

International VIEWPOINT

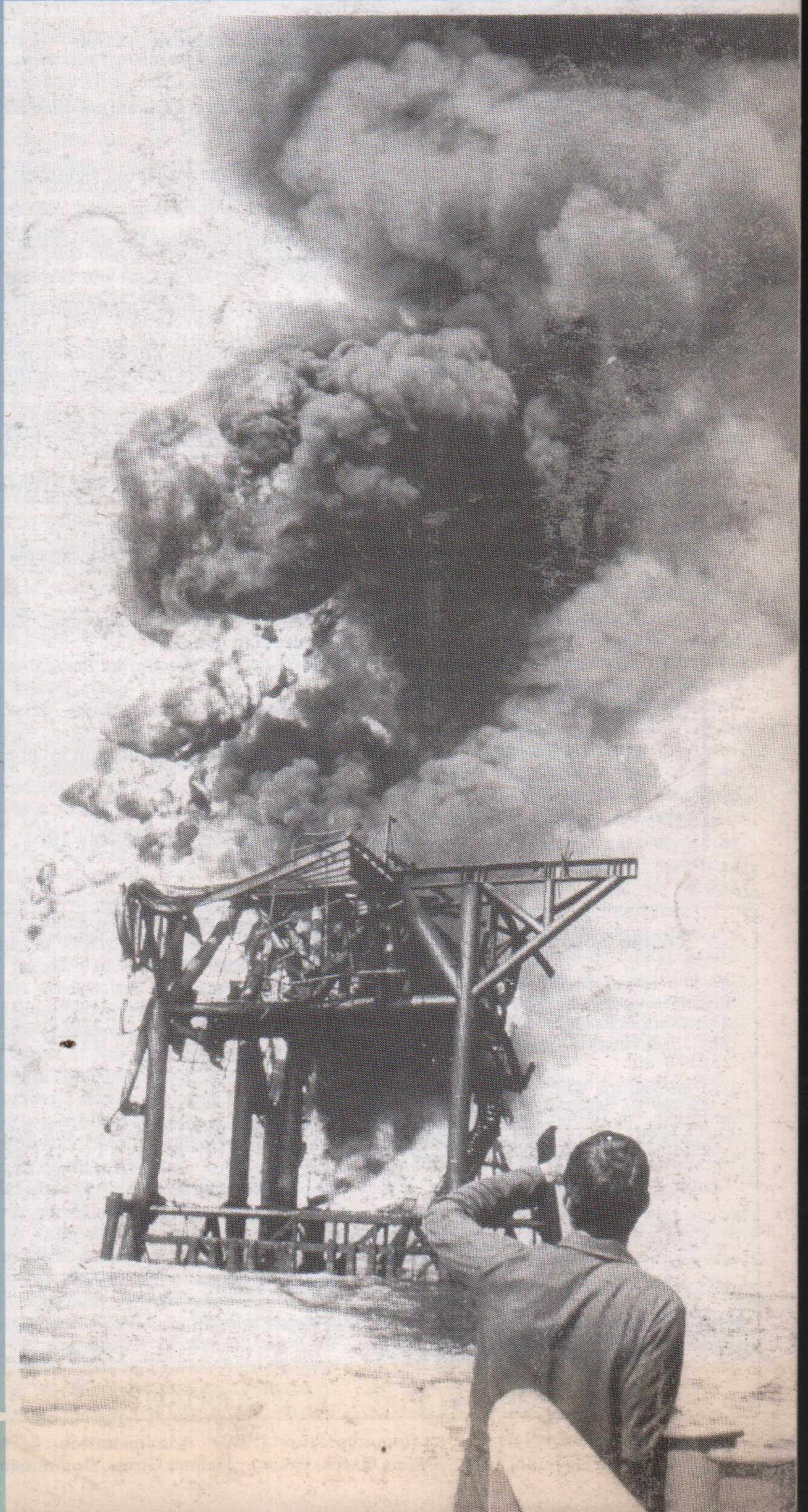
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**A Camp David for
Southern Africa ?**

**Uruguayan
workers
movement
reorganises**



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International Viewpoint

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Imperialists play dangerous game

The one thing that nearly all the interested parties in the Gulf War agree on is that the conflict is being kept going and manipulated by the imperialist powers. Even Tehran and Bagdad now say this, although they draw opposite conclusions about what the answer to it is. (1)

Gerry FOLEY

The most authoritative capitalist papers themselves no longer make any bones about it. For example, the *New York Times* said in an editorial May 23:

"In Henry Kissinger's apt phrase, the ultimate American interest in the Iran-Iraq war is that both sides should lose. The underlying hope is that mutual exhaustion might rid the Middle East of the aggressive regimes of both Ayatollah Khomeini and Saddam Hussein, yet leave their nations intact to avoid a super-power rush into the vacuum."

The editorial concluded: "The deeper American duty is to keep all sides focused on the right outcome of the Iran-Iraq war — a military stalemate, so that no one wins."

The editorial in the London *Financial Times* May 24 almost directly paralleled the one the day before in the *New York Times*.

"Western interests demand ceasefire or stalemate. Victory by Iran would threaten the stability of the Arab world. Victory by Iraq would turn Iran into a cockpit for strife between the superpowers."

The *Financial Times* editorial pointed up the fact that whatever differences the imperialists have with the Khomeini regime, they view it as a bulwark against the spread of Soviet influence in the region. This was, in fact, Imam's representative Hashemi Rafsanjani's point in the discussions with Turkish foreign minister, Vahid Halifoglu around the time of the first Iranian offensive this spring:

"If an Islamic government is established in Iraq, the threat of communism will be removed from the region....Presently, there are two major problems in the region, the problem of Afghanistan and of the Baathist party of Iraq....If these two problems are solved, the Arab countries, ourselves, you and Pakistan can collaborate more fruitfully in the region."

(2) This meeting was followed by another massive increase in trade between Turkey and Iran.

The attitude of the imperialist press expressed in its editorials on the new escalation of the Gulf war follows in the line of previous positions taken at the time of the first Kurdish war by the post-revolutionary Iranian government, and at the time of the Iraqi invasion of Iran.

In the first case, the *New York Times* indicated that a decisive victory by the Kurdish liberation fighters was distinctly undesirable because it would create uncontrollable instability in Iran. There is evidence also that the US discreetly gave Iran military aid during the period of the Kurdish challenge. (3)

When Iraqi troops were advancing rapidly into Iran, the US also made it clear that it was opposed to any major territorial changes that could undermine the Iranian state.

Washington's attitude during the latest phase of the Gulf war and particularly at the moment of truth when the conflict is spreading to the oil lanes and threatening to affect the oil supply to the imperialist countries, makes it still more clear that what the US wants is not to mount a decisive attack on the Islamic Republic now, but to wear it down and slowly bring it to heel.

The Soviet view

This is also the conclusion of the Soviet leadership, which has now condemned the continuation of the war outright as a result of imperialist manipulation. Thus, Vikentii Matveev, *Izvestia's* "Political Observer," wrote in the May 23 issue of the Soviet daily:

"Neither of the two sides to the conflict is gaining anything. Both are suffering bigger and bigger losses, exhausting their forces. At the same time, the imperialist circles that are used to dominating the international raw-materials markets are apparently determined to warm their hands at the more and more dangerous fire in the Persian Gulf."

Matveev's conclusion was that the objective of the imperialists in this phrase is to pressure Saudi Arabia to grant them bases on Saudi territory.

"It is well known what efforts the Reagan administration has made to line up the Gulf states behind its 'strategic concessions conception.' The Soviet bogey was used to force the states in the region to grant its bases for its 'Rapid Deployment Force.' The statement made in the capital of Saudi Arabia in 1981 by the visiting US secretary of state tried to do this in characteristic fashion. The answer he got was that it was not the

Soviet Union that was threatening the Arab countries but Israel."

Washington does have a fundamental political-military problem in the Near East. It has to balance two conflicting alliances, one with the Zionist state, and the other with dependent Arab regimes.

The US commitment to Israel appears a far more tangible and enduring stumbling block for even the most conservative Arab states than the speculative question of Pan Islamic or Pan-Shiite reaction to an open alliance with the US against the Islamic republic. That is shown, among other things, by the fact that the US stopped delivery of Stinger ground-to-air missiles to Saudi Arabia following Jordanian King Hussein's recent denunciation of American support for Israel. Both Syria and Jordan, the two Arab states in direct conflict with Israel, depend on Saudi subsidies.

Washington has now offered to go ahead with delivery of the missiles to enable the Gulf states to defend their shipping against air attack. But at the same time, it has stressed that it cannot defend the oil lanes unless it is given bases in Saudi Arabia.

In a few weeks, the Iraqis have managed to reduce Iranian oil exports from about 1,800,000 barrels a day to about 800,000. So, they have a dagger to the throat of the Islamic republic. The Khomeini regime survives only on the basis of oil income. Both Iranian industry and agriculture are in a sorry state, with massive unemployment of industrial workers and growing needs for imported footstuffs.

The oil income is essential to the Khomeini regime to maintain its patronage base, all of the mass organizations on which its control of the society depends, including the Shiite clergy itself. The regime's base is parasitic, it is not the productive layers either on the land or in the cities, for which it has done nothing.

Therefore, it is not surprising that confronted with a serious threat to its oil exports, the Islamic Republic has been ready to take big risks. But its present course has fundamental limitations.

Virtually all Iranian oil exports got out through the Gulf, whereas Saudi Arabia has a pipeline to the Red Sea that can carry 1,800,000 barrels, an amount equal to the total exported by Iran before the start of the campaign against Gulf shipping.

Furthermore, in the conditions of a world oil glut, the major oil importers need not worry greatly even about a total reduction in imports of 4,000,000 bar-

1. Rafsanjani did this for example in his Friday sermon May 18. *Etela'at*, 29 Ordibehesht (19 May). The solution the Iranians propose is the imposition of an "Islamic" regime on Iraq.

2. See, "The worst is true," IV, No 50, April 9, 1984.

3. See "Iran government tried to crush Kurdish peasant revolution," by Gerry Foley, *Intercontinental Press*, September 3, 1979; and *Haber-Name-ye-Kurdistan*, Tehran, 1979 (a compendium of facts on the Islamic Republic's first war against the Kurds published by the front of the Kurdish armed organizations).

rels a day, which is the worst that could happen if Iran closed down the Gulf. On the other hand, the Islamic Republic's finances would collapse.

Moreover, it is clear as the confrontation sharpens, Iran can depend less and less on Syria, which shut Iraq's pipeline to the Mediterranean. Iran would be still less able to replace Saudi subsidies if it loses its oil income.

Moreover, the other pillar of the Assad regime is its alliance with the Soviet Union, which has made it clear that it does not want to see Iraq defeated by increasing arms shipments to Bagdad since last November.

In its international affairs magazine, the Kremlin has said quite unambiguously that it considers the Iranian regime's course in continuing the war is leading it back into the arms of the Western imperialist powers.

"Inflated with religious fanaticism and nationalist intoxication in connection with the war against Iraq, the Iranian ruling circles are stepping up their persecution of the democratic forces in the country.

"The Tudeh Party is the first victim of repression. This policy has led simply to forgetting the principles and objectives of the antimonarchical revolution in Iran. It is being exploited by pro-imperialist elements that are still exercising an influence in Tehran in order to bring about a rapprochement with what until recently they were describing as the No. 1 enemy of the Iranian people....

"The Americans pretend to be for an end to the conflict, but this stance is designed for the public eye. In reality, Washington has been cherishing designs of intervening in the events for a long time, increasing its military presence in the adjacent region and reinforcing its rapid deployment forces....It is with the connivance of Washington that hundreds of millions of dollars of American-made arms are still being shipped into Iran. By their actions designed to reestablish their military force in this region of the globe, the US is whipping up the Iran-Iraq conflict and obstructing rather than promoting a peaceful settlement." (4)

It is notable that with the new escalation of the Gulf war, both Saddam Hussein and the Saudis are stepping up their demands on the Western powers to stop arms shipments to the Iranians.

In fact, the extension of the war to the oil lanes seems to remain very much in the framework of a complex game of pressures, in which all the protagonists have limited aims. That is, the Iraqis and the Gulf states want the imperialists to stop playing a double game. The Iranians want the Arab Gulf states and the imperialists to restrain Iraq. And the US wants to force the Arab Gulf states to accept American bases on their soil so that it can regain a military foothold in the region.

As long as the Khomeini regime holds down the mass movement and evolves to the right, as it is clearly continuing to

do, the US has no reason to take the risks of trying to knock the props out from under the Islamic Republic, in particular when it itself is still in a weak military position to intervene. It is moving a step at a time to reestablish its positions.

The Khomeini regime, moreover, has been multiplying its guarantees to the Arab governments that it does not threaten them, and that it can maintain "security" in the region. And on the evidence of Rafsanjani's assurances to the Turkish foreign minister cited earlier, what this means is not merely military security.

Obviously, as long as none of the regimes involved in the conflict challenges the capitalist bases of imperialist domination, the conflict has to take the form of competing for imperialist support. In that sense, it inevitably becomes manipulated by the imperialists, as conflicts between economically dependent countries generally have been since the rise of imperialism. But the game of pressure being played in the Gulf war indicates that none of the states involved are simply surrogates for imperialism. They all have their differences with US imperialism, even the Saudis.

The conflict between the US and the Khomeini regime gave Bagdad a chance to stick a knife into the Iranian state, and in this operation it undoubtedly got direct or indirect encouragement from the imperialists. Both had a common interest in dealing a blow to the Iranian revolution. But the conflict between the Iranian and Iraqi states did not begin with the Iranian revolution.

In fact, the shah's regime backed Kurdish resistance to Bagdad in the mid-1970s, with US and Israeli collaboration. At the time, although the US found it useful to back the Kurds as a means of punishing and weakening the nationalist regime in Bagdad, the Kurds were not simply a surrogate of imperialism.

The Kurdish example

Although the Iraqi Kurds were backed by the imperialists to an extent, their defeat was not in the interest of the colonial revolution. When they were crushed, because of the betrayal of the US and the shah, that in fact removed an obstacle to the rightward movement on the part of Bagdad, since Kurdish autonomy had been an essential fortress of the democratic gains made by the masses after the overthrow of the US-backed monarchy in 1957.

The upshot of the whole episode was that the Iranian state got control of half of Iraq's only outlet to the sea. Whatever sort of regime was in power in Iraq, it would have tried to get that back in the event of a weakening of the Iranian state, regardless of what form that took.

The Iranian regime that took power on the basis of the mass upsurge against the shah in fact opened the way for the Iranian attack in 1980 by making it clear that it was going to continue to uphold the

traditional objectives of the Iranian bourgeois state.

While all the peoples of Iran and Iraq are oppressed by imperialism, both countries have rich and powerful ruling strata that seek a bigger role in the region at the expense of neighboring peoples and states. Moreover, they both subject nationalities within their state to double national oppression, and this fact is a fundamental basis of conservatism in Iran and Iraq. In all the recent cases, their victories over their chafing national minorities or their regional rivals have not strengthened them against imperialism but at bottom increased their dependence on it.

In the case of the Gulf war, Iran's military victories have enabled it to mount a savage repressive drive against the Kurdish areas that have been the main remaining fortress of the freedoms achieved by the ousting of the shah. On the other hand, Iraq's defeats have forced Bagdad to loosen its grip on Iraqi Kurdistan, giving the Kurdish national liberation movement a chance to expand its sphere of operations.

In general, the victories of the Iranian forces in the war have gone hand in hand with repression of the mass movement and more and more right-wing policies.

The workers movement and anti-imperialists have nothing to gain by supporting or painting up either one of the warring regimes. In the first place, that would mean working for the enemies of the workers movement and democracy and alienating oneself from the left and democratic forces that have suffered at the hands of both regimes. Secondly, it would mean playing into the hands of imperialism, which is conniving with both. Moreover, and in particular it would stand in the way of exposing the imperialist operations to significant numbers of people in the imperialist countries themselves, since neither of the regimes in question is attractive, and the Iranian one is growing more unattractive all the time.

On the other hand, the connivance of imperialism with both regimes, and their competition for imperialist support is more and more evident, as is the imperialist objective of regaining bases in the region. The results of imperialist domination of the Near East for more than a century are evident. Furthermore, the dangers to world peace of the game the imperialists are playing today in the Gulf war are also clear enough.

These are the only effective basis for exposing the imperialist designs in the Gulf and building opposition to imperialist intervention.

There is no simple military way out of the imperialist trap either for Iran or Iraq. The only real way out is unity of the masses in the region around an anti-imperialist struggle that can actually benefit them. And the first step toward opening the way for that is ending this war. ■

4. "En de pit des interets nationaux (Conflict Irano-irakien), V. Gourev, *La Vie Internationale*, April 1984, pp. 120-121.

Big step forward for anti-missiles movement

May 6-12, the Dutch peace movement held a big week of action against the Cruise missiles. It was a marked success. Once again, a lot of new people were drawn into the campaign against nuclear weapons.

Robert WENT

The week culminated in the following highpoints:

— According to the estimates of the FNV (Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging), the country's biggest labor confederation, with about a million members, some 900,000 people participated in the 15-minute work stoppage May 10 to protest against the missiles.

— The National Secretariat of the Jongeren Tegen Kernwapens (Youth Against Nuclear Weapons) estimated that 40,000 to 50,000 high school students participated in the strike.

— On Saturday May 12, there were thirty demonstrations to conclude the week of action. These were not the peak, which was the strike, but many tens of thousands of people participated in them. There were more people than ever at the encircling of the Soesterberg airbase (8,000). And the city of Leeuwarden in the northern part of the country had the biggest demonstration in its history (15,000).

The week of action came at a time when the government has begun to talk again about *postponing* the decision on the stationing of the missiles. A government crisis over the missiles question is still possible. The right-wing government headed by Ruud Lubbers has a majority of 79 out of 150 seats in parliament. This is two less than last year, because two Christian Democrats have formed their own fraction, among other things because of disagreement on the missiles. In the biggest government party, the CDA (Christian Democrats), 10 to 15, members of parliament are still against stationing the missiles.

The Christian Democrats therefore cannot vote straight out for installation. But refusing to deploy the missiles would also mean a government crisis, because the right-wing liberals of the VVD ("Voor Vrede en Democratie" — "For Peace and Democracy") have announced that they would leave the cabinet if that happened. The minister of foreign affairs, Van den Broek (CDA) is at loggerheads with his colleague de Ruiters (also CDA), who holds the portfolio for defense.

De Ruiters is against deployment, because he fears that the peace movement

can radicalize into a movement against Nato, and because he knows that there is not a sufficient base of support for deployment in the CDA. Therefore, following the planned timetable for installation (1986) is more or less excluded. Van den Broek (along with the VVD) is more sensitive to pressure from Nato. He thinks that the missiles should be deployed, period, but in the meantime he is prepared to accept a compromise.

In recent weeks, the pressure from other Nato countries has increased enormously. At the meeting of the Nuclear Planning group in early April, de Ruiters was leaned on heavily. The heat was also put on at the semiannual meeting of the Nato Defense Planning Commission in Brussels in May.

Nato heat on the Dutch

According to the Dutch press, the British minister of defense, Michael Heseltine, demanded "political leadership" from the Dutch government. And in a closed session the Italian minister Spadolini is supposed to have told de Ruiters that Italy is deploying the missiles even though the country is "40% Communist."

In particular, government representatives from Britain, West Germany and Italy have stressed that nondeployment in the Netherlands would give the peace movement new momentum elsewhere. The Dutch government has come under heavy pressure, therefore, from all quarters.

The May 6-12 week of action had been planned for a long time. No one was terribly enthusiastic. But things began to change when the FNV decided to call for a work stoppage *within* the framework of the week of protest. In short order, the day set for the strike became the focus of the protest. The opinion polls show what happened during the week of action itself. At the start, only 40% of the population was aware of the actions. On the Wednesday of the strike, the percentage went up to 75%.

The FNV call for a short strike came after trade-union activists in more and more places started becoming involved in the fight against nuclear weapons. Cees Commandeur, the secretary of the FNV and the person responsible for actions for peace and security in the FNV national leadership, said in an interview in *Klassenstrijd*, the paper of the Dutch section of the Fourth International: "We have been occupied with this for years. The round of discussions in 1981, followed by the defining of positions in 1982 and the participation in the 1983 demonstration built up an awareness in our union rank and file."

The strike can be called a success. The FNV estimates that 900,000 people participated. They did so both demonstratively in canteen meetings, and quietly by not doing anything at their workplaces for 15 minutes. Demonstratively, the strike was firm in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, where public transport stopped and meetings with music and speakers were held in a lot of public squares.

Throughout the country, the peace movement and the union jointly organ-

The Dutch section in the week of action against the missiles

The building of the week of action and particularly the strike was one of the best campaigns the Dutch section of the Fourth International has ever been involved in.

In several places, members of the Socialistische Arbeiders Partij (SAP — Socialist Workers Party, Dutch section of the Fourth International) played a central role in organizing the strikes, both citywide and in the various factories and institutions.

Everywhere, the youth organization in solidarity with the SAP, Rebel played an important role in organizing the high-school students' strikes, and in some places it was decisive. In Nijmegen, in twenty minutes, Rebel activists sold 86 copies of their paper during the student strike. In Breda, also in a brief period, they sold 75 papers, all they had.

In the coming weeks, the focus will be the actions during the parliamentary debate and building the boycott of work for the Woensdrecht base. Central also will be the discussion in the peace movement and the unions over "Where do we go from here?"

Among other things, in the campaign around the European elections, the SAP is working to get support for the initiative of Danish unionists to get a European people's strike against the missiles. Our objective is to promote discussion of this idea in broad circles and to win support in the peace and union movements as well as from leading figures in the left parties.

ized hundreds of rallies, crossroads occupations and other actions. The whole thing was broadcast "live" over TV in a two-hour-long program. It would be a hopeless task to try to give a full picture of the strike. It spread outwards from various strongpoints, from Philips, Unilever, the Rotterdam docks, and from the Fokker airplane factory (which also produces military aircraft!) in Amsterdam to education and a considerable part of the personnel in public administration.

On May 10, it was demonstrated once again that strikes have not only to be called but to be built. There was a problem there. The FNV distributed too little material — too few leaflets, posters and buttons. And not all the member unions pitched in effectively to build the strike.

The FNV's biggest member union, the civil-servants union, the ABVA/KABO, did not even call for a strike nationally, but left the strike action to its local organizations. In many cases local leaderships of the FNV and member unions went no further than sending out a few leaflets to the workplaces.

But where there was a group of activists, a committee, or even just a few enthusiastic people working, a strong action nearly always came out of it. Various FNV local leaderships were amazed on the evening of the strike, because a lot more happened than they considered possible.

Intimidation

An additional barrier was intimidation and threats of reprisals from a lot of bosses. In various factories and establishments, the organizers of the action were put under so much pressure that the strike was dropped at the last minute. In a number of cases, the number of participants was greatly reduced.

Alongside the strike in the factories, offices and institutions, the largest youth actions in years took place. Jongeren tegen Kernwapens, a coordinating committee including thirty local groups, had decided to organize a high-school strike. At the start, there was doubt about the possibilities for organizing a real strike. But once the work began, it went tremendously well. In all, 40,000 to 50,000 high-school students struck, including 3,000 in Rotterdam, 5,000 in Nijmegen, 3,000 in Breda, 2,500 in Deventer, 2,500 in Arnhem, 3,000 in Leeuwarden, 2,500 in Groningen, 1,000 in Middelburg and 3,000 in Haarlem.

Scores of new people signed up as activists in Jongeren tegen Kernwapens, 170 in Nijmegen alone.

For the week of action, high schools in various places were declared nuclear free. As the week went on, a lot more schools were added to the list.

In the high schools also, there were problems of intimidation and threats of reprisals. In various schools, students were locked in so that they could not take part in the strike. Moreover, there are about a dozen known cases of suspen-

sions. A new factor was the attempt in various places by the far-right organization Constructief Jong Nederland to obstruct actions. Because of the massive support for the protests, the CJN had no success anywhere.

Intimidation and repression were also a problem in the soldiers actions. In recent months, actions declaring bases and companies nuclear free have gone astonishingly well.

— At the G.M. Koot base in Garderen, five out of the thirteen companies have declared themselves nuclear free, and the campaign is still continuing.

— At the Willem I base in Den Bosch, two out of five companies have declared themselves nuclear free.

— During the week of action, campaigns started in eight military bases across the country to declare companies and housing units nuclear free.

There were also other actions during the week.

— Ten soldiers wearing suits designed to protect against radiation as well as chemical and biological warfare handed out leaflets at the Utrecht train station. They were taken in by the police.

— Soldiers from the Willem I base who tried to hang a banner against the Cruise missiles in a lot near the base were arrested. They were accused of planning to demonstrate in uniform while on duty.

Immediately after the week of action, two soldiers refused to go on guard duty at the Woensdrecht base. The Cruise missiles are expected to arrive here, and so guarding the base means guarding it against antinuclear activists.

Three soldiers from Steenwijk refused while they were on guard duty to accept the truncheons they were issued. Soldiers are regularly refusing to do SITE guard duty, that is to guard places where nuclear weapons may be stored. On May 22, Eddy Spikerman was brought before a military tribunal because he refused to do SITE guard duty.

Eddy is a member of *Rebel*, a revolutionary youth organization in solidarity with the Fourth International and its Dutch section. The soldiers trade union, the VVDM, and the Soldiers Committee Against Nuclear Weapons (Kommittee Sol-



daten Tegen Kernwapens — KSTK) collected 5,000 signatures on behalf of Eddy during the week of action.

From the start, the FNV indicated that it wanted to involve people entitled to unemployment benefits in the strike. This came at the same time as hundreds of actions have been taking place throughout the country against the new cuts in unemployment benefits scheduled to go into effect July 1, as part of the government's so-called July Package. The FNV has done something in this regard, but not a whole lot. (1)

The FNV encouraged those drawing unemployment insurance to participate in the May 10 strike. Cees Commandeur said in his interview with *Klassenstrijd*: "What you can see is that people are going to link the question of the missiles with the July Package. And I'm not unhappy about that, because in the final analysis it's all against the same government."

In a lot of places, the unemployed did participate under the slogans, "No Cruise missiles and No July Package," "Social security not bombs." This highlighted the fact that the struggle against the deployment of the Cruise missiles is a fight against the right-wing government and its *entire approach* to dealing with the economic crisis.

Both the FNV and the national Committee to Stop the Cruise Missiles (2) are enthusiastic about the way the week of action went, and especially about the success of the May 10 strike. The president of the FNV, Wim Kok, has said that he does *not* exclude a repetition of the strike. And Cees Commandeur has said that nothing is excluded, not even a 24-hour strike. He has also called for a boycott of all work for, and on, the Woensdrecht base.

The Wood and Building Workers Union (Bouw-en-Houtbond) is working on a memorandum showing how many jobs would be created if the 700 million guilders spent on Woensdrecht were allotted to building a new hospital and soundproofing the homes that will be disturbed by overflying military aircraft. The report can be used to mount a campaign throughout the union for blacking all work for Woensdrecht.

In the immediate future, actions are planned for June, when the parliament will debate the Cruise missiles question. The outcome of this debate will be in large part determined by how the peace movement carries on from here. ■

1. The FNV organized thirty rallies throughout the country on May 10, in which a total of 5,300 people participated. This was much more than expected. On May 29, there is to be a demonstration in The Hague against cuts in unemployment insurance. Some 10,000 unemployed and factory delegates are expected there. The call from the unemployed for an hour strike against the cuts has gotten no response from the FNV leadership, and in the factories and institutions not even any information campaign about the July Package has been mounted.

2. The Kommittee Kruisraketten Nee organized the week of action. This nationwide organization includes all the peace groups, the FNV, the soldiers union, the VVDM, as well as the left parties represented in parliament and the left liberal Demokraten-66 Party.

A programme for labour fightback

A *Business Week* survey of the top 500 US corporations reports that profits in 1983 — adjusted for inflation — increased 82 percent. Inflation has been significantly reduced, and US corporations are regaining their competitive edge in the world market. Major executives are receiving fat bonuses for achieving this dramatic turnaround.

Carl FINAMORE

But in reality the recovery is no mystery. Losing ground against their international competitors, US capitalists have sought to strengthen their position in the world market by squeezing workers harder in this country. In 1982 one-third of all workers represented in contract negotiations were forced to accept wage freezes, while in 1983 one-half of the workers took cuts.

The 1.25 dollar an hour wage reduction for basic steel workers is a case in point. There is also the growing introduction of the two-tier wage structure permitting drastic cuts in the pay scale of new hires. Added to this is a serious erosion in union security taking place through cross-crafting and the contracting out of union work to nonunion firms.

The real meaning of competition in a capitalist economy is the race to depress the wages, benefits and working conditions of the workforce. Each business competes with the other to extract more concessions from the workers. The success of the big-business assault on our living and working standards is the driving force behind the economic "recovery." But the new profit gains will not mean a let-up in the anti-union drive. Rather, the bosses will only be emboldened to deepen their campaign against our hard-won rights.

We can learn from the German, French and British workers as they confront their homegrown variety of plant closures and wage reductions. The British coal miners have launched an effective strike action against the Tory government's proposals to reduce one-third of the coal workforce by 1990. In defiance of injunctions limiting the size of picketing squads, the workers have closed the coal pits with the mobilized power of thousands of miners.

French and German steelworkers have responded to plant shutdowns by building large demonstrations and rallies. The German metalworkers union is conducting a campaign for the 35-hour workweek with no loss in pay to counter the bosses drive to "restructure" the steel industry through massive layoffs. When this employer offensive was begun several years ago, the steel bosses announced

their plan to eliminate 200,000 steel jobs in the Common Market countries. But the existence of large workers' parties in these countries increases the leverage of the workers to advance their demands despite the sell-out strategies that guide the leadership of these parties.

Unfortunately, the misleaders of the trade unions in the United States endorse big-business sponsored efforts to portray foreign workers as our enemy. Of course, that has not stopped US business from raking in super-profits by exploiting cheap labor abroad.

Lower wages and working conditions for one group of workers is used to pressure all workers into accepting the sub-standard pattern. As long as workers in the United States remain divided — white against Black, men against women, and American against foreign workers — it will be easier to put the blame for the capitalist crisis on one or another group of working people.

The militant mass social movement of workers that gave birth to the CIO in the 1930s established industrial unions as a solid force on the American scene. The employers plan to extend the notorious World War II no-strike pledge and wage freeze into the post-war era was decisively defeated by the 1946 strike wave that still stands as the largest strike action anywhere in the world.

Unable to prevent the massive organization of the workers, the employers sought to tame and housebreak the unions. Only by reinforcing a conservative union leadership could the bosses hope to restrain the labor militancy so forcefully expressed in the formation of the CIO.

The Democratic party under Roosevelt became the main vehicle for cementing an alliance between the labor misleaders and the ruling rich. The "labor-business partnership" is based on promoting the idea that what is good for business is good for the workers. This false notion led to a break in the class struggle methods used to build the CIO. The mass mobilization of the workers against the employers profit drive came to an end. Negotiations by "labor statesment" substituted for the action of the rank and file.

This set the stage for the introduction of a whole series of concessions in the name of preserving the "labor-business partnership." The labor chiefs exchanged no-strike pledges for the dues check-off. This guaranteed the bureaucrats a fixed flow of dues money despite the unpopularity of their policies among the ranks. Arbitration by a so-called neutral third party was used to resolve differences on the interpretation of contracts without any input from the membership. Anti-labor laws such as the Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin acts that imposed harsh restrictions on the right to strike and picket were accepted without any meaningful challenge from the bureaucrats. False hopes were encouraged that the Democratic Party would repeal these laws.

The continued expansion of the economy permitted small but regular increases in the standard of living of US workers from 1950 to 1965. This allowed the rulers to establish a pattern of gradual enforcement of a multitude of anti-union legal decisions in preparation for the union-busting offensive that is now underway.

Profits enrich capitalists not workers

The relative prosperity in this period created the illusion among workers that clever bargaining accounted for the wage benefit increases. But the concessions given up by the union misleaders in exchange for wage increases has disarmed and undercut our ability to defend ourselves from the attacks we face today. Art Preis, in his book *Labor's Giant Step*, aptly termed this practice of giving up a little bit of job security in exchange for modest wage increases as "the hock-shop method of bargaining."

In 1943 a resolution of the United Auto Workers stated: "Our industries can no longer be operated to serve private interests where they conflict with the public need." Yet this wisdom has been rejected by the labor officialdom, despite the growing concentration of wealth and monopolization of the US economy. Turning away from the ranks, the labor bureaucrats seek to preserve at all costs their alliance with the Democratic Party.

This class-collaborationist approach fosters the myth that profits for the boss mean more job security and wage increases for the workers. Most workers still believe this lie. But recent experiences with the Greyhound Corporation, a highly profitable operation, and the giants of the oil and auto industries, who are making super profits, is leading many workers to reexamine this notion.

Corporate plans to revitalize industry have been largely abandoned for more profitable investment ventures, as the recent flurry of "mega-mergers" indicate. During the 1970s two out of every three new Fortune 500 manufacturing plants were not "new" at all. They were simply acquired in mergers or pur-

chases to increase monopoly control of the market. Thousands of jobs have been lost in the process. But the labor bureaucrats continue to insist that high corporate profits are good for the workers.

Paralyzed by these class-collaborationist policies, the labor movement has failed to rally behind unions that have shown a readiness to fight. Nearly 12,000 PATCO [air traffic controllers] workers were summarily fired while the labor misleaders scurried about in a futile search for support from politicians of the two parties. The Greyhound strike was broken under similar circumstances. Steelworkers were forced to accept a drastic cut in wages and working conditions after twice rejecting company proposals. Several months ago the Teamsters' membership, by an 88 percent majority, refused the bosses' demand to reopen the contract and negotiate concessions.

There are other examples of resistance in the auto, copper, oil and aircraft industries. But none of these fights has received the kind of labor support necessary. No one union can stand alone.

The workers in Europe are displaying the kind of fighting militancy that can provide a starting point for an effective mass struggle to defeat the employers' assault. The power to stop the capitalist offensive resides in the mobilized strength of millions of working people.

If that power had been employed in the recent Greyhound strike, the outcome could have been quite different. The millions of dollars being spent on capitalist election campaigns by labor should have been used to mount an extensive solidarity effort. Demonstrations by the labor movement could have rallied support from a broad layer of working people and stopped the buses from rolling.

To dissolve the suicidal "partnership" between business and labor will require a new leadership, emerging from labor's ranks, with new policies. But a new leadership, to be effective, must go beyond the militancy of the 1930s and 1940s. The political reality is that those victories gained on the picketline by millions of workers during the 1930s and after the war were skillfully eroded over the years by not only the labor-hating Republicans but by the "friends of labor" in the Democratic Party.

New approach needed

Supporting Mondale, Hart or Jackson will only repeat the mistakes of the past. We need to organize the power of working people in the streets, on the job and in the halls of Congress. We need our own party — a labor party. A labor party controlled by the unions would have the power to protect gains won on the picketline. A labor party would be a vehicle for advancing an alternative program to the bosses' offensive. Instead of shoring up the capitalist Democratic Party we should build our own party.

A leadership adopting this approach will certainly be forged in the battles ahead. Experience in the class struggle will dictate a change in the current union policies. A class struggle program to transform our unions can serve to rally militant workers for a working class counteroffensive against the employers' anti-union drive. Some elements of this program are:

— Reclaim our right to strike during the life of the contract as a restraint against capitalist abuses. Government-controlled arbitration is a trap based on the fiction that the government is impartial.

— Remove any undemocratic bar-

riers limiting the full participation of workers inside their unions.

— No subsidies to corporations to enrich themselves at the expense of the workers. We demand that the financial books of the corporations be opened.

— Workers' control of industry to ensure production is geared to social needs. Capitalist control places the profits of the few before the needs of the majority.

— Reject the racist and divisive "Buy American" solutions. This solution translates into "layoff German and Japanese workers — not us!" The drive for profits is international. Our class solidarity must also be internationalized.

— Cost-of-living clauses to protect us against an inflationary trend that has reduced our real wages since 1965.

— Reduce the workweek with no decrease in pay! A reduction of just one hour with no loss in pay would put one and a half million people back to work. Oil workers gave up a 36-hour workweek in World War II with assurance it would be returned. Today, oil workers average 43.5 hours per week.

— Solidarity among all working people and our allies. We reject any divisions between employed and unemployed; between Black, Brown, minority and white workers; and between men and women workers. An injury to one is an injury to all.

— Abolish the military budget. The majority of our tax dollars go to finance the US government's policy of militarism, repression and terror against working people all over the world. These funds should be used to build roads, schools and hospitals. A public works program could employ millions.

— The Democratic and Republican parties are not our parties. They serve the ruling rich. The road to independent political action by the working class means breaking from the two parties and building a labor party — this is the only winning strategy.

The bosses' offensive will generate more skirmishes as workers attempt to overcome the obstacles to an effective fightback. Participation in these battles by class struggle militants can help speed up the development of a militant class struggle left wing. Socialist Action members pledge to participate in these fights to our fullest capacity. Relying on the tremendous power of an organized and mobilized working class, our victories can take us beyond the archaic capitalist system into a future based on workers' power.

Our fight for the immediate defense of the interests of the working class is inextricably tied to the struggle for a socialist society. The crisis of humanity can only be resolved by constructing a leadership committed to this task. ■

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American workers lose jobs to pay for Reagan's war (DR)



Towards the fall of dictatorship

The political situation in Uruguay began to change in mid-1983. The shift was marked by the breakoff of dialogue between the traditional bourgeois parties and the military, after the military presented to the parties a 24-point document that was essentially a repeat of the draft constitution rejected in the November 3, 1980, referendum by 58% of the voters. The following article describes the evolution.

Daniel JEBRAC

After the success of the 1983 May Day celebration organized by the trade-union movement, the government proved unable to stop a planned "march for democracy." Although it banned this demonstration on August 6, the action nonetheless took place on August 10.

Then there were student demonstrations for amnesty, pot-banging concerts and ten-minute strikes. Such actions multiplied, coming to an initial peak on November 9, with a new ten-minute strike and a demonstration in the evening of 15,000 persons.

The crowd marched down the Avenida 18 de Julio in Montevideo in defiance of a government ban and explicit threats of repression. The police intervened brutally, arresting 270 persons.

Nonetheless, this was the first time the workers movement directly defied the dictatorship in this way, openly braving its threats. Seeing the change in the attitude of the masses and anxious not to lose control of the situation, the traditional political parties (1) called a big rally for "democracy, jobs and freedom" on November 27.

The organizers got permission for a legal rally, and it drew 400,000 persons, in a country whose total population is just over 3 million. All the political parties and people's organizations were represented on the platform, including the banned organizations, although in the later case this was through wives or relatives of political prisoners. In this way, the Frente Amplio reappeared on the scene. (See box.)

The manifesto adopted at this rally by the political parties was couched in tough-sounding language. But it in fact accepted the dictatorship's calendar for democratization and made major concessions on the questions of amnesty and wages. Nonetheless, the success of this rally, which was tolerated by the dictatorship, lent a renewed confidence to the mass movement and a new momentum to the mobilization.

The Colorado and Blanco Parties tried to ride on the back of this movement up until the beginning of 1984, when despite

the Southern Hemisphere summer, a number of labor conflicts erupted, strikes and occupations of workplaces.

On the crest of these struggles, the Inter-Union Workers Plenum (PIT), a union coordinating body, organized a general strike on January 18, 1984, the first since the coup d'etat of June 1973. The action was built to push a platform of economic and democratic demands.

This platform was adopted on January 13, 1984, and included the following major demands: A wage increase of 2,500 pesos, with cost-of-living increases every three months. Support for the struggles underway and for an immediate resolution of them. Subsidies to families to allow them to buy the basic necessities. A program for creating jobs until full employment is reached. A general and unconditional amnesty. Full restoration of trade-union rights. The immediate granting of civil and political freedoms. Lifting of the bans on persons, union organizations and political organizations.

Bourgeois party backs out

Before the strike the Colorado Party declared that it was inopportune because it coincided with shifts in the military hierarchy and could be taken as a provocation by the dictatorship. This pulling back by one of the major parties obviously made it easier for the government to use repression. On the day of the strike the dictatorship outlawed the PIT.

The junta was out to smash the means for centralizing the struggle and mobilizing that the workers movement was forging. But while the ban could make it more difficult for the PIT to function and act, it could not reverse the course of events. The chains of fear were broken. So, in early March there was a new rise of initiatives for amnesty, for International Women's Day, as well as to greet the release successively of the Communist Party leader and mathematician Luis Massera, and the former leader of the Frente Amplio, General Liber Seregni.

The military dictatorship has never managed to attract any mass base whatsoever. Every attempt it has made since



1974 to reshape the trade-union movement has failed. It was resoundingly rejected at the polls in the 1980 constitutional referendum and once again in the "internal elections" for the political parties in 1982. So, now the military had to pass the stick as quickly as possible to the bourgeois parties before they themselves were outflanked by the radicalization of the workers and people's movement.

In early March, the Montevideo carnival offered a graphic demonstration of the nearly unanimous rejection of the dictatorship. Following the costumed contingents and the drummers, the people of the capital shouted, "If we aren't the people, where are the people?" and "Seregni, friend, the people are with you!" ("Seregni, amigo, el pueblo esta contigo!") Every day the immense majority of the population feels the results of ten years of dictatorship like a new wound.

By comparison with 1973, real wages have fallen by 60%. The rate of inflation is running around 60% annually, and the foreign debt has gone over 4.5 billion dollars. Under the pretext of nonpayment of debts, the banks have taken over 30% of the land. Almost all of industry is under the financial control of the big multinational banks, such as the Chase Manhattan Bank or the City Bank.

The unemployment rate has shot up, going officially from 8% to 16% of the

1. The two traditional parties are the Partido Nacional (Blanco), or the Whites, and the Partido Colorado, or the Reds. Another bourgeois formation, the Union Civica, a Christian Democratic group, a recent revival of a group that dissolved itself in 1961, has also gained legal recognition.

economically active population, to say nothing of the plague of unemployment. Industries such as leather and textiles have been hit hard. After the building boom in the Punta del Este tourist region, the construction industry, which gives impetus to others, is now sluggish. A decline for the market in meat is expected for 1984, which will have an impact on the Uruguayan economy. Moreover, the economy is being bled white by military spending, which absorbs 50% of the budget.

In these conditions, whatever government that comes out of the general elections next November will face more than difficult social problems. The present regime was able to gain time by taking advantage of a favorable conjuncture in the market for meat and by re-scheduling payments on the foreign debt.

Balance sheet of general strike

Nonetheless, in 1982, it had to reach directly into the pay packets of workers for the first time, imposing a 5% wage tax. In the best of circumstances, an upturn in the world economy could breathe some new life into such industries as leather and wool. But the internal market is contracting more and more, becoming limited to the satisfaction of immediate needs.

So, in order for a civilian government of the bourgeois parties to be able to effectively take over from the military, it would need the benefit of a social pact that would enable it to put off facing the social problems. The Communist Party previously supported the "progressive" sectors of the Blanco Party in the 1982 "internal elections," while the other left parties and General Seregni from his prison called for a blank vote. It has now become the champion of the great "national accord." The CP's bi-monthly paper published abroad ran a front-page headline in its February 23 issue calling for "Support for National Accord."

From the same standpoint, the PIT leadership adopted a balance sheet of the January 18 general strike, in large part inspired by the CP, that defined accord among all the antidictatorial forces as "a fundamental value in the struggle to definitively oust the dictatorship." This phrase is also played up in the Communist Party press.

The PIT's balance sheet was approved by only ten of the twenty federations that make up the organization. Five abstained. And five approved the counter balance sheet presented by the Union of Administrative Workers in the Fuel, Alcohol and Cement Industries (ANCAP). This counter balance sheet stressed the responsibility assumed by the traditional parties in refusing to back the January 18 general strike, concluding:

"United-front mobilization against the dictatorship is central to defeating it. But we must remain aware of the limitations of such unity that derive from the differ-

What is the Frente Amplio ?

The Frente Amplio (Broad Front) was formed for the 1971 elections, in which it got 20% of the vote. It included the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Christian Democracy and a series of other organizations among which was the Revolutionary Workers Party-Uruguay (PRT-U), today the Socialist Workers Party of Uruguay (PST-U). In the context of the economic crisis that rocked the country in the 1960s, the formation of the Frente Amplio was an attempt to break out of the framework of the bourgeois two-party system of the Blancos and Colorados.

After the 1973 coup d'etat, the Frente Amplio continued to exist only formally in exile. But it reappeared on the Uruguayan political scene in the course of the new rise of the mass movement, especially after November 1983. Frente Amplio base committees were formed in more than twenty neighborhoods in Montevideo.

Today, the Frente Amplio embraces the CP, the SP, a group of organizations including the March 23 Movement, the Party for the People's Victory (PVP), known as the "Fourth Option," or the Independent Left, and the PST-U. The Christian Democracy had withdrawn from it and wanted to make its return conditional on discussion of a new platform. But it underwent a change of leadership in February 1984 and decided to re-adhere unconditionally.

Finally, the Frente Amplio includes independent personalities such as its candidate for the 1971 elections, Liber Seregni, who was released in March, after eight years in prison.

The Frente Amplio has not drawn up a new platform for the new political situation. It ran on a thirty-point platform in 1971. The following ones were under the heading "Immediate Governmental Measures."

... "2) We denounce the statement of intent signed with the IMF and other agreements that violate national sovereignty. We will re-negotiate the foreign debt to postpone payment and eliminate unjust conditions. If we are unable to accomplish this, we will take adequate unilateral steps...

"3) We will establish diplomatic, trade and cultural relations with all countries, in particular with the Republic of Cuba, the only country in Latin America with which they have been interrupted.

"4) We will intervene in the private banking system, using the legislation on the books, while we are preparing to nationalize it...

"6) We will intervene, using the legislation on the books, in exporting firms (the packing-house industry, wool), as a first step toward nationalizing foreign trade...

"7) We will undertake a plan for agrarian reform...

"9) We will increase the wages and income of workers in the private sector, both urban and rural, and of public workers to reestablish a minimum of the buying power that existed before the wage freeze, in agreement with the workers organizations and in the framework of planning...

"12) We will assure the buying power of the population and the necessary supply of mass-consumption items by establishing price controls and eliminating parasitic middle men. For this purpose, organs of popular control including producers and consumers will be set up.

"23) We will reinstate with full rights workers fired, suspended or transferred as a result of persecution, and provide compensation for the economic and other damages inflicted on them.

"24) We will work for the adoption of an amnesty law to get the release of all political prisoners...."

This program includes measures that remain urgent after ten years of dictatorship and in view of the social effects of the economic crisis.

It is too early today to know whether the Frente Amplio as such will be able to participate in the November elections, and if so, in what form. This will also depend on the attitude of its various components. Some of them may refuse to participate in an electoral process marked by limitations on democratic freedom of expression, such as maintaining the ban on political parties or certain potential candidates.

Moreover, the Communist Party, a key component of the Frente, has not yet decided whether to intervene in the elections through the Frente Amplio or support what it considers the progressive wing of the bourgeoisie by calling on people to vote for the Blanco Party.

ent class interests of the forces involved. The traditional parties have already taken the trouble to define these limitations in practice."

The document also called for mobilizing to win legality for the PIT. It proposed a new 48-hour general strike, and organizing a major mobilization for May Day 1984.

In fact, from November 1983 to January 1984, the PIT represented a class alternative within the opposition, both

with respect to its methods of struggle (the general strike) and the axes around which it mobilized. Its slogan, "Freedom, decent wages, jobs and amnesty!" served to distinguish it from the traditional bourgeois parties on the platform at the big November 1983 rally. Their slogan was "Democracy, jobs, freedom!"

There is no doubt either that the political polarizations that developed in the PIT leadership will also show up in the

Frente Amplio. These have turned around three key questions.

1. A determined fight for democratic demands involves pressing for full restoration of political and trade-union freedoms. First of all, this means amnesty for all, without exceptions. But the traditional parties would let the cases of some political prisoners accused of terrorist acts, such as Raul Sendic, leader of the Tupamaros, just be transferred from military to civilian jurisdiction, rather than demand that they be released.

Full restoration of rights also means lifting all the bans and reestablishing civic rights. But Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, leader of the National (Blanco) Party is still banned. And although Liber Seregni has been released from prison, he does not have the right to run in the elections. The Colorado Party is ready to participate in the vote under these conditions. But the attitude of the Blanco Party and components of the Frente Amplio has not yet been made clear.

Full restoration of civic rights would mean, moreover, opening up the way for 600,000 exiles to return to the country, punishment of the torturer, and finally, the demand for a freely elected and sovereign Assembly to have constituent powers.

2. Democratic rights do not stop at political and trade union rights. They extend to social rights and national sovereignty. For example, the workers have the right to demand the restoration of 60% of their real wages — stolen from them under the dictatorship — as well as the rehiring of all the workers fired as a result of the regime's attack on the trade-union movement.

Furthermore, the workers have the right to demand stopping the payments on the foreign debt contracted by the dictatorship to finance its military budget, as well as for breaking with the International Monetary Fund, the nationalization of credit and control of foreign trade. All these demands obviously run counter to the adoption of any "social pact."

3. Today, unity against the dictatorship is being built on a number of levels. There is the "Intersocial," a coordinating committee of social, trade-union, student, cooperative, etc. movements. There is the "Interparty," a coordinating structure for the political parties. And there is the "Intersectoral," a coordinating body that includes both social movements and political parties. This united framework, however, must not obstruct the independence or the freedom of action of the workers organizations as such. This in fact is what the dictatorship wanted to achieve by banning the PIT, by trying to isolate the organized workers movement so as to reduce it to being a mere atomized element of the "Intersectoral."

The coming months will be an important test for the future of the social struggles in Uruguay, a decisive moment for the resurgence of working-class and popular mobilization in the country. ■

The reorganisation of the union movement

The following is an interview with Victor Semproni, coordinator of the Executive Secretariat of the Plenum Intersindical de los Trabajadores, which he gave to our special correspondent in Montevideo in March. Semproni was vice-president of the Central Nacional del Trabajo (National Labor Confederation), which was banned by the dictatorship in 1973. He also represented the bank workers union in the CNT executive. He was imprisoned from 1974 to 1979.

Question. Could you go back over the main stages in the reorganization of the trade-union movement under the dictatorship that led up to the present PIT.

Answer. When you discuss the reorganization of the unions, you have to start from 1973. That was when the union movement reached its highest level of organization and unity. For years, there had already been attempted coups d'etat. The powerful CNT had decided, therefore, to respond to any new attempts of this sort by a general strike with occupation of the factories. This idea got well established in the minds of the workers.

However, when the 1973 coup d'etat occurred, the CNT did not call a general strike but only a renewable 24-hour strike. It was the ranks of the union movement that forced the general strike and spontaneously occupied the workplaces. The slogan of an unlimited strike went around by word of mouth.

The general strike held solidly for eight days. After that it started to ebb, and there were expulsions and severe repression. The watchword nationally was not to get into any confrontation with the army. So, when the troops came, the workers evacuated the factories, to return a couple of days later.

The military regime finally responded by banning the CNT and issuing an order for the arrest of its leaders. This massive repression led to the dismantling of the trade-union structures. The fugitive union leaders went into exile, and union leaders on all levels were fired. Some died in prison, under torture. The entire trade-union infrastructure was destroyed. The CNT had 220 member unions, but only five survived the advent of the dictatorship, and in fact they continued more in the form of associations or sporting clubs than of unions worthy of the name. We saw a nearly total liquidation of the union movement.



Q. Since the movement was so completely shattered, what were the first steps toward the reorganization of the union movement?

A. The period after 1973 can be divided into three stages.

First, following the ban on the CNT, the dictatorship issued a decree that the unions had to ask all their members to re-sign up. The government was counting on intimidation to prove that the unions were no longer representative.

Nonetheless, the unions rose to the challenge. To the surprise of the military, they signed up more members by name and address than they had before the 1973 coup. This was a demonstration of total support for their militant class-struggle tradition, despite the differences that existed about the orientation imposed on the movement by the Communist Party, differences that were, obviously, sharper after the general strike. So, unable to show that the unions had no mass base, the dictatorship changed its tack and simply went out to wipe them out altogether.

This opened a second phase, five very rough years for the union movement, from 1973 to 1978, in which, under foreign pressure, the regime rigged up "Parity Commissions" as a substitute for unions. These commissions were not at all like unions. But the surviving elements of the trade-union movement tried to move into the most minimal opening. So, they gained control of the Parity Commissions. Another failure for the government! The dictatorship only recognized and gave formal status to the yellow commissions, which were a tiny minority. It found a thousand and one pretexts for not recognizing the great majority of these commissions.

Finally, we went into a third stage. Confronted with all these failures, the regime took a new initiative in 1979-80. Through the navy's intelligence service, it made semiofficial contacts with trade-union leaders. The draft of a new trade-union code was already in the works. The military claimed, therefore, that they were ready to collaborate with these union leaders to revive the union movement, if they were "democrats" and not Communists.

This liberalization maneuver was met with a categorical refusal from the union leaders. At that time, I was already free. (I had been in prison from 1974 to 1979.) And I participated in a meeting with the bank-workers union leaders. The first thing we demanded was trade-union freedom, without any government tutelage. That was the dictatorship's third failure.

The trade-union code was finally voted into law in 1981. It formalized the fetters placed on trade-union functioning and helped to atomize the movement. The right of the movement to exist was recognized but not its right to act.

The union movement was the only force that opposed the 1973 coup d'etat. So, the military viewed it as their special enemy. That's why they subjected it to

so much harassment, repression, and got so many union activists fired. Nonetheless, the new law did make an extraordinary concession. It made it possible to hold general assemblies to elect a provisional union leadership.

These assemblies were supposed to take place under the surveillance of a representative of the authorities. But any worker could be elected, although the Minister of Labor could later censure the elected leadership. No matter, this mechanism gave union work a new legitimacy in the factories.

Q. So, you used the dictatorship's trade-union law to get around the repression and get a basis for legal basic organization?

A. We used the union law with the idea of going beyond it. That in fact is what happened. The first year, leading up to May Day, we put the regime on the spot by presenting an official request for a permit to celebrate Labor Day, signed by 50 official union structures.

Theoretically, the law forbade the combination of union structures into industrial federations or across professional lines. Nonetheless, we got an unexpected positive answer. Maybe the government had the idea again that it would show that the union structures lacked authority and representativity.

In fact, the May Day celebration was an enormous success. This initiative tapped a deepgoing desire to act and to break from passivity. About 150,000 workers turned out for the rally, pointing up the gap between the extent of the structures actually organized and their ability to mobilize.

The name *Plenario* was chosen because assemblies of workers across professional lines were not permitted and the union leaders needed to meet together. We negotiated again with the police, who would not permit assemblies but agreed to

"plenary meetings." So, we said, OK, let's make it a *plenario*, and that's how the famous PIT got started.

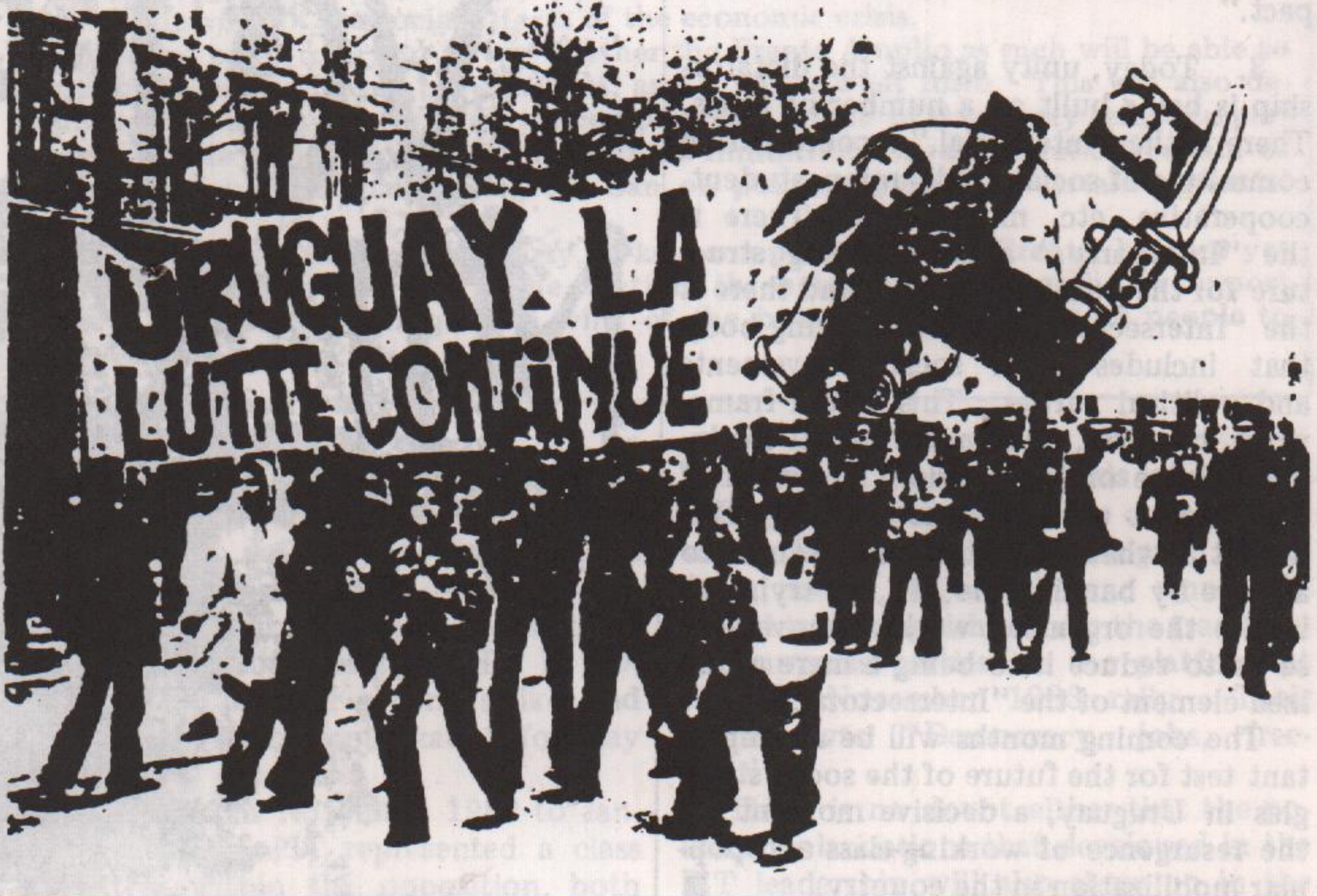
Q. Did the PIT come out of the successful May Day demonstration?

A. After this success, there was a period of inaction, due partly to our organizational weaknesses. Nonetheless, we took the initiative of sending a delegation to the meeting of the International Labor Organization (ILO). This was important to establish our legitimacy and gain the solidarity of the international union movement.

The government refused to authorize our delegation, and sent a representative of yellow unionism, the yellowest there was. But the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) supported our move, including our representatives in their own delegation to the ILO.

When our representatives returned, the government refused to let us organize a reception, which would have turned into a trade-union demonstration. It was then that we organized a "round table" (provisional leadership) of the PIT, with a representative from each national union, twenty members, and a provisional secretariat of seven members. On the basis of this structure, assemblies arose in nearly all the enterprises. They also formed in the public sector, where they were explicitly banned by the union law. These assemblies took various forms (civic associations), or came out directly as union assemblies where the relationship of forces permitted it, as in ANCAP.

In September 1983, the reinforced union movement took the initiative again. At first with modest actions, such as ten minute strikes, that gave the movement a chance to regain its confidence. On November 9, we held a demonstration that was harshly repressed by the police. The struggle demonstrated the PIT's authority, even in the public administration, despite the risk of sanctions.



You have to remember that public workers are divided up into three categories. The first are the respectable ones. The second are officials whose promotion is blocked. And the third are the black sheep of public administration.

It should be added that after August 1983, the reorganization of the unions combined more and more closely with the general process of reviving mass mobilization. The point of departure was the initiative taken by the "Peace and Justice" association on the occasion of the Uruguayan independence day, August 25. It organized a fast, which it presented as a moment of reflection for the people, so that every Uruguayan could think over the question: "What should I do today to help bring about the change Uruguay needs?"

Through the 15 days of the fast, there were constant discussions with the hunger strikers. The action ended on August 25 with a massive turning out of lights and a vast pot-banging concert (*cacerol-zao*).

After that the PIT participated actively in the mass movement, alongside the students, "Peace and Justice," the professional associations and the political parties. Thus, the legal traditional parties suffered from a contradiction. A considerable part of their electoral base were workers. But the regime's economic policy led to disaster. In ten years time, wages lost 60% of their buying power, production was in free fall and commerce was strangled.

So, the traditional parties had to ride the mobilization to a certain point. But they did not want to go so far as to organize street mobilizations, for fear of losing control. They wanted a limited and controlled protest to put pressure on the regime over a negotiated loosening up.

We workers saw mobilization as our only guarantee, and we wanted to continue. The social movements, including the PIT, thus called two protest actions, on December 24, and 31, 1983, without the traditional parties. Some parties, not all, joined in. The Colorado Party then expressed its concern, saying that no moves should be made in January because the army was reorganizing its hierarchy. It was fundamentally the pressure of the activist base that forced through the call for a general strike on January 18, 1984. This was necessary to draw in even sections of the PIT that were hesitant.

The strike call, moreover, reflected the need to gain a better relationship of forces in order to confront the problem of wages being frozen and the charges for public services going up. Since the start of January, there had been social conflicts, factory occupations.

The PIT then called an assembly in solidarity with the sections of workers involved in struggle. It was this assembly of all the unions that put pressure on the national union leaderships, some of which were less than enthusiastic about calling the January 18 action. This general strike,



300,000 people against the dictatorship in Montevideo, November 1983 (DR)

the first in ten years, was an enormous success. It was marked by strong support from the workers but also by the backing it got from other strata of the population.

Q. What perspectives opened up after the January 18 action?

A. After the January 18 strike, we continued to discuss the perspective of a still bigger struggle, a "great national day of protest." But the traditional political parties did everything they could to hold this back. So, now we are seeing a proliferation of different sectoral or local initiatives — a demonstration for amnesty, the March 8 Women's Day demonstration, strikes, etc.

Q. Elections are to be held in November. Many recent examples, including Spain after Franco's death, show that the bourgeoisie often tries to offer a certain "democratic institutionalization" in exchange for a "social pact" that involves the workers accepting the burden of the crisis. What would be your reaction to such a pact?

A. This question of a "social pact" is the subject of argument. Personally, I don't want to talk about any pacts. But even if we have a revolutionary position, some sort of social accord is necessary. The ideal, of course, would be to directly undertake a revolutionary project, to liquidate not only the dictatorship but also the bourgeoisie and capitalism.

The only problem is that today we have no instrument for accomplishing this. The "class-struggle" left is not able to take power. We are heading therefore for a process of transition, because I doubt that the government that comes out of the November elections will really be a democratic one. But just having an election is a step forward, and it opens up important possibilities by comparison with the present situation.

But what sort of question will come up if this liberalization does not go hand

in hand with a social accord? The bourgeois parties are going to come to power. The government is going to have to confront the social situation. We risk an escalation, new chaos and the closing of the opening. On the basis of the strength of the social movements and the relationship of forces, we can put forward some precise and vital demands, such as, for example, trade-union freedoms and full political rights, amnesty for all political prisoners and a change in economic policy involving a bigger part of the national income going to wages.

If we could get agreement on these three questions, we could extend the discussion to the big national questions. For the Uruguayan workers, an accord meeting these three points would be a framework for a viable transition.

Through such a social accord, we would have to aim to bring to the negotiating table an alternative position on the sort of society we want. This confrontation must be an opportunity for us to undertake a big ideological struggle to raise the consciousness of the working masses by openly and publicly taking on the bourgeois parties.

We must establish a great national debate to break the mechanism that is leading the majority of the workers to vote again for the traditional parties, the Colorados and the Blancos. The negotiation I am talking about can serve as a springboard for challenging the bourgeoisie in the eyes of public opinion.

Q. A last question. How do you see relations between the PIT and the banned CNT?

A. The trade-union movement that exists today is in fact the CNT. There is only a problem of names. It will be resolved as soon as we have the freedom to give the union movement a program, to elect its leadership and to choose a name. There is no danger of division. The Uruguayan trade-union movement is united. We have a plan for organizing, despite the formal banning of the PIT

after January 18, 1984, a congress to adopt a program, to set up structures, and to define a minimal acceptable program for the transition. This PIT con-

gress could take the form of delegates meetings beginning in April to reach decisions that would be submitted to the vote of a general assembly on May 1. ■

Grass-roots recomposition in the trade unions

The following interview was given to our special correspondent in Montevideo by a member of the provisional union leadership in the state trust ANCAP (Fuel, Alcohol and Cement Administration). About 6,500 people work in this trust, which is one of the largest enterprises in the country and one of the crucial centers of energy production. It is decentralized, divided into various sectors, some of which operate in the provinces.

Question. Could you explain how people saw the 1973 coup and how the union movement was slowly reorganized in a pace-setting enterprise like ANCAP?

Answer. The backbone of our union is in the fuels sector, especially the refinery, which is the cornerstone of the enterprise. There, the resistance to the coup d'état followed the line adopted by the CNT — general strike against any coup attempt.

So, we occupied the enterprise, and there were even sabotage actions. We were cleared out by force, despite the support we got from the population throughout the area. The army came in with light tanks. We had to choose between total confrontation and negotiation. The majority was for negotiation, hoping to reach a general compromise with a Peruvian-style military-populist dictatorship.

We kept up a campaign of action for a week more on the basis of this agreement, while continuing a discussion in the union. A more determined group of activists took form. There was even an attack on the enterprise, followed by a strike and a walkout, despite the dictatorship's decree conscripting the workers. Everyone hid. The army took the workers who were still in the factory hostage. The factory started up again on a limited basis under military control.

Q. As soon as you raise the question of the 1973 coup d'état with workers who lived through it, the discussion turns around the general strike. The balance sheet of this strike seems to be at the root of the major political currents that still exist in the workers movement.

A. Some people think that this general strike was a success, others don't, and still others think that it was a defeat that led to the outlawing of the CNT and the breaking up of the workers organizations. What should have been done?

The provisional leadership of our union has a clear position in this controversy. The union movement had no



strategy for meeting the coup d'état nor any real alternative to put forward. Its only objective was to resist. So, the end of the general strike left a big vacuum. A broad critical current developed around drawing the lessons of this defeat. This produced a situation that would influence the whole process of rebuilding trade-union work.

Since 1973, the CNT has been banned, and the coup de grace came in 1975 with the arrest of the Communist Party leadership. In the meantime, the repressive apparatus carried out a general purge, not just of leaders but even of union activists. We entered into years of silence.

People looked for individual solutions to their social problems. A lot of people had a regular eight-hour job and then moonlighted for another eight hours. Above all there was fear of arrest and torture. These general conditions were aggravated by a more subjective obstacle to reorganization. There was a skepticism about union activity created by a wrong orientation — or worse — in the general strike. But this critical spirit could also have a negative side, providing a pretext for doing nothing.

Q. But despite all these obstacles the trade-union movement revived. What was the point of departure for the reorganization?

A. In our case, the reorganization started from the most basic level. It had

to start by having the honesty to recognize the fact that we could begin to do something again, by contacting those people who agreed about doing something, no matter how small.

This termite-like work took a lot of time. There were no union offices. We worked through individual contacts and small meetings. The only legal form for trade-union activity was through the yellow union, which everyone rejected. In our enterprise, for example, in the key fuels industry, this union never included anybody more than the leaders.

The problem was to find some sort of initiative that could serve as a basis for reviving union activity. Often it was petitions on specific questions, demands so elementary that it was hard to object to them. Collective petitions were banned. Only individual requests were allowed. So, you had to sign your full name on the petitions, which in those times was quite a heroic act.

One of the first important petitions was started in the refinery in 1981. The conditions are unusual here, in the sense that there are a lot more possibilities for discussion than in a shop. So, we discussed documents, and were able to organize the discussion so that everyone could read and comment on the drafts and add their own suggestions.

There were a lot of suggestions. Because in eight years we had lost innumerable gains both with respect to hygiene and work organization. So, demands arose for winning back things. Finally, we combined the draft and the comments, and on this basis made a final proposal, which was circulated again to get the maximum commitment from the largest possible number of people.

In view of what had happened in 1973, the authorities at first showed a certain tolerance, so as not to provoke the refinery workers. Other sections, such as maintenance, wanted to take up the petition themselves. That was the straw that broke the camel's back. A new witch hunt started up, they started making blacklists again and so on.

Then, there was sort of a chain reaction. To start with, in the absence of any possibility for dialogue, resentment had built up. All that was left to do was to organize and mobilize to break out of the straitjacket.

Q. Since ANCAP is a public trust, you could not invoke the trade-union reorganization law like workers in the private sector.

A. The 1981 trade-union reorganization law applied only to the private sector. In the public sector (250,000 jobs, representing one third of the wage workers in the country), trade-union reorganization remained underground. As in the private sector, union activists in the public sector took advantage of this law to subvert its purpose. Although the law was unacceptable, they demanded the same rights under it as the workers in the private sector.

I won't go into all the fetters imposed on the associations the law provided for. The important thing was that these associations had the right to hold meetings and to take initiatives (although not to strike), after asking permission from the government, of course.

Then, taking advantage of the least opening, the traditional mechanisms started operating again. This continued up till May 1, 1983. At that time the petition to the government for permission to celebrate May Day had an enormous psychological importance. It was the sign that the time had come for winning back our lost rights, and this was an encouragement to the workers in the public sector.

In ANCAP, we started to raise our heads, to make public statements condemning the fact that the state was denying to its workers those granted to workers in the private sector. Up until then, trade-union activity had remained on the molecular level. After May 1, 1983, a structure was formed, by base groups in shops and sections naming delegates to a coordinating committee.

There were as many coordinating committees as there were production units (the refinery, maintenance, administration). And there was an overall coordinating committee for the enterprise. This structure started to publish resolutions and to publish a bulletin called *Antorcha* ("Torch"), the same name as the old union bulletin.

The government left a certain amount of slack, which was the result of the relationship of forces. While it was not in a good position to strike back, we also

left it few pretexts. We always demanded legal and public recognition. Thus, we sent a letter to the authorities, specifically to the Ministry of Labor, explaining the nature and objectives of our organization. Our intermediaries were the representatives of the PIT, in which we participated from the outset. A labor confederation is for everybody. The law could prevent us, but workers cannot exclude workers. The authorities did not answer our letters.

Q. How do you see the new stage opened by the January 18 general strike?

A. When the perspective took form for the January 18 general strike, the ANCAP union, faithful to its tradition, considered that support for the strike should be decided on in a general assembly. This brought a good result, 100% in the more militant sections of the enterprise. This success buoyed up the workers and the general morale, despite the banning of the PIT.

A new stage has opened, in which the objective is to win recognition of the PIT as the country's single labor confederation, the continuer of the CNT's tradition. Along with this, we are continuing the fight for the freedom of public workers to organize.

The ANCAP union never definitively lost its headquarters. But most of the union headquarters were not only taken over by the military but were also symbolically transformed into commissariats. We have legal title. Our headquarters is a wreck. It has been empty for ten years. But on the basis of this title, we intend to regain our legality with a massive cam-

paign of resigning up old members and signing up new ones.

This decision was put to the general assembly and made public in the January 24, 1984 issue of our bulletin. So, we have held an assembly of 200 workers for reaffiliation, which was announced publicly. The police intervened, telling the workers to leave and leave no one in the hall but the presiding committee. There was a general reaction of solidarity in defense of our rights. So, this assembly remained a bit inconclusive. Therefore, we told the police that we wanted to be allowed to complete it. They replied that the meeting was banned, and what is more, it should be held in a union hall.

Since then, we have been trying every recourse open to us to get legal authorization for holding this meeting. The authorities don't know quite what to do. They keep passing the buck from office to office. We present ourselves everywhere with a request signed by the workers with their full names, and they politely refer us on, right up to the minister.

Q. In the PIT, ANCAP presented a balance sheet of the January 18 strike different from that of the majority. The majority balance sheet got ten votes out of twenty. Your counterreport got five and there were five abstentions. Why did you present an alternative balance sheet?

A. On the balance sheet of the January 18 general strike, ANCAP found itself in a minority in the PIT. The problem is one of united action. Bourgeois sectors of the opposition, such as the traditional parties, did us harm and played into the hands of the government by denouncing the strike in advance as inopportune or irresponsible. The balance sheet presented by the majority in the PIT covered this up too much.

In any case, we are members of the PIT. We participate in its initiatives. But we retain our right of criticism, and we are suspicious of uniting with or compromising with the political parties. We can take concrete initiatives together with them, but not negotiate any sort of intermediate-range political project.

Q. In other words, this difference on the balance sheet could lead to different points of view on a "social pact," which some people are beginning to talk about in connection with the elections next November?

A. The question is under discussion, and this is a rather delicate matter. The fall of the regime cannot just take us back to the point before the coup d'état in 1973. We cannot accept any sort of pact that would take us back to the situation that gave rise to the coup. We have to get a new situation that offers the workers a chance for a decent life. In other words, we have to finally win the demands the working class in this country have always raised. This objective may be pursued in common with other sections of society, such as students and the poor masses, who follow the lead of the workers.

Protest by mothers of the Uruguayan missing (DR)



One step more towards a 'Pax Americana'

On February 16, 1984, a three-way agreement was signed in Lusaka, the capital of Angola. The parties to this agreement were Angola, the Republic of South Africa and the United States of America.

This agreement provided for setting up an Angolan-South African joint commission. This was for the purpose of reaching a definitive cease fire, thereby putting an end to the clashes that have taken place regularly on Angola's southern border since independence in 1975 and the South African invasion in 1976. In other words, South Africa has undertaken to withdraw its troops from the south of Angola, which it has occupied more or less continuously for years, in exchange for the undertaking by Luanda to restrict the activities of SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation), the Namibian national liberation movement, on Angolan territory. This 'gentleman's agreement' was accepted by the Angolans on the basis of a vague promise by the South Africans to advance the negotiations on the status of Namibia, which is presently occupied by the racist regime in Pretoria. (1)

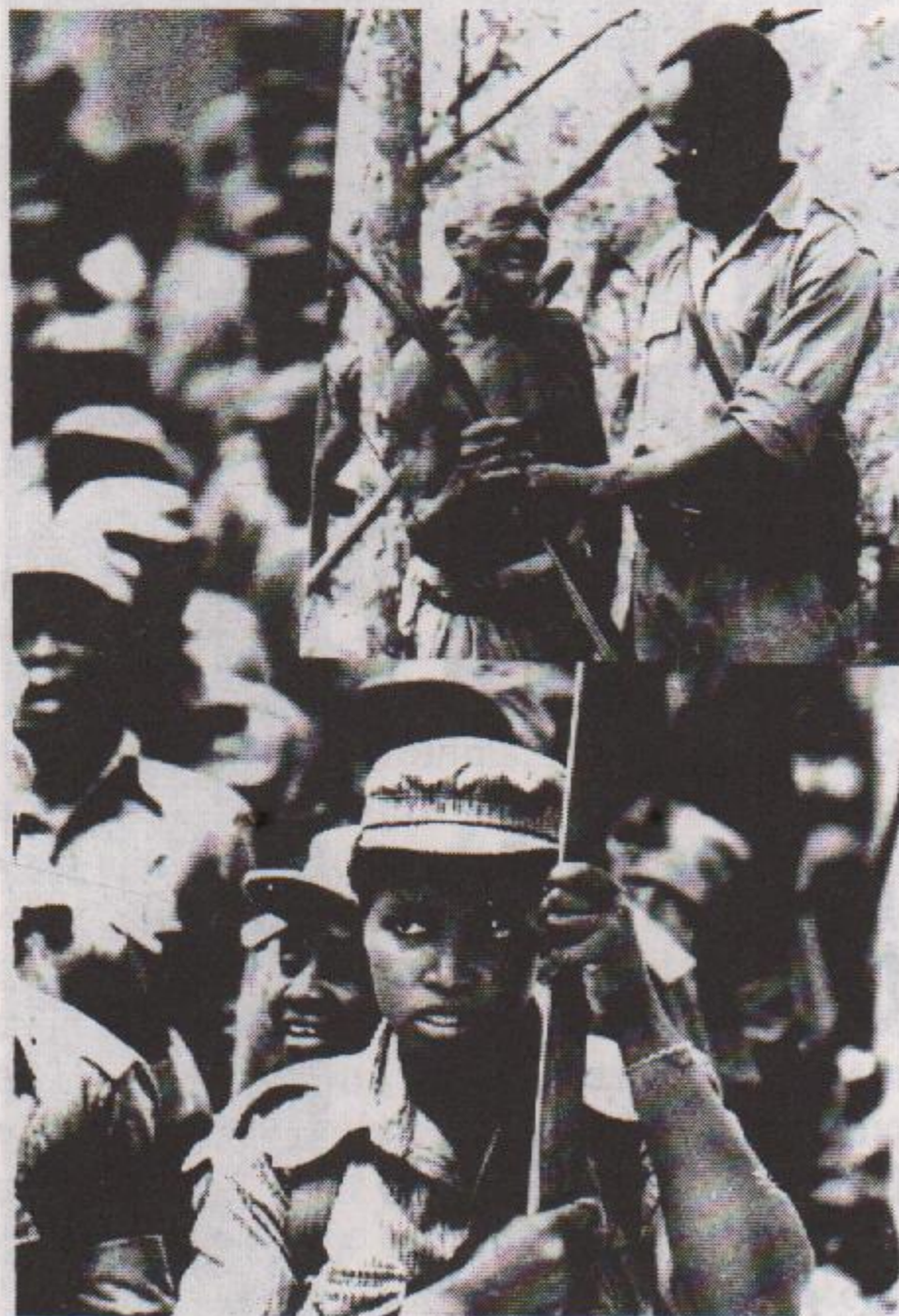
On March 16, 1984, it was Mozambique's turn to sign a non-aggression and good neighbour treaty with the South African regime. After negotiations lasting several months, in which the declared objective was to study the measures necessary to assure 'that no country can be used as a launching pad for violent actions or aggressions against another', the South African leaders undertook to stop supporting the reactionary guerrilla struggle waged in Mozambique by the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR). The Maputo government, for its part, agreed to no longer allow the ANC (African National Congress, South African national liberation movement led by the Communist Party of South Africa, CPSA), to use Mozambican territory for mounting sabotage actions against South Africa. In fact, Samora Machel's government asked several dozen members of the ANC to leave Mozambique.

Claude GABRIEL

The new situation in Southern Africa reflected by the bilateral defence agreements between Mozambique, Angola and South Africa has come about as the result of a combination of factors. One is the depth of the economic crisis affecting the two former Portuguese colonies after ten years of independence, and the destructive impact of the reactionary guerrilla forces on the economies of these two countries. Moreover, the international context marked by the increased and unflinching support to South Africa by US imperialism, has greatly assisted the drive by the racist regime to bring the independent countries of Southern Africa to heel by brutal pressure.

In countries like Angola and Mozambique, the economic crisis has reached a most critical level. Over the last two years a certain number of factors over which these two governments have no control, such as drought, the fall in raw materials prices, the international recession, the rate of discount on the international financial market, etc. have helped to worsen the economic situation.

But, over and above the present unfavourable economic climate, there are underlying reasons why the economic catastrophe in these two countries has



Pro-Frelimo demonstration in Mozambique (DR)

assumed such scope. They have to do with the political nature of the regimes in power since 1975.

After having taken care to first control and then suppress the movement and activity of the popular masses that accompanied the granting of indepen-

dence, the MPLA (Angolan People's Liberation Movement) and Frelimo (Mozambique Liberation Front) governments consciously kept the main forms of dependence on imperialist interests.

The bulk of the nationalisations carried out in this initial period affected only the Portuguese holdings, that is middle industry and commerce. The pillars of these two economies — energy, heavy industry, mines, plantations — remained either under the direct ownership of imperialist companies, or very dependent on technical or commercial agreements with the West.

Having based their state sector on those enterprises least important for an advance toward real economic independence, the Luanda and Maputo regimes then left the imperialists a free hand to manipulate the relationships between these two countries and the multinationals and Western markets.

This economic compromise went hand in hand with the systematic muzzling of popular demands, and repression of any form of independent expression by the toiling masses. Thus, the trend of development of these regimes could only go in the direction of more dependence on imperialism rather than less. The bureaucratism of the Frelimo and MPLA leadership then took the form of a nomenclatura system determining the distribution of wealth within the ruling layer. (2)

Despite their victory against Portuguese imperialism and their mass following, the MPLA and Frelimo have created dependent states and economies. While, for the time being, their political form remains special, as a result of the specific history of liberation struggles that gave birth to them, the social nature of these states is well and truly bourgeois.

It has once again been proved that the famous 'non-capitalist path of development', celebrated by Moscow and its disciples for the last 25 years as the main road to progress in the 'third world' countries, is a pure fabrication. The claims for it cannot stand up to objective analysis. In less than ten years, the Angolan and Mozambican regimes have shown that, fundamentally, in the realm of economic structures, they have never aimed to break out of the imperialist sphere of influence.

Despite the hypocritical way these regimes have played up their relations with Cuba, they have completely ignored the warning given by Che Guevara in his famous saying: 'socialist revolution or the caricature of a revolution'.

The political and military threats to these two governments from the UNITA (National Union for Total Independence of Angola) and the MNR guerrilla forces is the second element in explaining re-

1. *Le Monde*, February 24, 1984.

2. The Stalinist model is faithfully copied in the organisation of the top leading layers of these parties and these states, which are, moreover, not clearly separated. For example, in the Angolan capital Luanda, there are shops reserved for members of the central committee of the MPLA.

cent events in Southern Africa. While they are historically very different, in recent times these two reactionary guerrilla movements have played very similar roles. Supported, trained and equipped by the South African army and special services, their objective is to force Angola and Mozambique to increase their unproductive arms spending and thus aggravate the economic situation in these two countries. They have been able to use ethnic and regional resentments and mistrusts that the ruling parties have not managed to overcome, to acquire a base in certain zones.

In the case of UNITA, it is obvious that its impact does not simply come through intimidation of the population. Since the civil war of 1974-76, Jonas Savimbi's movement has, in certain localities, filled a vacuum left by the MPLA.

This opening was left by the MPLA's inability to win credibility among the peasantry by proposing an agrarian programme meeting their interests. On the contrary, the authoritarianism of the MPLA and Frelimo leaderships in their relationship with the peasant masses, and sometimes even their fascination with collectivisation and pushing towards state control and centralisation, aggravated the deterioration in relations between certain rural areas and the Luanda and Maputo regions.

UNITA and the MNR, advised by the South Africa regime, have been able to exploit these weaknesses and carry out their terrorist actions using such bases of support (see box on UNITA).

Finally, while there was a certain slight discord between the US and South Africa following the independence of Mozambique and Angola and the failure of the South African military opposition to this, Washington has since stepped up its support for the racist regime. And this constitutes a third key element in the evolution of the situation in the region.

Reagan's support for Pretoria

Even though the Carter administration supported South Africa in practice, the arrival of Ronald Reagan in power meant strengthened American economic and military support for Pretoria. The advent of the Reagan government opened the way for a propaganda drive to refurbish the image of Pieter Botha's government in the eyes of American and international public opinion.

Last and most important, Reagan gave the South Africans full diplomatic licence to make regular incursions into Angolan territory carry out their murderous actions, to bomb Mozambique, and to continue their refusal to grant Namibian independence as was outlined by the United Nations.

With Reagan, South Africa appeared more than ever as the imperialists' armed force in the region. Washington did its part by blocking any action of the five Western countries (France, West Germany,

UNITA, a reactionary guerrilla force

The present leader of UNITA, Jonas Savimbi, was a member of the Union of Populations in Angola (UPA), forerunner of the FNLA of Roberto Holden. This was a regionalist movement, mainly of northern Angolans of the Bacongo ethnic group, many of whom were refugees from Zaire. In the 1960s it organised a Revolutionary Government in Exile of Angola (GRAE) in which Savimbi had the post of minister of foreign affairs for a time, and then left in 1964. Two years later, in 1966, benefitting particularly from the freedom of movement allowed by neighbouring Zambia, UNITA was created by Savimbi in the Moxico region of Angola. The first statements of UNITA, which received some aid from China, were quite radical. During the 1970s, its propaganda insisted on the 'Marxist-Leninist' character of the movement, and thus enjoyed the support of pro-China organisations which denounced the MPLA as being pro-Soviet. However, the UNITA military actions against the Portuguese troops were never as great as they claimed. This organisation continued to exercise, and does still to this day, a mainly regional influence in the centre and south east of the country, where the Ovibundu are dominant.

At the fall of the Portuguese dictatorship, it was learnt that UNITA had had a tacit agreement with the Portuguese troops since 1972 to fight the MPLA. In an exchange of correspondence with the colonial authorities, Savimbi wrote: 'As far as we are concerned, we would like the war to be decisively eradicated from the eastern sector. We have done everything in our power to weaken the strength of the common enemy....Our analysis has allowed us to designate the MPLA as the principal obstacle to peace, not only in the east but throughout Angolan territory.' (*Afrique-Asie*, July 8, 1974). Despite its anti-white and anti-Coloured verbiage, in 1974 UNITA lined up with the neo-colonialist option of the Portuguese president, Spínola, in coming out for 'total independence, which must be prepared and carried through progressively', and against any idea of immediate independence (*O Seculo Ilustrado*, Lisbon, September 21, 1974). For this, UNITA enjoyed the support of certain white settlers after April 25, and Savimbi kept good contact with the ultra-reactionary group United Angolan Front (FUA) of the engineer Fernando Falcao. A former member of the OAS, colonel Armand, then revealed that he was to have organised 'a coup d'etat to put in Jonas Savimbi as president of the Angolan republic' (idem).

UNITA was joined with the FNLA and MPLA in the transitional government installed in Luanda in 1975 following the decolonisation agreements signed at Alvor. At this time it then came out against the strikes and mass mobilisations, while loosening its too obvious links with the white settlers. After the battle of Luanda, in which the popular masses fought alongside the MPLA against the UNITA and FNLA, and the FNLA forces were evicted from the capital, the UNITA and FNLA, organised by agents of the American CIA, took part in the support of the South African invasion that attempted to overthrow the government formed by the MPLA alone. In this regard Savimbi stated, 'One day I learnt that the South Africans had entered Angola with their tanks....Once the mistake was made, then it should be turned to advantage, allowing it to follow through so that the South Africans would take Luanda, and then withdraw and allow us to occupy' (cited by *Afrique-Asie*, April 14, 1980).

It is this movement, regionalist, pro-imperialist and allied with South Africa, that the United States and the Western countries today present as 'freedom fighters'.

Britain, Canada, USA) that were supposed to ensure the implementation of the UN resolutions on Namibian independence.

The combination of these three factors thus constitutes the heart of the imperialist offensive in Southern Africa. (3)

There are around 360 American companies with investments in South Africa, mainly in the advanced technology sector. Their investment comprises one fifth of all foreign investment in this country, putting them second behind British capitalists in the list of foreign investors. The American banks have supplied one third of the foreign capital to which South Africa has turned to finance its imports in the last decade. Finally, the exchange of goods between the two countries makes the US the main trading partner of South Africa.

This situation has given rise to great complicity between the capitalists of the two countries, expressed particularly in the relations between the Reagan administration and the South Africa lobby in the United States. Thus, John Sears, a former organiser of Reagan's presi-

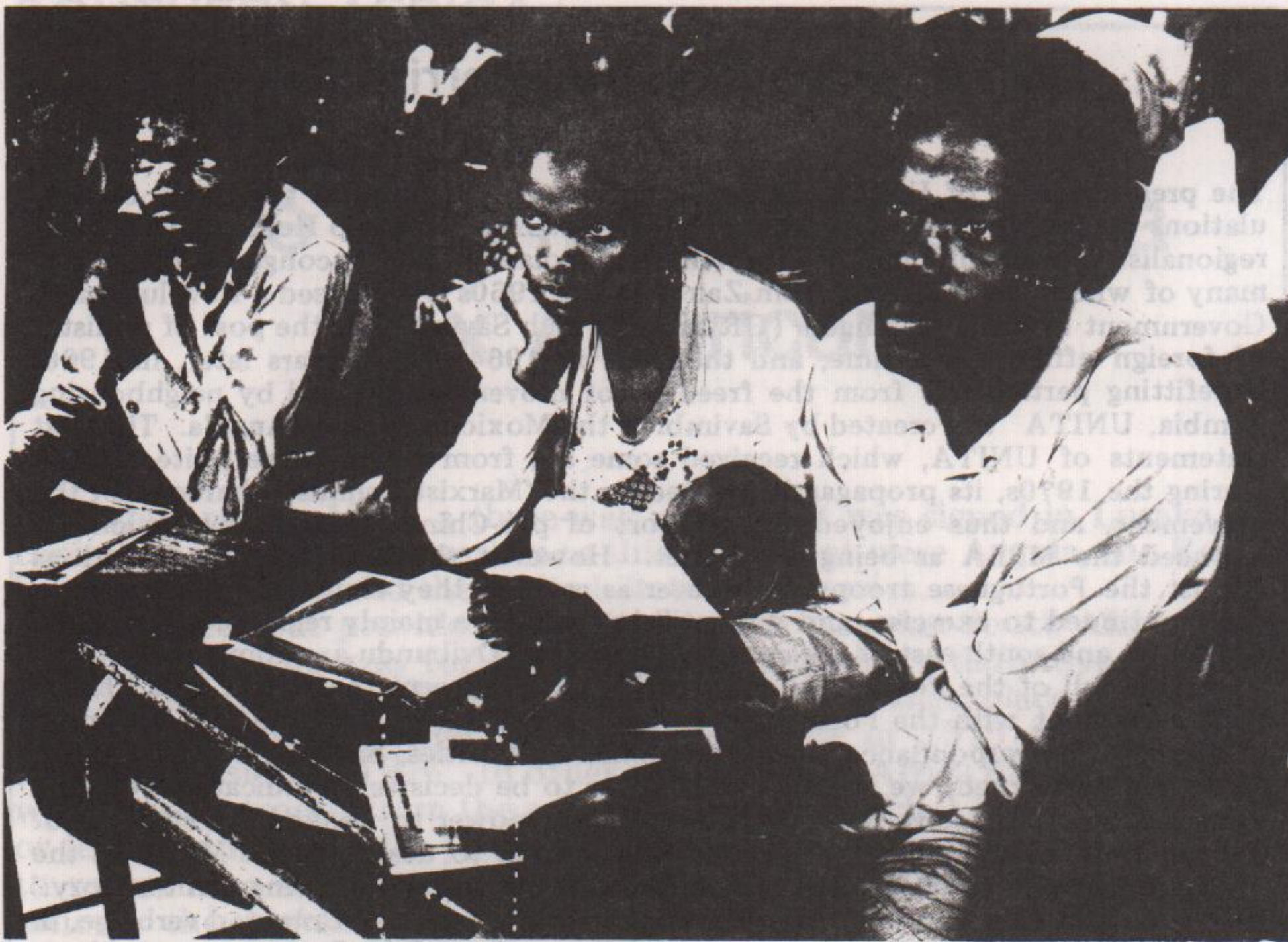
dential campaign, became one of the main leaders of the South African pressure group in Washington, and a certain Don De Keiffer, who was a member of this group up to 1979, was eventually given a post within the Reagan administration and sent on a mission to South Africa. (4)

It would however be wrong to contrast Carter's policies with those of Reagan on every point. But it is certain that since the latter arrived in the White House the 'globalist' political conceptions, portraying every localised conflict as the result of Soviet manoeuvres and thus a factor in the East-West conflict, have been systematised and generalised.

Chester Crocker, deputy secretary of state for African affairs, in the Reagan

3. This is probably an offensive throughout Africa, if one takes into account the rumours of a crisis within the Ethiopian regime and the withdrawal of the Cubans from Ogaden (southern region of Ethiopia with a border with Somalia), as well as the current diplomatic toings and froings for a negotiated solution to the Western Sahara conflict.

4. *Sunday Times*, South Africa, December 14, 1980.



Adult literacy, an unresolved problem (DR)

administration, has topped one explanation of this sort with another.

In Honolulu on August 29, 1981, Crocker explained to the American Veterans Association: 'The influence being exercised in Africa by the USSR and its allies worries us particularly. The Soviets are trying to exploit the numerous differences rending Africa, as well as the conflict that is currently taking place — when they're not provoking new problems so as to be able to fish in the troubled waters....As the United States occupies the place of leader of the Western world, it owes it to itself to help Africa put in order a strategic context that is harmful to it.'

As for Southern Africa proper, he explained the local situation and stated, 'the political basis necessary to introduce regional cooperation is sorely lacking. The racial and ethnic diversity of these peoples — added to the purely emotional behaviour in response to colonialism and the domination of a white minority — constitute an obstacle to understanding between fellow citizens or neighbours.' (5)

The United States is thus going to devote itself to encouraging such 'regional cooperation' and 'understanding between fellow citizens'. And its political orientation in pursuit of this has taken a dual form. One side is unreserved support for both the present negotiations between Pretoria and neighbouring Angola and Mozambique. The other is backing the constitutional reforms within the Republic of South Africa. These reforms are designed fundamentally to create the illusion of granting the vote to certain categories of non-whites, while in fact widening racial divisions. (6)

Such professions of faith go hand in hand with commercial interests. American investment in South Africa increased by 13.3 per cent in 1981 alone and officially amounts to 2.6 billion dollars. (7) During this whole period the United

States facilitated loans to South Africa to help it out of a very serious economic crisis, due, among other things, to the drop in gold prices and a drop in world demand for minerals.

The South African debt amounted to 9.3 billion dollars at the end of 1981. But Pretoria got considerable aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and, with the backing of Western banks, very large credits to help it get out of this difficult situation. 'This is frenzied borrowing, we have not seen the like since the beginning of the 1970s', wrote the South African journal *Rand Daily Mail* on February 15, 1982, describing the situation.

South African dominance

American aid is also given in the military field. The American government encourages South African armament through the transfer of technology. One example is the sale of a Sperry Univac 1100 computer to the Atlas Aircraft Company which builds military aircraft in the Republic of South Africa. Another is the sale of Control Data computers to a South African research group that works for the army.

Moreover, Reagan has tried to bend the rules setting a quota for direct sales of military material to this racist regime. Thus, in April 1982, for example, the American government authorised the sale of 2,500 electrified truncheons for the use of South African police.

Finally, through the CIA, Washington gives aid to the reactionary UNITA movement of Jonas Savimbi. On May 6, 1980, Ronald Reagan answered a question about this: 'Let's be frank, I will give them arms [to UNITA]. I have nothing against someone who wishes to free themselves from the yoke of a foreign power, in this case the Cubans and East Germans. I don't see why we wouldn't give them arms for that.' (8)

Overall, this policy aims to strengthen the racist power and make it the decisive link in the resistance to the 'Soviet threat' in Southern Africa. In future, Washington will make the departure of Cuban troops a precondition for applying its so-called policy of pressure on South Africa to get it to recognise Namibian independence. Washington also gives aid with strings attached to the countries in the region, in order to persuade them to defer to their dangerous neighbour.

Dependence on South Africa on one side and the imperialist market on the other is a characteristic of all the neo-colonial states of Southern Africa. These countries import a good part of their cereals from South Africa, the country through which they export their mining production. The dependence of these regimes on South Africa for foodstuffs goes along with a network of infrastructures completely oriented towards Pretoria. Moreover, a slice of these neo-colonial economies, notably in the mining sector is partly the direct property of South African interests. This is the case, for example, for certain mines in Zambia and Botswana, while 20 per cent of the Gross National Product of Lesotho derives from the wages of 141,000 workers from this country employed in South Africa.

The weight of these dependent relations with South Africa has already made itself felt in the past through the moderating pressure of certain of these states during the struggles for national liberation in the region. Thus, Zambia several times assumed the role of spokesperson, or even the intermediary, for the racist regime in Pretoria, during the diplomatic negotiations on the struggles for independence in Angola and Zimbabwe. It should also be said that this country has several times only avoided famine or revolt by importing cereals from South Africa at the last minute to offset its cereal deficit.

With the independence of the Portuguese ex-colonies and of Zimbabwe, South Africa tried to replace its former protective wall of Portuguese colonialism and the racist regime of Ian Smith in Rhodesia, by creating a sort of regional 'common market' involving the most dependent states in the region. To try and emancipate themselves from this South African economic tutelage, several states in Southern Africa formed SADCC (South African Development and Coordinating Conference) in 1980.

The objective of this association of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi,

5. USA-Document, US Embassy, Paris (retranslated from the French).

6. See *International Viewpoint*, No 46, February 13, 1984, on the proposed constitutional changes.

7. See *International Herald Tribune*, March 31, 1983. However, the real figure for direct and indirect American investments could reach a much greater sum, estimated at 14.6 billion dollars by the *Washington Post* of July 30, 1983.

8. *Wall Street Journal*, May 6, 1980. Retranslated from the French.

Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, is to rationalise relations between these countries in order to promote a better integration of their resources and their infrastructures. But, to do this, the SADCC had to fall back on international capital. The score of industrial projects in operation, financed by Western countries represents the equivalent of 240 million dollars of financial involvement. And, under the pretext of seeking to emancipate the member states' economies from South African tutelage, this neo-colonial association supported by international — particularly European — finance, in fact emphasises the integration of these different economies into the world capitalist market.

Mozambique, therefore, has found itself specialising in the role of a transit port for the export of the regional mining wealth, and benefits from many Western loans for modernising its railways and ports. While that might for the time being have given Zambia a port on the Indian Ocean, freeing it from dependence on the South African ports — in fact it did not because of the numerous sabotage actions against the Mozambican communication network by the MNR — this would nonetheless not have radically transformed its dependent relations with the international capitalist system.

The European Economic Community (EEC), has also shown itself to be more attentive to the SADCC countries' requests for loans since Mozambique and Angola declared their intention to participate in the EEC-ACP agreements, the Lome Convention, to which all the other SADCC countries belong. Countries such as France, West Germany and Italy have a direct stake in playing a political card which could promote their interests in a zone where British and American capital is dominant. But the international economic crisis, the drought, the specific crisis of these states have all contributed to weaken this whole project and its

internal thrust towards autonomy from the South African economy.

On the one hand, the United States general policy on aid and loans is not favourable to such costly projects for re-directing economic development in the present business climate. And, on the other, the reduction of the American contribution to the International Development Association (IDA), subsidiary of the World Bank, along with American domination within the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, also make it a lot more difficult for the EEC to engage in 'autonomous' operations, particularly in a region with such complex geopolitical factors as Southern Africa.

A serious failure for the Kremlin

Eager as they are to make lucrative investments in these countries, the European governments do not have any great political capacity for putting across an alternative orientation to that of the United States. An indication of that is the Namibian affair, where the famous 'group of five' of the Western countries charged with conducting the negotiations for Namibian independence has now been resoundingly upstaged by the tripartite negotiations between Angola, South Africa and the United States on this question. Moreover, the French government has recognised the uselessness of participating in this 'group' and left it on December 7, 1983.

In the light of these events, there can be no doubt that recent events in Southern Africa, diplomatic and military, are directly related to the application of American strategy to which Mozambique and Angola have chosen to yield. These events thus come fundamentally within the context of a 'pax Americana' project for Southern Africa. They are only secondarily South African manoeuvres.

In the popular neighbourhoods of Luanda (DR)



The Soviet Union has based its whole policy in Southern Africa on its relations with the countries it regards as 'progressive', and its support for the ANC in South Africa. The latter movement, which, among other things, engages in armed actions, is controlled by the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and is aligned with Soviet foreign policy. It generally presents itself as the vanguard leadership of the South African people for its liberation, that is to say as a liberation movement.

On this basis, for a long time the ANC has been able to organise some of its actions from base camps in Mozambique and Tanzania especially. But, for the ANC as well as the Kremlin, the strategy they follow depends to some extent on the relations established with the regimes in these countries. The theories on the 'progressive' or 'non-capitalist', or even 'revolutionary' character of the Angolan, Mozambican or Tanzanian regimes, only serve after the fact to consecrate the diplomatic, political or military relations that Moscow has established with these countries. Moreover, the Soviets have made no effort to analyse these terms, never going beyond quite vague formulations in their characterisations of these regimes.

As the economic crisis has speeded up, the process of political realignment in this region of Southern Africa, the Soviet leadership and, with it, that of the ANC, now have had to change their tune. Konstantin Chernenko, the Soviet leader, recently bitterly commented: 'By playing on the need of the South African peoples to live in peace and stability, the United States and certain of their allies are trying to impose their designs on the peoples of Southern Africa. But these peoples will see themselves whether the security of their states is now guaranteed against aggression from the Republic of South Africa.' (9)

All those who, for the last ten years, have constantly emphasised the growth of Soviet influence in Africa, now have to draw a balance sheet of their method of analysis. There is no doubt that the Stalinist leadership has tried to go as far as possible in obtaining diplomatic positions in Southern Africa, without having to risk a real confrontation with imperialism. In fact, its strategy is simply that of adapting to the conjunctural aid needs of the bourgeois nationalist leaderships in the countries concerned. The Soviet leadership has never developed a policy that could favour the independent interests of the toiling masses in the whole region, masses who have been subject to the omnipotence of regimes which allow them scant possibility for autonomous mobilisation.

Soviet diplomacy today is paying the price for this orientation. The Soviet Union is probably going to lose some diplomatic support or other advantages it has gained. But it should never be for-

9. *Le Monde*, April 7, 1984.

gotten that the highest price will be paid by the popular masses of these countries. However weak their level of consciousness, the workers and peasants in these countries never got any help from the Kremlin's policy in understanding the real nature of their governments. In ten years of independence, the practical experience of these populations is not so much that the economy has remained under the control of the capitalist market, but that the regime's arrogance and bureaucratism grew with the blessing of the Soviets, with their military aid, and the presence of their advisors, those from Czechoslovakia and East Germany for example. It is undoubtedly the case that ten years of unconditional Soviet diplomatic support for these regimes have encouraged an anti-Communist sentiment among the masses.

The Cubans have not totally escaped implication in this negative balance sheet either. Their intervention in Angola in 1975, alongside the MPLA and against South African troops and the reactionary UNITA and FNLA, was absolutely necessary to achieve the political independence of these countries. But, when the MPLA regime proved incapable of unifying the popular Angolan masses around policies which corresponded to their interests and, in particular, to resolve the agrarian question, the Cubans were left in a position where they had to remain for a prolonged period, to protect a fragile regime from UNITA. Doing this, they took the risk of becoming mired in Angola, without ever being able to stabilise the situation.

A new situation

During the last ten years, the Cubans have also been content simply to praise the Angolan and Mozambican regimes. Today, there is more and more talk of preparations for the departure of Cuban troops from Angola. While the Cubans restated their positions on Namibian independence and South Africa in a joint communique with the Luanda regime, there is no doubt that the Castroist regime sees the latest events as a setback for its African policy. (10)

It would be particularly educative for the anti-imperialist movement if the Castroist regime would one day draw a public balance sheet of its orientation in these countries. Sending hundreds of Cuban teachers and doctors into an African country cannot substitute for an internationalist policy of support for the peoples of these countries. In the first place, this practice is coupled with unconditional support from the Cubans for the regime in power. Moreover, it is subordinated to the demands of supporting these regimes militarily.

In Angola, for example, the Cubans stood by without flinching when the Committees of Popular Power that arose during the Angola civil war were being housebroken. Nor did they balk at seeing the National Union of Angolan



Frelimo supporters, building a new future? (DR)

Workers (UNTA) being regimented and subjected totally to the aims of the MPLA leadership. They were witnesses to the repression of strikes, the growth of corruption and bureaucratic rotteness in an MPLA wracked by numerous internal struggles.

In such circumstances, could the massive Cuban presence in Angola be seen solely as an 'internationalist' act against South African intervention? In any case, the Cuban military presence could only prevent the South Africans from penetrating too deeply into Angolan territory; it could not block their incursions altogether.

The explanation of the real economic crisis that the dependent economies of Angola and Mozambique are suffering from, and the military threats they face from nearby South Africa, are not sufficient today to explain the present evolution of the regimes that the Cuban leadership not so long ago was describing as 'revolutionary'. This is shown, among other things, by the example of the steadfastness of the Nicaraguan leadership which has mobilised the masses against imperialism. The difference thus resides in the different nature of the regimes in question.

All these political changes in Southern



Africa should not, however, lead any one to think that the South African regime can achieve victory in the class struggle in South Africa itself. The ANC is going to have to readjust its policy. But there is no evidence that Pretoria has been able to seriously undermine this movement, which retains big political influence within the country. For a majority of the oppressed people in South Africa there can now no longer be the least illusion in the Mozambican or Angolan 'model'.

The 'armed struggle' preached by the ANC has at the same time lost a lot of its credibility, at least in its present form of raids organised mainly from outside of the country. On the other hand, the various factors are now converging to increase the weight of social struggles within South Africa. The most important of these are the battles being waged in connection with the rise of the independent trade-union movement and local community associations. All these movements have formed without external aid or influence. The new relations between the racist regime and the Angolan and Mozambican governments are hardly going to have any direct influence on them.

Paradoxically, at the moment when the Botha regime is full of optimism because it has scored a good point over the Soviet Union and the ANC, the mass movement in the country has never felt itself so powerful and determined to fight. And there is nothing to indicate for the time being that Pretoria's success in the field of foreign policy is going to help it achieve any quick change in the domestic relationship of forces.

Thus, it is more necessary than ever to follow attentively the development of social struggles in South Africa and to ensure that the diplomatic recomposition going on in Southern Africa does not interfere with solidarity for the struggle of the South African masses. ■

10. The communique signed by Fidel Castro and the Angolan president Dos Santos reported in *Le Monde*, March 21, 1984.

From independence to the agreement with Pretoria

The constitution of the People's Republic of Mozambique states that 'power belongs to the workers and peasants, united and led by Frelimo'. The third congress of Frelimo in February 1977 also made it clear that Mozambique has entered the stage of 'popular democracy...in which we socialise the means of production, we create and develop the essential forms of socialist property: state property and co-operative ownership... By taking agriculture as the basis, industry as the motor force and building heavy industry as the decisive factor, we will break definitively with poverty, dependence, and we will build an advanced economy in the service of the people'. (1)

Nothing in that corresponds to the actual facts. Neither from the point of view of the stage that Frelimo claims to have passed: the achieving of elementary democratic tasks such as real national independence, agrarian reform, improvement in the means of existence for the popular masses. Nor from the point of view of progress in the organisation, mobilisation and level of consciousness of the popular masses that such a process would logically entail.

Francois CAZALS

It was all the easier for the Frelimo rhetoric to be so radical as it bore no relation to the state of popular mobilisation or social relations. Mozambique's independence on June 25, 1975 did not give rise to a general eruption of social struggles, still less to a revolutionary situation. There were several strikes in spring 1974, usually limited to wage demands. The Mozambican proletariat, a good part of which was emigrant workers in the South African gold mines, did not even have similar experience to the Angolan proletariat, which in 1973 launched a general strike in Luanda.

During this period Frelimo followed a temporising course, most often falling back on the colonial forces to ensure good progress in the transfer of power. Thus, no significant element of an alternative proletarian leadership to the petty bourgeois nationalist current Frelimo, or of the self-organisation of the masses, emerged during the decolonisation process. Frelimo was able, without great difficulty, to impose its complete political hegemony over the mass movement and the state apparatus in construction.

From that point, the 'people's power' it claimed to stand for did not leave any room for the initiative and the autonomy of the mass movement. This 'people's power' was imposed from the top in order to structure the new state apparatus and organise the workers for production, in line with the bureaucratic methods inspired by the Soviet model.

Having refused to grasp the opportunity offered by the spontaneous strikes of spring 1974 to raise the level of consciousness and independent activity of

the proletarian masses, Frelimo then saw the mass organisations only as instruments to combat indiscipline at work. According to the established formula of the time, productivity was 'the barometer of the political consciousness' of the workers. (2)

From the outset, these structures (political ginger groups, production councils) were marked by bureaucratism and were more niches for careerists than factors in the self-organisation of the masses. In the successive balance sheets of the Frelimo leadership, moreover, they were criticised for this time after time. For example, the fourth congress of Frelimo in April 1983, was the occasion to note that certain cells of the party 'instead of working for the masses, close themselves up as if they were private clubs', and to denounce those who 'enter the party to make their careers'. (3)

Economic failure of the regime

In order to retain a certain contact with the mass movement, which was a specific feature of the Mozambican regime, the central leadership of Frelimo effectively engineered denunciations of the bureaucracy and the corruption of middle layers of the state and party.

Sometimes the purges reached the highest levels and the denunciations made by Samora Machel accused certain ministers. In 1978 the minister of agriculture was expelled from the central committee because of accusations of elitism, individualism, egoism, liberalism...

There were many settlings of internal accounts and ministerial reshuffles, sometimes lifting the veil which hid the authoritarianism of the regime. In Nov-

ember 1981 for example, a purge of the army and security forces was carried out against 'enemies disguised as agents of the state' who mistreat the population.

The two major bones of contention within the ruling team are economic orientation and relationship with the Eastern European countries. Each shift on these questions leads to a reshuffle of responsibilities in the top personnel. The defection of security chief Jorge Costa to South Africa in 1982 illustrates the depth of the political crisis within Frelimo, a major factor in which is the economic failures of the regime.

At independence, Frelimo nationalised the enterprises belonging to small and middle-sized Portuguese capitalists, as well as of imperialist firms that refused to continue activity under the new regime. The nationalisation of the land, hospitals and clinics, schools, investment property, funeral parlours and small processing plants did not mean taking control over the major share of local capital and production.

The initial distrust of imperialist investors and the size of the state sector (50 per cent of enterprises in 1978) formed a basis for relationships with the Eastern European countries. Economic and technical aid from these countries in return for diplomatic advantages (Maputo following the Moscow line) or material favours (fishing rights for the USSR) accompanied the departure of the Portuguese technicians and the starting up of bureaucratic economic projects.

Corruption, gigantic projects useless for local needs, authoritarianism (4), lack of motivation for the popular masses, combined with the maintaining of capitalist relations and imperialist investment in strategic sectors, would have precipitated economic failure. This was so even before the sabotage actions of the reactionary guerrilla forces of the Mozambican National Resistance (MNR) or natural calamities such as droughts and floods came to worsen the situation. (5)

A reorientation started in 1979 with the denationalisation of small commerce and a greater openness to foreign capital. A Mozambican official signing an agreement on railway cooperation with South Africa in February 1979 stated that 'We are businessmen. We have to find realistic solutions. Nobody should be surprised at this agreement. Maputo and Latola are the two natural ports for the Transvaal.' (6)

1. Report of the Central Committee to the Third Frelimo Congress, Harmattan, Paris, 1977, p. 50.

2. Speech by Samora Machel 'Organise the working class for a big production offensive', Maputo, October 1976.

3. *Le Monde*, April 28, 1983.

4. The forced gathering together of the rural population to which the so-called 'community-village' policy leads, like the recent 'Operation Production' consisting of the forced return of the unemployed from the capital to the country, or the re-establishment of the corporal punishments in force under colonialism, are examples.

In March 1980, Samora Machel pleaded for the reestablishment of a hierarchy in the state sector, opposing the 'dispersal of power' and the 'constant practice of calling everyone "comrade"'. (7) He launched an appeal to emigrant small industrialists, traders and farmers, assuring them of financial guarantees if they returned to Mozambique and insisting that: 'There is a place in our economic development for the participation of other countries, international firms and foreign capital in general'. (8)

Mozambique made no secret of its interest in the EEC-ACP aid and commerce agreement between the European Community and 63 African Caribbean and Pacific countries, and Western investors once more became seriously interested in this country. (9) This economic reorientation was further emphasised during the Frelimo fourth congress in 1983. (10)

The compromise reached with the Republic of South Africa cannot be judged simply as a realistic recognition of the unfavourable balance of forces in the region. This is because Frelimo has done nothing to help the evolution of the balance of forces in a favourable direction, by mobilising the masses against imperialism for example, as the Sandinista leadership in Nicaragua has done.

The path to a real break with imperialism in the present conditions of Mozambique is indeed very narrow, but Frelimo never, at any point, tried to follow it. At the time of independence, when the state of mind of the masses would have allowed them to do so, the Frelimo leadership called for peace and accommodation. After that, without even recognising the workers rights to trade unions, it imposed an economic policy over which the workers had no control whatsoever. Changes in the orientation of this policy were also made in a completely bureaucratic manner. But no steps towards real independence were taken.

The agreement with Pretoria

South Africa, principal trading partner of Mozambique, remained its main supplier. The port of Maputo, like the Mozambican railways, still works at 60 per cent with South Africa. For a country that specialises in railway and port services, this is enormous. There are South African technicians permanently employed by the firms that use the port of Maputo. The 45,000 Mozambicans that work in the mines of the Transvaal account for one third of Mozambique's foreign currency earnings.

Mozambique remains extremely dependent on South Africa for food, a dependence increased by recent bad harvests. Imported wheat comes from France or the United States, maize (200,000 tons in 1981) from South Africa. Rice, as well as fish, has to be imported. Agricultural products for



Samora Machel (DR)

export (cashew nuts, cotton) are mainly sold to the West, and productivity has still not returned to pre-1974 levels. Until 1980 and the export contract with the USSR, Mozambique's sugar production was sold to the USA. The electricity from the Cabora Bassa dam (Portuguese property until 2014) is destined for South Africa and should cover 10 per cent of its needs, at a cost below that of production. The town of Maputo on the other hand, is supplied by this electricity repurchased from South Africa.

Many foreign companies, including sometimes even South African, have kept their interests in the country. They have interests in cashew nuts, cement production, or the Beira-Umtali oil pipeline to Zimbabwe, owned by the British firm Lonrho. Many Western countries have been active in Mozambique during the last few years. In 1983 Esso and Shell invested 60 million dollars in oil exploration.

Brazil participated in agro-industry projects in the Limpopo valley, an area where a programme for the socialisation of agriculture was put into operation by Bulgaria, which has since been largely dismantled. Italy is playing a leading role in the spread of Western technology in Mozambique.

The economic aspect of the agreement with South Africa, like the probable inclusion of Mozambique in the EEC-ACP agreement, will probably increase this economic, technological and financial dependence of Maputo. Commercial exchanges with South Africa are going to increase still further, particularly the use of the port of Maputo, with the construc-

tion of a mining terminal in 1985. A well-informed bourgeois review recently noted that 'the possibilities of joint South African-Mozambican investments in the port and tourist sectors are being studied, as well as the possible future creation of a Mozambique-South Africa chamber of commerce.' (11)

The South African firm Rannies has already proposed to build a tourist complex worth 40 million dollars. The multinational Lonrho has also proposed to invest in this sector.

The agreement with South Africa represents a culminating point in the evolution of the regime since independence. Nonetheless, it seems a good bet that this course will aggravate conflicts within the state and party apparatuses and give a new impetus to the process of social differentiation within the country, and poison relations with the Eastern bloc countries.

Far from putting an end to the political crisis of the regime, the deal with South Africa is likely to sharpen it. At the same time, however, it is unlikely that the popular masses, excluded from all these decisions, will enjoy a process of political liberalisation similar to the present process of economic liberalisation. Perhaps to forestall future demands in this area, Samora Machel recently defined the role of the trade unions, which are said to be in the process of formation in Mozambique. They are to be strictly instruments for organising production, substituting for the previous structures which no longer have any attraction for the masses. ■

5. The Mozambique National Resistance is a coalition of reactionary groups, financed originally by the Portuguese billionaire Jorge Jadim, supported by Ian Smith's Rhodesia and then by South Africa, and recruiting among the former colonial military of Mozambique. It is trained and supplied by South Africa and, since 1980, operates particularly in the south of Mozambique. Its strategy is to sow terror and cause the maximum amount of damage to the Mozambican economy. One of its leaders, Orlando Cristina, since mysteriously murdered in South Africa, stated explicitly the goal of the MNR: 'It is a military and not a political organisation, which concentrates its efforts on overthrowing Machel. It is determined to liberate the Mozambican people from the Marxist oppression forced on it.' (*To The Point*, July 13, 1979).

According to Frelimo, Mozambique has lost since independence about 3.8 billion dol-

lars, 248 from the drop in South African trade, 568 million from the drop in the number of Mozambicans working in the South African mines, 2,647 million from the cessation of payment in gold of the miners' wages, and 333 million from the attacks by the MNR and South Africa.

6. *Le Monde*, February 28, 1979.

7. *Le Monde*, March 22, 1980.

8. Cited by *Demain l'Afrique*, Paris, April 7, 1980.

9. For an analysis of the EEC-ACP agreement see *International Viewpoint*, April 23, 1984.

10. One of the directives adopted recommends 'using economic mechanisms to stimulate investment in the private sector, particularly food stuffs'. Another advises greater recourse to 'foreign capital'. *Le Monde*, May 3, 1980.

11. *Marches Tropicaux et Méditerranéens*, April 27, 1984.

Foreign troops out of Grenada! Hands off gains of Grenadian masses!

Resolution of the UNITED SECRETARIAT
of the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL, May 10-14, 1984

1. The seizure of power by the New Jewel Movement (NJM) on March 12, 1979, started to destroy the semicolonial bourgeois state in Grenada which is located in the Caribbean, a strategically key area for American imperialism. Gairy's small army and police force were completely destroyed. This process progressed constantly towards a situation in which only the nominal ex-governor survived, completely stripped of political power. A revolutionary regime was set up and a process of social revolution was started.

The forms and rhythm of these revolutionary transformations were largely determined by the objective conditions on this small island:

- Extreme dependence on imperialism;
- Small and extreme lack of resources;
- Great weakness of the proletariat (only a few thousand stable industrial workers) side by side with a large layer of small peasants;
- A relatively large layer of semi-proletarian layers (unemployed, marginal temporary/short-term workers, etc.).

Despite these very unfavourable starting conditions, the relatively weak political organisation of the population at the beginning, and the continuing destabilisation efforts of imperialism and its allies in Grenada and the region, the revolutionary regime in the space of a few years was able to bring about a series of impressive gains for the toiling masses:

- Chronic unemployment was radically reduced from 50% of the workforce (and 70% of the women) to 12%, while in the rest of the Caribbean the basic tendency is in the opposite direction;
- Over three consecutive years an impressive annual rate of growth of nearly 4% was achieved (3% in 1980, 3% in 1981 and 5.5% in 1982), the supply of running water was increased by 100%, an effort was made to begin to develop agricultural cooperatives and a start was made in planning the economy;
- An important agrarian reform was initiated;
- A vast education campaign meant the number of illiterates fell to 3% of the population, the percentage of school-age children benefitting from secondary education went up from 11% to 36% and a plan was drawn up for achieving universal secondary education before the end of 1985;

- The poorest 30% of the population were exempted from taxes;
- Progress in the housing field with the renovation of some 18,000 houses, affecting nearly three quarters of the entire population;
- Introduction, with the revolutionary help of Cuba, of a free health service for the whole population accompanied by a 100% rise in the number of doctors.

In addition to this economic and social progress, there were similarly impressive advances in democratic rights for the masses:

- Mass trade unionisation of agricultural and unskilled workers, trade-union membership tripled to 90% of all wage earners on the island;
- Democratisation of the trade-union structures with regular general meetings, election of leaders, opening of trade unions' accounts to any member wishing to consult them;
- Rapid growth of women's and youth mass organisations which quadrupled in membership and the setting up of a small peasants organisation;
- Setting up of embryonic organs of mass self-organisation (zonal councils and workers parish councils) that had the power to submit the action of ministers, high-ranking civil servants and directors to their control and disapproval. They also discussed proposed legislation and the national budget before it was adopted. The Bishop team had a project of transforming these councils into genuine organs of political power;
- Building people's militia.

The rhythm adopted for the collective appropriation of the means of production was relatively slow and the priority in economic diversification was given to the development of tourism by the building of a modern airport. This was fundamentally due to the backward objective conditions of the country and not to weaknesses or errors of the revolutionary leadership. Under such circumstances, no alternative orientation would have led to better results.

Therefore, these conditions weighed heavily on the economic choices made by the revolutionary leadership as well as on the possibility of establishing a democracy based on councils. The absence of proletarian tradition worked in the same direction.

2. Imperialism considered the forma-

tion of Maurice Bishop's revolutionary government as a serious threat, despite the small size of Grenada. This hostility, which was immediately and continually expressed by destabilisation operations, was basically due to the following factors:

- The changes taking place in Grenada were likely to favour the extension of the revolutionary process to other Caribbean islands and neighbouring countries in a period of sometimes explosive instability due to the economic crisis (Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Surinam, etc.)
- The risk of a Grenada-Nicaragua-Cuba axis and the constitution of an international force of attraction for the masses in this region of the world;
- The fact that Maurice Bishop's government was the first revolutionary government established in a black English-speaking country, which imperialism thought could well stimulate a process of radicalisation in other parts of the world (North America, Great Britain, Black Africa).

Consequently, imperialism used a dual counter-revolutionary tactic:

- Preparation of direct military intervention by US imperialism, allied with some of its puppet regimes in the region;
- More underhand pressure, accompanied by limited aid granted under political pressure, from European imperialists to try to progressively 'neutralise' Maurice Bishop's revolutionary government.

3. The military intervention of US imperialism and its puppets represents the destruction of the state created after the March 1979 victory (councils, people's army, militia, administration) and the return to colonial juridical institutions. Therefore, it is the victory of a social counter-revolution. It is a grave defeat inflicted not only on the Grenadian masses but on the overall revolutionary process in the Caribbean and the neighbouring countries of the region. The initial consequences of this defeat are already making themselves felt — by the temporary consolidation of the reactionary regime in Jamaica, by the break with Cuba by Bouterse's regime in Surinam and by the creation of a small counter-revolutionary 'relay' army in the English-speaking Caribbean around the US intervention forces.

However, the defeat of the Grenadian revolution is not a crushing military dictatorship type of defeat. Imperialism and its puppets are having difficulty in eliminating all the gains of the masses won between March 1979 and October 1983. Centres for mass resistance have been set up. The New Jewel Movement maintains a certain continuity around the initiative of a few survivors of the Bishop leadership. US imperialism is obliged to 'moderate' repression due to the disapproval its military operation has run into internationally and even in the United States. Furthermore, the test of strength underway between the revolu-



Member of the People's Revolutionary Army under US 'escort' (DR)

tion and the counter-revolution in Central America, and the ongoing mass struggles and mass explosions like the one that occurred at the end of April 1984 in Santo Domingo, puts real limits today on the effects of US imperialism's counter-offensive.

It must be noted that this imperialist military intervention did not lead to a military confrontation with all the anti-imperialist forces — both for the reasons outlined by Fidel Castro as well as for more profound objective reasons. It would be irresponsible to reproach the Cuban leadership for this.

Undoubtedly, the risk of having to stand up alone to US military might well influence the strategy of many revolutionary organisations in the immediate future. The way out of this impasse is the extension of the revolutionary process in the region based on the ripening of *internal* revolutionary crises in each country.

4. The victory of the social counter-revolution in Grenada, unleashed by the military intervention of US imperialism, was facilitated in a decisive way by the seizure of power by the Coard faction of the NJM in October 1983, which overthrew Maurice Bishop's revolutionary government. The Coard faction which carried out this political counter-revolution was an authoritarian and substitutionist faction of a Stalinist type, whose bureaucratic orientation appeared clearly in the immediate measures which totally removed the toiling masses' possibility of exerting political power:

a) Hefty wage increases were granted for the army (among civil servants similar measures were proposed for party fulltimers).

b) The militia began to be disarmed.

c) It was decided to act against popular feeling expressed massively in the demand for the release of Maurice Bishop (in the council meetings, petitions in the workplaces, strikes, demonstrations, etc.)

d) There was firing on the big October 19 mass demonstration.

e) The deliberate assassination of Maurice Bishop and his closest collaborators on the orders of the Coard faction of the Central Committee and party. The soldiers were only acting on these orders.

f) The declaration of a state of emergency and the imposition of a curfew which in practice meant the neutralisation of the councils and militia.

All this went in the direction of a growing militarisation of the country. These measures profoundly traumatised and demobilised the Grenadian masses and meant they were incapable of responding vigorously to imperialist aggression. It even resulted in at least a fraction of the masses seeing this aggression as a lesser evil compared to the fear of an increasingly authoritarian regime installed by the Coard faction.

It is important to correctly characterize this faction as a Stalinoid one in order to understand why, even totally isolated from the masses, it nevertheless opposed the imperialist invasion, had its army fight the invaders and is today subject to imperialist repression.

We must denounce that repression and these abuses of the reactionary regime in Grenada while demanding that Coard and company answer for their crimes before a people's tribunal.

5. The fact that the Coard faction was able to develop inside the NJM, was able to win the majority of the Central Committee and take over the leadership reflects the type of social-economic pressures any ruling revolutionary organisation is subject to in a backward country. It also shows the pernicious influence that the Soviet bureaucracy can exert either through its direct intervention or through its objective weight, its example and its ideological influence over political currents without great experience.

The opposition of the Coard faction to the Bishop group cannot be fundamentally explained by Coard's personal defects, his arrogance, personalisation of power or by intrigues, the use of a 'secret faction', 'cliquist mentality', not to speak of the hypothesis of manipulation by imperialism and the manoeuvres of 'enemy agents'. This split reflected, given the above-mentioned pressures, two diametrically different conceptions of relations between the party and the state, between the leadership of the party and the masses, between the party and the masses, two different conceptions of the internal structure of the party itself. These different conceptions reflected, in a historical sense, even if only embryonically, divergent social interests, those of the proletarian masses on the one hand and those of an incipient bureaucracy on the other hand.

Furthermore, the conflict between the Coard and Bishop groups was not a recent phenomenon. Coard was a member of the Jamaican Workers Party, a hyper-Stalinist group, and was a faithful supporter of it in the 1970s when he set up the OREL. Later OREL was dissolved into the New Jewel Movement but remained a current with another political project.

The survivors of the Bishop tendency are themselves today conscious of the necessity to examine the causes of the Grenadian revolution's defeat. They say it is a subject for discussion and debate that will last for years.

The fact that they approved the rule whereby differences that emerged (which had been the case for at least the final year) inside the Central Committee should not be presented to the party rank and file nor to the masses, undoubtedly weakened the Bishop group and facilitated the bureaucratic faction's victory.

In a revolution like the one which had developed in Grenada, it was difficult during the first stage, for obvious objective reasons, to organise the majority of the working people in their workplaces and into bodies of political power independent of the party. The NJM itself only had a few dozen members. The seizure of power had not, strictly speaking, been preceded by a mass movement bringing about through its actions a

dynamic of control and self-organisation, although it immediately led to an impressive mass mobilisation, mass activity and mass organisation under the impulse of the revolutionary government.

Under the circumstances, an immediate separation of party and state bodies, given the extreme narrowness of cadre, was further very difficult. In these conditions, the NJM as a whole was bound to undergo, to varying degrees, substitutionist pressures to carry forward the revolutionary process. The conflict which broke out inside the NJM expressed a qualitative differentiation in the response to be given to such social and political pressures.

So, the tragic experience of the Grenadian revolution confirms the vital importance for the consolidation of a revolution of an articulation between institutionalized workers power, a correct conception of the party/state relations and a Leninist concept of building the party (extension of proletarian base, free political discussion, capacity to launch public discussion related with key interests of masses, etc.). Such an articulation, far from holding back the exercise of power by the proletariat or the consolidation of its dictatorship, is an indispensable guarantee for the safeguarding of this power both against the bourgeoisie and imperialism and the dangers of a bureaucratic process. It avoids the masses being taken by surprise by events as happened in Grenada.

The Grenadian tragedy must also help to reinforce the education of revolutionary militants throughout the world on why violence should never be used against the masses or between revolutionaries to settle political differences.

6. The main task of the Fourth International, given the victorious counter-revolution in Grenada, is to participate in the international solidarity movement with the Grenadian masses, and revolutionaries against American imperialism and its puppets and to explain the reasons of the defeat, in which the Coard faction's seizure of power played a key role. We will do all we can to build this.

— Foreign troops out of Grenada now!

— Hands off the gains of the Grenadian masses!

— Immediate and unrestricted restoration of democratic rights for the masses!

The Fourth International also participates in the international movement of solidarity with the Grenadian working class organisations and the Maurice Bishop and Martyrs of October 19th Foundation and works to defend them against any repression attempted by the reactionary regime established in Grenada. It will seek to alert its audience among vanguard layers to the increased dangers of counter-revolutionary military intervention against the Central American revolution, the Sandinista revolutionary government and Cuba. ■



AROUND THE WORLD



Luxembourg Fourth Internationalists launch election campaign

In Luxembourg, the European elections coincide with the parliamentary ones. The Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, Luxembourg section of the Fourth International, is running slates in both.

In the southern district, the LCR is running a slate of 12 candidates, and in the central district a slate of 10 for the parliamentary elections. In the northern and eastern districts, it calls for a vote for the traditional workers parties, the CP and SP.

In the European elections, the LCR is running a slate of 12 candidates. The Euro-candidates are also standing on the parliamentary slates.

A 25-page, illustrated election program has already been published and is being circulated, along with posters and other materials.

In the May 14 issue of its paper, *Klassenkampf*, the LCR presented a summary of its election program in eight points.

The first point explained the roots and character of the economic crisis:

"For nearly ten years now, the capitalist system has been showing what had nearly been forgotten, that it means continual crises that spare the rich but impoverish the workers of the developed and underdeveloped countries....In Luxembourg in the last three years, the masses of working people have lost 15-20% of their buying power....

"From Brussels...the Europe of the capitalists dictates how many plants have to be closed in ten countries. But when acid-rain clouds spread across borders, destroying whole sections of woodland, it has nothing to say....Protection of the environment has to be done on an international basis. But it is not profitable, and so the International of the capitalists has nothing to say about it.

"In a lot of industries, where the capitalists cannot make sufficient profits anymore, they are turning to arms production....The vicious circle has begun. As in the period of the last great crisis, the arms that are being produced will have to be used sometime."

The second point was unity and independence of the working people from the capitalist parties, the Christian Democrats and liberals.

"The Christian Democrat and Liberal government must go. That is clear. It has made the poor poorer and the rich richer. But that is not enough. In 1974, when the Christian Democrats were

forced to go into opposition, there was great rejoicing. The Social Democrats then got in bed with the Liberals because they said they were more progressive. The divorce came in 1979. Because in coalition with the Liberals, the Social Democrats had to carry out the policy of the bourgeoisie. And that was followed by five years of rule by the all-bourgeois bloc, with disastrous results for the working people.

"Now since the Liberals have shown themselves too openly to be the party of big capital, the Social Democrats want to get back into government in coalition with the Christian Democrats because, while they are reactionary, they also control a labor confederation. That is no alternative.

"The working people, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population, must develop their own policy, free from collaboration with the bourgeois parties and the mechanisms of 'codetermination.'...

"So, to oppose the block of the capitalist forces around the Christian Democrats and Liberals, we need a block of the workers organizations that will fight uncompromisingly for a policy against austerity and the capitalists.

"The united union demonstration on March 27, 1982 and the general strike of April 5, 1982 to defend the sliding scale of wages showed the full power of the Luxembourg working class. This strength could have been built on....

"We call for a workers government based on the unions, that will uncompromisingly carry out an antiausterity policy.

The third point was the following: "Instead of nationalizing the deficits of the steel companies and leaving the capitalists the profit, we call for nationalization without compensation and under workers control."

The statement explained: "It has become the fashion to fill the breaches in the industrialists' finances with state money without investing. Thus, tens of thousands of jobs have been eliminated and whole regions...dismantled, without the capitalists losing a hair off their heads."

In connection with this point, the LCR said:

"We also demand a stop to the running down of other sectors, such as transport, where public transport is being cut back and the quality lowered."

The fourth point called for "building strong, democratic and militant unions. The LCR is fighting to transform the unions from immobile bureaucratic apparatuses oriented toward compromises into fighting organizations in which all currents will have the full rights to express themselves and in which rank-and-file bodies such as the factory sections will be reactivated. None of the layers involved can rely on their problems being solved from above. They have to take their fate into their own hands."

There were subpoints on youth and women.

"The LCR and its youth organization, Fonken [Sparks] are for self-organization of the youth, self-managed youth centers, freedom in choosing a profession and union control of the training centers."

With respect to women, the statement said:

"The LCR calls for autonomous organization of women and unity with the workers movement. It calls for the full right to work for women, equal pay for equal work, good childcare centers financed by the state in all the major localities."

The fifth point was on defense of the environment.

"There can be no political neutrality on the environment....There are better forms of technology more suited to the environment. Applying them by no means represents stopping technical advance. But the big companies are blocking the development and application of such technology...because this runs counter to their short-term profit interests.

"The LCR by no means goes along with the sort of theories that call for zero-growth, but it holds that the destruction of the environment has reached proportions that demand urgent action. It calls for a state program to develop the new technologies, especially in the energy industry, and nationalization of the energy industry....

"We support the international movements fighting the destruction of the environment....Thus, we are for the national and international labor movement intervening more in all questions affecting the environment."

The sixth point called for "stopping the dismantling of democratic rights, the militarization of the country and the threat of war."

"The reinforcement of the intelligence service, the creation of new specialized police units to suppress rebellions, the legalization of phone tapping and the military requisition law...have set in motion a process whereby the capitalist state can act in a more and more repressive way against oppressed strata. The LCR demands repeal of all these laws and regulations.

"The building of the Nato base, WSA, of the US army base in Beles, the expansion of Findel for military purposes, the stationing of AWAC reconnaissance planes in Luxembourg and the stepped up drive to recruit youth to the army has in short

time rapidly increased the militarization of the country.

"The broad mobilizations in Luxembourg and the neighboring countries against the missiles have shown that the rulers are in a minority on this question....

"The LCR demands stopping and reversing the militarization of Luxembourg, immediate withdrawal from Nato and reduction of the military budget by at least 50%."

The seventh point demanded "solidarity with the revolution in Central America; solidarity with Solidarnosc."

"In the Central American countries, we can see...what the military power of the West and the USA represents — a means for oppressing whole peoples and continents that are trying to free themselves from the yoke of neocolonialism and capitalism.

"The LCR calls for active defense of revolutionary Nicaragua through material help, political support, sending international work brigades, twinning of Luxembourg cities with Nicaraguan ones....

"The Polish working class has shown what the working people in the so-called socialist countries think about this bureaucratic repressive caricature of socialism. They have also indicated in their program how a socialist, self-managed society really run by the working class can be built in those countries where capitalism has been abolished.

"The fate of the Polish working class and that of workers in the West are closely bound together. The Polish workers'

fight to free the imprisoned Solidarnosc activists, for trade-union freedom and to oust the Jaruzelski dictatorship is also our fight."

The final point was for unity of the workers movement.

"At a time when the Christian Democrats and liberals are in power and the bosses are attacking the wages and jobs of the working class, the basic gains of the workers movement, everything must be done to reinforce the workers movement and its organizations....

"Only a strong workers movement prepared to go on the offensive can carry through class-struggle proposals and actions. Therefore, every reinforcement of the workers parties strengthens the entire workers movement. Therefore, every strengthening of the workers organizations reinforces the potential of the entire movement to mobilize against the government and the bosses."

This statement was accompanied by a program of urgent measures for a workers government, which included some additional points, such as the following:

"Full political and social rights for immigrant workers." "Abolition of bus and train fares." "Diplomatic recognition of the Salvadoran FDR-FMLN." "Breaking all diplomatic, political, economic and military relations with South Africa, Turkey and the Latin American dictatorships."

Central demands in this program were for immediate introduction of the 35-hour week and restoration of the sliding scale of wages. ■

Canadian UAW prepares contract fight

The following article appeared in the May 7 issue of *Socialist Voice*, a revolutionary socialist biweekly published in Montreal. The article is by Gail Hurmuses, a member of the United Auto Workers Local 303.

TORONTO — "The period of concessions is behind us!" That was the message of the Collective Bargaining and Legislation Conference of the United Auto Workers (UAW) in Canada held here April 14-15. The UAW is gearing up for a battle to regain what auto workers were forced to give up in the last round of negotiations in 1982.

The conference discussed union policy for contract negotiations with all major employers of UAW members. The key showdown this year will be with General Motors and Ford. Contracts covering 36,000 workers at GM and 14,000 at Ford expire in September.

The upturn in the industry has meant record profits for the auto companies and a growing militancy among auto workers. Inspired by the victory of the Chrysler strike last year, the UAW recog-

nizes that now is the time to fight hard for gains.

The more than 300 delegates, representing 120,000 union members mainly from Ontario and Quebec, laid out a series of demands for the bargaining table and for political action in preparation for the expected federal election. Bargaining priorities include:

— A substantial immediate wage increase and restoration of the "annual improvement factor" (the yearly wage increase, traditionally 3 percent, that was given up in the last contract).

— Improvements in the cost-of-living allowance.

— Reduced work time to combat high unemployment. In the 1982 contract the union was forced to give up 10 paid personal holidays per year. The delegates were determined to recoup this loss in one form or another. An important aspect of the fight for reduced work time is the fight for the right to refuse overtime. Workers at many Ford and GM plants have been plagued by forced overtime.

The union is also demanding improve-

ments in supplemental unemployment benefits and pensions and the elimination of "new hire" rates. The last contract allowed the companies to pay newly hired workers less than the full wage for their first 18 months on the job.

The conference firmly rejected profit-sharing schemes currently being promoted by the auto companies with the agreement of the UAW leadership in the US. These programs, UAW Canadian Director Bob White said, add "uncertainty to workers' lives, leaving our wages more directly contingent on the success of management's decisions, interest rate fluctuations and the general direction of the economy."

The conference also rejected phony "Quality of Work Life" programs designed to undercut the union.

In general, the conference struck a militant and confident tone.

Women's issues were highlighted at the Toronto conference. Demands for mandatory affirmative action in hiring and job upgrading were adopted. The conference supported company-sponsored, union-controlled child care, a demand already won by UAW Local 1325 in Stratford, Ontario.

A delegate from Quebec explained the need to defend the workers movement from the corporate blackmail of companies moving or threatening to move out of Quebec.

The conference came out strongly for the defense and improvement of the medicare system. It proposed the elimination of user fees and extra billing.

In the keynote speech, Bob White urged UAW members to get involved in politics. He stressed the need to defend the New Democratic Party (NDP), Canada's union-based labor party, against the current attacks from the bosses and the media and called for stronger UAW support for the NDP in the coming federal election campaign.

Ontario NDP leader Bob Rae and federal leader Ed Broadbent both gave major talks to the conference.

White, Rae and Broadbent all argued that the key solution to the problems facing auto workers and workers in other industries is a protectionist campaign for increased Canadian content. This mistaken view, which provides no real answer to the fight against unemployment, was shared by most of the delegates.

UAW members at the conference were encouraged to get more involved in international issues. The main conference resolution supported "the long struggle of the Black workers in South Africa for freedom and justice and the desire of the Nicaraguan people to defend their revolution against the hostility and intervention of the US." The Canadian Labor Congress's peace petition and caravan were presented as priorities for the union.

At the end of the conference delegates joined the picket lines of striking Toronto hotel workers in a show of solidarity.

All in all, the conference was marked by a genuine fighting spirit. ■

Further step to unity of South African independent unions

A further step towards unity of the independent unions in South Africa has been achieved, after a period of seeming impasse. The formation of a unified trade-union federation was decided in April 1983. (*International Viewpoint*, No 31, May 30, 1983). A liaison committee has existed since that historic Athlone summit, the fourth of its kind. It is composed on a parity basis between the different union organisations.

But it then took almost a year for the unions involved in this process to agree, on March 3-4, 1984, to draft the document forming the future federation. One basic principle has already been adopted: the federation will organise industry-based unions, with the objective of eventually having one single union per industry.

This orientation was approved by the main organisations: the two federations, Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATUS) and Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), each of which has more than 100,000 members, the commercial union CCAWUSA, the food workers union FCWU, the municipal workers union of Cape Town CTMWA, and the General Workers Union organising dockers and metalworkers, that is in total, 24 unions representing more than 300,000 workers. The proposal made to

the non-industry-based unions, organising workers on a 'general' basis, was to have the status of observers in the liaison committee as the purpose of this body was not simply to exchange ideas, but to organise the foundation of the united federation.

The general unions present rejected this proposal and left the meeting. Among these was SAAWU, which has abandoned its original links with the black consciousness movement and today identifies with the South African Congress of Trade Unions and the Freedom Charter of the African National Congress.

It seems that in general the unified independent trade-union movement which could be launched towards the end of this year will not subordinate itself to the United Democratic Front (UDF). (See *IV*, No 46, February 13, 1984, for the role and character of the UDF.) The CUSA has chosen to participate in both the UDF and its rival the National Forum. The other five organisations have rejected affiliation in order not to divide their members. The media union MWASA, two of whose regional branches had joined the UDF have paid for this by a split. Thus, the independent trade-union movement has confirmed its role as an essential pole of unity within the mass movement. ■

Growing international support for British miners

British miners received a boost on May 12, with the decision of the Mineworkers International Federation meeting in Luxembourg that a 'coal blockade' of Britain be imposed.

The Federation includes unions in the United States, Australia, South Africa and West Germany, all of which countries supply coal to Britain.

According to reports in the *Financial Times*, 'a senior Polish trade union official denied reports that Poland would supply extra coal to the UK this year — though he confirmed that shipments of 540,000 tonnes of coking coal and nearly 200,000 tonnes of other coals would be delivered as contracts specified.'

The report continued: 'Mr Rajmund Moric, head of the new miners' union in Katowice, in southern Poland, said that British importers had asked for 100,000 extra tonnes of coal "but they won't be getting them".'

The decision of the Mineworkers International Federation gives the green light for militant miners in affiliated unions to demand action to stop extra coal supplies getting to Britain. This

would strengthen steps taken by rank and file dockers and rail workers in preventing coal being imported into Britain.

Such solidarity is desperately needed. As the strike enters its fourth month, hardship is becoming widespread among miners' families. However, the reaction of miners' wives is to become more involved in the strike, with wives joining pickets against scabbing in the Nottinghamshire area.

Those going to work against union orders are now being faced with expulsions from the National Union of Mineworkers. Talks began on May 13 between the Coal Board and the miners' union, but an early settlement of the dispute is widely discounted by observers.

All donations and messages of support to National Union of Mineworkers, St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S1 2EX. Telephone: (0742 700-388. Donations can be made directly by sending to Miners Solidarity Fund, Co-op Bank, West Street, Sheffield, Great Britain. Sorting code 08 90 75, account number 300 00 009. ■

Head-on class confrontation in 35-hour week fight

The lockout of IG Metall workers in the state of Baden-Wurttemberg marks a major escalation of the conflict over the 35-hour week, and more lockouts are threatened. The following is the editorial on the new phase of the struggle from *Was Tun*, paper of the German section of the Fourth International.

It's collusion. The bosses have launched a big coordinated offensive. Twelve hours after 13,000 IG Metall union members went on strike, the big auto companies all suddenly realized that they would have to shut down in a couple of days. Twelve hours after the start of the strike, *Bild* [the flagship of the right-wing Springer gutter press] was already running the provocative headline, "After Monday, 1.5 Million New Unemployed."

At the same time, *Bild's* more genteel colleague, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* [the liberal, prestige bourgeois daily] referred to last year's change in the printers union statutes [making it easier to call strikes] as an "emergency powers law" [this is the term applied to the law that cleared the way for establishing the Nazi dictatorship].

On the evening of the first day of the strike, the first and second TV channels fired broadsides at IG Metall and the striking workers. The "Day's Events" show on the second channel offered an embittered BMW (Bavarian Motor Works) worker saying, "I'm going to quit the union." On the first channel, anchorman Feller commented: "It's a good thing that the employers are locking out the

Factory on strike for the 35-hour week (DR)

workers. This strike has turned into a strike against the economy."

The bosses, the government and the media are waging a concerted assault on the striking unions.

The heads of the employers organizations have launched a crusade. They have a thoroughgoing political understanding of their class and its interests. And in every big confrontation with the unions, the way to wage class struggle from above has always been and remains a *massive lockout to bring the workers organizations to their knees*.

All the bosses' economic arguments are phoney. Are they having to halt production for lack of parts? If so, that's because they deliberately created the situation, either for the sake of profits (to bloat the inventories of parts suppliers in order to bring down prices) or to prepare the way for the lockout. Does stalled production mean they have no money to pay wages? Hasn't Daimler just accorded its stockholders record dividends of 21%, and BMW dividends of 24%? Aren't Daimler's declared profits running at around a billion Deutschmarks a year, BMW's at 200 million, and Audi's at 130 million?



Are the auto export markets threatened? Haven't the auto companies themselves transferred operations abroad in recent years — Mercedes and Volkswagen in Brazil and the US, Opel and Ford in Spain and Vienna, BMW in Steyr, Austria — and therefore themselves undermined car exports from West Germany?

And now the first few minutes of a strike by a few thousand engineering workers are supposed to be responsible for layoffs and crisis of the capitalist economy, even for the 2.2 million unemployed.

No, the reasons for the bosses' campaign are not economic. It's politics, class politics. The bosses are demanding the change that they sought by backing this [right-wing] government of "The Turn." The victory of the bourgeois parties was intended to open the way for the defeat of the organized workers. It was supposed to open a long period of Thatcher-style "law and order" in our country. The working class was supposed to be held in check by a reserve army of 3 to 4 million unemployed and profits kept high.

There is only one way to fight this effectively. The concerted action of the bosses, the government and the media has to be met with concerted action by the workers movement. The capitalist press cannot wage a hysteria campaign against the workers if it doesn't come out. The printers are already calling for new strikes. The bosses can't enforce a lockout if the teams of workers stay in the factories all the time as a guarantee.

The owners cannot lie, evade taxes, conceal profits or transfer capital abroad if the books and ledgers are opened. The bosses cannot split the union movement if the strike front is widened, if a readiness to strike is built up everywhere by strike referendums, and the broadest possible solidarity movement is built.

The postal workers are already planning demonstrations this week for the 35-hour week. The HBV [Handel, Banken, Versicherungen — Store, Bank, Insurance Clerks Union] is calling for strike action for the 35-hour week in the insurance companies.

The slogan of the 1979 steel strike suits the present situation quite well. "Today the bosses are locking us out, when are we going to throw them out?" ■

