

# International VIEWPOINT

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## US intervenes in Lebanon

Mass upsurge  
in Philippines

Massive  
fightback  
against cuts  
in Belgium

Americans  
bombing  
Salvador?





# International Viewpoint

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# Imperialist hands off Lebanon!

A ceasefire accord was announced in Beirut on September 25. As we go to press, it is not yet clear whether it is going to hold, even temporarily.

In military terms, the accord confirms the defeat of the Phalangists at the hands of the Shi'ite militia, Amal, in the southern suburbs of Beirut and at the hands of the Druze forces in the Chouf mountains.

Only imperialist intervention saved the Gemayel regime from total defeat. The basic facts thus remain unchanged: the imperialists are determined to prop up Gemayel militarily and will have to continue to do so.

\* \* \*

For the first time since the end of the Vietnam war, the U.S. army, the No. 1 imperialist army in the world, is using its fire power to defend another puppet regime.

In the worst tradition of gunboat diplomacy, the U.S. navy has begun shelling the positions of fighters opposed to the reactionary Phalangist regime of Amin Gemayel in Lebanon, a regime that is obviously remote controlled from Washington.

What is more, the airplanes carried by the U.S. Sixth Fleet are flying over these positions also threatening to intervene. At the same time, 2,000 Marines are ready to land to join the 1,200 U.S. soldiers already lined up alongside Gemayel's troops.

In all these moves, the U.S. has had the active collaboration of the other imperialist powers. The French, Italian, and British soldiers of the Multinational Force sent to back up the Gemayel regime are dividing up the job on the ground with the U.S. soldiers. French and British planes are flying sorties through Lebanese skies, alongside the U.S. airforce.

In this situation, it is an urgent task for anti-imperialist militants throughout the world to mobilize to force the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of imperialist troops from Lebanon.

**Imperialist troops out of Lebanon!**

Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International  
22 September 1983



Livio MAITAN

Once again Lebanon has been thrown into turmoil by military clashes arising out of a combination of communal and international conflicts.

The rebuilt Lebanese army and the Christian Phalangist militias are locked in combat with Walid Joumblatt's Druze forces in the Chouf mountains and with the Shi'ite militia, Amal, in Beirut.

At the same time, the U.S. is making a show of naval power off the coast of Lebanon and beefing up its military forces on the ground.

For its part, the Zionist government is threatening reprisals against the Druzes and the Syrian government that supports them if in the course of these clashes, they overstep a certain "red line."

## THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING A NATIONAL CONSENSUS

The Zionist aggression in the spring of 1982 led to the establishment of a reactionary regime headed up by Amin Gemayel (who succeeded his assassinated brother, Beshir).

The Gemayel regime was set up in a climate of national consensus. It clearly represented a victory for the imperialists, and at the same time a solution that did not make the reactionary Arab governments unhappy.

The Lebanese bourgeoisie, the bulk of which lined up behind Gemayel, were aiming for the reunification of the country after a decade of upheavals, the elimination of all the Palestinian positions, and the withdrawal of all occupation forces. This project fizzled.

Already by the beginning of this year, conflicts had erupted in various regions, putting an end to the national consensus, which proved to be quite ephemeral. A year after the Israeli invasion, the government of Amin Gemayel controlled no more than the capital city and the adjacent area.

For some weeks now fighting has been raging in Beirut as well. And the international airport that the Lebanese government wanted to make the symbol of its rebuilt power has become the target of bombardment by Druze and Syrian forces and even of ground attacks.

In the Chouf, communal conflicts resumed in an extremely violent form. The northern part of the country also continues to be a powderkeg. It is completely out of the control of the "central government."



In several respects, Lebanon seems to have reverted to a situation comparable to the 1975-76 civil war.

This state of affairs is the result first of all of the fact that after the departure of the PLO forces from Beirut no progress has been made toward solving the Palestinian question for achieving a re-composition of the situation in the region.

A second factor is that the new Lebanese regime has found it impossible to reach a general agreement with the state of Israel, although the Israelis played a decisive role in putting it in power.

Moreover, Amin Gemayel failed to play an effective role of arbiter in the name of "national unity." In trying to rebuild the Lebanese bourgeois state, he relied essentially on the Phalangist apparatus and militia. This inevitably led to growing conflicts with the other forces and to a resumption of communal warfare.

A final, more immediate factor, was the results of the withdrawal of the Israeli troops to the line of the Awali river in southern Lebanon.

This withdrawal was carried out despite pressure from Washington in particular, which regarded it as premature. There were a number of reasons behind it.

First of all, the Zionist government cannot contemplate the occupation of a major part of Lebanese territory for an indefinite period. This could embroil the Israeli forces in a bloody struggle against growing mass resistance and have serious repercussions inside Israel itself.

What is more, the Zionist leaders are not at all unhappy to see the process of de facto partition of the country that is underway, and which was further stimulated by the withdrawal of Israeli troops.

It should not be forgotten that the Zionist leaders have never made any bones about their schemes for Balkanizing Lebanon. In particular, they would like to see the formation of a Druze mini-state as a buffer between Israel and Syria. In line with this perspective, on several occasions, there has been a certain connivance between the Israelis and the so-called progressive forces of Walid

Joumblatt, which failed to fire a single shot when the Israelis invaded last year.

More specifically, at the present time Israel may be favorable to a partition that would involve their maintaining their control of southern Lebanon and accepting Syrian control of the Bekaa valley and the northern part of the country.

To be sure, this scheme would not be easy to achieve either, because the imperialist countries do not want to see any reinforcement of the positions of Syria, which remains the Soviet bureaucracy's only ally in the region. This notwithstanding, the Zionist leadership's policy involves a dynamic leading to the partition of Lebanon.

### THE REAL SOCIAL STAKES AND THE COMMUNAL DIVISIONS

While it is useful to note the similarity with the 1975-76 civil war, it should be kept in mind that the present situation is not exactly the same.

In 1975-76, the Palestinian resistance played a major role, and the general framework was defined by the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nationalist, anti-imperialist, and anti-Zionist aspirations thus had an undeniable weight.

In the present confrontations, the Palestinians are only an auxiliary force. Moreover, the old components of the progressive front are divided, and the moment they are not mobilized essentially in support of anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist aspirations.

In other words, in the civil war that is developing today the social and political stakes are being obscured and distorted by communal differences. On the one hand, this is the result of the defeat of the PLO represented by its withdrawal from Lebanon and of the setback for the Lebanese national and workers movement itself. On the other, it is the consequence of the failure of the scheme for reunifying the country on a reactionary basis in the framework of the Gemayel regime.

In this context, centrifugal forces have been growing, and the main element holding various forces together has become

communal loyalty. And this has a diabolic logic. That is, the various communities draw together for self-defense and survival and become more and more ferociously hostile to the other communities.

From this standpoint, Lebanon seems to be falling back into the worst sorts of turmoil that it has experienced in the past century, situations in which external forces can intervene as "peacemakers" and arbiters.

### THE ROLE OF THE IMPERIALISTS

In fact, external forces are manipulating the communal conflicts, exploiting them as well as restraining them. Under the pretext of "peace making," the imperialists have been intervening increasingly in support of the "legal" Lebanese government, that is, of the reactionary forces.

The so-called international Interposition Force has been getting involved more and more openly in the fight against Joumblatt's Druzes and the Shi'ite militia — despite the fact that neither of these groups has the slightest intention of challenging the basic framework of the neocolonial regime. It has been more and more openly backing the reactionary government of Amin Gemayel.

There is a charming harmony among the imperialist family. The British government is sending its Jaguar planes over the Chouf. The French government is making a display of its Super-Etendard planes. The Italian contingent is threatening the Druze forces. U.S. troops have been notably beefed up, and have now been authorized in the words of the White House spokesperson himself, to "use the weapons they have, their tanks."

It is this imperialist intervention that is the fundamental problem on which the workers movement and revolutionaries throughout the world must take a stand and act. And this is the special duty of the workers movement and revolutionaries in the imperialist countries.

In order for the Lebanese masses to be able to defend their legitimate interests and reorganize Lebanon democratically on a noncommunalist basis, it is essential to prevent the imperialists from imposing their solution to the conflict.

What the imperialists want to do is to set up a reactionary regime throughout the country, eliminate the rest of the Palestinian forces, and establish a new framework in the region in accordance with the interests and aspirations of the Zionists.

To combat these reactionary plans, it is essential to continue to mobilize to demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Zionist troops from all of Lebanon and for the withdrawal of the multinational Interposition Force. This is an urgent task and a vital part of the more general struggle against all the imperialist war threats. ■

## Obituary

The Revolutionary Communist Group, Lebanese section of the Fourth International, announces with sorrow the death of Comrade Afif Obeid ("Fahd").

Comrade Afif Obeid died fighting to defend his village, Kabr Chmoun, which was besieged by the Lebanese army and the Phalangist militia.

Comrade "Fahd" was the LCR's most experienced cadre in military affairs. He participated in all the stages of the long war against the Lebanese reactionaries and their various allies. He led the participation of the LCR in the resistance to the 1978 Israeli invasion.

Arrested by the Zionist troops during the second invasion in 1982, he was held several months in the notorious Ansar concentration camp.

After he was released, comrade "Fahd" returned to his village, where he took part in the fight against the fascist "Lebanese Forces," as well as in activity against the Zionist occupiers.

With the Israelis looking for him again, he was forced to go underground.

Following the retreat of Israeli troops from the Aley region and the Chouf, "Fahd" took part in the defense of his village (near Souk El Gharb) against the reactionary Lebanese army. It was here that he was killed in the fighting.

His devotion and courage can be a source of inspiration for all revolutionists.



# US pilots bombing Salvador, Swedish journalist says

"It was going on 6:00 in the evening, and the sky began to cloud over. There was only one military plane in the sky, and suddenly an American voice came over the radio: "It's hard to see, I'd better come back."

"U.S. pilots are involved in bombing the people of El Salvador."

That was what the journalist Monica Zak told us. She spent three months with the guerrillas in El Salvador in the spring. We talked to her about the time she spent with them.

"It's a lot harder to fight in El Salvador than in Nicaragua," she began.

"El Salvador is very mountainous and the forests were cut down a long time ago. Now the government is destroying what woods remain by systematic incendiary bombing.

"El Salvador is very densely populated, and this also causes problems for the liberation struggle. El Salvador has an average of 238 persons per square kilometer. This compares for example with twenty persons per square kilometer in Sweden!

"I experienced this systematic fire bombing myself. There were fires nearly every day when I was in the Guazapa region, not far from the capital city, San Salvador."

There is strong support for the guerrillas in the Guazapa region, and during the time she was there Monica Zak saw no less than fourteen attempted invasions by government troops.

"The level of organization in the region is very high. The land is cultivated collectively. The main crops are coffee, beans, maize, and sugar cane. Since people risk being murdered by the army if they leave the area, trade in kind is very well developed. The sugar-cane fields are divided into five parts, one each for the five organizations that make up the FMLN."

During her stay, Monica Zaks saw military planes drop incendiary and phosphorous bombs to destroy the crops just before they were ready to be harvested. Since the people's houses are close to the fields, there were heavy casualties.

"I photographed a little boy who had been wounded by a phosphorous bomb. It made deep burns going into the bone. The FMLN instructs the people to put mud on to shut off the supply of oxygen to the burning phosphorous. Obviously, it's hardest for the children to do this."

Monica Zak was there too when 6,000 government soldiers launched an



Monica Zak, Swedish journalist (DR)

attack. Artillery was landed on the mountain tops from the air, and from there the towns on the slopes were shelled.

The FMLN's tactic is that major confrontations should be avoided and therefore the population has to be evacuated. People are getting used to this routine.

Some children explained to Monica Zak that napalm bombs have a duller sound than phosphorous grenades.

"When the attack was over, the army did not dare stay in the region and retreated. Then the people came and began to rebuild what the army had destroyed. The people cultivated yuca root, which grows fast, so as to have something to eat."

But this tactic of the army of retreating after attacks has changed increasingly as the U.S. has gotten more deeply involved in the struggle. The new tactic involves more setting up of "strategic hamlets," a concept we are familiar with from the Vietnam war.

"So, the troops are staying more."

This new tactic was tried out first in the San Vicente district. After an attack by the government troops during which the FMLN followed the usual plan of pulling back, 800 soldiers stayed put.

The materiel left behind by the FMLN was distributed to the population in an attempt to discredit the guerrillas. "The Communists stole this from you," they were told.

During her stay with the liberation forces, Monica Zak saw how deeply demoralization has affected the government troops. This is true even of the U.S. trained elite soldiers in the Atlacatl Brigade.

"After a clash with Atlacatl soldiers, we found an American fruit juice container. Inside it, there was a note: 'I am a soldier with the Atlacatl Brigade, and I want to join you.'

The name was given so that the FMLN could make contact.

This U.S.-trained elite soldier was one of the increasing number going over to the guerrillas. When they are ready to de-



fect to the guerrillas, the soldiers give a special sign. They hold up their rifles in one hand and raise a clenched fist with the other.

"The pattern is the same throughout the country," Monica Zak said. "Teenagers who do not belong to the ruling stratum do not dare leave their homes. They risk being shanghaied into the army. They get three months intensive training, including a lot of indoctrination that is supposed to keep them from going over to the FMLN.

"These soldiers are never sent to their home areas. They are told 'The FMLN tortures and murders people, don't let yourself be taken alive.'"

At the start of the war, FMLN forces often executed captured soldiers. But now prisoners of war are treated in accordance with the Geneva Convention. They are not mistreated. They get food and cigarettes.

"The treatment of prisoners of war has become part of the FMLN's military strategy. They are allowed to move around freely in the villages, and sometimes it is hard to tell who the prisoners are. The guerrillas talk to them about why they are fighting."

Very quickly, the prisoners are sent back to the army. This has a powerful demoralizing effect on the forcibly recruited government forces.

In fact, released prisoners of war are often afraid to go back to the government side. They are considered security risks. They often surrender willingly to the guerrillas because they know that they will get decent treatment.

"I interviewed a captured lieutenant. He said: 'It is the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua that are behind the guerrillas. They are being led by Russians, who never get involved in the fighting themselves. There is no food or medical care in the guerrilla areas.'"

He explained: "That's what I was taught during my training."

"So, what have you seen as a prisoner of war," I asked him.

"I haven't seen any Russians. The weapons that are being used are not Russian, but the same kind we have," he said.

Monica Zak was also present when prisoners of war were being handed back. In most cases, the way that this is done is that two trucks meet, under the supervision of the Red Cross. Monica Zak saw how the FMLN tried to maneuver to get more contact with enemy soldiers."

"This was in connection with the fighting that was going on around Suchito, where twenty prisoners were to be handed back. The day and place were fixed. A few kilometers outside the city of Suchito we climbed up a mountain. Since fighting had been going on, we were very nervous. When I looked down on the city, however, everything was quiet.

The group set up loudspeakers and appeals echoed over the city:

"We are soldiers from the FMLN here to hand back prisoners of war. Help us give them back without bloodshed by



Young Salvador guerrillas (DR)

coming to the church yard."

Then, suddenly I saw people start to come out of their houses. The delegation that was to meet the prisoners came up with a white flag. A lot of civilians followed them. Even though we had a unit of fighters concealed nearby, we were afraid of a massacre. But we did not see any police or military. The presence of a lot of civilians also helped to prevent attacks from the air.

"I asked several of the prisoners why they did not stay with the guerrillas. Most of them were ordinary farmers, like the guerrillas. All of them said that they would stay but they had three children, responsibility for an aged mother, or similar personal problems. They were also nervous about being considered security risks by the army, an army that they wanted out of.

"On this occasion, I wore a scarf over my face and a wide-brimmed hat so that no one would see that I was a foreigner. A man from the city civilian security group took me aside. He had heard that the FMLN had a good medical service and wondered if I had any medicine for Athlete's Foot!

At the end of February, Monica Zak was in the Chaletenango district. There she saw how the government's planes consciously bombed civilians. A few thousand civilian refugees were found by a search plane. Over the FMLN radio, Monica Zak heard the discussion between the pilots in the plane:

"Here are some guerrilla supporters. Now we have them." This was followed with a lot of profanity.

"The people were terrified when the planes attacked. The FMLN soldiers tried to get them to run into the mountains out of the way. But they didn't go. They tried to hide under trees or bushes. A bomb fell nearby and they were all killed."

On three occasions, Monica Zak heard pilots speaking English.

"The FMLN people listening to the pilots' broadcasts could not understand English so they asked me to translate. They spoke with a marked American accent. They rattled off numbers, which were probably some kind of code. There was an American woman who answered at the planes' base. In two cases I'm not sure whether there were Americans in the bombers. On the other hand, in the reconnaissance plane, there was no doubt."

But the third time Monica Zak heard American voices, she was sure. In a densely populated area the guerrillas' hospital was bombed, along with a lot of civilian targets.

"It was getting on to 6:00 in the evening," Monica Zak said. "There was only one plane in the sky, and suddenly I heard an American voice over the radio. 'It's getting hard to see, I'd better go back.' Right after that, the solitary plane returned to its base.

Monica Zak is certain about it:

"U.S. pilots are involved in bombing the people of El Salvador."

(From the September 15 issue of *Internationales*, paper of the Swedish section of the Fourth International.) ■



# Belgian workers' cup of bitterness overflows

In less than a week, a strike begun spontaneously by a tiny group of workers spread throughout the public services and transport in Belgium and began to paralyze the country.

This protest grew into one of the most massive and explosive movements against austerity yet seen in Western Europe. It was ended on Friday, September 23, by the deliberate and calculated betrayal of the national union leaderships.

But these astonishing two weeks have certainly left a deep imprint on the minds of the masses of Belgian working people. It remains to be seen how they will respond. But the pattern has been, as confirmed again by this astonishing explosion, an ascending spiral of struggle despite repeated betrayals.

Gerry FOLEY

**CHARLEROI** — By September 9, the mood among the Belgian public workers had reached the boiling point. It took just three or four train drivers in Charleroi to touch off a massive rebellion.

Rene Andersen, a leader of the Charleroi train workers, explained how it all started to *La Gauche*, the French language paper of the Belgian section of the Fourth International:

"At 9:30 in the Charleroi-South station, three or four train drivers were discussing among themselves. They decided to go out. Within five minutes they got the support of the switch operators. Arguing that the security conditions had not been met, they did not give the go-ahead signals.

"Within half an hour, a whole series of station and yard personnel followed the movement. Then, little by little the news of the shutdown spread to all the railway personnel, including other regions."

Andersen continued: "Within half an hour also, the full-timer for the CGSP (the public workers union affiliated to the Socialist Party-dominated Belgian General Confederation of Labor — the FGTB/ABVV) was contacted. He was told: 'We're fed up. We read the information you put out. We're stopping work.'"

The union had put out a series of flyers explaining the content of the new austerity measures proposed by the right-wing Martens-Gol government.

The railway workers were hit the hardest. First of all, the new program put in question any payment of bonuses.

Octave Lambeau, chief shop steward for the train drivers in Louvain explained the impact of these measures to *La Gauche*:

## INFURIATED RAIL WORKERS

"At the start of their careers, train drivers make 29,000 Belgian francs (about 580 US dollars) per month before deductions. These wages are supplemented, however, by bonuses for night and week-end work that add up to about 10,000 Belgian francs.

"According to the government's new proposal, we would also lose a months wages because of the shift of the payment date to the end of the month."

Lambeau continued: "The ranks are hoping that this time the leaderships, in whom their confidence has been shaken, will not let them down again.

The train-drivers' action, thus, resembled the January-February dockers strike in Denmark against the austerity plan of the right-wing Schlueter government.

In both cases, a key section of workers were directly hit and took the lead in the fightback. Given the dispersed nature of the railway work force, moreover, the role of the train drivers was crucial.

In Belgium, the train drivers were able to draw all the public workers and important sections in private industry behind them, at least for a time.

In the first place, there have been a series of mass struggles of successive austerity plans imposed by the bourgeoisie, including a national general strike in February.

There was recently a general strike by municipal workers in Liege, one of the main cities in the French-speaking part of the country.

All these strikes have been defeated as a result of the capitulationist maneuvers of the union leaderships.

But despite the heavy financial losses suffered by the workers, as the growth of the spontaneous public workers strike shows, the result has not been demoralization but growing bitterness. That was the meaning of the Charleroi train-drivers' message to their union representatives, "We're fed up."

Before the latest austerity measures, Belgian public workers were already being paid 40% less than their counterparts in the Netherlands, 50% less than those in West Germany, and 56% less than those in Luxembourg.

This disadvantage by comparison with equivalent workers in the surrounding countries was acutely felt by public workers in such a small state as Belgium, which traditionally has been no poorer than its neighbors.

Moreover, the new austerity package included measures that hit all workers, such as increases in deductions for social security benefits, and a cut in pensions for early retirees. In fact, early retirement has been encouraged as a means of dealing with unemployment, which is nearing 15%, the highest rate of any of the developed countries of continental West Europe, although the Danish rate is close.

## HESITATIONS

The spontaneous strikes tended to falter over the weekend of September 10-11. Andersen explained:

"I came to work at 10:00 p.m. [on Friday, September 9]. The people there asked me if the strike should be continued. They were hesitating because three months ago...there were threats of sanctions following a solidarity action with comrades laid off in Ottignies. People didn't want to stop work without an official order. I went to the union headquarters. I met officials in the corridor. They still had not given any call for a strike but they took me with them to shut down the stations in Tamines and Chatelineau. People like that are close to the ranks but under the pressure of the apparatus. I came back at about 3:00 a.m. and explained that the movement was spreading. Then people left. But Saturday and Sunday, the movement did not spread because people wanted an official call."

*La Gauche* asked Andersen why the strike had spread so quickly to the bus and tram drivers, in particular since they had waged a long unsuccessful strike in November 1982. He said:

"At the beginning they were cautious because they knew that a good part of the apparatus was against the railway workers strike. Saturday, Sunday, and Monday I watched what happened on the railroads..."

"Monday evening I got a favorable response to the strike from some Brussels leaders. Then on Tuesday evening, I said to myself, 'Now's the time.' I asked the delegates at seven depots to test the



mood. They asked the people who came in at 4:30 a.m. to hold a work stoppage until 8:00 so that we could hold a general assembly with those coming in later...At 8:00 the assembly voted for a strike."

### AN AVALANCHE STARTS

The determination of the railway workers was decisive in the continuation and spread of the strike. On Monday, September 12, a stormy assembly of 700 striking railroad workers in Charleroi demanded that the fight go on.

The railway strike spread to all of the Walloon country and then to Flanders. At this point, the union leadership gave the go-ahead to workers to strike.

Both the Catholic and Socialist transport unions announced that they would officially recognize the strike up until at least 10:00 p.m. on Friday, September 16.

The CGSP called for a 24-hour national strike. The Catholic transport union, the SCCC, called for the postal, telephone-telegraph, and radio-TV workers to join the strike on Wednesday, September 14. The trade-union common front of tram and bus workers called for a plan of action for Wednesday.

On Tuesday, September 13, the public workers union controlled by the rightist Liberal Party joined the strike. Buses and trams stopped running in Brussels.

On Wednesday, two sections of the Cockerill Sambre steel plant in Liege went on strike. The National Committee of the Catholic public workers union, the CCSP, decided by a vote of 63 for, 7 against, and 12 abstentions to launch a general strike in the ministries, the parastate bodies, the municipalities and public transport.

By Thursday, September 15, all sectors of public workers were on strike.

On Monday, September 19, the CCSP joined the strike in Antwerp, which helped to shut the port.

### THE COUNTRY BEGINS TO BE PARALYZED

A number of big factories began having to reduce or suspend operations due to lack of parts and materials. These included the Volkswagen factory in Brussels and the General Motors factory in Antwerp.

The operators of the locks on the canals were also on strike and the barges stopped running. The country was becoming paralyzed.

In the Charleroi region, the workers in the big factories that dominate the economic life of the region, Glaverbell, Caterpillar, ACEC and CDC joined the strike. An LRT/RAL leader in the area explained that these were not "solidarity strikes" because the "workers knew that the government is out to get them too and that this is a chance to fight back."

This attitude seemed to reflect the high level of consciousness among workers in the Charleroi area. But the idea that this was a chance for a general strike

## Belgian organisations

*Since Belgium is a bilingual country, all nationwide organizations have two names, one in French and one in Flemish. The following is an explanation of the initials used in this article.*

*LRT/RAL — Revolutionary Workers League, Belgian section of the Fourth International.*

*FGTB/ABVV — Belgian General Confederation of Labor, the Socialist confederation.*

*CSC — Confederation of Christian Trade Unions.*

*CGSP — General Confederation of Public Workers, affiliated to the FGTB.*

*SCCC — Christian Confederation of Communications and Cultural Workers.*

was clearly spreading. In a few days the Walloon country regional conference of the FGTB adopted a position favoring a national general strike.

### WORKERS DEMOCRACY

Notably, the new upsurge in Charleroi was accompanied by a demand for more workers democracy, for more discussion, and for more involvement of the ranks.

I was struck by this attitude at an assembly of railway workers early in the morning of Friday, September 23.

There was an overwhelming vote for continuing the strike, hundreds for and only seven against. One of those who had a hesitating attitude felt obliged to explain himself. His remarks were not well received. But the chair called for respecting workers democracy and then he was heard out respectfully.

I asked a local leader of the LRT/RAL about this insistence on workers democracy, which I did not see anywhere else. He said: "Well, there have been a lot of struggles and they have all been defeated. People want to know what went wrong. They want to be able to discuss things, take things into their own hands."

Charleroi was also where the largest street demonstration of strikers took place, involving about 4,000 people on September 2. The LRT/RAL comrades explained that the action was largely spontaneous.

### ACTIVE MOBILIZATION

As the strike continued, however, the need increased for street actions to back up the strikers.

In Antwerp, workers at the depot of MIVA, the city bus depot, told me that they thought the September 22 demonstration there persuaded units of the gendarmerie that had entered the city not to intervene against them. Some 200 local police had joined in that demonstration.

There was a small group of scabs that

kept up pressure on the picket line and threatened to create incidents when for one reason or another the line thinned out.

Antwerp was the major bridgehead of the strike in Flanders, which is traditionally less militant than the Walloon country and where the Catholic union predominates. Local transport and the port of Antwerp, the third largest in Europe, were firmly shut down.

The "backwardness of the Flemish" is the traditional alibi of the trade-union bureaucracy in the French-speaking part of the country.

Every retreat is the "fault of the Flemish," the Walloon bureaucrats say. But "this time they won't be able to blame the Flemings," Rene Andersen told me in Charleroi. "The whole country could see over TV that the port of Antwerp was shut down."

The picket groups were extremely important in Antwerp. They were organized by an Action Committee that directed about 400 activists, the majority of them young teachers.

At the start of the strike about 80 percent of the picketers had been young teachers, a local LRT/RAL leader estimated. As the strike continued, however, the proportion dropped to about 60, as other sectors became more involved.

The LRT/RAL has recruited significantly among radicalized youth in the last period in the Antwerp area and they were in evidence on the picket lines.

The LRT/RAL played a central role in organizing the picket lines and the Action Committee. Antwerp was one of the few places where it was possible to organize a strike action committee within the framework of the union movement.

No such committee existed in Charleroi. But this city is also entirely proletarian and dominated by a few big plants as well as by the transport workers.

In Liege, the LRT/RAL comrades told me, there are informal action groups but no formal structure recognized by the unions.

The Antwerp Action Committee was organized at first informally. But once it showed what it could do, the organizers went to the union leaders and persuaded them to give official backing.

The Action Committee became an effective mobilizing instrument. During a packed meeting of union activists late in the evening of September 22, I saw hundreds of people rush out to join a picket line at a local railway station after the Action Committee made an appeal. About 400 people were involved continuously in the pickets.

The Thursday night assembly of union activists in Antwerp also voted unanimously for the continuation of the strike. "This militancy is something new here in Flanders," an LRT/RAL leader active in organizing the pickets told me.

### LIEGE: FIRE IN THE ASHES

One of the hardest sections of public workers to mobilize were the Liege



city workers, who suffered a severe defeat in the recent seven-week general strike. Their pay was not docked immediately but they fear the loss of up to half their wages late this fall when the strike days are deducted.

In the case of the Liege city workers also, the pickets were decisive.

"The city workers are not ready to strike," LRT/RAL city worker activists explained. "But they are not prepared to cross a picket line either."

The fact is that in the past the Belgian labor movement forced the acceptance of a law that guarantees that public workers will not have to cross a picket line. Workers could simply go to the city hall, sign in, and say that they were prevented from working by a picket line. In this way, they did not lose any money and the government did not get any work.

The problem was that since the city workers were not formally on strike, they were not putting their moral weight behind the action.

"The help of the teachers and the railway workers is crucial on the picket lines now," Denise Comanne said, "because we are still very weak among the city workers." Denise is a city office worker.

She explained that the "assemblies of city workers where the strike was discussed were very rough. About 80% of the workers were not ready to go back on strike so quickly after our defeat this summer. It was only a small nucleus that were ready."

Renny Boiten, a heating plant installer, said: "I am a pretty militant worker. So, I saw the strike as a chance. We struck for seven weeks demanding a general strike of all workers, and now finally this is the beginning of what we were fighting for. We have to be in it. But most workers don't see it that way at first. The tram workers say, 'We struck last October, and you weren't with us. So, we're not going out with you now.' That sort of thing has to stop. It's a vicious circle. We all have to go out once and for all."

Boiten explained that the lack of democracy in the union created all sorts of distrust:

"In my sector we have not had a single assembly. The workers showed up for work and there was a chain of union officials to stop them from going in. They did not understand why they should strike. The reaction was very bad."

The other problem was that the workers were sick of half-way actions. "A lot of workers tell me," Boiten said, "I'll be with you if it's a general strike, if they go all out to dump this government. But we don't want to be played with the way we were during the seven-week strike this summer."

#### THE DEMAND FOR BRINGING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT

Eric Toussaint, a delegate in the Liege teachers union, said the general mood among the strikers seemed to be for a

general strike to bring down the government.

Two postal union delegates I talked to at the Liege central post office confirmed that. "This is a vicious government. People want to get rid of it, or at least to force them to put the Liberals out of it."

In both Liege and Charleroi, the trade-union and political militants I talked to stressed that the Socialist Party had no organization and no credibility in the unions. SP speakers had the record of the previous Socialist Party government thrown at them.

Unionists belonging to the Communist Party are the largest left opposition grouping in the workers organizations. But the Communist Party does not put forward any political line that can unite them. It is also opposed to a call for a general strike to bring down the government.

The left centrist Belgian Workers Party, Parti du Travail/Parti van de Arbeid, puts forward an ultraleft line as regards union action but also shies away from a call for bringing down the government.

The LRT/RAL proposes a government of the workers parties put in by a general strike and responsible to the organized workers. The public workers general strike has proved a good occasion for publicizing this proposal for a political solution.

Boiten said that it was clear that the trade-union leaders that were also part of the Socialist Party leadership did not want to force out the government but just to use the strike as a bargaining chip.

#### DISORDERLY ADVANCE, DISORDERLY RETREAT

The lack of centralized and decisive leadership of the strike resulted in an uneven and shifting pattern.

Although the railroad workers had launched the action in Liege, Toussaint explained, they were also the first section of workers that showed signs of faltering, because they feared being left in the lurch.

In the middle of the second week of the strike, the union leaderships agreed to negotiate with the government, which made a proposal including some minor concessions. This opened the way for the more conservative leaderships to begin to pull back.

Following the withdrawal of the Liberal Party-controlled union, the Catholic Confederation of Labor rescinded its strike call on Wednesday, September 21. The sort of domino effect that began the strike threatened to go into reverse.

The Catholic rank and file and various individual Catholic unions remained strongly in support of the strike, as the September 22 meeting in Antwerp pointed up. That was particularly true in the Walloon part of the country, where there was little apparent difference in the attitude of the Catholic and Socialist unions.

But in the Catholic union confederation, the national center controls all the money, unlike the Socialist union confederation, where each member union controls its own finances.

#### THE STAGE IS SET FOR SELL OUT

Eric Toussaint said that it appeared that the FGFB union leaderships were preparing the way for ending the strike on Friday. They had called an enlarged National Council meeting first.

For hundreds of thousands of union members in Liege, Toussaint said, there were only six members of this body. "So, it represents the real bureaucracy." Only after the National Council meeting, would a special congress of the confederation be convened.

"If they had wanted the strike to continue, the schedule would have been the other way around," Toussaint said. "They would have called the special congress first."

This is the way *Le Peuple*, the Charleroi daily supported jointly by the SP and the FGFB, reported the outcome of the National Council meeting on Friday:

"The representatives faced an initial choice — to accept or not the proposal by the Walloon regional conference for a 48-hour general strike on Monday and Tuesday. This option was rejected by 55% of those voting.

"The second proposition was a sort of life raft, a strike Monday followed by an evaluation of the meeting scheduled for that day with the government. This proposal was rejected by a very strong majority, in which the supporters of firm action joined with the moderates. The vote of rejection was very badly taken by the railway workers, who left the hall and voted to resume work at 10:00 p.m. on Saturday."

#### TOWARDS A NEW UNION LEADERSHIP ?

However, it remained to be seen what the reaction of the rank and file would be. One of the CGSP postal union delegates I talked to in Liege on Friday, who was far from radical, said: "If we call off this strike without a victory, I don't know how we are going to explain it to our troops."

There has been no lack of militancy, determination to fight, even of desperation among Belgian unionists whose standard of living has been being cut to ribbons by austerity. They have been betrayed again and again by their leaderships. And they have realized this increasingly.

The problem is that there has been absolutely no organized opposition in the unions that the ranks could turn to. A new opposition will have to be forged out of repeated spontaneous explosions. The public workers general strike is the most advanced experience of this type in the present period. It gives an indication of how rapidly a militant opposition may develop when the conditions are ripe. ■



# An important victory for Danish workers

The first sharp struggle against the austerity program of the right-wing Schlueter government that came to power in Denmark in the fall of 1982 was fought by the dockers.

The cuts in unemployment benefits hit the dockers directly since labor on the docks is organized according to a casual system. Early in 1983, they went out on strike and stayed out for six weeks.

The dock strike was met with heavy police repression, something quite new in Denmark. For example, a march by dockers and their families was broken up by police with clubs, dogs, and tear gas.

Following the strike, the dockers leader, Karl Joergensen, was jailed on the charge of complicity in an alleged arson that took place during the action.

Joergensen, a middle-aged family man, was very harshly

Greger SAGERSTROEM

It seemed to be an ordinary Wednesday. [September 7]. Fall had arrived in Esbjerg, and a strong wind was blowing. The threat of rain was in the air. It was exactly 6:00 a.m. in the coffeehouse in the harbor area, and a lot of dock workers were already gathered around for a morning coffee or the day's first beer.

But there was something strange about this morning, it was not just any day. People were coming in with red flags and banners. People were coming in cars and buses from all over Denmark, from Fyn, from Sjaelland and Jutland. This Wednesday the workers were gathering for a fight, to fight for the release of Karl Joergensen, who had been held in detention and isolation for nearly six months.

He was accused of complicity in the fire at the KFK's silo on the Esbjerg docks.

Although it was still early in the morning and the demonstration would not begin until 1:00 in the afternoon, more and more people kept streaming in. Dock workers and their families, people from the most varied professions, gathered with their red banners. Today, everyone wanted to be there.

At 9:00 a.m. the trial against Karl Joergensen began in the Esbjerg courthouse. His family was there, along with a lot of his workmates. There were about sixty people in all, including the press, in the small courthouse.

The judge, Kenneth Juul-Olsen explained the rules of the proceedings. At the same time, he complained that in all his 25 years on the bench he had never been subjected to so much pressure. The 12-person jury also told of heavy pressure being put on it.

You had to pay a price for taking part in this class trial. The judge declared quite seriously that the campaign that had been started up for Karl Joergensen and the demonstration to be held that day had to be considered a violation of the law that says that no one

can try to influence, or put pressure on a judge or jury.

The trial began and the prosecutor, Preben Alsoee, started to present his case:

"It is not my responsibility to say whether the strike was right or not. But it is my responsibility to see that Danish law was maintained throughout this conflict as well."

This Danish law obviously gave the police and other "defenders of democracy" the right to provoke, harass, and mistreat workers during the conflict!

During Joergensen's testimony, the prosecutor was clearly irritated. Joergensen told how the police treated the workers on the docks, including in the Esbjerg harbor.

Already from the gallery, you could see how hard a time the prosecutor was having with this case, this small-time legal trickster. He had run into more resistance than he could handle. He was faced with an honest worker, who stood fast despite all the dirty tricks and harassment he was subjected to.

With the questioning of the first chief witness, the prosecutor could see that all his charges were falling flat. The witness took back what he had said earlier.

Joergensen also showed what he was made out of. When the prosecutor turned to Karl Joergensen during the questioning of witnesses and called him by his first name, Joergensen refused to answer. He said that his name was Karl Joergensen and henceforth the prosecutor had to respect that.

At this time, the coffeehouse was completely inundated, but you could see the outlines of the cortege. It started just after 1:00 in the afternoon. It was impressive. There were certainly four to five thousand people marching toward the central square. There were 249 red trade-union banners from all parts of the country, followed by hundreds of banners. The march was accompanied by music and chants over loudspeakers. It was no ordinary Wednesday!

Once the cortege came into the city-hall square, speeches began. We stood

treated and suffered a nervous breakdown in jail.

At the same time, the Schlueter government introduced a bill giving the authorities sweeping powers for "preventative detention" of persons they thought "likely to promote violence."

The "Toilet Seat Cabinet," as the Schlueter regime is popularly known, was clearly launching a major repressive attack on the labor movement. Thus, the trial against Joergensen became a crucial test of strength.

The following article by a correspondent for *Internationales*, the paper of the Swedish section of the Fourth International, describes the outcome of this confrontation. Because of the French postal strike, the paper of the Danish section of the Fourth International has not yet arrived in Paris.

there surrounded by a forest of flags. Shouts echoed throughout the town: "Let Karl out, put Schlueter in! This is the Workers Wednesday!"

The trial was continuing in the courthouse. The prosecutor's No. 2 witness was on the stand. He confirmed in general what the first had said. He took back everything he had said earlier that incriminated Joergensen. He testified that the police had acted in such a way that heavy pressure had been put on him and that he just lied.

He said that in the previous hearing, he had got hold of the first witness' deposition, and that he only had to follow it. He just laid it on a bit thicker, as he put it, so that no one would notice the similarity.

At this point, the prosecutor gave up. The case they built up against Karl was too weak. When his lawyer, Hans Kjellund, got up to begin questioning the witnesses, the judge stopped him. Enough had been said already. Karl Joergensen was a free man.

It was about 3:00 in the afternoon, and when the dock-workers union spokesperson, Karl Peder Pedersen came into the coffeehouse to say that Karl was free, no one believed him, and so he had to say it again. Then the celebrations began.

The assembly in the sports stadium which was supposed to be a discussion meeting with various political figures and trade-union representatives, turned into a powerful celebration of the workers' victory.

When Karl Joergensen came in he was greeted by two thousand people. The tumult was enormous. People stood up on the benches and did not want to stop applauding. It took some time before Karl could reach the podium. Everyone wanted to greet him. With a raised fist, he stood there, a worker surrounded by his mates, surrounded by hundreds of red banners.

Then it started, spontaneously. The orchestra chimed in. First a few voices, then more and more, and the "Internationale" filled the stadium. ■



# Racist victory in Dreux highlights threat to French workers movement

The recent by-election in Dreux was marked by a new-type coalition between the "respectable" right and the neofascists represented by Stirbois. Despite the scandal, the right won the second round by 55%.

"Dreux, a sign of hope." That was the conclusion of the editorial on the election in *le Figaro* (the prestige daily of the right). It was signed by Alain Peyrefitte, minister of justice in the last government of the right.

The Stirbois-Hireuax duo, has become a banner, a reference point for the right.

The danger is not fascism. That is, we are not seeing the poorer white-collar workers and middle strata turning en masse to the far-right groups.

The threat comes from the classical right — the RPR and the UDF (1) — which is imbued with the antiworking-class and racist ideology of the so-called New Right.

To prepare themselves for the coming class confrontations, the RPR and the UDF are taking an aggressive class-struggle stance, that is, on behalf of the bourgeoisie. What they are coming out with is no longer the old Gaullist froth or Giscardian-liberal soothing phrases.

The features of the bourgeois class line are beginning to appear. In Dreux it is anti-immigrant racism; in Levallois, Balkany's campaign against the unions. (2)

Peyrefitte comments: "A quarter of the population is immigrants. The racist tensions are not the expression of some sort of philosophy but of an instinctive reaction that is probably inevitable once a certain limit of toleration is passed."

Is this fascist, New Right, or just racist old right? Anyway, the attempt to elevate racism into some sort of biological reflex is not the monopoly of the Front National.

So, behind the moderate speeches with which the right's three stars — Barre, Giscard, and Chirac — opened this fall political season, the right's intentions are emerging more clearly.

Could anyone have thought that the right would conduct its campaign to regain power in a gentlemanly, sporting way?

The meager troops of the fascist groups have long since joined the RPR or the UDF. This is indicated by the appearance of such names as Alain Robert, Alain Madelin, and Ecorcheville on the slates of these parties. They are well-known former activists in the Nazi grouplets.

This convergence is not simply the result of a Machiavelian entrism by former

students from the Assas faculty of law and economics (an ultra-right stronghold) who are now coming into their pudgy thirties in the guise of local notables. There is a common interest, the main-spring of which is the desire to inflict a defeat on the workers movement as a whole.

Those who think that Dreux was a lost cause, a bad combination of circumstances, are wrong. Dreux is not the opening blast of a fascist offensive. It is a tableau of the traditional right in all its battle array. There is not a decent right on the one hand, represented by Veil and Stasi, and an indecent one hooked up with the ugly fascists, on the other. There is one right, which is not squeamish about the means for getting back into power. They are called racism and repression against the workers.

The Majority (the CP-SP coalition) sent such leading figures as Rocard and Juquin to Dreux. They raised the alarm. They said that voting for Hireuax meant voting for Stirbois, and thus voting fascist. However, neither the CP nor the SP party leaders managed to make an impact.

The "great calm power" (as the coalition calls itself) marked time. Despite the last-minute pressure, applied mainly through appeals in the media, most of those who voted right or fascist in the first round did so also in the second.

There was a little motion. Piquet gained a thousand votes. But the fascist-right slate also gained two hundred votes. These results are the index of the negative effects of the government's austerity policy.

Even at the last minute, against a right glued to the Front National by racism, the representatives of the Majority defended a halt to immigration and justified repressive measures against the "illegal" immigrants.

So, they stepped right into the trap laid by the right, which was trying to present immigration as the central problem. It's true they said gravely that the concentration of immigrants in public housing causes problems. It's true that the illegal immigrants who come here cross the Mediterranean to take the bread out of the mouths of our unemployed create problems. But, watch out, its immoral for the right to ally themselves with fascists.

By trying to separate the good right from the bad right, the Majority proved ineffective against the right in general.

You cannot fight racism by calling for a halt to immigration. Clearly such con-

traditions sowed doubt and disarray, especially among working people with the least tradition of organization. This disarray reflected a feeling of helplessness in the face of the crisis and an exasperation, which in some strata create fertile ground for the racist demagoguery employed by the fascists and the classical right.

Isn't there any breakwater strong enough to hold back this groundswell of racism? Why have the fascists and the right found it so easy to play on hostility to immigrants?

This is because in this area we are having to pay a particularly heavy price for the capitulations of the majority leaderships in the workers movement. The SP as well as the CP, the CFDT as well as the CGT, early on accepted a halt to immigration. They came out for protecting labor against foreign labor. In so doing, they yielded to the bosses' drive to regulate the supply of labor to suit the needs of business.

## THE WORKING PEOPLE DIVIDED

By dropping the demand for the right to vote for immigrants after May 10, 1981 (when the left came to power) these capitulationist leaderships helped to relegate immigrants to the status of second-class citizens. But if immigrants had had the right to vote, the workers parties would have had a majority in Dreux.

By helping to keep immigrants out of political and social life, by denying them the full rights of citizens, these working-class leaderships have driven a wedge into the ranks of the workers. And this cleavage was widened by the government's August 31 measures.

Now, Stirbois, who has gotten himself set up as a petty gauleiter, can apply the letter of the August 31 decrees regarding illegal immigrants to his heart's content.

A national consensus has been built up on the question of immigration, as it was before on producing atomic bombs. And the consensus against immigration is no less dangerous.

Solid links have not been built up between the immigrants and the workers movement. And the struggles of immigrant auto workers did not trigger any reflex to make up for lost time. To the contrary, solidarity was slow in coming for the immigrant workers at Citroen and Talbot.

Now the way is open for the development of a "poor White" racist mentality in France. That is because the defenses of the workers movement were lowered to the point that a latent racism could get through. This brings back shameful memories of the capitulations by the

1. Rassemblement pour la Republique, the right-wing Gaullists led by Jacques Chirac; Union pour la Democratie Francaise, the political formation of the former President, Valery Giscard d'Estaing.

2. After being elected mayor, the rightist Balkany deprived the unions of their traditional center, the Bourse de Travail. In France, traditionally Bourses de Travail provided by the city governments have served as the centers for the union movement.



French workers leaderships during the Algerian war.

## A UNITED FRONT AGAINST RACISM

In Dreux, there was not a dead silence following the vote. Alongside working people, SP and CP members, alongside immigrants, the LCR demonstrated. The demonstrators showed so much spirit that Stirbois and his cowboys decided not to set foot in the city hall that evening.

So, facing the mounting threats hundreds of people in Dreux are ready to wage a day-to-day fight against the abuses of the right and its auxiliaries. The town is not on its knees, and it has no intention of letting the Stirbois-Hireaux duo impose its racist notions or rule the roost as a local dictatorship.

What about other places? The municipal election results in the twentieth arrondissement of Paris showed the same pattern as in Dreux. What part of the country is safe from such dangers, then?

However, there is no inevitable process leading the middle strata and the poorer white-collar workers to fall into the arms of a dreary fascist demagogue or an activist of the right grown more savage in the opposition.

It would be wrong to react to Dreux with resignation, "the pendulum is swinging back, what can you expect?" The fact is that a lot of SP and CP activists and unionists do not agree with the national consensus on immigration. A lot of workers are ready to fight racism. The campaign that was waged between the first and second rounds in Dreux shows that.

So, the process can be reversed if a broad, united antiracist campaign is launched now. The activists and working people who oppose racism can be brought together into a united front, along with the forty organizations that are campaigning for a single residence permit-identity card valid for ten years, with the MRAP (3), and all the trade-union and political organizations that can be induced to join.

We have to take the fight against racism seriously, just as we take the racist offensive seriously. The war has not been lost with the first skirmish. It will be a long-term struggle, a constant task. It will have to be explained again and again in the neighborhoods and the workplaces that working-class unity is the best bulwark against racism.

The Front National is a quite small fascist organization. The racist propaganda of the right can be combated. So, let's get on with the fight. ■

3. Mouvement contre le Racisme, Anti-Sémitisme, et pour la Paix, Movement Against Racism, Anti-Semitism, and for Peace, a liberal organization in which Communist Party members and periphery have traditionally played a major role.

# "Out with the US bases now!"

## Position of the Greek Fourth Internationalists

The treaty on the U.S. bases in Greece, which was initialed by representatives of the Greek and American governments in July, was formally signed in Athens on September 8.

At the same time, an exchange of letters between the two governments was revealed, making clear what the Greek government had gotten in return for the new treaty.

The gifts that the Americans bore were two. One was 500 million dollars in credits for 1984, to be used to buy U.S. military materiel. The second was a promise to maintain the balance of power in the Aegean, that is, to assure that Greece kept military equality with Turkey in the sea that divides the two countries.

Since military equipment is one of the U.S.'s most lucrative exports, it is clear that a paltry half billion dollars to finance such purchases is not a particularly generous present.

What maintaining the military balance in the Aegean means, moreover, is far from clear. Obviously the U.S. would not let a war between Greece and Turkey go very far. It stopped the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in a few weeks, just by cutting off supplies to the Turks.

Washington keeps both the Turkish and Greek military on a tight leash. The fact that the Papandreou government has extended the lease for the U.S. bases on such poor terms is particularly scandalous since this regime was elected on a wave of nationalist feeling.

Because of its small size and strategic position, Greece is unusual among the developed capitalist countries in that throughout its history as a bourgeois state it has been subjected to continual direct intervention by the big powers.

A reactionary government was reimposed after World War II by Britain and the U.S. The dictatorship that was forced to withdraw from power in 1974 took over in 1968 with the help of the CIA and NATO.

Thus, anti-U.S. and anti-NATO feeling is extremely strong among the workers and poor masses. And this, in large measure, accounts for the successes of Papandreou's Pan-Hellenic Socialist Party (PASOK).

The present Greek CP defeated a Euro-Communist faction by identifying a pro-Moscow line with militancy. To maintain its pretenses, and perhaps as a way of winning back lost ground from PASOK, it has denounced the treaty. But it has the problem of explaining the Kremlin's support for it. The following comment is from the September issue of *Ergatiki Pali*, the paper of the Greek section of the Fourth International.

After an interminable round of discussions, deliberation, and bargaining — the aim of which was to confuse and disorient the Greek working people — the Greek government has initialed a treaty with the U.S. on the American military bases here.

The government claims that this is a great victory. We are not surprised by this sort of bluster by the PASOK government. Over the last two years, the most blatant false pretenses have become its trademark. We doubt if this scale of demagoguery has any parallel in all of Greek political history.

When he initialed the agreement on the bases on July 15, 1983, the Greek premier [Papandreou] said over TV: "The contents of this treaty will be made public, I think, in ten to fifteen days."

Well, over a month has passed since then and these celebrated contents have not yet been put before the public.

Another example of the way PASOK distorts the truth is the so-called time limit for removal of the bases. PASOK has talked about a five year period for getting the bases out. But this does not

include the year that was taken up by the negotiations. And it will not include the year for "dismantling" the bases (which in fact will never happen). So, it is at least seven years before the bases could be removed.

On TV, Papandreou also said "This treaty is virtually unparalleled. There is no other example of such a treaty. If you like, it constitutes an important historical precedent."

We agree that there is something unparalleled about this treaty. But what it is is the retreat from PASOK's election promises.

The new treaty is scheduled to run out on December 1988. Every treaty has a definite time span; it ends sometime. In this case, the treaty runs out in five years. There is nothing, however, to prevent the two contracting parties from renewing it or from signing another with better or worse conditions.

What PASOK in fact did was to commit any Greek government from moving against the bases for five years. Over this period, there is now no legal way to get rid of the bases.



What the PASOK government in fact did is say, "Mr. U.S. imperialists, I give you my pledge that for five years you can keep your bases, your fortress against the Arab peoples, and if necessary against the peoples of Eastern Europe." This is about the only pledge, moreover, that PASOK is likely to keep. And we are not putting words in their mouth in our hypothetical quote. Because these are exactly the words they used in their election campaign.

The essential thing about the treaty, in fact, is that it guarantees that the bases will remain a long time and does not offer any guarantee that they will go when that time is up.

The treaty also contains other stipulations, the details of which we do not know about. But from what the premier said immediately after the signing, we have a pretty good idea.

The premier boasted that the Americans agreed to make it explicit in the treaty that the bases do not serve NATO's interests but only those of the U.S. But what real difference is there?

Another point that Papandreou stressed was that Greece got important concessions both in terms of economic aid and with respect to maintaining the balance in the Aegean.

We might paraphrase this also. What it amounts to saying is: "Yes we did give them some land — no small part of the national patrimony — to use to build a fortress to serve their interests — and everyone knows what those interests involved. But the Americans will give us aid." If that is not a deal, if that is not selling out the country, what is it?

To point up how much of a retreat this treaty is from PASOK's election promises and how much of a "victory" it is, we will note two facts:

The first is that Americans do sign treaties like this with countries where they have bases. They have recently signed such treaties with Spain and Turkey.

The second is that the treaty has gotten the approval of all the reactionary forces from the Greek right to the Americans.

The rightist papers have not only expressed their satisfaction. They have ridiculed PASOK for its vainglorious pretenses.

Averoff said that the treaty was a positive step. Karamanlis (1) said that it strengthened our national defenses.

At the same time, the Soviet Union and TASS commented: "Thanks to the courageous stand taken by the Greek government, reflecting the great wave of opposition to the U.S. military presence in Greece, Washington was forced to make some concessions."

The Soviet bureaucrats thought the position of the Papandreou government was courageous. That means that the Greek working people should accept the treaty and of course not protest about it.

The position of the Soviet Union does not surprise us. This is not the first time the Soviet bureaucracy has betrayed the

interests of the Greek working people for the sake of its policy of "peaceful co-existence" and maintaining the status quo.

What do *Rizospastis* (the Greek CP paper) and the Communist Party think about this? The CP, of course has a different view. It is against the signing of the treaty. But we don't think its objections will go beyond some limited flights of patriotic rhetoric and appeals for national independence.

This treaty is a spectacular retreat from the promises PASOK made during the election campaign to convince the Greek people to vote for it. The hopes of the Greek people have been betrayed in the most brutal way.

However, as a defender of the interests of the capitalist class, PASOK could not pursue a policy different from that of its bourgeois masters. The American bases represent a guarantee and an underpinning of interests of the bourgeoisie.

From this standpoint, maintaining these bases is a question of vital importance for the bourgeoisie. But also for American imperialism, this is a question of enormous strategic importance. These bases enable them to control an important part of the Mediterranean. They make it possible for them to control an area as sensitive as the Middle East.

For example, it is from the bases that it has in neighboring countries that the Americans are sending their mercenaries against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

The government should stop pretending that this treaty is a victory. It only makes them look more ridiculous. Or do they think that it amounts to a victory because it has a few minor improvements over the previous one that was signed in 1953, in a period when the Americans had made Greece into their backyard.

The Greek working people will fight to overturn this treaty. The plans of the bourgeoisie shall not pass. The bases must be dismantled now. No delay is justified. This government has no right to sign a treaty that not even the right dared to accept, that all the working people are opposed to.

More fundamentally, why doesn't the government give the right to the Greek people to decide on such an important question?

We should remind the government that the bourgeoisie often gives its dirtiest jobs to "socialist" and "left" governments. ■

- The bases out now!
- Let the people vote on the bases!

1. Karamanlis is the president and the main representative of the classical right. He was installed as premier in 1974 by the dictatorship of the colonels when it retired from the scene. Averoff is the leader of the main rightist party.

## Turkish prison protests grow

The second major hunger strike in recent months by political detainees in Turkish prisons began on September 2, 1983, in the penitentiary in Diyarbakir, the capital of north Kurdistan.

This protest was preceded by a hunger strike of 2,500 prisoners in four Istanbul prisons that began in July. The Istanbul strike lasted 35 days and was crushed finally by military pogroms in the prison that resulted in two deaths and severe injuries to a number of other prisoners.

These recent hunger strikes are the first protests by political prisoners to break through the dictatorship's curtain of censorship.

The fact that these hunger strikes have become known and made a political impact in Turkey and internationally reflects the development for the first time of a movement in defense of the prisoners organized by their relatives.

It was unbearable conditions in Diyarbakir prison that sparked the present protest. The dictatorship imposes the most inhuman conditions in the prisons in Kurdistan. Every inmate is held in solitary confinement and beatings are part of the daily routine.

Most of the prisoners are seriously ill and many have been crippled. Moreover, on the day when the prisoners' protest began, relatives demonstrating in front of military headquarters were badly beaten.

The strike was initiated by about 200 prisoners, who declared a fast to the death. Very quickly another 2,100 prisoners went on hunger strike in support of them.

To back up this action also, when groups of political prisoners under collective indictment are brought to trial now, they simply announce that a hunger strike is underway and refuse to cooperate. They are then usually ejected from the court room with the greatest brutality.

The success of this desperate protest by the Kurdish prisoners depends mainly on international support, since at the moment the junta is most sensitive to the pressure of world public opinion.

Even a small victory can be extremely important in halting a repressive steamroller that threatens the humanity and the lives of tens of thousands of political prisoners. ■

Send messages to:

General Kenan Evren  
Head of State  
Ankara  
Turkey



# Massive support for campaign to defend Canadian abortion clinics

The question of abortion has been dominating political discussion in Canada over the last few months. The weekly Canadian news magazine *Maclean's* described the situation in its July 25 issue, 'Canadians everywhere are taking a stand on the rights and wrongs of having an abortion....On shopfloors, in schoolrooms and at political meetings across the nation, abortion [is] no longer being treated as a marginal — if highly volatile — political issue.'

The spark to this debate was the opening of two independent abortion clinics, in Winnipeg and Toronto, staffed by, among others, Dr Henry Morgentaler. Morgentaler became world famous when he spent ten months in jail in 1975 for having performed illegal abortions in his Montreal clinic. However, in the course of his three trials in Montreal no jury would convict him and finally his stand established the right of women in the province of Quebec to abortion on request, in state clinics funded by the health insurance scheme, medicare, in the major cities at least.

The functioning of the clinics in Winnipeg and Toronto is contrary to the 1969 federal abortion law in Canada. This

Penny DUGGAN

The restrictive nature of the law is not the only obstacle Canadian women face. Hospitals are restricting the number of abortions they perform under pressure of the need for economic cutbacks. Because abortion is considered 'non-essential' surgery there are fewer beds available for it.

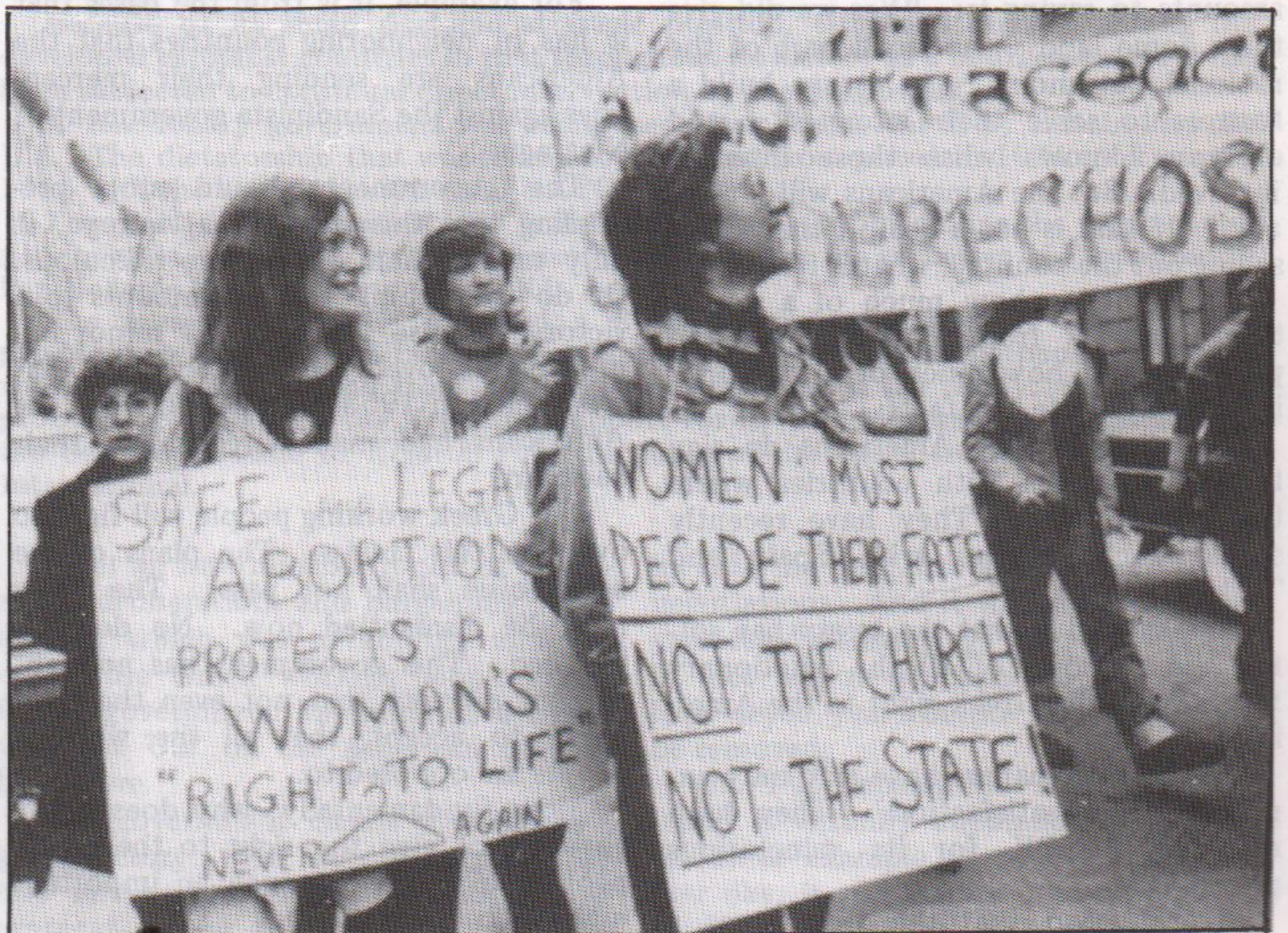
There is also the activity of the fanatical 'right to lifers' to contend with. They have managed to put a lot of pressure on hospitals in some areas and severely restrict the numbers of abortions performed. For example, in Moncton, New Brunswick the hospital stopped doing abortions for six months in 1982 under the pressure of a campaign accusing doctors of carrying out a 'silent holocaust'. And according to the *Toronto Star* 'even a raped and pregnant 12-year-old can't find a legal abortion [in New Brunswick] because of intimidated doctors and fanatic lobby groups.' (November 4, 1982). However, a Gallup poll in 1982 showed that 72 per cent of Canadians thought that the decision on abortion should be left to a woman and her doctor.

Although the situation in Toronto is not the worst in Canada it is deteriorating. Judy Rebeck, a leading figure and spokeswoman of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) explained how the situation is getting worse:

'We've talked over the last two years about the problems of access [to abortion] in terms of women having to wait a long time, having to spend money above medical insurance premiums, and abortions only being available to women with both money and connections. In the last

law states that after a woman and her doctor have agreed that an abortion is required they still need the approval of a hospital committee (Therapeutic Abortion Committee — TAC) usually composed of three other doctors, none of whom may perform the abortions. The law states that an abortion can only be performed if the woman's life or health is at stake. Neither of these terms are defined — so they can be interpreted either in a very broad way, either along the lines of the World Health Organisation belief that a woman's health is endangered if her 'social wellbeing' is threatened, or very restrictively, that she will die or commit suicide if she continues the pregnancy.

This system makes it very easy for the opinions of doctors or local communities to determine whether women in that area can have a legal abortion in their local hospital. It is not compulsory for a hospital to set up a TAC, and only 30 per cent have done so. In small hospitals, where there are not even four doctors on the staff, it is obviously impossible to do so. The situation is particularly bad in rural areas. A 1977 report by a federal government committee of inquiry concluded that this system had led to 'much inequity' for women seeking abortions.



(DR)

two months every hospital in Toronto has severely curtailed or stopped doing second trimester abortions. That means not doing abortions after fourteen weeks. This has created a total crisis in the city, where women who find out they are pregnant too late, or who can't get an appointment with a committee in time, can't get an abortion anywhere in the city of Toronto or province of Ontario.'

The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics was set up in September 1982 when women involved in the community health movement, community workers and lawyers decided that something needed to be done about the deteriorat-

ing situation, and that the long term lobbying for a free-standing clinic (1) like Morgentaler's in Montreal had got nowhere.

They decided to set up the sort of clinic he had in Montreal and carry out a campaign as had occurred in Quebec. Dr Morgentaler was approached for help, which he agreed to give, and another doctor, Dr Smoling also agreed.

1. OCAC defines a free-standing clinic as a clinic outside of a hospital where abortions are performed on an out-patient basis where a woman is treated with care and dignity.



Some sixty women's groups were invited to a meeting in September which was very well-attended and OCAC set up from there. The coalition realised that a successful campaign to change public opinion and establish the right of the clinic to exist needed to have mass public support. The group decided to mobilise this support as quickly as possible.

#### FIRST STAGE IN MOBILISING MASS SUPPORT

The opening date for the clinic was set for November 1982, and a mass rally scheduled for November 18, preceded by a series of newspaper advertisements. Dr. Morgentaler addressed the mass rally, whose size and scope showed for the first time the potential mass movement that existed on the issue.

Although the clinic opened in November, it was evicted, and new premises not found until spring 1983.

In the meantime OCAC continued with its work. Although OCAC supports the clinic which it sees as a test case, it is a completely separate, broader coalition fighting for the legalisation of free-standing clinics and repeal of the federal abortion laws, which include abortion in the criminal code. This requires a long-term political education campaign, intervening in the Ontario Federation of Labour, working with women in the New Democratic Party, and going to other groups and organisations to get their support.

Judy Rebick summarised the success of this aspect of the campaign:

'In a year we've been able to completely turn around the whole debate on abortion, from a debate that the press treated as a religious struggle — the way they report the struggle in Northern Ireland — while we understood it as a political struggle. Well, that's the way the press has always reported the abortion debate — as an hysterical, emotional, religious, heartrending debate. And we've managed, by focusing on the question of choice and women's rights and human rights, to turn that completely around in the course of a year.

#### THE CHANGE IN PUBLIC OPINION: AGAINST ABORTION OR FOR CHOICE

'From my own personal experience I can say that if I went up to someone at a labour convention a year ago and said "I'm from the OCAC", they'd say, "Oh, I'm against abortion." Today I don't get that response anymore. I get the response, "Well, I'm against abortion, but I'm for choice. I'm in favour of a woman making her own decision." So, the public education has been really profound.'

New premises were found for the Toronto clinic and it opened again in June 1983. Almost immediately — within two weeks — it was raided by the police. This raid was also a month after the Winnipeg clinic opened by Dr Morgentaler had also been raided.

The police burst into the Toronto

clinic one morning, on July 7, roughing up nurses, and trying to interrupt the doctor. Although they were prevented from doing that, they did enter the operating room while a woman was on the table. Women patients were treated in an intimidatory way and forced to talk about what happened in the clinic. This 'evidence' is being used in charges against Morgentaler, Smoling and another doctor for 'procuring miscarriages', which can carry a life sentence.

In the preliminary hearing the government's role was revealed quite clearly. The Crown Attorney, who is undoubtedly getting his instructions direct from the Attorney General, asked for bail to be refused unless the doctors accepted his condition that they would not go near the clinic.

In turning down this request by the prosecution, the judges made a rather significant landmark decision. The two judges talked of the need to avoid turning the doctors into martyrs, and of the social issues involved, arguing that the doctors should not be treated as criminals. As Judy Rebick pointed out, 'We know that social factors such as demonstrations and public support affect the judiciary, but they never admit it!'

During this period the anti-choice organisations remained quite. They relied on the Ontario Attorney General Roy McMurtry to deal with the question for them. This turned out to be a big political mistake as the pro-choice campaign was able to have a monopoly in the press, and had very positive coverage. There were some isolated actions by individuals which the anti-abortion groups neither took nor denied responsibility for. These were quite extreme. On the day the Toronto clinic opened, June 15, a man attacked Morgentaler with a pair of garden shears. Later an individual set fire to the women's bookshop in the same building as the clinic.

The first organised demonstration against the clinic took place in August, organised as 'People Against Abortion Clinics'. Despite four days of advertisements in the *Toronto Star* and bussing people in from towns all over Ontario, it only mustered 1,000 people.

#### CONSISTENT SUPPORT FOR THE CLINIC

In contrast, public support and mobilisation in support of the clinic has been consistently high, and demonstrations have attracted many people who have never been on a demonstration before. A rally was organised a few days after the fire, to politically pin the blame on the anti-choice groups for stirring up that sort of attack, even if they were not directly responsible. Some 2,000 people attended although it was well into the summer period.

After the police raid 150 people gathered spontaneously outside the clinic within an hour. It was a large and militant showing, mainly of women but, as has been the case consistently through-

out the campaign, with good support from men too. They sat on the steps, refusing to allow the police to remove equipment.

The following day over 5,000 people attended a rally — at 24 hours notice and in the middle of summer. This was a very militant anti-government demonstration. According to Judy Rebick, 'People were not there for a picnic or to see their friends, they were there to fight. It was clear in the way they chanted and marched. We can say that in the last one-and-a-half months in Toronto we have had more demonstrations on abortion than we had on anything in the last year.'

The *Toronto Star* published a poll which showed that following the raid 62 per cent of the people in the city supported the clinic. This was an increase of 3 to 4 per cent from before the raid. Some 80 per cent objected to the way the police handled the raid.

#### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE: DIFFUSING THE MOVEMENT

The tactics that the provincial and federal government will use to combat this movement seem to be that they will try and diffuse it by granting piecemeal reforms. In August Judy Ercola, a federal minister, stated that there is a problem with the abortion law, the problem of access to abortion. Ercola and cabinet minister Mark McGuigan have both made statements to this effect, although the provincial government have not yet recognised it. Thus, the minister stated that better access was needed but not the 'barber shop' approach, as she called it, of Morgentaler. Possibly such a reform would be to make it compulsory for hospitals of a certain size to have TACs. The Manitoba provincial government attempted this approach, promising to set up an abortion clinic in a hospital, although this has not been fulfilled.

Since the raid the OCAC have added the demand 'Drop the charges against the doctors' to their central slogan of legalisation for free-standing abortion clinics. It also takes up the theme 'keep the clinic open'. At present the clinic is open only for referrals and counselling although it is hoped to restart a full service as soon as possible.

The central slogan of legalisation has succeeded in uniting every group in the women's movement, whether socialist feminist, radical feminist or liberal feminist, any organisation that has anything to do with the women's movement, in a way that has rarely been achieved. All these groups are working actively to build the campaign. There has been tremendous support from the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL), its president Cliff Pilkley, and the OFL Women's committee. However, there has not yet been organised support from the union movement in terms of mobilising their membership, although a large number of union women have come to the rallies. The coalition has a strong orientation towards winning support from the union movement, and



major labour leaders have spoken at all the rallies.

The membership of the labour-based New Democratic Party has also given support. At the federal convention in July a resolution was passed condemning the conspiracy charges brought against Morgentaler in connection with the operation of his Winnipeg clinic. Manitoba has the only NDP provincial government in Canada. The policy of the NDP leadership is that, although the party is pro-choice, it is not in favour of breaking the law. However, the NDP Women's Committee have been fighting strongly for support for the clinic and there is a big struggle inside the party. It was a major victory for the OCAC that Ontario NDP leader Bob Rae spoke at the rally following the raid on the Toronto clinic, although he dissociated himself from the question of the clinic, and said he had come to talk about the question of choice on abortion.

#### POLITICAL DEBATE IN NDP: PRO-CHOICE BUT PRO 'LEGALITY'

This debate is raising important political issues within the NDP, such as: should the NDP support illegal actions? The NDP leadership argue no, while party militants, particularly trade-union militants, point out that the union movement would not exist if laws had not been broken, that you often have to break unjust laws to change them, and you have to support social movements on all these issues. The central issue should not be the rule of the law, but whose law it has been.

Although the NDP government in Manitoba is directly responsible for the harassment and closure of the Winnipeg clinic organised opposition within the party has not been so great as in Ontario. It would have been possible for the provincial government to approve the clinic as a hospital within the confines of the existing laws but they did not do so.

The next stage of the campaign is to develop it as a cross-country campaign. Already there is regular co-ordination between campaigns in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario who have common demands, literature, badges, etc., and focus on the test cases around the Winnipeg and Toronto clinics.

The next action is the cross-country day of action for choice on abortion on October 1. The demands for this initiative are: defend a woman's right to choose, remove abortion from the criminal code, legalise free-standing abortion clinics. Actions are already planned in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Montreal, Halifax, Prince Albert and Moose Jaw. The organisers are receiving news of other actions daily.

This will be the first cross-country action by the women's movement since the abortion caravan in 1970.

The struggle to win, defend, and extend the right of women to abortion has been one of the major struggles of the women's movement internationally. The



breadth of support for the campaign in Canada indicates that tremendous advances have been made in winning mass support for this aspect at least of women's rights. Judy Rebick explained the importance of this movement today in Canada:

'It's the most important struggle the women's movement has participated in during my history in the movement.

#### THE MOST IMPORTANT STRUGGLE

'First of all I think the question of abortion is a fundamental question to women's liberation. Reproductive rights are fundamental because if we can't control whether or not we have children, we can't control our lives, even within the confines of capitalism. Obviously, the best solution is complete and universal birth control, but since that doesn't exist we need access to abortion.

'The attack on abortion rights is the tip of the iceberg in the attack on democratic rights. This movement is in the vanguard of the fight against such an attack — against the effort to roll back our rights in the context of the current economic crisis. Because of the support we've won we can turn what began as a defensive struggle into an offensive one. By winning the clinics we can go on to establish the right to abortion for women.

'Secondly, this has important implications for the working class as a whole, not only because half of the working class is female, but right now abortion is only available to women with money. So, really, the struggle is for working class women, for the poor, because those are the women who are denied access now. So, in a more general political sense, this

struggle for women's rights and human rights, against the take-backs, directly benefits the whole working class.

'Thirdly, we haven't often seen in Canada a social movement, independent of the union movement, stand up to the government in this way. Our movement has refused to back down, despite intimidation on various levels, from police opening our mail, to death threats, to police raids, to threats of life imprisonment.

'This is both an inspiration to the labour movement to fight in this way, and an example that there are other sectors, beyond the union movement, in society prepared to fight. The coalition today between labour and the various social movements in British Columbia against the viciously anti-labour legislation and cutbacks budget is a further indication. Certainly, here in the abortion rights struggle, we have a coalition between the women's movement and the labour movement on a controversial issue — one that is not strictly workplace related.

'Finally, the effect of this campaign on the women's movement has been to unify and politicise it. A lot of debate has occurred over the past year on strategy and tactics. Women who two months ago said to me "I don't believe in demonstrations. They don't have any effect," can see that we have a demonstration, and a week later a judge says, "I don't want to turn these men into martyrs, given the social climate, so I'm going to let them go." How can anyone say that demonstrations have no effect? In this case we see the effects so dramatically, in a way that's rarely seen, because the issue is so hot, and it is having a huge impact on masses of people.' ■



# Mitterrand launches new wave of repression against corsican nationalist

The island of Corsica passed under the jurisdiction of the French state in 1768, when it was sold to France by the city state of Genoa. Culturally and socially, it has remained distinct.

The language of the older population, called Corsican by the nationalists and written in a special orthography, is quite close to standard Italian.

Corsica has also had a distinctive political history, including a major bourgeois nationalist rebellion against French rule at the end of the eighteenth century.

In the recent period, the distinctiveness of Corsican society has been threatened by two processes. The older economy of the island is declining, with more and more Corsicans being forced to emigrate in search of work.

At the same time, a French speaking population has been coming in, linked to new businesses, such as a wine industry owned by former French settlers in North Africa and tourism, as well as to the French administration. The new comers already represent about half the population of Corsica, which is only about 200,000.

The Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC) has claimed the assassination of Pierre-Jean Massimi, general secretary of the General Council of Upper Corsica, the second highest official in the department.

Massimi was assassinated on September 13 in Bastia. The FLNC informed French authorities, using a special code, on September 21 that they had killed Massimi because he funnelled large sums of money to an ultraright French nationalist organization on Corsica, Francia.

The FLNC says that such elements were responsible for the kidnapping, torture, and murder of Corsican nationalist activist Guy Orsoni last summer.

Parallel police operations in fact have a long tradition in France.

The FLNC announcement was the front page story in the Paris papers on September 22 and the French radio reports talked about the "irelandization" of Corsica.

The following interview by two Corsican nationalist leaders was given to Christian Picquet, a journalist for *Rouge*, the paper of the French section of the Fourth International. Piquet's introduction follows and then the interview.



No to colonialization! (DR)

More than six months after the banning of the Front de Liberation Nationale de la Corse (FLNC — National Liberation Front of Corsica), the French government has just started a new step up

in repression.

Following a public demonstration by the banned movement in Vero, it arrested nine of the main leaders of the Consulte des Comites Nationalistes (CCN — Con-

sultation Bureau for the Nationalist Committees), the legal organization of the nationalist movement, and charged them with reconstituting a banned association and spreading false information.

Such measures, which were only mitigated by the release of the activists charged, will inevitably be seen in Corsica as a return to practices similar in every respect to those of the former rightist government. In fact, some of those now charged got out of prison only after 1981 [when the left coalition came to power in the French state].

This new stage of the confrontation between the French state and the nationalist movement was sparked by the disappearance June 17 of CCN leader Guy Orsoni. The indications are that he was murdered after being tortured in revolting ways by goons linked to the SAC [French nationalist terrorists]. The problem is that the role of the French authorities in this affair seems particularly murky, since the police kept a close watch on the perpetrators of this kidnapping and seemed to have been informed of their preparations.

Up until now, the government has been able to take advantage of the errors and weaknesses of the nationalist movement and exploit its relative isolation. For example, chauvinist slogans aimed at French people in general and a very confused sort of strategy have played into the hands of the French authorities.

The attitude of the police in the Orsoni affair, the uncommunicativeness of the police officials from Commissioner Broussard on down, have turned things around and given the CCN a new capacity for mobilization. Thus, recently, entirely on its own, the CCN was able to call a demonstration of two thousand people in the streets of Ajaccio marching to the chant of "Statu francesu assassinu!" ["The French State is a Murderer" in Corsican].

In this context, we thought that it would be interesting to give the floor to Yves Stella and Pierre Poggioli, two of the nationalist leaders who have just been charged.

This does not mean that we agree with the orientation of the CCN, but it is an expression of elementary solidarity with the victims of a repressive campaign that cannot contribute in any way to solving the problems of the Corsican people.

\* \* \*

**Question.** What is the political situation in Corsica and what is the French state trying to do?

**Answer.** We are seeing the failure of the system that has been set up — of the special status for Corsica that was instituted and the regional assembly, the failure of the officials appointed, both the old ones and the new ones (Prosper Alfonsi and Simeoni). (1)

1. This refers to a layer of nationalist leaders who have opted for participation in the autonomous institutions. — IV.



Mitterrand is lying about the nature of the Corsican people. He is playing with words, recognizing the existence of a separate people without granting it a capacity for expressing itself as distinct from the French people. The regional assembly does not represent the Corsican people.

The election of the assembly was compromised by all the evils of the system of domination by the traditional families and by the reduction of the Corsican people to a minority in their own country, which were the issues in the debate that preceded the election of the assembly.

The CCN calls for the dissolution of this powerless assembly and the election of a new one endowed with real powers. This assembly should be elected by a new system involving recognition of the Corsican people, which requires a two-tier electoral system.

The Corsican nationalists will not lend themselves to any destabilization of the left government for the benefit of the right.

We will not retreat either on what we consider the minimal acceptable demands for any sincere Corsican or for any sincere French person.

If the government undertakes a process of decolonization, we will play the game. If not, there will be a test of strength. We will never give up the struggle to free Corsica, any more than we will condemn the FLNC.

If there are new elections, we will participate in them. In the municipal elections, we demonstrated our capacity to conduct an election campaign and revolutionary propaganda without any concessions. We alone represent the nationalist movement. The UPC is a reformist electoral apparatus that resembles a traditional family patronage operation. It has the blessing of the government, in contradiction to the nationalist preferences on which it is based.

Behind Simeoni there is no popular base or activists. He is deluded about the 15,000 votes he got in August 1982. That was not a vote for a milk-and-water autonomy candidate. It was a Corsican nationalist vote in the broad sense, and Simeoni has diverted this mandate.

The state wants to eliminate by any means possible the organizations that uphold the cause of the national liberation struggle. Among the means it has used are the following:

— a new political status and the expressions of satisfaction from the representatives of the traditional gangs, who have their snouts in the new trough provided by the autonomous assembly.

— Repression, accompanied by a smear campaign about the so-called degeneration of the FLNC into gangsterism, which is designed to turn the Corsican people against the nationalists.

— Physical liquidation. The colonial nature of the Corsican situation has blocked this strategy. The French state is coming to the limits of this strategy. It

is going to change it, try to incite tensions among Corsicans. But it is going to run up against the obstacle of the economic situation. They will be lucky if unemployment does not go over 10,000.

Q. What stage has the CCN reached?

A. It has become a movement of political activists. This is the result of a concerted effort to structure and politicize the organization. It is now an instrument of struggle capable of a sustained campaign to mobilize the population and not just of responding to events as they come along.

Today, we are able to take up questions that had been left to lie fallow, such as economic problems, and to create real points of counterpower, in agriculture for example.

We are also going to work harder to create a Corsican union, a nationalist trade-union organization. These two fundamental axes of work could not be developed before the CCN was consolidated into a well organized and powerful political movement.

Q. What are your links with the FLNC?

A. The struggle for national liberation is one. The CCN is an expression of this, as is the FLNC. The complementary character of these two organizations flows from the colonial situation in Corsica.

We stand in solidarity with the FLNC on all levels, and nothing can change that. The CCN is not a front organization, it has its own political space, as does the FLNC. The notion of an armed wing is also wrong, because this would involve too much of a role for military action, a militarist illusion. This idea is the result of insufficient political understanding, and is disappearing today. The national liberation struggle is one, and even if armed struggle were to have its place in it, the conclusion can only be political.

Q. What is your position toward the trade-union movement? You seem to be rather cut off from it today.

A. The underpoliticization of the movement resulted in a grave deficiency in political and trade-union work. However, if, for example, the CFDT exists in northern Corsica, this is largely the result of the work of nationalists. We are in the CFDT, even if the leadership is doing everything it can to push our activists out. Moreover, the CFDT has dropped its support for a measure of autonomy and is lining up more and more tightly with the other unions that back the government.

The CGT and FEN (the teachers union) are playing the game of the French state, organizing demonstrations on its behalf against the nationalists, linking up with the hysteria campaign orchestrated by Broussard. They are under pressure from a Communist Party that is hostile to national liberation, a French chauvinist party, a party of "order" in Corsica.

Q. What effect has the campaign to portray the FLNC as criminals had on Corsican public opinion?

A. This campaign has not failed to have a certain effect. Magnified by all the media, both right and left, Broussard's hysteria campaign reached the outer limits of provocativeness. Fortunately, we have been able to come up with political answers and to respond to the situation.

Q. What do you think about the attacks on French teachers and clerks, when the heads of the traditional gangs are left unpunished?

A. We support all actions against the colonization of the island. But they have to be seen essentially as political protests. No one has any intention, we repeat, to refute the hysteria campaign, of driving all the French, to say nothing of all the foreigners, into the sea. In a time of unbridled racism, we continue to defend the immigrant workers here, who are victims of the capitalist colonial system. The French, on the other hand, represent a social, political, and cultural pressure, a mass base for the colonial state, for "French Corsica."

The gang leaders are, on the other hand, Corsican. They may join us when the relationship of forces obliges them to, and in certain cases they may be won over to Corsican nationalism, at least in theory. They will disappear with the system that is being reinforced by a massive influx of French who take the places of Corsicans.

It has to be seen that the French who are working in Corsica have formed from the beginning an interclass French nationalist front against Corsican nationalism. They must leave. We had hoped that this front would break up. But we have seen nothing like that to this day. The political pressure will be kept up with the "Francesi Fora" ("French Out") campaign.

Q. Have you chosen a "model for the new Corsican society?"

A. We propose a break with the capitalist system and the building of a socialist Corsica suited to the traditions of our community.

Q. What do you expect from the French left?

A. We want the parties in power to undertake a process of decolonization in Corsica. But we have no illusions. We have been disillusioned by the left and far left media which either keep quiet about the situation here or repeat the government's black propaganda aimed at stigmatizing the FLNC as criminals. The left media have played a real and rotten role. It's time for them to stop their one-sided advice. We need the solidarity of French revolutionists. Why don't the French organizations form "committees to support the struggle of the Corsican people" as they do for struggles that are being waged further away?



# The Philippine dictatorship in crisis

Paul PETITJEAN

A murderer fired a bullet into the head of former Philippine senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino on Sunday, August 21, 1983, as he was disembarking from a flight at Manila's international airport.

The alleged assassin was immediately gunned down by the soldiers escorting Aquino. So, he is not going to do any talking.

But no one, either in the Philippines or internationally, has been convinced by the official account of this spectacular murder, that is, that it was the act of a "well-known" professional killer hired by some one unknown, maybe a Communist.

All the indications are, in fact, that this political murder could only have been engineered by a faction in the regime, if not President Marcos himself.

Even the identity of the assassin is being questioned. Who was it that killed Aquino? Was it the hired killer who was shot by the soldiers, or one of the soldiers themselves?

The circumstances of the murder point to a conspiracy going high up. The behavior of the authorities in the hours and days following the crime has raised troubling new questions, which have been pointed up by the big international press.

The climate of suspicion has grown to such an extent that Premier Cesar Virata has had to acknowledge publicly that "some elements in the government" may have been involved in the murder.

## THE IMPACT OF THE KILLING

The murder of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino has highlighted the political conflicts developing in the Philippines. This is for a number of reasons. One is the circumstances in which the murder was committed. Another is the former senator's personal prominence. He was the principal figure in the bourgeois, pro-American opposition to the Marcos regime.

Moreover, the killing touched off a wave of mass indignation that was impressive in its breadth and its depth. Giant demonstrations accompanied the cortege taking Aquino's body to his native village and then back to Manila, reaching their culmination at his burial. On August 31, hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, followed the funeral cortege. It was an unprecedented mobilization, a resounding condemnation of

the regime. And during the student demonstrations in front of the presidential palace, the "forces of order" opened fire, killing one demonstrator and wounding a number.

After a brief letup, street demonstrations resumed in September in the capital city, with the demonstrators calling openly for President Marcos' resignation.

Clearly, Aquino's murder has opened a new stage in the crisis of the Marcos regime, and is going to have a deepgoing impact on the course of the political and social struggles in the country. This is what gives the event its importance in the Philippines and internationally.

The economic situation in the Philippines is very bad. Mass democratic and revolutionary struggles are underway and growing. While the bourgeois liberal opposition is badly organized, the communist left — represented mainly by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) — is leading a guerrilla movement that is spreading, and it is also leading significant mass movements both in the urban centers and in the countryside.

What is more, this chain of islands inhabited by 53 million people holds a very special place in U.S. Asian strategy.

## THE PHILIPPINES — A PIVOT OF IMPERIALIST POLICY IN ASIA

The strategic role of the Philippines in the lineup of U.S. forces in Asia is clear.



Reagan and Marcos (DR)

There are two very large military bases on the island of Luzon — the Clark airbase and the Subic Bay naval base.

The relative importance of these installations has increased since Washington lost its main bases on the continent of Asia, owing to the fall of the Saigon regime in 1975 and the shutting down of the Thai bases under the pressure of mass nationalist demonstrations in 1976.

The U.S. bases in the Philippines, which are among the largest bases Washington has anywhere in the world, are located at the heart of a key strategic area. After Indonesia, the Philippines control the straits linking the Pacific to the Indian Ocean. They face the Vietnamese coast, where the Soviet fleet can now dock.

In fact, Southeast Asia is certainly one of the regions where the confrontation between revolution and counterrevolution has been the sharpest and the most sustained since the second world war. Let us just recall the major episodes:

— The Japanese intervention on the Asian continent and the subsequent victory of the Chinese revolution.

— The successive Indochinese wars waged by the Japanese, French, and Americans from 1940 to 1975.

— The emergence of Communist-led guerrilla movements in the Philippines and Malaya in the late 1940s and early 1950s, which suffered defeats.

— The struggle for national independence in Indonesia, the growth of the Indonesian Communist Party and then the mass slaughter of Communists in 1965-66.

— The rise and the crisis of the Communist movement in Thailand in 1973-1982.

And now to this list has been added the present ripening of revolutionary struggles in the Philippines themselves.

From the standpoint both of the overall military relationships of forces between the "blocs" and the capacity of the imperialists to intervene against revolutionary movements in the region, the U.S. bases in the Philippines have an essential role to play.

Moreover, this role is not limited to Southeast Asia. The Clark and Subic Bay bases are kingpins in the deployment of the U.S. navy and airforce from the coast of Korea to the Near East. They are central to the strategic system the U.S. has set up to link the north Pacific bases (in South Korea and Japan, including Okinawa, the Marianas, and Guam) to those in the Indian Ocean (in particular, Diego Garcia).

Facing crises at both ends of this chain of bases (e.g., the Kwangju insurrection in South Korea in 1980 and the dispatching of U.S. commandos to Iran in the same year), the Pentagon's policy relies on being able to shift air and naval forces rapidly from one sector to the other. In this context, the U.S. installations in the Philippines assume an importance that goes far beyond Southeast Asia itself.



The importance of the Philippines in the Asian policy of the U.S. is not just military. It is not by chance that this is where Washington has its last big bases in Southeast Asia.

### A BULWARK OF U.S. NEOCOLONIALISM

For historical reasons, the Philippines are more closely linked to the U.S. than any other country in the region. Colonialism came early in these islands, beginning in the sixteenth century. (The other major countries in the region did not become direct colonies or semi-colonies before the eighteenth century or the nineteenth century.)

With the exception of the Muslim sultanates in the southern part of the archipelago, which were founded in the fifteenth century, colonial domination was imposed more easily in the Philippines and put down deeper roots than in the other Asian countries.

This was because of the relative backwardness of this island chain, which seems to have still been in a slow process of transition to class society when the colonialists arrived. In these conditions, the resistance to Christianization was broken. For a long period, the Spanish Catholic church served as the underpinning of the colonial society. Within the Spanish empire, the Philippines were commercially linked to the kingdom of Mexico.

After 350 years of Spanish domination, the islands were "sold" to the U.S. as a result of the Spanish American War in the New World. But the Americans were able to occupy them only after sending an expeditionary force that had to wage a bloody struggle.

The Philippines thus became one of the rare direct colonies of the U.S., along with Puerto Rico. In fact, it was the U.S.'s biggest colony. And this situation lasted until the aftermath of the second world war.

The Philippines are a bit like a Latin Asia. The history of the archipelago offers many analogies to those of the Latin American countries. It is the only Christian country in Asia. U.S. economic interests have traditionally been dominant, although today they are facing stiff competition from the Japanese.

The growth of national consciousness was set back and profoundly distorted by the extent of colonial penetration and the pressure of neocolonial attitudes. The feeling of being part of Asia was blunted, and this helped to cut the Philippine people off from the political developments in the region.

Of all the states that belong to the ASEAN alliance, the Philippine government is certainly the most directly dependent on Washington. The vicissitudes of Philippine political life also have more impact in the U.S. This is one of the factors that explains why Aquino was assassinated, as I will show in more detail further on.

Historically, politically, economically,

and militarily, the Philippines are the neocolony most firmly controlled by the U.S. in Southeast Asia.

### THE MARCOS REGIME AND ITS CONTRADICTIONS

Ferdinand Marcos, a brilliant lawyer and a good politician, was elected to the presidency for the first time in 1965. Reelected in 1969, he could not constitutionally run for a third term.

However, on September 22, 1972, claiming that the country faced the threat of "extremism from the right and from the left," Marcos clamped down martial law and maintained it for eight years. In fact, Marcos established a dictatorship with the active support of the World Bank and Washington.

Personal ambition certainly played a role in Marcos' decision to hang on to the presidency by decreeing martial law and later changing the constitution. His government is a regime of one-man rule. But there is more to it than that.

Under martial law, important political and economic changes were initiated under the auspices of the World Bank. At the start of the 1970s, the country was in poor economic shape, with a large foreign debt. The political situation was unstable.

There was an upsurge of anti-imperialist feeling. (Marcos himself was obliged to use nationalist themes in his electoral campaign, although he dropped them as soon as he was reelected.)

Divisions were growing in the bourgeois forces as a result in particular of the crude electoral fraud and massive vote buying that accompanied Marcos' campaign in 1969. Peasant struggles were starting up again. The student movement was veering to the left and heading up mass mobilizations and street demonstrations.

### DRASTIC CHANGES UNDER MARCOS

Once martial law was established, the regime instituted a series of measures that transformed the framework of Philippine politics.

First of all, the mass movement was harshly repressed. It was forced into a retreat that lasted for several years. The state apparatus was unified and centralized. The power of the local notables who had previously ruled the roost was cut down to size. The private armies were broken up, and replaced by the national army and police.

The old parties were pushed to the sidelines. Then, after a few years, Marcos launched a political movement that became all pervasive — the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL), or New Society Movement.

In the economic sphere, big public works were undertaken to promote the penetration of foreign capital into industry, mining, and agriculture. Free-trade zones were set up, starting with the one on Bataan (the BEPZ or Bataan Export Processing Zone) at the entrance to Manila Bay.

New regulations "protecting" foreign investment were adopted, and repression helped to keep the cost of labor down in industry.

In response to pressure from the peasants, especially in the rice-growing areas, an agrarian reform was decreed. The so-called Green Revolution got under way (that is, the use of special seed, the introduction of new technology, increased capital investment, and the generalization of market relations).

In fact, the International Research Institute for agronomy is located in the Philippines. This is the institute that develops better strains of rice and tests new growing techniques.

Agribusiness is taking off in areas not touched before, as in the case of the fruit plantations on the island of Mindanao. The fishing industry (dominated by the Japanese) is opening up fishing areas.

Martial law was justified as a basis for driving through the modernization of the country. Officially, it is supposed to prepare the way for a restoration of constitutional rule, which was continually put off. The regime asked to be judged by its results — order, security, and economic development. But in all these



Demonstration in Manila against the Marcos regime (DR)



areas, the balance sheet of the Marcos regime is far from favorable, even from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie.

### THE MARCOS FAMILY MONOPOLIZES THE STATE AND THE ECONOMY

After a marked drop (following the breakup of the gangs and private armies), the crime rate started to shoot up again. Very often military officers and police officials are found to be behind the rackets and crimes decried in the press.

Far from stopping the growth of the revolutionary left, the imposition of martial law has contributed to the radicalization of new sections of the youth and the church. The Communist-led guerrilla movement is stronger than ever, and the mass influence of the CPP broader and more deepgoing.

Over the last decade, the Philippines has had the lowest economic growth rate of all the ASEAN countries — about 5%. Industrialization has lagged behind that in most of the neighboring countries. On the other hand, the spiral of foreign debt has not stopped. Alongside South Korea, the Philippines is probably the biggest debtor in East Asia (its foreign debt exceeds 12 billion dollars).

Still more grave, the policy followed by the Marcos regime has generated new social and political tensions and conflicts, not just between the state and the mass movement but also among various bourgeois circles and leaders.

The Marcos regime means not just one-man rule. The state apparatus and a number of national resources have been taken over by one family — the family of the president and his wife, Imelda Romualdez — and their cronies.

The old propertied oligarchy has been shoved out of the major areas of the economy by particularly brutal methods, such as threats of repression on the charge of subversion. Today these old moneyed elements have formed a broad bourgeois opposition to the regime. While this bourgeois opposition has not been able to build a powerful political movement, it has widened the field of action for the forces challenging the regime, promoted an anti-Marcos lobby in the U.S., and in fact in a general way it is helping to legitimize "subversion."

The Marcos clan has taken over a number of businesses and monopoly positions with the help of forms of political protection that have been disclosed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in their confidential documents.

In recent years, most of these businesses have failed as a result of incompetent management and have avoided bankruptcy only with the help of state aid.

### THE CASE OF THE "COCONUT LOBBY"

Through a specialized bank (supported by the state), a government agency overseeing exports, and a tax levied on all

producers, the minister of defense, Juan Ponce Enrile, and a private businessman, Conjuago, have acquired control of the sale of coconut products.

This sector accounts for 23% of the land under cultivation and 20% of exports. A very large section of the population depend economically on it. Like all other agribusiness industries, in particular fruit and sugar, the coconut industry is essentially export oriented, and for some years has been hit by crisis and declining sales.

Obviously under these circumstances, the drop in the standard of living of the producers — who include wage workers, leaseholders, small and medium-sized producers — has generated social struggles aimed directly against the Marcos clan and the state.

### THE AMBITIONS OF THE MILITARY

Moreover, during the eight-year rule of martial law, the army has become for the first time in the Philippines a leading force within the state, even though the government remains ostensibly a civilian one.

This is a new factor in a country that has not had a tradition of military regimes, unlike Thailand, where the army has run the country for fifty years.

There is the unmistakable possibility now that the army may try to take over to succeed the present regime, presenting itself as the only force that can maintain order in the aftermath of Marcos. But this is a particularly disquieting prospect for the significant sections of the bourgeoisie that are waiting for the president to leave the scene to retake the political initiative.

It also poses a problem for the church hierarchy, whose power might be challenged. The clerical authorities fear, moreover, that the imposition of an outright military regime would accelerate the slide of the country toward civil war.

And the prospect of a military regime is certainly not arousing any enthusiasm either in important circles in the U.S. Administration or the World Bank.

So, the picture in the Philippines is a somber one for the imperialists. The economy is in an overall bad state. Mass struggles are growing and becoming more radical and guerrilla warfare is spreading. The Marcos clan's businessmen are manifestly incompetent. Dangerous monopolies are being concentrated in the hands of leading figures in the regime. And the army is playing an increasing role.

This picture is made more threatening by the fact that the regime seems to be at the end of its rope, incapable of any new and innovative policy, incapable of overcoming the contradictions created by its previous orientations.

The crisis is deep. It is being aggravated today, moreover, by persistent rumors that the president's health is failing. It seems in fact that struggle to determine his successor has already begun. This indicates both why Benigno Aquino decided to go back although he knew that

his life would be in danger and why he was killed as soon as he set foot on Philippine soil.

### THE POWER STRUGGLE AND AQUINO'S MURDER

Like any prolonged dictatorship by one family, the Marcos regime has created a political vacuum around itself and has not prepared the way for passing on power. For some years now cries of alarm about this have been being raised in international business circles, as evidenced by articles in *The Economist* of London and the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of Hong Kong.

Various observers pointed out that unless something was done to assure a constitutional transition, Marcos' Philippines could face the same fate as the shah's Iran or Somoza's Nicaragua.

The U.S. found itself in a dilemma. It could support Marcos to the end and run the risk of going under with him. Or it could change horses in mid-stream and risk drastically aggravating the crisis.

Under Carter, the U.S. Administration essentially maintained its support for the regime, although it formally took some distance from Marcos in the name of "human rights diplomacy."

Under Reagan, these more or less superficial qualms were abandoned, and full and undisguised support was given to the Marcos regime. But the problem remains, in particular when preparations can no longer be delayed for making the transition to the post-Marcos period.

In response to international pressure (and pressure from domestic sources such as the Catholic hierarchy), Marcos formally lifted martial law in January 1981 throughout most of the country. (An exception was made for the Muslim southern provinces where the Moro National Liberation Front has been waging a long struggle for self-determination that Manila has not been able to decisively defeat.)

A parliament was elected. A new constitution was drawn up. But basically nothing changed. The government continues to rule by decree, and this enables it in fact to do what it likes. The repression has intensified instead of decreasing. The National Assembly has no authority. The elections have no credibility for anyone. The state is still in the hands of the Marcos clan.

### THE FACTIONS WITHIN THE REGIME

Within the regime itself, no credible successor to Marcos seems to be shaping up, except for the army, and there is deep-seated resistance to that.

One section of the regime — represented by Defense Minister Enrile, his "coconut lobby" colleague Cojuanco, and Foreign Affairs Minister Ramos — seem at the moment to be in decline.

The "technocrat" faction, represented most prominently by the former finance minister and present premier, Cesar



Virata, owes its place in the government to the support of the World Bank. It has no political base of its own in the country.

The third faction includes the "sugar lobby" (that is, Marcos' friend Benedicto); the president's wife, Imelda, and the military chief of staff, Major Fabian Ver.

It represents continuity: the army; one of the businessmen who owes most to his connections in high places; and Imelda, who controls important networks of power and money. (She is the governor of Greater Manila, minister of social institutions, and head of the KKK, a body that covers the rural areas and is an effective instrument for all sorts of patronage.) But because of her high spending in particular, Imelda is very poorly regarded in international circles.

This third faction seems in the best position today in the race to succeed Marcos. But to support it would mean running the risk of a rapid worsening of political and social tensions.

The church has not been off the mark in stressing this, and in the Philippines it is still a state within a state. It is the only nationally organized body that has been able to hold up against the Marcos regime's steamroller and martial law, except of course for the underground movements.

The archbishop, Cardinal Sin, has long laced his support for the regime with a modest dose of criticism. For some time in his public interviews he has been calling for Marcos' resignation and for the regime to change its course "so as to head off the threat of civil war." And today he is refusing to take part in the commission of inquiry that is supposed to look into Aquino's murder. He fears becoming the hostage of a commission controlled by Marcos' friends.

### THE BOURGEOIS OPPOSITION

Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino no longer had any coherent political force behind him. His old party, the Liberals, no longer exists. The main bourgeois opposition grouping is UNIDO (United Democratic Opposition), an alliance of 12 parties whose main leader is Senator Salvador Laurel. It has not yet made any real demonstration of effectiveness.

Nonetheless, Aquino could have had an effect on the power struggle. Aquino had charisma and considerable ambition. He would probably have defeated Marcos in the 1969 elections, if the vote had not been heavily rigged. After the imposition of martial law, he was jailed for seven years (on charges of murder, rape, and subversion) and then condemned to death by a military court before being allowed to leave for the U.S. "for health reasons."

Much younger than Marcos, the murdered senator could have provided a focus for the hopes for a return to democracy as well as political guarantees for Washington. He could have offered an alternative to the various factions within the regime.

This is probably why he was killed before he could really get into the power

## International solidarity urgently needed

On September 21, exactly one month after the murder of Benigno Aquino and the anniversary of the imposition of martial law in 1972, a crowd estimated at around half a million assembled in the center of Manila.

Following this giant demonstration, violent clashes developed between demonstrators who marched to the presidential palace and the "forces of order." In the course of these confrontations, eleven persons were killed and hundreds wounded.

Another rally was held against the presence of American bases in the country. Boycotts have begun of the newspapers and supermarkets controlled by Marcos.

The international press is openly pointing a finger of blame at the military for the murder of Aquino.

In a press conference held after the September 21 demonstrations, President Marcos threatened to reinstitute martial law, which was formally lifted in 1981. The army has clearly shown its intent to repress the mass movement.

It is now an urgent task to demonstrate active solidarity with the struggle of the Philippine people throughout the world. ■

struggles to determine the post-Marcos government. If he decided to go back to the Philippines when he knew that his life was in danger, if he was able to get out of the U.S. when he had to travel on false papers, he probably had reason to hope that he would get the necessary support when the time came.

The fact is that Aquino's murder removed Washington's best card — perhaps the only one, because he will not be easy to replace — if the factions within the regime prove to be too compromised or unable to keep control of events.

### GROWING STRUGGLES

The gigantic demonstrations that accompanied the internment of Aquino's body showed the profound isolation of the regime. The government's servile press did everything possible to lessen the impact of this assassination. Repression was threatened. But nothing could hold back these largely spontaneous demonstrations.

It is still difficult to predict how rapidly struggles may grow. If the president's health took a turn for the worse, that could precipitate things. The resumption of street demonstrations in mid-September shows that Aquino's murder will not be forgotten. The regime is now in an open crisis. But the opposition formations do not seem prepared to undertake an all-out struggle for power.

UNIDO must have gained an increased sympathy as a result of the murder of a figure with whom it can identify itself. It has launched an appeal for civil disobedience, and its deputies have resigned from the National Assembly. It was in response to the call of the UNIDO leaders that street demonstrations resumed in the Makati business district.

However, UNIDO has neither the national organization, nor the orientation, nor the activist forces on the ground to be able to take full advantage of the powerful upsurge that has developed around Aquino's death.

### THE FIGHTING OPPOSITION

On the other hand, the CPP, along with the National Democratic Front in which it plays the leading role, and the New People's Army can offer a perspective and a means for organizing to those

who are convinced that Aquino's murder offers the final proof that the survival of the mass movement depends on the ability of the revolutionary movement to resist a dictatorship that is capable of anything.

However, the CPP, for the time being, maintains a perspective of gradually building up its social, political, and military power. It does not seem prepared to undertake in the near future a decisive struggle for power and for overthrowing the regime outright. It is likely that at least initially the CPP will take advantage of the new opportunities to build its mass network rather than launch spectacular struggles.

During the recent events, the CPP has kept a "low profile." But the student movement has played a very radical role. And on August 22, the National Democratic Front issued a short statement condemning the murder of Aquino. It noted that it had proposed to the senator that he take refuge in an area held by the New People's Army, and went on to say:

"Senator Aquino became a martyr to the cause of democracy and freedom...." But "his assassination signals the death of all well-meaning but vain efforts to achieve national reconciliation.

"There can be no national reconciliation under a rabidly brutal regime. There can only be people's unity in the fight against the oppression and the injustice perpetrated by this regime."

"Ninoy" had prepared a speech for his arrival in the Philippines in which he advocated national reconciliation, identified himself with Ghandi, and declared that he was for nonviolent struggle. Cardinal Sin did not fail to point this up.

However, for the youth, for trade-union activists, for the social volunteers engaged in the dangerous day-to-day work of defending the exploited, for the sections of the clergy that take to heart the interests of the impoverished masses, for the peasants subjected to repression, for the many who have had a friend or loved one kidnapped, tortured, or shot down by the "forces of order" and the paramilitary groups, Aquino's death probably had a much more concrete message than the speech he was unable to read. It is the lesson that the NDF drew in its communique. It is vain to seek reconciliation with such a regime. You have to be prepared to fight it. ■



# The land question in Zimbabwe

James BARNETT

Zimbabwe is not the first newly independent African country to be feted by both the East and West. Despite the ripples over 'dissidents' in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe remains one of the most popular stopping-off places in the so-called third world for politicians and investors of every hue. Even the pope is planning a visit in the near future!

'There is something for everyone in Zimbabwe', say the tourist brochures, and the same thing could be said for the political scenery. Progressives can support the practical steps towards primary health care, the launching of Education with Production, the continuing resettlement programme and the various development schemes. Local black businessmen like Mr Chambati (deputy chairman of TA holdings) can rejoice, as he did at a recent public meeting, in the co-operation between the government and the private sector that together can achieve 'the good life for the majority of people' happy in the knowledge that there will be no forced nationalisations. Trade unionists can come and fete the growth of workers committees and the establishment of the minimum wage. And the 'law and order' brigade can see strikers put in jail, land squatters evicted, and take comfort in the fact that the State of Emergency (declared by Ian Smith the former white prime minister) is still in force and the bulk of the National Army has now been retrained by crack British Army experts.

Peasant farmers are getting higher prices for their produce, major new road and water development schemes, and the launching of the Adult Literacy schemes. The big commercial farmers are also benefiting. The unproductive ones can sell their land to the government at market prices, while the productive ones pay their workers only 50 Zimbabwe dollars per month, and benefit from a guaranteed price and marketing policy. For feminists the Legal Age of Majority Act has given majority status to African women for the first time, and a special Ministry of Community Development and Womens Affairs has been established. On the other hand, for confirmed sexists, polygamy is legal, abortion is not, and lobola (bridewealth) is still a way of maintaining property relations over a wife.

With this strange sort of 'double vision' it is not easy to evaluate the situa-

tion in Zimbabwe now, after only three years of independence. Yet the very fact that so many defenders of Zimbabwe are confused about the direction the government is taking should be a common cause of concern to all socialists.

On the one hand it is not difficult to find staunch government supporters including ministers, senior civil servants, and senior party officials who speak in eloquent Marxist phraseology of the present 'transition to socialism'. At the opening of parliament in June the president, the Reverend Canaan Banana, affirmed, 'This year will witness the injection of a more extensive and vigorous impetus into our collective efforts to transit to socialism', and that, 'Zimbabwe would strive for the total elimination of all forms of imperialism, colonialism and discrimination'. On the other hand, leading defenders of free enterprise warmly welcome the 'partnership' between the public and private sector, or in the words of Mr Bell, director of two local tobacco firms, 'Let Pamberi ne Zimbabwe (Forward with Zimbabwe) reverberate around the tobacco world and let us become the winners of markets that we were before.' (*Herald*, June 16, 1983).

## THE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

Let us examine the presumed co-existence of these two systems in the light of what is still a burning issue today — the land question.

It was widely believed on both sides that land was the central issue in the liberation struggle. There is no doubt that colonial rule was effected and maintained on the unequal carving up of the land along racial lines. The best half of the country's agricultural land was reserved as prime farm land for the white settlers while the bulk of the rest was classified as 'reserves' (now called the Communal Lands) for the blacks. In 1974 the population estimates for the two areas were 274,000 whites, and nearly six million blacks.

It was a generalised theme of the liberation struggle that victory would bring 'the redistribution of land stolen from our forefathers'. The February 1980 election manifesto of ZANU (PF) committed itself to 'the resolution of the land and agrarian problems' as its first major task. The Resettlement Programme, one plank of this policy, was accorded a high

priority. Indeed, the new government has committed itself to resettling 162,000 peasant families by 1985 (about ten to fifteen per cent of the total population). These would mainly be returning refugees and the landless from the hard-pressed Communal Lands.

In the course of the present 3-year plan the government estimates that a total of 260 million Zimbabwe dollars will be needed in capital expenditure to buy land on a 'willing-seller, willing-buyer' basis. The British aid programme on land, hammered out at Lancaster House, and later reiterated at the ZIMCORD conference, will provide about 33 million Zimbabwe dollars. It is unknown from where the remaining 227 million will come.

Within narrow definitions resettlement has got underway, an estimated 7,000 families have been resettled to date. Resettlement schemes are also regarded as models for agrarian reform in general. They are the focal points for three varieties of collectivisation of agricultural production, they enjoy a higher concentration of agricultural extension workers, at a ratio of 1 per 50 households, compared to 1 per 700 households in the Communal Lands, and the aim is to provide income from farming equivalent to the wage of a farm labourer (4-600 Zimbabwe dollars per annum).

Another thorny issue has been the continued squatting on resettled land or abandoned white farms since Independence. More often than not most of these squatters have been incorporated into the 'accelerated' (meaning without basic services) resettlement schemes. But it would appear from the president's speech at the opening of parliament in June, that the government will in future take a much harder line on squatters. This assumption was borne out by the recent eviction of 3,000 squatters from the abandoned Russeldene farm — their houses were flattened by bulldozers.

The question is: how far can the Resettlement Programme go in redistributing the land? The present answer would appear to be: not very far at all. If the government were actually to pursue its own policy of buying all the land necessary even for the present resettlement requirement, it would bankrupt the country.

The minister of lands himself indicated that 240 million Zimbabwe dollars is needed to settle only 54,000 families on 4 million hectares (*Herald*, April 17,



1982). At this rate, an additional 480 million Zimbabwe dollars and 8 million hectares of land would be required to resettle the remaining 108,000 families. This is a much higher cost than the 260 million Zimbabwe dollars mentioned by the president, and much more land than commercial farmers are willing to sell. Even if, by chance, the funds could be found, it would have to be at the cost of channelling funds away from the general problems of development in the Communal Lands to the Resettlement Programme. And this money would go into the hands of a 'willing seller' — an unproductive commercial farmer — not a particularly good investment for a socialist government. In fact, in the July budget, the total sum set aside for the whole Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development was a mere 32 million Zimbabwe dollars, and the actual sum set aside for land purchase and compensation was a paltry 26.5 million Zimbabwe dollars. On the basis of simple arithmetic, resettlement appears to be grinding to a halt.

But perhaps a greater political problem is the nature of the Development Programme for land and agriculture as a whole, and the future for the estimated 70 to 80 per cent of the population who depend on the land for subsistence and survival.

#### A CONTRADICTIONARY COMMITMENT

ZANU's election manifesto approached the problem gingerly. While committing the party to swift collectivisation of peasant agriculture and the establishment of state farms, it retained the somewhat contradictory commitment to maintain an efficient core of large-scale commercial agriculture. Influential commentators like Roger Riddell (chief economist of the Confederation of Zimbabwean Industry — CZI) has recently reiterated this theme in the recommendations of the Riddell Commission/Inquiry into Prices, Incomes and Conditions of Service. 'New areas of land (should) be acquired to absorb the population that is in excess of the safe carrying capacity of the present-day peasant sector while assuring that commercial farming land is able to continue to provide the bulk of the nation's basic food requirements, a surplus for export and for the provision of inputs for industrial production.'

While it is tempting to view the maintaining of the private sector as a 'holding operation', to maintain food security and export earnings, etc. during the transition to socialism, a closer reading of the Three Year Transitional Development Plan reveals that there are no plans for change at all in this sector, either now or in the future. In the opening pages it states that the government 'recognises the existing phenomenon of capitalism as a historical reality which, because it cannot be avoided, has to be purposefully harnessed, regulated and transformed as a partner in the overall national endeavour to achieve set goals.'

Later, the Plan stresses the absolute priority of development in the rural areas (the Communal Lands), while recognising the 'dualism' of the economy in general, describing the peasant sector as 'underdeveloped, poor in physical, agricultural and social infrastructure' and the modern sector as 'advanced, dynamic, diversified'. Indeed, 90 per cent of the value of all agricultural produce marketed through official or formal channels is from the large-scale commercial sector although, up to the present drought at least, peasant families were more or less feeding themselves, and were estimated to consume 80 per cent of their own production.

And how could it be otherwise after over 80 years of systematic material and racial exploitation? The point is, one reads the Three Year Transitional Plan in the hope of discovering an overall strategy to *confront* and *change* the prevailing social relations of production — namely that the bulk of the country's prime farming and ranching land is in the hands of big commercial farmers and multinationals and that 70 per cent of productive capacity (much of it derived from agricultural raw materials) is owned by foreign capital. If such a strategy is there, it is written in invisible ink.

While commitment to investing in the Communal Lands is laudable and necessary, it would be as well to remember that the Plan envisages that 41 per cent of investment outlined is to come from the private sector — that is nearly 2,500 million Zimbabwe dollars. It seems highly improbable that this will be used in projects that promote genuine socialist transformation. It is also hard to see any really socialist ideas in many of the 'development' projects funded by aid programmes.

The USA now boasts that Zimbabwe is the recipient of the largest American Aid Programme in Africa, and agriculture is a prime target. The Zimbabwean government has just negotiated a plump loan of 31 million Zimbabwe dollars from the World Bank for agricultural development. It seems unlikely that this will be jeopardised by promoting socialist agriculture. And on this point the Three Year plan is cleverly worded — the stated goal is the 'integration' of the commercial and peasant agricultural sector into one system — *which* system is not specified.

To summarise, without an overall radical agricultural reform, combining the nationalisation of the large landholdings,



Nkomo and Mugabe (DR)

#### NO STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

Instead statement after statement from ministers and other party leaders, while criticising what is called the essential 'dualism' of the economy, continue to prescribe ways for its maintenance, albeit in a new form. For agriculture this means that development should take place *principally and only* within the Communal Lands which must receive 'balanced investment in growth and rural service centres. This must bring the rural population into close contact with ser-



the redistribution of land, and to aid the small producers as partners in a workers and peasants alliance, one can state that what Mugabe means by 'socialist transformation' is nothing other than an authoritarian regimentation of the African small peasantry, and defence of big private property.

It is easy to find other indicators of this apparent new 'dualism' of public and private sectors. Perhaps the most glaring recent example is the growing cost of the Hwange II power project. The government has reluctantly purchased 40 per cent of the shares in this thermal power plant — commissioned by Smith in UDI days — at higher than market prices in order to keep it going.

It is said that the World Bank made it a condition of its loan that this project was continued, but as these conditions are not public information, this cannot be verified.

What is known is that the cost to the government of this development (including loan repayments) has pushed up the price of electricity by 30 to 50 per cent depending on the area.

The effect of this increase alone on the rapidly rising cost of living is likely to be substantial. The government is still trying to negotiate a lower tariff for industry, in an attempt to prevent them passing on the whole cost to the consumer.

The irony of the situation in a country that is immediately threatened by South Africa is that the main beneficiary of the Hwange project appears to be one of the largest American multinationals, Anglo-American, who receive a guaranteed rate of profit on every ton of coal mined at the Hwange colliery. As the local magazine *Moto* pointed out, 'Anglo retains management of the project and thus the possibility of transfer pricing to ship hidden (and untaxed) profits to South Africa.' Some local economists (see *Moto* May 1983) argue the case for energy co-operation within the Southern Africa Development Co-ordination Conference (SADOC), and demonstrate clearly the need for a regional electricity grid at a fraction of the cost of independent projects like Hwange. But with conditions coming thick and fast in the wake of major loans from the World Bank and the IMF such a strategy is unlikely.

Indeed, the visit of the IMF team to Zimbabwe early in 1983 hardly aroused any interest. Yet the size of the sum borrowed, and the interest rate on repayments and the conditions for the loan are still unknown. What is known is that the Zimbabwean dollar was devalued by 17 per cent at the end of 1982 — although finance minister Bernard Chidzero said that this was not at the behest of the IMF, it was simply a coincidence. Interest rates have increased from 4.5 to 9.5 per cent, government spending has slowed down and concessions have been made to corporations, reducing their effective tax payments, and relaxing controls on remittances of corporation profits sent abroad.

The recent budget, announced in July,



Zimbabwean soldiers (DR)

includes major cuts in public spending, with a few exceptions such as defence, home affairs, and education. Whether these measures are conditions of the loan or not hardly matters. The fact that they coincide with IMF thinking leads to only one conclusion — that maintaining the profits of the private business sector and the higher income minority are more important than the needs of the vast majority.

Nor are these isolated examples. The government is desperately trying to attract capitalist investment to Zimbabwe, and most economic measures taken by the State are supposedly in order to provide the 'sound economic footing' of which Mugabe makes so much play.

It is perhaps then the final irony that, in a country which is presently self-sufficient in food resources, it is in food manufacturing that foreign investors have shown keen interest. The ubiquitous Heinz baked bean is about to make its entry onto the Zimbabwean scene. American-controlled Heinz has taken over locally-based Olivine Industries.

Gradually, the beautiful Zimbabwean dream is transformed into a horrible vision of peasant farmers in partially developed rural areas growing fields of beans on 'co-operatives' set up by World Bank 'developers' who sell them at state-controlled prices to Heinz, whose minimum-wage workers pack them in (local, cheap) tins, after which they are sold back to the workers and peasants at prices they cannot afford, and the profits are shipped back home to Reagan!

A major factor determining this attitude of ignoring the needs of the masses is the almost total lack of open political discussion in Zimbabwe. In some cases this amounts to a real fear of expressing political views, particularly if they could be construed as radically critical of government policy. Permission must still be sought to hold any kind of meeting, this is frequently refused particularly in the case of ZAPU and UANC (the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union of Nkomo, and Muzorewa's United African National Congress).

There are very few Marxist or any po-

litical books or pamphlets to be found. In the few public forums where views are expressed it is clear that there is an abysmal lack of any kind of political education. The two daily newspapers are empty of real political comment or debate or even of real news apart from ministerial speeches and visits.

#### THE NEED FOR POLITICAL DEBATE

Speeches by party members are one of the few forms of 'mass communication' both in the townships and the rural areas. They always take the form of a long peroration repeating the latest programmes or policies of the government, on this there is no discussion. In fact, the government constantly uses the election of ZANU in 1980 as its mandate for every step it takes in whatever direction.

This does not mean that there is no 'dissent'. Clearly the continuing disturbances in parts of Matabeleland and the Midlands reflect this, however fragmented and incoherent it might be. And Mugabe is absolutely mistaken to classify all criticism as the work of dissidents. In any case the 'dissidents' are certainly not one homogeneous group but a fragmented and frustrated response to the severe limitations on life in post-Independence Zimbabwe.

Although we do not condone the anti-social acts of banditry, theft and murder, we have to recognise that undoubtedly whole communities have been intimidated by the National Army under cover of smashing the 'dissidents', and that ZANU ex-combatants everywhere have been singled out for rough treatment ranging from threats to torture. This is not a situation that encourages people to voice their political criticism openly.

Nor is generalised frustration at the lack of real change confined to Matabeleland. In the Communal Lands in particular, even in ZANU strongholds, it is not hard to find people voicing feelings of having been 'abandoned' by the government — by the same 'freedom fighters' that they fed and supported during the struggle. In the towns, industrial disputes are not uncommon, although weak and fragmented.

But, as yet, none of this constitutes a class base of any significant force. Whatever the different motives of the 'dissidents', their tactics in the present situation are clearly mistaken. Neither 'guerrillism' nor common banditry can form part of an effective strategy of struggle against the combined forces of capitalism which continues to form the base of the Zimbabwean economy.

Mugabe remains a very popular figure, and Zanu (and ZAPU) still enjoy popular support. But there is no doubt that this is accompanied by a growing feeling of frustration that the expected fruits of Independence are fading into the distance. For the time being the politicians can blame the prevailing drought for many of the current hardships. Once that is over the stark realities of Zimbabwean capitalism will remain. ■





# AROUND THE WORLD



## CREATION OF THE POR-UNIFICADO

On July 2 and 3, 1983, a unification congress of the POR-Combate (Revolutionary Workers Party — Bolivian section of the Fourth International) and Vanguardia Comunista del POR (Communist Vanguard of the POR) took place. The new organisation has taken the name of POR-Unificado. The first issue, in July, of the newspaper of the new organisation, called *Bandiera Socialista*, was entirely given over to the analysis of the congress. The unification has come after four years of discussion and joint activity between the two organisations.

The congress took place in the headquarters of *Radio Nueva America*, who broadcast the first hour of the proceedings. There were 150 delegates present, miners, workers, peasants, teachers and students, coming from La Paz, Huanuni, Siglo XX, Potosi, Oruro, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Escoma, San Jose. Fraternal greetings were given by a representative of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and the PRT (Revolutionary Workers Party), Mexican section of the Fourth International. Representatives of Bolivian organisations, the PRIN (Revolutionary Party of the Nationalist Left), and the Revolutionary Front of the Left (FRI), and a leader of the Bolivian Workers Confederation (COB), also addressed the conference.

In his address, the representative of the PRIN, who brought the greetings of Juan Lechin to the congress, stated that, 'Our presence is neither casual nor just for form....We are realistic and modest, but the PRIN undertakes to take an active part in the programmatic unity of the left.' The FRI delegate declared that, 'co-government (1) requires a powerful instrument that the left forces must create....The working class needs a driving force, and a first step towards this has been taken here.' Comrade Karina spoke to the conference on behalf of the revolutionary women of the POR-Combate to highlight the important role of organised women in the revolutionary process.

After the opening contribution by Victor Sosa, leader of the former VC del POR, the long time Bolivian Trotskyist leader Hugo Gonzalez Moscoso, member of the former POR-Combate, opened the debate of the unification congress. At the end of this contribution he stated that it is necessary to pose the question of power for the popular masses through

'their own organisations, through the Bolivian Workers Confederation, a people's assembly, a workers and peasants parliament'.

A praesidium of six union leaders including Felipe Vazquez and Augusto Leon, miners leaders from Huanuni and Siglo XX, organised the discussion, which concluded by adopting the general line of the programme, the statutes, and the political resolution for POR-Unificado. It was also decided to maintain the new organisation as the Bolivian section of the Fourth International. A central committee of 17 full members and two alternatives was elected.

The political resolution, extracts of which are published in *Bandiera Socialista* No 1, outlines the way in which the austerity policy carried out by the Democratic People's Union (UDP) government and the pressure of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) sharpen the anti-worker measures being taken, and underlines the weakness of the UDP governmental coalition, shaken by numerous internal crises. The document looks finally at the most recent workers actions, the occupation of COMIBOL by the miners, and the appeal by the second congress of the Single Confederation of Rural Workers in favour of a co-government between the COB, the CSUTCB,

and the UDP. These events allow the comrades to affirm that 'the workers are not defeated.'

The POR-Unificado proposes to launch a national campaign against the austerity policy of the UDP government on the following lines, 'Against the economic measures that the IMF wishes to impose. For the rejection of the foreign debt. Against unemployment and for the right to work. For the minimum living wage and sliding scale of wages. For the workers, through the COB, to revise and determine the price rises of necessary articles. For the workers to decide the rate of production. For workers majority co-management in state enterprises, and for workers control and their right of veto in private enterprises.'

The other axis of the political work of the POR-Unificado will be the fight for 'the constitution of a united front of the workers parties and people's organisations around the COB, concentrated on the need to deepen the present democratic process and prevent a fascist coup d'etat.'

1. The COB has recently proposed to the UDP government a co-government formula, along the lines of the workers majority co-management in the mines.

## STRIKE IN THE HAMBURG SHIPYARDS

On September 12, the workers at the Hamburg shipyards voted to begin an indefinite occupation to stop threatened mass layoffs. The action is being supported by the engineering union, IG Metall. The workers hung the flag of Solidarnosc outside the yard as the symbol of their action. There is a possibility that this action may spread to the shipyards in Bremen as well. The shipyards in question are owned jointly by the German federal government and the states of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holdstein. The workers decide every day by vote whether to continue the occupation. They are doing no work in the yard itself, only small tasks to assure their right to use the canteen. This action is being supported

both by the official union and by Aktive Metaller, a grouping expelled from IG Metall two years ago when it won the majority on the factory council (Betriebsrat). This split has now been healed in this action.

The workers have won an initial victory with a labor court decision rescinding 1,300 layoffs. These layoffs, however, are not definitely called off; the final outcome depends on the owners decision about the future of the yard.

Messages of solidarity for this action are important and should be sent to the following address:

Betriebsrat, Howaldtswerke, Deutsche Werft, Rosstrasse 20, 2000 Hamburg 11, Federal Republic of Germany



## HUGO BLANCO SUSPENDED FROM PARLIAMENT

*The Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, (PRT — Revolutionary Workers Party), Peruvian section of the Fourth International, has been the victim of repression several times over the last few years. In 1981 Teofilo Inga Quispe, a member of the PRT, was murdered by the hired thugs of the mayor of San Luis. In June 1981 Hugo Blanco was beaten up during a demonstration by the street vendors federation. In the same year there was the arrest and torture of several militants of the PRT in Ayacucho, the murder by the 'sinchis' (a particularly repressive section of the police) of Raimundo Mitma, a member of the PRT in Ayacucho, the arrest of a journalist from Combate Socialista the PRT's newspaper, etc.*

*These various attacks clearly show that the repressive forces have the PRT in their target sights. This wave of repression has recently taken the form of the suspension of Comrade Hugo Blanco from his parliamentary functions until the end of the present session. This is contrary to the legal statutes which only allow for such a suspension for two weeks. This measure is an open attack on the democratic rights of a current in the workers movement. But it is also, for a revolutionary party based in the popular layers of a society where the economic crisis is in full swing, a direct attack on its financing. Because, obviously, the parliamentary salary of our comrade will not be paid throughout this period.*

*We ask you to publicise this flagrant attack on the democratic rights of our comrades of the PRT and to send messages of protest to;*

Presidente Belaunde Terry  
Casa de Gobierno  
Lima  
Peru

and to:

Presidente  
Camera de Diputados  
Lima  
Peru

*We publish below the statement made by Hugo Blanco on the occasion of his suspension.*

On August 29, 1983 I was suspended as a member of the Peruvian parliament for having accused, on the floor of Parliament, General Clemente Noel, military commander of the Ayacucho region, of being an assassin.

I protest against the form and the whole basis of this preemptory procedure which suspends me from parliament until the end of this parliamentary session (December) and thereby deprives me of

my parliamentary immunity for this period. Furthermore this procedure flagrantly disregards article 10, Chapter 9 of the internal Parliamentary Regulations, which stipulate that such a suspension cannot exceed 15 days.

The form of this suspension is illegal according to the very rules of the Peruvian Parliament. The vote must be organised by calling on the members of parliament to stand up or remain seated. Abstentions are not allowed. A rollcall (named) vote has to be taken if a member requests one. The vote which suspended me was a complete farce which is a discredit to Parliament. It was obtained anonymously since the members were asked only to approve the proposal by banging their fists on their desks, by 'acclamation', a sort of noise level test! Thus it was not even possible for the chairperson to provide a figure for voting!

The request for a rollcall vote made by the member, Enrique Fernandez Chacon, did not even get an answer from the parliamentary chairperson.

As to the substance of the affair, I stand by my accusations of assassination and genocide. I can give the lists of the names of peasants who have been executed and the villages bombed on the orders of General Noel. And I am not the first to publicise such information. Already at the beginning of this year the prosecutor of Ayacucho province demanded that charges be brought against General Noel. Also at the end of June the vice-chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on Human Rights had made a similar request. These calls could not result in a legal investigation due to the simple fact that the General is covered by his military functions and journalists no longer have access to the zone of military operations.

My suspension is the most elementary denial of democratic rights. It is part of the rightwing's 'putschist' escalation which has been characterised by a campaign denouncing Amnesty International, by a restriction on democratic guarantees for the next election campaign and by a systematic harassing of my party, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores — Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT). The offices of the PRT have been attacked, one of its members of Parliament has been physically beaten and one of its trade union leaders has been detained and tortured.

Experience has taught us that faced with this type of escalation from the right wing, any stepping back serves only to reinforce its arrogance. We must stand up and defend inch for inch, each of the democratic gains of the masses — without bending to threats or blackmail.

This is why, once again, I want to draw these facts to the attention of world opinion and call for protests against a flagrant violation of parliamentary rights by a body which is supposed to defend them. ■

Hugo Blanco Galdos, August 31, 1983.

## FREEDOM FOR THE COTTBUS PEACE ACTIVISTS

*The East German bureaucracy has launched a counter attack on the development of the independent peace movement in the country supported by the Protestant churches. Wearing of peace badges has been banned, their slogans taken up by the government and activists imprisoned, or expelled from the country.*

*We publish below a letter-petition signed by intellectuals resident in France against this repression, and for the release of activists from the peace circle in Cottbus.*

Peter Knotter, 25, sentenced to 3 years six months; Petra Knotter, 25, sentenced to 2 years ten months; Bernd Dewards, 21, sentenced to 3 years; Peter Nowick, 25, sentenced to 3 years; all arrested since November 1982.

Franck Fischer, 33, sentenced to 2 years six months; Christa Fischer, 30, sentenced to 2 years six months; Reinhold Kauczov, 28, sentenced to 3 years; sister Regine Kauczov, 28 years, sentenced to 3 years; and the singer Charlie Scheithauer, 40; all arrested since January 1983.

These people are in prison at Cottbus, in the German Democratic Republic, for having infringed Article 99 of the East German penal code 'Divulging information dangerous to the country'. They are all, with the exception of two, employed by the Evangelical Church in Cottbus.

The real reason for their arrest is that people from this group of friends have publicly declared themselves to be from the movement 'Schwerter zu Pflugscharen' (Turn the swords into ploughshares) for peace, and have printed posters against the war toys and for human rights.

In Apolda, in February 1983, Reinhard Linzke, a lorry driver, was arrested for having refused to do his service as a reservist. In Brandenburg Uwe Keller, 28 years old, and an artist, has been in prison since October 1981. He was sentenced to 6 years and eight months in a closed prison for having 'attacked the security of the state and denigrated the GDR'. Until his arrest he was a Bausoldat (a soldier who does not carry weapons) in a military hospital near Leipzig. He has for a long time been considered as a 'nuisance' by state representatives because of his public appearances as a composer and singer (for example at the 'Blues Mass' in East Berlin). For that he has already served a sentence of one year at the end of the 1970s. At the present time Uwe Keller is in the psychiatric service of the prison in Brandenburg. He is kept under drugs.

The signatories of this letter demand their immediate release.



# For a generalised mobilisation against US missiles and NATO

*Declaration of United Secretariat of the Fourth International  
September 12, 1983*

When the leaders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) took the decision in September 1979 to build new missile bases, and to deploy the new 572 American missiles in Europe at the end of 1983, they did not expect such a massive response by the peoples and workers all over Europe.

But last autumn, there were more than three million of us demonstrating against Cruise, Pershing and Nato. There will be still more of us out this year to force a retreat on Reagan-the-warmonger and the capitalist governments that have agreed to his crazy demands.

## NO TO NATO! NO TO WAR BUDGETS!

Ronald Reagan and his Nato allies were the instigators of the arms race now threatening the whole of humanity. They are the chief warmongers.

They are perpetrating their criminal acts in Africa and the Middle East, in Chad and Lebanon. In Central America in particular, American imperialism is supporting the dictatorships ensconced there, is preparing for war against Nicaragua, and is already giving direct aid to the Somocista mercenaries. It has no qualms about drowning in blood peoples that are fighting for their freedom.

The imperialists can cynically contemplate transforming the European continent into a battlefield, and are prepared to cause tens of millions of deaths.

They think that one of the ways out of the capitalist crisis is gigantic arms spending. The fundamental aim of this is to maintain the domination of the bourgeoisie.

They are following a policy of militarisation that is inextricably linked to the austerity policies being imposed by all the capitalist governments in Western Europe.

While there is still time we have to act to stay the hands of these murderers!

Workers must struggle first of all in each imperialist country to disarm their own bourgeoisie.

Reagan can do nothing without the agreement of the governments concerned. The primary objective of the demonstrations this autumn must be to force them to refuse to deploy the Nato missiles. They must be presented with a choice: to abide by the unambiguously expressed wish of the people, or resign.

Not one single new American missile must be deployed. Not a single new Nato base must be built, and those that already exist must be dismantled. This is the simple and forceful message of the astounding mass anti-war movement that has developed in capitalist Europe.

## SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEACE MOVEMENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE

For their part, the first demonstrations of the independent peace movement in Eastern Europe, in the USSR, Czechoslovakia, in Hungary, and above all in the German Democratic Republic, constitute an opposition to the military policy of the bureaucracy, which denies every elementary democratic right to the masses, and particularly 'the right to work for peace in an independent fashion'.

In addition, the Soviet bureaucracy has not hesitated to respond to the deployment of American missiles by the threat to deploy new missiles in Eastern Europe, in contempt of the sovereignty of the people. This policy can only cut down the mobilisation of the anti-war movement in the West.

This is why we stand in full solidarity with those in Eastern Europe who are struggling against the arms race and its murder-

ous implication. They reject a militarisation policy which weighs more and more heavily on the economy of the Soviet Union and the other member-states of the Warsaw Pact. They reject a militarisation policy that is contributing to the deterioration of the conditions of existence for the peoples living under the yoke of bureaucratic dictatorship.

By demanding the right to organise independently, by demanding the right to know and give an opinion about decisions regarding armament and military spending, the independent peace movements in Eastern Europe are challenging the bureaucratic order.

The growth of mobilisations in these countries will stimulate the whole of the anti-war movement in the capitalist countries, and at the same time strengthen the struggle against the imperialists — the chief warmongers.

## ALL TOGETHER IN THE AUTUMN MOBILISATIONS

The American imperialists have every interest in giving the impression that they are negotiating. In this way, they can better conceal their aggressions, and their huge war effort. At the same time, they can retain, through secret diplomacy, at the least cost, a decisive military superiority that enables them to threaten the peoples fighting for their liberation.

The anti-war movement can have confidence in neither the capitalist government nor the Kremlin bureaucrats. Both sides negotiate in secret and on the backs of the masses.

The united action of young people and workers does more for peace than interminable negotiations behind closed doors around a baize-covered table.

Only powerful demonstrations independent of the state, in the East and West, based on the active strength of the workers movement, can put an end to the inexorable course of the arms race and nuclear terror.

The demonstrations this autumn, a few weeks before the first scheduled deployment of US missiles in Europe, will be crucial. So, no possibility can be neglected to build these actions and assure their success, since they will weigh heavily in the balance when the capitalist governments have to take stock.

The Fourth International and its sections in Europe will lend all their forces to this struggle against militarisation and capitalist austerity, for peace and socialism.

— From Comiso in Sicily to Greenham Common in Great Britain, no to the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles!

— Out with the Nato bases! Dismantle the American forward bases in Europe! Down with the dictatorship that makes Turkey a fortress maintained by imperialism in the region!

— No to the French and British nuclear-strike forces, which are part and parcel of the imperialists' military array!

— For a nuclear-free Europe, from Poland to Portugal, from Sicily to Scandinavia!

— For a massive reduction in military budgets, complete nationalisation and reconversion of the arms industry — jobs not bombs!

— Support the democratic rights of soldiers conscripted into the bourgeois armies, support the workers who are victims of special laws on employment and trade-unionisation in the armament industry!

— End imperialist intervention in Central America!

United Secretariat of the Fourth International  
September 12, 1983