

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

1 November 1982

ISSUE No 16



SOLIDARNOSC PREPARES GENERAL STRIKE

Document: Turn in Middle East Situation

8 FF, British Pound 0.65, Irish Pound 0.70, Skr 9, Dkr 12, Nkr 10, Ikr 17, US dollars 1.50, Canadian dollars 1.70, Australian dollars 1.35, DM 3.50, Dutch fl. 3.25, Austrian schillings 24, Drachmas 14.8, IS 25, Mexican Pesos 40, Cypriot Pound 0.65, Yen 400, Leban. Piastres 6, BF 65, SF 2.5, Portuguese Escudos 90, Rand 1.30, Pesetas 145, Italian Lire 1 700.

Towards the general strike

Cyril SMUGA

General Jaruzelski's new trade-union law banning Solidarnosc and reestablishing the old Stalinist unions that were just a means for controlling the workers was the ruling bureaucracy's biggest provocation to the Polish masses since the December 13, 1981, crackdown.

On the same day the bill was introduced, October 8, Deputy Premier Mieczyslaw Rakowski said: 'Those trade unions that were only suspended by the state of war decree now cease to exist.' It would be more accurate to say that they no longer have any legal existence, because there is a gigantic gap between what the bureaucracy wants and what the reality is.

But Rakowski's statement does mark out the road being taken by the National Council for Military Salvation (WRON).

PROVISIONS OF THE NEW 'UNION' LAW

The following provisions show what sort of 'trade unions' are permitted by the October 8 law.

1. Before December 1983, these 'trade unions' can only organise the workers in one plant at a time. Only one 'union' will be permitted in each plant, and fifty persons are enough to form one. In most of the big factories, therefore, it will be possible to form a 'union' made up entirely of the supervisors, the party cadres, and the management.

Not before January 1984 will these bodies be able to join into federations by industry and trade, since any organisation on a geographical basis is forbidden.

Finally in 1985, when the bureaucracy can be certain that these structures are completely house broken, they will be allowed to join in a national confederation. Only then, should the federation bureaucrats prove unable to agree among themselves how to divide the top positions at the confederation level, does the law permit the formation of other confederations.

2. Much as the text emphasises that these new 'unions' are to be 'independent' and 'self-managed', the actual measures it contains make these terms devoid of meaning. In order to exist these 'trade unions' must be 'registered' by a tribunal. At any moment this tribunal may revoke this 'registration'. What is more, the tribunal can dismiss the representatives elected by the base, at any level.

And everyone knows that the judges are included in the *nomenklatura*, the register of government officials that is the formal foundation of the bureaucracy. Thus judgeships are only open to those whom the authorities consider 'suitable', committed to their cause and prepared to make whatever rulings they are ordered to.

Moreover, if this were not a sufficient guarantee, the law details that the 'trade unions' must endeavour to build socialism, 'recognising the leading role of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) in the building' of such 'socialism'. Should

Moreover, the law bans strikes by employees of the Ministries of Defence, the Interior, of Justice, and of Education. Likewise, it forbids stoppages by those who work in the food industry, radio and television, in banks, international transport, in hospitals, and on the gas and oil pipelines.

THE REGIME GOES FOR DOUBLE OR NOTHING

The vote on this law took place at a time when the bureaucracy was being forced more and more to realise that the



Security checks in Poland (DR)

they differ with the Polish CP in any respect about 'the building of socialism', the party can dissolve them forthwith.

3. The October 8 law recognises the right to strike, but this is reduced to a mere formality. Before starting a strike it is necessary to call a 'commission of conciliation'. When the commission has finished its work, it has to register a 'failure to agree'. The differences will then be examined by a tribunal, whose decision will be binding, unless one of the parties rejected arbitration at the start.

If the trade union succeeds in getting through all these stages, which can be protracted, it still has to give one week's notice. The strike can then take place, on condition that it is not 'political', and is not detrimental to 'the defence and security of the state'.

political operation it undertook after the December 13 crackdown had failed. The passage of the new law reflects first of all the inability of the WRON to induce even a few recognised leaders of Solidarnosc to collaborate so that it could 'normalise' the trade union that on the eve of the crackdown organised 90 per cent of the workers.

It is now more than ten months since General Jaruzelski began to talk of the return to 'normality', even if he kept hedging '... If the changes for the better continue, as long as no new tensions appear and if the return to normality proceeds in good order.'

It is now more than ten months since the resistance of the working class and the whole of society have shown the hollowness of Jaruzelski's guarded claims

of progress toward 'normality'. For ten months, there has not been a single success in any of the attempts to set up 'mass organisations' that could at least gain the passive acceptance if not the support of the workers.

ECONOMIC DISASTER

What is more, the social effects of the so-called economic reform have driven into opposition to the regime most of those who had initially resigned themselves to the rule of the WRON, out of lack of perspective, weariness, or hope that a 'stronger' regime would at least lead to an improvement in their daily lives. Among these effects the most prominent are a 44 per cent drop in average real wages between May 1981 and May 1982, according to the official figures themselves, and a striking increase in unevenness of income among the various regions and industries.

In fact the economic crisis has worsened considerably over the last ten months. There has been a drop in production in all heavy manufacturing industry of up to 40 per cent — indeed for the past year as a whole the drop has been even greater than that in some industries. An unprecedented agricultural crisis has developed, because the relationship between prices and production costs, particularly in cattle rearing, are more disadvantageous for the peasants than they have been ever since 1956. There has been a growing disparity between the goods available on the market and the spending power of the workers — despite a rise in prices of more than 200 per cent — owing to the fall, indeed the complete halt, of manufacture of a number of consumer goods.

The official figures themselves do not give any hope of an improvement in the situation within a time span that would have any meaning for the population.

CRACKS APPEARING IN THE RULING TEAM

This grim picture of the 'achievements' of Jaruzelski has not failed to have its effects on the cohesion of the ruling team. The vote on the trade-union law provided new demonstration of the defections which are beginning to appear within it. Thus, a dozen deputies voted against the law, and several others abstained. Among them were several deputies of satellite parties of the PUWP, and



independents, who had, however, approved the introduction of the state of war.

Particularly worthy of note is the defection of the non-Party sociologist Jan Szczepanski, a member of the Council of State, and therefore directly responsible for the December 13 crackdown. Given the job of heading up the Consultative Social Council — a body entrusted with soliciting the support of intellectuals for the junta and supposed to represent the continuity of 'renewal' — he was one of the few intellectuals of any reputation to support Jaruzelski. His defection, which was known before the vote, even gave rise to the rumour in Warsaw that the vote in the Diet (parliament) would be postponed.

Likewise, as the recent cabinet reshuffle indicated, voices have been raised within the government itself against bringing in such a law at this time. And in the top ranks of the bureaucracy the heirs apparent have been getting into position, expecting that the regime would this time be forced to retreat in face of popular discontent.

CRUMBLING MORALE IN ARMY AND POLICE

In fact, the bureaucratic leadership has decided to go for double or nothing in stepping up the spiral of repression. But as it does this, the morale of its troops has reached a low ebb. This is clearly illustrated by the following statement by a garrison commander to a reservist called-up, which was reported in an underground bulletin:

'In a conversation with an ordinary soldier, the commander said that if the workers went on resisting the coup as they had done until now they would win "because the leadership here has not the least idea what they should do".'

Another sign of the demoralisation corroding the regime's repressive bodies is expressed by the policeman, interviewed by the organ of the PUWP in Silesia, *Trybuna Robotnicza*: 'What the people are saying about us is brutal and unjust ... All these stories get around and it is difficult to deny them. We have families, children, fiancées, and they want to be able to live together in harmony with the rest of society without this kind of psychological burden.'

In this situation, the appeals of Solidarnosc to the soldiers and police — which it has been issuing on a large scale now for several months — are falling on fertile ground. It seems that more than a few people in the repressive apparatus are wondering whether the time is not coming to change sides.

SOLIDARNOSC ON THE EVE OF THE VOTE ON THE NEW LAWS

The outlawing of Solidarnosc came at a time when the union was being hard hit by repression. Wladyslaw Frasnyniuk, leader of the regional committee in Lower Silesia (Wroclaw), and one of the most prestigious national leaders of the



resistance, had just been arrested, along with several other activists of his region.

The repression in the wake of the August 31 demonstration had already taken a number of intermediate leaders, or forced them deeper into clandestinity, thereby disorganising their structures.

In addition, the national leadership, and certain regional leaderships, were divided as to the balance sheet of the August 31 action, and had not been able to lay out clear perspectives for action.

Thus, in a declaration on September 6, the Provisional Coordinating Committee of Solidarnosc (TKK) wrote: 'Despite the abyss that the regime has created between itself and society, an understanding remains our goal, and remains the only way out of the crisis.'

The TKK was saying this when among among the population, the feeling was growing that an 'understanding' with the regime could never be achieved.

In none of the documents adopted by the TKK around this date was the perspective of preparation for the general strike mentioned. In fact, this marked a retreat from certain previous statements. The American newsweekly *Time* reports that during a meeting of the TKK some days before the arrest of Frasnyniuk, he was the only one to propose other forms of action than a simple boycott of the new 'trade unions', and that he came into conflict with other members on this point.

Similar debates took place within the regional leadership of Solidarnosc in Warsaw, at which two groups of experts proposed a resolution advocating 'entryism' within the new 'trade unions'. This foundered on the veto of the representatives of the big enterprises, who saw it as a first class burial of Solidarnosc and a capitulation. So, the proposal was rejected.

These discussions as a whole bear witness to the disarray and lack of perspectives that made it difficult for Solidarnosc to organise a concerted response at the time of the vote on the law. This was all the more difficult inasmuch as the majority of militants were conscious that only

a full-scale general strike would be an appropriate response, and that such a strike could only succeed if it was prepared beforehand.

Since it was not possible to prepare an action of this sort in a few days time, the TKK issued a call on Saturday October 9 for a four-hour general strike Wednesday, November 10. The success of this action would, without a doubt, be the first step towards a chain of general strikes, that could be repeated until all Solidarnosc's demands were met. Only such mobilisations can make it possible to build up a relationship of forces favourable to the workers and thereby force the bureaucracy into retreat.

MASSIVE STRIKE ERUPTS IN GDANSK

However, the workers had become exasperated. And in those areas where it seemed possible to launch immediate strikes, they were unwilling to put off acting until some later time.

In Gdansk, on Sunday, October 10, two days after the passage of the law, leaflets appeared calling for an immediate strike. It seems that the TKK's call for a strike on November 10 had not yet become known in the city.

On Monday, October 11, at 6.00 a.m., the first shift at the Lenin shipyard went on strike. The action seems to have begun at the same time in a dozen other big enterprises in the Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot region. These included the Paris Commune shipyard, the Gdansk refinery, the two ports, the Northern shipyards, Unimor, Hydroster, and the Gdansk naval repair yard.

A clandestine interenterprise strike committee was formed. In a leaflet distributed that Monday, it specified the demands of the strike: '1) Release of Lech Walesa and all the internees. 2) The lifting of martial law. 3) the right of Solidarnosc to begin functioning openly again within the framework of their present structures.'

The leaflet also gave news of the development of the strike: 'The strike started at 6.00 a.m. this morning and will end at 2.00 in the afternoon. The second shift will not go to work. Tomorrow and the following days, there will be a strike from 6.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. The second shift will gather with the first. If the shipyard is closed, we will gather around the monument (near the entrance), and if there are other problems we will gather as close as possible to the fence. If there are attempts to bring in other workers to replace those who have been fired, we will continue the strike in the form outlined above. The new unions must be actively boycotted. Work will not be resumed until Lech Walesa shows up at the naval yard.'

At 2.00 p.m., the workers left the shipyard in a cortege. Very rapidly, other demonstrators joined them. The ZOMO attacked. Street battles continued into



the evening in which the demonstrators built barricades and burned several armoured police vehicles.

Other strikes are reported in the enterprises along the Baltic coast, notably in Elblag, Koszalin, and Szczecin. On Tuesday, October 12, the strikes and demonstrations continued. The police arrested several hundred people. In Gdansk alone, there were 148 arrests. Strikes were also reported in enterprises in other cities, such as the Ciegelski plant in Poznan and URSUS in Gorzow.

The strike committee issued an appeal for a general strike in the Gdansk region. In the evening, the radio announced the militarisation of the shipyards. Henceforth, all workers were to be treated like soldiers and would be subject to military jurisdiction. The 'price' for striking went from five years in prison to death ...

In Gdansk, which was occupied by several thousand ZOMO, the call for generalising the strike was not followed. The Lenin shipyard itself resumed work on Wednesday. Leaflets signed by the regional Solidarnosc called for building for the November 10 strike:

'It is not time yet for a general strike. The regional coordinating committee is calling on the union to build one for November 10. The fight for Solidarnosc will continue until it is won.'

Did these Baltic strikes fail? It is clear that they did. But the workers were not broken. Some of the journalists who were there reported what they were saying: 'For the time being, it's over. We are getting our breath back.' That is what one worker said. 'This does not mean that it's over for Solidarnosc', another added. 'Something may happen later this month, or the following one.'

BUILDUP FOR THE GENERAL STRIKE

On the same day the workers in the Baltic went back to their jobs, support demonstrations took place in other cities. At Nowa Huta, the giant steel complex outside Cracow where 40,000 people work, more than 12,000 demonstrators confronted the police. Cops were seized by the crowd, disarmed, undressed, and

slapped. One of the cops opened fire. Bogdan Wloski, a young steelworker fell, mortally wounded.

The workers at Nowa Huta had decided to build for the November 10 general strike but to demonstrate their solidarity with Gdansk in the street.

However, after the murder of the young worker, demonstrations and very violent street battles continued for several days.

On October 20, at Wloski's funeral, between 15,000 and 30,000 workers demonstrated at the Grebalow cemetery. Their banners read: 'Solidarnosc Is Not Dead', 'He Died for Us, for Solidarnosc'.

But the strike expected in the steel complex during the burial did not take place. It was called off a few days before by Solidarnosc because too many workers had already been hit by the repression, and it was necessary to martial the maximum forces possible for the November 10 general strike.

After October 13, repeated short work stoppages continued in the Jankowice mine near Rybnik in Silesia, in Polar in Wroclaw, in URSUS in Warsaw, where a leaflet signed by Zbigniew Bujak, one of the five members of the TKK, called for generalisation of the strike.

The new unions were boycotted everywhere. At the October Revolution printing plant in Warsaw, which employs several thousand workers, 11 joined. At the URSUS plant in Gorzow, out of 5,000 workers, 90 joined; at the FSC truck factory in Lublin, 33 out of nearly 10,000; at WSK in Swidnik, 20 out of 9,000; and at Nowa Huta, where the new 'union' has offices and controls the plant radio, 100 joined out of 40,000.

Throughout the country, the preparations for the November 10 general strike are going well. This is shown by the setting up of underground strike committees, walkouts, slowdowns, and street demonstrations.

The test of strength that began with the Gdansk strike is continuing in Poland. More and more workers are beginning to feel, as a statement made by nine Solidarnosc leaders interned in the Bialoleka camp points out, that 'a social compromise has to be won by force', that a general strike well prepared politically and materially is the only strategic perspective open to Solidarnosc.

In this new stage of their struggle, the Polish workers will have even greater need of the active support of the international workers movement. We must work today to see that such support is increased and extended.

The stakes are very large and they are far from confined to Poland. The struggle of the Polish workers for democratic rights, for trade-union rights, and for a self-managed republic based on socialisation of the means of production and their management by workers councils is a struggle for socialism. It is part of our struggle. Victory for the Polish workers would give a powerful impetus for other workers victories. A defeat for them would be a defeat for us as well. ■

Spain:

The PSOE on the eve of electoral success

Upon announcing the dissolution of the Cortes (Parliament) and calling a general election for October 28, Spanish Prime Minister Calvo Sotelo made the following bitter statement last August: 'In a democracy, there is no room for a political vacuum.' (*Le Monde*, August 29-30, 1982). The editorial of *Le Monde* commented that this confirmed that 'the team in power found it impossible even to keep up the appearance of a normal parliamentary life'.

In effect, the crisis of the party in power, the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD) reached its high point, whereas, the military, since the aborted coup of February 23, 1981, seemed to be acting more and more like the power behind the throne of Spanish parliamentary 'democracy'. The decrepitude of the UCD was illustrated by the defection of 25% of its members of parliament while it was in session. It got worse during the summer following the electoral victory of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) of Felipe Gonzales in the Andalusian regional elections, and after the current grouped around former Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez, who then created the Democratic and Social Centre (CDS), left the UCD on July 28.

This exposed political crisis goes back a long way. The backdrop to it is the inability of the bourgeois formations to lead an effective process of institutional reform to transform Francoist Spain into a parliamentary-type regime. The February 23, 1981 coup attempt illustrated this failure, with the direct intervention of a sector of the military hierarchy against the process of reform.

This crisis provoked divisions within the bourgeoisie on what policy to conduct on immediate fundamental problems: the national question, the hardline sectors of the army, social and political reforms, etc. One orientation of the bourgeoisie following an electoral victory of the PSOE is a recomposition around Popular Action (AP) of Fraga Iribarne, former Francoist minister. Although a PSOE victory may be just about assured, the exact governmental form that will follow and the resulting

attitude of certain bourgeois components will depend on how many seats the socialists actually win. The socialists, as they get closer to participation in government, are being more and more respectful of the 'real powers' (institutions, army, capitalists, church) that govern the Spanish state.

The PSOE is basing its economic and social policies on a reduction in the cost of capitalist production, aiming to create 800,000 new jobs over the next four years. To do this, the PSOE programme considers indispensable 'the collaboration in the sense of a dialogue and the necessary understanding between the different groups and economic and social forces that operate inside and outside industry'. They want to install real 'concerted planning', that is, to institutionalise the principal of the Social Pact, as, 'to get out of the crisis, it is necessary to advance towards a concerted economy'. This policy certainly does not match up to the aspirations and expectations of the electorate the will bring the PSOE into government.

Santiago Carrillo's Communist Party (PCE), whose programme is barely distinguishable from the PSOE's, is especially preoccupied with trying to avoid too great an electoral collapse and marginalisation from parliamentary life. If the PSOE puts itself forward as the guarantor of change, with a programme that does not propose any radical reform, then the PCE puts itself forward as the guarantor of the PSOE's election promises.

In this political context, as well as with the discovery on October 2 of a new military conspiracy (Operation Cervantes), aiming to 'neutralise the centres of civil and military power' and to 'declare and state of war and isolate the capital' (*Le Monde*, October 13, 1981) just before the elections, our comrades of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR), section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state, have been arguing for joint candidates to stand on a platform of a few key demands.

Vincent Kermel spoke to Jaime Pastor, a leader of the LCR on October 12 about the present situation in Spain.

Question: Could you specify the reasons that led Prime Minister Calvo Sotelo to dissolve the Cortes (Spanish Parliament) last August, and to call an election for October 28?

Answer: The dissolution of the Cortes last August by the Sotelo government had become inevitable because of the irreversible crisis in which the governmental party, the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD) found itself. This followed two important events: the coup attempt on February 23, 1981, and the landslide victory of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) in the elections last May to the Andalusian Assembly. The result was a crisis, not only of the government, but of the regime as such, making the UCD unable to reconcile the inherited institutions of Francoism with the viability of parliamentary-type mechanisms.

This is what provoked the crisis and the splintering of the UCD, accompanied by a flow out of the party in two directions — towards the Popular Alliance (AP) of Fraga Iribarne on the one hand,

and, towards the moderate right led by former Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez, who set up the Democratic and Social Centre (CDS) last August, on the other. The UCD could not wait any longer in such a climate of political decomposition.

Calvo Sotelo's aim in calling elections was to reconstruct the right. But since then it is evident that these attempts to reconstitute the unity of the right wing bourgeoisie have failed. The right-wing bourgeoisie remains divided among three parties. First of all, the Popular Alliance led by the *caudillo* Fraga Iribarne; the UCD, chaired since last July 13 by Landelino Lavilla, who does not even have any authority in whatever remains of the party; and, finally, the CDS of Adolfo Suarez. Indeed, the AP has the support of big capitalists, the bankers, the less hardened sectors of the army and the church, but it does not have a chance of getting as much electoral support as the PSOE. And in the bourgeois camp, neither the UCD nor the CDS has the weight to forge a bourgeois democratic right. Moreover, it

is evident that the government was obliged to call a general election, although the reunification of bourgeois political forces has not made much headway. This is what has created favourable conditions for a possible PSOE victory in the elections.

Q: What are the most widely forecast electoral results, and the governmental forms that might result following a PSOE victory?

A: The most likely outcome is a PSOE government with some independents. Right now, Democratic Action (AD) led by Fernandez Ordonez, which came out of the crisis in the UCD, is part of the PSOE electoral list. On the other hand, it seems that Adolfo Suarez does not want to be part of the government. Rather, he contemplates a sort of arrangement with the PSOE in parliament while staying out of the government, in order not to leave too much room for the right that will regroup around the AP and the UCD.

Obviously, all this depends on the final electoral results. The PSOE, which has



Felipe Gonzalez, leader of PSOE (DR)

not given up hope of winning the absolute majority, is waging a frantic campaign in favour of a 'useful vote', in order to marginalise the Communist Party (CPE). At the moment the polls give at least 48% to the PSOE (its own polls gave it up to 58%). The AP is improving, but still failing to reach 20%. The UCD and the CDS seem to have levelled off at under 10%: this is amazing for a party which, like the UCD, is still in office. Finally, the CP is very preoccupied with speculations that barely give it 5 to 6%. If they do not make the 5% minimum, they would lose their parliamentary representation.

Q: How will the electoral victory of the PSOE affect the political crisis that you spoke of above?

A: The victory of the PSOE will step up the instability even further. With the PSOE as the majority in parliament, compromise between the state apparatus inherited from Francoism and the parliamentary institutions is not going to stabilize. But the victory of the PSOE will compel the bourgeoisie to speed up the process of political regroupment around the AP. After the elections, the AP would have to push the UCD to create a coalition of the opposition against the parties in government. The wing of the bourgeoisie that supports this perspective may have a majority in the big bourgeoisie for pushing the project of a 'great right'.

But on the other hand, within the bourgeois camp, there will be the right nationalists, the bourgeois parties of the Basque country, of Catalonia and the party of Adolfo Suarez (CDS), that will adopt a different attitude towards the PSOE, mid-way between direct confrontation and collaboration with the government coming out of the October 28 elections. The division within the bourgeoisie will continue after the electo-

ral victory of the PSOE, even though it is likely that the forces polarised around the AP will turn out to be the most powerful.

Q: On October 2, it was announced that a military plot to prevent the elections had been discovered. Was this a bluff or a real reaction of certain sectors of the army? In general, how is the military reacting to the perspective of a PSOE victory?

A: The Francoist sectors of the state apparatus very much doubt the capacity of the right-wing bourgeoisie to prevent the PSOE from, sooner or later, undertaking certain reforms of the state apparatus and thus attacking their privileges. This is why the coup attempt discovered on October 2 was not a bluff. It is certainly not an initiative of the majority of the military hierarchy. But it is an action of the toughest sector of the army, who do not want to rely on the PSOE's collaboration with the regime, and do not even want to give the bourgeois parties the chance to force the PSOE to carry out a right wing policy. Moreover, from the start, the PSOE denounced this coup attempt as a bluff of the bourgeois forces on the eve of the elections. But they could not keep up this argument for very long. It is now clear that the hardest sectors of the army wanted to carry out a coup. They will continue to use this threat after the elections.

But what is still the greatest danger is that using the excuse of the presence of these ultra-reactionary sectors within the army, a majority of the military hierarchy is considering a sort of institutional coup after the elections, a semi-constitutional coup as we call it here, with the establishment of a civil-military junta, or something like that. After an initial period of PSOE government where the PSOE will have felt the pressure of the bourgeoisie to follow a right wing line, if the AP can

appear as a viable governmental alternative, especially after the municipal elections in February 1983, this bourgeois sector could, without openly attacking parliamentary institutions, and with the support of King Juan Carlos, provoke the setting up of a new form of government, what we call here an 'administrative government' of the right wing parties and the military. Relying on the Bonapartist role of the king, this institutional coup would aim to undo the results of the October 28 elections, while avoiding a central confrontation with parliamentary institutions. If the majority of the military hierarchy plays this card, it nevertheless will have to take into account the great difficulty in carrying through this project: the lack of a social base for an attempt of this nature, even if it enjoys the support of the king and the constitution ...

Q: What kind of electoral campaign are the bourgeois parties conducting?

A: The campaign of all bourgeois forces is affected by the fact that they expect favourable results for the PSOE. It is rather a campaign for the day after the election. The basic picture presented by the electoral campaign of the bourgeoisie is one of a divided right with no confidence in its ability to win in the electoral arena. Certainly, Fraga Iribarne and the bourgeois leaders sometimes say that they can win the elections, but nobody really believes them.

Popular Action, for example, has as its main slogan 'It's time for solutions!', which refers to problems such as 'insecurity in the cities', 'terrorism' or 'danger of division in Spain', etc. The AP rests on certain traditional values, like the family, absolute opposition to abortion rights or even decriminalisation, defense of private education, while combining these with populist promises such as reduction of

taxes or economic protection for housewives ... Moreover, the economic orientation of the AP is the open defense of the neo-liberal options of Milton Friedman (1). Certainly, Fraga Iribarne does not talk about Pinochet, but he does lay claim to Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. It is thus a very rightist campaign, with a populist aspect, that has a certain resonance in some layers of the traditional petty bourgeoisie. There is an aspect, however, of the AP's political orientation that is very much used against it, even by rival bourgeois parties — it appears as a party conciliatory to the putschist sectors of the army. Thus, after the last coup attempt, Fraga Iribarne declared that one must understand the motives of the *golpistas*, because of a risk of a split in the Spanish state.

The UCD is leading a very defensive electoral campaign, with enormous programmatic confusion, because it is not able to find an electoral niche between the right of Fraga Iribarne and the liberal-democratic orientation of Adolfo Suarez's CDS. The fundamental difference with the AP is that it combines themes like the defence of freedom of education, rejection of decriminalisation for abortion, with the affirmation of defence of democratic and parliamentary institutions.

As for the CDS, it develops the perspective of progressive social reforms on the economic terrain, of support of the most modern sectors of industry. Certainly, the proposed reforms do not go very far, but this is enough to distinguish the CDS from other bourgeois formations. So, after the recent military putsch attempt, Suarez reacted more strongly than the leaders of the PSOE themselves, stating that all officers implicated in this action be removed, and that the army must remain in its barracks.

Q: How do the different bourgeois forces define themselves in relation to the problem of nationalities?

A: That is precisely another difference between the bourgeois formations. While the AP and the UCD appear to be the two parties of the centre bourgeoisie, it seems to be the CDS that is more ready to compromise with the bourgeois nationalist parties, especially in Catalonia, but also in the Basque country. For example, the CDS does not agree with the LOAPA (Organic Law for the Harmonisation of the Process of Autonomy). (2) It supports negotiation with the bourgeois parties and a new law on the nationalities. Undoubtedly the CDS would be ready to make concessions on issues such as the withdrawal of the police force from the Basque country, on the extension of autonomous governmental responsibilities in the area of education or communication, but it does not make any concrete proposals.

Q: What would a vote and a victory for the PSOE represent for the working class?

A: For the workers and for whole different strands of the population who are prepared to vote for its candidates, the PSOE represents the hope for change. But

Trotskyists election campaign

The *Liga Comunista Revolucionaria*, section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state, will be putting forward candidates in 48 out of 52 constituencies, the exceptions being Albacete, Cuenca, and the Moroccan territories of Ceuta and Melilla.

The LCR is part of the following electoral coalitions: *Front Comunista de Catalunya* (Catalonian Communist Front); *Esquerda Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Left of Galicia); *Izquierda Comunista* (Communist Left of Aragon); *Esquerra Unida del Pais Valencia* (United Left of Valencia) and *Frente de Izquierda Comunista* (Communist Left Front) in Madrid.

The LCR is also participating in electoral regroupments in Rioja and Asturias in the *Bloque de la Izquierda Asturiana* (Bloc of the Asturian Left), and in Caceres in *Bloque Popular de Extremadura* (Popular Bloc of Extremadura). All in all our comrades are participating in 18 united campaigns.

In 30 other constituencies, they are standing alone. This is the case of the *Liga Komunista Iraultzailea* (LKI, section of the Fourth International in Euzkadi) in the four constituencies in Euzkadi, and of the LCR in Andalucia, the Canary Islands, the region of Murcia and in Castille-Leon, etc. In these 30 districts, the LCR is standing both for Congress (Parliament) and the Senate. In some cases, the comrades intend to stand down after the campaign in favour of candidates from radical nationalist organisations, such as *Herri Batasuna* in Euzkadi.

The comrades are legally entitled to a half hour on national television, 45 minutes on national radio, and corresponding time on regional and local TV and radio. The LCR has demanded to be represented on electoral bodies, such as the central electoral Junta and the Radio-TV Committee.

at the same time, while the central slogan of this campaign is simply 'For change!', its actual programme seems to get more and more watered down the closer we get to October 28. The policy of the PSOE is to achieve an electoral victory, if possible an absolute majority in the Cortes, while maintaining a willingness to consult with the 'real powers', that is, the employers, the church, the institutions and the army, even if in the last case this is not overtly expressed.

In the electoral campaign the process of change has become focused above all on the question of links with the North

Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). With its proposal for a referendum on this question, the PSOE indicated its continuing desire to freeze the integration of the Spanish state into the military organisations of NATO, although no precise date was proposed. On all its other promises it is clear that the PSOE is reducing the scope of the changes it stands for. For example, on the question of unemployment: the PSOE promised to create 800,000 new jobs in the next four years of government. But this would only mean a reduction in the unemployment rate from 16 to 12% of the active population, that is, it would keep a high level of unemployment for the next four years. While the PSOE promised to increase the period of unemployment benefit to two years it still refuses to extend it to all the unemployed. The reduction of the work week to 40 hours is offset by an increase in productivity. The PSOE has also accepted the essential argument which has gone along with signing various social pacts in the last while, that is the proposal to increase salaries in line with the rate of inflation predicted for the year to come, and not inflation in the current year.

On the land question, which is crucial in Andalusia and Extremadura, the PSOE is content to put forward a 'minimum income' guarantee for the poor peasants, and very weak laws on the question of division of the land. The power of the big landowners is still respected. The only nationalisation envisaged by the PSOE is of the high-tension wires.

In the field of democratic liberties the PSOE intends to keep the laws that were approved after February 23, 1981, such as the law for defence of the constitution, which can in fact be used against workers organisations and newspapers. Anyone who denounces state repression being used to suppress the demands of the nationalities in the Spanish state can be arrested under the charge of apologism for terrorism.

One of the weak links in the policies of the PSOE is precisely this question of nationalities. Not only does it not oppose the LOAPA, but it refuses to take account of the most immediate demands supported by the radical nationalists, from the Basque country for example.

The same goes for the nuclear power centre at Leminiz, 15 kilometres from Bilbao, which is a real scandal from the point of view of the safety of the local

1. Milton Friedman, American economist and Nobel prizewinner, is the leader of the 'monetarist' school. This prioritises absolutely the fight against rising prices. Faced with the capitalist economic crisis this option aims to re-establish the rate of profit by a brutal attack against the buying power of the workers, through a massive rise in unemployment in particular.

2. The Organic Law for the Harmonisation of the Process of Autonomy (LOAPA) is a measure adopted under the government of Calvo Sotelo. Under the pretext of bringing into line the differences in autonomy status of the different nationalities in the Spanish state the law reduces further the power of local institutions. The PSOE supported the adoption of this law, just like the UCD. This measure increased the contradictions between the centralist bourgeoisie and the nationalist bourgeois formations.

population. The PSOE has declared itself in favour of stopping the functioning of nuclear centres which do not offer sufficient guarantees of safety. However, it is in favour of maintaining this one because they want to distinguish themselves from the radical Basque nationalists and ETA who are opposed to building this centre. But it is likely that once the PSOE is in government they will be forced to make certain concessions on this because it is a very popular issue in Euzkadi.



The PSOE also refuses to retreat on the freeing of the Basque political prisoners and the withdrawal of the police force from the Basque country because it knows that the Army is intransigent on these points.

The decriminalisation of abortion is only seen in extreme cases of rape or malformation of the foetus, but this question hardly appears in the election campaign. The PSOE has also retreated already from one of the proposals to abolish a law which maintains the privileges of private education with respect to subsidies and the role of the church. The PSOE did not intend to stop these subsidies, but to control them in order to prioritise the development of public education. The right made a fuss and the PSOE backed down. But there will be a lot of popular pressure around this issue once the PSOE is in government. Finally the PSOE, in its electoral programme does not propose any concrete measure to purge the army, even though it denounces the continual threats of a coup d'etat, *golpismo*.

To the workers and the layers ready to vote for it, the PSOE appears as a hope for change rather than as a party able to make big radical reforms. But above all, it is seen as an instrument of defence for the workers against the danger of a coup d'etat, and a right wing which is tending to concentrate itself behind the AP of Fraga Iribarne. This is not to say that the present vague promises meet the expectations of the PSOE electorate. They want the defence of democratic freedoms, the fight against unemployment, and against entry into NATO, to be linked to policies that really oppose the right and the threats of a coup c'etat.

Q: What is the Communist Party (PCE) doing in the present electoral campaign?

A: The PCE more than ever seems to be running the risk of decomposition after these elections. In fact, according to the electoral law and the organisation of the Cortes, if the PCE does not get 15 deputies in Parliament, it cannot have its own parliamentary group.

This risk of being squeezed out of parliamentary representation explains the rather militant campaign of the PCE base for these elections. But the problem of the PCE is that it wants to get deputies with a programme that is not sufficiently differentiated from that of the PSOE, bar a few differences. For example, the PCE is against LOAPA, for a rapid exit from NATO, and it has put a time limit of six months on calling a referendum on this question. It is for the removal of American bases, and has been bolder on the question of abortion than the PSOE. But these differences are very limited. And all the more so as their way of applying these demands is totally within the framework of the consultation policy advocated by the PSOE.

In fact, at the same time as it criticises the PSOE as a right wing social democratic formation, the PCE puts forward a policy of democratic front with the UCD, with Suarez's party, and with the PSOE. Essentially, it reproaches the PSOE for not taking sufficient account of it in its policy of alliance.

Q: What is the attitude of the trade union confederations, the General Workers Union (UGT), and the Workers Commissions (CCOO) to the question of how to vote?

A: The UGT has called for a vote for the PSOE, even though it has stated it will not give a blank cheque to a socialist government, and that it will retain independent trade union policies. There are moreover some differences between the electoral programme of the PSOE and that of the UGT. For example, there are several trade union federations of the UGT which have declared themselves in favour of nationalisation of their sector, as was done during the congress of the bank federation.

Marcellino Camacho, leader of the Workers Commissions is trying to maintain a certain autonomy from the PCE in order to shield the union from the effects of the Party's crises. Therefore, while remaining closely linked to it, they have not called openly for a vote for its candidates alone. The CCOO have called for a vote for the parties which support their programme. However, this programme remains quite cautious, even though there is an attempt to differentiate the CCOO's position from that of the UGT. The CCOO, for example, has called for a 35 hour work week as soon as possible.

Q: What are the central axes of your own election campaign?

A: Our central slogan has to thrusts: Que no nos rebajen el cambio, ven con la izquierda que lucha. (So that they don't minimise the change, come with the left that fights). Around this slogan we have

elaborated five themes of the campaign.

First of all, the struggle against the continuous threat of a coup d'etat. This demands, we say, a radical purge of the state apparatus.

Against the LOAPA we say, 'Down with LOAPA, self-determination for the nationalities in the Spanish state.'

On unemployment, we say that, as there are two million unemployed, two million jobs should be created, through immediate investment, and that unemployment benefit should be instituted for all women and men. And, if money is needed, then it should be taken from where it is, by nationalising the banks.

We demand immediate withdrawal from NATO and the calling of a referendum on this question, the removal of American bases in Spain, and refusal of nuclear weapons. As for the practicalities, we have not set a date for this referendum. But within the electoral coalition in Madrid, for example, we support the position of the PCE, which proposes a referendum within six months of the inauguration of the new government.

We demand, which is very important, legalisation of abortion rights, for this medical service to be free and reimbursed by social security.

Thus, we have not developed a general programme for the elections. We preferred to put the emphasis mainly on these five themes, to try to get electoral alliances with the radical and revolutionary left.

Q: On that point, what results have you gotten in your attempts to get united-front slates?

A: The outcome of our policy of electoral alliances is very uneven. We have made formal alliances with the Communist Movement in Spain (MCE) in four areas, Catalonia, Madrid, Aragon and Galicia. In these four regions we are putting forward common candidates on a two-party slate. In addition, in Madrid, a section of the former Maoist Workers Party is participating in the electoral list.

In other regions there are coalitions which are not coalitions of parties but in which the MCE and LCR are present. These are coalitions of political fronts, some of which existed before the elections, some of which have now been created with independents. In Valencia, for



example, there is a coalition which is called the United Left of Valencia, in which sections of the radical nationalists are taking part and which is structured through collectives at the base. This coalition is campaigning on key themes similar to our own, while putting a lot more emphasis on the national question. Then there is Asturias, where there is an electoral front in which the MCE and LCR are participating, but which also includes a current of workers leaders, which has come out of the Workers Commissions. It is better known as the left current of the Workers Commissions. It was actually expelled, but continues to fight for reinstatement. This coalition is called the Left Bloc of Asturias.

Outside these examples, which show that it is in fact possible to pursue a policy of electoral alliances, the LCR is standing separately in places where such agreements cannot be reached, even with the MCE. This is the case in the Basque country or in Andalusia. The Liga Komunista Iraultzailea (LKI), section of the LCR in Euzkadi, are standing candidates and running an election campaign, but they are going to stand down before the vote, for the nationalist organisation Herri Batasuna. For our Basque comrades it seemed better, since we could not get a unitary candidature of the radical and revolutionary left, and since there is the candidature of Herri Batasuna, an organisation which has already shown itself, in previous elections and during struggles, as the principal force of the currents resisting the present regime and the *national oppression of the Basque country, to concentrate the votes on this candidature.* This 'useful vote' is not unconditional support, as we will show during our campaign.

In fact we have three areas of difference with Herri Batasuna. First of all, their underestimation of the usefulness of having a presence in the parliamentary institutions. While they use election campaigns to popularise their programme, Herri Batasuna do not want to use their elected representatives to attend and take part in parliamentary debates. This criticism does not fall into a void, in so far as this question has already created tension within the organisation during internal debates. Second point of difference, the relationship that this coalition has with ETA. And that is not because we are opposed to armed struggle in principle, but because we consider that the policy of mass mobilisation cannot be subordinated to the minority armed actions of ETA. Activity which we think, as a general rule, does not relate to the actual balance of force. Finally, we criticise the sectarian attitude of Herri Batasuna to other currents in the workers movement, and the fact that they do not want to develop any type of unity with the CCOO, the UGT, the PSOE, or the PCE. These very important criticisms cannot however hide the fact that Herri Batasuna has been the principal force of resistance to the regime of reform and that of

counter-reform following February 23, 1981 (3).

To summarise our voting advice: we can say that where we have not formalised common candidates we call for a vote for nationalist radical formations like Herri Batasuna in Euzkadi, the National Popular Bloc in Galicia, and the Union of the Peoples of the Canaries in the Canary Isles, or worker candidates of the reformist left in the rest of the Spanish state. This is an orientation which takes account of our objective, to strengthen the radical left and our comradely relations with different forces in this current. But where there are not significant candidatures of the radical left we call for a vote for the reformist left parties, against the right.

Q: Have you had negotiations and discussions on common lists with groups coming out of the PCE?

A: In the case of Madrid there was in fact a very good chance that a whole left current from the PCE would reach agreement with us to stand together in the elections. Since the dissolution of the Cortes at the end of August there has been a whole process of debate with this dissident left current in Madrid, led by trade-union leaders, in fact the majority of the CCOO leaders in the province. We had almost reached agreement around the central themes of our campaign outlined above. But, when the agreement was to be concluded, a pro-Soviet faction in this current came out against the agreement, and won the day. It is nevertheless positive that this current refused to have an electoral list with the pro-Soviets. *There is in fact a pro-Soviet candidature which is called the candidature of Communist Unity, it comes from groups which came out of the PCE several years ago.*

If we had reached agreement with this dissident current in Madrid, this could have extended to other provinces of the country. However, the bridges to this current are not broken. For example we have campaigned together on Palestine, and we continue to work together in trade unions

Q: Does the unity in action you have developed with the MCE open up new possibilities in the political and organisational level, in the perspective of building the revolutionary party?

A: We think that the electoral agreements with the MCE constitute a step forward in unity between the two parties. But in order to see the next step forward we are waiting for the result of this joint campaign, and above all their attitude towards a PSOE government. There could be political differences on this, even though there are points of convergence. The risk the MCE is running is that it does not want to take into account the illusions, even limited, that part of the left wing electorate will have in this government. This could raise tactical differences between the two parties. But there is now a common wish to work together and not to treat political differences as irreconcilable. But we cannot make predictions on how far the results of October 28 will open a new period for all the revolutionary left. ■

3. The rule of 'political reform' is the process of gradual transition towards a form of parliamentary democracy, after the fall of the Prime Minister at the time, Adolfo Suarez, within the limits of the monarchical institutions inherited from Francoism. The 'counter-reform' was initiated by the military coup d'etat of February 23, 1981. This is a period in which the direct or indirect pressure of the armed forces blocked, or even reversed, the process of opening up, with the adoption of the anti-terrorist laws, and laws against the autonomy of nationalities.

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Prerevolutionary crisis looms in Bolivia

With the military in retreat before the mass movement in Bolivia, there is a possibility of a prerevolutionary situation developing in the country. The following is a summary of reports from Bolivian Trotskyists and Sergio Rodriguez, a leader of the Mexican section of the Fourth International who visited Bolivia in early October. Some other elements have been added to complete the picture.

Facing a nationwide general strike, the Bolivian military junta agreed on September 17 to withdraw from power. It announced that the congress dispersed by the authors of the military coup of July 17, 1980, would be reconvened.

Early in October, the congress met and elected a civilian president and vice president, Hernan Siles Suazo and Victor Paz Zamorra. Both represented major components of the Union Democratica Popular (UDP).

Siles Suazo is the leader of the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario de Izquierda (MNR-I, the Left Revolutionary Nationalist Movement); Paz Zamorra of the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario (MIR — Movement of the Revolutionary Left, originally a guerrilla organization).

The key economic ministries of labor and mines were given to Communist Party representatives.

The July 17, 1980, coup was staged expressly to prevent the UDP from assuming office. That is an index of the turnaround. In the June 1980 elections, the coalition got 40% of the vote, and a smaller, far more radical grouping, the PS-uno (Socialist Party, No. 1) got between 11% and 12%. Together they held the majority.

The leader of the PS-Uno, Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz, was murdered at the time of the coup d'etat. Six months later, in early 1981, eight leaders of the MIR were murdered, following the new government's announcement of its austerity program.

During the military takeover, the headquarters of the national labor confederation, the COB (Central Obrera Bolivia — Bolivian Workers Federation) was destroyed by fire from tanks. The leadership of the COB was arrested, and violent military assaults were launched against the working-class neighborhoods.

A large number of workers were killed, it is still impossible to say how many. Hundreds were sent to concentration camps. The COB was outlawed, and broken for a period.

In fact, the July 1980 coup was an

attempt to repeat the Argentine military takeover of March 1976 in Bolivia. The coup was preceded by the buildup of rightist terrorist organizations modeled on the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance. In the most recent period, such paramilitary forces included about 10,000 well armed and well paid operatives. An important element were organized by the three gangs that control the cocaine trade.

It was on the section of the bourgeoisie that controls the cocaine business that the 1980 coup was essentially based. Its most direct foreign ally was the murderous military regime in Argentina, with its 30,000 "missing persons." This, to a considerable extent, explains the stand-offish attitude taken by Washington, which refused to recognize the regime.

WHAT THE COLLAPSE OF THE JUNTA REPRESENTS

From a more general standpoint, the 1980 coup marked the failure of a long attempt to restabilize a form of bourgeois rule in Bolivia. The 1952 revolution, one of the deepest revolutionary processes in Latin American history, shattered the traditional structures of the ruling class and gave rise to very powerful working-class organizations, the COB, and in particular the miners union, the most radical driving force within the proletariat and poor masses.

The revolution, however, failed to solve the problems of the peasants or dissolve the bourgeois army, and it was on that the counterrevolution based itself. The army was rebuilt in 1954-56 with American aid and training. In 1964, General Barrientos seized power and maintained it with the help of a largely peasant base.

In 1971, General Hugo Banzer established a more right-wing regime, based in particular on the bourgeoisie of Santa Cruz, one of the most backward areas of the country. Santa Cruz differs economically and culturally from the rest of the country, in that it is a region traditionally dominated by big ranchers and where the population is almost exclusively of European origin. The bourgeoisie in this area was strengthened by an oil boom.

The rise of dictatorship in Bolivia was closely connected with the development of military regimes from the mid 1960s on in Brazil and Argentina, which intervened in various ways, among other things to gain control of Bolivian resources, in particular natural gas and hydroelectric potential.

Thus, the development of more and more repressive military regimes in Bolivia was an integral part of the rise of strong military regimes throughout the Southern Cone of Latin America. And it was tied up with a prospect of economic growth subordinate to imperialism.

THE CRISIS OF THE DICTATORSHIPS OF THE SOUTHERN CONE

The withdrawal of the military rulers in Bolivia, therefore, represents a very deep crisis of bourgeois rule throughout the region. The nadir of capitalist economic development was a regime openly based on the drug trade, which became the country's main export at the end of the 1970s, passing tin and petroleum.

The retiring military ruler, General Torelio, is indeed a nonentity who was put at the head of the government because the U.S. vetoed the chiefs of the other services, well known members of the cocaine mafia.

The political failure of the junta is symbolized by the fact that two years after the coup. It had to call the UPD back to government to rescue bourgeois rule. That reflects the deterioration in the relationship of forces for the bourgeoisie vis-a-vis the workers movement and the masses of the poor. And in this situation, the bitterness of the workers and the poor toward the military is very sharp.

The military did not send officers to the inauguration of the new president, evidently for fear of the response they would get from the crowd. *Liberation's* special correspondent, Veronique Soule, noticed a crowd gathering around five human silhouettes drawn on the pavement, representing five victims of the military coup. An old trade unionist who was in the COB headquarters when it was attacked spoke:

"Come up, you young people, so you will know ... It happened on July 17, during the coup of General Garcia Meza. Look at what they did to our building. Everything was taken away, burned. This is all that is left of the COB headquarters. They fired on those who came out first. The whole leadership was gathered in the building. The others were able to escape over the roofs. I was there ... it still hurts me today. And what became of my brother, a miner too? Come on, look, don't forget what the military did."

THE NEW GOVERNMENT

In his inaugural address, Siles Suazo called for "a war economy, discipline on the job, productivity." At the same time, he promised workers a share in the management of the state owned enterprises, which dominate the mining industry. Before taking office, the new president had pledged to reform the armed forces and punish those officers involved in the cocaine trade; at the same time he promised that his government would not attempt to "take vengeance against the military."

HOW THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT WAS TOPPLED

In short, the UDP government assumed the mediating role that the military expected of it. It was not the UDP leadership that forced the cocaine generals to relinquish formal control of the government. The coalition leadership, as well as the union tops had opposed the unlimited general strike of September 16. It was the ranks and the leaders closest to them, especially in the miners union, that forced it.

This development at the same time reflected the pressure of an upsurge expressed in many protests and actions, which forced the restoration of the legal status of the COB in May.

The miners union went on an unlimited strike first, announcing that the miners would not return to work until the government accepted four demands. The first that it withdraw in favor of a government of Siles Suazo and Paz Zamorra. The second was that this government should immediately call general elections. The third was acceptance of the miners' economic program, calling for (a) nationalization of the banks; (b) a state monopoly of foreign trade; (c) nationalization of the part of the mining industry remaining in private hands. The fourth demand was for a living wage of 20,000 pesos a month (the official rate is 160 pesos to the dollar, far below the real exchange value) and a sliding scale.

The miners wanted immediate elections rather than a recalling of the 1980 congress, because the right still held a majority in it. It is generally accepted in Bolivia that if elections are held now, the UDP and PS-uno will get more than 70% of the vote.

It was only during the mass workers rally in La Paz on September 15 that the COB leadership was forced to accept an indefinite general strike. Filemon Escobar, a leader of the miners union, appealed to the crowd and got overwhelming support for the proposal.

The Bolivian Fourth Internationalists played an important role in building and leading the strike, one of the prominent leaders being Felipe Vasquez, a well known member of the Bolivian section of the Fourth International.

Once the military saw the leadership slipping out of the hands of the reformists and moderates, it decided to turn the



POR-Combate, Bolivian Section of the Fourth International (DR)

government over to the UDP before the radicalization could develop any further.

raised by the miners. But the leadership was not even prepared to push this.

THE MINERS STRIKE

The miners, however, refused to end their strike, in particular since the military had not accepted their economic demands. They remained on strike, even though 80% of their own leaders were opposed to that.

Union chiefs went into the mines all over the country to try to persuade the miners to go back to work. In many places, they were driven out. The strike continued until mid-October, when the union chief, Juan Lechin Oquendo threatened that if the miners did not stop the action the leadership would resign en masse. His argument was that the continuation of the strike was favoring "putschist tendencies" among the military.

Ironically, the union leaders used the same argument in the period before the 1980 coup to justify the Pacto de San Jorge with the military leaders. The pact involved a pledge by the unions that they would not go too far. It was supposed to reassure the military chiefs and keep them from doing anything rash.

The effect was to demobilize the workers, sowing illusions that the military had been satisfied. The coup came a few months later. And the COB had no plans for opposing a military takeover but defensive ones, calling for occupations and blocking roads. Facing ruthless and determined *gorilas*, the workers were smashed, with heavy casualties.

By breaking the miners strike, the reformist leaderships have already dealt a serious blow to the working-class movement in the new phase of development toward an all-out confrontation. Despite waging a long strike, the miners were obliged to go back without anything to show for it. There had been a demand that the government at least sign a statement of intent to comply with the calls

A NEW COUP IN PREPARATION

The fact is that a new coup is being prepared now; that is obvious. And it would be a far more murderous one than the last, because it would face rebuilt and stronger workers and mass organizations and more determined opposition.

At the same time, neither the military nor any bourgeois government can offer the masses any economic concessions whatever. The next military government will have to force the population to accept the results of an economic disaster unprecedented even in the dreary history of Bolivian economic development.

Given such economic prospects, the military decided that it would be better to let the UDP administer the crisis for a period. As long as the government can keep the masses under control, the military can afford to wait for the people to become demoralized by the economic situation and the lack of hopes for improvement. And then, at the proper moment, it would be able to make its move.

The incoming government, including two Communist Party ministers, has met the military's expectations, as the UDP's attitude to the general strike and the miners strike before demonstrated that it would. Now it faces one of the world's worst economic situations.

ECONOMIC CATASTROPHE

With a population of 5 million people, Bolivia has a foreign debt of 4 billion dollars, when only 35% of the labor force is employed. For this year, the service on the foreign debt amounts to 600 million dollars, while the total government income is only 900 million. That means that the total resources available to the state are 300 million dollars. And of that, 14% is allocated for the police and the

army, that is, for repression. The rate of inflation for this year is expected to be between 150% and 300%. Since a third of the food consumed in the country is imported, the result is that food prices have increased by 500%.

Today in Bolivia there is not a single major state or private enterprise that is not working at a loss. Some 90% of the private sector is in the red. Only one mine in the state mining trust, Comibol, is not working at a loss — the one at Huanuni.

Even the food industry, which remained the longest untouched by the crisis, is now working in the red and is maintained only by state subsidies. Despite state support of the food industry, moreover, food shortages have become dramatic. Nearly every staple is scarce from meat to bread and milk, potatoes and vegetables. Milk in particular is prohibitively expensive, so that even employed miners cannot afford it.

COCAINE INSTEAD OF FOOD

In fact, Bolivian agriculture is not directed toward food production, since the only profitable cash crop is now cocaine. In this context, the first demands for control by farmers over prices and marketing of products have been raised by the small coca growers in a part of La Paz province. These farmers have been subjected to spoliation by the military drug mafia, which often steals their crops outright. Even when they are paid, what they get is a pittance compared with the profits of the racketeers.

That is the reality to which U.S. imperialism has reduced the economies of the neocolonial countries in its "backyard." Even the Mexican government has been forced to threaten, for example, that if its U.S. creditors refuse to renegotiate its foreign debt it will stop trying to block the flow of marijuana into the United States.

The idea is abroad among the farmers that agriculture should be redirected toward food production. But given the nature of the world market today and the pressure of prices, that would only be possible in the context of a centralized economic plan.

Any real independence for Bolivia is impossible without such planned development of agriculture, since at present the country is heavily dependent on U.S. food surpluses. U.S. experts estimate that Bolivia would face famine in three months if American surplus food shipments were cut off.

THE NARROWING SOCIAL BASE FOR BOURGEOIS RULE

The various options for achieving even neocolonial bourgeois stability have withered away over the last decade. The Santa Cruz oil boom has faded. One factor is the international oil glut now. But in general the imperialists tend to inflate speculative booms around the development of extractive industries in

colonial countries for the sake of prices and attracting investors, and then let the air out of them. The oil reserves in this area are classified as probable rather than proven.

Moreover, the development of the natural gas industry, the major branch of petroleum exploitation in Bolivia, has been left stranded by the crisis of the major neocolonial countries in the region. Most of Bolivian gas was exported to Argentina. As the prices dropped internationally, the Bolivian junta increased the amounts pumped to ruinous levels in order to try to maintain income levels. Then, the Argentines, gripped by their own crisis, failed to keep up their payments, deciding to deduct the large debt owed by Bolivia.

So, the Bolivians lost a major part of the income they were counting on to meet their other foreign obligations. In September they were obliged to announce that they were unable to meet the interest payments falling due.

The Falangist party, the fascist organization based mainly in Santa Cruz, was wiped out at the polls in 1980, failing for the first time in its history to get over the 50,000 vote minimum for participation in elections.

RADICALIZATION OF THE PEASANTS

In the context of the economic crisis, the peasantry has moved away from its old bourgeois leadership toward a closer and closer alliance with the workers. Most of the peasant unions have now affiliated to the COB, which is now in a position to serve as the framework for unity between the workers and the farmers.

In fact, the major form of solidarity that the miners got during their strike was from the farmers, who brought them food.

THE INDIAN MOVEMENT

The national Indian movement, which consists essentially of the peasant union leaderships, has radicalized and affiliated to the UDP. It is pushing various Indian cultural demands, such as recognition of the native language and culture. The Indian organizations conduct their affairs in Quechua and Aymara, as well as in Spanish.

The radicalization of the Indian organization has already led to a split and the development of a group with a revolutionary orientation, the Movimiento Indio Tupac Katari. It is much smaller than the traditional formation but has considerable strength in certain areas. This group has accepted the position that no solution to the problems of the Indian people is possible without a socialist revolution. It is involved in discussions with the Bolivian section of the Fourth International for the formation of a revolutionary front.

About 68% of the population of Bolivia speak Indian languages, including the bulk of the peasantry. However, the

Indian population has been divided into two antagonistic nationalities, the Incas (Quechuas) and the Aymaras, who have a history of being subordinated by the first.

Among other things, the integration of the peasant unions into the COB has for the first time provided a framework for uniting the struggle of the two Indian peoples. The Indian movement has been forced into sharper confrontation with imperialism notably by a giant missionary campaign by U.S. Protestant sects, which threaten the languages, cultural values, and militant traditions of the Indian peoples. The sects serve as an instrument for ideological penetration and cultural assimilation. Therefore, the national Indian movement has demanded restrictions on their activity.

THE ARMED FORCES

Thus, the social base available for a bourgeois solution has narrowed to the vanishing point. The military remains the major institution of the bourgeoisie. It has grown into a gigantic mafia feeding on the country. It has its own economic organization, the COFADENA (Corporacion Nacional de Desarrollo de las Fuerzas Armadas — Armed Forces Development Corporation). In 1975, this trust had a capital of 85 million dollars. Today, its capital is estimated at between 250 and 300 millions. It functions as a private enterprise without any state control.

The military are the recipients of a whole gamut of privileges, opportunities for importing, exporting, for buying food and clothing at low prices, etc. They also control the cocaine trade totally.

However, at the same time the army is very poorly armed. It is still equipt for example with outdated FAL rifles. And it has a correspondingly low technical level, besides being totally corrupt. It would not be worth much as a fighting force against either a very widespread or well organized mass resistance.

ARGENTINE HANGMEN GET SQUEAMISH

Moreover, the Bolivian military finds itself increasingly bereft of effective backing in the region. This is symbolized by the bloodstained Argentine junta objecting to the appointment of Colonel Luis Arze Gomez as a military attache in Buenos Aires.

Arze Gomez, who was minister of the interior at the time of the murder of the eight MIR leaders, is now considered by the Argentine hangmen themselves, the inspirers of the rightist terror in Bolivia, as something they do not dare be associated with.

The Argentine dictatorship is in deep crisis, and could fall in one way or another in a short time, opening up the way for a resurgence of mass mobilizations.

In Uruguay, in a referendum organized by the junta itself, 75% of the voters expressed opposition to the dictatorship.

In Chile, the reorganization of the working class is already well underway and the regime is in retreat, symbolized by the resignation of Admiral Ley, the hardliner in the junta.

In Brazil, the dictatorship has been decaying for some time. A mass workers party is developing, and the government party faces defeat in the upcoming elections.

In turn, as the weakest link in the neo-colonial setup in the Southern Cone of Latin America, Bolivia could initiate a series of explosions throughout the area.

MASS PRESSURE ON THE UDP GOVERNMENT

What happens now depends on the political struggle that is opening up in the left, including the UDP, which holds the government.

The coalition in office is far from homogeneous. Ironically the most right-wing component of it is the MIR, which calls for a government of national unity including representatives of the armed forces. The Communist Party, which follows the usual line of seeking an alliance with bourgeois forces, does not go so far. It represents the biggest working-class component of the coalition.

Siles Suazo's party, the MNR-I is divided into a number of wings. The right wing wants to rebuild the old MNR as the typical bourgeois nationalist party it was. But the youth in particular look to socialist solutions.

Thus, the UDP is vulnerable to pressure from the left, if a clear and determined left pole can be built.

In this situation, the PS-uno can play an important role. This party has a basis of maneuver in the parliament, 15 deputies in a house of 250. It has mass support, and a more militant line. As a result, it has served as the gathering ground for the broad class-struggle opposition. It is not a hardened reformist formation but rather a fluid, militant mass current.

In fact, the PS-uno is hardly a party. It is not structured. It has no press of its own. And in the period of the dictatorship it played little role. But with the return of parliamentary democracy it has blossomed as a pole of regroupment for the broad military, class-struggle left.

THE REVOLUTIONARY POLE

The Bolivian section of the Fourth International, the Partido Obrero Revolu-

cionario (POR — Revolutionary Workers Party) is trying to build a pole of revolutionary regroupment in order to be able to intervene forcefully in the political process that has opened up. Besides the Movimiento Indio Tupac Katari, it is in discussions with a number of smaller far left groups, such as Vanguardia Comunista, the Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional, and a left split from the MIR, the MIR-15 de Enero.

The strategic objective of the POR is to begin to prepare the masses for the continuation of their struggle under the UDP government and for a confrontation in the not very distant future with the military. At present that does not involve all-out opposition to the government, but a strategy of pressuring it and exposing the capitulationist leadership.

As a result of the role it has played in the resistance to the military dictatorship — indicated among other things by its influence in the miners union, the Indian movement, and by its press, which is the most widely read in the underground — the POR is now in a position to serve as the political and organizational backbone of a revolutionary front that could play a decisive part in the process that has now opened. ■

The struggle for free abortion in France

In 1975, under the pressure of mass mobilisations, and thanks to the votes of the Socialist Party and Communist Party, the Veil law was passed by the French parliament. This law allows abortion under certain conditions in the first ten weeks of pregnancy.

However, this law refused to consider this as a medical operation to be reimbursed by the social security funds. Thus, one of the major obstacles to the liberalisation of abortion remained the financial question. The cost of abortions performed legally in hospitals or designated clinics is variable and depends on the good or bad will of the hospital service concerned. Today it can be as much as 800 to 1,000 French francs, £70 to £80. More and more women are resorting to abortions abroad or illegally, very often in very bad conditions of hygiene.

The Socialist Party has declared itself in favour of the reimbursement of abortions, and Francois Mitterrand announced on International Womens Day, March 8, 1982, that it would soon be reimbursed by Social Security — on September 1, according to some government spokespersons. However, an announcement of legislation to this effect was only made on October 20, under the pressure of the mobilisation for October 23.

This was not by chance. On August 2 the Minister for Women's Rights, announced the government's decision to

put back the date for reimbursement of abortion for an indefinite period.

The many reasons given were contradictory and unacceptable to women. Yvette Roudy talked of economic reasons, the deficit of the social security funds. Pierre Beregovoy, the minister in charge of Social Security explained that for him "it is necessary to take account of the religious-minded families". The most reactionary currents of the French bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie!

But the thousands of women who have fought during the last years for their rights, and in particular for free abortion on demand, refuse to carry the cost of the new austerity and the concessions the government is making to the right.

The decision to postpone the reimbursement of abortion came, what is more, at a time when the decline in abortion services in hospitals is becoming worse and worse. "Today it is quite simply the gains of the struggle for the right to abortion which are being put into question. While the reimbursement of abortion is only one stage in the real recognition of the right of women to control their own bodies, it is a decisive step and an elementary measure of social justice which must be put into operation immediately. To achieve this all the feminist forces and the workers movement must work together and mobilise to demand that the government keeps its



promises," wrote *Rouge*, the weekly newspaper of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR), French section of the Fourth International, on September 12.

On October 20 the government announced that legislation would be presented to Parliament before the end of the session to give reimbursement of 70 per cent of the cost for abortions. This would be paid for by a special fund that the state would grant to the Social Security funds.

Several thousand women and men attended the demonstration called for October 23 by the organisations which campaign for women's rights: the Family Planning organisation, the Co-ordination of Womens Groups, the association 'To Choose', the Movement for the Freedom of Abortion and contraception (MLAC), the National Association of Centres for Abortion and Contraception (ANCIC), women from the Socialist Party organised in MIFAS, etc.

The mobilisation however is not over. It is still necessary to ensure that the law is voted through the parliament, that it is put into effect, and to fight for its extension to minors and immigrants, and for 100 per cent reimbursement. ■

War and revolution in Iran

Interview with HKS representative

The following interview was given to Gerry Foley in mid-October in London by Saber Nikbeen, a leader of the Hesbe Kargarane Socialist (Socialist Workers Party), which is one of the three groups in Iran that adhere to the Fourth International.

There have been a number of articles in the press of the International presenting the views of the other two groups — the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) and the Workers Unity Party (HKV). But there has been less contact with the HKS in the last period because of repression. Therefore, their positions have not been so fully presented. To remedy this, we will publish a series of interview and articles by HKS leaders in the coming months.

Question: What does the HKS think that the Iran-Iraq war has represented politically? What were the political motivations behind it and what has it represented for the Iranian revolution?

Answer: The war between the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein and the Iranian regime dominated by Khomeini and the forces around him has now entered its third year. Over the past two years, the character of the war and hence the attitude of the workers and oppressed masses toward it has undergone considerable changes.

These changes have followed the evolution of the decisive political factors in Iran, that is, the stage of development of the Iranian revolution and process of rebuilding the bourgeois state after the old state apparatus was broken up by the mass upsurge and insurrection in 1978-79.

The most obvious change in the war is that while it was begun by an invasion of the Iraqi army, Saddam has now had to withdraw his forces back across the "international border" and it is Khomeini's soldiers that are being sent on massive offensives inside Iraq.

Unless the changes in the circumstances of the war are taken into account, one could easily fall prey to mistaken and simplistic ideas, into thinking that the present aims of the two regimes are simply a continuation of the earlier ones. It would be wrong, for example, to accept the claims of the Iranian regime that it is still waging the "same old defensive war," only now inside the Iraqi border.

The Iraqi population certainly cannot believe this, when the Iranian press and

government raised the cry around the last offensive that the "Islamic fighters" were within a hundred kilometers of Baghdad (actually that is about how far the Iraqi capital is from the Iranian border at the nearest point), or when the Iranian government proclaims that its prime intention is to liberate the Shiite holy cities of Nejad and Kerbala in southern Iraq. In fact the headquarters of the Iranian invasion force is called "Nejad Base."

There is no doubt now, if there ever was, that Saddam began this war with the tacit support of the reactionary Arab states and world imperialism, in order to weaken the Iranian revolution and to diminish the threats it was posing against the interests of reaction in the Middle East.

Therefore, revolutionary Marxists could not take a neutral position. The war was not simply a war between two reactionary bourgeois states. It offered the opportunity for reactionary forces to strangle the Iranian revolution. And — this must be understood clearly, it was not just aimed at crushing the Iranian revolution from without but at changing the balance of forces within the country in favor of reaction, including the reaction ensconced in the Khomeini government.

Wars represent vast social, political, and economic turmoil; they are not some sort of giant football game. There is usually a certain complicity between bourgeois regimes at war, that is, complicity against their respective working classes and oppressed population. It is very rare to bourgeois regimes to try to destroy the bourgeois social formation in another country; they usually have the idea of coming to terms with it at some point.

To assume that the Khomeini regime wanted to destroy the Saddam regime root and branch for example, one would have to assume that the Khomeini government actually wanted to spread a revolutionary upsurge through the region, when in fact its objective, as in the case of any bourgeois regime in a situation of such crisis, is to liquidate the upsurge in its own country, not to spread it. While it has tried to use the mass discontent in Iraq against Saddam to some extent, it has been very careful not to encourage a mass upsurge that could go out of control.

The opposite side of this coin is the determination of the Khomeini government to take advantage of the blows dealt

to the Iranian revolution by the Iraqi invasion to strengthen its hold on the situation in its own country. Within the Khomeini regime, the right also looked for ways to take advantage of the invasion to strengthen its position.

In short, the war has not been a two-dimensional military conflict, but a three-dimensional political-social-military struggle in which the essential stake is the future of the mass movement in Iran.

Therefore, what revolutionists in Iran and in the region had to do was to try to mobilize the oppressed masses in both countries to oppose the Baathist aggression. This campaign had to be focused around the central task of *defending the Iranian revolution and putting an end to this war.*

Q: Was the Saddam regime simply acting as a proxy for imperialism in launching the war?

A: No, the relationship of neocolonial regimes to imperialism is not so simple. The Baathist regime had its own social interests, its own objectives and strategy in maneuvering with imperialism, and the specific national interests of the Iraqi bourgeoisie to advance.

Nowhere in the region was the impact of the Iranian revolution greater than in Iraq. It gave impetus to an upsurge of the so-called "Shiite" opposition to Saddam (which in reality is mainly the movement of the poor peasants, particularly in southern Iraq). It opened the way for the strengthening of the Kurdish movement struggling against national oppression. It encouraged a new wave of anti-imperialist feeling in a period in which the Iraqi bourgeoisie was preparing a shift toward a new increase in its integration into the world capitalist market.

The response of the Saddam regime to the Iranian revolution was a more marked shift to the right both internally and internationally, involving collaboration with ousted politicians and generals of the shah's regime, such as Bakhtiar and Oveissi.

The Iraqi regime began to advocate openly the overthrow of Khomeini's regime from the right and to systematically aid counterrevolutionary projects and schemes for coups in Iran.

The full-scale military aggression launched in September 1980 was simply the logical extension of this Baathist policy.

However, in mounting this attack, Saddam was able to take advantage of the

reactionary chauvinist policies of the Khomeini leadership, such as the brutal repression of the Arab national minority in Iran, the "Greater Iran" nationalistic statements of the regime made under the cover of "pan-Islamic" rhetoric, and the refusal of the new government in Teheran to renounce the one-sided 1975 border treaty imposed on Iraq by the Shah.

Although the Arab states and organizations did not raise open protests against the repression of the Iranian Arabs, the impact of this went very deep. For example, Khomeini ordered the closing of the PLO office in Ahwaz, one of the main cities in the Arab area.

The Baathist regime also aimed at consolidating itself by getting the backing of the Gulf Emirates and Saudi Arabia. It sought, to a certain extent, to fill the gap left by the fall of the shah's regime as a major imperialist gendarme in the region, that is, to gain a privileged relationship with imperialism.

The Baathists also hoped that the war would assist them in their project of shifting their alliances away from the USSR to the USA (this began in 1979, after the break with the Syrian regime).

Already before the war, the Iraqi regime was getting encouraging signals from U.S. imperialism, although indirectly through the Saudi rulers. More directly, the French imperialists were offering help as a means of regaining a position in the region through Iraq.

However, there were contradictions between the aims of U.S. imperialism and those of the Baathist regime. For one thing, after the overthrow of the Shah, the U.S. had to rely more and more on Zionism as its "strategic" ally in the Middle East. In no way could it rely on Saddam to be its main gendarme. And the Zionists have demonstrated in no uncertain way that they will not accept a reinforcement of the Iraqi regime.

In general, it was in the interest of U.S. imperialism that the Iraqi regime be kept in a weak and dependent position so that it could not upset its Israel-Egypt-Saudi Arabian axis. This in fact seems to explain, at least partly, why the Soviet bureaucracy has been willing to continue to pay the high and rising political cost involved in maintaining its support for Iraq in a war against the Iranian revolution. In fact both the Tudeh Party (the Iranian CP) and the Iraqi Communist Party condemned the Baathist aggression. Nonetheless, the Kremlin has continued to supply decisive military equipment to Iraq. This is hard to explain simply by the pursuit of diplomatic interests, since the Kremlin's main ally in the region is Syria, a violent enemy of the Baghdad government, and Moscow has been energetically wooing the Islamic Republic.

Thus, when the revolutionists in the region stated that this war served the interests of imperialism (and Washington in particular), it was not because they thought the Iraqi regime was directly carrying out U.S. policies. The war objectively served the designs of imperialism by creating a situation in which it could

reinforce its military position in the area and step up its preparations for intervening militarily at a later stage. In this context, from the standpoint of imperialism, a weakening of the Iraqi regime itself was desirable.

For all these reasons, the question of how to approach mobilizing the masses against the Iraqi aggression presented some difficult tactical problems for revolutionists.

While stressing that we had to *condemn this war* between two semi-colonial bourgeois states and fight for the *unconditional withdrawal* of the Iraqi troops back behind the pre-September 21, 1980, border, we *also* emphasized that this war served none of the interests of the Iraqi or the Iranian masses. That meant that while we worked for mobilizing the Iranian masses against the military aggression, we warned against falling into the trap of defending the Khomeini regime, and helping it accomplish its objective of using the mass sentiment against the Iraqi aggression as a means of furthering its own chauvinistic aims.

We also had to proceed from the standpoint that the threat to the revolution from within was at least as great as the one from without, that they were in reality linked. We could not defend the revolution against Saddam by delivering ourselves bound hand and foot to the counterrevolution within Iran, which included the Khomeini regime.

Q: How was it possible to mobilize the masses against the Iraqi attack in independence from, and opposition to, the Khomeini regime that came out of the revolutionary upsurge and the insurrection?

A: It is an oversimplification to view the Khomeini regime as the outcome of the mass upsurge and the insurrection.

Khomeini did not want an insurrection. He based himself on the mass mobilizations against the government in order to try to force the government to transfer power to him at the top. The insurrection was actually led in Teheran, the decisive place, by the left, by the Mujahedeen and the Fedayeen.

In Kurdistan, the Kurds carried out their own revolutionary parallel to the one in the Persian centers, but under their own leadership. They never accepted Khomeini's leadership. That explains why within a month after the fall of the shah, Khomeini started launching indiscriminate military attacks against the Kurdish centers.

The self-organization of the masses went further in Kurdistan than in the parts of the country where the Khomeini forces had effective control. The peasants began to take the land first in Kurdistan and Turkmenistan, an area inhabited by a brutally oppressed Mongol people who speak a Turkish language. No publication in their language was ever permitted. The first book published was a small collection of verse that appeared after the fall of the shah. Khomeini's pasdars burnt every copy of it they could find.

Moreover, the mass movement that led to the insurrection split very quickly after the shah fell. Within two months after the overthrow, the Khomeini forces had succeeded in destroying or isolating and intimidating the local and factory committees, and begun mounting violent attacks on the gains made by the masses. The mass movement was not smashed. There were subsequent upsurges, but the same political problems remained.

It is false and dangerous to maintain that at the time the Iraqis launched their attack in September 1980, the revolution was the same thing that it was in February 1979, a year and a half before, that is, a mass movement of the oppressed under the leadership of Khomeini.

The revolution, because of the Khomeinists' attacks on the masses and because of the rising expectations of the masses themselves had come to have two completely opposed meanings for the vast majority of the toilers and oppressed in Iran.

There was the actual revolution, which meant the struggle of the toilers and the oppressed for the extension and unification of the independent factory councils (the *shoras*) and for workers control. And there was the "revolution" (that is, the "Islamic" one) which meant destroying the independent shoras by setting up Islamic shoras, which were not elected, not democratic, and antileft, and installing watchdog committees of the regime called Islamic Societies (Anjomanhaye Eslami), which were run politically by the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) and linked to the repressive apparatus outside the factory.

The real revolution involved the movement of the oppressed nationalities for self-determination, the struggles of the poor peasants to form rural shoras, and of the women, students, soldiers, and other layers for the extension of democratic rights. Khomeini's "revolution" meant genocide against the national minorities, destruction of the peasant shoras, and the suppression of all democratic rights.

It was the first revolution that was threatened by the war. The second was already seen to mean *counterrevolution* by the vast majority of the revolutionary masses. It stood to gain from the Iraqi regime's aggression.

The situation at the time of the Iraqi attack was that there had been a very extensive experience of mass mobilization and experience and at the same time of betrayal of this and attacks on it by the Khomeini forces. In this context, it was possible to call for a revival of independent factory and neighborhood committees independent of the regime in order to oppose the attack. It did not mean necessarily opposing the regime directly but it did mean appealing to the masses' understanding of the need to organize independently of it.

There were various tactical ways of applying this approach, but the fundamental problem was to avoid being pulled into building committees that were

fact means of political control and repression by the regime. This was essential because the war offered a pretext for strengthening the instruments of repression such as the army and the state's armed militias — which were already being used against the Iranian revolution. Secondly, it offered a pretext for increasing repression against the movement of the oppressed and the toilers in the name of "national defence" and "national unity." Thirdly, the war threatened to prepare the ground for a return of the forces of the old regime (through a coup linked to outside military intervention).

In fact, the attack came at a very dangerous point for the Iranian revolution. The masses were breaking from Khomeini, but this meant a moment of reflection and division, that is, of downturn of the mass mobilizations, and a certain skepticism on the part of broad layers. The disillusion with Khomeini threatened to lead to demoralization.

Moreover, in the wake of the seizure of the U.S. embassy and the taking of the hostages, Iran was isolated internationally, and the chances of an international outcry correspondingly less.

On the one hand, Iran was isolated diplomatically. On the other, the demagogic diversion of the mass movement to focusing on symbolic questions and emotional anti-Americanism had created tremendous confusion and isolated the Iranian revolution from the real world anti-imperialist movement.

The attack came after the occupation and shutting down of the universities, that is, the new wave of repression launched by the Khomeini forces in the spring of 1980, after the mass upsurge of autumn 1979 had been successfully diverted and given time to burn itself out. At this point, those left offices remaining open were attacked and a new massive campaign was launched in Kurdistan.

Actually, the upsurge itself had followed the defeat of the regime's first attempt to restabilize the bourgeois state in the first war against the Kurdish people. This war, which was launched on a full scale in June 1979, included a massive repressive campaign throughout Iran. The Kurdish people defeated the Khomeini forces in August-September 1979.

When the embassy diversion had run its course, the government resumed the Kurdish war and the repression and the campaign to restabilize the bourgeois state.

Finally, at the time of the Iraqi attack, the Iranian army was torn by rifts between the army officers trained and promoted under the old regime as the *pasdars*, Khomeini's revolutionary guards.

So, the Iraqis apparently thought that they could score more decisive victories quickly and establish a base for the right in Iran in the "liberated zones."

Q: How big a victory were the Iraqis striking for, overthrowing the regime outright, establishing a protectorate over the oil producing areas where there is a historic Arab majority?

A: There are documents indicating that

there was an agreement between the rightists to set up a "provisional government." It is possible that the rightists misled the Iraqis about the situation in Iran; They would have had to give a totally false picture of it for anyone to think that the regime could be overthrown in that way. To overthrow the government militarily from Iraq would be an enormous undertaking, involving a long march across desert and mountains. There is no way the Iraqi government could have contemplated that.

The U.S. government warned the Iraqis against attempting to take the oil fields. And in point of fact, throughout the war they never made a serious attempt to seize them or put them out of operation.

By its nature, the Iraqi regime could not attempt to mobilize the Khuzistan Arabs; that would have represented as big a danger to it as to Khomeini. In fact, they waged a purely military campaign, and as a result the Arabs were driven from their homes and alienated. The Arabs were also the victims of spoliation and atrocities at the hands of the Iraqis.

On the other hand, there was a real danger that in conditions where demoralization was already spreading among the masses, the human and material sacrifices imposed by the war would further weaken the will of the masses to resist and thereby open the way for a more rapid consolidation of the bourgeois state.

Q: What were the political results of the attack within Iran?

A: The immediate results tended to confirm the Iraqis' perspective. The reactionary officers in jail were freed to reorganize the Iranian army. A committee was set up immediately to negotiate a settlement to the conflict over the U.S. hostages (which ended in the Algiers agreement that signed away over half of Iranian foreign reserves. The details of this agreement have never been made public in Iran.). Approaches started being made internationally to get arms from anyone willing to sell (and this eventually included Israel, from which at least two large sales are fairly well documented).

Strikes had previously been banned. But now they were dealt with by armed intervention inside the factory. To help the war effort, workers were forced to "step up production," which meant working sometimes up to 15 hours a day, and to give part of their pay (on the average three days pay per month). The workers were also obliged to accept militarization of the factories by armed Islamic Societies (which now had a good cover for their reactionary role in the factories).

All the democratic gains of the soldiers were taken away, and a tough repressive code of discipline was reestablished in the armed forces.

Under the pretext of the war, the campaign against the Kurdish people was stepped up. The regime claimed that "the Kurds are basically serving the war aims of Saddam."

In fact the Kurdish Democratic Party offered the government "a truce" in return for a joint campaign against the Iraqi Army.

The introduction of the land reform bill was postponed until "the forces of infidelity are defeated." All political discussions were banned in the high schools, and students now face armed Islamic Society members in every high school.

The left political parties were banned, including the Mujahedeen, which got nearly two million votes in the parliamentary elections according to the official figures and a lot more in reality. The pretext was that they were sabotaging the war effort.

In opposition to this, we called for arming the masses through their shoras (which meant fighting the regime's attempt to dissolve these bodies) and for a revival of the democratic neighborhood committees to organize the work of defense and military training (and therefore fighting the government's policy of using the Imam's Committees to suppress the mass movement in the neighborhoods).

We called for the soldiers to exercise control over their unreliable officers through their own shoras (and therefore for fighting the government's policy of reimposing the old discipline of the shah's army in the barracks).

Despite the downturn in the revolution and despite the demoralization of the masses, the Iraqi attack provoked a new wave of mass mobilizations against the war and for the defense of the revolution. Neighborhood committees revived, and independent workers defence committees were set up in many factories. In Teheran the day after the start of the war, spontaneous mass demonstrations began, calling on the government to arm the people. (They were suppressed by the *pasdars*).

Q: Was it realistic to think that neighborhood and workers committees springing up spontaneously could play a real role in opposing a full-scale invasion by a large and well equipped army?

A: In fact, the decisive battle of the war was won by fighters organized independently of the regime. That was the battle of Khorramshahr, which halted the Iraqi blitzkrieg. The population of the city, the vast majority of whom were Arabs, took up arms and stopped the Iraqi army for nine days. The army and the *pasdars* fled.

It was rumored at the time that the government had deliberately pulled the army out in order to avoid a confrontation with the masses. Later, documents were released by the IRP to prove that Bani Sadr ordered the withdrawal as part of "his conspiracy to crush the Islamic revolution." That at least shows that the army was ordered to pull back, although now for its own purposes the IRP is trying to put the blame on Bani Sadr.

The mass sentiment was so strong that the Khomeini regime itself was forced to concede that it was necessary to arm the masses and mobilize them outside the

regular army and the pasdars. Baseej (mobilization) committees were set up in many neighborhoods to enroll the volunteers and canalize this sentiment. The committees were then put under the authority of the pasdars and used to provide cannon fodder for mass suicidal assaults.

The regime managed to keep the mass mobilizations from getting out of control by two means. First, the war zone was cleared of civilians. Military bases were set up in the middle of populous towns. No efforts were made to build civil defense shelters. And food shortages were allowed to continue, despite the massive support of the entire Iranian people for the front.

In Ahwaz, the central storehouse of ammunition was placed in the centre of town. One night it exploded. The next day, at least a third of the population was in flight.

The depopulated towns were put under tight control of the pasdars and any independent mobilizations were brutally crushed.

In the first months of the war, at least twenty Mujahedeen supporters and 12 leftists, and many more Arabs were executed in the war zone as "armed saboteurs." In fact, they had been fighting the Iraqi army. Even independent medical aid was banned.

The Mujahedeen and Fedayen medical tents in the area were attacked by the pasdars and the staff was put in jail. Moreover, these groups had played a key role in the defense of Khorramshahr.

The second reason the government succeeded in getting a firm grip on the situation is that the major groups and parties to the left played into its hands. The Tudeh Party and the Fedayeen (Majority) took a line indistinguishable from that of the regime, calling on the masses to work harder, demand less and to help *the government* to organize its war effort.

The Mujahedeen also, who had called for independent mobilizations in the beginning, quickly dropped this. They entered into an alliance with Bani Sadr who was trying to use the war to strengthen his faction in the ruling apparatus (based on the army, the technocrats, and a section of the clergy) as an alternative to the IRP. This alliance required dropping independent mobilizations since Bani Sadr was against that.

The Mujahedeen made a mistake similar to those who thought it was necessary to support Khomeini in order to oppose the Iraqis.

Bani Sadr tried to base himself on the rising demands for democratic rights, the mass reaction against the demagogy and antidemocratic attitudes of the mullahs and the IRP.

It was to that sentiment that Bani Sadr owed his overwhelming victory in the presidential election. He appeared to represent the popular will, on the basis of an election that was less rigged than the parliamentary elections, in which the IRP was able to control the polls and thus

assure that its people got in.

Of course, the presidential election was not that free either, since "non-Islamic" candidates were banned, but by comparison it smelt like a rose.

The Mujahedeen, who were influenced by Maoism and bourgeois populism at their origin, therefore decided that Bani Sadr represented the democratic bourgeoisie and therefore the democratic alternative. In fact, he was just as determined to stamp out the basis of real democracy in the conditions of the revolutionary crisis in Iran, the independent mobilization of the masses.

The Mujahedeen used the government's repression against them as a pretext for withdrawing from involvement in the mass mobilizations and to throw all their weight behind Bani Sadr's solution (a palace coup).

Khomeini's regime gradually succeeded in consolidating its power through the IRP dominated parliament, the vastly strengthened Pasdaran, and an IRP government. Linked to the so-called mass committees, which had become instruments of repression — the Imam's Committees, Reconstruction Crusade (*Jihad Sazendegi*) and the Baseej — the Khomeini government started preparing for a showdown with the so-called "liberal" faction, having already crushed the left.

Q: What effect did this have on the attitude of the masses to the war?

A: From that point on, coming about six months after the outbreak of the war, larger and larger sections of the masses began to regard the government's war effort as simply a maneuver to consolidate the power of the IRP and crush the revolution. This did not mean that they did not want to see the Iraqi army defeated. It meant only they realized that the government was crushing the mass movement and thereby sabotaging the war effort and therefore not fighting the imperialist plans.

In this phase, only the government was saying "the central issue facing us is the war with the infidel Saddam." The masses were already mobilizing in all the major cities around democratic demands and a program of social reforms.

In the absence of a powerful revolutionary organization, this movement could very easily be strangled by Bani Sadr, who was trying to improve the position of his own faction within the ruling class.

The next three months were basically taken up by the regime's preparing for the overthrow of Bani Sadr and the containment of the mass movement against repression and for social justice. In this period, the demagogy about the "pan-Islamic" aims of the war was stepped up. Fantastically exaggerated reports of mass revolts against the Saddam regime were constantly trumpeted in the totally controlled press and media.

In many cities, the vastly increased forces of the state apparatus were being used openly to intensify repression. Mujahedeen members were being attacked and

killed on the streets. There were more than a hundred known cases in northern Iran alone. Purges of militants in the factories were intensified. In Teheran alone, over 1,500 workers were either arrested or dismissed.

The campaign against the Kurdish people reached genocidal proportions, with bombardments of the villages and forced evacuation of the population from the strategically important regions (e.g. Saghez and Baneh areas).

Those political groups who had refused to fight for independent mobilization of the masses and which had helped to strengthen the instruments of the mullahs' repression by providing them with a left cover now found themselves forced into the position of actively aiding the repression.

Fedayeen-Majority and Tudeh Party members were involved in the Islamic Societies, which were spying on the militant workers and reporting them to the government authorities.

By early June 1981, the Khomeini faction was ready to move. Bani Sadr, seeing the handwriting on the wall, issued a call for a referendum so that the people could show who they supported, him or the IRP-dominated parliament. He did not, however, call for any mass mobilization to back this up. And he was quickly deposed as chief of the armed forces and later as president.

Demonstrations in support of Bani Sadr, which were mainly organized by the Mujahedeen, were brutally crushed. A rally in front of the parliament building in Teheran was machine gunned. On that occasion alone, over 170 people were killed. A quick deal was struck with the leaders of the army, who were considered Bani Sadr supporters. As it happened, they died in a suspicious airplane crash a few months later.

The Mujahedeen's response to this wave of terror was to adopt the tactic of "armed struggle." In practice, this meant assassinating individual government leaders. They did not call for, or try to build, mobilizations and strikes, although they were by this time a mass organization capable of calling hundreds of thousands of people into the streets in their own name. The growing mass opposition to Khomeini was polarized mainly by them.

In fact, their "armed struggle" was the outcome of their class-collaborationist political line. They thought that by weakening the pro-Khomeini faction, the way would be opened for the "more progressive" liberal faction to come to power in collusion with the army, and that such an alternative would then be supported by the masses. Their bourgeois friends in the government would not, of course, have approved of general strikes and mass mobilizations.

This tactic simply played into the hands of the regime. The masses were further demoralized and demobilized. The forces of repression were unleashed with savage ferocity. The day after the explosion at the IRP headquarters, at

least 15 thousand people were arrested in Teheran, of which at least 3 thousand were militant workers from every factory. (From Evin Jail a caravan of buses went the Teheran-Karaj road, calling on every factory and picking up workers named by the Islamic Societies.)

Street executions, house raids, wholesale purges, mass arrests, and mass executions followed. In the course of one year, over 20,000 political prisoners have been executed in Iran, and over 60,000 persons are being kept imprisoned for political reasons.

Obviously a terror of this scope was aimed at the mass movement as a whole. All the independent organizations have been broken up or driven far underground, the major gains of the revolution have been rolled back. This is why despite the victories at the front, we have not seen a rise in the mass movement and in fact repression has increased.

This is tragic confirmation of our position at the start that the only way to defend the revolution effectively was to avoid being trapped and disarmed by our enemy at home. *It has been shown that there is a danger that we can win the war and lose the revolution.*

Once the real revolution was stopped and rolled back, the regime began to back away even from its own demagogic nationalization plans and land reforms.

The regime did pursue the war effort against Iraq. But this took on an ever increasing chauvinistic character with constant declarations of intent to impose a "truly Islamic" government on Iraq.

The masses were called on to foot the bill with ever increasing human and material sacrifices. The Iraqi army was defeated in a number of major battles, but at the cost of the lives of over 70,000 Iranian youth, 150,000 crippled, and more than 2 million war refugees.

Most basic necessities are now rationed. The standard of living has fallen by over 50% by comparison with what it was in the last years of the shah. A vast black market run by the Pasdaran and the bureaucrats has now developed. The whole country is mourning its dead.

Victories won in such circumstances did not result in mass jubilation. The response was just a sigh of relief and a hope that the war would end soon.

Not even the victory at Khorramshahr was greeted by mass demonstrations. The demonstration called by the government in Teheran to celebrate the victory did not draw more than 100,000 participants, a comparatively small number for the circumstances and the society.

With his army demoralized and facing defeat, Saddam was by this time under great pressure to end the war. Furthermore, the capitalists in Iraq had achieved most of the objectives they sought in launching this war. There was a lot of money to be made through the many deals concluded with Western imperialist interests (estimated to involve 65 billion dollars). And for the most part, these contracts are to go into effect only after the war ends.

The Iranian government, however, insisted on stepping up the war and talking in terms of setting up an Islamic Republic in Iraq and of a pan-Islamic revolution throughout the region. There were certain contradictions in the line, with some of the military commanders talking about going into Iraq only far enough to assure that Iranian cities could not be shelled from Iraqi positions. Such vacillations were ended by the Imam himself immediately after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Large numbers of people volunteered to go to Lebanon and defend the Palestinians. The government feared that this could upset its own reactionary designs. Khomeini declared that in fact the invasion of Lebanon was "an imperialist conspiracy to divert attention from the Iranian victories" in the war with Saddam. He declared that "the forces of Islam are prepared to go to Lebanon but only through Baghdad."

The regime's motivations are not difficult to understand. The end of the war would produce an explosive political situation in Iran. Furthermore, the rainy season will soon begin, making military operations impossible on the southern front. The cold weather in the mountains would have a similar effect in the north. So, the government could maintain a phoney war for several months.

If the war ended, the war refugees would have to return to Khuzistan, and a new nationwide movement for social and economic reforms would begin. Secondly, it would be difficult for the government to justify maintaining the military instruments forged in this war—the hugely inflated corps of pasdars, and all the manifold foundations.

Thirdly, the Iranian government looked to a Shiite uprising in Iraq linked to the advance of the Iranian army as a good solution to all its political and social problems.

For these reasons, the Iranian regime has embarked on a dangerous course which can only bring greater material and human losses and therefore a deeper political crisis sooner or later for it itself, a course which has the effect of increasing the threat of imperialist intervention in the entire region, including in Iran itself.

This is because the war is dividing the oppressed peoples of the region in the face of imperialism and because the Iranian advance is seen by the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi people as a threat to their national independence, to the gains of their national revolution, and to the aspirations of the Arab people. It is reconsolidating the reactionary Baathist regime and providing a justification for the passivity of the Arab regimes in the face of the imperialist attacks in Lebanon.

Moreover, in circumstances when the Khomeini regime is being regarded with disillusion by a growing majority of the Iranian masses, the military defeat that is likely if the war is pursued could precipitate a radical shift in the balance of forces

in favor of imperialism and its most subservient local agents.

That is, defeat of the Iranian army followed by mass demoralization could provide favorable conditions for the old counterrevolutionary forces of capitalism in Iran. Khomeini's "Islamic" counter-revolution is thus only preparing the ground for a final crushing of the Iranian revolution that would involve the destruction of his own regime.

The extent of the repression, which no one can deny is massive, shows the real state of the mass movement and the real balance of forces in the country.

Effective democratic and trade-union rights are the result of a favorable relationship of forces for the proletariat and the masses.

The mistake that is made by those who mistake the demagoguery of the regime for mass radicalization is that they leave politics out of the equation in calculating the balance of forces. In order to fight effectively, the masses have to have some concrete political perspective and a leadership that really represents their interests. There are other historical examples of the collapse of very powerful mass movements when these decisive factors are lacking.

For example, in Italy, some local Communist Party leaderships built up mass insurrectionary movements during the war, thinking that this was the real line of Stalin. When Moscow turned against them after the war, they collapsed politically and so did the movements they led, although these included hundreds of thousands of conscious revolutionary fighters.

I have described how the development of a mass political leadership was diverted and crushed. Those who now maintain, against overwhelming evidence, that the mass movement is continuing to go forward are obliged in fact to try to present Khomeini and the IRP as a kind of revolutionary leadership, albeit with *contradictions*. That has a certain logic, but it is political lunacy.

Q: In this situation, what should revolutionaries do?

A: We must call for an immediate end to this war and put forward a program of social and economic demands representing the interests and the deeply felt needs of the toiling and oppressed masses.

We have to call on the masses to resist in every way possible this regime of hangmen and deceivers, to return to the traditions and the experience of the mass movement that overthrew the shah, which this government in no way represents. It is the gravedigger of that movement. ■

* The core of the Kurdish nation in Iran belong to the Sunni sect of Islam. Those who are Shiites are border peoples that generally stand in a more fluid position relative to the Persian state and culture, or else assimilated middle-class layers in the centers of Persian administration — IV.

The war in Lebanon—

A turn in the Middle East situation

Following a discussion in which somewhat different estimates of the Lebanon situation were presented, the resolution below was adopted at a meeting of the United Secretariat in early October and represents the considered judgment of the Fourth International.

1. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the siege and bombing of Beirut, the horrible massacres of the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian camps are all part of a political operation aiming: to break up the Palestinian resistance as an independent political-military force; to stabilise the Zionist state as the imperialist policeman for the region and to consolidate the pro-imperialist Arab regimes shaken by the shock waves of the Iranian revolution.

Zionist aggression is part of the international imperialist counter-offensive. It was started with the complicity and support of the United States. It took advantage both of the passivity of the Soviet bureaucracy tied up with its own economic and political difficulties and the powerlessness of the 'non-aligned' movement institutions. During the two-month siege of Beirut the Arab League did not take the least initiative, the Organisation of African Unity summit had to be adjourned for lack of a quorum and the Bagdad Non-Aligned Movement conference had to be postponed because of the Iran-Iraq war.

The operation which started with the entry of Israeli tanks into Lebanon continued with the Phalangists' arrival in power, the presentation of Reagan's 'peace plan' and the results of the Fez Arab summit. Imperialism, Zionism and the Arab regimes combined efforts to work out a new 'American Peace' for the region.

2. The Zionist state has once again been the strike force for counter-revolution in the Middle East. For months the Begin government had wanted this war and openly prepared for it. The 'Litani' operation of 1978 today seems like a dress rehearsal for the June 4, 1982 aggression.

Signing the Camp David Agreement with Egypt left Begin's regime free to develop its annexationist policy for the occupied territories, to move against the strongholds of the Palestinian resistance and thereby impose by armed force a second Camp David with Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.

The aims of the military offensive were clearly set out by the Zionist leaders:

— to break the backbone of the Palestinian resistance, facilitate the annexation of the occupied territories and prevent the link up between the rise of the mobilisations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the resistance as a whole;

— to install a strong state in Lebanon allied to Israel, impose the withdrawal of Syrian troops and force the Palestinian refugees out of Lebanon;

— to strike a strong blow against the Syrian army and thus weaken the last Soviet ally in the region.

Begin and Sharon in this way intended at the same time to prove Israel's irreplaceable role as the privileged ally of American imperialism in the region. An ally which, on the pretext of legitimate defence, is capable of militarily intervening when American imperialism, mobilised on several fronts and above all in Central America, finds it difficult to carry out many direct interventions. This is the context in which to understand Sharon's staggering declaration that Israel's zone of military interests will in the future stretch from Sudan to Pakistan and Turkey.

The Zionist leaders also want to restimulate national unity in Israel itself which is more and more eroded and threatened by

the effects of the economic crisis, galloping inflation and the burden of military spending.

3. The Palestinian resistance and Lebanese progressive movement put up an admirable resistance to the armoured invasion and intensive bombardments. The 79 day long Beirut siege was an act of defiance against the Zionist war machine which no existing Arab regime has ever been capable of making.

By preventing a lightning victory of the Zionist army the tenacious defence of Beirut permitted the modification of the relationship of forces, the diplomatic isolation of Israel, the development of contradictions among the Zionist leaders and the affirmation of the legitimacy of Palestinian national demands.

Begin and Sharon hesitated over the military and political cost involved in an assault on Beirut. The repercussions of the Sabra and Shatila massacres in Israel and world-wide give an idea of the effects that would have been produced by the physical destruction of the Beirut 'ghetto'.

The Palestinian resistance was not physically crushed, but defeated, betrayed and abandoned by the Arab regimes and the Soviet bureaucracy. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leadership also bears part of the responsibility for the defeat. No one can contest this abandoned and besieged leadership's right to negotiate. But from the beginning of the siege it got involved in secret negotiations with a 'mediator' representing imperialism over the conditions for an 'honourable' surrender. In effect its aim was to obtain diplomatic recognition from the United States in exchange for the retreat of its fighters. By doing this it contributed to disorienting and demobilising the resistance.

This choice fits in with a long political trajectory.

4. The Arab League waited until June 26-27, three weeks after the invasion of Lebanon, before meeting. This meeting rejected en bloc the fourteen requests made by Yasser Arafat in the name of the PLO: aid for the armed struggle, radical condemnation of the USA, recall of ambassadors, freezing of contracts with the USA and withdrawal of funds placed in the American banks, etc.

The Arab regimes showed themselves more preoccupied with the Iranian offensive against Iraq than by the invasion of Lebanon. Saudi Arabia and the Arab Emirates gave Iraq a credit of 23 billion dollars. Kuwait offered to provide rear-bases for its army. Jordan, North Yemen and Sudan sent volunteers and Egypt supplied Soviet arms taken from its stock. It is true that Israel did not waste any time reselling to Iran a good part of the arms and ammunition seized in the Palestinian camps.

For its part Syria speedily concluded a unilateral ceasefire with Israel in the Bekaa Valley, leaving the Zionist army free to concentrate its efforts on Beirut. Later it grudgingly bartered the acceptance of a Palestinian contingent evacuated from Beirut in exchange for an increase in Saudi financial aid.

Everything happened, in the words of a high-ranking American official, 'as if the PLO had been condemned to death by the whole of the Arab world.'

It is true that this cold-blooded betrayal by the Arab bourgeoisies of the Palestinian people fits in with an already long tradition. It stretches from the Faisal-Weizman accords (January 3, 1919) opening up Palestine to the establishment of the Jewish national homeland, to the Camp David Agreement. In between

there were the Abdallah-Ben Gurion agreement on the partition of Palestine, the massacres of the Palestinians ordered by King Hussein in 1970-1971 in Jordan and the new massacres of 1976 in Lebanon carried out by the Christian Phalangists with Syria's blessing.

5. For its part the Soviet bureaucracy does not go beyond formal protests, on the pretext that it could not be 'more Arab than the Arabs'!

The diplomatic support it gives to the PLO is still subordinated to the general interests of its alliances with the bourgeoisies of the region. It also has a long tradition of this from supporting the partition of Palestine in 1947 to the Gromyko-Vance 1977 declaration (with in between the UN Security Council Resolution 242 and the Geneva Conference).

One of the main PLO leaders, Abou Ayad, exclaimed during the Beirut siege: 'We resisted the Israeli army more than all the Arab armies ... The Soviet attitude is even more inexplicable. We questioned Moscow publicly and in secret. We only received symbolic encouragement. How can the Soviet Union allow such passivity when the United States takes sides in the battle in such a flagrant way? I don't understand it.' However, while the Soviet attitude is unpardonable, it is not surprising: the Soviet bureaucracy is quite disposed to sacrifice regional allies in exchange for imperialist counter-offers concerning the arms race, economic negotiations or its own problems in Afghanistan and Poland.

The attitude of the Soviet bureaucracy to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon shows once again that any strategy based on getting its support and not that of the militant solidarity of the international workers and anti-imperialist movements will always be at the mercy of a betrayal in the middle of the battle. The tragic lesson of Lebanon is valid for revolutionary movements of the whole world and particularly in Latin and Central America.

6. On the other hand American imperialism fully committed itself alongside its Zionist ally. Sharon publicly stated that Reagan was informed in advance of the Israeli government's intentions. The United States supported and covered the Israeli military expedition from the beginning to the end. It used its right of veto twice in the UN Security Council and unflinchingly maintained its diplomatic and military aid.

The European imperialist countries, which decided without batting an eyelid to boycott Argentina during the Malvinas war, did not take the slightest measure or lift a finger against Israeli aggression.

Only if one suffers from optical illusion can French government policy be seen as favourable to the PLO leadership. In fact Mitterrand was only opposed to the excessive zeal of Begin-Sharon's policy which he considered could place the pro-imperialist Arab regimes in difficulty and create an uncontrollable situation in the area.

Mitterrand began by declaring himself for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Lebanon, putting the Zionist invading army on the same level as the Palestinian resistance which has been forced out of its own country and condemned to exile. He finished up by supporting the Habib plan — a 100% imperialist diktat which organised the departure of the Palestinian fighters, the disarming of the resistance, set the conditions for the election of Bashir Gemayel and ratifies the prolongation of the Israeli occupation for an indefinite period. By its participation in the international 'intervention' force the French government has furthermore through its presence given its backing to the 'election' in a barracks protected by Israeli arms, of the fascist, Bashir Gemayel, to the Lebanese presidency.

With the departure of the Palestinian fighters and the dismantling of the West Beirut defences the Habib Plan 'sanctioned' the modification of the relationship of forces imposed by the Israeli army. It opened the way to a strong-arm regime in Lebanon and to the terror against the now defenceless refugee camps and progressive forces.

7. The presence of the multinational 'intervention' force in the framework of the Habib plan has served to dismantle the Beirut defence lines, to guarantee the election of Bashir Gemayel and to open access to the refugee camps to the Phalangist killers.



Beirut in ruins (DR)

Whatever the identity of the Sabra and Shatila butchers they were only able to act with the agreement and complicity of the Israeli military command. And the imperialist governments knew perfectly well that this massacre was possible and probable after the evacuation of the PLO fighters.

The second mission of the multinational 'intervention' force does not serve the interests of the Palestinians and Lebanese peoples any more than the first one did. Its presence aids the reconstruction of the Lebanese state around the Amin Gemayel Phalangists, storing up new threats for these peoples.

8. The Zionist and imperialist aggression against the Palestinian resistance has resulted in a serious defeat for the Arab revolution, the colonial revolution and the whole of the anti-imperialist movement on a world scale.

The stronghold of the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon has been dismantled. Its fighters have been dispersed in a dozen Arab countries whose governments are careful to exert an even stricter control over them since they fear the prestige of these resistance fighters among the oppressed masses of their own countries.

Nearly a half of Lebanon is still occupied by the Israeli army which is now also within firing range of the Syrian capital. Hundreds of thousands of refugees are left defenceless against Phalangist hegemony in Lebanon and the Israeli desire to force them into a new exile.

It is true that it is not a defeat without a fight — the very fact of having resisted limits the demoralisation and creates better conditions for drawing the lessons of the defeat and overcoming its consequences, as the mobilisations in the occupied territories show.

It is also true that imperialism has not obtained all its objectives. The PLO is defeated but not annihilated. The restoration

of a strong state in Lebanon will not take place without difficulties. Cracks are appearing in the Zionist edifice in Israel.

These fractures are expressed in the rise of the anti-war movement, the radicalisation of a current inside it and the protests which have arisen inside the army (Tsayal). In addition there is the economic cost of the war which already weighs over Israeli society as a whole.

These factors are not sufficient to transform the military defeat of the Palestinians into a political or diplomatic victory. The proof of this is that the PLO leadership at Fez accepted the principles of a solution similar to those of the Fahd plan which was not approved a year earlier. Arafat in person is reduced to calling on the protection by the imperialist armies of the refugee camps in Lebanon!

The 1982 war and the battle of Beirut register a radical evolution in the relationship of forces in favour of imperialism in the region.

9. An important period has thus come to an end. All its lessons must be drawn for the future. Nothing will be like it was before, either for the Palestinian resistance or for the Zionist state.

The Palestinian resistance is going to be led to re-define its relations with the Arab regimes in the context of a new relationship of forces. The capitulation of these regimes faced with the invasion of Lebanon opens a new chapter in the crisis of Arab nationalism and its leaderships. The powerful rise of Muslim fundamentalism represents one consequence of the decline of Arab nationalism, in the absence of a consistently revolutionary anti-imperialist leadership. The authority won by Palestinian fighters in the struggle can, at the price of internal clarifications and differentiations, permit them to play a motor role in the formation of such a leadership. The other road is that of a growing alignment with the diplomacy of the Arab bourgeoisies and the renunciation of the resistance as an autonomous political force.

As for the Zionist state it unleashed its war machine to crush a population of refugees, chased from their land, without country or state, an exiled people which throws back in the face of Israel an image of an oppression which was formerly that of the Jewish people itself. The demonstration, unmasked and without any alibis, of this state terrorism will inevitably begin to shake up the internal consensus established around the Zionist project since the foundation of the state of Israel.

The Palestinian movement at a crossroads

10. The PLO and its leadership now find themselves at a new crossroads in their history.

The Arab regimes are going to put on increasing pressure and use material aid as blackmail in order to push the Palestinian resistance definitively off the terrain of armed struggle and on to that of diplomatic compromise, to force it to recognise and accept the state of Israel and to be content in exchange with a formal administrative autonomy under Jordanian-Israeli tutelage with the patronage of American imperialism. This evolution will not proceed without conflicts within the Palestinian resistance.

The other road consists in drawing all the consequences of the internationalisation of the Palestinian question to link it organically to revolutionary and anti-imperialist struggles in the Arab countries.

11. The final impasse in which the besieged leadership of the PLO in Beirut ended up is not only the result of being 'dropped' by the USSR and the Arab countries. It is also the end result of its own political line. The particular characteristics of the Palestinian national liberation struggle pose two key strategic questions which this leadership has not been able to resolve.

On the one hand, in its struggles against the Zionist state the Palestinian resistance must find its main support in the anti-imperialist mobilisation of the exploited and oppressed Arab masses. Only if their force is released can the relationship of forces with Zionism and its big imperialist patron be changed. Furthermore this mobilisation inevitably comes into contradic-

tion with the specific interests of the bourgeois Arab regimes, which for the most part are allied to American imperialism. On the pretext of a line of 'non-interference' in the internal affairs of Arab states, the PLO has always wanted to avoid the organic liaison between the Palestinian resistance and the struggle of the exploited masses of these countries. It is a fatal illusion — it has not prevented the most brutal 'interference' of these states into the history of the Palestinian resistance. From 1968 to 1982, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria continually intervened, including with armed force, against the resistance. The Arab regimes cannot tolerate on their territory the presence of a political and military force outside of their control and capable of encouraging the independent mobilisation of the oppressed people of their own countries. The conflict between the Arab anti-imperialist movement and the local bourgeoisies and oligarchies allied to imperialism is inevitable.

On the other hand the Palestinian resistance does not confront, with the state of Israel, a simple colonial occupation. The strength of the Zionist state does not relate only to the technical qualities of its armies. It relates also to the fact that Zionist chauvinism manages to divert the sentiment of self-defence of the Jewish population, which previously was still oppressed in its countries of origin, into setting up a national state on the basis of the expulsion of the Palestinian people and the denial of its rights. The war perspective, the permanent state of mobilisation and the spectre of anti-semitism constitute a necessary cement for national consensus and work against a development of class struggle in Israeli society. The struggle against Zionism on the contrary must mean the deepening of this struggle and the internationalist link up between the Arab national liberation movement and the Jewish working masses.

Arafat publicly recognised that one of the main weaknesses of the PLO has been its inability to resolve this question: 'We have not been able to explain our cause to the Israelis, we have not understood the Israeli mentality'.

But this new consciousness can also lead to two radically different ways forward. Either accommodation with the Zionist state as it exists in the framework of the Camp David Agreement or a revolutionary internationalist policy, the only one capable in the long term of winning the confidence of the Jewish proletariat.

12. The dual error of the PLO leadership in its relations with the Arab states and masses and in its approach to Zionism has led it inevitably to an impasse and a succession of defeats which are linked together and condition one another.

The 1967 Six Day war resulted in a debacle for the Arab states and a strengthening of the Zionist state — embodied in the occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Sinai and the Golan Heights. This defeat brought about a renewal and re-orientation of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation created by the Arab League. Its old leadership was subordinated to the Arab states and was prodigious in declarations which were both irresponsible and inconsequential. It was replaced by a new leadership under the hegemony of Fatah.

This leadership showed its willingness to free itself from the tutelage of the Arab states and set up rather effective military organisations in order to launch armed struggles from bases in Jordan and Lebanon. The gains made between 1968 and 1970 did not flow from military operations but were due to the mass mobilisations which defeated the reactionary operations against the resistance in Jordan in 1968 and in Lebanon in 1969. The Palestinian resistance showed itself to be a vanguard for the whole of the Arab nationalist and revolutionary movement.

Neither imperialism nor the Arab bourgeoisies could let these developments pass without reacting. Their counter-attacks combined diplomatic manoeuvres and the most brutal repression. 1970 was thus marked by the Rodgers Plan proposal, first step on the road to Camp David, and by the massacre of the Palestinian fighters in Jordan (Black September).

The 1975-76 Lebanese civil war registered a new stage in which the PLO played a frontline role. Thanks to its support and the mass mobilisation the Lebanese progressive movement achieved control of two thirds of the country. Zionism and imperialism, but also the Arab regimes (both conservative and so-called progressive) were afraid of the dynamic of joint mobili-

sation of the Arab and Palestinian masses. Syria intervened to stop and control the progressive forces. Under its pressure the PLO leadership — looking for diplomatic recognition since — accepted the compromises which allowed the Phalangist counter-offensive exemplified in the Tell el-Zataar massacre of summer 1976.

The civil war and the Syrian occupation contributed to provoking the disintegration of the Lebanese state and its military apparatus. The Christian militias profited from it to reinforce their control over whole regions. But also the Palestinians were able to exploit the situation by maintaining and consolidating their positions in the south of Lebanon and West Beirut.

The 1975-76 events spurred the imperialists and Arab bourgeoisies to look for a negotiated compromise giving a neo-colonial answer to the Palestinian question. More than any other Arab state Egypt had to bear the costs of four disastrous wars and the threat of social explosions. It took the initiative of a 'rapprochement' with Israel under the patronage of the United States. Sadat signed the Camp David Agreement to obtain American aid and appear in the eyes of the masses as the one who freed them from the haunting fears of periodic war.

For the Zionist state Camp David neutralised the main enemy military force and introduced division in the Arab world without imposing any recognition of the PLO in exchange. The idea of a Palestinian state was ruled out and the autonomy of the occupied territories was seen in terms of a five year process whose outcome would be the subject of new negotiations. While the United States played the decisive role in the operation of the USSR, already weakened by Sadat's about turn ending their alliance, was even more marginalised and could only count on Assad's Syria as a dubious ally in the region.

The triple 'no' of Begin to the withdrawal from the occupied territories, to the restitution of East Jerusalem and to the Palestinian state, coupled with the resurgence of Jewish colonisation in the occupied territories, enabled all ambiguity over the meaning of Camp David to be lifted and gives the measure of the defeat suffered by the PLO and the Arab nationalist movement as a whole.

Between Sadat's trip to Tel Aviv and the signing of the Israeli-Egyptian agreement the Begin government launched a new military operation in Lebanon in March 1978. This operation permitted them to destroy the Palestinian bases and to push the resistance north while consolidating the positions of Commander Haddad in the frontier region. However the main Palestinian positions were maintained.

The June 1967 defeat sanctioned the bankruptcy of the petty-bourgeois radical nationalist leaderships, just as the 1948 defeat had sanctioned the bankruptcy of the traditional conservative leaderships. The new leadership of the PLO, animated by the Fatah, broke with the previous line which gave priority to the diplomatic terrain and proclaimed people's war against the Zionist state in the framework of the struggle of oppressed peoples against imperialism.

In practice it remained in the orbit of the Arab states, giving priority to one or the other of the states according to circumstances. It continued to function fundamentally thanks to the conditional aid and subsidies of the Arab governments, including from the most reactionary. It did not really try either to democratically organise the resistance or to link it up with the mass movements of the countries where hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees were living. It subordinated its solidarity with the national movements of the different host countries to the imperatives of 'non-interference'. From 1972 it outlined a turn which was formalised in 1974 towards a compromise solution in the framework of an agreement between the Arab states and imperialism.

While its 1969 programme traced out the perspective of a 'democratic, secular state for the whole of Palestine' it now accepted an independent state limited to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, presenting it as a first step. Consequently it increasingly displaced the axis of its activity onto the diplomatic level.

13. These vacillations of the PLO leadership express the powerful political and social contradictions which run through the movement.

The struggle of the Palestinian people began as a national liberation, democratic and revolutionary struggle against a Zionist state which is the agent of imperialism in the region. But to defend its national rights to the end the Palestinian resistance needs a class leadership and orientation (to link up with the Arab masses oppressed by their own bourgeoisies) which is internationalist (in order to take advantage of the class contradictions of Israeli society.)

Furthermore the PLO is the product of an experience of struggle which is that of the refugee camps and of a population dispersed throughout the Arab countries. The Palestinian bourgeoisie is integrated in these countries and plays a decisive role there. It has no unified and stable territorial base nor a social base facilitating the wide scale use of traditional proletarian methods of struggle.

Even after the 1967 turn the PLO remained the national movement of all classes of Palestinian society. It was to regroup both the mass of socially marginalised refugees, the disinherited masses from the occupied territories, the workers and artisans established in the various Arab countries and well off petty-bourgeois layers and real bourgeois sectors economically active in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. It is a front of organisations and personalities which stretches from the Islamic right to a far left identifying with Marxism and Marxist-Leninism.

To ensure the coexistence of all these forces without coming into conflict with the Arab regimes it must stick to a democratic and anti-Zionist programme which does not challenge capitalist relations of production. The result is a contradiction between the needs and aspirations of the masses which constitute the principal basis of its forces and the strategic objectives of its leadership. This contradiction is expressed by the formation and consolidation of an increasingly important military apparatus which also develops a logic of its own. The material and financial aid of the Arab states reinforces the crystallisation of this apparatus.



French soldiers in Lebanon (DR)

Diplomatically recognised by more than one hundred countries and observer at the UN, the movement led by the PLO has thus become a sort of state apparatus without a state or its own territory. The disproportion between the material force of its apparatus and the reality of its social base makes it particularly vulnerable to the pressures of its financial backers — whether Arab governments or rich Palestinians.

These are the material roots of the evolution of the PLO leadership. The combination between its social composition, its programmatic conceptions and the acceptance of the framework imposed by the Arab regimes aligned with imperialism or influenced by the Soviet bureaucracy, has pushed it into a dead end.

To win and affirm its political independence from the Arab states and to sustain it the PLO must reinforce its own social base by a dual turn, linking up with the Palestinian proletariat in Israel and the occupied territories on the one hand and with the exploited masses of the Arab countries on the other. The upsurge of struggles these last years on the West Bank and in Gaza, the election of Palestinian mayors and the difficulty the

Begin government has in finding puppet collaborators, constitute a challenge to the might of the state of Israel and show the potential militancy of this Palestinian population which has been progressively integrated since 1967 into the Israeli productive process. Its mobilisations combine the awakening of a Palestinian national consciousness and the emergence of a class current inside the Palestinian movement.

14. In Lebanon, with the dismantling of their strongholds, the election of Amin Gemayel as President of the Republic and the repressive role of an army moulded by American imperialism, the progressive forces are now paying the price for their conciliatory policies since the 1975-76 civil war.

Religious sectarianism then partially masked the social and anti-imperialist content of the civil war, permitting bourgeois Muslim leaders to place themselves in the so-called progressive front in order to preserve the support they had based on patronage, and to work for a compromise. The Palestinian-progressive front limited itself to acting defensively. Given the disintegration of the Lebanese state they were called upon to carry out growing social, administrative and military functions. But instead of presenting itself as an alternative power it was content to store up the breaches in the legal regime while backing up the legitimacy of the decrepit bourgeois state institutions.

The Lebanese Communist Party, whose responsibility was particularly large since it has a certain mass influence, is the consistent defender of this line. Faithful to a Stalinist conception of revolution by stages and alliances with the so-called national bourgeoisie, it fixed the framework of struggle as the defence of liberal capitalism. Constantly banking on the role the USSR might play, directly or by the intermediary of its ally Syria, it even went so far as to render homage to the body of the fascist Bashir Gemayel in the name of national unity.

In 1976 this policy of class collaboration allowed the Christian militias to regain the initiative. This time again the Lebanese National Movement remained attached to the respect and perpetuation of legal institutions — instead of making the Beirut resistance a springboard for sweeping away the collaborationist Elias Sarkis regime, in open collusion with the Zionist occupier; instead of putting forward the perspective of a Government of National Resistance based on the unification and centralisation of the military forces resisting the occupation; and instead of developing a network of councils of peoples resistance.

This constitutional legality finished by spawning — in an electoral farce produced in a corner of a barracks — a fascist president at the head of an occupied Republic. The bourgeois forces of the so-called progressive camp ratified the election of Bashir Gemayel and directly contributed, still in the name of national unity, to that of Amin Gemayel, representative of the so-called moderate wing of the Phalangist party who is claiming a 'Bonapartist' role.

All the imperialist governments have given good character references to this new strong-arm regime which is looking to be a zealous partner of the United States.

To set up a strong state in Lebanon and to assure the return to order sought by the commercial bourgeoisie, Amin Gemayel has a hard task of reasserting an uncontested bourgeois regime. That is why given the threat that the military regime established in Beirut will be extended to the whole country, the defence of democratic rights, above all the right of the workers movement to organise, is a priority.

Contradictions and cracks in Zionism

15. The Zionist project meant that the State of Israel from its formation was an advance post of imperialism, founded on the expropriation and expulsion of the Palestinian people.

After the bombing of Beirut and the Sabra/Shatila massacres the imperialist governments tried hard to minimise the cruelty and responsibility of the Israeli state by presenting it as a model of democracy. In fact it is a confessional state defined by its own declaration of independence as 'the Jewish state in the land

of Israel'. It is a state founded on anti-Arab discrimination and deformed by the weight of its enormous military-industrial apparatus and largely subsidised by imperialism. Israel is the seventh biggest arms supplier in the world — in this line it is the privileged partner of dictatorships in Latin America and South Africa. With its 20 billion dollar debt Israel is one of the countries with the biggest per capital debt in the world.

While the state of Israel is organically tied to imperialism in its very structure and functions it is not reduced for all that to a simple colonial detachment of an imperialist metropole. The originality of the Zionist colonial operation is that its initial aims were not to exploit native Arab labour but to replace it with Jewish labour to form a completely Jewish society with its institutions and also its division into antagonistic social classes. It is the collaborationist agreement made between the social classes of Israeli society in the framework of the Zionist project which gives it its force against the Palestinian resistance and which permits the Zionist state to ensure a bourgeois democracy for the Jews on the basis of a negation of rights for the Palestinians.



Israeli troops (DR)

Any attempt or project to expel en bloc the Jewish Israeli population from the region or to deny its national existence can only help to weld it together and mobilise it behind the most aggressive and chauvinist Zionist leaderships. On the other hand the class conflicts within this community give the possibility to the Palestinian resistance and the Arab revolution to intervene in these contradictions, on the condition that it sees the Jewish proletariat as a potential ally.

16. After the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 a new chapter in the history of Zionism opened up. Originally Zionism meant the formation of an exclusively Jewish society by the expulsion of the Arab people. For that it had to impose 'Jewish labour' and 'freedom of the land'. This operation was the basis of an alliance between the Jewish bourgeoisie and a powerful colonial 'labourist' movement of which the trade union confederation, Histadrut, is the symbol.

The occupation of the West Bank and Gaza territories poses Zionism with a new dilemma between the annexation of new territory in the name of never-relieved security imperatives and bringing into Israeli society more than a million Palestinian Arabs in open contradiction with the Zionist project.

Israeli capitalists opt for using this cheap Arab labour (wages are about a half that of Jewish workers on average) who have no social security or other protection combined with increased privatisation of the economy.

With the Camp David Agreement Begin gave his response to the problem posed in 1967 with a line of annexation of the occupied territories under the form of a supposed 'administrative autonomy' permitting the continued exploitation of Arab workers while excluding them from Israeli citizenship.

But no formal stratagem can prevent the proletarianisation of the Arabs in Israel and the occupied territories, which combined with the awakening of their Palestinian national consciousness stores up an explosive contradiction for the Zionist state.

17. Zionist mythology maintains a permanent confusion between the existence of a national 'Jewish'-Israeli community in Palestine and the existence of the Zionist state. It also tries to concoct a permanent equation between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.

By claiming that the existence of an Israeli national community in Palestine cannot avoid having a state based on racial discrimination, an organic alliance with imperialism and permanent expansionism, the Zionist leaders themselves feed the idea that the destruction of the Zionist state implies the liquidation of the community as such. Thus they are the people who risk to create a resurgence of anti-semitism as the 'anti-Zionism of idiots' after having been the 'socialism of idiots' (Bebel).

It is up to Jewish workers to unmask this mystification in Israel by opposing the infamies committed by the Zionist leaders, not only in the name of the state of Israel but in the name of the Jewish people as a whole. Unrelenting struggle against Zionist crimes is not at all contradictory with a tenacious struggle against any form of anti-semitism which targets not particularly the state of Israel but all Jews in their national identity.

In recent years divisions have emerged in Israeli society and fractures have appeared in the edifice of Zionism. This has accentuated since the war of aggression in Lebanon. From the first days the Begin/Sharon policy has been challenged on a significant scale.

Broad layers of the population were troubled by the fact that the army was not able to carry out a blitzkrieg type war, that it met stubborn resistance from the Palestinians (who were moreover isolated) and that losses were proportionally heavier than during previous campaigns. The invasion of West Beirut and the direct complicity in the Sabra and Shatila massacres provoked a wave of indignation which shook Israeli society and stirred its conscience.

The protest movements, whether peace demonstrations or soldiers' initiatives, expressed uneven levels of consciousness. All components of the anti-war movement are coming into contradiction with the logic of Zionism. It emerged at the end of the 70s as a pressure group in the framework of diplomatic negotiations and today it is mobilising against a war while it is taking place.

The great majority of this current, as the gigantic September 25 demonstration after the Sabra and Shatila massacres showed, rallied around the slogans: 'Withdraw the troops from Beirut', 'Mutual recognition between Jews and Palestinians' and 'Resignation of the Begin/Sharon government'. But a radical pole was formed around the Committee Against the War in Lebanon which demanded the 'immediate withdrawal of troops from Lebanon' (and not only from Beirut) and unconditional recognition of the PLO.

The Labour Party, which openly supported the 'Peace for Galilee' operation was not at the origin of the anti-war movement. On the contrary it has done all it can to oppose mobilisations during the war. But after the Sabra and Shatila massacres it was obliged to channel the movement and to draw the best advantage it could from it. 'Saving the honour of Israel' in this way means for it preparing an alternative leadership not implicated in the massacres and capable of taking over the baton from Begin in negotiations with imperialism. This position responds to the preoccupations of Zionist sectors more conscious of the real relationship of forces in the region and the global interests of imperialism. From the beginning of the war these sectors have displayed their worries concerning the Begin/Sharon adventures and their consequences.

Over and above these manoeuvres the breadth of the anti-war movement is a major event in Israel even if this movement remains by and large within the framework of defence of Israel's security and is characterised above all by the absence of organised working class participation. Its future is closely linked to the victories and defeats of the Palestinian resistance. After the



Anti-war demonstration in Israel (DR)

Beirut defeat its immediate perspectives fundamentally depend on the continuation of mobilisations in the occupied territories and the capacity of its most conscious sectors to link up with these struggles.

In Israel the following democratic demands are in contradiction with the Zionist project and the foundations of the state of Israel: the abolition of all repressive and discriminatory legislation against the Palestinians, the de-confessionalisation of the state, the recognition of the right of return of all Palestinians expelled since 1948 and the recognition of the Palestinians right to self-determination.

International solidarity and imperialist plans

18. After the Israeli armed aggression modified the relationship of forces the diplomatic stage of the imperialist offensive started. The United States wanted to draw the best advantage from the military victory by preventing Begin putting those Arab regimes willing to negotiate too much in a corner. The Egyptian president Mubarak furthermore did not fail to remind Reagan what the real interests of the United States were: 'As a super-power it has overall interests and responsibilities; it must not forget it is the main deposit holder of the oil producers funds; in brief, the United States is the first to suffer from the extension of instability and insecurity in the region.' (*International Herald Tribune*, August 25, 1982).

The plan proposed on September 1 by President Reagan sets out in complete clarity the hierarchy of imperialist pre-occupations: first the stabilisation of the region, then the security of Israel and in third place only the Palestinian rights. Furthermore these 'rights' do not include the right to self-determination of an independent state but only the perspective of 'an autonomous government of Palestinians in association with Jordan.' This perspective, with a transition period of five years could result in the possibility of a Palestinian protectorate under the control of the Jordanian state and army or in a Jordanian-Israeli condominium on territories 'granted' a formal 'autonomy'.

19. By unanimously adopting a project which recognises the right of the Palestinians to self-determination and calls for the 'creation of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital', the Fez summit wanted to save the face of the Arab regimes tarnished by their passivity at the Beirut siege.

Appearances suggest it is a project unacceptable to Israel and Begin quickly rejected it. But the imperialist governments are not mistaken about its real significance. The important bourgeois press echoed their satisfaction: 'It is still too soon to

define the Fez Summit as an historic turning point for the Middle East, but it represents at least a considerable victory for common sense over empty rhetoric. The Fez declaration seems for the first time since 1948 to recognise that the Palestinian people will never obtain self-determination through a military victory.' (*Financial Times*, September 11, 1982). *Newsweek* underlined the point that at this summit meeting, 'the moderates finished by winning out over the radicals' (September 20, 1982). And *International Herald Tribune* headlined, 'Fez: Victory for the Arab moderates'. (September 13, 1982)

Everybody underlines the continuity of this project with respect to the Fahd plan rejected a year earlier. Everyone draws out point 7, according to which the UN Security Council 'guarantees peace between all the states of the area, including the independent Palestinian state' — implying a de facto recognition of the state of Israel. Most opinion considers the Fez plan, of which Saudi Arabia was the architect, constitutes the starting point and not the last word in a negotiation which is only beginning.

By stating on several occasions during the siege of Beirut that he recognised all the UN declarations, including those on the partition of Palestine, Yasser Arafat had himself announced his acceptance of the negotiating framework. To eliminate any ambiguity on this, Naif Hawatmeh (Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine — PDFLP) publicly committed himself to support of the Franco-Egyptian proposition at the UN which is along the same lines.

20. On the other hand Begin has vigorously denounced the Fez plan as well as the Reagan plan. He continually repeats that there is no question of Israel withdrawing from the occupied territories. On the contrary he encourages the implantation of new colonies. Sharon and the foreign affairs minister Shamir release statements for their part that the Palestinians 'have already exerted their right to self-determination and have a state in Jordan'. They all consider a sovereign Palestinian state in the occupied territories as a threat to the vital interests of Israel. They do not mean to go beyond the 'autonomy' envisaged in five years of the Camp David Agreement, and exclude the PLO from all negotiations.

The Labour Party, which presents itself as a 'presentable' alternative leadership for the Zionist state, has been implicated in its colonial expeditions since the creation of Israel. They still supported the 'Peace for Galilee' operation and limited themselves to criticising the siege of Beirut. They voted the war budget in the Knesset (parliament) and Shimon Peres accepted — at the height of the war — a special mission of going to present the Begin government's case to the imperialist governments. To cool Peres' indignation over the Sabra/Shatila massacre Sharon did not miss the opportunity in the Knesset to remind him that the Labour Party lent a hand in the 1976 Tell el-Zataar massacre.

Shimon Peres stated that the Labour Party supports overall the Reagan Plan (about 70% of it) pointing out that the plan does not propose the self-determination of the Palestinians but only a 'leading role' in the choice of their future. Fearing the disruptive effect on Israeli society of annexing the occupied territories it declares itself resolutely for what is called the 'Jordan option'. Shimon Peres makes it clear — not without a dose of cynicism if one recalls the 1970 massacres: 'Jordan has no interest in having a state within a state, an army within an army.' (*Le Monde*, April 2, 1980)

21. The perspective of setting up a sovereign Palestinian state in the occupied territories has been raised since 1972-4. The creation of such a state, limited to the occupied territories but really sovereign, would presuppose a significant defeat of the Zionist state and its imperialist ally and place decisive confrontations on the agenda.

Today in the framework of negotiations opened by the Beirut defeat such a state would not constitute a spring board for the anti-imperialist struggle of the Arab masses. Neither American imperialism, not Mitterrand and Mubarak, nor Saudi Arabia and Jordan envisage for a single moment the possibility of a really sovereign Palestinian state in the occupied territories.

No Zionist leader, including the Labour ones, is ready to accept it. They all want to get the Palestinian resistance, submitted to increased pressure by the Arab states, to accept a formal autonomy under the direct tutelage of Jordan and Israel, with the guarantee of the Arab bourgeoisies and American imperialism.

22. The isolation of the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese National Movement faced with Zionist aggression highlights the irreplaceable role of international solidarity from the workers and anti-imperialist movement.

While the Arab regimes and the Soviet bureaucracy remained compliantly passive there were many support demonstrations, delegations and public meetings in the imperialist countries, in certain Arab countries (despite the repression) and even in Latin America. However these mobilisations as a whole, including in the Arab countries, were insufficient given the challenge posed by Zionist and imperialist aggression, by the bombing and massacres of Beirut.

The social democratic parties are openly committed to the discussion and setting up of imperialist plans. The communist parties, in most cases, were content to denounce the evils of the imperialist warmonger without getting involved in really active solidarity with the Palestinian movement.

Revolutionary organisations and sections of the Fourth International played a dynamic role in these solidarity mobilisations.

This solidarity remains today very much an immediate task. Imperialism is continuing with the implementation of its projects for the Middle East. Thus on October 6 the French contingent of the multinational 'intervention' forces was involved in 'sweep' and disarming operations alongside the Lebanese army in Beirut. For their part the Arab regimes are doing everything to reinforce their hold over the Palestinian resistance. The breadth of international solidarity is therefore an important element in the relationship of forces which can safeguard the freedom of action of this resistance.

The axis of this solidarity remains the demand for the immediate and total withdrawal of Zionist troops from Lebanon and the unconditional support of the Palestinian resistance struggle.

Imperialism and Zionism are making more and more manoeuvres to deny or reduce the representativity of the PLO or to impose on it the recognition of the state of Israel on the pretext of 'mutual recognition'. The demand for the recognition without preconditions of the PLO as legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in Israel and in those imperialist countries where it is not yet the case, is, in the present circumstances part and parcel of the unconditional support of the Palestinian resistance struggle against imperialism.

The Fourth International and its sections will play an active part in this solidarity campaign with the Palestinian people's struggle against Zionism and imperialism. It will support and publicise the activity of its sections in Israel and Lebanon.

— Immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Zionist troops from all Lebanon!

— Total and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops from the territories occupied since 1967!

— Recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, i.e. its right to form a sovereign state on its territory!

— Solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian resistance against the Zionist state! Freedom of action for the Palestinian resistance in all the Arab states! Recognition of the PLO as legitimate representative of the Palestinian people!

— Solidarity with the struggles of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories and with the anti-war movement in Israel!

— Solidarity with the Palestinian masses in Lebanon and with the Lebanese anti-imperialist movement!

United Secretariat of the
Fourth International
October 10, 1982

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

ISSUE No 16

ISSN: 0294-2925

1 November 1982

Fortnightly Review of News and Analysis Published Under the Auspices
of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

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News closing date 25 October 1982

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SUBSCRIPTION

Published by Presse-Edition-Communication (PEC) - Administration : 2, rue Richard-Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France
Directeur de publication : Robert March. Gérant : Jacques Girma. Commission paritaire 64324. Imprimé par Rotographie