

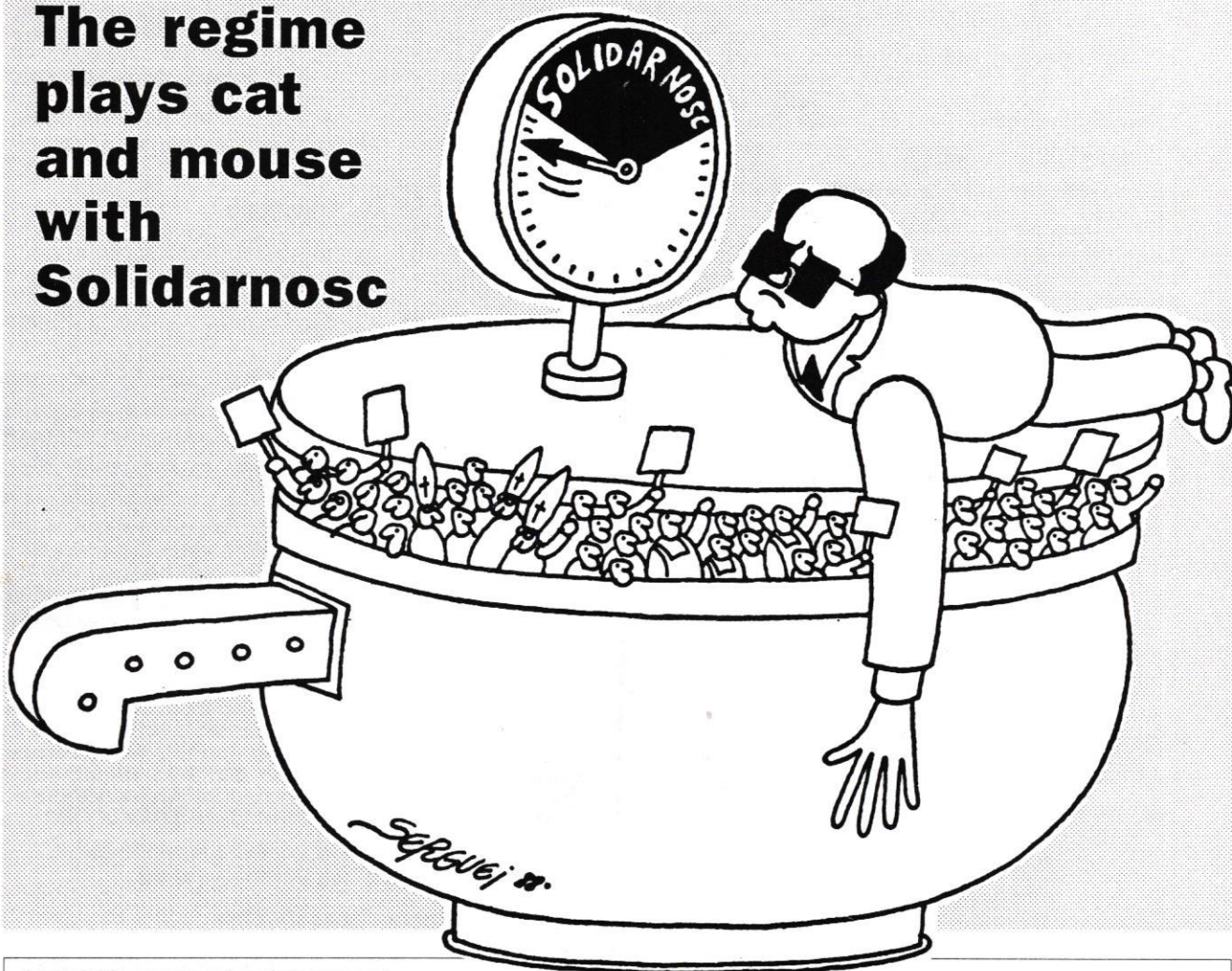
International VIEWPOINT

Issue 147

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plays cat
and mouse
with
Solidarnosc



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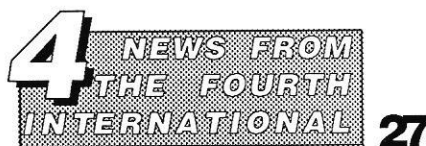
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The regime plays cat and mouse with Solidarnosc

AFTER MORE than two weeks of strikes hitting several major industrial centers, Lech Walesa called on September 1 for a return to work, after meeting for about three hours with the strong man of the regime and one of the main authors of the December 1981 coup d'etat.

Since then capitalist press coverage of Poland has centered around the prospects for an accommodation between the Solidarnosc leadership and the regime. The following article deals with the bases of such speculation, as well as describing the strike wave.

CYRIL SMUGA

THE COMMUNIQUE published after the meeting between the chair of Solidarnosc and the minister of the interior was strikingly brief. It contained no trace of any commitment, or even any promises. It even failed to note the credentials of the participants in this unusual meeting. Readers can judge for themselves: "On August 32, 1988, in Warsaw, General Czeslaw Kiszczak meet Lech Walesa. Bishop Jerzy Dabrowski and Stanislaw Ciosek took part in the discussion, in the course of which were discussed the conditions for holding a round table and the means of organizing it."

In order to get a more precise idea of what was discussed, you have to refer to the communique issued by the Polish Council of Bishops, which specifies: "Lech Walesa posed the most important question today, that of the roads leading to the application of trade-union pluralism, that is, the question of the status of Solidarnosc. His interlocutors stated that all the problems related to the trade-union movement will be discussed at the round table."

It will be noted that this communique does not speak of any other commitments than those already made on August 26 by General Kiszczak concerning the organizing of a round table that is supposed to discuss any problems that the participants may raise. In particular, there is no question of amnesty for the large number of workers who have been arrested and sentenced for

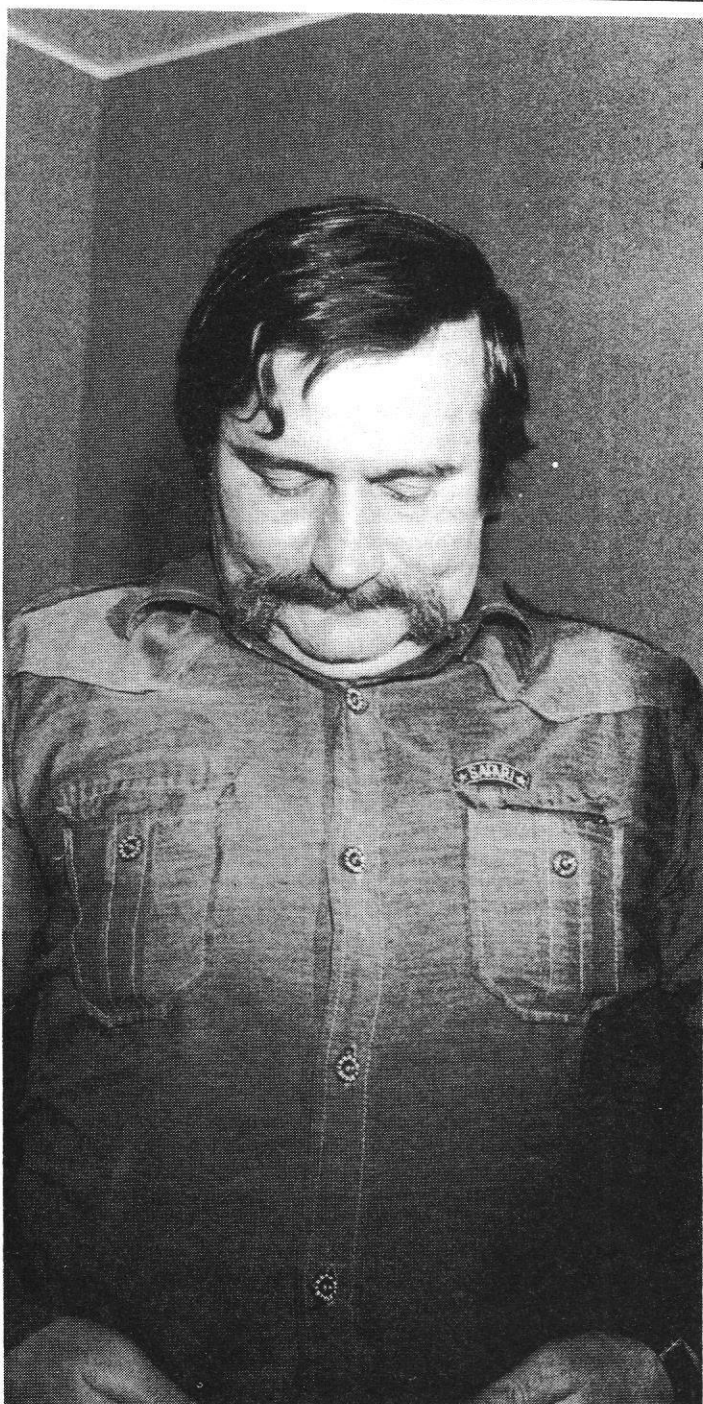
actions related to the strikes nor of guarantees for those who resume work.

On his return to Gdansk, Lech Walesa got a chilly reception.

"You have betrayed Solidarnosc," a woman shouted at him in front of Saint Brigitta's Church, the strikers' support committee headquarters. "We have lost and wasted our time," commented a member of the strike committee." Alojzy Szablewski, chair of the Gdansk Interenterprise Strike Committee, let slip the remark that "the decision to stop the strike is a bitter one," before adding that in his opinion the relationship of forces made it impossible to achieve recognition of the independent union.

Decision to end strikes greeted with amazement

Nonetheless, after a stormy general assembly held in the morning of September 1 at the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, the workers accepted the strike committee's proposal to suspend the action. "We can fight for



our main objective by other means than striking," Lech Walesa explained. He went on to say, "there is no other reasonable way out other than to stop the mobilization."

"You are the only guarantee!" This was Lech Walesa's response to strikers who asked him on what he based his hopes about the outcome of negotiations that would be held later in an atmosphere of calm. At 2pm, the strikers marched out of the shipyard, greeted by a crowd of three thousand people shouting "Solidarnosc! There is no freedom without Solidarnosc! We will win!" In the wake of the evacuation of the Lenin shipyard, the mobilization in the Gdansk docks and the other shipyards also came to an end.

In the other strike centers, the decision to end the mobilization if an agreement on

3

local demands could be reached (in the Lenin shipyard the only demand was for legalization of Solidarnosc) was greeted with stupefaction and astonishment. In the Manifest Lipcowy mine, where the mobilization had started during the night of August 14-15, the strikers demanded that Lech Walesa come and talk to them so that they could understand his point of view.

In the Stalowa Wola metallurgical complex, the strike committee announced that there was no question of suspending the strike because they had not received guarantees that there would be no repression. In particular, they said that everything was ready for extending the strike to the foundry, where work had been continuing for technical reasons. They also demanded to be put in touch with the chair of the union.

In Szczecin the port workers, as well as those barricaded in the Dabie bus depot, undertook some tough negotiating on wage and repression issues, making any return to work conditional on satisfaction of their demands. In Cracow, a strike had been called again for September 1 in the Nowa Huta steel complex. It was suspended at the last moment. In Lublin, on the other hand, the workers of the FSC pickup truck factory organized a rally and presented their list of demands.

Besides legalization of Solidarnosc, the FSC workers demanded an "end to the political monopoly of the PZPR [the Communist Party] and the satisfaction of many material demands. The factory management immediately agreed to open negotiations on the latter. They engaged in public dialogue with the strike committee in front of thousands of assembled workers. This persuaded the workers to suspend their mobilization that same evening. Despite these waverings, in the evening of September 1 the wave of strikes began to mount again.

Only a few days after Lech Walesa convinced the last strikers to go back to work, voices began to be raised loudly in the bureaucratic camp against any perspective of legalizing Solidarnosc. For example, the leadership of the so-called unions set up by the regime after the banning of Solidarnosc adopted a resolution on September 6 demanding that any recognition of Solidarnosc be excluded. In another, it called for resignation of a government guilty of showing weakness.

Police break up pit strikes

On the same day, government spokesperson Jerzy Urban declared that there was no question of allowing any union to function in an enterprise if it were linked to Solidarnosc in any way. Finally, the celebrated round table proposed by General Kiszczak seems to have got off to a bad start because the regime refuses to recognize any possible participants as members of Solidarnosc.

4 Lech Walesa agreed to meet General Kiszczak on no other condition than being

treated in fact as the representative of the strikers. But at the same time, the repression, which had been inaugurated with the police assault on three public transport depots in Szczecin and the proclamation of a curfew in the Upper Silesian mining regions, was growing. In about 20 mines, the strike was broken by force, with many strikers being arrested, sentenced and fired.

An independent peasant leader, Gabriel Janowski, who was bringing food to the Lenin and Myslowice Wesola mines, was arrested by the police who were keeping them under siege. After being savagely beaten, he was confined in a mental hospital, an unprecedented procedure in Poland.

In Stalowa Wola, a demonstration of a thousand people organized by the independent peace movement, Freedom and Peace (WiP), was attacked on August 28, and those arrested were very badly mistreated. The account of some of the victims was taken by Solidarnosc's Intervention Commission:

"They started hitting us on the steps of the Commissariat. Then, inside, they set up the first gauntlet. They hit people indiscriminately. They dragged us by our hands and feet on the staircase....I was thrown into a room by three officers. They beat me with their fists and with clubs. I fell down and I shouted. They pulled my jacket over my head. One of the officers held my head against the floor with his knee, and they started beating me systematically. I don't know how long that went on.

Repression stepped up during negotiations

"After that, they took us down into the courtyard and threw us into paddy wagons. We had to run another gauntlet. The officers hit us with clubs, fists, and kicked us....We were taken to the village of Nisko, where the ZOMO [riot police] barracks is. Inside the station, were forced to run another gauntlet. When we came into a room, they shouted 'on the floor,' and beat me again for a half hour.

"The police picked out some of us and concentrated on them...They were particularly hard on those who were not from Stalowa Wola." All those arrested were given heavy fines over the next two days.

While Lech Walesa was being received by the minister of the interior, in the Stalowa Wola complex, the workers had been facing an assault by helicopters and simultaneous attacks by machine-gun units and 500 soldiers from the Pomeranian paratroop division who had come to back up the ZOMO. The sit-in strike had started here on August 22 with major reinforcements on August 29 when six thousand workers brought in by the management to overwhelm the strikers had immediately joined in the action. In the following two days, arrests took place throughout the country.

Thus, while agreeing to meet with the chair of the union, the regime was continu-

ing and extending its repression. General Kiszczak himself symbolizes the unity of the bureaucracy's policy. Minister of the interior, member of the Committee to Defend the Country (KOK)¹ and one of the principal architects of the 1981 state of war, he holds a grip on the repressive forces as a whole and is therefore responsible for all their exactions.

Support among the masses mainly passive

But, at the same time, Kiszczak personifies the liberalization measures, such as announcing the amnesty of political prisoners in September 1986 and in meeting with Lech Walesa on August 31. The decision to continue the repression while holding out a hand to the chair of the banned union owes nothing to chance. It indicates the limits of the liberalization that the regime is ready to offer, and is a bad omen for the perspective of democratization on which Lech Walesa seems to be pinning his hopes.

Was there a basis for hoping on September 1 that the relationship of forces between the strikers and the regime would lead to forcing the government to make more substantial concessions, or for Lech Walesa's position that calling for a halt to the mobilization was the "only reasonable attitude"? A simple answer to this question is difficult. The strike mobilization had not exhausted all its possibilities, despite the return to work in nearly all the Upper Silesian mines. This is indicated by the mobilizations that broke out in Lublin, as well as the widening of the strike in Stalowa Wola and the tensions that appeared in Nowa Huta most recently.

On the other hand, the workers participating actively in the factory occupations, as a general rule, represented only a minority. A larger number solidarized with the strikes but preferred to stay home, afraid of violent confrontations. In this respect the example of the Upper Silesian mines is significant. The bureaucracy failed to get masses of workers to sign statements against the strike by offering pay for the days not worked.

Finally, aside from a few special cases like Stalowa Wola, where the calling of solidarity demonstrations made it possible to assure massive support by all sections of the population for the strike, the occupation strikes were generally quite isolated from the population. Although sympathetic, most people remained passive. This was probably related to the fact that the universities were on vacation. During the spring strikes, the mobilizations of the student

1. Formed in 1981, the KOK became the real center of power in the bureaucracy. It is presided over by General Jaruzelski and makes decisions in time of crisis, relegating the party Political Bureau and the government to the sidelines. The announcement of the curfew in the regions affected by unrest, as well the proposal for a round table including representatives of the opposition, came shortly after a meeting of the KOK.

youth had an exemplary effect.

In the government camp itself, as indicated by the calls for the removal of some leaders at the Central Committee plenum on August 27-28 and the public polemics between a member of the Political Bureau and the head of the official unions and the premier, dissention and factional struggles flared up again with a vengeance. However, the regime was able to retake the initiative both on the political level and through repression, which required a considerable homogeneity in its leadership. It was this contradictory situation that probably explains why the majority of strikers — while not necessary sharing Walesa's hopes for a future dialogue — accepted his call for a return to work.

Can it be said, therefore, that the meeting between a figure who for seven years was described as a "private person" and the putting forward of the scheme of a round table with representatives of the opposition were intended only to end strikes whose forcible suppression could have increased the polarization in the country and accelerated the radicalization of the youth? Certainly not.

Since the September 1986 amnesty, the regime has relentlessly pursued its attempts to co-opt at least a part of the opposition, even at the expense of leaving the latter a certain maneuvering room that would not put the system in question. Thus, the official Polish press for a good while has exceeded the outer limits of *glasnost*, demonstrating a very real ideological pluralism and offering its readers information that, while biased, is relatively complete.

For example, the recent strikes have been the subject of long articles in which descriptive reporting has gone hand in hand with crude insinuations directed at the strikers. In January 1987, a Consultative Council was set up in which some independent intellectuals accepted places, and even some former Solidarnosc advisers, such as the lawyer Wladyslaw Sila-Nowicki or the sociologist Andrzej Tymowski, who maintain numerous ties with colleagues in the opposition and rebel intelligentsia.

Some independent meetings tolerated

The regime has also authorized the functioning of some political clubs, where discussions about a transition to capitalism are in full swing, and permitted some former oppositionists to publish their previously

clandestine journal, *Res Publica*, legally.

Finally, independent gatherings have been tolerated. The latest was the International Human Rights Congress held in Cracow in late August. A great number of opposition figures participated in it, along with foreign delegates coming even from Eastern bloc countries. In this way, bridges have been built between the orbits of the regime and influential circles within Solidarnosc. The discussions conducted this spring over a possible anti-crisis pact² both behind the scenes and in the official press are the latest example of this.

In a deliberately leaked secret report, Mieczyslaw Rakowski, who is both a member of the Political Bureau of the PZPR and the Central Committee secretary in charge of propaganda, advocated pursuing such a policy in order to "isolate the hard core" of the opposition. This was to be accomplished notably through initiatives

its Western creditors and from the International Monetary Fund, who are demanding a more consistent austerity policy as a condition for opening new lines of credit that are indispensable both for modernizing some industries and for financing the imports of raw materials and semi-manufactures essential to the functioning of others.

Strategy of co-opting moderate union leaders

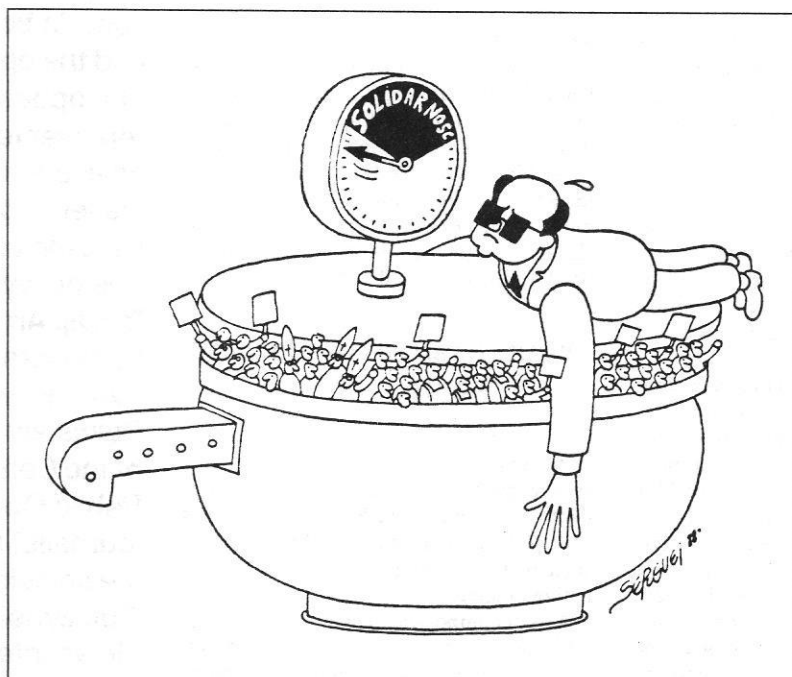
In order to ward off all these dangers, some sections at least of the bureaucracy are today considering the possibility of an understanding with the moderate wing of Solidarnosc. For them this does not mean permitting the legal existence of a powerful national union — as Solidarnosc was in 1980-81 — that could dictate conditions to the government and would be propelled by a dynamic that would inevitably lead to dual power.

Rather, what these sections of the bureaucracy have in mind is dividing the workers by trying to get at least a section of Solidarnosc to accept an austerity policy in the name of "higher national interests." They want to impose a binding legal framework — that laid down by the trade-union law adopted in 1982 — which authorizes selective repression of all workers' initiatives that could lead to a generalization of the struggles.

The Polish bureaucrats made no bones about the fact that in order to carry out such an

operation they are counting on massive foreign financial aid in the first stage, comparable to a sort of "Marshall Plan." It was in fact in the hope of such aid, according to official explanations, that Poland joined the IMF.

A good number of Solidarnosc experts and advisers, and even leaders, share this



designed to co-opt Lech Walesa and, through him, at least a section of the Solidarnosc trade unionists.

General Jaruzelski's regime is indeed aware that simply banning Solidarnosc and repressing the trade-union activists cannot in the long run offer any guarantee against new working-class uprisings. The disastrous economic situation, reflected by the growing burden of foreign debt³, shortages and galloping inflation⁴, as well as the chronic under-utilization of installed industrial capacity⁵, has prevented General Jaruzelski from following the example of the Czechoslovak "normalization," by combining repression and sustained improvements in the population's standard of living.

The drop in living standards⁶, combined with the housing crisis⁷, is a powerful source of frustration and radicalization, especially for young people. Moreover, the Polish bureaucracy is under pressure from

2. See the interview on page 6.

3. It has reached nearly \$40 billion, as against \$26 billion in 1981, not counting the debt in rubles that amounts to nearly \$7 billion.

4. In comparison with the 1980 index, the cost of living was up by 603% at the end of 1987, and it is estimated that it will pass the 900% mark this year.

5. It is estimated that 30% to 40% of industrial capacity is not utilized for lack of raw materials, energy or labor.

6. The fall in real wages is estimated at about 30% since 1981, although general scarcity makes monetary income largely symbolic.

7. In Warsaw, more than half of young couples lack housing, and the average wait for housing after buying into a cooperative is estimated at 30 years!

perspective, although they make the legalization of Solidarnosc a condition for participating in such an agreement. The galloping inflation that wipes out even large wage increases in a few months could lead some sections of the working class to accept measures that appear to stabilize their standard of living for a time. The hope is also present that subjecting enterprises to market forces could break through the straitjacket of bureaucratic control and lead to weakening the regime.

An ascending phase of struggles

Such a project, however, runs counter to the dynamic of the radicalization of a working class that has an accumulated experience of Stalinist betrayals, a considerable capacity for organization and a high level of militancy, as witnessed by the recent strikes. There is no reason to think that even extremely limited and restrictive measures leading to a de facto legalization of independent trade-union activity at the enterprise level could open the way for co-opting the independent union.

In fact, since the regime's defeat in the referendum on the economic reform in November 1987, the Polish workers' movement has entered into an ascending phase of struggles and organization, shown by the strike waves this year as well as the growth of opposition political organizations and Solidarnosc structures.

In the spring Polish workers demonstrated great tenacity and capacity for recovery after the defeats they had suffered. For example, despite the forcible evacuation of the Lenin steelworks in Nowa Huta on May 5, the strike continued until May 18. In August, in Szczecin, a number of workers cleared out of the bus and tram depots besieged by the police regrouped in those where the occupation was continuing. Although the strikers got nothing in the spring strike at the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, less than three months later they resumed the fight in greater numbers and with more determination.

Despite a strong police presence and an unfavorable relationship of forces locally, the repeated attempts to launch strikes in a series of enterprises this summer — as well as the tenacious resistance of the Upper Silesian miners, some of whom did not hesitate to isolate themselves underground to prevent a resumption of work after the majority of their comrades had been cleared out by the police — also attest to a high level of combativity and determination.

The August strike wave has undoubtedly helped to reorganize Solidarnosc's structures by bringing forward new leaderships where the historical leaders have left the scene or not been up to the level of the tasks, and by making possible a massive recruitment of workers. In many enterprises, workers have taken advantage of the strikes to set up new trade-union commit-

tees. Moreover, in some cases the workers have already elected their representatives for the round table announced by General Kiszczak. This reduces the possibilities for making a deal at the top, behind the back of the workers' mobilization.

This project of a deal, especially in the form in which it is conceived by Solidarnosc leaders and experts, is more dangerous because of the drifting and political disorientation it engenders than because of any threat that it might actually be put into practice.

Moreover, the coming onto the scene of new radical organizations reflects a growing politicization, particularly of young people. For example, WiP activists have played an important role in supporting the strikes by circulating information and organizing solidarity actions. In this movement, currents identifying with anarchism have appeared, symbolizing the new generation's desire to reestablish links with the historic traditions of the workers' movement.

The involvement of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) in the struggles is indicated by the repression directed against several of its central leaders, including (once again) Jozef Pinior, Czeslaw Borowczyk and Jolanta Skiba in Wroclaw, as well as Piotr Ikonowicz, Krzysztof Trzaska and Jacek Kilian in Upper Silesia, who were imprisoned for their role in the strikes.

Young people reinforcing the opposition

The extent of the radicalization of the student youth has been shown by the massive reappearance of the Independent Student Organization (NZS) in the spring, as well as the growing success of the politico-currerealist happenings organized by Alternative Orange.

Another important factor is that all the traditional organizations of the opposition have also experienced a major renewal of their forces. This is true of the oldest of them, the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN), which organized rallies in several cities on September 1, 1988. Another example is that of the Fighting Solidarnosc Organization (OSW), whose main leader, Kornel Morawiecki, was banished in the spring but returned clandestinely to the country at the end of August.

All these organizations have proven capable of organizing major actions, such as the August 31 demonstration in Poznan, in collaboration and in concert with Solidarnosc.

Their capacity for achieving unity in action in order to extend mobilization, despite often very deepgoing differences, is clearly a new and important element in the Polish political situation. Along with the other factors cited, this is another obstacle to the governmental schemes for tying down the Polish workers by means of an anti-crisis pact. ★

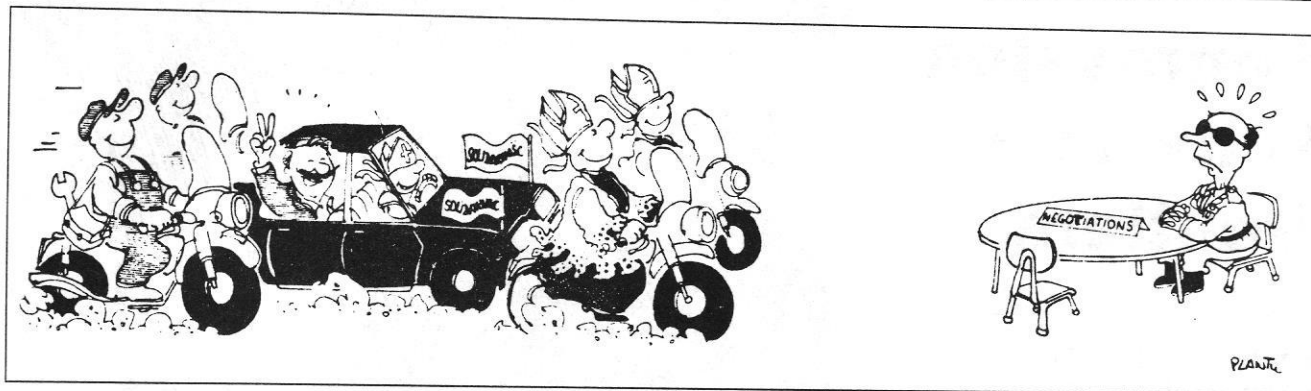
An eagle-eye view of the reform

UNDER THE PRESSURE of the mass protests in May and June, a first meeting was held on June 28 between advocates of an "anti-crisis pact" in both the government and the opposition camps. The opposition was represented by former advisors to the Solidarnosc leadership, Bronislaw Geremek, Andrzej Wielowieyski and Ryszard Bugaj. Among the bureaucrats taking part in the meeting were Colonel Stanislaw Kwiatkowski (head of the Center for the Study of Public Opinion, CBOS), the journalist Ryszard Wojna and the sociologist Marian Gulczynski.

In an interview in the July 9 issue of *Zycie Warszawy*, the prestige official daily, Marian Gulczynski gave some indications of what the meeting meant and what was discussed at it.

WHO DO you consider today to be the anti-reform forces?

These forces have two wings. One wing is represented by rebels who want to destroy the system without any idea of what should be built on its ruins. I have observed this attitude above all among the young people, who feel frustrated and ill at ease, which is the consequence of the stagnation and the inadequacy of the reforms. We should not forget, for example, that one out of two couples in Warsaw lacks an



apartment of their own.

In the other wing are entrenched dogmatic and conservative forces. They defend the old model of socialism because their vital interests are linked to this model, for example the administration and the lobby that control raw materials and steel. The same goes for the various local establishments that control the decisions about the distribution of scarce goods — building materials, fertilizer, tractors and so on — and from this role derive very concrete advantages.

■ **You talk about “rebels,” which might suggest that you are talking about some organized group.**

It is not a group, but a social phenomenon, a “mass of powder.” But it is very dangerous because it is a powder that explodes very easily. These are teenagers and youth in their early twenties. They are frustrated, not only because of what is functioning badly at the level of the system as a whole, but also because of what is not working for them, in the factories or the universities. Among these young people, I see no leaders. But I am sure they will appear when an explosion occurs. They are there, ripening.

To keep this “powder” from catching fire, we have to rapidly give these young people the opportunity to organize themselves freely. We must be aware that protest by young people is inevitable. But it may take uncontrolled, aggressive forms, and then the contact between the government and the young generation will take place through the stone and the club. It can also take other organized forms respectful of the law, if the youth have an opportunity for self-organization.

■ **Does this mean taming the revolt?**

Is there another solution? What? Emigration? Private initiative? The safety valves are already largely closed off. It is characteristic that today young people’s anger is being directed mainly against local targets, against the bureaucrats in the enterprises who are hanging on fiercely to their privileges. We know cases where the defense of socialism is being equated with defending a team in power. But the bureaucracy is dangerous at all levels.

We have to realize that in fact we lost the recent municipal elections, while formally winning them! We would really have won

them if new solutions had been introduced in the new election law, as public opinion demanded; if the electoral colleges had included people not belonging to the local bureaucracies; if collecting 100 to 200 signatures had been sufficient to put up a slate of candidates, and so on.

Then, the municipal councils would have really had an infusion of new blood. Even if, say, the opposition had taken power in 15 municipalities or a department, that would not have been a tragedy. On the contrary, it would have been a very good thing, because the opposition would have found itself obliged to take on tasks of co-responsibility, and the old establishments would have had to mobilize themselves to do better.

■ **In a year, there will be new elections, this time to the Diet. How do you think that the election campaign should be organized?**

I think that the future parliament should approximate the real relationship of politically active forces in our society. This is not the case today. There are informally organized forces that in the long run could become illegal forces. But in general, when such forces reorganize illegally, they become destructive. The better part of these forces could form a constructive opposition.

That is why I think that the most important thing is the right of free association, including the right to form political clubs and associations. I place a special stress on the club form, because I think — and on this point I am in agreement with many representatives of the opposition — that if parties were formed overnight, the demagogues and populists would take center stage. Associations and clubs are different, because they set in motion processes that can gradually lead to the formation of a broad coalition of political forces.

■ **Without being called parties?**

In the future, these forces should call themselves parties. I have nothing against that, but this should be the result of a long process, especially since an important part of such associations and clubs would be parliamentary in character — that is, they would have enough representation in the Diet to influence the decisions of the national legislature. But they would not be

strong enough to overturn the party, or coalition, in government.

■ **There is not much time left before the Diet elections!**

That is why it is necessary to start working right away on the new election law, bringing in those representatives of the opposition that respect the constitutional realities of our system.

■ **And excluding the rebels?**

Obviously. That is precisely what I proposed in the meeting [of June 28], a meeting that has already become famous, although I think that none of those participating were looking for public notoriety.

■ **What were the results of this meeting?**

It became clear that the differences were secondary in comparison with what unites us, both with respect to our assessments of what is going wrong in the country and our convictions about what has to be done to remedy these evils. On one point there was total agreement, that there is not a lot of sense in having more meetings of this type, because we already know each other well enough, I think, to work together. The nation is waiting for action.

■ **What are the limits? What concessions are unacceptable to the government?**

Two sorts of concessions are impossible. The rebel forces cannot be allowed to organize and act freely. They cannot be permitted to break up the system and render it anarchic. That is obvious. But if we put forward a constructive project rapidly that includes the right of association, we can hope that those sections that are a little bit reasonable, which might be under the influence of the rebels, will end up in the last analysis in the reform camp.

We cannot permit a destabilization of our position in Europe, which conditions the delicate worldwide balance between the two politico-military blocs. This is a fundamental question for security and development for us as well as for the rest of the world.

The reforms and changes cannot affect the alliances that assure our existence. These are the limits, and these are the stakes. ★

Repression knows no frontiers

SINCE 1967, one of the leitmotifs of the radical left in Israel has been that the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza — and the consequent maintenance of a Palestinian Arab population, similar in size to that of the Jewish people in the Zionist state, under its direct domination — cannot be carried out without undermining the famous Israeli “democracy”, which only Jewish citizens could fully enjoy.

SALAH JABER

THE COMING to power in 1977 of Likud, the right-wing Zionist bloc, was an important new stage in this corrosion. Ten years on, in 1987, a qualitative threshold was reached with the inculcation of our comrade Michel Warshawsky, falsely accused of collaborating with Georges Habache's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). In addition, four other Israeli militants (two members of the Zionist left, Mapam, and two members of the Israeli Communist Party) were charged with meeting representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Romania.

The launching of the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza since December 1987 only hastened and accentuated this inexorable degeneration. Recent events confirm this. Last March, Mordechai Vanunu was condemned to 18 years in prison for having divulged open secrets in relation to Israeli nuclear weapons. In May, two women militants from the *Derech Hanitzotz* group were arrested, submitted to intense psychological torture and then accused of belonging to Nayef Hawatmeh's DFLP before being joined by other members of the group (see box p.10). In June, the four were found guilty of meeting with the PLO and condemned to six months in prison. Given this, much harsher sentences can be



predicted for others facing trial.

If Zionist repression is no longer afraid of stepping over the red line of “racial” segregation, it goes without saying that it does not make much distinction between the “green line” separating the territories occupied in 1967 from those on which the Israeli state was established in 1948 when it comes to repressing Arab militants.

Israeli citizenship for Palestinians who stayed this side of the “green line” since 1948 consists of an intermediary status between that of residents of the West Bank and Gaza and that of the first class citizens, Israeli Jews.

Since the beginning of the uprising all kinds of repressive measures and harassment against Israeli Arabs have been increasing in intensity. The main target for this growing repression is the Abna Al-Balad (literally: Sons of the Country) movement, the most radical of the political currents implanted within the Arab minority of the Israeli state.

Here, we reprint a communique of this movement, dated June 26, that describes the police harassment it has suffered. Since then, the campaign against Abna Al-Balad has been stepped up. On July 11, on the front page of a large-circulation Israeli daily, *Yediot Ahronot*, an article accused the movement of being behind the fires that have multiplied this summer this side of the “green line”. It also accused them of being linked to the leadership of the uprising in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as to Georges Habache's PFLP.

In response to this campaign, which opens the door to a frontal attack against the movement that could go as far as banning it, a solidarity meeting was held on July 16 in Nazareth with the participation of a number of anti-Zionist organizations including the LCR, the Israeli state section of the Fourth International. ★

“SINCE THE beginning of the popular insurrection in the occupied West Bank and Gaza strip in December 1987, and parallel to the barbaric repression applied by the military authorities to the whole of the Palestinian population in those areas, we have experienced a sharpening of repression against those Arab Palestinians that are Israeli citizens, and against all those who oppose the occupation.

On December 25, 1987, administrative detention orders were issued against two our members: Raja Agbariya, editor of the weekly paper *El-Raya*, published in Nazareth, and Raslan Mahajne, both from Um El-Fahem. Those were the first such orders issued by the 1979 Emergency Law (Detentions) inside the green line. The period of detention was defined as three months and seven days, until April 1, 1988. On January 24, another of our members, Kadry Abu-Wassal from the village of Ara, was detained by a similar order until the same date as the others.

On March 17, another member of our movement, Hashem Hamdan from Reine, was detained. In April, Hassan Jabarin from the Al Anssar movement in Um El-Fahem was also detained, followed by Mohammed Bursal, a member of our national committee, on June 1. These three detainees will be held for six months each, the longest period allowed by the law.

The first three detention orders were issued as part of the Israeli authorities' response to the general strike by the Arab population on December 21, 1987, a strike held to protest against the daily massacre and brutality against our brothers and sisters in the occupied West Bank and Gaza strip. The three-and-a-half month duration of the detention was planned in order to prevent our movement from organizing protest acts, especially on the Land Day of March 30. It failed, however, to prevent another general strike by the Arab masses.

The current wave of arrests can't be “reasoned” as a preventative act toward some such date; it comes clearly as a reprisal for

ordinary political activity. After the district and high courts rejected appeals against the first detentions, and as there were no wide democratic protests against the use of such measures, it seems that administrative detention began to be used routinely, just as town arrest orders were used before.

The State of Emergency Powers Law authorizes the detention of anyone for a period of up to six months, without confronting detainees with the accusations against them, and without giving them any opportunity to deny and contradict those accusations. The order is signed by the minister of defence, but actually the decision is taken by the security service, Shin Bet.

The detention, after its execution, has to be reviewed by the district court, but there also the detainees have no opportunity to defend themselves: the accusations and the evidence that support them are presented to the court as secret materials, and detainees and their lawyers are not allowed to review their contents. Most of this material consists, presumably, of declarations by Shin Bet officers — “the one called ‘Yony’”, “the one called ‘Abu-Sharif’”, and so on — which declare beyond closed doors that

they have information from sources that they are not allowed to expose, and by that information informer “A” and informer “B” have sworn that the detainee has done or said something. The courts, with no exception, choose to believe these testimonies, just as they have believed Shin Bet officers for 16 years who have sworn in court that they do not torture detainees — testimonies that have been officially exposed as perjury by the Landau Committee report.

Severe treatment of administrative detainees

Conditions in Israeli prisons are hard, for administrative detainees as for most others. The detainees suffer from miserable hygienic conditions, monotonous food with low nutritive value and lack of conditions for study. The regulations that allow administrative detainees access to books and newspapers are violated by the prison authorities.

These bad conditions are extremely severe, given that the detainees were not ac-

cused of any offence and have not been sentenced or punished for anything they are accused of doing.

Hashem Hamdan has been held, since the beginning of his detention, in complete isolation in the Shata prison, in a cell of only about two square meters in size. He is allowed to go out of the room for only two hours during the day, and during that time he is still isolated.

Some of the administrative detainees, unlike other detainees and prisoners, are allowed visits only by immediate relatives. Sometimes, the authorities make it harder for the family to visit. Muhamed Burgical from Lod is being held at the Jelamy detention center, three bus rides and many hours away from his family instead of at the nearby Ramle prison....

From the beginning of the popular insurrection in the West Bank and Gaza in December 1987, our movement has filled an important role in all of the democratic struggles against the occupation, including two general strikes by the Arab population, the food and medical contributions campaign, breaking the hunger siege of the refugee camps and organizing demonstrations, mass meetings and picket lines all over the country.

Arab women in prison

UNTIL RECENTLY, women militants in the Arab countries gained one tiny benefit from their specific oppression by generally being spared political repression. A sort of oriental machismo and a certain conception of “honour” resulted in women’s relative immunity on the political scene. Even the Israeli authorities took account of this particularity.

But this has changed a lot today, particularly in Syria and in the territories occupied by Israel. In the Syrian dictatorship’s prisons, the number of women detained for suspected membership of the Communist Action Party (PAC) is higher than ever before in the history of the country following a major repressive offensive launched against the PAC since summer 1987. Nearly a quarter of the 1,500 arrested are women, of whom dozens have been kept in detention.

In the Douma prison, 25 of these women began a hunger strike on May 24 this year to win elementary rights like visits from their families or the right to appear before a tribunal with a lawyer of their choice. (Some PAC militants have been imprisoned for more than ten years, and none of these detainees have ever had the “privilege” of being tried.) The hunger strike lasted for several weeks and succeeded in forcing some concessions from the dictatorship, notably around visiting rights. There is a non-confirmed rumour that one of the hunger strikers died following ill-treatment.

On the other side of the border in April, the fifth month of the uprising, the occupying authorities decided that they would no longer make an exception for women, who until then had avoided being arrested. Dozens of Palestinian women have since been incarcerated to add to the 5,500 men and boys imprisoned as a result of the continuing uprising. Given the absence of detention centres for women in the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinian prisoners are put into Israeli prisons in violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention stating that prisoners in an occupied country must be held on their own territory. Moreover, like their Syrian sisters, Palestinian women are detained without charges or trial and submitted to various forms of torture during interrogation.

Specific solidarity and defence actions from democratic and feminist organizations are needed for all these women prisoners, particularly in the imperialist countries. Such organizations, and public opinion in general, must be alerted urgently to their plight. ★



Torture used to extract confessions

Our activists are repeatedly detained for “interrogation”, in which police and Shin Bet officers try to intimidate them and press us to stop our legal and public political activity. In many cases the interrogators use torture in an attempt to extract confessions to various offences.

Since 1980, central activists of our movement have been victims of town arrest orders that require home detention during the evenings and nights.

It seems that administrative detention has now become the standard weapon of the government, in its attempt to deny us the rights of expression and struggle by democratic means. The use of emergency laws, detention without trial, the secrecy of accusations and evidence — all these are the authorities’ response to the legitimate political character of our struggle.

Experience proves that the denial of democratic rights knows no borders. Just as the use of administrative detention has recently expanded from the ’67 occupied territories to include us, those measures might be used against whoever opposes the occupation and against whoever tries to defend democratic rights.

To confront this danger a wide front should be established, right now, in order to organize the struggle for the immediate release of all administrative detainees. The government should be denied the authority to make such arrests. Let us unite to abolish the anti-democratic emergency laws and free all administrative prisoners now!

Warschawsky in jeopardy

ON OCTOBER 19, the trial against our comrade Michel Warschawsky will enter its decisive phase. The trial was opened on July 5 with a reading of the indictment, which accuses him and the Alternative Information Center of working for an illegal organization (punishable by 10 years in prison), possessing written material from an illegal organization (up to 10 years) and supporting a terrorist organization (up to three years).



WITH THE exception of a typist who worked at the Center, all the witnesses are secret service police agents or special branch police. In the July session, Warschawsky pleaded not guilty.

While a year ago it an acquittal may have been likely, the situation has changed radically since the Palestinian uprising. The Israeli government has declared a total war on the Palestinian people as a whole and any political expression of their views. Key elements in this policy are the administrative detention of 3,000 political cadres, deportations and the outlawing of the People's Committees. In order to be effective, this repressive policy has to extend to Israelis who offer political or material aid to the uprising.

Moreover, the courts today are not inclined to make distinctions. They have to do their part of the job in repressing the uprising. The "quality of justice" has dropped sharply. Judicial errors are an everyday occurrence. Average sentences are ten times more severe than they were a year ago. Acquittals are getting rarer and rarer.

The most striking example of the dangers now facing Warschawsky is the sentence received by four peace activists who met a

PLO delegation in Rumania. They were sentenced to a year and a half, six months of which had definitely to be served in prison. This judgment may have a direct effect on our comrade's trial.

Propaganda judged as dangerous as weapons

Another element that has to be taken into account is the trial of the members of the *Derech Hanitzotz* group, who were charged with joining the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Both cases are before the same court, and this is no accident. It is easy to continue on from one case to the other, even if the charges are very different.

And the *Derech Hanitzotz* defendants face serious dangers. They made admissions under torture that they have now retracted.

The last element is the idea that leaflets are weapons in the uprising, like bombs and Kalashnikov rifles. The accusation against the Center and Warschawsky concerns precisely written material.

What in the past has been a minor thing has become a formidable "weapon," and the courts judge it accordingly. While a year ago the prosecutor would have sought a compromise in order to get rid of the case as soon as possible, today he wants to strike a blow at Israeli/Palestinian cooperation. And the three cases before the courts today (the Rumania Four have appealed) are the means for doing this. ★

The mentality of the torturers

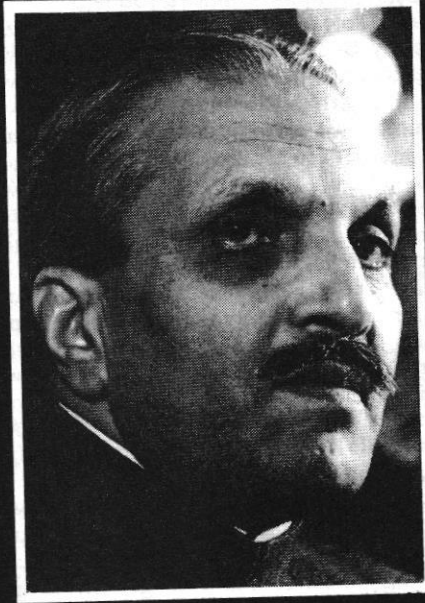
IF TORTURE is accepted currency in the territories occupied by Israel, then the case of Hadas Lahav is symptomatic of the present evolution of Zionist repression. Hadas is an Israeli Jew, a journalist working for the weekly far-left journal, *Derech Hanitzotz*. After 20 days in detention Hadas was freed on bail on May 25 this year, when she related the ill-treatment she had suffered:

"I was interrogated day and night for 72 hours after my arrest on May 5. To destabilize me psychologically, they covered my eyes and made me wear headphones that played deafening noise. . . . After this I was held incommunicado in a miniscule cell with no window."

The last straw was the blackmailing torture that Hadas suffered in an episode that reveals the mentality of the torturers of Shin Bet, the internal Israeli security service. Hadas was brought before a Palestinian prisoner who begged her to confess in order to put an end to his torture! ★

Zia ul-Haq: death of a dictator

THE DEATH of Pakistan president General Zia ul-Haq on August 17 will have consequences far beyond the borders of Pakistan. Zia seized power in 1977, and became a crucial conduit for US imperialism's interests in the region, in particular in Afghanistan. So far the origin of the explosion that brought down Zia's plane — which also killed the US ambassador, US military attache and top Pakistan army officers — has not been discovered, although the list of suspects is long given his many enemies.



While epitaphs for the military dictator were lengthy and full of praise, little mention was made in the Western media of Zia's brutal internal tyranny. Tariq Ali talked to Salah Jaber about Zia's legacy, and the future prospects for the Pakistan opposition. Tariq Ali is a member of the *New Left Review* editorial board and author, among other works, of *Can Pakistan survive?**

THE REACTION to Zia's death in Western capitals remained silent on the record of his internal politics...

With few exceptions, the reaction of Western politicians and the Western media in general to the assassination of Zia ul-Haq is marked by myopia and hypocrisy. Myopia, because the Western press and Western leaders — in particular Shultz, Thatcher, Reagan, Bush and Jeane Kirkpatrick amongst others — have talked exclusively of the role Zia played on the border of Afghanistan. This is totally understandable because that was Zia's only real function for the West. He acted as a conduit for Western arms and money to the Afghan Mujahideen. That was his importance.

But for people who constantly talk about democracy and freedom, to ignore the internal record of this butcher is grotesque. It is not simply sickening, but also somewhat shortsighted. Not a single leader has spoken about the barbaric practices introduced by Zia's regime in Pakistan. These include public floggings and hangings, torture of

political prisoners — including women prisoners — and the execution of the country's first and last elected prime minister to date, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. There has been no mention of the total and complete failure of the Zia regime to stop the cultivation of poppies and the manufacture and distribution of heroin both inside and outside the country. Under Zia Pakistan has become one of the main suppliers of heroin to the West. All these aspects of Zia's legacy have been largely ignored by the media.

Secondly, the media have tended to downplay the fact that the citizens of Pakistan in their overwhelming majority expressed open relief — and in some cases even jubilation — at the death of this despot. The images on Western television concentrated on Zia's funeral, but it is very important to take note of who attended it. The crowds at the funeral were brought from the Pakistan/Afghan border in several hundred truckloads. They were mainly Afghan Mujahideen, secondly soldiers and police out of uniform and thirdly civil servants and army officers who had worked

with the regime. There was also a smattering of religious maniacs. Yet it was noted that even these people found it difficult to express a lot of grief, and that the atmosphere was similar to a holiday outing. So even these people that were brought to the funeral in truckloads to put on a show for the West, essentially for the West, were not able to show any signs of grief.

Zia's overall legacy in this country's unfortunate history is that of the military dictator who totally brutalized political culture, thus making the transition and return to bourgeois democracy more difficult. On the way he destroyed all the institutions of Pakistan.

By utilizing the Islamic religion in an extremely cynical and manipulative way, Zia has attempted to undermine the very fundamental principles of any humanitarian law or system of law. Women in particular have been mistreated and made into second-class citizens. For example, under Zia's interpretation of Islamic laws a woman's evidence is not counted in a case of rape unless there is another witness! This is one of the most scandalous legal developments that Pakistan and that part of the world has ever seen.

As regards the working class, the regime has totally and shamelessly backed the big capitalists, putting down strikes extremely ruthlessly. Trade unionism has been totally destroyed under General Zia, and occasionally heroin mafia gangs have been used to break strikes. The whole situation is extremely messy. Added to this is the fact that when heroin takes over a country you have the growth of a parallel government, and Pakistan today is, I would say, a heroin state. So you have had, over the last few years, an official government which is a puppet civilian government representative of nobody except a tiny layer of officialdom. You have the army in the background, whose interests were protected by Zia, and in addition a virtual parallel administration run by the heroin mafia who have infiltrated the army, the civil service and other parts of society. No major decisions about society are taken without their being consulted.

For example the city of Karachi, which is a port town and vital for the outflow of heroin, is very reminiscent of Beirut in the early days of the civil war in regard to the amount of guns available. Stinger missiles can be bought, virtually everything is available there. Of course, heroin and guns go together. So the arms and heroin mafias have linked up and terrorize large numbers of citizens. Often the city just erupts in a bloodbath.

This is the legacy of General Zia that has not been made available to readers of newspapers or watchers of television programmes in the West. I think that many of these things will come out if there is a democratic election in mid-November, as appears to be the case now. We have to wait and see — the next few weeks are going to be critical.

■ **In contrast to the silence surrounding Zia's internal record, in the West there has been a big emphasis put on his role in promoting the "sovereignty" of Pakistan.**

The argument that Zia has preserved the sovereignty of Pakistan is a very cynical argument. Prior to Zia taking over, Pakistan was moving towards non-alignment. American influence in Pakistan has been strong since 1951 when the first aid deals were signed, and the US has played a major part in Pakistani politics.

In fact, it is one of history's ironies that the US ambassador who died with Zia was a senior political officer at the embassy in Islamabad when the Americans helped to organize the coup that toppled Bhutto and put Zia in power. Many people in Pakistan have noted this and concluded — alas, in a slightly mystical and religious way — that God always punishes evil people. One point I would like to make is that the death of Zia, the American ambassador and four generals is not going to make it easier to get people to move towards rationalism, because they do believe that fate and God combined have helped to punish the evildoers.

Far from protecting Pakistan's sovereignty, Zia totally prostituted the country's armed forces and the country itself to the United States. Pakistan is totally mortgaged to the United States of America and nothing happens in that country without its prior approval. Pakistan today is more of a puppet state than it has ever been in its entire history, and that is saying quite a lot.

When American leaders talk about Zia preserving the sovereignty of Pakistan what they mean is that he has preserved American sovereignty over Pakistan. Without formally being a member of any pact, Pakistan has played a major role. Its troops are now active in 16 different countries of the region, including most of the Gulf states. They are used as mercenaries in the region. Pakistan is part of the Central Command planning of the United States in the region. There are substantial allegations made by leaders that on the Baluch coast special American radar bases and refuelling facilities have been prepared for the US Rapid Deployment Force.

So this argument about sovereignty is a total and complete joke. When you add to all this the fact that Zia has — with American backing — been running camps in Pakistan to train and arm Khalistan and Sikh extremists to try to destabilize the neighbouring government of India we can see what Pakistan is being used for.

The sovereignty of Pakistan has been totally wiped out under Zia. A sovereign power has the right to negotiate both with the superpowers and with its neighbours in the interests of the country. Zia has negotiated and behaved in the interests of the United States of America. This cannot be stressed enough, which is why they were so deeply upset when he was removed. They were shocked. Washington was thrown

into total panic at Zia's removal.

■ **What are the prospects for the internal situation? First, in relation to the ruling layers, [ex-prime minister] Junejo's possible role and the homogeneity of the army. Secondly for the opposition, in particular Benazir Bhutto. Finally, do you think that the fundamentalist movement will play any specific role?**

At present there is a National Council in power in Pakistan, essentially consisting of the chief ministers of the provinces and others who backed General Zia. The aim of these people is to prevent a free and fair election. The acting president is a veteran civil servant who has served every military dictator, Ghulam Ishaq Khan — although reportedly he is now in favour of a general election in the country.

Recently the civilian members of the cabinet called on the new commander-in-chief, General Aslam Baig, and asked him to take over the country. But he refused and said that the constitution must be upheld. Since that time I think he has come under very heavy pressure from Pentagon/CIA military officers in Pakistan, Pakistani officers, who have forced him to make a harsher statement. But it seems as though the army is divided at this point in time. It's not a monolithic force. The other thing is that the very fact that half the high command has been blown up in a plane must concentrate minds inside the army as to whether it should carry on playing a role in politics or not, because they saw the results before their very eyes.

I think that the Americans were banking on a more gradual transition to elected rule, but it's been taken out of their hands. People used to talk about the "arc of Islam" but now you see an arc of democratic movements stretching from the Philippines, through Burma to Pakistan. These are destabilizing American plans in the region.

The government that Zia had set up was made up of notable and bandwagon careerists, basically the political dregs and hoodlums of that country. Junejo himself was a fairly harmless fellow. His party was called the Moslem League. (The Moslem League was just a name of convenience, along the lines of the flags of convenience flown by oil tankers. This type of name of convenience is flown by every party that generals want to put into office.) Junejo did not prove to be totally reliable as far as Zia was concerned. When there was a big explosion nearly a year ago now in Rawalpindi at a secret ammunition dump in the heart of the city that was for supplying arms to the Afghan rebels, Junejo wanted the head of the general who was responsible, wanted him sacked, and for that Zia dismissed Junejo. But that general, Akhtar Rehman, was travelling in the plane with Zia, so Junejo unexpectedly got his way in the end.

Meanwhile, Junejo's Moslem League has split into two warring factions, with one half trying to tell the army to take over, and Junejo himself is a fairly isolated fig-

ure. Neither faction has any significant support outside of army backing.

Coming to the opposition parties, the main opposition force remains the populist Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Benazir Bhutto. If free and fair general elections were held in mid-November they would win between 60% and 70% of the popular vote, and thus sweep to power with an overall majority. I think there's very little doubt about that. This is why the Americans are worried. Even though Benazir Bhutto has been reassuring them they know she is a politician with mass support who will often have to respond to the sentiments of the masses. The Americans are not keen on politicians who have mass support in the third world because they fear that they will veer between the masses and the apparatus of the state, making it difficult for the Americans to get their own way all the time.

On this front a lot will depend on who wins the US election. I think that if the Republican Party wins in November then the chances are that the transition to democracy in Pakistan could be delayed. If the Democrats win the effect inside the United States will not be very significant, but the effect in some third world countries like Pakistan will be to give a breathing space to people fighting for democracy. Many leading Democrat congressmen and senators have said that they want an immediate restoration of democracy in Pakistan and have backed Benazir Bhutto's cause. So the situation depends on changes in Washington as well, unless there is a big, big upsurge in which case they will immediately grant general elections.

The masses have so far not been brought out into the streets by the People's Party since Zia's death, since it was considered to be in bad taste. But Benazir Bhutto's statement expressed the feeling of the majority of the country when she said "I, for one, cannot mourn Zia's death because for 11 years the shadow of death and destruction has hung over our country and now it's been removed". This was quite a sharp statement to make.

What will happen next remains to be seen. The ruling class in Pakistan — represented essentially by the top echelons of the army and elements in the civil service, with the army playing the dominant role — would like to delay the process in collusion with the United States. The Americans have always been important players in Pakistan's political games so what they say is very important. They would like to delay elections, but they may not be able to.

■ **How much of a threat would Bhutto's victory represent for US interests and in general for their domination over Pakistan?**

I think that she will proceed very slowly. There will be some reforms, some statements. Pakistan will move marginally, maybe half-an-inch, away from the US. I think she will try to restore normal relations



with India, which have been very bad. The PPP is committed to a settlement in Afghanistan, and this worries the Americans more than anything else. Benazir Bhutto may not be prepared to continue allowing Pakistani troops to be used in Afghanistan as Zia did. The Americans may try to put pressure on her, but in any event it's going to be a messy situation, even after the elections.

■ **Are there any prospects of a general radicalization?**

I don't think so. All hopes at the moment are being channelled through the Pakistan People's Party.

■ **What about the fundamentalist movement?**

The Jamaat-e-Islami are a small force. They have always been a minority force in Pakistani politics. Zia tried to build them up but didn't succeed. Finally they weren't prepared to negotiate with Zia, so in the last few years they broke away from him. Naturally, they will put up candidates and win some seats in a few towns, but nothing very significant because in the minds of the people they are identified with Zia.

■ **How essential to the present regime is Islamic fundamentalism and support for the Afghan fundamentalists?**

The Islamic fundamentalism that Zia talked about was a cloak that he used to legitimize his rule in the eyes of the common people and that has failed. If he had

been able to win support he would have held elections and won. But he has been avoiding a general election ever since he seized power in July 1977. That brand of Islam is not popular among the masses. The army and the present government may try to continue with it, but with little real effect.

Regarding Afghanistan, there are people in Pakistan — including in the army — who want to get rid of that mess. That policy came directly from American pressure.

■ **Many commentators say that Islam is the only unifying ideology for Pakistan, given its heterogeneity on other levels, that this is a common feature for both Pakistan and Afghanistan, and that this is why Zia promoted the fundamentalist wing in the Afghan Mujahideen....**

All these fundamentalist wings are backed by the US. They want these people in power because they feel they could manipulate them. As far as Islam is concerned, it has always been used. If religion was the only unifying theme in Pakistan it would collapse very soon. It isn't. The unifying theme in Pakistan is that it is an existing state with a structure and an army. That keeps the country together, and it has a history of sorts — albeit a very checkered history. Within Pakistan there have been clashes between Shias and Sunnis, so even the unity of Islam is not a very profound thing in the eyes of the people. They will have to find a different form of legitimacy for the state and Benazir Bhutto is already

talking about a secular state. She says, "our religion will always be Islam but we have to secularize the state".

■ **You made a comparison between Karachi and Beirut, and there has been talk of the "Lebanization" of Pakistan. Is such a civil war situation a possibility in Pakistan?**

The first key problems a new elected administration will have to solve is Afghanistan, getting the refugees back and how to stop the heroin business. I have no easy answers. My own feeling is that heroin is a cancer that can only be rooted out by surgical methods. It would really need a social revolution to get rid of it, and there isn't the slightest hope for that at the present time. Any elected government of whatever complexion is going to find this difficult to deal with, which means that this form of instability will probably continue in Pakistan for some time. A Lebanese-type scenario cannot be excluded.

There is also the question of how the United States will want to use this country in the coming years if there is a Democratic Party victory in the White House. Traditionally, the Democrats have always been closer to India, thinking that it is much more important to be friends with India and to unite India and Pakistan on some level. Whether they will try this again remains to be seen. ★

* *Can Pakistan survive?* by Tariq Ali, Verso (New Left Books), London 1983.

THE OFFICIAL strategy was in full swing, and the results were clear. In only three years, Colombia had been transformed into a shooting gallery for political assassination and massacring peasants.¹ The armed forces pursued their plan with utter ruthlessness. The mass mobilizations against state terrorism and the few international protests did not manage to change the situation.

Bogotá's pious explanation was that the acts of violence were perpetrated by "right-wing extremists," "left-wing terrorists" and gangs of drug traffickers, that is, by groups out of the control of the state.² When Amnesty International announced that "there is convincing evidence that the Colombian armed forces have adopted a policy of terror to intimidate and eliminate the opposition without the need to bother with legal proceedings," the ministers of the interior and defense blew their tops and demanded that Amnesty revise its report.

This demand, which was not accompanied by any serious measures to stop the killing, was rejected by the human-rights organization. The repression continued. An event, however, altered this picture. On May 29, a commando unit of the M-19 guerrillas kidnapped Senator Alvaro Gomez Hurtado in Bogotá. Nothing like this had occurred in the country before.

Gomez Hurtado is the chief of the most reactionary wing of the Colombian establishment. He has twice been the Conservative Party's presidential candidate. The charges that M-19 made against the senator indicated that the affair was going to end in an "execution," like that of Aldo Moro in Italy.

Government reneges on negotiations

M-19 accused Gomez Hurtado of being "one of the five political-military chiefs of the oligarchy, and one of those who had voted for unleashing the dirty war against the people." However, the objective of his captors was not to assassinate the rightist leader.

After public negotiations in Panama with representatives of the Colombian political parties, M-19 promised to release Gomez Hurtado on condition that the government, the military, the establishment parties and their opponents, the unions and workers' parties, as well as the civic and human rights movements, agree to sit around a table to initiate a process of dialogue to find a negotiated way out of the armed confrontation that was becoming more and more generalized throughout the country.

The government indicated that it was "pleased" with the contacts in Panama, and let it be known that it would agree to holding a "summit meeting" of personalities representative of all the sectors in question, including two or three representatives of the guerrillas. Gomez Hurtado was re-

leased 53 days after he had been taken captive, and on July 29 a meeting was held in the Colombian capital under the auspices of the Catholic Church. It included 40 representatives of political parties of right and left, the employers' organizations, the unions and civic and human rights movements.

The so-called National Dialogue lasted nine hours, and reached concrete conclusions. A Democratic Coexistence Commission (CCD) was to be formed within 30 days. It was to present a plan for a rapprochement between the leaders of the rebel movements and the authorities. However, the meeting was undermined by the absence of the government, which pulled out at the last minute, charging that the event was the product of the violence. Moreover, guerrillas' representatives did not attend either. The top military command, contradicting the position of the civilian government, threatened to arrest anyone who showed up at the "summit" to represent the rebels.

A last chance to avoid civil war

Despite these setbacks, the July 29 meeting was presented by all the participants as the "last chance" the country had to avoid a devastating civil war. Alvaro Gomez Hurtado was one of the keynote speakers. His speech reflected the powerful psychological and moral impact that had been made on him by his stay among the guerrillas.

The senator said that he was convinced that his captors really wanted to achieve peace in the country, and that in order to reach an agreement with them it was necessary to carry out major reforms. Moreover, he deplored the absence of the government from the meeting and the official indifference to the massacres.

A few hours later, M-19 released a document reiterating that it was ready for direct talks with the government, and that this position was shared by the five organizations that make up the Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordinating Committee [see IV 141], other than the Ejército de Liberación Nacional.

The impression of a relaxation that followed the release of Gomez Hurtado contrasted cruelly with the acts of violence continuing in the country. On the eve of the National Dialogue, a death squad assassinated two union activists in Barrancabermeja, the country's oil capital.

In the local demonstrations to protest against this crime one person died and several others were wounded by the police. A few days earlier, 16 other worker and peasant activists died in attacks carried out by unknown persons. In response to this, the United Workers' Confederation (CUT), the country's major trade-union organization, called on the government to take steps to stop the wave of assassinations of people's leaders and to initiate a direct dialogue with the guerrilla organizations.

A free-fire political

DIALOGUE with the guerrillas in Colombia. Up until a few weeks ago, it was violently rejected by the government, the Liberal and Conservative organizations. With a few individuals, it led to the military liquidation of the

RODRIGO



The Catholic Church, through the intermediary of Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo, chief of the Latin American conservative hierarchy, declared that the Barco government had no reason to refuse to participate and to carry on the discussions initiated on July 29. Ex-presidents Belisario Betancur, Alfonso López Michelsen and Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala made similar statements.

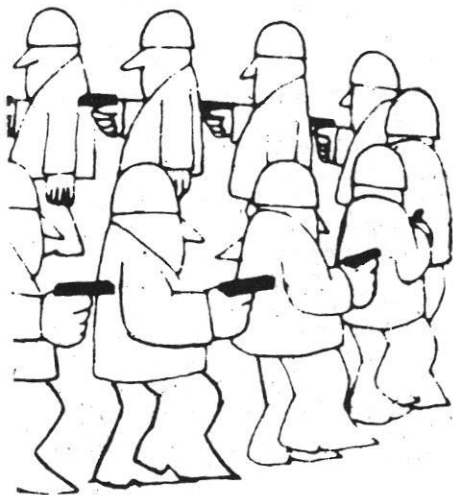
Nonetheless, as soon as it saw that Senator Gomez Hurtado had regained his freedom and was packing his bags for a long trip to Europe, the Liberal administration went back to its former strong-arm solution. Protests about abuses committed by soldiers in the countryside continued. In mid-August, several rural districts were deserted as peasants fled to avoid murdering soldiers.

On August 19, heavily armed men entered three houses in Barrancabermeja and shot down five people, including a 60-year-old woman. The regime's "toughness" was also expressed politically. On August 22, the Democratic Coexistence Commission

zone for murder

being talked about again in ago, such a possibility was ment of Virgilio Barco Vargas, by parties and by the employers' al exceptions, all of them were nters of guerrilla resistance.

'FARREL



met for the first time. Among its various civilian components, the idea gathered steam of strengthening this forum for dialogue. (The idea of political negotiations for peace first arose in the country during the presidency of Belisario Betancur. It was backed only by the president himself and some guerrilla leaders. The majority of the bourgeois parties were openly sceptical about it.) This time, Virgilio Barco connived to sabotage the meeting, while at the same time saying that a peace plan would "soon" be made public.

The Liberal Party and the employers' associations announced, as a result, that they would not attend the CCD because they preferred to examine the president's proposal before engaging in other peace negotiations. Thus, without the presence of the Liberals and the employers' organizations, the multi-party forum was left in political limbo.

On the eve of the CCD meeting, the Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordinating Committee delivered a five-point document to Monsignor Dario Castrillón, one of

the notables involved in the forum. For the first time, seven organizations of armed rebels had agreed on a process of negotiations with the government.³

Sharp disillusionment at the government's maneuver was expressed by Monsignor Castrillón, who told the press that "a military response to the subversion in Colombia would be a historic error." He said that instead Virgilio Barco's government should join in the national dialogue.

The guerrillas responded quickly to Barco's maneuver. On August 23, two fronts of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC, the CP-led guerrillas) and of the Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL, of Maoist origin) attacked an army camp and police station in Saiza, a town in Córdoba. The battle lasted 24 hours.

Ten soldiers, two policemen and 12 civilians were killed. Another five members of the uniformed forces were wounded and 26 were reported missing. The police station was destroyed, as well as some houses from which civilians belonging to a "self-defense" group set up by the army had opened fire. According to governmental sources, the guerrillas suffered 15 casualties. In all, 39 people, including 26 soldiers, were reportedly killed in the bloodiest confrontation since the storming of the Palace of Justice in November 1985.⁴

A severe blow to army morale

The region neighboring Saiza is under the control of General Jesús Cabrales, military chief of Urabá, a militarized region in which the worst massacres of peasants have been perpetrated. Soldiers belonging to the Light Infantry Battalion, to which those who came under attack in Saiza belonged, were involved in the March 4 massacre in Currulao in which 17 workers were shot down in front of their wives and children.

The battle in Saiza created a sensation in Bogotá. Because of its duration, the number of casualties and the number of guerrillas who took part (nearly a hundred), the

attack was a severe blow to the morale of the army, which has been lord and master of the region up until now.

It is quite possible that this event was the cause of the government's new turnaround. On September 1, Virgilio Barco presented a plan for "national reconciliation," the first in the two years that he has been office. It called for a constitutional reform and a timetable for the guerrillas returning to normal life. The pro-government press portrayed the president's proposal as following the Salvadoran model.

Salvadoran-type proposal for "reconciliation"

It is a scheme similar to the plans proposed by Napoleón Duarte in El Salvador, as well as to the one proposed in the past by the former Colombian president Turbay Ayala. In other words, it is a plan that will be difficult for the armed rebels to accept. It makes the ending of armed actions and the rebels surrendering their arms a prerequisite for an amnesty for those who accept the plan. The guerrillas are offered very little else — dialogue aimed at reintegrating the guerrillas into civilian life and a parliamentary debate on some superficial changes in the constitution.

Barco specified that in the meantime the armed forces would continue "the fight against terrorism" and against "those who persist in subversion." The plan does not call for the slightest implementation of the recommendations of Amnesty International and the human rights organizations in Colombia to cut the ground out from under the feet of the death squads.

The chief executive does not envisage any purge of the army or the police to dismantle the parallel structures responsible for innumerable political assassinations and massacres. In these conditions, his proposal does not have much chance of getting anywhere. The outlook, therefore, is grim. In their fight against the dirty war, Colombian workers' and people's organizations need international solidarity. It is the obligation of democrats and revolutionists throughout the world to expose what is happening in Colombia. ★

1. In 1986, 976 people were assassinated for political reasons. In 1987, the number went up to 1,200, including 267 alone in the banana growing area of Urabá, where the Light Infantry Battalion operates. In the first seven months of 1988, the number of political assassinations has amounted to more than 600. In the 22 massacres that have taken place up until now, 231 people have died. Those responsible for these crimes enjoy total immunity. Moreover, to date, 1,400 cases of "missing persons" have been reported to the Department of Justice. See also IV 141, May 16, 1988.

2. Besides bumping off their "immediate enemies" (police, judges, a minister, an attorney general, journalists), the drug traffic chiefs are taking advantage of the climate of political violence to "clean out the communists" from the regions and cities where they hold their assets. They finance armed gangs collaborating with corrupt military officers and promote terrorist attacks against individuals and groups. In the assassination of Jaime Pardo Leal, a former candidate for president of the Unión Patriótica (the CP electoral for-

mation), a judge established a connection between various military officers and Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha, one of the country's most powerful drug traffickers. An army colonel allowed the escape last March of Pablo Escobar, head of the Medellín drug cartel, according to the daily *El Espectador*.

3. The Simón Bolívar Coordinating Committee proposed in short: 1. Seeking a political solution to the present violence. 2. To humanize the conflict by respecting international law and taking real steps against the dirty war. 3. To conduct a dialogue on the country's energy problem (the multinational contacts for exploiting Colombian oil) between the government, the guerrillas and the society. 4. To carry out constitutional reforms by means of referenda. 5. To support the general strike that the CUT is preparing for.

4. In trying to dislodge the M-19 commando unit that had taken the building, the army killed 84 people, including 15 judges, two lawyers, 28 guerrillas and 39 ordinary civilians. Fourteen people have remained "missing" since then. The army suffered 11 casualties.

General strike of workers and peasants against economic catastrophe

IN ITS FIRST PHASE, the government of Alan García — the candidate of the APRA (American People's Alliance, originally a populist movement) who was elected to the presidency in April 1985 — could boast of slowing down the rate of inflation, in contrast with the situation that developed at the end of Belaunde Terry's government.¹ But this did not last.

Officially, for the first six months of 1988, the rise in prices was 115.3%. For the month of July alone, it was 30%. For the year as a whole, all the estimates see a price rise of the order of 400%, with the most pessimistic projections going as high as 600%.

Shoppers simply notice that they can buy less and less necessities every day. Some 65% of Peruvians who are lucky enough to have a job earn 7,000 intis a month, or about \$40², while the cost of the family "basic basket" is equivalent to \$250. In reaction to this increase in the cost of living and the government's announcement in mid-June of an austerity plan, many workers' organizations called a general strike for July 19-20. It was a major success.

HUGO BLANCO

SINCE THE beginning of the year, there has been a constant succession of strikes involving hundreds of thousands of workers. In May alone, 132 strikes were registered in the private sector. In June, 15,000 building workers stopped work for two weeks, followed by 18,000 telecommunications and transport workers. In mid-July, the miners went into action, demanding an end to the repression, wage increases and a lowering of the retirement age in an industry where appalling working conditions result in a very high mortality rate.

Mining products occupy a important place in Peruvian exports. This is why Alan García's government had to yield partially to the miners' demands in August, offering a reduction of the retirement age. Against this background of working-class agitation, in June Premier Armando Villanueva announced an austerity plan designed to bring Peru back into the good graces of the International Monetary Fund.

The days of Alan García's big talk, when he pledged not to give in to the dictates of the international credit organizations and to allot only 10% of export receipts to debt repayment, have been quite forgotten.

The most important measures in the austerity plan are the following:

- A 58% rise in the prices of petroleum products. Already the energy and mines minister, Abel Solinas, has warned that a new rise will go into effect in September.

- An increase in indirect taxes on consumer goods.

- Giveaways to foreign investors. In this context, free-trade zones will be created whose entire production will be for export, and where, of course, the tax laws and labor code in force in the rest of the country will be not be applied. Finally, what is produced in these zones will not be subject to price control.

- Preferential exchange rates for imports of food products and medicines. Like many third-world countries, Peru has given maxi-

mum encouragement to export crops, at the expense of food growing. It ceased long ago to be self-sufficient in food.

- Finally, a 50% wage increase for the public sector. When you look at the inflation figures, you see how insufficient this is.

On July 19-20, in reaction to the plan, almost all of the workers' and people's organizations called for a general strike.

July 19 has a special significance for the Peruvian people. On that date in 1977, a massive illegal strike took place. It was a general strike that challenged the government and put an end to the military dictatorship of Francisco Morales Bermudez, opening the way for the period of very relative democracy in which the country has been living since.

Peruvian workers remember 1977 strike

In that year, the banned general strike threw a government that had expected to hold on for ten more years into retreat. The result was the calling of a constituent assembly, the promise of general elections, the end of the state of siege and the return of the exiles.

Such dates are disdainfully ignored by the international press, which likes only the spectacular. But they are recalled by the Peruvian workers, who retain the memory of their collective struggles.

It was in memory of July 19, 1977, and encouraged by its success that the two-day general strike was called this year by the Peru General Confederation of Workers (CGTP), the main labor confederation, and the National People's Assembly (ANP). The latter includes, along with the CGTP, the Peasant Confederation (CCP); the United Union of Teachers (SUTEP); the Inter-occupational Union of Government Workers; the Bank Workers' Federation (FEB); the Student Federation (FEP); the street vendors, a sector that has been growing constantly in a country where the unemployed do not get a penny from the state; and the slum dwellers, inhabitants of regions neglected by a hyper-centralized administration.

In addition, the Peru Workers' Confederation (CTP), the union confederation led by APRA, joined in the mobilization, as did the owner-drivers in the public sector. The drivers' pro-government leadership was obliged to leave it up to them whether to join in the mobilization or not.

The strike was a success throughout the country, despite a big campaign by the government and the extreme right against it and

1. First excluded from power by General Velasco Alvarado's coup d'état, Belaunde Terry became president of the republic in 1980 at the head of the right-wing Popular Action (AP) party after the fall of General Morales, who drove out Alvarado in 1975.

2. The official exchange rate is \$1=33 intis, but it is equivalent to 75 intis for financial transactions and 173 intis on the black market.

despite the fact that the government ordered huge payments to those who did not join in the strike.

The strikes have far from ended in the wake of the general strike. For example, on August 2, 30,000 FEB bank workers stopped work again, and "international experts" looked forward with disquiet to a second half of the year likely to be "hot, not to say violent, on the labor front."³

Everyone was waiting the annual speech to parliament by the president on July 28, Peru's independence day and a major national holiday. Last year, it was on that date that Alan García dropped his political bombshell, announcing the nationalization of the banks.

That declaration impelled the most important sections of capital to break with the government, and led to the reappearance of an extreme right, led this time by the writer Mario Vargas Llosa.⁴ These waged such a campaign against the president's scheme that he was forced to backtrack. So today, there is virtually nothing left of the nationalization of the banks, and its only result has been the strengthening of this extreme right.

García's speech applauded by the right

Consequently, this year the weeks preceding July 28 were marked by an intense campaign by the sectors linked to big capital and the political far right demanding that the government not announce any disagreeable surprises.

During the speech, the national employers' leaders gathered in the headquarters of the Confederation of Private Employers' Institutions (CONFIEP) to listen to it over TV. When it was over, they came out congratulating themselves and expressing loud approval of the speech, which was also hailed by the extreme right.

The bulk of the speech was devoted to promising tougher legislation against "subversion." Henceforth not only participation in terrorist acts would be punished, but also membership in "subversive organizations." The concept of "intellectual responsibility" for terrorism was introduced. People can be convicted even they are not accused of any concrete action.

From now on, the police and not judges will be in charge of all investigations. The police have got into the habit of planting weapons in the homes of those that they accuse. It will now be possible to convict people on the basis of such "evidence." "Incitement to violence" will be a crime. In Latin America, this is a very venerable means of suppressing freedom of the press.

All of these promises were accompanied by expressions of sympathy for the small number of butchers, murders and torturers belonging to the repressive forces that have been brought before the courts. Peruvians, Alan García said, "must have confidence in their armed forces and police who are



risking their lives in the mountains...and taking direct charge of the struggle [against terrorism]."

In another part of his speech, he referred to the Peruvian Institute of Social Insurance (IPSS). The latter is a state body whose funds come from contributions by the workers and employers. It is responsible for paying for medical and pensions for the workers. The corruption that exists within it has led it into crisis.

The employers are not paying in the money that they are supposed to, according to the terms of the law, and the very little money that there is in these funds is being diverted into the pockets of the administrators, who belong to the government party.

On numerous occasions, both the insured workers and the IPSS clerks themselves have denounced these swindles. Unfortunately, the only remedy envisaged for such evils is a gradual privatization of this service. This privatization will be extended to other public enterprises that have been bled dry by APRA's corruption, in the same way as the IPSS.

So it is understandable that the bosses have many reasons to be happy.

Extreme right resort to death squad terrorism

Osman Morote, regarded as the second most important leader of Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path)⁵ after Abimael Guzmán, "Chairman Gonzalo," was captured in the late summer. Five prosecutions were set in motion against him. In one, the court could not prove his guilt, and he was acquitted. Needless to say, he has remained in prison. But this acquittal was enough to set off the extreme right. It has raised a furore, accusing the court of dastardliness and saying that the Sendero Luminoso guerrillas are being allowed to operate with total impunity.

The president of the republic has added his voice to the chorus of the right. It was partly for that reason that a large chunk of his speech was devoted to repression.

Morote's lawyer, Manuel Febres, was a very prominent professor. He also took part in the team of lawyers who conducted the

civil suit initiated at the time of the massacre of eight journalists in Ucharaccay under the government of Belaunde Terry.⁶ Febres was murdered a few hours before the president's speech. He left his home, and a few hours later his body was found in a quiet street. It bore the marks of torture.

Subsequently, the papers and radio stations received a communique from the "Rodrigo Franco Democratic Commandos" claiming responsibility for the crime. Rodrigo Franco was an APRA functionary killed by Sendero Luminoso a few months ago.

It seems, therefore, that the Peruvian extreme right or sections of APRA have begun to resort to the death squad methods seen at work in Argentina and Central America. It is possible that this group is made up of police led by military officers, operating outside the law but without being disowned by the official apparatus.

In their communique, the Rodrigo Franco Commandos say that they have decided to act because they are "tired of the government's incompetence and the indecisiveness of the forces of order." They go on to say that "for every mayor, soldier or policeman assassinated, a leader of Sendero Luminoso or the groups that protect it or support it will die."

We already know that, in the language of the extreme right, this means the left in general. It depends on mass mobilizations in Peru and international solidarity to keep Peru from becoming like Argentina under the military dictatorship. ★

3. *Latin America Weekly Report*, July 14, 1988.

4. Mario Vargas Llosa, who led the right's campaign against the nationalizations in the name of "freedom from totalitarianism", has announced that he may be a candidate in the next presidential elections to be held in 1990.

5. First appearing in May 1980 in the Andean province of Ayacucho, this guerrilla movement rapidly grew and spread to the rest of Peru. See also *IV* 108, November 10, 1986.

6. On January 26, 1983, eight journalists were assassinated by the special repressive forces — the *sinchis* — in Ayacucho province. The international impact of this event was to force the government to set up a commission of enquiry presided over by Vargas Llosa. This was to be Llosa's first big occasion to play a disgusting political role in trying to whitewash the military and put the blame for the massacre at the door of Sendero Luminoso.

AROUND
THE
WORLD

YUGOSLAVIA

Trial provokes mass protests

ON AUGUST 18, the trial began against Janez Jansa, David Tasic and France Zavrl, three journalists on *Mladina* — journal of the Slovenian Socialist Youth Alliance — and Ivan Borstner, a warrant officer in the Yugoslav army. All four are charged with “having divulged military secrets” (see *IV* 144 and 145).

The military tribunal was held in camera and in Serbo-Croat, even though Yugoslav laws stipulate that defendants have the right to be judged in their own language, in this case Slovenian.

The trial, seen as a test of strength between the federal army and the republic of Slovenia, was accompanied by mass mobilizations of the Slovenian population. Since Janez Jansa was arrested last May, a defence committee was set up in Ljubljana, involving around 70,000 individuals. More than 500 organizations have also supported the committee, including local branches of unions or of the League of Communists, not only in Slovenia but also in other Yugoslav republics, in particular Serbia.

The military tribunal pronounced sentence on July 27. Ivan Borstner was condemned to four years in prison, Janez and Zavrl to 18 months and Tasic to five months. However, the army conceded by giving provisional liberty to the four, whose sentences will be carried out later. Coming out of the court the four were cheered by a crowd of 10,000 protesting against the verdict. The Slovenian Communist Party leadership was involved in the protests, and Slovenian CP head Milan Kucan described the judgement as “usurping” the sovereignty of the Slovenian republic. ★

SOUTH AFRICA

Fighting conscription

LAW AND ORDER minister Adriaan Vlok silenced the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) on August 22. It is the first “white” organization to be banned in a quarter century.

The ECC is a single-issue organization that draws together an unusual variety of people under the broad banner of anti-conscription: religious objectors, universal pacifists; those who would take up arms against, but not for, apartheid, and unpoli-

tized youth whose major concern was the loss of two years of their lives and careers to the military. The organization has a quality few other white anti-apartheid groups have: a trendy, populist and open image that had the potential to take it beyond the traditional student and intellectual circles of white radicalism.

This — and the fact that military and political developments ensured that the issue of conscription developed more and more of a resonance among white South Africans — took it into areas of organization previously untapped by the “white left”.

Set up in 1983, the ECC initially brought together about 50 organizations who shared little more than a concern for the growing number of young whites who were facing doubts about serving in the South African military. The issue of conscription was not new: there had in the previous decade been at least 12 conscientious objectors sentenced to jail or detention.

The conscription issue was highlighted by the secret invasion of Angola in 1976, but it became most important when troops were sent into the townships to combat unrest in September 1984. The declaration of a national State of Emergency in June 1986, with the concomitant detentions, bannings of meetings and other restrictions, heralded a difficult time for the ECC. In particular, Emergency regulations made it illegal to “undermine the system of compulsory military conscription” — and therefore removed the ECC’s main focus.

Recently, international attention was focused on the trials of Dr Ivan Toms and David Bruce, who were given heavy sentences for refusing to serve in the army. Following this, 143 others publicly proclaimed they would also not do military service. These events brought ECC and the fight against conscription back into the limelight.

It was significant that Vlok, in the statement released with the restriction order, justified his action by linking ECC to the “revolutionary onslaught” rather than addressing the issues of conscription directly. “[The] activities of the ECC are a link in the so-called struggle against apartheid and the so-called national liberation struggle undermining an existing state structure,” he said.

Other groups — such as the Objector Support Groups, conscripts groups and parents’ groups — will fill some of the functions of the ECC. And there are a few objectors due for call-ups — and therefore

high-profile court appearances — in the next few months. So if Vlok believes he has added the issue of conscription to the long list that he can keep hidden from his white electorate, he might be in for something of a surprise. ★

[Abridged from an article by Anton Harber in the *Weekly Mail*, August 26.]

U S A

Police frame-up SWP activist

MARK CURTIS, a member of the US Socialist Workers Party in Iowa, works at the Swift/Monfort packing house. On March 1 this year, several immigration agents raided his workplace, arresting one Salvadoran and 16 Mexican workers for using false documents. A few days later, March 4, a meeting was called to protest against these arrests, which Mark Curtis attended.

A few hours after the meeting, Mark Curtis was on his way to the supermarket when a woman ran up to his car at a traffic light. She pleaded for a ride home, saying that someone was after her. After arriving at the house, she asked Curtis to wait on the porch while she looked inside. Moments later, the police arrested Curtis and charged him with attempted rape.

At the city jail, police attempted to make him confess. When he asked to see an attorney, one of the police remarked, “You’re one of those Mexican-lovers aren’t you?” Curtis was then beaten up, his cheekbone broken and his face cut up. He is charged with first-degree burglary, which carries a 25-year mandatory sentence, and third-degree sexual abuse, carrying a five-year mandatory sentence.

As soon as Curtis’s friends, co-workers and fellow political activists learned of his arrest, they formed a defense committee, raised \$30,000 to get him out of jail and found lawyers. To date, more than 4,000 individuals have signed petitions against the frame-up.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is requesting all supporters to help by sending messages to Polk County Prosecutor James Smith and Police Chief William Moulder demanding that the charges are dropped and the police who beat Curtis up are prosecuted. Write to James Smith, Polk county Prosecutors Office, 500 Mulberry Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309, USA.

Though the defense committee has already surpassed its goal of raising \$45,000, more funds are needed to cover ongoing expenses. Contributions and copies of messages should be sent to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, P.O. Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311. ★

SWP win legal fees

IN A significant gain for democratic rights, the US government agreed to pay attorney’s fees and costs to lawyers representing the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance (YSA).

Earlier this year, the court had awarded the two organizations \$264,000 in damages, plus additional costs, for the FBI's illegal use of informers, burglaries and disruption operations against the two groups. In addition, the court issued an injunction barring the government from using illegally obtained information to victimize members of the two organization today.

Winning these fees sets an important precedent for the right of victims of government attack to obtain legal defense. All too often defense lawyers who have volunteered to defend political activists from government attack have been victimized along with their clients. In the past many lawyers representing political and union defendants have been hit with contempt-of-court rulings, fines and jail terms.

In addition, lawyers often have had to take on such cases for little or no pay because many victims of political persecution cannot afford large legal expenses.

This award, forcing the government to pay a substantial fee to the attorneys for the SWP and YSA, will help to encourage other lawyers to come to the defense of victims of political persecution. ★

[From *The Militant*, August 26.]

WESTERN EUROPE

END congress

THE LAST congress of the European Nuclear Disarmament movement (END) was held in Lund, Sweden, from June 29 to July 2. During the four-day gathering, hundred

of peace activists from all over the world discussed the new tasks of the movement.

Leaders and representatives came from about 50 groups and movements in Western Europe and from the entire English-speaking world. There were also delegations from the official peace committees in Hungary, Poland and the Soviet Union, as well as a small number of independent peace and human-rights activists from Hungary and Poland, who had been given special authorization to attend the congress.

The independent Polish participants included members of the Peace and Freedom Group (WiP), as well as two leading personalities in the union Solidarnosc, Jacek Kuron and Janusz Onyszkiewicz. Among the independent participants who came from Hungary, there were several members of the unofficial peace group 4-6-0 and the newly Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESZ).

Delegates representing independent peace activists, the Church and human-rights groups in the USSR, Czechoslovakia and East Germany had also been invited, but the authorities in those countries refused to grant them exit visas.

The general problem posed in Lund was finding new focuses around which to revive the movement. In fact, the congress could only note a major decline in peace mobilizations in the recent period. In these conditions, few new ideas have come forward from the activists, the space has thereby increased for official and institutional declarations. For example, the official stands taken by the Social Democratic

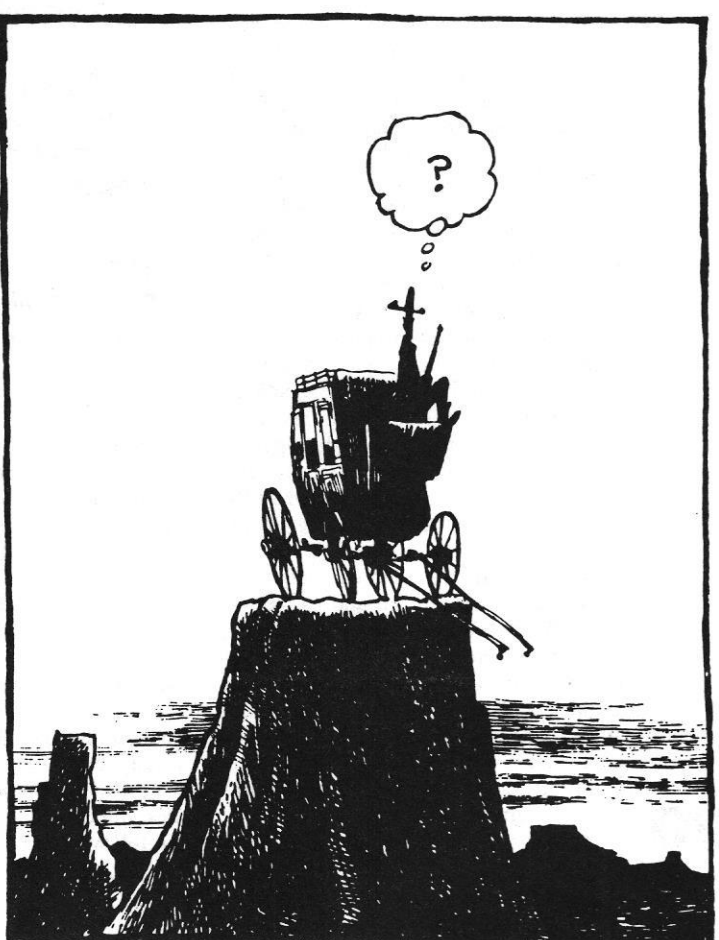
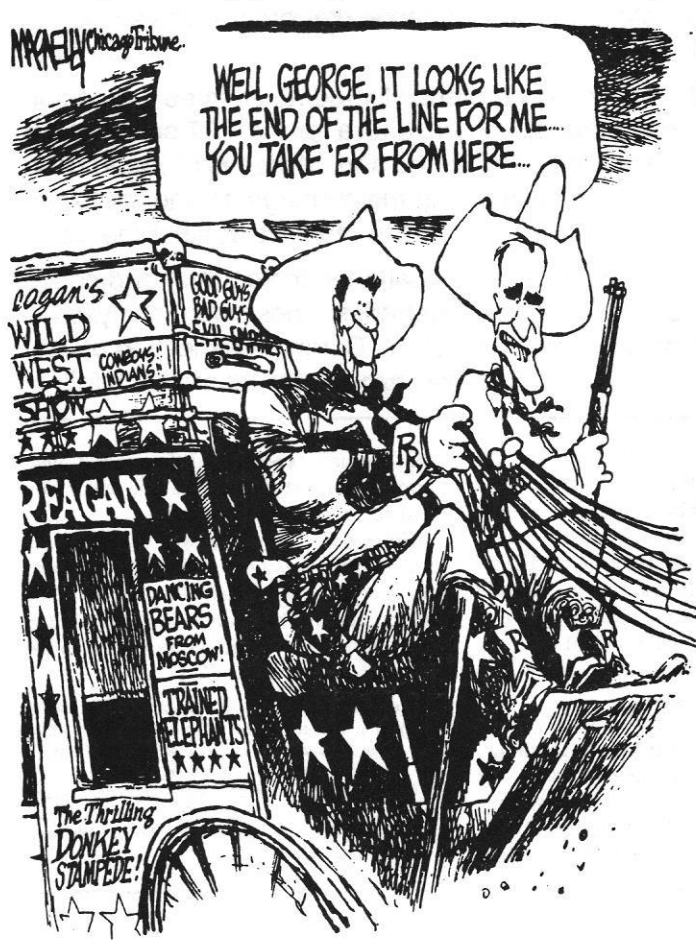
government in Sweden, largely repeating the already well-known proposals for nuclear-free zones and armed neutrality, have marginalized the peace movement in the country.

East European problems took up only a small part of the debates. But the organizers had decided to put the question of human rights in East Europe on the agenda of the congress, and the invitation that was extended to members of the independent groups showed that the importance of these groups is recognized in the Western peace movement.

The congress held sessions on Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania. But it was only on the last country that a joint statement was issued by the participating movements. It was accompanied by a decision to call a joint action. The session on Romania was organized at the instigation of the Dutch religious movement Pax Christi. The proposal was made to build solidarity actions, information campaigns and demonstrations this year on behalf of the peoples of Romania and the democratic circles in the country.

The initiators of this proposal included the representatives of the Polish Peace and Freedom Group; Lynn Jones, chair of END in Britain; Joanne Landy, head of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy East and West in the United States; and Jan ter Laak, general secretary of Pax Christi.

The official and independent delegates from Hungary drew attention to the discrimination suffered by the Hungarian population in Transylvania and appealed for international protests. ★



ON JULY 6, the political potential of the Mexican people was fully revealed. Working people in the countryside and the cities dealt an impressive blow to the PRI. This vote expressed the level of mass discontent provoked by the anti-democratic character of the regime and the attacks on living standards. In this respect, there should be no mistake about the reasons for this vote. A series of political commentators have analyzed it as the expression of a desire to vote for change without violence. And this assessment seems confirmed by the small vote won by the PMS and the PRT.

However, the Cárdenas vote reflects a diametrically opposite evolution. In the first place, it reflects a dynamic of political independence. It is true that the policy proposed by Cárdenas by no means poses the need for political independence. But for significant sections of the Mexican people, it means a political break with the PRI.

Secondly, those who voted for Cárdenas did so because this seemed to be the best way of dislodging the PRI. In this sense, for the first time in Mexico, a dynamic of "tactical voting" has emerged. Thirdly — and this is a fundamental point — they voted for Cárdenas as the best way of advancing the fight for democracy, seeing this not only as fight in the electoral arena but also centrally in the social arena. They wanted to bring about a change in the relationship of forces.

Mass demonstrations against election fraud

This is why, immediately after the elections, masses of people came into the streets to demonstrate their desire for change and transformation. They gained confidence and were no longer afraid to express themselves politically.

When the masses are no longer afraid of the regime and state policies, possibilities abound for the realization that they must take their fate into their own hands. Possibilities also loom of situations in which classes can organize politically in order to win definitive solutions to this crisis.

Since last November, we stressed the possibility of the PRI losing the elections. However, we did not think that this situation would be accompanied by the big mass mobilizations that have occurred and which have deepened the crisis of the PRI. But we are still at the beginning of this crisis.

Throughout the election campaign, we saw Cárdenas gaining ground as Salinas lost it. While sections of the old political bureaucracy were convinced that it was necessary to maintain the old policy of crude election fraud, others thought it was necessary to come up with a more "respectable" sort of fraud, which could also be a basis for a future deal. This explains the contradictory statements on election night.

Everything was set up for the proponents

"Within this reformist avalanche, the masses need a socialist reference point"

IT TOOK the Mexican authorities ten days to announce the results of the July 6 presidential and parliamentary election. Everyone expected the usual electoral fraud of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has held all governmental power for 60 years.

The PRI candidate to succeed Miguel de la Madrid as president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, was accorded 50.4% of the vote. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the candidate of the National Democratic Front (FDN), supported by the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS, a coalition including the CP), was credited with 31.1%. The National Action Party (PAN, the traditional right-wing opposition party) was credited with 17%.

The Revolutionary Workers' Party, PRT, the Mexican section of the Fourth International, and its presidential candidate, Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, were credited with 0.38%, and thus lost their representation in parliament.

Officially, then, the PRI won, even if Salinas' score looks dismal by comparison with the 70%, 80% and even 90% of his predecessors. Most of the population considers that he was not really elected. In the aftermath of the vote, gigantic demonstrations swept the country.

On July 9, at a press conference including all three opposition presidential candidates, Rosario Ibarra for the PRT said that the popular will should be respected and Cárdenas recognized as president. She called on workers in the countryside and the towns to mobilize against the fraud.

The election has created a new situation in the country and posed new and difficult tasks for revolutionaries. These were analyzed in a report adopted by the PRT Central Committee meeting of July 22-24, large excerpts of which follow.

of crude election fraud to have their way. That is why the action conducted by the three opposition candidates on the evening of July 6 was so important. The occupation of the Ministry of the Interior by FDM-PMS, PAN and PRT activists and the sharply worded confrontation between Bartelett [the chair of the Board of Elections] and the opposition candidates blocked this crude fraud.¹

A few hours later, the PRI president announced that the PRI had won a "crushing" victory, explaining that Bartelett was going to proclaim Salinas the victor in a few minutes. But nothing of the sort happened. One the following day, Salinas had to explain

that we had experienced the closest elections in our history, and that the opposition had achieved major victories.

From that time on, it was clear that the line that was going to win out was the one for "respectable" fraud. That reflected the contradictions that were being expressed in the PRI. When Camboa Pascoe's defeat

1. The FDN is the Cárdenas organization. The PMS is a coalition dominated by the Communist Party, which supported Cárdenas. PAN (National Action Party) is the traditional right-wing opposition party.

2. Camboa Pascoe and Fidel Velasquez are leading figures in the union bureaucracy linked to the PRI. Velasquez is the general secretary of the Mexican Workers' Confederation (CTM).

was announced, Fidel Velásquez refused to accept the defeat of his candidates.² It is very significant that Fidel was only one of leaders of the various sections of the PRI to be absent when the election results were announced by Salinas. The division caused by the massive vote for Cárdenas was already evident.

In this regard, the fraud that was committed was not what was expected by the more retrograde sectors of the PRI. In practice, in the coming months, we are going to see a settling of accounts among the various currents within the party.

Divisions in trade-union bureaucracy

However, the most important aspect of the political struggle in the PRI will be seen in the trade-union bureaucracy. For a long time, our party has believed that the divisions within the PRI would show up first in splits in the union bureaucracy. This explains why we did not pay much attention to the emergence of the Democratic Current in the PRI. This view of possible splits in the union bureaucracy is based on two ideas.

The Miguel de la Madrid regime's economic and social policy affected fundamentally the mechanisms for controlling the mass movement, and we thought that this was going to lead some sections of the union bureaucracy to react and take the lead in some mobilizations. Secondly, in observing the development of the ripening political crisis, we thought that it would break out in all its dimensions if there was a split in the union bureaucracy, since this apparatus is the backbone of the regime's political stability.

While it is true that the crisis within the PRI did not start with the union bureaucracy, there is no doubt that the expression, development and conclusion of this crisis are entirely dependent on the future of this apparatus of domination. During the Salinas campaign, the divisions between the various sectors of the trade-union bureaucracy and the PRI candidate appeared in different forms.

All of this unfolded in the midst of the struggle to succeed Fidel Velásquez. For a long time, we have been pointing out the importance of this battle. The various currents preparing themselves for this fight have been considerably shaken up by the election campaign. It is clear that the hardest hit has been the Gamboa Pascoe current in the Federal District Workers' Federation, which has about 700,000 members.

Today, we are more convinced than ever that the problems in the union bureaucracy are so great that it is no exaggeration to think that a series of breaks are possible in

the short run. Such a development will be even more likely if, as everything indicates, Salinas carries the policy of "modernization" and industrial reconversion further. The trade-union bureaucracy's deeply cowardly character has led it into dangerous waters by forcing it to pursue a policy that is not its own.

Facing imminent attacks from the bosses and the government, sections of the trade-union bureaucracy are getting ready for a fight. Quina's actions and Romo's statement³ are a warning to the modernizers about what the response will be if they persist in trying to touch the bureaucrats' share of power. Today, it will be easier for these bureaucrats to react because there is a new political force challenging the modernization policy — Cárdenas.

We are undoubtedly on the eve of a split of major sections of the trade-union bureaucracy from the PRI. What is keeping Quina in the party today is obviously not his loyalty to Salinas but the fight over succession in the CTM. If he sees that there is no chance of becoming Velásquez's successor, or if Velásquez dies and he is not crowned the new czar of the CTM, then his evolution toward Cárdenas will be more rapid.

In this situation, the closest circle of Salinas' collaborators took on the job of carrying out a "respectable" fraud. In fact, they had to deliver more than 50% of the votes cast in order to be able to govern with so-called legitimacy. However, the vote for the PRI was so low that they had no other solution than to push up the abstention rate.

This sort of fraud implied the idea that a deal was necessary. In this respect, the

at not getting a favorable response to their proposals for consensus. They even used the attorney general, who enjoys a certain sympathy in some sectors of the Cárdenas movement, to make a speech in which he insisted on the need for such consensus. Most journalists played up this appeal, but without saying this implied the "minority" recognizing the PRI's victory. The way things are going, the most probable thing is that Salinas will be the next president of the republic but that the government that he wanted to look strong and democratic will instead be weak and anti-democratic.

Salinas will be the new lonely man in the presidential palace, not only because of the desertions from the PRI but fundamentally because from the start of his term in office he will have to confront rejection by the people. It is probably under the Salinas administration that we will see the end of the present mode of domination. The man who wanted to be the modernizer of the PRI will be its grave-digger.

Cardenas' political project

A few hours before the polls closed, some prominent Cárdenas people proclaimed that the PRI had won, that the vote for Cárdenas had been very high, and that the Cárdenas movement has established itself as the second political force in the country. In this connection, the socialists who supported Cárdenas were the first to be surprised by his triumph. A little later, at the time of the demonstration at the Ministry of the Interior and in faced with the scope of the reaction of the people who gathered there, they exhibited uncertainty about how to follow up this action.

Cárdenas himself was more at ease. All the statements that he made and all the political activity he undertook showed him to be a very adept politician with a clear idea of what he wanted. Most surprising was the capacity he showed for getting everyone to bow to his positions.

Some of us thought that Cárdenas' reformism would show itself by rejecting mobilization. If he never accepted Salinas' victory, that did not mean that he would mobilize the masses to defend his own victory. But Cárdenas did mobilize hundreds of thousands of Mexicans, and not only in Mexico City. In many places in the provinces the mass mobilizations were impressive.

This should lead us to make a more accurate assessment of Cárdenas' political project. The most important thing is to understand his political strategy. An initial response has to lead us to get an overall view of Cárdenas' policy. It seems clear



amount of ink spilled by journalists advising Cárdenas that he should be satisfied with his victories and participate in a consensus government was significant. These statements indicate the open or veiled fears of the PRI about the dynamic that could open up if Cárdenas did not recognize Salinas' victory.

Salinas' supporters are despondent today

3. Two union bureaucrats who came out for Cárdenas.

Violent attacks against the PRT

ATTACKS suffered by our comrades in the PRT during the election campaign were not limited to verbal abuse — far from it. Physical attacks, rape and murder were the methods employed by PRI thugs in their attempts to silence the PRT and sow terror among its militants.

● June 9: Jean McGuill de Conde, a PRT representative on the Election Commission in Morelos state, was attacked and raped at her home.

● June 17: Meliton Hernandez Velasco, a PRT peasant activist and member of the executive committee of the peasants' union, UGOCP, in the state of Puebla, was assassinated.

● June 18: another PRT peasant activist was murdered by two members of the Antorcha campesina group, a group linked to the PRI.

● June 21: Fatima Flores Palacios, PRT candidate for deputy in 1982, candidate in the 1985 federal elections and presently on the federal Election Commission, was also attacked and raped at her home.

● August 21: four young people aged from 16 to 18 years were found murdered by bullets fired at point blank range. The bodies of two of them showed traces of torture. Two of the four were respectively the son and nephew of a PRT militant, who had stood as a candidate for deputy in the previous July 6 elections. ★

that he is not looking for a negotiated solution to the present situation. We are convinced that his project was modified as his strength increased.

While it is true that in the first part of his campaign he envisaged the possibility of salvaging the PRI, he now has a radically different view. What he wants to do is to divide the PRI more. He intends to refashion the mechanisms of the relations between the masses and the government, between the masses and a party different from the PRI. On many occasions, we have seen that Cuauhtémoc is fully aware of the history of our country, and especially of the form of domination set up under his father.⁴

Cárdenas' project is to create a new Party of the Mexican Revolution, with the same vision as his father, but with a difference. While the general built up the party based on the state apparatus, his son wants to build the party in order to reorganize the state apparatus, starting from the firm conviction that it is impossible to carry accomplish this task with the sort of politicians the PRI has today.

Cárdenas' conviction on this is based on another assumption: unless the social pact that came out of the Mexican revolution is reformulated, a social and political crisis of historic dimensions may break out. From this standpoint, the policy conducted by Miguel de la Madrid and the one that Salinas

wants to pursue is the best way to shatter the system as a whole into a thousand pieces. Cárdenas is trying to avoid this eventuality, and in order to do that he has to take very radical positions against Salinas.

In order to achieve his objective, he is extending a hand to sectors breaking with the PRI and independent left sectors. He is trying to transform the FDN into a political instrument (not necessarily by transforming it into a party initially) to structure the mass support that he has gained. The next step, undoubtedly, will be to organize this support in accordance with the various social categories. It seems that he has called on the three most important leaders of the University Student Council (CEU)⁵ to work in all the country's universities toward forming a Cárdenas youth organization.

Building a movement from above

Obviously, he cannot call now openly for forming a new party, but that does not mean that he is not going to take the first steps in that direction. During the present struggle against the election fraud, he does not want to be accused of diverting energy. But then he has to prepare his forces, those that will be with him in this project.

Cárdenas has a vision of building this political instrument from above. In a meeting he had with the associations of the earthquake victims, he was faced with a flood of proposals about how to organize anti-fraud committees, with the traditional democratic discussion in the associations. Cárdenas responded by saying that all this discussion was pointless, that the fundamental question was to organize a single authority that would make the bulk of the decisions. Most of the associations accepted this point of view.

Our starting point is that Cárdenas' victory and the illusions it has created inevitably pose the possibility of moving forward in a process of reorganizing the mass movement. Of course, the workers in the cities and the countryside are not going to limit their democratic aspirations to the electoral arena. They want to democratize their social organizations, especially the unions. In accordance with what we have said before, forming a democratic front or a national democratic movement from above is not the same thing as something that comes out of the self-organization of the masses.

His project of restructuring the political mechanisms to help recompose the Mexican state and its relations with the masses can involve a certain corporatist attitude toward social sectors. It is clear that he is going to try to build such an organization, especially in view of the extent of the Cárdenas' movement's contradictions. In the same sectors, we find Cárdenas people who have nothing in common with each other.

In the trade-union movement the question is even more delicate because in al-

most every sector there are Cárdenas people both in the bureaucratic leaderships and in the democratic currents that are fighting them. With such a heterogeneous foundation, Cárdenas has to build a political organization from above, with an undisputed unity of command, in order to control the whole process and not let anyone get in his way.

In any case, Cárdenas is determined to fight Salinas. He knows that there is not much chance of keeping Salinas from taking office. But the same time, he is creating the conditions to prevent him from finishing his term. Precisely as a result of this project, his opposition to the current that Salinas represents is irreconcilable. Today this involves no end of dangers.

Gaining confidence in itself, the mass movement and its political expression will become more and more radical. This dynamic will inevitably combine demands for democratizing social organizations with those for a substantial improvement in living standards. The mass movement's need for democracy concerns not only its channels for expression but also encompasses the conduct of economic policy. The word "crisis" and a series of economic questions are beginning to lose their taboo character for the masses.

Struggles for wages and jobs will be central

It is inconceivable that the Mexican workers will confine themselves to fighting to democratize their unions, or more generally, their social organizations. At the same time, they will fight to improve their living conditions. In this regard, the wage and job struggle will be key, along with the struggle for democracy. And this is precisely where the limitations of Cárdenas' project appear. Its democratic struggle is restricted fundamentally to the fight for the presidency of the republic.

Significantly, the speech that Cárdenas gave at the July 16 rally clearly revealed his intentions. During it, he made not the slightest reference to the people's most urgent material demands. Nor did he talk about the wage and job fight or about better labor contracts.

Nor has the need for extending the fight for democracy to all areas of society received any attention. The speech did not mince words about Salinas de Gortari, who was called a usurper more than once. But there was not a word about the people's demands. This speech, written as a protest by a new president, was not intended for the people who massed on the Plaza de la Con-

4. General Lazaro Cárdenas was president of Mexico from 1934 to 1940. He was the one who worked to get the bulk of the workers' and peasants' organization to come into the party that he created at the time, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). On the nature of Cárdenism, see *Notebooks for Study and Research 6*, "Populism in Latin America".

5. The CEU led the student movement during the mobilizations that took place in the winter of 1986-87.

stitution, but rather for those who were not there — the bourgeoisie, the army, the Yankee embassy.

The PRT has formulated a political line based on the need for maintaining a pole of class independence in this election campaign. Some political opportunists, such as Marcos Rascon of *Punto Critico*⁶, try to judge this decision on the basis of the election results. Obviously, this is not our way of analyzing the correctness or incorrectness of a given policy.

The importance of a long-term vision

In recent months, our party and still more our political project have been constantly attacked. Moreover, it has to be stressed that this is only the beginning. We are going to experience much stronger attacks. The attacks and harassment that we have been subjected to spring from the fact that the independent existence of the PRT is a thorn in some people's side. They would like to see the entire Mexican left proud supporters of Cárdenas.

When our party decided to maintain its organizational independence and its independent line, it showed a great political firmness. And this takes on a still greater significance today when we realize that our party had been enjoying an ongoing series of political successes. What is more, we were a party where the ideology of engaging in big-time politics, breaking the sectarian schemas of the past, had become a kind of false consciousness. Some people left, and there is no doubt that we, who were the pioneers in the development of this false consciousness, bear a share of the responsibility.

In a few years, we had achieved so many successes that we lost the perspective involved in a vanguard project for society. We educated our members more in terms of short-term successes than in the long-term vision our socialist project represents. For this reason, we are right to be proud of our party, which has emerged triumphantly from this first great test without losing its revolutionary and socialist profile. It is true that in this trial, some comrades — many of them good comrades — have taken another road and broken with us. That was the price that had to be paid for maintaining a line of class independence.

Whether our decision was correct or not cannot be judged on the basis of our election results. Some comrades think that the decline in our vote reflects a drop in the level of consciousness of the masses. That is totally wrong. Those who argue that way do not seem to realize what our election results were before. The PRT did not get 30% or even 10% of the vote, and now, according to the government, our vote has fallen to 0.38%. The truth is that our party got about 3% of the vote in 1982 and about 2% in 1985, and in reality in these last elections we got about 1.5%. This is what has

led some commentators to say that socialism is a minority current in Mexican society. But that is obvious. It was not only the case in 1988, but for many decades if not always.

These elections have not shown a decline in the level of consciousness of the masses. To the contrary, the defeat that the working people in the towns and countryside inflicted on the PRI government reflects a higher level of consciousness. It is true that this consciousness expresses itself in contradictory ways, but that could not be otherwise. Our tasks cannot be to adapt to the circumstances but to fight to raise this consciousness to a higher level.

Our policy has demonstrated a considerable coherence in this situation. Those who feared that we would be pushed to the political sidelines or even be rejected because we did not call for a vote for Cárdenas have to recognize now that this has not been the case. The masses have understood our position, even if for the moment they are not entirely in accord with us.

The socialist project, the class independence that our party represents, have to be pursued even more today. In crisis situations, revolutionists always face more sharply the problem of being a minority. But this cannot obscure the meaning of a strategic project. It is not the same thing to be a minority in a period of social calm and at a time when we see the masses gaining confidence in themselves and mobilizing in an impressive way. This is the truth that we cannot fail see.

We have maintained our independent socialist project, not out of any narcissistic need for self-affirmation. We have maintained it, and will maintain it because it is necessary for the mass movement of our country, no more and no less. In the reformist avalanche that we are experiencing, the masses need a socialist reference point, and they are seeing it as a point of view that is necessary for understanding what is going on in our country.

Reorganizing the mass movement

As we said earlier, what is fundamental today for our party's perspectives cannot be perceived in terms of the present intentions of the leadership of the mass movement, but rather in terms of the dynamic that this movement is opening up. Our objective must not be to wait until a betrayal, or until the masses shed their illusions, in order to intervene. Our task is not to shatter the illusions of the masses but to channel these hopes toward other objectives. We have to insert ourselves into the dynamic of the masses today and participate with them not in something limited to elections, but rather in a process that offers the possibility of reorganizing the mass movement.

In the first place, we have to participate actively in building committees against the election fraud.

In the broader political arena we have to understand that, without having an orientation of outflanking the leadership, we have to throw ourselves entirely into the democratic struggle. Cárdenas has the view that in his fight to overturn Salinas' victory it might be possible to get the deputies to walk out of parliament. In view of this, we have to pose the need, once the Electoral College has ruled on the validity of Salinas' victory, for the congress to declare itself sovereign, to reject the president's authority and call new elections.

In the Electoral College, in which we have to participate, it will be necessary to fight first against a recognition of Salinas as president of the republic. But then we have to pursue a policy that will advance the crisis of the institutions. By calling on the Congress to act in a sovereign way, we will oblige the Cárdenas deputies to demonstrate whether they are really ready to defend the victory that Cárdenas won in the elections.

PRT must continue fight for legal registration

At the same time, we should not act as if we were no longer a legally registered party. It is clear that the PRT was also a victim of election fraud. We have to go into the Electoral College to fight for our legal registration, and at the same time to campaign politically. Obviously, in this defensive fight there many limitations because of the small number of our party's representatives at the polls. Nonetheless, it is necessary to gather together all the evidence we have, together with other parties, in order to be able to compare these results with those announced by the government.

Once again, the government is trying to tame our party, thinking that we will give up our political profile in exchange for a handful of votes.⁷ Once things were clear for the authorities and for the slanderers on the left who were eager to accuse the PRT of lending itself to election fraud, they did not push the point any further. And, of course, they decided to take revenge by giving us a lower overall score in order to minimize our place in society.

The PRT came through this test. But that is no reason to rest on our laurels. If the PRT loses its registration, it will not be because of its electoral score but because of the government's decision to victimize us for our political positions. Therefore, our fight for our registration is not over, and in all the general mobilizations against the fraud, we must press to ensure that the defense of the PRT's registration be included in the demands. ★

6. An independent left group that has become a component of the FDN.

7. In some places, the PRT was credited with more votes than it actually got as a maneuver against Cárdenas. In those cases, the PRT refused to recognize the excess votes the authorities accorded to it.

New campaign against Trotsky obstructs de-Stalinization

THE COLLAPSE of Stalinist falsifications of history is continuing to accelerate in the conditions of *glasnost*. But at the same time even bureaucrats and official intellectuals who support the reform are promoting a secondary growth of Stalin's poisonous excrescences in one area — the question of Trotsky's role in combating the rise of the bureaucratic dictatorship.

The rehabilitation of the right-wing opposition corresponds to the long-term orientation and interests of the ruling bureaucracy. Thus, it has few problems with rehabilitating Bukharin. But it is difficult to strike out the condemnations of these victims of the 1930s purges without questioning the accusations against the left oppositionists as well. So, a new line against Trotsky is necessary. It

is that he was as totalitarian as Stalin. This approach has the benefit of appealing to social democrats and advocates of "convergence" between the Soviet system and Western capitalism. It also strikes a chord with Soviet intellectuals in rebound against Stalinism, who tend to reject the heritage of the Russian revolution as a whole. However, it creates new obstacles to untangling the web of Stalinist ideology and false history.

The problems are explained in the following article published in the Italian Communist Party theoretical magazine, *Rinascita* on July 9 this year.

Its appearance in an Italian CP publication is notable, since the Italian Euro-communists came out openly for Bukharin long ago.

HISTORICAL DEBATE is developing at a surprising speed in the Soviet Union. At the time of the seventieth anniversary of the October revolution, a little more than six months ago, you could get the impression that the debate was bogged down at a half-way point. Today, on the other hand, it is clear that this debate is leading to a re-examination of a very large body of historical questions.

In this debate, a wide range of political problems are coming out into the open, as well as a confrontation with the previously dominant ideological system, the mode of organizing the society and the Soviet political system. The acceleration of this debate reflects the rapid maturing of the reform policy and its attempts to achieve deepgoing changes.

In this process of reflection, of maturing, the problem of Trotsky and his place in Soviet and world history in the twentieth century is coming up again and again. There is nothing surprising about this. It is not a secondary question. Trotsky has left his imprint on the world's consciousness by the exceptional role that he played, alongside Lenin, during the October revolution and in founding and leading the Communist International in the early years.

Later Trotsky drew attention to himself by the fight that he waged against the Soviet party leadership in the post-Leninist period. With the passing of time, this battle

became a struggle against Stalin and his policy. The essential themes of this confrontation centered on the party regime and the functioning of the state, the usurpation of power by the Stalinist bureaucracy and Stalin himself, the repression, the terror.

A socialist writer of great stature

Whatever one might think about this, if we analyze the ideas of Trotsky today it is a fact that during the 1930s he was the only leader of the Leninist period who drew the full implications of Stalin's repressive policy and political crimes. Moreover, it cannot be forgotten that Trotsky has gone down in the history of our century as a socialist writer of great stature. His works have been published and widely circulated in all the main languages, and have had an influence not only — as many Soviet authors wrongly think — on the ideas of "extremist Trotskyist groups," but also on a broad section of socialist thought, and also on liberal and conservative conceptions, especially with regard to the processes of internal evolution in the Soviet Union.

The question of Trotsky, however, cannot be limited to an evaluation of his role in history. Over long decades, the fight against Trotsky and "Trotskyism" served an instrument for throttling the slightest independent thought in the USSR and the

Soviet Communist Party. On the basis of the accusations against Trotsky and "Trotskyism," tens and even hundreds of thousands of people were excluded from public and political life, most of them being imprisoned and then liquidated.

Soviet political and police bodies intervened brutally in the life of other Communist parties. They accused, persecuted, and often physically eliminated cadres of the non-Russian Communist parties. The accusations against Trotsky and "Trotskyism" provided the basic elements for the "anti-Trotskyist" trials of the 1930s. They became one of the important obstacles to uniting the anti-fascist forces. They played an unfortunate role during the Spanish civil war. After the Second World War, these accusations became the pretext for the political repression and frame-up trials in the so-called people's democracies.

Of course, all this is not recalled in order to minimize the contrasts in Trotsky's historical role or cover up the complexity of his political and literary work. But a real discussion of Trotsky will be possible only when those involved in it are aware of the scope and seriousness of this theme. The problem of Trotsky is by no means one that concerns only Russian history. And it cannot be resolved if its decisive place in the Stalinist ideological system is not identified.

It is no secret that the present level of understanding of this problem in the USSR

does not correspond to the basics pointed out above. As such, that should not be the problem. What is worrying is something else. The body of questions relating to Trotsky is still a restricted area in which research is rarely permitted and has remained very inadequate, although it is necessary to deal with other acute ideological and historical themes (such as some rehabilitations). The consequence is that this restricted area becomes a reserve in which attitudes and the methods used are rooted in the Stalinist past.

The first thing to recognize is the fact that legal rehabilitation of Trotsky is not an easy matter in the USSR. Few authors have come out for this, and most of them have done so only with great timidity and often by only the most veiled allusions. Is this because Trotsky was the principal figure in all the "anti-Trotskyist" trials of the 1930s, whose frame-up character is no longer doubted, even in the USSR?

The sentences handed down in the 1936 and 1937 trials called for the arrest of Trotsky and his son, Leon Sedov, and for them to be brought before a military tribunal. In these verdicts, Trotsky is described as "an enemy of the people," a "saboteur," a "spy," an "ally of the fascists," as a person guilty of violating the territorial integrity of the Soviet Union and so on. His assassination in 1940, and that of Leon Sedov three years earlier, were justified by the camouflage of a "sentence of a working-class tribunal."

It flows from this that the question of Trotsky's legal rehabilitation cannot be considered a secondary question. The lack of a solution to such a problem in the Soviet Union generates a peculiar atmosphere of prejudice and hatred around Trotsky's name, which makes all sorts of inventions acceptable. And this atmosphere, moreover, operates on the consciousness of people who can by no means be considered advocates of conservatism or defenders of Stalin's ideas.

If it is necessary to pay attention to this anomaly in Soviet thinking, above all because recently it has become a source of dangerous tendencies being expressed in the Soviet press. There have been attempts to equate Trotsky with Stalin, and in fact, to blame him for Stalin's policies and actions. This tendency has taken on such dimensions that it is arousing objections and protests in the USSR itself.

Let us look at some characteristic examples of this phenomenon. In issue 12 of *Ogonyok*, a valuable scholar, who has made an important contribution to the evo-

lution of the new way of thinking in the USSR, stated, "I could never stand Trotsky. In my opinion, he was yesterday's Stalin, and Stalin is today's Trotsky." In *Pravda* on April 15, 1988, in an interview with an important Soviet writer, we can read among other things that "endless taxes, loans, the liquidation of the cooperatives, the confiscation of their tools and finally the repression, executions, sentences, exile — all of that was Trotskyism for millions of peasant families."

Conscious and unconscious distortions

In issue 4, 1988, of the political-literary magazine *Oktjabr*, another scholar, a professor and doctor of philosophy, uses an unpublished document by Maxim Gorky, whose date is not given nor its origins explained. It is supposed to say, "Trotsky is the man most alien to the Russian people and to Russian history."

Another magazine (*Nash Sovremennik* 3, 1988) published an article containing the same idea. "Men like Martov, Trotsky, and Bogdanov were defined by Lenin with an ironic zest as 'Europeans.' He systematically stressed their remoteness from Russia and the real interests of the Russian proletariat...It is hard to imagine what the situation of the European nations would have

of the writers cited, Trotsky is the historical representative of the left wing of Bolshevism. But does this mean that he was responsible for what Stalin did? Does this mean that in his activity Trotsky was motivated by unavowed aims?

Most of these Soviet authors who blame Trotsky for Stalin unquestionably want to maintain that Stalin did nothing other than put into practice what was already contained in Trotsky's ideas and conceptions. Naturally, evidence for such a thesis is thin. The authors in question generally refer to the period of "war communism" (1918-21) in which Trotsky was one of the main advocates of militarizing the economy. But this was a period of civil war and breakdown of the economy. The absolute majority of the Bolshevik leaders at the time, including Lenin, shared Trotsky's views.

Moreover, the statements about Stalin's "Trotskyism" have roots in the tradition of the Bolshevik party itself. In the political battles at the end of the 1920s, the representatives of what was then the "right" of the party — Bukharin, Rykov, Tomski and others — accused Stalin of adopting "Trotskyist" viewpoints. And there are also statements by some representatives of the "left" that discovered a so-called left turn by Stalin in order to justify taking their distance from the Left Opposition. But can arguments of this sort be recognized as valid evidence today?

Recently, in the pages of *Kommunist* [the Soviet CP theoretical magazine], another author referred to Trotsky's *Open Letter to the Members of the CP(B) of the Union* (March 23, 1930) in order to support his argument about the similarity of Stalin and Trotsky's positions. But what does this document, which is clearly left, say? It says that it is necessary to put an end to adventurism, to put an end to "total" collectivization, and to replace it by a policy of prudently accepting peasants into the cooperatives on the basis of their free choice; that it is necessary to form *kolkhozy* (state-supported cooperatives) in conformity with the creation of the material resources for their functioning; that it is necessary to break off the policy of expropriation and forcible transfer of the well-off

peasants and to return to the policy of soaking the Kulaks, which would remain the only correct policy for years; that it is necessary to stop the policy of forced-march industrialization; that it is necessary to solve the problem of rates of development on the basis of a fundamental concern for improving the living conditions of the working masses; that it is necessary to improve products and the fight against inflation. All of this involved revising una-



been like if power had fallen into the hands of Trotsky, who coveted it his entire life and tried to obtain it by every means."

It is difficult to list all the conscious or unconscious distortions contained in these articles and quotations about Trotsky. Just listing them, re-establishing the truth, would require a great many pages. But the attacks on Trotsky — leaving aside the outbursts of nationalism and anti-Semitism — have a precise foundation. For the majority

chievable plans, giving up the idea of a close, autarkic economic system and orienting to cooperation within the framework of the world market.

Underplaying the Trotsky/ Stalin confrontation

So, what should be said about this question? Trotsky's critique of Stalin, at least as regards his general direction, is not very different from the criticism made at the end of the 1920s by the representatives of the "right" wing of the Bolshevik party. Its drift does not differ much from what the general secretary of the CPSU (Gorbachev) said in this regard on the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution.

What impelled these Soviet authors to attack Trotsky so harshly, without first having a clear notion of what they were attacking? Is this simply a residue of Stalinism? Undoubtedly, several factors are involved. Trotsky is a touchy point in the history of Soviet communism. By attacking him you can attack, from a nationalist standpoint, a whole revolutionary period of Bolshevism, describe it as foreign to Russian national history and the history of Bolshevism itself.

But obviously what is involved here is not simply a resurrection of Russian nationalism. The problem of Trotsky leads back to a search for a link with today's reform current. Bukharin is seen as the precursor of the present reform. In fact, Bukharin and Trotsky were at loggerheads at various times on various questions relating to building up the country.

By attacking Trotsky, of course, many authors try to play up Bukharin's positions and merits. But Bukharin and Trotsky opposed each other not only on social and ec-

onomic questions but also on what attitude to take toward many phenomena marking the life of the party and the state. They expressed different orientations on this subject. One line called for intransigent confrontation with Stalin, for breaking with him. That was Trotsky's. Another tended toward adapting to the given situation and collaborating with Stalin. That was Bukharin's.

In my opinion, the attacks against Trotsky reflect a desire to avoid thinking about this second aspect of the confrontation between Bukharin and Trotsky. The best evidence of this lies in the increasingly numerous attempts that are being made in USSR to underplay the Trotsky/Stalin confrontation and to present it systemati-

cally as an unprincipled fight for power.

There are no simple answers to the problems cited here, and none will be found in the future. But these problems are taking on an extraordinary importance in Soviet intellectual life.

The body of questions related to the assessment of Trotsky and "Trotskyism" are the area in which the conceptual and methodological continuity of the Stalin epoch are most clearly manifested. This is also the area where this heritage is beginning to be transferred into new rewritings of history, especially in refashioning a new aggressive Russian nationalism, of which the Stalinist legacy is an integral part. In this lies a great threat for the future, a threat that cannot be underestimated. ★

Soviet minister says Trotsky will be rehabilitated

[Abridged article from the September 1988 issue of *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, USA*]

IGOR YAKOVLEV, Senior Counsellor on Legal Affairs to the USSR's Permanent Mission to the UN Commission on Human Rights, along with two other Soviet diplomats, in a meeting on June 29 with a delegation from the [US] Moscow Trials Campaign Committee, claimed that Leon Trotsky would soon be rehabilitated by the Soviet government and that his works would eventually be published in the USSR.

However, opinion was divided among the diplomats as to whether Trotsky would be posthumously re-admitted to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). While Yakovlev, who claimed to have read Trotsky, favored admission, one of his colleagues, who never read a word of this great Russian revolutionary, opposed the move. Their differences reflect the depth of discussions within the USSR today.

In a two-and-a-half hour meeting in New York, requested by the US branch of the international campaign to rehabilitate the victims of the Moscow Trials, Yakovlev also discussed the political and economic reforms of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev....

Yakovlev said the exoneration and rehabilitation of Trotsky would be a natural outcome of Gorbachev's policy of glasnost and perestroika and was surprised that an American group would even bother to make such a fuss over the issue, as he hardly saw it as the most pressing matter facing Soviet society today. The US delegates remained cautiously optimistic about Yakovlev's pronouncement....

Yakovlev vehemently defended Gorbachev's plans to allow market forces greater influence in the economy. He dismissed the revolutionary Marxist alternative for the Soviet Union — represented by Trotsky's thinking and the Fourth International today — as he dismissed the Left Opposition's positions in the economic debates of the late 1920s as irrelevant today. Yet it has been Stalinist policies of the bureaucracy that have plunged the country into stagnation and repression for decades, and the decentralizing market-oriented reforms envisaged by Gorbachev and his followers are bureaucratic alternatives to a democratically planned economy advocated by Trotsky and his followers.

Because Trotsky severely criticized the bureaucratization of the Russian revolution and provided a Marxist analysis and a program to combat it, it is obvious that today's bureaucrats are yet wary of his works. *Glasnost* seems to have its limits.

Bukharin, the leader of the Right Opposition to Stalin, who was legally vindicated in February, was politically rehabilitated on July 9. This is significant for it is his thinking that appears to provide a blueprint and the legitimacy for Gorbachev's reforms. It was Bukharin as Stalin's ally against Trotsky who called upon the peasants to "enrich themselves" through the New Economic Policy in 1925. Likewise, Gorbachev wants individual enterprises to accumulate capital and drive other firms out of business if need be. Trotsky's ideas could provide a program for Soviet workers to fight those bureaucrats and managers who see *perestroika* as a chance to get rich, as well as the forces of capitalist restoration that could be unleashed. Nevertheless, Yakovlev called "Trotskyism" a "bourgeois" idea. ★

Moscow Trials campaign

THE CAMPAIGN to clear the names of all the accused in the Moscow Trials, launched over a year ago, has been collecting signatures from all over the world (for the full text of the appeal, see IV 137). You can contact the campaign c/o Michael Löwy, 34 rue des Lyonnais, 75005 Paris, France.

Latest signatories:

Poland: Grzegorz Ilka, secretary of the central executive committee of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), and editor of *Robotnik*; Jerzy Kolarzowski, PPS spokesperson; Piotr Niemczyk, member of the Freedom and Peace Movement (WiP); Malgorzata Ponulak, PPS central exec. cttee; Tadeusz Rachowski, president PPS central exec. cttee; Henryk Szlajfer, adviser to the National Self-Management Federation in 1980-81; Tomasz Truskawa, founder member of PPS. ★

4 NEWS FROM THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

WESTERN EUROPE

Fifth summer camp

HEAVY rainfall greeted the participants at the fifth summer camp for youth organizations in solidarity with the Fourth International, which was held in France at the end of July. Luckily, for the rest of the week the weather didn't stay that way! But the downpour in no way dampened the enthusiasm of the 650 young people who came from 16 different European countries, and also from Canada and the USA.

For more than half the participants, this was their first camp. Veterans of previous camps were pleased with the overall organization of the event this year, which seems to grow better with each camp that passes.

The political programme included forty-odd workshops that discussed around the themes of each morning's plenary forums: Europe and the crisis, youth struggles, feminism and women's oppression, anti-racist struggles, ecology, bureaucracy and *glasnost* and anti-imperialism. The discussions on ecology and the USSR were particularly good.

As in past years, a day was given over to discuss feminism and women's oppression. There were more young women than ever participating this year, representing 40% of the participants, with many playing a central role in the camp leadership (elected from each delegation). The average age of those at the camp was 20-21 years.

A third of the young people were not members of the youth organizations represented at the camp. The educationals held each day on basic Marxism were once again very successful, with a high attendance.

Three big rallies were held, including one with a comrade from the Mexican section of the Fourth International, the PRT, who spoke about the situation in Mexico after the recent elections.

But the summer camp was also an opportunity to relax in the magnificent site in the mountains of Saint Beuzire in Auvergne. There were a variety of sports, including football, jogging and swimming, outings to visit local beauty spots, a bar and a disco on site. In addition, an excellent rock concert was organized on the Friday evening in Brioude, with groups playing rock, reggae and Moroccan music.

Everyone is looking forward to an even better camp next year — see you in the Spanish state! ★

INTERNATIONAL

Fourth International anniversary celebrations

THIS YEAR sees the fiftieth anniversary of the Fourth International, founded in 1938 by Leon Trotsky. A number of activities have been held already this year to celebrate the event — we will have reports of the most recent events in the next issue. Meanwhile, there are a number of events planned for this autumn:

Mexico: the comrades of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) are planning three days of activity from September 14-16 around the anniversary of Mexico's independence from Spain, which will include a rally to celebrate the anniversary of the Fourth International. Ernest Mandel will be one of the featured speakers.

Britain: supporters of the journal *Socialist Outlook* will be holding a rally on No-

vember 12 in London. Speakers will include Ernest Mandel, Catherine Samary, Heather Dashner and Charlie Van Gelderen.

USA: the Fourth Internationalist Tendency are planning a rally in October with Livio Maitan.

Italy: comrades of the Italian section of the FI, the LCR, are planning an event in Milan in November.

France: the LCR, French section of the FI, will be holding a celebratory event on December 10 in Paris. From 2pm to midnight, the event will include a rally, workshops, exhibitions, music and a dance. The central themes of the event are the work of Trotskyists today and the rehabilitation of Trotsky by the Soviet Union. Among others, two already confirmed speakers will be Esteban Volkov, Trotsky's grandson, and Rosario Ibarra, ex-deputy for the Mexican PRT. ★



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Democracy struggle explodes in Burma

A COUNTRY that had got scant notice for decades from the international press has boiled over in a spectacular eruption. Mounting mass mobilizations reminiscent of the Iranian revolution have swept over every successive storm-breaker put in place by a military regime that had sought to establish an all-pervasive system of social control.

The well springs of this explosion clearly go very deep. For forty years, the regime has worn itself out in vain exertions to suppress armed rebellions based in minority peoples representing nearly half the population of the country.

Some minorities rebelled in the first years of the Burmese state. Others began to fight after the establishment of Ne Win's military dictatorship in 1962. The fight to suppress the insurgent minorities has been absorbing 40 per cent of the state budget.¹ Together the nationalist rebels have kept 16,000 fighters in the field, against the 180,000-strong Burmese army. This includes 8,000 for the Kachin liberation movement and 4,000 for the Karen National Union.

GERRY FOLEY

TEN OF THE national liberation groups, including the major ones, joined together in 1975 in the National Democratic Front (NDF). In 1986, the NDF made a limited agreement with the Communist Party of Burma, which maintains a guerrilla force reportedly numbering about 10,000. In the new rise of anti-government demonstrations in the cities, student leaders made contacts with the guerrillas, laying the foundations for an all-embracing front of the militant opposition.

The continuing decay of the economy, strangled and drained by military control, and the enticements of Japanese capitalist penetration undermined the last props of the dictatorship. For example, one of the major opposition figures, General Aung Gyi, has claimed to speak in the name of Japanese capitalists anxious to help develop the country.

Growth of independent administrations

Military statism and ultra-nationalist economic policies were undoubtedly a barrier to Japanese economic expansion into Burma. But it is hardly likely that Japanese capitalists take any comfort from seeing the mobilization of hundreds of thousands of people creating a situation in which power is in the melting pot. Some forty towns and cities are reportedly already under the control of opposition committees.

The growth of independent administrations seems to be continuing. In his speech in connection with the government's prom-

ise over the weekend of September 10-11 to hold multi-party elections, according to the September 12 *Herald Tribune*, President Maung Maung issued a special warning about the independent local governments, saying that they were creating "a grave and dangerous situation for those responsible," and that "it is essential to remove them immediately."

Two leaderships claiming governmental authority

Similarly, while the idea of a free market may be attractive to masses who have seen the economy strangled by military control, the mobilization of large numbers of working people has always led toward the aspiration of democratic control of economic as well social and political life.

At the time of writing, there are at least two national leaderships that claim to be the government in Burma, the besieged regime of the "Socialist Programme Party" and the "Provisional Government" formed by U Nu, the country's last bourgeois-democratic premier, from the Peace and Democratic (Interim) League (PDIL). It is not clear to what extent the opposition movement is prepared to follow the lead of the old parliamentary personalities grouped around the octogenarian former premier.

"The strongman in the League seems to be General Tin U, 60 years old, who is no other than the former feared chief of the secret police, who seemed in line to be Ne Win's successor until he fell into disgrace in 1983," *Liberation's* correspondent wrote in the September 11 issue of the Paris

daily.

"It is reasonable to doubt that the students, who are the vanguard of 'people's power' are enthusiastic about men whose only program seems to be a return to the period right after independence. At that time, U Nu already led a vague coalition, the People's Anti-fascist League for Freedom, which had no well defined program or ideology. It rapidly disintegrated in factional struggles, opening the way to anarchy and then to the ethnic insurrections, which served as the justification for Ne Win's military putsch."

The student movement has a long history of fighting the dictatorship, and has played a central role in the present uprising. Immediately after Ne Win seized power, students went into the streets in Rangoon to demonstrate in protest. In 1974, the funeral of the Burmese secretary general of the UN was the occasion for big new student protests. In September 1987, students demonstrated to protest against the catastrophic economic situation.

Students' long fight against military dictatorship

Student demonstrations sparked the present upsurge. It started with protest demonstrations against the wounding of a student by goons of the ruling single party. It swelled after the killing of about a hundred students, 41 of whom were suffocated in a police wagon. In the course of the events, a new united student organization has been formed.

The students' long fight has been against a military dictatorship that covered itself with a socialist cloak. That has undoubtedly had an effect on the political consciousness of the movement. But nonetheless it has been a courageous struggle that has gone on for two decades. It is unlikely that the students' aspirations are limited to a return of the paradise of hucksterism recalled by Aye Saung in August 25 issue of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* ("Catchy slogans and jingles poured out of the radio, and in cinemas all over the country people goggled as a plane took off and then reversed back to the ground, all because 'I forgot my Brylcreem'").

Ever since the start of the new upsurge, the government has made concessions too little and too late. Even the agreement over the weekend of September 10-11 to abolish the single party and to set up a so-called independent board of elders to supervise multi-party elections seems not to have halted the mobilizations. The Burmese struggle has been taking on the aspects of a full-scale revolution. It seems certain that it will deepen politically in the coming weeks and months. The process will have a great importance throughout the region, and perhaps beyond it. ★

1. Rainer Hörig, "Bimmas Diktator vereint die Opposition," *Tageszeitung*, Frankfurt, August 13, 1988.