

International VIEWPOINT

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British miners
in crucial fight

The martyring of
Iran's youth



**Salvador's electoral
farce does nothing
for peace**

International Viewpoint

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US-sponsored electoral maneuver weaves a tangled web

Instead of providing a facade of legality and parliamentary democracy for the Salvadoran junta, the March 25 elections highlighted the deepening crisis of bourgeois rule in the country.

In the first place, they demonstrated the shrinkage in the government's physical hold over the population, in particular since voting is compulsory in the country. Everywhere the government had effective control over people and was able to provide the facilities for voting, Salvadorans had to cast a ballot.

However, whereas in the elections for the Constituent Assembly last year an estimated 80% of those qualified voted, this time the most optimistic of Salvadoran bourgeois politicians could not claim that more than 65% to 70% went to the polls. The US ambassador's estimate was 65%.

In the province of Chalatenango, for example, where the insurgents are active, the number of those voting fell from 60,000 in the 1982 Constituent Assembly elections to just 19,000 this time.

According to the first official figures released by the Central Electoral Council on March 28, the Christian Democrat Napoleon Duarte was far from getting an absolute majority and only 10% ahead of the ultrarightist Roberto d'Aubuisson. That is, these initial figures showed Duarte with 41%, d'Aubuisson with 31% and the second rightist candidate, Francisco Guerrero of the National Conciliation Party, with 22%.

Thus, a runoff vote appears certain, and the rightists have gotten a majority. Even if Duarte is able to win the second round, he is very likely to have to openly mortgage himself to the reactionary and murderous right.

Moreover, the government proved unable even to organize orderly voting. The chaos was so great as to arouse an outcry from the bourgeois political forces themselves and in particular from the army.

The commander of the elite US-trained rangers denounced the bungling of the election officials as virtual treason.

Symbolically, after the first few days, Salvadoran vote counters abandoned the electronic equipment provided by the US and returned to the old methods. Thus, the final tally may not be known until weeks after the polling date.

The FMLN-FDR issued a communique describing the results of the elections as "the biggest political failure the Reagan administration has suffered in this country." The statement went on to say, "out of a total of 261 municipalities, people did not go to the polls in 89, that is 34%, because they were in rebel-controlled zones."

According to Christian Martin, special correspondent for the Paris daily, *Liberation*, the elections were being referred to as a "farce" even in the well-to-do rightist neighborhoods of San Salvador.

Martin also interviewed the mayor of Chinameca, a village in the eastern part of the country, who complained that it would be even harder to get people to vote in the second round.

Vincent KERMEL

The March 25 presidential elections in El Salvador had a key role to play in US policy to block the revolutionary upsurge. They were part of a plan to defuse the social crisis underlying the civil war that has gone on now for several years, and to isolate the forces of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front to clear the way for destroying them.

What the Reagan administration sought to do was to build up a facade of "reform" for the Salvadoran junta. To this end, it proposed some economic measures, such as the agrarian reform and nationalization of the banks. It proposed,

moreover, reorganizing the government around the Christian Democratic team and the Christian Democratic president, Napoleon Duarte.

The March 28, 1982 legislative elections and the presidential elections this year were designed to give a certain legitimacy to the new government and make it possible to achieve an equilibrium among the various bourgeois political forces in the country.

This scheme, however, ran up against fierce, concerted opposition from a local oligarchy particularly attached to its privileges, the great majority of the military hierarchy and the ultrarightist parties.

Representative of the ultrarightist par-

ties is the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA). This group is led by Major Roberto d'Aubuisson, a former military officer. He has been accused by the previous US ambassador to San Salvador, Robert White, of having organized the March 24, 1980, assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, and of being linked, along with a number of Salvadoran businessmen, to the Death Squadrons.

The polarization of an important part of the local ruling classes on the far right and the growth of the revolutionary struggle led by the FMLN left little room for the "reform" policy initially envisaged by the US. Moreover, the stepping up of imperialist military pressure on Sandinista Nicaragua is pushing the overall situation in the region toward armed confrontation.

The results of the March 1982 elections sharpened the crisis of political leadership of the Salvadoran bourgeois forces, which was reflected in the conflict between Arena and the other far right parties and the Christian Democrats. The latter elected only 24 deputies, as against 36 for the coalition of the extreme rightist forces.

Having gained a majority in the Constituent Assembly, the rightists rapidly set about wiping out the timid reforms — in particular, the agrarian reform — that had been instituted by the previous Christian Democrat-dominated government. Alvaro Magana of the Democratic Action Party was named as the provisional president of a veritable war cabinet. (1)

At the time, Washington was rather worried about the Christian Democrats being pushed aside, and Ronald Reagan himself said that an electoral victory for the likes of Roberto d'Aubuisson would cause "big problems" for the US, if the new Salvadoran government went back on Napoleon Duarte's reforms. (2) The American government brought some pressure to bear to get some officers too obviously linked to the Death Squadrons removed from important posts. But this did not go very far, which is hardly surprising when you consider that one of the main organizers of the Death Squadrons was on the CIA payroll.

Fundamentally, Washington has no local agent today for conducting any policy different from the one the ultrarightists want. Moreover, the rightists enjoy the support of the oligarchy and of a part of the local bourgeoisie, besides being very influential in the military hierarchy.

Two years after the March 1982 legislative elections, the situation has worsened for the Salvadoran junta in every sphere — military, economic and social. And in this context, the lack of cohesion in the bourgeois camp is a major obstacle to improving the military regime's capabilities for combating the guerrillas.

1. See "New Situation in Central America," IV, No 8, June 7, 1982.
2. *Newsweek*, April 12, 1982.

In fact, the acute crisis of bourgeois political leadership that the imperialists are confronted with in El Salvador, the growing military activity of the FMLN forces over the last two years, and the aggravation of internal cleavages in the armed forces and in the political army on the eve of the presidential elections are all elements that in the eyes of many US imperialist leaders demonstrate the un-avoidability of direct military intervention against the Salvadoran revolution. From this standpoint, the results of the presidential elections may influence the Reagan administration's timing of such an intervention.

In 1983, the breakdown of the Salvadoran economy became particularly glaring. The consequences of this would no doubt have helped to bring about the overthrow of the junta by the masses, if it were not for the vast support it gets from the US imperialists. (3)

According to a study carried out by the Salvadoran University Information and Documentation Center (CUDI), in 1983, production of goods and services was only two-thirds the level of 1978. (4) Production of the major export crops — coffee and cotton — was down. For the 1983-1984 season, the coffee harvest was 40% lower than for the previous year, and according to Salvadoran business sources, it amounted to only 23% of the harvest for the boom year of 1970-71.

Contributing causes to this drop are a decline in productivity and the sabotage actions of the FMLN, which have reportedly destroyed from 20% to 25% of production every year since 1979. However, the amount of land on which coffee is grown did not decline over the past year, and still represents 7% of the arable land in the country.

With respect to cotton, 1983-1984 production fell 34% lower than that of the previous year, and the amount of land in cotton shrank by 29%. Cotton production was the most affected by the FMLN's actions, since 80% of the cotton-growing areas are in zones of guerrilla activity.

The CUDI report points out, moreover that manufacturing industry has been the hardest hit by the dislocation of the Central American Common Market, the rising prices for raw materials, as well as the slowness in renewing production equipment. The latter is due, among other things, to the stagnation of private investment. On top of all these problems, there is the growing foreign debt and trade difficulties. The result, according to the president of the country's central bank, is that Salvador has been "set back twenty years." (5)

More than ever, therefore, the Salvadoran junta's power depends on US aid. This is all the more decisive, since the deterioration of the economic situation has gone hand in hand with a new rise in urban mass struggles. On February 29, for example, 5,800 workers at the Salvadoran Institute for Social Security went on strike demanding a 50% wage in-



Salvadoran fighters in a liberated town (DR)

crease. Some 4,000 workers at the National Water Company did the same a week later. In total, at the end of February, several tens of thousands of workers were on strike.

These actions have been denounced by Colonel Adolfo Blando as "a campaign of economic destabilization waged by subversives to undermine the electoral process." What is clear is that these actions, which developed a few weeks before the elections and spread to many categories of workers, indicate how far the urban workers movement has gone in reorganizing, in particular in the capital. To a large extent, this process has gone forward under the aegis of Christian Democratic leaderships.

Death squadrons attack strikers

The strikes have been subjected to many police attacks and to threats from the Death Squadrons. Their workplaces have been occupied by the army.

In mid-March, new public employee struggles erupted in response to the government's decision to increase wages by a mere 10%. This was described as "a joke at the expense of the working class" by the United Public Employees Union (FUSEPM).

But the political and social tensions have not been generated solely by the many strikes that have developed in the recent period around wage demands. They have also been fostered by differences within the ruling classes. For example, the powerful coffee producers association recently made a violent attack on the government of Alvaro Magana, rejecting the wholesale price for coffee proposed by the National Coffee Institute (Incafe), the state coffee-marketing agency. The coffee producers even threatened to strike, warning that Magana and the board of Incafe would be responsible for "all sorts of measures that the em-

ployers' organizations will find themselves obliged to adopt in the future to obtain a just price." (6)

Such differences foster and exacerbate the political disputes going on in the ruling strata and their parties. For example, the *cafetaleros* (coffee growers) lobby supports the proposals of Arena, which calls for reprivatization of the banks so that they can serve the interests of the landowners. They also back the demands of the Party of National Reconciliation (PCN), the traditional voice of the military, which calls for dismantling Incafe by setting up a parallel market for agricultural products. This party also decries "the merry-go-round of the reformers whose experiments have cost this country so much."

At a press conference organized by Abecafe (the Coffee Exporters Association), Christian Democrat leader Napoleon Duarte announced the concessions that his party was ready to make to the coffee growers. He pledged not to begin the second stage of the agrarian reform unless the Constituent Assembly decided to, which is hardly likely, since the ultra-right holds the majority in this assembly.

The presidential elections come right in the middle of these political confrontations, which reflect the resistance of most local bourgeois forces to any change in the country's economic structure, resistance that sometimes even takes the form of Death Squadron attacks on Christian Democrats. Moreover, this electoral farce can in no way lend any greater legitimacy to the dictatorship, nor

3. For the 1984-85 fiscal year Ronald Reagan asked the US Congress for 333 million dollars in economic aid and 243 million dollars in military aid.

4. The following figures are from *Inforpress Centroamericana*, Guatemala, February 23, 1984.

5. *Le Monde*, March 14, 1984.

6. *Inforpress*, March 15, 1984

even bring about any greater homogeneity among the reactionary forces.

For the imperialists, the terms of the problem will remain the same after the March 25 elections. The fact that six major parties are running six different candidates indicates, moreover, how fragmented the bourgeois political personnel is. Despite several months of discussions, the four main ultrarightist parties — Arena, the PCN, the Salvadoran People's Party (PPS) and the Salvadoran Authentic Constitutional Party (PAISA) proved unable to agree on a common candidate. Not all these forces were prepared to unite behind Roberto d'Aubuisson.

The role of the Christian Democrats

Besides the four ultrarightist candidates, then, Napoleon Duarte is running for the Christian Democratic Party, as well as another candidate for the Democratic Action Party. The electoral campaign was conducted under the repressive legislation of the state of emergency.

As usual, Arena accused the Christian Democrats of being "accomplices of Communism," and in this it got the support of several businessmen's pressure groups, which published ads in the Salvadoran press raising this sort of accusation against Napoleon Duarte.

While the Christian Democrats agreed to make concessions to business sectors upset by their original scheme for agrarian reform, they denounced the "rightist terrorists" of Arena and proposed a "social pact," although it is hard to see who

would want such a thing today in El Salvador or who could apply it.

Nonetheless, the Christian Democrats have managed to get the public support of the trade-union grouping they influence, the People's Democratic Union (UPD), by promising the union leaders posts in the Ministries of Agrarian Reform and Labor in a future Christian Democratic government.

The UPD then described the deal that it made with the Christian Democratic Party as a "historic duty...to defend the interests of the workers, peasants and of the people in general."

As for the PCN, it raised a slogan that illustrates well its yearning for the good old days: "We want to live the way we did before!" (7) The PPS's main slogan was "God, order and progress!" The windup rallies of the PDC and Arena were supposed to have drawn respectively 10,000 and 20,000 persons, but a lot of workers have complained that their bosses forced them to go.

The FMLN, which has called for a boycott of the electoral farce, has threatened reprisals against any bosses who try to force their workers to go to vote. And the guerrilla forces have undertaken several operations to confiscate voting cards, even though the FMLN has not opted for a military strategy of interdicting the elections.

The FMLN, moreover, is not the only force to have denounced these elections. Similar positions have been taken for example by the High Council of the University of San Salvador, as well as by Colonel Claramount, who was the candidate of

the National Opposition Union in 1977, a bloc including the Christian Democrats and the Salvadoran Communist Party.

Claramount stated forthrightly, "no one here can believe that this election is going to bring about a solution. And there is no sympathy for the established political parties. They have become grouplets, clubs, without any base of popular support. These elections are a masquerade staged by those who have always held the power, for the gratification of those who pay the bill, the US." (8)

In 1982, a section of the urban masses apparently thought that voting for the Christian Democrats was a way to express its aspiration for an end to the war and for certain reforms. Today, it does not seem that the mood of the population is the same. A poll even showed that 46% of the population had no preference for "any one" of the established political parties. (9) And voting will obviously not take place in the zones controlled by the guerrillas.

More infighting in the bourgeois ranks

One thing is certain, regardless of the final results of the elections, the March 25 masquerade will increase the internal wrangling in the bourgeois camp. Even if the ultraright is unable to put together a majority, it could make important gains in the wheeling and dealing to achieve the appearance of a stable government.

This is no doubt one of the reasons that led the FMLN to launch a proposal for a broadly inclusive provisional government. (See the FMLN document in this issue.)

The FMLN apparently hoped that while this political proposal was directed to sections of the masses not yet organized by the front or which are still susceptible to the demagogy of the Christian Democrats, it could also serve to widen the differences among the bourgeois forces. In fact, the recent urban strikes have shown the combativity of the urban masses not directly led by the FMLN and subject to Christian Democratic influences in particular.

Although it decided to boycott the electoral masquerade, the FMLN wanted to take part in the political debate. And so it advanced simultaneously an answer to the preparations for imperialist military intervention and a government based on negotiations as an alternative to the perspective of keeping the dictatorship intact after the elections.

In this document, over and above the specific governmental formula, the FMLN simply repeats its offer of negotiations with the dictatorship and the US. Here it proposes that these negotiations be based on the perspective of forming a government built around a parity agreement that would serve only long enough to introduce a series of urgent reforms, such as agrarian reform, abolishing the

ERP members in their Jucuaran headquarters (DR)



7. Ibid., March 1, 1984.

8. *Christian Science Monitor*, February 9, 1984.

9. *Infopress*, February 9, 1984.

repressive bodies and purging the armed forces.

The institutions and structures that would put into practice the FMLN's proposal (a broadly inclusive provisional government, fusion of the army and the FMLN forces, etc.) are thus clearly subordinated to an agreement on the tasks of such a government. And the FMLN explicitly rejects laying down its arms before such an agreement is reached.

The essential feature of this proposal is that in the final analysis the only support it can get is from the working masses not yet involved in the revolutionary struggle or who have become tired after several years of a bloody civil war. It is hard to see, in the present context, how it could be accepted by the forces in power today in San Salvador by US imperialism.

In fact, the rightist camp has unanimously rejected the FMLN's proposal. The American secretary of state, George Shultz, had stated that any dialogue with the forces of the FMLN is out of the question "unless they lay down their arms." He added, moreover, "the interests of the US can only be met if the Communist subversion is ended."

Arena found it sufficient to reiterate "that it would get rid of these people in three or four months." And the PCN described the FMLN's proposal as "unserious and bearing no relation to reality." (10) On the other hand, the UPD reacted positively to the FMLN's initiative.

What remains decisive today for the reactionary forces, regardless of their immediate differences, is the aggressive military strategy of Washington. The advance of the Salvadoran revolutionary forces and the breakdown of the governmental

army every day strengthen the conviction of the imperialists that direct military intervention is unavoidable. Only the form and the timing are still in question.

This seems to be the debate going on in the White House, when you consider that General Gorman, commander in chief of the American forces based in Panama "has already suggested that camouflaged American planes be used in Salvador to shell rebel concentrations." (11) This scheme for using American "air power" has supposedly been rejected by Washington, but it is becoming a more and more real possibility.

The FMLN's response

Guillermo Ungo, leader of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), recently summed up the present contradictory situation of the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador as follows:

"We have seen that the FMLN's gains are creating two paradoxes. The first is that they are bringing closer the possibility of intervention. And a military victory followed by intervention would have a very limited scope, because the intervention would destroy a good part of its effects. The other paradox affects the US. The more the FMLN advances and the more the US feels the necessity to intervene, the more our gains make it more difficult to do so." (12)

There is no doubt in fact that the US is constantly preparing for the possibility of direct military intervention in Central America. And, as the Grenada example shows, it will not miss any opportunity to act.

Using the March 25 elections as a pretext, the American forces based in Hon-

duras have recently moved toward the Salvadoran frontier. The Salvadoran refugee camps that were along the border have been shifted deeper into Honduras. Joint American-Honduran maneuvers, broadened to include Guatemalan troops and coordinated with actions by the Salvadoran armed forces, are to take place on the northern border of El Salvador, facing the province of Morazan, which is a center of FMLN strength.

About 8,000 troops will participate in these maneuvers, while several Salvadoran battalions could be mobilized for a pincers operation against the guerrilla-controlled zones. The way for this has been prepared by bringing in additional American troops from the Panama Canal and stationing them in groups of 100 to 200 along the Salvadoran border. The US State Department has already presented this new escalation as a response to "the campaign of terror waged by the leftist guerrillas to sabotage the elections." The code name for this veritable dress rehearsal for intervention in El Salvador is "Emergency Alert."

The FMLN has responded by mounting preemptory attacks on Salvadoran army bases and announcing that its forces will be put on alert to "prepare for battle against invading troops." The determination of the Salvadoran insurgents is clear. "The FMLN will try to avoid any provocation. But if the Americans and the Hondurans invade our country, there will be sufficient arms and fighters to defend our national territory until the victory." ■

10. Ibid., February 16, 1984.

11. *Le Monde*, March 14, 1984.

12. *El Dia Internacional*, Mexico, February 17, 1984.



The FMLN-FDR's proposal for a broad-based provisional government

I Introduction

For several years, the FMLN-FDR has been fighting to liberate our people once and for all. In the conviction that the greatest possible number of Salvadorans must be involved in the search for peace and justice, we have proposed various alternatives for solving the present crisis. Indeed, only a very broad-based and very great exertion can extricate our country from the ruin into which it has been plunged by the oligarchical regime and by the intervention of the government of the United States.

We face a complex situation nationally and internationally. The oligarchical society and the state serving its interests have

created a bloodbath in their death agony. Unable to meet the demands of many thousands of Salvadorans, they have institutionalized a machine for repression and exploitation. At the same time, they are resorting to political maneuvers to conceal their determination to continue using military means. Moreover, the escalating intervention by the Reagan administration has prolonged the war and threatens to spread the conflict to the entire region.

We maintain that building peace in our country requires a process involving as many political and social forces as possible. It is necessary to bring together enough forces to make possible a solution based on eliminating the previously cited factors, which are the causes of the conflict.

To this end, the FMLN-FDR proposes the formation of a broad-based provisional government. Such a government must have a program including the tasks that have to be accomplished to overcome the present crisis and enable our people to carry forward the process of social, economic and political transformations until they can achieve a truly just society.

II The broad-based provisional government

The proposal for the formation of a broad-based provisional government is the result of the advances of the revolutionary democratic forces of the Salvadoran people in the political and military spheres.

The broad-based provisional government will not be dominated by any one force but rather be the expression of broad participation by the political and social forces ready to scrap the oligarchic regime. Under this government, private property

and foreign investment will not be counterposed to the interests of society.

The term of this broad-based provisional government will be determined by the time it takes to achieve its basic objectives, in accordance with the agreement among the forces participating in it. It is understood that it is to serve only for a limited period.

The basic objectives of the broad-based provisional government are the following.

1. To restore independence and national sovereignty.
2. To dismantle the repressive apparatus and lay the foundations for genuine democracy. This will involve assuring the full exercise of human rights and political freedoms. It will be expressed by the broad participation of the people in achieving a definitive peace.
3. To meet the most urgent and immediate needs of the great masses of the Salvadoran people, to carry out basic measures to transform the economic and social structures.
4. To lay the practical basis for resolving the present war situation.
5. To prepare for, and hold general elections.

At the top level, the broad-based provisional government will have a simplified structure. Its component bodies will be the following:

- A Council of Government
- A Cabinet of Ministers
- A Consultative Council of State
- A Supreme Court

The broad-based provisional government will be made up of representatives of the workers movement, the peasant movement, teachers organizations, public employees organizations, professional associations, universities, political parties, employers organizations, representatives of the FMLN-FDR and of a purged national army.

The functioning of the government bodies will reflect this broad representation. Excluded from the government, however, will be those sectors or individuals who are opposed to the objectives of the broad-based provisional government or who are for maintaining the dictatorship.

III The government platform

This platform outlines the basic framework and the essential measures that must direct the work of the broad-based provisional government. With the benefit of support and discussion by the various organizations, sectors and citizens, it will be transformed into a government program that will make it possible to further elaborate the solutions we have to provide to the most pressing problems posed by the development of our country.

We propose, to start with, a series of measures to be applied immediately, and, secondly, objectives and guidelines that would orient the broad-based provisional government throughout its time in office.

Immediate measures

1. Repeal of the 1983 constitution and its replacement by an organic law establishing the norms of functioning for the broad-based provisional government.
2. Lifting of the state of siege and rescinding all the decrees issued since 1980 that restrict individual and public liberties.
3. Release of all political prisoners, both those held openly and those held secretly ["missing persons"], as well as the rescinding of all sentences based on repressive and special-powers decrees.
4. Full guarantees of the exercise of individual and public democratic liberties. A law must be passed establishing the right of agricultural and public workers to organize. The unions will be compensated for the damage to their property caused by the repression since 1979. The people's power organs that have developed in certain areas in the country during the war will be given legal status.
5. Dissolution of the special security forces, the Death Squadrons, and their political arm, the Arena party. Creation of a civil police force under the Ministry of the Interior.

6. Withdrawal of the American military advisors, an end to intervention in the form of military aid from the US and other countries, as well as an end to all arms shipments.

7. Purging the governmental armed forces and then giving them representation in the structures of the broad-based provisional government.

8. Investigation and trial of military personnel and civilians responsible for mass murder, political crimes, torture, kidnappings and violations of the rights of the individual. The killing of FMLN fighters, as well as of government military personnel, in battle does not constitute a crime.

9. The Supreme Court will set in motion investigation of the crimes against human rights and organize rapid trials. At the same time, it must purge and reorganize the judicial branch. Nongovernmental human-rights organizations that defended the people under the dictatorship will be asked to collaborate in these tasks.

10. Return of the exiles and refugees and an emergency program to settle returning refugees, displaced persons, war victims, former soldiers and families or individuals left destitute by the war on one side or the other and attend to their most pressing needs. In this task, the broad-based provisional government will ask for the help of international agencies and nongovernmental bodies.

11. Execution of an emergency program to rebuild the economic, educational and public health infrastructures destroyed or damaged by the war.

12. A moratorium on the debts of small and middle-sized businesses. A flexible finance program will be adopted suited to the needs of such businesses, both in the industrial and agricultural and stockraising sectors, to stimulate the revival of the economy.

13. Setting and controlling of prices for basic necessities, with the aim of improving real wages. Readjustment and supervision of the trade in basic necessities.

14. Renegotiation of the foreign debt on the basis of recognizing the financial commitments made by previous governments.

15. Restoration of the autonomy of the University of El Salvador. It will also be allotted the financial resources necessary for its reorganizing and functioning. The campus facilities



will immediately be turned over to the legitimate authorities. [At present, the university campus is occupied by the military. — IV.]

16. A massive literacy campaign and a democratic program to train adults in the areas of public health, education, agriculture and husbandry, and local government.

17. A massive jobs plan based on stimulating state and private investment in those sectors that offer the best possibilities for putting people to work. An emergency program for acquiring the raw materials and producers goods essential for reviving the economy and to guarantee adequate trade channels and margins for producers.

18. Stimulating and developing a program for organizing the people through a broadening and consolidation of local government and neighborhood organizations. Involvement of these structures in the planning, execution and evaluation of projects to benefit the community.

19. Developing a program for mass communications by developing means of communication with a local focus.

20. Setting up of a board of elections that, on the basis of the agreement of the forces in the government, will prepare the way for free general elections. A reliable electoral register will be established.

Economic and social reforms

1. To lay the foundations for completion of the agrarian reform by assuring the right of rural workers to participate in its implementation. Developing a program of cooperative organization involving the small farmers.

2. To lay the foundations for thoroughgoing nationalization of the country's banking and financial system, with the aim of putting the financial and credit system to the service of the great masses of the people.

3. Laying the bases for reforming the system of foreign trade by extending control over the export of the country's main products — coffee, cotton, sugar, fish and meat.

Controls will also be extended to the importing of raw materials, producers goods, parts and technology important for production.

4. To lay the bases for a proper solution of the housing problems of low-income sectors, as well as for the progressive expansion of social security services. To provide also for re-orienting foreign investment so that it contributes in fact to meeting public needs.

Foreign policy

The broad-based provisional government will pursue a foreign policy based on the following criteria:

1. The broad-based provisional government will follow a world policy oriented toward maintaining peace, opposing the arms race and opposing nuclear weapons. It will defend the principles of peaceful coexistence, self-determination and non-intervention. To this end, it will take the following steps:

It will join the Movement of Nonaligned States, and in line with this reinforce the struggle against colonialism, neocolonialism, Zionism, racial discrimination and apartheid.

Diplomatic relations with other countries will be established without regard to their social systems on the basis of the national interest.

The broad-based provisional government will meet the commitments made in the world bodies and will seek to take an active part in international forums to discuss and find solutions for the problems arising from the economic relations between countries.

It will reaffirm the aspiration of Bolivar [i.e., the goal of Latin-American unity — IV] and therefore it will strive to promote and participate in regional forums that strengthen the position of the Latin American countries for dealing with regional problems of political, diplomatic, economic, financial and social nature.

2. Relations with the United States:

2.1 It will propose agreements to guarantee the national security of both countries, including the following steps that correspond to this objective:

The broad-based provisional government will pledge not to permit the installation of foreign military bases or missiles on its territory. For its part, the government of the United States must pledge not to instigate acts of aggression or destabilization operations against the broad-based provisional government or against the government that finally emerges from this process.

The Salvadoran government will not allow the national territory to be used for destabilization operations against the governments of neighboring countries, nor will it allow the transit of foreign arms and troops across its territory.

It will promote the signing of nonaggression treaties and agreements guaranteeing nonintervention in the internal affairs of the countries in the region.

2.2 The relations between the government of El Salvador and the United States and Central America will be reoriented on the basis of unconditional respect for the right of self-determination. This involves the following:

Striving to achieve Morazan's ideal of Central American unity and to rid our region of foreign troops. The Salvadoran government will not participate in military blocs, and therefore it will withdraw from CONDECA.

It will take an active part in promoting and building regional bodies to guarantee a political solution to international disputes and will sign treaties fostering economic, social and political integration.

IV Procedures

In order to implement this proposal, it is necessary to begin a process of dialogue and negotiation that will involve the following points:

1. The participants

a) The conflicting parties:

1. A delegation from the FMLN-FDR

2. A delegation representing the government, the armed forces of El Salvador, and the US special envoy for Central America, or another representative of the United States.

b) Mediators without powers of arbitration, named on the basis of agreement between the parties.

c) International witnesses, such as representatives from the Contadora Group or other democratic governments.

2. Stages

a) Direct dialogue without preconditions organized by one or various mediators either on their own initiative or at the request of the parties, leading to substantive negotiations, the establishment of the agenda, selection of the witnesses and the setting of the procedures.

b) Direct negotiations between the conflicting parties, with the mediators serving as the hosts for these meetings and in the presence of ambassadors from the countries chosen as witnesses.

3. Pledges

Once this process of dialogue and negotiations is initiated and reaches an advanced stage, the FMLN-FDR express their willingness to negotiate a ceasefire.

Once these accords are reached, the documents will be signed by the conflicting parties, the witnesses in their capacity as guarantors, and by the mediators.

The agreement will immediately begin to go into effect in accordance with the dates and conditions agreed on. This process will culminate in the organization of a single national army incorporating the FMLN forces and the purged governmental armed forces. Until such time, both armies will retain their weapons.

General Command of the FMLN
Executive Committee of the FDR
El Salvador
January 31, 1984

Miners' strike most serious challenge yet to Thatcher

The fight of British miners against pit closures is the most important workers' dispute yet faced by the Thatcher government. The political stakes involved in the strike are reflected in the massive police operation against the miners and a press campaign of unabating ferocity.

As the strike moves into its third week its effects are beginning to be felt throughout the economy and more and more miners are joining the action.

The lack of practical support given to the strikers by the leaders of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress, the central trade union confederation, underlines the need for rank and file solidarity and international labour movement action.

Steve ROBERTS

The miners' action began on March 12 and as it entered its third week had shut down three-quarters of the National Coal Board's (NCB, the management board of the wholly-nationalised deep-mined coal industry) 176 pits and involved 120,000 of the industry's 183,000 workers.

The strike began in the biggest coalfield in Britain, South Yorkshire, after an announcement by NCB chief Ian McGregor that 20 pits would close in the next financial year with a loss of 20,000 jobs and a wage offer of only 5.2 per cent. The immediate flashpoint was the Cortonwood colliery in South Yorkshire which was served notice of closure within one month without any consultation with union representatives. Over 27,000 jobs have already been lost through the closure of 36 pits in the period 1979-1983.

The left-wing president of the miners' union, Arthur Scargill, warned that the Coal Board eventually aimed to close down a total of 95 pits in a claim which was widely ridiculed at the time. Now commentators concede that he was probably correct.

The massive pit closures are an essential part of Tory Party strategy. The Tories suffered major defeats at the hands of the miners' union in 1972 and in 1974, the latter strike eventually bringing down the government of Edward Heath. While in opposition, the party — under the new leadership of Margaret Thatcher — thought carefully about the balance sheet of this experience. The result was a confidential report named after its author, current minister of transport Nicholas Ridley.

The Ridley Report saw the principal politico-economic problem faced by a new Tory government as being the large nationalised and public sector. It represented a political problem since many of the most strongly organised groups of

workers were employed there. High on the list of potential opponents of the Tories were British Leyland car workers, rail workers, the waterworkers and, of course, the miners. Economically, the public sector was singled out for treatment because of the drive to shut down unprofitable sectors of the public sector and open up profitable ones to capital seeking new avenues under crisis conditions.

The strategy arrived at was to initiate a large-scale closure programme in industries such as steel, rail and coal; to privatise and abolish the state monopoly in

expanding areas like telecommunications; and to contract out services in the hospitals and the municipalities to private firms.

The report gave trenchant advice on the necessity of strengthening both the capacity of the police to intervene and giving the courts sufficient legal powers to outlaw an effective response. Leaving nothing to chance however, the report also advised that the weakest sections should be taken on first — steel, British Leyland, train drivers — and stronger sections such as the waterworkers and the miners should first be given concessions and then encountered directly.

This was the battle-plan put into action by Thatcher after her election in 1979. British Leyland workers were taken on in a series of disputes that decimated rank and file organisation in factories such as Longbridge in Birmingham and Cowley in Oxford. The defeat of the steel workers in 1980 meant that 100,000 workers eventually lost their jobs. The civil service unions suffered a humiliating defeat in 1982, resulting in the whole principle of union organisation in the state apparatus being threatened. Now the Tories are taking on the miners and the coal industry.

Britain's coal industry is the largest in the European Economic Community alongside West Germany's. In common with all coal industries in Europe it is being run down. This process is presided over by Ian McGregor, a Scots-Canadian businessman, originally 'headhunted' from the board-rooms of North America to carry out a ruthless run-down operation on Britain's steel industry. After

Violence has erupted on picket lines (DR)



having largely fulfilled Tory objectives in this industry, he was then appointed to implement the same type of operation in the coalfields.

McGregor's strategy for the mines has been to end state subsidies to the industry, close uneconomic pits, channel investment into new 'super-pits' and then, as left-wing Labour Party leader Tony Benn has charged, to sell these pits to the oil industry. The result is that subsidies to British coal are now the lowest in the EEC.

Another reason for the switch away from coal production is Britain's nuclear energy programme which is due to expand by 500 to 800 per cent by the end of the century. This switch is difficult to justify on economic grounds, but government policy is to reduce Britain's energy dependence on the miners and transport workers on the one hand and the politically unreliable oil states on the other.

The miners case against McGregor is widely-known and accepted throughout the labour movement and also in the anti-nuclear and ecology movement. The miners argue for a return to the policy whereby pits were only closed when the coal ran out or when they became unsafe for working. They admit this may mean certain pits making a loss, but argue that the industry as a whole can be viable with adequate investment, arguing that state subsidies should support the industry to the same type of level as in the rest of the EEC. (See table)

Subsidies in support of current coal production (£m)

	1979	1980	1981	1982
France	18.0	15.6	12.5	17.2
Belgium	34.0	28.9	24.9	17.7
West Germany	14.9	12.6	10.8	8.6
UK	1.5	1.4	3.6	3.2

Arthur Scargill, the current president of the National Union of Mineworkers, was elected overwhelmingly three years ago on a platform of militant industrial action to defend the industry. His victory meant the defeat of the right wing that had dominated the national union for decades, and the ascendancy of the militant leadership developed in South Yorkshire, South Wales and Scotland during the 1970s.

The beginning of the fight against closures began at the same time with the spectacular victory of the South Wales miners in 1981 imposing a reverse of the run-down programme. However, consistent with its policy of biding its time, the government did not make a wholesale retreat but waited for more favourable circumstances.

In 1983 South Wales again appealed for national strike action against pit closures in their area in 1983. The call went out but, in a national ballot, was supported by only 39 per cent of the union, despite flying pickets being sent

throughout the country. Similar experiences followed in Scotland this year, when miners at the Polmaise pit failed to receive even regional support for their fight against redundancies.

The lessons drawn from this experience are reflected in the conduct of the present strike. Preparations for the strike began last year with the introduction of a 19-week overtime ban whose aim was to reduce coal stocks and begin to forge a national purpose in the union. The ban was universally respected. However, divisions began to develop when the South Yorkshire area called for national support for its action against the new pit closures.

Divisions among miners

Much of the responsibility for the divisions in the union must be laid at the door of the media, who have characterised Arthur Scargill nationally and internationally as a totalitarian figure who refuses to allow his members to vote on their action. This press campaign has consistently ignored the fact that the policy of the union has been to give and ask for national support to those areas who *want* to take strike action without forcing them to first obtain the sanction of a national ballot. Areas which are taking strike action have voted by large margins, 86.3 per cent in the case of Yorkshire, to take industrial action.

Scargill has been correct not to call for a national ballot so far. If such a ballot had been called, the press and media would not have hesitated to spend millions of pounds trying to influence the direction of the vote. Such a propaganda campaign would have found fertile ground in areas of the coalfields, like Nottingham, which for geological reasons are not faced with the immediate prospect of closure. This unevenness of the miners' response has been exacerbated by the heritage of the right-wing leadership which, in 1977, negotiated area-by-area productivity deals which seriously divided the union, reversing the trend towards national action around pay claims which had marked the previous decade.

The correctness of Scargill's policy has been proved in practice. At the beginning of the strike on March 12 the number of pits closed by industrial action stood at 90 out of 176. By the next day the figure had reached 133 and after the first week 142. A partial ballot held in moderate areas during this week showed that nearly a third of miners — 65,000 — were against the current action or wanted a national strike ballot. However, despite this, the strike continued to remain solid with only 38 pits working normally by March 27. On that day areas like the Midlands, which had voted *against* strike action, were *rejoining* the action.

As John Lloyd, the industrial editor of the London *Financial Times*, explained with an air of stupefaction: 'Miners at the South Celynen colliery voted once against striking and twice for a national

ballot: *yet these same men later went off to picket pits in Staffordshire and Leicestershire.*' (Emphasis in original).

Of course, a key role in these developments has been played by pickets. For many of these young workers it is the first time they have been involved in a full-scale industrial battle, but they are continuing a tradition of the miners' union which first introduced the term 'flying picket' into the British political dictionary at the famous battle at Birmingham's Saltley coke depot — the deciding point in the 1972 miners' strike.

While the pickets have openly shown their anger to those miners who are crossing picket lines to go to work in areas like Nottingham, the responsibility for the violence that has left one miner dead, scores injured and hundreds arrested, lies with a massive 8,000-strong police operation mounted to smash the strike.

In the Nottingham area alone over 3,000 police have been deployed at the cost of £550,000 a day in the single biggest police operation ever seen in Britain. (Comparable figures are 1,340 police in the 1983 dispute involving print workers in the National Graphical Association, 1,192 in the 1980 steel strike in South Yorkshire and 800 at the Saltley coke depot in 1972.) The operation is coordinated from London from a centre first established in 1981 after the uprising by black youth in Britain's inner cities.

One of the police actions has been to arrest pickets to prevent them travelling to other areas *in case* they might commit an offence. These draconian measures have been denounced by civil liberties organisations and prompted miners in Kent to take their case to the High Court to seek an injunction against the obstruction to their freedom of movement.

Courts threaten union

State action has not been confined to the police. As in the recent print workers dispute, the South Yorkshire NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) have been threatened with unlimited fines and sequestration of their £7 million assets if they persist in trying to picket other areas of the coalfield. Court action is still pending, but on March 19, one thousand Yorkshire miners, fearing that court officers would seize union assets, formed a human wall to defend their headquarters.

While the state has thrown all its resources behind the employers the response of the leaders of the British labour movement has been pitiful. The Parliamentary Labour Party, while claiming to support the miners' case has, in practice joined the chorus of condemnation of supposedly violent pickets.

Neil Kinnock, the new leader of the Labour Party said in Parliament, 'The law does not prohibit people trying to influence other workers, but when people become violent in the course of

picketing I condemn it.' This was correctly characterised by the Tory leaders as 'ritual hand-wringing'. While Kinnock has condemned police tactics this has not required much courage, since similar statements have been made by leaders of the Social Democratic/Liberal Alliance, the other main opposition party in the House of Commons.

Kinnock's vacillating performance has been in sharp contrast to that of Tony Benn, recently convincingly re-elected to parliament in a by-election in Chesterfield in the mining area of north Derbyshire. Benn has spent his time visiting pickets in his own area and elsewhere, speaking at miners' support meetings and completely associating himself with the strike and with the Scargill leadership.

The Trades Union Congress leadership achieved the truly remarkable feat of not even discussing the strike on its leading bodies for two weeks after it started! The reason is that, while the TUC at its last conference took a sharp turn to the right, the ranks of the movement have consistently embarrassed their leaders by refusing to follow them in passive acceptance of the government's policies. Thus, in a day of action grudgingly called by the TUC in protest at the government's anti-union actions, nearly one million workers took some kind of industrial action in a response which surprised union leaders and government alike.

Part of the reason for the slowly growing mood of resistance is the upturn in growth in the British economy of 3 per cent, not large by international standards, but fairly spectacular in recent British terms. Secondly, an ongoing row has been simmering in the TUC leadership about the failure of the right wing majority, led by general secretary Len Murray, to back trade-union action deemed unlawful under the government's anti-union legislation. (See *International Viewpoint*, No 47, February 27, 1984).

This division has been reflected in the attitude to the miners' strike. The Transport and General Workers Union has pledged its 1.6 million workers to back the miners' strike. But power station workers, dominated by the right-wing leaders in the electricians and power engineers union, have been told to work normally.

Further support for the miners has come from the activation of the 'Triple Alliance', the unions in the rail, steel and coal industries who have pledged to offer mutual support in the event of any member union taking action. This solidarity is key because, although the coal employers boasted of massive coal reserves before the strike began, in practice fuel is already running out at big steel mills like that at Scunthorpe on the east coast, where half-time working has been introduced to conserve coal stocks. Members of steel workers' unions at the plant have joined miners to stop coal being imported from Spanish-registered ships.

On the railways, too, workers have risked being sent home for refusing to move coal. The action of railworkers

has been decisive in making the miners' action effective.

Support has also come from the National Union of Seamen. Seventy lorries carrying strike-breaking coal were turned back at Zeebrugge and Calais and similar action has been pledged at the main Channel port of Dover.

Domestic supplies have been virtually halted in some areas except to the old, sick and hospitals.

The press has tried to create 'wives against the strike'-type movements in the mining communities. However, these have enjoyed only a fleeting existence. More enduring have been organisations like the 'Yorkshire Miners Wives' Action Group' which has established four advice centres in the south Yorkshire area to advise miners' families on financial problems.

Joint action between the Labour Party and miners is also growing with the decision of miners to join actions called by the Labour Party on March 29 — 'Democracy Day' — to protest against Thatcher's bid to abolish local councils in the big cities.

However, despite this flowering of solidarity action, the only way the strike will be won is if the trade union leadership uses the whole power of their movement in support of the miners.

Socialist Action, a revolutionary socialist paper published in London, expressed the demands of the majority of miners when it said in its March 23 issue:

'Now is the time for the union leaders to act. In conjunction with miners' pickets at power stations, coke and coal depots, and at the rail yards, the other unions could make sure that no coal is moved. This means that the coal turned out in the scab pits would simply be stockpiled.

'The left trade-union leaders must also make it clear that if the government attempts to use the army to shift coal, then they will call an all-out stoppage. This strike can and must be won. But to win it means that the unions must join alongside the NUM in openly defying the government and its laws.

'The Triple Alliance and TUC must organise the blacking of all movement of coal!

— Unconditionally support mass pickets at the pits and power stations. No recognition of Tebbit's anti-union laws!

— Labour councils must extend practical support for the miners and pickets!

— Name a day for solidarity action with the NUM!

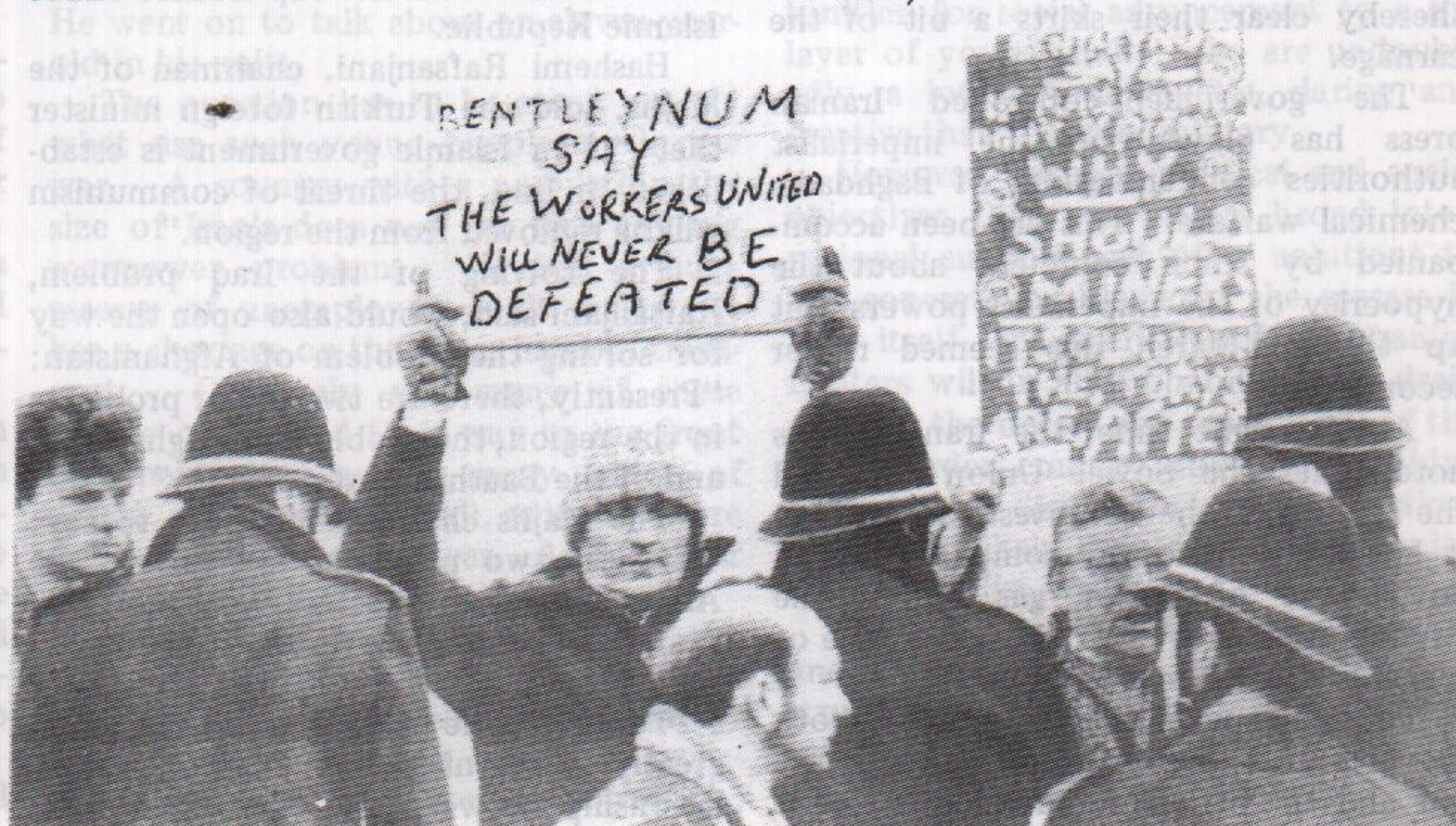
Undoubtedly with this sort of action the strike could be quickly won. However, the consequences would be to fatally wound the Thatcher government or bring it down. The Labour and TUC leaders are more frightened of such an outcome than they are of the consequences of a Tory victory over the miners. The miners have no choice however. If they had refused this fight, their union would have been virtually dismembered and the way opened for half of the workforce to have been sacked over the next decade. The British working class would lose its vanguard.

Precisely because the stakes are so high, there is a real need for international solidarity action. The British miners have a fine record of supporting other workers internationally in struggle. Militants throughout the world can aid the British miners by monitoring the movement of all coal suspected of being used to break the strike.

Coordinated action can be taken with British transport workers and miners to stop strike-breaking coal being imported into Britain. Messages of support and financial contributions can also be sent.

While the miners' strike could herald a long-overdue rise of serious resistance to the Tory government and pave the way to real political advance, a defeat could herald the reverse. Not only the British working class, but all those workers fighting austerity in their own country have a stake in making sure this does not occur. ■

(For further information IV readers can contact *Socialist Action*, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP, telephone 359-8180 or directly contact the National Union of Mineworkers, St. James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield, telephone 700-388.)



The worst is true

As the dust has settled after the opening of the Iranian spring offensive, the worst accusations against both sides have been confirmed:

1) There can no longer be any doubt, if there ever was, that the Iraqi army is using poison gas on a rather large scale and has made this an important part of its strategy.

2) There can no longer be any doubt either that the Khomeini regime is throwing away masses of young teenagers on the front, and that this is a deliberate and premeditated policy.

In addition to the medical reports on Iranian soldiers sent to Europe for treatment, the evidence produced by the UN investigating team sent to Iran is conclusive.

Gerry FOLEY

The imperialist governments and press have raised the biggest hue and cry about the Iraqi use of prohibited weapons. This is, of course, a new development. It also has broad implications. But this issue also offers the imperialist powers an opportunity to pose as humanitarians and "responsible" leaders of the world community at little cost to themselves.

It is doubtful that the US embargo on shipments of chemicals that can be used to make poison gas will have much effect in keeping Iraq from getting what it needs to wage chemical warfare.

Even if the imperialist countries were intent on applying such a ban, given the nature of the capitalist world market, it would be hard to make it effective. There are too many conflicting interests and too much of a scramble for profits.

Applying an embargo is a very complex business and offers a lot of room for maneuver. The ban the US and its allies imposed on certain types of trade with Iran is already well known to have been honored in the breach.

Thus, condemnations of the use of poison gas and some token gestures of an embargo on shipments of the component chemicals offer an easy way for the imperialists to disassociate themselves from the Baghdad regime, which in fact can only survive on the credit the imperialists and their local allies provide, and thereby clear their skirts a bit of the carnage.

The government-controlled Iranian press has played up the imperialist authorities' condemnations of Baghdad's chemical warfare. This has been accompanied by some comment about the hypocrisy of the imperialist powers, but up till mid-March this seemed rather secondary.

At the same time, the Iranian press noted that the Soviet Union criticized the sending of the UN investigating team. It has also consistently compared alleged Soviet use of poison gas against the Afghan resistance with the Iraqis' use of it against the "forces of Islam."

Thus, it appears that the effect of both the introduction of poison gas into the war and the official condemnations of it

by the imperialists have increased the political room for maneuver in the region. It makes a breakthrough by ill-equipped Iranian volunteers more difficult. It gives the imperialists a way of regaining some appearance of neutrality.

The attention focused on the Iranian occupation of the major part of the Majnun islands can also increase the political maneuvering room. This bit of territory is not very far into Iraq. The claims of the amount of oil under it, however, make it possible for the Tehran regime to present it to the Iranian population as a worthy prize for the war effort. Since the political settlement in Iran is not stable, there is no reason to think that small changes in the borders will be permanent.

The consolidation of the Iranian bridgehead does demonstrate the fighting spirit of the Iranian forces and the lack thereof on the part of the Iraqi pilots, who did not fly low enough to be effective. But the reports from reporters allowed to visit the area indicate that the Iranians there were well equipped for chemical warfare, though it is not likely that the Iranian army is able to so equip large numbers of its forces.

There are indications that the political maneuvering in the region is, in fact, increasing. In the midst of the new Iranian offensive, the Turkish minister of foreign affairs, Vahid Halifoglu, visited Tehran and had talks with the top leaders of the Islamic Republic.

Hashemi Rafsanjani, chairman of the Majlis, told the Turkish foreign minister that "if an Islamic government is established in Iraq, the threat of communism will be removed from the region."

The solving of the Iraq problem, Rafsanjani said, would also open the way for solving the problem of Afghanistan: "Presently, there are two major problems in the region, the problem of Afghanistan and of the Baathist party of Iraq."

The Majlis chairman went on to say: "If these two problems are solved, the Arab countries, ourselves, you and Pakistan can collaborate more fruitfully in the region."

Turkish trade with Iran has expanded greatly in recent years. The political relationship between the two regimes has

also begun to grow closer,

There are also more and more indications of Turkish intervention to maintain the "stability" of the region. On March 11, French wire service reporters in Ankara reported information that Turkish planes had bombed Kurdish freedom fighters near two centers in Iranian Kurdistan, Mahabad and Sardasht.

Neither town is near Turkey or has any close connections with it. Sardasht is on the Iraqi border and in the past has been a major conduit for contacts between the Kurdish liberation movements in Iran and Iraq.

There can hardly be any doubt that the Turkish authorities fear that the continuing war between Iran and Iraq will give the Kurdish organizations a chance to consolidate bases.

In Iranian Kurdistan, the overthrow of the shah gave the Kurdish liberation movements a chance to expand massively. The democratic organization of the masses there was much more extensive and radical than in the Persian-speaking areas, where the movement was under the political control of the Khomeini clergy from the beginning.

The Kurdish liberation fighters represent the only mass movement in Iran that has not yet been crushed by the repressive regime. But under the cover of the war with Iraq, the Islamic Republic has subjected the Kurdish fighters to heavy pounding and driven them out of the cities into the most remote areas.

On the other hand, the Baghdad regime has had to make concessions to the Kurdish fighters in Iraqi Kurdistan, since the military pressure it is under makes it unable to keep a firm grip on the area.

There are reports that the Baathist regime has offered free elections for autonomous regional bodies in the Kurdish area, a share of oil revenues to develop the region, and proposed the creation of a Kurdish home guard to defend the area against "foreign enemies," presumably the Iranian army. There have also been continuing reports of bargaining over the extent of the autonomous area.

On March 9 (21 Esfand), the Tehran daily *Etela'at* reported that captured Iraqi documents talked about collaboration with the Kurdish forces of Jela Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, an Iraqi Kurdish organization, and Ahmed Qazemlou's Democratic Party of Kurdistan, an Iranian Kurdish organization. The documents allegedly stressed the importance of keeping the Kurdish forces under "tight control," because "the present situation is a difficult and tactical one, and close watch has to be kept on what may happen."

This is no doubt the attitude the Iraqi regime would take to Kurdish allies. It is also interesting that the Iranian press would choose to play up such an account of Saddam Hussein's relations with Kurdish allies. In general, the Khomeini regime has portrayed the Kurdish nationalists simply as "counter-revolutionaries" and tools of the "infidel

Saddam." Furthermore, previously, although the hard pressed Iranian Kurds accepted a certain collaboration with the Iraqis, the Iraqi Kurds were inclined to look for help from Khomeini against their nearer enemies.

What *Etela'at* played up most in its account of the alleged documents was references to the execution of mutineers. There cannot be much doubt how the Iraqi military maintains military discipline. But what is astonishing in the present circumstances, when the Iraqi soldiers are called on to make heavy sacrifices and have nothing positive to hope for from the fighting, that there have been little signs of a breakdown in morale.

The policy that the Khomeini regime has followed in the one populated part of Iraq that it has managed to occupy illustrates the reason.

One Kurdish faction in Iran has been linked to the Khomeini regime from the start, the group led by the sons of Mullah Mustafa Barzani, who allied himself with the shah in his struggle against the Baghdad regime in the mid-1970s. As a result, he both collaborated in repression of Kurdish nationalists in Iran and prepared the way for a disastrous defeat of the Kurds, when the shah abandoned him to make a deal with Baghdad. Thus, the Barzanis have very little support in Iranian Kurdistan. But they could have served as a tool for Tehran's maneuvers in Iraqi Kurdistan. Nonetheless, Khomeini did not treat them much better than the shah did their father.

In the February 2 issue of *Politica Internazionale*, Mirella Galleti gave this account of what happened: "Along with the regular Iranian army and Paskadan, Barzani forces and those of the Islamic Revolutionary Council (which includes a number of the Iraqi Shiite opposition groups) participated in the conquest of the area. But the conquered Kurdish areas were assigned to the Iraqi Shiites [hence Arabs] to establish bases."

Thus, the only forces in Iraq that the Khomeini regime is prepared to appeal to are reactionary groups from which the Iraqi people have no reason to expect anything better than from Saddam and not unimportant grounds for fearing worse.

The Iranian press denounces the Saddam regime only as "infidel." It refers to its own forces only as "the Forces of Islam" and to groups of volunteers for the front as "fighters against the infidel."

On the other hand, despite the claims that Iran is fighting a holy war for all Muslims, the Persian great-power pretensions show through more and more.

For example, in an interview with the weekly *Etela'at* (quoted in the March 9 *Iran Times*), Doctor Hadi, representative for Tehran to the Majlis, said: "The best way for the war to end is for the Islamic republic to eliminate the Iraqi regime and strive to get an Islamic republic set up in Iraq." He went on to say:

"Our demand is that Islam prevail

there, that the *Velayete Faghih* [the rule of the supreme interpreter of Islam] prevail there, that Iraq be ruled by an Islamic government. *People must know that five years or ten years is not so much in the life of a nation that has existed for thousands of years and will exist for thousands of years more.*" [Our emphasis.]

The sending of large numbers of young boys to be slaughtered at the front, moreover, is not hardly an inspiring example of what the "rule of Islam" would mean in Iraq. Apparently, it is not all that popular with young Iranians of that age group either.

In its March 16 issue, the *Iran Times* reported the issuance of a circular from the Ministry of the Interior in Tehran forbidding youths between the ages of 15 and 17 from leaving the country.

The same issue of the *Iran Times* reported an answer by Mehdi Karubi, an official of the Martyrs Foundation visiting London, to the *Daily Telegraph*, which questioned him about the use of boys in the fighting. He said: "From the standpoint of Islam, we consider puberty as defining adulthood." (Retranslated from the Persian.)

The sacrifice of the very young

Karubi went on to say that many boys falsified their identity cards. That explanation, however, is about as likely an answer as the story spread by Iraq's friends or agents in France that the Iranian soldiers sent to Europe for treatment were victims of an explosion at an Iranian poison gas factory.

The numbers of boys taken prisoner by the Iraqis, as well as the continuing reports from reporters who have visited the Iranian side of the front make it clear that there are masses of young people of this age involved. The presence of boys in their early teens is not something exceptional or marginal.

In fact, one of the Iranian soldiers sent for treatment in West Germany, Mohammed Resa Assadi, told *Der Spiegel* in an interview: "There are many of them who are only 13, 14 or 15. But they are much more mature in their thinking. They know a lot about Islam." He went on to talk about an eleven-year-old in his unit.

The question has to be asked exactly what use such young people are in the war. A country with a population the size of Iran's does not yet face any big manpower problems. It has a huge reserve of unemployed adult males. It has a shortage on the other hand of transport. Obviously not many of these people could find their way to the front on their own across many miles of desert. It is not, after all, as if they were fighting in their own areas. And the war at the front is not partisan warfare.

Moreover, what exactly has the "Islamic" regime done for youth of this age. It has in fact denied them everything that people their age want everywhere else in the world, recreation,

education, freedom, social life. The Iranian young people were not, in fact, an exception in this respect, especially those who participated in the revolutionary upsurge.

The mass base of the big left organizations was very largely made up of young teenagers, whose aspirations for a better life were awakened by the spread of education, the stimuli of growing urbanization and the penetration of modern ideas.

For example, when the Khomeini forces kidnapped the children of the liberal Ayatollah Teleghani in May 1979, the Mujahadeen shut down high schools throughout Tehran in a massive strike. At that time the high-school age youth were able to force the "Islamic" heavies to retreat and release their hostages.

There were spontaneous demonstrations of high-school girls against the ending of co-education. The first demonstrations for women's rights were made up mainly of teenagers.

This radicalization of the very young also explains why there were so many of this age group among the victims of Khomeini's executioners, including girls in their early teens and perhaps even younger.

Khomeini consolidated his grip with a massacre of the very young. And the very young continue to be the special victims of this savage and demagogic regime, which has no ability or desire to meet the real needs and aspirations of these youth.

The very young are particularly vulnerable to demagogic deception and indoctrination, since their fighting spirit alone cannot make up for the lack of experience of independence and life.

It is clear from the reports of Western journalists who have visited the Iranian frontlines recently that the mass mobilization set in motion by the revolutionary upsurge against the shah, and the sense of common purpose that came out of that experience continue to be major factors reinforcing the Iranian war effort. They are particularly important for a third-world country where masses of people have long been left to neglect and hopelessness.

Moreover, like any giant upheaval, the Iranian revolution opened up opportunities for social advancement to a big layer of young adults, who are undoubtedly a lot more energetic, daring and creative than the Iraqi military.

However, without political and social objectives that can inspire broad international support and offer solutions to the concrete problems of the masses in Iran itself, the sacrifice of the Iranian fighters will in all probability only drain away in the desert and marshlands of the Iraqi border country and leave nothing behind but disillusion and exhaustion. The only likely gainers are the Iranian and imperialist exploiters.

This sacrifice of the young has not, and cannot, offer an enduring and instructive example to the masses throughout the world who aspire to solutions to their problems.

Workers pay for bureaucracy's 'economic reform'

The economic reform plan introduced in 1982 attempted to divert the workers from their aspirations for new economic measures to get the country out of the crisis. This aspiration had been expressed in the spontaneous development of the self-management movement during 1981.

The heavy blow to the mass movement represented by the introduction of the state of war in December 1981, allowed the bureaucracy to change the immediate objectives of the economic reform plan from those contained in the draft plan of 1981. The emphasis was put more and more on the compulsion to work on the one hand, and increasing the exploitation of the workers on the other (see documents in the following pages). The banning of trade-union activity leaves the bureaucracy more room for manoeuvre in this arena. Other modifications of the system come up against the stubborn and effective resistance of certain pressure groups within the bureaucracy. (1)

The reform plan introduced a wide autonomy for the enterprises — freedom to fix prices, more powers to reorganise the work force, autonomous decision-making on production plans. The first effect was a generalised price rise in 1982. Calculating the retail price index on the basis of 100 in 1981 it reached an average figure of 209.4 in the following year. For food products the figure was 262.8, and for industrial products 232.3. (2)

The recent changes in food prices and on the right to work are just one more step down the road forcing the workers to pay for the bureaucracy's waste and chaos.

Cyril SMUGA

Annual per capita income was 28 per cent less in 1983 than it had been in 1978. In addition, the last few months of 1983 were marked by a new drop in production. The index for production sold, calculated on the base of 100 for the corresponding months in 1982 was 106, 103.5 and 100.4 for October, November and December respectively.

It is the same story in agricultural production. The purchase of meat from producers, whether individuals or state farms, at the end of 1983, by comparison with 1982 which was already a low year, dropped by 7.2 per cent in October, 16 per cent in November and 25.6 per cent in December. (3)

Over the last four years the standard of living for the population as a whole has widely deteriorated. The available figures on consumption illustrate this. In five years the consumption of bread per capita has dropped by 3.1 per cent, for milk by 5.8 per cent, for butter by 35 per cent, for vegetable oils by 30.4 per cent, for animal fats by 39.3 per cent and for meat by 44.7 per cent. (4)

The Polish bureaucracy has planned new, sharp cuts in workers' income for 1984. The price rises for food stuffs on January 30 were only one aspect of this policy. But, nevertheless, they were painful enough.

Prices went up by 25 per cent for bread and flour, 25 to 80 per cent for

good meat products, 10 to 35 per cent for milk and dairy products, 15 to 25 per cent for vegetable oils, 10 per cent for animal fats, 10 to 20 per cent for meat, 25 to 38 per cent for pasta and 13 per cent for sugar.

At the same time, a steadily growing number of people cannot afford even to buy the monthly rations to which they are entitled — one pound of butter, 2.5 kilograms of meat, 1.5 kilograms of sugar.

In order to 'limit the effects of the price rises', in the words of the bureaucrats, a series of legislative changes came into force on February 1, 1984. The

1. The figures on investments are particularly explicit on this. During the 1970s, the central state's control over this steadily weakened. Thus, in 1980 the emphasis was put on getting a firm grip on investment, particularly through abandoning unprofitable investments. The results in this field for 1983 are significant. The annual report of the Central Statistics Office (GUS) notes that 'the investment side remains disordered and puts the economic equilibrium in danger'. It gives examples of delays in prioritised central investments, while work has progressed significantly on works that should have been 'frozen' by the decisions in the plan (the powerful bureaucratic lobbies had thus succeeded in reversing the priorities at the level of implementation — as in Gierek's time...). Moreover, the low level of investment for modernisation-reconstruction does not allow the reproduction of fixed capital.

2. The annual rises in price index, taking the previous year as a base of 100, were: 8.5 points in 1976, 3.9 in 1977, 4.7 in 1978, 2 in 1979, 4.2 in 1980, 9.2 in 1981 for industrial prices. For retail consumption: 8.4 points in 1978, 7.4 in 1979, 8.5 in 1980 and 18.4 in 1981. Source: The official statistics



media unashamedly advised old people, those on parental leave and young people in education, to 'supplement' their incomes by working at night or after school. The Labour Code was modified to provide for this.

The second aspect consists of imposing a ceiling on the total wage bill. The 1982 reform created a 'fund for professional activity' (FAZ). The stated purpose of this fund was to finance retraining of workers, in special schemes or on the job, and unemployment benefits. In practice, however, as no such programmes exist, it acts as a way of pressurising enterprises not to raise wages, even when they are making a profit.

The enterprises had to pay a steeply progressive tax to the state to finance the FAZ if the average annual workers wage rose by more than 7 per cent. A new law came into force on January 1, 1984, and, from now, this tax will apply to the total wage bill, and not simply the average wage.

What is more, the 1984 law is retroactive, applying also to the 1983 end-of-year bonuses. Its immediate result is thus to keep down the amount of these bonuses and, in the long term, to limit hirings as well as wage rises. Moreover, it will tend to increase the wage differentials within one plant, and between the different sectors. (5)

The third aspect is the modification of the wage system. A January 26, 1984 law allows the enterprises to decide their wage scales in complete autonomy. Up till now the rates were decided centrally for each sector on the basis of a collective agreement. The individual enter-

directory *Rocznik Statystyczny* and *Rocznik Statystyczny Przemysłu 1983*.

3. Figures from the GUS. The last three months of the year are traditionally the best from the point of view of production because the enterprises always try to catch up on their production delays for the annual plan.

4. According to the *Solidarnosc* bulletin for the Huta Warszawa steelworks, *Hutnicy 82*, No 20/47.

5. There are big wage differentials between and within the different sectors of the economy in Poland. In 1982 the average wage for a worker was 25,022 zlotys in the mines, compared to 9,405 in light industry. In 1983 the legal minimum wage was 5,400 zlotys. However, the legal ceiling for the 10 per cent of non-production workers in the mines was already 41,373 in 1982. This was the basic salary without bonuses or other supplements. The difference in wages between workers doing the same job could be 1:2.5, between the sectors, between a worker and a director it could be 1:9. Source: GUS. Moreover, according to *Television Solidarnosc*, journalists in the political service earn...70,000 zlotys per month.

prises could only make decisions affecting bonuses.

The affect of this new law is first of all to make it possible to revise, on a factory-by-factory basis, the collective agreements, which guarantee a certain number of benefits.

Moreover, this law fixes new norms concerning the bonuses, payment for overtime, wage supplements, etc. From now on, these are to be calculated on the basis of the minimum wage in each category, not on the basis of the wage actually received by the person concerned, and so will be lower.

However, this is a special clause, because the enterprise can base themselves on this, or they can stick to the previous system, depending on whether the relationship of forces within the enterprise gives the management sufficient room to manoeuvre to impose the new arrangement.

This law will also promote greater wage differentials, both within an individual enterprise as well as between workers of different enterprises. In effect, it does away with the previous maximum wages.

The December 18, 1983, issue of the official Polish weekly, *Zycie Gospodarcze*, confirmed this assessment when it quoted the words of the minister in charge of relations with the trade unions, Stanislaw Ciosek.

Speaking at a meeting of the Economic Reform Commission in Warsaw on December 14, the minister said, 'The aim of this law [on wages] is to produce a wide differentiation in wages, according to the criterion of usefulness for the enterprise, and ridding ourselves of any notion of charity in fixing wages. We cannot give away money, and we must not let ourselves think of wages as social benefits. If the enterprise wants to pay someone more, it has to pay someone else less. Wages must be fixed by the harsh laws of the economy, and the concept of a social minimum can only affect those without work.' At least he has the merit of being frank and open!

These recent anti-worker measures follow on in a long string of changes to the labour laws introduced in 1982 and 1983. Among the most important are the following: It has been made compulsory to look for work through the state office, reinforcing the authorities' control over employment. A ban has been imposed on leaving the job in a number of enterprises. And the notice required before quitting has been lengthened to six months in industry, commerce, etc.

All these measures aim to increase the pressure to work and to step up the exploitation of the working class. These aims are the centrepiece of the changes introduced since 1983 in the name of 'reforming the Polish economy'.

Today, all these measures are running up against the resistance of the workers (see box on recent strikes). The announcement of price rises was greeted with work stoppages in many of the

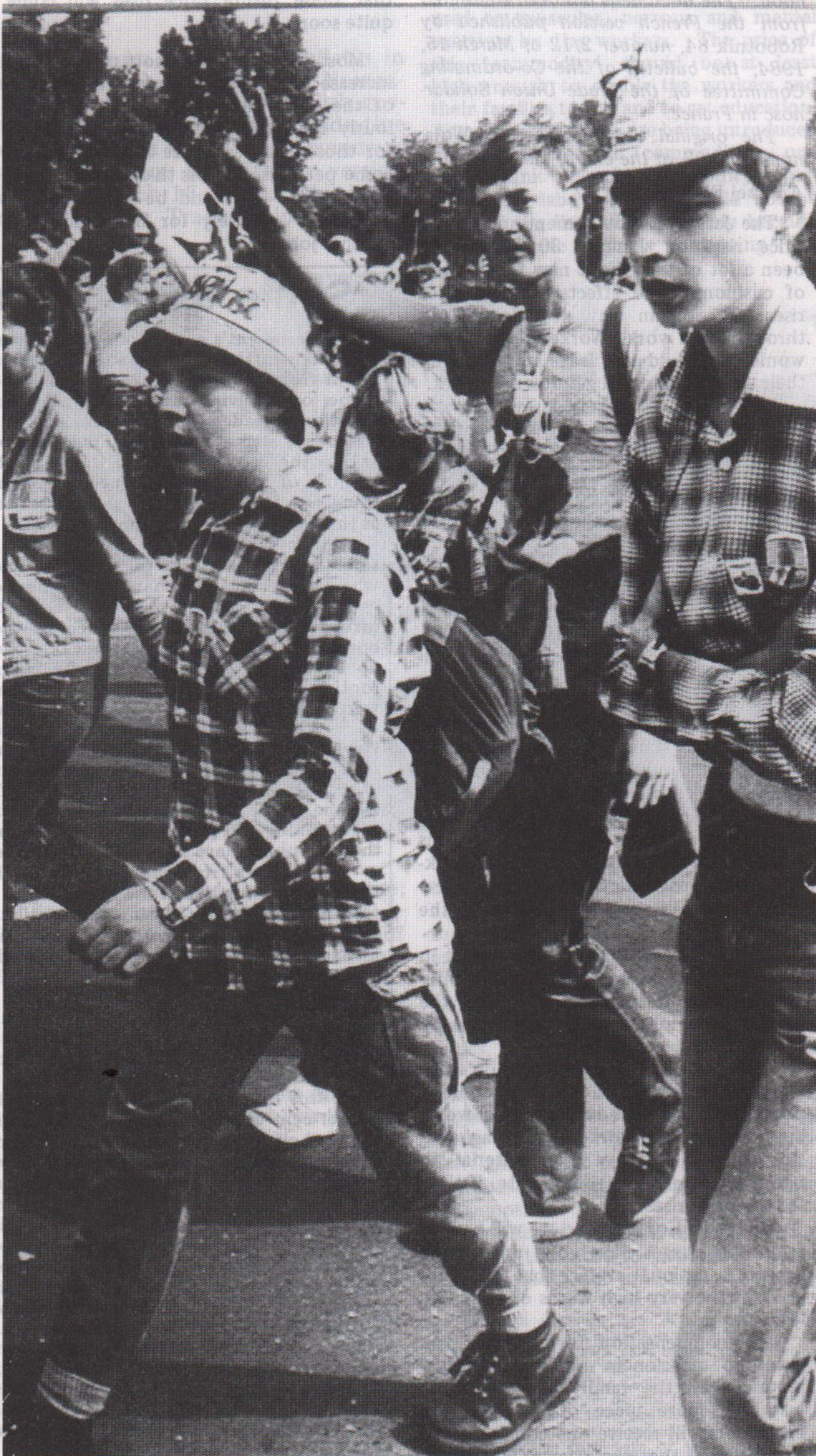
country's enterprises. The workers often use the Self-Management Council as a substitute for the outlawed union to shoot down this or that action of the management.

Passive resistance is also growing. To give just one example, in the Uniontex textile factory in Lodz an experimental wages scale was introduced. Of the 12,000 workers in the factory at the time that the experiment was begun only

6,700 were still there a few months later, in August 1983. The workers had voted with their feet against the super-exploitation.

But this resistance, massive as it is — and strikes have generally been joined by 90 to 95 per cent of the workers — has run up against the problem of the general weakness of the inter-enterprise union structures. As a result, it has remained fragmented. ■

Solidarnosc members are still active (DR)



More work, more exploitation

The weekly *Wola* in Warsaw is linked to one of the inter-enterprise union structures in the capital. It is distributed particularly in the *Wola* workers' neighbourhood. The document has been translated from the French version published by *Robotnik* 84, number 2/12 of March 15, 1984, the bulletin of the Co-ordinating Committee of the Trade Union *Solidarnosc* in France.

The original was published in *Wola*, number 4/87, at the end of January.

Andrzej FRYCZ

The Jaruzelski government announced price rises on January 30....There has been a lot of talk about new possibilities of cushioning the effects of these price rises. The main way of doing this is through extra work. Workers, pensioners, women on child-care leave must roll up their sleeves again and get down to work.

This piece of trickery is even grosser than their usual manoeuvres. Workers have been fighting for an 8-hour working day for decades. Before the Second World War, the Polish Socialist Party even demanded a 6-hour day. Today, workers are forced to work 10 or 12 hours.

So, the last 'gain' of the protective Communist state has been done away with. In many sectors of the economy this had any way been fictitious for a long time — in mines, state-owned agriculture, transport.

Another job, supplementary hours, are of course available for all those who want to raise their standard of living. But, in the present conditions it is not a question of free choice but being forced to do so. Many people will take on this to keep their already meagre food rations. This work will not only be bad for the workers' health, particularly in the heavy sectors, but it will also have an effect on the workers' family life.

It will not lead to an improvement in the material conditions of life. The only purpose of it is to 'compensate' for the increased exploitation of the workers by the state-boss.

Thus, those who cannot take on extra work will eat less. If, on the other hand, production increases during normal working hours and the workers get a wage rise, this will not improve their material situation but only just compensate, if that, for the price rises.

At the end of the year, we will be told again that wages have gone up, on the basis of a national average that takes into account the very high wages of the privileged groups.

The 'compensation' for the price rises given to pensioners and the fiddling around with the family allowances are just one more piece of the trickery. Pensioners will receive one compensation payment for the whole year (300 zlotys

per month). This will not be included in the basic pension that will be the basis for calculating future compensatory payments for price rises, and we can be sure that these future price rises will come quite soon.

Most workers will not receive any increase in child allowances. The amount of the child allowance, which is ridiculously low, will only be raised in 1984 for those families where the monthly income per person is less than 5,000 zlotys. Great idea. It would be still better to propose — precisely for the children — another job.

Never fear, the ministers are already thinking about it. Official sources are talking more and more about the limitation of social security. That will come. And then the party unions will call for an increase in production.

There is only one word to describe this: exploitation. The poor will be poorer. Those who have average salaries will be so overburdened with work that they will not only not have time for their family, their cultural desires, for social life, but, above all — and this is the regime's secret hope — for any sort of independent life.

On the other hand they will have plenty of work and vodka. And also a smouldering hatred for those who do better. It is a fact that inequalities are going to grow at an increasing pace.

Only one question remains: will they defeat us with hunger, or will we be able to make 1984 a turning point? ■

Some examples of recent strikes

The government's anti-labour measures are meeting with resistance from the workers, often in the form of strikes or work-stoppages. Strikes today are very different from those of 1982. At that time they were symbolic actions of a regional scope, or involving several enterprises at least. The demands centred around the question of trade-union freedom.

Today, strikes are often longer, involving only one enterprise — even though, as was the case in January, they may break out more or less spontaneously in a number of enterprises at once. And local demands immediately override everything else in the common slogans. These strikes are also more often successful, as these recent examples show:

— At the beginning of November 1983 a spontaneous strike broke out in several departments of the Polkolor television factory at Piaseczno near Warsaw when workers learned that the October bonus was being cut by half.

Some 800 workers were involved. There was no strike committee, the workers turned their backs on the director when he tried to negotiate. The December bonus was the usual 48 per cent of wages, and the so-called motivation bonus was up by 1,000 zlotys. The security committee of the enterprise was put on a war footing to prevent 'strikes and sabotage', and people suspected of union activity were called in and threatened with the sack.

— Short work-stoppages took place in the ZNTK and IASE enterprises in Wroclaw on December 13 and 16 in protest against the announcement of price rises. Some 80 per cent of the workers took part.

— On January 9, 1984, the RZO foundry workers in Radom went on strike for the whole day. The chief administrator of the region arrived in the factory that evening and promised an extraordinary bonus of 4,000 to 4,500 zlotys. Since then the police have been calling in workers to interrogate them.

— Workers from the assembly section and paintshop in the FAM factory in Chelm went on strike at the beginning of January 1984 to demand improvements in working conditions (heating and ventilation). The strike ended that evening when the director promised to rectify everything by the next morning. The next day the management decided to move the head of the department to a lesser post, the foreman to sweeper-up, some of the strikers to other departments and to sack four workers.

— Between January 30 and February 4 different actions in protest against price rises took place in most of the enterprises in Wroclaw. On January 30 spontaneous work-stoppages took place in the following factories: Pafawag, ZNTK, IASE, Dolmel and in the river shipyards.

In this latter case, the strike lasted from 6 am to 1 pm. The strikers, 90 to 95 per cent of the workforce, after a brief meeting, organised a procession around the yard chanting, 'Down with the price rises! No liberty without Solidarity!'

In negotiations, the director said he was unable to do anything about the price rises. The strikers organised a meal for all the workers. The strike leadership did not appear publicly. For a period during the negotiations the elected representatives in the enterprise acted as intermediaries. At 2 pm the workers left the yards, filing out between two rows of anti-riot police (ZOMO).

The next day a strike totally paralysed the Hutmen foundry in Wroclaw for one and a half hours. Strikers ensured that the furnace fires kept going. When the management threatened to sack all the workers, the strike stopped. Nevertheless, several workers were sacked the next day.

— On January 30, at the call of the *Solidarnosc* clandestine union commission, a meeting took place in the Nowotko engineering factory in Warsaw to protest against the price rises. Four people with between 19 and 30 years of seniority were sacked, although the meeting took place during a break. The director of this enterprise is a member of the regional leadership of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) in Warsaw. ■

Attention!

Our wages are under attack

The document we publish below is taken from a workers' bulletin in Warsaw, *Chleba i Wolności* (Bread and Freedom), number 5, of November 3, 1983. It is one of the most complete analyses of the Polish government's anti-worker attacks that has appeared in the clandestine Solidarnosc press. The attempt to formulate a series of demands is particularly interesting. The translation is from the French version published in *Robotnik 84*, number 2/12, of March 15, 1984. This is the bulletin of the Co-ordinating Committee of the Trade Union Solidarnosc in France.

'What happened to the model of the protective state? Won't it give way to a tough state, hardly even charitable to the most deprived?' Answer, 'The protective function of the state is in total decline. This is related to the colossal amount of social spending by the state.'

Despite appearances, this is not an extract from an interview with a Western minister of state. These are the words of Professor Sadowski, assistant to the government official in charge of the Economic Reform Plan, in the June issue of the review *Kontakty*.

However, it is this social spending that pays for free education and health care, slightly cheaper canteens in kindergartens, at school or at work, benefits paid to the sick or for education of young children and the miserable pensions for invalids.

In our country, four of the eight million workers do particularly arduous non-mechanised work. Three million work in conditions harmful to their health, and at least 300,000 others risk losing their life or health each day at work. The death rate for men of working age is particularly high in Poland, and the average life span for men is thus declining relative to that for women.

The mortality rate for young and middle-aged men is a lot higher today than in 1960. Industrial accidents, causing permanent disability or poisoning are an important factor in this. The increase in mortality in working men testifies to the deterioration in working conditions and the rising level of exploitation of workers. Today, those who leave their workplace with an invalidity pension are many more than those who leave with a retirement pension. But the minister who shares responsibility for economic reform thinks that we live too well.

The first general price rise in our history took place in February 1982, and was introduced under the protection of the state of war, and in the name of the economic reform plan. It was supposed to re-establish a balance between supply and demand on the market, stimulate competition between the enterprises, de-

velop production and, as a consequence, bring down prices. It did none of these.

In a country where only 60 per cent of productive capacity in industry and construction is utilised, where the level of satisfaction of social needs is falling, the drop in real income has led, paradoxically, to the phenomenon of over-production of goods. (1) The amount of goods sold retail (particularly food) calculated in fixed prices turned out less in 1983 than in 1982.

We first learned of a 'surplus' in pasta and soap products, then in jam and purees which rotted in the windows. At the present prices it appears there are even problems in selling cement, seeds and fertilizer. Buying of coal in particular has fallen off.

Real wages in industry have dropped sharply. Wages in the health, education and commerce sectors are even lower. Even for the miners, prices are going up faster than wages.

After the price rises, the enterprises became profitable and 'rich'. The state

became quite well-off, having soaked up all the taxes from the enterprises, and the banks became powerful but...the people became poorer. The rate of production and the quality of goods dropped. According to the official statements, productivity in 1983 calculated in work-hours returned to its pre-crisis level [the period before 1979]. However, in 1984, consumption will be still lower than it is today.

Wages are the price paid for the time used in muscular, nervous and mental exertion by the workers. The price of this 'commodity' should be at least high enough to enable the workers and their families to live and to get education. As negotiated prices are being introduced everywhere for all commodities, one could think that the commodity represented by labour power should not be left off the list. It is precisely because the economic crisis is continuing, and



The Lenin shipyards in Gdansk in 1980 (DR)

because those who govern us cannot achieve economic growth, that Poland is one of the countries where labour power is the cheapest.

Since raising prices alone was not enough, we are being attacked on other fronts at the same time: new taxes, new prices, a new wage system. Official propaganda presents the question of taxes, prices and wages as different things, subject to different rules. In reality, all these measures represent one and the same thing: the attempt to increase the exploitation of the worker and reduce consumption.

The rise in food prices at the beginning of 1984, the move to 'negotiated' prices for new industrial products, the rise in

1. There is a severe lack of consumer goods in Poland. In this situation the extraordinary price rises since 1982 have meant that a growing number of what are considered products of basic necessity — the lack of which is sorely felt by the workers — do not find buyers on the market because of their prohibitive prices. This is the phenomenon to which the authors are referring when they talk of 'overproduction' of goods.

obligatory contributions in the housing cooperatives, the rise in rents and service charges will lower the real value of wages. (2) The system of taxes on the enterprises will limit, if not abolish, the possibility of winning an increase in the amount of wages. What is more, in these conditions the workers, in order to earn more, must accept Saturday working, to undertake 'of their own volition' to work after the legal hours, and accept a further speed-up.

The modification of the wage system should have already come into operation in January 1983. What did they hope to gain by postponing the wage reform announced in autumn 1982? The pacifying statements of the Catholic hierarchy? A chance to exploit the pope's visit? The collapse of Solidarnosc structures after the formal lifting of the state of war? One thing is sure: in the corridors the bargaining and pressurising is continuing.

In September, *Polityka* published an article stating that the government should learn to say 'no' to the people, that it was time to understand that the economic reform plan implied the division of society (into what classes and layers?). It also said that the watchword of social justice should be abandoned, and replaced by 'the harsh laws of the economy'. (3) So, it was probably fear of the people's reaction that led to the initial postponing of the change in the wage system.

What the future holds

The workers have responded to the particularly low wages by refusing to work. They have not been given any other means of expression, they have 'voted with their feet' by looking for a slightly higher reward somewhere else. In this situation the authorities, in the quest of cheap labour power, have created 'organised work groups'. That means that they have used soldiers, 'alternative work' for conscripts, prisoners and OHP [voluntary work brigades].

While putting off the introduction of the modifications in the wage system for a time, the authorities in Warsaw and 15 other regions, made it compulsory for workers to seek employment through the state office.

Thus, the worker is forced to accept a given job in a given factory, and the enterprise has to give confirmation of the hiring within seven days. This measure is supposed to keep down wages and to maintain the wage differentials between enterprises, and to stop the workers imposing changes in the system which would be favourable to them.

The anti-worker headquarters, called by a name that is the opposite of what it really is, the 'Ministry for Work, Wages and Social Affairs', published the draft of a governmental decision on a change in the wage system in the daily *Rzeczpospolita* in August 1983.

The new system of wages is supposed to mean that the compensation payments for food price rises given in 1982

are incorporated into the basic monthly and hourly wages. (4) So, we are going to pay dearly for the kindergarten, the creche and holidays, which are calculated on the basic salary. In some cases, the taxes paid by the enterprise and the cost of insurance will go up as much. The monthly increments to compensate for the price increases, to which wage-earners are entitled, will be suppressed as will some bonuses and the holidays at the time of retiring. Benefits won through sectoral agreements will disappear.

Bonuses for working in conditions dangerous for one's health, for night and evening work, will, from now on, be calculated on the basis of the minimum wage, and not for an individual worker. This will reduce them noticeably. This change is to be introduced at the same time as the new, higher work norms [for piecework]. The system of bonuses will be modified. They will only be given for extra results and extra production. In many places they will be purely and simply done away with.

The new system reduces the possibilities of rises in the framework of a graded wage scale to only two points on the index, for workers with two skills, or very high qualifications. On the other hand, bonuses for foremen and heads have been increased. The possibilities of augmenting the hourly salary by including different bonuses have been limited straight-away; altogether they cannot go above 60 zlotys per hour.

The regime came to the conclusion that the general modification of the wage system 'would stimulate a new pressure to increase wages', as the Council of Ministers draft already mentioned, put it. Thus it decided to operate differently.

The enterprises are divided into two categories. In most, wages from now on are supposed to include the compensation for the price rises, the thirteenth month payment, a part of the productivity payment, the bonus and the so-called 'useless' supplements — 'useless' from the point of view of the management. (5)

The enterprises themselves have to find the necessary finances to increase the basic wage and pay the bonuses for training, overtime, and night and evening work. Their inability to do this will sooner or later force them to abolish all these supplements. They want to start this change in the general wage system on

December 1, 1983, one month before the rise in food prices.

At the same time, in a series of so-called 'experimental' big enterprises, the supplements mentioned above are to be included in the basic wage with, simultaneously, a very big differentiation in bonuses. The minister could give these enterprises hourly and monthly wages higher than those allowed for in the official limits (60 zlotys and 16,000 zlotys) on an experimental basis.

The management of an enterprise can take part in this 'experiment' if it shows that it has the means to pay it. These means will usually be obtained through a frenzied increase in prices or an increase in exports, generally unprofitable from the point of view of the economy as a whole. Such an enterprise also has to fulfil another condition: to impose a radical increase in the norms of productivity. If that works, these norms will be imposed on all enterprises in 1985.

Illegal changes in wage system

They are also planning to increase the dependence of workers on the foreman. Certain workers will be able to collect supplementary sums from him during payday, and the foreman who succeeds in imposing new work norms will receive a bonus from management.

The managements of the 'experimental' enterprises will have to go further in applying a wage system that will exact a greater extortion from the workers. The new system will increase social differentiation and try to pit worker against foreman. It will also magnify the difference between the experimental enterprises and the others, and widen the wage differentials in the enterprise.

In this way, the collective agreements, which give more or less the same wages for the same amount of work, will be thrown in the rubbish bin. Each management team will impose its own wage scales, norms, wages, its own 'agreement'. However, the present Labour Code and the principle of agreements by sector have not been abolished, which makes all these things illegal in the terms of the law itself.

It is worth recalling that the principle of 'equal pay for equal work' was among the most popular demands during the legal existence of Solidarnosc.

2. The economic reform plan in 1982 introduced three categories of prices. The *fixed prices* set by the state organs which in 1982 applied to some 40 per cent of goods and services. The *regulated prices*, applying to 15 per cent on goods and services in 1982, for which the law sets the way they are to be fixed (the cost of production plus an average profit). Finally, there are the *negotiated prices* for the remaining 45 per cent of goods and services in 1982. In fact, these are market prices, negotiated between the producer and buyer. The current dominant tendency within the government is towards aligning the first two prices with the prices on the world market. Source: Wladyslaw Baka (member of the praesidium of the Council of Ministers, and in charge of the economic reform plan), *Polska Reforma Gospodarcza*, Warsaw, PWE 1983, pp 78-80.

3. *Polityka* is an official weekly publication of the government. Its former editor in chief, Mieczyslaw Rakowski, is deputy prime minister. Former editorial writer Jerzy Urban is a government spokesperson.

4. During the price rises in February 1982, the government introduced a general wage rise known as compensation (although it only slightly compensated for the drop in buying power). This 'catching up' of wages, paid for by a special state budget, was not taken into account in the calculations of income for fixing the payments for various social services until 1984.

5. The latter are so-called incentive bonuses that had become part of the de facto wage. They are now being included in the formal wage. The effect of this is to make it more difficult for the workers to win rises.

There is no reason why an electrician working in the militia or a military enterprise should earn more than an electrician employed in a 'normal' enterprise, which produces for the needs of the population as a whole, or an electrician working in a school or hospital or other public service.

Nor is there any reason why an electrician should earn more when working in a big enterprise than in a small factory. Just as there is no justification for wages to be different from one section to another in the same enterprise. The wage should be related to work done and qualifications, not to informal arrangements or the goodwill of department heads, foremen or ministers.

Minimal workers demands

Collective agreements in the past guaranteed a number of gains won by the workers. This is where the idea of getting the Diet to vote a law allowing enterprises to work out 'internal regulation' comes from.

These regulations, called 'local social agreements' for the purpose, will allow the directors of enterprises to manipulate the wage scales at will. But the Labour Code and the collective agreements remain in force. So, all the unilateral decisions by management are illegal.

These decisions would, in the spirit of their initiators, allow for increasing work rates, the norms, the number of machines operated by one worker, generalise the overall agreement and piece-rate work, speed up the production lines, increase the weight of loads carried by workers, increase work time and impose work in the worst conditions of hygiene and security.

Moreover, all these extra demands on the workers would be made without improving the technical state of even the most archaic enterprises or the organisation of the work, without getting rid of the over-staffing in administration, and without changing the total wage bill.

This way of distributing the cost of the crisis means that the workers will pay for it all.

These new anti-worker initiatives are arousing such general discontent that it is even affecting a large section of the members of the official 'unions' and members of the PUWP. Jerzy Urban [government spokesperson], losing his temper during a press conference, complained about unjustified demands coming even from this quarter.

Every collective group of workers, in every factory, must take up the struggle to defend our basic living conditions. Let us try to formulate the demands that it is obvious are most important for the workers, when you have even the slightest knowledge of what they think.

1. We consider the abolition of the social gains guaranteed by the Labour Code, the collective agreements, and the

Gdansk, Szczecin and Jastrzebie accords, as illegal (6)

2. We consider it illegal to try unilaterally to impose internal wage systems in different enterprises. We consider it as contradictory with the principle of 'to each according to his work' to attempt to make the workers pay for the negligence and wrong decisions of the enterprise managements, for the bad organisation of the work and supplies, the chronic lack of spare parts, etc.

Even official enquiries show that the results obtained by an enterprise, expressed in terms of profit, depend 90 per cent on factors other than the workers, who are deprived of any influence on the decisions of the management, the bank or the finance ministry. We demand an equivalent salary for equivalent work, carried out in similar conditions of hygiene and security throughout a sector of the economy and a region, in all the enterprises, including those attached to the army or the militia.

3. We demand that the 1982 compensatory payment be kept in its present form. We demand 2,500 zlotys per month for all as a compensation for the higher cost of industrial goods, services, housing and rents in 1982 and 1983.

4. Considering the greater training of the workers, the capacities and the skills they have acquired, as well as the difficulties inherent in working on old machines with raw materials of poor quality, we demand an increase in the basic salary of two points for all workers.

5. We demand wage increases in the enterprises producing for the internal market to bring them up at least to the level of the national industrial average. We demand wage increases in health and education to put them in line with the national average wage in industry, and a wage increase for service and commercial workers.

6. A thirteenth month payment for all as in previous years.

7. Payment of the increases in pension and retirement benefits to those groups of pensioners and retirees who have not yet received the increases, in January 1984.

8. The enterprises pay huge taxes, which absorb the majority of their profits. In this situation, at least that part of the tax that is levied on the total

wage bill and on wages increases should be considered illegal.

This concerns direct taxation of the wage bill by the taxes destined to pay the funds for professional activity (FAZ) and the development of culture (the rate is 13 per cent) because these are fake funds not used for the stated objectives. The finances thereby obtained should rather be used to pay for wage increases, and the minimum wage should be increased to 6,500 zlotys per month.

At the same time, we demand a stop to spending on the ZOMO (riot police) and to the allocation of other funds to the ministry of the interior for administering the state of war. The money saved in this way should be used for the fund for the promotion of culture.

9. A stop to food price rises and an end to the generalisation of 'negotiated' prices for industrial products.

10. The introduction of a sliding scale of wages, as provided for in point 9 of the Gdansk accord, according to the principle 'of an automatic wage increase to compensate for price rises and a drop in the value of money'. The sliding scale should also apply to the benefits given for the education of children, pensions, retirement and scholarships. Wages should go up by as much as the quarterly rise in the cost of living and prices. Such a system has been won through a hard struggle in a number of countries in Europe.

11. Given that people are worn out by four years of the crisis, we demand that the present norms in work and production are maintained.

12. The order to look for work through the State Office should be repealed as illegal, because it implies an obligation to work in the enterprise and job decided by that office.

13. The obligation to give six months notice of leaving a job, which has been extended to many enterprises, should be abrogated as illegal.

14. It should be made public exactly how many millions of zlotys have been wasted as a result of gigantic, useless investments, which were later frozen and are now being liquidated, and by the senseless use of machinery and installations. This will open the way for reducing the waste through the pressure of the people.

We all know that the present wage system is good for nothing but the rubbish bin, and the changes proposed by the regime are just a swindle. The workers in the assembly section of the FSO car plant in Warsaw and in other enterprises have already shown that by stopping work they can block a worsening of conditions. ■



6. These were agreements signed after the national strike in August 1980. The Szczecin accord brought many material advantages. It was signed by the regional strike committee and government representatives on August 30. The Gdansk agreement won free trade unions. The September 3 agreement signed at Jastrzebie by the central strike committee of the Silesian mines and the regime's representatives gained the free Saturdays, and generalised the other two agreements throughout the country.



Soeren BECH

DUISBURG — Some 2.7 million organized engineering workers and 100,000 of their unorganized workmates are preparing for the most important labor struggle since the war. It is getting underway in the coming weeks.

The West German engineering workers union is demanding a 35-hour week with no cut in pay. But the workers face strong opposition from the government and the employers.

The background to the engineering union's demand for a shorter workweek is the growth of massive unemployment in West Germany. In 1980, a million people were out of work; now there are 2.5 million registered unemployed. Moreover, the upturn that began in 1983 has not brought any more jobs.

Travelling through the Ruhr region, it is obvious that industry has been cutting back. In Dortmund, the big Hoesch steelworks stands quiet and desolate, rusting away. The chimneys are smokeless, the blast furnaces cold.

On the broad highway leading into Duisburg, we crossed over the Ruhr River. The whole horizon was lined with factory chimneys. Smoke came from a lot of them, but by no means all.

"The highest smokestacks belong to Kupferhuetten, a copperworks owned by the English concern Rio Tinto," Hermann Dirkes, a dockworker at the colossal Thyssen-Hamborn steelworks in Duisburg, told us.

"Around 1,200 copper foundry workers have been thrown on the streets, even though they put up a fight. Their struggle was unsuccessful because the chairman of the engineering workers union organization in Duisburg, Rainer Buhlitz, who is also the mayor, refused to support them.

"On the other hand, the workers at the Krupp-Rheinhausen steelworks here won. Krupp wanted to fire 4,500 of the 8,000 workers at the plant. But the workforce put up such a strong fight that the company had to change its plans."

Dirkes went on to point out that "17 percent of the workers in Duisburg are without jobs. That is a record for the Ruhr region, where 10 million people

The fight begins for the 35-hour week

live." The official unemployment rate is 10 percent.

So, something has to happen. If unemployment continues to spiral, this will have very grave consequences for the labor movement. Hermann Dirkes noted:

"In 1983, the engineering workers union (IG Metall) lost 100,000 members. These were all people who dropped out of the union after they lost their jobs. That represents a sharp decline in membership, and that is something that the union leadership understands. The leadership was also prodded by the threat that if they did not do something, they would lose their credibility and another 100,000 members could drop out. What use is a trade union that doesn't do anything?"

The unions take the offensive

So, at the end of 1983, the IG Metall top leadership in Frankfurt am Main launched an offensive for a 35-hour workweek. At loggerheads with the top leadership are the bureaucrats at the intermediate and somewhat lower levels, in particular in the Nordrhein-Westfalen district (which includes the Ruhr), who have traditionally been deeply mired in class collaborationism.

"The union functionaries here in the Ruhr want to do as little as possible. They know that if they get the 35-hour week fight going, that means the end of the cozy class-collaboration they have spent decades trying to build up with the bosses.

"Instinctively, they understand that this struggle will lead to a big mobilization in the union, and that then the membership could want to replace them with more active leaders. So, in the present case, the top leadership holds the initiative.

"Specifically, it is the IG Metall's new vice president, Franz Steinkuehler, a strong figure, who is for a more active line. On February 2, he gave a great speech here in Duisburg, one filled with a militant spirit. There were 600 people in the audience, and the class-collaborationist leaders got a real kick in the behind."

Dirkes continued: "Franz Steinkuehler said that unemployment makes the 35-hour week with no cut in pay an urgent necessity. What is needed to win

this demand, he said, were trade unionists who do not subordinate themselves to the logic of capitalism or try to balance between the bosses and the workers. What was needed are people who consistently represent the workers' interests. That is what Franz Steinkuehler said. And strangely enough, the most pro-boss union leaders clapped loudly. They didn't dare do anything else, because new factory council elections were coming up in mid-March."

The majority of the West German engineering workers support the 35-hour week. They think that something has to be done about unemployment. But on the other hand, they have had bad experiences with IG Metall. So, they are skeptical and want to see some evidence that the IG Metall top leaders are really serious this time before they strike or demonstrate.

Andreas Kroker, an apprentice at the Gutehoffnungshuetten in Sterkrade, where 3,000 people work, explained:

"During the weeks-long steel strike in December 1978-January 1979, IG Metall dropped the demand for a 35-hour week and agreed to a compromise that provided for six weeks vacation a year, something that the workers never asked for. Most of my fellow workers think that when IG Metall, for example, demands an 8 percent raise, it settles for 4 percent, and so a lot of people think that now that it is demanding 35 hours, it will settle for 39 hours or 35 with a cut in pay. And so they think that it's not worth going on strike and losing the money.

"On top of that, the local union leaders at the Gutehoffnungshuetten works have done absolutely nothing to explain how the 35-hour week is to be introduced in practice. Does this mean that we will have to do in seven hours what we do in eight today? Will it be possible to bring in more workers after the introduction of the 35-hour week, how many and where? Most of the workers think that it is fine that the union magazine, *Metall*, is agitating for the 35-hour week, but at the same time they have a lot of questions in their minds."

Herman Dirkes from Thyssen-Hamborn, where 32,000 people work, added:

"This time the IG Metall leadership has gone a long way. It has agitated strongly for the 35-hour week. There is no longer any way back. The leadership of the union knows that if they lose or accept an inadequate compromise, they will face a dim future. The bosses and the government are standing tough, and if they win, it will be decisive proof that the union is weak, and then they wouldn't give us a penny in next year's contract negotiations.

"So, there is no doubt that the IG Metall leadership wants to get strikes going in selected areas in the coming weeks, especially in the automotive industry. And if struggles really get started, then the mood among the workers can swing in a few days from skepticism to full support and militancy." ■

What the Social Democratic government has brought the Basque country

Under the Social Democratic government of Felipe Gonzalez, the Spanish repressive forces have escalated repression against the Basque national movement. In the period before the elections to the Basque autonomous parliament on February 26, this took the form of murder-gang attacks on militant Basque nationalists who had taken refuge on the French side of the border that divides the Basque people. These attacks were well-organized and deadly, and it is inconceivable that they could have been carried out without the connivance, and probably the active involvement, of both the French and Spanish police forces, both operating under Social Democratic governments.

Within less than a month after the Basque elections, in which once again the nationalist parties won a big majority, the Spanish police seem to have inaugurated a shoot-to-kill policy against members of the Basque nationalist guerrilla groups. On March 22, in the port of Pasajes, four members of a breakaway group from ETA were gunned down by Spanish police. The action drew strong protests from the whole gamut of the national movement and even from the bishops of San Sebastian and Pamplona, two of the four major Basque cities.

In a pastoral letter, the bishops said: "You cannot kill an enemy, only because he is an enemy. Not every means is justified for carrying out the legitimate defense of society."

The bourgeois Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) issued a communique saying: "The use of police force was excessive." Euskadiko Eskerra, a smaller moderate formation with its origins in the younger generation of nationalists, said: "The police had every

necessary means for arresting the suspects. What happened in Pasajes amounts to police terrorism."

The Spanish government responded with a total defense of the police and an attack on even the bourgeois Basque Nationalist Party, which has by far the largest electoral support of any party in the Basque country. The Madrid government's delegate to the Basque country, Ramon Jauregui, accused the PNV president Garaikoetxea of "systematically casting doubt on the democratic character of the activity of the central government and the police."

The Basque country was, to a considerable extent, the cockpit of the struggle against Francoism, which assumed a particularly militant and massive character in this region. The Basque country also was the one region of the Spanish state where the leadership was not dominated by reformists, not even by the Communist Party. The Basque country and the Basque national question obviously remain very important obstacles to the Gonzalez government's scheme of reconsolidating Spanish bourgeois normality on behalf of the capitalists.

One of the most thorough and systematic books on the Basque national movement and the rise of the mass struggle in the Basque country is *Das Baskische Labyrinth* by the author of the following article. It is available for 28 Marks from ISP Verlag, Postfach 11 10 17, 6000 Frankfurt Am Main, Federal Republic of Germany.

Josef Lang's article is from *Was Tun*, paper of the German section of the Fourth International, number 373, March 3, 1984.

G.F.

Josef Lang

With its promise of "change" — *El Cambio* — the Social Democratic PSOE won a landslide victory in the 1982 Spanish-state parliamentary elections.

There have been changes, but in a rightward direction. While the PSOE government has taken small steps forward on certain questions, these have been only where even the former bourgeois UDC government would have had to make concessions.

For example, the abortion law was so amended that only 3 percent of those concerned can freely avail themselves of this right. The Catholic church has blocked reform of the antiquated school system, keeping it from getting beyond the initial planning stages.

The only area where there is any sign of a new wind blowing is the cultural sphere, and there the minority cultures and languages are getting short shrift.

The balance sheet of 16 months of the PSOE government for the wage earners and the national minorities is an unmitigated disaster. Most scandalous is a level



A PNV poster: Even Franco couldn't clear it up on his own (DR)

of repression against the Basques, the Andalusian rural workers, the Valencian steel workers, the Galician shipyard workers and the Asturian miners that has not been seen since the passing of the Franco regime.

In March 1980, Amnesty International published a report on torture in "Democratic Spain." It decried the "Anti-Terrorist Law" passed with the support of the PSOE and the CP. Amnesty argued that this law facilitated the torture of Basque political prisoners.

In the meantime, the PSOE has reinforced this law still further with its Special Plan for the North (ZEN). Accounts of torture regularly make the headlines — even in the bourgeois papers. In the past year alone, it is estimated that 100 to 150 Basques have been seriously mistreated in state custody. The PSOE just denies the whole thing. Last fall, the Spanish premier, Felipe Gonzalez said that 95 percent of these reports were "stinking, lying slander." This amounted to encouraging the Guardia Civil and the Policia Nacional. So, it is not surprising that the policemen who tortured ETA member Joseba Arregui to death in February 1981 were exonerated last November.

Working together with the Israeli secret service, the old Francoist torturers developed a new strategy for "combating terrorism." It involves kidnapping or assassinating ETA members and other radical Basques who have taken refuge in the French Basque country.

In October 1983, the Grupo Antiterrorista de Liberacion (GAL), which consists of Spanish cops, French extreme rightists and criminals, announced its existence. Joxi Lasa and Joxan Zabala were kidnapped and probably murdered. Two days after that, they tried to kidnap Larretxea Goni in Hendaye, the closest town across the French border. In December, Franzose Segundo Marey, not a member of any group, was kidnapped but soon released.

At the end of December, the GAL assassinated ETA member Onaederra. Shortly after that, they killed an ETA leader, Mikel Gotkoetxea. Then in February they assassinated two ETA militants, Angel Gurmindo Izarraga and Vincente Perurena Tellexea.

This campaign was given active support by the "left" government in Paris, which shipped off six Basque refugees to Guadalupe, from which they were deported to Panama. Another 11 Basque refugees were deported to northern France.

The stepped-up repression can be documented also by other figures. In 1981, 249 Basque defendants were sentenced to 4,100 years in prison. In the last six months alone, 189 Basques have been sentenced to 4,462 years in prison. Gonzalez is the first premier since the days of Franco to threaten to ban the radical Basque electoral coalition Herri Batasuna.

Moreover, the Spanish-state government has allotted the equivalent of a

100 million dollars to build up a surveillance system and authorized the building up of files on the 20 to 25 percent of the Basque population who are suspected of being "radicals." Today, there are 12,000 Spanish police in Euskadi, including thousands of secret agents. By way of "reform," an "autonomous Basque police force" of a few hundred has been created. They are used mainly against demonstrations.

The police, supported by the PSOE, are heavily armed and conduct themselves like an occupation army, maintaining street patrols, conducting raids and pushing people around brutally.

Repressive tolerance

The Basque language, Euskara, was persecuted ferociously by the Franco regime, and thus it became a symbol of national liberation for the non-Basque speaking population also. Today, along with Spanish, it is an official language in the Basque autonomous region, which includes the three provinces of Vizcaya, Alava and Guipuzkoa. (The fourth Basque province in the Spanish state, Navarra, was excluded from the autonomous region by the central government.) Nonetheless, very little progress has been made in extending the use of Basque.

In daily life, Euskara remains a marginal language. Less than a third of the Basque population understand it, although 90 percent of the non-Basque speaking population — half of them immigrants from other parts of the Spanish state — are in favor of their children learning the language.

The reasons for the poor state of the Basque language are essentially political. The Spanish constitution makes it an obligation for every Basque to learn Spanish first of all. It is the language of the police and the courts. Herbert Marcuse's concept of "repressive tolerance" is applicable here. People should learn Euskara, which has been persecuted for centuries. But they *have* to be able to speak and write its competitor, Spanish.

It is symptomatic that in the 1982 elections, only the three revolutionary organizations — Herri Batasuna, the Movimiento Comunista and the Liga Komunista Iraultzailea (LKI, the Basque affiliate of the section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state) made extensive use of Basque in their electoral propaganda. The percentage of speeches, leaflets and

posters in Basque for these three groups were respectively 57.8, 50 and 48.

The Spanish centralist attitude of the PSOE is highlighted by the fact that the percentage of its electoral propaganda in Basque was a flat zero.

The capitalist system poses a fundamental obstacle to extending the use of Euskara. The long working hours and stress that it imposes on wage earners make learning it an almost superhuman effort. This is one of the arguments used by the Fourth Internationalists in the Basque country in fighting for the 35-hour week. They are also demanding the right to time off during working hours to study Euskara. A struggle led by them, for example, at the big Cerajera metallurgical plant in Mondragon forced the company to hire an instructor in Euskara.

The growth of radical Basque nationalism among the youth of Basque ethnic origin as well as the youth of immigrant families has a lot to do with unemployment. In June 1982, 37% of the youth between 16 and 19 years of age were jobless in the Spanish state as a whole. In Navarra, the percentage was 49. And in the three provinces under the autonomous Basque authority, 63!

The reason for the depth of the Basque economic crisis is not any strike-happiness on the part of the Basque workers or the revolutionary tax imposed by ETA. The causes are structural — the special weight in the Basque economy of shrinking industries, such as steel, shipbuilding and household appliances.

The Moncloa Pact in 1977 between bourgeois government, the bosses, and the PSOE and CP meant the beginning of the end of the rise of labor struggles that had been in process for a number of years in the Basque country. It had peaked in a dozen general strikes in the years 1975-1978, in which the working class mobilized very extensively against repression and for national rights.

In 1978, the cause of Basque national rights fell back into the hands of the radical and bourgeois nationalists. This was facilitated by the Spanish centralist attitude of the big workers parties, the PSOE and the CP.

In the context of the big workers mobilizations that have been taking place on an all-Spain level since the fall of 1983, and which in February 1984 alone led to two strike-type mobilizations in the Basque country, the tide has turned.

How strong the pressure on the leaderships is now is shown by the fact that the UGT, the all-Spain union confederation controlled by the PSOE, itself called for a general strike and that the bourgeois Basque nationalist party, out of electoral expediency, participated in a militant workers demonstration.

The attitude of the PSOE government, which is both anti-Basque and anti-labor, could once again set in motion the dynamic that gave the Basque resistance of the 1970s its strength and breadth — general strikes, occupations and giant mass demonstrations. ■

Correction

The tally of the vote for Auzolan, the coalition supported by the LKI in the elections for the Basque parliament given in the last issue was garbled. It was 10,659 in the three provinces, approximately 1 percent.

The PT in the present political situation



On April 15 the Brazilian parliament will vote on the form of the forthcoming presidential elections. The debate over whether this election will continue to take place through an electoral college or directly from popular suffrage is one of the central political questions in the country. Mass demonstrations of the workers and popular layers have been in the streets demanding the right to decide directly who heads the government.

The Workers Party (PT, Partido dos Trabalhadores) will probably be presenting the well-known workers and political leader Lula as their candidate. *International Viewpoint* spoke to a member of the editorial board of *Em Tempo* (a Marxist revolutionary journal of PT members) about the political situation in Brazil in the run up to these elections.

Question. Recent years have seen the Southern Cone dictatorships in clear crisis, with mass movements reappearing on an impressive scale in Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, even in Brazil. At the same time even the bourgeois press in Europe and elsewhere has been making apocalyptic speculations about the danger which these countries' foreign debt represents for the capitalist system as a whole. What do you think would be a realistic view of the region at the present time, and how does Brazil in particular fit into it?

Answer. There's no doubt that the crisis is serious, firstly from the economic point of view. In the medium term there is no possibility that the Brazilian debt (which now stands at 100 billion dollars) can be paid: the various 'letters of intent' to the IMF follow one after the other (we're already onto the fourth) and no one believes, even in the government, that the terms of the next one can be met. It is clearly impossible to keep 'rolling over' the debt forever, and the effects on the international financial system will probably be very great.

Social tension has grown with the austerity policies, the squeeze on wages and living standards, which all the region's governments have been applying. The weakening of all these dictatorships is plain to see.

However, one question has very clearly limited the extent of the crisis, and that is the lack of any governmental alternative outside the bourgeois fold. In Argentina, although the situation is far from being stabilised, the masses were pretty much channelled into an electoral dispute between Peronists and Alfonsín, with victory going to the candidate best trusted by imperialism, who had been able to present himself as the one the least compromised with the hated military regime. The class-conscious current in the Argentinian workers movement is still extremely weak.

The Brazilian situation bears some similarities. But it's also true that the

Brazilian dictatorship has been able to lead the process of changing the form of domination. There is a less awful economic situation, repression has not reached quite the same depths, and there has not been a defeat like the Malvinas. It is in a much more favourable position than the Argentinian dictatorship was before the elections, and it may manage to hold on to the system of 'indirect elections' for the Presidency, that is, where the president is chosen by a totally spurious 'electoral college'. What's more, questions which in Argentina are explosive — like those of torture and the disappeared, etc., are much less sharp here — both because the extent of these events was less and because the distance in time is greater.

There's no doubt that at the moment it is the most conciliatory sections of the bourgeois opposition who are leading the opposition to the government. The campaign for direct elections (in fact it's a lousy term because it's not a question of direct vs. indirect elections, but rather of elections vs. the manipulation of the 'electoral college') has been largely headed up by the forces of the PMDB (Brazilian Democratic Movement Party) and the PDT (Democratic Workers Party) (1), who try to reduce everything to the question of 'direct elections' and have very little to say about alternative programmes for government or the interests of the masses, etc. The prevailing tone in the campaign is 'we want an Alfonsín'. All this means is that despite the seriousness of the crisis, the bourgeoisie remains very firm.

Nonetheless, Brazil has an important difference, particularly in comparison with Argentina: there does exist here a strong class-conscious current in the workers' movement, which is expressed in the unions and in the Workers Party (PT). This opens up possibilities, which we ought to discuss in more detail later. Overall, however, Brazil today has a more stable bourgeoisie, with one difference which may prove decisive: the existence of a class-conscious, class-struggle current

in the workers movement and the PT.

In Uruguay, on the other hand, the situation is very interesting. The dictatorship is utterly discredited and we have seen launched against it what are proportionately the largest mass mobilisations of the continent. The dictatorship has proved incapable of working out and applying any plan for changing the form of bourgeois domination. Furthermore, unlike Argentina, there never existed any sort of Peronism, and today there does exist a class-conscious current in the unions around the PIT (Plenario Intersindical de los Trabajadores). (2) However, unlike Brazil, this current still doesn't have its own political expression, a party with mass influence. This is going to be the decisive question in coming months.

Q. From the outside, it looked as if the deepening of Brazil's economic crisis from 1980-81 onwards, with the staggering growth in unemployment and so forth, really interrupted the wave of struggles which had been developing in the previous two or three years. What were the main problems which faced the organisation of the workers and popular movements, and what kinds of solution have been sought?

A. Beginning in May 1980, with the defeat of the big metalworkers strike in the ABC (3) industrial region, the workers' movement did suffer a downturn. It became clear that strikes by sector or by region were unable to confront the repression unleashed by the bosses and the state. The ABC metalworkers held out for 43 days, but were unable to overcome the taking-over of their union, the arrest of all their leaders, the police occupation of the industrial districts, and so on.

At the same time, as the crisis deepened the bosses and the state became more inflexible.

The period that followed, therefore, up until the middle of 1982, was marked by isolated struggles of resistance (many struggles, including strikes, against redundancies — some of them successful), and by the continuing reorganisation of the class. In Brazil there was no central trade union body — that was forbidden by law. And a national body was essential for the only form of struggle capable of confronting the dictatorship and the employers — the general strike.

1. The PMDB is the largest opposition party, a broad front headed by sections of the liberal bourgeoisie and enjoying the support of the three illegal Stalinist parties, the PCB, the PC do B and the MR-8. In the elections of November 1982 it won the governorships of most of the largest states and by far the largest number of votes for local and federal deputies. However, because of the heavily gerrymandered electoral system, the government held on to its majority in Congress.

The PDT is a small party with social democratic leanings organised around the old populist leader, Leonel Brizola. In 1982 he was elected governor of Rio de Janeiro state.

2. An inter-union co-ordinating committee that called the general strike in Uruguay on January 18, 1984. It was banned as a result by the government, but continues to function.

3. The belt of working-class suburbs around Sao Paulo: Santo Andre, Sao Bernardo and Sao Caetano.

August 1981 saw the holding of CONCLAT (Congress of the Working Class). It decided a platform of demands for the movement, defined the general strike as a necessary form of struggle, and set for 1982 the founding of the CUT (Central Unica dos Trabalhadores). With the presence of some 5,000 delegates, this was the most important trade union conference that had ever been held in Brazil. However, in 1982, manoeuvres on the part of the 'pelego'-reformist wing of the union movement (a block made up of 'pelegos', the PCB, the PC do B and the MR-8 (4)) succeeded in postponing the CONCLAT which was to have founded the CUT from 1982 to 1983.

In 1983 the situation of the workers movement changed significantly. A new national political scene — with governors of the bourgeois opposition parties recently elected in all the major states — and an explosive worsening of the crisis, of unemployment and of sheer poverty, led to much more intense mobilisation: street demonstrations, hunger-raids on supermarkets, big strikes in July, leading to a partial general strike about 80 per cent effective in Sao Paulo, slightly less in Porto Alegre.

In August, the CUT was founded in Sao Bernardo — without the pelego-reformist block, which in November formed its own central body, taking over the name of CONCLAT. (5) The central questions now posed, therefore, are the building of the CUT (trying to draw in the sector organised in CONCLAT) and the preparation of the general strike set for this April.

Q. What about the PT, which emerged precisely out of that first wave of struggle in the late 1970s? How has its role developed?

A. The PT is still, fundamentally, the expression of the class-conscious current in the workers movement. It serves mainly as a pole of reference, and it includes the main leaders of that class-struggle trade-unionism. It is not, as a party, the effective political leadership of the class.

Q. At the moment there are a number of important discussions going on inside the PT about the party's strategic orientation. What is at the centre of these debates, and what do they imply for the party's immediate tasks, especially in connection with what is obviously the major political development of the day, the campaign for direct elections for president?

A. There are three main discussions in the PT at the moment. The first is over the general character of the party itself. Should it try to be the political leadership of the masses? Should it incorporate its members and affiliates as organised militants? Should it draw up a programme of struggles to propose to the masses?

There have been, and still are, many doubts over this. The prevailing idea in the PT became one of 'a party that

represents the social movements', which is their 'political expression' — in other words which didn't seek to be a leader of the masses. Today, a majority of the party's national leadership do believe that the party should lead the masses, but this isn't yet reflected in the way the party's actually organised.

The second is around the question of power and a governmental alternative. Should the PT make some sort of proposal?

There's still quite a strong belief in the party that this would be premature, that the PT should merely support day-to-day struggles, building the workers' power 'step by step'. But there is an evolution in the national leadership, which is already saying that faced with the seriousness of the crisis the PT should have its own global alternative — a programmatic proposal for government.

The third debate is about how to participate in the campaign for direct elections. The position of the left in the party, which has a lot of support amongst the rank and file militants, is that the PT needs to mark clearly its own profile — with its own programme for government and its own candidate. But there are sectors which more or less openly defend supporting one or other liberal bourgeois candidate. This is the immediately decisive question. It looks probable that the PT will decide on its own candidate. What's more, the campaign for direct elections needs to be widened out to include the defence of a Constituent Assembly — the only way of preventing any sort of negotiation with the dictatorship.

It is on these three questions — clarity about the general character of a workers' party, how to take an attitude to the question of power and clarity about the party's independence in the campaign for direct elections — that the influence of the PT in the present political situation will depend. It's true that the party has already grown stronger, as a result of the increasing discredit of the liberal bourgeois state governments, and of the rising level of workers struggles. But its influence will only become decisive with much clearer policies.

Q. How, then, would you assess the PT's possibilities for the next few years, and what is the outlook for revolutionary Marxism within the party?

A. Overall, the PT's possibilities are favourable: it has seen its influence grow in the last year, it has improved its political positions, and it has begun — timidly — to organise itself as a real party.

However, there is a serious problem: anti-communist (anti-Leninist) attitudes have grown considerably within the party. There are a number of reasons for this:

— the permanent polarisation in relation to the bureaucratic reformism of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), the Communist Party of Brazil (PC do B) and the MR-8, which is a great source of confusion;

— the presence within the PT of

many disillusioned ex-Leninists;

— the strong presence of sections of the Catholic Church;

— some links, on an international level, with trade unions close to social democracy (which financed the Sao Bernardo congress that founded the CUT).

So far this anti-communism hasn't implied conciliatory, social-democratic type positions — quite the contrary. Nor is there any direct, organised influence of social democracy. But it is a risk.

The situation of revolutionary Marxism is therefore a contradictory one: on the one hand favoured by the proletariat's generally upward course, by the radicalisation of the working-class rank and file, and by the PT's own political development (albeit limited); on the other hand hindered by campaigns conducted within the party against the 'communists' or the 'organisations'. We have made progress, but with limitations. The coming national convention — where the party will take a position on the big questions in debate — is going to be crucial.

At the same time, a promising process of regroupment is occurring on the left of the PT, particularly of those sectors committed to building the party and who identify with communism, with Leninism. These are sectors which in the past have fought bitterly inside the PT, and most of them — the old centrist organisations — have gone through big crises. The most spectacular example was that of Acao Popular (Popular Action), which was once the largest organisation to the left of the CP, and which disintegrated to the point of final self-dissolution. These have now developed convergent positions on the main questions of the class struggle, especially on the need to strengthen a revolutionary communist vanguard inside the PT so that we can influence its growth. Greater unity between the Leninist sectors of the PT and the most determined class-struggle sectors at the base of the party, those who firmly defend a party of struggles, giving political leadership to the masses, this is possible and probable, and it will be a lever to help the party as a whole move forward. The very need to counter the anti-Leninist campaign has brought the PT's Leninists closer together.

4. The 'pelegos' are the pro-government bureaucrats put in charge of the corporate union structure after the military coup in 1964. To maintain the slightest credibility some have been obliged to assume a minimum of independence from their former military benefactors. The PCB is the Brazilian Communist Party, wrought by divisions between varying shades of 'Eurocommunists' and unreformed Stalinists, but maintaining some basis of strength in various union and local government bureaucracies, and in some cultural and intellectual circles. The PC do B is the Communist Party of Brazil, which split from the PCB over the Sino-Soviet dispute but after the death of Mao abandoned its Chinese orientation for alignment with Albania. The MR-8, the Revolutionary Movement-8th October, is an ex-urban guerrilla organisation which in recent years has adopted ultra-Stalinist positions. Both the latter have a significant numerical presence at various levels of the popular movement.

*5. See *International Viewpoint*, No 39, October 31, 1983.*

'Women in the global factory'

"In Malaysia, a woman may suddenly see a 'hantu' or 'jin,' a hideous mythological spirit, while peering through a microscope. She falls to the floor in convulsions, screaming with 'masuk hantu,' spirit possession. Within minutes the hysteria spreads up and down the assembly line. Sometimes factories must be closed for a week or more while the evil spirits are exorcised...In Malaysia, where labor unions are outlawed, women have virtually no other outlets to protest working conditions." (*Women in the Global Factory*, by Annette Fuentes and Barbara Ehrenreich, South End Press, Boston)

Carol McALLISTER

In their pamphlet, Fuentes and Ehrenreich present a succinct and useful portrait of recent industrialization in the Third World, its control by multinational corporations and financial institutions, and its impact on the women workers in these new industries. Drawing their material primarily from Asia (Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines) and from Central America (especially Mexico), they do a fine job of interweaving a sense of the experiences of individual women with an overall description and analysis of the problem.

Women in the Global Factory focuses on women factory workers — especially in the textile, electronics and micro-processor industries — who are employed in free trade zones. Free trade zones, or export processing zones as they are also called, are areas set aside in underdeveloped countries where foreign corporations (the majority are US-controlled) can set up shop without paying taxes or custom-import duties, and where they are provided with a controlled workforce.

As Fuentes and Ehrenreich say, "Free trade zones — there are now over 100 — mean more freedom for business and less freedom for people. Inside, behind walls often topped with barbed wire, the zones resemble a huge labor camp where trade unions, strikes and freedom of movement are severely limited, if not forbidden. A special police force is on hand to search people and vehicles entering or leaving the zones."

The majority of workers in these free trade zones are young women, who work on light-assembly lines. These women are usually paid 3 dollars to 5 dollars a day, an income that cannot provide the basic necessities for a single person, let alone for a woman trying to support her children. They are also subjected to particular forms of harassment and exploitation ranging from pregnancy tests (and being fired immediately if they are found to be pregnant), to lay-offs at age 25 (since they are past their "most productive" years), to sexist advertising attempting to attract foreign investors.

A Malaysian government investment brochure advertises: "The manual dex-

terity of the Oriental female is famous the world over. Her hands are small, and she works fast with extreme care...Who, therefore, could be better qualified by nature and inheritance, to contribute to the efficiency of a bench-assembly production line than the Oriental girl?"

One aspect of this new industrial work which Fuentes and Ehrenreich focus on is the health and safety hazards it involves. They point out that the conditions in the garment and textile industries are "visibly unhealthy, rivaling those of any 19th century sweatshop."

But even more dangerous are the electronic and micro-processor industries. Here women are daily exposed to toxic chemicals, eye-damaging microscope work and high levels of stress. There are no health benefits; vacation or sick days; unemployment or disability insurance; social security; or adequate services such as daycare centers, health clinics and decent housing to meet their new needs.

Fuentes and Ehrenreich point out that capitalist corporations are *really* creating global factories (the title of the pamphlet is not just a metaphor) where work is broken down and farmed out on an international basis. The least skilled and most noxious and tedious work goes to Third World countries — especially to the women. The whole system is of course designed to facilitate increased profit-making.

But Fuentes and Ehrenreich do not fully draw out the implications of this trend. They fail to note that workers in the neo-colonial world are in a less favorable position to unionize and to demand basic rights because they control only a small and easily movable part of the total production process.

Changing lives

One of the most serious limitations of *Women in the Global Factory* is that, in focusing on factory workers, it only touches the surface of the deep transformations occurring in women's lives throughout Asia, Latin America and Africa. Most women in these regions are not yet assembly-line workers, but their lives are just as surely being changed as a

result of capitalist development.

With the expansion of capitalism there is a whole shift of the agricultural economy away from production of basic food crops, often on a semi-communal basis, to cash-cropping and mono-cropping, on a capitalist basis — usually in the form of large plantations or small freeholdings. Many women in the countryside are forced to become agricultural wage-laborers and often are able to find only migratory and seasonal work. Although still involved in food production, rural women — both peasant and proletarian — often go hungry and they and their children experience life-threatening malnutrition.

Other women find themselves pushed out of the agricultural economy and into the cities, with little chance of even finding factory work. The overwhelming majority seek work as domestic servants, where their low pay is combined with a lack of freedom and often with less than humane treatment. Others who are more fortunate, may find work in the low-paid but ever-expanding service, clerical and sales sectors within the "pink collar ghetto."

Many women, however, can find no regular niche in the "new" economy. If still embedded in a traditional family structure, these women may become "housewives," economically dependent on and increasingly subordinate to husbands and other male family members. But most of these women are on their own and try to create their means of survival in the margins of the economy as day-workers, street vendors or prostitutes.

Capitalist development does not just affect women economically. It transforms all aspects of their lives. It causes women's self-images and the images others have of them — of their roles, their abilities, their persons, their sexuality — to generally become narrowed, negative and denigrating. This is especially clear with the explosion of personal violence against women, as well as the military terror needed to keep capitalism intact in places like El Salvador and Guatemala.

What are the solutions to these problems facing Third World women? What answers do Fuentes and Ehrenreich offer?

The picture presented in *Women in the Global Factory* clearly shows the need for a revolutionary solution. Yet the authors' suggestions for what can be done are limited to reforms in the system. But it is capitalist development, itself — the whole system of production based on private property and profit-making for a few — that is at the core of the increase in oppression and suffering of these women.

Fuentes and Ehrenreich emphasize that the solution must be global, which seems absolutely correct, and talk about creating links between women around the world such as an international network to share information on hazardous substances and corporate policies. But most of their proposals are limited to sugges-



AROUND THE WORLD



Turkish protesters face trial

“The objective of this action is to denounce the murder of eight patriots, including the mayor of the city of Gerbukan in Kurdistan, as well as the attack by the police and the special repressive forces against another sixty Kurdish patriots, when they savagely suppressed the protest in Diyarbakir prison.”

With those words, on February 9, 14 Turkish and Kurdish political prisoners, all members of revolutionary organizations, explained to reporters the aim of their two-hour occupation of the offices of the Turkish airline, T.H.Y., in Syntagma Square in Athens. In order to carry out this occupation, they had to disarm a plainclothes policeman guarding the premises. On April 5, a court will try these protesters on baseless charges of “resistance to authority” and “illegal violence.”

The 14 militants were unarmed when they occupied the airline offices, which they had entered previously in small groups. After they let all the employees leave, they hung out a banner in Greek and Turkish inviting reporters for a press conference.

At the same time, outside the occupied office a crowd gathered shouting

slogans in support of the Turkish refugees. And revolutionary left activists, mainly students, distributed statements signed by Turkish revolutionary organizations.

The area was surrounded by the police who guarded the Ministry of Communications, and in a short time a squad of special forces arrived. Inside, the Turkish activists were talking to reporters about the slaughter of prisoners in Diyarbakir prison, about how the prison was sealed off by tanks and how the smoke rising over the prison showed that the protest would end with a massacre. The special forces prepared to go into action “against the terrorists.” They were ordered to “attack and to prevent

the Turkish militants from leaving after the press conference.”

The Turkish militants risked their lives by crossing the border to continue the struggle. After that, they faced the ghetto of the Lavrios camp, destitution, isolation. To get out of the camp, you need the consent of the authorities who check your reasons for wanting to leave. To find a job, in most cases as a dishwasher and for a short time, is a small miracle.

Today, if they are not banned from political activity outright, it is made very difficult. While Averoff, Metsotakes and others [the rightist politicians] exalt the virtues of Kenan Evren [the Turkish dictator], the government seems to think that it has done its socialist duty by the Turkish political refugees simply by assuring their survival. ■

This article is from the March issue of Ergatike Pale, the paper of the Greek section of the Fourth International.

Belgian Fourth Internationalists form Socialist Workers Party

The Revolutionary Workers League (LRT-RAL), Belgian section of the Fourth International, held its seventh national congress on February 17-19, 1984. A very large majority of the 60 delegates present approved the political resolution entitled ‘Towards a vanguard workers party’, adopted a motion that decided to change the name of the party to Socialist Workers Party (POS-SAP), and new party statutes. Far from being a routine event, this seventh congress marked an important turning point in the history of the Belgian section of the Fourth International. It followed a long internal discussion on a self-critical balance sheet on its 15-year history.

The LRT-RAL was formally founded in 1971 by the fusion of three organisations: the Belgian section of the time, the Jeune Garde Socialiste, the youth organisation of the Socialist Party, which had been sympathetic to the Fourth International since 1969, and a small left centrist party, the product of a split in the SP in 1965, whose Walloon (French-speaking) wing in particular had a workers base in several big industrial plants.

Nevertheless, this new organisation had to build itself in difficult conditions. There was a very markedly uneven development between, on the one hand, the decline in workers struggles, and rising student radicalisation on the other.

However, at the same time the Walloon working class was suffering the effects of unemployment from 1966-67 while the Flemish proletariat was strengthened and made more combative by the effects of assisted economic expansion in the north of the country, although this combativity was not reflected in a level of consciousness or union organisation comparable to that which still existed in the Walloon country.

Thus, these three initial components, of which the JGS was undoubtedly the most dynamic, drew on the active forces of the anti-imperialist movement, the student movement and the successive waves of spontaneous workers strikes.

Despite the presence of seasoned worker militants and influential union delegates [shop stewards] the line and the functioning of the LRT-RAL was determined during this period by the role played by activists who had come in large part from the student movement. This led, among other things, to a certain delay in accumulating experienced comrades and some difficulties in recruiting and keeping workers with experience of leading struggles. The decline in revolutionary prospects in Europe, particularly after 1974-75 in Portugal, and the violent austerity offensive of the bourgeoisie, led in the end to a sharp political crisis within the organisation at the end of 1978.

Women in the global factory

tions of ways to counter particular abuses of multinational corporations, along the lines of the Nestle boycott.

Fuentes and Ehrenreich present a clear description of the function of governments in both underdeveloped and advanced capitalist states — especially in the United States — in underwriting this exploitative process of “development.” This support ranges from economic incentives to military repression.

The struggles of Third World women for economic and political freedom must therefore involve workplace actions and strikes — many examples of which are documented in this pamphlet. But they must also attain a level of political organization that opposes capitalism and goes in a revolutionary socialist direction. This is also the only real solution for working people in the United States. Our struggles are intertwined.

This review was first published in the March 1984 edition of Socialist Action, an American socialist monthly published in San Francisco. ■

Thus the seventh congress had to be a congress of rectification. This demanded a rigorous analysis of the organisation's main weaknesses. It meant making a critical survey of the current state of the workers movement, its vanguard and the present situation.

The correction and rectification took place step by step as the self-critical discussion progressed. The 'turn to industry' decided by the Eleventh World Congress in 1979 gave a new enthusiasm to the Belgian section. This important tactical measure forced a rethink of political orientation and the way it was put into practice.

The LRT-RAL leadership, therefore, took a firm grasp of the work among workers and in the trade unions. The almost uninterrupted rise of social movements in the period 1979-1983, expressed in several movements towards a general strike, the annual 'Women Against the Crisis' mobilisations, the youth marches for jobs and gigantic anti-missiles demonstrations, allowed the LRT-RAL to test out its new political orientation in a lively social context, and anchor the 'internal debate' in the reality of the class struggle.

The congress which decided to form the POS-SAP broke with a certain tradition of having a political resolution based on a detailed analysis of the objective situation, in which the tasks of building the party were relegated to a small section at the end, with a few ritualistic formulas in the body of the text. This time the task of building the party was placed centrally in the resolution and related to a theoretical section on the party (Part I), the nature of the political period (Part II), political orientation (Part III), mass work and the union movement (Part IV) and the tradition of the party (Part V).

Thus, this conference prepared a new stage in the growth of the POS-SAP which, according to the resolution, offers certain possibilities despite the difficult political situation for the workers movement. The political resolution outlined a specific organisational objective for the next two years: 'To recruit and organise within and around the party several dozen vanguard workers from the working class and modify the party's organisational system from top to bottom to form these workers, often important trade-union militants, into party cadres.'

The next few months will tell if the POS-SAP can meet this challenge. There is no doubt that the organisation has already made some important gains. Between the sixth and seventh congresses it grew by 20 per cent. Today, 82 per cent of the members are employees, 25 per cent are industrial workers and 22 per cent are elected union representatives, some of whom have also been elected to their regional executive committees. Everything will depend on the ability of the new 28-member central committee elected at the congress — a third of whom

are industrial workers — to involve all the members of the former LRT-RAL in carrying through a thoroughgoing transformation of the POS-SAP. ■

Dutch union calls strike against missiles

The leadership of the Socialist-led Dutch trade-union federation (FNV) decided to call a 15-minute strike against the missiles on May 10.

The strike, which will take place between 11.45 am and midday, will fall in a week of action on peace called and organised by the local and national committees of the peace organisations, the left-wing parties represented in parliament, the FNV and the soldiers union the VVDM.

Initially, there were doubts about the effectiveness of the action week in many cities but already the call for the strike has had a good effect on the preparation for the week. Different groups are scheduled to come into action on different days of the week: Monday-women; Wednesday-schools/colleges; Thurs-

day-trade unions. Demonstrations and other actions are scheduled for Saturday.

A conference of 'Youth Against the Missiles' supported by 20 groups, some of more than 100 members, decided to try to organise school strikes and other actions on the same day as the FNV has called for a strike. This follows an initiative in Amsterdam for a school strike on April 10.

Soldiers from the soldiers committees were also present at the youth conference. They are now building a campaign to declare army barracks and bases nuclear-free zones. All the soldiers in barracks or base are asked if they agree with the proposal that it should be nuclear free, and if half of them do so it is declared a nuclear-free zone. This follows campaigns in the Netherlands as well as Britain, Italy and other countries, to call cities nuclear-free zones. Already badges declaring 'This school is a nuclear-free zone' are proved to sell like hot cakes.

Meanwhile the government is trying to find a way out of an impossible situation. US Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger has been visiting The Hague to explain why the Netherlands must accept some missiles — if not 42, then perhaps 32 or 16? But the prime minister has said on television that it is not totally excluded that no missiles will be accepted... ■

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Solidarity with political prisoners

There were 244 political prisoners in Poland at the beginning of February 1984. Ninety-three of them had already been sentenced to prison, in general for periods of between 3½ and 7 years. The latest reports we have indicate a considerable increase in arrests of people suspected of clandestine union activity in several towns.

One of the towns particularly affected by the latest wave of repression is Wrocław, the capital of Lower Silesia, a region where the union Solidarnosc, and the political group called 'Fighting Solidarnosc', are particularly active.

In the last week of January there were mass strikes and protest actions against the new price rises in many Wrocław factories, (see articles in this issue of *International Viewpoint*). Since then there has been a wave of arrests and people 'taken in for questioning' in factories, offices and universities. Just before January 10, the secret police questioned around one hundred scientific and cultural figures in Wrocław who had signed an appeal to international and Polish public opinion in solidarity with the seven national leaders of Solidarnosc and the four KOR activists imprisoned for ten years without trial. Seventeen Solidarnosc activists were recently arrested in the small town of Gorzów. In Toruń, four Solidarnosc members were taken, beaten and threatened with death before finally being released.

Warsaw, Lublin, Szczecin and Cracow have not escaped this repression. The Polish media announces new arrests of Solidarnosc members every week. The bureaucracy also harasses lawyers. There are more and more suspensions, attacks by 'unidentified wrongdoers', burglaries and arrests of those who undertake the

defence of Solidarnosc members.

The repression also hits at activists from the independent peasant movement. On December 11, 1983, the president of the National Resistance Committee of Peasants, 71-year old Jozef Teliga, was arrested. Teliga was a leader of the anti-Nazi resistance and a political prisoner during the 1950s.

The body of Piotr Bartoszcze, a peasant unionist of the Bydgoszcz region, was found in a mine on February 9. No one disagrees with the assumption that he was murdered by the secret police. He was not the first victim of the wave of terror.

After the murder of the Warsaw high-school student Grzegorz Przemysk last spring, another, Andrzej Debski, fatally beaten by a militia patrol, died in a Warsaw hospital at the beginning of January.

In many prisons — Barczewo, Braniewo, Strzelin — there have been hunger strikes by the imprisoned unionists. Well-known leaders of Solidarnosc — Wladyslaw Frasnycuk and Piotr Bednarz of Wrocław, Andrzej Slowik and Jerzy Kropiwnicki of Łódź, Patrycjusz Kosmowski of Bielsko Biala as well as the socialist militant Edmund Baluka — won important concessions in Barczewo prison after a hunger strike in autumn 1983.

Since then they have been continuing the struggle for the rights of political prisoners along with Leszek Moczulski and two other leaders of the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN). On December 7, they were attacked by the prison guards. Shortly afterwards, Frasnycuk was found guilty of having 'insulted' the assistant governor, which he allegedly did while he was being beaten.

Seven union activists in Strzelin prison stopped their hunger strike on January 27, having held out for 55 days. Five of their comrades — including Janusz Palubicki who was a member of the national underground leadership of Solidarnosc and president of the Poznań region — had shortly before been transferred to hospital in a serious condition. They wrote, in a statement, 'As we consider that risking our lives or long-lasting mental or physical deterioration is not desirable from a humanitarian point of view, and taking account of the voices from outside, we have decided to stop our hunger strike.'

From Barczewo prison, Frasnycuk wrote, 'We have decided to hold on. However, I call for wide and active support for political prisoners, particularly those who could be easily forgotten.'

The regional strike committee in Lower Silesia wrote, 'The political prisoners' hunger strikes demand admiration and respect. They bear witness to the unshakeable spirit of those who have been condemned for fulfilling their duty to Solidarnosc and to society. Prisoners' hunger strikes are often the only means of struggle they can use to defend themselves against the bad treatment meted out by the regime, and to preserve their dignity.'

'This form of struggle severely harms the health of the prisoners. Society will need the health and strength of our comrades again. The fate of the prisoners rests in large measure on those of us who remain outside the prison walls, and our activity. It is up to us to create a situation in which they will no longer have to have recourse to hunger strikes.'

'The RKS asks all the union organisations, all members of Solidarnosc to demand freedom for the political prisoners and to testify to their conditions. This can be done in any way they choose, by individual or collective appeals to the Diet or the Council of State, protest letters to prison governors, letters to the prisoners, material help to them and their families.'

It is the duty of the international workers movement to respond to this appeal, by protesting vigorously against the increase of repression in Poland through which the military-bureaucratic dictatorship hopes to crush Solidarnosc's will to resist.

Send letters, telegrams and resolutions demanding the status of political prisoners and an unconditional and general amnesty for the imprisoned Solidarnosc militants to the president of the Diet (Marszałek Sejmu PRL, Warszawa, Poland) and to the Council of State (Przewodniczący Rady Państwa PRL, Warszawa, Poland).

Support for the prisoners, in the form of letters, telegrams or resolutions, should be sent to Wladyslaw Frasnycuk or Andrzej Slowik, Zakład Karny, Barczewo, Poland.