

# International VIEWPOINT

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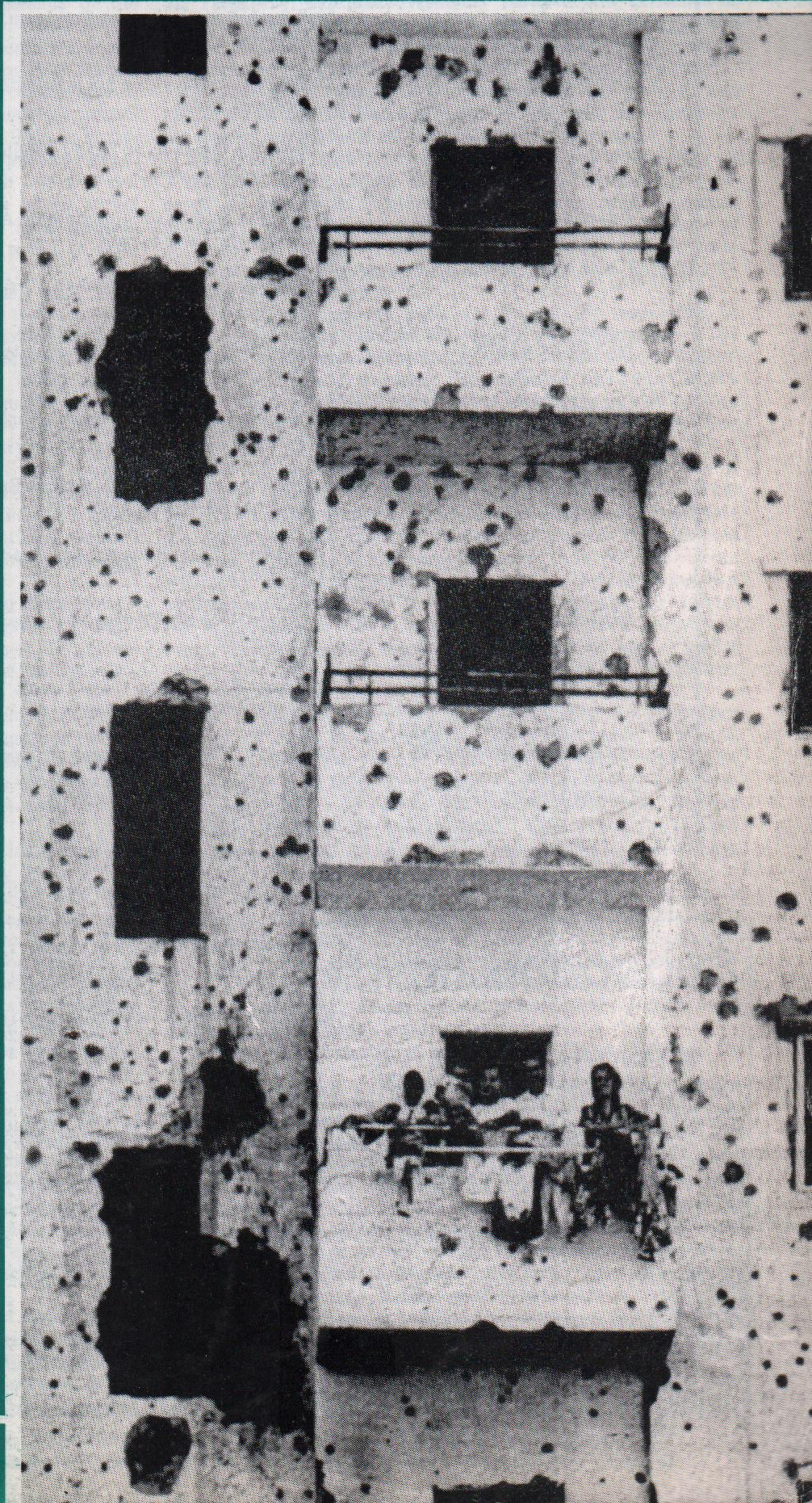
28 NOVEMBER 1983

## Imperialists strike deeper in Lebanon

Democracy and  
the US  
in Grenada

New assault  
on US unions

Chile's difficult  
'transition'



# International Viewpoint

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# For the defense of the Palestine national movement

The bombing of the Palestinian camps in North Lebanon and the siege of Tripoli by Syrian troops and dissidents of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) could result in the liquidation of the PLO as the unified and representative organisation of the Palestinian national movement. The PLO as such an organisation — over and above its many links of dependence with different Arab regimes — constitutes a relatively autonomous political force in the regional conflicts. This is inconvenient for more than one force on the regional political scene. Throwing the Palestinian resistance out of North Lebanon can be seen as completing the work started by the Israeli armed forces in the south of the country with its June 1982 invasion and siege of Beirut. Zionist leaders make no secret of their satisfaction at the new weakening of the PLO.

The Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza occupied territories instinctively understood that it was another deadly blow against their struggle. Their demonstrations against Syrian aggression at Tripoli, more than a defence of Yasser Arafat and his policy, show a desire for unity, for defending the PLO as the only instrument of effective struggle for their national demands. This sentiment is expressed in the communique issued by the professional associations (lawyers, doctors, etc.) of the occupied territories denouncing "the Syrian conspiracy against the independence of the PLO" and calling for "democratic discussion inside the organisation and for respecting the decisions of the Algiers Palestinian National Council meeting" which reaffirmed Yasser Arafat as chairperson of the PLO.

The open division of the PLO and the civil war in its ranks is the "delayed" political price for its defeat in Beirut and strikingly contradicts Yasser Arafat's claims that this military defeat could be transformed into a political victory at the negotiating table.

The positions taken by the leaders of the dissidents inside the PLO since the beginning of 1983 reflected legitimate criticisms and concerns, widely shared among Palestinian fighters after the evacuation of Beirut. Above all they represented a sharp opposition to diplomatic operations personally undertaken by Arafat.

Giving his own interpretation of the Palestinian National Council's (PNC) resolutions from the February 1983 Algiers meeting, Arafat in fact in March, through personal talks with King Hussein of Jordan, engaged in negotiating a 'protocol agreement' that constituted a threefold violation of the PNC decisions. That is, Arafat gave up the demand for inclusion of the PLO in any negotiations with Israel. He abandoned in practice the right of the Palestinian people to establish its own sovereign state, prior to any form of association with Jordan. And finally, he only explicitly mentioned the Reagan plan among the various projects that could lead to a negotiated solution. This protocol which, to all intents and purposes, was accepted by Arafat, was rejected on April 10, both by the PLO Central Committee as well as by the Central Committee of his own organisation, the Fateh.

The public declarations of Abu Mussa and Abu Saleh, spokespersons for the dissidents, also draw on the strong desire of PLO members for a democratisation of the PLO leadership structures, against bureaucratisation, the influence of 'chiefs' and the personal power of Arafat, and even for a more scrupulous control over the organisation's finances.

However, by going from legitimate criticism to armed rebellion under the patronage of the Syrian regime and with Libyan support, the PLO dissidents rushed into a politically suicidal adventure. Whatever the immediate outcome of the confrontation among Palestinians, this political line is likely to

result in the destruction of the PLO as a united organisation of the Palestinian national movement. However, the existence of such an organisation is vital for the resistance and struggle of a people hounded out of its own homeland and condemned to dispersal and life in refugee camps in different Arab countries.

A 'new PLO' formed in Damascus under the political and military tutelage of Hafez el-Assad would only be a pawn in the overall negotiations on the situation in the region.

The political trajectory of the dissident Palestinian officers is not however surprising. After the Beirut defeat and the dispersal of Palestinian fighters in a half-dozen Arab countries, the only chance for a renewal of the PLO lay in a transfer of its centre of gravity to the occupied territories and the mass organisation of the population there, who had not directly suffered the Beirut defeat.

However, an opposite path was taken. By responding to Arafat's diplomatic concessions just by a reaffirmation of the principles of the movement and a return to the pre-1974 tradition of the 'armed struggle', the uprooted dissidents of the South Lebanese refugee camps were inevitably pushed to turn to Damascus for the material support they needed for their struggle.

However, for a long time Syria, like the other Arab states of the region, has shown in practice what its notion is of defending the Palestinian cause. It has always sought to subordinate the activity of the Palestinian liberation movement to its own interests. That has been a constant thread in its policies — from setting up an armed Palestinian organisation directly controlled by Damascus (the Saika) to intervening, alongside the Lebanese Phalangists in 1976, against the Tall-el-Zatar Palestinian camp, and then more recently its blocking of arms supplies during the 1982 Beirut siege, and finally today to its military involvement in the siege of Tripoli.

For Syria, the important thing is holding the maximum number of cards in the regional diplomatic game — that is, a part of Lebanese territory and the Palestinian movement. Its objective is to bring the greatest possible influence to bear in the negotiations and extract the best possible price for any rapprochement with the United States. That is, it wants to pressure Washington to force Israel to make substantial concessions, particularly over the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

In such a framework there is hardly any place for even a 'relatively' independent Palestinian movement. The Pan-Arab ideology of the Ba'athist party, which holds power in Damascus, is a cover for its real diplomatic interests in the region. It dissolves the specificity of the Palestinian liberation struggle in the overall Arab cause, whose banner is supposedly carried most resolutely by the Syrian regime.

As the commentator of the *Financial Times* (October 18, 1983) notes:

"Their [i.e. the Israelis.] invasion, and the subsequent military and political imbroglio, have gradually forced the Americans to recognise the special nature of Syria's historical relationship with Lebanon, and the consequent need for Washington to engage in real diplomacy with Damascus if there is to be any chance of stability in Lebanon." Since Robert Mac Farlane was named as American special envoy for the Middle East, these diplomatic relations are said to have improved to the point that, according to the Syrian Foreign minister: "they [the Americans] admit that the Syrian military presence in Lebanon is different in kind from that of Israel (because it was invited in by the Lebanese government in 1976), and they admit that Syria is not a Communist country nor a Soviet puppet".

However, the United States is not manoeuvring in a vacuum. Israel remains its strategic ally in the region, whatever

tensions Washington may have with the Zionist regime. In this complex situation each force can raise the stakes. Reagan may be led, for a time, to step up pressure against Syria. The deployment of American forces in the region could lead to a 'punitive expedition'. This could be a means of enabling the U.S. to further improve the relationship of forces on the ground, in order to either obtain a satisfactory negotiated agreement or to roll back Syrian ambitions.

In the short term, the struggle against imperialist and Zionist plans, and against the specific manoeuvres of the Syrian regime means that defending the Palestinian national movement — i.e., the unity and integrity of the PLO — is a priority. Concretely this means demanding an immediate halt to the fighting between Palestinian forces and defending the Palestinian fighters against Syrian aggression.

This position implies no particular allegiance to Arafat himself, nor support for his past policies (which are largely responsible for the deadend in which the Palestinian resistance got trapped) and even less a blank cheque for future policy. In fact, Arafat could be tempted to try to get out of his predicament by starting negotiations again with Hussein of Jordan.

The European governments and reactionary Arab regimes would be favorable to such an approach.

The fighting between PLO factions can still be stopped on the basis of maintaining PLO unity and reaffirming the national right of Palestinians to return to their homeland, for self-determination and the establishment of an independent state under the leadership of the PLO. Outside of these widely recognised elementary principles, many gaps and ambiguous formulations of the Algiers' PNC leave the door open to all sorts of interpretations, including the plan for a Jordanian-Palestinian federation within the framework of the Reagan plan — that is, the establishment of a Palestinian homeland directly subordinated to the Jordanian state.

Today these questions cannot be resolved. They must be dealt with democratically in an extraordinary PLO congress. Such a congress is being demanded by several sectors of the PLO as well as by the population of the occupied territories. But the pre-condition for preparing such a congress is the lifting of the siege of Tripoli by the Fateh dissidents and Syrian and Libyan troops. ■

## French revolutionaries condemn 'vengeance' bombing

*When social democrats have responsibility for an imperialist government they are even more hypocritical than the right itself. On Wednesday November 16, Francois Mitterrand, French president, appeared on the television programme 'L'heure du verite' (The hour of truth) to answer questions about French foreign policy. During this programme he justified the French presence in Lebanon thus:*

*'Our mission today remains to occupy the zone in Beirut that has been entrusted to us by the Lebanese government, and to do there what our soldiers do so well: ensure peace. Our soldiers are at once nurses, guardians, peacekeepers. They help the old, they save the young, all those little children that one sees run into the street among the shells and the bullets. Every time, our soldiers intervene to save lives. This is why they are called soldiers of peace.'*

*The next day French Super-Etandards bombed the city of Baalbek as a 'punishment' for the attack on French paratroopers headquarters in Beirut. Mitterrand claimed that this attack was directed against a pro-Iran Shi-ite Muslim stronghold responsible for the attack. However the community denied responsibility.*

*We publish below the statement issued by the national leadership of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International, on November 18, following the first news of this bombing.*

By sending French naval airforce Super-Etandards to bomb the city of Baalbek, Francois Mitterrand has gravely escalated French imperialist involvement in the endless war in Lebanon.

The Baalbek operation represents a form of state terrorism that nothing can justify. It will unleash a chain of new guerrilla attacks and new reprisals, for which the primary responsibility will be on the French government, which is keeping its troops in a country where they have no business.

The LCR reiterates its demand for the immediate withdrawal of French troops from Lebanon. It issues an urgent appeal to the workers and democratic movement to act to force the withdrawal of French troops before the country finds itself involved by Francois Mitterrand's arbitrary decisions in another dirty colonial war.



**PALESTINE**



## GRENADA

# The "democracy" the US is bringing

Gerry FOLEY

The U.S. rulers have never had, and are hardly likely to have again, such an opportunity to score a decisive political victory over a revolution as they got in Grenada.

It was not hard to bring overwhelming military power to bear to intimidate such a small population.

In a country where the great majority lives from small farming, small trade, and tourism, it should not be too difficult to seduce a certain small business element, if only by the money spent by the occupation forces.

Most importantly, the population was confused and demoralized at the time of

the U.S. landing. The leaders of the revolution had been murdered by former comrades. The guns of the revolutionary army had been turned on the Grenadian people themselves.

Washington, therefore, had a golden opportunity to "rescue" Grenada from "leftist thugs," to demonstrate the virtues of "democratic law and order."

The U.S. rulers have not had a chance like that to present themselves as the champions of democracy since the second world war period.

Furthermore, the Grenadian peoples, like all peoples in the Western Hemisphere, have been deluged with anti-Communist propaganda for decades. Despite the strong hatred most of these peoples

have for U.S. imperialist domination, such indoctrination has not failed to have an effect.

Given this condition, the Austin-Coard coup must have aroused deep fears. This is all the more so because the general political education given to the masses and the party did not include an explanation of why and how revolutions can degenerate and put these processes in their historical perspective.

Nonetheless, despite all the political advantages the U.S. rulers had in their attempt to pose as defenders of "democratic law and order," they have very quickly revealed the ugly face of sadistic and ruthless repressors.

In its November 15 issue, the Paris daily *Liberation* reported:

"Several hundred Grenadians have been arrested and jailed by the American occupation forces, the *Washington Post* correspondent has cabled from St. George's, the capital of Grenada. The persons arrested are suspected of sympathy for, or links with, the revolutionary regime overthrown by U.S. intervention.

"The arrests, which are completely arbitrary, are carried out on the basis of informers or lists of people who worked for the Grenadian government, as well as lists of members of the New Jewel Movement.

"At least 230 prisoners are being held in a camp run by the American army at Point Salines in the southeast of the island. The camp is overlooked by guard towers and surrounded by barbed wire."

The number of prisoners cited is very high for such a small island. The entire membership of the New Jewel Movement (NJM), for example, was only about 800. Furthermore, the U.S. authorities are apparently using a cat-and-mouse system, arresting people, releasing them, and re-arresting them.

Kenrick Radix, Grenada's former minister of justice and an opponent of the Austin-Coard coup, for example, has already been in and out several times. He has explained how the prisoners are being held in wooden boxes, similar to the Tiger Cages the U.S. forces and their allies used to hold Vietnamese prisoners.

"You have to stoop right down to get into the cell. The opening is only about two and a half feet high. The roof is a piece of badly fitting plastic sheet. The rain came in during the night and I was drenched."

The British *Guardian* correspondent Jonathan Steele has written:

"Reporters who drove to the airport at Point Salines, the main American operations base, could see the detention camp from the outside. We were not allowed in. The new camp consists of roughly two dozen wooden crates, about 10 feet all round, set in two rows behind barbed wire. Each crate has one small window."

What is a large number of prisoners for Grenada is quite a small one in absolute terms. The U.S. command did not need to confine them in such conditions. It has, after all, had to house thousands of occupation troops, and it certainly has

not put U.S. soliders in such accomodations.

The reason in fact for the "Tiger Cages" was the same as that which motivated the U.S. authorities to display Coard and Austin to the press half naked, blindfolded, and trussed up like captured gorillas.

The U.S. military wants to degrade and humiliate its prisoners, to make them look like whipped animals. That has clearly become standard operating procedure for dealing with rebels in colonial countries.

The methods show the fundamental reactionary character of U.S. military intervention in the underdeveloped world. To maintain imperialist exploitation, the population has to be kept terrified and degraded.

For example, Steele quoted in *The Guardian* the explanation given for Radix's detention by U.S. army spokesman Captain George White, who said that the ex-minister of justice was "picked up on the basis that he has been cited by the populace as an instigator...."

In every country in Latin America and the Caribbean where the U.S. has intervened a system of terroristic repression has been set up, in the recent decades usually accompanied by Ku-Klux-Klan-like death squads.

In fact, in an interview in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in early November, the U.S. Commander on Grenada, General Farris, said that one of the tasks of the occupation forces was to set up a police unit that would ensure that "no leftist revolutionaries would ever be able to get into power."

In view of the other examples of U.S. "help" in the Caribbean area — Guatemala, Somoza's Nicaragua, El Salvador — it may easily be imagined what any "police force" the U.S. army sets up on occupied Grenada is going to be like.

It is Washington, therefore, that is creating a "Tropical Gulag" on Grenada, similar to the bloody repressive systems it has midwived throughout the area.

The Grenadian revolutionary government could only survive in the face of imperialist pressures with the enthusiastic support of the overwhelming majority of the population.

The minute a section of the NJM turned on its comrades and then turned the army against the people, an imperialist triumph was inevitable.

Fidel Castro pointed this out in his November 14 speech at the memorial meeting in Havana for the Cuban internationalist workers killed defending themselves against the American invaders.

"The imperialists present the events [the Coard-Austin coup] as the coming to power of a group of hard-line Communists, loyal allies of Cuba. Were they really hard line? Could they really be allies of Cuba? Or were they conscious or unconscious agents of Yankee imperialism?"

"Look into the history of the revolutionary movement and you will see more than once the connection between imperialism and people who take what

look like left extremist positions. Take Pol Pot and Ieng Sary, who carried out genocide in Kampuchea. Aren't they today the most loyal allies the imperialists have in Southeast Asia? After the events in Grenada, since we had to call these people something, we called them the 'Pol-Pot Group.'"

Fidel went on to say:

"In Grenada the government was morally indefensible. A country where a split had occurred between the people and the party, the government and the army was militarily indefensible, because revolutionary war is possible and justifiable only in unity with the people."

The Cuban leader said that when a government put in power by a revolution turns its guns on the people, the revolution is dead.

"The imperialist government of the United States wanted to kill the symbol that the Grenadian revolution represented. But this symbol was already dead. The Grenadian revolutionaries themselves had destroyed it by their division and their colossal error.

"In our opinion, after the death of Bishop and his closest comrades, after the army fired on the people, after the party and the government became separated from the people, the revolutionary process could not survive."

Fidel used the harshest terms in describing the Coard-Austin faction, referring to them as "plotters" and "hyenas."

As the only revolutionary team that has succeeded in making a revolution and maintaining it in the very shadow of U.S. imperialism, the Castro leadership obviously understands some basic revolutionary principles that became obscured by Stalinist degeneration in the Soviet Union.

That is, the strength of a revolution depends ultimately on the power of its moral example, on the confidence it inspires in the activists and the masses.

Achieving a revolution in the face of reactionary repression and terror requires the strongest moral bonds among revolutionaries. Those who betray those ties are the worst kind of traitors. That is why Trotsky referred to Stalin as "Cain." Apparently Fidel meant the same thing by the word "hyena."

The fact is that when degenerate elements turn on their former comrades and the people, they are inevitably driven to try to make deals with the enemy, the capitalists and the imperialists.

That is apparently what the programmatic statement issued by the Revolutionary Military Council in the days after the coup represented. It called for a bigger role for private initiative and better relations with the U.S.

The Coard-Austin coup is explained fundamentally by the pressure of imperialism on the Grenadian revolution and by the poverty of the country.

Given Grenada's tiny size and the fact that soldiers earned only 200 Eastern Caribbean dollars a month, there was a very strong incentive for a section of the

military to look for some solution that could offer them better personal prospects.

There is no reason to look for any other sort of outside encouragement to explain the coup. After the story that Cuba was behind Coard fell flat, the international capitalist press came up with the line that the conflict in the NJM was between a "Soviet faction" and a "Cuban faction," the Coard-Austin group representing "Soviet communism."

It is, however, unlikely that the Soviet bureaucracy would have any interest in crossing the Cubans directly in an area where they themselves are more than reluctant to get involved.

In fact, this line of a "Soviet" and Cuban faction has the hallmarks of a disinformation operation. This is all the more so since some of these stories include what can only be deliberate falsifications, such as the claim that the Soviet press took a different line from the Cubans or cut out the paragraph condemning the murder of Bishop from the October 25 statement of the Cuban government.

Anyone who can read the Soviet press can see in a minute that there is no truth in these claims. Thus, the Kremlin obviously has no monopoly on the "big lie" technique.

The New Jewel government clearly did not create an atmosphere of totalitarian intimidation, otherwise it would be hard to understand how thousands of people could mobilize so quickly to release Bishop or why the mood of the crowd was so festive and unafraid, as eyewitnesses say it was. The Grenadian people were used to expressing themselves.

After the shock of the shootings had passed, they would probably have made short work of the Military Council. But they did not get a chance. The imperialists forestalled this by invading.

Obviously there had to be weaknesses in the system of mass direct democracy the NJM was trying to build. In fact, the events have shown that it is both extremely difficult and vitally important to build a real mass democratic process under the overwhelming pressure of imperialism.

With whatever limitations it may have had, the NJM leadership clearly understood this, as do the Salvadoran revolutionaries.

And the same principle is reflected in Fidel's statement that when a government turns the army against the people, it can no longer be revolutionary.

The U.S. invasion and the repressive system the U.S. forces are now installing on Grenada shows clearly what fundamentally prevents peoples in the colonial world from solving their own problems and achieving meaningful democratic rights.

Against that background the example of the Grenadian revolution will remain a continuing inspiration to oppressed peoples, as well as a model to be studied and perfected, like the Paris Commune or the Russia of the soviets. ■

# How the Grenadians tried to build democracy

*The author of the following article spent some time in Grenada in the period preceding the U.S. invasion. It is from the November 10 issue of Internationalen, the paper of the Swedish section of the Fourth International. We have shortened it somewhat for space reasons.*

Roland ELIASSON

Long before the revolution in March 1979, the New Jewel Movement said that the political system that existed on Grenada should be replaced by another one. In its 1973 manifesto, the NJM said, among other things:

"Our objective is to gradually replace the existing political system with a genuinely democratic, grass-roots system through which the people in every town and parish can exercise power in their own way, in their own interests, to build a decent future for themselves."

In May 1973 the NJM called a People's Conference on Independence, which demanded that the people should have a say in the political process that was to lead to independence. Some 10,000 people attended the conference [out of a total population of 110,000]. (Grenada was a British colony up to February 7, 1974, when it became independent. It remained in the British Commonwealth.)

On November 4, 1973, the NJM called another People's Congress, which was also attended by 10,000 people. This assembly condemned the dictator, Gairy, for 27 crimes, including corruption and brutality. It demanded that Gairy resign within two weeks or else there would be a general strike.

Between 1974 and 1976, the NJM broadened its work through public discussions. That led to a lot of people participating in the party's activity at the grass-roots level. The NJM built local support groups in nearly every town and held a number of public meetings across the island.

The NJM also built special structures for youth and women — the National Youth Organization (NYO) and the National Women's Organization (NWO).

The movement made progress among the urban workers and the unemployed. The circulation of the party's paper, *New Jewel*, rose to 10,000 and it became the most widely read publication on the island.

In 1976 elections were held on Grenada. The NJM formed a coalition with a

bourgeois party, under the name of the People's Alliance. Gairy used elections as a means of control, but the NJM thought that it was worth making the attempt to participate in the election.

The results shocked Gairy. The People's Alliance got 48 percent of the vote, despite Gairy's election rigging, and got six out of the fifteen seats in parliament. The NJM could combine its work among the population with work in parliament.

Between 1977 and March 1979, Gairy's methods became more and more brutal. He admired the Pinochet regime in Chile and tried to imitate it. At the end of 1978, five Grenadians "disappeared." Since support for the NJM was growing, the persecution increased. The united opposition to Gairy drew a larger and larger proportion of the population behind it.

From 1978 on, the NJM concentrated on intervening in the unions and trying to activate them. Party members ran for the leadership posts in the most important unions. The NJM also built a new union, the Bankers and General Workers Union, which got broad support despite Gairy's attempt to crush it.

Party members and sympathizers went round the houses and discussed with their neighbors about Grenada's social and economic problems. The party's support groups met secretly in houses and in backyards to discuss various questions.

The party's members and sympathizers, as well as those of the women's organization and the youth organization, met regularly to discuss and formulate policy and to convince the population that it was necessary to build a new society. The members and sympathizers from these support groups elected representatives from all over the island, who then met in a national assembly. This body was called The National Coordinating Council for Delegates.

In 1978 the NJM broadened its activity and formed Parish Councils, which were to coordinate activities on the local level and at the same time make it possible for members and sympathizers to participate in the discussions and work. The Parish Councils were a rallying point for the support groups in the various parishes.

Meetings were held once a month. As the participation in the Parish Council Meetings increased, they were divided up on the basis of zones. Grenada's six parishes were divided into zones including

a group of towns, and Zonal Councils were established.

As a result of the overthrow of the Gairy regime on March 13, 1979, and the setting up of the People's Revolutionary Government, the population got a workers government led by the NJM. This gave a tremendous impetus to the development of various mass organizations and structures through which the people could participate in the decision-making process.

A characteristic of this new government on Grenada was that the heads of various departments, ministries, state enterprises, and public institutions had to give an accounting for their actions.

If a council demanded that a certain official appear before it, the official in question was obliged to do so. There was no way of getting out of it.

At first these councils were open to party members, sympathizers, and those most devoted to the revolution. Later, in the spring of 1981, they were opened to all those who were for the revolution and not working against it.

At the same time, the party set up parallel structures for the major groups in society — workers, farmers, women, and youth. Questions affecting these sectors were discussed in monthly workers, farmers, women, and youth parish council meetings.

The various Parish Councils, Zonal Councils, and mass organizations in the respective parishes were served and coordinated by a committee called the Parish Coordinating Body. Besides this, the various mass organizations had their own coordinating structures on the parish and national level.

In June 1980 the youth organization opened its ranks to all youth. It also ended the link with the NJM, becoming a mass organization rather than a party one.

The women's organization underwent a similar development. In May 1980 it decided to open its ranks to "all women who want to see our country develop and go forward and see women play an equal role in this process of development."

In its 1982 congress, the women's organization also ended the link with the New Jewel Movement. Among the reasons cited were the following:

"1) Not all members are sympathizers of the NJM Party; this is a mass organization.

"2) We want to unite all women of all political, religious, and other persuasions (except for counterrevolutionaries). That is what a mass organization is. A mass organization cannot be an arm of a party no matter how close it may be to it."

The overthrow of Gairy in 1979 meant a tremendous increase in the participation of the population in various decision-making processes and activities. The organizations literally mushroomed. More and more people took part in the public meetings, as well as in building cultural groups, such as calypso and reggae bands.

The population on Grenada began to realize that they could have an effect on the development of the society. It was no longer a question of having to vote every once in a while for some party. The people themselves had the possibility every day to have an effect on their own lives. They could play an active role in shaping the economy of the country. Grenada began to develop into a democratic society for the great majority rather than for a small minority.

Unlike most parties and governments in the West, the NJM and the PRG decided in a democratic way on laws and the budget. Two examples can illustrate the confidence the government had in Grenada's people.

Women on Grenada had a hard time getting jobs and were pushed around by the bosses. When they were pregnant, they often lost their jobs. They were simply fired.

The demand began to be raised by the women's organizations that women should be guaranteed maternity leave and be able to go back to their jobs after giving birth.

The government drew up a proposal for a Maternity Leave Law that was sent to the various mass organizations and councils for discussion.

It turned out that most people were for the law but the leadership of one union was against it. The government decided that the law should apply to everyone but the members of that union. Very quickly, the members elected a new leadership, and the new leadership was for the law.

The government could very easily have decided that the law would apply to everyone. But it did not do that. By its approach the government showed its confidence that the membership would see the advantages of the law and take care of the problem itself.

The decision on the Grenadian budget for 1982 and 1983 was a unique experiment in the history of democracy. For the first time the population in a country took part in the decisions about the national economy.

The 1983 budget was presented by the finance minister to a meeting of 1,000 delegates from the various mass organizations on February 24. Work groups were set up to discuss various aspects.

All told, 20,000 Grenadians participated in the preparation of the budget that was finally presented on March 17. But that was not all. All the viewpoints, suggestions, and criticisms were compiled so that they could be considered in the continuing discussions on the local level.

In the summer the council structures were developed further. In the towns Village Coordinating Bodies (VCB) were set up. These bodies were responsible for taking up the complaints and problems of the population. They were also to be responsible for social development.

The thirty Zonal Councils were also divided up into Mini-Zonal Councils, since the Zonal Councils could not deal



Anti-imperialist demonstration in Grenada (DR)

with all the problems or offer everyone a chance to speak. The Mini-Zonal Councils covered smaller towns.

The NJM's aim of establishing a new political system began to be put into practice in the summer. A National People's Assembly was to replace the PRG as the government of the country. In order to build up this assembly, the democratic structures were to be expanded to cover all the population.

The main objective was to get a council for every town and where that was not possible at least for every two towns. And this council was supposed to elect a town assembly that would carry out the function of an executive. These town assemblies were then to form Parish Assemblies. The National Assembly was supposed to be elected from among the representatives of the various town assemblies.

On June 4 the PRG set up a constitutional commission. The commission consisted of five members and a secretary. The government chose three of the members, the unions one, and the women's organization, the youth organization, and the small farmers association chose one together.

The terms of reference of the commission were the following:

"1. To obtain information on alternative forms of political constitutions and the ways in which political constitutions work in practice in other countries.

"2. To receive and consider written and oral representations as to matters which should be provided for, and the form and structure of, a Constitution for Grenada.

"3. To receive and consider the views and proposals of all classes, strata and interests of the Grenadian people.

"4. To prepare for public consideration and discussion a draft Constitution and participate in public and other discussions thereon.

"5. To consider and assess written and oral proposals for improvement or alteration of the draft Constitution received from organisations, groups or individuals.

"6. To prepare for the Government,

with such notes and other supplementary material as may be appropriate, a final draft Constitution for approval by the People of Grenada in a Referendum."

The Guiding Principles for the commission were the following:

"(a) The social, economic, political and structural transformation of Grenada geared toward a higher standard of living for the working people, the building of a new and just society, peoples participation and grass roots democracy, national unity.

"(b) The widest possible participation by the people in the country's decision-making process and the day-to-day administration of affairs of the State and of matters affecting their work and their residential communities....

"(d) Entrenchment of the principle of public accountability including the right of recall."

The Instrument of Appointment of the Constitutional Commission, with these Terms of Reference and Guiding Principles was published in the Grenada *Government Gazette* on August 26, two months before the American invasion.

When the U.S. government and the other Caribbean states talk about bringing democracy to Grenada today, there is only one word to describe that — hypocrisy.

The NJM, the PRG, and the people of Grenada were deprived by the October 25 invasion of the right to determine their own future.

Grenada's future, however, has not yet been determined. What can be said is that the progressive process on Grenada has suffered a disastrous defeat.

However, the revolution on March 1979 sowed a lot of seeds in the Grenadian earth and among the Grenadian people. From these seeds a grass-roots democracy had begun to grow, a pride in the people, a consciousness that they themselves could determine their future.

Let us hope that the fertile soil of Grenada and the lessons and experiences accumulated by the Grenadian people since March 1979 will foster new sprouts. ■



# The sad ending of an economic adventure

Michel WARSCHAWSKI

Three days after his appointment to the new government of Yitshak Shamir had been confirmed by the Knesset, Finance Minister Yoram Aridor announced his resignation.

While financial circles in Israel, including a not inconsiderable section of Aridor's own party, had been calling for his resignation for some time, he had hung on to his post, trying to show that it was possible, within the capitalist economic system, to flout the market laws and satisfy both the bourgeoisie and the toiling masses.

It was a leak, in all likelihood orchestrated from within the top financial circles of the country, about the 'dollarisation' project that finally forced the new head of government to rid himself of his finance minister. Ygal Cohen-Orgad, one of the strongest opponents of Aridor's policies, is going to replace him, thus marking the definitive end of an economic adventure that took the Israeli economy to the verge of bankruptcy.

## THE ECONOMIC POPULISM OF ARIDOR

Contrary to a widely-held belief, Herut — the party of Menachem Begin, Yitshak Shamir, David Levy and Yoram Aridor — is not and never has been the party of the Israeli big bourgeoisie. The great majority of this class has always been within the Labour Party. The social base of the Herut is petty bourgeois and popular, and its leadership has always been very sensitive to the pressure from the popular neighbourhoods of the big cities and the immigrants' towns.

The tensions that have surfaced several times within the Likud between the Herut and the Liberal Party — which is closer to financial circles, and particularly to small industry, commerce and land owners — reflect the class differences between the support for these two formations.

Some months before the last elections to the Knesset, at the beginning of 1981, Begin replaced the then minister of finances, Yigael Horovits, who had tried to implement austerity policies around the slogan 'The coffers are empty'.

Horovits was replaced with Yoram Aridor, former leader of the Herut group in the Histadrut. The new minister immediately undertook a policy of reducing taxes on consumer goods and

of raising subsidies on basic necessities. At the same time Aridor blocked all projects likely to lead to an increase in unemployment. This economic policy, while not arousing great enthusiasm in financial circles, was to guarantee the Likud's victory in parliamentary elections.

Advised by a charlatan, Dr. Yakir Plessner, who stated that the number one priority must be the fight against inflation — 120 per cent at the time — and that this was above all a psychological phenomenon, Aridor decided to follow his economic policy after the elections also.

Refusal to devalue the shekel and the detaxation of imported goods caused a spectacular rise in the balance of payments deficit. Moreover, it led to a flight of capital from industry to commerce, and to the stock exchange, where one could make spectacular gains of more than 200 per cent per year.

For the workers the Aridor-Plessner tandem had meant more than two years of full employment and a real rise in buying power thanks to the sliding scale, the subsidies and the reductions in taxes on consumer goods, and the stock speculation which was far from being limited to the most privileged sections.

To be sure, the running down of the health, education and social services had been an attack on the living standards of the toiling masses. But it is only in one or two years time that one will be able to see exactly the extent of the disaster in these areas. And, for the great majority, this deterioration in public services will pass unnoticed, overshadowed by their home gadgets, videos, cars, and foreign holidays, the number of which are — proportional to the number of inhabitants — the highest in the world.

A recent anecdote illustrates the scope of the consumer fever that has hit Israel. One of the biggest Japanese producers of videos sent one of his directors to Israel to find out what his customers did with the enormous number of machines they ordered, and to see if they did not export them elsewhere. It was only after he had seen with his own eyes, that he did in fact accept that this huge quantity was sold within Israel itself.

This massive subsidy for consumer goods and the relative guarantee to buying power and jobs are, in themselves, praiseworthy objectives. But they are totally utopian in the framework of the economic reality of the state of Israel

and the world capitalist system.

From the capitalist point of view — and this is indeed the point of view of the Zionist regime — the economic policy applied by the Begin government was suicidal.

Local industry was unable to compete with foreign products, not only on the international market but also on the internal market. As a consequence, dozens of factories were closed down and the capital invested in imports.

Agriculture, which for two decades had been the pride of the Israeli economy, and industrial diamond production literally collapsed in the course of the last two years as a result of the reduction in subsidies and the overvaluation of the shekel.

The balance of payments deficit tops 5 billion dollars, and at the end of the year the foreign debt will reach 33 billion dollars. As for inflation, Dr Plessner's theories have turned out to be completely erroneous, as could have been predicted. The present rate will top 200 per cent at the end of the year.

## COHEN-ORGAD'S DECLARATION OF WAR

Aridor has been succeeded as minister of finance by a fervent supporter of 'rationalisation' in spending. Since his appointment, Ygal Cohen-Orgad has stated that his objective would be to reduce the budget and balance of payments deficits. How does he intend to proceed? Certainly not by substantially reducing the military budget or that for the [West Bank] settlements, which comprise more than 50 per cent of the national budget.

Ygal Cohen-Orgad is not only a faithful mouthpiece of the Israeli bourgeoisie, he is also one of the deputies that voted against the Camp David Accords, considering them too defeatist. He is a declared supporter of the far-right settlers movement Gush Emunim. The new finance minister is on the point of finishing the construction of his new residence at Ariel, a new settlement right on the West Bank.

Since it is not in the area of guns and settlements, it will be in that of butter and jobs that Cohen-Orgad will announce draconian measures. It will be rather reduction of subsidies for basic necessities, a 5 to 10 per cent reduction in the social budgets, which will bring about a new deterioration in social services and huge cuts in jobs.

But the essential axis of the attack by the new finance minister on the workers will be the sliding scale, which he considers as the main cause of inflation, and of the uncompetitiveness of Israeli products on the international market.

For the first time in 15 years, it seems that the Zionist government has no other choice than to declare austerity for the workers.

The international banks and the International Monetary Fund have made the Zionist rulers understand that any new loans, which the Israeli economy

needs, will depend on this. Today the indices — particularly that of the construction industry, which is traditionally at the forefront of any turn in the economic situation in the country — show that we are on the verge of a crisis. In fact this crisis had been deferred for six years, thanks to an increase in American support and at the price of a growing deficit in the national budget and the balance of payments. The time has come to refill the coffers, or at least to plug the holes through which the government has allowed astronomical sums that it did not really have to drain away. (The war in Lebanon has, up till now, cost at least 2.2 billion dollars.)

### THE WORKERS AND PEOPLE'S REACTION

While the collapse of bank shares provoked panic amongst the vast majority of the population, who had been attracted by the high rate of profit on them, the government took the opportunity to raise the prices of basic necessities by 50 per cent and to devalue the shekel by 23 per cent.

'This is only a beginning', the new minister told the employers, who were not slow to add 'Now or never is the moment to implement austerity policies, including if that means the end of full employment.' (*Yediot Aharonot* October 21, 1983)

For the workers, the era of the car and video seems to have definitely ended. The guarantee of buying power by the sliding scale, and the guarantee of employment are the subjects now being discussed in the factories and popular neighbourhoods. A turbulent meeting of delegates from the Workers Committees forced the Histadrut to organise a two-hour protest strike which, for the first time for a long time, was observed by almost all the workers.

While pathetic in relation to what is at stake, the strike was, by virtue of the massive participation, a warning as much to the leaders of the Histadrut as to the government.

The 'workers' organisation and its Labour Party leaders are completely incapable of presenting an alternative economic policy to that of the government. In fact, the only way to at the same time maintain buying power and significantly reduce the budget and balance of payments deficits would be to substantially reduce military spending and the settlement budget.

No significant Zionist party is prepared to do that. This is the reason why one can talk of a consensus within the ruling class about the need for a sharp attack on the living standards of the workers. The Labour Party is content to demand 'an equitable sharing' of the effort.

We still cannot forecast the rhythm and form of the workers fightback. Will it be through committees of workers elected in the factories, co-ordinated at the level of sector and region, as the

appeal that the Revolutionary Communist League distributed in the workers centres proposes? Or will it rather be through Action Committees as happened at the beginning of the 1960s?

Will we once again see the popular neighbourhoods flare up, this time linking social and economic demands to the affirmation of the Eastern identity of their inhabitants? It is fruitless to speculate on these questions.

One thing is certain. The workers and people's demands will be, from the outset, political. The first demonstrations organised by the organisations from the popular neighbourhoods have all taken up the slogan, 'Money for the popular neighbourhoods, not for the settle-

ments'. This illustrates that all economic choices, in the last analysis, come back to political questions.

The question that is posed sharply today is whether the movements that mobilised the masses against the war and the occupation — whose composition was mainly petty bourgeois — will be capable of orienting towards the popular layers in order to unite the anti-war movement with the social layers capable of offering a progressive solution to the crisis of Israeli society. In any case, it is with this perspective that the revolutionary Marxist activists, despite their limited forces, will act within the working class and in the structures of the anti-war movement where they have been able to win a not inconsiderable audience. ■

## Soldiers' anti-war festival at A'hziv

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Leila KHATIB

It no longer makes the front pages, the massacres have given way to more discreet search operations, and the big military operations to routine ones. However, the war in Lebanon continues. The government's budget and the number of soldiers permanently mobilised on the other side of the northern frontier testify to that. The fact that the operation 'Peace in Galilee' has been transformed into Endless War in Lebanon undoubtedly explains why the centre of gravity of the anti-war movement has shifted towards the soldiers movement Yesh Gvul ('There is a limit' or 'There is a border').

While there has been a certain dropping off in the mobilisations by Peace Now and the Committee Against the War in Lebanon, Yesh Gvul has just organised an anti-war festival at A'hziv near the Lebanese border. Over 15,000 people attended in the most massive anti-war action since the Peace Now demonstration on the anniversary of the invasion of Lebanon.

Despite the threats of a future boycott, and the real risk of seeing the doors of television and radio studios shut to them, the best known singers and groups in the country responded to the appeal of Yesh Gvul to come and perform in a benefit for the families of soldiers who have refused to serve in Lebanon. These soldiers have been deprived of their salaries for the weeks, or even months, that they have been in prison.

The poet Yehonatah Gefen hosted the show where one could hear Hava Alberstein, Shalom Hanoach, Arik Sinai, the group Benzine, and many others. Most of them not only sang but explained the

reason for their presence at A'hziv under the huge banner 'Bring the boys home'.

Those attending, mostly young people, came from kibbutzim in the south as well as immigrant villages in the north. One could even note, sitting side by side, soldiers recently released from prison for refusing to serve in Lebanon, and military police who just a few weeks ago were their gaolers, and who the next day would return to prison No 6 with messages of solidarity for those still serving their sentences.

The success of the Yesh Gvul festival (already dubbed Yesh Gvulstock by the Israeli press) is in the main explained by the real impact of the refuseniks in the Israeli army, and in society as a whole.

While the war is less spectacular than previously, it is a tangible and dangerous reality for tens of thousands of reserve soldiers. As our comrade Michel Warschawski, who is presently serving 28 days in Prison No 6, wrote 'In each unit that must leave for Lebanon there are only one or two soldiers who are prepared to go to prison. But there are dozens of others who discuss whether or not one should refuse to go, who hesitate, who will refuse to go the next time, or the one after. That's to say nothing of the dozens who find some scheme to avoid going. Whatever it is, before going to prison I took part in dozens of discussions in my unit on this subject. Never once did I meet a completely hostile reaction, in general it was encouraging.'

It is because the opposition to the war in Lebanon is so strong within the Zionist army that the military authorities do everything possible to discourage people from refusing. Three weeks after he had completed his sentence Michel Warschawski had to rejoin another unit in Lebanon, or once again go to prison. This could go on indefinitely. They would have to do more to break Yesh Gvul, and more still to persuade Israeli soldiers that there is something to be gained in the Lebanese quagmire. ■

## Spreading strikes by public workers against austerity

One feature of the latest phase of the world economic crisis is that most of the small north European countries that have long enjoyed high levels of prosperity and social welfare have been dragged into the vortex.

The labor movements in these countries tend to look to other countries in the same category. The following article on the recent Dutch public workers strikes is by a correspondent of *Klassekampen*, the paper of the Danish section of the Fourth International.

AMSTERDAM — No trains were running from Amsterdam to the north. In some areas, there was no mail. Garbage was piling up on the streets. A whole series of state agencies were disrupted, from the electricity board to the police.

That was the situation in various parts of the Netherlands on Monday, November 7, when public workers began a long campaign of rotating strikes against the cuts in real wages that are supposed to go into effect on January 1.

There is something wrong with the Dutch economy. The condition of state finances is not so good. And the right-wing government thinks that the solution is clear — the workers have to pay for the capitalist crisis.

The premier, Ruud Lubbers, as it happens, has a personal fortune of 5 million guilders, which amounts to 15 million Danish kroner, or close to 2 million dollars. He is the local version of our Schleuter [the right-wing premier who got austerity going in a big way in Denmark].

The Dutch working people have already been hit hard by the crisis. The number of unemployed is running around 800,000 which represents 16 percent. This is the highest percentage in any industrialized (OECD) country.

Next year, unemployment is expected to rise to 18 per cent, that is, nearly one out of every five workers will be prevented from producing value for the society and will have to live from what is produced by other workers.

On top of this, a few weeks ago, the Dutch parliament adopted a law by a majority of 81 out of 150 that calls for cutting the real wages of public employees and benefits for recipients of social welfare (the unemployed and the ill) by 3.5%.

This attack was immediately met with protests. Sections of public workers staged protest walkouts who have never struck before.

But as in the Belgian public workers strike a few months ago, it was the railroad workers who took the lead. They drew the rest of the transport sector behind them in a work-to-rule action, which is now in its fifth week.

To illustrate the anger among the public workers, it can be pointed out that the very morning the action began the leadership of the Christian union movement made a statement saying that such protests were suicidal. But before the day was out, they were forced to fall in behind the actions.

An attempt the next day to get the actions stopped was voted down. To the contrary, more and more people began saying that what was needed was "what happened in Belgium" — that is, a general strike of the public sector.

(The Dutch labor movement is split between the Social Democrat-dominated FNV, which has about a million members and a Catholic wing, the CNV, with about 300,000 members.)

These protest actions by the transport workers were the spark for the rotating strikes that began Monday and are planned to continue until January 1, when the law is supposed to go into effect. However, the government has now called the unions in to discuss the situation.

The objective of the government's attack is not just the immediate economic one. It also has two clear political objectives. The first is to drive a wedge between workers in the private sector and workers in the public sector. The second is to break the tradition of aligning unemployment benefits and other social benefits with the prevailing wage levels in the society as a whole.

If the government succeeds in driving wedges into the Dutch working class between public and private workers, between the employed and the unemployed, then obviously its way will be clearer for stepping up attacks against other sections of workers.

For that reason also, it is essential to unite the working class to resist this onslaught. But the leadership of the Social Democratic Party (PVdA) and the trade-union leaderships are obstructing this.

As an alternative to the government's policy, the Social Democrats and union leaders are proposing that the workers real wages be cut a bit, specifically 2 percent. For the public workers, obviously this would be less of a bite than 3.5 percent. But for the workers in the private sector it would mean a cut in their real wages of 2 percent more than the right-wing bourgeois government itself has proposed.

At the same time the PVdA and union leaders are refusing to take any concrete steps toward united actions. The leadership of the Catholic public workers unions has even come out directly against the public workers' fight against cuts in their real wages.

In this situation, the Dutch workers have difficult tasks to accomplish:

— The ongoing rotating strikes have to be extended, effectively organized, and made into united actions through coordination.

— In the private sector, solidarity has to be built with the public workers struggle. There was a first example of this on Monday when 500 food workers blocked a road in solidarity with the public workers.

— At the same time a left wing has to be built in the trade-union movement capable of dealing with the reformist leaders' wavering, betrayal, and splitting policy.

— Finally, it is necessary to work with the perspective of uniting all workers in both the public and private sector in the fight against cuts, and of building a united front that can bring down the government.

In this latter task the workers have common interests with the strong peace movement that is fighting against the installation of U.S. missiles in Europe, and specifically in the Netherlands.

The line of the bourgeois Dutch government is clear — increasing arms and cutting back on social expenditures.

The demonstration of 600,000 people recently in the Hague against the missiles, together with the strikes and actions of the past weeks, shows that the Dutch workers do not care very much for the mixed drink the bourgeoisie is offering them.



# German unions call women's rights demonstration

Steffi ENGERT

In early autumn, amid the anti-war days of action, the huge peace movement demonstrations and the preparation for the 35-hour week campaign — the DGB (national trade-union confederation) national leadership suddenly announced the first countrywide DGB women's demonstration against the government's austerity policies.

There was justifiable scepticism that the women's demands would be neglected by the apparatus in a half-hearted mobilization. There were quite a number of bad signs.

— The leadership of the IG Metall at first backed out on participating in the demonstration. The preparation of the 35-hour week campaign and the steel workers demonstration on September 9 were supposed to be more important. The slogan for the steel demonstration was 'All men to Bonn'!

— Leaflets for the September 18 demonstration were a rarity in most towns and counties. In many places, such as Esslingen, women took matters into their own hands and had leaflets printed as it seemed as if the national call would never come.

The most active women did everything they could to publicize the call for the demonstration during the anti-war rallies, placing leaflets on their stands and so on. But there was little attempt to use the opportunity afforded by these mass gatherings to launch the call from the speakers podium.

Despite these rather negative signs the mobilisation for the demonstration was really overwhelming. More than 20,000 women and men gathered in Bonn's Muensterplatz. Such a large turnout can be above all attributed to the efforts of the active women trade unionists.

The IG Metall leadership could not sell its arguments to self-confident women who were not afraid to take on their union leaders directly. So, a shamefaced call finally appeared in *Metall*, the trade-union journal.

All the sectors of the union were represented in Bonn. There were particularly strong contingents from the traditional women's sectors: textiles, clothing, and the NGG (food, luxury goods and hotel union). Also strongly represented were IG Chemie [the chemical industry

union], the OTV [public service workers union] and the IG Metall. Even women from the police union (GdP) had a banner demanding the retention of social factors in the decision to give legal abortion.

## WOMEN AND MEN

Between a third and a half of those present were male colleagues who had taken over practically all the 'responsible' positions: female stewards were far and few between. Women had no role at all in organising the start of the demonstration.

It was more a DGB demonstration for women's demands than one by DGB-women for their own demands supported by the entire trade union. In some of the corners of the Muensterplatz feminists attempted to engage women trade unionists in conversation.

The banners were a colorful sight. Here and there purple banners could be seen. The 'O' of OTV was often transformed into the women's symbol. Women from IG Metall carried boards in front of their foreheads in a graphic illustration of the German idiomatic saying for stupid, saying 'This is how men want us to be'.

The banners, slogans and chants of the women taking part did not simply raise the question of austerity policies in themes such as the threat of reduction in maternity leave funds, raising of the retirement age and restriction of abortion rights.

Nearly half the banners made reference to the problem of armament — the danger of war, and the relationship between military spending and social service cuts — particularly affecting women. They also took up Interior Minister Zimmerman's tightening of the immigration laws and the anti-foreigner campaign in general.

## NO PERSPECTIVE

The fighting spirit of the women taking part was scarcely reflected in the keynote speeches by Irmgard Blaettel, DGB women's leader, or DGB president Ernst Breit. As for protests against the government, reproaching it for not having kept its promises, there were scanty perspectives for action. Only the rather general



threat that 'We won't be had so easily!' or 'We won't take it any longer!' But even these remained without any bite.

However, a few days before the demonstration took place, the leadership had upgraded its importance, presenting it as the start of a longer campaign against austerity policies. But there was not a word about the goals, or the means to carry out this campaign. But the September 18 demonstration showed that the trade-union leadership will be under more and more pressure to act from the ranks, and that a lot of members are just waiting for the leadership to issue a call to go into action.

## OUR PERSPECTIVES

The demonstration of September 18 should not only be the beginning of a trade-union campaign against austerity policies. Above all it should launch a serious trade-union fight for women's demands.

The Gruppe Internationale Marxisten (GIM — German section of the Fourth International) argued this in the following terms in their leaflet distributed at the Bonn demonstration:

'Many women trade unionists are unavailable for fulltime union positions because of the double burden of work and the family. Thus, fundamental changes in women's role must be a goal of trade-union policy. Demands such as skilled jobs and training positions for women and girls, positive action, and the setting up of creches, etc. are not divisive.

'On the contrary. Only when these demands are fully integrated into the trade-union struggle for the 35-hour week can division be overcome.'

## Continue the campaign against Euromissiles

The week October 22-30 saw the biggest internationally co-ordinated anti-war mobilisations for a long time. Nearly 5 million people took to the streets of the capital cities and major towns in Europe to oppose the imminent installation of Nato missiles.

This huge wave of anti-war protests is substantially more developed than autumn 1981 in its level of international co-ordination and in its breadth and capacity for mobilisation in each country.

In the Netherlands (550,000), Belgium (400,000), Britain (400,000), Italy (500,000) and particularly in West Germany (1.5 million throughout the country), the size of the demonstrations was unprecedented in recent history.

In total, the figures indicate an increase of 50 per cent over the 1982 anti-Reagan mobilisations. A force not only more numerous, but better organised and more combative than ever.

Francois VERCAMMEN

In addition to this numerical advance, the movement against the installation of the Nato nuclear missiles obviously put its apparent 'hibernation' between 1981 and 1983 to good use in better organising itself.

First of all, it has clearly become more structured, particularly in the countries where the missiles will be deployed. Hundreds of action committees have sprung up; in Britain based on the long tradition of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), in Holland through the Ecumenical Assembly for Peace (IKV), in Belgium by the Committees Against Cruise Missiles (KKN) and in West Germany around a national co-ordination of the mobilising committees of the peace movement. Over the last two years these committees have carried out consistent information and propaganda work among working people.

It was the activists from these organisations who succeeded in bringing thousands of people to the October 1983 demonstrations, which seemed rather disorganised and easy going. This has nothing to do with a one-off united action by a coalition of reformist parties pulling the crowds behind them.

### A STRUCTURED MOVEMENT

Secondly, it should be noted that this ability to structure the movement and carry out regular activities is directly linked to new political skills that go well beyond those of the traditional pacifist movement.

The leaderships of these movements have generally held fast in their unconditional rejection of the deployment of Nato's new nuclear missiles. This is the outstanding feature of the last two years, above and beyond the toing and froing, questioning, manoeuvres and political fights that are indispensable for clarify-

ing and maintaining such an orientation within these movements.

Neither imperialist pressure, nor the advocates of the 'lesser evil', nor the threats and promises of Yuri Andropov, have got the better of the anti-missiles movement's political determination to hold to its course of mass mobilisations around a clear, simple and understandable objective: unconditional opposition to the Nato missiles.

The movement's activity, based on a limited unilateralism, expressed in the formula 'a unilateral first step towards general disarmament', is the product of the masses' experience of the generalised war drive and the continuing deadlock in the negotiations on disarmament between the American imperialists and the Soviet bureaucrats — both equally interested in maintaining the political and social status quo in the world.

Peace activists often come from the Christian milieu, or are 'children of 68' disillusioned by the defeats of the workers mobilisations in Portugal, Spain and France. They are often firmly oriented towards the Third World and revolutionary advances there and profoundly anti-imperialist, but this layer is also sensitive to the question of the democratic oppositions in Eastern Europe and sympathetic to Solidarnosc in Poland.

These activists form a political force, relatively autonomous from the traditional reformist leaderships, whose dynamism, orientation and ability to be consistently active over a long period have helped to modify the political course of several of the big social-democratic parties.

The social-democratic parties in question, while opposed to the anti-missiles movement, decided under the impact of the movement's 1981 successes and continuing pressure, to try and co-opt it for their own tactical reasons by shifting their public positions on the Euromissiles.

At the moment, the eager warrior Francois Mitterrand, who was frostily re-

ceived in West Germany in 1982 and in Belgium more recently, appears as the rightist pro-Atlantic Alliance figure within the Socialist International.

To be sure, the balance within the British Labour Party has shifted to the right. But this turn is meeting with resistance because of the overall political situation. It in no way reflects what is going on at the base of the anti-missiles movement.

A particularly notable development has been the spectacular turnabout in the public position of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). It was the SPD, through its spokesperson, Helmut Schmidt, that called for the installation of these new missiles in the first place, during the Nato discussions in 1979, when the Nato 'two-track' decision was made.

Of course, no credit can be given to these social-democratic leaderships. They are devoted agents of American and European imperialism. Moreover, it has to be considered that the change in their attitude is not unrelated to the fact that they have been freed of governmental responsibility. Nonetheless, their shift is an indication of the extent of the political change on the question of the Euromissiles that has taken place since 1981.

The national SPD congress will discuss the question of the missiles again in December. In the regional congresses of various states (*Lander*) a very large majority has already come out in opposition to their installation.

In the Netherlands, the main social-democratic leader, Joop den Uyl, heckled and booed during the 1981 rally, was greeted with applause this time. However, for that he had to adopt the position of the KKN.

The Flemish Socialist Party in Belgium has campaigned in support of the unilateralist arguments of the VAKA. The French-speaking Socialist Party, absent and silent in the 1981 demonstration, rallied to the 1983 demonstration, although it did so on the basis of bilateral disarmament. Nevertheless, this half-hearted support for the anti-missiles movement provoked the immediate resignation of the parliamentary deputy Simonet (former EEC Commissioner) representative of the Atlantic Alliance tradition within the SP and inheritor of the line of Paul-Henri Spaak, general secretary of Nato from 1957 to 1961.

### THE WORKERS MOVEMENT AND THE FIGHT AGAINST THE MISSILES

All these developments in the anti-war movement have begun to influence the organised working class. This has been helped by working-class resistance to the austerity policies of the bourgeoisie, and the installation of homogenous, hard-nosed bourgeois governments

1. See *International Viewpoint* No 38, 15 October 1983.

in the key European countries affected by the installation of the missiles: Britain, the Netherlands, West Germany and Belgium.

Thus, for the first time the Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB), West Germany's powerful trade-union confederation, with 8.5 million members, organised a five-minute warning strike throughout the country on October 5, in which 4 million workers took part. (1) This was a symbolic act, but its impact was colossal in West Germany itself and in the neighbouring countries.

In the Netherlands the trade-union federation (FNV — Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging) which organises the vast majority of workers played a pivotal role in the October mobilisation. It carried out extensive propaganda activities in the workplaces, and took its responsibilities as part of the organising committee for the demonstration.

The two trade-union federations in Belgium, the Socialist-led General Labour Federation of Belgium (FGTB) and the Catholic Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (CSC) provided part of the organising structure for the anti-missiles demonstration of October 23.

Immediately after this demonstration the FGTB called a general strike of 15 minutes for November 18, the day of the parliamentary debate on this question. The powerful Catholic metal workers federation added its name to this call although the cross-sectoral leadership of the CSC seemed to want to block this action.

Despite its limited nature, and its lateness, this turn by the unions represents a breakthrough for workers methods of struggle in the fight against the new missiles. The dynamic of these methods in the overall political struggle and on workers consciousness is well known.

This is only a modest beginning, both compared to what is at stake in this struggle, and to the anti-militarist tradition that animated the workers movement of yesteryear. But if the present evolution continues and is reflected in the union congresses and in new workers actions, it will represent a major political turn.

This political turn is starting now, because the continuing mass activity is creating a situation in which militant initiatives can flourish, strengthening and deepening the movement overall. The DGB's action cannot be explained in any other way, nor can the unremitting struggle of the 'Greenham Common Women against Cruise', or the school student strikes and demonstrations in Belgium, in which tens of thousands of young people have taken part — to give just a few examples. These partial struggles, backed up by the whole movement, open up important perspectives.

However, this political evolution is also expressed in the level of consciousness of the masses who have mobilised. The mass anti-war movement has taken time to free itself from the position of calling for negotiated bilateral disarm-

ament. In fact, this stance derived from the Yalta compromise and the Cold War period, and it is vehemently defended within the movement by the Stalinist and Eurocommunist Communist parties.

It is of course true that many vestiges of this old bilateralist position can still be found in the movement's united-front platforms. It is also true that those who still hold to the perspective of a solution negotiated at Geneva play an active role in the leadership of the anti-war movement. And it is clear that the new peace activists are by no means insulated against the temptation to seek a 'way out', a 'tangible result', by linking the demand for unilateral disarmament to some sort of European diplomatic conference.

However, the conscious defence of a policy of negotiated bilateral disarmament by openly reformist political parties and currents should not be confused with the new consciousness of the masses who mobilise against the missiles.

Given the imminent installation of the Nato missiles, the unconditional rejection of their deployment has made enormous strides in the consciousness of the peace demonstrators. The placards and banners showed this, as well as the opinion polls.

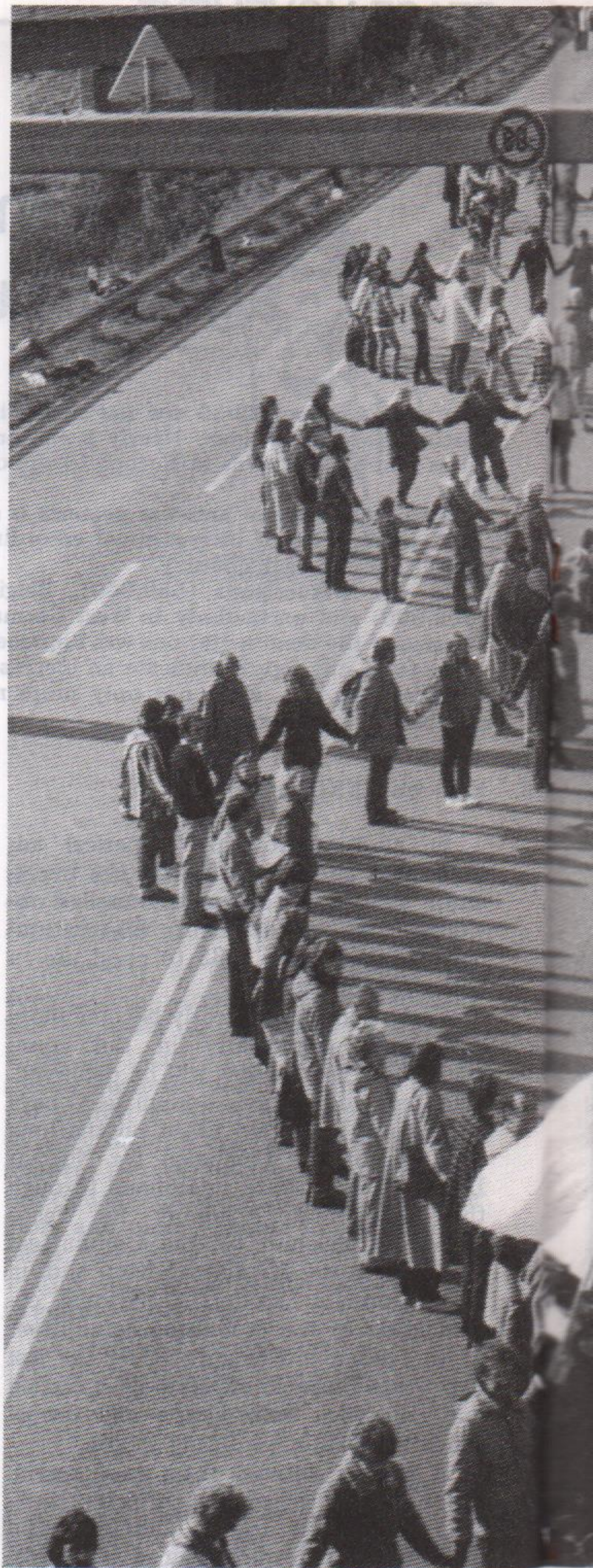
In fact, whatever the precise political opinions of the mass of these millions of demonstrators on questions of world politics in general, one thing is certain. They do not want these missiles in their countries. And they are prepared to mobilise and act as a result of that. In this sense, all these demonstrations have an objective dynamic towards demanding the unilateral disarmament of the capitalist countries.

The opposition to the Soviet SS20s by the majority of those on the demonstrations comes more in fact from the formal demand for equal treatment for all parties than from mistrust of the Kremlin's politics overall, that is, from the sort of anti-Communism typical of the Cold War period.

The Kremlin bureaucracy's announcement, on the eve of the October demonstrations, of the already longstanding presence of Soviet missiles in the German Democratic Republic and in Czechoslovakia thus appeared as a deliberate provocation, and a stab in the back for the Western European peace movements. The threats of deploying new Soviet missiles in these countries, as well as the organisation of a 300,000-strong demonstration in Prague by the official peace movement in favour of the deployment of SS20s, showed once again the counter-revolutionary role of the Eastern bureaucracies.

#### THE EFFECTS OF THE ANTI-MISSILES MOVEMENT

October 1983 constituted a victory for the European proletariat against its own imperialist bourgeoisie, in the sense that a real chance exists to force a breach in an essential aspect of Ronald Reagan's war-drive. The level of anti-war mobili-



Demonstrators formed a 65-mile long human chain

sation is not at the point where the movement has just reached its peak, and from now on can only decline and fragment in a multitude of isolated actions.

This movement has the political and organisational capital that would enable it to inflict a real defeat on imperialism on the Euromissiles question.

It has to take stock of its potentialities and its problems, in order to prepare for a new, concerted battle, one that will this time demand both an understanding of how to mobilise the masses and an adequate political line.

In fact, Reagan has to push through the installation of the missiles at any cost. This is both a military and political necessity. It flows from the overall imperialist offensive, which has several aspects: counter-revolutionary actions in the



near Stuttgart (DR)

Third World, strengthening the imperialist camp through Nato, and pursuing austerity policies in the imperialist countries themselves. Imperialism must achieve this end, although the vast majority of the peoples of Europe are opposed to it. Thus, the European bourgeoisies, who are supposed to implement this policy directly and openly, find themselves in difficulty.

On the very day after the Brussels demonstration, the Flemish Christian Social Party (CVP) was forced to ask for a parliamentary debate, even though this would be full of pitfalls for themselves, in order to freeze its own contradictions on the question of the Euromissiles. For the bourgeoisie, the parliamentary democratic system is a real obstacle to pushing through a decision when 'public

opinion' is clearly hostile to its militarist projects. They need not only to safeguard the credibility of this system. How, in fact, are they going to explain that although 80 per cent of the population is opposed to a decision, parliament can, nevertheless, impose it?

There is also another problem. The bourgeois parties, which are only groupings of well-known figures or 'management teams' at municipal or national level, can carry out Reagan's policies, following his methods. It is not at all the same for the populist or cross-class bourgeois parties that have deep organisational roots in the petty bourgeoisie and working population, particularly through the broad social movements or trade unions. This goes particularly for the Christian Democrats in certain countries.

In such countries, the alignment with Reagan's policies is not only breaking up the longstanding socio-political consensus established by the bourgeois governments. It is also setting in motion a process that will tend in the longterm to destabilise the historic links between the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeois and popular layers, and which will have some immediate effects.

The anti-missiles movement must be built on the basis of a strategy that can lead it to victory. Since the October 22-30 week of action, several bourgeois governments are in danger of a severe crisis that could put into question the deployment of the Nato missiles.

Even if these governments clear this first hurdle for example by getting a formal vote for deployment, it is a long way from a vote in favour in parliament or the council of ministers, to actually deploying the missiles. This is particularly true when such governments face such a powerful anti-war movement and one so ready to mobilise again at the first alarm.

From now on everything depends on what the anti-war movement does. A debate is open more or less everywhere. A political fight must be waged within the movement around four essential questions:

First of all, there is the question of the movement's objective. Now, more than ever, the fight has to be for the unconditional rejection of the deployment of Nato missiles in Europe. This, more than ever, is the goal that unites, that mobilises, that enjoys majority support in public opinion. Within the movement all points of view should be permitted free democratic expression on all other subjects: SS20s, Nato, the perspective of a complete or partial nuclear-free zone in Europe, etc. But acceptance of these slogans should not be made a precondition to united action.

It is still more important to prevent the movement from becoming bogged down in compromises that divide or demobilise. This is the major risk. The Reagan administration, knowing that it will be difficult for the European bourgeoisies to confront their own populations, will be forced to help them demobilise the movement. To this end, it

will make certain superficial concessions, without giving up on the essential aim. These concessions are called 'a moratorium', 'a freeze', partial installation, progressive installation, etc.

Another solution could be the participation of the European governments in the Geneva negotiations to help them swallow the pill. It would be wrong to minimise the imperialists' partial concessions, if they are tangible. But they should still be explained as a product of the anti-war movement's ability to mobilise. This will help the movement to win still more forces so as to finally be able to impose the stated objective.

Secondly, the movement must keep to a strategy based on the awakening, the organisation and mobilisation of the masses. Those in the movement who in 1981 told themselves 'we can do no better' were mistaken. If they say the same now, they will again be mistaken.

While the shift in public opinion may have reached its peak, the mass movement, embracing the working class, is only making its debut. This force is the guarantor of victory. More must be done to win its participation in anti-war mobilisations. This is possible in the months to come.

Regardless of the scope of the actions taken around the December meeting of the Nato council, spring 1984 should bring a new blossoming of activity, to make a sharp response to the European governments. At that point many of them will be facing their electorates in the European elections.

Thirdly, the anti-war movement has to develop a conscious strategy of uniting with the organised workers movement, on the basis of joint opposition to the deployment of the missiles, austerity policies, and military spending. 'Jobs not Bombs' is a slogan whose popularity can only increase in the months to come.

Finally, conscious activity on the political terrain should be developed. From this point of view, the movement frequently oscillates between a rather crude, purely extra-parliamentary orientation — that leads it to ignore what is happening in parliament and within the political parties — and a certain tail-endism when something begins to move in the big institutions of bourgeois democracy, whether parliament, government or the political parties.

In several European countries that are crucial to the success of Reagan's policies in the deployment of the Euromissiles, rightwing bourgeois governments that are convinced of the need to install the missiles, are however subject to enormous popular pressure which could threaten their stability in the more or less near future.

Using all the political opportunities in the unions, the social-democratic parties, and also in the mass social organisations linked to Christian Democracy for example, would allow the anti-missiles movement to win a new round after October 1983, and this time on the strictly political terrain. ■

## Call from East German Peace Activists

The following is a message from militants of the East German (GDR) independent peace movement to "those demonstrating against the new American missiles." It was read out by Heinrich Boll at the October 27 Bonn anti-war demonstration.

*"We are members of various GDR independent peace groups. We too are against the new American missiles. We also campaign for the dismantling of Soviet missiles. But we are conscious that peace cannot be reduced to the missiles question. Above all it is human beings who use them, it is a case of criminals and victims. Orders are given and followed, either with apathy or zeal. We face the problem of social relationships that create divisions between those who command and those who are commanded. Even without the new American missiles, the world can be annihilated hundreds of times.*

*We know very well why certain milieus in the West will always have a stake in the war drive. Profits from the arms industry attract them. We are conscious of their responsibility — they threaten us also. But what we are also threatened by is a series of still embryonic developments in the states where there is 'existing socialism'. From what point can an unhealthy need for security be transformed into the threat of war? What are the profits made by a state that owns an arms industry, even if they are made only through sales to developing countries?*

*Often the way in which the question of human rights is posed in relation to peace seems very abstract. It occasionally sounds like a moral lesson. Thus, taken out of its context the peace question always appears to be more important than any other right, such as the right to travel for instance. But that seems to us to be a wrong way of posing the question. How direct a link is there between the right to refuse an order and whether or not peace is endangered or preserved? How important in the defence of peace is the right to openly criticise militaristic tendencies?*

*In this sense certain paragraphs of the GDR penal code jeopardise the possibility of a peaceful exchange of ideas and information. In our country a 'rally' in front of an army base can be punished by the death penalty if the state judges such a demonstration a particularly important danger for its military strike force. To close our eyes to that state of affairs would be to refuse to face reality. How can we achieve real peace if we do not fully take into account the reality of the situation? The Soviet Union does not want a war, doubtless neither does the USA — but one country could initiate a war to forestall a supposed enemy attack.*

*It is difficult for us to keep the discussion on this question on an abstract level. We cannot talk about humanity without taking into account the individual human being and his/her possibilities of working for peace and achieving it in the society where he/she lives. For our part we come up against a credibility gap which exists in our country between the government's verbal declarations and its practice. In the GDR the importance of the military factor increases year by year. It is dangerous for peace.*

*In the city of Halle, Rochau, Funke and Kathrin Eigenfeld (activists of the GDR independent peace movement) are in prison for having written an article on the peace question. The information on which this article is based comes from official sources — it is not a state secret. Official secrecy covers a much bigger domain than in your country. In general, the Halle 3 only gave advice on the legal means of becoming 'Bausoldat' or of opting for an alternative to military service (1). Giving advice on how to use the law is already a crime in itself! It is called 'obstructing state measures'. That is what we mean when we talk about threats to peace.*

*Let's take another example: the experimental measures aimed at obliging women to join up for military service. In several towns in the GDR in the last few days they had to take 'aptitude tests' after which they receive military cards. They are*



East and West, Europeans call for peace (DR)

*told they must already consider themselves to be army members. In the interests of peace we are against such measures and we counterpose our demand for the demilitarisation of civilian life. That is certainly an area where the GDR could and should proceed with unilateral disarmament without for all that leaving itself disarmed.*

*We ask you to pay attention to what is happening here. Take a position on this — as we have taken a position against the American war threats. A real interest in what is happening in the East is perhaps more important than just protests. It is certainly necessary to make some effort to understand the situation here. It is just as useless to see things through anti-Communist spectacles as to adopt an attitude of reverential admiration if we want to go forward in our thinking. You should keep well away from one or the other position.*

*Various currents are involved in working for peace in our country: religious, socialists, liberal democrats, radicals. Poems, songs, plays, pictures, photos and political books have all played a big role in the movement in our country. Critical literature has particularly contributed to the emergence of the peace movement.*

*Excuse us for not signing this letter. We don't want to put ourselves forward as individuals but want to publicise ideas that, outside of ourselves, are popular in our country." ■*

Solidarity greetings,  
Friends of Peace in the GDR  
October 1983

1. The 'Bausoldaten' special service ('soldiers of construction') was established in 1964, under the pressure of young Christians who refused to carry arms. The GDR authorities consider that it is not a civilian service to the extent that the conscripts — attached to construction projects — remain soldiers in uniform, are subjected to the same military discipline as regular soldiers.



## Chile's difficult "transition"— a bourgeoisie in a tight corner

Ten years after seizing power through a military coup and massive slaughter and repression, the Chilean dictatorship now finds itself in a deep and apparently irreversible crisis.

Two recent events illustrate the new political situation that has opened up in the country. To commemorate the tenth anniversary of this seizure of power, Pinochet held a festival in Santiago on September 9 that drew about 40,000 people. Of this number, according to *le Monde* of October 13, "a great many were unemployed people dependent on government subsidies and functionaries."

A month later, on October 11, a rally organized by the United Democratic Command (CUD), an umbrella organization of shantytown-dwellers associations and human-rights and student organizations, which is supported by the People's Democratic Movement (MDP) recently formed by the Communist Party, assembled more than 80,000 people. The main slogans were "You can feel it, you can feel it, Allende's spirit is here." ["Se siente, se siente, Allende esta presente."] The historic slogan of the Popular Unity government ousted by the Pinochet coup was taken up massively, "The people united will

never be defeated." And the flag of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) waved over the crowd.

This rally, the first held by the left in many years, highlights the role of the movement of the workers and the poor masses in the struggle against the dictatorship and the involvement of the traditional working-class formations that have reorganized underground in the recent years.

A sort of race against time has developed in fact between the mobilization and reorganization of the forces of the workers and popular movements and the maneuvers of the Christian Democrat-led Democratic Alliance that is seeking to negotiate a democratic transition with Pinochet's minister of the interior, Onofre Jarpa, that would not threaten the continuity of military rule and would thus defuse the struggle over the overthrow of the dictatorship.

The following is the first of a two-part series by a special correspondent of *International Viewpoint* analyzing the political and organizational problems that face the reviving workers and people's movement and the problems of strategy raised by the struggle against the dictatorship.

Jair GIL

The succession of national days of protest ("*protestas nacionales*"), coming at a rate of at least one a month since May 1983, represents a fundamental turn in the Chilean political situation.

Through these mobilizations on May 11, June 14, July 11, August 11, September 8 and 11, and October 11, the mass movement has burst onto the political scene, opening up a process that will be extremely difficult to reverse. It may go through ups and downs but it would take the largest kind of political developments to turn it back or contain it.

A lot of observers in fact did not expect to see any "initial stirrings" until 1989, the date set by General Pinochet for transferring power over to civilian hands and for which he staged a plebiscite to confirm it in 1980. Nonetheless, these "protestas" revealed a substantial change in the relationship of forces among the classes and within the classes. This evolution was hidden by the dictatorial nature of the military's rule, but it could not but come out into the open when the mass movement erupted.

These mass mobilizations were the result of the crisis the Pinochet dictatorship entered into at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s.

### "CHICAGO BOYS" SERVE AS APPRENTICE SORCERERS

Under the combined effect of the defeat of the working class after the September 11, 1973 coup that overthrew Allende's class-collaborationist Popular Unity (UP) government and of the international economic crisis, Chile was to serve as a laboratory for the so-called Chicago Boys, adepts of Milton Friedman's (1) monetarist and extreme free-market policy.



The September 1983 'protesta' (DR)

Punctilious defense of private initiative and enterprise and of freedom of trade was to create a full-fledged economic catastrophe, ruining local industry and throwing the financial system into turmoil.

Suicidal tariff cutting reduced Chile's custom duties to the lowest in the world and opened the floodgates for a torrent of imports. Between 1977 and 1982, the volume of imports from the United States doubled.

In addition to the selling off of the nationalized and public industries, the balance sheet of this policy includes more than 2,000 business failures and a 15 percent drop in industrial production in 1982.

Then financial speculation and a spiraling rate of indebtedness led to the col-

lapse of the banking and financial system. Up until August 1982, the military dictatorship kept the peso at a relatively high rate against the dollar, 39 to the dollar. This promoted not only the influx of imports but also frenetic speculation and growing indebtedness to the IMF and the international banks.

What is more, when the peso was later devalued in August 1982, going from 39 to 60 against the dollar and even 90

1. Milton Friedman is an American economist known as the guru of the "Chicago School." His theory links the fluctuations in economic activity to the money supply rather than to investment. On this basis, he has developed a "monetarist" school of economics, calling for a return to a very pure form of free-market economy and opposing state intervention in the mechanisms regulating the capitalist economy.

the black market, the entire private banking system, one of the solidest institutions of the Chilean regime, collapsed in January 1983.

Their coffers empty, the reputation and power of the Chilean trusts linked to the Vial, Cruzat-Larrain, and other such families, who had been the pillars of the dictatorship's economic model, were severely undercut. At that point, Pinochet sacked the Chicago Boys who had been advising his government.

Since the collapse of the country's banking and financial system, Chile's economic situation has continually worsened. The index of this is that in August 1983, Caceres, one of Pinochet's economic ministers, signed a new agreement to get 1.3 billion dollars in credits. This will be added to Chile's foreign debt, which already amounts to 20 billion dollars.

### MASS DESPERATION

The social consequences of an economic policy that ruined the country are even more dramatic. Unemployment, poverty, hunger — that is the reality of Pinochet's "economic model" for the Chilean people.

More than 30 percent of the entire population, 3 million out of 11 million people, are out of work and get no social insurance benefits. Tens of thousands of workers are obliged to work in the government projects under the Minimum Employment Plan (PEM) and the Family Heads Employment Plan (POJH) for monthly wages of 2,000 to 4,000 pesos, when the average wage is between 6,000 and 8,000 pesos.

According to an official analysis of the Chilean wage differentials, 43.16 percent of workers earn less than 10,000 pesos a month, and 71.32 percent less than 20,000. To understand what these figures mean, you have to realize that a loaf of bread costs 40 to 60 pesos — that is, 50 to 80 U.S. cents — and that the average monthly wage of Chilean workers corresponds to 80 to 100 dollars.

Moreover, 700,000 families are without homes, 160,000 have no running water, and more than 300 shantytowns have no electricity.

Behind these figures there lies a terrible reality. Hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children have nothing to eat. Hundreds of thousands of workers or people coming from the petty bourgeoisie find themselves declassed and forced to live by various "odd jobs." This all-pervading poverty is also the material basis for what is called vandalism.

In fact, one of the features of the recent "protestas" has been that they have set off social explosions, with the young and not so young looting stores to get the clothing and food they need. The minds of the well-off are haunted by visions of these gangs of "vandals" swarming into the upper-class neighborhood and pillaging everything.

Within the bourgeoisie, the dictatorships economic model produced a shift in the relationship of forces to the disadvantage of the industrial national bourgeoisie and to the advantage of the economic groups linked to foreign capital, as well as the ruin of the middle bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie.

### PINOCHET ISOLATED

In sociopolitical terms, the result of this was that the regime put in power by the counterrevolutionary coup of September 1973 lost its social base. This is what has created the material social basis for the political realignment around the Christian Democrats. It explains the turnabout by the people in comfortable neighborhoods in Santiago who have participated in the pot-banging protests (*cacerolazos*).

The buildup of long-contained social, economic, and political tensions threw the regime into an unprecedented crisis from which no economic finagling can offer a way out. Extremely vulnerable to the fluctuations of raw-materials prices, the Chilean economy has to rely on copper exports to fuel a new cycle of accumulation, as was the case in the 1930s. Dominated now by the multinationals and imperialist capital, Chile no longer pursues a policy of developing import-substituting industries as it did in the past. It can only sink further and further into debt as its financing problems increase.

The Pinochet dictatorship consolidated itself in the context of the relationship of forces that resulted from the defeat of the mass movement in 1973, which involved the destruction of all the working-class organizations and the liquidation of all institutions of bourgeois democracy. The basis for governing by "civil-war methods" was the paralysis of the mass movement and the achievement of a social consensus of the bourgeoisie and sectors of the petty bourgeoisie around the dictatorship.

However, after the collapse of the regime's social and economic base at the end of the 1970s and the revival of the mass movement, initially through the outbreak of limited workers struggles and reorganization of the trade-union movement, the Pinochet regime has become a more and more inadequate political instrument for the bourgeoisie. It has been increasingly unable to cope with the new relationship of class forces. And this has precipitated a political crisis. For the bourgeoisie, as well as the proletariat, although for different reasons, the Pinochet dictatorship has become unbearable.

The model for a transition to parliamentary rule that the Chilean bourgeoisie would like to apply in the 1980s is the way the shift from Francoism to constitutional monarchy was accomplished in Spain. This was explained quite lucidly by Andres Zaldivar, a Christian Democrat leader who returned to Chile on September 4 after three years of exile and who is



Funeral for demonstrator killed by police (DR)

also chairperson of the international Christian Democrat organization. He said: "Personally I am for trying to achieve as broad a consensus as possible. It is useful to recall the Spanish example and the Moncloa Pacts. There was a Democratic Center Union government headed by Adolfo Suarez. But in order to avoid a political and social confrontation, Suarez sat down at the same table with Felipe Gonzalez, Santiago Carrillo, Fraga Iribarne, and a consensus was achieved on the constitution." (2)

### THE PROBLEM OF THE DIE-HARD DICTATORSHIP

The problem is that Chile is not Spain and there are a lot of obstacles to following such a policy. First of all, Chile, unlike Spain, is an underdeveloped, dependent capitalist country. Secondly, there is the problem of General Augusto Pinochet. Franco died, leaving the way open for the transition. Pinochet is very much alive and represents a major obstacle to any real liberalization. Behind his personal excesses, his declarations of war on the politicians (3), his stated will-

2. Interview in the September 1983 issue of the Chilean magazine *Que Pasa*.

3. On September 10, General Pinochet said: "Today we say to these politician gents that we cannot return to our barracks...because that would mean a series of military coups d'etat from which no understanding could emerge." (*El Mercurio*, September 11, 1983).

ingness to organize a new "September 1973" and his rejection of any change in the calendar of the transition to constitutional rule before 1989, there is something quite real and substantial.

Pinochet is the cornerstone of the military dictatorship. He controls the government, the generals' assembly — the military's parliament — and the armed forces as a whole, which represents a basic institution in Chilean life. The continuing solidity of the dictatorship's police and military apparatus, moreover, is demonstrated every day by the repression of the mass mobilizations and the opposition groups.

Whatever means are used to remove General Pinochet, the military dictatorship is too bound up with him for his departure not to mean a qualitative increase in the crisis of the dictatorship and a qualitative advance of the mass movement. This is why Pinochet, backed up by the rest of the junta and the assembly of generals, opposes any real liberalization. Thus, it is impossible both to keep Pinochet and follow a different sort of policy.

Moreover, the Chilean bourgeoisie is quite incapable of pursuing the policy of a social pact for a number of reasons. The first is that they cannot offer the masses democracy in exchange for their acceptance of austerity as long as the military dictatorship exists. The sort of "tough democracy" without parties that the Ministry of the Interior proposes would make it impossible to follow a policy of coopting the Socialist and Communist leaderships of the workers movement.

The second reason is linked to the economic situation in the country and in the world. There is not, in fact, a lot to negotiate. The conditions were very different for the introduction of the austerity policy under the Moncloa Pact. Spain, of course, was beginning to experience the effects of the economic crisis in 1974-75, but it was coming out of a period of 16 years of relative prosperity. There was a material basis for democratic illusions and for the reformist leaderships asking the workers to accept sacrifices in return for political democracy and democratic rights for the workers organizations and parties.

In Chile, to the contrary, the "transition" is posed against a background of massive unemployment and poverty. In the present state of the world economy, it is hard to see how the U.S. imperialists could offer any substantial aid to Chile in the style of the Marshall Plan. This is why the Chilean masses give their demands for democracy a concrete social meaning.

The slogans of "Democracy," and "Liberty" are systematically backed up with calls for "Peace," "Justice," "Food and Jobs." The democracy that tens of thousands of Chileans are demanding means precisely "bread and work." And in the present economic situation it will be very difficult to implement a social-pact policy.

No one has any doubt that if there were a liberalization tomorrow that made it possible to legally reconstitute political parties and unions independent of the state, the traditional workers organizations that were decapitated in 1973 would reemerge stronger than ever.

For the moment, the relatively rapid reorganization of the workers movement, in view of the extent of the September 11, 1973 defeat, gives these formations an unstable character and thus limits their ability to control the mass movement. For those who want to implement a policy of social consensus, this peculiarity of the process of the reemergence of the workers parties and unions is an immediate obstacle.

The Chilean bourgeoisie does not have a strong class-collaborationist movement that it can turn to for help in tying down the mass movement. There is nothing like the Peronist movement in Argentina. Nor is there anything like the Communist Party in Spain, which in the course of twenty years of the struggle against Francoism won control of the key sectors of the mass movement through the Workers Commissions (except, possibly, in the Basque country). Such political apparatuses are essential for the bourgeoisie to be able to carry out a transition to democratic forms involving political or social pacts between the classes.

#### THE "DIALOGUE"

In these conditions, terrified of chaos and of a big vacuum developing in the wake of the military's departure, the government, the Chilean capitalist class and its representatives are gambling on a solution that is inherently contradictory. That is, they want to carry through a limited democratization in the context of a continuity of military rule. This, significantly, is the view of Sergio Vergara-Larrain, one of the bankers of the Cruzat-Larrain family, who calls himself "a man of the central center" but who really stands on the right. He said recently: "Our action can have two objectives. We can appeal to the military to make a change, assuring them that it will not lead to chaos. Or we can reach an agreement with Pinochet. We can have a dialogue for stability, consensus or a majority."

When he was asked, "What about the Communists?" the banker replied, "I think that they should be a party to this dialogue. There cannot be any dialogue without the Communists." (4)

This is the outlook of one of the capitalists' big managers, who in fact rejects the "protestas." It is shared by other representatives of the Chilean bosses, such as Jorge Fontaine and Angel Fantuzzi, who today support liberalization with continuity. In this state of affairs, we have to look at the way the two main forces in this "dialogue" — the Democratic Alliance, controlled by the Christian Democrats, and the Pinochet-Jarpa team — are lining up.

The Democratic Alliance (AD) was founded in August 1983. It is a coalition dominated by Gabriel Valdes's Christian

Democrats. It also includes the Nationalists and some sections of Socialist Party supporters. It is also linked to the Project for the Development of a National Consensus (PRODEN), a socio-political organization controlled by the Christian Democrats. (5) Its formal program calls for the resignation of Pinochet, setting a date for elections, the election of a constituent assembly, and a social pact.

The AD is the force that is the official interlocutor in the dialogue with the dictatorship. But this has not kept some of its leaders, such as Gabriel Valdes or some of its demonstrations, such as the September 8 one in Santiago, from suffering severe repression. At this stage the AD is in fact the Christian Democratic Party.

In the 1960s, under the leadership of Eduardo Frei, the Christian Democrats carried out a policy that corresponded to the interests of the industrial national bourgeoisie and of certain sections of the peasantry, since they instituted an agrarian reform.

Although it was a bourgeois party, the Christian Democracy nonetheless developed a base among some strata of the working class. In particular it had an influence in the United Confederation of Workers (CUT). Its nationalist-populist ideology provided a basis for winning support in such strata.

Today the Christian Democracy is rebuilding its forces. Among some sections of the petty bourgeoisie, the students in particular, it is seen as one of the most active political forces in the opposition. If there were an election today, it would get a lot of votes. Nonetheless, it is confronted with many problems.

First of all, the Christian Democratic leaders know that they will not have the benefit of an economic situation enabling them to buy peace. It cannot be forgotten either that the Christian Democrats' support for the military coup d'etat against the Allende government made a lasting imprint on some sections of the masses, even if today, ten years after the coup, this does not overly tarnish its oppositionist image.

Finally, in the immediate future the Christian Democrats have to regain credibility in the eyes of the Chilean bourgeoisie itself. Today, ten years after the elimination of all parliamentary life, the bourgeoisie is well aware of all the weaknesses and internal divisions that the Christian Democrats suffer from. But if the Christian Democrats want to regain credibility for the bourgeoisie, that means that they cannot do anything to meet the aspirations of the masses, who are threatening the bourgeoisie's rule.

There are already some examples that illustrate this problem. In the negotiations with Onofre Jarpa, the minister of

4. Interview in the August 10, 1983 issue of the Chilean weekly *Hoy*.

5. PRODEN was formed by former Christian Democrat members of parliament and conservative figures at the end of 1982 as a "study circle" in order to get around the ban on political parties. Its objective was to work out a political schema for the transition to democracy.

the interior that Pinochet assigned in August to conduct the "dialogue," the Christian Democrats demanded that Pinochet go. Jarpa explained that everything was negotiable, except for Pinochet's resignation. A series of statements by representatives of capital toe the same line.

So, the Christian Democrats have backed off from demanding Pinochet's resignation in the negotiations. Their credibility in the eyes of the masses is obviously going to suffer as a result.

Another example is the rally called September 4 by PRODEN, which was to be the first public meeting held with the permission of the government. The junta granted a permit for using one of the biggest parks in Santiago, right in the middle of the city, O'Higgins Park. It disclaimed all responsibility for maintaining order, thereby leaving this obligation in the hands of the Christian Democratic leaders. The meeting was being built. Hundreds of thousands of people were expected to come, including large numbers from the provincial cities.

But what happened? The PRODEN and the Christian Democratic Party refused at the last minute to assume their responsibilities and cancelled the meeting.

In October, this capitulation was still clearer, when the Christian Democrats refused to issue a call for the mobilizations on the 11th of that month. This was a response to the fears of the bourgeoisie of the capital city, who were terrified at the thought of such a concentration of people and of the possibility of groups getting out of hand and of the acts of "vandalism" that might be committed.

So, the Christian Democratic leaders eased the apprehensions of the bourgeoisie. But at the same time they revealed their fear of the mass movement and the limits of their control over it, thereby exposing a weakness that the junta immediately exploited.

The logic of the policy of conciliation with the dictatorship and of retreating under the pressure of Pinochet's military chiefs is clear. It has led the Christian Democrats, in order to reassure the bourgeoisie, to opt for a continuity of military rule, while at the same time demanding a democratization that would enable them to rebuild their party. For this purpose they want the schedule for the return to constitutional rule to be reduced to 18 months. (This would involve adopting a law on political parties in three months, election of a constituent assembly in six months, and a referendum on the proposed constitutional reform in the following year.)

However, even though the Christian Democrats have accepted the general framework of dialogue with the military, all the plans and schedules they have proposed have run up against insoluble basic questions such as the type of constituent assembly, the names of the parties that can be legalized, and the nature and content of the next constitution.

A lot of people in Chile are saying that Pinochet is not running the government

any more, that it is now in the hands of Sergio Onofre Jarpa. They are wrong. Pinochet still has a firm grip on the reins of the military apparatus. What is more, his speech on September 11 presenting the latest economic measures — a 15 percent wage increase for public workers, aid to some sectors of national industry, and the initiative of calling a referendum on the changes in the 1980 constitution — shows that he is definitely still the strongman in the dictatorship.

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to underestimate the significance of Pinochet naming Jarpa minister of the interior. As a conservative bourgeois politician, the former general secretary of the National Party — the party of the bourgeois right and the main civilian group backing Pinochet's coup — Jarpa is the very model of the reactionary Chilean "statesman."

By taking Jarpa into the government, the dictatorship is broadening to incorporate the bourgeoisie directly, including some of their politicians. This move is the first step toward a "civilian-military government."

However, the government's discussions with the opposition have been held in the framework of accepting Article 24 of the 1980 constitution, which gives Pinochet the power to restrict public freedoms at his discretion. The framework of the discussions also involves excluding from the "dialogue" all parties that countenance class war. It involves accepting the continuity of military rule, keeping Pinochet. In this context, Jarpa has the full confidence of the military.

The "Jarpa Operation" also has the blessing of the church and the support of the most influential representatives of capital and U.S. imperialism.

The terms of this dialogue therefore give a central place to the armed forces. So the combined effects of the political crisis and the mass mobilizations on the military become important elements in the picture. So far, however, unlike their Argentine counterparts, who do a lot of talking and accuse each other, the Chilean military have remained silent.

There is no doubt, however, that there are tensions within the military and that they are playing a fundamental role in the dialogue between Jarpa and the Democratic Alliance.

Some months before the mass movement erupted onto the political scene, people had already lost their "fear of fear." This feeling developed after 1978-79, when the mass movement began to reform around trade-union struggles. With the start of the "protestas," the movement went into a stage of open mass struggle. This began with the call for a national work stoppage on May 11, 1983 issued by the copper-miners union (CTC) led by Rudolfo Seguel,

Following Seguel's arrest, what began as a strike call turned into national days of protests, the form the mass movement has taken today in its struggle against the dictatorship.

While the shantytowns have been the heart of all the mass mobilizations against the dictatorship, the opposition to Pinochet nonetheless goes far beyond the poor masses and even the petty bourgeoisie. The "cacerolazos" that begin as soon as night falls on all the days of protest and make it possible for people in their homes to participate in the actions have always spread throughout Santiago, including into the upper-class neighborhoods.

The Democratic Alliance is one of the initiating centers of these days of protest. But it is necessary to make a distinction between the dynamic of the mass movement itself and the objectives set for it by the present leadership, in particular the forces grouped together in the Democratic Alliance.

The shantytowns are the mobilizing centers for the "protestas" and the driving forces in them — the youth, the workers, and the poor masses, both employed and unemployed — use their own method, direct action. For example, on September 8, from 10:00 p.m. on the same scenario was repeated in all the poor neighborhoods in and around Santiago: "cacerolazos", bonfires on the main streets, barricades, demonstrations, police charges, dispersion, formation of new demonstrations, and so on. And this continued until midnight or 1:00 in the morning.

These forms of struggle have now become classical. Most often they are inspired by young natural leaders between the ages of 12 and 20, who are the spearhead of these mobilizations. Regardless of whether they are semi-spontaneous or led by some activist of a clandestine left organization, these mass mobilizations always run up against the decisive problems of organization, leadership, and political centralization.

This organizational weakness is a serious obstacle today to the extension of the mobilizations of the workers and poor masses. A feature of the most recent "protestas" has been the organization of "demonstrations" and "marches" in the shantytowns. In several of these areas, the idea is already going around of coordinating these actions, of having several of these neighborhood marches converge in more imposing demonstrations.

In fact, all the preconditions exist already in these shantytowns for a national march of the workers and poor masses on Santiago. This could build a rally of hundreds of thousands of people against the dictatorship in the center of the capital.

The October 11 rally in Santiago, which was organized by the left and assembled 80,000 persons, is the first step toward organizing really massive demonstrations.

However, as the situation ripens for broader confrontations, the problems of the mass organizations and political perspectives for the struggle take on more immediacy. I will deal with these questions in some detail in my next article. ■

# Unions face ruling class assault

Malik MIAH

There is a deepening offensive by the employers and their government against working people in the United States. The employing class seeks to fundamentally alter the relationship of forces between themselves and the working class as they restructure many industries — such as steel, auto, railroads, trucking, and airlines — to raise productivity and the rate of profits. Their main targets are the industrial workers and their unions.

This offensive is shaking the organized labor movement, which is slightly more than 20 percent of the working class. Although there is still no class-struggle left-wing leadership in the trade unions, there are stirrings beginning to take place that are of some importance and indicate potentially greater changes down the road.

This article will review some aspects of the state of the U.S. labor movement by taking a look at the aims of the employers, the policies of the top trade union officials, and changes going on among rank-and-file workers. These changes include a new combativity and a growing gap in political consciousness between the ranks and the top layers of the union officialdom.

## POLICIES OF THE BUREAUCRACY

In early October, the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) — the 13.8 million-member national trade union federation including the large majority of U.S. unions) held its biennial convention in Hollywood, Florida. Its deliberations and decisions reflect the views of the top layers of the trade union bureaucracy.

Not surprisingly, the convention adopted a course that failed to advance the interests of U.S. workers. There were three major decisions.

First, it endorsed the 1984 Democratic Party presidential bid of former vice-president Walter Mondale. It is unusual for the AFL-CIO to officially back a presidential candidate before the Democratic and Republican Party conventions, normally held in July or August before the November elections. This decision was neither formally discussed, nor will it be voted upon, in the ranks of the labor movement. Up to 20 million dollars in union resources will now be spent on Mondale's campaign.

Second, the top officials reaffirmed their support to U.S. imperialist foreign

policy, cloaking it in familiar pro-State Department, anticommunist language. The adopted resolution, "Labor, National Security, and the World," called for strengthening NATO to deal with the "threat" of "Soviet expansionism" as well as supporting U.S. and Israeli government objectives in the Middle East.

At the same time, reflecting antiwar sentiments of rank-and-file workers, the convention reaffirmed the labor federation's criticism of U.S. policy in El Salvador first advanced by the AFL-CIO executive council last January. While supporting Washington's overall goals in Central America and in El Salvador, the resolution called for restrictions on military aid to the Salvadoran junta until progress is made in securing democratic rights for workers and peasants.

Lastly, the convention adopted what it called a new industrial policy, intended to strengthen the United States' international economic position in relation to its imperialist competitors. The federation proposed the government establish a National Development Bank that would grant low-interest loans and tax incentives to companies having difficulty raising capital to modernize their facilities. Labor officials claim this policy will create new jobs.

Trying to patch up capitalism, especially when the system is in deep structural crisis, is not a new profession for the trade union officials — the bureaucratic caste that sits atop the unions. Most top officials have not worked a job in years and are, at best, workers only in origin. They receive salaries sometimes as much as ten times higher than the wages of even the best-paid workers they represent. Their living standards and conditions of life are far, far above most workers, especially the lower paid, unskilled and semiskilled, Black, Latino, women and young workers.

These "labor statesmen" place the profit needs of the employers ahead of the interests of working people. It is no wonder they try to emulate the bosses' lifestyles.

That is why the top officialdom is conservative. Its material interests lie with stability, represented by close political and economic collaboration with the employers. They are literally of the same family.

But as the blows of the capitalist offensive hit the working class, the bureaucracy, which maintains its position and existence on its base in the unions, is



forced to respond. Moreover, the depth of the crisis is causing divisions to appear within the bureaucracy.

These are evident on both domestic and foreign policy issues.

## DIVISIONS ON CENTRAL AMERICA

Of particular importance are emerging differences on U.S. intervention in El Salvador and Central America.

Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO, is presently serving on President Reagan's Commission on Central America, headed by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Kirkland supports the State Department's goals, and the AFL-CIO's American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) — traditionally used as a cover for CIA activities — is active in El Salvador.

The AFL-CIO's current position, which opposes U.S. military intervention in El Salvador until certain conditions are met, is still made within a framework of support to imperialism's overall counter-revolutionary goals. Kirkland is dead opposed to the labor movement adopting an independent foreign policy. For this reason, he opposes any genuine debate

and discussion on international issues in the ranks of the union movement.

Despite this longstanding approach, a layer of top officials of AFL-CIO unions are now openly and publicly speaking out against Washington's military moves in El Salvador. The National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, formed by these officials, calls for a complete end to military intervention and favors a dialogue — without conditions — between the revolutionary forces and the Salvadoran regime.

In mid-1983 a leadership delegation from the Labor Committee went on a fact-finding trip to El Salvador. Upon their return they published a report entitled, "El Salvador: Labor, Terror, and Peace." The report explained that the "current rationale behind our [the U.S. government's] military policy in El Salvador cannot but lead us into another Vietnam."

Significantly, at the October AFL-CIO convention, Jack Sheinkman, secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, a member of the fact-finding delegation, and co-chair of the Labor Committee, took the floor to discuss the trip. He spoke for several minutes and was warmly received by a number of delegates — all of whom were top labor officials or full-time union functionaries.

Early this year, a number of state and local union officials stood up to Kirkland's attempt to red-bait Salvadoran trade union leader Alejandro Molina Lara and prevent him from speaking before union bodies. Molina Lara, who was on tour as a representative of the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS) and the Fishing Industry Union, received a positive response from most unionists he addressed. These included miners, steelworkers, garment workers, teachers, and others.

The changing views of U.S. workers on foreign policy questions is also evident in attitudes expressed on events in the Middle East and the downing of the South Korean plane by the Soviet Union.

While most workers are confused about the role Israel plays as a reactionary bulwark in the Middle East, oppressing Palestinian and Arab peoples, many question the use of U.S. and other imperialist troops in Lebanon. Many workers fear it could lead to another Vietnam, which they oppose.

The attempt by Reagan to whip up anti-Soviet and prowar feelings over the Korean Air Lines incident has not gotten very far either. Despite anti-Soviet prejudices that do exist among U.S. workers, many doubted the story presented by the State Department and the White House from the beginning. As the truth began to come out, the credibility of the U.S. government dropped further.

The deep antiwar sentiment among workers is a factor the employers must take into account in implementing their domestic and foreign policies. The possibility that the commitment of U.S.

combat forces in other countries will lead to massive antiwar protests at home raises the stakes for Washington in defending imperialist interests around the world. The new offensive against workers in the U.S. itself and the lessons many workers have drawn from the experience of the Vietnam war mean the U.S. rulers cannot count on the ability of the top labor officials to line up support for a war. In fact, any new, mass antiwar movement will be based in the working class and led by it.

It is this understanding that is pressuring a layer of union officials to speak out against U.S. intervention in El Salvador. It is particularly significant in view of the fact that Washington has not yet committed large numbers of ground troops to back the right-wing regime there.

The fact that many workers are questioning U.S. foreign policy reflects a deeper thinking-out process unfolding in the working class and among its major potential allies — Blacks, Latinos, women, and family farmers.

This process is a result of the imperialist war drive and the impact of over 15 years of capitalist economic crisis, which is disrupting the lives of working people.

#### IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CRISIS

More and more working people view their lives and future with uncertainty. Workers with 20-30 years seniority are losing their jobs *permanently* when the employers shut down or relocate plants. Family farmers are losing their land through bank foreclosures. As a result, confidence in the economy, government, and other political institutions is eroding.

That is what is beginning to take place across the United States. It deepens a process begun in the late 1960s with the end of the post-World War II economic expansion of U.S. and world capitalism.

In the period after World War II and prior to the 1970s, the employers were able to obtain relative labor peace (with exceptions at particular times in particular industries) by agreeing to hand out some crumbs to sections of the working class in the form of higher wages and benefits. This was based on the preeminent position of U.S. capitalism and the enormous superprofits it enjoyed as a result.

Top union officials accepted this deal and followed policies that divided the working class further. In exchange for these crumbs, the union bureaucrats agreed to make little or no effort to win important social benefits for the class as a whole. An example is that the United States is the only advanced capitalist country without socialized medical care.

Another aspect of the deal, and a sign of the bureaucrats' subordination to the Democratic Party, was their refusal to lead a serious campaign to unionize unorganized workers in the South. Another example was the officials' refusal to lead a fight against racist and sexist practices in industry or in society as a whole.

The "labor statesmen" also accepted, with no serious fight, antilabor legislation that weakens the unions and allows the government to intervene more openly and directly in the internal affairs of the labor movement.

The Taft-Hartley Act, for example, allows states to adopt what are called "right to work" laws that are in fact aimed at preventing unionization. These laws make it easier for scabs and strike-breakers to be protected by the government and employers.

States also added their own antilabor laws. Many passed laws making it "illegal" for public workers to strike. In New York, city and state workers face the loss of two days' pay for every day they "illegally" strike.

Although these laws were used selectively in the past, they are now being used more and more by all levels of government to break strikes and defeat unions.

This offensive by the employers and government is also undermining the old buddy-buddy relationship between the top union officials and the capitalists. "Independent" labor analysts complain of the end of good "labor-management" relations since the employers have shifted to hard-ball tactics.

An example of this shift occurred during the 1974-75 recession when the city of New York faced bankruptcy. The employers, banks, and government forced onerous concessions from the workers. Contracts were torn up, social services slashed, and the conditions of life made much worse. The hardest hit were the Black and Latino workers who were already at the bottom of the economic ladder.

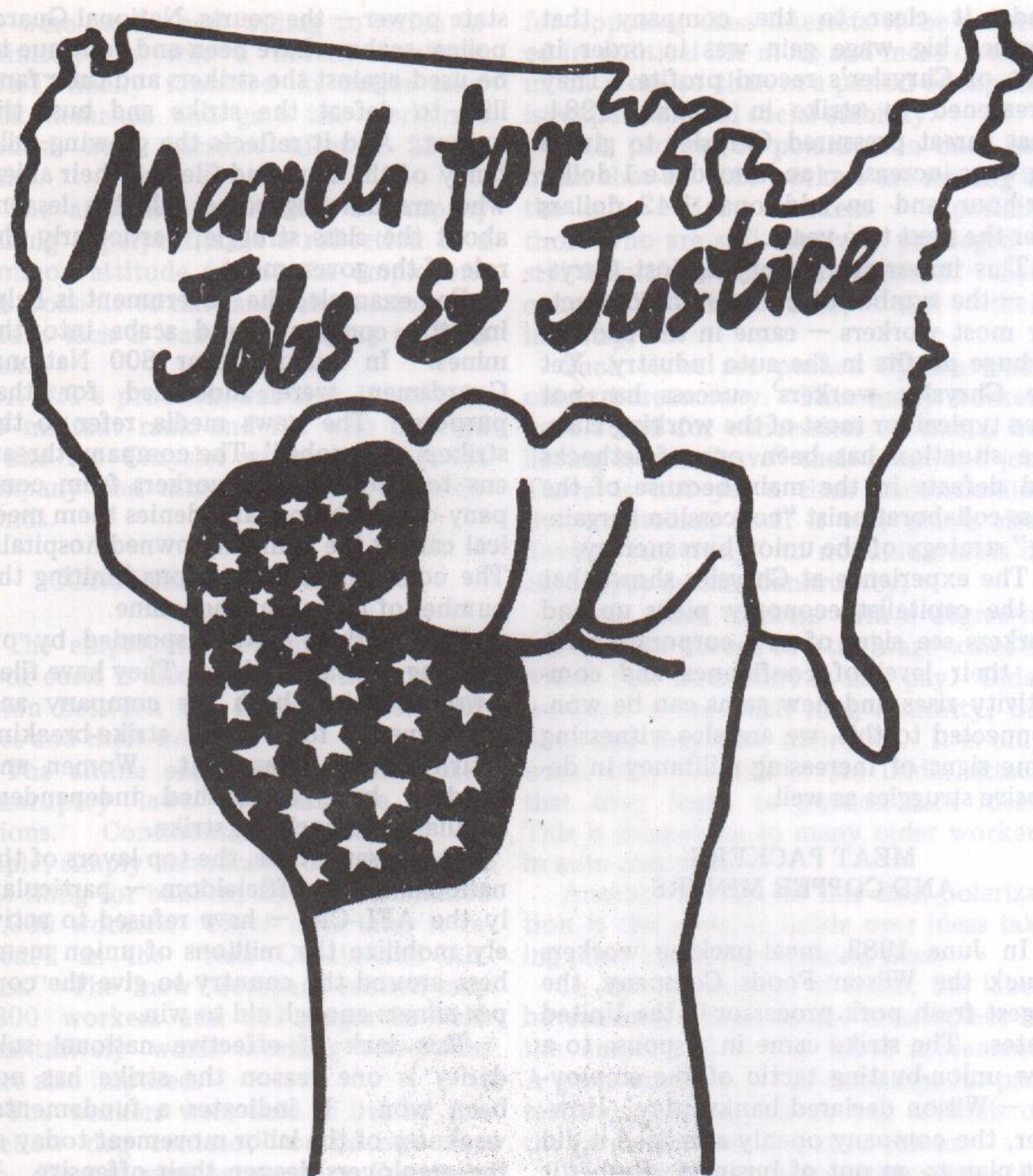
The top union officials complained the attacks were unfair. But instead of launching a political fight against the government, they sought to come up with their own "takeback" concessions to "save" the city. Of course, the workers lost out.

That defeat for public employees was taken by the employers as a green light to demand even more concessions from these and other workers. The bosses correctly perceived that the national labor movement would do little to aid workers under attack.

This experience was a prelude to the full-fledged assault on the bastions of the labor movement — the industrial unions — that we have witnessed over the past few years.

During the 25 years following World War II, the trade union bureaucracy was consolidated as a conservative, class-collaborationist layer. These labor officials, as voices for the bosses in the unions, were essential in pushing back the influence of class-struggle militants and Black rights fighters.

For example, during the anticommunist witch-hunt of the 1950s, the AFL and CIO unions raided other unions that they had labelled "red." And in the late 1960s, the bureaucracy fought the formation of Black caucuses that were established to fight the racism of the bosses



and the union officialdom.

These policies of the bureaucratic caste in the labor movement helped to alter the relationship of forces between labor and the employers to the latter's advantage. More and more, the labor leadership represented only the most privileged layers of the working class, at the expense of the big majority of workers who were not even in unions. For instance, when the AFL and CIO merged in 1955, 35 percent of U.S. workers were organized into unions. By the early 1970s it was down to less than 25 percent.

#### 1980-82 RECESSION

When Reagan took office in 1981 he stepped up the government-employer drive against working people. The heart of this accelerated offensive was to cut social services and lower labor costs as part of the restructuring of the economy to make it more competitive with other imperialist powers. The restructuring included cutting taxes for big business to make it easier for them to introduce more advanced technology in order to raise productivity and the rate of profits.

This bipartisan attack on the working class — which was carried out with the support of the Democrats in Congress — coincided with the deepest downturn in the capitalist economy since World War II. Massive layoffs in auto, steel, and other basic industries contributed to a national unemployment rate of almost 11 percent — the highest rate seen in the

United States for more than 30 years. Workers of the oppressed nationalities — Blacks, Latinos, and others — experienced joblessness at twice that rate or more.

At the same time, Reagan demonstrated the employing class's willingness to take other decisive steps against organized labor by smashing the 1981 air traffic controllers strike, again with complete support from the Democratic Party. The Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) — the controllers' union — was effectively destroyed. Some 12,000 workers were fired and black-listed from the jobs for which they were trained.

For their part the top labor officials offered no effective solidarity with the strikers. They took no action to mobilize the ranks of the labor movement to defeat Reagan's strikebreaking.

Meanwhile the employers were winning concession contracts from workers in such basic industries as auto, steel, and rail. They threatened workers with concessions to "save" the company, or the loss of jobs. But jobs were lost anyway, as in the case of the Chrysler workers, who made the greatest concessions at the time.

Again the trade union bureaucracy mounted no effective fightback. As a leader of the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) remarked, if the company's money tree is shaken too often, there won't be any left. That false logic was used to pressure basic steel workers to accept an unprecedented 9 percent

wage cut and other concessions in March 1983.

This has been true in other industries as well. So much so that the big business daily *New York Times* wrote, "So deeply have concession demands cut that the average first-year wage rise in contracts negotiated in 1983's first half nose-dived to below one percent, down from 10 percent two years ago. What's more, one-quarter of the new contracts contain pay cuts and one-fifth, wage freezes."

#### RESTRUCTURING FAR FEWER JOBS

While the current upturn in the capitalist business cycle is leading to a drop in unemployment — down from almost 11 percent to 9 percent — the main beneficiaries have been the employers, who continue to use all their tools — government, courts, bankruptcies, mergers, international corporate deals, and when necessary strikebreakers — to raise their profits.

Recently, for example, the Republic and LTV Steel Corporations, the nation's third and fourth largest steel producers, announced plans to merge. The new company will become the second largest steel producer after U.S. Steel. According to the big business publication, the *Wall Street Journal*, "if LTV succeeds in acquiring Republic Steel, a lot of pieces of both companies are almost sure to be cast off. Trying to revitalize themselves, the two ailing steelmakers will cull their least efficient facilities and fire thousands of no-longer-needed employees."

U.S. Steel and British Steel have discussed plans for U.S. Steel to import steel slabs from Britain to its finishing mill outside Philadelphia. The venture would increase each company's profits, while leading to the loss of thousands more jobs in both countries.

Both moves are aspects of the continuing restructuring of the U.S. steel industry in the face of increased inter-imperialist competition from Japan and Western Europe. While the upturn in the U.S. business cycle has not led to a big increase in steel production and most steel companies continue to register losses — a sign of the weakness of the capitalist "recovery" — some capital spending on modernization is taking place. The steel barons' overall objective is a smaller, more efficient, more productive, more profitable industry with reduced labor costs.

Another deal is unfolding between the world's first and third largest auto manufacturers — General Motors and Japan's Toyota. They plan to jointly produce a small car at GM's Fremont, California, plant beginning in 1985. Part of the deal, however, is that the venture will be called a "new" company that will not recognize the right of laid-off Fremont employees to be called back first. The "new" company also intends to hire workers with wages and benefits below the typical union contract, while still formally recognizing the union.

The auto industry provides one of the clearest examples of the objectives of the employers, the policies of the trade union bureaucracy, and the response of the rank and file.

The 1979-1982 recession hit the profits of the Big Three auto makers — General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler — hard. They lost close to 7 billion dollars, and Chrysler nearly went bankrupt.

In the worst of the recession, over 250,000 auto workers were laid off. Most will never be called back to work. For example, in 1979 Chrysler had 130,000 employees; today its U.S. and Canadian plants employ only 65,000 workers.

Between 1970-82, 20 auto plants were shut down. Although some are reopening with the upturn in the economy, many will not.

At the same time the auto bosses are investing billions of dollars for modernization. Budgeted outlays for 1980-84 are 80 billion dollars.

But much of the returned profitability in the industry is the result of a smaller workforce, lower wages and benefits, and worse working conditions. Job combination and speed-up alone will save the companies millions of dollars.

In 1979-80 Chrysler won a concession contract with the aid of the federal government and United Auto Workers (UAW) leadership. Seeing no alternative leadership and perspective, the ranks voted three times for such contracts. This resulted in a total loss of 1 billion dollars in wages and benefits.

But jobs were not saved. More plants were shut down and thousands of workers were laid off permanently. The workers still on the job suffered from speed-up and much worse working conditions.

The ranks became more angry and even hostile to sections of the union leadership, including Douglas Fraser, then president of the UAW, who joined the Chrysler Board of Directors to "represent" the workers.

The anger and dissent nearly came to a head in 1981. A new concession contract pushed by the employers and the top union leadership was narrowly approved by 52 to 48 percent of the members voting.

Then in October 1982, the workers voted overwhelmingly to reject a fourth concession contract after Chrysler reported a modest profit.

The Canadian UAW members working under a similar contract went a step further. They not only rejected the proposed contract, they also voted to go on strike. They stayed out for five weeks won a significant pay raise for themselves and U.S. workers despite Chrysler's threats that any wage increase would send the company into bankruptcy. Chrysler made record profits in the first half of 1983.

Many workers learned from that experience. By fighting back — against the advice of the top union misleaders — gains were made.

In 1983, based on these gains, Chrysler workers took another step forward. They

made it clear to the company that another big wage gain was in order in light of Chrysler's record profits. They threatened to strike in January 1984. That threat pressured Chrysler to give a big wage increase — an immediate 1 dollar per-hour and an additional 1.42 dollars over the next two years.

This important victory against Chrysler — the symbol of concession contracts for most workers — came in the context of huge profits in the auto industry. Yet the Chrysler workers' success has not been typical for most of the working class. The situation has been one of setbacks and defeats in the main because of the class-collaborationist "concession bargaining" strategy of the union bureaucracy.

The experience at Chrysler shows that as the capitalist economy picks up and workers see signs of new corporate profits, their level of confidence and combativity rises and new gains can be won. Connected to this, we are also witnessing some signs of increasing militancy in defensive struggles as well.

#### MEAT PACKERS AND COPPER MINERS

In June 1983, meat-packing workers struck the Wilson Foods Company, the largest fresh pork processor in the United States. The strike came in response to a new union-busting tactic of the employers — Wilson declared bankruptcy. However, the company openly admitted it did not plan to go out of business. Rather it was using the bankruptcy laws to tear up its union contracts. Its competitors, it said, had lower wages and weaker or no unions, and Wilson wanted equity.

The rise of nonunion plants is a result of restructuring in the meat processing industry. For a number of years union-organized plants have been relocating to new cities and states to remove or weaken the unions.

After the shock of the bankruptcy maneuver, the workers pressured their national leadership to call a strike. Three weeks later the workers forced Wilson to back down somewhat from their initial takeback demands. Workers accepted an approximately 2 dollar per-hour wage cut instead of the over 4 dollar per-hour one that Wilson first imposed. Considering the lack of national labor solidarity, the strike was a modest success.

In mid-year three other important defensive strikes were imposed on the workers.

On July 1, 13 unions representing copper miners in Arizona — who are majority Chicano, *mexicano*, and Native American — were forced out on strike by the Phelps Dodge Corp., the second largest copper producer in the United States.

The strike is more than a struggle between labor and management. It is a combined fight for the rights of oppressed nationalities and for stronger unions. And this is how many of the workers see it.

The strike is instructive on two levels. It shows how the various arms of the

state power — the courts, National Guard, police, scabs — have been and continue to be used against the strikers and their families to defeat the strike and bust the unions. And it reflects the growing militancy of the rank and file and their allies, who are drawing some valuable lessons about the class struggle, particularly the role of the government.

For example, the government is helping the company herd scabs into the mines. In August, over 800 National Guardsmen were mobilized for that purpose. The news media refer to the strikers as "mobs." The company threatens to evict striking workers from company-owned homes and denies them medical care at the company-owned hospitals. The courts issue injunctions limiting the number of pickets at each mine.

The workers have responded by organizing militant pickets. They have filed lawsuits against both the company and government for their strike-breaking activities and harassment. Women and children have established independent auxiliaries to back the strike.

At the same time, the top layers of the national union officialdom — particularly the AFL-CIO — have refused to actively mobilize the millions of union members around the country to give the copper miners enough aid to win.

This lack of effective national solidarity is one reason the strike has not been won. It indicates a fundamental weakness of the labor movement today as the employers deepen their offensive. It is harder and harder for workers in one plant or industry to make gains by themselves.

The trade union bureaucracy's refusal to organize active solidarity is a factor in why most defensive strikes are losing or barely holding their own. Despite worker militancy, advances have been few.

#### TELEPHONE WORKERS STRIKE

Another recent example involved the more than 675,000 unionized telephone workers at the huge American Telephone and Telegraph company. Last year AT&T reaped 7.2 billion dollars in profits. The workers expected a decent wage increase — at least to keep up with inflation — and some improvements in benefits in their new contracts.

But AT&T had something else in mind. It demanded takebacks from the unions. It said the government's decision to restructure the telephone industry by breaking AT&T into 22 smaller companies — but still owned by the same capitalists — meant its profits would begin to decline.

The three unions involved were forced to call a strike. The unions demanded job security for all currently employed workers. Specifically they sought a job retraining program to minimize the impact of the introduction of new technology. They also demanded a decent wage increase and other improvements.

The company refused to negotiate seriously until it became clear that the work-



ers were ready and willing to strike indefinitely to win a decent contract. AT&T finally retracted its major take-back demands and gave the workers a modest wage increase after a 22-day strike.

The arrogance of AT&T, a company making superprofits, is a reflection of a common attitude among the employers: it is possible to take and take because the unions lack a leadership willing to fight back.

AT&T's problem was that it ran into the militant rank and file who believed — like the Chrysler workers — that the company had money to meet their demands.

### CONTINENTAL WALKOUT

The employers' determination to cut labor costs is also evident in the confrontation between the major domestic airlines and their workers.

The airline employers have also used bankruptcy laws to bust the airline unions. Continental Airlines, for example, simply announced one day that it was filing for bankruptcy and terminated 12,000 workers. Three days later it reopened as the "New Continental Airlines." The "new" company rehired only 4,800 workers and cut wages in half. Qualitatively worse working conditions were also imposed.

The workers were told to live by this "yellow dog contract" or be out of a job. That is what happened to Continental mechanics, who went on strike in August after the airline made its last offer — they were immediately fired. This was before the bankruptcy ploy was used.

Once Continental declared bankruptcy, the pilots and flight attendants had no choice — fight back or capitulate.

The decision of the airline pilots in particular to walk the picket lines is quite significant. These are some of the highest-paid workers, and they have generally displayed little solidarity when other airline workers have struck. They refused, for instance, to respect the mechanics' pickets in August, and in 1981 they crossed the picket lines of the striking air traffic controllers.

These employer attacks and the workers' response are fueling the working class radicalization. Growing numbers of workers continue to question where the country is heading and to consider alternative ideas for defending themselves. This is true for most working people, but especially for workers in basic industries that are in the process of major capitalist restructuring such as auto, steel, rail, trucking, and airlines.

### RADICALIZATION AND POLARIZATION

The radicalization of workers is developing alongside a growing class polarization in U.S. society. Under the employers' offensive, the capitalist economic stagnation, and the beginnings of working-class resistance, there is a tendency

for opposing class interests to be reflected in political life more and more openly, much more so than in a period of capitalist expansion and social stability.

This process of polarization does not mean that all U.S. workers are moving to the left. Many workers — especially those who are still relatively privileged — still identify with the interests of "their country," "their boss," and "their industry."

Such views are pushed by the trade union bureaucracy. Thus many workers have voted for concession contracts, believing it will "save" their plant and job. There is not yet a clear understanding that capitalism itself is why plants shut down, "run away" to nonunion areas or abroad, or declare bankruptcy.

Some older workers with a degree of job security accept two-tier wage scales in which new hires start at half pay. Older workers, those with long seniority, believe this may save their jobs. It is only when they themselves are under attack that they begin to jettison such ideas. This is happening to many older workers in auto and steel.

Another feature of this class polarization is the growing battle over ideas taking place inside the working class.

In this discussion of ideas, the labor bureaucracy serves as the mouthpiece of the employers in the labor movement. A good example is the campaign for protectionism being led by top officials of the garment, steel, and auto unions.

While different views exist within the ruling class on import restrictions, tariffs, etc., all of the employers benefit when U.S. workers are encouraged to blame workers in other countries for the crisis caused by capitalism. This lets the bosses off the hook and impedes workers from coming to a correct understanding of how best to fight for jobs.

Moreover, the anti-imports stance is undermining labor solidarity among U.S.

workers and between U.S. and other workers. This type of worker "competition" is an aid to the employers and can ultimately lead workers to accept the employers' view that "defense" of the company's profits means fighting their wars to "defend" the country.

The fact that the government is central to the employers' attacks on working people is making clear to more and more workers the need to develop a strategy that challenges the government directly.

Where does the labor movement stand in developing such a perspective?

Although there is no organized expression of working people developing a political perspective independent of the employers and their parties, the Democrats and Republicans, over the last several months there have been signs of working people trying to go in that direction. This is most pronounced in the Black community where discussions about forging broader political alliances to push for more political representation and influence are most developed. The result of the employers' offensive in general is leading more working people to think about and discuss politics.

The crucial challenge — and need — is to forge a class-struggle leadership to prevent further setbacks and defeats and eventually take on the political monopoly of the capitalist class.

It means the unions forming a mass labor party — something that does not exist in the United States because of the officialdom's complete subordination to the capitalist parties.

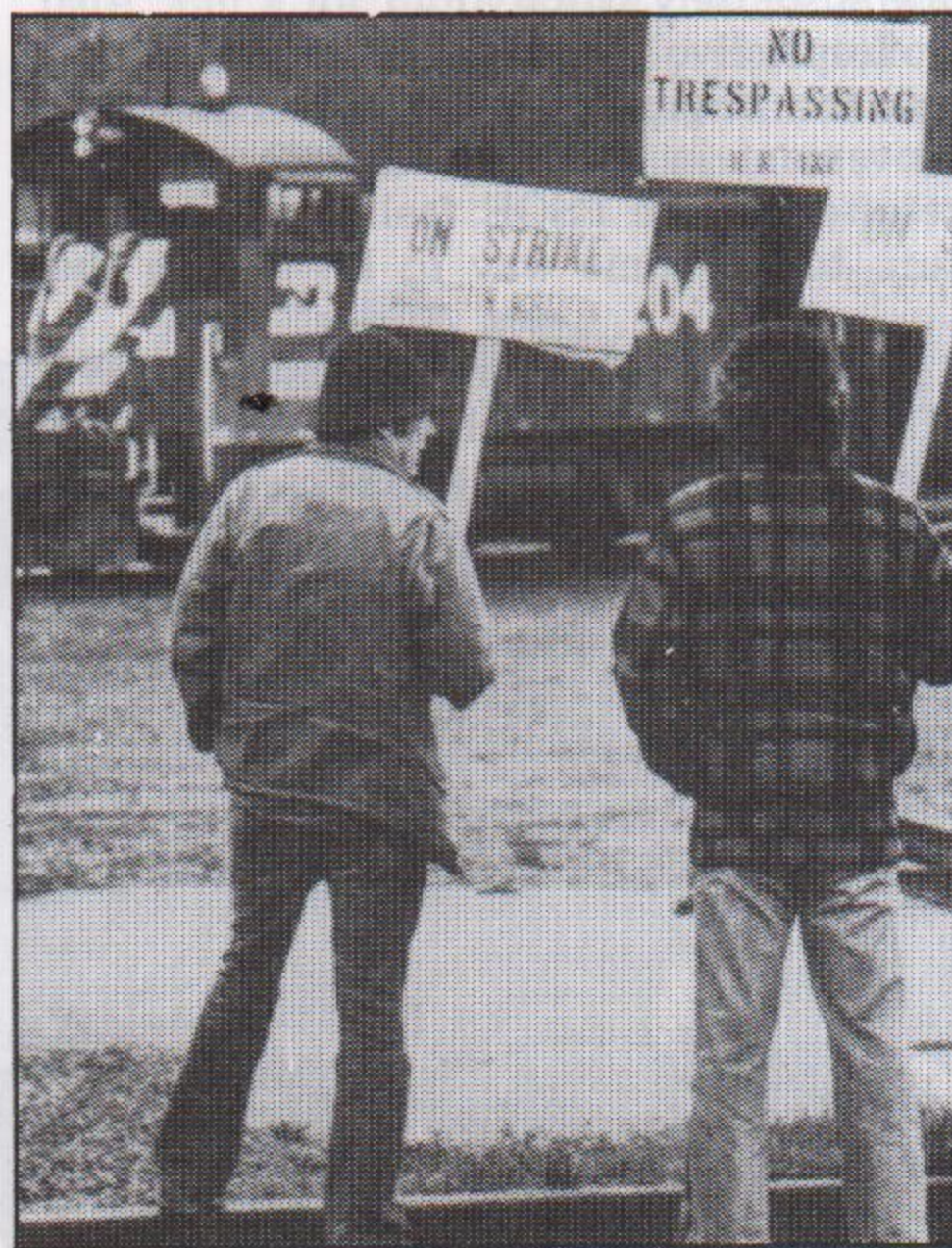
Although motion in the labor movement or among labor's strategic allies — Blacks, Latinos, women, and family farmers — toward breaking with the capitalist parties is not expressed in an organized form there is a serious discussion developing around the 1984 presidential election on the need to build new alliances of the oppressed and exploited to achieve more political clout.

This is especially true among the oppressed Black nationality. Jesse Jackson, a prominent Black civil rights leader, has announced publicly that he is considering entering the race for the Democratic Party presidential nomination. This idea, of a Black running for president, has generated a wide-ranging discussion among Blacks, Latinos, farmers, and all workers. This discussion centers on how the oppressed can best fight for more political power.

Jackson makes clear that he is not talking about independent working-class political action. He argues that the oppressed must remain within the Democratic Party. Nevertheless the discussion he has helped initiate poses the broader question of how working people can achieve political power. It reflects growing dissatisfaction with the capitalist political parties and helps open the door to a discussion of genuinely independent working-class political action.

In this situation of political ferment, the top layers of the trade union bureaucracy have reaffirmed their strong sup-

Striking railroad workers on picket duty (DR)



port to the two-party capitalist system and their traditional support to the Democratic Party. That is why the AFL-CIO voted to endorse Walter Mondale. The bureaucracy is procapitalist and opposes any motion toward a labor party.

#### HOW WILL A NEW LEADERSHIP ARISE?

Workers will overcome this class-collaborationist leadership through struggles against the employers' offensive at home and abroad. It is through struggles that workers are learning lessons and will bring forth new leaders to defend their interests. While there is no motion now toward a labor party, the defensive strikes, the antiwar sentiments, and the fact that tens of thousands of unionists marched in Washington for jobs, peace, and freedom on August 27 along with a half million other working people are all part of the process that is deepening the political consciousness of many workers.

Furthermore, there is no way to know in advance which unions will move forward first and over what issues.

For instance, in the late 1960s and early 1970s a rank-and-file movement rose up in the oldest industrial union in the United States — the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). That movement became so powerful that it overthrew the entrenched bureaucracy and established important elements of rank-and-file control over the coal-miners' union.

How did it begin? Mine workers built a movement around health and safety. In response to the deadly illness, "Black Lung," miners demanded federal health and safety legislation. The top union leadership reluctantly supported the movement but refused to lead the fight against the coal operators necessary to win these demands.

During this movement, new leaders who favored democracy in the UMWA began to come forward. Although the bureaucracy used force and violence to attempt to beat back the movement, eventually the bureaucratic caste was thrown out — not just at the top, but throughout the UMWA. Democratic forms of functioning — many of which existed on paper but had been abused by the bureaucracy — were given life blood and new ones instituted for the first time since the union was founded in the late 1800s.

This revolution in a major industrial union was an unprecedented development, something not seen since the rise of industrial unionism in the 1930s.

The democratic forms established by the mine workers — which will not necessarily be the same in other unions when their bureaucratic castes are overthrown — have continuously been utilized by the miners to defend their interests. Many a local, regional, and national leadership has been removed by the ranks when they felt these leaderships were not effectively fighting the coal operators.

The miners' experience places them in

a stronger position than most workers to forge a class-struggle leadership to fight the bosses' continuing takeback demands.

At the same time, like other unions, the UMWA is facing the combined power of the employers, courts, and government. A united front of all unions and other working people is needed to respond to this reactionary capitalist alliance. That is why a militant national labor movement, beginning in the political arena and extending to the shop floor, is needed to effectively defend working people's interests today.

What the last year has shown is that the fight for jobs, better health care, and

education — and against U.S. wars abroad — means a political fight against the employers and their government.

The last year has also shown that working-class radicalization is uneven, based on the depth of the employers' offensive in any particular industry and its connection to the national and international objectives of U.S. capitalism. While there have been more setbacks and defeats for workers in this recent period of class struggle, these experiences are clarifying class politics to more and more workers. Growing resistance as well is convincing many workers that fundamental change is needed to end the crisis. ■



## AROUND THE WORLD



### NEW SPANISH ABORTION LAW DOES LITTLE FOR WOMEN

On Thursday October 6, the parliament in the Spanish state passed a bill introduced by the ruling Socialist Party (PSOE) to legalise abortion in certain cases. These cases were rape, danger to the life of the mother and deformation of the foetus.

The limitations to this new law have just been graphically illustrated. Five Bilbao women who had abortions between 1968 and 1976 have just been given sentences by the Supreme Court ranging from 140 dollar fines to over twelve years in prison.

These women had originally been acquitted by a lower court because of their 'state of necessity', that is, their poverty. The Supreme Court, in overruling this decision, interpreted the new law absolutely strictly.

Ironically, the case of the Bilbao 11 was the original catalyst to the abortion movement in the Spanish state — which resulted in the PSOE feeling under pressure to go some way to liberalising the law!

The first Bilbao trial opened in 1979 after a number of delays. It provided a focus for a widespread campaign. Thousands of women and men signed a public document stating that they had had an abortion, or helped women to obtain one. Demonstrations were held, international observers invited, and lawyers paraded through the streets of Bilbao in protest.

This trial was suspended, as was the second in 1982. Only in March 1982 was the verdict finally given. It marked a turning point in Spanish law, and seemed to be a victory not only for the women on trial but Spanish women in general. The Bilbao judge defined the 'state of necessity' as an extenuating circumstance, and said that the 'right to life' protected in the constitution did not include 'juridical protection of life in formation'. A remarkable ruling in a Catholic country.

The Supreme Court upheld the acquittal of four women, while finding the other five guilty. It also increased the previous sentences on the woman abortionist and the man accused of helping another woman to get an abortion.

The Madrid Abortion Rights Commission and other feminist organisations immediately attacked the sentence, pointing out it showed how little the new law would do to help the vast majority of Spanish women who want abortions. Only 3 per cent of the women who have abortions in the Spanish state each year will be helped by this law. Otherwise they will continue to have illegal abortions on their kitchen tables, risking trials and prison sentences, or, if they can afford it, flying to London or Amsterdam. The promised PSOE's 'new course' has not yet done much for women. ■



## SUCCESSFUL SWISS ANTI-MISSILES DEMONSTRATION

The last few weeks have seen huge demonstrations in many European countries against the installation of the Nato missiles (see article in this issue on page 13).

Such a demonstration also took place in Switzerland on November 5, as the major action in a Day of Action for Peace. Our Swiss comrades sent this report.

BERNE — 60,000 people at Berne is equivalent to almost 400,000 people in Bonn, the capital of West Germany. It is an unchallengeable fact that an important step forward has been made. The success of the first big demonstration on December 5, 1981 has been considerably broadened and consolidated. No longer can the peace movement be talked of as a simple 'flash in the pan' animated by a desire to imitate what is going on elsewhere, or as being 'manipulated by Moscow'.

There are several reasons for the ongoing nature and consolidation of the movement. The young and working people of Switzerland feel that they are directly affected by the stationing of Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe. An opinion poll carried out by Swiss German television showed that 48 per cent of the people asked thought that the installation of the missiles should be put back to give more time for the US-Soviet Geneva negotiations. In French-speaking Switzerland 42 per cent were of the same opinion.

The same poll showed that 42 per cent thought that the Swiss government should pursue 'a more active peace policy', while 48 per cent considered that Cruise and Pershing II missiles would make no positive contribution to their security. These results confirm the correctness of the demands put forward in the Day of Action.

It should be noted that the bourgeois

parties and the Federal Council have increased their slanders against the peace movement. The most striking example of this attitude was the communiques of the Radical Party, and of the Society of Swiss Officers, attacking the day for its unilateralism, as the SS20s were not mentioned in the platform of demands.

In reality, and interviews with many superior officers show this, the official policy of the Federal Council is to welcome the deployment of Cruise and Pershing. In that sense, the unilateralism of the platform on this point is only the product of the official policy.

We can say, without fear of contradiction, that the official policy of the Federal Council, and government, of lining up with Nato, has met with a rebuff. The real significance of the demand for 'a more active peace policy' is to question this agreement with warmonger Reagan's policies. An agreement that could also be noted in a series of other areas, such as the growth of military spending to the detriment of social spending, repression of conscientious objectors, and the desire to build new army practice ranges as at Rothenthurm.

The overall crisis of the system, the sharp rise in imperialist military intervention in the dependent countries, the frenzied austerity policies of the bourgeois governments, all these factors also underly the peace mobilisations.

In the period of a real danger of nuclear holocaust, it is absolutely justified to struggle for a different future than the physical, social and ecological destruction of humanity.

We think that there will be many repercussions from the day of action. We will see the opening of a still broader debate, and a lot more activity in the arena of the social, military and foreign policy of the present bourgeois parliamentary majority. This is a positive step. ■



## FRENCH ANTI-RACIST MARCH

The horrific killing on November 15 of a young Arab by four young men travelling with a sergeant to join the Foreign Legion underlines the increasing danger and discrimination that North African immigrants face today in France.

In the last two years racist attacks have claimed some 60 victims. At the same time the far-right have been increasing their scores in municipal elections from 9 per cent to 17 per cent.

The Socialist Party-Communist Party government have not combatted this increasing racism through implementation of Mitterrand's election promises: to give immigrants the right to vote in municipal elections, issue ten-year combined work and residence permits (rather than the present complicated system of three different types of residence permit and two for the right to work), and regularise the situation of the *sans papiers* (without papers).

It is in response to this situation that an anti-racist march for equality is presently traversing France. Thirty marchers left Marseilles on October 15. They will make their way through the big cities and industrial areas of eastern France, including Grenoble, Lyon, Dijon, Lille and Amiens, to Paris where there will be a national demonstration on December 3.

The march was originated by a charitable organisation concerned with refugees and those in need, the CIMADE, and a local association of public housing residents, SOS Avenir Minguettes. It is now supported by all the big anti-racist and immigrant organisations.

A spokesperson of CIMADE explained the reasons for the march at a press conference on October 13, 'There is still no equality, despite the anti-racist laws there is no equality in real life, for example, in being allowed to stay in the country where one has lived for ten years. When will we get a single [work and residence] card?'

As the march makes its way through France it is being met by local demonstrations, forums or days of action on anti-racism, activities that are also being undertaken to prepare the mobilisation for December 3 in Paris. ■

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VIEWPOINT

## Petr Uhl — the protests helped

### IV CORRESPONDENTS

PRAGUE — The many protests seem to have had some effect. One of Czechoslovakia's best known political prisoners, Peter Uhl, has been moved out of the ill-famed Mirov prison and transferred to a better one outside Prague.

A relieved Anna Sabatova, Uhl's wife, told us this two weeks ago when we visited her in Prague.

In Mirov, which is in northern Bohemia, hundreds of kilometers from Prague, Petr Uhl's situation had become quite critical. He was very sick. The prison is a castle that dates from the thirteenth century, and for all this time it has been used to hold dissident elements. It is notorious as one of the worst prisons in the country.

Anna Sabatova could get permission to visit Petr Uhl only every six months — for one hour. The last time she visited him was in May this year. After seeing him, she was very worried.

Petr's face was swollen, and he seemed to find it very difficult to concentrate. In order to break Petr both psychologically and physically, they had him grind hard, brittle plastic in a room without ventilation, when he already suffered from chronic asthma. He was put in a cell with five other prisoners, all of them were loyal to the regime, and who constantly tried to provoke Petr, Anna Sabatova said.

In 1979, Petr Uhl was imprisoned along with five others, including the well-known writer Vaclav Havel. He was sentenced to five years in prison for his activity in the Committee to Defend the Unjustly Accused, VONS.

The others have now been released. Petr is still being held. He got the most severe sentence, on the pretext that he was a second offender.

Uhl was imprisoned the first time for opposing the Soviet invasion in 1968. He was active in the resistance, the widespread strikes and university occupations. Later he was one of the founders and leaders of Charter 77, the movement for human rights in Czechoslovakia.

In the capitalist countries, a lot of workers organizations have campaigned for the release of the political prisoners in Czechoslovakia or at least to see that they got better conditions in prison.

In the nearly four and a half years that Petr Uhl has been in prison, a number of campaigns have been waged on his

behalf in many countries. Organizations such as Amnesty International have also participated in these campaigns.

In the big international peace conference in Prague this summer, many delegates — to the great distress of their Czechoslovak hosts — pressed for Petr Uhl to be allowed to attend. Resolutions were read, moreover, demanding the release of the political prisoners.

It was shortly after this conference that Petr Uhl was moved. When Anna Sabatova went to the authorities to complain about the poor state of her husband's health, she got nowhere. The last time she complained she went together with her father, Vaclav Sabata, who himself spent six years in prison for being spokesman of Charter 77.

Petr was transferred because the regime is sensitive to criticism from the West, especially as regards political prisoners, Anna Sabatova said.

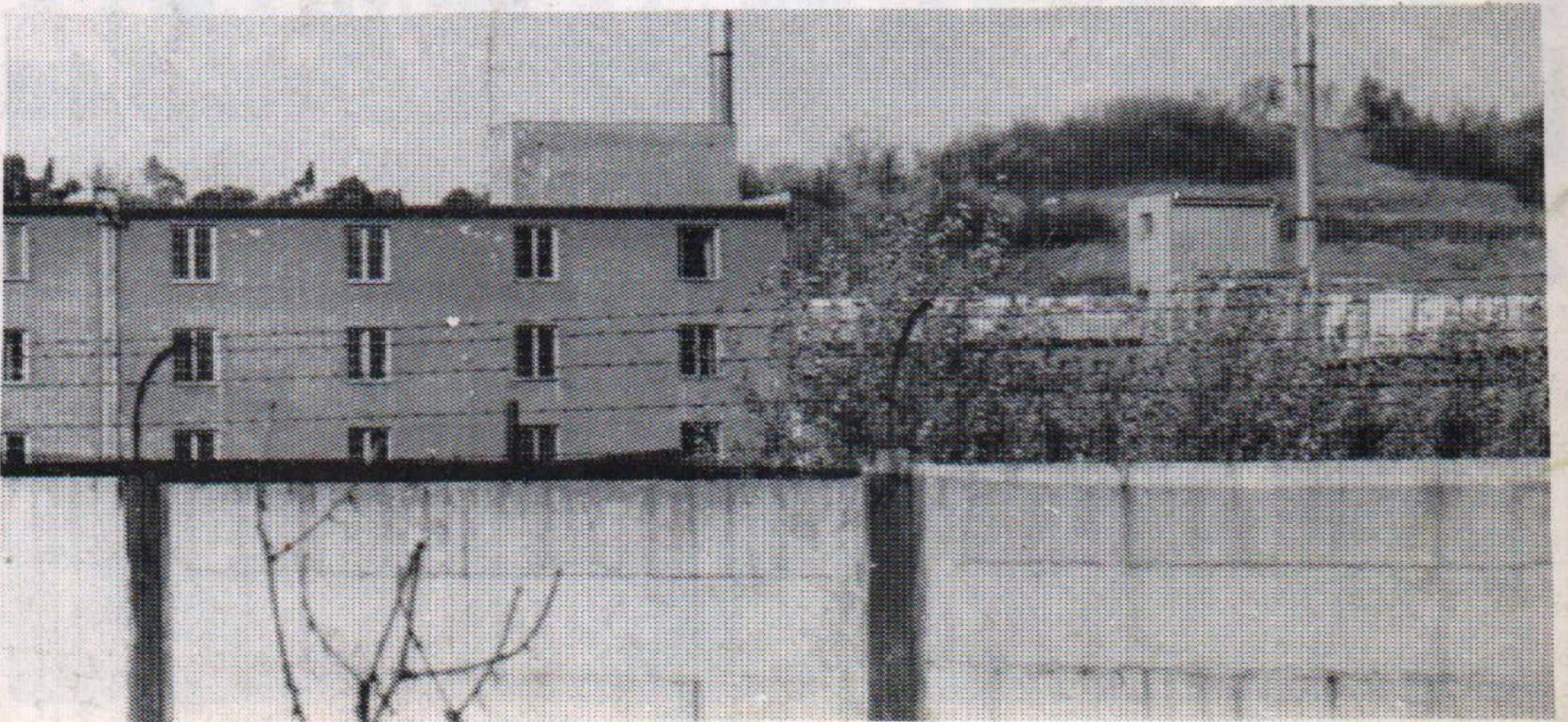
Now it only takes an hour's bus ride to get to Petr's prison. So why not go out there? We went out with Anna Sabatova. She had not yet had a chance to go.

In the bus we traveled through the big coal-mining area north of Prague. In a small town, Kladno, we got off. The last few kilometers we had to walk down into a valley. We passed a coal mine, and then we could see to the left the prison walls that are supposed to "protect" the Czechoslovak people from "anti-social elements." The wall was 2.5 meters high, with barbed wire on the top.

Keeping a good distance away, we walked along the wall. It was snowing down in the valley. At the bottom we came up to the prison, right up against the wall.

We walked along a railway embankment, from which we could see most of

*The prison where Petr Uhl is now held (DR)*



the area. There were guard towers at each corner of the wall, with guards constantly on the watch. We could hear a loud noise from behind the walls. It was a pack of police dogs. They were chasing up and down in a runway that circles the wall on the inside.

The prison itself consisted mainly of about ten low one- or two-story buildings. They looked like small workshops. Most of the buildings also had fences around them. In the middle, a big four-story building towered over the rest.

"Petr's cell is in that building, on the second floor," Anna Sabatova said.

We went along the railway embankment a little way along the wall. We wanted to take pictures of the prison. That is not allowed. But we managed to do it by putting the camera in the bottom of a bag. The guard got very edgy about having us walk around. He yelled something at us. So, we turned quickly around and went back to Kladno to take the bus back to Prague.

In six months, Petr Uhl will be able to take the same bus ride into Prague, if he is released from prison on time. But even then he will not be quits with the authorities. He will have to pay them money. They are not satisfied with just jailing you, they make you pay for the room and board for all the time you are held under indictment. For Petr Uhl, that was nineteen months.

A large part of the wage he earned in prison went to pay that debt. When he gets out, he will still have a lot to pay. Besides that, he still owes money for his first stay behind bars.

For Anna Sabatova, the situation is the same. At the beginning of the 1970s, she served two years in prison. She is still paying her room and board for that stay in the government's hotel.

Petr has now gotten better conditions. For example, he can study English in his free time. He could not do that in Mirov, Anna Sabatova explained.

"There are more and more political prisoners in Czechoslovakia," Anna Sabatova continued. "So, it is important that all progressive forces in the West protest against the jailing of people who are politically active and against the conditions under which they are held.

"Now you can see that protesting has an effect," she concluded. ■