

# International VIEWPOINT

ISSUE No 25

7 March 1983

## Africa in the world crisis

Begin's  
hypocrisy

Class battles  
in Europe

\* Italy

\* Holland

\* Denmark



# International Viewpoint

ISSN: 0294-2925

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

Africa in the World Crisis <i>Editorial</i>	3
Israel: Formal Democracy and Illusion by <i>Michel Warschawski</i>	4
A Crucial Year for the Netherlands by <i>Robert Went</i>	5
Dutch Fourth Internationalists Congress	6
Tragedy in West Africa by <i>Claude Gabriel</i>	7
A Social Pact Against the Italian Working Class Interview with <i>Rocco Papandrea</i>	10
Sharp Class Battles in Denmark by <i>Gerry Foley</i>	13
Tribunal of the Peoples Condemns Guatemala Interview by <i>Renaldo Tucci</i>	15
Land and National Question in South African Revolution Document of the <i>Fourth International</i>	16
Around the World: Abortion Rights, Women and Work, Filipinos, US, Australia	26
The Fate of the Imprisoned Palestinians	28

News closing date 28 February 1983

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# Africa in the world crisis

The history of capitalist and imperialist domination of Black Africa has been a particularly brutal and bloody one — from the enslavement of tens of millions of Black Africans shipped to the Americas, to the working of hundreds of thousands of people to death for the private fortune of a Belgian bourgeois king, to the establishment of a unique system of industrial helotry in South Africa.

This past of unrestrained exploitation has left an extraordinarily distorted and contradictory capitalist structure in Black Africa, prone to continual violent breakdowns.

One obvious symptom of this is the number of forcibly uprooted people in Africa, which is by far the highest in the world. This is "the continent of refugees."

In the last years, wars and civil wars have become endemic in a whole series of African countries, from Ethiopia-Somalia to Mozambique and across the continent to Angola and Namibia.

It was to be expected that the onset of a worldwide crisis of the capitalist economy would have dramatic effects on the rickety structures in Africa. Some of these effects are already beginning to

shock international public opinion.

In recent weeks, the mass of refugees in Black Africa has been swelled by hundreds of thousands of workers and their families expelled from Nigeria as a result of the falling price of oil. This exodus, moreover, is bound to have a chain-reaction effect of economic and social collapse.

In the last days, news has begun to come out of massive slaughter in a region of Zimbabwe, which has been touted as the great success story of a negotiated settlement between imperialists, white colonialists, and representatives of Black African organizations.

It has become absolutely clear that the aspirations of the peoples of Zimbabwe have not been met and that the country has been freed from neo-colonialism. In fact, another civil war, with an ethnic aspect, could be developing there.

In connection with the conflict in Zimbabwe, there is already speculation in the international press that the South Africa regime may extend a long hand into the country to stoke the flames.

The South African racists are already

deeply involved in Mozambique and Angola. In fact, the Mozambique rebels have managed to disrupt petroleum supplies to Zimbabwe by terrorist bombings, and thereby contribute to instability in the neighboring country as well.

In every respect, what happens in South Africa is decisive for the revolution in Black Africa. It is the political and military bulwark of imperialism in the area. It is by far the most developed of all the Black African countries, of which it is essentially one, although it has a white ruling class.

South Africa continues to dominate all of southern Africa economically. It is also one of the world's most important storehouses of key raw materials. And so it holds a vital strategic place in the world imperialist system as a whole and not even just in Africa.

Moreover, the very structures that have made South Africa a paradise for capitalists and a reliable ally of imperialism make peaceful evolution and therefore long-term stability impossible. They lead to the accumulation of explosive contradictions, making South Africa one of the biggest time bombs in the world capitalist and imperialist system.

All these points are explained in detail in the Fourth International resolution published in this issue, which represents some years of work and thought by revolutionists involved with the revolution in Black Africa.

This document brings together considerable concrete information. It also is a landmark of the application of revolutionary Marxism to key questions of the social revolution in Black Africa. And as such it will be a point of reference for revolutionists in dealing with the explosions that are building up in Black Africa in the age of the worldwide economic crisis of capitalism. ■

*Militant blacks commemorate the Soweto uprising of 1976 where 600 died (DR)*



# Formal democracy and the game of illusion in Israel

Michel WARSCHAWSKI

— TEL AVIV. In the western press, a flood of eulogies on Israeli democracy greeted the Kahane commission of inquiry's report into the Sabra and Chatila massacres. Forgetting what was involved — the massacre of thousands of defenceless Palestinians — Francis Cornu of *Le Monde* and Serge July of *Liberation* (French daily papers) were in ecstasies over how special Israel was. Israel was, believe it or not, ready to look into its own deeds. It had allowed an 'independent' commission to make a pronouncement about the — indirect — responsibility of the Israeli government for the massacres.

However, what is really special about Israel the whole world was able to see clearly a week later. But no-one in the media pointed it up. It was that although the commission drew its conclusions and made its recommendations, Sharon, Begin and Shamir are still at the head of the Jewish state. They are applying the letter of the recommendations but disregarding what lies behind them — the denunciation of the immorality of the leaders who are responsible for the criminal adventure in Lebanon.

This is 'Israeli democracy' — abstract formulas that hide the reality of repression, racial discrimination — the covering up of all the crimes of the Zionist state by neutral formulas. An example is the laws that exclude Arab citizens of Israel from a whole series of social gains, not because they are Arab, let it be understood, but because they have not done their military service. The content is racist and discriminatory but the form is democratic.

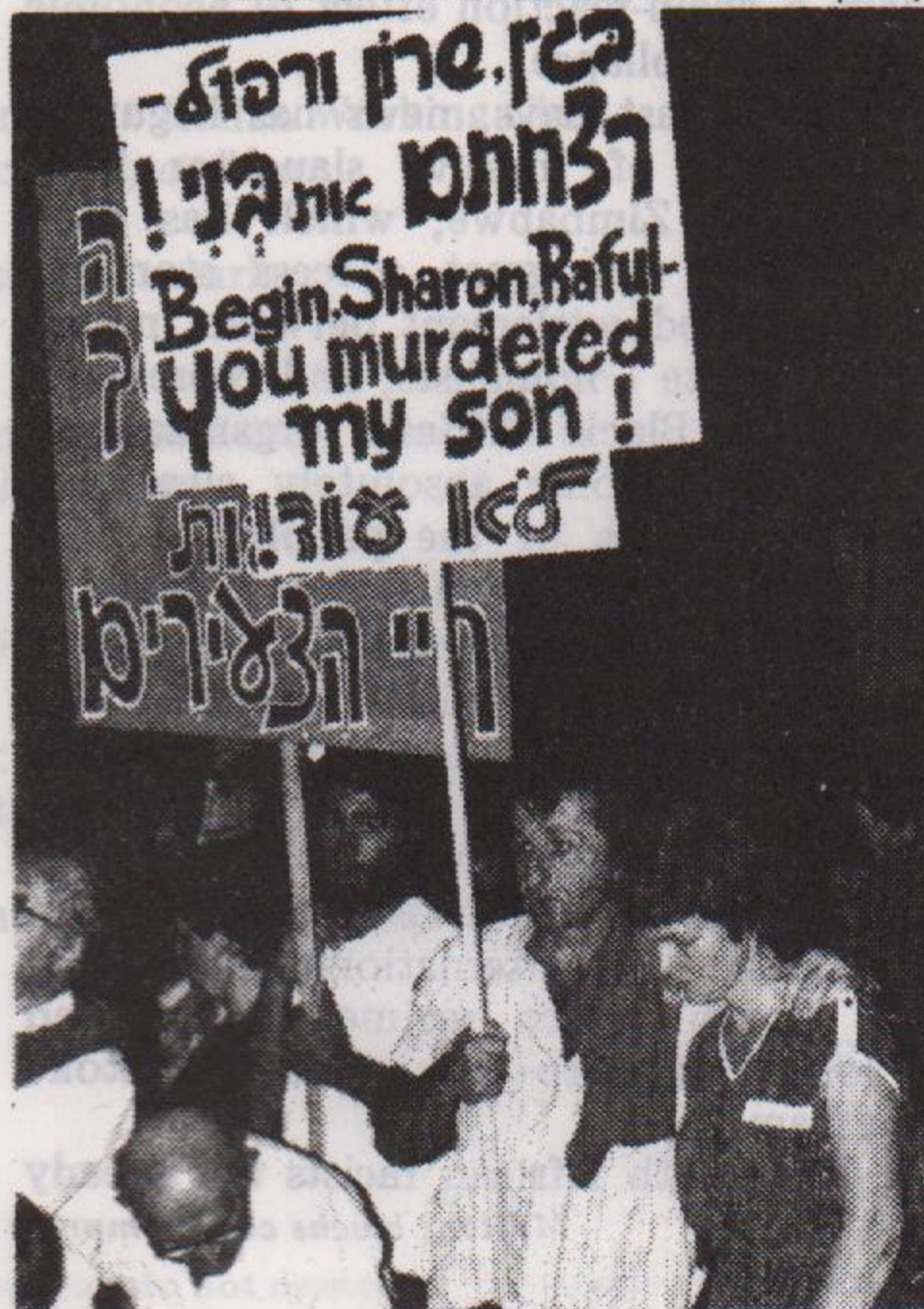
Sharon therefore stays in the government and, so that there will be no misunderstanding, keeps his responsibilities within the enlarged ministerial commissions for military affairs and negotiations with Lebanon. The former minister for defence told the Paris newspaper *Le Matin*, 'I have won'. For once the man who has made untruths an essential element of his politics spoke the truth.

All this goes to show that those who naively or cynically argued for a moratorium on mass mobilisations against the Begin government while waiting for the conclusions of the Kahane report, were playing the game of Sharon and his acolytes. This gang got five months respite to go on with their criminal

policies as if nothing had happened. What is more, they got a verdict, endorsed by all the big political forces, which says, 'The matter is closed'.

As we wrote in *International Viewpoint* No 24, February 21, 1983, now that the shouting is over Begin, has

*Antiwar demonstration in Israel (DR)*



fallen on his feet. He has managed both to avoid a governmental crisis and to throw the mass movement, which had grown dramatically since June 1982, into disarray. Because the peace movement staked everything on the expectation of the political consequences that they thought the commission of inquiry report should have.

There has been no defection from the government coalition. No change of the majority is foreseen because the Labour Party is more than ever incapable of using the repercussions of Sabra and Chatila to win a majority, or even force a crisis within the government coalition.

Thus, it is not on the parliamentary terrain that the next stage will take place, but in the street. This was confirmed, tragically, by the grenade thrown by far-right activists, which killed Emile Greensweig, a Peace Now militant.

Peace Now has a duty to finally break from the Labour Party. It must take initiatives that will not only be a response to the excesses of the Begin-Sharon government but which can give impetus to a movement that will stay on the streets until it wins over a majority of the population to active and determined opposition to the policy of war and annexation.

It was in such a perspective that the Committee Against War in Lebanon decided not to yield to the many pressures put on it by the moderate pacifist currents to stop its activity. These currents argued that a halt was necessary to avoid widening the split that is more and more dividing Israeli society.

The only hope of putting an end to the criminal and suicidal policies of Sharon is precisely to widen this split. This is to say that Peace Now must commit itself entirely to fight for peace if it wants to justify the confidence that hundreds of thousands of Israelis have placed in it.

*The following message was sent to the recent conference of the Palestinian National Council held in Algiers by the Fourth International section in the State of Israel, of which Michel Warschawski is a well-known spokesman.*

Palestine National Council  
Algiers

Dear Brothers and Comrades,

On the occasion of the convention of the Palestine National Council, we send the delegates of the Palestinian Arab people fraternal greetings from the anti-Zionist Jewish and Arab forces inside the state of Israel.

We are confident that this council will once again express the spirit of unity that distinguished the Palestinian Arab people in the most difficult moments of the battle for Beirut.

We wish to reiterate our commitment to continue the struggle inside the Zionist state, in co-operation with all forces that fight for peace and freedom.

We wish to reaffirm our commitment to the struggle for the achievement of the full rights of the Palestinian Arab people and the establishment of a free society in Palestine in which Jews and Arabs can live in peace, brotherhood, and equality.

As the vanguard of the anti-Zionist struggle inside Israel itself, we shall make every effort to strengthen the solidarity with the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arab people. Revolution until Victory.

Revolutionary Communist League — Matzpen

# A crucial year for the Netherlands

Robert WENT

AMSTERDAM — For three months, the Netherlands has had a right-wing government.

Presided over by the millionaire Ruud Lubbers, a coalition of right-wing liberals from the Partij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD — Party for Peace and Democracy) and Christian Democrats from the Christen Democraties Appel (CDA) have launched an offensive against the working class on many fronts.

The government can rely on a clear majority in parliament. This is the result of the victory of the right-wing parties in the September 1982 special elections held after the fall of the coalition of the CDA, the PvdA (the Labor Party, led by Joop den Uyl), and D-66 (Democrats 1966, so-called left liberals). This government fell after the PvdA lost so many votes in the regional elections that it had to stop going along with the Christian Democrats' demands for more and more austerity measures. Otherwise it would have risked losing still larger sections of its base.

So, the PvdA took its distance from the CDA's calls for further austerity. The D-66 took the side of the CDA, and paid the price for that in the September elections. Of the 17 seats it had, it lost all but six.

In the short time the new government has been in office, it has become absolutely clear that the capitalist parties are mounting a big new escalation of social cutbacks and preparing an even more drastic one.

— The government is doing everything it can to get rid of automatic cost-of-living adjustments in wages.

— Youth aged 16 and 17 can no longer draw unemployment benefits after January 1 of this year.

— Wages for youth have again been lowered.

— After February 1, everyone will have to pay 2.50 guilders (about 1.25 US dollars) for every purchase of medicines, although up till now they could be gotten free by anyone earning up to a certain income.

— The cuts in the social budget this year will be 7 billion guilders if the working class sacrifices 2 percent in wages. If it does not, the cuts will be increased to ten billion guilders.

— Plants threatened with closing or

mass layoffs in principle get no support, unless they get rid of their unprofitable sections. But first, the workers in these plants have to agree to pay the costs, to give up their cost-of-living increases, vacation pay, and take wage cuts.

— The previous government had a Social Democratic "plan for jobs," which was supposed to provide work for 25,000 people. This was far too little, naturally. But this government has adopted a memorandum on employment that does not provide for creating a single job but grants the bosses 6 billion guilders and infringes on various legal rights of the workers.

— The government expects that in 1984, there will be one million unemployed in the Netherlands, and a million and a half in 1986.

— Reprivatization of various publicly owned corporations is under study.

— Fares on public transport are going to be raised by 10 percent this year.

— The government wants to install 48 new Cruise missiles in 1986, but in view of the strength of the peace movement it does not want to say that and so it is linking deployment of the missiles to the outcome of the so-called peace negotiations in Geneva.

It is clear from this list that the Lubbers government wants to make the Netherlands a paradise — for the bosses. The bosses are obviously quite pleased about this, and they are making sure to keep up the pressure on the government by raising new demands almost every

week. They want the following:

— The environmental-protection regulations for companies relaxed.

— More freedom to lay off workers.

— Education of the youth to be more under the control of the employers; youth should be obliged to do a year's apprenticeship in the factories without pay.

— More social cutbacks.

## THE REACTION OF THE WORKING CLASS

If we look for the reaction to this stepped up attack in the working class, we have to make a distinction between the leaderships of the trade unions and the PvdA, on the one hand, and large sections of the workers, women, and youth, on the other. A few key struggles in the first months of the Lubbers government make this clear.

— In the first couple of months of the right-wing government, there have been strikes in the railroads (for the first time since 1944), in education (a week of strikes for the first time in history), and by sections of the public workers against the incomes proposals of the cabinet.

These actions have all been quite militant, massive, and popular with the people. This was true in particular of the teachers week of action, which a study has shown was supported by 80 percent of the Dutch people. This, in fact, could be seen from the massive support by parents and pupils in the demonstrations and strikes.

But the PvdA worked out a compromise proposal in the lower house of parliament. And the leadership of the union deliberately kept the actions separated. It refused to build united actions, raised no unifying demands, and organized no solidarity in the rest of the working class.

— A great many actions have been, and are being conducted against threats of mass layoffs, for example at Fokker (1,100 laid off), ADM (700 laid off), and the RSV shipyard (6,000 laid off), the Bijenkorf chain of department stores

'Nato soldiers against nuclear weapons' (DR)



(thousands laid off). The trade-union leadership is keeping these actions separated, even if they are in the same industry. And it is prepared to accept layoffs without a fight if the bosses will just reduce the numbers a bit.

At Fokker in Amsterdam, for example, more than 1,100 workers, prompted by the trade-union youth group, called for negotiating a reduction of the work-week with no cut in pay. But the union negotiator refused to go to discuss this and agreed to 1,100 layoffs in the Fokker company as a whole.

At the ADM ship-repair yard, an agreement providing for hundreds of layoffs and a 10 percent wage cut was represented as a great victory and a model of how actions against layoffs should be conducted in the future.

During the week of teachers strikes, youth throughout the country showed their solidarity by joining in these actions. But the union leaderships took their distance from the spontaneous strikes of pupils.

In the same period, youth staged actions throughout the country and demonstrated massively in The Hague against the attack on unemployment benefits for 16-year-olds and 17-year-olds. But the unions did nothing to back up these actions. To the contrary, various unions now want to talk to the bosses about hiring more youth for a 32-hour week for 32 hours pay.

In general, we see great militancy on the part of the workers, women, and youth. At the same time, on the part of the union leaders, we see a still greater inclination to capitulate and a stronger reluctance to organize struggles. As for the PvdA leadership, it has at best given lip service to the actions that have been carried out. It has not made any real effort to build them or to call actions to bring down the government.

### PRESSURE

Nonetheless, this wave of militancy has not failed to have an impact on the union leaderships and the PvdA tops. In the past period, we have seen actions every day — by youth, railroad workers, teachers, government workers, women getting the minimum unemployment benefits, invalids, the growth of actions and of 23 committees against the cuts in social security for women, committees against the increase in the price of gas, committees against higher rents, against initial payments for medicine, peace movement demonstrations, and so on. These actions are putting on increasing pressure for action against the right-wing government.

At the end of last year, the leader of the biggest union confederation (the FNV), Wim Kok, signed an agreement with the head of the employers association, van Veen. In the agreement, it says that cost-of-living increases are to be traded for shorter hours. But now, after the concrete content of this has been discussed in the factories and shops, it

seems that there is almost nowhere it has had any effect. What is more, 350,000 workers got a further cost-of-living increase on February 1 (2.06%), since it seemed impossible to get them to agree to give this up. It seems that this is going to happen in still more factories and industries.

On Saturday, January 22, a coordinating committee of trade-unionists (including the national chairman of the food-workers union), action leaders from various movements, and people from the left political parties under-

took to organize a national demonstration under the slogan: "Stop the cuts policy, for a progressive alternative." For the first time, the PvdA and the FNV were officially represented in this activity.

In all sorts of preparatory activities and discussion, calls were raised for initiatives and actions. For several reasons (which cannot be gone into here), little concrete came out of this. But the participation of the PvdA and the FNV in a committee dominated by parties and currents to the left of the PvdA

## Congress of the Dutch Fourth Internationalists

The Dutch section of the Fourth International, the Internationale Kommunistenbond (IKB, International Communist League), held its seventh congress January 8-10. The event had originally been scheduled for December. But in view of the scope of the discussion it was decided to extend the discussion period and hence postpone the congress.

In the course of the pre-congress discussion, three tendencies were formed, of which one gained an absolute majority (51.5%). The congress passed a resolution defining the political priorities for the coming period, an action program, a document on building a class-struggle tendency in the union movement, and a resolution on the Dutch Social Democracy and the tasks of Dutch revolutionaries toward it.

There will be two main axes of the IKB's work in the coming period — the fightback against nuclear weapons and the struggle against wage reductions, cutbacks, and layoffs. The congress decided to focus the work of the entire organization more on these main tasks than had been done before.

In all branches, comrades should become members of the most important peace organizations in order to participate more fully in the movement and in its discussions.

The resolution centered around the need for the IKB to link up with the radicalizing sectors of the peace movement and the unions, even if this radicalization does not go beyond the left-reformist framework.

It is only by sharing in the struggles of the advanced sections of the working class and in their grappling with their problems that the struggle as a whole can be carried forward and progress can be made toward building a revolutionary party in the Netherlands. It would be wrong to try to counterpose a ready-made perfect program to the solutions that are thrown up in the course of the evolution of these sectors themselves.

So, a central point was also the need for the unity of the entire workers movement, and therefore for actions and initiatives to that end, insofar as possible. In this context the PvdA will be more important for us in the coming period than in the past.

The Social Democracy also takes on greater importance for another reason. At the moment, the Netherlands is ruled by a right-wing government. Mobilizations come more immediately into collision with this government.

More and more, the political resolution pointed out, mobilizations and discussions are going to focus on getting rid of this right-wing government. In this context, propaganda for an alternative — a government of the workers parties — is going to assume more weight. As by far the biggest workers party, the PvdA holds the key position. "Kick out Lubbers!" and "For a government of workers parties!" will be the main slogans for the IKB in the coming period, to be adjusted for the concrete circumstances.

At this congress, the largest so far of the IKB, there was extensive discussion of the following points: What sort of an action program do we need? What are the main axes today for building the kind of class-struggle left wing in the trade unions that has not been seen for a long time? How should we assess the peace organizations? Can we expect differentiations within the PvdA? Is the trade-union movement going to play a more independent political role?

This congress registered an increase in the number of IKB members in industry. This was reflected, among other things, in the report by a worker at the ADM ship-repair yard about the struggle going on now to prevent the closing of the yard. More of the delegates were working in key industrial sectors and/or were members of the revolutionary youth organization Rebel.

The congress heard greetings from representatives of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, a representative of the left-reformist Pacifist Socialist Party (three seats in parliament), various foreign workers organizations, and the women's action group Vrouwenvuist from Eindhoven. It also heard a report by Rola Jansen, speaking in the name of the national leadership of Rebel, on the building of the revolutionary youth organization.

At the conclusion of the congress, a new Central Committee was chosen, in which the majority tendency got 11 out of the 19 places, the next largest six, and the smallest two.

reflected the pressure there is on these organizations to do something.

On January 15, the National Council of the PvdA decided, against the will of the party leadership, to begin a study of the potential and limitations of civil disobedience, and decided that even after a decision by parliament to site the missiles the PvdA would continue to resist this.

The whole right-wing press and all the right-wing politicians have gone after the PvdA to show how undemocratic it is to consider civil disobedience. They also know that a PvdA that led actions against this government would not only become enormously popular but could bring the government down.

#### THE MISSILES DEMONSTRATIONS

It can easily be seen that in this whole context, actions against the new missiles take on a continually greater importance. These actions lead to successes; they have already produced big divisions in the government parties (especially the CDA). And they might even lead directly to toppling the government. It is more and more clear also that this year for more and more organisations, groups, and individuals the antimissile actions are going to be central in finding a way to fight back against the right-wing government.

The peace organizations have quite ambitious plans for action. On Saturday, February 5, there was a very well attended national conference to work out their implementation. Among other things, October 29 was set as the date for a national demonstration in The Hague. The actions are to begin at Easter.

The unions are being approached directly, and committees of trade unionists against nuclear weapons are being built. The possibilities are being investigated for a two-hour work stoppage on October 28. A national youth paper is being set up as the first step toward building a national youth organization against nuclear weapons. The PvdA declared that it was going to fully support the actions, and the peace organizations call for mobilizing the two million PvdA voters.

In the CDA, a memorandum has appeared by the defense specialists de Boer and Frinking. Both are not against the missiles. But in their document, which has been leaked to the press, they call for serious consideration for not deploying the missiles, regardless of what happens in Geneva. The reason is the mass opposition. Previously, former premier Van Agt said that it was necessary to consider not bringing in the missiles. In a TV interview broadcast February 13, he again stated that in the face of great social unrest it would be wrong to site the missiles.

The CDA is trying to water down the coming actions by making them into a vague apolitical protest against nuclear weapons. Premier Lubbers said that the memorandum drawn up by the Boer and Frinking represented a "nationalist point of view." Both maneuvers were coun-

tered at the February 5 conference of peace activists by Mient Jan Faber, who was cited not long ago in *Newsweek* as "as dangerous to the security of the West as Andropov." He said: "It would be good for the CDA to collaborate with the peace movement, but on the basis of our demands, that is, not one missile, no matter what comes out of Geneva." And, he stressed, the peace movement is not nationalistic but internationalist. If the government decides not to site the missiles, then we won't have to demonstrate here, "we'll hire a couple

of ferries and go over to England."

Former Premier van Agt has said that in studying civil disobedience, the PvdA was doing something dangerous. "It's letting the genie out of the bottle." He was right. This government is far from being as firmly in the saddle as it claims. Even the PvdA leader Joop den Uyl has said that he does not think the government can remain in power more than six months. The coming year, in which the fight against the missiles will be central, is going to be an enormously important one. ■



Mass exodus from Nigeria (DR)

## Tragedy in West Africa

Claude GABRIEL

On January 18, 1983, in Nigeria the civilian government of Alhaji Shehn Shagari ordered all foreigners without "proper papers" to leave the country within two weeks. It is generally accepted that this measure applied to about 2 million people who have come in from neighboring countries, at least half of them from Ghana.

In my article "The Effects of the Black 'Goldrush' on African Neocolonial Economies" in Issue No 22 (January 24, 1983) of *International Viewpoint*, I described how the oil economy built up within a few years in Nigeria totally disrupted the pattern of life in this country, creating deepgoing social and economic maladjustments. I pointed out that the mass of problems that had been allowed to accumulate was soon going to create difficulties for the regime and the country's federal institutions. I mentioned the

case of the religious revolts in the north.

#### THE ISLAMIC REBELLIONS

It is significant that one of the reasons given by the Ministry of the Interior for the expulsion of the foreign workers is that non-Nigerians supposedly participated in these riots. (1) Whether this claim is true or false, it nonetheless reveals the contradiction of a state that presents itself as the only developed large country in Black Africa, and at the same time has to face the political and social problems of a backward semicolonial country.

When Nigeria gained its independence on October 1, 1960, the economy of the country was centered around the export of three commodities, whose production was focused in three distinct regions of the country.

1. *Le Monde*, January 19, 1983.

The coconut-oil industry was based in the southeast, while the production of cacao centered in the southwest and peanut growing in the north.

### OIL BOOM

Since the start of the 1970s, this setup has been radically altered by the growth of the petroleum industry. In the 16 years from 1964 to 1980, petroleum production rose from 1 million tons to 103 million tons. The first customer has been the U.S., which took 40.7% of total production in 1980. About 90% of foreign-currency income comes from petroleum. This new market aroused the greed of the imperialists, who are looking for opportunities for investment and to sell producers goods.

The backlash effects of these changes have been a rapid decline of agricultural production, an acceleration of the flight from the countryside to the cities, and growing inability of the country to feed itself, and hence spiraling imports of foodstuffs.

In an attempt to mitigate these effects, the Nigerian government is trying to push industrialization by reinvesting its oil bonanza and by heavy borrowing on the international money market. (2) Moreover, the regime has proclaimed a sort of "green revolution" designed to give a new boost to agricultural production by introducing modern capitalist methods of cultivation.

However, by itself a partial industrialization will not be able to smooth out the maladjustments arising both from higher discount rates and from the failure of the "green revolution."

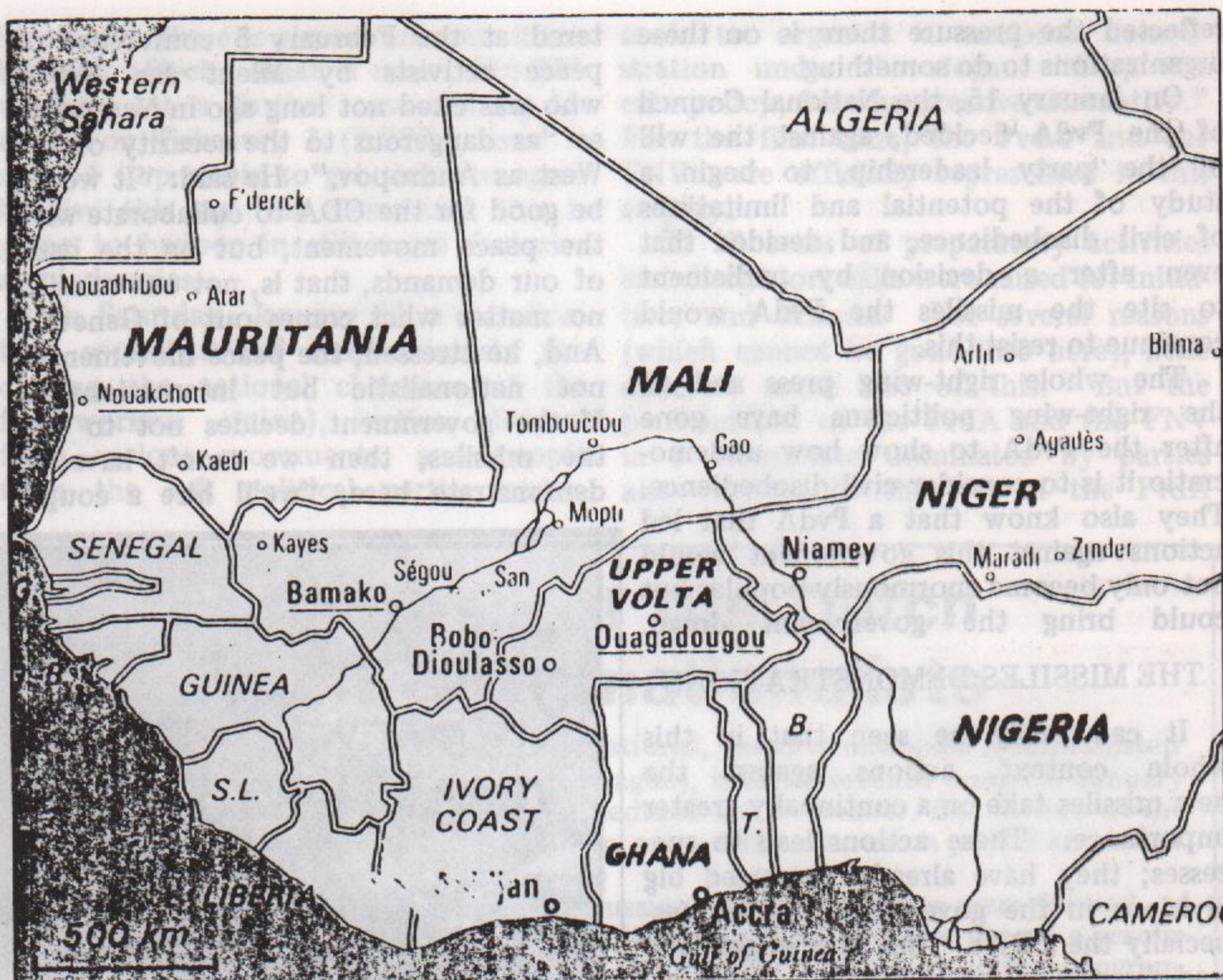
In fact, the final blow is coming in what might be called the tenderloin of the Nigerian economy, the petroleum sector. By reducing the world demand for hydrocarbons, the international economic crisis started taking the buoyancy out of the petroleum market in 1978. This decline was aggravated by political factors and by the growth of oil production in non-member countries such as Mexico and Great Britain.

### OIL BUST

In 1982, world petroleum consumption dropped by 4% for the third consecutive year. It will probably decline still further in 1983. For the OPEC countries alone, including Nigeria, the volume of petroleum sales has declined by 40% in three years.

In order to try to limit this drop in sales, countries such as Nigeria have sought, in violation of their OPEC commitments, to offer lower prices on the parallel market. But then they have had to face cutthroat competition from producers of a crude similar to theirs, such as the owners of the British North Sea oil wells.

The petroleum boom that for a time



Map: Pluto Press World View '83 (DR)

inspired talk about industrial development and the Nigerian "miracle" has ended in a blind alley. Once again massive tragedies have revealed the falseness of developmentalist ideologies that ignore the control of the world market by the imperialists and the ability of the multinationals to manipulate trade for their benefit.

### DISTORTIONS IN WEST AFRICA

The relative development of Nigeria for more than ten years helped to draw capital, industrial investments to this country, which were in fact diverted from other African countries in the region. A company like Peugeot-South Africa, for example, went so far as to establish an assembly plant in the middle of Nigeria able to turn out far more cars than could be absorbed by the Nigerian market. It was designed to supply also countries such as the Cameroons, Togo, and Benin (formerly Dahomey). And this is even though by itself, with its 100 million inhabitants, Nigeria represents a very important market.

As a result of these developments, a part of the poor population of the neighboring countries began to immigrate into Nigeria to find work. In the heyday of the petroleum boom, Nigeria welcomed all sorts of foreign workers (electricians, agricultural workers, street vendors, and so on). For a decade, this posed no problem for the Nigerian regime. The government saw it, as all governments do in such a situation, as an opportunity for exploiting cheap, unorganized labor.

However, with the onset of the crisis, the regime found it necessary to impose draconian controls in order to reduce the pockets of poverty and un-

employment. This was essential to avert social explosions. At that point, the government "discovered" that a lot of foreign workers had not come into Nigeria legally.

The abrupt expulsion of these masses of foreign workers was accompanied by a racist and chauvinist campaign in the press and media blaming the immigrants for the crisis. Thus, the *Lagos Daily Times* called on its readers to help identify undocumented foreign workers...

It is striking to see the government of a semicolonial country using the same ideological arguments and administrative measures as the governments of West European countries faced with growing unemployment. Making a scapegoat of immigrant workers is an old recipe of all bourgeois governments.

The majority of the "illegal" workers were of Ghanaian origin. The economic chaos that has reigned in that country for nearly five years gave impetus to this exodus to Nigeria. The fact that the official language in both countries is English, in contrast to Togo, and Benin, which are French speaking, also facilitated Ghanaian immigration to Nigeria. Ghana and Nigeria are, moreover, members of a regional body, the Community of West African States, which has been touted as an example of a large-scale

2. Nigeria's external debt is around 10 billion dollars. Like most oil-producing countries it is among the most indebted countries. A few months ago there were similar upheavals in Mexico. All these countries, facing a permanent lowering of the price of oil, plan their income on a prediction of the price per barrel. Mexico is banking on a price of 28 dollars per barrel. If these forecasts turn out to be wrong we would see a new panic among the oil-producing countries, who only a few years ago were presented as the 'new rich' of the commercial world. But even at this price the IMF estimates that Mexicans will suffer a drop in their standard of living by 10-20% in 18 months. What will happen to Black Africa?



scheme for regional economic and customs unity and development.

However, very quickly, the powerful Nigeria began to put pressure on the already precarious economies of the small countries associated with it in the Community of West African States. Smuggling benefited the Nigerian market, and, to the same extent, undermined the balances of trade of the neighboring countries.

In these last years, the pretty speeches about regional economic integration have given way to tightened border controls and protectionist policies. Countries such as Ghana have exported their unemployment to Nigeria, pinning their hopes on a projection of higher prices for cacao that would enable them to get out of the hole.

### THE WORLD CRISIS MEANS DISASTER IN WEST AFRICA

The latest events in Nigeria, therefore, represent a new phase in the general crisis of the dependent economies in the region. Nigeria is now exporting its problems. By sending hundreds of thousands of men and women home with hardly more than the clothes on their back, the Lagos government is assuming the responsibility not simply for swelling unemployment in its neighboring countries. Much worse than this, it is creating the gravest political and social problems.

In its February 14, 1983, issue, the American magazine *Newsweek* noted: "The recent exodus threatens the resources and political stability of the poorest nations in West Africa."

In an impoverished and politically unstable Ghana, constantly on the verge of civil war, the return of these masses of emigrant workers is increasing the chaos. The Paris daily *Le Monde* reports that villages that have been virtually deserted for years are being filled suddenly to overflowing by people returning to their place of origin without resources or perspectives.

The majority of these refugees are

natives of the central and east central regions of the country, that is, they often belong to the Ashanti ethnic group. This fact also can aggravate the Ghanaian crisis by stoking the fires of regionalist resentments.

Benin and Togo, which have seen this exodus pass across their territory, have also suffered severely. But in the short term some privileged layers in these countries are going to be able to profit from this disorder. In a few days, the naira, the Nigerian currency, fell from 315 African francs to 126 (350 African francs equal approximately 1 US dollar.). In the immense lines of Ghanaians waiting at the Benin and Togo frontiers, local operators have been able to acquire the few belongings that these unfortunates were able to take with them, and had to sell for a scrap of bread.

In these last years, this uneven development has also affected Nigerian society. Alongside the oil economy and some big industrial areas, all the traditional features of a backward, semi-colonial country remained. In some areas, there is a peasantry working tiny plots of land. In some regions, the industrial fabric is quite weak. Technology and the banking system are dependent on the imperialist centers. There is a widening gap between the well off and the poor.

The April 1982 decisions introducing a new austerity policy have not solved any of these problems. But they have worsened the lot of the poorest, that is the overwhelming majority of the population. At the same time, those in high places in the state apparatus and the army retain all their nouveau-riche arrogance. These contradictions, along with the sharp drop in the price of crude, are going to have cumulative effects on a society torn by structural maladjustments. The expulsion of the "undocumented" foreign workers in no way resolves these contradictions. It can only provide a few months respite.

However, in the longer run no one will benefit from this crisis. The world recession is hitting all the African countries hard. What Nigeria has just done to its immigrant labor force, the Ivory Coast could do tomorrow to its immigrant workers from Upper Volta. We

are now seeing the effects of an uneven and combined development that in these last two years has been tearing the African continent apart. The main responsibility for this falls on the imperialists.

### A NEW IMPERIALIST CRIME AGAINST BLACK AFRICA

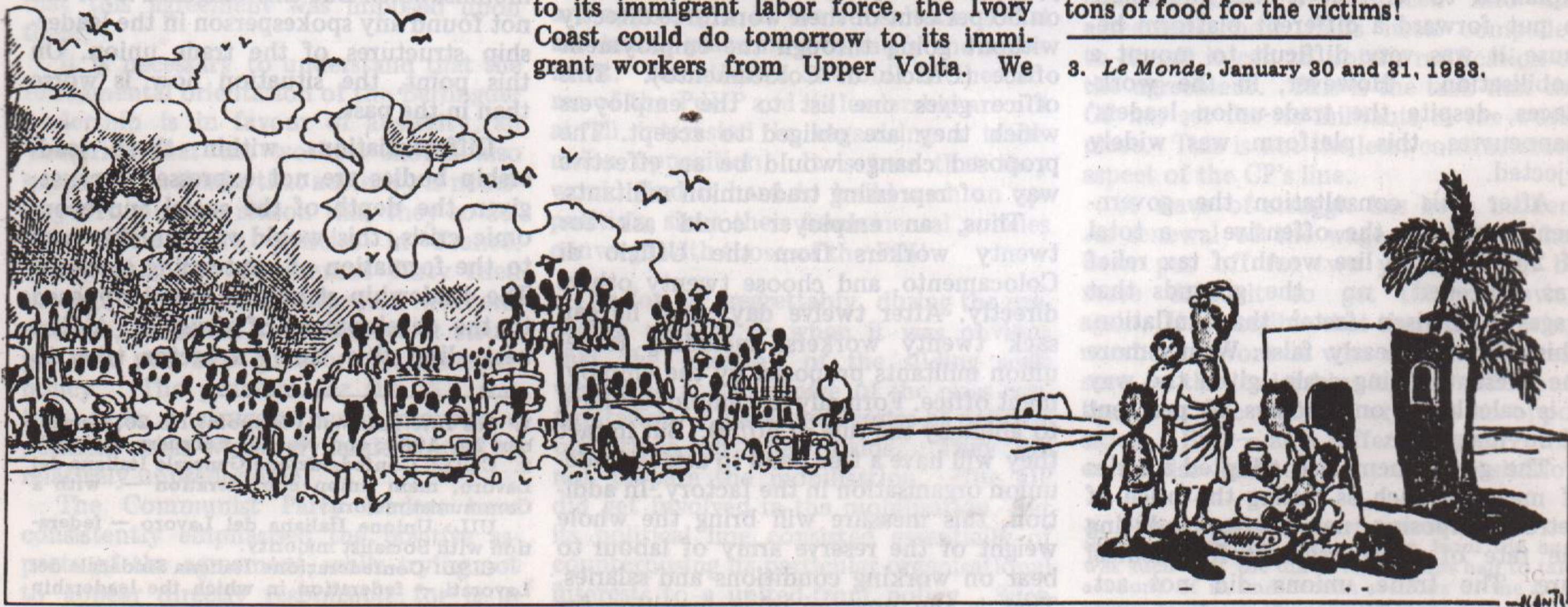
Does anyone need to be reminded, for example, that it was the EEC that set up a body such as the European Committee of Industrial Cooperation in the framework of the Lome Convention? This organization is responsible for investigating possibilities for industrial investment. And, in the name of so-called regional integration, it has favored a few show-case countries, such as Nigeria or the Ivory Coast.

In a continent where there were already 5 million refugees, hundreds of thousands more have now been added. The TV news has shown the horror of this mass of human beings standing holding bundles of clothes waiting for permission to pass from one country to another. Tens of millions of people around the world have watched Benin and Togolese police herd these crowds of starving people around with clubs. In a few days, dozens of people died of hunger.

*Le Monde* reported: "On this continent of refugees, these deportees were not surprised by the calamity that fell on them. Some of them have been subjected to brutality. A lot of them have been robbed of everything they had. At best, their prospects are poor. But they show less anger than resignation. They have been driven out again. They find themselves unwanted at home or anywhere else. They are just hopeless." (3)

This is a new crime that the imperialists have perpetrated in Black Africa, an outrage that they have committed through the intermediary of the Nigerian government and with the complicity of the other neocolonial states in Africa and the Organisation of African Unity. And some imperialist countries are trying to reduce the scandal by sending a few tons of food for the victims!

3. *Le Monde*, January 30 and 31, 1983.



# A social pact against the workers mobilization

Despite the massive wave of workers struggles in Italy in defence of the sliding scale of wages agreement, the trade-union leaderships made an agreement with the employers and government that severely limited the agreement (see *International Viewpoint* No 23, February 7, 1983).

IV correspondent Andre Duret spoke to Rocco Papandrea, member of the factory council at Fiat-Mirafiori, and a leader of the Lega Comunista Rivoluzionaria, about the workers' reaction to this sell-out.

*Question. What do you think of the agreement that was made on January 23 between the government, the trade unions, and the employers, in the wake of the big strikes and demonstrations in early January?*

*Answer.* In order to assess this agreement, you have to put it in a more general context. It cannot be judged in the abstract. If the mobilisations had not had the scope they did, the contents of this accord would not stand out in such flagrant contradiction to the workers wishes. (1)

It should be remembered that during autumn 1982 the trade unions consulted the workers in the factories on their famous nine-point platform. In this there was already the proposal to reduce the automatic cost-of-living increases by 10 per cent. In return, there were to be 'benefits' for the workers in the field of taxes, etc.

At the time, the trade-union leaders explained to us that it was impossible to put forward a different platform because it was very difficult to mount a mobilisation. However, in the workplaces, despite the trade-union leaders' manoeuvres, this platform was widely rejected.

After this consultation the government went on the offensive — a total of 2,850 billion lire worth of tax relief was cancelled on the grounds that wages had risen faster than inflation. This claim is clearly false. What's more the present sliding scale, given the way it is calculated, only covers 70 per cent of buying power.

The government also adopted a series of measures such as raising the price of petrol, imposing new taxes, reducing the rate of reimbursement for medical care. The trade unions did not act. However, a strike movement started,

which went far beyond what the bureaucracy expected. Defence of the sliding scale was the central demand.

Thus, the agreement made by the trade-union leaderships came after mobilisations of a scope that has rarely been seen. In the factories, for example at FIAT, the desire to 'go forward', to prepare and launch a general strike, was explicit. This frightened the trade-union leaders, as well as the Communist Party and Socialist Party tops.

After that, to agree to a reduction of 20 per cent in the automatic cost-of-living rises was a bit much! Even better, according to the employers' interpretation of the agreement — which is not without some technical foundation — the reduction could be 35 per cent. The give-back in taxes is largely phoney.

This measure only provides for tax relief on wages up to 9,000,000 lire gross per annum, which is about 500,000 lire net per month — £227 sterling. Most industrial workers have a net monthly income greater than that.

Besides these measures the trade-union leaders have accepted points never discussed before; a freezing of contracts for two years; fixed-term employment contracts; a limited time for the payment of 'technical unemployment' (cassa integrazione — workers continue to draw their pay although there is no work). After a time the payment would be reduced.

A substantial change in the organisation of the labour market is also proposed. The employers will be able to take on 50 per cent of their workforce directly without going through the employment office (Ufficio di Colocamento). This office gives one list to the employers which they are obliged to accept. The proposed change would be an effective way of repressing trade-union militants.

Thus, an employer could ask for twenty workers from the Ufficio di Colocamento, and choose twenty others directly. After twelve days trial he can sack twenty workers, including trade-union militants proposed by the employment office. Formally the employers have to abide by the rule of 50/50. But in fact they will have a free hand to attack trade-union organisation in the factory. In addition, this measure will bring the whole weight of the reserve army of labour to bear on working conditions and salaries. That is the pressure of competition for

jobs. In the agreement new norms for controlling of absenteeism are put forward, which go against the celebrated Workers Statute won after the 1969 struggles.

Finally, the idea of a contribution of 0.5% of gross salary has been taken up again. This is to be paid to the 'solidarity fund'. Under the pretext of safeguarding jobs, these funds aim to subsidise the company. However, when the workers were consulted on this proposal, which was concocted by Carniti (general secretary of the CISL) in June 1980 they rejected it. They rejected it again in 1982. What we are seeing is the trade-union leaderships taking a sort of revenge on the working class for having successfully blocked their project.

*Q. How did the trade-union activists react to the policies of the CGIL, UIL, and CISL leaderships? (2)*

A. One of the most striking aspects of these mobilisation was their anti-government dynamic. The despised Fanfani government was incapable of imposing such measures by decree. This agreement has given the government, which is the worst enemy of the workers, a breathing space.

The Confindustria (the employers federation) understand very well the risk of a major governmental crisis that could arise if the negotiations fail. And it also fears the cumulative effect of a political crisis in the present social and economic climate in Italy.

The trade-union leadership, from its point of view, has the same analysis. Thus, it is not by chance that there has been a convergence between the bureaucracy and the employers representatives on this agreement. In effect it concretises the main orientation of the trade-union leadership, which is indeed going against the workers' interests.

In the consultation on the nine points, as in the mobilisations over the last two years, a dramatic contradiction has emerged. A broad layer of workers in the union have demonstrated their opposition to the line of the bureaucracy. These are the militants who initiate and lead the mobilisations. But this vanguard layer has not found any spokesperson in the leadership structures of the trade union. On this point, the situation now is worse than in the past.

Differentiations within these leadership bodies are not expressed because, given the depth of the social and economic crisis, this would very quickly lead to the formation of contending currents. The leadership structures stand opposed to the development of struggles. At the best, like this time, a sector tries to

1. See *International Viewpoint* No 20, December 20, 1982; and No 23, February 7, 1983.  
2. CGIL: Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro, main union confederation — with a Communist majority.

UIL: Unione Italiana del Lavoro — federation with Socialist majority.

CISL: Confederazione Italiana Sindacale dei Lavoratori — federation in which the leadership is linked to Christian Democracy.

channel what struggles arise. But these officials supported the agreement, and did not try to express the workers point of view within the negotiations.

Certain officials have gone so far as to say to the federation leaders 'you have made an error'. But they did not organise any opposition. This is a traditional feature of the 'trade-union left', which prefers pressure on the tops to organising a class-struggle current within the unions. (3) The workers today are paying a heavy price for this capitulation, which is presented as a clever, non-sectarian way of modifying the course followed by the federation leaderships.

This lack of an organised opposition is dangerous. After episodes like the one we have just been through, it could lead to the following scenario: for some militant workers distrust of the leadership could become distrust of the union itself. This attitude could develop even more easily if the political currents to the left of the Communist Party (PCI) do not offer a more credible alternative policy.

*Q. Wasn't the leadership of the PCI caught off guard by the wave of struggles? How did it try to co-opt it?*

*A.* In fact the PCI leadership was taken by surprise by the mobilisations. It didn't expect them. What's more the activists at the base of the PCI played a significant role in the development of the struggle. The PCI leadership did not oppose the movement head-on.

The PCI leaders' first thought was to use these mobilisations politically to strengthen its position and put the Socialist Party (PSI) in difficulties. They wanted to take the opportunity to whisper in the ear of the bourgeoisie: 'We have an important role to play, you cannot ignore us. We are the only ones capable of channeling a workers' upsurge, and making the workers accept an agreement.'

In articles signed by members of the Party leadership, proposals very similar to those in the agreement were quite readily advanced. However, given the pressure from the base, the PCI leadership did everything it could to give the impression that this agreement was imposed upon them.

It is necessary to understand that the fundamental orientation of the Berlinguer leadership is in favour of austerity, an 'austerity that the workers should also support'. It thinks that austerity is necessary. This is the reason that they so admire Mitterrand's policies in France. Thus, while the Communist Party tried to profit from an unexpected workers' upsurge, it could only oppose a struggle that put into question the austerity policy. The problem for the PCI was that such a struggle could provoke a political crisis whose dynamic would be relatively unpredictable.

The Communist Party leaders have consistently emphasised the positive aspects of the agreement, while trying not to appear directly responsible for it in the eyes of the workers. They have also

spoken much of the strength of the enemy and the risk of a confrontation, so as to be able to present the agreement as a reasonable compromise. At the moment, they aren't being bashful about lying outright, claiming that in fact the workers' buying power has been defended. Their campaign of prevarication in the press is impressive.

The CP leaders make a big case that the CGIL and PCI leaderships have different roles. In fact, both consulted continually in fixing the terms of the agreement. It has never occurred to a PCI or CGIL leader of the likes of Lama or Trentin to say 'it is up to the workers to decide'. For them it is obvious that decision making is the prerogative of the higher levels of the Party and trade union.



*Italian cops attack workers (DR)*

*Q. What was the attitude of the PdUP and Democrazia Proletaria?*

*A.* Sections of the PdUP said they were opposed to the agreement, and they are opposing it in the consultations that are taking place now to ratify the agreement. Nonetheless, the bulk of the cadres of the PdUP and its leadership are not at all interested in organising a trade-union opposition. It is true that they would find it hard to build such an opposition, since their fundamental policies converge with those of the PCI!

As for DP, regrettably, during the preceding months — when it was obvious that the question of the sliding scale would be at the centre of the class confrontation — it started a series of political operations on other fields. They did not prepare the mobilisation. The DP did get involved in the mobilisation. But its political line consisted essentially of counterposing its particular organisational interests to a united-front policy. Such a policy, however, was needed to build a

broad opposition, that would become a point of reference for a whole layer of workers. Democrazia Proletaria is opposed to the agreement, and is fighting against its ratification in the present round of consultations.

*Q. What have the factory assemblies said about the agreement?*

*A.* In many factories, Italsider and Ansaldo in Genoa, Alfa Romeo in Milan, Aeritalia in Turin, the factory council at Fiat Rivalata in Turin, as well as many factories in the Brescia region, workers have rejected the agreement. But this cannot amount to more than an expression of a negative judgement by large sections of the working class about the agreement. Both the policy followed by

the union leaderships and the lack of a structured opposition will prevent any reversal of the results of the negotiations.

The leadership of the PCI, after claiming they were forced into the agreement, now finds itself compelled to do all it can to obtain ratification of the agreement. This is the task that the CP has set for its militants in the workplace. This is not the least contradictory aspect of the CP's line.

A wave of struggle has been broken. As renewal of the wage agreements has been put off for two years, it will be more difficult to get things moving again. It is possible that there is a growing number of workers who realise that pressure on the leaderships is not sufficient, that it is necessary to organise an opposition. But — at a different level — this could also lead to an increased hesitation

3. This orientation was encouraged by the fact that for a period the pressure from the base was such that the union leaderships had to take account of it, and certain sections of the leadership expressed this through more or less alternative proposals.

about going back into struggle. It is possible that the 'social pact' will be broken at the level of the factory.

However, it is difficult to imagine that the 1978 scenario will be rapidly repeated, where the mobilisation of the whole metalworkers sector threw into question the Social pact of the EUR. (4)

Given the internal contradictions of Christian Democracy, its system of alliances, and the social instability there is always the possibility of political crisis opening-up. This is an ever-present factor in the situation. Any political crisis could lead a reshuffling of the cards, and a relaunch of social struggles.

*Q. Isn't the problem of trade-union democracy raised once again by this agreement as it had been by the way the struggles were conducted? At the same time the leaderships are striving to restrict the jurisdiction of factory councils and openly rig the results of membership votes, as was so obviously done last November.*

A. In fact, one of the biggest problems that has been thrown into relief, and remains posed, by the agreement is that of trade-union democracy. In the first place, there is the question of how the terms, of such an agreement were arrived at, then the way in which it was signed. Secondly, within the agreement itself there is a reduction of the role of the factory councils in contract bargaining. These councils have for years been a factor favouring a certain trade-union democracy.

Some sections of the unions, most openly within the UIL, are favourable to a reduction in trade-union democracy, and to the transformation of the unions into a pliant tool in the hands of the apparatus.

The existence of terrorist activity has been used to further this aim. Some union leaders openly stated that the structures that encourage union democracy make it easier for terrorists to infiltrate the unions. Giorgio Benvenuto, general secretary of the UIL had the cheek to use the 'Luigi Scricciolo affair' to justify this operation. I don't know if Scricciolo is an agent or not. For several years in Italy the regime has often made the most fantastic accusations against militants. Officially he is accused of having collaborated with the Red Brigades, of being an agent of the Bulgarians, of having betrayed Solidarnosc trade-unionists to the police after the coup. (5)

But, one thing remains certain. Scricciolo did not get his trade-union responsibilities on the basis of militant activity at the base, or through election to a factory council. He has never been elected by a trade-union congress to any level of the leadership. He came into the leadership circles of the UIL thanks to his personal relations with Benvenuto. Within a few months, he became one of the main leaders of the UIL!

The real question that Benvenuto has

to answer is the following: how is such a dizzying rise to the heights possible in a trade union? The real problem then is not too much democracy, but the lack of organised control by the base over the union leadership. The key question is evidently not the risk of infiltration in the rank and file structures, but that the bureaucracy can engage in negotiations and sign agree-

ments as they please, when the effects are disastrous for the workers and the trade union itself. ■

4. In January 1978, during a meeting of the national leaderships of the three federations at the Palace of the EUR in Rome, the trade-union leaders openly declared themselves for austerity and social peace.

5. Scricciolo had extensive links with Solidarnosc. He organised Walesa's trip to Italy.

## Sharp class battles in Denmark

Gerry FOLEY

HAMBURG — After a six-week-long militant struggle, the Danish dockers suspended their strike on February 14. It was the most determined fightback against the austerity offensive of the right-wing government of Poul Schluter that came into office in September and highlighted in a dramatic way the escalating class confrontation in Denmark.

The dockers strike was marked by an extensive use of police and strike-breakers against the workers that would have been unthinkable in Denmark before the deepening of the capitalist economic crisis.

One worker was even killed, run over by a truck at a barricade on the docks in Hirtshals, a town on the northwest tip of mainland Denmark, not far from the major port city of Aalborg, one of the centers of the strike.

Managerial personnel gave a Dutch truckdriver the go-ahead to drive through a picket line. He ran over a striker, Kaj Aage Nielsen.

The day after, on December 30, a Copenhagen shop stewards meeting passed a resolution saying:

"The Copenhagen workers movement was shocked at the death of a dock worker on a strike barricade....

"His memory will remain part of the history of the struggle of the working class to defend our fellow workers and their families against the attacks of the bosses....

"Honor the memory of a fighting worker!"

Thousands of workers came from the Aalborg region and all over Denmark to march in Nielsen's funeral procession.

Within a few days, the driver of the truck that killed Nielsen was released without charges. At roughly the same time, on January 8, in Horsen a docker was jailed on the charge of butting his head against a cop.

The cops launched full-scale attacks on workers demonstrations. An Aalborg dockers' leader, Hans Hansen, described one in an interview in the January 13

issue of *Klassekampen*, the weekly paper of the Danish section of the Fourth International.

"I never saw anything like it. It was just plain Nazi methods. Over a hundred police in battle dress with plexiglass helmets charged us. They pulled people out of buses and cars and beat them up with clubs. At the same time, they loosed their maddened police dogs on the crowd. People literally ran for their lives, and still they didn't get away without getting clubbed and bitten."

The demonstration had been a peaceful one, Hansen explained, and its leaders had made it clear that they wanted no confrontation with the cops.

"There were between 400 and 500 of us dockers and about 100 sympathizers from all over the country....

"At first, everything went peacefully. There were only twenty to thirty police....Then, suddenly, all the police forces in the region...converged on us.

"At a command, they all charged us... There was an inferno of screaming, shouting, weeping, ambulance sirens."

Hansen recalled that a worker in his sixties fell down in front of a cop holding a raging dog. Every time he tried to get up, the cop loosened the dog.

The Schluter government did not hesitate to unleash the cops against the workers. But in some cases the workers were able to respond effectively.

On January 21, thousands of workers marched to the docks in Aalborg to support the dockers. "A few cops drew their pistols," Jorn Schmidt reported in the January 27 *Klassekampen*, "but this time police stepped back." Unfortunately, that did not last long because the mass blockade was not continued.

In Norresundsby, a force of seventy cops came in from Copenhagen to protect scabs. Schmidt wrote: "The dockers, unemployed, and others rushed to the harbor. In the coming hours, they more and more gained the upper hand. Among other things, they managed to remove the police barricades.

"In the bitter cold, the workers de-

monstrated a number of times in front of the police line. In the afternoon, workers from several places...came to demonstrate.

"The cops were bombarded with everything the workers could get their hands on, and a police car was overturned."

But the action was not sustained. Schmidt quoted a local activist:

"It was a very strong demonstration. But it could have been stronger. There were a lot of us. We could have cleared the area of cops without having to use violence, just by marching forward in massive columns and sweeping them away."

"The problem was that the whole thing was too unorganized. When the scabs were stopped from working, the crowd broke up. That meant that the scabs could resume work on the weekend and Monday."

In the B&W shipyard in Copenhagen, the use of police and scabs led to a sympathy strike of the ship-repair workers.

Schmidt described how the action developed in the February 10 *Klassekampen*:

"The crane sirens started screaming. It was a signal for the 1,100 workers on the day shift. It meant there were police in the yard. A few minutes before a small bus of cops had come in to clear away the dockers who were blocking the loading area."

"Work stopped everywhere. A few minutes later, crowds of workers began moving toward the gate. They went outside and would not return until the police left. Shortly after that, the gate was locked behind the last workers. They had been locked out."

"The atmosphere had been tense in the yard from the early morning. A confrontation was shaping up. That was clear to everyone."

"On Monday, there was a 24-hour protest strike against the yard management permitting the scabs and foremen to load steel plates that had been blacked by the dockers. The loading was done under police protection. The confrontations continued Tuesday and Wednesday."

"On Tuesday, a workers assembly decided to resume work. But at the same time it decided to continue support for the dockers and to refuse to work under police surveillance. On Tuesday, the police came in and cleared out the dockers. The second time, they were stopped by B&W workers. The workers had had enough...."

"At a short meeting on Thursday morning, the leadership announced that the management had told them that if the workers walked out, they would be locked out."

The next time the police came the workers walked to the gate but did not go out. However, when they returned to their workplaces, they found that the gas and electricity had been cut off. The management told the workers they

would not be paid until they "normalized" work, that is stopped protesting the presence of the police.

Unfortunately, the shop stewards in the other main B&W branch, the marine-motors production section held back the workers there from supporting those locked out in the other section. This is despite the fact that in marine-motors production itself there were a number of spontaneous work stoppages where the workers came into direct contact with the police.

These cases illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of the dockers strike. The dockers were determined to fight. Their example attracted groups of workers and the unemployed to join them, even without leadership and at great risks. The impressive solidarity actions

ization in the marine-motor production section of B&W, which let the locked-out ship-repair workers down, is dominated by the CP.

The other main political force in the shop stewards movement is the Socialist People's Party (SF), a sort of precursor of Eurocommunism.

Actually, the CP and SF have worked out a symbiotic relationship. Since the SF is not associated with repression in East Europe, it is more popular with the voters. In fact, it has emerged as the main electoral alternative to the Social Democracy. But, as an electoral party, it does not bother much to organize its supporters in the unions. It leaves the union work to the CP, which in turn relies on the SF for parliamentary operations.



Copenhagen workers support dockers (DR)

that occurred showed that there already are elements of an alternative, militant leadership in the workplaces.

The shop stewards represent a distinct layer in the Danish unions, much closer to the workers and more militant than the union apparatus.

However, the national shop-stewards organization and most of the lower-echelon organizations are dominated by the Communist Party, which basically tails the Social Democratic leadership. It has not tried to make these bodies into an alternative leadership with an alternative policy. Quite the contrary, it uses them as a back-up system for the Social Democratic bureaucracy.

For example, the shop-stewards organ-

In fact, the workers parties in parliament did little or nothing to help the dockers during the strike. The CP made a proposal that the workers party deputies meet with dockers representatives. But then it "clarified" its position, saying that it would be best if the dockers union leaders themselves set up such a meeting.

The CP itself has no seats in parliament. Besides the SF and the SP, the other left party in parliament is the Venstresocialisten (Left Socialists), a federation of various left and countercultural groups without a coherent alternative policy for labor.

The attitude of the Social Democrat-controlled national labor confederation (the LO) to the dockers strike was direct-

ly hostile. In fact, the LO chairman made a statement that the labor organization should adopt rules making it easier to expel groups of workers who do not "listen to advice" from the labor tops.

Thus, despite the support of rank-and-file workers and numbers of shop stewards throughout the country, nationally organized support for the dockers was absent. The general sympathy and scattered support actions were not sufficient to enable the dock workers to beat the government in a head-on confrontation.

The dock union leadership ended the work stoppage, therefore, without getting any concessions from the bosses or the government. Negotiations are continuing, but in various places the bosses have said that they will not allow strikers to return to work.

Nonetheless, the dockers strike represented an important first experience in battle by the Danish working class against the general offensive launched by the right-wing government. The dockers put up an impressive fight. And, in a number of sharp actions they and other sections of the working class that came to their aid showed that they could beat the cops and the bosses.

In essence, the dockers strike represented a continuation and deepening of the fight that began against the new right-wing government in October, soon after it came into office.

For the dockers, the new government's program of social cutbacks was a direct attack on their pay packets. They are employed on a casual basis, and most work only a few days a week. For the rest of the time, they collect unemployment insurance.

One of the first measures of the new government was to cut the unemployment benefits for dockers from 335 kroner a day to 226, which will represent a cut in yearly income of up to 20,000 kroner, or close to 3,000 US dollars.

Other unemployment benefit cuts hit building workers and fishermen hard. Workers out of work because of weather conditions will now receive no benefits for the first three days. That means in effect, as a building worker pointed out in an interview in *Klassekampen*, people will be forced to work in bad conditions and thereby inevitably undermine their health.

The government claims that the old system of unemployment insurance maintained structural underemployment. In an interview in *Klassekampen*, a dockers leader pointed out that what the government wants to do is increase full unemployment at a time when there are already 300,000 out of work, about 12% of the workforce according to the official statistics.

There is no lack of readiness on the part of the workers to fight back. The installation of the right-wing government in late September and the announcement of its austerity program prompted one of the biggest protest movements in Danish history.



On October 8, fifty thousand people massed in front of parliament. On October 13, demonstrations called throughout the country by the unions and the unemployed organizations drew 120,000 people in all — 80,000 of them in Copenhagen. For a country the size of Denmark, these were massive demonstrations, the equivalent of about 6 million people in the U.S., for example.

The protests began as local initiatives, an essentially spontaneous movement. None of the big labor or political organizations offered leadership. Once the band wagon started rolling, they were obliged to jump on. But then they took the wheel and steered it into a blind alley.

The trade unions and shop stewards groups organized the protests so that they were after working hours and thereby counterposed to strikes. After this, the actions began to fall off. The final big demonstration in Copenhagen on October 25 was only 30,000.

The way that the right-wing government was established illustrates the problem. It was not on the basis of a right-



wing electoral victory. It was through a shuffling of parliamentary coalitions, in which the Social Democratic minority government of Anker Jorgensen effectively handed responsibility for carrying the austerity policy further to a new bourgeois coalition.

The initials of the parties involved in the new coalition spell the word for "toilet seat" in Danish, and so the government is known as the "toilet-seat cabinet."

It has become abundantly clear that the Social Democrats want this government to remain in office to do the dirty work. If they had put their weight behind the October demonstrations, they could have forced new elections, with excellent chances of winning.

The Social Democrats left no doubt about their objectives in the December 7 vote on deploying nuclear missiles in Denmark. There is a powerful anti-nuclear movement in the country, and the lineup in parliament made it perfectly possible to put the government in a minority.

The SF and Left Socialists introduced a motion calling for a cutoff of support for NATO. But then the SP introduced one that in fact accepted the government's present proposal and effectively committed to nothing in the future but was sweetened with the provision that "after this" there would be no money for NATO. The bourgeois parties all voted for the SP motion.

*Klassekampen* reporters noted that during the protest demonstrations and the dockers strike, while the workers expressed hatred for "the toilet-seat government," few showed any enthusiasm for the idea of a return of the SP to the seat of power.

That was the basic problem of both the mass protest movement and the dockers strike. Facing a general offensive by the bourgeoisie, the workers have no leadership on a national scale ready to lead a fight-back. In such a situation, it is nearly inevitable that there will be some initial defeats.

However, the reformist machines are not so well integrated nor the workers movement so "normalized" as in most other north European countries. There are already scattered elements of an alternative militant leadership.

In fact, the example of the Polish workers has had an influence in Denmark in particular. Following the military crackdown in Poland, Danish dockers carried out actions in solidarity with their Polish counterparts. During the dockers strike, the Danish Fourth Internationalists stressed the example of *Solidarnosc*, which became more directly relevant as Danish workers were obliged to work under police surveillance.

In the past four months, important sections of the Danish working class have gone through a very intense experience of struggle. The likelihood is that, under the impact of this, the radicalization shown in these battles will continue to deepen.

# Tribunal of the Peoples condemns Guatemalan regime



The following interview was given early in February to Renaldo Tucci, Paris correspondent of International Viewpoint, by a Guatemalan exile active in the French movement of solidarity with the people of Guatemala.

**Question.** You were at the Permanent Tribunal of the Peoples session on Guatemala, which was held in the last week of January 1983 in Madrid. First of all, can you explain what this tribunal is, its composition, and its aims?

**A.** The Permanent Tribunal of the Peoples is a body whose aim is to analyse, at the request of various human-rights organisations, accusations of violation of human rights in a given country. It also studies the economic and political situation. The Tribunal evaluates the proofs of any such violations and if verified, clarifies the causes and those responsible.

**Q.** What is the origin of the Tribunal? Who formed it?

**A.** The Lelio Basso Foundation is behind the Tribunal. L. Basso was an Italian senator, a democrat, who had a legal firm that defended in the international courts countries involved in nationalisations of private companies, multinationals. He used the fees earned to finance a body defending the rights of peoples. The Tribunal has already held

seven sessions, and its verdicts have received international attention. (1)

**Q.** Who are the members of the Tribunal and its judges?

**A.** For the most part they are independent personalities, non-partisan but neutral — political personalities, intellectuals, scientists, lawyers, religious leaders.

**Q.** Who was present, and how was the session organised?

**A.** As concerns the judges, there was a broad spectrum of sociologists, intellectuals such as Eduardo Galeano; the Nobel-prize winner, George Wald and Eduardo Perez Esquivel; Mgr. Mendez Arceo; and Giulio Girardi (an Italian theologian).

The Guatemalan opposition was fully represented, all the popular, democratic, revolutionary organisations; intellectuals; politicians; peasants; workers and students. Various Guatemalan human-rights organisations were also present — the Guatemalan Human-Rights Commission, which had asked for this session, and the Pro-Justicia y Paz (Pro-Justice and Peace) Committee. Other participants included Guillermo Toriello, Guatemalan Chancellor under the Arbenz government (2) and now the international representative of the URNG; the ex-rector of Guatemala

City University, Doctor R. Castillo Montalvo, whose father is currently Guatemalan ambassador at the UN; leaders such as Pablo Ceto of the Frente Popular 31 de Enero and a member of the CGUP (3), Rigoberto Menchu, Gabriel Ixmata, and Arturo Arias, secretary of the ATCG (Cultural Workers Association of Guatemala).

There were witnesses for each theme — many were peasants, Carmelita Santos, a catechism teacher Pro-Justicia y Paz; an ex-army sergeant; a peasant forcibly recruited to the 'civilian patrols'; and Susanna de Medina, wife of Rolando de Medina, an intellectual kidnapped last October.

The reporters and witnesses represented the whole of the Guatemalan opposition. This is very important since it confirms the strength and cohesion of this opposition.

**Q.** Was the Guatemalan government, the accused, represented at the Tribunal?

**A.** No. Despite being invited, the Guatemalan government did not give any official answer. There were rumours that the President of the Council of State was going to come, accompanied by witnesses and defence lawyers. But given the weight of the evidence and proofs, the government would have found it exceedingly difficult to go there and deny its crimes. That is particularly so at the moment when it is trying to improve its international image. It did not come, it said, because it considered this tribunal had no validity, and was a 'put-up affair.'

What the Guatemalan government does not say is that it had been invited to give evidence and bring proofs. It should be remembered that at the Tribunal there was a report and evidence given on each theme, and the judges cross-examined both the reports and the witnesses. The government could have delegated people to refute the accusations made against it on every question. But it chose not to do so. Why? Because the direct testimony, documentation, legal arguments, and proofs were irrefutable.

**Q.** Can you give us some examples of the evidence?

**A.** On the systematic repression of the Rios Montt regime, there was a lot of written evidence given to the judges as well as testimony from witnesses such as Mrs. Consuelo de Azmitia, whose husband and two children were kidnapped. On the army, there was a report and evidence given by an ex-sergeant. Intellectuals and Indians testified about the cultural genocide,

1. One of the more recent verdicts was the condemnation of the Soviet Union for conducting mass terror in Afghanistan. On this, see "Tribunal on Afghanistan" by Michel Lequenne in IV, Issue No 22, January 24, 1983. — IV

2. The Arbenz government, which carried out some progressive reforms, was overthrown by a CIA organized invasion and coup in 1954. — IV

3. CGUP: Guatemalan Committee of Patriotic Unity. — IV

the ethnocide. Other reports and evidence dealt with the counter-insurgency strategy, persecution of the Church, and of Christians in general etc.

*Q What was the verdict?*

A. After deliberation behind closed doors, the verdict, set forth in a document of seventy pages, was announced in a press conference given on January 31, (the third anniversary of the Spanish Embassy massacre). I would like to draw out the most important aspects of this closely argued document.

Firstly, with respect to the illegitimacy of the Rios Montt regime: The decrees issued by the latter are in flagrant violation of all international laws and conventions that protect human rights (the Geneva Convention, various UN amendments, the OAS convention).

Secondly, there was definite proof of the genocide. To be sure, the word 'genocide' is used a lot these days to describe different situations. But it seems to me that for the first time it has been recognised, according to the principles of the Nuremburg Tribunal, that there is genocide in Guatemala. This is true whatever precise definition of genocide one uses. In a strict sense, because the regime is involved in the total extermination of small population centers, and in a broader sense, because we are seeing the partial but very extensive destruction of the Indian community as a whole, about half of which is threatened with extinction. (4) This latter aspect was already defined as genocide by the prescriptions of the Nuremburg Tribunal as well as by the various conventions established later. The Tribunal thus legally, and not just politically, proved that genocide in the precise sense of the term, is taking place in Guatemala.

Thirdly, the Tribunal recognised a state of war exists in Guatemala, which applies both to the internal situation and to the status of the refugees. Although this question was not raised directly in the sessions, the judges also called for the recognition of the Guatemalan organisations, in particular the URNG, as 'belligerent parties'. This was a very important decision, much applauded by the people there.

*Rios Montt, leader of Guatemalan regime (DR)*



*The military think that these are guerrillas (DR)*

Fourthly the Tribunal made an appeal to all international bodies and the United States to stop, or suspend, all economic and military aid to the Guatemalan regime.

Finally a letter was sent with a copy of the verdict to the Pope, who will be visiting Guatemala in March. Thus the Pope will be informed of the country's situation and the real living conditions of the people he wants to address.

*Q. What is the significance for the URNG (5) of being recognised by the Tribunal, perhaps tomorrow by other bodies, as 'a belligerent party'?*

A. In my opinion, the main impact of this resolution is to show that the Guatemalan revolutionary organisations are not some sort of 'gang of subversives.'

On the contrary, these organisations unified in the URNG, have incontestably proved they are political organisations, with a project, a programme representing an alternative for the Guatemalan people. They are organisations that decided to take up arms because

it was the only way of winning the reforms needed by the Guatemalan people. They are not groups who opt for the armed struggle for the pleasure of it, who enjoy letting off bombs all over the place. No, the reality is that the Guatemalan opposition has been restructured around the perspective of overthrowing the regime, of confronting by force a military dictatorship that will never peacefully relinquish its power. Such a regime will never make the least real reform.

*Q. What are the consequences of the Tribunal's work on the struggle of the Guatemalan people to establish a 'patriotic, popular, revolutionary and democratic government'?*

A. In the short term, I think it adds to the buildup of international pressure. Indeed, this verdict against the regime comes just after the UN resolution on Guatemala and the resolution adopted by the European parliament on December 16. Furthermore, it has been handed down just before the meeting of the UN sub-Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

With all the proofs and arguments contained in the Tribunal document, it is possible to irrefutably prove that the Guatemalan government is a regime that not only violates human rights but is also carrying out a systematic policy of genocide. Moreover, all economic and military aid to this regime directly serves the counter-insurgency campaign. International pressure can isolate the Guatemalan regime and help bring closer the day when our people's suffering will be ended.

*Q. How can the Permanent Tribunal of the Peoples session on Guatemala help us in our solidarity work?*

A. First of all the solidarity movement can use the documents that prove the regime's genocide and the legitimacy of our struggle. The verdict provides us with a good basis for further isolating the Guatemalan regime and developing solidarity with the Guatemalan organisations. We must publicise as widely as possible the Tribunal's work and get it taken up by political parties, trade unions, democratic, human-rights and religious organisations. We want its message to reach a wide public — to show that the regime is not just a military dictatorship but that there is a logic behind it — international aid backs it up, particularly from Israel, Taiwan, Chile, and Argentina (in addition to the US), and there is a struggle taking place that offers a real political alternative. ■

4. About 43% of the population is Indian, as defined by linguistic and social criteria. This percentage has been steadily declining for centuries. Thus it fell by 10% from 53% in 1950 to 43% in 1964. The 1973 census showed no major change from 1964, but such processes do not develop in a linear way but rather in leaps. They are registered in censuses as social changes involved come to their conclusion. The official statistics show only the general trend; they notoriously underestimate the size of the Indian population. — IV

5. URNG: Guatemalan Revolutionary National Union. — IV



# The national question and the land question in the South African revolution

## A capitalist country of a special type

1. In the course of the last decade southern Africa has emerged as an area of major importance in world politics. The victory of the liberation movements in the former Portuguese territories, the end of the white racist regime in Zimbabwe, and the upsurge of mass struggle in South Africa, have turned what was once a region of 'stable' imperialist domination into a zone of crisis and upheaval. The fact that a considerable number of strategic raw materials and a large volume of imperialist investments are concentrated in this part of the continent makes this crisis situation of great concern to imperialist powers.

The key to the future of southern Africa lies in the Republic of South Africa. This country is the most important regional base for imperialism and the main counter-revolutionary force in the region. But it also contains an industrial economy richer than any on the African continent, built by the labour of a large and powerful black working class. If the productive powers of the South African workers were to be freed from the fetters of racism and capitalism, they could become an immense social force for the liberation of Africa from imperialist domination.

The South African Republic is a semi-industrialised capitalist country, still dependent, despite important industrial development, on investments and technological assistance from imperialism. But it is a capitalist country of a particular type. The great majority of the population and the overwhelming majority of industrial and agricultural producers do not have the right of citizenship in their own country, neither do they have rights of self-determination, nor elementary democratic or political rights. *This is a unique situation internationally that results from the particular forms of implantation of capital via the white settler colonialists allied with foreign capital: first to Dutch and British colonialism, then to imperialism generally. Apartheid is only the final form of the racial segregation by which international capital and the leading layers of the local whites have been able for more than a century to maintain the super-exploitation of the black proletariat which is the source of the profits of the gold and diamond mines, that are one of the essential bases of the interna-*

tional capitalist economy and of the accumulation of capital locally.

South Africa is a semi-industrialised capitalist country for which manufacturing represented 22 per cent of gross domestic product in 1975 (against 17 per cent for Egypt and 10 per cent for Nigeria, the next two most industrialised countries on the continent). By way of comparison this proportion is 23 per cent for Mexico, 35 per cent for Argentina, 28 per cent for South Korea and 30 per cent for Hong Kong. In 1977 the growth of South Africa's GDP was three times the average for the rest of the continent. By the end of the eighties it is predicted that the secondary sector will account for 28.9% of GDP.

It has the greatest concentration of mineral wealth in the capitalist world. It is the foremost world producer of gold (75 per cent of capitalist world production). It ranks third for uranium and diamonds, second for chrome, seventh for phosphates and coal, of which it is one of the principal exporters, eighth for nickel and iron ore. Its share of the world production is 92 per cent for platinum and 62 per cent for manganese. Mineral production is around 20 per cent of national production and up to 80 per cent of exports.

*It is the share of this mineral income in the general income that in part maintains its dependence on imperialism.* South Africa's gold production is more a factor leading to its dependence on the imperialist market than a means of pressure or autonomy. Fluctuations in the price of the yellow metal strongly influence the South African economy. The Pretoria regime is not really able to exert any influence over these externally determined factors. The lower prices of gold and their fluctuation since 1981 explain why they no longer hedge the South African economy against international recession: deficit of the balance of trade and a rate of inflation of about 15-16%.

This immense wealth is jointly controlled by South African and foreign capital, more and more closely integrated one with the other, and incorporated in trusts and companies operating in *joint ventures*. The other pole of society is found in the impoverished mass of black workers (African, 'coloured' and 'indian' according to the official terminology) for whom per capital income is about 10 per cent of that of the whites. The most misery is found among the peasantry of the *Bantustans*, largely dependent on subsidies from the South African state and the wages of migrant workers. It is this polarisa-

tion between rich and poor which, coinciding as it does with apartheid and the control of all fertile land by whites, makes the South African social situation explosive.

2. South Africa occupies an absolutely unique position on the African continent. It alone is the site of nearly 50 per cent of all imperialist investment in Africa south of the Sahara. The importance of its mineral riches and mining exports makes it one of the essential bases of the international capitalist economy. The development of the colonial revolution, notably in the Middle East, has increased South African global strategic importance. In June 1981, a private conference was held in Buenos Aires which included military personnel from the USA, South Africa, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Brazil. It had the purpose of discussing the long-standing project of a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Washington was particularly interested in using the military base at Simonstown abandoned by the British in 1975.

The development of the national liberation movement in Black Africa, especially in southern Africa, has led to the consolidation of South Africa as the main counter-revolutionary force of the region. Its military interventions into Zimbabwe before independence, in Angola, Namibia and Mozambique have a tendency to extend over a wider geographical area. The national defence budget has quadrupled in ten years and has now reached 2.5 billion rand annually. The armaments industry in South Africa is a sector of prime importance that is already capable of manufacturing heavy weapons based on foreign models imported in the past. The government has encouraged the movement of savings towards national defence bonds and foreign companies such as Barclays Bank, Telefunken and a subsidiary of the French Thomson group have also invested in such bonds. The South African state has been able to capitalise on certain technologies introduced by foreign firms by exploiting their military possibilities, in order, as always, to get round the UN recommendations for a halt to all arms trade with South Africa.

The growth of the South African economy necessitates more and more the incorporation of African countries into its commercial sphere of influence. A significant amount of capital invested in these countries comes from South Africa. It dominates in different ways the economies of Botswana, Lesotho and



Black miners learn their trade (DR)

Swaziland. It exercises a strong influence on those of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Zambia, particularly in the latter's mining sector. A significant part of the foodstuffs consumed in these countries is provided by South Africa. The South African communications network extends over a part of the sub-continent. In Mozambique the exploitation of the port of Maputo depends on materials and personnel from South Africa. The same country's giant Cabora Bassa dam exports most of its power production to South Africa. Furthermore in some of the countries of the region there is a temporary emigration of the work force to the South African mines. This economic influence now extends as far as Kenya, Zaire, the Congo and Mauritius. For the single year of 1980 South African exports to Africa increased by 66.6% reaching a level of 1.1 billion rand.

All serious efforts to weaken the economic weight of the racist bastion must be supported. However the present appeals of the 'front line' states for international aid to reduce their dependence are utopian. It is a tragic and dangerous illusion to believe that the imperialist states are going to help these countries decisively to break with South African influence when they themselves have such a big stake in the latter. Precisely because the 'front-line' states have dominated economies the only possible political position to have there is to struggle simultaneously against the economic, political and military influence of the racist state and to fight the local ruling classes who are the accomplices of imperialist domination.

There is a real contradiction between on the one hand, the necessity for the racist regime to play the role of counter-revolutionary policeman over a part of the continent which accentuates the indignation and hatred of the mass of Africans for South Africa, and on the other, the need to gain crucial parts of the continent as arenas for its own commercial expansion. The most effective solution to this problem would be the installation, with the aid of imperialism, of more conciliatory regimes in these surrounding countries. But as long as the anti-imperialist consciousness of the masses of Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe is not finally defeated, it is difficult to reconcile

these imperatives for South African commercial expansion with those of military repression against countries that remain for the moment bourgeois nationalist regimes brought to power by mass anti-colonialist movements and now having their own separate interests as a developing national ruling class. This contradiction is the basis of one of the tactical differences between some imperialist milieus and Pretoria that relate simply to what is the most effective means to combat the mounting mass movement in the region — and not ones that arise from fundamentally divergent political and economic objectives.

## Gold, and technological dependence

3. The growth of the South African economy has produced a powerful class of white South African capitalists. From the mid-1920s a tax (the Excess Profits Tax) hit mining profits, permitting a redistribution of profit and the development of state and private manufacturing industry (in particular steel or production linked to the needs of the mining industry). But at the same time the interpenetration of national and international capital, both in mining and in manufacturing grew stronger. Since the unequal exchange plays a primary role for imperialism (in opposition to the traditional and colonial interests in mines) the development of South African industry is, for multinational companies, an interesting target for the export of machines and equipment. The increase of South African industry is also the consequence of this change during the last 30 years in the world capitalist market.

The appearance of a South African finance capital sector is a recent development in the history of capitalism in that country, but in no way is a sign of its 'completion'. It is in fact yet another illustration of the *law of uneven and combined development* (which besides is in no way limited to South Africa). It would however be premature to deduce from it a qualitative change in the relations between the South African bourgeoisie and imperialism. The sector of the ruling class that holds this section of finance capital remains dependent on the technological expertise of

the big industrial powers. For this reason, and also because of the permanent financial and commercial needs of the Republic, South African capitalists are most often obliged to have recourse to joint-ventures for any large-scale undertakings. But above all this bourgeoisie remains dependent on the mechanisms that have made possible its profits — apartheid and the national oppression imposed on the majority of the population. It cannot therefore overthrow these barbaric forms that have been responsible for its own process of capital accumulation. It therefore finds itself historically condemned not to be able to obtain a development identical to that of a typical ruling class of an advanced capitalist country. The narrowness of the internal market, itself dependent on apartheid constitutes another aspect of this objective blockage and cannot be overcome by the South African ruling class. Thus between 1972 and 1980 South Africa borrowed nearly 7 billions US dollars from overseas banks via 186 different loans. Typical are the loans made by such as Barclays to the South African Oil Fund that aims, via the Sasol oil from coal projects, to offset dependence on foreign oil.

4. Despite the fact that a South African finance capital has emerged which even engages in the export of capital, foreign capital continues to predominate in the banking sector. In 1978 two foreign banks, Barclays and Standard Bank Investments, on their own represented 52 per cent of the overall funds of the 20 most important financial institutions of the country. The next three largest the Netbank, the Volkskas and the Bankorp were controlled by South African capital.

In the mining sector foreign participation is very strongly entrenched going up to 72 per cent of capital in the best gold portfolios quoted. They are of the order of 40 per cent of the total mineral sector capitalisation on the stock exchange, worth in 1979 some 35 billion Rands. US firms control 25% of South African mines actions.

Foreign companies totally control the electronics industry. They control around 80 per cent of sales and the multinationals entirely dominate the computer-data communications industry. In the car industry three-quarters of annual turnover is accounted for by foreign firms, the rest going usually to concessionaires holding licenses. With regard to sources of energy, South Africa is still far from being able to liberate itself from foreign control. Caltex, Mobil, BP, Total and Shell control around 85 per cent of the oil industry of the country. 95 per cent of refined petroleum products are processed in four refineries, three of which belong to multinationals that own between them 91 per cent of service stations.

Also in the coal industry, traditionally in the hands of South African companies, Total, Shell and BP have obtained mining and selling rights, no doubt in exchange for the oil that has been difficult to import since the decision of the Arab League in 1973 to stop all sales of oil goods to South Africa.

During the last eight years foreign investment has almost tripled in value, going from 10.5 billion rand in 1973 to 23 billion in 1978

and 30 billion R at the end of 1981 (45% of GDP). Yet this represents accumulated profits and inflation: in the past two years there has been a deficit on capital account. The principal owner of this capital remains Great Britain with around 8 billion followed by the rest of the EEC with 6 billion and the USA with 5 billion. The South African government is trying to reform the bank framework and to increase its own political control on the Bank Companies. In the banking sector, using the banking act of 1974 it obliged financial institutions to reduce foreign participation to 50 per cent by 1985. This will essentially affect four banks: Barclays, Standard Bank, Hill Samuel and the Southern French Bank (a subsidiary of the *Compagnie française de l'Indochine et de Suez*, today nationalised by the French government). The estimated 350 US companies operating in South Africa employ about 70,000 Africans, comprising 2% of the total African labour force.

But the contradictions of dependence remains. The government has created a 'financial rand' marked down by 25-38 per cent below the commercial rand in order to favour foreign investment, more particularly that of non-residents. The market for this 'financial rand' is located in London with two auxiliary markets in New York and Johannesburg.

The South African government is also trying to reduce this dependence in the areas of energy and armaments. It has made considerable investments in the state companies that now dominate numerous industries. The Iron and Steel industry (ISCOR) and electrical generating (ESCOM) have been under state control since their beginning in the 1930s. It has also taken many steps to increase local production and to assist South African enterprises to become majority shareholders in certain key branches. The determination to resolve the oil problem has led to a concentration on technical research for substitutes.

It is precisely in this area that the difficulties and contradictions of this 'nationalist' policy are illustrated. South African technological skills often require imperialist industrial inputs for their realisation. For instance for the Sasol II and III projects which have the objectives of transforming coal into petroleum products, 40 per cent of the costs are being borne by foreign capital.

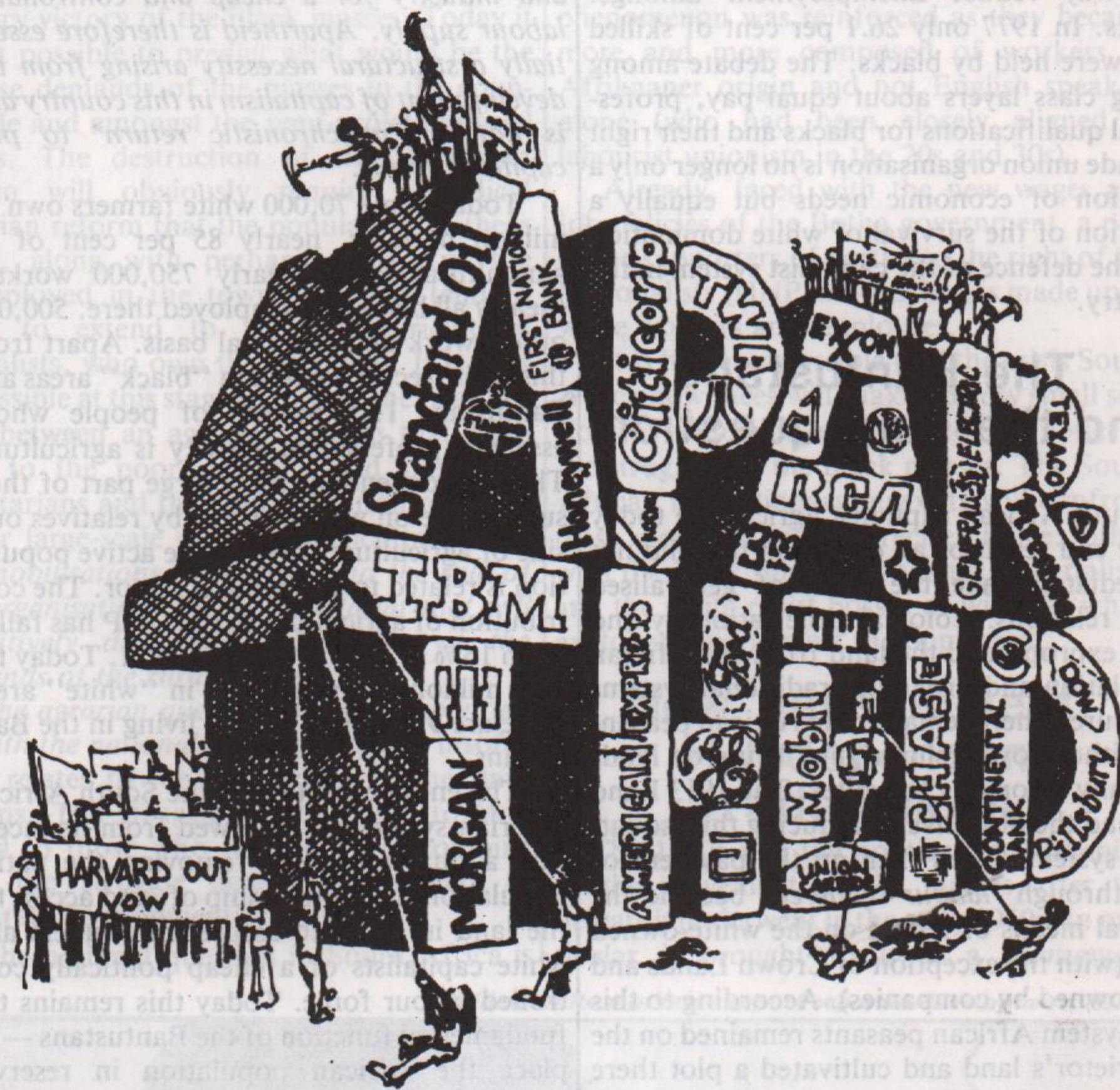
Multinationals such as the petroleum companies or some British banks will be shareholders in Sasol III. It is therefore clear overall that the development of capitalism in South Africa is reinforcing the weight of foreign investments and technology. The government can try to favour investments by the South African bourgeoisie but overall it is failing to reduce substantially its dependence on foreign capital. Industrial growth does not only increase technological dependence, it depends itself in part on the international market for gold.

5. The material base of the former contradiction between the interests of the Afikaaners and the English speaking bourgeoisie has been largely modified. The intertwined interests of the factions of the dominant classes no longer allow such a simplification. It is, however, true that the big industrial and financial boureoisies (mostly English-speaking) opposes the political practice of the majority of the small business,

agriculture, the bureaucracy and the army. At the bottom these differences concern the needs of modern capitalism, for a rationalisation of capitalist domination and a widening of the market. The differences between the liberals and the ruling National Party center on one question: how best to avoid upsurge of the oppressed and the opening of a revolutionary crisis. The liberals think that a controlled democratisation will block the process of radicalisation of the mass movement. The majority of the National Party believe that the least major concession reinforces the determination of the masses and that only the stabilisation of apartheid by the creation of a 'Coloured' and 'Indian' petit-bourgeoisie can avoid the worst. No fraction of the bourgeoisie is in fact ready to give all political and democratic rights to the black worker and peasant masses. F. van Zyl Slabbert, leader of the liberal opposition, for example, accompanies the proposals for a democratic

public sermons at the international level, in no way has it decided to put into question the system of racial segregation. Some recent studies have besides proved that American and European firms established in South Africa in general ignore the 'Codes of Conduct' (which moreover are set at very modest levels) elaborated by various official bodies which aim to achieve equal wages between blacks and whites 'through example'. The Sullivan Code of the USA and its equivalents established by the EEC have shown themselves quite incapable of counter-acting the imperatives of capitalist profit in South Africa. In 1980 a British government document admitted that 33 British companies paid salaries below the 'poverty line' to their black employees and that 20,000 black wage earners in British subsidiaries were paid at rates below the very modest standards prescribed by the EEC.

The development of capitalism in this



opening-up with a right of veto for the white minority, and explains his idea that 'universal franchise must be distinguished from majority rule'.

It is the National Party itself which is at this stage divided on this between 'verligte' (enlightened) and 'verkrampste' (hard line). But these political conflicts show only a growing political crisis amongst the bourgeoisie amidst a situation of social tension in the country. They in no way indicate the determination of any fraction of the ruling class to accept the need for a fundamental change in the policy of racial segregation. Some new political organisations like the Herstigte National Party, the National Conservative Party and neo-Nazi groups show, on the contrary, that some sections of the white population are preparing for confrontation.

Imperialism is the principal beneficiary of this situation. In spite of all its hypocritical

country, the importance of foreign investments or the appearance of a South African finance capital are not therefore miraculous events presaging the evolution of the country towards bourgeois democracy as a result of the so-called objective needs of capitalism. The contradictions within this system will not give birth to its reformist transformation. On the contrary, the more wealth is accumulated by the bourgeois camp the less is it possible to call into question the prison camp conditions imposed on the black population. The evolution of capitalism in South Africa each day further accumulates the basis for its violent overthrow.

The South African bosses and the more 'enlightened' political leaders recognise on the contrary that the rigorous system of job reservation for whites and the low professional qualifications of blacks holds back in the short term the economic development of

the country. At the 'Manpower 80s' symposium it was revealed that South Africa would have to train nearly 5 million extra workers in the next eight years. The government has decided to accelerate professional training for 'african' and 'coloured'. It has embarked on a re-moulding of the employment market by opening jobs in new sectors to blacks. But this cannot immediately solve industry's problem of skilled labour nor the problem of enlarging the internal market for consumer goods. On the other hand this does hit the white labour aristocracy which constitutes the social base of the regime and reinforces the already strong inflationary tendencies of the South African economy. This debate currently pre-occupies ruling class circles in South Africa. The 'generous' idea of encouraging small-scale black enterprises directed towards the townships' market and the possibility of extending house ownership to certain 'privileged' black persons will in one way reduce unemployment amongst blacks. In 1977 only 26.1 per cent of skilled jobs were held by blacks. The debate among ruling class layers about equal pay, professional qualifications for blacks and their right to trade union organisation is no longer only a question of economic needs but equally a question of the survival of white domination and the defence of the capitalist system in the country.

## The Bantustans and the land question

6. South African capitalist agriculture today is the end result of an evolution that did not immediately take the form of generalised wage relations. Colonial penetration by and large expropriated the land from the African population and broke up traditional systems of tenure. There remained an African peasantry without ownership rights, living on lands formally belonging to whites. The 1913 Land Act had the objective of reducing this 'squating' system. From then on the payment of rent through 'labour rendered' became the general means of tenure on the white-owned land (with the exception of Crown Lands and land owned by companies). According to this new system African peasants remained on the proprietor's land and cultivated a plot there but were under obligation by contract to supply labour. This development only took place as a result of the direct intervention of the state against the peasant squatters. This organisation of agricultural labour was in some ways a sort of *transitional system*. Through the 1936 Native Trust and Lands Act and the initial measures of the apartheid regime after the Second World War, which stopped all legal migration of black workers to the towns, payment of rent in labour supplies disappeared to give way to a pure and simple agricultural wage labour force. This development took place under pressure from the Boer farmers through their farmers' union and at the parliamentary level through the arrival in power of the Nationalists in 1948. *The racist apartheid institutions founded at this epoch arose therefore in part from the new needs of a capitalist agriculture conscious of its requirement for a stable labour force. They were also fundamental to the needs of mining*



Black workers village in Natal sugar plantation (DR)

and industry for a cheap and controllable labour supply. Apartheid is therefore essentially a structural necessity arising from the development of capitalism in this country and is not an 'anachronistic return' to pre-capitalist forms.

Today some 70,000 white farmers own 85 million hectares, nearly 85 per cent of all agricultural land. Nearly 750,000 workers (nearly all black) are employed there. 500,000 others work on a seasonal basis. Apart from this white sector we find in "black" areas and Bantustans 1.25 million of people whose essential professional activity is agriculture. They are dependant for a large part of their subsistence on wages earned by relatives outside of agriculture. 28% of the active population is related to agricultural sector. The contribution of agriculture to the GNP has fallen from 16% in 1946 to 6.8% in 1981. Today for 10.5 million of "migrants" in "white" areas there are 9.6 million people living in the Bantustans.

The entire evolution of the South African agrarian system has followed from its inception a dual objective: removing the native population from ownership of, and access to, the land in order to assure the farmers and white capitalists of a cheap politically controlled labour force. Today this remains the fundamental function of the Bantustans — to place the African population in reserves where they are deprived of resources, thus obliging them to sell their labour power at 'starvation-level' wages to South African capitalists and to remain as a reserve army of labour far from the industrial centres. The recent setting up of industries on the periphery of the 'reserves' is an even more cynical expression of this policy. Thus the racist regime deprives this population of all civil and political rights, puts it under constant repression, places it under *structures of artificial re-tribalisation* in order to keep it divided and without the capacity to defend its most elementary rights — including that of selling its own labour power in a collective fashion in a unified labour market.

One indication of the desperate character of the Bantustans' economies is given by the fact that in Venda in 1975 82 per cent of the population consisted of people who depended on remittances from migrant labour in the white areas. 90 per cent of the economically

active population worked in agriculture but provided only 0.9 per cent of the national income of this territory. But for the biggest of the Bantustans, the Transkei, it is predicted that in the year 2000, 1.9 million of the 5 million inhabitants will be unemployed. Already today this Bantustan is unable to produce more than one third of the food requirements of its population. The infant mortality rate is 282 per thousand live births against 18.5 for whites in South Africa. People not belonging to the officially accepted race in a particular area are constantly harassed by the authorities thus adding to the persistent persecution directed at preventing the unification of the black masses. Black trade union militants are imprisoned, even killed, by the puppet 'authorities' of these territories on behalf of the white racists.

7. In her book *The Accumulation of Capital* Rosa Luxemburg insisted that a 'million white exploiters of two national groups cemented their fraternal alliance in the form of the Union of South Africa by depriving 5 million black workers of their civil and political rights'. This collusion, or at least this community of interest, expresses itself unevenly and in different ways. The pressure of the state against squatting encouraged accumulation by the Afrikaaner peasantry and its investment outside of agriculture in industry and banking. The pact established in 1924 between the National Party and the Labour Party was another form of consensus between different white layers. It was this government that established a protectionist tariff, assisted agriculture and created the nationalised sector, notably the steel business, ISCOR, the Excess Profits Tax also favoured the *bourgeois bloc* unifying a part of Afrikaaner interests with those of the English-speaking capitalists and imperialism.

Racial discrimination has worked in favour of the profit-making of all sections of the bourgeoisie in South Africa. The existence of two labour markets — one for whites and one for blacks — has facilitated the combination of the defence of an internal market, albeit limited, founded on white salaries, and very low cost production rooted in the existence of the reserve army of black workers and their minimal salaries. *In the final analysis the South African state is directed to*

*sustaining this articulation.* In this context it has been possible to combine on the one side, the emergence of a South African bourgeoisie and on the other, the imperialist interests searching for the maximum return on their investment. The South African state has served a *dual function* which still explains the complicity today between the white South African employers and foreign investors. The existence of an autonomous state apparatus since 1910 has been an important factor in the strengthening of a white South African bourgeoisie and in the stimulation of its investments.

The racist regime thus has a real margin of manoeuvre, especially because it knows that it can, even if only temporarily, maintain a position of relative isolation thanks to the resources of the country, its own relative economic development and the autonomy of the interests of the multinationals in relation to imperialist governments.

That is why it regularly uses these possibilities to put pressure on the West's governments so that they will line up with it in a more determined way. Certain military interventions such as Operation Proteus in 1981 against Angola can have this as one of its objectives.

## From a struggle for democratic rights to the anti-capitalist revolution

8. The South African revolution will conform with class reality, that is, with the social, economic and political structures of the country. It will take the form of a *process of permanent revolution* that would seek to resolve the national question, the question of equal civil and political rights and the land problem in the interests of the great majority of the population: Africans, Coloureds and Indians.

At the same time given the preponderant weight of the industrial, mining and agricultural proletariat in the working population, the struggle for these rights will be carried out through increasingly proletarian means of action and organisation and will be combined more and more with the struggle for class objectives proper to the proletariat.

Already by 1970 1.5 million black workers were employed in industry and provided 85 per cent of the labour force in this sector. At the same date 36.6 per cent of the economically active population were concentrated in four principal industrial regions (of these 23.3 per cent were in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand area). The concentration of more than 9 million blacks (out of a black population of 20 million) in the townships — immense shanty towns on the periphery of the big industrial cities — has reinforced the explosive character of this evolution.

The South African revolution will begin on the terrain of the national question. The struggle in the factories expresses above all the will of blacks to organise as black workers to win their emancipation. Their mobilisations *combine* diverse immediate demands (salaries, work conditions, residence rights, solidarity against repression) with the struggle

for national democratic demands, for *national liberation* (equal rights, freedom of expression and organisation). *The development of the revolutionary process from a struggle for national democratic demands into a fight for anti-capitalist objectives will thus be uninterrupted.*

That is why the growth of the mass movement will bring together on the one side the formation of the black community associations locally and nationally leading to the unity of the black masses against the racist regime, and on the other, the formation of unions and other organisations of the proletariat properly speaking — while it is still not possible to predict the precise articulations of the two organisational forms.

In the countryside the generalised development of agrarian capitalism in the white zone and the generalisation of wage labour must favour the collective appropriation under whatever form of the large agricultural holdings in the wake of a revolutionary victory of the black masses. Today it is not possible to predict what would be the precise demands of the masses in the countryside and amongst the semi-proletarianised layers. The destruction of the Bantustan system will obviously require a radical agrarian reform that the population of these areas, along with perhaps a part of the unemployed in the townships, will tend to want to extend to the big agricultural capitalists, who own the best land. It is thus impossible at this stage to foresee the relationship between an agrarian reform that gives land to the poor peasants and the semi-proletarians and the nationalisation of a sector or large-scale capitalist agriculture. *It is the mobilisations themselves and the role of the organisations of the proletariat that will definitively determine the nature of the demands of the rural masses.*

*The agrarian question is inextricably tied up with the national question* notably insofar as it relates to the destruction of the Bantustans. The struggle for the right to land ('land to those who work it') will combine with the struggle against all aspects of 'separate development'.

The national question in South Africa is

above all the fight to unify all the oppressed and exploited and to win their right to constitute a single nation. The motor force of this struggle is the industrial proletariat, unifying around itself the youth of the townships, the mining and agricultural proletariat and the poor peasantry. It is already significant that a part of the mobilisations in the township are associated with workers struggles (bus boycotts, boycott of meat in the Cape during the strike in the slaughterhouses) and that actions led by young Indians and coloureds take similar forms to that of the African youth.

The white labour aristocracy, more and more elevated out of the productive sector constitutes a 'privileged and arrogant caste of whites' (Trotsky) that seeks to defend its privileges.

The 1924 Pact, through the subsidiary positions it gave the unions of the white working class fuelled the disappearance of the latter as an autonomous political force. This phenomenon was reinforced as they became more and more composed of workers of Afrikaaner origin and not English speakers alone (who had been closely aligned to labourist unionism in the 20s and 30s).

Already, faced with the new wages and job policies of the Botha government, a part of the supporters of parties to the right of the Nationalists (HNP and fascists) is made up of white workers and employees.

It is however possible that the crisis South Africa now faces will shake up very small sections of whites and lead them to take notice of the struggles of the black masses. The South African revolutionary marxists will confront these elements with a precise choice: either with the black oppressed against imperialism and the white racist bosses or with the white exploiters and against the oppressed.

## New development of independent trade unions

9. The 1970s saw the political re-awakening of the movement of the masses after the defeats it underwent in the early 1960s. In particular it brought forth as a *permanent*

Skilled white workers support separate development (DR)



feature the struggles of the workers and youth and urban masses generally.

It was first the struggles of the workers in 1972-3, then the uprising in Soweto in 1976 which were characterised by new forms of radicalisation amongst the youth as also amongst workers. The struggles in the winter of 1980 illustrated that the centre of gravity of the struggle against apartheid is today the working class. This now confronts the white power structure on two levels. One is around economic demands and the other the right to impose union recognition, a fight that provides a lesson and inspiration for the entire mass movement, community associations etc.

The independent trade-union movement is still young and divided. Two federations; Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), as well as a certain number of trade unions (General Workers Union, GWU; African Food and Canning Workers Union; South African Allied Workers Union, SAAWU; the Motor Assembles and Components Workers Union, MACWUSA;...) share the bulk of the trade-union membership of the black workers. The independent trade-union movement (leaving apart COSU) declares itself 'non-racial', which, in the conditions of South Africa is a pedagogic formula for class-conscious trade unionism as opposed to trade unions by race led or influenced by 'coloured' or 'indians' or by movements like the Zulu Inkatha. The problems arise little by little, introducing between all these organisations, and within them, debates and differences. The question of registration, that of 'industrial councils', as well as that of directly political demands, have already occupied a big place in these debates. The principle of 'non-collaboration' with the institutions of the racist state should become more precise with each new experience of struggle and of confrontation with the regime or the bosses.

The question of 'registration' confronts the trade unions with a political problem. The effects of this regulation, fixed by the Wiehahn commission, are to well and truly allow repressive control by the government. A struggle against the principle is therefore necessary. However, the already complex history of the South African trade unions in no way allows us to characterise those who are presently registered as undoubtedly collaborationist or compromised. This is particularly true for the 'registered unions' which belong to FOSATU that have shown themselves as prominent combative unions in recent strikes and struggles. Within the trade union movement some consider registration as a tactical question and others as one of principle.

The first unitary conference of all the independent trade unions held in Langa in August 1981 adopted a resolution condemning the principle of registration as it is conceived by the state and recalled that all of the participants "refuse to subject themselves to control by anybody other than their own members". The independent trade unions met on two other occasions after this first step toward unity. It seems that strategical divergences have separated the different unions in two sides, one with FOSATU, FCWU and GWU insisting on the discussion

about the kind of unity and federation, the other with SAAWU, and MACWUSA raising the question of non-registration as a key question, making this point a preliminary. Yet, if such a situation should last for some time, the burgeoning unity, even if partial, would express the steps forward accomplished by workers more and more organised. This high and growing level of consciousness is a strong force pushing in the direction of an increasing unity between the unions which will show the deepest roots in the working class.

But in the final analysis the key question today is to give a political content to the battle for trade-union unity. This should be posed not only at the top but also in the workplace where sometimes there exists two different independent trade unions. This battle for trade-union unity will be a stage towards *trade union unification*. It is only in these conditions that the workers movement will be capable of discussing and sorting out each new problem which arises, each trap set by the government, the liberals, the multi-national bosses, and imperialism. The present division is not a means of clarification between the different organisations. On the contrary, by the differentiation of local experiences and implantations, it feeds the confusion, and sometimes sectarianism.

A unified trade-union movement will have the means to resist the pressures of all types already exercised by certain imperialist, liberal or social-democratic agencies to 'help' the trade unions. Unity will also be a way of broadening the capacities for intervention among the unemployed, the youth without work, women, and the disinherited population of the Bantustans.

The workers vanguard is rapidly going to find itself at a crossroads. The regime will certainly not for long tolerate the present evolution of the movement. It cannot allow the black working class to continually challenge its authority in this way.

*No illusion should exist of the possibility of the regime allowing a status quo with the already existing movement.* In order to respond to the inevitable growth of repression it will be necessary to be prepared. Immediate steps need to be taken to strengthen plant level shop steward organisation, to improve internal union democracy and broaden the field of union activity and mobilisation. The union leaderships themselves will have to, at least partially, play the role of a political leadership. To promote this process a decisive step will be the emergence of a single national federation of workers on a non-racial and democratic basis, accepting within itself the right of tendency and freedom of discussion.

## The lack of a mass independent workers party

10. The real weakness of the mass movement is not the result of lack of determination on the part of the oppressed but the absence of a revolutionary leadership and a clear perspective for black political organisation. The growth of the mass movement after the war propelled the African National Congress to the forefront. This organisation, after its original leadership had been replaced with

militants coming out of the more radical Youth League, recognised the leading role of the African masses. Nonetheless its greatest weakness remained the absence of a class perspective and its strategy of revolution by stages. Dominated by the Communist Party this leadership adopted the perspective of a bourgeois democratic stage and oriented itself towards collaboration with sections of the liberal white population. These politics led to a sector splitting and the emergence, on a nationalist line, of the Pan African Congress (PAC).

After the massacres of 1960 the ANC and the PAC oriented towards a *strategy of rural guerilla warfare*. There can only be a negative balance sheet made of this orientation. Today the ANC and the CP seem to have turned towards an urban guerilla tactic without any public balance sheet.

This change is not only an indication of the setback of rural guerillaism but also of the pressure of the South African social formation and the decisive weight to the urban masses. The ANC has delayed in seizing this evolution as much because of its programme as its international links. On 6 August 1976, Olivier Tambo, President of the movement, again stated to an Algerian newspaper, El Moujahid, 'the Soweto events are also the expression of the present stage of the development of the struggle in South Africa, of the preparation of the people for the struggle against the racist regime, and its ability to develop the same actions as FRELIMO, the MPLA or the Zimbabwe liberation movement.' Such a comparison does not yet have any material base in the social and political reality of South Africa.

Moreover the echo such actions have amongst the masses hardly favour their self-organisation. They turn attention towards the ANC and can increase its popularity but they do not bring together nor unify the struggles of the masses. They tend to substitute spectacular actions for the slow work of preparation of the masses for their own self-defence. The consequent repression of the regime against nationalist militants engaging in such actions has been consistently merciless. But it is quite difficult to see what gains the masses have made from their heroic sacrifice.

A guerilla dependent on the 'front line' states with the support of a part of the OAU no doubt fits into the framework of ANC and CP diplomacy. In the short term it can be a response to the desire to fight expressed within the refugee community of the front line states. But in the absence of real contact with the struggles emerging in the factories and townships, it will wear out this fighting spirit shown against the military and political apparatus of the racist regime in the long term.

It is not meanwhile excluded that in the immediate period the ANC will undergo some development, in particular thanks to the international aid it is able to receive from certain African states and the USSR. It has an external apparatus and cadres in the interior that enables it to capitalise partially on the present radicalisation. It can also try and adapt its policy to the rise of struggles by orienting in a more tactical way to the black trade union movement and to no longer reduce this intervention to simply a self-



proclamation of SACTU, the trade union apparatus in exile which is linked to it. But conforming to an orientation rooted in the Stalinist conceptions of the CP, the ANC still maintains today a sectarian stance, according to which the masses must unify themselves behind it alone. This self-proclamation as the 'true' revolutionary leadership does not assist in the objective necessity of uniting struggles and organisations.

However, the ANC has strong credit among the population. Thousands of youth and workers take their inspiration from it, confusedly, not on the basis of its programme, but as a symbol. This influence can also be explained by the intense campaign of certain liberal milieus to evoke this political movement widely in the press in order to better project its image as 'sole representative spokesperson'.

It is, however, certain that in the ranks of supporters and militants of the ANC there are cadres and militants whom it will be necessary to win to a revolutionary programme of class independence.

The influence which the ANC has can allow it to capitalise on the social movements which it has not in any way initiated and still less led. It is today at the centre of the preoccupations of those who want to avoid a socialist revolution in South Africa at any price. Moscow, the front-line states, certain social-democratic parties, certain liberals, and certain imperialist groups would like, for different reasons, to find a leadership in the ANC that would accept some sort of 'Lancaster House' deal. But the violence of the class struggles in South Africa will not easily allow this sort of solution. And if the ANC strengthens on one side its ideological influence the complexity of the actual fight on

the ground could well open breaches in another side and produce serious divergences between different components of the movement. There already exists a contradiction between the relations that the ANC has with the liberals and the pressure which the independent non-racial trade unions exert.

For its part, the PAC, today very weak, is marked by oscillations and turns that veer from armed struggle to reformism passing through a radical nationalism that is tinted with Maoism. The Black Consciousness Movement has also undergone a grave crisis of orientation accentuated by the repression it has undergone. The AZAPO, a little organisation, which is for the moment one of its political descendants, seems to have evolved towards a recognition of the role of the working class.

Notwithstanding that, this very heterogeneous current has imprinted itself overwhelmingly on the present generation of youth and will mark for a long time its political experiences. It has above all failed by not understanding the necessity to unify all the mass movement (and not only 'African') and to centralise the fight by what is clearly necessary: of building a revolutionary party.

Despite a clear understanding of the objectives of the South African revolution the Trotskyists in the country did not succeed in the 1930s and 1940s (when a South Africa section of the Fourth International existed) in constructing an alternative leadership to the nationalists and Stalinists. They did, however, know how to analyse the relationship between the national question and anti-capitalist objectives. The class-independence of the emancipation movement should, according to them, express itself in the slogan of

'non-collaboration' with the state and racist institutions.

But the construction of the revolutionary party also depends on the organisational capacity to form cadres, to stabilise the leadership, to centralise different interventions made in the mass movement. They did not pay sufficient attention to these questions. And repression aggravated the situation. The Trotskyist movement in general and the NEUM (which never officially designated themselves as Trotskyists) in particular failed to increase their influence within the mass movement and underestimated the tasks of the united front in relation with the other components of the political movement. This isolated them at the time of the greatest radicalization during the 40s and the 50s in spite of some very important issues more particularly in the trade union movement.

Besides, when the Non-European Unity Movement appeared in 1943 there remained a hope of seeing a mass radical current develop, in which the revolutionaries could build a vanguard nucleus.

But after the World War II the situation in South Africa became more complex. Repression increased and a strong pressure was exerted on all the opposition currents. The programme for national emancipation could not be separated as a minimum program from other revolutionary objectives. It was necessary to insist still more strongly than before on the education of the cadres and political preparation for repression. The cohesion of the vanguard around a clear programme of permanent revolution was a vital necessity of maintain themselves in the new situation, without compromising with the dream of rural guerrillaism or with illusions in international pressure on the racist regime. The political and organisational vulnerability of a current to the left of the nationalists and the Stalinists did not therefore allow the construction of an alternative leadership at the end of the 1950s when the mass movement knew a new growth. The NEUM, like the

ANC and the PAC, suffered a defeat in the 1960s after having gone through a crisis and fragmentation.

11. The central task today is to build a *united* mass movement capable of destroying the apartheid system. The crisis of the racist state is based in the growing refusal of the black masses to submit to national and social oppression. For this the construction of mass organisations (trade unions, student, neighbourhood or peasant associations etc.) is determinant.

At the moment the neighbourhood associations against housing and rent conditions, like the non-racial sport associations, are playing a very important role in the organisations of the oppressed. *It is the unity of all these associations and organisations in a vast centralised national movement that will be really capable of overturning the racist system.*

This task of unifying the struggles will be incomplete without the definition of a programme and leadership capable of centralising the struggles of the different sectors, and of posing along with this objective the need for self-defence of the black community. This must be one of the aspects of the work of constituting a mass movement against apartheid. There is in effect a direct link between the sense of strength and determination which the unification of the mass movement of blacks across the entire country would give, and the possibility of the masses themselves organising the protection of their mobilisations, the self-defence of their neighbourhoods and organisations. The revolutionary vanguard in this country must be able to master this problem of the link between the development of this mass movement and the organisation of armed self-defence.

The mass movement must definitively emancipate itself from the well-off Coloured and Indian petit-bourgeoisie, and the reactionary 'tribal' movements. This has already been widely done in certain regions. One of the central objectives for the regime in keeping the division between 'Africans', 'Coloureds' and 'Indians', is to promote a leading layer, artificially enriched notables, or managers, administrators or those in the liberal professions with high incomes. It is for this reason that there exist several small industries and big businesses belonging to Indians. There even exists a so-called Indian bank in Natal, the New Republic Bank. The parties like the Labour Party (Coloured), the Reform Party and the Natal Indian Congress (Indian) are the reflection of these *class* interests.

Moreover, movements like Inkatha, an about 200,000 membership organisation created by Buthezi, chief of the Kwa-Zulu homeland, play a similar role, but at a greater level, in the control and intimidation of the Zulu workers and allows its leadership to become more wealthy through corruption and help from the racist regime. This process is complemented by control of the apparatus of the Bantustans.

The strengthening of the democratic structures of the independent community organisations and education given by the trade unions should bring about a reduction in the influence of these reactionary organisations.

To affirm that the proletariat can successfully lead and centralise the struggle against apartheid, attaining national and democratic rights and *regrouping around itself all the oppressed*, is to say that this process may lead to the constitution of a *workers and peasants government*, going forward to engage in the struggle for the proletarian revolution and socialism. An important step must be fought for in the workers movement: the building of a *Workers Party* devoted to defence of the interests of the whole working class and oppressed people and the total destruction of the apartheid system. In practice this means a party based upon the black workers and their organisations. The formation of such a party would represent a major advance in the consciousness and level of organisation of the workers.

The existing organisations are to different degrees marked by sectarianism. This only makes more fundamental support for all real initiatives now in progress towards unification of the mass movement, in particular the development of trade union federations, the success of which is much more important from the point of view of the interests of the masses than any type of military operation, however successful. The unifying attempts of the mass movement include:

- abolition of all apartheid laws and the bantustan system.
- abolition of all laws that restrict the right to land ownership on the basis of racial criteria.
- the right to form independent trade unions bringing together African, Coloureds and Indians without restrictions, controls or intimidation.
- refusal to collaborate with apartheid institutions.
- abolition of all repressive legislation (the Suppression of Communism Act, press censorship etc. and the release of all political prisoners).
- convening of a constituent assembly democratically elected on the basis of *one person one vote*.

In these circumstances the Republic of South Africa would in practice become a 'black' republic. Obviously this does not exclude complete equality for all, nor fraternal relations between the races (this depends particularly on the conduct of the whites). It is absolutely clear that the distinctive character of the state would be given by the vast majority of its population — 'emancipated from their servile dependency' (Trotsky).

These objectives underline the importance of solidarity with the struggles arising right across the country, in the towns as much as in the rural areas, in the townships as much as in the Bantustans. *The movements that might appear in the latter must be considered as a section of the struggle of the black population of South Africa* against the regime and its puppets. At the same time it is certain that the national liberation struggle will produce sooner or later anti-imperialist demands against the multi-nationals and the capitalist powers — accomplices of apartheid.

This struggle for the overthrow of apartheid, for national liberation and for democratic rights, opens the way to the socialist revolution in South Africa. In this

respect South Africa is not an exception to the theory of permanent revolution. *It is impossible to try to abolish apartheid without attacking capitalism (that is to say, the capitalist property of the mines, factories, banks and land) whose development has been at the origin of the entire racist system.* This regime cannot just wither away. It will have to be overthrown. Such a revolutionary overturn will establish the basis for collaboration between the peoples of the whole of southern Africa against imperialism and capitalism. This will be a decisive development of the socialist revolution in the African continent.

## International solidarity

12. It is necessary to construct a revolutionary organisation that intervenes at the heart of the mass struggle in order to raise the level of consciousness and to forge a revolutionary leadership capable of giving an answer both to the current problems and those that will arise tomorrow. This organisation must endeavour to unite all those in agreement on the central questions of the South African revolution:

- for the united front of all black organisations and associations which fight uncompromisingly against apartheid.
- for mass struggle against the racist regime, for a workers and peasants government.
- for the unity and independence of the black working class and the recognition of its leading role in the united front against apartheid. For a single, unified, independent and non-racial trade union.
- for a break with substitutionist guerilla orientations.
- for the socialist revolution in South Africa and its extension to all Southern Africa through the fight against imperialism and neo-colonialism.

These positions are not specific to South Africa but are distilled from the living experience of the working class world wide. These tasks and objectives of the South African revolution find reality in the anti-imperialist struggles in Indochina and Cuba which were only completed because they gave birth to anti-capitalist revolutions and the construction of workers states. By contrast the lessons of Angola and Mozambique where imperialist interests maintain their dominance and where the masses have still not obtained elementary democratic rights illustrate what happens to movements of national liberation that stop halfway. In Zimbabwe where the Lancaster House agreements have maintained a neo-colonial situation, despite the arrival of Mugabe in power neither the questions of land nor those of complete democratic privileges nor that of the misery of the mass of blacks have received any credible response.

The proletarian revolution necessitates an organisation which can draw such lessons and integrate itself in the construction of an international revolutionary leadership. To help in this attempt the Fourth International has the objective of building a South African section.

But the FI favours the largest possible unity on precise points that will facilitate carrying the struggle forward. It is necessary to promote and to develop the debate between dif-



ferent components of the freedom movement in this country. The formation of a mass revolutionary movement in South Africa is only at its earliest stages. That is yet another reason for accepting and indeed being in favour of political debate and for encouraging political rapprochement on the basis of partial political agreements.

13. The necessity for supporting the struggle against apartheid in South Africa means that the FI should take part in the construction of a vast permanent international solidarity movement. This calls at one and the same time for specific activities of the FI and the participation of its militants in the activities of the Anti-Apartheid movements in their countries.

#### a) Specific activity of the Fourth International

It is necessary to publicise the unfolding struggle in South Africa and to underline the objectives and demands of the black masses fighting against the racist regime. The press of the International's sections should regularly report on the situation in this country. Whenever the struggles in South Africa become the key events of the day our movement will respond to the need for solidarity by launching centralised world campaigns which can bring together strong, punctual mobilisations against the apartheid regime. Members of our movement will propose to the trade unions they belong to that they take positions and initiatives of concrete support to the struggles in South Africa. In particular, members of the Fourth International working in companies having subsidiaries or interests in South Africa propose to trade unions and workers that they demand the bosses respect equal wages and trade union rights for black workers employed by them in South Africa. They call on the trade union branches to support and link up in a united way with the trade union structures built up by the black workers of this country. In this way Trotskyist militants insist on the necessary solidarity between the workers of their country and their black comrades in South Africa. Whenever possible they raise the need for financial collections, solidarity resolutions and trade union aid to their fellow workers in the same multinational or company in South Africa.

At this time one of the most urgent questions is the struggle in Namibia. Since 1977 the group of 5 western countries (USA, UK, West Germany, Canada and France) have been at the centre of prolonged and frequently stalled negotiations with the South African Government, its puppets of the Turnhalle Alliance, the front line states and the main liberation movement SWAPO. These have been constantly frustrated in the achievement of any settlement by the actions of the South Africans, most notably their walk out from the conference in Geneva early in 1981. Meantime they have engaged in prolonged and sustained warfare against neighbouring front-line states, most prominently Angola. This has had the object both of destroying SWAPO's rear bases and of destabilising the Luanda regime, perhaps by creating the space for a Savimbi/Unita government in its southern areas.

The response of the imperialists to these

actions has been limited to the odd verbal condemnation. In fact South Africa's actions have served their needs perfectly. The attacks on Angola provide an opportunity to draw attention to the continuing presence of Cuban forces in that country — something which has been drawn into the question as somehow equivalent to the South African presence in Namibia and negotiable away in the same package. Meantime, the theft of Namibia's wealth continues at an escalating pace. Both South Africa, which is fuelling its weapons and power programme and Britain which now gets more than half of its uranium (from the Rossing mine which is the biggest mine exploited by the Rio Tinto Zinc, a British company in which Lord Carrington, who led the Lancaster House neo-colonial agreement on Zimbabwe, has interests) are anxious to delay an independence that might threaten these supplies. As a second line of defence they will introduce into any negotiated settlement a series of guarantees for the continuation of its exploitation. They have now rewritten the relevant UN resolutions to incorporate 'protection from arbitrary deprivation of private property without prompt and just

Finally the Fourth International supports all the movements in South Africa which are fighting the racist regime in order to abolish apartheid and win full national and democratic rights for the African, Coloured and Indian masses.

#### b) The Anti-Apartheid movements

Trotskyist militants participate in the activity of these solidarity organisations to make them mass movements that work in a united front fashion which are active and capable of launching and sustaining campaigns:

— Against links on relations of all types with the racist regime and the South African market in order to increase the political and economic isolation of the RSA.

— For the support of struggles and in particular support for trade union organisation and anti-apartheid mass associations in South Africa. For the development of active solidarity within the trade unions with the black working class in South Africa.

— For the liberation of all political prisoners. For the stopping or disruption of South African sports tours which are used as



Black and white segregation, the reality of apartheid (DR)

compensation'. They will also certainly try to re-introduce institutional guarantees for whites of the kind found in the Lancaster House Zimbabwean agreement and a similar peace-keeping force to supervise any settlement.

Revolutionary marxists will oppose this imperialist plot on the clear line of unqualified self-determination for the people of Namibia. We do not recognise the right of the five imperialist powers to be involved in any settlement. 'Imperialists out of Namibia Now!' Consequently we defend Namibia's immediate right to independence, the withdrawal of all South African troops from this territory, including the port of Walvis Bay and the right of all people of this country to participate in free elections on the basis of 'one person, one vote'. We demand that SWAPO should be able to freely organise in Namibia without threats or constraints — we reserve the right to criticise the programme of SWAPO.

diplomatic 'representatives' of the racist regime.

— For non-exclusive support to all political forces fighting in South Africa against racism and Apartheid.

Thus through our activities we fight in these associations against all sectarianism — the latter occasionally results in privileged support being given only to the ANC (as members of the Communist Party often propose) or only to the PAC. Solidarity associations in exile should give aid to all fighters and victims without discrimination. The alignment of solidarity associations on such or such a political movement can only reinforce division in South Africa itself.

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*This resolution was adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International at its January 24 to 27, 1983, meeting.*



# AROUND THE WORLD



## ABORTION RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK

— West Germany. A woman employee of the German Catholic magazine *Neue Bildpost* recently won a court ruling that payment for abortions by the social security system was 'unconstitutional'. She claimed that she could not reconcile her conscience to paying for abortions, 'mass murder', through her social security contributions.

This ruling came at a time when the ruling CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union) is considering proposals, supported by the Chancellor and several ministers, to cancel state financing of abortions. These plans have been temporarily shelved during the election campaign. However, eighteen members of parliament have submitted a resolution of this effect.

At present abortion is allowed under paragraph 218 of the constitution. This allows abortion for social and economic reasons up to twelve weeks, and for medical reasons up to twenty-two weeks. The total cost is reimbursed by the state.

The pro-abortion coalition, '218' has called a national demonstration for February 26 at Karlsruhe, the seat of the federal constitutional office, opposing the proposed attacks, and in support of women's right to decide when and whether to have children.

— Ireland. Abortion is completely illegal in the Republic of Ireland. However, the two main political parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, are agreed on having a referendum on the proposal to make it unconstitutional as well!

The proposed constitutional amendment read, 'The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect and, as far as practicable, by its laws to vindicate and defend that right.'

But this has been rejected as too open to pro-abortion interpretation as it for the first time gives the mother an 'equal right to life' with the foetus. A revised wording is to be submitted.

A broad range of Irish opinion has come out against the proposal to amend the constitution in this way, including all the Protestant churches, and the Jewish community. Lawyers and doctors have opposed the amendment, arguing that it is unworkable from a legal and medical point of view. In fact some abortions are carried out in Ireland today, with the agreement of the Catholic Church. These are in cases where women have cancer of the womb, or a

pregnancy has started outside the womb, in the fallopian tubes.

The backbone of the campaign is of course women, ranging from committed feminists who believe that women should have the right to decide in all circumstances whether or not to have children, to those who do not feel that their own beliefs should be imposed on others who do not share them through the constitution. Women who know full well that even despite the existing laws thousands of Irish women do have abortions. The official statistics show that ten Irish women take the boat to England every day to get an abortion.

The real figure is much higher as many Irish women will give the address of a friend or a relative when they have an abortion in Britain.

The People's Democracy, Irish section of the Fourth International, are fully involved in the campaign. In early February they organised a successful seminar to discuss the question, which involved Rita O'Hare head of the Women's Affairs department of Sinn Fein, Nell McCafferty a well-known feminist journalist, and other speakers from the campaign, the trade-union movement, and PD itself. This was attended by some 100 people. ■

## EUROPEAN WOMEN DISCUSS 'WOMEN AND WORK'

Women's organisations in Turin are planning an international conference on the theme of 'Women and Work'. This gathering will take place at Turin on April 23/24/25 1983.

The organisers of the conference explain, 'We have seen similar developments in many countries on questions like part-time work, public services, sectors of "women's work", women being pushed out of the workforce because of the crisis, and related to the process of restructuring the international division of labour, in a substantially different situation from the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time we think that for many women their perspective for life has changed, as regards their family situation, their children, their sexuality, their work. We feel the need for a discussion, which will not necessarily lead to single conclusions, on how reality is changing.

'We would like the most practical conclusions possible to come out of the meeting. This is why we have organised it on specific themes, and asked those women attending to come well-prepared with proposals and information on each country.'

The conference is being organised by three groups, the Women's Centre (Casa delle Donne) in Turin, the inter-confederation women's commission, and the Union of Italian Women (Unione delle Donne Italiane).

The Women's Centre has existed for two years and is the base for a number of different groups, including the journal *Quotidiano Donna*, and a meeting place for the women's movement where debates on questions such as abortion, women's health, International Women's Day, the struggle against rape and so on take place.

The inter-confederation women's commission was established in 1974 following the women's struggles of the early 1970s. It is a form of co-ordination between the women from different trade-unions, and organises struggles in the workplaces, and within the unions themselves.

The UDI was created in 1944. Originally it was a national organisation of women from the Socialist and Communist Parties. Now, although the CP still has influence, it is an independent organisation of 200,000 women with a weekly review *Noi Donne* (We Women), organised through local groups.

These three groups, despite their important differences, work together in Turin.

The conference is planned at a time when major attacks are being made against women. In Italy positive discrimination in employment for women, the unions won a quota of 50% women in previously male jobs, has been abolished. The cost of childcare and social services has gone up, and part-time work, and short-term employment contracts have been widely introduced. It is hoped that the conference will be a starting point for organising an overall response to these attacks.

This is the first time that such an international meeting has been organised which can discuss how to defend women's rights that are under attack everywhere (see *International Viewpoint*, No 20, December 20, 1982).

Places at the conference are limited to 400, including 200 Italian women. With very limited financial resources the organisers can only provide accommodation and one meal per day. Registration and information from: Casa delle Donne, Via G. Fiochetto 13, 10152 Torino, Italy. ■

## THE CASE OF THE MURDERED FILIPINO UNIONISTS

On June 1, 1981, two Filipinos, activists in the International Longshoremen's Union, were gunned down in the union hall in Seattle.

A trial has just opened in Seattle to try to establish the truth about these murders.

The two victims, Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes, were opponents of the US-backed Marcos regime in the Philippines. They were also leaders of a rank-and-file campaign to rid Local 37, which organises mainly Filipino cannery workers, of gangsterism and corruption.

In 1980, 11 of the former executive council members of the local were replaced in elections. The displaced officials were accused of extortion, collusion with a gambling syndicate, and collaboration with the employers.

One of the victims, Domingo, lived long enough to identify the gunmen as members of a Filipino street gang. These two men were tried and convicted. The leader of the gang, Tony Dictado, was later tried and convicted of having given the order for the shooting. His lawyer claimed that these orders came directly from Tony Baruso, longtime president of the Local 37 ousted by the rank-and-file campaign in December 1981. Baruso has been widely linked to the Marcos regime. He was honoured by the Philippines government six months after the murders.

Although an investigation into Baruso was initiated, it has not reached any conclusion, arousing strong suspicions of a cover-up.

The Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes was formed soon after the murders. In addition to publishing literature, organising speaking tours, and reaching out for support in the labour movement and elsewhere, the committee is publicising a civil suit that alleges the shootings were ordered by the Marcos regime.

The plaintiffs in the suit are the wives of the two men, union activists, and the chairperson of the main Filipino political organisation in the US, the Union of Democratic Filipinos. Defendants named include Marcos, former secretary of state Al Haig, and Tony Baruso.

Only two weeks before they were killed Domingo and Viernes had led a fight to get the Longshoremen's Union to send a delegation to the Philippines to investigate the repression against working people there.

The spy activity of the Marcos regime in the US is well-known. In 1982 it was reported that for ten years Marcos had sent 'action teams' to the US to 'infiltrate, monitor, and possibly counteract the threat of anti-Marcos groups'. It is inconceivable that such teams could operate without the collaboration of the US secret police.

Nor would the US government be too happy about a vigorous campaign in solidarity with workers in the Philippines. The largest US naval and airbases outside the United States itself are in the Philippines, and a new 'mutual defence' pact

was agreed last September. The Philippines provides the US with a launching pad for imperialist intervention into Asia and the Middle East. The loss of such a good ally and supporter would be a major blow. ■

## US TRUCKERS SHOULD BE SUPPORTED

The 11-day strike by independent truck drivers in the US has ended, but their struggle for decent living and working conditions is not over.

The shutdown was called by the Independent Truckers Association at the end of January to protest against a crushing package of tax rises signed by Reagan on January 6. Increases under the Highway Revenue Act would lead to truckers paying 5,000 dollars per year more in taxes. This went along with a 5 cent per gallon rise in tax on petrol.

The truckers, who are independent owner operators, buy their 100,000-dollar vehicles at high interest loans, swelling the profits of banks and vehicle companies.

All truck drivers, independent, union and unorganised, are facing high unemployment, worsening working conditions and low take-home pay. However the truckers union, the Teamsters, did

not support the ITA drivers — going along with the press campaign to portray these workers as anti-union, anti-consumer and thus anti-worker.

In reality these drivers are used by the big bosses to increase their profits by offloading onto the independent drivers the cost of the trucks, upkeep, fuel, taxes, tolls, insurance etc. Unlike the big companies, the independents cannot recoup these expenses by lower wages and higher prices.

The independent truckers could be won to identify with other workers, rather than management, if the labour movement, and firstly the Teamsters, had supported their struggle. This would have been a valuable step towards overcoming the divisions between the independents and the employed truckers that management and the media try to foster, and thus helped to strengthen the unions themselves. ■

## AUSTRALIAN SWP ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Federal elections will be held in Australia on March 5. Opinion polls at present show that the Labor Party could win control on first preference votes, and throw out the Fraser government which is implementing the most vicious anti-working class austerity measures that Australia has seen since the 1930s.

The return of the Labor Party would be a boost to the self confidence of the Australian working class. The Labor Party is a party based on the mass organisations of the working class — the trade unions.

However, the policies put forward by the Labor Party are in the same framework as the Liberal-National coalition — managing the capitalist crisis. For this reason the Socialist Workers Party, Australian section of the Fourth International are linking their slogans 'For a Labor government with socialist policies' with an electoral campaign of their own. They are standing 48 candidates throughout the country.

This is the biggest socialist election

campaign in Australia for more than thirty years. The campaign is putting forward the policies that the Labor Party should adopt if it is truly to defend the interests of working people:

— Nationalise companies that sack workers. Reduce the workweek, without loss of pay, to provide jobs for all. Outlaw all forms of discrimination in jobs or wages. Money for public works not for subsidies to the bosses.

— No freezes or agreements restricting the right to improve wages or working conditions. Automatic wage rises to match each increase in prices. Reverse the social welfare cutbacks.

— No dams in south-west Tasmania. Nationalise the polluters.

— Repeal all anti-union laws. Abolish the bosses' Arbitration Commission. Abolish ASIO and other political police bodies.

— End the ANZUS (Australia/New Zealand/US) alliance. Close all US bases. Not one cent, not one soldier for the bosses wars! ■

# What is happening to the tens of thousands of imprisoned Palestinians



Some weeks ago, in a Turin hospital, International Viewpoint correspondents in Italy were able to talk to wounded Palestinians evacuated from Lebanon, as well as a doctor from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, who worked in the hospitals during the Israeli invasion.

### *The wounded Palestinians said:*

Since the Israeli invasion was part and parcel of the Zionist government's aggressive policy, the Palestinian people in Lebanon were not surprised by it, any more than they were by the preceding wars.

All that the Palestinians had to defend themselves with was their determination and the resistance forces of the PLO. A civilian population found itself facing an army of 160 thousand men armed to the teeth with the most sophisticated American-made instruments of destruction. The latter included nerve-gas bombs, fragmentation bombs, and vacuum bombs, which

certainly cannot be called conventional weapons.

The result of all this was that whole villages were destroyed. The outstanding example is the Ain el Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp in southern Lebanon. Even after the nearby city of Sidon fell, and after twelve hours bombardment from the air and sea, it was razed by bulldozers to keep the remaining people from continuing the resistance.

On the ruins of Ain el Hilweh, a concentration camp was set up without any buildings for the remaining population and the other prisoners to live in. The bulldozers started rolling while those wounded in the fighting were still lying on the ground.

At present, there are about 70 thousand unhoused Palestinian refugees in southern Lebanon, most of them around the cities of Sidon and Tyre.

*We asked the doctor about the situation of the prisoners being held by the Israelis.*

We only have information about those in southern Lebanon. Moreover, we have been unable to update those because the Israeli authorities will not allow the Palestinian medical aid bodies, such as the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, which is part of the International Red Cross, to operate.

There is some information provided by the International Red Cross, but it is not reliable. The facts they present

have always been very different from the ones we have. It is well known that the International Red Cross is not all that neutral.

In the Ansar concentration camp, there are 25 thousand civilian prisoners. The Israeli authorities have nothing against them except the fact that they are Palestinians. Their families are not allowed to visit them, and they are not permitted any contact with the outside world. The treatment of the prisoners has similarities to the procedures in the Nazi concentration camps. For example, the Palestinian prisoners wear a yellow star, the Lebanese a white cross.

It is impossible for us to know exactly what is happening to these prisoners, but there have been some eyewitness reports of executions, atrocious torture, and accounts of many deaths. All this, clearly, is in violation of the Geneva Convention, which requires occupying forces to provide medical assistance, food, and shelter for prisoners.

Another grave fact is the disappearance of 700 members of the Red Crescent. Despite our appeals to the Red Cross and other international bodies, we have been able to get no word of them.

Some of our foreign colleagues who worked with us in the hospitals during the invasion were taken prisoner. They have reported that most of the Palestinian medical personnel were imprisoned with them and then deported to prisons in Israel. We know even less about what is happening in these prisons than we do about the ones in southern Lebanon.

*International public opinion must not be allowed to forget about the tens of thousands of Palestinians and Lebanese being held in concentration camps and prisons by the Israeli authorities.*

*(For an account of the conditions in these camps and prisons, see "Caught in an Israeli Roundup," an interview with a member of the Lebanese section of the Fourth International who was held several weeks by the Israelis. International Viewpoint, No 19, December 13, 1982.)*

*It is essential that all those interested in human rights keep asking questions about what is going on in these camps and prisons. A spot light must be focused on them.*

