

# International VIEWPOINT

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**“Berlin 1989 is like the Prague Spring and Paris 1968 rolled into one”**



## INSIDE:

### EL SALVADOR

The FMLN's call to arms

*plus*

The reasons for the insurrection *and*

The road to insurrection — two articles by *Arnold Berthu*

*also*

### CZECHOSLOVAKIA

*Petr Uhl* describes growing opposition

### SWITZERLAND

Youth mobilize for abolition of army

### USA

Race, abortion, key issues in New York election

### EGYPT

Economic crisis fuels class conflict

# Contents:

**EL SALVADOR 3**

THE FMLN offensive is the culmination of a long process — *Arnold Berthu* recounts the steps leading to it

**EAST GERMANY 5**

EYE-WITNESS account of the mass upsurge in East Germany — *Ernest Mandel* analyzes the potential and the dangers

**Plus**

CALL by the French section of Fourth International for withdrawal of all foreign troupes from all of Germany

**DOCUMENT:** Preparation of Conference of Independent Socialist Left in East Germany

**DOCUMENT:** Call for formation of a Green Party

**CZECHOSLOVAKIA 14**

GROWING NUMBERS demonstrate for democracy — *Petr Uhl*

**PORTUGAL 15**

BROAD sympathy for Trotskyist leader killed by neo-Nazis

**SPANISH STATE 17**

ASSESSMENT BY Fourth Internationalists in the Spanish state of the electoral setback for the Socialist Party and gains for CP-dominated alliance — *Combate*

**SWITZERLAND 18**

REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN for abolition of army upsets the brass and politicians — *Sophie Missouri*

**Plus**

REPRESENTATIVE of Swiss section of the Fourth International describes the growth of the campaign — Interview with *Gisela Hürliman*

**UNITED STATES 19**

FIRST BLACK mayor of New York and first Black state

governor — *Frank Lovell* looks at signs of change in the US local elections and growing disillusion with two-party system

**EGYPT 20**

DEEPENING economic crisis leads to sharp conflicts between workers and the government. An example of determined strikers facing brutal repression at the Helwan steelworks — *Samia Hussein*

**Around the World 26**

- Israeli state ● Soviet Union
- Algeria ● Czechoslovakia

**EL SALVADOR 27**

TEXT of the FMLN's declaration of a general offensive and call for a general uprising — *Document*

**Plus**

THE REASONS for the 28 insurrection — *Arnold Berthu*

## International VIEWPOINT

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# The road to insurrection

**B**IRTH of the revolutionary organizations in the 1970s. In 1980, they form the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

IN 1970, the Farabundo Marti People's Liberation Forces (FPL) were founded, on the basis of a split from the Salvadoran Communist Party, which had been following an electoral and stagist policy. Among the founders of the FPL were Salvador Caetano Carpio (former secretary of the Salvadoran CP) and Anna Maria, future guerrilla leader and founder of the class-struggle teachers' union, ANDES-June 21.

In 1972, the Party of the Socialist Revolution and its armed wing, the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), were formed, coming out of radicalized Christian circles. In 1974-1975, a group split from the PRS-ERP and formed the National Resistance. Its armed wing, the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FARN), was led by Roque Dalton.

## Central American aspirations of revolutionaries

In 1978, the Revolutionary Party of Central American Working People (PRTC) was formed. Its aspiration was to build its organization throughout Central America. In fact, it had an affiliate in Honduras.

These four organizations declared themselves to be Marxist and took their inspiration from the lessons of the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions. Thus, they opted for armed struggle and for linking the tasks of national liberation and those of a socialist character. They gradually went beyond focoism (an oversimplification of the Castroist strategy), as a result of the failures of the Latin-American guerrilla movements, both urban and rural.

These organizations defined themselves in opposition to the line followed by the Salvadoran Communist Party. With the rise of the struggles of the Salvadoran masses, each of these organizations built its own mass organization, which competed more and more with each other. Nonetheless, by 1978 these revolutionary organizations came virtually to dominate the bulk of the mass movement.

## October 1979 — A baptism of fire

IN the aftermath of the Sandinista revolution (July 1979) and in the context of a rise of mass struggles, a

**THE GENERAL OFFENSIVE of the FMLN is the culmination of a long process, political and social as well as military. The landmarks are presented in the following chronology.**

**ARNOLD BERTHU**

military coup was carried out against the dictatorship of General Romero. In October 1979, a civilian-military junta was set up, supported by the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), the Revolutionary National Movement (MNR) of Guillermo Ungo (present chair of the Revolutionary Democratic Front [FDR]) and the Salvadoran Communist Party.

## Junta sets in motion radical reforms

This junta has the endorsement of US president Carter and a part of the employers' organization, who saw it as an alternative to a revolutionary solution of the Nicaraguan type. This junta set in motion radical reforms. The four organizations opted for intransigent opposition to the junta. They thus underwent their baptism of fire.

By spiking the reformist trap, they saved the revolutionary perspective. In January 1980, confronted by an impetuous growth of the mass movement and a rightward radicalization of the armed

forces repressing this movement, the junta went into crisis. The revolutionary upsurge strongly radicalized the Church, up to the top levels. The archbishop, Monsignor Romero, came out for the mass movement, and issued appeals to the soldiers to refuse to repress the population. In March 1980, in the middle of a sermon, Monsignor Romero was murdered by the death squads (led by Major D'Aubuisson), an integral part of the army. Repression becomes more and more massive.

In March April 1980, the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) was formed, based on what had been a left component of the civilian-military junta represented by the MNR and a split from the PDC, the Social Christian People's Movement (MPSC), led by Rubén Zamora.

## Revolutionary organizations overcome divisions

Progressively, the revolutionary organizations overcame their divisions, and agreed to form a unified leadership (the DRU in May 1980). They finally combined their efforts, forming in October 1980 the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front.

The CP, for its part, made a 180-degree turn in February-March 1980 (the only CP in Latin America to do so), opting for armed struggle. In a self-criticism that was to become a landmark, its general secretary, Shaffik Handal, said in substance that the Salvadoran CP had to change its strategic perspective and define the revolution as combining the tasks of national liberation, democratic tasks and the beginning of socialist transformation. He added that this was the only way to keep the Nicaraguan experience (in which the CP was thrown in the garbage can of history) from being repeated in El Salvador.

In the fall of 1980, the repression reached a peak. Many of the revolutionary cadres in the urban areas had to fall back into the guerrilla movement or go underground.

**In January 1981 the FMLN launched a military offensive that it regarded as the final onslaught.**

THE masses had participated on a large scale through 1980 in various general strikes. But they were partially disorganized by the repression, and were not able to rise up. After managing to gain control of key certain key cities, the FMLN organized a retreat eight days after



the start of its offensive.

**Formation of the FDR-FMLN Alliance**

**1981-1984:** The bourgeoisie continued to rely on massive repression (40,000 people were killed between 1979 and 1983). The country was ruled by an alliance between ARENA and the National Reconciliation Party, forces closely linked to the army, which played a key political role. During this period, the FMLN built a real revolutionary army, took control of 20% to 25% of the national territory and began to regain a foothold in the cities.

It adopted a policy combining military pressure, work to reorganize the masses and a proposal for dialogue and negotiation with the regime, while maintaining an insurrectional strategic perspective. It never envisaged laying down arms "before structural changes designed to deal with the roots of social injustice are undertaken."

**1984-1989: Recomposition of the mass movement culminating in the formation of the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS) in February 1986.**

THE UNTS includes a broad spectrum of mass organizations, industrial unions, service workers' unions, the peasant cooperative movement, teachers, students and unemployed committees. Christian Base Communities also grew, a movement is organized for the return of the refugees to the zones controlled by the FMLN (especially after 1987).

US imperialism prevented the reelection of ARENA by giving massive support to the Christian Democratic Party. It thus followed a policy of low-intensity warfare, creating a limited democratic space and promising to undertake the second phase of the agrarian reform decreed by the junta in October 1979. At the same time, it pursued the war against the FMLN, while carrying out selective repression of the mass movement.

The Duarte-US project rapidly eroded. The reforms were not carried out. A part of the social Christian organizations withdrew their support from the PDC. Poverty grew. The UNTS gained ground. The FMLN stepped up its military activities perceptibly, and regained an impressive base in the cities. This was the context in which ARENA won the legislative elections in March 1988 and the presidential elections in March 1989.

The vote for ARENA was above all a vote against the PDC. The FMLN boycotted the elections. But the FDR participated in the March 1989 elections through a left electoral alliance, *Convergencia Democrática*. (Its exiled leaders, Guillermo Ungo of the MNR and Rubén Zamora of the MPSC returned to El Salvador at the end of 1987 thanks to the military strength of the FMLN, as they themselves say.)

4

The alliance get a small percentage of the

votes (about 4%).

These discordant positions temporarily gave rise to some teeth-grinding, but the FDR-FMLN alliance held up. Moreover, the rate of participation in the election was the lowest since 1984. The FMLN's boycott had made an impact. After June 1989, ARENA held all the levers of power, and finally got the support of the Bush administration. The FMLN systematically used the weapon of dialogue-negotiation, first with the PDC but also with ARENA after its victory.

**Space for political action restored**

The fight for dialogue restored a space for political action by the masses and their organizations. Thousands of people went into the streets to demand that the government negotiate with the FMLN, which enabled them indirectly to affirm that the FMLN was a legitimate force that could not be gotten around. A novel dual-power situation arose as a result of the FMLN's strong military position. Two opposing powers confronted each other, and not only in the countryside.

Several factors stood in the way of a revolutionary resolution of this dual-power situation. First, there was the threat of direct US military intervention if the regime started to fall. Secondly, the mass movement had not reached the 1979-1980 level of self-activity. The memory of the massive repression of that period continued to weigh heavily. This memory was kept fresh by a repression that, while selective remained murderous.

As a result, the decision several times considered to launch a general military offensive coinciding with a popular uprising, was on each occasion put off to a more favorable conjuncture. The masses wanted to be sure that the FMLN would be able to inflict decisive blows on the army. For its part, the FMLN wanted the maximum assurance that the general military offensive would not fail to be accompanied by an uprising of the population.

Thirdly, the Salvadoran army had been considerably reinforced since 1980. It had grown from 13,000 to 52,000 men, and no cracks appeared in it, despite the very heavy casualties inflicted by the FMLN (an average of about 500 a month in 1987-1989). US aid was enormous — more than a million and a half dollars a day (3 billion dollars since 1981).

Fourthly, the progress of the Reagan-Gorbachev and subsequently Bush-Gorbachev negotiations on both global and regional questions represented a major difficulty for the FMLN, even if it loudly declared that the international détente did not mean that new revolution-



ary victories could not be won in Central America and particularly in El Salvador. \*2

On the other hand, the agreements between the five Central-American presidents had not up until then represented a real obstacle to the FMLN's strategy. The difficulty lay above all in the Soviet pressures on the Cubans and Sandinistas to limit tensions in the region. Fortunately, the Cubans and Sandinistas did not stop their aid to the FMLN.

**FMLN shows great tactical flexibility**

In its nine years of existence, the FMLN has confronted a series of major challenges, sometimes in very unfavorable circumstances. It has, nonetheless, been able to show tactical flexibility, exploiting every weakness of the enemy in order to gain the initiative militarily, socio-politically and diplomatically.

Every important initiative has involved an approach to the masses to increase their confidence in themselves, to advance their organization, to encourage them to arm themselves and posing the question of the seizure of power. The FMLN's tactical flexibility has not undermined its strategic firmness.

What is more, the FMLN has shown that it is possible to build a pluralist vanguard, not striving at any price to unite the various revolutionary forces under the dominance of whichever of them is considered to be the most Leninist. The rivalries among the components of the FMLN have at times created major tensions, but despite that they have not impaired unity in action at the decisive moments. ★

1. "It would be absurd to consider the Salvadoran conflict as an integral part of the East-West conflict that could thus be resolved by an agreement between the USSR and the USA. The revolutions will not wait. They represent an inevitable social process. In the Salvadoran case, the level of the crisis afflicting the system points to a social explosion as a result of the strength gathered by the revolutionary movement....A détente at the Central American level would be possible only if the structural problems of the region found a solution." Villalobos in the magazine *Universidad*, University of El Salvador, April 1989, p. 10.

# The political revolution — and the dangers that threaten it

**THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION** in East Germany is also a spectacular rebirth of workers' democracy and excited and exciting debates about the perspectives for the revolution and for socialism. At the beginning of November, our comrade Ernest Mandel was invited by the Humboldt University to give two lectures. The opposition took advantage of this to organize a public discussion on social democracy between Mandel and several representatives of the East German Communist Party (SED). In these debates, Mandel spoke as a representative of the Fourth International and was able to present the general program of our current. He also had the opportunity to attend the mass demonstrations that preceded the fall of the Berlin Wall.

## ERNEST MANDEL

**T**HE UPSURGE of the mass movement rocking the GDR has assumed the dimensions of a real revolution. This movement exceeds anything that has been seen in Europe since 1968, if not since the Spanish revolution. The language of numbers is clear. On November 4, 5 and 6, nearly 2 million people came into the street. On November 4, in East Berlin, between 750,000 and a million people came out in the biggest demonstration in the history of the German workers' movement.

At the same time, there were 350,000 in Leipzig, 300,000 in Dresden, 70,000 in Karl Marx Stadt (Chemnitz), 60,000 in Halle, 50,000 in Zwickau, 25,000 in Schwerin, tens of thousands in several other cities, thousands in many smaller cities. In proportion to the overall population, this is equivalent to 7 to 8 million demonstrators in France or Italy, or 5 to 6 million in the Spanish state. It is something that has never been seen in the space of three days.

There cannot be the slightest doubt about the predominance of workers in these demonstrations. Their size alone makes this clear. How in a city like Leipzig, East Germany's industrial center, could you have 350,000 demonstrators out of a population of 500,000, if virtually the entire working class had not come into the street? Are there 750,000 to a million intellectuals, housewives and high-school students in East Berlin, a city of a million and a half people?

The proletarian character of the revolution that has begun in East Germany is attested to most of all by the vast ferment in the enterprises. It is true that, unlike May 1968 and the Italian hot fall of 1969, there have not yet been strikes in the formal sense. But in most of the big enterprises, workers' assemblies are constantly engaged in discussions. In several workers' "bastions," notably in the Leuna chemical plant, the country's biggest factory, such assemblies discussed draft resolutions calling for a three-day general strike if the Political Bureau failed to resign. It had to step down.

### Spontaneous explosion of demands

The November 4 demonstration in East Berlin was distinguished, besides the number of demonstrators, by an unprecedented spontaneous explosion of demands. An entire working people that had been regimented, gagged and oppressed for decades suddenly woke up, like a giant breaking its chains. This is a feature of every genuine revolution.

The humble, the downtrodden, rose to their feet, marched upright, and began to shout about everything that was wrong, about all the wrongs they suffered. This people occupied the center of East Berlin on November 4. And something never before seen happened. They did not just shout. They did not leave the formulation

### The end of socialism?

IMPRESSIONISM, a tendency to take appearances for reality, an inability to understand the underlying movements of history, even when they are glaringly obvious, has always characterized the ideology of the ruling class. At unexpected turning points, this does not fail to put a strong pressure on the workers' movement, including its revolutionary wing.

Never has the uproar over "the end of socialism," "the end of the revolution," "the end of communism" been as loud as it is today. Could the fall of the Berlin Wall be the final proof of the triumph of capitalism or reformist social democracy integrated into capitalism? All these charming people seem not to notice that the Berlin Wall was not overthrown by the capitalists but by the risen masses in the GDR. How long can the racket from these editorial offices drown out the roar of the streets occupied by millions of East German workers?

What is dying is not socialism or the revolution. What is dying is Stalinism and post-Stalinism, which as most Soviets themselves say today are incompatible with socialism. Socialism's time can come precisely at such a moment in the GDR, in the USSR, as well as in many imperialist and third-world countries. The revolution, which in 1967 had been prematurely buried, can raise its head again proudly in East Germany, as it will do tomorrow in other places.

Still better, the cause of freedom can come over to our camp, and this combination of socialism-communism and freedom is invincible. It is not hard to imagine the consequences of a situation where, in East Germany, the freedom to demonstrate is more extensive than in West Germany; the electoral laws more liberal, the daily press and TV more critical of the authorities and more open to the people, where there are people's inspection committees for protecting the environment with more powers; where there is a more deepgoing elimination of poverty; greater equality between men and women; a more thoroughgoing elimination of militarism; and above all more advanced trade-union rights in the factories (self-management and not co-management). All the bourgeoisie's hypocritical talk about democracy would rebound against it.

If the East German revolution triumphs, this will be an important stage in the advance of the world socialist revolution.★

*International Viewpoint*

of written demands to the notables, as was the case of the Cahiers de doléances ["List of Complaints"] at the time of the French Revolution. They did their own writing.

The demonstrators carried at least 7,000 placards and banners that they had made themselves. Thus, more than 90% did not come from any organization or any grouping. They came straight from the brains and hearts of of the masses of working people. Rosa Luxemburg's descendents proved themselves worthy of her. Today, history has proclaimed that she did not fight in vain; that she did not die in vain.

I obviously cannot cite all these slogans here. (See box). Their general tone reflected a mixture of hope and skepticism, of humor and cheekiness, a mixture that reflects the present level of consciousness of the masses quite well. Another indication of the demonstrators' political sense was that instead of taking their placards back to their homes after the march broke up, they pasted them up by the hundreds on the parliament building.

The demands that set the tone were "We are the people," "We are staying," "Free elections," "Down with repression," "Legalize Neues Forum," "Free trade unions," "Freedom to travel."

### **Cooperation between workers and intellectuals**

The demonstration was organized by the trade-union locals at the four big theaters in East Berlin. It was marked by exemplary cooperation between intellectuals and workers, reminiscent of the Prague Spring and radically different from what is happening in the USSR, to say nothing of Hungary and Poland.

Twenty-seven speakers represented all the opposition currents except the far left. There were also two speakers from the reform wing of the SED, and they got a fair bit of whistling from the crowd. One speaker specified the demands drawn up by an initiative group for independent unions — higher wages, reduction of the differentials in pensions, popular control over supplies; no increase in norms without higher wages.

On the platform, as well as in the crowd, the demonstration had a heart-warming internationalist aspect. The rally started with a song for Nicaragua, performed by two young singers who had been beaten up by cops only a few weeks before. The crowd gave them prolonged applause.

An appeal was launched for solidarity with the persecuted opposition in Czechoslovakia. Placards expressing solidarity with South Africa were waved. There were signs proclaiming solidarity with the Chinese students. There was a poster reflecting a cheerful Berliner cheekiness: "Gorbi, thank you. You helped us. Now we are going to help you." A Soviet poem was read from the platform, "Letter from an unknown political prisoner to Comrade Stalin."



All this was was not fortuitous, just as the crowd's unanimous rejection of nationalism and militarism was not. Today, the GDR is the only state in the world defined exclusively by its social identity. There is no national identity. The popular masses in the GDR reject every militarist tradition, including the abortion combining Stalinist and Prussian militarism that the SED bureaucracy has been trying unsuccessfully to graft into the youth. This is bringing about a real opening to internationalism among working class, the intelligentsia and the youth in the GDR, at least for the moment. Its future is linked to the future of the political revolution itself and its repercussions in the rest of Europe and the world.

### **Many gains already accumulated**

In the space of a month, the upsurge of the working masses has already accumulated a great number of gains. The political and social situation in the GDR has changed with the rapidity that characterizes real revolutionary explosions.

The opposition has won acceptance. All groupings, including the far left, are working in the open. Representatives of the main opposition group, Neues Forum, speak on radio and TV, are interviewed on West German TV; and the NF is recruiting hand over fist, at least in its bastion of Leipzig. It is now fighting to be able to participate in the coming elections. Unless there is such participation by the opposition, in fact these elections will lose all legitimacy. This was accepted in principle at the SED Central Committee meeting of November 8-10. It is hard to see how it can be prevented at the

last minute.

The repression has virtually ceased. The East Berlin chief of police apologized from a balcony of the "Red City Hall" for the misdeeds of his police. The hated secret police, the Stasi, is lying low. Its chief, Mielke, has been eliminated from the Political Bureau. He will doubtless also be removed from the Central Committee.

The right to emigrate and freedom of travel have been accepted. The government resigned, in accordance with the demand of the demonstrations. The new head of government, Modrow, leader of the Dresden SED, is the chief of the Gorbachevite reformers. His lieutenant, Schabowski, is trying to project a reform image in Berlin. A part (not all) of the conservatives have been eliminated from the PB, under the pressure of the crowds in the streets.

### **Tendencies and factions forming in SED**

The media have opened up, not as much as in the USSR today, but much more than in the first phase of the Gorbachev era. In the party press, especially the papers of base organizations and the daily of the Communist Youth, *Junge Welt*, nonconformist and frankly oppositionist documents are being widely disseminated. In fact, tendencies and factions are forming openly within the SED. (This goes much further than in the USSR.) An unprecedented spectacle could be seen in the evening of November 8 in front of the Central Committee building, where the CC had just started a three-day meeting: More than 10 thousand oppositionist SED members were gathered there, carrying hundreds of slogans, calling above all for a

special party congress before the end of the year. On November 10, the party leadership gave in. A special congress has been accepted.

All the opposition groupings, including those within the SED, are preparing to launch independent publications with big print runs.

In the plants, exciting discussions are underway about replacing the organizational structures. (See box) Renewal of the official unions? Forming new unions? Reelection of all delegations by free multi-candidate elections? A new role for the factory councillors (*Betriebsräte*), who have a glorious tradition in central Germany? The decisions will doubtless be made in the very near future.

Teachers are spontaneously taking steps to give new life to an educational system that was admired throughout the world but which the bureaucracy totally undermined by its fear of "dissident thinking." Doctors and nurses are getting ready to take similar actions in the hospital system.

All these initiatives are occurring throughout the country, down to the small provincial cities, involving hundreds of thousands of people in the most various spheres of activity. For the moment, they are totally uncontrollable. In any event, their effects will be long lasting.

To cite one moving example: On Krenz's personal intervention, kids at Ossietzky high school in Frankfurt-ander-Oder were expelled and denied the right to matriculate in any other high school in the GDR. Their "crime"? In a hand-written document, they had proposed a small reduction in military spending for the benefit of spending on education, since there was a détente in central Europe. Today, they are being feted as national heroes throughout the country.

However, no one should be carried away by spontanist euphoria, and think that this magnificent revolutionary movement is going to endure and triumph just because of its breadth. This revolutionary explosion is marked by two grave weaknesses that could condemn it in time to failure.

First of all, there are only embryos of real self-organization. Demonstrations,

even the broadest ones, cannot in the long run substitute for such structures. The more perceptive opposition currents — both inside and outside the SED — are perfectly aware of this. They are multiplying all sorts of initiatives to promote self-organization. They are also formulating such proposals in their writings (a large number of leaflets and circulars are being

general, and with certain qualifications, it can be said that there are five major currents among the political forces on the scene:

● The mass opposition current embodied by the New Forum, the Democracy Today organization, Christians for Socialism (Protestants) and the reconstituted Social Democratic Party (SPD). All these organizations say clearly that they are in favor of democratic socialism based on collective ownership of the major means of production and political pluralism. (See the "Böhlen Appeal" that they signed in common, *International Viewpoint*, No. 172, October 30, 1989.) But they have no clear ideas on the institutions and government of a workers and people's state. Some "bloc parties"<sup>1</sup>, especially Gerlach's Democratic Liberal Party (PLD) line up with this current, but on the basis of still less clear ideas.

Together, these currents could undoubtedly get a majority in free elections. But a differentiation seems inevitable. The right-wing of Neues Forum and some of the "Bloc Parties" are doubtless going to evolve to the right, others more to the left. The SPD is a left social democratic party (see box), which has declared itself in favor of maintaining

collective ownership, except in retail trade. Will this last? It is hard to make prognostications about this.

● The left current that seeks a democratized workers' state based on political pluralism, democratic freedoms, collective ownership of the major means of production and banks, democratic and decentralized planning and workers' self-management. This current is in the majority within the opposition in the SED but very much in the minority outside it. It has the sympathy of many workers, but it is difficult to gauge its overall influence.

● The conservative post-Stalinist current that wants to maintain the status quo with a few cosmetic changes. It is in a majority in the apparatus, in a minority in the SED and practically nonexistent

### Slogans at the East Berlin demonstration

"Deceived police, turn against Stalinism"

"The left against those on top."

"No neo-Nazis here."

"Chemical industry, introduce filters."

"Workers, use your gray matter, be on the alert to the dogs who only bark." (A rhyming phrase in German.)

"All power to the editors."

"No more lies."

(Slogans carried by journalists.)

"Only dead fish go with the current."

"Instead of co-management, self-management."

"For the right of conscientious objection."

"Demilitarized schools."

"A monopoly of power produces abuse of power, even under socialism."

"Equal pensions for all."

"The coach is too deep in the mud, all those who have been guiding the team of horses have to be removed."

"The streets are the platform of the people."

"A proposal for May Day, let the leaders parade in front of the people."

"Use your power. Form workers' councils."

"The same rights for all the parties."

"Monitoring of the state and the police by elected popular bodies."

"Rehabilitate the victims of Stalinism."

"Without truth about the past, there can be no truth about the present."

"Found political parties."

"The October 1989 Revolution."

"Put the security police to work in the factories."

"Krenz zu tisch."

(A play on words, "tisch" means "table" in German, but it is also the name of the general secretary of the trade-union confederation, the FDGB, who had just resigned under pressure from the workers. So, this slogan called for Krenz's resignation.)

disseminated in the GDR).

However, for the moment, the masses seem to be hesitating, if not abstaining. Perhaps this will change with the emergence of new forms of self-organization in the factories. That would undoubtedly be a new qualitative leap in the revolution.

### Exceptional situation in Leipzig

In Leipzig, there is an exceptional situation. Neues Forum has become effectively a mass organization. It has established a veritable regime of dual power. But its leadership, while able to lead vast marches every Monday and organize an exemplary corps of stewards, is not elected.

Moreover, the mass movement and the opposition have no precise political aim or any clear idea of the institutions that should be created to exercise power. In

1. The group of official "non-Communist" parties maintained as a figleaf of pluralism in the one-party "People's Democracies."

among the unorganized masses.

● The "reform" current in the apparatus. This current has a big majority in the SED but is (still) in a minority in the apparatus. For the moment, it is not striking much of a cord among the non-party population. But this could change, if it carries through substantial reforms. It is subdivided into a technocratic wing, which tends toward a neo free-enterprisism, on the Hungarian and Polish model, strongly attracted by a Swedish-style "market economy"; and a wing more sensitive to working-class pressure and the socialist tradition.

A split of the SED into three or four parties seems possible in time, or even probable.

● A current that could be termed pro-capitalist, favorable to unconditional reunification with West Germany, which in present conditions would mean the absorption of East Germany by imperialist West Germany. The smallest of the Bloc Parties, the National Democratic Party (NDP), seems for the moment to be the culture medium for pro-capitalist tendencies. It has struck virtually no cord in the mass movement. During the big demonstrations of November 4-6, not a single placard called for reunification. Only two placards out of 7,000 in East Berlin called for a "social market economy." A few placards called for freedom for craftsmen, which, moreover, is not something that need be rejected a priori.

### Politically capable vanguard needed

However, a lot more time and a lot more work will be necessary, and especially a vanguard capable politically of applying a united-front tactic toward all the working-class masses involved, in order to define definite institutional objectives, in the political as well as economic spheres, in order to open the way for the victory and consolidation of the political revolution.

For several weeks, the population of the GDR and especially the opposition circles have taken seriously the threat of violent repression, or even a "German Tiananmen." The very fact that the demonstrations have continued despite this worry demonstrates the extent to which the masses have become conscious of their power and have thrown off the burden of fear and resignation. Once again, these are the signs of a real revolution. Especially so, because this worry was not without foundation.

The decisive day undoubtedly was October 9. Tanks took up positions in Leipzig, with the order to fire. Whole rooms were cleared in the schools and hospitals to care for the wounded. The nurses immediately warned the trade-union locals in the big plants.

**8** It is rumored that the order to fire was cancelled only two hours, or even a half

## Appeal for building independent unions

**Fellow workers!**  
WHAT has the FDGB [the single official confederation] done for us in 40 years?

Has it raised the question the question of the shorter work-week as a fundamental demand on the enterprise managements? Why has it not fought with us to win a 40-hour week? Has it been concerned about our wages, which are often falling behind inflation? Why are charges not set in accordance with wage levels?

Where were the FDGB leaders when new work norms were introduced in the enterprises. Were they on our side? Did they oppose the norms that were not in our interest?

Can we consider the FDGB to be a real representative of our interests, when our fellow workers in the West get, on the average, ten more paid days of vacation a year than we do? Has the FDGB done anything to reduce the power of nonworkers? Has the union leadership ever rejected state plans opposed to the interests of the workers? Have we yet seen the unions go against the party and the state?

For 40 years, no one has been defending our interests. That's enough!

hour, before the start of the mass demonstration. The decision came from the Political Bureau, and was transmitted by Krenz. Undoubtedly, this was the result of strong pressure from Moscow.

Gorbachev is supposed to have warned Honecker that if he opened fire on the people, the Kremlin's whole foreign policy would collapse. They would find themselves again in a Cold War climate worse than when the Berlin Wall was built, with disastrous economic consequences for the USSR and for all the East European countries. It is important to verify this report. But it seems plausible, since it represents a realistic judgement of the international repercussions of such a crime.

The very breadth of the demonstrations, however, also influenced the Political Bureau's decision. This makes a crackdown unlikely in this stage, even if there were a change in leadership in the Kremlin. A police provocation certainly cannot be excluded. But the opposition is trying to reduce this threat as much as possible, by correctly stressing the nonviolent character of the movement, apply-

We must not let ourselves be organized anymore, even by the "new men." We must organize ourselves. The coming years are not going to be a picnic for us. The fetters have to be denounced. Prices will go up; wages will go up much less. The task of the state is to govern the society, but it threatens to abdicate in short order. We have to get the coach out of the mud!

To prevent a drop in the standard of living of many of us, we need our own representatives.

— General assemblies have to be called and present the bill to the union leaderships.

— The workers have to be able to express themselves.

— They have to present their own demands to the plant managements.

— They have to be supported, when they run into difficulties.

— The results of the struggles have to be made public immediately, so as to prevent reprisals.

— Contacts have to be established with workers in other enterprises.

— Independent unions have to be built! ★

Contact Bureau  
"Initiative Group for Independent Unions"  
Berlin

ing a rule of self-control among the demonstrators and surrounding the police stations with lines of stewards in order to avert any direct confrontation.

This question has to be put in a broader geographical and historical context. Since 1917, all revolutionists have hoped for a linkup between the German revolution and the Russian revolution. This would represent a decisive breakthrough for the world revolution. Conversely, the international bourgeoisie (and subsequently both the bourgeoisie and the Kremlin bureaucracy) have left no stone unturned to find gendarmes to nip the possibility of a victorious revolution in Germany in the bud. Noske and his Freikorps; the Reichswehr; the SS and the Wehrmacht; the victorious armies of World War II; and NATO and the Warsaw Pact have successively fulfilled this function.

Today, for the first time since 1918, the political revolution in the GDR is beginning in an international situation in which no one, in the immediate future, can play this gendarme's role. This is the result of a great number of changes that have occurred on the world scale and that have



occurred in the USSR after Gorbachev's rise to power, such as the abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty.

It is necessary to recognize the repercussions that a victory of the political revolution in the GDR, a seizure of power by the working class of the GDR (which is possible, although neither certain nor probable) could have for the world revolution. A spark from the GDR could set all Europe, even the USSR and China alight.

### Kremlin leaders face insoluble dilemma

This points up the real dilemma facing the Kremlin and Washington/Bonn/NATO. If the USSR intervenes again, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, Gorbachev's entire policy will collapse. At the same time, a formidable wave of protest, equal to, if not greater than, that of the American people against the Vietnam war would be unleashed in the USSR. But if Moscow lets a democratic workers' power become established in East Berlin, this will quickly have repercussions in the USSR, East Europe and West Germany, with the "destabilizing" effects that Gorbachev fears like the plague.

Likewise, if Washington and Bonn intervene against the East German workers, a formidable mass protest would explode in West Germany, with the possibility of a general strike, and incalculable repercussions in the rest of Europe, or even in the United States. But if they got away with it, the perspectives for the stability of capitalist Europe would not be any better.



Already on November 9, a representative of NATO drew the paradoxical conclusion that today the Warsaw Pact is an essential factor of stability in capitalist Europe. But for the moment the Warsaw Pact is virtually powerless to intervene against the workers in East Germany.

The conclusion, from the standpoint of the workers' and revolutionary movement, follows logically.

### Sovereignty of East German workers must be defended

We have to defend the unlimited sovereignty of the workers of East Germany. We have to oppose any diversion, any provocation, that would permit the governments in either the East or the West to prevent the workers of East Germany from freely determining their own fate, which would facilitate the intervention of any gendarmes against these workers.

The bureaucracy at bay is maneuvering today to regain control of the rebellion by announcing and carrying out real, but limited reforms. In view of the masses' distrust and the breadth of the upsurge, coopting it through mere promises is absolutely impossible. Neither the appointment of Krenz as general secretary nor the resignation of the government and the formation of a new Political Bureau on November 8 are more than rearguard battles by "conservatives." These "transitional solutions" will prove only ephemeral.

More serious would be an attempt at a "Gorbachev-style" reform, based on a coalition that would include, along with the reform wing of the apparatus around Modrow, a section of the more moderate opposition leaders.

The latter, out of opportunist *Realpolitik* considerations at the same time as fear of intervention by the Kremlin "if it goes too far" (a fear that persists despite everything), and undoubtedly also out of the fear of a "leap into the dark" that overlaps with fear of a genuine workers' revolution, are probably prepared for a "Polish-style" solution, at least in the political sphere. (That is, a solution that would involve sharing or even heading the government along with the SED reformers, while the control of the armed apparatus remained in the hands of the nomenklatura.)

The election victory that the opposition can expect in the event of free elections would favor such an option. Even the SPD, with the direct support of the West German SPD, could take that road.

Can such a reform succeed? In the short term, yes; purely in the constitutional sphere. But it will not stop the flowering of the mass movement. It will not choke off their thousand-faceted self-activity. To the contrary, it could even stimulate this. This is the great difference from the Polish situation.

In these conditions, such reform would also stimulate political differentiation. Hybrid political institutions would have little chance of stabilizing. In the medium term, it seems probable that the "reformers" will fail.

Experience shows that a mass movement, not even the most spontaneous and the broadest, cannot last indefinitely. It must win a decisive victory, if not it will start to ebb. No one can determine the time limits in advance.

If the mass movement begins to ebb; if skepticism begins to set in and if hope evaporates, if in those conditions the number of East German citizens emigrating to West Germany increases qualitatively, if the economic situation gets much worse (for example because of such a massive exodus and unsolved problems of currency convertibility), then at a certain moment that political situation could turn.

### Population ready to defend social gains

The majority of the population remaining in East Germany could come to consider that joining West Germany in one form or another would be a lesser evil by comparison with deepening poverty. Even then, the population would remain ready to defend its social gains (full employment, social security, the elimination of poverty) in the framework of a united capitalist Germany.

The West German bourgeoisie, for its part, may calculate that economic advantages of reunification and its repercussions on the rest of East Europe can cancel out the financial costs and the politico-social risks of the operation (which in any case would be considerable).

The political revolution would then be defeated through attrition and the lack of political solutions. The East German working class would fall back into a defensive position, with immense disillusionment but without having lost its potential for struggle. In the long run, this potential could even boost that of the West German working class.

However, opting for this hypothesis today is assuming defeat before the decisive battle is waged.

To the contrary, in the present conditions, the task of revolutionists is to go against the current and help the East German workers, to defend, protect and aid, with all their strength, the political revolution that is beginning in East Germany, so that it can triumph as rapidly as possible. ★

# "Berlin 1989 is May 1968 and the Prague Spring rolled into one"

IN RESPONSE to the East German mobilizations, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International, published 100,000 copies of the following statement. The text has been somewhat abridged for space reasons.

ROUGE



**A**SPECTER is haunting Europe — the German revolution! The worries of the great powers of the world show through their initial expressions of very moderate satisfaction.

What makes the chiefs of the Western world tremble is fear of a destabilization of the East-West balance in central Europe, the fear of revolutionary contagion!

## The spirit of Yalta hovers over Malta

This is what is what is impelling the leaders of the big industrial powers of the capitalist world to make an urgent agreement to maintain the status quo. The spirit of Yalta (the division of the world between US imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy) will hover over the coming conference in Malta between Bush and Gorbachev.

The weapon of all the big powers, the USA and the USSR, as well as the other major Western countries, remains the presence of NATO troops in West Germany and Warsaw Pact troops in East Germany.

Our first concrete demonstration of solidarity with the German people is to demand the departure of all foreign troops from both West and East Germany. French troops must get out of Berlin and West Germany now.

The democratic and socialist aspirations of the people of East Germany are today the best lever for creating the conditions for a future united socialist Germany in a Europe in the service of the workers.

In 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill came together at Casablanca Conference. This

meeting set the demand for the "unconditional surrender of Germany." Why was this demand raised? Because Churchill and Roosevelt knew that the front held by their troops would define a new frontier.

At the end of the hostilities, the frontier of the Western Camp would be defined by the front of Anglo-American troops facing the East Camp defined by the front held by Red Army troops. A race began between the two blocs to crush Nazism and at the same time to gain as much territory as possible.

## Roosevelt equated executioners and victims

The ideological disguise for this military competition in a nutshell was the notion of "collective guilt" of the German people for Nazism. This concept put the Nazi party's hangmen together with the communist and socialist working-class activists imprisoned in 1933 in the first concentration camps. "It has to be instilled in the heads of the German people taken as a whole," Roosevelt wrote in 1944, "that the entire nation was engaged in an unbridled conspiracy against the laws of modern civilization."

Stalin still made a distinction in 1942: "It would be ridiculous to equate the Hitler clique with the German people, the German state." That did not prevent him, we might note in passing, from turning over Communists who took refuge in the USSR to the SS at the time of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. In 1943, he lined up with the view of his allies and signed the Yalta Resolution along with them.

"We have agreed on common political plans for applying the terms of unconditional surrender that will be imposed on

Nazi Germany after Germany's armed resistance is finally crushed."

The doctrine of unconditional surrender and collective guilt were the basis for dividing up the country into four occupation zones, placed under the tutelage of the two camps, the East and the West. "The lies of Goebbel's propaganda," commented the manifesto of the European Executive Committee of the Fourth International issued in December 1945, "claiming that Hitler and the German people altogether formed an indivisible whole today serve as the pretext for the treatment allotted to this people by the victorious allies."

## Special sort of democracy in West Germany

In the West, the allies agreed to set up a very special sort of democracy. Its application led, among other things, to the banning of the Communist Party in October 1951. The leading force of the stubborn but little known resistance to Hitler from 1933 to 1945 was outlawed. In the East, a stage-managed unification between the Social Democratic Party and the CP in April 1946 produced the United Workers' Party (SED). Walter Ulbricht was to rule over East Germany for 30 years before being replaced by Erich Honecker.

In June 1953, the strike of building masons against "production norms" spread from East Berlin to all the big industrial cities before it was quickly drowned in blood. The cold war got continually worse after the failure of the Moscow conference in 1947. Some 2,600,000 East Germans fled to the West to escape Stalinism. The Berlin Wall was built in 1961 to stop this exodus. The 14,000 frontier

# Towards an independent Socialist left in the GDR

**ON October 2, 1989, a meeting of members of Independent left groups, working groups and socialists took place. It was decided to convene an all-GDR working meeting in November and a co-ordinating group was set up to prepare the meeting. We publish here statements of the co-ordinating group, omitting for space reasons details of the workshops to be held at the meeting.**

## DOCUMENT

**ON the all-GDR open working meeting of the Independent left (socialists) planned for the end of November 1989 — statement of the co-ordinating group.**

THE working meeting aims to bring together the broadest possible spectrum, both on the level of the issues and of the different left currents and tendencies. It offers the possibility to promote the basic clarifications and orientations for a socialist future for the GDR and to present conceptual proposals regarding particular political and economic questions for discussion.

It will be an opportunity to work out concrete socialist alternatives for the transformation of the GDR. We will try to facilitate a issue-related discussion and one to which both practical and theoretical people and both those interested in general questions and specialists can contribute.

The participants will not only present their different views, but will also work out and try out general ideas in order to establish a consensus that is capable of sustaining the project of a united left. Also on the agenda therefore will be a discussion on how the project of a united left can be carried forward after the meeting.

We address ourselves to the whole left, whether working in an independent

group or alone, whether organized in the SED or not, and call on them to take part in this meeting with their contributions or to organize similar working meetings themselves and keep each other in touch about their experiences. Support in your work the project of a "United Left" and thus the struggle for a socialist alternative for the GDR!

Contact with the co-ordinating group for the November meeting can be made via the postal address or directly at the Berlin "Umweltbibliothek".

Information about the state of organizational and theoretical preparation, other dates, contact addresses for working groups or the final time and place of the meeting, will appear for example in the Umweltbibliothek's "Telegraph" news service of the or in other independent news sheets where the public statements of the co-ordinating group will be published.

**Statement no.1 of the co-ordinating group for the preparation of a working meeting for the project "United Left".**

THE co-ordinating group for the preparation of a working meeting will publish regular statements on dates and the content of the meeting.

It is responsible both for for the working out of the thematic framework of the meeting on the basis of different preparatory texts and contributions from announced participants and for the organizational preparations.

It is also ready to support the arrangement of contacts which will allow collaboration between different participants on the same project coming out of the meeting. This is aimed at a long-term collaboration of the left around such working meetings. In the same way, the co-ordinating group views itself as an initiative for the advancement of a projected "United Left" which proposes, in the context of the discussion about economic change, a socialist reorganization of the GDR along the following lines:

- Social ownership of the means of production as the dominant and leading basis of socialist socialization.
- The establishment of self-determination of the owners in the fulfill-

guards killed 79 people and wounded 115 in escape attempts.

More than 200,000 American, 60,000 English and 50,000 French soldiers, without counting the Canadians, Belgians and Dutch are stationed on one side. On the other, there are more than 300,000 Soviet soldiers. The inter-German frontier is one of the most heavily guarded in the world.

## NATO forces threaten East German revolution

At a time when the East German workers are going into motion, this formidable concentration of foreign troops represents at least a potential threat for the German revolution. There can be no doubt. The NATO forces, like those of the Warsaw Pact, are not going to stand idly by facing the possibility of a revolutionary victory that would profoundly shake the regimes that they defend.

In these conditions, the demand for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all foreign troops from the two German states must be taken up by the whole workers' and revolutionary movement in the countries concerned, above all the four states occupying Berlin.

Already in 1983-1984, a big campaign on this question initiated by the French and German sections of the Fourth International in collaboration with the peace movements made a considerable impact on public opinion and some contingents of NATO.

Three French soldiers, members of the LCR, were hauled before the Landau military tribunal on this account. They got very broad international support. The officially proclaimed sympathy of the French CP and SP leaders for the East German masses must be judged by the attitude they take to this question. ★





ment of genuine socialization of collective economic activity.

- The consistent implementation of the principles of social security and justice for all members of society.
- Political democracy, the rule of law and the consistent implementation of indivisible human rights and the free development of the individuality of every member of society.
- The ecological reconstruction of industrial society.

The provisional date for the working meeting is November 25/26. Information about the place will be provided as soon as possible.

The over-riding aim of the work of the groups working on specific questions must be to produce a concrete, politically thoroughgoing and radical transitional programme for the socialist re-organization of the GDR. This includes efforts towards a durable consensus of the left on the most important questions concerning this re-organization.

The co-ordinating group is preparing the discussion through two thematic groups. The Coordinating Circle of the Thematic Group "Democratic and People's Self-Management" proposes the following framework for discussion.

**Main Heading I**

The political forms required to establish popular sovereignty and develop public opinion.

**Main Heading II**

The role of the state and the tasks of people's self-managed bodies.

**Main Heading III**

The reconciliation of differing interests within the society and the political framework for solving conflicts in the process of forming a socialist society.

**Theme-centered Workshops**

- Socialist foreign policy.
- The all-German policy of a socialist GDR

- Socialist defense policy.
- popular education.
- culture.
- History of the Communist Movement.

The coordinating circle for the workshop on "The Foundations for Shaping Socialist Economic Relations" provisionally proposes the following framework:

**Main heading I**

The shaping of production and property relations in the process of socialist socializa-

tion. Possibilities and limits of the development of self-managed and private property.

**Main Heading II**

Forms and methods of reconciling the interests of self-managed plants and social, collective economic and environmental interests.

**Main Heading III**

Outlines of specific structural policy for the GDR.

In view of the crisis situation in our country, it is expected that all thematic and theme-centered workshops will go beyond the inevitably partially very basic discussion of their subjects to concrete conclusions and proposals for immediate, timely and urgent changes.

During the meeting, a committee of representatives of all workshops will be formed, which will summarize the work of all the groups and present it to the plenary session.

All leftists who want to participate in, or present their own reports or suggestions, or to help or participate in the presentation of material or reports, or to support the work of the United Left can submit their requests in writing or in person through the contact addresses given. We ask that they provide concrete details regarding the area of work or the theme to which they want to contribute. In this respect, the framework given above should not be seen as a limitation. The coordinating circle feels duty-bound to respond to all suggestions also through continually widening of the framework.

Berlin, October 19, 1989.

The Coordinating Group for the November Meeting of the Left.

Contact Address: Umweltbibliothek, 1058 Berlin, Griebenowstrasse 16 or Genn. Kathrin Schmidt, 1150 Berlin, Schönburger Strasse 8. ★

**Appeal of the Social Democrats**

**THINGS** cannot go on like this! Many hope that the situation will change. But this isn't enough! You don't hope for change, you have to impose it.

The democratization of the GDR which is needed requires a challenge to the monopoly of power and the pretensions to sincerity of the dominant party. We need a battle of ideas, an open debate on the situation of our country today and on its future.

This requires the elaboration of a programme involving all citizens who can contribute their professional expertise. For us, the signatories of this petition, the formation of a social democratic party is very important for the future of our society.

Our goal is that of a social democracy with an ecological orientation. This goal can only be realized through a clear and complete separation between state and society. We wish to implement, defend and reinforce the fundamental rights of citizens on the social, cultural and political planes. We wish to ensure the defence of the natural environment as well as the preservation of natural resources and the possibilities of life for future generations. We ask all those who share this programmatic orientation to group together at a local level:

- a state of laws and rigorous control of the civil authority
- parliamentary democracy and a multi-party system
- relative autonomy — in the financial, economic and cultural spheres — of the regions, departments, towns and villages
- a social market economy with rigorous restrictions on monopolies, so as to avoid any anti-democratic concentration of economic power
- democratization of the structures of economic life
- the freedom to establish independent trade unions and the right to strike.

We wish to establish forms of collaboration with all those who share these fundamental principles. Those who wish to express their criticisms can put forward their own democratic perspective. We are attempting to create a common front of all those who want to participate in the democratization of our country.

12 September 1989

Group for a social democratic party in the GDR.

# For a Green Party in the GDR

**THE East German opposition also has a strong ecological consciousness. We publish below the founding appeal for the East German Green Party.**

## DOCUMENT

**T**HE transformation of our ruined environment is of decisive significance for the renewal of our society. Not only the environment, but also, to a large extent, our own consciousness has been contaminated, notably by the utopia which claims that prosperity and its point of departure — permanent economic growth — must be the aim of social development. This utopia is founded on the idea that humanity can have its own way and arbitrarily change the life systems of our planet. This leads to the conviction that humanity can subject nature to its domination. This also implies the idea that production and revenue are the essential indexes of human progress. This conception, in its arrogance, throws the weakest to the margins of society and denies them all possibility for improving their lot.

Those who share this idea of society are indifferent to the question of knowing whether the weak should present themselves, alone and robbed of dignity, at the nursing wards, whether they should be shovelled into the mass graves of the Third World or be put on show in the museums of rare species of animals or plants.

Our contaminated consciousness has

created, for the first time in the history of the planet, the possibility of the destruction of every form of life. If we denounce the common responsibility for this consciousness and this process, it is from our instinct of self-preservation. From this starting point we intend to build a Green Party in the GDR so that it can fight according to its principles and as a political force.

Our initiating group has decided to call for the creation of a Green Party in the GDR on the following bases: The Green Party in the GDR takes its place alongside every force that is mobilizing in our country for liberty and democracy through deepgoing reforms. It is ecologist, feminist and anti-authoritarian.

### The specific aims of the Green Party

1. The consistent ecological reorganization of our country through a radical break with environmentally destructive growth with its waste of raw materials and with the Stalinist-style attitude to people, the economy and the environment.

Immediate intervention is needed to deal with ecological disaster areas such as exist at Leipzig, Bitterfeld, Halle, Dresden Karl-Marx Stadt and Cottbus and to save many old historic towns, cultural locations and castles, for example in Mecklenburg.

2. The final securing of peace through general and complete disarmament. The dissolution of the military alliances, the reduction of the army to the smallest level necessary for defence and the removal of the military no-go areas are urgently necessary for the upholding of peace and defence of the environment.

3. We reject force, national chauvinism and racism, and adhere to a consistent anti-fascism.

4. The unlimited equality of all women and men at every economic and political level, and in both local and national administrative bodies, which retain their character as overwhelmingly patriarchal institutions. Women as mothers should enjoy positive action in these spheres.

5. Nature needs to be protected against unrestricted development. Only thus can it be the basis of human community and culture. Every economic act needs to be justified: where will it lead? Who will it benefit? Why is it being undertaken?

**The Green Party is committed to long-term development.**

We above all want to prevent the present movement for renewal, under the pressure of an unthought out and short-term material need to catch up leading to a society of ruthlessness, alienation and waste.

We consider that it is urgent for the ecological outlook to be introduced at all levels of education, including the introduction of ecological and peace studies.

We are for a reform of the constitution of the GDR. We are therefore opposed to all obstacles placed by the state in the way of the Green Party's activity.

We will collaborate, both at a national and international level, with every citizen, organization and group that even partially supports our ideas.

As part of the European Green movement, we are for a just order of distribution that will guarantee a long term economic development also to the peoples of the third world and help to stem the breakdown of the eco-system.

We call for collaboration across borders for the general ecological transformation of areas of ecological crisis.

In the light of the fundamental changes in our country, we call on all interested inhabitants of whatever outlook, religion or nationality to:

1. Come together on a local and regional basis to form Green Party groups out of concern over the catastrophic situation of our environment, and responsibility to our children and generations as yet unborn.

2. To choose delegates to work out proposals for our programme and basic organizational structure. Elaborate alternative concepts, make creative and practical proposals for the ecological reconstruction of our society on the basis of lists of problems and demands for your communities, towns, regions and the GDR as a whole.

#### Start with actions!

The first general meeting that will determine among other things the programme, structure and personnel matters of the Green Party in the GDR will take place at the start of 1990 in one of the places in the GDR worst affected by the destruction of the environment.

For a Green change! ★



# Will Czechoslovakia be next?

**T**HE demonstration of 28 October proved that the independent movement had lost none of its breadth. The number of demonstrators was more or less the same as in January of this year when the twentieth anniversary of the heroic death of Jan Palach was commemorated; it was two or three times greater than that of August 21, when the bureaucracy wanted to intimidate the citizens through threats. There was no shortage of the latter even on this occasion — some sixty militants were subjected to preventive (and illegal!) arrest, warnings were given to others, and the military oath-taking ceremony which took place in Wenceslas Square on the morning of the demonstration had a clearly provocative character.

The repression against the demonstration was, by the standards prevailing in Prague, rather modest. No tear gas, no dogs, no water cannons, although these had been prepared. The police limited themselves to clubbing the "malcontents", above all in the late afternoon during rallies in different parts of the Old Town, at which the participants are estimated as numbering up to 20,000.

## Slogans show great political maturity

This time, the people carried banners, which had been rare at the previous demonstrations. The slogans of the day, written and chanted, showed the greatest political maturity — Freedom for the political prisoners!, This is our home, long live Charter 77!, Long live Havel!, We want free elections!, Down with Jakes and Stepan, we want another government! Most of the 359 people taken in for questioning were freed the same evening; 148 had been detained by the police for two days.

They will be prosecuted for minor infringements against public order, punishable by up to six months in prison or a fine of 20,000 crowns (it is worth noting that it is becoming more difficult for the ruling bureaucracy to involve judges in this dirty business; they find against the municipality or impose the minimum penalty). The 16 foreigners who were arrested on 28 October in Prague have also been freed.

An estimation of how strong or weak the independent and pro-democratic forces are must start from an analysis of their social base. It is true that Charter 77 — for 12 years the only independent formation to exist, along with VONS, the Committee to Defend the Unjustly Persecuted — came out of its ghetto two or three

**THE MASS DEMONSTRATION** of 40,000 to 50,000 people in Prague on Friday, November 17, and the following weekend have finally launched a major challenge to one of the last unreconstructed Stalinist regimes in East Europe. Only the Albanian regime and the Romanian despotism under Ceaucescu remain as yet unshaken by demonstrations demanding democratic reforms. According to a BBC correspondent in the Czechoslovak capital, some Soviet soldiers publicly showed solidarity with the student reported killed in the police attack on the November 17 demonstration. The following is a report by a leading Czech dissident on the demonstration of October 28, which helped to open the way for the much larger one on November 17, which evidently frightened the government into brutal and counter-productive repression. At the time, the Western reporters considered this demonstration of 10,000 to be disappointing and illustrative of how far the movement for democracy in Czechoslovakia lagged behind those in the neighboring countries.

PETR UHL

Other groups have been formed, cultural, ecological, religious, humanitarian and also political, the latter ranging from anarchist to monarchist. Four amongst them are particularly important, their adherents numbering from 500 to 1000 — the Movement for Civic Liberty (HOS), a liberal democratic group; the Socialist Renewal Club for *Perestroika* (Obroda), led primarily by ex-members of the CP expelled after the Soviet military intervention of August 1968; the Czechoslovak Democratic Initiative which has recently established contacts with the Democratic Forum in Hungary; and, finally, the Independent Association for Peace which is an initiative for the demilitarization of society.

But the social base of the members and sympathizers of these groups remains very narrow; it is above all the young workers who are beginning, more and more, to demonstrate their frustration with the political system and its harmful consequences in the cultural, economic and ecological spheres. Older workers, more settled and relatively affluent, are very much more prudent whilst retaining a critical attitude.

It is nonetheless the intellectuals, above all in the two spheres of culture and science, who are increasingly active around a number of initiatives — petitions of solidarity with the Slovak democrats who are now being judged by the town tribunal in Bratislava and with two journalists of the independent monthly *Lidové*

*Noviny*, Jan Ruml and Rudolf Zeman who have recently been imprisoned; the foundation of a Circle of independent intellectuals and its activities; positive changes inside the People's and Socialist parties (two small parties dominated by the CP inside the "National Front"); the boycotting of television and radio by the Czech Philharmonic because of discrimination against artists who signed the petition "A Few Words". All of which shows that the demonstrations in the street cannot be taken as the sole measure of combativity and mounting social courage.

## The Czechoslovak road to democracy

Undoubtedly, the Czechoslovak road to democracy and an efficient and socially just economic system cannot be a copy of the Hungarian, Polish, Soviet or East German roads. I see our tasks in the coming months as being in the work of the oppositional groups, existing and future, in defining their political programs, and in broadening their influence on other social layers and other milieu. Only a still greater isolation of the leadership of the CP, culminating in its isolation from its own party base, will bring about its retreat. The developments in our neighboring countries are important for us on two counts; they increase the isolation of the Czech bureaucracy and they provide an encouraging example for our society to follow. ★

# Outrage at murder of Trotskyist militant



**IN THE early morning of 28 October José Carvalho, a leader of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR, Portuguese section of the Fourth International) was murdered in front of the Lisbon offices of our party. [see IV**

**173] José was known to his comrades as Zé of MESSA (the factory where he worked). His assassins were a band of neo-Nazi skinheads, already known for a series of small provocations, largely directed against the African and Indian minorities. There is reason to believe that this group has killed other people, although without witnesses and in other conditions.**

**FRANCISCO LOUCA**

**O**N THE evening of José's murder, as every week, the PSR offices were the venue for a rock concert, organized in connection with the anti-militarist campaign that the PSR has been building amongst youth for the past year. These concerts have been organized in collaboration with nearly 70 rock groups (almost every group in the country, and certainly all the most important). Because of the popularity of the anti-militarist theme — in a country where youth are obliged to serve two years in the military, being trained by officers who have an ideology and a practice inherited from the colonial wars — and given that this is the only place in Lisbon where live rock music can be heard, some hundreds of youth attend these concerts each week. For some months, para-military skinhead groups have been organizing provocations, gathering at the entrance to intimidate the young concertgoers. However, until now, we have only known minor confrontations, which have been dealt with through efficient stewarding supported by the self-organization of the youth themselves.

On the night of José's murder, the skinheads behaved differently. After some

provocations, a group of around forty PSR militants and sympathizers came out of the offices to block their access. The skinheads moved away quickly enough, but this was simply a manoeuvre to prepare their attack. This was very rapid, and took place when only a small number of militants remained outside the doors of the offices. In a few seconds, the attackers had wounded two people (of whom one suffered concussion and the other a broken nose) and had killed another. José Carvalho was stabbed in the heart, and died almost instantly.

A pursuit was organized, this time with significant numbers of PSR comrades and with the assistance of the police, but it was not immediately possible to find the band of skinheads, who had quickly taken flight. Around half an hour after the attack, the PSR provided the police with descriptions of three of the attackers, so that they could conduct their own enquiries. By the following morning, all the members of the band had been identified and imprisoned, and it was soon possible to reconstruct the circumstances of the murder. One of the members of the group, who had confessed to having a knife (a habitual small arm for this type

of group), was kept in detention by the magistrate, although, during the course of the investigation, he did not wish to charge the others with complicity.

José Carvalho was 37 and for a year had been a member of the Central Committee of the PSR. Elected at the last congress, he immediately became a member of the party's Political Bureau, responsible for the distribution of our press and support for the anti-militarist campaign amongst youth.

He had joined the LCI (Internationalist Communist League, which later became the PSR) in 1974, during his military service. He participated in the anti-militarist sector of the party, and in 1975 helped to build a broad democratic and political movement amongst soldiers. A worker, he had begun work at the age of 14 in an important factory on the outskirts of Lisbon, MESSA, which produced typewriters. He worked in this factory for 15 years, and for many years was a member of its Workers' Commission.

MESSA was the arena for the most important struggle against industrial reconversion which Portugal has known. For nine years, nearly a thousand workers resisted the threats of closure of the factory, negotiating with, and struggling against, different governments, spending month after month without pay.

## Bastion of working class combativity

The democracy that existed in the factory, the general assemblies that led the struggle, made this enterprise a bastion of the combativity of the working class left. As one of its principal leaders, Zé participated in all these struggles: he organized demonstrations 30 kilometers long to Parliament, he negotiated with secretaries of state and ministers, he organized the popularization of the struggle amongst the workers in other enterprises.

From the beginning, Zé devoted himself tirelessly to party work, assuming numerous responsibilities and initiatives, involving himself in every aspect of work and discussion. He had, on most issues, a critical and independent frame of mind. At our last congress, he was part of a minority that was critical of our project, since adopted, of transforming the section's newspaper into a permanent instrument of collaboration with those revolutionary independents who were participating in party initiatives. But this position did not prevent him from being one of the central figures responsible for the distribution of our press, which has now attained a circulation of 5,000 and aspires to surpass this figure. Such was his attitude to party work; his opinion was respected all the more because of his recognized authority stemming from his leadership abilities and orientation towards collective decisions. The whole party knew that it could have

**15**

confidence in him.

On the very day of his assassination, a national conference of the party was due to meet which was to vote for José's status to become permanent, for the first time. Relieved of his youth responsibilities, he was to become responsible for the network of national contacts of the PSR in the large towns; and this task reflected a significant advance due in no small part to the work of José himself. The week following, he was to have participated in a five-day conference to establish a new youth sector of the party, born out of the anti-militarist campaign. His loss is a terrible blow for the PSR.

### Impressive reaction to assassination

The reaction to the assassination was impressive. Some thousands of people attended the burial, held 24 hours after the crime. All the parties of the left without exception; the two trade union federations; the soldiers of April 25; the municipal councils; the individual trade unions; the student associations; the cultural centres and anti-imperialist/international solidarity groups, the national and European deputies, the associations of African workers; the youth organization of the party in government and several parties of the right sent messages to, or were represented at, the funeral. Prominent leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties, as well as of all the formations of the far left; the president of the Association of the soldiers of 25 April; a brother of, and the widow of, singer José Afonso; friends who came from throughout the country; writers and artists; militants of the trade unions and popular struggles from the area where José lived, all joined in an impressive and moving funeral cortege. The rock groups with whom José worked in the anti-militarist campaign also formed part of the cortege.

All the daily newspapers led with the theme, which also featured as the lead story of the day's television news. The dailies and the national weeklies have devoted more than a hundred pages to this event. The radio gave live reports hour by hour, as well as declarations and commentaries on the progress of the investigation. On the Saturday evening, the principal Lisbon radio station broadcast a programme on Zé of MESSA.

Twelve hours after the murder, the PSR organized a public tribute in Lisbon, after having adjourned its national conference scheduled for that weekend. All the delegates, and particularly those from three regions where the party's implantation is fairly recent (Coimbra, Caldas da Rainha and Evora), who were attending a national conference for the first time, participated in the organization of this reply to the fascist provocation.

**16** The next day, the President of the Republic, Mario Soares, telephoned the

PSR leadership to express his sadness and to put himself entirely at our disposal. Parliament unanimously approved a motion of condolence (see box). Some hundreds of letters and telegrams have arrived, notably from many youths who had witnessed or been victims of skin-head aggression, putting themselves at the disposal of the party as witnesses or wishing to help identify the murderers at the investigation.

### Range of judicial procedures opened up

From the beginning, the PSR has reacted at two different levels. On the one hand, it has put pressure on the authorities and the institutions that all the murderers be held responsible. Successive meetings have been held with the police, the minister of justice and the state prosecutor. Meanwhile, a range of judicial procedures have been opened by the PSR and the two wounded militants, in collaboration with their families.

At the same time, the PSR has endeavored to organize a mobilization of the whole of democratic opinion and all the forces of the workers' movement. Working with an important group of investiga-

tive journalists, the PSR has compiled a dossier on the links between these neo-Nazi groups — which go back, as might be supposed, to the Salazar dictatorship — and has started a campaign to reply to the threat.

Two big tribute concerts, in which all the principal names of Portuguese music, from rock to opera, by way of jazz and popular music, will participate, will form the centerpiece of this campaign. All the Lisbon theater troupes are to dedicate a show to Zé. The trade unions and left parties are collaborating in our initiative. Thus, the PCP has put at the PSR's disposal both its newspaper and the part of its infrastructure that deals with the organization of festivals.

The reply has begun. It is far from over. The crime will be neither forgotten nor forgiven. ★

**viva a vida!**  
*homenagem*  
*a*  
**José carvalho**

**músicos contra o nazismo**

**PAV DESPORTOS, LISBOA, 6<sup>h</sup>, 17 NOV, 21.30**

**SFADP, COVA DA PIEDADE, 6<sup>h</sup>, 24 NOV, 21.30**

### Motion unanimously approved by the Portuguese Parliament

"Vote of sympathy: In the early morning of 28 October 1989, José Carvalho, a leader of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, was murdered in Lisbon, by a group of individuals belonging to a gang which adheres to a fascist ideology and has a policy of employing organized violence. The Assembly of the Republic expresses its sadness at the death of José Carvalho and sends its condolences to his family and to the Revolutionary Socialist Party; it expresses its indignation at this barbarous act which has taken a human life, and its great concern at the growing activities of the neo-fascist groups; it pronounces itself in favour of adopting the measures laid down in article 46, paragraph 4 of the Constitution of the Republic." [which forbids organizations of a fascist character].

### Message sent by Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho [one of the radical army leaders at the time of the 1974 revolution]

"I heard in Oporto the terrible news of the assassination on early Saturday morning of José Carvalho at the hands of a young Nazi: I add my revulsion to yours at this alarming event whose details I have read in the newspapers, and on the occasion of this tragic event I send greetings of fraternity and solidarity to you and to this militant, this friend, this comrade, who is dead."

### Message of the CGTP [one of the major trade union confederations].

"The General Confederation of Portuguese Labor (CGTP) condemns absolutely the crime committed on the night of Friday to Saturday, against a leader of the PSR and a trade union militant, José Carvalho, and expresses its solidarity with his party comrades and with his family, at this moment of bereavement and indignation. This tragic crime is an indicator of the growing violence of extreme right groups, which, until now, have been treated with too great an incomprehension and a tolerance by the authorities of the country. This growth must be rapidly checked and this shocking assassination must be severely punished.

The workers and the democratic forces must be vigilant against any reappearance in our country of something that has no place in the democratic society in which we live and which we defend.



# What will the United Left do with its electoral victory?

**A** PART from the fact that the socialists (PSOE) kept their majority — something in which it appears fraud played a role — the most important fact about the elections was, without doubt, the results of the United Left (Izquierda Unida — IU, the Communist Party dominated coalition). This is the opinion of most of the media, and is generally accepted by public opinion. In this case appearance and reality coincide. The general election results saw a reinforcement of IU, not only of its parliamentary representation but also of its political project. This will have an impact on the overall political situation, and will create new and serious problems for the radical left. It is important that we approach these problems cautiously and without haste, allowing time for practical experience to supply essential and reliable facts since no magic solution exists, either an organizational formula or a political idea, that will allow us to resolve problems just like that. Nonetheless, it is possible now to take a look at the likely consequences of the position won by the IU on October 29.

## United Left makes spectacular gains

In order to arrive at a balanced assessment of the importance of the election results it is necessary to look at things from several angles. In comparison with the 1986 general elections the picture is clear enough. The IU has made a spectacular advance; its vote rose evenly throughout the Spanish state. IU's vote doubled in every voting district, making particular progress in those areas that have traditionally voted for the left, in spectacular con-

**THE RESULTS** of the Spanish state general election of October 29 provided a shock for Socialist prime minister Felipe Gonzalez — after some initial confusion and disputed votes it now appears that the Socialists have lost their overall majority in parliament (see box). The parties of the right made no progress on their share of the vote at the last elections in 1986, and the main beneficiaries of the disillusionment with Gonzalez were the Communist-dominated United Left coalition, who gained almost exactly the 4.5% of the vote that the Socialists lost. We print below an editorial commentary on the election results from *Combate*, the weekly paper of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR, section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state).

COMBATE

trast with the PSOE. On the other hand we should remember the scores that used to be won by the Spanish Communist Party (PCE). In 1979 there were 2,300,000 fewer voters than in 1989, but the PCE obtained 100,000 more votes than the IU now. The degree of recovery with respect to the position of the PCE is thus modest. And with its 9% then, the PCE was in the tail of the important European CPs on the electoral terrain. Finally, the idea defended by the IU that its electoral results are a "deferred payment" for the general strike of December last year is a double-edged sword. One bright commentator on the PSOE's "civilian plot" hastened to express his agreement with this idea, concluding that it is thus proved that the whole social support for the general strike adds up to the 900,000 extra votes for the IU.

If the total price paid by the system for a general strike of 10 million workers was really such a vote shift, we should be talking not about a "deferred payment" but a bargain, especially when we remember that the big loser in the strike came back to win in the ballot boxes. In our previous editorial, we stated that the election result was not basically the product of the general strike, but of the truce that followed it. All these facts are needed to enable us to establish the real dimensions of the IU's success, although they should not be allowed to conceal that a success is what it was.

## How can the PSOE be politically weakened?

What consequences can we expect? Our analytical starting point is the IU's positions with regard to the problems that have, above all after the general strike, been the central concerns of the left: how can the PSOE be politically weakened — a necessary condition for the establishment of a government favourable to the workers? And how to carry forward the recomposition and reinforcement of the social movements? These are, of course questions of different kinds, but they are also inter-related.

The success of the IU in the elections affects the first question above all. Anguita has effectively managed to establish himself as a rising leader, something that has great importance in the personality cult conditions of our political system, which prevail also in the CP tradition. Furthermore, the IU appears as a force, something that will probably be confirmed in the next municipal and autonomous regional elections. Moreover, the IU

## Election Results (1986 FIGURES IN BRACKETS)

	Seats	% of vote
PSOE (Socialists)	175(184)	39.5(44.3)
Partido Popular (rightist)	106(105)	25.8(26.1)
IU (CP led coalition)	18(7)	9.05(4.6)
CDS (rightist)	14(19)	7.9(9.1)
CiU (Catalan nationalist)	18(18)	5.04(5.0)
PNV (Basque nationalist)	5(6)	1.24(1.5)
Herri Batasuna (Basque revolutionary nationalist)	4(5)	1.06(1.1)
Other nationalists	10(5)	3.52(1.8)

appears as a force that is gaining by taking support from the PSOE. The attraction of this for socialist personalities and especially the surprising implicit support from the leader of the UGT, the trade union federation linked to the PSOE, Redondo (although perhaps given with a heavy heart) are the proof.

Finally there is the hope that Anguita might have learned from the disastrous electoral experiences of his predecessors, and will try to make more intelligent use of his 18 deputies.

All this gives IU its principal political axis: to present itself as the only real possibility for a leftward shift in the parliamentary left. The fact that the Greens are still far from getting deputies, and that radical left has no weight on the electoral-institutional left (with the very specific exception of Herri Batasuna) also contribute to making the IU the only candidate for this position.

The second problem is more complicated. It would be a serious error to believe that the problem of the recomposition of the social movements is of no interest to IU or is irrelevant to its electoral results. It is likely that the IU or rather the PCE, which is what counts in this sphere, is going to use its victory in the elections in order to carry out what we might call a "normalization" of the situation in the social movements. That is, to create a situation where the PCE controls or holds dominant positions in the most important social movements.

### Radical left strong in social movements

The idea would be to finally put an end to the "abnormal" situation that existed from the beginning of the 1980s until the defeat in the anti-NATO referendum, a situation in which the radical left was stronger than the PCE in the social movements, especially in the peace movement. At the same time the splits in the PCE led to a weakening of its hold on the Workers' Commissions (CCOO).

The IU will use its parliamentary position to achieve this objective. An idea of how they are going to work, as well as the total lack of scruples in carrying out their plan, was given by the statements of Sartorius, when he announced that the issue of the GAL (murder gangs recruited by the Spanish police to assassinate Basque militants) would be one of their first initiatives. "IU has always taken the lead on the GAL issue, and has at times found itself somewhat isolated. From now on, we hope to no longer be so isolated." (*El Mundo* November 4, 1989)

In reality, it will try to use its deputies to "stand alone" on issues with popular appeal or which reflect the aspirations of the movements, seeking to displace people who have put much time into fighting for these objectives. But the profit that IU can draw in this respect from its deputies

and its role as a "political alternative" should not be underestimated when the most important battles take place on the ground in the movements and in its organizations.

The programmatic battles are not to be feared. Despite Anguita's obsessions on the subject, the IU programme says nothing of any significance, and in any case played no role in its electoral rise. It should not be forgotten that there is a crisis in the PCE that current events in the East will aggravate. To refer to the "consistent implementation" of the Declaration of Human Rights, the Spanish Constitution and the European Single Act as the basis for a "left policy" is pure hot air, and represents an alternative neither to the PSOE or anything else.

In reality, IU will continue pragmatically to seek the themes that will benefit it at the given moment, in the context of its basic interests, which are to strengthen or keep control over the most important organizations of the social movements. This will involve a battle with the radical left that it will conduct with all the means at its disposal. This is the reason for the first signs of a resumption of bureaucratic attacks on the trade-union left in the CCOO immediately after the elections.

### Radical left must use its positions well

Fortunately, things are different in other movements. The overall evolution of the situation, that is to say, whether the relatively low level of social mobilization continues will, in the last analysis, determine how far IU gets with its plans. But, in any case, as far as movements and mobilizations are concerned, the radical left continues to hold important positions in its hands. What is needed is for us to be able to use these positions well and, if possible find new ones.

We said at the start that it was necessary to consider the problems posed by IU's victory carefully and without haste. It is particularly important to think critically about the following question: IU has put itself forward as the fundamental reference point for all those to the left of PSOE who believe, for various reasons, that it is important to strengthen an alternative of this type.

On the other hand, all those that are definitely to the left of the IU and believe that the essential task at the moment to strengthen the radical left lack, not a common reference — the creation of which would be in any case too ambitious and costly — but points of contact going beyond particular mobilizations or struggles. And this lack weighs on us, and in a negative sense. Because it is above all necessary to strengthen the movements, especially in the light of our own weakness. For in political intervention and in the common effort that is required, there is still a lot of work to do. ★

ON SEPTEMBER 1980, two young socialists from Basel hit on the idea of proposing a campaign for the abolition of the army. The previous year the Swiss Young Socialists, an organization with an anti-militarist tradition, chose "the politics of peace" as the subject of their annual campaign. From the start of the 1980s pacifist demonstrations of thousands of people took place<sup>1</sup>. Under impact of these mobilizations, in March 1981, the Young Socialists decided to add a simple question to their annual theme: "Does Switzerland need an army?" Thinking developed rapidly along these lines and the idea of launching a popular initiative on this question began to take shape<sup>2</sup>.

The Young Socialists did not, however, get the support they had hoped for from the Swiss Socialist Party (PSS). The latter was rather embarrassed by the anti-militarist fervour which threatened to spoil the party's image of trustworthiness and respect for institutions. The Confederation is, in fact, ruled by a governmental college of seven ministers from the Radical Party, the Christian Democratic Party, the Democratic Centre Union and the Socialist Party, the so-called "Magic formula".

### Referendum campaign launched

On 12 September 1982, over 100 people came together to form the "Group for a Switzerland without an Army" (GSsA) and decided to launch the campaign for a referendum. In September 1984, a new assembly of the GSsA agreed on the changes to the Constitution for a "Switzerland without an Army."

The meeting also decided to add a second section to the referendum proposal "for a global peace policy". Without media coverage, the GSsA was able to get nearly 111,300 signatures. The demand for a referendum for the suppression of the army was handed in on 12 September 1986. The movement had scored its first victory.

Many observers as well as people who considered the activists of the GSsA as "a handful of marginal troublemakers" were surprised by the breadth of the response to this "utopian" idea.

The national debate only really got going in June 1987. This was due to the appearance on German television of a documentary film by Roman Brodmann on "the insane hope of leading the sacred cow to the slaughterhouse." This

1. In 1983 40,000 people demonstrated for disarmament in the Federal capital Bern.

2. In Switzerland, every group or citizen is entitled to launch a popular initiative to amend the constitution of the Swiss Confederation. All that is necessary is to hand in a properly drawn up proposal about the articles to be amended along with 100,000 signatures supporting the initiative. After the signatures have been verified by the Federal Council, the Confederation is then called on to vote for or against the proposition.

# "We must kill the sacred cow"

**THE referendum called for by the Group for a Switzerland without an Army takes place on November 25 and 26. Three years after the handing over of the petition signed by more than 100,000 people calling for a change in the Constitution, the Swiss are going to vote on the abolition of their army. The referendum campaign has aroused an unprecedented debate about the army, neutrality, Switzerland's foreign policy and history and so on. Demonstrations, concerts, debates and outspoken statements have come one after another.**

**When the Young Socialists launched the idea of abolishing the army in 1980, they did not imagine that such an idea would strike so deeply at the foundations of the Swiss Confederation.**

SOPHIE MASSOURI

unleashed the political class and the army chiefs-of-staff against this "suspicious manoeuvre that has severely affected the national sensibilities of many Swiss people". The parliamentary interventions that followed this showing of this film were virulent and the defence minister even sent a note to the German parliament to denounce what he considered an attack on Swiss sovereignty.

The extreme quality of much of this made the debate explode. In the eyes of the ruling class and the army brass, what had seemed like a vague and utopian idea had become, just like that, a real destabilizing plot against the country. Out came the old refrain about the "patriotic values that are being lost" and which are "the real cement of the nation."

The most extraordinary of these reactions was, without doubt, the publication of the message sent by the Federal Council to the Federal Chambers about the referendum on June 1, 1988. Announcing the referendum, the Federal Council, in a 30-page addendum, listed arguments in favour of rejecting the initiative. For them, everyone knows that those behind this initiative do not believe that this vote will allow the army to be abolished. "(It) is, for them, a utopia whose purpose is to set in motion the process of the formation of a consciousness leading towards the political transformation of society." Characterizing the initiative itself they add: "to keep or to abolish its army is incontestably an existential decision for a state. The army embodies, in fact, the

monopoly of power against warlike external interventions or an overturn fomented from within. No state can do without an army."

After a historical excursion, the document moves onto the specificities of the Swiss defence system: "No other army is so imbued with the militia principle as ours.<sup>3</sup> Responsibility for the safeguarding of independence is shared by the soldier-citizen." In reply, the GSsA recalled that "on the contrary, called on several occasions to preserve a certain type of peace — or the peace of certain people — during the 1918 general strike, in 1932 in Geneva or in the Jura in 1968 — the army is a real danger to democratic rights. It always considers the actual exercise of democratic rights as a threat." They say that the army protects us from the enemy, but from what "enemy"?

The other question that has come up during the campaign is the cost of the army and of its abolition. The army is expensive. In Switzerland, as in other countries, the military budget is the only one to survive and grow in the face of cut-backs in public spending. In 1987, military spending went up to 10 billion Swiss francs [approximately \$6.25b or £4b] that is 1,800 francs [approximately \$1,125 or £720] per citizen per year. Switzerland pays more per head of population for defence than any other European country.

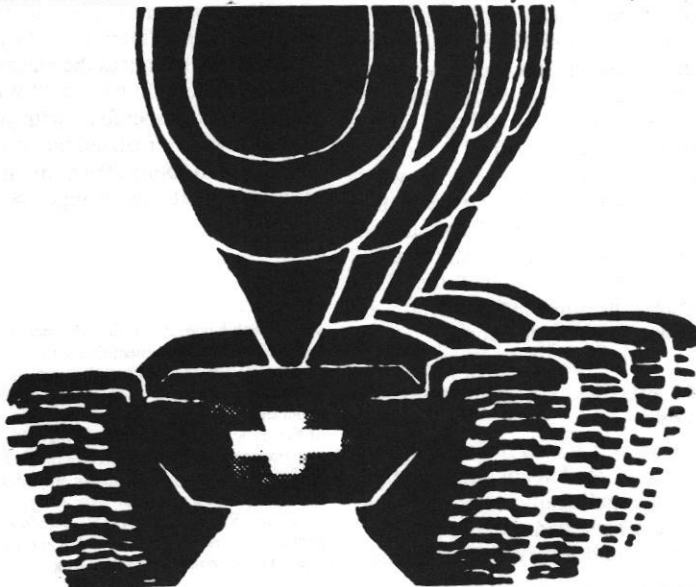
## Economics of abolition of army debated

During the debate, however, the government and the federal military department (DMF) raised arguments about the economic cost of the eventual abolition of the army, in particular in terms of employment. "The army awards numerous contracts to artisans or groups whose skills have become outdated and who would otherwise be unemployed." To these wholly demagogic arguments the GSsA replied that: "an investment of \$1b can create 76,000 jobs in the military production sector, but 86,000 in mechanical manufacture, 92,000 in transport, 100,000 in construction, 138,000 in health and 187,000 in education.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever the result of the vote on November 26, it is clear that the right, the DMF and the whole military lobby will no longer be able to ignore the evident malaise in Switzerland about "a particularly expensive cow that has been sacred for too long". ★

3. The Swiss army is a conscript army; it comprises today 650,000 men, together with 3,000 women who provide a voluntary service. The famous peculiarity of the Swiss army is that every man is a soldier from the age of 20. As well as the 17 weeks spent in recruit school when they first joined, the citizen soldiers is recalled twice a year for weapons training. After the age of 45, they are assigned to the civil protection service.

4. These figures are given in a brochure published by the GSsA, and are based on a survey undertaken by the United States Department of Labor in 1975.



# Debate on army stirs Swiss society

**W**HAT response did the GSsA campaign get?

After a rather slow start, the movement grew with dazzling speed in 1988. The media and the politicians ignored the movement for as long as they could. At the moment when the campaign was launched, the international climate and the relations between the blocs were not favourable to such an initiative.

Now, everything is different. Events in Eastern Europe, and Gorbachev's foreign policy have undermined the credibility of the "Soviet threat" arguments that the Swiss military have used to justify the ever growing defence sector.

The astonishment that followed the handing in of the 100,000 signatures was dying down a bit when Brodmann's film appeared on German television in June 1987. The aim of the film was to explain to German citizens the right of popular initiative that exists only in Switzerland. The film chose the GSsA's initiative as an example, demonstrating that we were even able to call for the abolition of the army. The violent reactions to this film focussed media attention on the movement.

The nearer we get to November 26, the more people are getting involved in the campaign. The total number of people who subscribe to the campaign's journal or who send money regularly is about 7,000 which is 4,000 more than last year.

But, above all, the debate has stirred society as a whole. Now there are trade unionists for a Switzerland without an army, Christians for a Switzerland without an army....and even military officers for a Switzerland without an army. Everybody has to take a position on the initiative.

**■ The international climate does not provide the whole explanation for such an initiative. Most people have an image of Switzerland as a calm country, without great social agitations. What has changed?**

In my view, it is not the GSsA that has brought about a change — it has acted as a catalyst. A deeper malaise grips Swiss society. Many things are coming to the surface and changing. The special links between the government and the people and between the army and the people does not exist any more. A lot of people do not vote in elections for example. Only about 40% bother to vote nowadays. This movement mirrors the upheavals of a more or

**THE Parti socialiste ouvrier (Socialist Workers' Party, PSO — Swiss section of the Fourth International) has been the only organized force to support the campaign, collecting a third of the signatures.**

**IV spoke to Gisela Hürliman, a member of the PSO and of the JSR — Provo (Revolutionary Socialist Youth), who has been a member of the national secretariat of the campaign of the Group for a Switzerland without Arms (GSsA) for German Switzerland since January 1989. The interview was conducted on October 2, 1989 by Sophie Massouri.**

less washed out society. That is why the government is afraid of the movement, because it challenges the foundations of the pact between the Swiss people and government.

**■ What has the attitude of the Swiss Socialist Party (SSP) been?**

A real debate in the ranks of the Socialists has erupted in the media. The bourgeois parties threatened to throw the social democrats out of the government if they did not come out against the initiative. That would mean the end of, or at least a serious challenge to, the "magic formula" that has existed for 30 years.

I was at the SSP Congress which took place in an exciting and excited atmosphere. The young socialists hoped that their party would call for a vote for the initiative. The party leaders, rather more pragmatic, tried to head off the real dangers of an explosion. They wanted to maintain at least an appearance of unity. They proposed two rounds of voting. In the first, each delegate would take a personal position on the initiative. In the second the delegates would vote on what position the SSP should take when the vote came. The first round revealed a large majority in favour of the initiative, but the second decided that the SSP should take no position on the vote. It was like a balloon suddenly deflating.

**■ What are the campaign's perspectives?**

The danger is that everything will stop after November 26. A lot of young people have become politically active for the first time and have had a rather positive experience around a very radical theme.

If, along with those who have a longer term strategy, we can hold our positions, I believe it will be possible to interest these young people in other subjects and in politics in general. Even if Swiss youth are in general apolitical, they are sensitive to questions about the Third World. A lot of them have discovered that it is not enough to give development aid because a lot more wealth is being transferred from the Third World to the industrialized countries than is going in the other direction. They know all about the laundering of drug money and so on.<sup>1</sup> We must show them that we have comprehensive answers at the national and international levels to the problems of society.

Already, in several places, in Basel, Bern, Luzern and above all in Zürich, we are trying to take things further. In Zürich, the JSR — Provos have set up a Youth Forum against the army and have organized well-attended courses on Switzerland, its history and on the role of the army in the second world war, the history of neutrality, the myth of neutrality and so on. Each week they are organizing meetings, either as the JSR — Provo or as the GSsA. The initiative also takes up the theme "Switzerland is pursuing a global peace policy".

With this formula it is also possible to discuss models of society. You can think what could be done with 10b francs per year — more money for pensions, for social security, for protection of the environment and so on. But you can also say that a global peace policy demands a different foreign policy, for example towards South Africa, by boycotting the apartheid system. Another foreign policy means another internal policy, another society and that raises the question? What type of society do we want? We are now able to discuss socialism with young people. Many have realized that it is not only necessary to abolish the army; it is society as a whole that must change. ★

1. Elizabeth Kopp, the Justice Minister, was obliged to resign from the government five days after her election to the Vice Presidency by parliament on December 7, 1988. Informed of an inquiry into Sakarchi Trading about the laundering of drugs money, she was accused of having warned her husband to leave his functions as vice president and legal councillor to this firm.

Furthermore, two parliamentary inquiries have been launched into the doings of some of her close collaborators and Rudolf Gerber, the Confederation's public prosecutor, head of state security, and coordinator of police inquiries into drug trafficking.

# Race, abortion – key issues in New York election

**THE New York mayoral election on November 7 turned out differently than planned. Among other partly hidden truths it turned up the malignant growth of racism which has long existed in American society. Sexism is another festering sore, and this too was a little noted influential factor in the campaign. But when the votes were counted, the Democratic Party candidate, David Dinkins, narrowly defeated his Republican challenger, Rudolph Giuliani, 898,900 to 856,450. Thus Dinkins becomes the first Black mayor of the country's largest city, the financial center of US capitalism.**

**FRANK LOVELL**

**T**HE 62-year old Dinkins is a wheelhorse in the Democratic Party machine that holds political power in New York. For more than 30 years he has been a timeserver in the machine, moving unobtrusively up the career ladder. He was Manhattan borough president, a powerful and prestigious position in city government, when picked to challenge the three-term incumbent Mayor Edward Koch in the Democratic Party last September.

## Dinkins faces aggressive white opponent

In that contest Dinkins showed that his early training in the Carver Club of Harlem, an institution of the Tammany/Democratic machine originally founded to garner the Black vote, had adequately prepared him in the mastery of "mainstream politics" (meaning dominant bourgeois political currents), to attract white voters when pitted against an aggressive white opponent.

As perceived by the two "mainstream" candidates and their media handlers in the mayoral election, the economic and social problems of the city are the unbalanced budget, deficit spending, street crime, drugs, auto theft, homelessness, garbage disposal, air pollution, a shortage of police and jails. At this level neither expressed much concern over white-collar crime, political corruption, military spending, the poor quality of public schooling, inadequate mass transportation, unemployment and low wages. Both favored more police on the streets and in the subways. They

agreed that homelessness is a problem — one that can hardly go unnoticed with thousands begging everywhere and sleeping in makeshift shelters — and differed on the solution. Giuliani favored private agencies to manage "rescue" shelters and build affordable housing. Dinkins also hoped low cost housing could be built, but saw another side of the problem. He said: "It's not the fact that a person is homeless, it is the behavior. That's what we and the police can enforce."

## Both candidates play-law and-order card

Giuliani gained prominence as a public prosecutor and champion of law enforcement before seeking election as mayor, and Dinkins tried hard not to be outdone in the law-and-order department.

With such candidates jabbing at each other over their chosen issues, the mass media tried to generate enough public interest to insure a respectable turnout. Straw polls are the standard method, purporting to show from week to week who is ahead and who is losing or gaining. On election eve they predicted a 60% turnout of registered voters (unusually high) and an easy victory for Dinkins. The publicity trick designed to fulfil this prediction was to paint one candidate as the no-holds-barred tough guy and the other as Mr. Reasonably Fair.

Accordingly, Giuliani mounted a relentless attack, accusing Dinkins of failing to pay taxes earlier in his career, of recently lying about his financial holdings (estimated at \$1 million) and of machine

politics. Dinkins responded that such charges befogged the "real issues" and claimed that if elected he would serve the interests of all people.

This time-honored flimflam brought opposing class interests into the fray. Nearly all unions endorsed fair-minded Dinkins while Giuliani stalked the city's five boroughs surrounded with law-enforcement officials and orthodox, usually Hassidim, Jews. He failed to win full endorsement from the Catholic hierarchy because he waffled on the abortion issue, having at first come out strongly opposed to abortion but sensing the shift in popular sentiment, promised that if elected he would uphold the legal right to abortion, which remains intact in New York. Nonetheless, he appealed to predominantly Catholic neighbourhoods, implying that he "understood" the abortion question. His publicity in its broadest general appeal used the code words "the trusted candidate" for himself — to white voters meaning "one of us" — and asking repeatedly in TV spots if a tax cheat and a liar about his personal finances such as Dinkins, who also happens to be black, can be trusted to manage the affairs of the city.

In a public symposium last October sponsored by the Trotskyist Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT) and its monthly magazine *In Defense of Marxism*, Lloyd D'Aguilar, host of a local radio show, predicted that Black communities, sensitive to the strong racist undercurrent in the Giuliani campaign, would vote more than 90% for Dinkins despite his failure to address the special problems of Black people. He also thought that there would be a large Black turnout. He was right on both counts.

## Danger of racist heading city government

All Black politicians and preachers backed Dinkins and warned their constituents against the danger of a racist heading city government, which they all know has been the case for as long as anyone can remember. For Blacks this was a chance to strike a blow against racism.

Giuliani's campaign strategy had sought to arouse the prejudices of white voters while pretending to be anti-racist. It succeeded in bringing out the white vote, but failed to deceive Blacks. This accounts for the large turnout — which surprised the pollsters who had predicted it — and the very narrow margin of victory for Dinkins — the smallest in any New York mayoral election since 1905 — which surprised the pollsters even more because it contradicted their predictions.

The election results revealed the truth about racism: 71% of all white voters cast ballots for Giuliani, only 27% for Dinkins. Even so, this was an unusually high vote from whites for a Black candidate in the US. Some 65% of Hispanic voters supported Dinkins. The gender vote also favored

Dinkins, indicating the significance of the abortion issue in the final outcome. Efforts to outlaw abortion are evidently seen as blatant sexism. Male voters were almost evenly divided with 50% for Giuliani and 48% for Dinkins. Women voters went 53% for Dinkins and 45% for Giuliani, who was unmistakably anti-abortion.

Protestant voters gave Dinkins a 71% majority, but white Protestants gave Giuliani 70% of their votes, thus revealing the racial cleavage there. White Catholics supported Giuliani by 60%. Jews responded about the same: 63% for Giuliani and 35% for Dinkins.

Both candidates ran on "personal qualifications" rather than party affiliation, a common ploy in the US two-party system. Both, however, accepted financial contributions and endorsements from their respective parties. President Bush appeared at fund raisers and rallies for Giuliani.

### Republicans seek to shed Giuliani style

Consequently, the "negative style", in the jargon of the Giuliani campaign, and his defeat, attaches an image to the Republican Party which the national Republican leadership now assiduously seeks to shed, since similar white racist, anti-abortion Republican candidates were defeated elsewhere on November 7. Black mayors were elected for the first time in New Haven; Connecticut; Durham; North Carolina and Seattle, Washington. A Black, a grandson of slaves, was elected governor of Virginia, the "heart of the old confederacy". If he survives a recount, he will become the first Black governor in the US.

In New Jersey, where the race for governor was between two whites, one a Reaganite Republican and the other a liberal Democrat, abortion was the central and decisive issue. The Democrat won by almost two to one, replacing a Republican incumbent who chose not to run for reelection.

In most US electoral contests it is impossible to distinguish between the platforms of the establishment contenders because there is no discernible difference between the two capitalist parties. It is sometimes argued that there is a very real difference because one is in office and the other is out. Politicians sensitive to shifting vote sentiment in their localities make necessary adjustments in campaign rhetoric to remain in office — as in the case of retired Mayor Koch who switched from "progressive" US congressman to "conservative" New York mayor. Others switch parties. The US Congress has witnessed a dozen or more party "turncoats" in recent years, several still in office. Prominent among them are Senators Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, Trent Lott of Mississippi, and Robert Stump of Arizona, who switched to the Republican Party. Senator Donald Diegle of Michigan switched to

the Democratic Party. John Lindsay was a Republican in the US Congress and when he was later elected mayor of New York in the 1960s, he switched to the Democratic Party. There is so little difference between these two parties that defectors retain high esteem in both camps.

With rising political consciousness among masses of people around such questions as race prejudice, which is widely regarded as one of the causes of economic and social injustice, comes growing dissatisfaction with the cozy two-party system that trivializes politics and deprives voters of meaningful choices. The abortion issue, perhaps more than any other at the moment, has aroused deep resentment of the complicity of the two establishment parties in the toleration and promotion of pervasive sexism. This resentment was expressed openly for the first time earlier this year at the convention of the National Organization for Women (NOW) when a resolution was adopted to investigate the formation of a new party. Pent-up frustrations were vented in the November 7 elections with the victories of more Black candidates and the defeat of disguised bigots.

### Public workers suffer declining living standards

The day of reckoning is not far off for the victors. In the case of Dinkins, who will take office on January 1, all major unions that represent city employees and other public workers will negotiate new contracts next year. This workforce is largely Black and other minorities and suffers a declining standard of living. These are the voters who elected Dinkins. Their unions contributed to his campaign. Their expectations are high. They think that Dinkins is in a position to satisfy their social and economic needs.

For his part, Dinkins is fully aware that he is powerless to give necessary concessions to the poor and to working people. This will be decided by the city's ruling rich, mainly the real estate interests and the big banks that control the Democratic Party machine, and the Dinkins machine will approve and enforce those decisions.

The familiar arguments against wage rises were heard during the election campaign. The city has a budget crisis and there is little hope for help from either the state or federal governments, which are also debt ridden. Tax increases are ruled out because business will suffer. The only promise that Dinkins was willing to make under these circumstances was that he will try to be fair to all parties in the coming wage negotiations. Meanwhile, with both candidates bad-mouthing government at all levels, the Democrat-controlled US Congress favorably considered a \$305 billion military bill, which was approved by the House. This indicates to most voters that money is always available when the politicians are prompted to look for it.

The fact is that the New York city budget is in the red by \$500 million for the current fiscal year, which ends in June 1990. This is sure to be an argument against higher wages for teachers and other underpaid public workers next September. In anticipation of union negotiations, the "Dinkins transition team", while considering ways to reward political supporters with jobs in the new city administration, is debating how to fill the sensitive post of labor relations director. This is only one of more than 100 top level jobs to be parcelled out, with thousands of others down the line. Dennis Rivera, president of local 1199 of the hospital workers' union, was called in to help make these decisions. Rivera, who helped deliver the Hispanic vote, is an essential link to the unions, and successfully negotiated settlements for hospital workers prior to the election.

### Union bureaucrats may be rewarded

His post-election role in the Dinkins camp suggests that some rewards for union bureaucrats may be forthcoming if they are helpful in averting strikes and assisting the new city administration in other ways.

Whether the disillusionment of workers and masses of this city's minority populations, especially Blacks, can be diverted from organized opposition to the two-party political establishment, as in the past, is dubious.

This time, the growing sentiment for a new form of political expression, as evidenced at the NOW convention in the call to investigate a "third party" is more pervasive than previously. It finds echoes in the labor party talk in some sectors of the union movement, as heard earlier this year at the broadly based conference in Detroit called by the popular publication *Labor Notes*. The Dinkins victory and others like it in the electoral arena have encouraged opposition to the two-party structure, rather than convincingly demonstrating that gains can be made through lesser evil strategies. When such hoped-for gains are not realized, new political strategies may be devised.

No new politics is likely to come spontaneously from the unions or the women's movement, and certainly not from within the Democratic Party under the leadership of such formations as the caucus of Black Elected Officials (BEOs) or Reverend Jackson's Rainbow Coalition.

But a new reform movement is now emerging in key unions. The New Directions caucus in the auto union and Teamsters for a Democratic Union are examples. These new forces in the ranks of US labor are most likely to be influenced by today's turbulent political developments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. And this can lead to the breakup of monopoly capitalism's fraudulent two-party electoral game in the US. ★

# Steelworkers fight back at Helwan

**A**FTER AN initial "active strike" involving the occupation of the factory, on the night of 23-24 July 1989, the factory management publicly agreed to open negotiations with trade union delegates. An agreement was reached involving a certain improvement of bonuses and provision of a meal. On the question of fringe benefits and revising the qualifications and numbers of new hires, the management went no further than promises. They would give no response on the question of reinstating the two delegates expelled from the factory committee and the release of workers imprisoned after the strike of 24 July.

## Workers resume active strike with occupation

On August 1, the workers, at a general assembly, decided to resume their active strike with an occupation and demanded the reopening of negotiations, directly with the minister of industry (who is the head of the administrative hierarchy responsible for administering public enterprises). They added to their previous demands:

- the dissolution of the trade union, considered to be too subordinate to management, and the organization of new trade union elections;
- the replacement of the managing director and his deputy;
- the freeing of workers imprisoned for having distributed a leaflet.

A sham of negotiations began, by telephone, between the minister of labour, the chair of the steelworkers' trade union and those in charge of factory "security", on the one hand; and the strikers, on the other. Without any satisfactory offer in response to their demands, and surrounded by police who prevented the workers of the second and third shifts joining them, the strikers decided to continue the occupation.

They had no wish to relive the experience of the 24 July strike, when they had stopped their movement on the basis of promises, and ceded to others the right to negotiate on their behalf. They declared that they would remain on "active strike" until the arrival of the minister of industry, with whom they wanted to negotiate and sign an agreement on the spot. Faced with

**FOR SEVERAL months now 24,000 workers at the Helwan steelworks, situated in the suburbs south of Cairo, have been demanding a raise in productivity bonuses and meal allowances, as well as a fair allocation of fringe benefits (housing, health care, transport).**

**They demanded also the reinstatement onto the factory committee of two workers' representatives (Mohammed Mustafa and Abderrahim Haridi) who were expelled from it for defending the demands of their comrades.**

**SAMIA HUSSEIN**

such determination, the government instructed the minister of the interior to prepare an assault on the factory.

At two o'clock in the morning, 5 to 6 thousand police from the special intervention force, armed with electric clubs and machine guns, forced open the doors and saturated the factory with tear gas, clubbing the workers and firing on them. One worker, Abdul Hay Mohammed, died after being kicked in the genitals and shot in the heart and lungs, as the autopsy would reveal. Seven hundred and fifty others were arrested and violently beaten, and 15 of these were taken to hospital with fractured ribs or skulls, or bullet wounds to the limbs, stomach or head. They were subsequently "recovered" by the security branch of the police force, to

be submitted to interrogation, then left without care in appalling conditions of detention. To the 300 strikers wounded while trying to get away, who had demanded sick leave for health care far from the hospitals and the security police, the management offered a choice between dismissal and return to the factory...there to be handed over to the police.

The leaders of the struggle, among them one of the two expelled delegates, who turned themselves in to the public prosecutor rather than being dismissed, were savagely tortured by the police (electric shocks, cigarette burns, blows), over several days, so as to make them

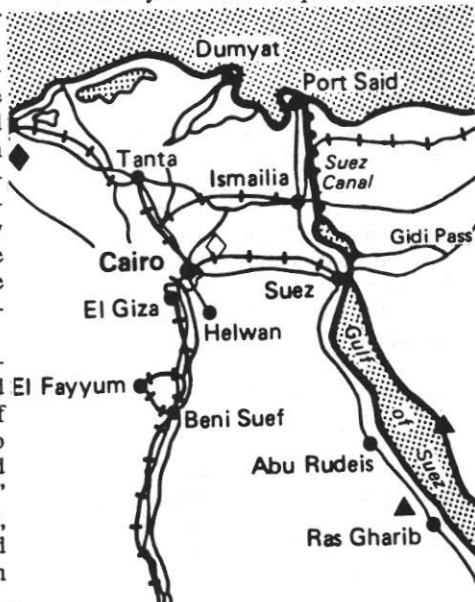
confess to having links with clandestine communist organizations. Sixty people suspected of belonging to the Communist Workers' Party (CWP Marxist-Leninist), accused of having incited the workers to go on strike, were arrested, as well as two leaders of the Egyptian Human Rights Organization, a lawyer and a journalist. Some of them went on hunger strike.

## Support campaign for jailed workers

A resistance began to organize in the factory. Two thousand workers working in the sector where their comrade had been murdered refused to draw their pay for the month of August, unless their comrades were freed. It was only under the threat of dismissal that some workers agreed to collect their wages. The Human Rights Commission of the Lawyers' Guild assigned several barristers to defend the jailed workers. Support committees were set up, public (comprising artists and intellectuals) or clandestine.

But the minister of the interior refused to give the names of the 600 to 700 strikers, dispersed amongst different Cairo jails, in the hands of the security branch. Only 120 of them have been subjected to a legal judicial procedure. Detained with common criminals, wounded in the course of the assault or the interrogations and denied health care, unable to receive visits from their families, the jailed workers are undergoing a particularly painful isolation.

In the struggle of the Helwan steelworkers — as in those that preceded it in textiles, engineering and rail — the violence



of compromise, and that it can accept no form of independent organization of the working class, even reformist or craft unionist.

The differences that could at one time exist inside the state apparatus on the modalities and the rhythm of economic liberalization have disappeared with the worsening of the economic crisis and the reduction of the regime's room for manoeuvre.

Having set for itself the goal of becoming one of the principal guarantors of the imperialist order and its interests in the Middle East and Africa, and being indebted to the tune of 48 billion dollars to the imperialist powers (principally the United States and France), the state of the Egyptian bourgeoisie has no choice other than to step up the exploitation of the working class. It must at the same time repay the interest on its loans (or at least a part of them) and maintain its profits and those of foreign investors in the country. The latter are relatively unimportant, foreign capital having opted for a strategy of indebting the state and its local enterprises, public and private, rather than for investing directly.

### Semi-finished products only for export

Public enterprises account for almost all Egyptian exports of industrial products. These essentially consist of semi-finished products (textiles, aluminium, cement and fertilizer). These are only for export, for two reasons: 1) because the big firms and the capitalist states have decided to "diversify", at least partially, such production towards the third world, so as to lower world prices. 2) because the state today of the Egyptian productive apparatus does not permit competition with the firms of the other capitalist countries in the more advanced products.

Thus the big public enterprises, which alone can furnish the surplus necessary to service the debt, have a special access to international credits to modernize their equipment. Their purchases of equipment have constituted an important channel for the imperialist firms above all since the crisis in the developed capitalist countries after 1974. The huge contracts with foreign firms have allowed the bureaucrats who run the state and the public enterprises to help themselves in the process to generous amounts of "baksheesh", which has also become part of the "debt".

Several factors have combined to put the Egyptian state in the position of being unable to repay its debts:

— the first stems from the fact that the majority of credits have been used to finance purchases of military material and infrastructural investments (subways, ports, rail, telecommunications, sewage, etc.), and this spending does not lead directly to production of exportable merchandise, which could obtain currency for

Egypt.

— the second resides in the mode of allocating credits and their utilization. That is, from the considerable waste accruing from the venality of the bureaucrats who manage the public enterprises, from their incompetence or from the systematic disorganization of the economic coherence of the state apparatus since 1974. All these factors have considerably reduced the efficiency of the materials and machines bought with the borrowed money, and undermined the possibilities for repaying it. Moreover, these investments, which have often led to a growth of production capacity for certain products (textiles, aluminium bars, fertilizer), have been realized without taking account of the world market's capacity for absorption.

At the same time, the credits were conditional on the halting of exports to the socialist countries and other third world countries under barter agreements (without currency).

### Enormous stocks of unsold goods

The Egyptian companies thus found themselves with enormous stocks of unsold goods, both because of the restrictions placed by the capitalist countries on imports coming from the third world, and because the international organizations that manage the debt of the countries of the third world (the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank) have encouraged the same kinds of production (primary materials, semi-finished textile and metallurgic products) in every country.

A consensus has grown up, stretching from liberal to reformist economists, that stresses the "exogenous" factors underlying Egypt's inability to repay its debt, because such an explanation questions the "external" order without reflecting on the political forces and class relationships of the "internal". Such factors are essentially the lowering of the world price of petrol (since 1984-85) on the one hand, as well as higher interest rates and shorter term loans (from 1980 on).

The first factor has gravely reduced the resources of the state. The emigrant remittances have shrunk with the slowing up of economic activity in the main oil producing countries of the Arab world. The second has considerably increased the debt burden on the Egyptian economy. Since 1981, the repayments (interest and matured bonds) have been greater than the new credits, and Egypt's negative balance has grown unceasingly.

With a productive apparatus lacking real internal coherence and a dislocated economy oriented towards the needs of the big firms of the imperialist countries, the Egyptian bourgeoisie has no practical alternative to the politics of "opening" followed today.

The reformists of the Progressive Unionist Alliance and of the Egyptian Communist Party mislead themselves and the working class in affirming that it would be possible to pursue another economic policy with other allies (the "socialist" countries or the other countries of the third world) on the basis of an accumulation directed towards satisfying the basic needs of the population, whilst maintaining the same social structure, the same relations of production, the same state apparatus. In fact, the reformists have nothing more to offer than a repeat of the Nasser experience, or that of the Ba'ath Party in Syria and Iraq or of "Algerian socialism"<sup>1</sup>, despite the common failure of all those experiments, and in an international situation that was very much more favourable for them than it would be today.

Aware of the unrealistic character of their proposals, since they are incapable of advocating socialist revolution, the reformists call for a simple "adjustment" of the programs of restructuring and austerity imposed on the working class.

### State not prepared to make any concessions

They demand that the latter moderate its demands, and hope that the bourgeois state will accord them a little space in which to practise their politics of compromise. However, the state is not prepared to make any concessions, as is shown by the violent repression, of which CP members are among the foremost victims.

The worsening of the economic crisis renders more and more necessary wide scale "restructuring", which is reflected in a sharpening of exploitation and attacks on the gains of the workers. The rapid deterioration of living conditions and the purchasing power of the working class is leading to a radicalization of struggles and reinforcement of repression. This situation can only end up, sooner or later, in a generalized confrontation between the working class and the bourgeois state apparatus. The outcome will depend on the degree of organization of the working class, the experience acquired in struggle and the defences it can develop against the repressive apparatus of the state.

The recent struggles revealed a high level of mobilization and solidarity amongst the working class. Important progress was made from the first struggle in textiles, when the workers had waited two years for a judicial decision before mobilizing,

1. In the course of the 1960s, the Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, leader of the Arab nationalist movement, inaugurated a "socialist model" founded on the statization of industry and agrarian reform, which would be imitated in Syria, Iraq and Algeria. After a decade, the bankruptcy of this bourgeois state "socialism" would be such that it progressively gave way to the "infitah" ("opening"), synonymous with (re)privatization and a turn to free enterprise.



to the one at Helwan, where the workforce organized an occupation of the factory in opposition to the police, and denounced the trade union commission when it had sold out on the question of the dismissals. The categorical refusal to negotiate by management and government, and the violence of the repression, removed many illusions amongst the workers about the possibility of avoiding a violent confrontation with the state.

Nonetheless, the organization of the workers' movement remains very weak. Deprived of independent trade union organizations since 1952, mistrustful of political organizations because of the undemocratic methods of the CP and its "defeatist" strategy in past struggles, subjected to the pressure of a police intelligence well versed in the practice of infiltrating clandestine organizations, the workers' movement is not sufficiently structured to gain a favourable relationship of forces vis-à-vis the state.

### State equipped for civil confrontation

The state, on the other hand, has been prepared for a long time for confrontation. A great part of the military equipment bought from France, West Germany, or the United States is intended for street combat and repression of strikes and demonstrations. The three-day curfew and show of strength by the army during the revolt of conscript soldiers and police in 1986 showed that the army was prepared for "effectively" guaranteeing the bourgeois order. Having gained experience in "anti-terrorist" operations in the crackdown against the militarized Islamic organizations, the police showed in the repression of the Helwan strike that it was also ready for "anti-striker" actions.

But however well equipped and well trained, the police and the army cannot indefinitely hold the line against a mobilization of nearly 10 million workers, largely supported by the other sections of the masses (public servants, students, artisans, small peasants). The working class faces thus a long struggle. In the course of this it must rebuild its organizations. And revolutionaries, despite the weakness of their forces today, have an important role to play.

For the Egyptian masses, the big capitalist countries are the colonists and aggressors of yesterday and the creditors of today.

They have not forgotten the tripartite aggression of 1956 (involving Great Britain, France, and Israel) against the Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal. They know that it is the companies and states of the principal imperialist countries that, through the intermediary of their so-called "international" organizations (IMF, World Bank, Club of Paris), are imposing the increases in the price of bread, clothes

and energy, the "restructuring" and privatization of the big public enterprises and the dismissals which accompany them, the devaluation of the Egyptian pound and the price rises that follow, the freezing of their wages, the reduction of public spending on education and health, and so on. They are finding out through the repression that a great part of the debt, for the repayment of which they are being asked to tighten their belts, has been incurred through buying from these same imperialist countries the tanks and machine guns used to break their strikes.

The Western companies have made lucrative profits out of Egypt's indebtedness: the French, through the construction of the Cairo metro, a nuclear power station west of Alexandria, and numerous factories, to say nothing of arms sales; the Americans, the Germans, the Swiss, the British, the Japanese, through the sale of "ready to use" factories, of machines of every type, the building of ports, roads and bridges, and again sales of military matériel.

### Facts about life of Egyptian workers not known

The workers of the imperialist countries have little information on the situation of their Egyptian comrades. The media present Egypt only from its "tourist" aspect. They do not report that the monthly wage of a university graduate civil servant is around 40 dollars, that a kilo of meat costs around 12% of this figure, and that this salary does not cover the minimal expenses of a single person living in Cairo — transport (15 to 30%), housing (15 to 30%), food (30 to 60%), cigarettes (30%), to say nothing of clothing. The wage of a skilled worker in a big factory, bonuses included, can reach the equivalent of 130 dollars per month, which is no longer enough to maintain a family.

The education of children and medical care are more and more expensive. The price of transport has quadrupled in five years, that of bread (the staple food in Egypt) has quintupled, and so on. Most wage-earners have a second job to make ends meet. Numerous married women also work, as do more than a million children of less than 15 years, for all that unemployment remains near to 15% of the adult male population.

Unless they are faithful readers of Amnesty International reports, few Westerners would know that the state of emergency is still in force, that arbitrary arrests of political oppositionists remain common, that torture is systematically practiced.

The Western media present the Egyptian regime, faithful ally of the imperialist powers, as the "agent of peace in the Middle East". They do not say that Egypt now possesses one of the most powerful armies in the region, ready to intervene in

Africa and Asia if the interests of those powers or a "friendly country" are found to be threatened.

The same media never cease to laud the "progress of democracy" in Egypt, which they present as a country of political pluralism and freedom of the press. There has been a pseudo-liberalization since 1975, with the authorization given to currents within the single "Socialist" party to form other "parties" and that given to politicians of the old pre-Nasser regime to reconstitute the reactionary *Wafd* party. But this "liberalization" is strictly limited to bourgeois parties.

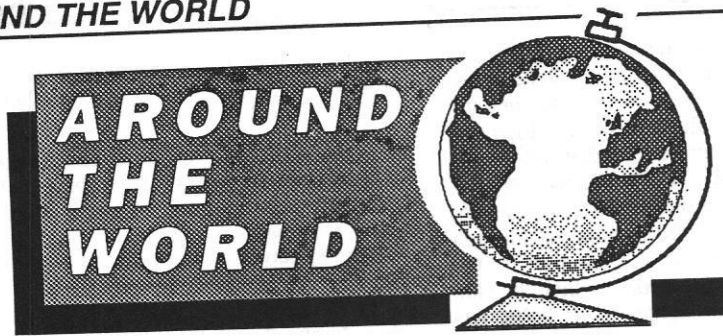
### Far left organizations permanently harassed

The Communist Party, which works on a clandestine basis inside the Progressive Unionists (who originated inside the "Socialist" party) remains persecuted, and its militants are regularly incarcerated and tortured. The other organizations of the far left are permanently harassed by police intelligence, and every workers' mobilization is immediately and brutally repressed. The violence of the repression unleashed against the fundamentalist Islamic organizations which, until now, have constituted the only real danger for the bureaucrats of the bourgeois state apparatus, foreshadows the scale of repression in store for the working class and its organizations, should the masses threaten the interests of local and foreign capital through their mobilizations.

For all these reasons, it is imperative to break the isolation in which the Egyptian working class finds itself, both regionally and internationally.

Solidarity must be built with the struggles of the Egyptian workers on a scale commensurate with what they represent — the principal working class of the Arab world, the second biggest on the African continent, and one of the most important of the third world. ★





## ISRAELI STATE

### **Suspended sentence for Warshawsky**

ON November 7 Michel Warshawsky, a militant of the section of the Fourth International in the Israeli state was sentenced to 30 months imprisonment. The case arose out of accusations that the Alternative Information Centre (AIC), for which Warshawsky works, had collaborated with a "terrorist organization", the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The only charge upheld by the court to back up this accusation was that the AIC had published a brochure, allegedly of PFLP origin, advice on how to deal with interrogation and resist torture.

The sentence — and the absurdity of the charges — had a big impact on the democratic movement in Israel, who saw it as a warning, and on international opinion. The protests have had their effect. Warshawsky has been set free, and the sentence is now suspended, but it remains necessary to fight for the complete suppression of the sentence. ★

## SOVIET UNION

### **Independence perspective for People's Front**

THE SECOND CONGRESS of the Latvian People's Front made some changes in its program. The only one noted in the international press was the adoption of the perspective of an independent Latvia. In its October 28 issue, the West German left daily, *Tageszeitung*, published an interview with Andrejs Pantelejevs, a member of the leadership of the Latvian Front. He explained the change on the question of independence as follows:

"We did not want any longer to hide our real objective. But we are realists, and we know that this goal can only be achieved in the long term. The precondition for this is that the entire Soviet Union change. In other republics also People's Fronts have been formed that seek independence. Only when all the republics get a real right of self-determination and can form a federation in accordance with their wishes can there be a solution for Latvia also. A special Baltic road is quite unlikely. I would like to stress that we have no inter-

est in cutting our economic and cultural ties with the rest of the Soviet Union, or with Russia. They will continue to be neighbors."

On the question of whether an independent Latvia would be only for ethnic Latvians, Pantelejev said: "The development runs in the opposite direction. A year ago, the Front made an error, raising the slogan of 'Latvia for the Latvians.' Since then, we have realized that we can only succeed together with the other ethnic groups. We have established guarantees for the non-Latvian population in our program. After initial mistrust, more and more Russians are participating in the People's Front. The future Latvian Republic will be a multi-cultural state....Already we can see more ethnic pluralism. The first Jewish college in the Soviet Union was opened on September 1 in Riga. For the first time also, there is a school for Polish-speaking people." ★

## ALGERIA

### **Trotskyists seek legalization**

THE Socialist Workers Party (PST), formerly the Revolutionary Communist Group (GCR, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International), has applied for legalization in the context of the new law on multi-partyism adopted by the Algerian national assembly.

This law, one of the gains of the popular uprising of October 1988 (see *IV* 150 and 151), remains tainted by reactionary restrictions, such as that forbidding affiliation to an international organization. Moreover, the government, which must give the green light to any legalization, retains a great deal of arbitrary power.

The PST is, except for the Socialist Vanguard Party (PAGS), a Stalinist party identifying itself with the "left" wing of the Algerian government, the only party adhering to Marxism which has up to now demanded legalization. We reproduce below the essence of an article devoted to the PST which was published in *El-Moudjahid*, (30 October 1989), organ of the governing party, the National Liberation Front (FLN).

"The PST was created following the events of October 1988, after having

operated as a clandestine organization since 1974, under the name of the GCR. (...)

"The PST is a communist party of the far left which works for the creation of a classless socialist society and an economy independent of the hegemony of capitalist imperialism. It proposes the non-payment of the foreign debt; the industrialization of the country and the expansion of the public sector; the democratization of education; the rehabilitation of the Amazigh [Berber] language...In sum, a program that 'no bourgeois current' can realize, in the words of spokesperson Salhi Chawki....

"The PST, furthermore, is not a section of the Fourth International (it was only a sympathizing groups as the GCR), which is not allowed by law. The PST is opposed to this "anti-democratic" law. The spokesperson denounced the economic, cultural and educational crisis that the country is now undergoing, and did not forget to criticize bourgeois capitalism and anarchic liberalism privileging a layer of private parasites. The PST is for secularism 'since religion is a private matter.' The separation of church and state is in the interests of religion itself. As for the private sector, Mr. Salhi said: 'we do not want to murder it, but our long term project is for the collective ownership of the means of production.'

"The PST is the second communist party to demand legalization, joining the PAGS, with which it has fundamental differences. 'We are revolutionary communists, who fought in the armed struggle for the independence of our country, which was certainly not the position of some Communists. Do not forget the history' said Mr. Salhi.

"The PST intends to publish a weekly paper *El-Khatoua*, an undertaking that it will find difficult to carry through financially, since there are no business people in the PST. 'No doubt, this is a matter of personal affinities' as the spokesperson said." ★

### **Stop Press — Czechoslovakia**

CZECHOSLOVAK human rights activists, Anna Sabatova and Petr Uhl were arrested on Sunday, November 19. They are accused of fabricating information about an alleged death of a student after beatings by police during the November 17 demonstration. Dissident sources are continuing to insist that the student, Tomas Smid was killed, although the regime is disputing the claim.

It is also reported that the Charter 77 democratic movement has called for a general strike next Monday to protest against the repressions. ★

# The FMLN's Call To Arms

**S**INCE 1981, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front has pointed out the need for a political solution to the war. This effort met with the stubborn opposition of the Armed Forces and the ultrarightist sectors in the country, which in fact have retained total power. We put forward dozens of negotiating proposals, in which we took more and more flexible positions, despite the fact that the military situation showed that we were unbeatable.

To the present ARENA government, we submitted a proposal that opened real perspectives for peace. Nonetheless, it responded with an escalation of repression, with torture and murders that culminated in the slaughter of FENASTRAS workers. The government refused to discuss our formulas for negotiation, and at the same time deepened the causes of the war, aggravating the social crisis and closing off the possibilities for action by the popular sectors.

In this dangerous situation, which not only threatened to stand in the way of a peaceful solution to the war but also threatened new killing and flagrant violations of the democratic rights of our people, the FMLN decided to launch an energetic strategic military offensive that would stop the fascists and open up the possibility for ending the war.

So, at 8:00 pm on November 11, our forces went into battle in all the theaters chosen for the offensive, making a joke out of the measures and deployments that the army had undertaken to stop us.

## Fighters more than accomplish objectives

Despite their smaller forces and means, our battle-hardened fighters more than accomplished all their objectives, waging one of the most glorious military battles in the history of people's war. In less than 15 hours, we took control of strategic territories, wiped out dozens of enemy units, took prisoners, seized arms and destroyed tanks and aircraft.

At the end of four days of uninterrupted fighting, our forces had repelled all enemy counterattacks, won new positions, and thousands of people in the cities had risen up in support of our forces and increased their numbers. In this situation, the ARENA government and the clique of corrupt officials known as the "Tandona" who command the Armed Forces unleashed criminal bombardment of the civil population in an attempt to stop the popular uprising. This has increased the support for our forces and redoubled the popular

**We publish below a statement on the current uprising issued by the General Command of the FMLN under the title "Manifiesto a la Nación".**

## DOCUMENT

anger against the Cristiani government and the army.

## Offensive must be carried through

In this way, a situation has arisen requiring that our forces take the decision to carry the offensive they have launched with the people to its final consequences. Peace is only possible by throwing those who have made the war a business out of the government. Accordingly, the General Command of the FMLN

1. Orders all our units to hold the positions that have been won and to proceed to organize a general uprising of our people, to undertake all the tasks of safeguarding and defending the population, as well as requisitioning and distributing food to those most in need.

2. It calls on the people to generalize the uprisings in order to join in the fighting, participating in every way possible and using every sort of popular armament enabling them to defend themselves and strike the enemy.

3. It proclaims that after the broadcast of the present statement, we are declaring all the zones under our control in the departments of Morazán, San Miguel, La Unión, Usulután, Cuscatlán, Chalatenango, San Vicente and Cabañas to be territories liberated by the people. Accordingly, our forces and the people will proceed to organize people's governments in all the towns. At the same time, our forces controlling territory in the cities must step up the struggle in order to

secure control of the entire country.

4. It calls on all the working people to stop work as a way of generalizing the struggle that will help to undermine the ARENA government and also enable everyone to join in the fight. Accordingly, so that the people can prepare themselves, we declare that the present transport strike, sabotage of energy supply and shutdown of gas stations will continue indefinitely. We issue a categorical warning to bosses who force their workers to do their jobs that our forces have orders to take action to guarantee that this order is observed.

## International Aid for victims needed

5. It calls on the international communities and the humanitarian organizations to send aid to the civilian victims of the bombing and to help to create refuges for the population against the criminal action unleashed by the Cristiani government and the Armed Forces high command.

6. It issues an urgent appeal to all political and social forces, people's organizations and private businessmen in our country to assume the historic role of promoters and builders of a national-democratic solution that will bring lasting peace to our country.

7. It makes a patriotic appeal to the officers and soldiers of the national army not to let the Tandona, ARENA and the interests of the United States bring them into further confrontation with the people, soiling their hands with blood. Our Front does not regard them as enemies, and is ready to make peace with those sections of the army that want justice, sovereignty and real democracy for our country.

The common enemy of the entire people and all social and political forces in our country is the Tandona, which has enriched itself from the war, and ARENA's death squadrons. They are the enemies of peace, democracy; they are the ones who do not want a system of justice. Against them, we call on the entire nation to struggle so that we can sing the verse of the national anthem that the tyranny has tried to bury:

"Liberty is the principle and guide that it has pledged a thousand times to defend, and to reject the odious power of arrogant tyranny".

**General Command of the FMLN**  
Comandante Salvador Sánchez Cerén  
Comandante Eduardo Sancho  
Comandante Joaquín Villalobos  
Comandante Francisco Jovel  
Comandante Schafick J. Handal  
El Salvador, November 13, 1989. ★



# International campaign needed against army's mass murder

**T**HE FMLN LAUNCHED its offensive from a position of strength, judging that the army's dramatic escalation of the repression against the popular movement after October 31, combined with the failure of the latest negotiations with Cristiani, required a general initiative that could lead to a mass uprising.

The FMLN considered that the international situation dominated by the recent evolution in East Europe would make it more difficult for the US to intervene directly in the Salvadoran theater, although such an eventuality cannot be ruled out.

The FMLN, thus, did not plunge into a desperate or adventurist initiative, and did not confront the mass organizations with a fait accompli. They were expecting such an action by the FMLN and were anxious for it after the massacre perpetrated at the FENASTRAS headquarters on October 31 (10 deaths).

## US Congress grants aid to Salvadoran military

Despite the problems it is encountering in its Central American policy, the Bush administration did not let any grass grow under its feet. It got the US congress to make an immediate grant of \$85 million in military aid to the Salvadoran armed forces.

The USSR, for its part, has explicitly demanded that the FMLN stop its offensive, declaring... "Whatever the reasons for the present explosion...neither of the two sides can succeed in overcoming the other, and attempts to do so can only increase the number of victims among the population." (*Le Monde*, November 15, 1989.)

This is indeed a general offensive. The guerrillas have taken up position in the country's main cities, thanks to the active support of the population and an effective network of activists in the urban zones. Everywhere they have been able to launch the fighting from the inside, which could only be done with broad support from the population. Sections of the people have joined in the action, building antitank trenches and hiding wounded guerrillas among injured civilians.

Not all the details of the military operation are known. But it is evident that the FMLN has been able to win key positions in the cities without throwing all its forces immediately into the battle. In this way, it had the means for sustaining the

**THE RESULTS of the general offensive launched on November 11 and the call for a general uprising issued on November 13 by the FMLN are still uncertain. Whether or not it is crowned with success, this offensive is certainly going to change fundamentally the situation in El Salvador, or even in the region.**

## ARNOLD BERTHU

struggle for a prolonged period. Throughout the past week, fresh guerrilla forces have been able to relieve the men and women involved in the first clashes.

The hostilities were unleashed simultaneously throughout the country, and the FMLN stormed at least seven key cities. The army has resorted to savage means in order to put down the rebellion — massive aerial bombardment of entire neighborhoods with DC-3s, at times encircling hospitals to keep the wounded from being treated, and assassination of civilian personalities, including possible mediators.

## Repression escalates as negotiations fail

Among the factors that prompted the FMLN to launch the offensive, two deserve further explanation — the escalation of the repression and the failure of negotiations.

The escalation of the repression launched by a faction of ARENA and the armed forces threatened to decapitate the public leadership of the mass organizations and left parties, throwing the mass movement back eight years.

The FMLN announced after ARENA won the elections that attacks on the lives of the opposition leaders would mean a large-scale military response. The mass movement leaders demanded such a counterattack, preferring an offensive to a situation in which they could be picked off like sitting ducks.

Regarding the failure of the Cristiani-FMLN dialogue, it has to be realized that the FMLN has won the sympathy of large sections of the masses by demonstrating its constant readiness to reach a negotiat-

ed solution of the war that would involve deepgoing structural changes to put an end to social injustice and open the way for democracy.

Cristiani had to agree to start a dialogue with the FMLN, abandoning the condition that it first lay down its arms. But he refused to consider the legitimate demands put forward by the revolutionists. In their last proposal formulated at the meeting with a governmental delegation that took place in mid-October in San José Costa Rica, the representatives of the FMLN demanded that those responsible for the assassination of Monsignor Romero in March 1980, as well as those responsible for the death squadrons, be brought to trial. They also demanded the calling of early elections.

The FMLN stated that if these conditions were met, it was willing to declare a three-months ceasefire with the government and the armed forces to provide time for carrying out fundamental reforms — agrarian reform, a purge of the army (retirement of all the military chiefs and trying them for their crimes), dissolution of the special repressive forces and the end of all repression, repeal of the repressive laws and replacement of the ministers of defense and the police by civilians.

## Cristiani rejects FMLN proposals for dialogue

During this three-month truce, the FMLN would not lay down its arms. But it would envisage taking part in the elections and recognizing the results. It might lay down its arms later, after the army was reduced from 52,000 men to 13,000 and professionalized. Cristiani's refusal to consider these demands, which had broad mass support, along with the stepup of the repression, were thus the two key factors that led the FMLN to engage in a test of strength.

**Stop the bombing of civilian populations!**

**Stop the repression against the Salvadoran mass organizations!**

**Down with the blood-stained Cristiani government!**

**Suspend all aid to the Cristiani government!**

**Support for the Salvadoran people in their struggle for national and social liberation!**

**Stop US intervention of any kind!**

**Support for the FMLN! ★**