

International VIEWPOINT

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Outcry over attacks on Nicaragua

The crisis
in Argentina

The Irish
mass movement
after H-Block

The Iranian
revolution today



International Viewpoint

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The response to U.S. escalation in Central America

Gerry FOLEY

The weeks following the escalation of the U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary attacks on Nicaragua in mid-March have been a key period of political testing in the United States.

The results so far have not been favorable for the advocates of a counterrevolutionary war now.

An index of the divisions and hesitations in the ruling circles is the extent of the revelations in the big U.S. press. They have effectively blown away what little cover Washington had managed to maintain.

In its April 4 issue, *Time*, hardly a "liberal" publication, exposed the basic structure of the covert operation. Its information, it said, came from the main counterrevolutionary group, the Democratic Front of Nicaragua (FDN). In fact, this "leak" is significant in another respect because it suggests that the *contras* have no interest in concealing the U.S. role but want to blackmail Washington into committing itself more to them.

This information, *Time* said, indicated that "the U.S. control is indirect." Formal leadership was in the hands of a "political coordinating committee" made up "largely of conservative and moderate Nicaraguans who fled their country during the last three years of Sandinista rule. Also included is Colonel Enrique Bermudez Varela, a former member of the Somoza National Guard, who was his country's military attache in Washington until the Sandinistas took over."

The actual military command is organized in a three-tiered structure.

The first tier is made up of former Somoza National Guard officers, allegedly purged of their worst gangster elements at CIA insistence.

The second tier is members of the Honduran military, "plus Colonel Bermudez and a military representative from Argentina."

The real direction comes from the third tier "by the F.D.N. accounts an all-American body. It is composed of CIA experts and representatives of the U.S. Army's Southern Command, based in Panama. This third staff is allegedly the brains of the insurgency. Its job is to pass orders to the second staff, which in turn relays them to the *contra* commanders. The coordinator of the separate command group activities is said by the F.D.N. sources to be John Negroponte, U.S. Ambassador to Honduras."

The reason for the elaborate structure, *Time* explained, was U.S. officials desire to avoid breaking the letter of the rider attached to the Defense Department appropriations bill passed unanimously by the House of Representatives in December 1981. It forbids the executive branch to allot funds for "military activities, to any group or individual, not part of a country's armed forces, for the purpose of overthrowing the government of Nicaragua or provoking a military exchange between Nicaragua and Honduras."

Late in 1982, an Argentine officer, Hector Frances, deserted. Frances told the press that large scale commando attacks had been planned to start in October 1982. The schedule was set back by the effects of the Malvinas war.

The objective of the operation was to gain control of the northwest provinces and declare them "liberated zones." That was to give the U.S. and its closest allies the chance to recognize a "provisional government." After that aid to the *contras* could be escalated.

Along with that, terrorist groups were to be set up in 14 Nicaraguan cities. Their job was to carry out regular bombings, identify and assassinate political cadres, commanders of the security forces and heads of state enterprises."

On April 4, the *New York Times* Service cited information from a Honduran reportedly "directly involved in planning U.S. covert activities."

The Honduran listed the following forms of U.S. involvement:

1. Frequent reports to the *contras* about the movements of Nicaraguan military forces.
2. Arming and training the paramilitary forces, sending arms and ammunition in August 1982 to Miskito Indian units in eastern Honduras.
3. Providing underwater equipment and explosives to Argentine-trained sabotage teams that blew up the Puerto Cabezas port installations in Nicaragua early this year.

Obviously the Argentinian dictatorship played a big role. Until its weaknesses were shown up by the mass workers demonstrations immediately before the Malvinas War, the Buenos Aires junta seemed the most reliable ally the U.S. had in the region. The Argentine army was also the most experienced in "counterinsurgency," that is, terror.

On April 7, the *New York Times* revealed that Reagan approved a plan for covert activities against Nicaragua in April 1982. Its stated aim was to "pre-

vent a proliferation of Cuban-model states."

Warnings have begun to be raised in congress that the U.S. operations could be shown to be in flagrant violation of the law.

The public discussion between the government and those politicians and officials who have raised doubts about the covert-war policy centers around whether the U.S. is getting pulled in "too deep."

It is not clear how quickly the U.S. intends to move in Central America. It is likely, in fact, that Washington wants to move fairly slowly, testing the response of the Nicaraguan government and its allies and looking for political weaknesses in the camp of the Sandinistas and the Salvadoran front.

The U.S.'s major success to date is gaining a certain base among the Miskito Indians, who reportedly made up a large proportion of the *contra* commandos in the recent operations. It is obviously probing among the small farmers.

The problem for the Reagan government, and what undoubtedly worries its critics, is that it is difficult to keep such covert-war operations under control, especially since the U.S. is inevitably obliged to rely on rightist gangsters who put their own interests first and are capable of anything.

The logic of the U.S.'s covert war was well illustrated by the murder in early April of Melida Manaya Montes, one of the most widely respected of the leaders of the Salvadoran front. This middle-aged woman, a prominent educator and leader of the Salvadoran teachers union, was murdered by commandos in Managua.

The big U.S. press suggested that she could have been killed by Salvadoran rebels themselves, citing the case of the guerrilla poet Roque Dalton, who was killed by his comrades on the basis of false accusations that he was a CIA agent.

The credibility of that suggestion was destroyed by the atrocious and "professional" style of the murder. The victim was stabbed repeatedly with an ice pick, all the blows apparently being meant as torture. Her arm was broken. And then her throat was cut with the expertise for which U.S. Green Beret-type "professionals" have become known.

The development in the last weeks confirms the eminently political dimensions of the struggle against imperialist oppression in Central America. The political impact in the U.S. and other imperialist centers is crucial, far more even than was true in the case of the Vietnam war.

In that context, the movement against U.S. intervention in America itself, the other imperialist centers, and Latin America will be decisive.

The divisions that have surfaced in U.S. ruling circles show that the possibilities for building effective opposition to U.S. involvement in counterrevolutionary war are, if anything, better than they were at the time of Vietnam. ■

Nicaragua: How the defense against the counterrevolutionary attacks is being organized



'Thousands of eyes are watching you, 24 hours a day' (DR)

Mats TINNERTWALL and Ulf JUNGMAR

MANAGUA — "La soberanía del pueblo! La lucha sigue!"

"Popular sovereignty! The struggle continues!"

These slogans echoed through the walls of the newly built community center in the suburb of Carlos Fonseca Amador, named after a murdered leader of the Sandinistas.

Every Friday, the CDS (Comites de Defensa Sandinista — Sandinista Defense Committees) hold a meeting in the area.

Representatives have come here from every committee in the town, sixty to seventy people in all.

The meeting begins with the national anthem. Then, there is a minute of silence in honor of four people from the area who died recently in battles against the counterrevolutionaries along the Honduran border.

The names of the four are read, one by one, and after each name the crowd shouts "Present!"

The participants in the meeting are sitting on benches along the wall. The area coordinator is standing behind a half-wall and chairing the meeting. He is talking about hitting back against imperialism, about the need to defend the revolution. About half the participants are women. Some children are playing on the floor.

There are some important points to be discussed this evening. The school in the area is a big problem. According to the compulsory education law, 1,200 children should be going to school. But the only available building will hold just a few hundred.

The state does not have the economic means to build a school, but can contri-

bute building materials if the local people will do the work themselves. The school committee calls on everyone to volunteer for work.

The meeting is interrupted as a truck drives up in front of the community center. A loudspeaker broadcasts slogans against U.S. imperialism. Some boys sitting in the back of it answer. They have enlisted in the reserves and are going up north to the border.

The last point on the agenda deals with the militia. A couple of recruiters give heated speeches saying that everyone who can should join the militia. The question is asked: How many of those at the meeting cannot enlist in the militia. Only one hand goes up.

A lot of people sign up during the meeting, but after two hours discussion a lot of the faces look tired, and the children have gone to sleep. The discussions are very quiet. Things do get heated at one point, when the question comes up whether drugs should be allowed at the town festival. The meetings ends with a revolutionary song.

The town of Carlos Fonseca Amador is only a year old. Most of the people living there lost their old homes in floods. There is a great enthusiasm for developing the town and an immense determination to defend the revolution. The CDS are the political instrument the people have for participating in the work of building a new Nicaragua.

The main task today is to strike back hard against the counterrevolution and imperialism. The threat from the north is palpable.

In Managua, you see gigantic posters with the slogan, "Remember, Counterrevolutionaries, half a million eyes are watching you!" The CDS are called the

"eyes and ears of the revolution."

Every neighborhood committee organizes night watches on a voluntary basis. This is to prevent counterrevolutionary activities, but also to combat theft, drug abuse, prostitution, and illegal gambling.

Maintaining the night watches is one of the tasks every CDS does. Such guards also function in middle and upper class neighborhoods, where the activity of the CDS is not so inspiring. There is still private property to defend.

On the social level, the CDS have a lot of tasks. They take part in the mass vaccinations against polio, among other diseases, and in adult education, which is important to follow up the literacy campaigns carried out earlier.

The CDS are also involved in giving out building sites for the new housing program. They organize voluntary work for building schools, repairing roads, and installing electricity and water.

The basic necessities of life are not rationed in Nicaragua today, but there is no surplus. Speculators could have a field day. To block speculation and assure access to the basic necessities, the CDS have begun to organize their own distribution network.

In the suburb of Carlos Fonseca Amador, one of the families has taken on the task of distributing the necessities. People in the neighborhood can go to them and buy rice, beans, maize, maize oil, and soap at low prices.

This is also a way of keeping up the level of real wages. The CDS check to see that the prices set by the government are maintained.

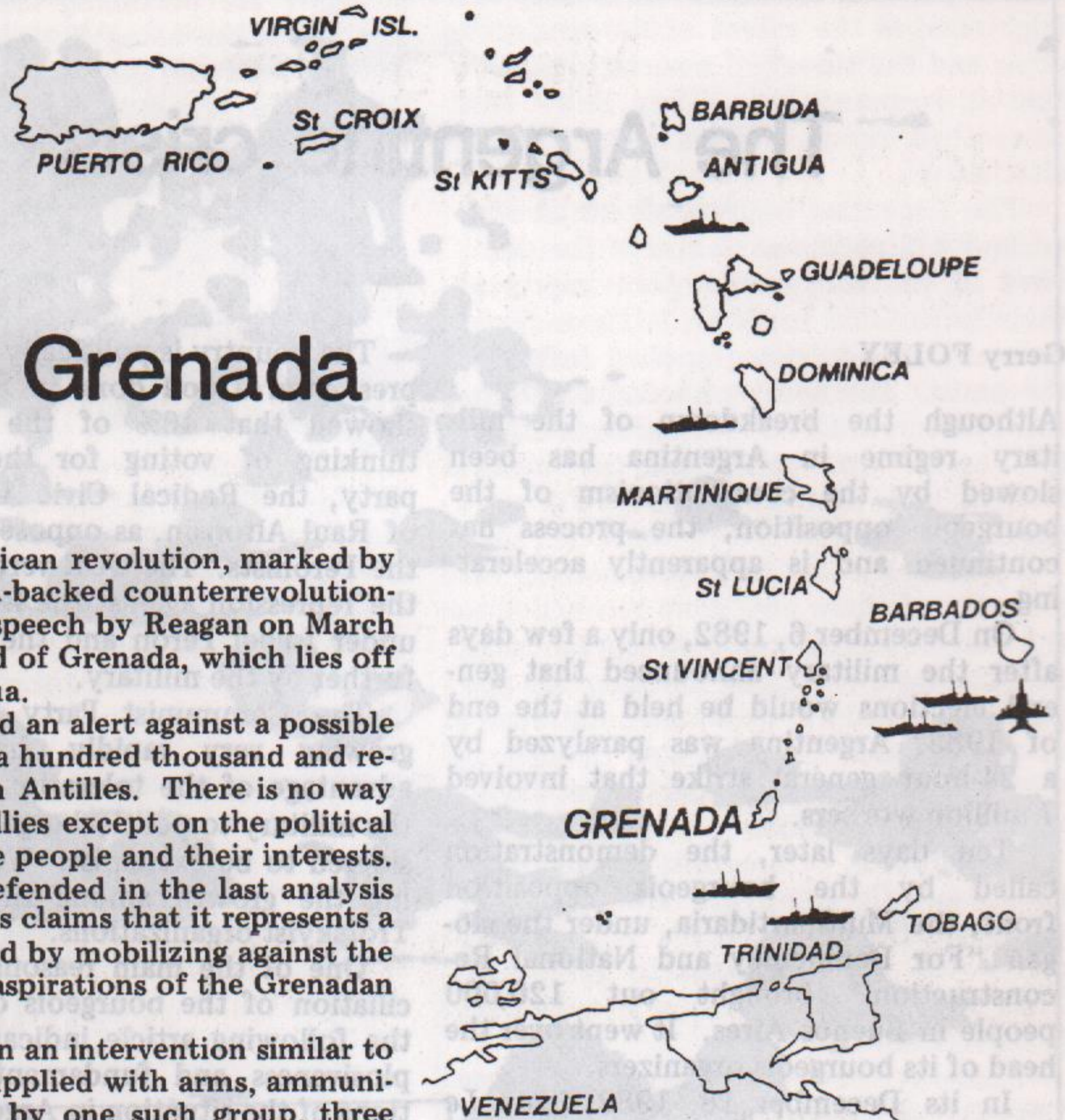
The CDS's role in military defense is to campaign to persuade people to enlist in the militia. It is hard to get exact figures of how many are involved in military defense (the army, the militia, and the reserves), but the number of 800,000 is being cited, out of a total of 3 million people in the country. All military defense is based on voluntary participation, but there is no problem in finding people to take up weapons.

How did the CDS acquire this role as one of the pillars of the Sandinista revolution?

The insurrection against Somoza was a people's uprising, not a clearly socialist workers rebellion. In the civil defense committees that preceded the CDS, all opponents of the dictatorship were organized, workers as well as bourgeois, although of course the workers took the lead.

In today's Nicaragua there are several conditions that make the CDS the underpinning of the revolutionary process. There is a revolutionary government and a mass defense out of the control of the bourgeoisie. But at the same time there are no workers councils, and the bourgeoisie continues to run a large part of industry.

The situation in Nicaragua is complicated. But there is no doubt about one thing. The CDS are of crucial importance in giving people a chance to influence the development of the revolution. ■



U.S. threats against Grenada

The escalation of U.S. threats against the Central American revolution, marked by a major stepup of military attacks on Nicaragua by CIA-backed counterrevolutionary forces and the Honduran army and by an aggressive speech by Reagan on March 23, have included increased threats against the tiny island of Grenada, which lies off the coast of Venezuela, far from both Cuba and Nicaragua.

In recent weeks, the Grenadan government has ordered an alert against a possible U.S. landing. The island has a population of just over a hundred thousand and remains essentially economically integrated in the western Antilles. There is no way it could represent a threat to the United States or its allies except on the political level, by the example of a government that represents the people and their interests.

Correspondingly, there is no way Grenada can be defended in the last analysis except politically, by exposing the falseness of the U.S.'s claims that it represents a military threat to the United States or anyone else and by mobilizing against the proclaimed intention of Washington to trample on the aspirations of the Grenadan people.

On the scale of the island, the U.S. has already begun an intervention similar to the one in Nicaragua. Reactionary groups have been supplied with arms, ammunition, and explosives. In a terrorist attack carried out by one such group, three members of the Grenadan women's organization have been killed.

On U.S. TV, commandos being openly trained in Florida declared that an invasion of Grenada was planned to "restore order."

In August 1981, the U.S. carried out the largest NATO maneuvers ever staged in the Caribbean. The exercise included an intervention on a Caribbean island given the code Amber. This operation called for a rehearsal of overthrowing the island's government, establishing a new one, and stationing troops there until "general elections were held."

It is not known whether the large U.S. naval exercises in the southwestern Caribbean in the past few weeks included such an operation. If they did, it could have been a dress rehearsal this time.

R. ELIASSON and Veikko SAARINEN

ST. GEORGE, GRENADA — In a meeting that dealt with American investments in the Caribbean, U.S. president Reagan made a new threat against revolutionary Grenada.

In front of a group of businessmen, he declared that Grenada represented a danger to the national security of the United States.

In his speech, which was broadcast over the Voice of America, Reagan claimed that U.S. interests were threatened by Soviet and Cuban military bases in the West Indies.

The U.S. president has also given the go ahead for a stepped up "destabilization campaign" against Grenada with the aim of overthrowing the government of the country.

These statements about the military installations on Grenada are nothing new. Ever since the revolution here in 1979, there have been stories about Soviet submarine bases, Cuban training camps, spy centers, and so forth. These accusations have always proved without foundation.

In most cases, these stories have fallen apart because of their own internal contradictions. Grenada is a little island with a land area of about 430 square kilo-

meters. There is no way that military installations could be concealed, either from the tourists or the local people. Nonetheless, the scare-story campaign has not abated.

In making these claims, the U.S. has two objectives. On the one hand, this is part of the destabilization campaign, a campaign to create chaos. Such statements, for example, help discourage tourists from coming to Grenada. On the other, these stories create an image of the country that could justify a military intervention in the future.

Under President Carter, immediately after the Grenadan revolution, the CIA worked out a plan of action to destabilize the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) headed by Premier Maurice Bishop.

The plan included a propaganda campaign, economic sabotage, and other unspecified actions. On a number of occasions, the Reagan administration has said that it intends to "get to the root of the problem," that is, to smash the three states that according to the Pentagon are causing all the unrest in Central America — Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada.

The U.S. has brought a strong naval force into the area. In a 300 kilometer radius of Grenada, there are now six

In the Caribbean south of Puerto Rico, the U.S. has 36 warships, including aircraft carriers, 22 destroyers, and 3 nuclear submarines.

large American warships. Two of them are stationed on Trinidad, two on Barbados, one on Dominica, and one on Antigua. On Barbados, there is also a force of Harrier planes.

Military activity in the region has sharply increased. South of Puerto Rico, units of the U.S. fleet are staging large-scale maneuvers. Thirty-six warships are involved, including three aircraft carriers, 22 destroyers, and three nuclear submarines.

The Grenada government thinks that it is hardly an accident that these maneuvers started around the time of the celebration of the fourth anniversary of the revolution on March 13.

It is no accident either that Reagan's new threatening speech came at the same time as the publication of the report on economic growth in Grenada since the revolution.

When the budget was being discussed, it could be noted that the Gross National Product had increased by 5.5 percent, while unemployment dropped from 50 percent to 14 percent at the turn of the year. Finance Minister Bernard Coard has even forecast a shortage of labor power within three years.

But the continued gains of the revolution have gone hand in hand with increased pressure from the imperialists.

The Grenadan government has declared that increased solidarity and support is extremely important now for all the people struggling for freedom in Central America and the Caribbean. ■

The Argentine crisis

Gerry FOLEY

Although the breakdown of the military regime in Argentina has been slowed by the conciliationism of the bourgeois opposition, the process has continued and is apparently accelerating.

On December 6, 1982, only a few days after the military announced that general elections would be held at the end of 1983, Argentina was paralyzed by a 24-hour general strike that involved 7 million workers.

Ten days later, the demonstration called by the bourgeois opposition front, the Multipartidaria, under the slogan "For Democracy and National Reconstruction" brought out 120,000 people in Buenos Aires. It went over the head of its bourgeois organizers.

In its December 18, 1982, issue *Le Monde* noted: "In the midst of this tumult, the leaders of the Multipartidaria, obviously lost control of the events... They discreetly slipped away, after distributing a document calling for the return of power to civilian hands 'at the latest by October 12, 1983.'"

On March 28, 1983, a new 24-hour general strike took place, called by the two CGTs (Confederacion General del Trabajo — General Confederation of Labor). Both CGTs identify with Peronism. One, called more moderate, is led by Triaca. The other, called more radical in the press, is led by Saul Ubaldini.

Although the March 28 strike was declared illegal by the minister of labor and although the minister of the interior declared that he would "repress any actions detrimental to internal security," this action was highly successful.

On March 30 a march for "peace, bread, and work," was held in Buenos Aires, called by Ubaldini and Lorenzo Miguel. It was held on the date of the big workers march that shortly preceded the start of the Malvinas war, a demonstration that was brutally attacked by the "forces of order," and in which a trade-union activist was killed.

About 15,000 people participated in the march.

Le Monde of April 1 reported: "Mr. Saul Ubaldini gave a violent speech, interrupted repeatedly with shouts of 'To the gallows, to the gallows, the military who have sold the nation,' and 'murderers.'"

The Peronists obviously still represent the major force in the Argentine workers movement and in politics. But, according to *Le Monde's* correspondent Jacques Despres, their influence is much weaker than it was.

The country is politically in flux. Despres cited a poll done in February that showed that 46% of the voters were thinking of voting for the old liberal party, the Radical Civic Union (UCR) of Raul Alfonsin, as opposed to 39% for the Peronists. The UCR verbally opposed the repression against the left that began under Isabel Peron and then was carried further by the military.

The Communist Party is reportedly growing very rapidly, having "taken advantage of the toleration extended by the military to political organizations considered to be extremist. We are also seeing the growth among the workers of Trotskyist organizations."

One of the main reasons for the conciliation of the bourgeois opposition, as the following article indicates, is the explosiveness and fundamental contradictions of the situation in Argentina.

Argentina a year after the Malvinas war

The following article was originally published in the March 4 issue of Rouge, the paper of the French section of the Fourth International. It was, therefore, written before the buildup to the recent national strike in Argentina.

Jean-Pierre BEAUVAIS

BUENOS AIRES. "We demand that you confirm or retract the statement attributed to you that 'the heroes who built the fatherland did not devote themselves to plunder like today's military men.'"

This telegram, accompanied with unveiled threats, was on the front page of all Argentine papers on February 11. It was sent by the general secretary of the military junta to Victor Martinez, leader of the Radical Party, one of the country's two main bourgeois parties and a possible candidate for the vice presidency in the elections that have been scheduled for October. Martinez disavowed the statement on the spot!

Just before this, the censors had shut down several movie houses that were showing the film, *le Choc*. They also closed a theater that was presenting a

The bourgeois opposition is terrified of anything that could open up the way for mass mobilizations of the type that developed in the country between 1969 and 1973. The anger and desperation of the masses are now much deeper than they were then and there is no Peron or united Peronist movement to divert them.

This reality has paradoxical effects. The very depth of the crisis has led the existing political forces to hold its development back. The erosion of the old demagogic populist party that has diverted past mass upsurges has led to the revival of an old liberal party that was pro-imperialist at the time of the rise of Peronism.

It is clear that the Argentine crisis is a major threat to the imperialist system of control in Latin America. It has already gravely set back U.S. plans for dealing with the spreading revolution in Central America, as another article in this issue points out. Development toward an explosion in Argentina can decisively alter the whole relationship of social forces in Latin America.

The process that is opening up will be one of the most important experiences in the history of the anti-imperialist and workers movement in Latin America. It has to be watched closely. ■

play by Jorge Amado (a Brazilian CP writer). The directors were arrested, and the spectators held for hours, if not more.

It is a strange sort of "liberalization" that the military have opened up after their debacle in the Malvinas last June.

After being banned for years, the main political groups have been relegalized. They have been invited to undertake "membership drives," in accordance with the rules set by the junta. And once these drives are concluded and the identities of the new members verified, it will be decided whether these parties will be allowed to run candidates in the elections.

At the same time, trade-union bureaucrats who not so long ago were in jail or under house arrest have become "responsible interlocutors."

Nonetheless, the octopus-like apparatus of repression, with its bemedalled and brass-hatted torturers, is still there. And they are still at work. They are everywhere. Their notorious Ford Falcon cars prowl the night-time streets of the capital. Thousands of prisoners remain in their hands.

Moreover, these torturers have forced

nearly everyone to maintain a guilty silence about the fate of the victims of one of the most recent and monstrous crimes against humanity, that is, the 25 thousand people who have gone "missing" in this country. The only people who talk about them are the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the activists of the human-rights defense groups, and the militants of the far left.

The military are hated, but they are still, for the time being, in control of the situation. However, in the wake of the Malvinas adventure, the regime seemed to be in a full-fledged crisis, on the brink of collapse.

"I got a telephone call at work. Seventy-two hours later, I was landing in the islands. I had no training. During my military service two years ago, I was given essentially administrative tasks. Despite everything, I was assigned to the defense of Puerto Argentino (Port Stanley), stationed on one of the hills overlooking the town...

"We were not equipped for the cold. At our post, people on night guard duty often suffered frost bite....In the last two weeks, after the British landed, our main concern was getting food. We had to kill sheep. Although it was forbidden, we went down into the town in turns. The disorganization was total. But we always found a noncom or even an officer who would sell us rations."

The long story I heard from this draftee, a survivor of the fighting on the islands, was a devastating indictment of the military. He confirmed, along with others I talked to, that the junta had totally misestimated the determination and the capacity of British imperialism to strike back.

This former soldier also confirmed how half-cocked this operation was. It was nothing more than a desperate plunge the military took to try to escape from its internal political problems.

Isolated, discredited, incapable of controlling the crisis, and frightened by the growing signs of a mass rebelliousness that was more and more difficult to keep down, the military sought a new lease on life for their regime by presenting themselves as the defenders of the "national sovereignty."

Sure of their move, knowing that the cause was popular, the military loosened the straitjacket on internal political life. Bourgeois politicians — Peronists, Radicals, and others — that had been repressed or gagged right up to the operation, were invited to collaborate. They did so. The population was called on to mobilize. But its response was very uneven.

Most of those who came out to the mass rallies were from sections of the petty bourgeoisie with a nationalist tradition inherited from Peronism. The working class, battered by the crisis and the repression, remained suspicious and very largely passive.

"Fight the Brits, fight the imperialists, to win the Malvinas — I'm a 100 percent for that....But go in behind these sons of bitches, never!" That was what a



Discarded Argentine Army helmets and equipment on the Malvinas (DR)

class-struggle workers leader told me with a great deal of force and hatred. He was one of the vanguard who came to the fore in the big struggles of 1974 and 1975. He got off with a mere six years in prison for the role he played.

Despite everything, the sorcerers apprentices installed in the military general staffs created a new situation that was in many respects irreversible. Regardless of the outcome of the war, a "liberalization" had become inevitable. But it did not reduce the isolation of a military government that was already too discredited.

The military fiasco only accelerated and intensified the process that had been set in motion. This was further accentuated by public wrangling between the top officers trying to avoid the blame by putting it on to their colleagues.

When General Reynaldo Bignone's brass-hatted cronies handed him the presidency, the days of the dictatorship seemed to be numbered: "Power is up for grabs," one of the few Argentine press commentators taken seriously wrote at the time.

But today, the better part of a year later, the military, their agents, and their institutions are still there. The reason for this primarily is the collaboration that the military have gotten from an "opposition" that is concerned first and foremost about its narrow class interests and at the same time suffers from a chronic collapse of the backbone — that is the leaders of the main bourgeois political organizations.

Already before the Malvinas war, most of the bourgeois groups had joined the heterogeneous coalition called the Mul-

tipartidaria. It embraced the Radical Party, the Independent Movement for Development (MID), the Partido Intransigente, the Christian Democratic Federation, and the official Peronist Party, which, despite its divisions, remains the political force that has the biggest following in the country.

After the Malvinas defeat, the great majority of the Argentine bourgeoisie say that they "favor the withdrawal of the military to their bases." This position also coincides with the wishes of the imperialist powers.

On the basis of this position, and utilizing a certain antiregime rhetoric, which the military now tolerates within limits, the bourgeois politicians are trying to channel the mass hatred of the junta to serve their interests.

But, after seven years of dictatorship, the bourgeois parties themselves are weakened, ossified. They are riven by clique warfare and pushing and shoving

among various would-be caudillos. They fear a political vacuum. And they are frightened at the extent of the economic crisis and the threat of a social explosion that it is generating. They know that from their point of view they have no alternative.

The Argentine bourgeoisie has accepted and will continue to accept the directives of the IMF experts who represent their imperialist creditors. These directives are already being applied today by the junta. The bourgeoisie knows, therefore, that in order to rule and to continue to impose this policy on the masses thrown into destitution, they will need the military.

As for the military themselves, the majority of them now seem reconciled to the idea of a withdrawal to the barracks. But this does not mean that they are prepared to withdraw without conditions or at any price. The crisis that opened up within the military is far from having come to a conclusion.

The settling of accounts in the armed forces is still going on, although in a more muffled way than a few months ago. The military want to gain time. That is why they set such a late date for the elections.

Primarily, they are demanding three "guarantees," which they consider crucial for "keeping the military institution intact." The first, is that there must be no inquiry into the conduct of the Malvinas war. The second is that there has to be agreement on an "amnesty law" for acts of repression. That is, the dead and the "missing" have to disappear a second time. Finally, the military want to maintain all their prerogatives in the area of "national security." This amounts to a division of power, and, in that framework, a free hand for repression.

These positions have formed the pattern for the shameful ballet of "negotiated transition" that the military and nearly all the bourgeois politicians have been dancing.

This "negotiated transition" is also called, for certain purposes "dialogue." This is all entirely tailored to suit the military. In the narrow maneuvering room left by the general crisis gripping Argentina, the terms of this "dialogue" have enabled them for the moment; to regain the initiative. How far can this go? How long can it last?

To a large part, the answers to these questions depend on the tempo at which the working class reorganizes and remobilizes. It has suffered the brunt of a catastrophic economic crisis, combined with savage repression. The numbers of the working class have been reduced. Its most militant activists have been decimated. Its organizational structures, in particular those in the plants, which were the result of decades of struggle, have been dismantled.

The workers have to spend a great deal of energy just to make two ends meet, just to survive.

In spite of everything, confidence is

reviving. Conflicts are breaking out. Struggles are becoming more persistent. The bosses are being forced to accept, de facto, forms of workers organization in the plants. These developments are still very scattered and still essentially on a defensive level.

But the working class has already ceased to be the passive and silent mass that the bourgeois leaders hoped that it would remain, so that they would be able to carry off their "dialogue" with the military smoothly.

In this regard, the rather new situation in which the old union bureaucracy, one of the components of the Peronist movement, finds itself is significant. Parallel to the Multipartidaria, it has been developing its own forms of collaboration with the military dictatorship. But, in this framework, its role has been growing

rapidly, and at the same time it has been obliged to sharpen its tone. Along with this, the rifts within it generated by this contradictory position are tending to widen.

The national strike that the Peronist bureaucracy was obliged to call on December 6 was not accompanied by any mobilization. But the strike call was very largely followed.

The most revealing event came ten days later, however, on December 16. With the tacit approval of the junta, the Multipartidaria leaders called for a big public rally to show support for their policy. The demonstration rapidly went over their heads. They chose to slip away quietly, while great contingents of marchers, mostly workers, turned the rally into a mass demonstration against the dictatorship. ■

Rebuilding the Argentine workers movement

Interview with a class-struggle union leader

Alberto Piccinini is one of the most representative class-struggle union leaders in Argentina. In 1975, he led a struggle by 30,000 workers in the Villa Constitucion steel complex outside Rosario, which was one of the most militant and advanced the country has seen.

After spending seven years in prison, he has reemerged as one of the survivors of the working-class vanguard that developed in the early 1970s and which was the main target of the military, even before the establishment of the dictatorship in 1976.

Although he has not been able to get back into his old factory, Piccinini has resumed his trade-union work. The prestige he enjoys and the confidence shown in him by the workers in this major industrial area have already enabled him to play an important role. This was notable, for example, in the national strike of December 6, 1982. Piccinini gave the following interview to a correspondent of International Viewpoint in Argentina in late January.

Question. How would you describe the situation in the Argentine workers movement today?

Answer. Despite the years of repression and although it is still far from having regained its organizing capacities and the unity that is more than ever necessary now, the workers movement is playing a growing role. Every day it assumes a greater weight in the country, and I am convinced that it will recover the strength that it had in the past.

Q. What, in your opinion, are the most immediate needs?

A. The most immediate task is the workers regaining legal control of their unions and the right to elect their leaders through a democratic process. In this context, we have to do everything possible to develop real union democracy. This will make it possible to bring forward genuinely representative leaders who can give real leadership to the unions

and assure their independence.

Q. How does this struggle fit into the present political context?

A. We have to start from the fact that the working class has been very hard hit, not only by the repression, by the murder and imprisonment of the most militant workers, but also by the dismantling of whole sections of the productive apparatus. This has had the effect of taking millions of workers away from their tools.

When employment is cut back to this extent, the possibilities for mobilization and struggle are also reduced.

Fundamentally, we have to work to reactivate the productive apparatus in order for the working class to be able to play its full role once again.

Q. How would you sum up the experience of the struggles over the last year?

A. The results are already promising. Of course, you have to take into account

that the unions have not been able to operate normally yet. In these conditions, however, the conflicts that have broken out, the struggles that have developed, have demonstrated a high level of mobilization and desire for unity. The best example of this is the strike conducted December 6, which almost totally paralyzed the country.

The decisive step is reestablishing a single General Confederation of Workers (CGT). It is not possible, it is unthinkable, that after having had a single CGT, after seeing the kind of power such an organization has, the Argentine workers movement is going to play into the hands of its enemies by maintaining more than one CGT.

All those who claim to defend the interests of the workers must prove it by actual deeds. Personal and sectional interests have to be fought. We have to work for complete unity of the working class inside one CGT.

*Q. What was the extent of the working-class participation in the December 16 demonstration called by the *Multi-partidaria*?*

A. The workers movement was the main force involved. Hasn't it always been the section of the population hardest hit? The working class has no choice but to struggle. It has shown this quite clearly by its resistance throughout these years of dictatorship.

Q. How did the December 6 strike go in Villa Constitucion?

A. What happened in Villa Constitucion has a great significance. The repression has had particularly tragic effects in this area. You have to think back to the events of 1975 to realize how extensive it has been.

All the leaders of the Metal Workers Union (the UOM) were arrested, and then imprisoned for long years. The repression reached its worst in this industrial center. A large number of comrades were kidnapped and murdered. The layoffs were still more massive here than elsewhere. For a long time there was a veritable reign of terror throughout the city.

So, it is not surprising that up to the eve of December 6 a climate of fear and passivity prevailed here. On that day, the "local leadership" of the UOM decided not to heed the strike call issued by the national leaderships of the two CGTs.

Parallel to this, the plant managements put a lot of pressure on the workers to come to work. In these conditions, the 6:00 to 2:00 in the afternoon shift went in as usual. When a group of comrades, former union leaders who are without jobs today, including myself, learned this, we decided to do everything we could to turn the situation around.

We went to the plant gate and stopped the buses bringing in the workers who were to start at 2:00. We asked them to organize a general assembly once they were in the plant so that a vote could be taken for a stoppage. Most of the comrades were enthusiastic about this pro-

posal. They started immediately putting their confidence in us.

Such developments, I repeat, are very significant. This is not only because of the results (the afternoon and night shifts downed tools). On this basis we were able to organize a rally the next day in front of the union headquarters. A petition had gone round demanding a general assembly to discuss getting underway, finally, the process of resuming "normal" union activity, as the dictatorship promised that we would be able to.

Since then, the climate has changed drastically. There is a real resurgence of a determination to join in activity, to act. This has been shown in a number of concrete actions. We have even been able to set up a structure called Metal Workers Unity-December 6. It is already shaping up as the instrument for organizing the workers' fight to "regain" real control of their union.

Q. What is your opinion about the present labor legislation?

A. The legislation that is still in force as of now completely disregards the workers' rights. We have to fight for the full restoration of trade-union rights. The unions have to be in the hands of the workers.

There is no excuse for keeping the unions under the trustees appointed by the dictatorship. Without any more delays, without shilly-shallying, the unions have to be given back to the workers. And, through democratic elections, the workers have to choose their own leaders.

Q. By what concrete means can "normalization of the trade unions" be achieved?

A. The only thing the government should do is give the unions back to their old leaders. Then, these leaders themselves should organize elections plant by plant so that delegates, Internal Commissions (plant committees), and leadership bodies can be elected. A democratic process of selection has to be respected from the shop-steward level to the national leadership of the CGT.

This is the only guarantee that the leaders will be representative and the unions strong. Strong unions are not a danger to the country, as some suggest today. To the contrary, they are the assurance that the organization of the working class will benefit the country.

Q. What do you think about the question of the "missing"?

A. This is a very grave wound for the Argentine people. It requires a very concrete response and a very concrete solution. This is something that cannot be ignored. I do not say that out of a spirit of vengeance, but it is impossible for human beings to close their eyes to such a reality.

This is not a political question, but one that touches the lives and feelings of every human being. It cannot be ignored, it cannot be sidestepped. And everything possible must be done to see that this sort of thing does not happen again.

Everyone who has any humanitarian feelings has to keep this question from being forgotten.

Q. You argue that it is essential to unite the two CGTs. On what bases should this be done?

A. In the first place, the leaders of the CGTs should come out clearly for dialogue, not only among themselves but also among the rank-and-file activists. I think that if these activists could really participate in such a dialogue, the problem of uniting the two CGTs would be solved.

Q. In other words, in practice, unity has to be sought at the rank-and-file level?

A. Unquestionably. In fact, the ranks want unity and in many cases practice it. It is on the leadership level that the division exists. Among the leaders, personal and sectional interests continue to come first.

Q. In your opinion, what are the essential axes of the "plan of struggle" that should be put forward by the union movement?

A. The most immediate points are defense of the means of work, recovery of buying power, restoration of the unions to the workers, and the reestablishment of all the guarantees included in the labor legislation that was abolished by the dictatorship. These are the most immediate demands.

Q. Isn't the reestablishment of democratic rights one of them, too?

A. Yes, but the restoration of what we might call legal and political democracy is inseparably linked to the restoration of democracy on the trade-union level. You can't say that democracy exists in a country unless it exists in all spheres. You can't say there is political democracy unless there is democracy for the unions.

Q. What do the sections of the working class that you have contact with expect from the elections that are promised for the end of this year?

A. The workers movement expects a great deal from a democratic stage. It wants democracy. The workers do not think, however, that their problems are going to be solved through elections alone. This will only be one step in a long march.

After the elections, we are going to have to go on fighting. We will have a big struggle in front of us. The people are going to have to realize that we find ourselves in a ruined country, a country whose productive apparatus has to be rebuilt, reorganized, a country where the buying power of wage earners has to be won back, a country whose international reputation has to be restored.

Both before and after the elections, the most important thing is and will remain fighting to solve the gigantic social and economic problems that face us. ■

Bolivian miners demand workers management of industry

Interview with a Fourth Internationalist miners leader

On October 31, 1982, the new Bolivian president, Siles Suazo, announced that his government would institute comanagement in the administration of the state-owned mines.

The date chosen for the announcement was a symbolic one. It was the thirtieth anniversary of the nationalization of the mines by the government that emerged from the revolution of 1952.

The party that held the government at the time, and the mantle of the revolution, was the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionaria (MNR — Revolutionary Nationalist Movement). This party has since moved clearly to the right and split into three successor groups.

The most right-wing, the MNR-Historico, which cooperated with the Banzer dictatorship, is headed by Paz Estenssoro, who presided over the nationalizations.

The MNR-I (Left MNR) is headed by the present president, Siles Suazo. And the Revolutionary Party of the Nationalist Left is led by Juan Lechin, the chairman of the Bolivian Labor Confederation, the COB.

A few days after Siles Suazo's announcement of the comanagement project, Juan Lechin rejected it, saying that it was nothing more than a "copy of the West German model, aimed at setting up labor-management boards in the state enterprises." (Le Monde, November 11, 1982.)

In this way, a debate started up on the comanagement proposals put forward by the government of the Union Democratica Popular (People's Democratic Union, a coalition including the MNR-I, the CP, and the MIR). The plans call for boards including an equal number of representatives of the unions and the government.

This scheme for administering the state-owned enterprises, which represent about 80% of the key industrial installations in the country, has the backing of the Bolivian Communist Party. The CP dominates the COB and serves as the transmission belt between the government and the unions.

The comanagement plan has also won the approval of other pro-Moscow CPs. For example, it was hailed in the March 3 issue of the French CP's theoretical journal, Cahiers du communisme, which noted:

"A commission has been charged with drawing up plans for comanagement in the productive public enterprises, and henceforth the two most important, COMIBOL (the mines) and the YPFB (petroleum) will be run by boards made up of three government representatives and three elected representatives of the workers."

The Bolivian section of the Fourth International, the Partido Obrero Revolucionario-Combate (POR-Combate, Revolutionary Workers Party) opposes the comanagement scheme. Along with other revolutionary currents, it is calling for a majority for labor in the labormanagement boards. This alternative is also supported by the leaders of the miners union, the FSTMB, which belongs to the COB.

The arguments for a workers majority in the comanagement boards are explained, among other things, in the following interview with Felipe Vasquez, a member of the Executive Committee of the FSTMB and of the POR-Combate. The interview was given to Carlos Illades in the Huanuni mining area in February.

Question. What is the basis for the demand that the miners have presented to the government for a minimum wage with a cost-of-living increase?

A. To go back into history a bit, we can say that since 1942 the miners have been the standard-bearers of the demand for a living minimum wage.

For several decades, this has been the demand that the workers have been most interested in. But it was simply ignored both by the MNR governments under Paz Estenssoro and the military regimes that followed.

Since November 1981, the Huanuni

miners have maintained that the demand for a living minimum wage is inseparable from the demand for a sliding scale of wages. This was the only consistent answer for the workers facing the crisis that has gripped the country.

Up till now, the miners union is the only organization that has made a serious study of the question of a living minimum wage and of the sliding scale needed to compensate for inflation.

We have taken into consideration the patterns of consumption among the working people, the nutritional needs that are linked to our geographic condi-

tions, the size of families, prices, and so forth.

After this study, we reached the conclusion that in May-June 1982, the minimum living wage for a family of six was 11,330 pesos a month (about 500 US dollars). Our study was unprecedented in Bolivia. Previously, everybody limited themselves to making calculations on the basis of increases in the cost of living.

Q. If the miners' demand is not accepted by the government, what will the FSTMB do?

A. For the moment, the government has not rejected our demand. But, unless we get a favorable response after the end of the hundred-day "social truce" the government has asked for, that is, after mid-February, we will start to mobilize.

As I have said, a minimum living wage with automatic cost-of-living increases is a demand that we cannot give up.

Q. What is the position of the FSTMB on the "comanagement" in the state enterprises that the UDP government is talking about?

A. Since 1970 we have been discussing the question of workers participating in the management of the public enterprises. This was a way of challenging the government bureaucracy's control of these enterprises.

At the same time, it was necessary to mount a counter-attack against sections of the bourgeoisie that wanted — and still do want — to denationalize the key sectors of the economy. We had to point out how the workers could run the economy on a different basis.

It was also necessary to make it clear that the reason the state-owned enterprises went into the red and have stayed there was the bureaucratic management imposed by the bourgeoisie.

For a whole period "comanagement" as the workers understood it had a progressive character, since it represented a vigorous struggle against reactionary governments that were trying to reprivatize the strategic sectors of the economy.

When we talked about "comanagement" in 1970, in reality we were fighting for a workers majority in the administration. Likewise now, we don't want the whole thing to be reduced — as the present government does — to mere technical administration.

We want the workers to have a direct influence over the use of resources, in determining a planned allocation of resources, in the sale of products, etc.

Q. What are the different positions on the question of comanagement within your union?

A. There are three general points of view.

Some support the government's position, that is, for parity between government and union representatives in the administration of the enterprises. The involvement of workers representatives in

this scheme would amount to no more than a simple administrative role.

The workers representatives would not have the slightest power of decision with respect to financial matters. In other words, the government wants to involve workers representatives in the framework of relationships of capitalist exploitation.

Then, there is the position that is being put forward by the revolutionary organizations. It calls for a majority for the workers in the comanagement boards and the right of workers to a say in the financial dealings of the enterprises, in the sale of the products, and so forth.

In other words, we are calling for a change of orientation in the management of the enterprises in order to move toward workers self-management.

Finally there is a position based on ultraleftist notions. Those who hold it declare their total opposition to "comanagement." They call for workers control, but have not defined very well what this would mean.

At present, the FSTMB is discussing this question in a national commission made up of representatives of the government and of the COB. But we miners have made it clear that this discussion should begin among the rank-and-file workers and not be channeled from above.

Q. Some people think that the participation of the workers in the administration of the nationalized enterprises could undermine the fight for a minimum living wage with automatic cost-of-living increases. This could happen, they argue, because the workers would be drawn into assuring the profitability of the enterprises. What do you think about that?

A. We miners think that we could get rid of the bureaucrats, if we reorganized the use of resources, and if we brought in new machines we could make the enterprises profitable.

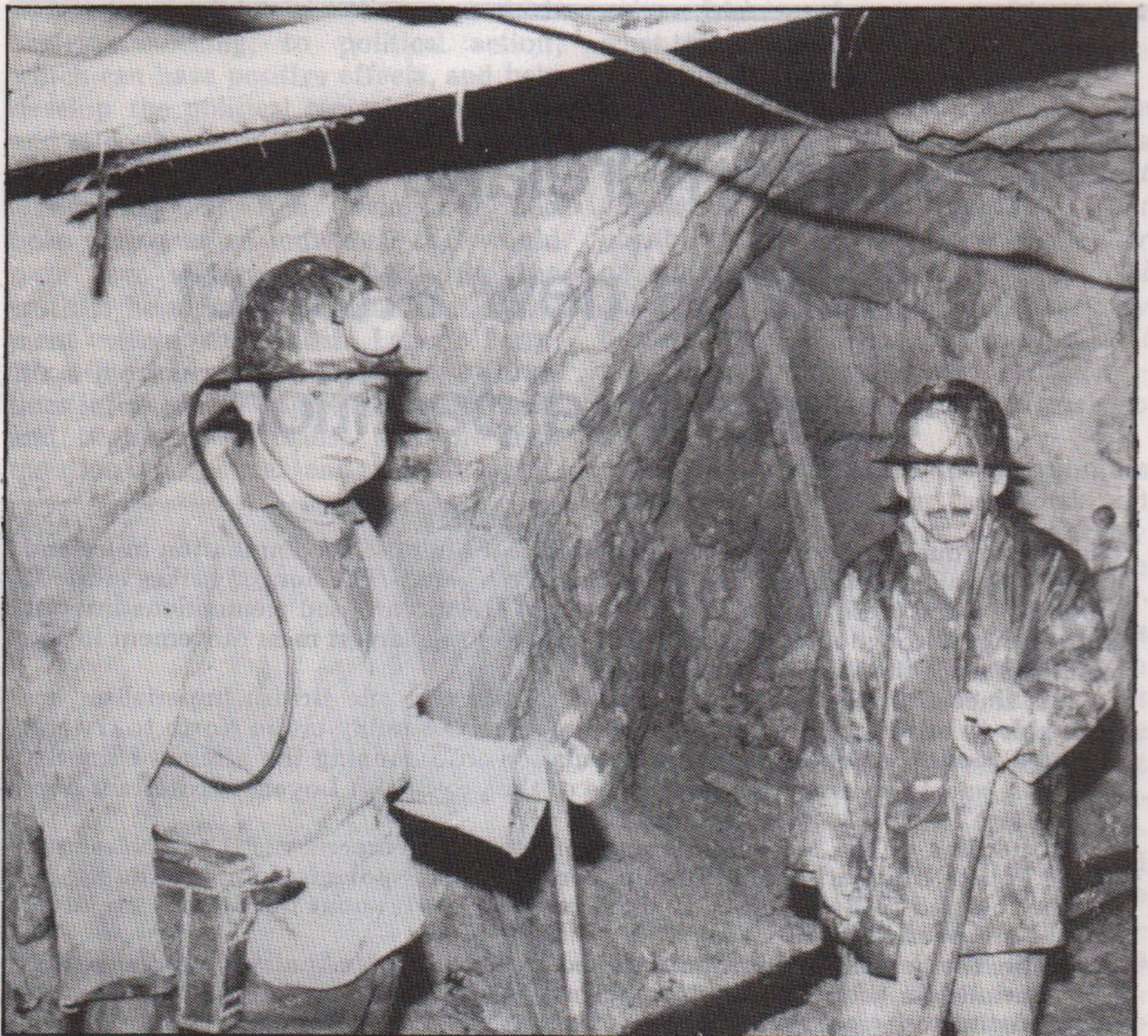
In the case of those enterprises that bring in the least profit, we would seek ways of increasing production. But all of that requires a rectification of the government's policy toward the mining industry. It is necessary to work out a policy designed to bring about a substantial improvement in the living and working conditions of the miners.

For all these reasons, we think that there is no basis for the argument that workers "comanagement" would be an obstacle to winning a living minimum wage.

If the government does not accept the formula of "comanagement" with a workers majority, there are two possible alternatives.

We may decide not to participate in the "comanagement" bodies. Or within the framework of "comanagement," we may take up a vigorous fight on the trade-union level, with the active participation of comrades involved in "comanagement."

Q. What do the miners think about



Bolivian miners underground (DR)

what the UDP has been doing in the government?

A. We miners took the lead in the Bolivian people's fight for democratic rights. Our idea was that this would make it easier for us to organize and therefore to carry on our fight in more favorable conditions.

With the November 1981 strike at Huanuni, we won respect for the rights of labor. Then, we waged a struggle for political rights, and we made headway there, too.

At the time, on the basis of its program, the workers thought that the UDP would follow an anti-imperialist policy, introduce a living minimum wage with an automatic cost-of-living increase, and so forth.

Concrete experience has opened the workers' eyes about the UDP government. A technocratic team has assumed the dominant role in the government and imposed a series of measures, such as those decreed in November (1), which dealt a severe blow to the workers' aspirations.

The government has not put defending the workers' interests first. We, for our part, have taken our distance from the government. It is an index of the workers' rejection of the UDP's policy that in the elections that have been held since November nongovernmental left slates have won.

Thus, despite the opposition of the Bolivian Communist Party, the miners have confirmed their class independence in several congresses.

Q. What has been the reaction of the workers to the departure of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR)

from the government in January?

A. Not everybody had seen it the same way. Nonetheless, most workers agree on one point: The governmental crisis has been the reflection of the contradictions that run through the regime because of its composition. (2)

We workers are very concerned about the present situation. This is because it is the most reactionary sectors that have gained the most from the breakup of the government coalition.

The workers do not confuse bourgeois democracy with workers democracy. But they have a stake in the present democratic process and are demanding that it be deepened. This does not prevent us in the least from preparing to deal with an attempt to reestablish a dictatorship, which is clearly in the works.

Q. In your opinion, what are the immediate perspectives for the Bolivian workers movement?

A. I think that the decisive moments are approaching. In such a context, there will be an increase in workers' mobilizations, and there will be a tendency for the workers to radicalize.

In Bolivia, there have been a lot of attempts to impose bourgeois solutions, both civilian and military. All these schemes have failed. The only possible alternative for the workers is a workers government and socialism. ■

1. This refers to the austerity program instituted by the UDP government shortly after coming into office. For the details, see IV, No 22, January 24, "The Bolivian Cauldron," by S. Romande.

2. The executive branch is run by a coalition of reformist parties (the UDP) with different strategies, that of the MIR being particularly right wing. The legislature is dominated by the right.

The Northern Ireland Assembly

— Britain's new attempt to stabilise partition

The continuous struggle of British imperialism to impose its domination in Ireland has met equally continuous and determined resistance. The hunger strikes in the H Blocks of Long Kesh prison in the North of Ireland aroused tremendous interest and support throughout the world, and impelled the largest mass movement in Ireland itself since the War of Independence.

But, since the relative defeat suffered in that struggle British imperialism has been able to introduce a new plan — setting up an Assembly in the North to try and co-opt a section of the nationalist population into running the affairs of the Six Counties, and to reassert the dominance of the pro-British Loyalist Protestant population (see IV No 13, 20 September 1982).

At the time of the recent conference of People's Democracy (PD — Irish section of the Fourth International) in Dublin, Penny Duggan spoke to John McNulty, PD member elected to Belfast City Council on May 1981, about the present situation, and the perspectives of PD today.

Within the general orientation outlined by comrade McNulty the organisation will continue its activity in the campaign against the anti-abortion amendment to the Constitution (see IV No 25, 7 March 1983), build solidarity with workers struggles against austerity, take steps to consolidate its system of press and propaganda around the monthly newspaper Socialist Republic, pamphlets, and regular public meetings, while maintaining and extending its active role in the trade unions and anti-imperialist struggle, which will focus on opposition to the Assembly and the proposed Council of Ireland.

Question. The Assembly elections were the last major political event in the Six Counties. What was the impact of these elections, particularly in the context of the decline of the mass movement following the defeat of the H Block hunger strike?

Answer. Well, you've got to put the elections in the context of British strategy over the last fifteen years. This strategy has been reasonably consistent — to restabilise the partition of Ireland, and thus ensure British imperialism's control over the Irish working class. The failure of the hunger strike presented them with an opportunity to move forward. The establishment of the Assembly marked the way in which they attempted to continue this strategy.

The collapse of the mass movement, the absence of mass struggle in the streets, meant that in a physical sense they were able to do that rather easily. But in a political sense the hunger strike had rather deeprooted repercussions.

The most immediate, and also the most significant and long term of those, was the rallying of support around the Sinn Fein candidates in the elections. This has had two effects, rather it has had three effects. The first is blocking the advances toward the establishment of a new Stormont in the North. Secondly, it has a long term effect in the sense that it destroys the whole ideological basis of British intervention in Ireland — that the Republican movement is a small group of terrorists. The elections established plain-

ly the mass support for Republicanism, for an end to British rule in Ireland, and the international dimension of the Irish situation — exposing it as a colonial struggle which must be resolved.

Thirdly, the effects of the hunger strike went well beyond the traditional Republican milieu. So, one of the outcomes of the elections was that it was made totally impossible for the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP — bourgeois nationalist party) to take their seats and participate in this farce. And even the most pro-imperialist sections of the Southern bourgeoisie had to realise participation in the re-establishment of this sort of Assembly was impossible.

There's one other thing that has become clear since the elections. That's the question of the autonomy of the Loyalist section of the working class. It's clear that the Assembly is part of British strategy, and not initiated by any struggle by the Loyalists. It is also quite clear that the Loyalist bourgeoisie no longer has the coherence and the strength to transform this Assembly into the old reactionary and authoritarian strong-state Stormont.

Q. But since the Assembly elections we haven't seen the mass movement on the streets in the North at all. So what do you think this means they feel about the Assembly? Do they see it as a threat, an attempt to re-establish Stormont? Or does it seem meaningless, dominated by

squabbles among the Unionists themselves?

A. I think that there is a great deal of fear of the Assembly within the nationalist population. It has had some immediate effects — the first demand was for a 'shoot to kill' policy. And the British responded by instituting a 'shoot to kill' policy against Republican activists.

Also, in the long term, the Assembly represents a solution to the Northern problem which involves no real concessions to any section of the nationalist population. This obviously has repercussions within that population.

I think that the reason that this hasn't been reflected in street demonstrations is twofold. First of all, it's not possible to simply be against the Assembly without having an alternative. So, the question of programme is raised as an immediate issue for the whole of the working class. The question of leadership is raised. And really the only alternative to the Assembly, the only alternative to the continued partition of Ireland, is a workers republic. Which is maybe expressed in a transitional way through demands for a constituent assembly, etc. But that isn't an immediate issue, and it's one that the traditional organisations, both anti-imperialist and working-class, haven't yet come to terms with.

The second factor is related to the first. The recession, the austerity offensive, is really beginning to hit. People find themselves swamped by the immediate demands of day-to-day existence, and the Republican leadership haven't really been able to draw the connection between that crisis and the political crisis of imperialist rule.

In that sense also people are looking for an answer. It is the convergence of those things that constitutes the crisis both for the imperialists, and to a certain extent for the anti-imperialist movement. Can they provide the leadership necessary?

Q. On the question of programme. Under the impact of the mass struggle, and the influence of PD and Bernadette, we've seen at least a section of the Republican movement develop politically, on questions such as the need for unity of the anti-imperialist movement, using the platform provided by elections, etc. Can you tell us what you think about that, and how significant it is?

A. Well, I think in an historical sense it is very significant. Traditionally the Republican movement has been a petty bourgeois nationalist movement. It remains so, but it is a movement that is coming under increasing pressure from its largely working-class membership.

In the short term the question is not how far the Republican movement has moved from traditional positions, from the old position of the dominance of military struggle to the question of mass action, class actions, et. It is how do the Republicans measure up to the demands of the class struggle today? And the answer to that is the Republican

movement has not been able to meet that challenge so far. So, we have not seen in their turn to electoral politics an immediate translation of that into a mass struggle policy, but rather a tendency toward pure electoralism. Using elections in somewhat the same way that the bourgeoisie uses them.

I'm hopeful of further development in Republicanism, but I think that revolutionary Marxists must be clear about the mechanism of how that will happen. The mechanism is the pressure from the working class on the Republican leadership, and not necessarily a conscious under-

bombing campaign in Britain, which achieves nothing, to political action, which can have positive effects, and help develop the political struggle in Ireland, and aid the turn toward the working class.

Secondly, if Ken Livingstone had been acting as an individual that would have been admirable enough. But the truth is he represents a significant movement within the British Labour Party. It's a movement that is starting to draw lines in the class struggle in Britain itself, and beginning to realise that the Irish question has a real and central signif-



Everyday British presence on the streets (DR)

standing by the Republican leadership of the tasks posed by the Irish revolution.

Q. Obviously the process of the Irish revolution cannot be separated from what is going on in British politics.

One of the most important features of British politics today is the development of a left current within the Labour Party. One of the leading spokespersons of that left, Ken Livingstone, Labour leader of the Greater London Council, has taken a very strong stand on his support for the struggle of the Irish people. He recently came to Belfast to meet leaders of Sinn Fein.

What was the reaction of the nationalist population to his visit? Was it welcomed, seen as positive? Do you think this is going to be an important element in the development of the interconnection between the British and Irish revolutions — such a link between the nationalist movement and the Labour left in Britain?

A. I think that Livingstone's visit was admirable, especially given the hysterical reaction of the British media, which was echoed by the traditional Labour bureaucracy.

I think it had two consequences. The first, here in Ireland, is that the Republicans realised that there really is a solidarity in the British working class that can be reached. This will help to turn traditional Republicans away from a

icance.

I think that Livingstone's situation is that he is realising that not in a defensive way — that the left need to protect themselves from the right — but in a relatively offensive way. He realises the need to develop not just an alternative economic programme for British workers, but an alternative political programme which is an anti-imperialist programme.

I'd just like to add that I recently attended a conference on plastic bullets in Manchester which I thought was rather significant. I think that during the hunger strike the British left found themselves in rather an invidious position.

In the past they'd taken rather abstract positions, rather than addressing themselves to the immediate needs of the Irish struggle, which is really the motorforce for building solidarity. I think that the lessons of this are starting to sink home.

What I found in Manchester was a current that had based itself centrally in the debate in the Labour Party, and has significant trade-union support. Now, how far that movement develops depends to a certain extent on the development of the British class struggle.

It also depends to some extent on ourselves and the development of the Irish movement, because obviously no British movement can hope to succeed

unless Irish workers are making clear what their demands are.

Q. As a local councillor you must be very aware of the day-to-day effects of the economic crisis on the nationalist population in the Six Counties. What possibilities do you see for struggle either on questions like jobs, or on more social questions like housing, social security benefits, etc? What relationship will this have to the national struggle — will it give it an impetus, or will the two struggles run parallel?

A. Well, I think that the question has different implications in the North and South. What we find in Ireland today is that there is a fightback against the austerity offensive. The chief characteristic of this fightback is that it is fragmented and sectoralist, especially in the North. The reason for that is that every struggle in Ireland for democratic rights, for the rights of workers against austerity, etc., runs up against the question of partition and of imperialist domination of the country's economy. I think that the solution to that is more immediate in the South. Take for example the recent struggle of the workers in the Ranks flour mills in the South. Although the bureaucracy concentrated the struggle around the immediate situation of the workers the redundancies arose directly from imperialist intervention, the dumping of flour on the Irish market.

In the North the questions come up against a sectarian barrier which is rather harder to break down. I think that that barrier can be broken down. But that depends to a very large extent on the ability of Southern workers to formulate a programme and build a united movement which can offer an immediate alternative to Protestant workers in the North.

Now, I think that in the short term what we're trying to do in the North is to build an anti-imperialist current. It may seem rather more attractive right away to issue a call for 'workers unity' in a very general sense, but in fact that doesn't answer the programmatic questions. We have to address those workers in struggle who have a real political consciousness of what the demands of the struggle are.

Q. You said earlier that the H Block hunger strike had really internationalised the Irish struggle and that wide support had been gained internationally. What do you think this illustrates about the importance of the Irish revolution at an international level, and, coming out of that, what do you think are the tasks for the Irish solidarity movement internationally?

A. Well, if I can answer that in reverse order. For the solidarity movement what I think comes to the forefront now is the realisation that the hunger strike represented a struggle between the Irish people and British imperialism.

So, it's now necessary for those activists concerned with the Irish ques-

tion to move to the root of the problem and demand British withdrawal from Ireland. I think that recent developments such as the controversy over the St Patrick's Day March in New York show that tide of awareness within the proletariat worldwide. Other developments such as the EEC decision to report on the North, against the opposition of Britain, represent the divisions among the bourgeoisie internationally about the solution to this question and Britain's role here.

But I think that for conscious revolutionaries the key question is to realise Ireland's strategic importance. It's a country dominated by imperialism. It is also a country that is on the edges of Europe and part of the EEC. So there isn't any solution here that is a partial one. The question resolves itself into the victory of imperialism or the victory of the workers. The victory of imperialism would have consequences world wide. To mention just one, the entry of the 26 counties into NATO and the establishment of Ireland as an armed beach head in the deployment of Cruise missiles and in the war drive of imperialism.

A defeat for imperialism would have the opposite effect. In the words of both Lenin and James Connolly — it would provide a spark for fuelling the European revolution. So, the national question in Ireland isn't some sort of optional question, it's a strategic question in world revolutionary politics. It's not something that exists on the sidelines. It's something that demands action now.

Q. So, just to end can you tell us what People's Democracy will be doing in the next while?

A. I should say at this point that PD has been going through a difficult period since the ending of the hunger strike. This was partly due to an overestimation of the possibilities of the situation, also to the failure of our organisation to realise the full meaning of the programme of Trotskyism in Ireland.

We've recently had our annual conference and that's meant a new turn for the organisation. This turn is in the direction of developing our programme, building our organisation, and making a real turn to the Irish working class. I think that to understand this, in general terms, what you have to understand is the dynamic of the Irish revolution.

What you have is a politically conscious vanguard which organises traditionally around the Republican movement. Then you have a layer of workers in struggle that traditionally organises through the trade-union movement. The sectoralist way in which both these structures organise means that neither by themselves can lead to victory. What People's Democracy represents is a politically conscious movement organised around a Marxist programme. What we're trying to do now is strengthen that political consciousness in order to make the fusion of all three traditions a reality.

The car workers strikes in France — a blow against Mitterrand's austerity policy

Since the election of the Mitterrand government in France on May 10, 1981 there have been a series of strikes in the car industry, although most other industrial sections have stayed quiet despite the austerity measures introduced by the government.

In early March Penny Duggan spoke to Jacques, a member of the LCR (French section of the Fourth International) who works at the major Flins plant of the nationalised Renault company about these strikes, and particularly that at Renault Flins itself.

Question. Why have we seen these waves of strikes in the car industry?

Answer. To answer that question I'll just have to go back over what has happened in the car plants in the past few years.

There was a series of struggles and strikes as early as Autumn 1981. These started in Renault Sandouville, continued in Renault Billancourt and Renault Maubeuge. A series of strikes broke out in Renault Flins itself in April 1982. This started among the fork-lift truck drivers. The main question was grading, which in effect meant wages.

The drivers went on strike, blocking the production lines with their trucks, and quite rapidly, within a week, these several hundred workers won their demands.

After this, the unskilled production workers, seeing that it was possible to win, also went on strike on the question of grading. Their strike lasted three weeks. They also blocked the production lines, and were locked out by the management. Nevertheless their strike ended in what they considered was victory. So, one after the other, the fork-lift drivers and the unskilled (OS) workers went on strike and won.

In large measure, they gained the confidence to do this from the victory of Mitterrand and the Socialists in the May 1981 elections. Up until that point the memory of the Flins workers was heavily marked by their last strike in 1978, which ended in failure. This was a strike in the press shop which was ended by the intervention of the police. Forty-eight workers were sacked as a result.

From that point up until 1981, there were a few fragmented and sporadic struggles, but nothing much. But after the May 10 election victory the workers felt they could go on strike without the CRS (militarised police) immediately appearing in the factory.

After the Flins strikes in April 1982, there was a series of strikes at Citroen and Talbot. These strikes were to deal with an old problem that these workers had: the presence of a fascist union, the CSL (Confederation des Syndicats Libres, Confederation of Free Trade Unions).

For years this had prevented any real organisation of the workers, and thus any struggles against the bosses on work conditions or wages.

The strike by the OS workers at Flins, who were mainly immigrants, while the fork-lift drivers, and the workers involved in struggles the previous Autumn, were mainly French, had given the immigrant OS at Citroen and Talbot the confidence to go into struggle. After these strikes, the CSL lost considerable support and the CGT (Confederation Generale du Travail — CP dominated union federation) grew rapidly, with thousands of workers joining. Thus the power of the employers in the factory, who work hand in glove with the CSL, was considerably weakened.

I would say that in these first strikes in 1982 the aspect of workers dignity vis-a-vis the bosses was crucial. After the May/June strikes at Citroen and Talbot the situation was quite confused — with the employers attempting to go back on the gains the workers had won. At Flins the situation returned almost to normal, although there were small sectoral conflicts involving a few dozens or hundreds of workers.

Q. Then what happened in January this year?

A. This relates to the wages policy of the government and management. Austerity measures have been in force since 1982 that have driven down the buying power of the workers. The Renault management planned to limit wage rises to 7 per cent for 1983, with another 1.5 per cent eventually if the company made a profit — which in effect was an anti-strike clause. And 7 per cent as everyone knows is below inflation.

That was one aspect. The other was that after the April 1982 strikes the management undertook to set up training programmes that would enable the workers to reach higher grades, which would mean higher wages. Very little was done on this, which created an atmosphere of discontent, expressed in the sectoral struggles I mentioned earlier.

This discontent was to be expressed

with greatest force in the strike that broke out in the paintshop at the beginning of January. Just before that there was a dispute in the R5 body shop. That could have extended, but the workers there decided to stop.

The next day the paintshop went on strike around two essential demands: 300 francs wage rise for all, and regrading, which would also have meant wage increases. The demand was for almost all the workers to be moved to the top OS grade, and those already in it to be moved up — in effect that meant the creation of a new grade. There were also minor demands on working conditions, provision of showers, replacements so that workers on the line could go and piss, etc.

These demands challenged both the management's wages policy, and the whole career system in the Renault company, which is very complicated. Everybody knew that if the spray painters won these demands, then one after the other every other section would come out for the same demands.

The workers settled into the strike, and the management quickly responded by a lockout. This took us by surprise, that it was done so quickly. Then we were faced with the classic problem of a struggle at Flins. It is an enormous plant, with 18,000 workers, and many sections are miles apart. So the blokes don't know each other. To extend and generalise struggles is very difficult, although this is of course very important, particularly when, as in this case, the demands are those that can unify the workers.

So, despite the fact that the demands concerned all the OS workers, that is, the majority in the plant, a large majority found themselves simply spectators. This situation of course was not helped by the rapid lockout. There is another difficulty. The workers can live as far as seventy miles from the plant. Therefore, to propose, for example, an occupation has been impossible up till now. We did so in April 1982 — the idea seemed to the other workers to come from another planet.

The management locked out not the whole factory, but the key sections most likely to join the dispute — some 11,000 workers found themselves outside the plant.

But the painters continued their strike. Management offered an increase of 140 francs per month, but this was massively rejected. During January the paintshop at Renault Billancourt went on strike for essentially the same demand — 300 francs for all. Most of their demands were granted quite rapidly and they were back at work within a week. Then the trim shop at Billancourt went out for the 300 francs.

The management were getting really worried! They knew that if the demand and the strikes began to spread they would be in real trouble. So, after the massive rejection of their first offer by the paintshop at Flins they decided to try

and manoeuvre to get the spray painters back to work and stop the flames spreading.

Their final offer was accepted. This gave between 190 and 275 francs according to category. The fact that this differential offer was accepted shows that there are still divisions among the workers according to grade. But the struggle was a real success. Some of the workers got very nearly 300 francs. And they had to give all the workers in the company 120 francs rise per month. This broke their wages policy of 7 per cent for 1983. It probably represented between 8 and 11 per cent according to grade.

These rises were won by the struggle. All the previous negotiations had got nothing — and not even the most bureaucratic trade-union leadership could have accepted 7 per cent. Not only has this put the frighteners on the car industry employers, but on all the big employers. They see it as a 'bad example' for other workers who are facing attacks on their buying power — and have the example of Renault before their eyes.

I should just add that at the same time as the paintshop strike, there were two other smaller ones involving a few dozen workers. These were in the plating and delivery sections. They also took up the demand for 300 francs for all. But in the plating section it was also a bit like April 1982, on the question of workers right to self-organisation. This section has not had a strike for fifteen years. Traditionally the supervisory personnel are fascist inclined, and working conditions are very harsh. In these rather particular conditions the strike ended more or less in defeat. The delivery section won a half-victory.

It was very difficult to link up these three sections that were in struggle at the same time. The CFDT tried to make links a little bit. But the CGT tried not at all.

There are some particular problems in organising struggles at Flins. The first is the tradition of blocking the line — that is, to physically block the production line which runs like a serpent through the factory.

What then happens is that those workers who come after that particular section have no work — no cars are passing in front of them. So they say — why come out on strike? We're not working, it would just mean losing wages. It's not a wrong tactic in principle, but it's not a very good one — it creates enormous problems in extending a strike.

The workers on strike either spend their time in their own section — or parading throughout the factory all day long calling on the other workers to come out on strike. With a plant as enormous as Renault Flins, and sections that are so spread out, the only way to keep up solidarity, and reach the other workers is in this way — staying together and moving round the whole plant. It is a bit surprising when you're used to another plant, pickets on the gates, etc.

Then there's another problem. The

immigrant workers in particular are very reluctant to meet, have discussions about what to do, and vote. Because they feel to vote is to divide. So the only time they will vote is when they're sure there's almost total agreement — like when the first offer was rejected, or the second accepted.

Q. Which union has the majority in the plant? And can you tell us a bit about how they organise?

A. Until last year it was the CGT which had the support of the majority of the workers. But in April 1982 the CFDT clearly advanced, and the relationship of forces changed. This was confirmed in the elections for the Comite d'Entreprise (1) which took place just after the paintshop strike. There the CFDT got 47 per cent and the CGT 43 per cent. In the previous elections two years ago the CGT got 56 per cent and the CFDT around 30 per cent.

I should explain that this strength is not reflected in actual union membership. The rate of actual union membership in Renault Flins is less than 10 per cent. But, as it is the unions who put forward the lists for candidates to be elected both to the CE, and as the equivalent of what you would call shop stewards, their influence is much stronger than it appears.

The low rate of unionisation is partly explained by a distrust of the unions. And that many workers identify the workers representatives almost as part of the institution of the factory rather than their own. So there is a tendency at Flins that negotiations there are a direct negotiation between direct shopfloor representatives and the management, rather than it going through the structures. This helps the tendency towards self-organisation. Though it is under-developed. For example, the strike committee in April 1982 was not elected, but was the workers who are accepted as leaders by the others who came forward and constituted it.

The shift between the CGT and the CFDT took place because in April 1982 it was the CFDT that seemed closest to the workers, that basically supported the struggle through and through. It was also the most unitary. The section of the CFDT at Flins is a bit particular — it is known as left wing, and oppositional to the leadership. In April it supported the moves towards self-organisation by the workers — the formation of a strike committee and so on.

These attempts were quite limited, and were not taken up again in the paintshop strike. That was largely due to the fact that there were fewer workers in struggle. The whole factory was not on strike so, the need for a strike committee appeared less clearly. And then you had the two unions who each did their own thing and didn't try to get together — there was absolutely no attempt at unity. That's

1. Comite d'Entreprise: a parity body between workers and management which is supposed to discuss questions of the organisation of the plant and workforce.

worrying, but it is an old problem at Flins.

Q. The press talked a lot about the fact that it was immigrant workers on strike. What effect did this have among the workforce?

A. The media have presented the strikes of both last April and this January as simply strikes by immigrant workers. This is not exactly true — there were French workers involved in the strikes. But it is undoubtedly true that the bulk of the workers, and the most combative, were immigrants.

But the question was a revolt by the unskilled workers against their conditions — and the majority of the unskilled car workers in the Paris region are immigrants. It's as simple as that.

The racist campaign against the striking workers, particularly the speech by the prime minister Mauroy, was disgusting and sheer madness. The attempt to denounce the strikes as a plot by Islamic fundamentalists to destabilise the French car industry is just crazy. At Renault Flins those who were most taken aback by this attack were the militant immigrant workers themselves, who have nothing to do with Islamic fundamentalism. Moreover, Mauroy talked about Shi'ite fundamentalism. Which is an absurdity because there aren't any Shi'ites in Morocco, and most of the immigrant workers are Moroccans. It's just the same old trick as the right wing government used to use every time there was a workers struggle to play it down. To say it was a plot hatched in Moscow or something. It's exactly the same system — every workers struggle is a plot manoeuvred by I don't know who or what.

Of course the immigrant workers do have their cultural traditions, and most of them are believers. But that has nothing to do with why they strike for better wages!

But all this is a very serious problem. It had a very precise purpose — to intimidate the immigrant workers, and sow divisions between them and the French workers. And it is worrying because it is not clear it did not succeed. Obviously there were divisions before, and this campaign has increased them.

Q. What do you think will happen now?

A. It's difficult to say. The French and immigrant workers do not have the same level of consciousness, do not have the same attitude towards the government.

The immigrant workers were overjoyed by May 10, 1981, the promise of change. Of course, they hadn't been able to express their opinion because they don't have votes.

The first governmental measures, the halt on expulsions, the regularisation of the status of those without papers, gave confidence to them, and a favourable impression of the government.

They felt as if an additional major obstacle that they faced, of continuous police harassment, the risk of being expelled if they so much as opened their

mouths or went into struggle, had disappeared. So they felt more confident about going into struggle. And they saw for example that in April 1982, when there were strikes, and the production lines were blocked, that the CRS did not immediately appear in the factory as they had every other time, like in 1978. So, the April 1982 strikes and the victory they won increased their confidence.

Among the French workers today it's a bit different. There's a widespread feeling that it's not normal to go on strike when you have a left government. There is the idea that this government, elected by a majority of the working class, should satisfy their demands. Thus, lots of workers have the feeling that to go on strike puts the government in the wrong, and it's better to avoid it. Some workers have gone beyond that and explain that it is not strikes that hurt the left, but the government's policies, and we should struggle to have our demands met. But the vast majority of French workers are not on this level today — and this creates a sharp division between French and immigrant workers which is very dangerous.

Obviously the ministerial speech, the racist campaign, struck a chord among the workers, and the effects are still unfolding. But I can see the effects every day on my line.

The Moroccan comrades were completely shocked by these sort of statements, and don't understand them. They say they would rather deal with the CRS than this sort of thing — which is so pernicious it's much worse than the CRS whom you can confront physically. Many of the immigrant workers are very angry, quite justifiably.

But what is worrying is that some of the immigrant workers are tending to say, 'We're fed up with being the ones who fight first, and fight for all, when the French workers do nothing or much less. We're the ones who bear the brunt of the attacks. We're fed up and we're not going to move unless the French workers do first.' I hear this every day.

Doesn't it just sound like what the government is aiming for? To produce a situation of passivity and division among the workers. It's extremely worrying.

Q. But do you think this will last? You have also said that the workers are full of confidence in their ability to struggle and win.

A. Well, this is a new situation. On the one hand there is the confidence and mobilisation among the workers. On the other hand there are these elements of division, which have grown. The combativity of the French workers could grow, and it remains to be seen how far the immigrant workers refuse to move.

From this point of view the response to the attempts to sack elected workers representatives after the strikes at both Citroen Aulnay and Renault Flins was very important. At Citroen the CGT responded weakly. But in Flins the CFDT reacted immediately and called a strike — it was CFDT members who were threat-

ened. The CFDT felt in a strong position given the elections which had just been held, as I mentioned earlier. The strike was a big success, 2,500 workers. It's years since there was such a big strike at Renault Flins. This reaction forced the CFDT leadership to vote to support the Renault Flins section.

Q. Were there any women workers involved in the struggle?

A. Very, very few. There are very few women workers at Renault, it's very much a man's world, so that already makes it difficult for women to get involved, and they are in marginal or auxiliary sections, not production. There is one woman trade-union militant who is a shop steward but it took years for her to become accepted.

Of course, the trade union could do a lot more in the way of education and encouragement. Particularly among the Muslim immigrant workers who of course have a particular traditional view of women. There are Spanish and Portuguese immigrant women workers here but very few others.

Q. Finally can you just tell us what intervention the comrades of the LCR have in Flins?

A. Really, we've only been present again over the last two years. At first, our intervention was from the outside through leaflets and so on. Now we have comrades working in Flins.

We're known as trade-union militants to the mass of the workers, and as members of the LCR within the union. We've shown that we're there in the struggles and we have ideas to offer about how they can be carried forward. We're undoubtedly a recognisable political force with our own ideas. I would say we have as much weight as the other Trotskyist organisation, Lutte Ouvriere, who have been in the plant for years.

This is a favourable situation for us because the workers are asking political questions and want answers. For example, we're just coming up to the municipal elections, and they're saying, 'We voted in 1981 and we're still waiting for change. I'm not going to go out on Sunday to vote.'

Whether they would be ready to vote for the sort of alternative we offer in 'La Voix des Travailleurs Contre l'Austerite' (Workers against Austerity, joint list presented by the LO and LCR, see IV No 23, 7 February 1983) is another thing. We were not able to do much about the electoral campaign during the strike — it would have seemed a diversion from the struggle. Anyway, the workers live in such dispersed areas we couldn't tell what effect it would have.

But the outcome of the elections will have an effect — if the right come out well, the bosses and the formen will feel themselves much stronger, more arrogant. They'll be stricter on the line, and the workers will feel demoralised. The workers feel deceived by this government and they're looking for an answer. ■

The crisis of the Iranian revolution

The perspectives for revolutionists in Iran today

The following is the second and concluding part of the report presented in January to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International by Andre Duret. The United Secretariat approved the general line of the report, that is, the main lines of its analysis and the political conclusions. The first part of the report was published in International Viewpoint No 27, 31 March 1983.

THE MOJAHEDDEEN VERSUS THE REGIME

The open conflict between the IRP, on one side, and Bani Sadr and the Mojahedeen on the other, came to a head in the second quarter of 1981, in the midst of the war with Iraq. The outcome of this confrontation marked the final stage in the Shi'ite clergy's takeover of all the institutions.

On 10 June 1981, Bani Sadr was removed as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The day before, Nobari, an ally of Bani Sadr, left his post as head of the Central Bank. Bani Sadr's call for a referendum to let the electorate resolve the dispute speeded up the showdown. The Majlis passed a law obliging Bani Sadr to accept all the measures passed in the preceding months by the IRP parliament. At the same time, the Bureau for Coordination and Cooperation between the People and the President of the Republic — an organisation set up by Bani Sadr following the 1980 presidential elections — was abolished. In addition, seven newspapers, including Bani Sadr's *Islamic Revolution*, *Mizan* (representing the Bazargan forces), and *Namehye Mardom* (published by the Tudeh Party), were suspended indefinitely by the General Prosecutor.

While pledging his loyalty to Khomeini, Bani Sadr denounced the 'tyranny' of the clergy and called for mass resistance. He thought he had bases of support in the army that he could count on and he made frequent approaches to the Bazaar entrepreneurs. The Mojahedeen of the People lined up behind Bani Sadr. They organised demonstrations to back him, the largest of which drew hundreds of thousands of people on 20 June in Tehran. Disoriented by the capitulation of the Tudeh Party and the Fedayeen-Majority, lacking an alternative leadership, a significant sector of the masses — much more than just the 'middle classes' — rallied to the Bani Sadr-Mojahedeen

bloc. This was because it seemed to them to offer some possibilities for halting the political takeover of the Shi'ite clergy and the attacks against democratic rights. All these demonstrations were attacked (including with fire arms) by the pasdars and hezbollahis. Following the 20 June demonstration, there were mass arrests of members of the Mojahedeen, the Fedayeen, and Peykar (a Maoist group). Executions began to be carried out already on 21 June.

The Mojahedeen made no further attempts to organise mass mobilisations. Rather, they declared war on the government. Numerous bombings took place. On 28 June, more than 71 IRP leaders, including Beheshti, died in an explosion at their headquarters. After initially accusing the U.S. and Iraq, the Islamic Republic leaders finally blamed this action on the Mojahedeen. Former Prime Minister Ali Rajai, who was elected president in July to replace Bani Sadr, was assassinated in August, along with the new prime minister, Bahonar. Thus, a whole layer of Islamic leaders were assassinated. The line adopted by the Mojahedeen, even though it denied responsibility for some attacks, was to wage war on the pasdars and the politicians of the regime. It openly claimed responsibility for a series of terrorist actions. The Mojahedeen hoped that by such actions they could either weaken the Khomeini faction relative to a wing that might be more favourable to them, or even set in motion a rapid disintegration of the IRP's system of rule.

In this climate, the regime was able to launch a reign of terror against all its opponents. The IRP dominated every area of political life. In October 1981, Sayed Khamenei, Khomeini's representative, was elected to the presidency of the republic. Madhavi Kani was then named prime minister (although shortly thereafter forced by the IRP to resign), and then replaced by Hossein Mossavi. After this, no leadership post of any significance in the state apparatus escaped the control of the Shi'ite clergy.

The Mojahedeen of the People is a populist, petty-bourgeois nationalist organisation. Its ideology is a melange of populist Shi'ism, 'third worldism' a la Fanon and elements borrowed from the Stalinist schema for colonial revolutions. In the absence of a strong workers movement, and where socialism was nearly always mixed up with the Tudeh Party, the Mojahedeen served as a channel

for the radicalisation of significant layers of students but also plebeian and working class sectors. It had within its ranks thousands of young anti-imperialist fighters. In the 1980 elections, it won 13% of the vote according to the official figures. This reflected the base that it had in the poor neighbourhoods.

From the standpoint of political line, the Mojahedeen's alliance with Bani Sadr represented a continuation of their critical support to the Islamic regime up till December 1979, of their special relations with some of the important ayatollahs, such as Taleghani, their continual appeals to Khomeini, and their strategic aim of building a democratic Islamic Republic. They initially presented their support for Bani Sadr as a tactical alliance to bloc the IRP's offensive. So, they said nothing about Bani Sadr's responsibility in the shutting down of the universities, the attacks on their offices or the war against the Kurds. The methods of struggle used by the Mojahedeen are only the other side of the coin of their populism. They represent continuity with the organisation's 'guerrillaist' past. Their methods reveal, as does their policy of alliances, a failure to understand the decisive need for an independent mass movement rooted in the working class. This approach was reinforced by the reluctance of their bourgeois allies, particularly Bani Sadr, to contemplate direct action by the masses.

The orientation adopted by the Mojahedeen also reflected their failure to understand the way in which the consciousness of the masses develops. Their approach went against a strengthening of the direct action of the masses, which seemed possible in June 1981. It was easy to make an amalgam between the Mojahedeen's terrorist campaign and the methods used by the restorationist forces, particularly in a war situation. Against this kind of challenge, the IRP was able to unify all its elements from Khamenei to Ardebili and throw everything it had into mobilising those sectors where it still had the biggest following. The Mojahedeen policy offered a pretext, as well, for a new wave of large-scale repressive measures that affected all the left forces.

For all these reasons, revolutionary Marxists must vigorously condemn the orientation adopted by the Mojahedeen. But they also have to point up clearly the political responsibility of the leadership of the Islamic regime, since they

made it increasingly difficult for this organisation to function legally. For a long time, a sector of the clergy had indicated its intentions to attack the Mojahedeen. In the Shah's time, in 1977, already Rafsanjani announced: 'Our final battle will be against the Mojahedeen'.

In June 1980, Khomeini launched the slogan, 'Death to the Hypocrites' (i.e., the Mojahedeen). The 'revolutionary' general prosecutor in Tehran, Lajvardi, explained the basis for this policy of repression as follows:

'The hostility of the Hypocrites' organisation toward the Islamic regime dates from the time of its foundation, since it considers scientific socialism

been imprisoned, tortured and executed. This defence must be put in the context of a clear denunciation of the imperialist propaganda against the Iranian revolution and of support for the fight against all imperialist forces or forces tied to the former imperial regime.

Once their strategy had clearly failed, all the negative aspects of the Mojahedeen leadership's policy of alliances and of its general political orientation crystallized. In the first place, the programme of the provisional government set up by the National Council of the Resistance (a coalition between Bani Sadr, the KDPI and the Mojahedeen) has no other aim but democratising the Islamic Republican Regime. That is, it proposes to maintain the capitalist state. Moreover, the social

THE IMAMATE AND ITS SYSTEM OF RULE

The ideology put forward by the ruling faction of the Shi'ite hierarchy, which it trims to suit its specific needs, has exercised a considerable influence over the course of the revolution. It is by no means a mere religious ideology. *It is presented as a social and governmental programme.* Thus, it provided the conceptual framework for the draft constitution. The latter was built around the central idea that the government and the laws belong to God. His representative on earth, the *faghih* — that is, Ayatollah Khomeini — makes the decisions in His name. All power, therefore, belongs to the *faghih* and he can delegate it as he chooses.

Sovereignty belongs to the *faghih* and not to the masses. He is their tutor. The population is divided into categories according to their relationship to the 'Imam's Line' — orthodox, atheists, hypocrites, etc. Obedience to the 'infallible' Imam becomes the rule of social life. Any opponent becomes an 'enemy of Islam' and of the 'Islamic revolution,' with the characterization of 'imperialist agent' often being thrown in for good measure. Thus, the justification for the harshest repression comes from an authority supposedly above the class conflicts, the representative of the Twelfth, or Hidden Imam.

The social programme of this fundamentalist Islam has been used to justify all the measures taken against women — exclusion from a series of professions, ineligibility to run for elected office, the 'blood price' law that establishes the value of women as 50% of that of a man, a very restricted right of divorce for women, the right of men to have four wives, the setting of the marriage age at nine for girls with the agreement of the father and thirteen in general, whipping or stoning for adultery, and so forth. These measures forced women back into their traditional roles, while the pressures of the revolutionary upsurge, in which they were in the front lines, had allowed them to escape for a time from the places traditionally assigned to them.

'Upholding Islam' became the justification for rescinding the most radical articles of the land reform law, the decrees against the rich, for subordinating the shoras to the IRP, for making the IRP effectively the single state party, for the 'purification' of the corps of teachers and for banning all political activity in the schools.

The role of the Majlis has been defined as follows: '(It) does not have sovereignty as regards legislation. What authority it does have is to legislate in line with the *shari'at* (Islamic law)...The representatives have to strike out any law contrary to Islamic precepts....The role of the Council of Guardians in overseeing the application of the Constitution is precisely to reject any law that does not conform to Islam'. (Hashemi Rafsanjani, pre-



Mojahedeen attacked during a meeting by the hezbollahi (DR)

and Marxism as the road to revolution. Now everyone knows that Marxism is against Islam. It follows, therefore, that anyone who believes in Marxism will be hostile to the Islamic Republic, even if they show a desire to politically relate to it or to maintain links of understanding and friendship with it. At the end of the day, there is clearly no way that the Believers and the Heathen can agree. The conflict between ourselves and the Hypocrites is one of principle and ideology, which goes back to the time before the victory of the revolution'. *Ash-Shaheed* (the publication of the Iranian Embassy in Paris, No.6, February 1982.)

To sharply criticize the political orientation adopted by the Mojahedeen without taking proper account of all the IRP's attacks on this organisation in fact amounts to covering up all this repression in the name of the needs of the 'anti-imperialist struggle'. This is what the Tudeh Party has done. It is the obligation of the international workers movement to defend the Mojahedeen militants who have

and economic content of this programme leaves no room for doubt about its respect for private property (including even veiled appeals to the middle-sized entrepreneurs and elements of the Bazaar). It is also clear that this provisional government is prepared to assign the shoras a subordinate role in the state institutions. Finally, the mechanism proposed for changing the regime, that is, through the assumption of office by a president (Bani Sadr and an appointed government charged with calling a constituent assembly) makes it clear that the National Council does not want to appeal to the most advanced traditions of the mass struggle in Iran. This means that the National Council does not want to call for a general strike or self-organisation of the masses and it wants to place limits on their activity.

The disastrous political logic of the Mojahedeen line has been further revealed by their open response to 'overtures' from the Iraqis and even from the French imperialists, who have big economic interests in Iraq and are taking a line of open support to Saddam Hussein.

sident of the parliament, *Ash-Shaheed*, July 1981.)

This reactionary programme is designed to ensure the dominance of the ruling faction of the clergy, and serves as a means for maintaining the established social order. The Khomeini leadership has used both the Shi'ite apparatus and religious ideology to establish its political ascendancy over the masses who believe in Shi'ism. But the social and economic content of this programme inevitably comes into conflict with the needs of the workers and even with the religious forms in which their aspirations are expressed. *Therefore, repression becomes a necessity to ensure the survival of the regime.*

In such a situation, defence of democratic rights is closely tied to the fight for independent organisation and freedom of activity for working people. The refusal to defend such rights on the pretext that this is playing into the hands of the imperialists or facilitating the work of the liberal bourgeoisie leads to subordinating the mass movement to the Khomeini leadership or precisely to facilitating the operations of the 'liberal bourgeoisie', which is taking up the democratic demands of the masses against the regime in

an attempt to reconsolidate its positions. As we pointed out in July 1980:

'Marxists will work....to strengthen the working masses' sense of belonging to an independent class, they will organise struggles around all the democratic, national and transitional (anticapitalist) demands. They will formulate these demands in such a way as to bring them into the very heart of the real mass movement. They understand the effects that the concrete experiences of mobilisation have on the consciousness of the masses, as well as the impact of the contradictions between the activities of the masses, the regime's plans, and the ideology put forward by the Khomeini leadership.

'That is the only possible way to draw the masses away from the influence of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois leaders. That is the only way to accompany the mass movement, without abandoning a political and ideological offensive against the reactionary content of the "Islamisation" campaigns'. (United Secretariat Resolution, July 28, 1980; published in English in *Intercontinental Press*, p. 1262, Vol. 18, No 45, December 1, 1980.)

THE IRAQI ATTACK ON IRAN

The military attack by the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein was to result in a war that has now lasted nearly two and a half years. This conflict has not halted developments in the class struggle or in the battle of the national minorities in Iran. It threw everything into a melting pot. Political, social and military struggle flowed together and influenced the dynamic of the mass movement. In both countries, this combined dynamic has become one of the most important questions involved in the war.

SADDAM HUSSEIN'S PLAN

On the pretext of a border dispute, Saddam Hussein attacked Iran in September 1980. He sought to overthrow the Khomeini regime. It was his hope that by striking hard blows against the Islamic regime and by trying to shift the relationship of forces inside Iran in favour of the reactionaries — that is, the supporters of Oveisi or Bakhtiar — he could strangle the revolution. In drawing up his plans, Saddam Hussein collaborated with ex-generals of the Imperial army. He armed them and gave them aid in their fight against Khomeini.

The Iraqi regime hoped to strangle Iran by occupying a vital economic and industrial zone, Khuzistan. Iran was internationally isolated after the occupation of the American embassy and was up to its neck in a real war against the Kurdish people. Furthermore, Hussein based his calculations on being able to take advantage of the weakening of the army inherited from the Shah's regime, of the opposition of a large section of the officer

corps to the new regime and of the fighting between cliques inside the institutions of the Islamic Republic. He engaged in a 'pro-Arab' demagogy. Referring to Khuzistan, he spoke of 'Arab land like Palestine'. Nevertheless his whole policy (bombings, destruction and repression) indicated unambiguously that the ruling clique in Baghdad was incapable of really appealing to the Arab population of Khuzistan, who were involved in a revolution. The Arabs immediately participated in the battles against Iraqi aggression; often they were disarmed by the pasdars.

Saddam believed Khomeini's regime would disintegrate rapidly. However, as has often happened in history, by invading a country in the midst of a revolution, Hussein triggered an immediate response in which the determination of the masses to defend their country fused with their determination to defend the revolution. Internally, Saddam Hussein's regime was not faced with a mass movement that directly challenged him. However, he feared the impact the Islamic revolution might have on the poor peasant masses in the south of Iraq — particularly since they mostly share the Shi'ite religion. The campaign against the Iraqi Shi'ite organisations intensified from 1979 on. In March 1980, Baghdad issued a decree calling a death sentence on any person belonging to the reactionary Shi'ite fundamentalist organisation *Al Daawa*. It ordered the execution of the spiritual leader of the Shi'ites, Mohammad Bakr al Sadr.

The resurgence of the struggle of the Kurds in Iraq, inspired by the combat of their compatriots in Iran, also caused

some headaches for the clique that held absolute power in Baghdad.

Finally, with the disappearance of the Shah's regime as the military power in the region, Saddam wanted to push for a larger role in an area that had been divided up by imperialism into more or less rival states (Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia). Egypt as well as Jordan gave their support to Iraq.

Saddam Hussein did not take the decision to unleash his military offensive alone! At the beginning of August, he went to Taif in Saudi Arabia. It was his first official visit since his accession to the Presidency of the Republic and the first for a Ba'ath leader to Saudi Arabia since 1958. Once the war began Saudi Arabia, along with the Gulf Emirate states, guaranteed a financial aid in tens of billions of dollars to Iraq. These reactionary regimes also feared the repercussions of the Iranian revolution. French imperialism backed Iraq, seeking in this way to regain a foothold in a region from which it had been largely excluded by the British and American imperialists.

In coming to power the Khomeini leadership did not renounce the unequal 1975 treaty that was imposed by the Shah on Iraq. On the contrary it made many pan-Islamic declarations, marked by a heavy Iranian chauvinist tone. It openly declared and organised support for the fundamentalist Shi'ite organisation *Al Daawa*. Khomeini launched a sort of personal ideological war against Saddam Hussein, in the name of the 'Islamic revolution', directing his fire against the Ba'athist secular and pseudo-socialist Arab nationalism. This propaganda took the form of Shi'ite expansionism. On 18 April 1980 *Jomhuri Eslami*, the IRP daily, published an appeal from Khomeini: 'It is your duty (the Iraqi peoples) as well as that of the army to overthrow Ba'athism, the non-Islamic party'.

The imperialist powers, especially American imperialism tacitly approved the Iraqi offensive. They saw in it a possibility of consolidating counter-revolutionary positions in Iran. They also feared the destabilising effects of the Iranian revolution in the region and the appeals of the Shi'ite fundamentalist forces in power in Tehran. On this there was a convergence of interests with Saddam Hussein's aims. But American imperialism did not strongly commit itself to the operation. There were too many unknown factors. And imperialist designs for the region by no means coincide exactly with Saddam Hussein's plans. Above all, in no way was imperialism favourable to a substantial drawing of the boundary lines established in the region at the time of the First World War — at least anything that would go beyond the sort of changes represented by the 1975 treaty. It was opposed to a breakup of Iran.

Moreover, the imperialists were not prepared to foster an Iraqi conquest of the Iranian oilfields. Imperialism does not want to encourage the concentration of such resources in the hands of a single

country. It rather favours a 'Balkanisation' of oil producers. By backing such a project it would create a very dangerous precedent in this strategic region of the world and would run the risk of alienating all governments. Iraq, a long-standing ally of the USSR, is not completely in the pay of imperialism. It is true it made a diplomatic turn to imperialist forces, but the Baghdad regime was still preoccupied with its own specific interests. Therefore, the imperialists were not ready rightaway to let it become the key power in the region, particularly after the disappointing experience they had had with Iran as a regional sub-power.

Finally, for the United States, after the fall of the Pahlavi dynasty, Israel remains even more of an indispensable lynchpin. To assign Iraq, a declared enemy of Israel, a key role, could only undermine a fundamental choice made by American imperialism. The aid that Israel was to give to Iran, in arms, only underlines this point. The quantity of arms supplied, mainly material manufactured under U.S. licence, showed that this initiative was not taken in direct contradiction to the wishes of the United States. The Israeli raid of June 1981 against the Osirak (Iraq) nuclear power station indicates Israel's determination to take advantage of the war situation to weaken Iraq.

In fact imperialism will use this conflict *above all* to increase its military presence in the region and in particular to consolidate its military aid to the Gulf states, while Iran and Iraq weaken themselves militarily and economically. Its interests are served by the detente in relations between Iraq and Egypt, which is resuming a place among the Arab countries at a time when the 'Rejection Front' of Syria, Libya, South Yemen, Algeria and the PLO is breaking up. While the Gulf states oppose the Tehran regime, they do not want to see Iraq transformed into the regional gendarme either.

The readiness of the PLO and Cuba from the beginning of the conflict to offer themselves as mediators was prompted by their understanding of the advantages that imperialism could gain from this war in a region that it has 'Balkanised' so that it could be manipulated more easily. The imperialists have undeniably profited from the conflict and its continuation — even more since they have not been openly involved in initiating and directing it. As for the Soviet bureaucracy, it acts cautiously, not putting all its eggs in one basket. Among other things, it uses 'satellite countries' as a means of spreading its bets.

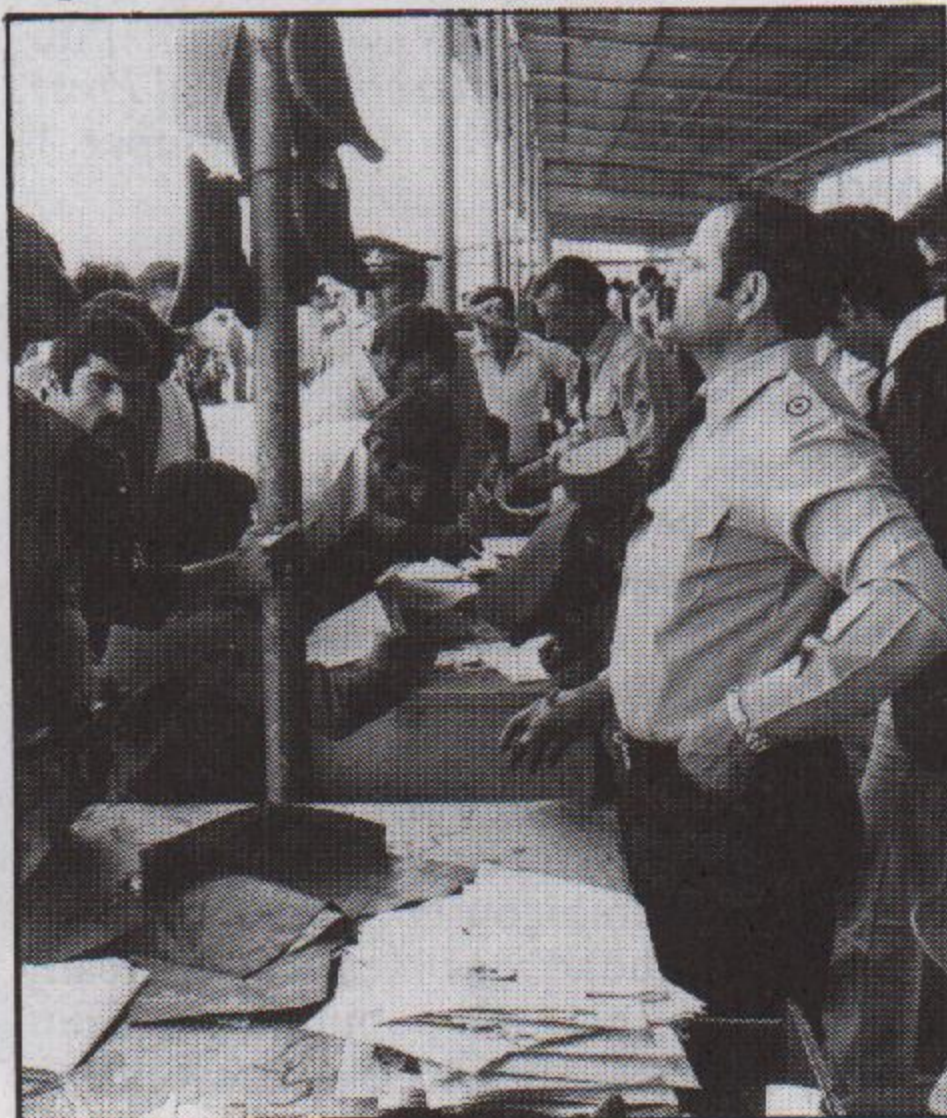
The conflict that broke out in September 1980, therefore, is a war between two dependent capitalist countries. The leaderships in power in both countries are pursuing an overall policy that goes against the interests of the masses. However, the Iranian leadership has come out of a still recent revolution and still has a following among the masses. Saddam

Hussein's attack was designed to strangle the Islamic revolution by a military attack and through backing counterrevolutionary forces linked to the former Iranian regime. At the same time, and more fundamentally, it was an attack on the Iranian revolution of the workers and poor peasants.

Facing the Autumn 1980 Iraqi assault, the task of revolutionists in Iran was to defend the unfolding Iranian revolution. This involved mobilising the workers and peasants to oppose Ba'athist aggression, to defeat it militarily. On the other hand, this campaign had to be carried out in such a way as not to undermine the fight to win the strategic objective of the political independence of the mass movement. In order to accomplish this, revolutionists had to stress the following points:

- The need for reactivating and arming the shoras and mass neighbourhood committees.

- The need for freedom of political expression in the militias set up to repulse



Military recruitment (DR)

the Ba'athist aggression and opposition to all witchhunts against left organisations.

- The right of workers to express themselves freely and organise in the army (that is, to form soldiers shoras), which, among other things, would make it possible to nip in the bud plots by generals and to purge the army of counterrevolutionary officers.

- The need for an immediate halt to military attacks on the Kurds (in September/October 20,000 pasdars and soldiers took part in an offensive against Kurdistan) and on other national minorities and the unconditional recognition of their right to self-determination.

- The need to oppose all measures of forced evacuation and reprisals against the Arab people of Khuzistan.

Revolutionary socialists had to declare forthrightly that the revolution could not be defended effectively without safeguarding all its gains, without extending the masses' freedoms of organisation, association and expression, without the deepening of the revolution in the social and economic areas. For revolutionists there

was no choice but to oppose an approach that, in the name of the overriding needs of 'national defence', called for saying nothing about attacks on democratic rights or for ending the just struggles of the workers in their factories and the peasants on their land.

In the event of an attempt to overthrow the regime by restorationist reactionary forces, assisted by the Iraqi invaders, revolutionists would have to call on the Iranian workers and peasant masses to defend a regime on the *military* level that they are not yet able to replace by a workers and peasants government. But the masses should defend the regime on a strictly military basis, without giving it any political support and with their own methods of struggle and action. In this battle, however, they should stress the need to revive the more advanced forms of struggle (self-organisation, arming of the masses) in order to build the best conditions for achieving a victory that could then become a springboard for the masses breaking with the leadership of the Islamic Republic.

The international workers and revolutionary movement, thus, had to mobilise to demand the *unconditional withdrawal* of Iraqi troops behind the frontiers existing before 21 September 1980, as well as of all imperialist troops from the region. From outset of the conflict, parallel to their participation in the resistance, revolutionaries had to explain that defending the Iranian revolution — which was in the interests of both the Iranian and Iraqi peoples — required opposing the development of chauvinism.

A lasting division between these two countries dominated by imperialism only profits the latter. The masses of the two countries will pay a heavy price for this, as Fidel Castro has correctly pointed out. Opposing the growth of chauvinism was not contradictory either to the demand for Iraqi unconditional withdrawal, or to support of military defence designed to defeat the Iraqi attack. Indeed, this *political* explanation of military defence would surely have found an echo among the Iraqi masses and politically undermined Saddam Hussein.

THE MASSES, KHOMEINI AND WAR

Between September and October 1980, there was extremely strong popular resistance to the Iraqi invasion in the working class centres of Khuzistan (Khorramshahr, Abadan and Ahwaz). It upset all the plans of the Iraqi high command, which did not hesitate to heavily bomb the towns. In the 'oil triangle', the regular Iranian army was practically absent during the first weeks of the war. Workers, young fighters, including many Arabs, backed up by sections of pasdars formed the spearhead of the resistance. Fedayeen and Mojahedeen members participated in the war effort and fought in the front line against the Iraqi army. From the beginning of the war, Ghassemlou, a KDPI leader,

let the Tehran government know that the peshmergas were ready to turn their arms against the Iraqis and the reactionary forces paid by Iraq on two conditions: 1) that the military attacks against the Kurds be stopped and that they be allowed to maintain their own military organisation; 2) and that the Kurds' right to autonomy be recognised.

In numerous Iranian towns, the day after the war started the masses went on to the street. They demanded arms. As during the insurrection, the question of arming the masses was on the agenda. This demand crystallised their two concerns — to defend the revolution and to fight against Ba'athist aggression. From the start, the regime opposed the resurgence of independent neighbourhood committees, particularly in the war-affected regions. It armed the Islamic Associations in the workplaces and not the shoras. It banned all political propaganda in the army and repressed the soldiers shoras.

The development of the war has fallen into roughly four phases:

1) *September-November 1980.* The Iraqi offensive and the popular resistance in Khuzistan, which by November stopped the Iraqi breakthrough. The onset of the winter rainy season, which makes motorized operations extremely difficult in the region, also played a role in the bogging down of the Iraqi assault.

2) *December 1980-August 1981.* A long war of position during which a bitter struggle raged inside the Tehran regime between the IRP and Bani Sadr with his Mojahedeen allies. The Shi'ite clergy's dominance over the state apparatus grew stronger. The bodies involved in mobilising the masses militarily were placed under strict supervision. The repression of democratic rights was stepped up.

3) *September 1981-June 1982.* The beginning of the Iranian military counteroffensive, after the army had received new supplies. This counterattack was based on a massive use of infantry, composed in part of very young fighters and organised by the pasdars. Abadan and Bostan were liberated, followed by the Dezful region and Khorramshahr. At the same time, there was a further step-up in the repression.

4) *July 1982-January 1983.* This phase is marked by Iranian operations against Iraqi territory. It opened with a large scale offensive aimed at Basra. New fronts were opened in the Zagros mountains in north Khuzistan. Iraqi troops withdrew from most of the Iranian territory they held. Iraq, however, continued to bombard Iranian positions and towns. Saddam Hussein had to sue for peace.

Faced with the war, the Iranian government had to confront two problems: 1) How to meet a military attack that was obviously not anticipated. 2) How to channel a mass movement that had been revived by the demands of defending the country and the revolution. The response of the leading circles of the Islam-

ic Republic to these questions was determined both by the differences of approach that were being manifested within its own ranks and by a constant concern to assure its control of the mass movement and to reduce it to a series of transmission belts. This went hand in hand with repressive measures against the forces opposed to the IRP policies. Thus, it was not long before the Mojahedeen and Fedayeen fighting at the front were being arrested, treated as 'saboteurs' and in some cases being executed.

In the first place, the Khomeini leadership reorganised the army it inherited from the Shah. Hundreds of officers were released from prison. The military chiefs were given the blessing of the highest authorities of the Islamic Republic. 'Military discipline' was imposed, that is, any organisation by soldiers was

the war effort and the struggle against imperialism, the Khomeini leadership reinforced the measures for keeping the factory workers under tight control. The pasdars and other IRP forces moved quickly to intimidate workers when necessary. This policy by the regime was stepped up after the outbreak of a series of strikes at the end of 1980 and the beginning of 1981 in Tehran, Isfahan, and Gilan. These struggles were defeated and repressed. Unemployment, the dispersal of the core of the Khuzistan working class, and coercion finally inflicted a serious setback on the workers movement.

In the course of 1981 and 1982, discontent among the masses grew stronger under the impact of the economic crisis (massive unemployment, inflation, etc.) The government's policy for hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the war



Kurdish demonstration (DR)

banned. Bani Sadr courted the army, of which he was formally commander-in-chief. He was seeking to make it his ally in the confrontation with the IRP. But at the same time, the Khomeini leadership assigned the pasdar corps a major role. The latter was to occupy a front-line role in the organisation of military defence (and later during the counteroffensive). The popular movement was channelled by the setting up of the *baseej* (mobilisation committees), which were used to recruit and train a militia. The *baseej* were put under the control of the pasdars. Just as the *komitehs* did at the beginning of the revolution, the *baseej* did attract sections of the masses — workers and young anti-imperialist fighters. But as a result of the tight control the pasdars exerted over them and of political and ideological purges, they became instruments for manipulating the masses in accordance with the IRP's projects.

In this regard, Rafsanjani declared: 'This war is consolidating our Islamic Republic'. Indeed, in the name of

also caused widespread dissatisfaction. In the countryside, discontent gradually developed. Thus, in *Merip Reports* of April 1982, Eric Hooglund noted:

'Most village people think the war with Iraq is a conflict that does not make much sense, which has killed their cherished children'.

Slowly, the centre of gravity of the masses' concerns moved from their willingness at first to participate in, and support the war effort to their own demands and day-to-day concerns. Attendance at 'Friday Prayers', diminished despite the regime's efforts to mobilise people for them. This was a sign that the distance between the regime and the masses, which had narrowed during the first months of the war, was again widening.

Certainly, the Khomeini leadership still has a certain backing among popular layers. The combination of repression and the distribution of material patronage to broad sections of the impoverished masses has also to be taken into consideration in order to understand the real meaning of the participation in some of

the demonstrations organised by the regime in support of the war effort. These mass demonstrations and the real initial commitment of the poorest layers of youth in the *basesj* cannot, therefore, be equated with a deepening of the class struggle. Such an approach would simply leave out of the analysis the character of the bodies through which the youth's actions are channelled, the overall political orientation of the faction of the Shi'ite clergy that holds power, the repeated attacks against the workers and peasant struggles and the repression against all organisations identifying with the workers movement and socialism, even those most servile toward the regime such as the Tudeh and Fedayeen-Majority. In the same way, if one looked only at the external enemy it would mean failing to see the internal enemy, the Khomeini leadership, which is threatening the revolution, and thereby undermining the capacity of the masses to respond to future imperialist offensives.

THE COUNTEROFFENSIVE AND THE IRP'S MILITARY POLICY

Demoralisation grew inside the Iraqi army, bogged down in a war with no end in sight. Little by little, the Iraqi soldiers came to see this war as pointless — particularly after Saddam Hussein made a declaration early in 1982 abandoning all territorial claims. The war's effects were felt more and more on the Iraqi economy. Many economic development projects were scaled down or postponed. There was a big fall in oil income. While the massive loans accorded to the Baghdad regime (about 55 billion dollars) made it possible to keep up the operations, they also prompted a big spurt in inflation (40%). The Iraqi casualties started rising rapidly after the start of the Iranian counter-offensive. The numbers of Iraqi prisoners of war ran into tens of thousands. Within Iraqi leading circles, pressure was building up for some move to get out of the dead end they had run into. Sharp differences developed inside the Ba'athist leadership, as indicated by the departure of more than one minister.

The offensive in the Dezful region (March 1982) marked the first big Iranian military victory since the onset of the war. On 30 April, operation 'Jerusalem' began. It ended in the liberation of southern Khuzistan and of Khorramshahr. Each time these offensives were led by elements of the traditional army, *pasdars* and *Basesj* militia. On 20 March 1982, Khomeini announced that school pupils 12 years old and up could join the front-line troops.

The damage inflicted on Iran by the Iraqi attack, the occupation and the subsequent fighting, is enormous. Whole towns are in ruins.

In June 1982, Saddam Hussein, trying to find some way out of the situation, fearing the internal political repercussions of the war continuing and further defeats, declared an unilateral ceasefire

and a troop withdrawal from Iranian territory. He started this on 20 June. Hussein demagogically stated that this retreat — which was practically total — was motivated by the desire of Iraq to fight against Israeli troops who had just invaded Lebanon. Rafsanjani retorted by demanding a right of passage for Iranian tanks through Iraq in order to go and fight Israeli troops in Lebanon! Khomeini, on 21 June proclaimed:

'We must save the Iraqi nation and save Iraq in order to be able to save Lebanon'.

That was the way the leadership of the Islamic Republic politically prepared the way for its military offensive into Iraqi territory. On 13 July, the Ramadan operation began. It was aimed at Basra and then at Zaid. In September/October, the Iraqi positions were attacked in the Abadan and Mehran regions and also in the Mandali area, which commands the strategically important road to Baghdad. In November, a new attack was launched in the north of Khuzistan, to the west of Dezful. The human cost of these waves of attacks was very high. Iraqi artillery decimated the ranks of an infantry composed largely of young militia members. The financial cost alone was also very high. On 13 October 1982, the Majlis agreed to add 2 billion dollars to the military budget.

As for Iraq, it carried out heavy bombings of the Iranian towns of Ilam, Hamadan, Khorramabad, Ahwaz and the Karg oil terminal. The Khomeini leadership showed its political intention of continuing the war. It refused any serious political or diplomatic offensive that could politically weaken or disarm the Saddam Hussein regime in the eyes of the Iraqi and Arab masses. Hussein made 'peace proposal' after 'peace proposal' in order to try to present the war as a chauvinist Iranian attack that was being waged by a retrograde religious leader against the Arab masses. He, thus, tried to cover up the tracks of his aggres-

Iranian soldiers at prayer (DR)



sion against the Iranian revolution.

Khomeini and his supporters responded to the Iraqi regime's diplomatic offensive with demands such as the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, and bringing him to justice. The political objective of this response was explained by Khomeini: to establish an Islamic Republic in Iraq, liquidate Ba'athism. Rafsanjani declared:

'We are not interested in money or war reparations. If we saw our neighbours, the Iraqi people, who are 99% Muslim, form an Islamic regime, then there is every possibility that we would help them...If the Ba'athist party remains in place, or even if other elements from the East or West replace the present regime, then we do not want land, but we will step up the pressure to obtain our reparations down to the last penny'.

Such a line expresses a profound disdain for the social and political aspirations, as well as the national sentiment of the Iraqi masses. Khomeini was not supporting a mass struggle to overthrow Saddam Hussein, as a way to clear the road for the Iraqi workers to realise their aspirations. He assigned them a political destiny along the lines of the Islamic Republic. Khamenei, the Iranian president, furthermore, presented the Imam as the supreme religious authority both of Iran and Iraq. The leadership of the Islamic Republic, which is the enemy of the masses in Iran, is not capable of looking for, or finding, real support among the Iraqi workers and peasants against their government.

In Tehran, under the auspices of the government, a Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution (Iraq) was set up, represented by the exiled fundamentalist religious leader, Sayed Mohammed Bakhr Hakim. This Council brought together fundamentalist Shi'ite Islamic forces, including the Al Daawa party, the Khomeini leadership presented this body as representing the 'extension of the Islamic revolution' into Iraq. It proposed

to the Iraqi masses a social and political programme identical to the IRP's, something that could only repel the most advanced sectors of the struggle against Saddam Hussein's dictatorial regime. This 'revolutionary' project of Khomeini, therefore, obviously was not based on the forces that are struggling against Saddam Hussein today, such as the Kurdish Patriotic Front and the Ba'athist Socialist Party or the Communist Party. The pursuit of a policy such as that of the Khomeini government at a time when the Iraqi dictatorship is shaky can only reinforce Saddam Hussein's diplomatic positions and strengthen his hand internally.

Syria had given essentially passive support to Iran, but nevertheless supplied war material for the Khorramshahr offensive. It was obliged to consider changing its position following Tehran's declarations and the first Iranian offensive. This reflected the growing pressure of the Arab national question. Thus on 31 May 1982, Abdel Halim Khaddam, Syrian Foreign Affairs minister, announced that his country would cease to support Iran if the government of the Islamic Republic decided to invade Iraq: 'If we agree to give up certain parts of Arab territory we would also have to give up Palestine'.

Saudi Arabia immediately started sounding out Syria. One of the points of disagreement between Iran and Syria is nothing less than the support Khomeini gives to Bakhr Hakim, designated by the Imam as the Iraqi *faghih*! Finally, given its deep conflict with the Iraqi Ba'athists, Syria, after some months of wavering, and in concert with Libya, reiterated its formal support for Iran — an Iran that evenhandedly denounces Washington and Moscow for their aid to Iraq!

In fact, after mid-1982, the USSR resumed deliveries of Mig-25 planes and T-72 tanks to Iraq. On the other hand, Iran signed important arms contracts with Israel (to which it supplies cut-price oil), Brazil, Italy, and North Korea.

Iranian military pressure worried the imperialist camp. The imperialist powers feared a total Iranian victory, a collapse of the Saddam Hussein government and its replacement by a regime similar to Tehran's, or a chaotic situation threatening their immediate interests. This was a particular source of concern for French imperialism. Imperialism's control of the region would be made more difficult. It is true that the imperialists already had the experience in the past decades of dealing with regimes that made just as radical anti-imperialist pronouncements as Tehran's, such as Syria and Iraq. Nonetheless, they do not want to see Tehran bring down the present Iraqi regime. Therefore, it is not surprising that the United States and also France are showing a readiness to aid Iraq and to reinforce their positions there.

The possibility that the Ba'athist regime could collapse under the hammer blows of the Iranian army cannot, on the other hand, be the starting point for de-



Iranian soldiers on the Iraqi front after the invasion (DR)

fining a revolutionary political position in the present conflict. The basis of a revolutionary approach must be the following:

- The real interests of the masses in Iran.

- The concrete possibility for the Iraqi workers and poor peasants to determine their own destinies and to once again link up with the best tradition of their struggles after the 1958 'national revolution'.

- Clear opposition to the social and political programme in whose name Khomeini is conducting the military operations against Iraq.

REVOLUTIONARIES AND THE WAR TODAY

The present orientation of Iranian military policy is consistent with the general foreign policy choices that Tehran has made. These are wrongly characterised as fundamentally anti-imperialist by the Tudeh Party or the Fedayeen-Majority. However, they have never gone beyond the narrow confines of the interests of the leading circles of the Islamic Republic and regional rivalry. The Tudeh and Fedayeen made much of the fact that a few hundred fighters were sent against Israeli troops in Lebanon. But this only covers up other facts.

Politically, the IRP leaders chose to link themselves with the conservative confessional Shi'ite group, Amal — which was set up originally by the Lebanese secret service to divide the Arab population in Lebanon from the Palestinians — rather than with the PLO forces. They publicly advised this group to fight on two fronts — against Israel and against communism. There was scarcely any need to give Amal that sort of advice. In different parts of south Lebanon, full-fledged battles took place between the PLO and the Amal.

The Israeli offensive against Lebanon was characterised by Khomeini as a

diversion to take the peoples' minds off the Iran-Iraq war. Tehran's decision to step up its military offensive during the invasion of Lebanon hardly hindered imperialist and Israeli projects for the region — quite the contrary. In fact, this is corroborated by desperate PLO efforts to mediate. The closing of the PLO embassy in Iran for a whole period is, in its own way, another proof. The pressure of the Iranian masses forced a cutoff of oil supplies to Israel in 1979. But these deliveries were resumed in 1982, thereby exposing the IRP's doubletalk.

Other indicators of the 'anti-imperialist' character of Khomeini's policy include:

- Close links with the Pakistani military dictatorship, a 'defender of Islam'. This regime pledged, after a visit in January 1983 by the Iranian minister of the interior, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, to send back all the 'hypocrites' (Mojahedeen and others trying to get out of Iran across the Pakistani frontier).

- 'Rapprochement' with Turkey and the considerable increase in trade with that country (multiplied 40 times compared to 1978). This goes hand in hand with Iran's eloquent silence on the role of the Turkish regime in the region-wide imperialist military system (in January 1982 the Iranian trade minister simply made a point about the 'lack of Islamic atmosphere' in Istanbul!).

- Support to the most reactionary sectors of the Afghan resistance and to the reactionary Islamic fundamentalist forces in the Gulf states.

Finally, the Islamic Republic's orientation, which fosters divisions between Sunnites and Shi'ites in this part of the Middle East, can only compound the problems caused by the old imperialist tactic of exacerbating conflicts and competition in a region that has been balkanised to suit imperialist interests. Consequently, this Shi'ite proselytism threatens to obstruct the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle of the masses.

Ringling denunciations of imperialism

go hand in hand with a virulent denunciation of communism and Marxism. It is no coincidence if the Islamic Republic was quick to renounce Articles 5 and 6 of the 1921 Treaty with USSR. This includes a provision for possible Russian military action 'in the event of a third power trying to carry out a policy of usurpation through armed intervention in Persia'. But these declarations have remained only expressions of sentiment; they have not been followed up by any concrete measures on the social and economic levels to break the links of dependency with imperialism. Worse still, the workers and poor peasants, who alone have a fundamental interest in waging a conclusive anti-imperialist struggle, are being violently repressed.

Indeed, throughout the war, repression has been stepped up. Even the Tudeh Party and the Fedayeen-Majority were very violently attacked in the IRP newspaper (*Jomhouri Eslami*) on 22 August 1982 because of their reticence at that time in supporting the regime's military policy. The IRP leaders reproached them for implying that the continuation of the war was driving Iraq even further into the arms of Saudi Arabia, that it was imposing enormous sacrifices on the masses and that popular discontent could play into the hands of the counterrevolution in the future. Arrests of Tudeh and Fedayeen-Majority members increased. (Most recently, at the start of February 1983, the Tudeh Party leadership, with its secretary Nurreddin Kianuri, were arrested. Ayatollah Janati, member of the Council of Guardians, stated that the arrests of the Tudeh Party leaders had dashed Soviet hopes of 'plotting against Iran through the intermediary of this party'.)

The continuation of the war now and the reasons for which the IRP leaders are pursuing it do not represent a political line of defending the Iranian revolution. Their objectives are to maintain their hold over the mass movement, to justify all the restrictions on elementary democratic rights, to consolidate their military and repressive apparatus and above all to try to put off having to deal with a series of increasingly explosive social problems. The latter include the crisis in the countryside, unemployment, the shortage of consumer goods and the thorny question of two million refugees.

The continuation of the war is helping to build up the positions of a whole layer of young officers who have risen rapidly through the hierarchy as a result of the upheavals in the army. This new generation of officers could tomorrow have some political ambitions! A certain fusion is taking place between the army and the pasdars. In a speech at the beginning of January 1983, Khomeini made the point that these two bodies 'must not be conceived of as separate entities'.

To try to shunt aside the problem of the regime's policies, what motivates them, and their results, on the grounds that the 'priority now is to get behind the anti-imperialist struggle', leads to politically supporting the Islamic regime

and to subordinating the demands of the masses to the pursuit of the war. The developments inside Iran since September 1980 — that is, fundamentally, the consolidation of the institutions of the Islamic regime and the effects of this on the mass movement and the military policy of the Islamic regime — modify the tasks of revolutionaries with respect to the war.

Revolutionaries must firmly reject the political-military line of the Khomeini government. They must call for an immediate ceasefire. It is necessary to build a political response to Saddam Hussein to expose all the schemes he has developed since 1980 against the Iranian revolution. In this way, the Iranian masses will be best prepared to repulse any new Iraqi aggression and the Baghdad regime can be most effectively undermined.

At the same time, revolutionaries should put at the centre of their propaganda and agitation all the demands of the exploited and oppressed masses

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE REVOLUTION

Oil revenue has eased the squeeze of the economic crisis. *Exports* have risen to about 1.5 million barrels a day, while they did not go beyond 500,000 barrels between June and September 1980. The barrel sells at 29 dollars, a price very much below the OPEC-fixed price. The price could be cut even lower to encourage sales. At the end of 1982 monthly *oil income* came close to 1.5 billion dollars. The foreign debt has rapidly declined. After a period of stricter rationing, there is now greater possibility of redistributing income through the regime's many channels — with all the privileges and corruption that goes with that.

Nevertheless, the war effort is fuelling inflation, creating bottlenecks in building projects for cheap housing and in developing the infrastructure in the countryside. The need is being felt to reduce administrative expenses, which would throw the patronage system into crisis and sharpen conflicts within the clergy. The social and economic crisis is bolstering the offensive of factions (such as Hodjatieh) that want to pacify the merchants and entrepreneurs.

'Islamisation' of laws has been further stepped up (e.g., September decrees). The new 'Assembly of Experts' elected in December 1982 is composed of just 74 mullahs. The nationalisation of foreign trade was decided by the Majlis on 31 May 1982. The previous 26 November 1981 decision on this had been suspended by the Council of Guardians (Shoraye Negahban). Nevertheless, once again on 1 June 1982 the Council of Guardians — where Khomeini does not lack influence! — declared this law 'contrary to Islam'.

The draft laws and the legislation on the nationalisation of foreign trade, however, left distribution in the hands of

against the policy of the Islamic Republican regime. The Iranian masses must not win the war and lose the revolution! In the imperialist countries, including France and the USA, revolutionaries must expose their governments, which are engaging in manoeuvre after manoeuvre to reorganise their domination in the region.

In its own way, mass support for the struggle against Iraq's counterrevolutionary operation boosted the Islamic Republican regime. But today there are many signs of opposition from broad sectors of the masses to the regime's policies and military options. Deserters and draft dodgers have begun to be harassed and hounded. Financial compensation is promised for families if their sons join up. Hossein Mossavi, the prime minister, plans to enrol a part of the public sector personnel. Khomeini has decreed laws making volunteering a religious duty and a priority over all other activities.

the traditional Bazaar. And controls on purchases are set on a parity basis by Ministry of Controls and the main private importers of the sector.

Likewise, in January 1983 the Council of Guardians vetoed the law adopted by the Majlis that had provided for confiscation of the property of 'deserters'. The Council let it be known that this law was contrary to 'Islam' and to two articles of the Constitution. On this occasion, Khomeini called the members of parliament to order, pointing out that they must not vote laws that the Council of Guardians are likely to reject! (*Iran Times*, 28 January, 1983).

These conflicts reflect the sharply opposing interests of different sectors and factions of the Shi'ite clergy and their bourgeois allies. The mutual accusations that are being thrown back and forth today inside the Shi'ite hierarchy about 'excesses' in the repression are another index of the regime's crisis of leadership.

The *working class* has lost a series of gains won at the beginning of the revolution. Its living standards have declined. It no longer has its own organisational structures. The shoras are reduced to a formal existence, if they survive at all. In September 1981, elections to the shoras were legally suspended. The Islamic Associations (*Anjomanhaye Eslami*) have gained the upper hand. They have made it possible to liquidate the shoras, and they have filled up with both representatives of the former official trade union and backward elements.

In some cases where the Anjomans could still express working class pressure through Shi'ite populist elements or Tudeh or Fedayeen members, the authorities have taken them firmly in hand. Their leaders have been sacked.

These Islamic Associations cannot be used for rebuilding and extending an

independent workers movement; their function is to help the management in the workplaces to meet its production targets, to denounce counterrevolutionaries, and to discuss workers demands.

Finally, the proposed labour code (which modifies some aspects of the laws imposed by the imperial regime that are still in force) expresses the fundamental IRP thinking on regulating relations between workers taken as individuals and the bosses. These relations are limited to simple personal contracts.

Trade union organisation has no place in the anti-imperialist policy of Khomeini and his supporters. There are a large number of workers, including many who support the regime, who are complaining strongly about this proposed law. Despite repression, strikes broke out to protest against it. This is a good illustration of the latent conflict between workers aspirations and the whole policy of the regime.

Among the *peasantry*, the occupations and distribution of land has created a new situation. But the Land Reform law, finally passed by the Majlis, does not extend the peasants' gains in any way. Basically, it proposes that landowners should sell land if their holdings are judged to be too extensive. This land will be then distributed to peasants under the auspices of committees of *pasdars*, judges, landowners, and peasants.

In addition to providing a legal basis for taking land away from peasants who seized it during the initial months of the revolution, this land reform law is designed to liquidate all village committee (peasant committee)-type structures and to replace them by local government bodies.

In the present period, the peasants demands focus around such issues as the prices of products sold to state bodies, the cost of manufactured products, and rentals on land held by Shi'ite institutions. For the moment, the social and political activity of the peasants remains limited.

Civil war continues between the government and the Kurdish fighters. The top general, Sharezi, threatened the Kurds at the end of 1982 with the full firepower of the Iranian army. The resistance of the Kurdish people remains a very important obstacle to the stabilisation of the Islamic regime.

The regime understands that the Kurdish people's resistance can open up the way to new upsurges of the mass movement. The large contingent of the armed forces assigned to fighting *peshmergas* confirm this. The Turkoman area is under military occupation. In Azerbaijan, Tehran has sent in more elite troops, supposedly to bring under control the supporters of Ayatollah Shariat Madari, who is accused of having participated in an alleged plot by the former minister of foreign affairs, Ghotbzadeh.

The mass movement, thus, has been severely set back. In its attempts to ac-

hieve its objectives of reorganising and stabilising a dependent capitalist state dominated by imperialism, the Khomeini leadership has dealt the mass movement serious blows. Its continuing rule can only aggravate the dangers threatening the future of the revolution.

But social and economic depression, the experiences accumulated by the masses in the extraordinary struggles and mobilisations in the still recent past, the capacity they have already shown to regain the initiative, could result in a resurgence of their actions if a political opening develops. The clique conflicts dividing the leading circles of the Islamic Republic, and the uncertainty over the Imam's successor — all these elements lead us to expect new institutional and political upheavals.

In that eventuality, the centrifugal forces at work in the country could violently come to the surface, and the unexhausted reserves of the revolution once again come into play.

Imperialism and the restorationist forces, as well as sectors within the army, are continually watching for their chance. Even if they are not the only danger

facing the revolution, they could take advantage of any deepgoing crisis, accompanied by an apathy among the masses demoralised by successive partial defeats extending over a rather long period. In this case, there could be a serious and lasting defeat of the Iranian revolution.

THE CENTRAL TASKS OF REVOLUTIONARIES

At the present time, revolutionaries are fighting to defend the Iranian revolution both against the threats of imperialism and its allies *and* against the Islamic regime. They reject making any separation between combating all the manoeuvres of the imperialists and their agents and the defence of all the exploited and all the oppressed against the Tehran government. Imperialist threats are not going to change the laws of the class struggle in Iran. Any effective battle against imperialism, for breaking Iran's links of dependency, necessarily results in exacerbating class contradictions. This battle can only be effective if it bases itself on satisfying the needs of the

Women stand at the back at prayer (DR)



workers and poor peasants and extending all their rights.

The course of the revolution itself has demonstrated that demands belonging to the bourgeois democratic revolution (land reform, democratic rights, self-determination for the oppressed nationalities, national independence...) cannot be satisfied by the Islamic Republican regime. Only an advance towards socialist revolution, only a deepening of the process of permanent revolution, can make it possible to win and consolidate such advances.

Revolutionary Marxists refuse to confine the demands of the masses in the straitjacket of the Khomeini regime's present military policy. They place their whole political approach to the war in the framework of fighting to win the political and organisational independence of the workers and their allies.

Revolutionary Marxists cannot give up defending democratic rights when they are trampled on by IRP forces or abandon the social and economic demands of the masses when they are under direct attack by the regime on the pretext that this would mean getting involved in a showdown with the government before the political conditions are sufficiently ripe for it to be replaced by a workers and peasants government. They reject this sort of reasoning to which Stalinists are so attached. Indeed, any uncompromising struggle by the workers and peasants for their rights and aspirations comes up against the regime and the government of the Islamic Republic. The non-satisfaction of the demands of the democratic revolution places such questions at the centre of the political scene. Starting from this reality, revolutionary Marxists must point out the roads by which the masses themselves can overturn this regime.

— To this end, revolutionary Marxists put forward throughout the Iranian state as an immediate slogan the call for a democratic constituent assembly. They defend the right of national minorities to set up sovereign constituent assemblies.

Masses chanting in support of the revolution (DR)



The Kurdish fighters have already adopted this demand. Given the present extent of mobilisation and self-organisation of the masses and the weakness of the revolutionary forces among the toiling masses, the slogan of workers and peasants government will serve a propagandistic function.

The call for a democratic constituent assembly should be linked to demands for a series of specific democratic, social, and economic measures, including equal rights and full civic and social freedom for women. Such demands can indicate to working people what tasks should objectively be on the agenda of such a constituent assembly. This slogan and the defence of this sort of social and economic programme are the means for bringing together in a common movement all the workers and peasants who threw themselves into the fight against the Shah in order to win fundamental changes in their living conditions, as well as all those, including the national minorities and women, who see in this perspective the possibility of winning their rights in a struggle against the oppressive regime of the Islamic Republic.

Revolutionary Marxists link the fight around the demand for a democratic constituent assembly with the call for dissolution of the repressive apparatuses remaining from the previous regime, as well as the liquidation of the repressive institutions of the Islamic Republican regime. Workers, peasants, and anti-imperialist militants did not fight to overthrow the Shah's army to have it replaced by a new IRP army (i.e., the pasdars), to liquidate the SAVAK to have it replaced by the SAVAMA! All their experience shows that the ability of the revolution to defend itself against its internal and external enemies depends on the arming of the masses.

— In the civil war between the Kurds and the troops of the Islamic Republic, revolutionary Marxists unconditionally support the peshmerga fighters until they obtain their demands. Throughout the Iranian state, they systematically defend the cultural and linguistic rights of national minorities, as well as their

right of self-determination up to and including independence. This right cannot, in any way, be subordinated to the imperative needs of the war between Iran and Iraq.

— Defending democratic rights, the freedom of the working masses to organise and express themselves, is closely intertwined with the work of rebuilding an independent workers movement and stimulating a new rise of autonomous mass organs, such as shoras and village councils, which are part of the revolutionary heritage of the Iranian masses.

The revolutionary Marxists do not in any way counterpose self-organisation of the masses to the democratic demand for a constituent assembly. Facing massive repression, the fight for the release of all the prisoners who have fought against the Shah's dictatorship again comes to the forefront. Revolutionary Marxists will also demand the lifting of all the restrictions on freedom of religion and cultural rights, as well as the separation of church and state.

— Revolutionaries must propose a Workers and Peasants Plan that will make it possible to respond to the economic and social effects of the crisis, to the urgent needs of millions of refugees, to offer the peasants the technical and financial means for resuming agricultural production on a higher level. In the spending of oil income, priority must be given to the financing of such a plan.

Basing themselves on the fighting and organisational traditions of the working people, revolutionaries will concentrate their efforts on stimulating all those factors that can contribute to a reorganisation of the workers movement in the factories around struggle committees, workers commissions, and so forth. They will do so both in struggles for immediate demands (wages, bonuses, working conditions) as well as movements in opposition to various laws designed to deny the right to union activity by workers in the workplaces. A propaganda campaign for a general strike can be built in order to prepare the way for a future resumption of mass action on a broader scale.

— Vigilance against all sorts of seditious attempts by the imperialists remains the order of the day. It is by giving new hope to the toiling masses, by responding to their needs, that they can be prepared to fight effectively against imperialism.

The international workers movement must do what it can to aid the Iranian workers and peasants and the fighters of the national minorities in their struggle to relaunch the revolution that began in 1979. It will focus this support around the following slogans:

**IMPERIALISTS, HANDS OFF THE
IRANIAN REVOLUTION!**

**DEFEND THE STRUGGLES AND THE
DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS OF THE
IRANIAN MASSES!**



AROUND THE WORLD



EUROPEAN YOUTH ORGANISATIONS SCHOOL

At the end of March leaders of the youth organisations in solidarity with the Fourth International in Europe came together for a week-long educational school.

Some forty delegates represented the Jeune Garde Socialiste from Belgium, the Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire in France, Revolution Youth from Britain, the group Rebel in Holland, the Young Socialists from Sweden, the Youth Socialist League of Denmark, and the Swiss Jeunesses Socialistes Revolutionnaires, who came from their founding conference the previous week (see IV No 27). There were also representatives from youth groups organised around the newspapers *Rivoluzione* in Italy; *Roter Maulwurf* in West Germany; *Barricada* in the Spanish state, whose representatives came from Euzkadi, Andalusia, Catalonia, and Madrid; and participants from Austria.

The only comrades unable to attend were those from Portugal, Norway, and Luxemburg.

The youth organisations and groups in general have a higher proportion of women among their membership than the sections of the Fourth International themselves, generally between 35 and 40 per cent (for Italy). With the exception of France, where most of the members are students, all the other organisations have a majority of young workers, young people in technical education, or school students.

Among the participants at the school 33 per cent were women. The ages ranged from 16 to 26 years old — the average age being 21.

The school itself was divided up into two parts. One part took up general questions such as the antibureaucratic struggle in the Eastern European countries; revolution in the countries dependent on imperialism; austerity and militarisation in Europe; and the oppression of women. The second part concentrated on discussions and exchange of experience on the question of building youth organisations, work amongst young workers, the importance of political campaigns, relations with the sections of

the Fourth International, press and propaganda...Not to mention the informal or musical sessions.

Most of the organisations, except in France, Sweden, and Austria, were principally involved in the struggle against the deployment of nuclear missiles, and against NATO bases. Important initiatives have also been taken on the questions of unemployment and job training for young people, the fight against racism, or in organising among soldiers



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of the solidarity committees are involved in this.

The second axis of extension for solidarity is through the involvement of the solidarity committees in anti-war and anti-missile mobilisations.

Without any attempt being made to force the participants in a sectarian way to make the connection between this issue and Central America, the involvement of the solidarity committees in unified and democratic mobilisations against the deployment of nuclear weapons and against NATO bases in itself very concretely raises the question of the imperialist aggression going on in Central America at this very moment.

It should be pointed out that the solidarity movement has not been able to make the best use of the World Front in Solidarity with Salvador that was formed last year in Mexico. Already affiliated to this body are several hundred political, trade-union, and humanitarian organisations. Most committees are affiliated to the front, but do not see how to use it other than in a symbolic fashion.

Thus, the report of the Fifth Assembly of the European Committees which was held in Geneva in February considered that, with the exception of the Netherlands, 'There has not been a real campaign for affiliations to the World Front.' This is even more of a pity as the existence of the Front, to which the World Federation of Trade Unions and some national federations like the UGT in Spain are already affiliated, could offer a fram-

(mainly in France and Holland). All the youth organisations are active in solidarity with the revolution in Central America.

This first such gathering ended in enthusiasm to extend the experience. A second such school will be held towards the end of the year. This will enable bigger and bolder initiatives to be planned, on a European scale, gatherings, camps, etc. The youth organisations will co-ordinate their efforts and distribute a joint appeal at the time of the demonstrations against war and missiles planned for the autumn. Finally, through their student members, they will take part in the campaign for the reopening of the University of San Salvador. ■

work for a systematic campaign to get affiliation of trade unions at all levels and directly involve the trade-union movement in solidarity activity.

CONSISTENT SOLIDARITY

Solidarity initiatives are presently being organised in a number of European countries. "Information Days" took place in France at the end of March. Three days of action for Salvador have been organised in Switzerland. An important conference of the Salvador solidarity movement, supported by numerous trade unions and Labour Party MPs, will take place in Britain at the end of May.

As regards internationally co-ordinated campaigns and activities, the World Front have already called for *October 10* to be a day of action. At the European level a meeting of the *European Russell Tribunal Against Intervention* is planned for Rome in the autumn. This could be prepared by national conferences in each country, and followed by a tour to report back.

A specific campaign is being made for the reopening of the *University of San Salvador*. This could be taken up through specific initiatives among university students, such as petitions, information meetings, etc., for this elementary democratic demand.

Finally, the mass mobilisations against nuclear weapons planned for this autumn in most European countries will also provide an opportunity for the Central America solidarity movement to make its own intervention. ■



To counter imperialist escalation— Step up solidarity with Central America!

The escalation of imperialist aggression towards Nicaragua, and more and more direct threats against El Salvador, make it essential to give a new thrust to the campaign for international solidarity with the revolution in Central America.

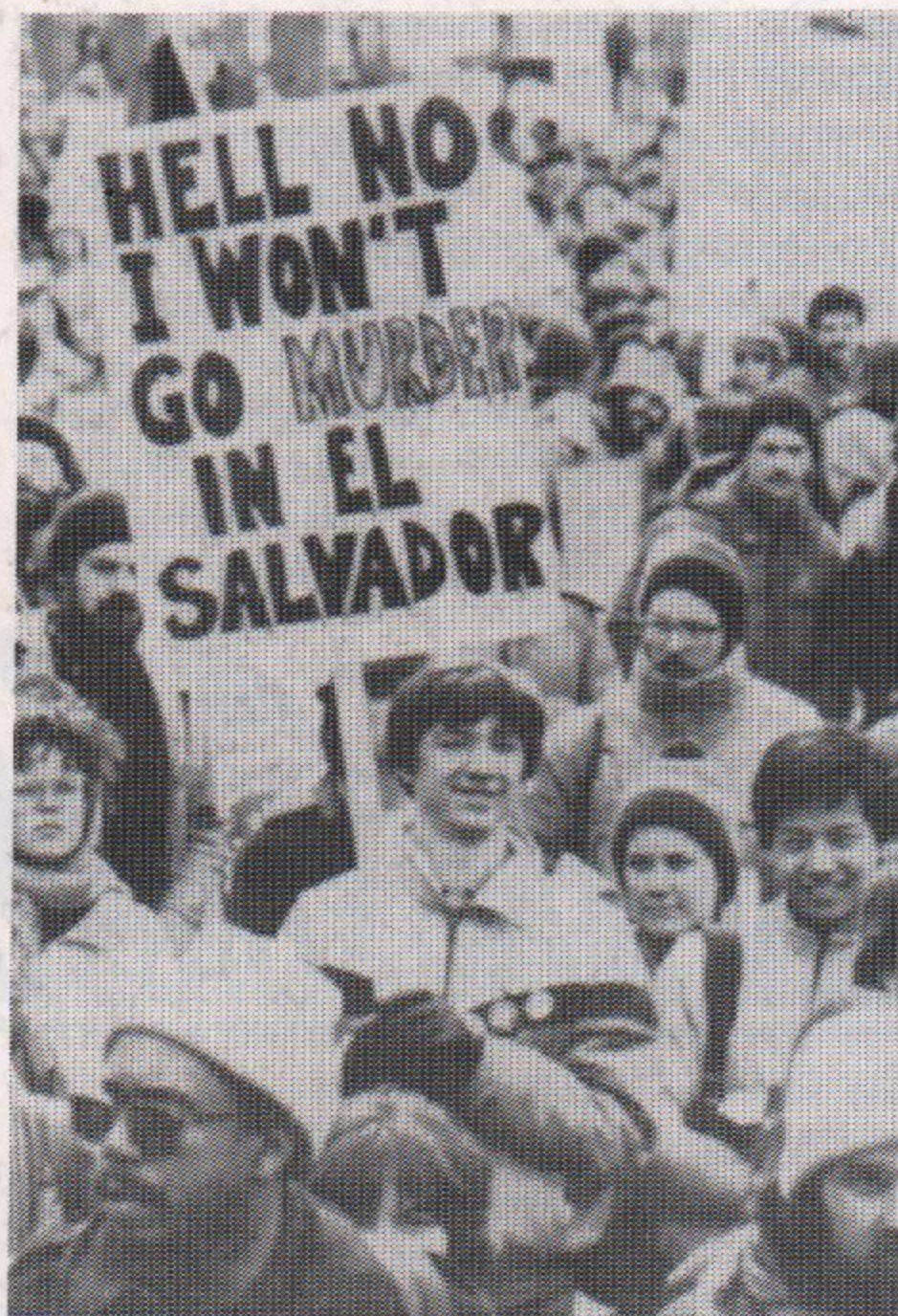
Since the elections in El Salvador in March 1982 solidarity activity in West Europe has declined, with the exception of the huge demonstrations against Reagan that took place in most European countries at the time of his visit in June 1982.

A solidarity movement does, however, exist, and has even become consolidated. It involves not just the broad current that signs petitions, or takes part in demonstrations, but an ongoing and organised movement. The latter sometimes takes the form of coalitions, sometimes of networks of committees.

For example, there are broad coalitions of political and trade-union organisations in Sweden, where SAMCA (the Co-ordinating Committee for Central America) includes some thirty organisations and committees. In Denmark a solidarity front brings together currents ranging from the Social Democratic youth to the far left. In Great Britain, a significant number of trade unions and Labour members of parliament support the El Salvador Solidarity Committee (ELSOC).

But in most cases committees composed of active revolutionaries, Christians, human-rights activists, and trade-unionists are still the motor force of solidarity activity, particularly with Salvador. There are national co-ordinations of committees. Such co-ordinating bodies are supported by 19 committees in Switzerland, some 50 in Italy, around 40 in the Netherlands, a dozen in Flanders, and several dozen in France. There are also such national co-ordinations in Iceland, and in the Spanish state, although in the latter case the network is still very decentralised. In Luxembourg, the Luxembourg-Nicaragua Solidarity Association has around 700 members.

In some countries, like France, the concern to be able to deal with the specific problems of building solidarity with Nicaragua, Salvador, and Guatemala, has led to the formation of three separate committees, one for each country. The stepped-up threat of imperialist intervention, although it does not do away with these special features, has tended, how-



ever, to promote joint mobilisations against intervention.

In Switzerland, a unified committee has been formed for solidarity with Nicaragua and Salvador. In the Netherlands, an Anti-Intervention Front brings together 32 organisations. The Central America Committee in Great Britain co-ordinates the work of the Salvador and Nicaragua committees. The three committees in France work together in a co-ordinated way.

In addition we should note the appearance on a still limited scale of committees on Honduras, Haiti and Grenada, particularly in France and Germany. Grenada committees also exist in Britain and Sweden.

INTENSE ACTIVITY

Practical solidarity activity has developed in three fundamental directions: mass mobilisations, circulation of information, and material and financial aid.

Since Reagan's visit to Europe, street demonstrations, which were the most spectacular form of mobilisation, have lost momentum. The demonstrations on January 22, 1983, in general were smaller than those of last year, except in the Netherlands where 8,000 people took part. In other cases the initiatives often took the form of gatherings or delega-

tions outside embassies.

By the same token, the Pope's visit to Central America did not lead to initiatives or demonstrations as large as the occasion warranted.

However, solidarity activity remains intense though of a less spectacular and mass type. Some 194 information meetings took place in Sweden over the last year. The Solidarity Forum which took place in Switzerland in January (see IV No 23, February 7, 1983) was a big success.

More generally, there has been sustained informational activity, which is very important at a time when the imperialist press is waging a veritable campaign of hysteria, particularly against Nicaragua. The committees in practically all the European countries publish regular bulletins or pamphlets. Information centres have been set up, exhibitions organised, in some cases a weekly newsletter produced.

For example, the second edition of the dossier on Nicaragua by the French committee which has now appeared is an excellent compilation of information.

Finally, above and beyond collections in meetings or public activities, systematic campaigns have been mounted to raise money for Central America. There has been the '500 lire for Salvador' campaign in Italy, the day of 'Five pesos for Salvador' in Colombia, a campaign 'A million francs for Salvador' in France... In Switzerland and Denmark these campaigns have been oriented towards the trade-union movement, calling for 'one hour's wage for Salvador'.

Material solidarity is more and more taking the form of practical projects mobilising specific professional groups: support for revolutionary radio stations, teachers to build up schools in the liberated zones, doctors for field hospitals...

In general, the solidarity committees identify with the Nicaraguan revolution and the Salvadoran fighters. They put forward slogans such as 'Recognition for the FMLN/FDR as sole representative of the Salvadoran people', or 'Support the struggle of the FMLN to victory'. But this has not at all prevented them from attempting to widen support and solidarity around more limited objectives — essentially on the basis of opposition to the threat of intervention. This broadening is going in two directions.

On one side, the movement is extending into the workers movement, in particular the trade-unions. In certain cases, such as Britain or Iceland, some trade-union organisations take part directly in the committees. In the Netherlands a major trade union confederation, the FNV, publishes a special solidarity journal jointly with the Salvador committee.

More generally, campaigns along the lines of 'one hour's wage for Salvador' imply that the trade-union structures have taken them up. In Switzerland a permanent solidarity fund, 'Solifonds', has just been set up. Trade unions, the Social Democracy, and a representative

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