Jensen asked a leading activist in the North West Campaign for Gay and Lesbian Equality in Manchester to explain the stakes involved.

KURSAK KARAMONOGLU

GAY MEN and lesbians were expecting a concerted attack from the Tories sooner or later. The aim of the Local Government Bill is to curb the democratic powers of elected local government. Tory MP Jill Knight's amendment — Clause 28 — adds that local councils cannot "promote" homosexuality. Once the Bill is law, the word "promotion" will have to be tested in the courts.

"Promotion" could mean: gay and lesbian books in libraries; licences for gay clubs and pubs; services like gay centres; and advice and information telephone lines for lesbians and gays — the whole range of services provided at the moment as a natural part of local government for the community.

The law that homosexual acts between consenting adults over 21 years of age are legal if done in private gave us the same problem as we will get now with "promotion". The lawyers did not recognize the word "private", so it was interpreted by the courts — in the most ridiculous way you can imagine. Two men kissing in a car is not private. Nor is a locked hotel room. If you live in a block of apartments and there is just one other person in the whole block who is offended by your living as a homosexual, you are not private. If this is how the courts interpret "private", you can imagine what they'll do with "promotion".

When the government realized the extent of opposition to this "bigot's charter", they tried to modify it. They added one word, "intentionally", which makes it even more vicious.

Many Conservatives are making the intention of the Clause quite clear, both in interviews and in parliament. They want to

drive lesbians and gay men back into the closet. After 20 years of partial recognition they want to push us underground again. But we won't go.

"We are an easy scapegoat"

We are an easy scapegoat. It is so easy to divert people's attention from serious social and economic problems by using popular prejudices. Simply by living the kind of life we do, lesbians and gays are the biggest threat to one of the fundamental ways the ruling classes keep the masses under control. The family has historically always been the unit used to control society and we are obviously a threat to the family institution. We refuse to fit into the well-defined roles. And that is really a big threat to the kind of society the Tories want to create. Remember, there are over six million of us in Britain.

We have to be prepared for the implementation of the Bill once it becomes law on June 1. We have to prepare for a long battle, because we cannot accept a law that would mean a denial of ourselves. We will work to make sure that local authorities understand the issue and will fight the law. There will be battles in court, all the way to the European Court of Human Rights.

This campaign has raised political awareness among many gay men and lesbians. That is our biggest strength. In Manchester, for example, it is very important for us to involve lesbians and gays who are not normally part of campaigning.

The Manchester demonstration in February was the biggest in the city for 20 years,



but it was also the biggest lesbian and gay demonstration ever in this country [before April 30]. We were very determined to show that lesbians and gay men are everywhere, that they don't just exist in London, and that the North West has its own share.

Within the Labour Party, there was a really massive protest against the Shadow Cabinet MPs half-hearted opposition to the Clause, and within weeks we suddenly saw the line changing. Now even Labour leader Neil Kinnock is calling the Clause the "bigot's charter"!

The trade unions are a very important part of future struggles. But they are too often scared of the lesbian and gay issue. During the miners' strike, lesbian and gay support groups all around the country found it difficult at the beginning because miners — in spite of all their militancy and radicalism — were quite suspicious. But after a year of sustained support, things started to change. Only last year the gay pride march was led by a South Wales miners' banner!

We realize the importance of the support of the organized labour movement. That is why we are approaching trade unions, especially those whose members will be directly influenced by Clause 28 like teachers, who will be under immense pressure not to mention homosexuality at all.

The attacks on lesbians and gay men can be linked closely with the oppression of the Black communities. This was clear in Britain during the AIDS hysteria. The press tried to say that AIDS is a gay plague, if not a Black plague. Day by day the newspapers said that AIDS came from Africa. There were even calls from so-called respected journalists and politicians to have compulsory tests for visitors from certain African countries. At the end of the day, we have a lot of things in common, not least a common enemy.

Finally, we hope that the national demonstration on April 30 in London will be followed by actions of supporters abroad on June 1. We are trying to organize massive international protest against this law. We are asking people — whether they are socialists, liberals, "nice" conservatives or whoever — to organize protest meetings in their own country on June 1 in front of British embassies and consulates. The real fight against the law will start at this time and we appreciate any international support. ★

Political bans highlight the role of the trade unions in the anti-apartheid struggle

WITHOUT minimizing the blow that has been struck against resistance organizations inside South Africa, there are some questions thrown up by the bannings. Why was COSATU not the main target? Are observers gravely wrong about the federation's significance in the South African struggle? Is it another occasion when a socialist delirium regarding the importance of workers' organizations has replaced accurate analysis?

At the same time, the two state of emergencies have already done their fearful work in the townships. Many of the organizations subject to the new orders have already had their officers hunted down, banned and gaoled. Organizations like the Youth Congress already lead a twilight existence. Why is it necessary to crush further some of these already cornered organizations? Why are they the target?

The place of COSATU in the struggle in South Africa today is of extraordinary significance. In 1987 COSATU members' living standards increased by 18% thanks to their struggles. This is a higher percentage than any other group of employees in South Africa, and means that workers in COSATU unions were the only ones to keep pace with inflation.² Wage increases were rarely the only advantages of COSATU unions' deals, and leading economic observers comment on the better conditions won by COSATU members as part of packages including wage increases.

Union membership grows despite unemployment

Contrary to the declining trend in union membership elsewhere in the more developed world, South African unions increased their membership in 1987. The last reported figures (1986) gave 36% of the active population of South Africa as union members, despite a massive, if partly uncharted, unemployment rate. In 1986 there were just over 1 million days lost in strikes. In 1987 that grew to a staggering 9 million. Some of these strikes were, for the first time, directed at state employers (Sats-transport, Iscor-Steel and the post office). More significantly, the huge number of days lost were distributed among ten major strikes, each representing a supreme effort of organization and militancy in a society without a scrap of welfare rights and living

ON FEBRUARY 24 the South African government issued an edict "restricting" 17 organizations. These organizations — such as the United Democratic Front (UDF), the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) and the Azania People's Organization (AZAPO) — are prohibited "from carrying out or performing any activities or acts whatsoever".

In a separate clause, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was allowed to continue trade-union activities, but barred from political activities. These include: calling for the release of prisoners from detention; calling for the restoration of illegal organizations, such as the African National Congress (ANC); calling for election boycotts or any other anti-government publicity campaigns; commemorating the anniversary of any incident or riot, public violence or unrest "which has taken place at some time or other in the republic".¹

PAUL SMITH

under the shadow of the gun.

A record like this would grace a period of full employment in a country with well-rooted civil rights. Under the second state of emergency and with the existence of

mass unemployment, COSATU's record is extraordinary. And the South African state has responded by deciding to move against the workers' movement this coming summer with proposed legislation that cobbles together the whole list of employers' moans and groans against their increasingly powerful workforces.

The Labour Relations Amendment Bill includes clauses to render sympathy or solidarity strikes and strikes on the same issue within 15 months illegal; to further complicate the procedures for making a dispute legal; to end majority union rights to negotiate on behalf of the whole workforce and allow minority unions to register; to make unions liable for losses sustained during strikes; and to make consumer boycotts called by unions illegal.

Major confrontations in the pipeline

If these and other clauses were not sufficient, the bill also gives the minister virtually unlimited powers to change relevant definitions of "fair" and "unfair" industrial practices should s/he feel fit.³ Botha's new approach to South Africa's business classes was further strengthened to the detriment of workers (including white workers) by his announcement of a cut in expenditure and a wages freeze in the public sector (affecting nearly 1 million Black workers and half a million whites). This is to be coupled with a sell-off of state assets, Thatcher-style.

All in all, South Africa's labour movement is in for a major confrontation with the state in 1988.⁴ And Botha appears to be prepared to pay the price for his new policy of alliances with English-speaking business by risking further alienation of white workers from the Nationalist Party — at least for the time being — in order to prepare a confrontation with the Black unions.

So the importance of South Africa's independent trade-union movement seems to be fully understood by the authorities. The recent bannings were not, therefore, the chosen instrument to deal with the trade unions — they were aimed elsewhere. They really only hit the unions a glancing blow in respect of the extension of trade-union activi-

1. *The Independent*, February 25, 1988.

2. These and the following statistics are taken from the *Financial Mail* (South Africa), January 8, 1988.

3. *Work in Progress* 52.

4. *Ibid*.



ty into the Black townships.

There is a debate today within the trade unions in general, and COSATU in particular, about how to move into the increasing vacuum in many townships. In reality, organization in the Black townships is on a much lower level than two years ago. State repression has accounted for much of this retreat. From that point of view, the latest bannings are the "icing on the cake". But the cake needs its icing! The regime is determined to completely root out any remains of "ungovernability" in the Black townships. In fact, this is critical to any longer term policy for "stabilization" of capitalist South Africa (with or without any reform programme.)

Without commenting here on some of the political strategies drawn out of the experience of the township rebellion by various sections of the liberation movement — whatever doubts one might have had about theories of "dual power" and the like — no one can doubt the depth and spread of that struggle in 1985-86.

Attempts to create a Black middle class

Since then, millions (perhaps when you add private investment, billions) of rand have flooded into the townships. Albeit a drop in the ocean with many failures (such as grotesque shacks erected without proper facilities and not based on any real infrastructure), there are some successful attempts to organize a more prosperous layer in many Black areas. The regime hopes to create South Africa's first real Black middle class, and these are the forces that the state is grooming to move into the political wastelands is has created in the townships through the destruction of township self-organization.

It is vitally important for the regime to persuade candidates to stand in the township municipal elections this coming October who are not in front of fighting

organizations that would, at the very least, demand accountability and perhaps their very lives if the election boycott tactics continue. The masses in the townships were empowered by their own organizations in direct disproportion to those Black elements who saw a career, or at least relative privilege, through winning power in the local councils.

Botha prepared to see Sharpville Six die

Botha was prepared to the brink of provoking a major internal and external backlash over the Sharpville Six for this very reason. (We can be thankful, in this case, that there was a relative autonomy of the South African judiciary from the state which allowed it to buckle under national and international pressure.) Botha himself, and his cabinet, are prepared to see the Sharpville Six die. What is involved is a cynical calculation that it is worth the risk in order to increase the cost of attacking "elected" officials in the townships. Botha will go to the edge and over to defend his Black mayors and officials. He has no choice. Repression alone will not suffice to deal with 15-20 million revolutionary-minded people!⁵ Sharpville and the February bannings are therefore part of the same story.

What Botha's policy for the Black townships looks like in practice can already be seen in one area — the townships around Pietermaritzburg. (There is no possibility of a return to the halcyon days when Blacks "knew their place", Black middle class or not.) In Pietermaritzburg, nightly war is carried out by the KwaZulu "head of state's" private army, Inkatha, against any and all radical groups and individuals. KwaZulu police back up unofficial efforts.⁶ The whole grisly parade started with the killings of a British Tyre and Rubber shop steward, Simon Ngubane, and his companion Florence at the Lion River near Dur-

ban. COSATU, and its second largest affiliate NUMSA (Simon's union) are at the centre of the struggle to stop the war with Inkatha.

Recruitment of right-wing vigilantes

This is, in fact, the only realistic vision of Botha's future for the townships — the massive recruitment of right-wing vigilantes who conduct war against those who fight apartheid and oppose incorporation into the system via the local councils. Only the destruction of all attempts to organize independently from the state in the townships plus organized pro-state forces can guarantee a successful breach in the boycott. Perhaps more pertinently, it could stop a movement behind class-struggle candidates for the municipal elections should this option get off the ground (it is being increasingly discussed, including inside the UDF).⁷

This is background for the discussion about moving into the communities that the trade unions in general, and COSATU in particular, are having. But already the methods of organization, accountability and democracy in leading unions are having an impact far wider than the union halls. The democratic accountability of many of the union structures is already having a considerable impact among the wider mass movement.

The starting point for the debate inside COSATU, however, is the resolution passed at the second congress which resolved to build "disciplined and permanent alliances with other progressive and democratic forces within the country..."⁸ A section of the South African National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has developed a position elaborating this resolution, not unreasonably pointing out that as the affiliate that proposed the original resolution they see it as their duty to set out clearly what they meant.

In fact, their meaning could not be clearer: Apartheid is a fascist phenomenon shaped by the particular evolution of the country; the Bantustans are the "grand solution", and these conditions call for the broadest front of anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, anti-racist and anti-fascist forces united for the destruction of apartheid. There are many references to the democratic and "patriotic" struggle of the resistance movements in World War II Europe, and particular emphasis is laid on the necessity to limit the struggle in advance. Spanish Popular Front leaders are favourably quoted: "the struggle in Spain was not between the dictatorship of the proletariat and bourgeois democracy, but between democracy

5. Surveys of township and Black opinion appear regularly in a range of journals including the *Sunday Times* January 1986, the *Sowetan*, etc.

6. See *IV* 133, January 25, 1988.

7. *Work in Progress* 51.

8. Resolutions of COSATU's founding congress.

and fascism, which was the enemy of not only the workers and peasants but also of all working people, all republican democrats and free thinkers...⁹

The conclusion could not be clearer either: today the front to fight apartheid already exists. Any call for a new front would be erroneous and retrogressive. The task of COSATU is to pull in firmly behind the already existing UDF formation — if not through affiliation (which was explicitly rejected at both congresses), then through political centres being established for the express purpose of collaboration with the UDF in the localities.

Workers' organizations and the united front

Naturally, this schema will be affected by the current bans, and it is therefore not so significant now in relation to its practical details. Nevertheless, the approach described is more than a clue to the thinking and direction of the people concerned.

There is a different orientation to the issues of unity of the mass movement to that expressed by the NUM which can be discerned throughout COSATU and its affiliates. The argument runs that a new united front is necessary that would mark the arrival of COSATU into organized community and civic politics. In this view (again extant before the current restrictions), it would not be possible simply to hook the trade-union movement onto the back of the UDF trailer. The leading role of the workers' movement has to be reflected in a thorough-going reorganization of the united front of resistance to apartheid. Consequently, the workers' organizations need to stand alongside the sectoral organization of women and youth and, where appropriate, other sectors and groups, in a new alliance involving the UDF organizations but wider than the UDF today. Further, the axiomatic principles in some of the leading trade unions like internal democracy and accountability should be spread to other sectoral organizations where they do not presently exist.

These discussions have only just begun, initial positions have barely been established. No long-term decisions have been made. The latest bannings and the battle against the trade union law (the bannings prohibit campaigning against *any* law) have inevitably forced themselves to the top of the trade-union agenda for the moment and have even brought to the fore other, more defensive, questions.

This is not to say that the balance of forces has tilted irrevocably in the regime's favour. Most commentators expect a huge reaction should the Sharpville Six be hung. South African armed forces are stalemated in Angola, and in 1987 only 35,000 turned out for the estimated military draft of 60,000. The white nationalist community continues its political disintegration. And 1987 was not at all the worst year for the

organized Black working class. Nevertheless, the resistance movement is on the defensive — and that includes the unions — despite their high level of organization and social homogeneity. Among the defensive problems that are now posed is the unity of the workers' movement itself.

Recent events surrounding the split in the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (CCAWUSA) and the ignominious reunification (organized by the lawyers of the contending factions) reveals something of the strains, even inside COSATU. Ostensibly, the Kganare faction set up a fusion with the Cape Liquor and Catering Union in order to create a majority in the union for the adoption of the Freedom Charter (while a COSATU commission was still investigating the divisions).

A welter of charges and counter-charges resulted in a schism in the union between the Kganare and Mtw'a wings, and the decision of the COSATU Central Executive Committee in November 1987 to recognize the Kganare faction as the union. It was argued that this group was pursuing COSATU goals in the struggle for one union per industry, and that the opposition had factionally resisted the fusion. The problems were further compounded by the refusal to let COSATU representatives enter a Johannesburg meeting of Mtw'a's wing to explain their position.

On the other side, it was claimed that the anti-fusion faction were pro the National Congress of Trade Unions (NACTU).¹⁰ Many of COSATU's affiliates looked on fearfully, blaming both sides for initiating a process that could start unstitching the whole federation and with it the major step towards the unity of the working class movement that COSATU represents.

Strains in the union federation

In the event, lawyers decided that CCAWUSA had to return to its only legal constitution of 1981 and hold a reunification congress on May 15 on that basis. Mtw'a's faction are still aggrieved by the original COSATU decision to back Kganare (which was subsequently confirmed), although some agreement seems to be emerging that no motions on contentious political issues such as the Freedom Charter or relations with NACTU should be taken at the May meeting.

This division in one of the most effective unions in South Africa (they led the big OK Bazaars strike) is a nasty warning of some of the strains in the federation that are beginning to emerge.¹¹

Defensive questions are also raised around the issue of NACTU itself. While it is true that NACTU leaders have traditionally pointed toward the Western-oriented International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in relation to resources and so on, and that they remain hostile to COSATU's "non-racial" policy, following a black con-



sciousness line, there are hundreds of thousands of workers organized in this federation. Observers agree that NACTU is not growing like COSATU, but still estimate that with its 400,000 members it is about half the size of the larger federation. In some industries like chemicals, the NACTU union is larger than its COSATU counterpart. It is probably not surprising therefore that the chemical workers' union (the CWIU) is one of the few COSATU unions to explicitly call for the implementation of the "one industry, one federation" policy of the founding COSATU congress.¹² This is an unhappy situation for the unity of the workers' movement in South Africa, especially when clauses in the Labour Law Amendment Act will increase the price of disunity by allowing for the recognition of minority unions in workplaces.

Added to all this is the problem of the very real head of legal steam building up against the trade-union movement with the possibility of outright banning which would represent a qualitatively new step in the situation. But the proposed labour laws appear to indicate that the regime is already committed to another track. Certainly the larger employers would not, at this stage, welcome the wholesale destruction of the centralization of the labour movement. At the moment it suits their purposes in terms of negotiation and the rationalization of agreements, and any such development



would raise renewed international outrage which could jeopardize their lucrative operations.

South Africa does not play the same role in the international market as a small country like Chile. The whole drift of events since the first state of emergency was declared seems to indicate a different direction for the repression than the total destruction of the unions — they would, in any case, extract a high price from the economy before they were dug out.¹³ Nevertheless, there was a real dialectic between the township rebellions, international interest and pressure and the expansion of the gap that already existed between the big employers and the regime into which the trade unions expanded. The space for legal and open action and organization was pushed wider and wider by the unions, particularly COSATU and its affiliates. There is obviously concern that the dialectic described is not forced into reverse.

The union movement in general, and some COSATU unions in particular, have played a big part in opening out their own political space over the years by avoiding premature confrontations, building very solid organization with many leadership levels, exploiting those contradictions that have opened between different sections of the ruling bloc and using the legal system extremely intelligently. (The latter is a feature of all struggles in which a democratic

opening emerges under a repressive regime. But it is particularly apposite in South Africa, where a lot of the laws were promulgated for operation in the whites-only "island of bourgeois democracy", and therefore have a real and sometimes useful content.)

But preparing the defence of the trade-union movement can also mean defending the right to exist as a movement with a class-struggle perspective. The new labour laws are also aimed at increasing the power of the union centres, taking away the initiative from the ranks and making every and any strike a matter of complicated deliberation. These are real dangers.

All of these issues and debates — on how the united front of the South African masses can be constructed across industry and in the townships, or how trade-union unity can be preserved and extended, "offensive" or "defensive" questions — all of them are tied to the various sensibilities that exist on the place of the trade unions in the struggle to transform South Africa.

For example, the view that the South African regime is fascist gives the unions only a half-life and means that such structures can only be temporary and peripheral in the overall struggle for transformation; they can only come into their own in a post-apartheid, democratic South Africa; they could not be, they can not be, the vital crucible of change today. Consequently, it is suicidal to afford such organizations or their debates a strategic place, let alone a centre-stage position, in any strategy for the destruction of apartheid.

Bannings underline importance of unions

Such an analysis can even flow into tactical choices today around the conduct of actual trade-union struggles with employers or the state, in the sense that acting to preserve the union as a fighting organization in the course of a particularly bitter struggle can seem a secondary priority when it

has no real future in any case. Certainly, whether or not to spend painstaking hours, days and months slowly building democratic workers' structures, accountability and education, depends on your view of the permanence of such structures.

On the other hand, the actual and living reality of the unions, built over fifteen years, has to be faced by everyone in South Africa today. They are now the only legal, national, mass fighting organizations in the country. (Individual church leaders are playing an heroic role, but churches are founded on other bases than the struggle in this world!)

Mapping out a new role for the trade unions

The trade unions' successes and their forms of organization are clearly an inspiration to all. COSATU and the union movement in general are seen every bit as a legitimate and valid instrument of resistance to apartheid as any other by the masses. Organized workers and their families see them as the centre of politics and life. Yet there remains a critical silence when it comes to mapping out an alternative role for the unions in the struggle to transform South Africa than the essentially peripheral role outlined in the views of those who subscribe to the view that South Africa is today a fascist state.

This is not a question of alliances; this is a question of perspectives. All in the liberation movement agree today that a central role is to be afforded to the working class. But there remain only the most embryonic ideas of how that can be achieved at the political level.

Part of those embryonic ideas come from the initiation of the debate around the role of a complementary charter to the Freedom Charter: the "Workers' Charter", particularly in the metalworkers' union, NUMSA. This discussion continues in the exile journals and elsewhere. A future article will review this discussion. ★

9. Duplicated document: the South African CP is here implicitly presented as the present proletarian leadership.

10. On November 17, 1987 Vivian Mtwi wrote: "We believe that in deliberating on the dispute another important factor should have been taken into consideration, that is, the acts of violence being carried out by the Kganare breakaway group. Prior to the last meeting of the commission the Kganare breakaway group took over our Cape Town office by force, which, amongst other acts, involved threatening officials and members with screwdrivers, stealing cash and our cheque book. Two days later hundreds of CCAWUSA members enraged by this act of thuggery re-took our office in a very disciplined manner.

"The Kganare breakaway group's behaviour, apart from being a serious threat to unity, is a serious contravention of COSATU policy.

"Some CEC delegates have mentioned that we are anti-COSATU and critical of COSATU policies. From time to time we have levelled criticisms against certain undemocratic activities carried out by certain COSATU structures or individuals. We see this as our democratic right and it does not mean we are criticizing COSATU as a whole. Part of being a democratic or-

ganization is to critically evaluate, and this in no way means being against the whole organization."

11. Among the problems of democracy and factionalism in COSATU is the case of the international conference organized by the ANC in Arusha, Tanzania. The intervention made there in COSATU's name, reproduced widely and circulated in the solidarity movement, defended a line that has never been democratically decided by the bodies of the organization. The person who made the intervention was never mandated to go to this conference to make this speech. Those directly inspired by the ANC and the CP obviously represent the point of view of a part of the COSATU leadership, but this cannot be taken as its official line. It can be understood that events like these put a big strain on efforts for unity and collective discussion.

12. *Policies adopted*, pamphlet with resolutions passed at CWIU conference in 1987.

13. Some employers, including the mighty Anglo-American, organized for union recruitment in some areas in the early 1980s in order to rationalize negotiations and with the utopian aim of building an alliance with Black workers in defence of industry in general.

Amnesty International denounces human rights violations

WE ARE reproducing here some major extracts from an Amnesty International report on human rights violations in the Philippines. The report, "Philippines: Unlawful killings by military and paramilitary forces"¹, was produced after a fact-finding commission visited the archipelago in July 1987 and has been updated since then.

Amnesty's conclusions are particularly important. Following two fact-finding visits in May and December 1986, Amnesty had welcomed the progress made under the Aquino regime in the area of human rights, declaring that it was reasonably optimistic. However, the report recently published notes that: "Since mid-1987, political killings carried

out by government and government-backed forces in violation of the law have become the most serious human rights problem in the Philippines".

For some months, human rights movements in the Philippines — like the Task Force Detainees — have sounded the alarm. They have shown, with inquiries to back them up, that summary executions and disappearances have again multiplied. The government and the army's general staff have denounced these humanitarian organizations as "communist fronts". Today, it is the turn of Amnesty International to present the dossier of "extra-judicial executions".² In spite of President Corazon Aquino's embarrassed criticisms of the report — challenging the validity of Amnesty's sources — it will be very difficult now for the regime to explain that all this is nothing but malevolent communist propaganda!

As we have often said before in these columns recently, the growth of vigilante groups, anti-communist terrorist groups, has reached extremely serious proportions. The publication of Amnesty's report must be used as an opportunity to step up solidarity with the struggle in the Philippines, particularly in the area of the defence of human rights.

Paul Petitjean

SINCE MID-1987, political killings carried out by government and government-backed forces in violation of the law have become the most serious human rights problem in the Philippines. Most of the victims have been suspected supporters of the communist insurgency, many of them members of legal left-wing organizations. They have been killed by members of the regular military and police forces, the paramilitary Civilian Home Defence Forces (CHDF) or community-based civilian groups commonly known as "vigilantes", acting with government support....

Suspected supporters of the insurgency are not the only victims of political violence in the Philippines. The New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), has claimed responsibility for many "executions" of soldiers and police and others in the name of "revolutionary justice". Secretary of Local Government Jaime Ferrer was assassinated in July 1987. During the 1988 local elections, many candidates were shot dead, sometimes the victims of the NPA, sometimes of political rivals. Other

deaths have been attributed to right-wing military rebels and locally powerful "warlords" who may or may not have the support or protection of military and civilian authorities....

Unlawful killings by government agents

Killings or other crimes by opposition groups, however, can never be used to justify unlawful retaliatory killings by agents of the government. Members of the security forces are entrusted with responsibility for protecting citizens and for upholding and defending the legal system. If members of the security forces themselves commit unlawful political killings, then others may feel that they too can act with impunity....

Amnesty International has other concerns in the Philippines in addition to extra-judicial executions. It has issued several urgent appeals on behalf of campaigners for left-wing political parties who "disappeared" after allegedly having been abducted by military personnel following the May 1987 congressional election. There

have been occasional reports of torture. Amnesty has been concerned about moves in the Philippines congress to restore the death penalty which was abolished in February 1987 when the new constitution was ratified. Extrajudicial executions constitute, however, the most prevalent human rights violations in the Philippines today.

Amnesty's mandate does not extend to many of the issues of concern to human rights groups in the Philippines, such as "militarization", forced population removals or injuries to civilians resulting from strafing or bombing during counter-insurgency operations....

The first two missions, in May and December 1986, produced strong evidence that the Aquino government's commitment to the protection of human rights and the establishment of legal safeguards had led to major improvements. There was little evi-

1. The report is available from: Amnesty International Publications, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, GB.
2. Amnesty uses the term "extra-judicial executions" to describe "such unlawful and deliberate killings carried out by governments or with their acquiescence.... [These] have gone largely unpunished in the Philippines".

dence of the kind of systematic and sophisticated torture prevalent under the previous government, and prisoners were quickly brought before a judge and charged or else released. There appeared to be almost no incommunicado detention. Isolated cases of extra-judicial executions were reported, and one leading left-wing leader, Rolando Olalia, chair of the trade-union federation Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), was assassinated in November 1986, his killing linked to the military. On the whole, however, reports of human rights violations were far fewer than in previous years.

But by the time of Amnesty's third mission in July 1987 there had been a sharp escalation in political violence, and the government appeared increasingly unwilling or unable to persuade its security forces to respect the safeguards it had promoted so vigorously a year earlier, particularly when members of the military and police were targets of the NPA assassination squads....

Government encouraged "vigilante" groups

The government encouraged the formation of "civilian volunteer self-defence organizations", more commonly referred to as "vigilante" groups, as a means of combating the insurgency, but it exercised little supervision over the groups, and reports of serious human rights violations, including deliberate killings of suspected NPA supporters and members of left-wing organizations, increased. Members of "vigilante" groups themselves became targets of the NPA as a result.

Amnesty representatives discussed their concerns about reported political killings by both regular security forces and irregular paramilitary groups, including the "vigilantes", with military and civilian authorities at both national and provincial levels. They were briefed on efforts undertaken by the departments of local government and national defence to register the groups and supervise their activities, but Amnesty's information suggests that in the months that have elapsed since the July mission, the problem of human rights abuse by these semi-official forces has only increased....

The military and the insurgency under the Aquino government

Important changes took place within the armed forces after February 1986. The role played by Chief of Staff General Ramos and Defence Minister Enrile in the revolt against President Marcos in 1986 seemed to give the military a new image overnight....Reforms intended to improve the image of efficiency of the military appear to have been initiated by the military themselves. Other reforms intended to improve the human rights record of the military were initiated by civilians....

But despite the stated commitment of

some senior officers to protecting human rights, the new government's early emphasis on human rights created tensions within the military. On the one hand, the focus on the need for "professionalism" within the armed forces entailed a determination to prevent the kind of abuses which had led to a negative image of the military among the civilian population. On the other, "professionalism" also involved a determination to pursue counter-insurgency operations more effectively, and it was in the course of conducting such operation in the past that many human rights violations occurred....

Many within the military, in fact, appeared to see defence of human rights and conducting counter-insurgency operations as mutually exclusive. In a BBC interview on March 2, 1987, then Colonel (now Brigadier General) Honesto Isleta, the armed forces spokesperson, said: "On the ground

war I would say that if only there would not be this hanging sword of Damocles over our heads of human rights, and perhaps if we look at these NPAs as...foreigners...in our country, not Filipinos, then we could go all out. To hell with human rights."...

Specific groups targeted for assassination

There is no question that the NPA — and other armed opposition groups such as the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) — have committed acts of violence against civilian non-combatants and have targeted specific groups of people for assassination. The Operation Command of the NPA unit operating in Manila, the Alex Boncayao Brigade, took out an advertisement in the newspaper *Malaya* on June 15, 1987, enti-



A young member of an anti-Communist cult displays his machete (DR)

tled: "Revolutionary justice should be meted out". It listed the targets of their assassination squad ("sparrow unit") attacks as follows:

"1. Those who undertake politically-motivated salvaging [executions], kidnapping and assassination of leaders and members of democratic organizations and ordinary civilians;

"2. Those who actively participate in the violent dispersal of demonstrations, pickets, strikes and other forms of legitimate protest by the people;

"3. Those who are responsible for and engage in the demolition and forcible relocation of urban poor communities;

"4. Those who organize, train and recruit members of armed vigilante groups or other paramilitary units;

"5. Those who directly assist the military in setting up, supervising and running intelligence and spy networks;

"6. Those who serve as ringleaders and chief protectors of big crime syndicates engaged in drug trafficking, white slavery, kidnapping and extortion."...

A Brigade spokesperson told the *Manila Chronicle* that the CPP network in Manila had only embarked on regular operations in mid-1987, following the lapse of the ceasefire.

By the end of 1987, however, the level of killing had prompted a popular backlash by Manila residents and criticism by human rights activists. (The popular protest led in turn to a publicly-announced change in strategy by the Manila-based Brigade, whose spokesperson said in December 1987 that no more police would be killed and that targeting of victims would be "more selective")....

Increase in political violence

The increase in political violence has led some members of the military to press for stricter legal measures against suspected subversives. In September 1987 defence and military officials drafted an "Internal Security Act", modelled on those of Malaysia and Singapore, which would permit the detention without trial of people accused of subversion, restoration of the death penalty, and a national system of identity cards. The Malaysian and Singapore laws have been used to arrest and indefinitely detain without charge people suspected of national security offences, including many people that Amnesty considers prisoners of conscience.

Amnesty International had received a number of reports of alleged extra-judicial

executions in the last months of 1986. The number of reports it received increased after the resumption of fighting between the NPA and government troops in the aftermath of the collapse of negotiations in January 1987. The alleged extra-judicial executions included both killings of non-combatants during operations against the NPA, usually in rural areas, and targeted assassinations of members of legal left-wing associations....

[In the rest of this chapter, Amnesty describes a series of assassinations committed by the army in a number of the country's provinces.]

Killings by paramilitary forces: the "vigilante" groups

Many of the extra-judicial executions reported to Amnesty during its July 1987 mission represent a resurgence of the kind of killings which took place during the Marcos years by paramilitary units acting

these organizations coincided with a move to improve grass-roots intelligence-gathering capabilities, one of the chief functions of the existing CHDF which President Aquino had pledged to dismantle.

Vigilantes aided by the military

The model promoted by the military was the Alsa Masa or "Masses Arise" — a movement that grew up in Agdao, a district of Davao City, in early 1986. Agdao had become virtually controlled by the NPA by 1984-85, and the formation of the Alsa Masa more or less coincided with the elimination of the NPA presence there....

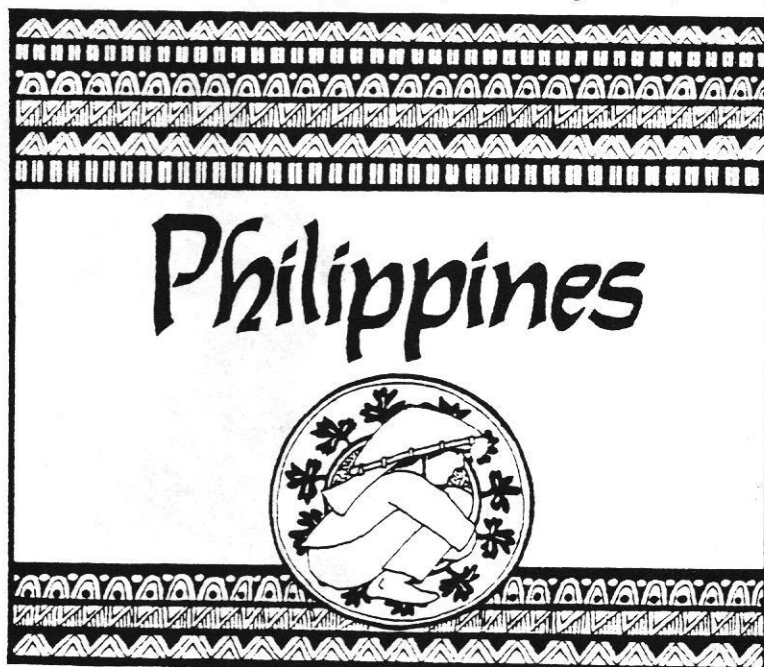
The notion of establishing organizations along the lines of the Alsa Masa has spread throughout the country so that by early 1988, according to one estimate, there were some 200 such organizations, which have generally become known as "vigilante" groups. Many have even adopted the name Alsa Masa. In theory, as stated by the military, they are not paramilitary organizations, but in practice that is what they appear to have become. They are armed, either with guns or with traditional weapons such as machetes; they supply the military with intelligence; some have access to military equipment such as vehicles; and in many cases their members accompany regular military forces on patrol or operations.

Aiding the counter-insurgency effort may not be their only function,

however. As elections approached in January 1988, many observers, including the respected editor of the *Manila Chronicle*, expressed the fear that the "vigilante" groups were turning into private armies for political candidates. The distinction between the old CHDF, the cult groups and the new "civilian volunteers" has become increasingly blurred....

The encouragement given to civilians to take part in the anti-communist effort has given a new legitimacy to any group taking an anti-communist stance, whatever its name or reputation.... Opinions differ even among senior officials over how exactly "civilian volunteer defence organizations" are to be defined....

The confusion over the nature of such groups may be one reason why the term "vigilante" has become indiscriminately applied to all civilian groups active in the counter-insurgency effort, armed or unarmed, old cult or new group. Colonel Cali-



under the command or with the sanction of the regular armed forces. The abuses committed by paramilitary groups including the CHDF forces were such that when the Aquino government came to power, many organizations demanded that they be dismantled....

A decline in the level of military activity against the insurgents in 1986, culminating in the 60-day ceasefire beginning on Human Rights Day (December 10) 1986, resulted in a concomitant decline in the number of reported human rights violations by military and paramilitary groups. When the ceasefire ended, however, full-scale counter-insurgency operations resumed. As one tool in their effort to stem the rebellion, the military encouraged and authorized the formation of "civilian volunteer self-defence organizations" whose members were to patrol their neighbourhoods and report any strangers or suspicious individuals to local authorities. The growth of

da told Amnesty that he disliked the term "vigilante" because it implied that civilian volunteers were "at once judge and executioner", whereas the Alsa Masa members were law-abiding citizens. There is strong evidence, however, that members of the Alsa Masa and other "vigilante" groups have committed grave human rights violations, including political killings, apparently with the knowledge or acquiescence of local military commanders....

[There follow a number of examples of assassinations carried out by the "vigilantes".]

The debate over "vigilantes"

Reports of human rights violations by "vigilante" groups come at a time of intense debate in the Philippines over their role.... Opponents of "vigilantes" fall into three categories. Those in the first category accept that there may be a need in some cases for civilian defence organizations, but they are concerned about how these groups operate in practice. The Presidential Committee on Human Rights (now disbanded) publicly stated that it had no objection to civilian voluntary defence organizations "provided they are strictly restricted to their respective neighbourhoods, are unarmed and their recruitment is strictly voluntary".

The second category consists of those who are opposed to the concept of civilian defence organizations which they believe is in conflict with the constitutional prohibition on private armies. They believe that the concept of defence against armed attack virtually implies the use of arms in return, which should be the monopoly of the regular armed forces. They fear that civilians ostensibly armed for self-defence might easily become enticed into the service of politicians or large landowners....

Counter-insurgency strategy

A third group believes that the "vigilante" groups were never intended to be self-defence organizations in the first place but were established as an element of military counter-insurgency strategy to provide an extra-judicial means of identifying, harassing and sometimes eliminating suspected NPA supporters.

One proponent of this view in Davao stated in a May 1987 paper, referring to Alsa Masa: "They have proven an invaluable asset to the military, allowing it to maintain a 'clean' image as the 'New' AFP while the 'dirty work' of intimidation can be left to the Alsa Masa. Alsa Masa members are responsible to no higher authority, and so there is no one to whom a victim can complain, safeguarding both the Alsa Masa and the military from legal prosecution".

Amnesty International recognizes that a government has a responsibility to take measures to counter threats to its security. It believes, however, that it has an equal re-

sponsibility to ensure that any groups set up for this purpose obey the law and do not violate human rights. It is disturbed by evidence from throughout the country of cooperation between such groups and the regular armed forces, and believes the government must therefore be held accountable for human rights violations committed by their members....

Amnesty has received several reports indicating that membership of civilian defence organizations in some areas is not entirely voluntary. In two areas people detained on suspicion of being NPA supporters were released on condition that they either join existing Alsa Masa organizations or form new ones in their areas....

Vigilante groups target NPA supporters

At a meeting with Amnesty International representatives in July 1987 in Manila, Brigadier General Dionisio Tan-Gatue implicitly acknowledged that membership was not always voluntary — he said that the military had to "convince" people to join and that its methods for doing so were the same as the NPA's because they were competing for the same population. Coercive recruitment may encourage human rights violations if those who refuse to join themselves become targets of abuse.

Amnesty representatives found that in some cases not only were criminal elements not discouraged from joining civilian defence organizations, but they were even actively encouraged to do so. General Tan-Gatue told the representatives that it was up to the military commander to decide who could join such groups. In response to Amnesty's query about one case, he said that men in Leyte who had allegedly decapitated two suspected NPA "tax collectors", and who were subsequently recruited into the military-sponsored "Barangay Self-defence Force" might seem like heroes to local residents. Amnesty believes that if individuals known to have engaged in activities outside the law, whatever their support or position within the

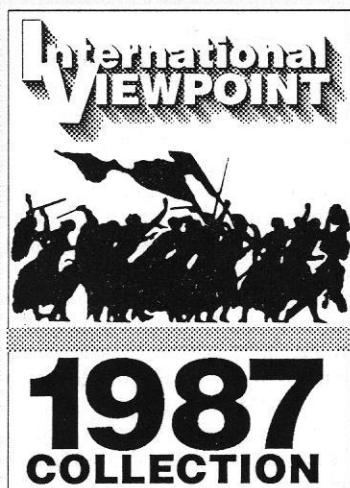
community, are recruited into military-supported "vigilante" groups, then inevitably the military will be seen to be condoning their actions and suggesting that similar acts may be committed with impunity.

Although the guidelines issued by the government and military on the civilian defence organizations stress their defensive character, many appear to have gone beyond purely defensive activity. The representatives found that in many cases, the extra-judicial killing of suspected NPA members appeared to be in retaliation for the killing by the NPA of relatives of members of the group responsible. The targets of such retaliation, however, were not the NPA fighters themselves whose whereabouts and identity might be difficult to determine, but rather unarmed members of legal, left-wing organizations operating openly in the community.

If the military or civilian authorities believe there is *prima facie* evidence that members of such organizations are aiding or harbouring the insurgents, complaints against them should be filed in court and the suspects accorded due process. The number of unprovoked killings reported to Amnesty International suggests that the principle of civilian defence organizations restricting their activities to non-violent intelligence gathering and nightly patrols is not being observed in practice....

There appears as yet to be no acknowledgement of the link between cult groups such as the Sagrado Corazon Senor or Tadtads and the regular military forces, and no public statement that the guidelines on civilian self-defence organizations should apply to such groups. Given the number of reported abuses by members of these cult groups and the evidence that they work with both the regular armed forces and "vigilante" groups, it is imperative that strict control and supervision be exercised over them as well and that the military be held equally accountable for human rights violations committed by them.

[The rest of the report demonstrates the inefficacy of investigations led by the administration and concludes with a series of recommendations.] ★



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USA

Rally for Moscow trials' rehabilitations

ON SATURDAY, March 19, over 200 people attended the first public rally in the USA held under the auspices of the Moscow Trials Campaign Committee in New York. The US committee is part of an international effort to seek the exoneration and rehabilitation of all the victims of the infamous Moscow show trials, which were organized by Stalin in the 1930s as a means of wiping out his political opponents.

Naomi Allen, one of the co-editors of the *Writings of Leon Trotsky*, chaired the meeting. Speakers included Paul Siegel, professor emeritus of Long Island University and author of several books on cultural subjects from a Marxist viewpoint, who represented the committee. He dwelt on the history of Stalinism, the monstrous purges during the Moscow trials, and the need to support the courageous people in the Soviet Union who are demanding the rehabilitation of all the victims of the Moscow trials.

Siegel was followed by Morris Schappes, editor of *Jewish Currents*. Schappes, who was fired from his job as a teacher at New York City College in 1941 and then imprisoned for over a year for his refusal to become an informer, and who recently achieved vindication when City College formally apologized for its wrongful behaviour and honored him with a dinner. Schappes devoted his remarks to examples of anti-semitism in the Soviet Union and also pointed to recent progress being made there for cultural Jewish life.

A brief statement by Juliet Ucelli, representing the New York Marxist School, stressed her support for the objectives of the rally and expressed concern that the full historical truth of the Moscow trials and their origin be revealed. Conrad Lynn, former counsel to the NAACP and now 80 years old and still active as an attorney in civil liberties and civil rights cases, was also a featured speaker.

Marilyn Vogt-Downey, translator from the Russian of *Notebooks for the Grandchildren* (the memoirs of Mikhail Baitalsky currently being serialized in the *Bulletin*), related some aspects of the memoirs which refer to the victimization of Left Oppositionists and others under Stalin. Her appeal to the audience for funds to help carry on the work of the committee resulted in over

\$1,600 being raised on the spot.

The final speaker was Esteban Volkov, the grandson of Leon Trotsky. Volkov did not speak of the personal tragedies that beset his family but of the political ideas which Trotsky and the other Bolshevik leaders fought for and the potential that exists to raise them again the USSR.

Messages of support to the campaign were read from such figures as Noam Chomsky, Phillip Berrigan and Bill Henning. Anyone who would like to participate in the work of the Moscow Trials Campaign Committee should contact it at: PO Box 318, Gracie Station, New York NY 10028, USA. ★

[From the May issue of Bulletin in Defense of Marxism.]

INTERNATIONAL

Moscow Trials Campaign

THE CAMPAIGN to clear the names of the accused in the Moscow Trials has been collecting signatures from all over the world (see IV 129). You can contact the campaign c/o Michael Löwy, 34 rue des Lyonnais, 75005, Paris, France.

Latest signatories:

Canada: Richard Fidler, translator.

Spanish state: Valentín Redondo, chair GERESAS factory council; Vicens Ballester, POUM; Manuel Vázquez Montalbán; Juan de Dios Cañete, PSOE councillor; Raimón; Carmen Sansa, actress; Raúl García, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona; Victoriano Cremer, national poetry prize winner; Josep M. Cardanell, journalist; Agapito Ramos, Madrid councillor; Eduardo Mangada, Madrid councillor; Empar Pineda, feminist; José Mariano Benítez de Lugo, lawyer; Pablo Castellano, general councillor, judicial branch; Pelai Pagès, historian; Mariano Sánchez, journalist; Jaime Pastor; Miguel Angel Rodríguez Lorite, Chair Ministry of Culture enterprise committee for Workers' Commissions; Enrique del Olmo; María Teresa de Andrade; Francisco de Cabo, POUM CC; Wilebaldo Solano, POUM CC; Jorge Gordon Nuevo, journalist; Adolfo Fernández Marugán, biologist; Fernando Savater, philosopher; Javier Maestro, historian; Enrique Rodríguez Arroyo, POUM CC; Enrique Calduch, journalist; Eugenio Fernández Granell, artist; Carles Girbau, journalist; Alejandro Arizcun Cela, historian.

Uruguay: Raúl Sendic, MLN-Tupamaros; E. Fernandez Huidobro, MLN-Tupamaros; Hugo Cores, Partido por a Victoria del Pueblo-Frente Amplio; Guillermo Chiflet, Partido Socialista-Frente Amplio; Mario Rossi, Movimiento Revolucionario Oriental-Frente Amplio (MRO-FA); Sergio Napoli, MRO-FA; Fernando Rodríguez, MRO-FA; Alejandro Quiroga, MRO-FA; Elena Lequio, MRO-FA; Rodolfo Lares, MRO-FA; Rosalia Sanles, MRO-FA; Díaz Stefano, MRO-FA; Mesio Falcón, MRO-FA; Juan Herterreche, Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PRT); Marita Silvera, PRT; Héctor Rodríguez, Izquierda Democrática Independencia-Frente Amplio (IDI-FA); Víctor Semproni, IDI-FA; Héctor Díaz, IDA-FA; Eduardo Rubienes, IDA-FA; Daniel Parada, IDA-FA; Marcelo Pereira, IDA-FA; Helio Sarthou, IDA-FA; Juan Manuel Rodríguez, IDA-FA; Eduardo Rubio, IDA-FA; Daniel Coll, IDA-FA; Zulma Nogara, Frente Amplio; Prof. Washington Estellano; Rubén Correa, architect; Adolfo Cortategui, accountant; Prof. Conrado Petit; Hugo Rodríguez Filippini, Partido Socialista EC; Miguel Bracesco, architect; Prof. José Luis Parodi. ★

OBITUARY

Frank Glass (Li Fu-jen) 1901-1988

AFTER A LONG illness, Frank Glass (better known in the world Trotskyist movement by his adopted Chinese name Li Fu-jen) passed away on March 21 in Los Angeles.

Frank Glass was a true internationalist and revolutionary communist. During his long life, he played important roles at different times in various countries — South Africa, China and the USA — and in the International as a whole.

He was born in Birmingham, England. He spent his boyhood in London, and moved to South Africa with his parents in his early teens. He served briefly in the British army at the end of World War I, and was influenced by the Russian Revolution.

Back in South Africa, he joined the Social Democratic Federation, but before long he and other comrades broke way to found the Industrial Socialist League. In 1921, together with many other supporters of the Third International, he was a founding member of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA).

At the Second Congress of the CPSA in 1923, Frank was elected as the organizer of the party. In December 1924, at the Third Congress, he led an opposition group fighting against the party's opportunist right wing. Thereafter he spent most of his time and energy leading the South African Association of Employees' Organizations (later renamed the South African Congress of Trade Unions, SACTU). He had long sympathized with the Left Opposition in

the Soviet Union, and became South Africa's first Trotskyist in 1928.

In 1929 or 1930, Frank left for the USA, where he met James Cannon, Max Shachtman, Arne Swabeck and other pioneers of American Trotskyism. Then he proceeded to the Far East. He was denied entry to Japan, and finally settled down in Shanghai, probably in 1931.

Frank did not immediately get into contact with the Chinese Trotskyists. Having achieved unification at their First National Congress (May 1-3, 1931), they had suffered very grave setbacks as a result of Guomindang repression. Successive arrests of their leaders had plunged the movement into disarray.

Frank earned his living in Shanghai as a journalist. He independently continued his revolutionary activity, mainly among Western intellectuals sympathetic to the Chinese revolution. He won some of them to Trotskyism, including Harold Isaacs (who later wrote *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*) and Alexander Buchman, who became one of Leon Trotsky's guards in Mexico nearly ten years later.

Frank's direct participation in the activities of the Chinese Trotskyists began in 1933. He played a rather important role in restoring and maintaining our underground organization. He was elected to the Provisional Central Committee (as secretary-treasurer) at a conference of representatives of Shanghai comrades in the winter of 1935.

As a foreigner working under conditions of Guomindang repression, Frank's contribution to the movement was inevitably restricted. Financially, he and his wife, Grace, supplied nearly all the needs of our printing operation and the living expenses of the two comrades who operated it.

Politically, it was through Frank that the Chinese comrades maintained relations with Trotsky in Norway and later in Mexico, and with the centre of the world movement in Paris.

In May 1937, Frank left China to visit Trotsky in Mexico and discuss the Chinese situation with him on the eve of the Sino-Japanese war. He took with him a resolution drafted by me and adopted by the Provisional Central Committee. On the basis of Frank's report and this resolution, Trotsky and Frank held a long and important talk on August 11, 1937. (The record of this discussion is published in *Leon Trotsky on China*).

Frank finally left China on the eve of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He spent the next few years in New York. I believe he helped run the affairs of the Fourth International, which had moved from Europe to the USA as a result of the occupation of France by the Nazis. He wrote a lot, particularly about China.

After the Japanese surrender in 1945, Frank was very keen to return to China and rejoin his old friends, but his dream was never realized. He continued to watch developments in the Chinese revolution, but

LCR and JCR celebrate the anniversary of May 68

AT THE END of May, the Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (French section of the Fourth International), and the youth organization, the JCR, are organizing a weekend-long fête to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of May 68.

The event will be held on May 28/29 in Paris, and is centred around the theme of 68-88, with meetings and workshops around the struggles in 68 and today.

Speakers include Tariq Ali, Hugo Blanco, Régis Debray, Jeanette Habel, Pierre Juquin, Alain Krivine, Anne Tristan and Henri Weber. There will also be a "Grand ball between two barricades" (!), music, cinema, theatre, stalls, a book city and regional food. ★

68 MAI 88



he paid more and more attention to the problems of the Philippines. For a long time, he edited a magazine for Filipinos.

After the victory of the Chinese Communist Party and the persecution of the Trotskyists in China, I restored contact with Frank. We exchanged opinions on nearly every turn in the CCP's policy. We saw eye to eye on most issues and disagreed on some. We remained very good comrades and friends.

Among Frank's virtues as a communist internationalist and revolutionary was foremost his complete lack of personal ambition. He was a man of conviction: he had his own opinion on nearly every major political question.

Once he had formed an opinion, he fought for it stubbornly. However, he was never opinionated, and still less self-serving. He defended his views honestly and fairly. He fought only on issues, never on personalities. In internal struggles, he was magnanimous in victory and gracious in defeat.

Frank's last wish was to live to see Trotsky restored to a place of honour in the Soviet Union. Sadly, he did not get his wish. Sooner or later, however, not only Trotsky but all Trotskyists will be rehabilitated: not only in the USSR but in China too, and in all those "socialist" countries where Trotskyists have been persecuted. ★

Wang Fanxi

21

Social crisis and the "dirty war"

BOURGEOIS SOCIETY is decaying very rapidly in Colombia, despite the fact that the economic crisis in this country is less severe than in most others in Latin-America. The increasing number of murders committed both by para-police gangs and drug traffickers' goons have begun to become a major international scandal, like the "dirty" war waged by the repressive forces under the last Argentine dictatorship. Revolutionary guerrilla forces have become well rooted and are apparently growing.

The following article describes the growth of governmental and drug gangsterism in the country, their connections, the deteriorating living conditions of Colombian working people and the relationship between the guerrilla organizations and social struggles.

RENE GONZALEZ

THE "DIRTY WAR" is developing in the context of a social crisis and a crisis of traditional values and the state institutions. It is these pressures today that determine the way the regime behaves toward the population of the country.

The following figures illustrate the social situation created both by Colombia's dependent capitalism and by the accelerated urbanization of the country over the last decade. These figures come from an official report presented in connection with a project for the most backward parts of the country, where absolute poverty prevails and the population has been left in total neglect.

It is in such areas that the social radicalization has been the strongest and where the guerrillas have found their traditional base of support. The government has begun a campaign to try to gain entry into these regions through paternalism, by undertaking some socially useful schemes, such as building roads and water pipes.

Illiteracy is 30%. In a country of 28 million inhabitants, only 6 million have access to state health services. Only 50% of housing needs are being met; 30% of the population is "undernourished," and 15% live in what the international bodies call "absolute poverty," that is, below the subsistence level. They do not even get the minimum calories the human body needs to sustain itself.

In the present economic situation, these "structural" living conditions are growing worse. Over the last two years, the Colombian economy has experienced an average

growth of 5% in Gross National Product. This has led the bourgeoisie to boast about abundance. But today the bourgeois economists themselves agree that the upturn was fundamentally due to capacity installed at the beginning of the 1980s.

Production will be much more limited this year. Inflation will increase, even if, in relative terms, Colombia has been relatively stable until now in comparison with other countries in Latin America. The reason for this is the association with "mafia capital."

No political tradition in trade-union movement

In the first months of this year, we saw the beginning of an inflationary process. For January and February alone, there was a 7% increase in the cost of living. By way of comparison, at the start of the year the country's main labor organization, the Central Unica de Trabajadores (CUT, the United Confederation of Workers) negotiated a wage agreement calling for raises of the order of 21% for the whole of 1988.

In other words, in only two months, a third of this increase has been eaten away. This factor is quite important because, as we will see later, the Colombian trade-union movement is fundamentally concerned with immediate economic demands. It has no political tradition. The fact that the bourgeoisie can still negotiate the minimum wage level and a ceiling on annual wage increases enables it to keep a rein on

workers' economic struggles.¹ This is an element holding back a further radicalization.

A second factor that exerts a strong influence over the economic situation is the debt. Also as a result of the partnership with "mafia capital," the consequences of the debt have not been so onerous as in other Latin American countries. But today the government itself recognizes that nearly 40% of the national budget goes to pay the interest on the debt. If you add to this fact the government's splurge on "modernizing" the army and the police, nearly 70% of the national budget goes on the debt and the military.

"Mafia capital" and the drug trade

In this social panorama of crisis, the agrarian question has to be highlighted. It continues to be a problem because of the traditional domination of the big landowners. The democratic struggle of the peasants for the land has always been met by the armed forces with assassinations and the formation of paramilitary gangs.

This is the context in which "mafia capital" operates. The importance of the mafia in Colombia is not simply economic. As I said, the debt is not as burdensome as elsewhere because the Colombian bourgeoisie has come up with a mechanism enabling the mafia to "launder" dollars piled up from the drug trade. The public banks do this job, and this makes it possible to maintain a currency reserve giving the government a certain margin of maneuver with regard to the debt, although this of course has no effect on the productive infrastructure.

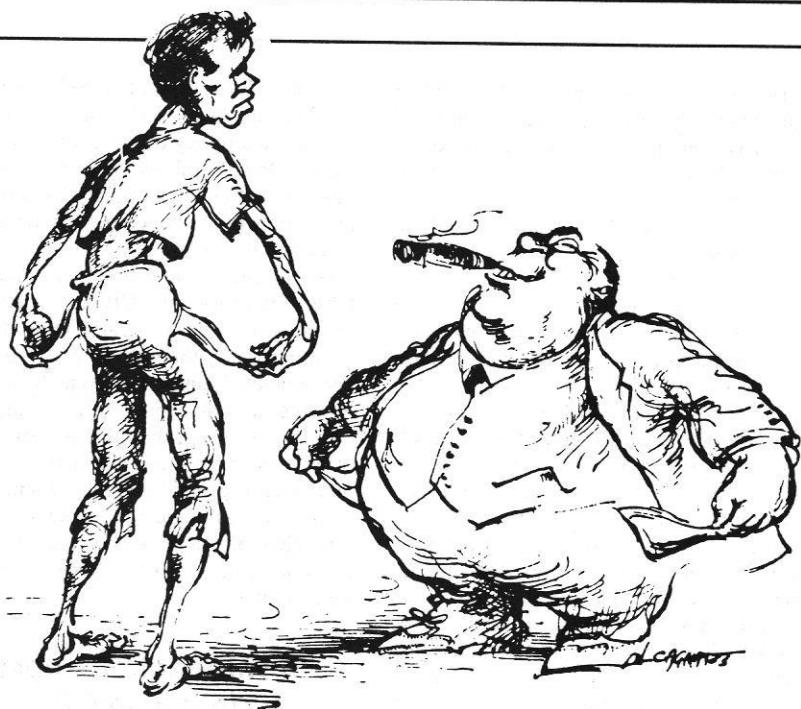
What has happened in Colombia, especially in the last 15 years, is a fusion of traditional and mafia capital. Today, banking would be unthinkable without the mafia. The buying and selling of land, especially in the urban areas, would be unthinkable without the mafia. The immense fortunes circulating in the real-estate business are considered publicly by everyone to come from the drug trade and be controlled by "mafia capital."

In Medellín, the country's second largest city, which has been made famous by the notorious "Medellín cartel,"² the weekly *Semana* ventured to say that it could be calculated that more than 70% of the city's economy is today controlled by the mafia.

Not only commerce and banking are implicated but now the productive apparatus, especially textiles, Medellín's traditional industry. "Mafia capital" has now expanded to such an extent that the process of accumulation is unthinkable in Colombia

1. The minimum wage level is negotiated between the government and the unions annually. The government also imposes a ceiling on wage increases relative to the rate of inflation.

2. A group of "big wigs" in the drug business, including the Escobar family and the Ochoas, who have one of the world's biggest fortunes.



today without it.

This factor is compounded by the social crisis, the fact that the workers' movement is unable to respond on the political level, political fragmentation and the demoralization produced by the growth of unemployment, which stands officially at 15%. (Of course, you have to add to this the high level of under-employment reflected in the expansion of what is known as the "informal" economy, which involves nearly half the population.)

State institutions riddled with mafia influence

The result is that sections of the population are beginning to be drawn into the mafia. It is no longer just the "lumpen" dregs of society, but also technicians and professionals, who realize that working for themselves or for the state will not bring them as much income as the mafia can offer. There is no need to dwell on the fact that these developments have to be taken very seriously by all those who want to offer a social alternative.

The problem of the mafia is linked to the institutions of the state themselves. At the beginning of last year, Reagan tried to force Virgilio Barco's government to declare war on the mafia, or at least to clean out some sections of it. This offensive led to the terrorist attack on the home of Escobar, one of the Cartel's "godfathers," in Medellín, a house well known to everyone in the region.

The mafia's response was swift — the assassination of the general prosecutor of the republic, Carlos Hoyos, on January 25 and the kidnapping of the Conservative presidential candidate, Andrés Pestrana, today mayor of Bogotá. It became glaringly evident to everyone that the state institutions — the army, Congress and the traditional parties — are riddled with mafia influence.

The interpenetration is so great that it is unthinkable that war can be waged on the mafia in Colombia based on the bourgeoisie.

There is no bourgeois institution, not even the Catholic hierarchy, that is not linked to the mafia! Traditionally, Catholicism has been a very strong mechanism for controlling the population, purveying an ideology of submission, resignation, of waiting for rewards in another life. But the exposure of the links existing between the mafia and the ecclesiastical hierarchy has provoked a deepgoing unease in the population. It is beginning to think that the Church is not as pure as it would like people to believe.

The same phenomenon is developing with regard to the army. The military's ties with the mafia are so tight that in some regions you cannot tell where one leaves off and the other begins. This army has never faced a foreign enemy. Its sights are set entirely on the struggle against the "internal enemy." It is shaped by a profoundly anti-Communist ideology, a long tradition of assassinations and state-of-siege conditions in which there is no guarantee even of most minimal democratic freedoms.

Emerging centralization of struggles

As for parliament, it is totally corrupt and discredited, a gang of tinhorn politicians thoroughly infiltrated by the mafia. It is based on patronage and a distribution of bureaucratic posts, along with various forms of siphoning off state revenues.

Such an all-pervasive crisis of the state obviously has not failed to have an impact on the development of the mass movement. The latter is beginning to go beyond immediate reactions to the social crisis and to the austerity plans of the government and the IMF. A centralization of the various struggles is beginning to emerge. This is a major

change, because for 30 or 40 years the mass movement in Colombia has had a tradition of division.

For example, until 1987 when the CUT was founded, the trade-union movement was divided into four confederations³, not counting what were called the independent trade unions, which were not linked to any of these. So the appearance of the CUT is an extremely important development. There is now an organization that can respond centrally, at least on an economic level, to the austerity plans of the government and the IMF.

Plans for a single peasant confederation

Likewise we are seeing a centralization of the peasant movement. The formation of a single peasant confederation is being discussed, which is going to facilitate the development of peasant struggles in the country, and there are already rather strong united actions in the countryside. The same thing is happening among the Indians, who are also building a national apparatus for struggle. But these advances made by the mass movement are contradictory. There are also weaknesses.

Because of the sort of leadership the CUT has, the trade-union movement's struggle is limited entirely to immediate economic demands. Political struggle, even for democratic liberties, is not posed. Therefore, the response of the mass movement to the "dirty war" falls far short of what is needed.

What methods are being used today by the bourgeoisie and the armed forces in the "dirty war"? First of all, we have what can be called the traditional one — armed paramilitary gangs. The government recognized in the fall of 1987 that there were more than 140 groups of this sort. Generally, they are regional combinations between the private sector bosses, the big landowners, the mafia and the regional structures of the armed forces.

The intelligence operations are carried out by the army services, and the dirty work is done by mafioso goons. There are mafia training camps. If the government has officially recognized the existence of 140 groups, it can easily be imagined that the real figure is five or six times that number.

These gangs stop at nothing to terrorize people. Death lists are made public throughout the country of trade-union leaders and human rights activists. The gangs also use telephone blackmail, threatening to kill people if they do not stop their activities. They send activists death notices bearing their names and inviting them to their own funeral. In general, the first step is intimidation, but it does not stop there.

3. The Workers' Confederation of Colombia (CTC), linked to the Liberal Party; the Union of Workers of Colombia (UTC), Catholic in inspiration and linked to the Conservative party; the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) and the Trade-Union Confederation of Workers of Colombia (CSTC) led by the CP.

The second step is sending a thug to assassinate the person concerned, or causing a "disappearance." Activists are kidnapped, and their bodies are found a few days later, mutilated by torture. For some time, especially in the province of Antioquia, there have been mass murders. This happened in Medellín in November 1987, when a group of paramilitaries burst into a headquarters of the Communist Youth and executed all the activists there, about 20 people.

Selective repression of the vanguard

Recently, in Urabá, also in the province of Antioquia, on the border with Panama, thugs murdered about 40 union leaders in the area, where there are big banana plantations. They went onto an estate and killed about 20 people; then went onto another and killed 20 others. Here the link with the mafia is clear, because it wanted to get hold of those lands.

On the model of what happened in Argentina during the dictatorship, what we are seeing at work is a mechanism for selective repression of the vanguard. The paramilitary groups are assassinating the best trade-union and political cadres, those who have a mass following, so that if a generalized upsurge of the mass movement occurs it will find no leadership. We see this clearly because it is not just the "public" cadres of the left who are being murdered, but also internal cadres of the organizations. Here the hand of the military intelligence services can be recognized.

While it makes more and more statements about opening investigations to find the assassins — who are known to everyone — the government is investing in modernizing the police and army and increasing their numbers. Today, the armed forces include about 120,000 men. The government proposes to increase this by 40,000 to 50,000 men over the next two years. What is more, in Colombia the police are not under the Ministry of the Interior but under the army. In the same period, the police apparatus is to be beefed up by 30,000 more men.

The bourgeoisie is already acting as if we were in a civil war situation, as if we already had a general confrontation. It is throwing the full weight of the state into preparing for such a war.

The mass movement made a major response on the social level. The number of "civic strikes," especially in middle-sized cities, is impressive, as are the agrarian struggles, which in Colombia are almost inevitably guerrilla struggles. In fact, conditions have been such that waging a legal struggle in the countryside automatically means accepting the murder of the cadres of the peasant movement. This is why peasant mobilizations are inevitably accompanied by guerrilla struggle, and provide a base for guerrilla movements.

However, the leaderships of the guerrilla movements have realized that because of the urbanization of the country, it is necessary to "transfer" some of the gains they have made in the rural areas to the urban ones. And they are doing that, especially in the middle-sized cities. Alongside this radicalization in the countryside, in the cities — as already mentioned — we have the limitations of the trade-union movement, which restricts itself to immediate economic issues.

In the big cities, the state institutions retain a considerable weight. This is indicated by the recent mayoral elections, where we saw a reinforcement of the traditional two-party system, despite an abstention rate of 44%.⁴ This shows that on the electoral level at least there is no alternative to the Conservative and Liberal parties.

Let us look now at what is happening on the left. First of all, it has to be noted that because of the country's features, owing to the social structure itself, a large part of this left is linked to guerrilla warfare. That is not only an expression of the peasant movements but also the result of the left's very limited possibilities for legal activity. Recently, in September 1987, the various guerrilla organizations decided to form a common coordinating body, the "Simón Bolívar" Guerrilla Coordinating Committee.

The Communist Party is the strongest organization on the left, and is linked to the oldest of the Colombian guerrilla organizations, the Fighting Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC-EP). The latter participated in the truce operation carried out under the government of the Conservative Betancur (1982-86) in 1983. At that time, the CP's policy was to try to integrate itself to the greatest possible degree into the state's political institutions.

Rural guerrilla movement

In this period many CP statements, as well as those of the FARC leadership, maintained that it was possible to gain a place in mass politics by "reinvesting" the capital of the guerrilla movement in legal activity. Such statements went so far as to envisage the guerrillas laying down their arms in order to take advantage of this opportunity. They thought that the regime could offer democratic guarantees, a minimum agrarian reform and so on.

The FARC is largely a rural guerrilla movement, with an agrarian program and peasant self-defence methods. The CP operates in the urban areas and the FARC in the rural ones. The FARC today has about 50 "fronts" and about 4,500 guerrillas, according to the Colombian army's own estimates.

On the basis of this negotiation with Betancur, the CP publicly avowed its link with the FARC and in 1985 formed the Unión Patriótica (UP), which brought

together CP cadres and FARC cadres who had become "legal." This organization has conducted a policy of what could be called classic class conciliationism and collaboration. In particular, its policy has involved presenting all the government's maneuvers in a favorable light.

During the recent elections in March, in 80% of the cases, the UP made deals with the most corrupt Liberals. They did not even try to ally themselves with the more "presentable" Liberals, despite the fact that this regime has been ruthless toward the UP. In two years, the UP has seen nearly 600 of its leaders and activists murdered, including its general secretary, Jaime Pardo Leal, who was executed last October. In the municipal elections, it won only 14 posts, and one of these mayors has already been assassinated.

Contradictions open debate in CP

The contrast between the massive repression that the UP faces and its reformist political language is preparing the way for a debate within this organization. But we know that this will not come about automatically. There is not going to be any major crisis in the Communist Party of Colombia until an alternative revolutionary pole is built up that will offer an example of a revolutionary policy in all areas of the struggle — in the trade unions, the countryside, the cities and so on.

M-19 is another armed left current. A part of the leadership of this guerrilla organization came out of a split from the FARC, another came from the ANAPO [Alianza Nacional Popular, a populist party led by the former dictator Rojas Pinilla]. In the 1960s, they launched a debate, noting that there was a stable guerrilla movement but that it had no impact in the country, because it was essentially rural and urbanization was accelerating. Bateman, who came from the FARC and was to become the major leader of M-19, raised the idea of a guerrilla movement projecting itself into the cities.

In Colombia, the guerrillas are a strong pole of attraction for the class-struggle left, for radical trade unionists and for the radical peasant movement. Therefore, at the beginning of the 1970s, when the M-19 was formed, it gained an influence over a large section of the radical trade-union movement. From the outset, it was different from the traditional guerrilla movements that the country had known.

Under the Turbay Liberal government (1978-82), M-19 launched a series of large-scale operations. The government's response was brutal. It resorted to systematic torture and assassination of the guerrilla leaders. The entire leadership, except for Bateman, was imprisoned. But because M-

4. For an analysis of the municipal elections, see "Democracy and the dirty war," in *IV* 138, April 4, 1988.

19 had already gained a mass following, this repression led to the formation of organizations to defend human rights. These groups waged an international campaign that offered M-19 an opportunity to increase its prestige.

So, when the Turbay government came to an end in 1982, not only had it been discredited by the activity of the military, but the role of M-19 in the left and in the social movement as a whole had been reinforced. So, when Betancur set up his peace commission, at the start it was directed primarily at the M-19.

The M-19 had said that if there was a process of general amnesty, it was ready to go back into a legal framework. This is what happened when Betancur advanced his operation. But the military cadres were the political ones and vice versa; the leadership was at once political and military. Those who publicly conducted the negotiations with the government were also the movement's military cadres.

M-19 leadership decimated by repression

At the end of the Betancur period and the beginning of the Barco period, this leadership was to be decimated by repression. In other words, the regime's operation consisted of getting them to come out into the open in the period of "peace" in order better to assassinate them, and it was successful. This was a lesson for the left as a whole in Colombia.

If you compare what happened in the case of M-19 with the FARC, the contrast is striking. The latter organization maintains a strict separation between public work and military activity. It has not suffered the consequences of the blows suffered by the UP. Its leadership is intact today.

Obviously, Betancur's whole "peace" operation was no more than a maneuver, as subsequent events were to prove. There was not the slightest agrarian reform measure or any step to widen democratic liberties. There was only a sharpening of repression.

The Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (PCml) comes from Maoist origins. It has broken all its ties with China, Albania and so on. Today, it is adapting increasingly to the policy of the Communist Party. This has provoked an internal crisis, and that is now paralyzing the party to a large extent. But it still has a mass base. The PCml is linked to a guerrilla organization, the People's Liberation Army (EPL).



The Camilloist Union-National Liberation Army (UC-ELN) is the last major current in the armed left. Of "Guevarist" origin, it included Camillo Torres in its ranks. The priest joined the guerrillas, and died in battle in 1967. After going through a serious crisis owing to its focoist strategy, this organization drew a balance sheet. It turned toward the idea of stable zones with a peasant base where it could build up its strength. This was more or less a conception of "prolonged people's war."

The ELN did not participate in the "peace negotiations" in the Betancur period, because it disagreed politically with the course taken, for example, by the FARC and M-19, and it was suspicious of the government's intentions. Subsequent events confirmed this judgment. The ELN's stance strengthened it numerically and politically on the national level.

Today, the Ministry of Defence estimates that the ELN has 1,500 guerrillas fighting on about a dozen fronts. It is, unquestionably, the second largest guerrilla force in the country after the FARC. And, like the latter, the ELN is not limiting itself to sporadic operations but controls certain areas in which the local population play an active social role.

A Luchar includes most radical forces

The organization *A Luchar* ["To Struggle"] has emerged in the general context of a recomposition of the mass movement and the revolutionary left. Today, it includes all the most radical forces in the social movement as a whole, and especially in the trade-union movement.

A Luchar is the second largest force on the left today, after the UP. It is the dominant force in the peasant confederation that is emerging, which undoubtedly will hold its congress in the next six months. It controls the major part of the Indian organization, and also a third of the leadership of CUT. It is the only radical force in the CUT, and the only one that is really confronting the policy of the trade-union bureaucracy and the class-collaborationist policy of the UP.

Objective of becoming a revolutionary party

At the beginning, *A Luchar* was only a broad mass movement. But because of the needs of the social movement, the need to centralize this movement, it is now tackling the problem of centralizing itself politically, of adopting a better defined program, platform and political activity. It has just gone through a whole period of discussion in preparing for its second national convention, which will be held in May. Its objective today is to become a revolutionary party in the full sense of the term.

The Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), the Colombian section of the Fourth International, has decided to join *A Luchar*. (See the political accord on page ??). We will take part in the coming convention of this organization, and after that date we will work together as a single organization.

We reached this conclusion after a self-critical balance sheet of the PSR's activity and political line in the past period.

We had underestimated some fundamental aspects of the situation in the country: the guerrilla tradition, the weight of the

peasant question, the question of national sovereignty. In that respect, we drew a negative balance of the past period. It became clear that we could not build a revolutionary alternative on the basis of the PSR alone. You cannot build a revolutionary leadership only on the basis of the correctness of a general program.

Need to build an activist backbone

A *Luchar* is an organization to be built. At present, it still does not have a stable infrastructure with regional leaderships, a solid foundation of cadres and so forth. That is the main problem facing us. A *Luchar* is a revolutionary organization with a very broad mass following, and it has to build an activist backbone in order to respond to the needs of the situation. This is also one of the lessons that can be drawn from the experiences of the Central American revolutionists. Moreover, the same sort of problems face our comrades in the Mexican PRT [Revolutionary Workers' Party, Mexican section of the Fourth International]. They arise from the social formations in these countries.

In regard to politics in the strict sense, we are discussing with the comrades of A *Luchar* what tactic we should adopt in the urban areas and on the constitutional and parliamentary level.

We think that we also have to fight on this ground to win the mass movement away from the traditional parties, because until the mass movement has broken out of the framework imposed by the two-party system we will not be able to move on to a higher stage of central confrontation with the government. Of course, we cannot limit ourselves to talking about the need for waging what we call constitutional political struggle, because the framework of the dirty war itself imposes a combination of tasks.

We are joining A *Luchar* as a political current, and will wage political and ideological battles in the organization that will come into being in May, on the basis, of course, of accepting its public discipline. We will have all the means for conducting political and ideological discussions — internal structures, discussion bulletins and so on — in order to convince the other members of A *Luchar* of what we believe to be correct.

We think that Trotskyists in Colombia today, and what the PSR represents, can play an important role in building a revolutionary leadership. It is a difficult road. In a more than unstable situation, in which tempos can suddenly accelerate, the stakes are enormous.

For us joining A *Luchar* is not a political "operation," or a "raid." It is an important stage in the process of recomposing the revolutionary vanguard in Colombia, the objective of which is to build a revolutionary leadership. ★



Political accord between the PSR and A Luchar

CONVERGENCE has occurred between the organization A *Luchar* and the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR) on a number of important political and practical points. They can be summed up as follows:

- The struggle against imperialism, defence of national sovereignty and of our natural resources and non-repayment of the foreign debt.

- Rejection of the Constitutional Reform, of the modernization of the capitalist state, which is trying to take on constitutional forms to co-opt and defuse social protests.

- The need to give impetus and concrete form to various processes of uniting the masses, such as the United Workers' Confederation (CUT), the National Association of Peasants (ANUC), the National Coordinating Committee of Civic Movements (CNMC), the Student Unity Committee (CUE), the National Organization of Colombian Natives (ONIC) and for organizing women.

- Defence against the military, the dirty war and paramilitary groups.

- Support for the processes of political and social unity that are represented today

in the National Unity Committee (CNU) and the Working Group for a Democratic and Popular Convergence.¹

● Opposition to the government and support for the application of direct mass democracy, for stimulating the mass action and self-organization that have appeared in the strikes in various regions and in the workers' strikes that seek to build up a working-class and people's power.

The bases of this accord are the following:

1 In beginning this process of fusion, we are aware of the programmatic and tactical differences that exist, of different traditions and practices. However, sensitive to the wind of liberation and the examples of unity offered by the revolutionary leaderships in Central America, the past and still recent experiences in Colombia and the demands of the class struggle itself in our country, we will spare no effort to unite our political will within a single democratic and centralized organization. The objective of this organization will be to become a real revolutionary leadership in the fight against imperialist domination, the oligarchy, as well as against reformist self-limitation and class collaborationism within the workers' and people's movement.

2 The PSR is in agreement on the fundamental questions. It considers the conclusions of the first national convention of A *Luchar* to be an important basis of discussion. It accepts the collective framework of the discussion on program, tactics, organizational questions, the Plan of Action and the line to be followed in the

1. The CNU is a grouping of mass organizations such as ONIC, CNMC, ANUC, political organizations (including A *Luchar*, the Popular Front, which is linked to the PCml) and various associations (Christians, magazines and so on). Its objective is to coordinate and give impetus to mobilizations.

The call of the Working Group for a Democratic and Popular Convergence that would aim for "a national response to the offensive against life...in order to seek a solution to the crisis and create a Colombia of peace and social justice" was signed by all the people's, trade-union and left political organizations (ONIC, CUE, CUT, UP, A *Luchar*, PSR, Popular Front, CP and so on).

mass fronts that the various components of *A Luchar* have put forward in the preparation for the second convention that is to be held in the first half of 1988 in order to build a single revolutionary organization.

3 In order to promote to the maximum this process of achieving political homogeneity and this common work in the present situation, we will build *A Luchar*'s national political campaign, "The people speak, the people command," for self-determination of the people in decision making, for their building up in the heat of struggle their own committees, assemblies, councils and people's "councils" that will put forward municipal programs embracing the national objectives of Life, Sovereignty, Peace and Democracy for the people. This is so that the people's economic and social demands will not be bogged down within the bourgeois institutions, but that the masses will be able to achieve these demands through their own activity and strength.

4 There is a tactical difference on elections. The PSR thinks that they have to be used as a platform for making denunciations and for mobilizing. *A Luchar* thinks that this is not possible. Therefore, the rule adopted is to respect both views. Insofar as the PSR's electoral registration offers it opportunities, the PSR declares that it is ready to share its access to the media with *A Luchar* for the presentation of their political opinions.

5 Through common organizational means, we will advance common proposals in all encounters with other political organizations and in the mass organizations such as the CUT, CUE, CNU, the Working Group, ANUC, CNMC and women's organizations. We will discuss whether or not it is politically opportune to appear publicly only as *A Luchar*.

6 Consistent with our internationalist practice, we will strive to set up solidarity committees with the peoples of Central America and the other countries in the world that are fighting for their liberation. Likewise, if *A Luchar* defines itself as a unitary organization at its second convention, the members of the PSR will remain free to affiliate to an international current.

7 Regarding the fusion as embracing all the activity of the ranks and leaderships, we are beginning a process of integrating ourselves (which does not in itself mean an immediate dissolution of the PSR's bodies) into the national and regional leadership structures of *A Luchar* and into the assemblies in each area of work until we have the conditions for adopting a single organizational model and structure.

The PSR accepts the rule of consensus that has governed decision making in *A Luchar* since it was founded.

8 Understanding the important role that the revolutionary press plays in orientation, organization and collective cohesion, a PSR comrade will collaborate with the *A Luchar* newspaper team. Consequently, while *Combate Socialista*, the organ of PSR, will publicize common political agreements, it will be incorporated

gradually into a single organ.

We are discussing the possibility of producing a theoretical journal that will consider the fundamental aspects of the national and international situation.

Bogotá, August 27, 1987
PSR and *A Luchar* Executive
Committees ★

Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinating Committee

FROM THE TIME of this conference, the entire body of the guerrilla movement represented today by the Union Camillista-ELN, the Quintin Lame Command [an Indian guerrilla group], the People's Liberation Army (EPL), the Revolutionary Workers' Party (PRT), the April 19 Movement (M-19) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) will form the Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordinating Committee.

In this way, we are joining in the process of popular, democratic, civil and social convergence that all of Colombia is going through. This decision is necessary because of the unprecedented crisis the country is experiencing, most acutely expressed by the dirty war, rampant hunger and the violence unleashed by the militarist and fascist oligarchy.

Aware of the authority, the road and the example that the people's arms and unity represent, we have agreed on the following points, which we pledge to pursue:

- To continue to build unity on the basis of autonomy, ideological and political independence and mutual respect among the various forces engaged in this unity.

- To give impetus to all processes and the most diverse expressions of national convergence around the need for democracy and respect for life.

- To support and promote every gain and reform that means an improvement in the quality of life for Colombians.

- To demand full and complete guarantees for political action around the popular election of mayors for the mass organizations that participate in these elections, whether or not they run candidates.

- To reject the government's ultimatum to demobilize the guerrilla movement, inasmuch as this represents a declaration of total war, a definite breaking off of dialogue and a false solution for the country, which wants fundamental solutions.

- We reiterate our opposition to war, and we insist on the need for political solutions in line with the urgent requirements for democracy and change.

- We have not been the first to take the path of war, and we have always been ready for different solutions. But if the regime wants to step up the war and generalize it, we will meet the challenge of such a confrontation. We will take on the building of an army that will be the guarantor and defender of life for national and political sovereignty.

- To defend life as the greatest good for our existence as a nation. To that end:

We appeal for uniting forces, for multiplying actions in defence of life and for building the broadest possible mobilization to stop the dirty war, punish the guilty and to press the demand for life as the most important of the people's rights.

We call on the people and their organizations to be the guarantors of these agreements, whose objective is to help to build a new Colombia. And we ask them to make this meeting of guerrillas and the implementation of their decisions the guarantee of victory.

With unity, for life, for Colombia and its people,

Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordinating Committee — the Colombian mountains, September 1987 ★

Brutal massacre in Kanaky

THE MOST DRAMATIC incident in the last days of the French presidential election campaign was the massacre of Kanak independence fighters in the colony of New Caledonia. The following article explains what was behind this, and the perspectives after Mitterrand's election.

CLAUDE GABRIEL

NOTICE had been given long in advance by the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) that it would call on Kanaks not to vote in the French presidential elections. But the situation was aggravated when the French government announced that it was going to hold a vote for president and for a new status for the territory on the same day. That amounted to cutting off any discussion or negotiation.

For several months, therefore, the FLNKS had been preparing for a counter-stroke on the eve of the elections to make it known that the Kanaks were not ready to yield. The plan was to obstruct the vote as much as possible by blocking the roads, isolating the polling stations and staging some spectacular actions.

The FLNKS hoped to broaden the mobilization and gradually extend unrest throughout the territory. But it did not have any plan for armed struggle as such. Their plan remained to put pressure on the French government in order to get speedy negotiations. So the Struggle Committee on the island of Ouvéa decided to take a group of gendarmes hostages. Unfortunately, the affair went wrong, and the FLNKS activists opened fire, killing three gendarmes before they left with a group of prisoners.

A few days later, when negotiations had started, a second group of French gendarmes were taken captive by the FLNKS and put with the other hostages. The national leadership of the Front called on the

French government to name a mediator, as well as to annul the vote on the status of the territory.

More or less confident that they could use the election period to put pressure on France, the FLNKS activists agreed to let a French officer taken hostage serve as a go-between. The officer was an "anti-terrorist" specialist. He provided sufficient information to get pistols to the prisoners and to storm the Kanaks' redoubt.

Press blackout during events

The toll was terrible, and will go down in the list of tragedies that the FLNKS has suffered since 1984. Nineteen Kanaks were killed. And now it is being said that three of them were executed when they tried to surrender. During all these events, the press was banned from Ouvéa, and the repressive forces maintained a blackout over the entire operation.

This assault was seen clearly as an electoralist operation. Nineteen people were deliberately killed to win Chirac a few votes. Bernard Pons, minister of the colonies, declared shamelessly that the honor of France and the French army was at stake, while the leader of the extreme right, Le Pen, called for "exterminating the rebels."

We know now that François Mitterrand was informed that the operation was underway. But he is continuing to play a double game, trying to win over the FLNKS by a whole series of very vague promises and at the same time to present the "French Republic" as the only guarantor of peace in New Caledonia.

In fact, on November 23, 1987, while pretending to argue against the right, François Mitterrand revised everything that he had previously said about colonialism and the advance toward independence. He said:

"Unserious people like the RPCR [the main settler party, the affiliated to Chirac's RPR] did not listen attentively enough to my previous statements. I have always said that independence, now, would result in the

law of the strongest operating, with guns doing the talking. I told [FLNKS leader] Mr. Tjibaou....If a political choice has to lead to the domination of one ethnic group over the other, then that is the end of everything."

Of course, Mitterrand never talked about independence "immediately" But the famous Pisani Plan was not free of ambiguity about a possible process of independence in the medium term. This was undoubtedly hypocrisy, as was revealed when the president started suggesting that independence would mean chaos and the domination of "one ethnic group over the other."

Moreover, as far as violence goes, one might ask Mitterrand what he has done to stop the settlers from accumulating weapons, to dismantle the fascist networks, to find the perpetrators of the innumerable right-wing bombings, to push a commission of inquiry into the murder of Eloi Machoro. He has done nothing, either before or after 1986 [when the right came to power].

Instead of playing cat and mouse with Chirac, Mitterrand might raise some questions about the settler extreme right and the RPCR and demand that more light be brought to bear on the little fascist world of Nouméa. But he has not tried to do anything of the sort. The president even let himself be "convinced" of the need for a spectacular reinforcement of the repressive forces in New Caledonia.

Solidarity with the Kanak people

Solidarity in France has been modest. But it has not been absent. Two demonstrations of several thousand people have taken place in Paris, called, among others by the Association for Solidarity with the Kanak People and with the active support of the far left and the united-front committees that supported Pierre Juquin's candidacy. The level of solidarity is clearly not commensurate with what is at stake. But the Kanaks are not alone. There is a substantial solidarity movement in France, rooted in the memory of the Algerian war, which sees support for the FLNKS as another form of action against racism and the French extreme right.

In the coming months, the FLNKS will have to rediscuss its strategy. Now re-elected president, François Mitterrand is going to revive the theme of dialogue. There is a great danger now that the white settler population will plunge into provocations. It voted 90% for Chirac against Mitterrand!

The president's scheme for getting the colonized and the colonizers to live together is a natural one for a social democrat. But nothing indicates that the explosive contradictions of French imperialism in New Caledonia are going to disappear just because of the president's wishful thinking. ★

