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# INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

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## BLOODY PEACE COMES TO LEBANON

### Chile: Nine Years After the Coup

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# The real terrorists govern in Tel Aviv and Washington

The 15,000 civilian victims of the massacre of the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila are yet another tragic illustration of the criminal nature of the expansionist policies of Israel. It is neither the only nor the first example. The entire history of the Zionist state is founded on the expropriation of

the Palestinians from their land and on the negation of their very right to existence. Moreover, it is quite symbolic that the government of Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon has just decided to raze the cemetery of Deir Yassin, site of the first Zionist massacre of the Palestinian population. (1)

Vincent KERMEL

According to the mad militarist logic of the Israeli government, it was necessary to inflict a bloody defeat on the Palestinian people and their fighters in West Beirut. It is because the resistance of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the growing disapproval even in Israel against the war prevented them from fully accomplishing their objective, that the heads of the Zionist army coldly opted for the wiping out of the refugee camps. The massacre of the civilians was meant to terrorise the Palestinian population still remaining in Lebanon after the departure of the Fedayeen, to make them flee.

For the Israeli aggression launched last June 6 had as its objective the expulsion of as many Palestinians as possible from Lebanon and the installation of a powerful militarist force led by the forces of Christian reaction. This power was to force out the Syrian troops, to bring into line the Lebanese National Movement, traditional allies of the Palestinians, and to permit the signing of a peace treaty with Israel, or at least to accept the Zionist takeover, through Major Haddad, on the buffer zone of Southern Lebanon. It was not only Begin who encountered difficulty in getting his protegee Bashir Gemayel, president-elect of the Lebanese republic to rapidly accept such an agreement. More and more, the Zionist leaders continued to believe, as Israeli Ambassador to the United States, Michael Arens proclaimed, that "the Israeli army is today the only truly stable force in Lebanon." (2)

## ZIONIST RESPONSIBILITY IN THE MASSACRE OF SABRA AND SHATILA

Even after the departure of the PLO troops, the population of the refugee camps represented, for the Zionist government, a potential base of possible recomposition of the Palestinian national movement in Lebanon itself. Simply by their presence, these refugees constitute a social and political force in Lebanon, an added obstacle in the path of installing a

strong state dependent on Israel. Thus this population had to be intimidated before international pressure made such an operation impossible. The bulldozers that covered up part of the corpses of the victims of Sabra and Shatila were to prevent the real scale of the crime being known.

Organised by Zionist leaders, using reactionary Lebanese forces (Christian Phalangist militias and mercenaries of Major Saad Haddad), the massacre of Sabra and Shatila is fully within the framework of the policy unleashed by "Operation Peace for Galilee". The American weekly *Time*, October 4 issue, has just provided the irrefutable proof by revealing the methods of organisation of the "mopping up operation" of the Palestinian camps (see box). "Top Israeli officers planned many months ago to enlist the Lebanese Forces, made up of the combined Christian militias then headed by Bashir Gemayel, to enter the Palestinian refugee camps once an Israeli encirclement of West Beirut had been completed.

... On several occasions, Gemayel told Israeli officials he would like to raze the camps and flatten them into tennis courts." Undoubtedly this ties in with Zionist aims. But the Israeli military force feared the cost in human casualties for the *Tsahal* (Zionist army) of such an operation. Taking advantage of the assassination of Bashir Gemayel, the Zionist troops nevertheless went into West Beirut September 14, according to a military communique published in Jerusalem to "assure the maintenance of peace and to prevent any serious incident." (3)

Undoubtedly encouraged by imperialist passivity in the face of the new advance of its armed forces, the Israeli military high command justified the invasion of West Beirut by the claimed presence of 2,000 PLO fighters. In fact it was a question of finishing off the political clean-up of the Lebanese capital to facilitate the future reactionary role of the Lebanese army. Again political prisoners — around 10,000 — were detained on this occasion. Local organisations such as the PLO's were ransacked from top to bottom. The Zionist political files have

been fully used, and networks of collaborators and Israeli spies have been set up.

On September 17, just as the massacre had begun in Sabra and Shatila, the Jerusalem military radio station announced that the Phalangists had come in to "mop up" the Palestinian camps. As *Time* reports: "Using the Christian militias to enter the camps would serve a double purpose: it would minimize Israelis casualties, and it would keep Israeli hands unsoiled.

"By Sharon's own admission, the Israelis planned two weeks ago to have the Lebanese Forces enter the camps."

This scenario was perfectly respected and the Israeli Minister of Defence, Ariel Sharon told the Knesset (Israeli parliament) on September 22: "We wanted to avoid losses of our troops and have accepted the proposition of the Phalangists to purge the Palestinian camps." (4) After that, only Menachem Begin could have the blind harshness to dare to say, in order to avoid the setting up of an inquest into the massacre: "Goyim (non-Jews) have killed goyim, and we're being accused..." (5)

Upon the announcement of the massacres, American imperialism, through the voice of Ronald Reagan, declared itself "horrified" by this news, stressing its "violent disgust" and expressing its "deepest regret" to the families of the victims. Indirectly implicating Israel, he remembered that in the course of negotiations for the retreat of the PLO, he had received assurance that Israeli forces would not enter West Beirut. (6)

## THE HYPOCRISY OF IMPERIALIST DENUNCIATIONS

However, such massacres, like most Zionist acts, could not take place without the unconditional support from imperial-

1. The village of Deir Yassin was in 1948 the scene of a massacre of 250 Palestinians by the *Irgun* (Zionist terrorist organisation led since December 1943 by Menachem Begin himself). Thus the present Israeli Prime Minister bears a direct responsibility on the historic massacre at Deir Yassin.
2. *Le Monde*, September 16, 1982.
3. *Le Monde*, September 16, 1982.
4. *Le Monde*, September 24, 1982.
5. *Le Monde*, September 23, 1982.
6. *Le Monde*, September 21, 1982.



ism that Israel enjoys. Can we forget that the tens of thousands of victims of "Operation Peace for Galilee" were caused by US weapons sold to Israel? (7) Without the passivity of the soldiers of the UN force (UNIFIL) in South Lebanon, who stepped aside for the Israeli intervention on June 6, without the multiform imperialist support to prevent Israel from too great a diplomatic isolation, without American endorsement for "Operation Peace for Galilee", without the support of chief of fascist commandos Bashir Gemayel's candidacy for president of the Lebanese republic, without the feeble American reaction to the entry of Zionist troops into West Beirut after the president-elect, without the opportune retreat of the American-French-Italian Multinational Intervention Force only a few hours before the massacre of Sabra and Shatila, ... could Israel really have persevered in its policy with impunity?

The differences that are appearing today on the diplomatic solution to the Palestinian question between US imperialism and Israel, spearhead of the counter-revolution in the Middle East, are only tactical. The Israeli aggression in Lebanon, supported by Washington, is part of the imperialist counter-offensive in the region that is benefiting from Soviet passivity. Washington shares most of the objectives of the Israeli government. The differences are only on the best way for imperialism to capitalise in the long term on the new relationship of forces created by the Israeli war in Lebanon. In opposition to the strict militarist logic of the Israeli "final solution", Washington put forward the Reagan plan and the creation of a Palestinian rump state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip completely dependent on Israel and Jordan. Imperialist logic is to take advantage of the military defeat of the PLO to make it accept such a compromise under pressure of the reactionary Arab states. (8)

Similarly in Lebanon, through sending a new multinational intervention force, the Lebanese army is being made to take over the policing tasks necessary for installing a militarised Lebanese state. Ronald Reagan specified this by defining the role of the intervention force. "Its objective", he said, "is not to act as a police force, but to permit the legal authorities in Lebanon to fulfill this task." (9) US imperialism is conscious of the danger of too overt repressive use of this imperialist force. What is proposed is that it help put back on its feet as rapidly as possible the Lebanese army, which has never recovered from its disintegration following the civil war of 1975-76, while obtaining through the diplomatic path the departure of the Syrians, to top off the imperialist victory. By contrast, the Zionist leaders still think that only their direct military engagement in Lebanon could get such results. Moreover, they still have not given up hope of pushing further forward their military position to achieve the expulsion of the Palestinian refugees in Beirut, the Pales-



tinian fighters in North Lebanon, and even the Syrians in the Bekaa Valley.

#### THE ROLE OF THE INTERVENTION FORCE

With the desertion of the Arab states and the pathetic response of Soviet diplomacy, one of the paradoxes of this conflict is that the Mitterrand government in France appears to be one of the most critical of certain military actions of the Israeli army. Nevertheless, beyond divergent secondary estimations, its policy has not for a single moment gone outside the framework of the global imperialist project of the stabilisation of the situation in this region.

Beyond the saluting of Israeli "democracy" by Lionel Jospin, first secretary of the French Socialist Party, particularly distasteful of a state engaged in the elimination of the Palestinian people, the Mitterrand government also assumes total responsibility in its role in the Multinational Intervention Force. In fact it appears that while rapidly dismantling the Palestinian defence lines — and notably the clearing out of mines in the streets of West Beirut — the French troops facilitated the entrance of Zionist troops, then withdrawing before the massacre in the Palestinian refugee camps. This raises doubts about the proclamations of the French government that it is "ready to send troops to Lebanon again, this time to protect the civilian population." (10)

From the beginning, the Mitterrand government situated its diplomatic

actions within the framework of the American plan of Philip Habib, of the disarming of the Palestinians. The French Minister for External Affairs, Claude Cheysson, has recently reaffirmed the unity in views with American imperialism by declaring: "France and the United States uphold any Lebanese effort to affirm the unity of the country, to establish a government capable of asserting itself and of avoiding trouble between Lebanese." And this "necessitates complete respect of the Habib plan", he stated. The objective is to facilitate the placing in power of Amin Gemayel, new Lebanese president, also from the reactionary Phalangist troops, and to aid in stopping the disintegration of the state and especially the Lebanese military apparatus.

Here and now the function of this army, future reinforcement of a Lebanese military power, is revealing itself in many

7. The request for regular economic and military aid by Israel to the US, presented in Washington by the Israeli Finance Minister, last September 13, is going up this year to 2.2 billion dollars. As the October 3 and 4 *Le Monde* notes, "this aid is by far the most important in the US budget, for it constitutes half of the expenditure of this nature."

8. On this point, the Israel government vehemently refused the slightest concession concerning the creation of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories. In an interview published by the weekly *Le nouvel Observateur*, Ariel Sharon confirmed this: "Judea and Samaria belong to us. For millions and millions of years. For always. Judea and Samaria is Israel. And Gaza also ... We will never permit a second Palestine to be created on this spot. Never."

9. *Le Monde*, September 22, 1982.  
10. *Le Monde*, September 23, 1982.



ways. Its forces, who are not opposed to the Israeli invasion, are combing Beirut, searching for foreigners whose papers are not in order, for Palestinians or militants of the Lebanese National Movement, finishing the job undertaken by the Israelis to disarm all local progressive forces. But the Phalangist troops, 26,000-strong, remain armed. The Communist Party journal *Al Nida* was even searched and its editors held for a short time by the Lebanese army. (11) All the makeshift shelters, the little businesses and others, that allowed refugees to survive under the Israeli bombardment in West Beirut are being mercilessly razed to the ground. Tomorrow, might not the Lebanese Army, in the name of national reconstruction expel the Palestinian refugees from Beirut? It is most certainly a reactionary power and army that the imperialist American-French-Italian forces are in the process of reconstructing.

In this new phase of reconstruction of the Lebanese bourgeois state, the expulsion of the Palestinians remains an objective of the reactionary forces, and other massacres are still possible. For the one at Sabra and Shatila also demonstrates a horrible truth: the indifference of the bourgeois Arab regimes. Almost all those states supported the election of Bashir Gemayel and the Fahd plan at the Fez summit (12), which fits into imperialism's strategy. None of them tolerated the slightest expression of solidarity and anger of their own masses against these crimes. In Tunisia, the opposition's demonstration on this theme was banned. In Algeria, the very official National Union of Algerian Women (UNFA) had its demonstration denouncing the massacre repressed by the police. The passivity of Arab states during the war in Lebanon opened up, without a doubt, a new stage in the crisis of Arab nationalism. The Palestinian masses have once again paid dearly for the PLO leadership's undertaking of the principle of "non-interference" into the internal affairs of Arab states. After the Palestinian defeat and the scattering of the armed forces of resistance across a number of Arab countries, after the diplomatic turn of the leadership of the PLO which accepts the imperialist plan of the creation of a Palestinian mini-state, the national struggle of the Palestinian people has not been definitively crushed. but, maybe tomorrow, the terrain of the struggle will be principally the Arab territories occupied by Israel, thus giving it a new impetus and a new social content.

#### MORAL AND POLITICAL CRISIS IN ISRAEL

The reaction in Israel to the announcement of the Palestinian refugees unquestionably deepened the crisis of Zionism. Numerous demonstrations and protests since the war in Lebanon show this. It remained nevertheless a militant minority grouped around the Committee Against the War in Lebanon or the *Peace Now* movement.

The massacre of Sabra and Shatila and the initial refusal of the Begin government to accept the setting up of an inquest qualitatively augmented the reaction against the Israeli military actions in Lebanon. Moreover, this brought to a head the differences between the Likud (coalition in power) and the opposition Labour Party of Shimon Peres, accentuating considerably the latent political crisis in the country. The distancing of the United States from the Begin government, the recall of the Egyptian Ambassa-

carried new proof of Israeli responsibility in the massacre.

In the occupied territories, in West Bank and Gaza Strip, there was a general strike for three days. The last day of this strike, September 22, the Arabs in Israel took part. This mobilisation of Arabs in Israel is the most important since 1976, which was against governmental restrictions on the acquisition of land by Arabs. *Le Monde*, moreover, reported on September 29 that "for the first time, Arabs in Israel publicly expressed their

## Israel and the massacres

"The crucial Christian-Israeli planning session, reports *Time* correspondent David Halevy, took place at noon Thursday, Sept. 16, at the Israeli command post in Beirut Port. Present was Israeli Major General Amir Drori, head of the Northern Command, and at least three other top Israeli officers. Also present was Fady Frem, the Lebanese Forces Chief of Staff. Frem was accompanied by Elias Hobeika, the Forces' intelligence chief, who had attended the Staff and Command College in Israel. He was to be the main leader of the groups that went into the camps.

"A man who always carries a pistol, a knife and a hand grenade on his belt. Hobeika was the most feared Phalangist in Lebanon. He had taken part in the Tell el-Zataar massacre and in attacks on the rivals of Bashir Gemayel. The Israelis know Hobeika and his followers as ruthless, brutal security men, and knew they did not constitute a disciplined military force. (...)

"At the meeting with the Israelis on Sept. 16, Fady Frem said Hobeika would take his men into the Shatila camp, and both men said there would be a *kasach* (in Arabic, a chopping or slicing operation). General

Drori ignored the evident implications of this remark, and the go-ahead was given. Later Drori telephoned Sharon in Tel Aviv: 'Our friends are moving into the camps. I coordinated their entrance with their top men.' Replied Sharon: 'Congratulations ... The friends' operation is authorized.' (...)

"At about 5pm Thursday, Hobeika's force assembled at the Beirut International Airport and moved into the Shatila camp soon afterward. Israeli artillery assisted them with flares and later with tank and mortar fire. (...)"

The next day "the murderous operation continued. On Friday, Israeli Chief of Staff Lieut. General Rafael Eitan arrived and was told by his officers that whatever was going on inside the camps was not a military action but a *kasach*. (...)"

Not far from the Shatila camp, the Israeli observation posts atop several seven-story buildings were, according to the *Times* correspondent: "an unobstructed and panoramic view of the area in the Shatila camp where most of the killings had taken place."

From the October 4, 1982 *Time*

dor to Israel, as well as the popular reactions in Israel itself, effectively spurred the Labour Party, who until then had more or less supported the Zionist military aggression in Lebanon, to raise their voice to call for the resignation of Ariel Sharon and Menachem Begin. Disagreements have now appeared in the government coalition and between figures of the regime. The Commander of Higher Military Studies, Amram Mitzna, handed in his resignation, as did the civil administrator of the West Bank, Menachem Milson. A movement of soldiers against the war, *Yesh Gvul* ("there is a limit"), got around a thousand signatures on a petition against the war. Among the signatories are 150 officers, some high ranking. From September 19, demonstrations of some hundreds of people took place in Israel, with cries of "Begin, resign! Begin, assassinate!" Day after day, the Israeli press

'solidarity' with their Palestinian brothers in the occupied territories."

After these daily mobilisations, the large demonstration of *Peace Now* and the Labour Party, that attracted 300,000 people in Tel Aviv on September 25, showed the scope of the crisis of conscience that has shaken up Israelis. Some 10% of the Israeli population was present that evening. The official slogans such as those calling for an inquest "into the massacre of the Palestinians", "Out of Beirut", "Start negotiations" or even the official slogan of "Begin, resign!" showed the tight control the Labour Party had

11. This did not stop the Secretary General of the Lebanese Communist Party, George Hawi, as the entire Lebanese National Movement, from finding the election of Amin Gemayel as "a good basis for understanding." (*Le Monde*, September 26 and 27 1982).  
12. See *International Viewpoint* No 14, October 4, 1982.



over this demonstration. But a contingent of about ten thousand people, Jews and Arabs, grouped around more radical slogans of the Committee Against the War in Lebanon, who demanded the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon and the opening of negotiations with the PLO. Expression of the moral crisis of the Jewish people facing the acts committed in their name, the demonstration of September 25 in a certain sense legitimized the fight of all anti-war militants. This mobilisation, moreover, compelled the Begin government to finally accept the formation of a commission of inquiry into the massacre of Sabra and Shatila, and the Likud cancelled the demonstration that was to take place the following week. If last July 17 the supporters of Menachem Begin succeeded in responding to a demonstration against the intervention in Lebanon that had taken place two weeks previously, this time, they did not feel able to outdo the September 25 demonstration.

Certainly the Labour Party's strategy is to place itself within the new framework defined by the diplomatic proposals of the US government. Since Begin backed off, Shimon Peres declared that demanding the resignation of the government must be put off till later. But the commission of inquiry will not present any conclusions until next January. In the meantime, the political crisis will undoubtedly have had new rebounds. Its roots go to the situation created by the departure of the Fedayeen from Lebanon, and the concurrence of propositions of a negotiated settlement to the



Beirut after bombardment (DR)

Palestinian problem, orchestrated by imperialism. Shimon Peres himself said: "never has the opportunity of what we call the Jordanian option been better than today, notably thanks to the Reagan whose philosophy is close to our programme." (13)

Beyond the political crisis of the Begin team, it is the entire national consensus on which the Zionist state has founded its existence as a confessional, racist and

expansionist state, that is seeing these new cracks. They will be fed by imperialist diplomatic pressures on Israel, the Arab mobilisations in the occupied territories, and the austerity measures that the government will have to take to make the Israelis pay for a war which has already cost 1.2 billion dollars, while inflation is forecast as 130% for the end of the year.

13. *Le Monde*, September 30, 1982.

## Deepening impact of Lebanon war in Israel

The following interview was given to Gerry Foley in Paris on October 8 by A. Mayir, a leader of the section of the Fourth International in the Israeli state.

**Question:** What happened to the peace movement in Israel during the siege of Beirut?

**Answer:** It was strengthened, since there was a division between the Labour Party and Likud over the advisability of trying to take the city.

A commander of the Israeli forces resigned rather than lead an attack on Beirut, since he said he did not want to lead his soldiers to their deaths.

Demoralization grew in the army, because the Israeli army is a reserve force. The ranks expect to be called up for no more than a month. Furthermore, there were many more deaths in this war than any of the previous ones. The Israeli Jewish masses expected another easy war. And then, the Israeli army is not prepared for attacking cities, which involves heavy

casualties. It has been built up for rapid engagements in open country. Thus Beirut became a trap.

**Q:** Was there any decline in the antiwar movement as a result of the Zionist victory in Beirut?

**A:** There was a rapid decline in the mobilizations after the PLO signed the agreement to withdraw. But they started to grow again during the actual withdrawal, and reached a new height after the refugee camp massacres.

Begin and Sharon have been able to gain nothing politically for their military victories. Many thousands of Israeli soldiers are being kept in Lebanon on occupation duty, doing essentially repressive work. There is considerable demoralization among these soldiers and their continuing absence is putting a lot of pressure on their families.

In fact, two soldiers organizations have grown up. One, the more radical, is called "There Is a Border," or "Enough." The name can be read either way in Hebrew.

The other is called "Soldiers Against Silence." As might be expected, the second is the largest; it has generally the outlook of the more liberal wing of the Labour Party, which predominates in the Peace Now movement. However, both committees are broad and include many officers as well as rank-and-file soldiers.

**Q:** What is the position of the Fourth Internationalists in the antiwar movement?

**A:** We are in the leadership of the Committee Against the War in Lebanon, which is the radical wing of the antiwar movement. This is a continuation of the Bir Zeit committee, which was distinguished by its defence of Palestinian rights and Jewish-Palestinian unity.

In the first week of the war, there was considerable confusion in the Peace Now movement, the largest antiwar organization. It tended to follow the pattern of traditional peace movements. That is, it tended to fold up once the war actually started.



In that difficult first period, it was the Committee Against the War in Lebanon that played the leading role. It organized the demonstration in the second week of the war that drew 15,000, the first big antiwar demonstration. Before the war, the maximum the Bir Zeit committee mobilized was 5,000. Normally, it could mobilize no more than 500.

We have very good relations with the various radical currents in the committee. And most of the newly radicalizing layers come around it. Large sections of left Zionist youth are moving toward it.

Our own periphery of sympathizers has grown. In general we are in a good position, being established in the three main cities — Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa.

*Q: What was the impact of the war on the Palestinian population under Israeli rule?*

*A:* At first, the reaction was shock, both political and personal. It was personal because many Palestinian families are divided, with relatives living in south Lebanon.

Obviously, the violence of the Zionist attack created a certain fear. But there was also a failure of the left.

The Communist Party, which is the dominant organization among the Palestinian masses called for no mobilizations. The groups further to the left were taken by surprise by the situation and failed to react. The organizations began to act only after spontaneous demonstrations started to develop.

*Q: What affect did the defeat of the PLO have on the Palestinian groups?*

*A:* In general, they are very much influenced by what happens outside Israel, in the PLO. They tended to become paralyzed as the siege tightened on Beirut.

After the PLO accepted the Habib plan, there were discussions. One current argued that the PLO did the only thing possible, that to refuse to sign would have meant suicide. The other argued that the agreement means disaster. From the outside, it would appear that the current critical of the agreement was about 10%.

*Q: Has there been increased tension between the Jewish and Palestinian communities as a result of the Zionist atrocities in Lebanon?*

*A:* No. It is the opposite that is happening. The growth of the antiwar movement among Jews is an important factor in this. There is much greater consciousness of the need for unity between Arabs and Jews. That is true on both sides. Before left Zionists were very fearful of demonstrating together with Palestinians, that was regarded as acting like a fifth column. But today this feeling has changed considerably. On the day of the Palestinian strike, there were a few incidents of attacks on Jews — about three.

*Q: What effect did the war have on the Palestinian vanguard?*

*A:* The organization with which we work most closely is the Sons of The Village. This group is a continuation of an older Palestinian organisation called *El Ard*, The Land. Already before the war, it was



*Arab demonstration in Jerusalem (DR)*

divided essentially into three currents.

The first, a traditional nationalist current, was in crisis. That was mainly because it had no perspective for reaching out to the Jewish population. The relationship of forces has changed since 1948, and it was unable to adjust to the new situation.

The second current might be called ultraleft, since it rejects any idea of a united front with the Communist Party. It also, while it verbally accepts the need for Palestinian-Jewish unity, puts forward slogans that drive Jews away. For example, it denies that the Israeli Jews are a nation. Its ultraleft character is particularly clear on the question of a united front with the CP, since that is the strongest organization by far among the Palestinian masses. The base of the ultraleft current is mainly among students.

The third current is a proletarian one, evolving toward revolutionary Marxism and an understanding of the need for an Arab-Jewish revolutionary party. It is based mainly in the Arab towns.

With the old-style nationalists in crisis, the relationship of forces between the ultraleft current and the proletarian current is about even.

Under the impact of the war, the political differentiation inside the Sons of the Village increased sharply.

*Q: What explains the CP's hold on the Palestinian masses?*

*A:* In the first place, it is an old established organization. In the second place, it has more of a working-class outlook than the nationalist formations. It has offered a perspective for day-to-day political work.

*Q: Is there a major language barrier between Palestinians and Jews in the Israeli state?*

*A:* Yes and no. Most Arabs can speak

Hebrew, but few Jews Arabic, although Palestinian public life is carried on in Arabic. Very few of the younger generations of Oriental Jews still speak Arabic.

*Q: What effect did the war have on the Oriental Jews?*

*A:* The Oriental Jews now make up the majority of the Jewish working class, and unfortunately the antiwar movement is continuing to develop outside the working class.

One of the reasons for this is a historical one. The country was ruled for 30 years by the Labour Party, which is actually a bourgeois party. As the economic situation worsened, the workers started to look for an alternative, but the only alternative to Labour that they could see was Begin's party. They voted for Likud as a way of rejecting everything that 30 years of Labour rule meant. And now they identify the antiwar movement with Labour, everything that is not with Begin is Labour.

On the other hand, for the first time during this war there was no suspension of economic struggles, strikes and so forth. And since the war, there has already been a perceptible decline in the standard of living, owing to special taxes and price increases.

On the other hand, the working class support for Begin is not active. The class is passive. I work in a large factory in the Tel Aviv area that has a militant tradition. I find that it is much easier to discuss with fellow workers now about such questions as the war and the rights of Palestinians.

The support of a mass antiwar movement in the streets makes it much easier to talk to workers in the factories. A demonstration of 300,000 people, such as the one in response to the massacres, is no small thing. ■



# Lebanon after the PLO withdrawal

The following interview was given to Gerry Foley in Paris in early October by S. Jaber, a leader of the Lebanese section of the Fourth International. The views represent those of the leadership of the Lebanese section. Comrade Jaber did not have the opportunity to check the edited text.

**Question:** Do you think that the PLO had no alternative but to withdraw from West Beirut, given the Zionist military superiority and evident ruthlessness?

**Answer:** No. The Zionists could not have paid the price necessary to occupy West Beirut militarily or to force the withdrawal of the fighters by bombing and shelling.

The war proved that partisan forces armed with antitank weapons could inflict very heavy losses even on a very powerful army such as the Zionist one.

In particular, in order to occupy West Beirut militarily, the Zionists would have had to send in soldiers for house-to-house fighting. Tanks are not much use in built up areas. That would have meant heavy casualties, possibly over a thousand deaths. Given the nature of the Zionist army, it cannot hold up very long in that sort of warfare.

Moreover, the PLO in West Beirut was in a good position to withstand a siege. Most of the Lebanese population, about four fifths, left the city. That reduced the danger of civilian casualties. It also meant that the large stocks of food had to be shared among many less people. There were large amounts of weapons and ammunition, as well as substantial defenses.

The PLO was not defeated militarily; West Beirut was not defeated militarily. The defeat was political, and the responsibility for it rests with the right-wing leadership of the PLO, essentially the right-wing leadership of El Fateh. It acted as the organizer of defeat.

**Q:** What did the PLO leadership gain from its negotiations?

**A:** Essentially, nothing. Even if the PLO and the Lebanese patriotic forces in West Beirut had been defeated, the Habib plan would have been unacceptable.

The PLO leadership gave in repeatedly to Zionist and imperialist pressure. It first proposed withdrawal to the camps, and then withdrawal by land from the city. It ended up accepting withdrawal essentially by sea.

If the withdrawal had been by land, the PLO would have been in a position to continue the struggle in the Bekaa Valley. But a withdrawal by sea represented sur-

render, and correspondingly had a demoralizing effect on the Palestinian people.

The PLO leadership agreed to the dispersion of the fighters in a large number of Arab countries far from the arena of struggle.

When they reached their destination, in most cases, they were taken to what amounted to internment camps, camps located in remote areas and kept under strict military control.

Secondly, the PLO leadership accepted the intervention of the so-called multinational interposition forces, which are in fact imperialist forces. They are not even under the aegis of the United Nations, because the imperialists wanted to make sure that the Soviet Union could not raise any questions. What these interposition forces did was remove the defenses of West Beirut and clear the way for the Israeli invasion.

Thirdly, the PLO leadership abandoned its original position of demanding a parallel withdrawal of the Zionist forces to a point ten kilometers from Beirut. The unilateral PLO withdrawal left the Palestinian and Lebanese masses in the city defenseless, in particular once the "interposition forces" had done their dirty work.

What is more, the election of Bashir Gemayel as president was linked to the settlement represented by the Habib. Everyone knew that.

Bashir Gemayel was the worst kind of fascist, and he would have followed a fascist plan if he had not been assassinated. There was no question that he would have carried out massacres.

**Q:** Why, in your opinion, did the PLO leadership accept such a settlement?

**A:** Because the Zionists left them no political room for manoeuvre. The strategy of the PLO leadership in recent years has not been based on an uncompromising fight against Zionism but on trying to negotiate diplomatic and political concessions, to get political recognition for the PLO and some sort of Palestinian state. Thus, the leadership was not prepared politically for an all-out fight.

**Q:** What sort of opposition to the settlement was there in the PLO?

**A:** There was very broad opposition, although it represented a minority. We had very close relations with this current, many discussions and considerable agreement. It was on this basis that we called for a front of resistance. The bulk of the opposition was in El Fateh, the largest component of the PLO.

**Q:** Why was this opposition unable to prevent the settlement?

**A:** Essentially because these forces were not prepared to form a political alternative to the PLO leadership. They told us that they did not think that they could make their criticisms of the leadership public, because they depended on it for everything — food, money, arms and ammunition.

They made very strong criticisms and even threatened the PLO leadership. But their concept was simply to put pressure on it, to keep it from going too far. In a situation, where there was no manoeuvring room, they had no choice but to go along.

**Q:** What are the perspectives for the PLO now?

**A:** That depends on what sort of a political discussion develops within it. The decisive thing is whether some positive alternative arises, an understanding of the need for an internationalist approach and a strategy based on uncompromising struggle with Zionism. Otherwise, the demoralization that exists now could lead in the direction of terrorism.

As for the leadership, further capitulations are to be feared. For example, Arafat has recently met with King Hussein of Jordan, who has once again raised the idea of a Jordanian-Palestinian federation. What this would mean would be Jordanian control of a Palestinian ministate. The Israelis are opposed to any Palestinian state because they think that they cannot rely on the PLO. But Hussein proved his reliability in 1970 by massacring the Palestinian fighters. A so-called autonomous Palestinian state under Jordan could be acceptable to them. It is notable that the Arafat leadership has not rejected the proposal this time.

**Q:** What about the Lebanese left?

**A:** Under the pressure of the war, the Lebanese National Movement, which is a kind of popular front, basically came apart. The Stalinists and the Nasserites, that is essentially the petty-bourgeois nationalists fought. The bourgeois components, mainly Jumblatt's party, did not. Jumblatt's party just sat back in its mountain hideaway and scarcely fired a shot.

We called for a government of national resistance made up of those forces actually fighting the occupation. That would have meant in effect a government without the bourgeoisie, since no bourgeois forces fought.

**Q:** What situation is the left in now?

**A:** Following the Israeli occupation of West Beirut and the activities of the "multinational interposition forces," the left has been disarmed. It has not been



politically smashed. That would have involved rounding up large numbers of activists, and the Israelis were not prepared to do that. In any case, they prefer to leave that job to the Lebanese right.

The situation for the mass movement is one of defeat and demoralization. The left is isolated among the population, and faces a very strong bourgeois regime. For the first time in seven years, the entire Lebanese bourgeoisie has united around Amin Gemayel.

*Q: What is the situation with respect to democratic rights?*

A: No formal changes in the laws have yet been made. However, respect for the guarantees of bourgeois democratic rights always essentially depends on the relationship of class forces. That is now unfavorable.

In fact, the Lebanese army has been acting in an entirely illegal way. The government has not even bothered to declare a state of siege, but the army is carrying out searches without warrants, and so forth.

Moreover, there is already a whole body of reactionary laws on the books, the heritage of the Sarkis government, especially with respect to the press. Sarkis was unable to implement them. But Gemayel is in an incomparably stronger position to do that.

*Q: What does the government of Amin Gemayel represent?*

A: Despite the fact that he is the brother of Bashir Gemayel, he represents a very different faction in the Phalangist movement.

Bashir was a fascist and had a fascist project. He would have ruled by means of violence. That was well understood, as was shown by the reactions to his assumption of the presidency.

There was a strong rejection of Bashir among the Muslim population, and not a single Arab state sent congratulations when he was inaugurated.

However, when Amin was inaugurated, every Arab state sent congratulations immediately, even Syria. The Syrian attitude was decisive for bourgeois stability. Lebanon is surrounded by Syria on three sides, and the Syrians can send anything through the border they want, men, arms, money, etc.

Since, the Lebanese bourgeoisie is mainly a mercantile one, which serves as an intermediary between the West and the Arab markets, good relations with the Arab states are essential.

Bashir's faction was concentrated in the Phalangist armed forces. It had its own radio, which was much more radically right wing than the radio of the Phalangist party.

On the other hand, the Phalangists party, while fascist in inspiration has evolved into a normal right-wing bourgeois party, similar to some of the Christian Democratic parties that exist in Europe.

The Amin faction looks essentially to American imperialism, while the Bashir faction was linked to Israel. This corresponds to their projects.

*Q: Can the Amin regime overcome the conflict between the Druzes and the Phalangists, which involved fighting in the Chouff mountains?*

A: It is in a position to do so. The conflict between the Christians and the Druzes is not an irreconcilable one. The rightists among the Druzes are calling for the intervention of the Lebanese army, and if it comes in it will stop the conflict. *Q: Why do you think that the Lebanese army can stand above the communal differences now, when it failed to do so before?*

A: The Lebanese army is basically a bourgeois army. Like the Lebanese state, it is dominated by Maronite Christians. But the Muslim bourgeoisie objects only when it feels that the Maronites are acting in a way that does not take their point of view into consideration.

When the Maronite dominated state institutions, including the army, are clearly acting in the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole, the Muslim bourgeoisie does not object. That has been true throughout the history of Lebanon.

*Q: What about the possibility of continued conflict between the Bashir and Amin factions, since you say that they represent quite different forces?*

A: That is both an advantage and a disadvantage for the Lebanese bourgeoisie. If Bashir had survived, he would have integrated his Phalangist armed forces into the Lebanese army, or, more correctly, established direct control of the army through them.

Amin Gemayel's project is a Bonapartist one. He claims to stand above parties and above communities. In fact, the regime is a very typical military dictatorship with a civilian head. But to maintain his Bonapartist pretences, he has to try to appear to use the army in an even handed way to assure order in both the Christian and Muslim community.

That means sending the Lebanese army into the Christian part of Beirut as well as the Muslim part to carry out arms searches, and so forth. And in the Christian east, there have been some conflicts between the Phalangists and the army.

*Q: What role have the Shiite organization Amal and the Khomeini regime played in the situation in Lebanon?*

A: Amal does not represent the entire Shiite community. In fact, that community is the strongest base of the left. It represents simply an attempt to create a Shiite confessional organization, which was promoted by the Lebanese secret police.

The objective was to exploit the antagonism to the PLO that existed among the Shiite people, who live mainly in the south of Lebanon. They were the ones who suffered the brunt of Israeli reprisals for PLO raids. The PLO also developed rather poor relations with the Lebanese population, coming to be seen as a kind of state authority over them.

What the secret police hoped to do was to use Amal to organize the Shiite population against the left and the PLO

and to contribute to the creation of a Lebanese strong state. Amal's recruitment themes were antileft, anticommunist, and anti-"foreigner." They corresponded to those of the Phalangists, and in fact, the Phalangist organs always spoke with sympathy of Amal.

On the other hand, when the Zionists invaded, Amal fought. It would have lost all credibility among the Muslim population if it had not.

It was not Khomeinite, although it utilized the prestige of the Iranian revolution. Khomeini's anti-imperialist statements are too radical for it, and it is not an Islamic fundamentalist organization. There is little or no base for Islamic fundamentalism in Lebanon. There was a tiny Khomeinite faction in Amal, which has now been expelled.

*Q: What about the role of Iran in the conflict?*

A: At the beginning, there were illusions about the Iranian regime. Khomeini's statements of support were received gratefully by the fighters. There were even some groups that put their hopes on Iran to save the situation. They hoped that Khomeini would send planes, and things like that.

Very quickly, disillusion set in, when the people saw that the Khomeini government sent only a few fighters who were not very useful in the struggle. The disillusion deepened when the Iranian government rejected Iraq's appeal for a ceasefire and for concentrating on the fight against the Zionists.

*Q: How would you summarize the main lessons of the Lebanon war?*

A: There were three main lessons. The first is that the Soviet Union cannot be relied upon as an ally of the colonial revolution. This was driven home forcefully by the passivity of the Kremlin in an area where there were very great illusions in the Soviet Union. It was expected that at least the Soviets would blockade the coast, as they have a right to do in accordance with their defense treaty with Syria.

The second lesson was a reconfirmation of the unreliability of the Arab bourgeois nationalist regimes, even such radical ones as Syria. The Syrian forces fought only self-defensive battles.

The third lesson is the reconfirmation of the validity of the theory of permanent revolution. This involved first of all a demonstration of the tendency of such conflicts with imperialism to become international, to spread through the region. And most importantly, it showed the unreliability of all bourgeois leaderships in the fight against imperialism. *Q: How much resistance is there to the occupation?*

A: Armed actions against the occupiers continue, many more than are heard of abroad. There are even a number of military units that remain hidden in the south. The resistance will continue and grow as long as the occupation lasts, and so we are continuing to call for a united front of resistance. ■



# New stage in Britain

## After the TUC and Labour Party conferences

Brian HERON

The Labour Party and Trades Union Congress Conferences clarified the British political situation, summarising the state of the labour and trade union movement following the Malvinas war. The notable feature of both of these congresses was the degree to which they faithfully reflected the same fundamental trends inside the labour movement. This in itself is a dramatic confirmation of the increasing extent to which the struggle in the unions is producing deep and immediate repercussions inside the Labour Party and vice versa.

Although some sections of the British left are uncomfortable in the face of these developments, the fundamental trend in working class politics in Britain is the further deepening of the interdependence of the struggle in the unions, the mass campaigns and the political focus provided for these struggles by the divisions in the Labour Party.

British politics, for all classes, is dominated by the issue of government. For the ruling class, the problem is how to align what will become a deeply unpopular Tory Party and the new SDP/Liberal Alliance parties to prevent the disaster that would be represented by an unstable Labour government coming into office under mass pressure. On the other hand, the public sector and health workers, who are now leading the strike battle against the Tories, are the same workers whose 'Winter of Discontent' in 1979 helped to bring about the collapse of the previous Callaghan-led Labour government. Today those same workers seek a Labour government of a different type. They are looking for every way possible to win a Labour government that would be a total break from a government of the Wilson-Callaghan type. The relatively short-term prospect of the most important election since the war means that such concerns on the part of both classes will come into sharper and sharper focus in the next months.

In this framework we are seeing a tremendous eruption of working class struggles, which are breaking up the social peace that the Malvinas war was partly designed to create. The days of action around the health strike (which involved solidarity-strike action with four million workers) are to continue. Post Office Engineers have already decided on strike action to stop the Tories selling off their profitable nationalised industry. Water

workers are preparing a national strike. Steel workers are on a similar course. And now the miners at their conference have decided on a pit-head ballot for strike action in defence of jobs and for a 30% wage increase. These moves on the whole have been forced on a reluctant and fearful trade union bureaucracy, who are being offered no concessions from Thatcher that could help to guarantee their own stability when they find themselves under siege from their own ranks. The bureaucracies' desire to put a shot across the bow of the Thatcher government has given focus to a furious wave of anger against the Tories. Despite the truly massive unemployment, the serious setbacks and the defensive struggle of the last three years, the basic trade union strength of the working class remains intact. Each national focus that emerges underlines the capacity and will to fight of the mass of workers in the trade unions.

Such conditions are the base from which very important policy advances were registered at the TUC and the Labour Party Conferences. These included a resolution against incomes policy passed at the TUC, and the emphasis placed by many speakers on the need to take forward the wave of trade union solidarity actions with the health workers (which completely transgresses the new trade union laws enacted by the Tories.) The Congress specifically stated their intent to break these laws.

At Labour Party Conference, the battle for unilateral disarmament received a tremendous victory with a two thirds majority of votes registered for the policy — which traditionally guarantees Manifesto status for this policy. Additionally resolutions were passed in solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinians and a big programme of nationalisation was confirmed.

In part, the victory over unilateralism and more specifically the resolution on the PLO was the product of the emergence of new forces that first surfaced in opposition to the Malvinas war and which have begun to construct an anti-imperialist current especially amongst the youth active in the mass movement against the missiles. The decisions of Labour's Conference not only give a tremendous boost to these new forces in the British labour movement — they further serve to direct the political attention of the vast anti-missiles movement to the problem of winning a

Labour government that will implement these policies.

The rise in the fightback against the Tories is one side of the current stage of working class politics in Britain. The other is a big administrative and political shift to the right within the labour bureaucracy as a whole. The bureaucracies' response to the new stage of struggle is the fight to 're-stabilise' the Labour Party. The message which they wish to issue to their own ruling class is that the Labour Party is on the way to becoming a stable and valuable instrument through which the ruling class will be able to express its interests. Along side this political fight, which was opened with a vengeance at the TUC and LP Conferences, the bureaucracy hopes to persuade the ruling class to begin again to open the door to negotiating and balancing role in the polarising struggle between the classes.

The centrepiece of the bureaucracies' offensive is the witch-hunt. Labour Party Conference set up a register of approved and non approved groups which work in the Party. Vast numbers of union block votes were cast in favour by trade union General Secretaries despite union conference after union conference voting against any witch-hunt. The immediate target of the witch-hunt is the Militant tendency and its constituency-Labour-Party-adopted parliamentary candidates. But the witch-hunt's longer term purpose is nothing less than the break-up of the power of the movement behind Tony Benn and the radical policies with which this mass current is associated and defends. It is this current that is 'destabilising' the Labour Party from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie.

The right wing offensive took other forms. Despite the vote *against* incomes policy at the TUC, the TUC and Labour Party Conferences agreed a joint document on economic policy which, under the euphemistic title of the 'national economic assessment' *includes* incomes policy. The document was passed virtually unanimously at Labour Party Conference. Secondly the TUC General Council has shifted to the right around a technical manoeuvre increasing the representation of smaller unions. The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party elections were worse. Benn supporters on the NEC have been whittled back — especially in the women's section — where the bureaucracy was determined to block the radical impact of Labour Women's Conference



on Labour Party policy as a whole. But this has not benefited the 'centre' of the Party and Foot, and Party leader. On the contrary, the right wing leader Healey now has an NEC majority. This has important consequences.

There is now a majority on Labour's extra-parliamentary leadership (as well as amongst members of parliament) who are opposed to unilateral nuclear disarmament and other major policy gains won by the left at Labour's conference over recent years. These gains for the right were sufficient for Labour right wing leader Roy Hattersley, who appeared on television immediately following the historic decision for unilateral disarmament, to confidently announce that the decision would never be applied by a Labour government.

The deep contradiction in the labour movement, which has unfolded around the TUC and Labour Party Conferences, between the evolution of its leadership and the big upturn in struggle against the government, has had immediate and dramatic effects. The strain of trying to drive to the right and at the same time deal with the growing force of the gathering mass movement against the Tories, produced the most anarchic and disorganised Labour Party Conference for years. Albert Spanswick, right wing leader of a section of the health workers demanded all out support from the Labour Party virtually up to a general strike. All day, following Hattersley's T.V. speech against unilateralism, delegate after delegate demanded assurances on the implementation of the policy.

In a well received speech, unemployed steel worker Ray Hill launched a vitriolic attack on sell-out steel union leader Bill Sirs. Such an effective deflation of Sirs' demagogic pretences of defending steel workers' jobs, required the chair to recall Sirs to defend himself. When rail leader Weighell was discovered using his union votes for a right wing candidate on the NEC against his mandate, he was denounced in every corner of the Conference and, in an attempted manoeuvre to re-establish his base, has subsequently resigned his post as National Secretary of Britain's largest rail union.

If one person could be said to have summed up these contradictory pressures it was Tony Benn. After the deputy leadership campaign of 1981 which brought Benn a few fractions of a percentage point from the deputy leadership of the Party, Benn has insisted that he will not open the fight against the Foot leadership unless certain conditions applied. These included the opening of a witch-hunt, or the attack on established Conference policy by the leadership of the Party. Both of these conditions now apply with a vengeance. Yet in the face of the mounting frustration of his base within the labour movement, Benn has adopted the policy of reaching out to embrace the Foot leadership.

At one of the biggest meetings on the fringes of Labour Party Conference following the defeat on the register and the vic-

tory on unilateralism, Benn said: 'we stand for the same Party membership, the same policies and the same leadership.' Terrified of the right's campaign to blame the left in the Party for Labour's disastrous showing in the opinion polls (the latest shows Labour trailing the Tories by ten points), Benn wants to break his isolation by building further links to the labour bureaucracy. In this process he is giving little lead to those prepared to fight the Foot leadership now. But the pressure building up for such a lead was graphically shown by the announcement of a new left wing Parliamentary group which broke from the old 'Tribune' group, of which Foot is still a member. Benn supports the break-away. But what will it do? Several of the MPs involved are for the calling of a national conference of the trade union, Party and parliamentary left. But such a course is completely out of the question in Benn's current perspective. 'Why should we', he asks, 'minoritise ourselves?'

The witch-hunt now in progress in the Labour Party is beginning to bring together all of these trends. Every possibility of winning a leadership and policies in the Labour Party that will begin to reflect the big struggles underway against the government is threatened. In that sense, the witch-hunt strikes a blow directly at the mass movement. The right wing in the Party intend to start with the leaders of the Militant tendency. They will continue with the eviction of the Bennites from all of the key policy committees in the leadership of the Labour Party. Protracted war will break out in many constituency Parties, as right wingers demand the 'registered credentials' of left wingers. The witch-hunt is already well underway in some unions, with Weighell in particular leading an attack on socialists' activities in his union that is aimed at breaking up the leadership of the reform movement that arose in response to his spectacular sell-out of the other major rail union, ASLEF, in their recent strike.

In this respect, Tony Benn and other leading left wingers at Labour Party Conference, consistent with their approach to the Party and union leadership at this stage, gave out the line that we may basically ignore the witch-hunt. Rather they propose that the left should concentrate on the policy advances registered at the Labour Party and TUC Conferences. In reality, without fighting the witch-hunt, such a line neither protects those policies nor mobilises the left for the battle it will certainly face.

The line of advance for the left in the unions and the Party today demands a frontal challenge to Foot and his allies in the trade union leadership. Naturally this is not a question of demanding immediate leadership elections in the Party. Rather the witch-hunt, led by Foot, must be fought, and socialist policies defended. This stand, together with deepening joint Labour Party and trade union action to kick out the Tories can ensure a Labour victory in the coming election. Today it is the right in the Party and the unions who

are proving by their massive disruption that they are more frightened of a Labour victory with the present policies than of losing the next election.

The perspectives for the labour movement in the coming months in Britain flow in part from the upsurge of the mass movement against the Tories, and in part from the right wing offensive opened up at Labour Party and the TUC conferences. These two have to be brought directly into collision. Mass forces at the base of the unions, amongst youth and in the anti-missile campaign are more than prepared to fight. They are coming up against the rightward shift of the labour leadership, and, on the crucial question of the witch-hunt, the immobility of the left leaders. Such conditions are guaranteed to increase the differentiation and divisions in Benn's base. Such divisions are inevitable when Benn's base is already coupling the prospects of a Labour victory with their own capacity to lead mass and industrial action against the Tories.

Over the past three years, support for Labour within the working class has been whittled back to that section of the movement which associates the Labour Party, however abused by previous leaderships, as the only serious prospect of any radical solutions to the crisis which they face. One third of the working class has traditionally voted Tory in Britain. At the 1979 elections one third of trade unionists were polled as supporting the Tories. Traditionally the only alternative to the Tories has been Labour. For the last two years, as the Tories drove home their attacks, sections of the workers detached their support from the government, became politically de-stabilised as the SDP/Liberal Alliance emerged as an alternative to voting Tory; were re-centred briefly by the Tories around the chauvinism whipped up by the Malvinas war, and today remain undecided as to their political direction. Labour has been pushed back to its basic working class bastion, and, even in today's conditions, trail the Tories in the polls. It is from this point of view that a fundamentally new development within the workers movement is beginning to emerge.

The only prospect for a Labour victory and for driving forward the reform movements in the Party and the unions was for the minority of the workers movement around Benn and his counterparty in the unions, Arthur Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers, is to take the lead inside the working class movement as a whole. And it is precisely that which is beginning to be posed by the current upsurge of the mass movement and the trade unions. Whatever the manoeuvres of the labour bureaucracy, thousands of workers no longer believe that vigorous industrial struggle disrupts the prospects of a Labour victory. On the contrary, in however unformed and confused a way, the mood is gaining ground that only the bitterest fightback against the government has any chance of changing the political relation of forces within the *working class itself*. ■



# The end of an era in West Germany

Winfried WOLF

"I am proud of our joint endeavors, and I remain as unequivocally committed as ever to everything on which we agreed before today." Helmut Schmidt on September 17, 1982, in the Bundestag. He said this in his speech reporting the breakup of the SPD's coalition with the FDP.

"A great man comes along only every ten years. Who paid the price?" Berthold Brecht.

With the breakup of the coalition between the Social Democrats (SPD) and the liberals (FDP), an era in the history of West German society came to an end. For 13 years the SPD was the leading party in Bonn and formed the government in coalition with the small FDP. In fact, the SPD has been in government for 16 years. Between 1966 and 1969, it shared governmental responsibility with the biggest bourgeois party, the CDU/CSU in a Great Coalition. This is the longest period in the history of the German Social Democracy that it has held the helm of the bourgeois state.

The breakup of the SPD/FDP coalition came about in a spectacular way. The SPD, which has been on the defensive since 1980 and been suffering catastrophic defeats in one state election after another, broke up the coalition on its own initiative.

Helmut Schmidt — who for years acted like a captive of the bourgeois liberals — took advantage of a proposal made in writing by his liberal Economic Minister Count Lambsdorff for a severe austerity program to throw the liberals out of the government.

Of course, the liberal party had an undeclared intention to shift from the SPD to the CDU in the near future, and thereby to bring down the Schmidt government. However, the FDP did not plan to do this so soon. Schmidt and the SPD leadership called their hand, and thereby gained the offensive.

The peculiarities of this breakup of the coalition are being widely discussed in West Germany and in the German media. "A masterpiece of finesse," is what the *Handelblatt*, the mouthpiece of West German capital, called Helmut Schmidt's coup. And Rudolf Augstein, the chief of West Germany's biggest political magazine, *Der Spiegel*, joined in the applause: "Schmidt's speech made it clear what the country is losing." (When Schmidt leaves the premier's office.)

All of this is the sort of superficial sound and fury with which the bourgeois press accompanies a historic event. It has not, however, in any way explained the meaning of this change nor the real reasons for the breakup of the coalition regime.

*Le Monde* had, nonetheless, touched on the grave underlying question when it wrote: "Is the economic crisis making the democracies ungovernable? One could wonder when we see Schmidt and his government making their adjustments to the current of discontent that more or less everywhere in Europe is leading to the 'ins being thrown out,' regardless of their political complexion. The West German case is all the more spectacular because that country held up the longest and the best against the recession." (September 9, 1982).

The underlying causes of the coalition breakup were well pinpointed by the *Financial Times*:

"The prospect of economic growth in 1983 and of unemployment in West Germany rising to 2 million prompted the two men [Schmidt and Genscher (the FDP leader)] to move in opposite directions." (September 20, 1982)

## THE STABLE WEST GERMANY UNDER ADENAUER

The Federal Republic is the world's second strongest imperialist country and the dominant economic power in the Common Market. Up until now, it has undoubtedly enjoyed an economic and political stability that has scarcely any parallel. This stability stands in diametrical opposition to the situation that existed in Germany between the two world wars, in which the class struggle led to the emergence of several revolutionary crises (1918, 1933, and 1930-33).

This interwar history, however, explains the essential reasons for the long period of political stability following the second world war. The crucial events were the defeats the workers suffered in these crises; fascism, which involved the smashing of the workers organisations; the second world war itself and the partition of Germany; and finally the defeat of the struggles in defense of democratic rights in 1945-52. These episodes broke the back of the German workers movement and left it politically disarmed. Such a cumulation of grave defeats must be unique in the history of the modern workers movement.

If you consider that the weight of all these defeats fell in three decades (1918-1948) on a generation of young revolutionary workers, then you can get a rough idea of the impact of this course of events.

For the masses, working-class and revolutionary consciousness was not just undermined, it was shattered. This was the essential foundation of the capitalist rump state that arose in 1949 on the territory of the former U.S., French, and British occupation zones, and which was built up under the protection of the imperialist Allies.

Despite the discrediting of the bourgeoisie in the eyes of the masses, owing to fascism and the world war, a bloc of bourgeois parties headed by the newly formed Christian Democratic Party (CDU/CSU) was able to win a majority in the first parliamentary elections in 1949 and to form the government of the new state under the leadership of the conservative CDU leader, Konrad Adenauer (1).

The 1952 elections resulted in another severe defeat for the SPD at the hands of the CDU. The situation created by the bourgeois restoration between these two elections deepened the demoralization of the workers movement. The Adenauer government put the seal on the partition of Germany, by driving forward the integration of the Western rump state into the imperialist bloc.

The currency reform carried out by this government amounted to a forcible expropriation of the "small savers" and fell almost exclusively on wage earners. A law establishing solid capitalist authority relations in the plants, the Structure of Enterprises Law ("*Betriebsverfassungsgesetz*"), was imposed in 1951-52, despite the fact that there was a mass strike against it.

Then, with the onset of the Korean war, the Western rump state experienced the beginnings of the long economic boom.

This development could not fail to be reflected in the SPD itself. This party was

1. It has, however, to be realized that at this time the bourgeoisie could not openly avow a bourgeois ideology. The CDU program, for example, claims to be against capitalist society (as well as against the system of "the Eastern type," such as the East German). The then still young CDU/SCU politician F.J. Strauss said that "German hands will never again take up arms." The boss of the biggest arms producer, Krupp, publicly pledged never to engage in arms production again. Adenauer himself never had any connection with the Nazis. Overall, in 1949, the bourgeoisie operated under the cover of populism.



built up in a rather artificial way after the war from the top down and with strong support by the allies. The capitalist restoration and the electoral defeats in 1949 and 1952 impelled a trend further to the right within the party. It was led by the three figures that formed the leading "Troika" in the SPD in the 1960s and 1970s — Herbert Wehner, Willy Brandt, and Helmut Schmidt.

This rightward trend led to the adoption of the Bad Godesberg program in 1959, which remains the official programmatic underpinning of the SPD to this day. It expresses support for the "market economy," and invokes only the vaguest continuity with the traditions of the German workers movement.

The "socialist goal" disappears for all practical purposes. The only trace left is a few vague formulas about "democratic socialism." Shortly after the Bad Godesberg congress, the SPD leadership came out in support of NATO. This was the final seal in the integration of the restored capitalist society of West Germany into world imperialism.

In the last big oppositionist mass movements before the SPD came into the government, such as the Easter March movement against atomic weapons, the party failed to play any significant role. This was quite different from the situation in the similar mass mobilizations of the 1950s, such as the "St. Paul's Church Movement" against the rearmament of West Germany; and in the "Fight Nuclear Death" Movement against atomic weapons.

The role and development of the SPD in the 1950s, up to the mid-1960s, can be summarized as follows:

It remained the main party of the wage earners, and on the electoral level even gained *increasing* support from the wage earners. On the other hand, it moved continually rightward, losing many of the characteristics of classical reformist parties. It has not, however, cast off its fundamental nature as a bourgeois workers party. In this respect, there was a correspondence between the very extensive integration of the SPD into the bourgeois system and the evolution of class consciousness explained by the historical background outlined above.

By the mid-1960s, the party had been pulled so far over to the bourgeois side that even the highly suspicious West German bourgeoisie regarded it as a party that could be "trusted in government."

## THE PRACTICAL TEST — THE GREAT COALITION

In the mid-1960s, some changes appeared in the political landscape of the Federal Republic. In 1966-67, we saw our first recession, as insignificant as it may seem in comparison with the present one (2). At the same time, social unrest developed among coalminers, as a result of massive layoffs. Finally, the first signs appeared of student protest, which were soon to turn into the student rebellion of the "Extra-parliamentary Opposition."

The CDU/CSU and the FDP (3), continuing to govern in one coalition after another, were running out of steam. With respect to economic policy and readjusting relations with East Germany and the other East European countries, this bourgeois bloc had failed to show the necessary flexibility.

So, in December 1966, a Great Coalition was set up, including the CDU/CSU and the SPD. It is illustrative of the character of the SPD leadership that the change in government came about at that time in exactly the same way as it has in 1982, but now the party leaders find it expedient to strike a critical pose. That is, the change of government came about within the parliament without new elections as a result solely of the alliances made by the party tops.

An official SPD statement correctly summarized the party's role in the National Coalition as follows: "In this situation, the SPD helped once again to pull the chestnuts out of the fire." The most important results of the National Coalition were the following:

—Passage of the "Emergency Laws" that were to be applied in the event of war or "domestic emergency," legislation for which there was no provision in the West German constitution. Since the constitution could be altered only by a two thirds majority, the bourgeois parties needed the votes of the SPD (and therefore the National Coalition).

—The introduction of a new "Policy Toward the East," which would be based on the new realities that had emerged in Eastern Europe.

## POLITICAL STABILITY UNDER SPD GOVERNMENT

The 1969 elections brought an SPD victory. In the meantime, the liberal party, the FDP, had indicated its readiness to join in a coalition with the SPD. The result was the formation of a "small coalition" of the FDP and the SPD. In 1969, probably no one thought that this coalition would last for 13 years and serve for such a long time as the basis for relative political stability.

Almost everywhere else big political shakeups occurred in this period. In Great Britain, there was a changing from Labour to Conservative governments and back again. In France, the Gaullist led government was replaced by a new

2. For a few months, the unemployed figure reached 700,000: and there was a stagnation for a brief period in the Gross National Product. A new boom began in 1967. It was frequently ascribed to the "new economic policy" carried out under the SPD economic minister, Schiller. This was wrong, however. The decisive thing was the absence of international recession, and the resulting possibility for a new export offensive by West German industry.

3. The CDU does not participate in elections in the state of Bavaria. It leaves that area to its sister party, the Christlich-Soziale Union, the Social Christian Union (CSU). The CSU has considerable autonomy, and under Franz-Josef Strauss has assumed the role of a right wing.

4. In 1969-74, Brandt (SPD) was chancellor and Scheel (FDP) and Genscher (FDP) served respectively as foreign minister. (Scheel later became president). Schmidt held various portfolios; and from 1969 to 1982 Wehner served as

bourgeois bloc under Giscard d'Estaing; and finally, Giscard himself, a bosom buddy of Schmidt, was ousted by Mitterrand. In Sweden, the bourgeois parties ousted the Social Democrats for the first time in 44 years. The Franco regime fell, and both Spain and Portugal went through revolutionary crises. The U.S. was rocked by the anti-Vietnam war movement and the Watergate affair, and the government changed hands back and forth between the Republicans and Democrats. But over this entire period, the government in Bonn continued to be led by the SPD and based on the SPD/FDP coalition. There was also a striking continuity of the political personnel. (4)

At first glance, this situation seems to contradict the general experience that in the crisis of late capitalism, bourgeois workers parties have only a very limited reliability as parties that can run the government in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

What made such a contradiction possible, on the one hand, is the relative strength of West German imperialism. This was a powerful factor up to the end of the 1970s, and continues to have an effect (5). On the other hand, what the wage earners expected from the SPD in government was relatively modest. The historical reasons for this have been noted. Thus, from the mid-1970s onward, the SPD was able to carry out a bourgeois policy for combating the economic crisis without encountering substantial opposition.

The results of 13 years of SPD dominated government now, when the Brandt-Schmidt era is coming to an end, can be used to build up a kind of political mythology. The SPD itself is promoting this. 1969-82 is presented as a period of social reform, social welfare, and wide-ranging democracy, as opposed to which the CDU/CSU-led government now is supposed to represent counterreform, cutbacks, and a "strong state." But the SPD cannot escape its historical responsibility so easily. An objective balance sheet would have to take the following lines:

(1) In the field of social and economic policy, there were a few small reforms (e.g. lowering of the retirement age). But as a rule, projects for reform were reduced to ruins or pure hot air the moment the conservatives put up any resistance, as in the case of the law against real estate speculation, abolition

head of the SPD parliamentary fraction. Schmidt replaced Brandt as chancellor in 1974 and remained in this post until 1982. Genscher was always the second man in Schmidt's cabinets. Throughout this period, Brandt retained considerable influence as party chairman and chairman of the Second International. 5. Since the 1974-75 economic crisis, I have analyzed this specific situation of West German imperialism, its "relative strength," and at the same time the decline of the special factors that produced this position of strength. See English-language *Inprecor*, January 1975, "The Relative Strength of German Capitalism"; and June 28, 1975, "Not Yet an Upturn". I also did this in the context of analyses of the world economic crisis of 1980-82. See the French *Inprecor*, January 17, 1980, "La nouvelle recession internationale en 1980," and February 16, 1981, "La spirale des recessions ne peut s'elargir a l'infini."



of Section 218 banning abortion, giving priority to public mass transportation over highway building, and apprenticeship programs.

Up until the mid-1970s, wage earners enjoyed steady improvement in their living standards and level of social security. This was the result, however, not so much of the policies of the SPD-led government but of the bigger strikes and mass mobilizations in 1969-74. (6). This fact was reflected in the slogan that was common in the workers mobilizations of the time: "We get only what we take!"

In the last two years, in the conditions of the recent crisis, the SPD in government went over to a policy of social cut-backs. A clear index of this is the budget they themselves introduced, which called for reducing social appropriations by 10%, while arms expenditures were increased by 4%.

In the 1980s, for the first time in the history of the Federal Republic, there have been perceptible drops in real wages (6% to 7% in 1980-82).

(2) In 1969, Willy Brandt came into government with the slogan "Dare to Try More Democracy." In fact, in the beginning of the 1970s the SPD-led government went over to a policy of dismantling democratic rights, using as a pretext the terrorist actions of the Red Army Faction led by Baader and Meinhof. This course went so far that the Russell Foundation thought it necessary to set up a tribunal in 1976 to study these developments.

It was Willy Brandt himself who initiated the decrees calling for the banning of "radicals from public service", thereby helping to spread a new ugly German word around the world, *Berufsverbote* (political blacklisting). Under the Brandt and Schmidt governments, various repressive laws were passed, which made it a criminal offense to propagate revolutionary ideas (the new "violence" sections, Section 88a and Section 130a) and which limited the rights of the defense in political trials (the law denying lawyers access to their clients).

In no previous period were the various secret services and "anti-terrorist units" so beefed up, and the possibilities for massive electronic surveillance as unscrupulously used as in 1969-72. The bourgeois bloc that is now taking office will find an apparatus of surveillance that meets the most advanced demands of bourgeois repression, and it will know how to make use of it.

(3) In the field of foreign policy, Bonn's "Ostpolitik" is often cited as a positive example. Of course, it was a step forward for West German governments to recognize, to a considerable extent, the economic realities in Eastern Europe, and stop proclaiming that these had to be changed by means of force.

Nonetheless, the SPD has never taken any initiative to challenge the essential juridical basis for revanchism, the constitution itself (7). Moreover, it should be noted that the new East European policy was a precondition for expanding trade



Helmut Schmidt (DR).

with East Europe, and in a period of growing crisis West German interest had a big interest in such a new export outlet. In line with this, the proportion of total exports represented by trade with East Europe doubled.

If other areas of foreign policy are taken into account, the balance sheet looks different. For example, the Federal Republic under the SPD-led government was the U.S.'s most reliable partner in Europe. Even at the peak of the U.S.'s genocidal policy in Vietnam, neither the government nor the SPD raised any protest.

Schmidt even claims to be the father of the notorious "two-track decision" of NATO, whose logic led to the stationing of a new generation of intermediate-range U.S. missiles in Europe, starting in 1983.

In Portugal, at the height of the revolutionary crisis, the SPD, through the Portuguese SP under Soares, which it built up, carried out an effective policy of containing the revolutionary upsurge. And if Felipe Gonzalez becomes the premier of Spain tomorrow and carries out a bourgeois policy for dealing with the crisis under the banner of the PSOE, this party and Gonzalez himself are also a product of the "SPD foreign policy" (8).

Finally, another result of the SPD-led governments is that the collaboration and economic involvement of the Federal Republics with bourgeois terror regimes has remained close, and to some extent been expanded. Thus, West German ex-

ports to the Shah's Iran rose from 928 million Deutsch Marks in 1967 to 5.2 billion in 1975. Exports to racist South Africa rose from 1.2 billion Deutsch Marks in 1967 to 3.4 billion in 1975. The same thing can be seen for the same period with respect to the dictatorships of Brazil, Indonesia, South Korea, Taiwan, and others.

#### THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMY

The decisive reason for the change in Bonn is the fact that the Federal Republic has now come fully into the grip of the capitalist crisis. For two years, since the middle of 1980, the economy has been stagnating.

The number of bankruptcies has been increasing rapidly. It has gone from 4,000 in 1970, to 9,000 in 1975, to 15,000 in 1982. This includes the biggest failure in the history of European capitalism, the collapse of AEG-Telefunken.

In recent months, the decisive impetus to frenetic trading and speculation, threatening to bring about an international financial crash, has been generated by West German banks. In particular, the Dresdner Bank, the second biggest in the country, has accumulated a large number of high-risk paper, including a large part of the Polish government debt and the debts of the AEG.

6. Roughly, the evolution of per capita real wages was as follows in West Germany: 1969-1974, a more than 30% increase; 1975, slight decline; 1976-79, stagnation; 1980-82, first major decline.

If the other factors that determine the standard of living are taken into consideration, the picture looks somewhat better. For example, there has been a constant increase in vacations. This rose from 21 days of annual leave in 1969 to 23 in 1975, and 30 in 1982. 7. The Bonn constitution is supposed to apply to all Germans, including those who live in East

Germany, and the former eastern territories [annexed by Poland and the USSR].

8. The SPD conducts its own foreign policy outside of the government, that is, in the framework of the Second International, partly through the Friedrich Ebert Institute. This policy cannot, to be sure, be simply described as counterrevolutionary. It is not that today with respect to El Salvador. In certain specific situations, especially revolutionary crises, it inevitably becomes an instrument of counterrevolution.



In the same period, the Federal Republic has acquired a massive deficit. Payment and interest on the debt has become the second largest item in the budget and will become the biggest in 1984.

This situation demands a different bourgeois policy, the one advocated by the CDU/CSU but also by the SPD's former coalition partner, the FDP. It includes the following points:

—A drastic assault on the underpinnings of the social welfare system, including a sharp lowering of unemployment insurance.

—A massive shift in public spending away from expenditures on social welfare toward bailing out businesses and investment programs for certain industries. A big role will be played in this by an accelerated program of building nuclear reactors (9). Finally, the West German armaments industry will be further concentrated and built up, bringing the country into line in this area as well with the other imperialist states (the U.S., France, and Great Britain).

—The West German bourgeoisie has to be able to respond in a flexible way to the stepped up competition between the U.S. and Europe. While on some points, as the Schmidt government has done (on the natural gas pipeline, for example) U.S. demands will be rejected — the West German interests involved here were too great — on others Bonn will go along meekly with U.S. policy. This has been the case for example with respect to the stationing of new U.S. missiles in Europe beginning in 1983.

In the longer term, there could be a change in Bonn's East European policy — that is, a reduction in trade and the adoption of an aggressive blackmailing policy toward the USSR, East Germany, and Poland. Such a shift could easily suit the West German capitalists, if it is not carried out in an abrupt way.

The economic crisis in East Europe is evident today and the possibilities for new export orders have long been exhausted. Thus, after the completion of the natural gas pipeline deal, there is not much more to be gained in this area.

The best "climate" for carrying out such a policy is high and rising unemployment. In mid-1982, the number of unemployed was 1.8 million, and in the winter of 1982-83, this figure will exceed 2 million for the first time, and should reach an average of 2.3 million for 1983. A further prolonging of the crisis and a severe austerity policy could even push the figure up over 3 million at the end of 1983. It is hard to conceive of a policy permitting such a growth of unemployment being carried out in the present circumstances with the SPD as the government party. On the other hand, a bourgeois bloc of the CDU/CSU and the FDP can pursue such a policy, claiming that the economic policy of the previous government has made this necessary, and that now it has to clean out the "Augean Stables."

This turn in the bourgeoisie's policy is in fact a sharpening of the policy that has been introduced by the SPD itself in recent years. However, the SPD is not equipt to implement this turn fully. In its last two years in government, it already lost a considerable part of its capacity to keep the workers quiet. This was reflected, among other things, in the massive defeats it suffered in state elections.

At the SPD congress this April, the writing could already be seen on the wall: "The days of the SPD-dominated government seem numbered in any case (10)." Under the pressure of their ranks, the unions called for big mobilizations this fall against social cutbacks and unemployment. This is the first time since 1969 that they have considered mobilizing against the SPD on a political question.

Finally, the threat was looming that in 1983 the mass peace movement would shake the Schmidt position and push the SPD in the decisive year to oppose the stationing of new U.S. Intermediate range missiles in Europe.

#### A STABLE BOURGEOIS GOVERNMENT?

The stockmarket reacted euphorically to Helmut Schmidt's departure. The price index rose by 10%. The bourgeois press greeted the change with a chorus of applause. The big bourgeois commentators are even saying openly that the SPD should move to the left in the opposition so that it can regain control of the peace movement and the class struggle forces in the trade-union movement and thereby help once again to assure bourgeois stability (11).

This perspective can, however, by no means be assured. It leaves out of consideration the problem of the international relationship of forces. And that cannot in any way be said to be turning everywhere to the right. (The cases of France, Spain, and Sweden indicate otherwise.) Moreover, such a projection fails to take sufficient account of three domestic factors: "the first is, that the new elections could produce a result promising anything but stability and consolidation ... It is also possible that the Greens — amorphous movement embracing ecologists, critics of NATO and so on — might gain parliamentary seats while the FDP got none. This could just open the door to an SPD minority government tolerated by the Greens ... This is not very likely ... but also not impossible and one international factor — the second warning point — might help them. This is the NATO's so-called 'two-

9. The powerful antinuclear movement that arose in West Germany in 1975-79 forced a de facto moratorium on the construction of new nuclear reactors and related facilities. As a result, the French nuclear industry pushed the West German one into second place.

10. See the balance sheet I made of the SPD congress in *International Viewpoint*, May 24, 1982. The title of the English version ("Party Majority Supports Peace Movement Position") was not mine and was misleading, since the majority voted against the peace movement's position.

11. The leading bourgeois journal, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, writes in a com-

track' decision ... As the deadline approaches, opposition to deployment of nuclear missiles seems bound to rise and could help unite the Greens and other groups. Finally an era of consolidation presupposes that the present recession throughout the western world does not turn into deep depression (12)."

Is there any reason why, as a conclusion for this kind of article, I should not quote an analysis by someone on the side of the class enemy — *The Financial Times* — when it is intelligent and more or less correct?

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The preceding article was written before the September 27, 1982, Hessen state elections. The results of this election are disappointing for the bourgeoisie, and confirm the conclusion of this article. The shift in Bonn in no way means that a period of bourgeois stability is being ushered in.

The FDP vote was reduced from 6.6% to 3.1%. Thus, the party lost its representation in parliament, since it fell below the 5% threshold. On the other hand, winning 8%, the Greens topped the undemocratic 5% barrier. The SPD suffered only minor losses (-1.5%), winning 42.8%.

The CDU remained the strongest single party, winning 45.6%, almost the same result as in previous years.

The division of the seats in the state parliament is as follows: 52 for the CDU, 49 for the SPD, and 9 for the Greens. This result contrasts with the results of previous elections in other states and with the predictions of the opinion polls, which projected CDU gains of 6% to 10% and corresponding losses for the SPD. Obviously the events in Bonn have led to a polarization, in which the SPD in particular has been able to mobilize its electoral support.

"Hesse is ungovernable," was the uniform comment of bourgeois circles. And they all fear that a similar relationship of forces could develop on the national level, if the early elections envisaged are held.

Of course, Hesse is governable, and West Germany would be governable if a national election produced a similar lineup. But it would be presided over by a very unstable bourgeois government, one formed by the SPD and tolerated by the Greens. Such a government would not be able to push through the austerity policy the bourgeoisie wants. And so the bourgeoisie has to fear a lineup of this sort, and therefore cannot look forward to new elections without apprehension.

mentary on September 23, 1982: "The SPD members and voters are beginning to get the feeling that the luster of the big people's party cannot be maintained over the 1980s." And the leading business paper, *Handelsblatt* expressed its approval on September 20, 1982, when Willy Brandt said that the SPD now wanted "to pay more attention to critically minded workers and shop stewards in the factories" and to the peace movement. "Channelling these forces can not only benefit the SPD but the state as a whole." 12. Jonathan Carr, "A New Political Era Opens," in the *Financial Times* of September 20, 1982.



# More than 200,000 people attended our election meetings

The Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT — Revolutionary Workers Party) Mexican section of the Fourth International, has just led a very dynamic and effective election campaign around the candidacy of Rosario Ibarra de Piedra for president, and dozens of PRT activists and supporters in the local legislative elections which took place at the same time.

Through this campaign the PRT won registration as a legally recognized political party. This gives it the right to participate in elections, and to have other rights such as regular television

broadcasts.

In *International Viewpoint* we have carried regular coverage of the progress of the campaign. In IV Issue No 13 we described the massive electoral fraud that had robbed the PRT of its representatives in Parliament.

Edgard Sanchez, member of the Political Bureau of the PRT, spoke to Fernando Zamora in Mexico City on September 1 explaining how the PRT assesses the outcome of the election campaign.

*Question: How does the PRT analyze the general results of the July 4 Mexican presidential elections?*

*Answer:* Among the most significant aspects of the results of the elections was the reduction in the rate of abstentionism. Previously about 50 per cent of the electorate had abstained from voting, while in these elections this figure dropped to 30-40 per cent.

This drop in abstentionism does not at all mean new support for the PRI, Mexico's governing bourgeois party which has been in power for more than 50 years. In fact, the percentage of the votes obtained by the PRI had gone down. Those who benefited by the increase of new voters were fundamentally those parties who were able to attract these new sectors, fundamentally the bourgeois opposition party, the PAN, and the PRT.

Other parties tended to maintain their previous percentages in these elections. The PSUM (Partido Socialista Unificado de Mexico, a fusion of the old Communist Party with several small Stalinist sects) increased their overall vote, but proportionally remained the same. There was also a marked tendency of those parties most closely associated with the PRI such as the right wing PARM, the PST (Socialist Workers Party) and the PPS (Partido Popular Socialista, a party which traces its ideological and organizational roots to Lombardo Toledano) to decrease their percentages. In fact, the PARM fell below the minimum needed to maintain itself as a registered political party.

It is also obvious that the regime was able to generate some political hopes through its much touted political reform. One result of this was an increased interest and participation in the electoral process by workers.

I'd like to briefly discuss the results of the PAN whose vote increase is particularly significant. The PAN went from 10

per cent in previous elections to some 25 per cent (14 per cent according to the government). Our analysis is that this vote does not reflect a right wing shift on the part of broad sectors of the population. Rather the fact that opposition to the government in the electoral arena is still not reflected through a class vote. There has undoubtedly been a more belligerent attitude on the part of the right wing, both in the election campaign as well as since then, particularly around the rumours being spread concerning the economic crisis. However the vote for the PAN was not a vote for their reactionary positions, for example, to the right of the PRI on questions such as Central America and austerity. Rather it reflects a protest vote against the PRI. It is an expression of social discontent.

This is obvious when one looks at the vote in those sectors of the working class which have a history of trade union experiences and struggles, such as the mineworkers of Monclova, the slum dwellers of Naucalpan and Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl. Despite a history of social struggles, these areas gave strong votes to the PAN. In fact, in Naucalpan, located in the industrial belt outside Mexico City, the PAN scored its only recognized electoral victory. In Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, a slum neighborhood of some 3,000,000 inhabitants the election results have been disqualified due to blatant irregularities on the day of the voting. There has not been an increase in PAN membership, although there has been a certain support for the PAN's denunciations of widespread electoral fraud.

There is a real danger however that Mexico might be moving towards a two party system. For example, in the parliamentary chamber corresponding to proportional representation, of 100 deputies, the PAN has exactly half.

One interesting sidelight of all this is that the PSUM was on a campaign within the left to promote the concept of a "productive vote", that is, to vote for the PSUM and not the PRT. In reality what happened was that it was the PAN who

gained from this idea of a "productive vote" and the PSUM's campaign was in reality counterproductive for their own party.

So, in short, we have a greater electoral participation by workers but on the other hand a real contradiction between their social struggles and the fact that they are politically voting for bourgeois parties.

*Q: What type of campaign did the PRT wage? What were some of its highlights?*

*A:* The PRT had an activist campaign from the beginning to the end, and a very dynamic one at that.

We calculated that just in the final six months of the campaign some 200,000 attended rallies for Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, our presidential candidate. This does not include figures for people who attended rallies for local candidates.

The PRT's closing campaign rally was attended by between 40-50,000 people, according to the bourgeois press. About 4,500 came from the provinces, and the remainder from the Mexico City area, which reflects a real implantation of the party in the Valley of Mexico. The vast majority of people marched behind the banners of the PRT in this demonstration. The PSUM rally was also very significant. Some 100,000 filled the Zocalo, the seat of the government. The other parties, except of course the PRI, had very small rallies. The PPS for example, had a rally of only 1,000 people to end their campaign.

The TV programs also had a big impact. From last August until June we had a monthly program of 15 minutes aired on all TV stations, usually in the early evening hours. In the last four months we had an additional 5 minute program per month. Our message reached literally millions of people. We were able to gauge the impact of these programs by the fact that when we gave the phone numbers for the PRT headquarters, we were flooded with telephone calls from listeners asking to join the party.



Different sectors of society looked upon the campaign as their own. There were womens support committees formed in some 10 cities. In Mexico City they were fundamentally made up of activists from the womens liberation movement, but in most of the provincial cities they were made up, in their majority, of peasants, women workers, and housewives, who wanted to emphasize the importance of womens participation in political life, economic demands, etc. A central rally of these committees took place in Mexico City in March to launch a Front of Committees in Support of Rosario Ibarra. The PRT had the highest percentage of women candidates of any political party.

Mexico's gay movement threw itself behind the campaign in a big way. All over the country chapters of the Committee of Lesbians and Homosexuals in support of Rosario Ibarra (CLHARI) were formed and three leaders of the gay movement ran on the PRT lists. The CLHARI was well organized and active throughout the campaign. It is interesting to note that the only PRT rally physically attacked during the course of the campaign was one organized by the CLHARI in Mexico City. For the first time ever, the gay movement successfully defended its right to hold a public rally, and the following week another rally in the same site was held without incidents

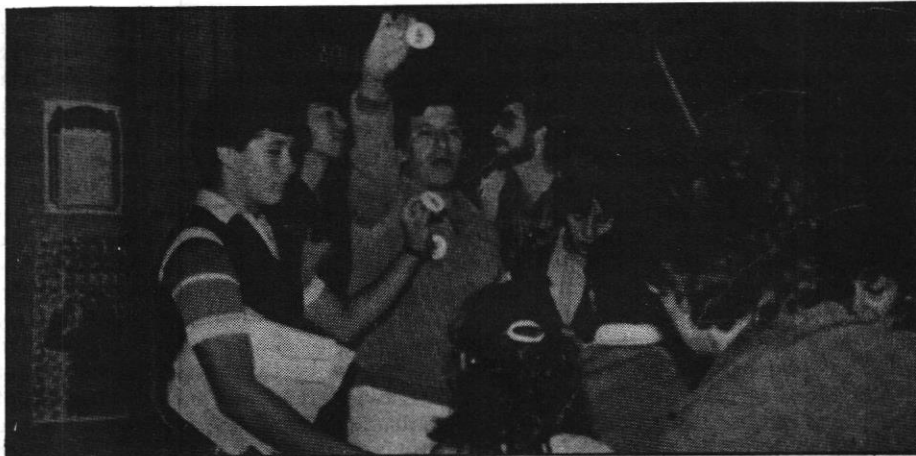
In three universities, those of Baja California Norte, Guadalajara and Monterrey, groups of *porros*, groups of right wing thugs, tried to prevent Rosario from entering the university. In these universities, repression had prevented the student movement from really developing. The successful organization of rallies on these campuses was a great help to the student movement as a whole.

The campaign was able to visit practically all the prisons in Mexico. As such it was the human rights campaign. During the course of the campaign several of the political prisoners who we were demanding freedom for, were released. However the real result of the campaign has just been registered this past week with the granting of a very broad amnesty which frees all political prisoners, although it still does not successfully resolve the problem of the 500 "disappeared" com-pañeros.

Among peasants the campaign had important support. The majority of the peasant organizations not controlled by the government officially gave their support to the campaign. Most of those that declined to do so adopted an abstentionist position on the elections.

I'd also like to mention that we held rallies on the two Mexican borders, that is, on the US border in support of the undocumented workers and on the Guatemalan border in support of the Central American revolution. Needless to say, we were the only election campaign that did such a thing.

Finally, we were able to use the campaign effectively in the trade union sector as well. Rosario was present in all the key



Mexican PRT campaign supporters (DR)

strikes that took place during the entire campaign period and hundreds of meetings and rallies were organized in working class neighborhoods from one end of the country to the other. It's worth pointing out that the majority of the PRT's votes came from working class, peasant, and poor areas.

**Q: What were the PRT's electoral results?**

**A:** The official government figures credit us with some 416,000 votes for president, although we calculate that we received far more than that. Even if we accept the official government results, it places us in fourth place nationally.

As I said before, the new votes went fundamentally for the PAN and the PRT. In our case, we attracted newly radicalized sectors who previously never took part in elections. In this sense, we did not have a traditional electorate, to say nothing of previous experience as a party in this type of campaign. Therefore being in fourth place is particularly significant.

We didn't expect such a high vote. Generally in election campaigns of radical parties, there's lots of success in terms of mobilizations but not in terms of votes. In our case, there was a correlation between the two, as can be seen by comparing statistics on attendance at PRT rallies and our vote. Rosario's meetings were generally the largest of any party, except those of the PRI, of course, and we campaigned in 29 or the 32 states of the Mexican republic.

This national implantation of the PRT is very important. We were in fourth place throughout the country, and on a local level, that is, where we ran local election campaigns for our 171 district candidates there was also a tendency to come in fourth place. In two states, Baja California Sur, where we had candidates running in all the districts, and Morelos, a state with a new industrial proletariat and a peasantry with a revolutionary tradition dating back to the days of Zapata, we were in third place, out of nine parties.

In the Valley of Mexico, which includes Mexico City, we received our greatest number of votes, some 150,000, in the city alone.

Finally, it should be mentioned that we had to organize a small army of poll watchers the day of the elections to try to reduce the possibility of electoral fraud. This was particularly difficult since

such poll watchers could not be candidates or the party's representatives on the district electoral bodies. These figures alone account for some 750 comrades. In Mexico City we were able to have representatives in about half of the 8,000 polling stations.

**Q: How extensive was the electoral fraud? Was it widely recognized as having occurred?**

**A:** The fraud was massive and widespread.

On July 5, the day after the elections, Olivares Santana, secretary of the Ministry of the Interior, Gobernacion, announced that they had computed 73 per cent of the polling places, that the PRT was in fourth place with 400,000 votes and the PSUM had 1,200,000 votes. One week later, the government announced that with 100 per cent counted, the PSUM had dropped to 800,000 votes, and the PRT from fourth to either fifth, sixth or seventh place, gaining only 20,000 additional votes.

Jose Angel Conchello, a PAN leader says that on July 5 at 6am the government knew that the PRI had received 8,000,000 votes, the PAN 7,000,000, the PSUM 2,300,000 and the PRT 1,200,000 and the other five parties lesser amounts. This has been backed up by an independent European investigator.

On July 4 itself we knew that there was serious fraud occurring, although it later became evident that the bulk of the fraud took place after July 4.

On election day, in various parts of the country, groups of soldiers were brought in block to vote, in the presence of their commanding officers. This in itself is completely illegal according to the governments own election laws. In addition, these soldiers did not appear in the electoral lists, which means they could vote again in different places.

In the city of Puebla many polling station opened one hour before the officially announced hour, in the absence of representatives of any of the opposition parties. When the poll watchers showed up at the scheduled hour, they found the ballot boxes full, the people supposedly having already voted.

In Monterrey, the third largest city in the country, the election day fraud was most obvious. Both the PAN and the PRT had expected to receive very high votes in



Monterrey, and in fact, the presidential candidates of both parties come from this city. Representatives of the opposition parties, in particular the PAN and the PRT, were physically thrown out of the polling stations. The bourgeois press has published accounts, along with the photographic evidence where possible, of transcripts of the police radio telling the police where to fill and refill ballot boxes with ballots marked for the PRI and where to bring the genuine ballot boxes, and where to throw away their votes. The press, as I said, has published photographs of the police carrying away ballot boxes, which is completely illegal under Mexican law, and of ripped up ballots scattered on the ground.

The PRT, which was expecting a good vote in Monterrey, actually wound up with below its national average. In the district where Rosario lives there was not a single vote for her. Much to the embarrassment of the local authorities, when she went to vote, her name had disappeared from the registration list.

However, as I said, the bulk of the fraud took place after July 4, in the one week period when the ballot boxes were in the hands of the government. The results were particularly modified in those areas where the only poll watcher was the PRI representative.

The most evident example of this fraud took place in the case of the PPS and PST, two reformist parties noted for their slavish support and dependence on the PRI. The votes of these parties were grossly increased so as to assure them parliamentary representation as payment for their opportunist political support. In many cases the PRI simply gave their own votes in the proportional representation lists (where the PRI doesn't receive representation in any event) to other parties. For example, in Morelos the right wing PDM (Mexican Democratic Party) received some 7,000 votes in the presidential column while they are credited with almost four times as many in the proportional representation lists, something which would not normally occur, to say the least.

There were three objectives which the PRI hoped to get through the massive use of fraud:

Firstly, to increase the presidential vote of Miguel De la Madrid, PRI candidate. No one disputes him as the winner of course. But the PRI wanted a majority, not only of all those who voted, but indeed of the entire potential electorate. This is so as not to appear as a "minority government". Toward this end, the presidential vote of the PPS, who were supporting De la Madrid, was artificially increased, as well as that of the PRI itself.

Secondly, to reduce the electoral presence of the left, that is, the PSUM and the PRT.

Thirdly, to prevent the PRT from having parliamentary representation, since the PRT is known as the most revolutionary force in the country.

The mechanism by which this latter objective was carried out was through

falsifying the proportional representation lists. While in many rural areas the PPS has ten times as many proportional representation votes as they do presidential votes, for the PRT, we are credited with less votes. The government argues that voters wanted to vote for Rosario for president but not for the PRT. This is patently absurd even on the face of it. To begin with, Rosario was our number one candidate for parliament on the proportional representation lists, a fact widely publicized by the party. It is simply illogical to assume that someone would want her as president but not as a member of parliament. Secondly, even looking at the official government results, one can see clearly what the real score is. On the senatorial lists, the PRT had candidates in

only 37 per cent of the districts. On the "uninominal" district lists in only 57 per cent of the districts. The proportional representation lists were in 3 national districts, that is, the PRT had candidates in 100 per cent of the areas. Logically, 63 per cent of the people who voted for the PRT for the proportional representation list could not do so on a senatorial level and 43 per cent couldn't do so on a "uninominal" district level. Yet, according to the governments figures, the PRT's proportional representation, district representation and senatorial lists received approximately the same vote. If voters from only 37 per cent of the districts gave the PRT senatorial lists X number of votes, isn't it logical to assume that voters from 100 per cent of the

## Political prisoners freed

On September 1, 1982, as part of the annual Presidential Report, Mexican President Lopez Portillo declared an amnesty for 40 political prisoners. The decree encompasses the majority of political prisoners held in jail, although it is, at the same time, partial in that there are still scores of political prisoners, mainly peasants, jailed in connection with land seizures, who remain in jail, and approximately 500 "disappeared" companions. Lopez Portillo said not a word about these activists in his report, although their situation has been the focus of a long campaign waged by the Frente Nacional Contra la Represion, led by Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, presidential candidate of the PRT in the past presidential elections.

Among those amnestied are Juan Islas and Arturo Gallegos, members of the PRT, Mexican section of the Fourth International. These comrades left prison on September 1, following eight years behind bars.

Islas and Gallegos were active in the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR), an armed-struggle organization active in Mexico City and the states of Morelos and Guerrero. Despite attempts by the FAR to initiate discussions with other organizations involved in armed struggle activities and despite a process of political elaboration in its ranks, the combination of isolation from the masses, lack of political clarity, and ferocious police and military repression led to a process of disintegration of these type of political-military organizations.

In 1974 Gallegos and Islas were arrested. For four days they were "disappeared" in the infamous Mexican clandestine prisons, subjected to savage tortures. They were then presented to the legal authorities and accused of conspiracy, kidnapping and murder. Three years later they were sentenced to 36 years of prison.

For four years, seven months they were held in the Acapulco Prison. There they were threatened with death on various occasions by the

family of Margarita Saad, assassinated several years previously by the FAR, with whose death the comrades were charged. The most famous case occurred in January 1979 when a plot was discovered to murder the four political prisoners held in the Acapulco Jail. A group of common law prisoners were to receive 2,000,000 pesos (about 87,000 dollars), their release from prison, and security guards for their protection if they achieved their objective. The public exposure by other common prisoners of the plot together with the public campaign waged by the PRT and the FNCR prevented the plot from being carried out, and the prisoners involved in it finally "escaped" from the jail.

In 1979, following a process of political evolution and rethinking, Islas and Gallegos, together with three other political prisoners, joined the PRT. This process of political clarification included a balance sheet on the armed struggle experience in Mexico and the current needs of the revolutionary movement.

The liberation of the 40 political prisoners, and in particular of Gallegos and Islas, is a victory both for the FNCR and for the PRT. Both organizations had waged a relentless campaign over the years on behalf of these imprisoned militants which included tactics ranging from hunger strikes to mass marches involving tens of thousands.

In the case of Gallegos and Islas, the authorities had argued for years that the powerful financial groupings, the Monterrey Group and the Saad family were exercising strong pressure against the application of any amnesty decree. The release of Gallegos and Islas is therefore a particular triumph both for the mass movement in general and the PRT in particular.

The comrades are now active politically outside prison walls, both in the movement for the recovery of the 500 "disappeared", as well as in the PRT.



districts would give a much higher quantity?

The fraud has, however, been widely recognized as having taken place. Articles appear daily in the press on accusations and counter-accusations. Particularly in the radical movement there is consciousness on this. Practically all the left organizations that do not have the legal registration as well as the PSUM in Mexico City have protested the fraud against the PRT. This includes electoral allies of the PSUM such as the Corriente Socialista and the POS.

**Q:** What type of campaign did the PSUM run? What is the current situation with this party?

**A:** The PSUM had the widely publicized goal of being the second electoral force in the country, that is, behind the PAN. The results of the elections made this the PSUM's first debacle.

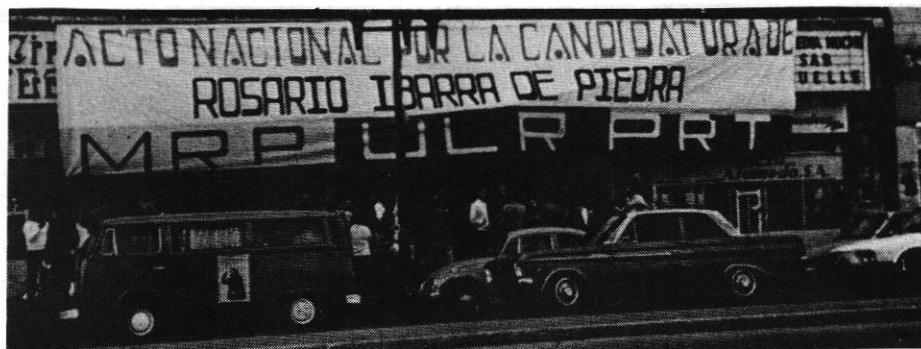
The PSUM had various factors working against them.

To begin with, the Mexican Communist Party's previous electoral experience was working against them. In a few words, it was nothing spectacular or attractive for the masses. The CP had done virtually nothing to link their parliamentary activity with the mass movement. In fact, inside the CP ranks there has been considerable criticism of their parliamentary orientation. Not too long ago a minority current known as the "renovadores" broke from the PSUM, criticizing, among other things, the CP's parliamentary experience.

The PSUM also wanted to take advantage of their recent foundation as the unitary party of the Mexican left. However this project was a failure when the most important and dynamic element in the fusion process which gave birth to the PSUM late last year, that is the PMT (Partido Mexicano de los Trabajadores, Mexican Workers Party) pulled out of the process.

The PSUM really did not run an active campaign. With the exception of their final rally of 100,000 in the Zocalo, their rallies tended to be much smaller than those of Rosario. During this whole period there have also been a series of internal crises in the PSUM, especially among the ex-CP ranks. In addition, there are a series of disagreements and fights amongst the various components that make up the PSUM. All this will of course intensify with the post-election period frustration which is a result of their having expected much better results.

The Mexico City base of the ex-CP want joint work and a series of agreements with the PRT. In the last few weeks we have been able to work closely with these companeros on a party to party level. The PSUM in Mexico City protested the electoral fraud, we have discussed a joint electoral balance sheet with them, and we co-sponsored a demonstration against the electoral fraud in which their speaker was Valentin Campa, veteran CP leader and presidential candidate in the 1976 elections. In this demonstration they supported the right of the



Mexican PRT election rally (DR)

PRT to have parliamentary representation, even though this would, of course, decrease the PSUM's representation in parliament due to the way the election law determines proportional parliamentary representation.

**Q:** How did the other Trotskyist groups relate to the election campaign?

**A:** The Liga Obrera Marxista (LOM-Marxist Workers League), the Lambertist organization in Mexico for the entire last year had a big campaign for one single candidate of the PSUM and the PRT. The campaign, modeled after their French organizations campaign for a joint CP-SP government, was a bit silly, collecting signatures for a PRT-PSUM ticket, etc. However we did support such an idea, and endorsed the campaign. At this time the LOM and the Morenista Partido Obrero Socialista (POS-Socialist Workers Party) were functioning virtually as a single party. The LOM continued to call for unity until the end of the campaign. Finally they urged a vote for either the PSUM or the PRT, without giving any preferences.

Despite a series of important political agreements, including concerning Poland, and the slogan of a workers and peasants government the POS inexplicably entered into an electoral alliance with the PSUM. This can be explained by their sectarianism or perhaps by their having received a spot on the PSUM ticket, or perhaps by a combination of both.

In this moment a split took place in the POS. While it was primarily due to international factors, one of the points in dispute was on electoral policy. The minority split off, known as the Liga Socialista (Socialist League, LS) and supported the PRT campaign.

The POS had virtually no participation in the electoral campaign. In fact, the PRT campaign produced a considerable amount of demoralization in the ranks of the Morenist group, and many of their members left, most leaving politics, but some supporting and some returning to the PRT.

I want to emphasize that all three groups — LOM, POS and LS — are really quite insignificant in the panorama of the Mexican left.

**Q:** Was the PRT able to strengthen itself organizationally during the course of the campaign?

**A:** Yes, very much so.

Out of the 32 states of the Mexican republic, we now have functioning PRT units in 29, which is a big advance for the

party. In general, we were able to experience significant growth during the campaign, and develop a very large periphery.

In addition, we were able to strengthen the national apparatus of the party, acquiring a new national headquarters, a print shop, expanding the number of full timers, etc.

In terms of recruitment, we were able to score important successes in sectors of the working class such as oil workers, textile workers, telephone workers and miners.

The central problem which we have is that we are still applying rigid criteria in terms of recruitment while at the same time the PRT's capacity to mobilize people has greatly increased.

We want to close this gap between our real periphery and audience and capacity to mobilize people and our recruitment policies. We have to strengthen the organization to be able to integrate the many new comrades who are today around the PRT.

**Q:** Many other left groups gave support to the PRT in the elections, some of them actively. What is happening with them?

**A:** It is true that many different groups on the left, in fact, the bulk of the far left gave the PRT support in the elections. Most of these groups came from Maoist or ultra-left backgrounds.

During the campaign itself we worked closely with the MRP (Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo, Revolutionary Movement of the People, an ex-Maoist group) and the ULR (Union de Lucha Revolucionaria, Union of Revolutionary Struggle, which has its traditions in the armed struggle groups of several years ago). And the Organizacion Comunista-Proletaria (Proletarian Communist Organization, of nationalist origin). Today we are in discussions with them with the idea of forming a permanent political current, that is a revolutionary wing, inside the general mass movement.

PAN - Partido de Accion Nacional  
PARM - Partido Autentico de la Revolucion Mexicana  
PRT - Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores  
PRI - Partido Revolucionario Institucional  
PST - Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores  
PPS - Partido Popular Socialista  
CLHARI - Comite de Lesbianas y Homosexuales en Apoyo a Rosario Ibarra  
LOM - Liga Obrera Marxista  
POS - Partido Obrero Socialista  
PDM - Partido Democraata Mexicano  
LS - Liga Socialista  
MRP - Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo  
ULR - Union de Lucha Revolucionaria  
PMT - Partido Mexicano de los Trabajadores



# Nine years after the coup—Chile: beginnings of political recomposition

On September 11, 1973, the Chilean military overturned the government of Salvador Allende. They thus brutally put an end to the revolutionary rise that Chile experienced after the electoral victory of the Unidad Popular (UP — Popular Unity) at the general elections of September 4, 1970.

Jair GIL

Under the effects of the new rise of class struggle in Latin America, marked particularly by the revolutionary developments in Central America, by sudden changes that affect other countries of the Southern Cone such as Argentina or Bolivia, and by the effects of the world economic crisis that are hitting Chile hard, the first cracks are appearing in General Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship. The workers and popular forces are reorganising themselves. A new process of political recomposition is taking place.

## THE DESTRUCTION OF CHILE

After September 1973, the military junta undertook the systematic destruction of workers and popular organisations. Massive repression, assassinations, imprisonment were daily occurrences. It was necessary to "root out Marxism to the third or fourth generation", according to the words of airforce general Leigh, member of the military junta.

This operation of annihilation was not confined to the workers movement. Almost ten years later, the Chilean military have also destroyed the economy, sold off the country's principal resources, and overturned the foundations of traditional Chilean society.

Since the 1920s, and up until September 1973, Chile went through a process of industrialisation that, apart from conjunctural variations and despite the deformations inherent in any dependent economy, developed in an almost continuous manner. This industrialisation shaped modern Chile.

By using the State as an essential lever, (particularly with the creation of CORFO — Corporación para el Fomento de la Producción — Productions Development Corporation), the economy was developed in a combined way:

— the creation of national industries under the control of the state (textile, steelworks, electricity, etc.)

— the "progressive Chileanisation" of mining resources, particularly copper, from the mid-60s under the Christian-Democratic government of Eduardo Frei;

Nine years after the *golpe*, the Chilean situation is still marked by the weight of this terrible defeat and the physical destruction that the Chilean workers movement underwent. Nevertheless, these last few years, the first signs of a change in the political situation have appeared.

— a hyper-protectionist customs policy that tended to limit imports;  
— a policy of agrarian reform, which could only be carried out to a limited degree because of the resistance of the landed oligarchy.

Thus, despite the existence of huge British and especially American companies after the Second World War (particularly the famous Anaconda or Kennecott Co in copper extraction), the country had a modest industrial development, scattered over small units of production, but concentrated in sectors such as metalworks, chemicals, and cellulose.

This is what determined the progressive marginalisation of the landed oligarchy to the benefit of the industrial bourgeoisie, the bloating of the public sector, and the integration into the civil service of the Chilean middle classes, the development of a proletariat concentrated in a few sectors, but especially in the mines.

These social transformations since the beginning of the century created a political terrain similar to that of more developed capitalist countries, with classic bourgeois parties such as liberals and conservatives, the the Democracia Cristiano (DC — Christian Democrats) and the Partido Nacional (PN — National Party), and mass independent working class parties such as the Partido Socialista (PS — Socialist Party) and the Partido Comunista de Chile (PCC — Chilean Communist Party). This is unique in Latin America.

It was this structure that was profoundly overturned by the military. The 1973 coup did not only restore the values of the reaction after having broken a revolutionary rise. It did not only wipe the slate clean of three years of the Popular Unity "experiment". It broke the entire dynamic of Chilean society since the 30s.

Effectively, the bourgeoisie made use of the new relationship of forces between the classes arising from the brutal defeat of the Chilean proletariat, in order to reorganise the capitalist economy, to increase the rate of exploitation of the workforce and to create the conditions for an economic recovery based on crushing the workers.

A first economic debate arose among the partisans of the military junta, between those who were advocating a corporatist model founded on a semi-autarchic economy (a project defended notably by Pablo Rodríguez and the leaders of the fascist movement "Homeland and Freedom", inspired by the example of Spain at the start of Francoism), and the supporters of a neo-liberal economic policy, totally opening Chile to the laws of the world market, conforming to the monetarist theories of economists of the Chicago School, disciples of Milton Friedmann, nicknamed the "Chicago Boys". The pressures of imperialism and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed maximal integration into the world market.

At a time when the crisis of overproduction was raging and the imperialist system was avidly searching for new markets, imperialism had to take full advantage of the new relationship of forces installed in 1973 to impose its demands on Chile. For the multinationals and the "financial transnationals", the country had to become a new market, that could be swamped with finished and semi-finished products (consumer durables, Japanese cars, textiles, steel, etc.) and with surplus American agricultural goods (wheat). It became a privileged hunting ground for financial and banking speculation.

The Chilean economic policy thus conformed to the needs of the IMF and the "Chicago Boys":

— putting into question the role of the state under the pretext of restoring private initiative;

— modernisation of production by letting the laws of competition run rampant and by suppressing any protective legislation of national industry and all customs barriers.

— refusal of any budget deficit by the suppression of a series of social services, and limitation of the role of the state in economic planning to the sole control of money supply.

This policy as a whole had profoundly devastating effects. It resulted in the privatisation of a series of sectors such as the wood industry, the steelworks, electricity and certain mineral resources, even



if the junta did not go as far as denationalisation of the principal copper mines. Key social services such as health, social security and education were dismantled. Teachers were turned into municipal employees. The establishment of the lowest tariff rights in the world opened the way to an invasion of imported products. Finally, the economic restructuring was conducted on the basis of a massive debt reaching more than 15 million dollars in 1982.

But the disaster was such that the state had to intervene in opposition to its own economic dogmas to redeem the mounting debts to private banks on the verge of bankruptcy. The effects of this policy were multiple:

— It provoked a collapse of the industrial apparatus: a reduction in production of 20 to 30% in textiles, of 50% in the steel industry, of almost 60% in construction;

— Bankruptcies multiplied in the industrial sector: 433 in 1981, already 500 in the first six months of 1982;

— It caused a fall in agricultural production: — 80% for the production of wheat for example;

— It engendered a galloping growth in unemployment. Chile went from 10% unemployment of the active population in the 60s to almost 30%, that is more than one million unemployed out of a total population of 10.5 million;

— It imposed a catastrophic reduction in buying power with a continual rise in prices. Similarly, constant pressure held down wages. Whereas productivity went up by 74% between 1976 and 1980, wages only went up by 42.5%. To get an idea of the standard of living of Chilean workers, the average salary of a worker is from 6,000 to 8,000 pesos, while the price of a kilo of bread is 40 pesos. In comparison with the price of the kilo of bread, the average Chilean salary would be equivalent to an average salary of £50 a month in Britain;

— Inequalities widened as the crisis progressed. In Santiago de Chile, the capital, one resident in 16 is homeless (the city has 3.4 million inhabitants). Whereas the per capita revenue in the bourgeois quarter of Providencia is estimated at 2,500 dollar per month, it is only 24 dollars in the working class suburb of Pudahuel. Whereas for one illiterate in 4,000 inhabitants in Providencia, there is one out of 35 in La Granja (another working class quarter). Soup-kitchens have multiplied in the shanty towns (*poblaciones*) of Santiago;

— There is a generalised financial crisis and a free fall in the value of Chilean money: the dollar has gone from 39 to 60 pesos, indeed 90 on the black market. The sector in debt is thus ruined and speculation is let loose.

These few facts offer a glimpse of the destruction that Chile has experienced and the social changes that have thus resulted. The liquidation of entire industrial sectors has shoved aside the industrial bourgeoisie to the profit of the new

sectors of finance capital closely tied to foreign capital. It is the financial groups linked to banking capital that today constitute the decisive economic press groups: Vial, Cruzat-Larrain, Angelini, Matte, Edwards.

The proletariat has maintained certain social positions, particularly in the mining bastions and the related industries, as well as in certain sectors indispensable to the internal market. But, with an unemployment rate of 30% added to the police repression, the working class has undergone a process of division and social atomisation. The division is particularly pronounced between those who have jobs and those who do not.

The petty bourgeoisie has undergone a process of proletarianisation, and even, in certain cases, of "lumpen-proletarianisation", as the small merchant or taxi driver who lose their business funds or their working equipment cannot, in these conditions, be integrated into the process of production. They survive by "odd jobs". Whereas formerly they had profited from the development of state services, the petty bourgeoisie is today ground down by the crisis. This is one of the most important transformations of Chilean society over the last few years.

As for the peasantry, who represent 20% of the active population, it is suffering from endemic unemployment tied to the lowering of wheat production and to the liquidation of all principal measures of previous agrarian reform.

The repression carried out by the dictatorship still holds back the explosive political expression of these upheavals.

#### THE CRISIS OF THE DICTATORSHIP

Nine years after the 11 September 1973 coup, not only the working class forces, but all the sectors of the opposition — including within the armed forces —, and even the official press like *El Mercurio*, is talking about the beginning of the crisis of the dictatorship. The alteration of the governmental team at the end of August 1982 is another indication.

To speak of a crisis may seem exaggerated or premature considering the effectiveness of the repression in blocking the situation. The military-police apparatus rests solidly buttressed behind General President Pinochet. But, behind the apparent political stability, the foundations of the dictatorship are profoundly undermined.

Without being identical to the fascist regimes in Europe between the two wars, it is a fact that the counter-revolutionary regime installed in 1973 initially had at its disposal a certain social base, not only in the bourgeoisie, but in the mobilisation of a significant sector of the petty bourgeoisie. In the polarisation at the beginning of the 1970s, these sectors were not only lined up against the UP, but also against the proletariat and its organisations.

The big change that has been happening since the beginning of the 1980s, is

the crumbling of this social base. It was comprised of sectors of the big industrial bourgeoisie or certain corporate groups of national industry that have been swept away by financial groupings. It was made up of sectors of the petty bourgeoisie flattened by the economic crisis. What exists today is what a dignitary of the regime modestly called "a process of distancing" of these sectors from the junta. Thus, not only Christian Democracy, who supported the coup, is now in opposition, but personalities of the regime, like General Leigh (former head of airforce) or Vilarin (leader of the lorry drivers who had played a key role in destabilising the UP), proclaim themselves henceforth "members of the opposition". At the very heart of the government, of para-governmental teams, technicians and politicians who support the junta, the media are now publicly making the distinction between "*duros y blandos*" (hardliners and "wets").

— The "*duros*" are those who are for a nationalist and corporatist model, call for a reinforcement of repression, consider the dictatorship eternal, revolt against any democratic regime, and demand that Pinochet prolong his mandate beyond 1989, the date fixed for the new constitution to consider a change of regime.

— The "*blandos*" are those who fully defend the neo-liberal economic model, who are seeking to translate it politically by a "restrained democracy", who would combine the maintenance of the dictatorship with the appointment of a larger assembly.

None of these currents really question the continuity of the dictatorship, but discussions and polemics fill the press daily. In this context of political ferment, it is the general assembly and its bonapartist figure Augusto Pinochet, who remain the axis of the actual regime, more and more hinged around the military-police apparatus.

This apparatus, moreover, also has these divisions, but in a way very much mediated by the vertical functioning of the military institution and the personal weight of Pinochet at the heart of the assembly of fifty generals who meet regularly to decide everything. Pinochet, who had the habit of proclaiming that the army marched behind him like one man, recently responded to a journalist who asked him about possible divisions amid the military: "I don't know!"

However, power rests in the hands of the military, not because of the very force of its apparatus, but because of paradoxical conditions created by the coup. Whereas the economic and social crisis is reaching dizzying proportions, we are only now seeing the first change in the situation of the mass movement, nine years after the coup. The gap between the socio-economic crisis and the weakness of the mass movement explains the margin of manoeuvre that the junta still has. This also holds true for the absence of a capitalist alternative to the dictatorship. While numerous sectors of bourgeois



opposition exist, imperialism still solidly backs Pinochet.

The right and the extreme right remain dissolved in the para-governmental organs. Christian Democracy, classic party of the Chilean industrial bourgeoisie, supported by the petty bourgeoisie, lost an important part of its social base in the crisis. It can always serve as a cover for a series of oppositional demonstrations, as at the time of the funeral of its leader, the ex-president Eduardo Frei (1966-1970). It can even reconstitute itself in the event of a change in the situation. But it cannot represent, because of the crumbling of its social base, a guarantee of a viable political alternative in the eyes of imperialism and big Chilean capital.

It is this combination between the crisis, the weakness of the development of the mass movement and the absence of a bourgeois political alternative, that holds back the explosion of a political crisis

Before the ripening of the conditions of such a crisis, different positions are nevertheless appearing within the ranks of the bourgeoisie:

— The first, taking sides in the confrontation that it already considers inescapable, intends to prepare itself to inflict a second defeat on the workers movement. Certain sectors of the army are openly engaged in this. Others, like Pinochet himself, envisage it while trying to put it off for as long as possible. This project really does exist, even if it is not immediately realisable, so great would be the risk of social explosions.

— The second intends to profit from the actual weakness of the mass movement to prepare a controlled democratic opening excluding those who they call "the Marxists", but in reestablishing certain formal democratic freedoms. The project is hardly credible immediately, for lack of political means capable of guaranteeing it.

— The third is the one that prevails at the moment. It consists of the pursuit of the present policy while striving to contain the recomposition of the mass movement by a policy of selective repression. This explains Pinochet's support of the policy.

Everyone realises that such a policy is impractical in the long term, and that sooner or later it will be necessary to choose between a new confrontation and the narrowest possible opening. Consequently, it is possible that the present coalition will explode and that new differentiations will appear. It is the awakening of the mass movement and the nature of its leadership that will determine to a great degree the dynamic of events.

Whatever they may be, the political choices facing the Chilean bourgeoisie justify more than ever for the workers movement the perspective of a revolutionary overthrow of the dictatorship by means of mass mobilisation, of a general strike and the arming of the workers.

The breadth of the economic catastrophe and the repercussions of political developments in the countries of the Southern Cone means we cannot exclude a sudden turn in the situation even before the main protagonists, bourgeois and proletariat, are ready to confront them.

Since September 11 1973, three phases in the dynamic of the mass movement can be distinguished:

— From 1973 to 1977-78, the counter-revolutionary wave broke the mass movement. All the workers and popular organisations were liquidated or disintegrated. The only union confederation (CUT) was dismantled. The workers parties were broken by systematic repression against the militants or by forced exile of their members and officials. The generalised terror by the DINA and the CNI in the factories, the neighbourhoods and the *poblaciones* thus paralysed the entire movement. The only ones who stood up to it and resisted were the PCC, the Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR — Movement of the Revolutionary Left), a few nuclei of the PS and Trotskyist militants.



— From 1978 to 1980 the first mobilisations took place. Presented with the *plan laboral* which legalised unions within a restrictive framework, the workers began to use the new legislation to start meeting together to defend elementary demands against redundancies and closure of factories. They thus began to act as a class, that is to say, in a collective way. This produced the first strike wave against the liquidation of factories, like PANAL, a textile enterprise threatened with closure. These strikes had a contradictory aspect: they failed on employment or wages issues, but were the first step in the recomposition of the mass movement.

— Starting from 1980-1981, the workers went beyond this first phase of semi-spontaneous struggle and, while pursuing these struggles, began a process of organisation or reorganisation of their forces, particularly on the union level.

After having undergone terror, the Chilean masses had "lost all, even fear",

according to a union leader of MEDECO (copper industry) and started to reorganise themselves. This evolution however was marked by very particular characteristics.

First of all, the reorganisation of the workers movement had structural limitations because of the catastrophic economic situation, with 30% unemployment, daily bankruptcies of tens of industries, the reduction of labour force from 40 to 60% in a series of factories. The threat of redundancy and the division between those working and those unemployed weighed heavily on the possibilities of the development of trade unionism.

On the other hand, tens of thousands of workers, without employment and practically without means of subsistence, are ready for revolt, indeed, violent action. Social explosions are possible.

Also, the unification of all sectors of the working class, by joining the unemployed with the activity in the unions, by stimulating the coordination in the industrial zones and the *poblaciones*, between unions and popular organisations (associations of neighbours, women, of youth...) constitutes a central task for revolutionaries.

Moreover, this is what union officials of the FESIMA (Union Federation of the region of Maipu in the suburbs of Santiago) undertook. They set up a regional coordinating body of more than 20 unions and mass organisations. This is also what was done in the *poblacion* of La Legua, where coordination of political parties (PCC, MIR, PS-Vanguardia) organised "workers workshops", that is to say support committees of unions in association with the unemployed.

The main force in this still fragile rebirth of the mass movement comes from the "new generation": workers between the ages of 20 and 30, who were only 10 to 20 years old when the coup took place in 1973. Of the generation more experienced, but hard hit by repression, defeat and exile, only a minority have been able to take up the fight. The mass of sympathisers of the UP are today taking up union or political struggles through structures that are not those of the mass workers parties of the UP, essentially the PS and the PCC.

This reorganisation of the mass movement is occurring in the context of still partial, fragmented and isolated struggles. In these conditions, a certain split is appearing between those sectors engaged in the reconstruction of union organisations within a "syndicalist" framework, due to distrust of the old UP parties and a more general rejection of politics, and other sectors whose conscious line of march is more directly anti-dictatorial, the capacity of throwing themselves into armed struggle in the *poblaciones*, in the politicised youth and among party sympathisers.

For the future of the mass movement and the construction of a revolutionary party, overcoming these differentiations by understanding their origins and their logic will be a determining factor.



## TWO EXAMPLES OF MASS ORGANISATION

— The unions: after the rejection of the nationalist and corporatist reorganisation of society, any project of vertical unionism of the Francoist type, where bosses, management and workers of the same corporation belong to the same union, was ruled out. Also, in 1978, a law was passed which recognised the union section of the industry divided into three electoral bodies: workers, employers and administrators. While recognising the union section, the *plan laboral* of the junta defined a series of limitations on the right to strike: outlawing of any coordination at a national level of an industry; obligation of two months notice before any strike and time limit of 60 days for strikes; on the other hand, for the bosses, full freedom to hire scabs in the event of a strike.

Despite these restrictions, the workers seized the tolerated structures to elect their delegates by section (five delegates each), most of the time opting for "independents" against the docile "official" candidates of the junta.

Unions being the only legal workers organisations in Chile, it is normal that they be used by the workers to defend their rights and elementary demands, in spite of the legal restraints of the *plan laboral*.

It is at this level that a dual process is developing in the union reorganisation:

— On the one hand, the leadership structures inspired by parties (DC, PCC, factions of the PS, MIR) reorganise the trade unions at the top, with the support of the CUT in exile. Thus were born the Coordinadora (CD-CP), the UDT (current close to the socialists) and the FUT (socialist tendency). These structures, linked to party projects (broad opposition front of all social classes against the dictatorship) are today the only national coordinating bodies, but they lack real united and democratic representation at the base of the unions.

— On the other hand, a movement is shaping up at the base of the unions themselves. The union of the MADECO company, for example, with its strong tradition and authority, took the initiative of battling to call an inter-union conference for the region of Santiago. At this conference delegates elected by the base of their unions are to be the representatives who discuss the demands and the reorganisation of the unions.

More than 15 unions joined the appeal of MADECO. They addressed themselves to all rank and file unions, including those tied to the national coordinating bodies (Coordinadora, UDT, FUT). At the moment it is a question of opening a period of discussion. But there is no doubt that the perspective of regrouping unions on a united and democratic basis can attract today a good part of the active forces in the Chilean workers movement, renewing the traditions and historic heritage of the CUT.

— The organisations of the *poblaciones*: the movement of the *poblaciones* is also developing, but with more difficulty and unevenness, mainly at the initiative of militants from political parties. Nevertheless it is achieving a mass character in certain sectors.

Thus, in La Legua, in the south of Santiago, out of a population of 5,000, almost 10% are organised at the initiative of the PCC, the PS and the MIR in a regular coordinating body that organises a series of fronts: women, youth, cultural groups, liaison committees of unionists and unemployed. This coordination has also organised demonstrations, the distribution of leaflets, and surprise actions which, in the present conditions in Chile, must be protected. This is the function of the self-defence militias in certain *poblaciones* mainly made up of militants and sympathisers of parties that defend the mass movement.

In the first stages of the recomposition of the mass movement, the unions will be the place where the experience of the new generations will be fused. They will have to play a decisive role. But, from the start this new-born movement is confronted with an economic and social crisis and the first political cracks in the dictatorship. This is why revolutionaries must combine daily trade union work with the development of an overall political perspective.

## PERSPECTIVES

The central immediate tasks for fighting the dictatorship are around the defence of elementary demands of the workers, the construction of a union organisation, the defence of democratic rights (in particular the status of political prisoners). It is around these tasks that a front against the dictatorship can be constructed and the workers movement can be reconstructed.

But it is also necessary to integrate the fight for these tasks and demands into an overall strategic framework for the Chilean revolution, especially after the experience of the UP. For, if the working class memory is mainly crystallised around small nuclei, there are also those who do not want to, or cannot draw the lessons of the UP. Then, there is the mass of the new generation that has not lived through this experience and who, in the absence of a mass revolutionary party, cannot draw all the strategic and tactical implications from it.

The entire dynamic of the mass movement under the UP, with the appearance of organs of "*poder popular*" (rank and file committees linked together in the industrial zones, and local self-defense groups), clearly demonstrated the proletarian character of the Chilean revolution and of its driving force. Moreover, despite the objective tendency of class confrontation, the Chilean masses have come up against the obstacle of hesitation, of compromise and of deals with the military hierarchy mainly advocated by the PCC in the workers movement and by the DC in the bourgeois opposition.

The PCC could not and cannot draw the lessons of the UP. Enmeshed in their schemas of revolution by stages (the present phase is one of "anti-fascism in the democratic anti-feudal stage") and integrated into the international Stalinist camp, the PCC proposes today the same formulas as yesterday: "Broad anti-fascist front! Opposition movement of all classes against the dictatorship! National unity of all the oppositional sectors, including sections of the military!"

Behind this policy they are seeking agreement with the Christian Democrats and all the bourgeois components coming out of the crisis of the dictatorship.

Faced with this policy, it is more indispensable than ever to remember the

Chilean military (DR)





lessons of the Popular Unity, to remember that it is class collaboration with the bosses, with the Christian Democrats, with the so-called progressive military, that caused the failure of the UP and swept in the terrible defeat of September 1973.

This UP policy expressed its legalism and constitutionalism vis-a-vis the armed forces who were to later massacre the Chilean people.

The same policy would lead to the same defeat. This is why the daily struggle for economic and democratic demands must be led by the workers and the Chilean people with total class independence:

— No “*gremial*” front: no corporate or union front with oppositional bosses like Vilarin, leader of the lorry drivers union, with a sinister past;

— No common permanent political front with the DC or other such bourgeois oppositionists, leading to a common governmental alternative.

The Chilean revolution will be socialist or it will not be at all. This is not to claim that the immediate tasks in Chile are of a socialist character, but to be clear on what will be the driving force of the revolutionary struggle: the proletariat and its allies. The social and democratic demands against the dictatorship can only be ultimately defended by resolute class struggle, implying a rupture with the oppositional bourgeoisie, in particular with the Christian Democrats.

Another thing is to reach precise and concrete agreement, under certain conditions, for mobilisation around this or that demand with all those, bourgeois or not, who would be ready to really act. But definitely not a common front or a common political block! How would it be possible to fight with determination for wages or for the defense of jobs while keeping up a “corporate front” with Mr. Vilarin? How would you fight with determination for democratic freedoms while discussing the possibility of governmental agreement with the Christian Democrats, who are hanging on to the oppositional sectors, which are hanging in turn on to the military opposition, who themselves fear Pinochet?

Today such a policy leads to inaction, if not to capitulation.

What is on the order of the day, is resolute combat for the defence of basic demands, the reestablishment of union rights, the reconstruction of a democratic union organisation. It is the fight for democratic freedom which means the fight for the overthrow of the dictatorship, the holding of free elections and the convening of a sovereign constituent assembly. Only this struggle opposes the dictatorship and the attempts to save its continuity by a controlling opening. Only this avoids lining up with this or that manoeuvre of the bourgeois, civil or military opposition. It prepares the development of partial struggles in the direction of a generalised movement, the “*paro nacional*”, traditional slogan of the Chilean proletariat, equivalent to the



general strike, up to the overthrow of the dictatorship and the establishment of a “workers and popular government without generals or bosses”, to establish democratic freedoms and to put into practice a revolutionary democratic programme of socialist reconstruction in Chile.

The existence of a clear strategic perspective has an immediate practical importance, if one considers the last declaration of the four oppositional parties: the PCC, PS-Almeyda, Radical Party and the MIR. While recognising the validity of all forms of struggle — including armed struggle —, to combat the dictatorship, this declaration does not breathe a word about its attitude towards the opposition sectors, and particularly towards the Christian Democrats. It is limited to advocating the formation of a government representing all sectors of the opposition, all classes and social categories opposed to the dictatorship and ready to reestablish democracy...

We know what these general formulas mean concretely in the definition of a class collaborationist policy and its negative effects on the dynamics of the mass movement. For, if there is no room in Chile for a new period of industrialisation under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, able to lay the basis for a rerun of experiences such as those of the Popular Front or even the bourgeois reformist regime of Eduardo Frei, one cannot exclude, one must even foresee conjunctural phases of a democratic or pseudo-democratic opening which can provide the framework for class collaborationist operations.

The call of a Stalinist party like the PCC to armed resistance does not change our judgement on the global character of its politics of class collaboration. Historic examples abound, which have seen the Communist Parties combine armed struggle with open political class collaboration (particularly during the anti-Nazi resistance in Europe). Thus, the present policy of the PCC is very similar to that followed by the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) during the 40s and 50s against the Francoist dictatorship.

It is within this framework that we must discuss with the comrades of the MIR, main revolutionary organisation struggling today in Chile. The aim of this fraternal discussion is to advance the conditions of the construction of a revolutionary internationalist party.

In effect, on the basis of the social transformations in Chile, the MIR affirms

that it is not only no longer possible to reconstruct Chile under bourgeois or imperialist hegemony, but it also reckons that there are structural limitations to the reconstitution of traditional organisations (union and party) of the Chilean workers movement.

Thus it tends to underestimate the work in the union organisations as well as the political weight of the PCC.

This is an error of appreciation. It is true that the traditional political parties are not, in the present conjuncture, playing a role as important as before the defeat in 1973. It remains nevertheless the case that the particular characteristics of the Chilean workers movement (power of a single union central and of the mass workers parties) can reappear with force as a result of the reactivation of the mass movement. The recent reappearance of a Communist Party as discredited and corrupt as the Argentinian CP gives food for thought ...

The MIR, which under the UP was weakened by a limited presence in the union movement, can, by underestimating the reconstruction of the union organisations, cut itself off from an important part of the new working class generations and put aside a decisive task for the whole of the workers movement.

Also, the underestimation of the political weight of the PCC is serious because it leads to deprioritising the necessity to fight class collaboration. The MIR signed a common declaration with the PCC, the PS-Almeyda and the Radical Party, but it was not a framework for a united front for action. In this way it backs up the propositions of the PCC and sows illusions in its politics, particularly on the meaning of its involvement in armed struggle. These limitations of the MIR can be explained by the relations it has with the Cuban leadership, and the vacillations of the latter with respect to the Soviet bureaucracy.

In fact, MIR hopes to reproduce in Chile the same relationship of forces that exist in the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) in El Salvador, where the hegemony of revolutionaries and the subordinate positions of the Stalinists is indisputable. This is a big gamble if one takes into account the sociological and historic differences between the two countries. Essentially, it is counting on its strategy of prolonged revolutionary war to constitute an alternative in military



action and thereby defeat the PCC.

It is within this framework that it is now building the "people's revolutionary army". It hopes to accumulate the maximum means and forces to combat the dictatorship by a combination of mass work, armed propaganda actions, expropriations, actions of resistance and guerrilla tactics in the mountains. It also hopes to gain hegemony over the "Left Front", whether it be in the assumption of an opening, of a political crisis, or of a revolutionary explosion.

This gradualist vision of the development of the revolutionary army opens the way to a substitutionist practice towards the mass movement. The conditions for the construction of a revolutionary army are far from existing. They will only exist in a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation. Besides, the MIR mixes up, without clearly choosing either, two strategic politico-military perspectives. It hesitates between an urban insurrectionary perspective and a perspective of prolonged popular war held up by liberated zones in the mountains, as in Neltume, mountainous zone where a group of cadres and militants of this organisation were crushed by repression.

This perspective is reaffirmed, moreover, in the June edition of *El Rebelde*, under the following slogan: "*Hacer de la montaña un baluarte de la guerra popular!*" (Make the mountain a bastion

of popular war!) In the geopolitical conditions in Chile, and taking into account the historical traditions, such a line seems to lead to an impasse. But these strategic questions demand a thorough-going discussion as, in light of the Nicaraguan and Salvadorian examples, the politico-military problem is posed again in the development of a struggle of the Chilean people against the dictatorship. At this moment, it cannot be tackled independently of the developments in the mass movement, which already implies concrete initiatives of protection of elementary mass activities, including the formation of pickets and self-defence militias as in a *poblacion*, where the militants of the PCC, the MIR and the PS-Vanguardia already take such initiatives.

This type of measure must be part of the preparation of an unavoidable armed confrontation — contrary to all the pacifist illusions formerly touted by the UP — on the strategic horizon of the Chilean revolution.

Several elements can play an important role in the construction of a revolutionary leadership in Chile 10 years after the defeat in 1973.

On the one hand, there is an integration of revolutionary militants in the reconstruction of the union organisations. On the other hand, their participation in the discussion provoked by the crisis of

the fragmentation of the Socialist Party. The Chilean SP is effectively split into various sections. A rightist current is regrouped around Carlos Altamirano and the Socialist Convergence (CS), which defends the perspective of a social opposition movement, taking up the themes of the current inspired by Michel Rocard in the French SP. A pro-Stalinist current inspired by Carlos Almeyda, that benefits from the PCC apparatus and the aid of the Soviet bureaucracy. Finally, a left current exists today dispersed in a series of sectors, like the PS-Vanguardia. Under the effects of the coup, and confronted with the necessary balance sheet of the UP, certain of these sectors can be led to raising the question of a revolutionary party, starting from the reconstruction of the PS on a revolutionary basis.

Finally, in certain zones or localities, mass work can be combined with an organisation of the currents and the revolutionary organisations, such as the MIR, sectors coming out of the crisis in the PS, and Trotskyist militants.

This is the framework open to revolutionary Marxist intervention, as much in the tasks of international solidarity as in the participation of the construction of a revolutionary party in Chile itself. This is the perspective of the comrades in the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), Chilean section of the Fourth International. ■

## Poland: An "internal affair" for Yugoslavia

Catherine VERLA

'By our presence at the congress (of Solidarnosc) and our speech from the platform, we showed our solidarity with all the socialist and progressive forces in Poland who are fighting to overcome the present difficulties of the country.'

This is how the delegation of the Yugoslav trade-union federation summarised its presence at the first congress of Solidarnosc (1). Their presence was notable given the complete absence of all the other 'trade unions' from Eastern Europe who had also been invited. Moreover, the Yugoslav population had been relatively well-informed of developments in Poland since August 1980. At a time when nothing is going well in Yugoslavia it is just as well to emphasise that it is worse next door, and to highlight certain rights which have been won here and regained by Solidarnosc with such difficulty: the right to strike for example. Certainly it has not been legalised by the Titoist

regime, but since the 1970s the dominant opinion among the Yugoslav authorities is that strikes must be accepted as a security valve, expressing the freeze on self-management and non-implementation of the self-management rights of the workers. In a very decentralised system local strikes are tolerated because they do not have the same dynamic as in a society with bureaucratic centralised planning. The Yugoslav trade unions have been encouraged to study and to take account of them, and even to support them — rarely.

However we should not think that that Yugoslav trade unions are real instruments for the defence of workers. At the end of the 1960s, with the extensions of the market laws, they had a tendency to free themselves from the tutelage of the Party and state. But the 1970s have been a period for taking back in hand — where the trade unions have seen their role confirmed as the transmission belt for the orientations of the Yugoslav Communist

Party. That is to say that support for *Solidarnosc* was going to be marked by the international diplomatic policies of the Yugoslav leadership and their fear that the Polish example should not give ideas to Yugoslav workers and citizens.

The Appeal to the Workers of the East to form trade unions independent of the state could only be rejected, for this dual reason: international diplomacy and risk of internal contagion. The delegation responded to this appeal in the interview already quoted as follows: 'It is well-known that the Yugoslav Trade Union Federation has consistently and strongly defended the right of the working class of every people to decide themselves, without external interference, on the form, the role, and the tasks of the trade-union movement of the said country ... We are against all interference and therefore equally against this.'

1. *Journal des Syndicats yougoslaves* Septembre/Octobre 1982, French edition.



## THE IMPACT OF THE POLISH STRUGGLE BEFORE DECEMBER 13

The sympathy for Solidarnosc was reflected in the media. The reports of the Solidarnosc congress were at peak viewing time on the television, and were clearly favourable. However this sympathy should be balanced against several factors: distrust of the Church and its influence within Solidarnosc; fear that the struggles in Poland would lead to a challenge of the international equilibrium and endanger the position of Yugoslavia itself. Thus, one can see that the Appeal to the Workers of the East has often been seen as good but irresponsible.

The state of war, the arrests, and the violence against the workers were condemned by the Yugoslav authorities. The media published the statements of leaders of the Yugoslav Communist Party which very explicitly rejected the justifications given by Jaruzelski and the 'counter-revolutionary' accusations against the activities of Solidarnosc. For example, Franc Seting, secretary of the Praesidium of the Slovene Central Committee, characterised the Polish events in an interview in the main newspaper in Belgrade, *NIN*, December 20, 1981, thus: 'The Polish working class has revolted violently three times: in 1956, in 1970, and today ... In the first two cases the Polish working class accepted the programme of its party as the way of getting out of the crisis. For its part the Party made a self-criticism of its own past, and promised fundamental changes in society. But the Party betrayed its promises. The bureaucratic deformation and perversion of socialism and socialist norms was re-established. This is the point of departure for the present events. In the third case the working class itself has taken the initiative.'

The editorial of *NIN* on December 27, 1981 added 'What sort of model of socialism is it when there is so much to be defended against the workers by force and coercion?' The Party organ in Belgrade, *Komunist*, stated on December 18, 1981 'Militant action always signifies the failure of a given policy.'

Certainly the 'extremists' of Solidarnosc have been criticised, but without challenging the global characterisation of the movement, nor justifying the state of war.

But while this was the official position the Yugoslav authorities have not tolerated it being actively taken up by the spontaneous movements of solidarity with Solidarnosc of the Yugoslav people. Thus Poland has become a question of internal politics, which is far from being resolved. Certainly, those who until now have made the strongest protests against the state of war are intellectuals. But the repercussions are not over.

—In December there were several petitions denouncing the state of war and calling on Jaruzelski to free the political prisoners. Some student demonstrations

were banned and repressed. Searches took place at the homes of certain of the petitioners who were questioned. Lots of them received warnings: 'the Yugoslav government has given its point of view on the Polish events. No other action by the citizens will be tolerated,' (2).

— A group of 25 intellectuals sent a letter of protest against the harassment to the National Assembly of Serbia, well supported by 112 intellectuals from Ljubliana (Slovenia), and 199 other signatories from Zagreb in Croatia.

'Is the expression of opinion forbidden in the Socialist Republic of Serbia? If that is the case, on the base of what legislation, by whom and when? Who has the right, and what is this right, to make a choice in this town between the hundreds of signatories of different letters addressed to Jaruzelski and the Solidarnosc trade union, and to submit them to repression? ... We demand therefore that the persons responsible for the repression mentioned above are found and individually named as well as being charged with violating human rights, and right of self-management, and the political rights of the citizens. We demand that the National Assembly prevents any future action of a similar type.' (3).

### REACTIONS TO JARUZELSKI'S CRACKDOWN

Other protests of the same type have been sent at different times to the state, enclosing the incriminating petition.

— The question came to life again in July. During a meeting of solidarity with the Palestinian people a banner was displayed supporting Solidarnosc. The police brutally arrested eight students who were condemned to forty or fifty days imprisonment.

— The journal *Student* published a dossier of the internal debates of Solidarnosc (letters of Kuron, Bujak, Kulerski), and a memorandum on the arrest of the students during the support meeting for the PLO. It emphasised that the congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party (held in June) was opposed to the state of siege in Poland.

— At the beginning of August in the same place a demonstration was held supporting Solidarnosc, but also demanding the release of the imprisoned Yugoslav students. New arrests and imprisonments (for shorter periods) took place, including the son of Tadic (a Marxist philosopher of the banned review *Praxis*) and of Nebojsa Popov (another collaborator on *Praxis*).

— The incidents and protests are going to grow. The fact that the last arrests took place at a meeting of solidarity with the Palestinian people strengthens the arguments of the protestors. How can it be, they say, that in an officially non-aligned country it is possible to protest against a military dictatorship in one bloc, and to be condemned for doing the same thing with regard to the other bloc ... Open letters have been sent to the press on this theme.

In a period of big economic crisis, after a congress of the Communist Party which resolved nothing, more and more voices are questioning the *lack of political democracy* in the Yugoslav Communist Party and Yugoslav society as the major cause of malfunctioning of self-management. It is public knowledge that this is the subject of very tense debates within the Party itself. The Polish events are a test for the first battles on democratic freedoms since the death of Tito. What is scaring one part of the state apparatus is that these struggles will combine with and reinforce social discontent fed by unemployment and austerity which, for the first time for decades has seen the standard of living in Yugoslavia fall.

2. *Nasa Rec* March 1982.

3. *Ibid.*

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