

International VIEWPOINT

ISSUE No 57

16 July 1984

European peace movement at crossroads

Behind the
massacre of
the Sikhs

The US buildup
in the
Mediterranean



**N
O
T
O
N
A
T
O
B
A
S
E
S
O
U
T**

International Viewpoint

ISSN: 0294-2925

Fortnightly review of news and analysis published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

TURKEY	Why prisoners hunger strike to death by <i>Gerry Foley</i>	3
UNITED STATES	The meaning of the Jackson campaign by <i>Larry Cooperman</i>	4
INDIA	Why Indira Gandhi sent troops into Golden Temple by <i>Inder Singh</i>	6
	The Bombay communalist riots Interview with <i>Vibhuti Patel</i>	10
	Towards a step forward for the peace movement by <i>Jacqueline Allio and Jean-Louis Michel</i>	13
PEACE MOVEMENT	After the decision to deploy the Cruise by <i>Oskar van Rijswik</i>	16
	What is at stake in the Mediterranean by <i>Jean-Louis Michel</i>	18
	The truce between the government and guerrillas: PSR's view by <i>Socorro Ramirez</i>	23
COLOMBIA		
UNITED STATES	Portrait of a revolutionary: J. P. Cannon by <i>Alan Wald</i>	25
AROUND THE WORLD	Czechoslovakia, Canada	26
POLAND	The regime steps up repression by <i>Jacqueline Allio</i>	28

News closing date 9 July 1984

Subscribe now!

French francs preferred. Cheques to PEC. Postal transfers to PEC, CCP No 2 322 42T Paris. Bank transfers to PEC, BNP Robespierre, Account 230179/90.

Sterling: Cheques to International Viewpoint. Bank transfers to Williams & Glyns Bank, Account 14612874, Code 16-00-58, Islington, London.

Mail all subs to: IV, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

	6 months	1 year
Surface mail, all countries	95FF	175FF
Air mail		
Europe, Middle East, N. Africa	105FF	195FF
The Americas, Africa	130FF	240FF
Asia	145FF	270FF

Exchange rates :

	95	105	130	145	175	195	240	270
FF								
£	9	10	12	14	16	18	22	25
US dol.	16	19	22	25	31	37	42	47
Can dol.	19	21	26	29	37	40	49	55

1983 collection

A limited number of full collections of *International Viewpoint* for 1983 are available for 100 francs. This price includes surface mail postage worldwide.

These issues nos 21 to 43 contain consistent coverage on the anti-missiles mobilisations, the Central American revolution and the continuing activity of Solidarnosc in Poland.

Included in the collection are major documents of the Fourth International on the Iranian revolution and Southern Africa, and a major theoretical article by Ernest Mandel on permanent revolution.

Individual copies are also available of most issues during the year at a cost of 8 French francs including postage.

Rush your orders now!

BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

LAST NAME FIRST NAME

ADDRESS

CITY COUNTRY CODE

RENEWAL

SUBSCRIPTION

Why prisoners hunger strike to death

With the hunger strike in Istanbul's Metris and Sagmalcilar prisons nearing the end of its third month, after acknowledging that four prisoners, one after the other, had starved themselves to death, the Turkish dictatorship cut all contacts between the protesters and the outside world.

Since the last week in June, the authorities have been refusing to let either relatives or lawyers see the hunger strikers confined in the Haydar-pasa military hospital in Istanbul.

Gerry FOLEY

On June 24, Turkish officials announced the death of a fifth hunger striker, Hasan Telci. The communique was only ten lines long. It was carried in the censored press without comment or additional information.

"Hasan, the revolutionist, died under a cloak of silence," Corinne Taor wrote from Ankara in the June 28 issue of the Paris daily *Liberation*. "The same is true of Abdullah Meral, Haydar Basbag and Fatih Oktulmus before him.

"As for Sermet Parken, whose death was announced by his lawyers, no further news has come out about his fate. This young militant is said to have attempted suicide after having broken his pledge to continue the hunger strike to death. Whatever the facts about this, his death has not been denied by the authorities.

"Four or five deaths, may be it's six or ten, who knows?

"At any rate, the families and lawyers fear that there may be more dead, since a curtain of silence has descended over Haydar-pasa hospital, where another ten hunger strikers are confined. It is more than a week since their parents announced that they had passed a 'point of no return.'

"There is concern in particular for the young woman, Aysel Zehir, twenty years old. Her lawyer said that he had seen her reduced 'to the mental state of a three-year-old child.'

On July 3, one of the prisoners announced in court that the hunger strike had been ended on June 30. But the authorities have not confirmed this, although they reported the beginning of the protest and the deaths of four of the protesters.

It is, therefore, possible that the prisoner who reported the end of the hunger strike was tortured to make this statement in order to isolate the protesters.

The hunger strike to the death in the two Istanbul prisons is the third undertaken since the start of the year by political prisoners in Turkey. The first, in Diyarbakir prison in Turkish Kurdistan, was started on January 5 after Ismet Karak was beaten to death in front of his

cell and in the sight of a number of his comrades.

Before the protest ended in mid-March, 11 prisoners died. Their bodies were turned over to their relatives in lead-sealed coffins that could not be opened, under pain of prosecution, without an order from the military prosecutor.

The testimony of a prisoner at Diyarbakir released February 9 by Amnesty International in London indicates what impelled the eleven to make the ultimate protest. Amnesty noted that the details in this account were "consistent with other information received by the organization, including those gained in personal interviews and medical examinations of former prisoners."

"We were taken to Diyarbakir Military Prison number 5....

"After completing some brief registration formalities, we were taken to the hall where the cells were situated. After a good beating up operation, they confiscated all our personal documents and burnt them. They also tore some of our suitcases and smashed the rest, hitting our heads with them until our heads went through them so that the suitcases were left hanging around our necks! All of the cells and half of the hall were filled with sewage waste. In some cells it was deeper than knee-high. The weather was quite cold. They dragged all of us into cells and ordered us to wait there. It was impossible to sit in the cells because of the faeces and urine on the floor....

"In the morning a group of soldiers led by a Second Lieutenant came to the cells for the roll call and then they led us out. We were stripped naked. They allowed us five minutes to tear our clothes to pieces....Those who could not finish this task in a few minutes were beaten up with a wooden cane. They put the torn clothes into the sewage water and trampled on them. Then they gave us those pieces back and ordered us to put them on again. We tried to put on whatever was left of our clothes and we lined up in rows of four. With the command of a lieutenant we lay down in the sewage water. The same lieutenant demanded that we should carry the sewage waste that had been carted from the cells to the yard back to the cells with our hands

and arms....We took this disgusting mess back to the cells with our hands. While I was struggling to do this, the lieutenant was sitting on my back and beating me incessantly with his truncheon. The dogs were also at the scene, pulling and biting our ears, arms and legs, with every blow of the lieutenant. We were very vulnerable to the attacks of these trained dogs."

At Diyarbakir, a special effort has been put into humiliating the national feelings of the Kurdish prisoners, forcing them to learn ultranationalistic Turkish marches and pronouncements by heart. It has been made into a veritable center for genocide. (The testimony of another Kurdish prisoner held at another prison reported a guard threatening: "If Ataturk [the founder of modern Turkey] were alive, he would slaughter you as he did the Armenians! And we'd get rid of you lot!")

"There was a sewage pipe passing through the yard. During each outdoor period, many of the prisoners were forced to eat and drink from this sewage waste. Many of us were forced to plunge our heads into it and stay in this position for long periods....Hundreds of prisoners had their bones broken and their fingernails pulled off. At present in Diyarbakir...it is a luxury to be beaten with a truncheon....Instead they use handles of shovels and pickaxes, especially made thick wooden sticks and chains for daily routine beatings. By the time I was released the number of military songs and marches to be memorized had been brought up to 52. All of them were full of hatred, vengeance, hostility and racism against other nations and people."

These are only vignettes of the daily routine in Diyarbakir. This prisoner also testified to atrocious systematic tortures.

Like the H-Blocks

The Turkish military authorities tried to crush the most elementary human dignity of the Kurdish prisoners, as their British counterparts sought to do with the Irish prisoners in the H-Blocks of Northern Ireland.

"In the court buildings, the prisoners were put into cells, and the beatings continued until one was taken out to the Court. Those who had stomach or kidney illnesses felt the need to go to the toilet soon, but whatever their condition, prisoners were never taken to the toilet. The ones who could not control their bladder and wet their pants were first to be beaten up, and then were made to lick the urine on the floor."

The prisoner went on to say, "The very words Kurd and Kurdistan made them [the guards] mad. If anyone tried to speak in the Court about the practices in prisons...his life was in serious danger. Many of such prisoners were killed, and then presented as having committed suicide, and many had no alternative but to go on hunger strike. Of these hunger strikers, a few were 'con-

vinced' by torture to accept intravenous feeding, but some died as a result of the hunger strike.

"In June 1982, four inmates of ward 33 set fire to themselves in the ward to protest against the terrible conditions and inhuman practices. Three of them died.... On that day, a special operation was carried out throughout the prison in which hundreds of prisoners were injured. Dozens of people were killed in the cells and then presented as suicide."

Although the worst brutality is reported in Diyarbakir, the testimonies of Turkish prisoners held in a number of places make it clear that systematic deprivation of sleep, undernourishment and denying inmates the right to relieve themselves are standard practices in the Turkish prisons.

On February 24, about 1,500 prisoners in Mamak prison in Ankara also started a hunger strike. On March 19, a prisoner said in court:

"In the situation we are in, we are sick of living. Rather than live like this, we would rather die voluntarily and keep our dignity."

On April 5, the hunger strikers in Mamak ended their protest after 41 days, before any deaths occurred. It appears that they won some concessions, although they had to accept "training" in Turkish nationalism. However, since Ankara is the capital, the Turkish authorities there are most sensitive to international attention.

The Turkish authorities have been saying that the most recent hunger strike was designed to prevent Turkey from normalizing its relations with the European community after it has formally returned to parliamentary rule. Despite the hypocrisy of this claim, it shows that the ruling junta and its "parliamentary" servants are sensitive to international public opinion.

So, it is essential now to build an international campaign to stop the mass-torture and murder machine set in motion by the generals, and which is continuing to grind away and stamp out the lives of no one knows how many hundreds of Turkish and Kurdish youth.

Messages demanding a full accounting for the prisoners on hunger strike in Istanbul and protesting the conditions in Turkish prisons should be sent to President Kenan Evren, Cumhurbaskligi, Ankara; and General Necdet Ozturk, Sikiyonetim Komutanligi, Istanbul. Copies should be sent to the Comité pour la Défense des Droits Démocratiques et Humaines en Turquie, Librairie La Breche, 9 rue de Tunis, 75011, Paris, France.

Like the Irish H-Block hunger strikers who preceded them and whose example they follow, the prisoners in Turkey are fighting a system that is designed to crush them totally as human beings. Therefore, their resistance is a battle for basic human values. In that sense, it is a battle for all humanity, in which they deserve the support of every defender of elementary human rights. ■

The meaning of the Jackson campaign

The Democratic primaries are over. The three candidates, Walter Mondale, Gary Hart and Jesse Jackson, who survived the initially crowded field, are busily preparing for the San Francisco Democratic Party convention on July 16th.

Of the three candidates, only Jesse Jackson has presented a campaign substantially different from the typical Democratic Party primary campaign. It was preceded by an impressive voter registration drive which focused on unregistered Blacks, and consistently drew large, mostly Black, audiences to its events.

Larry COOPERMAN

The Jackson campaign arose in the context of a decade-long retreat by all sections of the Democratic Party from New Deal/Great Society liberalism, which was characterized by the granting of concessions to the working class to maintain social peace. If Gary Hart has become the spokesperson of the "Atari Democrats", it is because he has clearly articulated that retreat, denouncing Walter Mondale's ties to the labor bureaucracy. (1)

And Walter Mondale, of course, was vice president under Carter. The Carter presidency, which at times enjoyed a Democratic majority in both the House and the Senate, not only failed to enact the AFL-CIO's minimum program, but actually invoked the hated Taft-Hartley Act against the United Mine Workers of America during its 1977-78 strike. (2) Furthermore, the Carter administration was responsible for initiating cutbacks in the majority of social service programs (cuts which Reagan has accelerated since 1980) and for raising the level of aid to the Salvadoran junta.

So, the Jesse Jackson campaign, which proposes military cutbacks, increases in social service spending, an end to US intervention in Central America, normalization of relations with Cuba and the strengthening of civil rights measures, has elicited substantial support.

This support comes from several groups, including Blacks who see in the campaign a voice to express their interests as an oppressed minority, liberals or left-liberals who are unhappy with the retreat of the Democratic Party from what they perceive to be its historic ideals, and radicals and antiwar activists who see the campaign as an opportunity to force the Democratic Party to the left on the issue of US intervention in Central America. A section of this group also views the Jackson candidacy as leading to an eventual break with the Democratic Party by millions of Blacks and others who will find their efforts frustrated within the Democratic Party.

The actual outcome of the Jackson campaign, however, will not be tangible benefits for Black workers, or a return to the previous "ideals" of the Democratic Party, or, much less, a break with the Democratic Party. Rather, the campaign represents a coherent attempt to reform the Democratic Party.

While Jesse Jackson had a certain status as a civil rights leader, since he had worked with Martin Luther King, Jr., he was also saddled with the reputation as a maverick. Despite being mistrusted by established Black leaders and elected officials, Jackson nonetheless rose to national prominence.

Jackson's presidential candidacy, announced after months of speculation about his intentions, followed the election of Black or Chicano mayors in several important cities. In particular, it followed the victorious election campaign of Harold Washington in Chicago in which Jesse Jackson was centrally involved.

Rise of Black hopes

The rise of Black electoral hopes nationally, which led to the election of Black mayors in Chicago and Philadelphia, and which impelled the campaign of Mel King in Boston, was partially the result of the inability of Blacks to see another means of fighting for their interests. In particular, the inability of the labor movement to effectively respond to the social service cutbacks or to defend itself against the concessionary demands of the employers led Blacks to look to electoral solutions.

Despite the failure of capitalist electoral politics to provide a means for Blacks to defend the social conquests of the 1950s and 1960s — which were won

1. The "Atari Democrats" is a nickname for the "typical Hart supporter", otherwise the "Yuppies" (Young Urban Professionals). Atari is a computer game brand name.

2. The Taft-Hartley Act requires a 90-day "cooling off" period between the decision to strike and its start.

through mobilizations for civil rights — the elections appeared to be the only avenue for pursuing the defense of Black rights. This situation was due, in part, to the unwillingness of the Black leadership to consistently organize mass mobilizations, despite the clear success of several demonstrations, especially the August 27, 1983, march for Jobs, Peace and Justice which commemorated the historic 1963 civil rights march led by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Can the Democrats fulfil hopes?

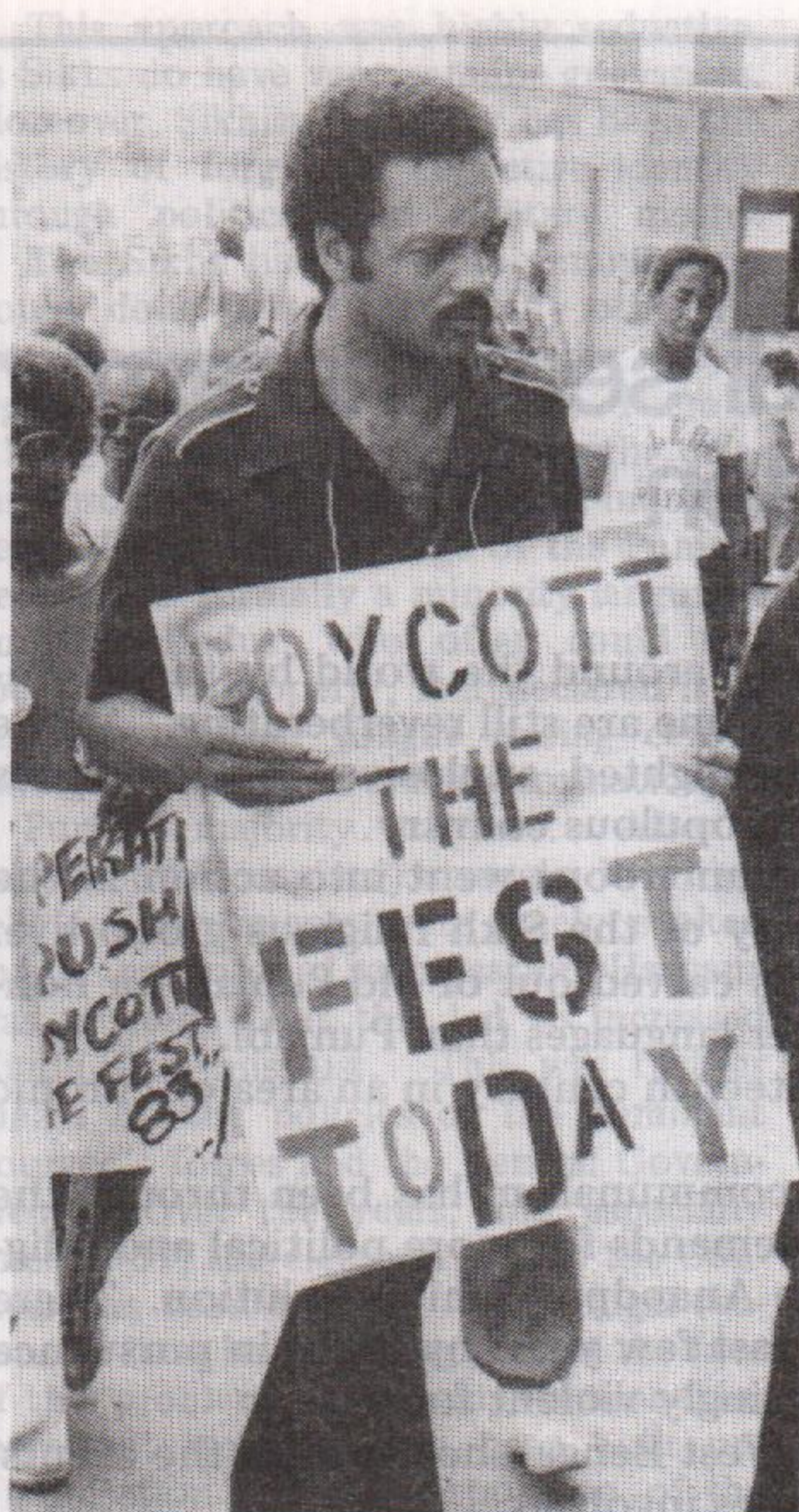
From 1964 to 1980, Black participation in elections declined in relative terms. Voter turnout among Blacks, for example, had slipped from 58 percent to 51 percent during that period. While all sections of the national Black leadership identified with the Black mayoral campaigns and the voter registration drives, there was serious division over whether a Black should run in the Democratic primaries and, if so, whether Jesse Jackson should be the candidate.

Andrew Young, former UN ambassador under Carter and currently mayor of Atlanta, Georgia, initially refused to support Jackson. Other prominent Blacks, including most of the Black mayors, Coretta Scott King and Benjamin Hooks of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), shared that opposition. In their view, a Black candidate would divide the Black vote in the primaries and possibly help to elect a more conservative Democrat, such as John Glenn or Gary Hart.

Professor Ronald Walters, in an opinion column in the June 12, 1983 *Los Angeles Times* supported the idea of a Black candidacy: "The threat to Blacks, severely buffeted by the policies of the Reagan administration, is that any reasonable-looking Democratic nominee brought forward by traditional politics would take a Black vote and then, once elected, implement Reagan-like policies.... In effect, the question is whether to check and reverse the rightward drift of the party with a seriously organized campaign behind a Black presidential candidate."

"The legacy of unresponsiveness continues today as former Carter-Mondale operatives move to intensify the rightward shift of the Democratic Party in response to what they perceive as the conservative mood of the American electorate.... At the very least a Black presidential candidacy would sharpen Black political mobilization to the ultimate benefit of the Democrats..."

The split over strategy among the Black Democrats in fact represented more than simply a debate over the effects of a Black primary campaign in the Democratic Party. It also represented the concern of a section of the Black leadership that Jackson's candidacy, fueling raised expectations among Blacks, would add to discontent in ways that could spill



Jackson leads Black boycott (DR)

over beyond election contests. This objection was cloaked mostly in attacks on Jackson's flamboyant personality, or accusations that his speeches ("hands that once picked cotton will pick presidents") were demagogic.

However, the evident success of the campaign (21 percent of the primary vote and 80 percent of the Black vote) quieted most of the critics. As the *Wall Street Journal* stated June 1, 1984, "Nearly all Black leaders, many of whom initially were antagonistic toward the candidacy, acknowledge the effectiveness of the Jackson effort." The success of the campaign in terms of Black voter turnout, indicated that there would be substantial benefits for the eventual Democratic candidate in the November presidential election. And Jackson, who has rejected running as an independent, made his attitude towards the other candidates clear when he stated bluntly, "We need each other."

At the San Francisco convention, Jesse Jackson delegates may engage in a fight over delegate selection rules. These rules, which deny delegates to candidates with less than 20 percent of the vote in a given district in most states, and which grant all of the delegates in a district to a candidate with an absolute majority in a district, have led to a wide disparity between Jackson's popular vote (21 percent) and the number of delegates pledged to him (9 percent).

At various times, Jackson has threatened to not support any Democratic candidate who does not agree to changes in the delegate selection rules. It is that implicit threat that Jackson must wield to gain influence within the Democratic Party.

The points in Jackson's platform which aroused the hopes of millions of Blacks and others will probably be downplayed to focus on the convention fight over delegate selection rules. It is not likely that Jackson will even try to get the Democratic Party to incorporate recognition of the PLO, normalization of relations with Cuba, immediate withdrawal of US troops from Central America, cutbacks in military spending or increases in social service spending into its platform.

Rather, the main objective of the Jackson campaign is to translate its popular support into a permanent voice within the Democratic Party for the Black leadership. As Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young noted: "Blacks will never again be taken for granted. That's probably the legacy of the Jesse Jackson campaign."

However, just as the incorporation of the labor bureaucracy into the Democratic Party failed to achieve even the most minimal objectives of the labor movement, Jesse Jackson's strategy will fail to produce any important gains for the millions of Blacks who place their confidence in him. The campaign may, however, result in important gains for a layer of the Black leadership, just as the incorporation of the labor bureaucracy into the top rungs of the Democratic Party produced tangible benefits to a layer of labor bureaucrats. Some labor leaders used those positions to obtain special privileges ranging from escaping prosecution on corruption charges to acquiring a diplomatic post. (Leonard Woodcock, upon retiring as president of the UAW, received a diplomatic appointment to represent the Carter administration in China.)

Despite the hopes of some activists that the Jackson campaign will lead Blacks toward a break with the Democratic Party, it is clear that its real dynamic is toward incorporation into the Democratic Party. To accomplish that it has successfully sought to overcome the alienation of many Blacks from the Democratic Party.

It is true that Jesse Jackson has succeeded in arousing hopes. However, the dashing of those hopes will not automatically produce a break with the Democratic Party. Without an authoritative leadership which points in the direction of independent political action, any disillusionment that does result from the campaign will most likely lead to demoralization.

The most likely result of the campaign is that it will lead to a renewed effort by Blacks to influence the course of the Democratic Party, even after the November elections. Just like the AFL-CIO's sad record in the Democratic Party, this would mean a prolonged and futile effort to reform a party than serves interests antagonistic to those of the vast majority of Blacks.

This article was first published in the July issue of *Socialist Action*, a monthly socialist newspaper published in San Francisco.

Why Indira Ghandi sent the army into the Golden Temple

The shock waves sent through India and around the world by the storming of the Sikh Golden Temple in early June are still reverberating. At the very least, this dramatic incident highlighted explosive contradictions building up in the world's second most populous country.

On June 2, some 72,000 crack Indian troops went into action in the province of Punjab, where the majority of the Sikh religious group live. The adjoining province of Haryana was carved out of old Punjab for non-Sikhs who speak or claim to speak other languages than Punjabi.

The Sikh religion arose in the seventeenth century in an area of chronic warfare between Muslims and Hindus.

The traditional expression of Sikh communalism has been through the Akali Dal party, which supports the demands for more political and religious rights for Sikhs summed up in the Anandpur Sahib resolution. There has been increasing agitation over the last few years by Sikhs in pursuance of these demands that has taken increasingly violent forms.

The following article was written in West Bengal shortly after the events, and indicates the complexity of the issues involved.

Inder SINGH

CALCUTTA — Several units of the Indian army, including tank battalions, as well as a large number of para-military units, moved in on the province of Punjab from June 2 this year. Their first target was the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar. The Golden Temple, the chief holy place of the Sikhs, was being used as a shelter by 'extremist' Sikh leader Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his followers. Attacked on June 5, they held out for two days. Ultimately, around 350 Sikhs were killed before the governmental forces could gain control of the complex. This official figure is contested by Akali leaders. Bacchan Singh Saral, a top leader of the West Bengal Akali Dal, for example, went on record stating that the actual number of casualties is close to double the government figure. This massive terror and murder campaign came in the wake of presidential orders throwing all foreigners out of Punjab, banning the publication of, or commentary on, any news regarding army activities in Punjab from inside the province, etc. Prolonged curfew was declared in Amritsar and other cities. Only the central government-controlled TV, All India Radio and the national news agencies were permitted to put out news. Thus, having apparently secured all its flanks, the government moved in to unleash a wave of terror unsurpassed in recent history.

At this stage, a brief account of events from June 1 would be useful. On the first of June, a gun battle at the Golden Temple complex left 11 dead and 25 injured. The government responded by imposing a 32-hour curfew in Amritsar. The next day, Prime Minister Gandhi

delivered a nationally publicised television speech roundly attacking the Punjab movement as 'extremist' and swearing to deal with it firmly before reopening negotiations. The decision to deploy the army was announced on the same day. Shoot-at-sight orders were issued in Ludhiana and curfew was imposed on four more cities.

This was followed by an all-out attack on the Golden Temple complex elsewhere. All kinds of one-sided news started coming out. The 'extremists' were accused of using LMGs, MMGs, mortars, rockets, etc. This was used as a justification for the army-organised massacre, including the murder of priests and others who could not be called terrorists or combatants in any way. By June 8, fighting was over inside the complex. Bhindranwale was 'found shot dead' — with the army disclaiming responsibility for his death.

Roots of the Akali movement

Sikhs all over the country were stunned by these events. The only comparison they could make was with the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre, when British imperialists slaughtered over a hundred people in Amritsar. Even Khuswant Singh, a well-known pro-Indira Gandhi Sikh journalist, turned in his Padma Bhusan award in protest.

At this stage we must turn to the history of the Punjab movement and its evolution over the last two years.

The roots of the Akali movement go back quite far. Indeed, in certain respects it is as old as independent India. Broadly speaking, the present movement had

three types of demands: political, economic and religious. There were some specific demands. There were also a number of grievances and general demands which had not been put in the form of any specific slogan.

To start with, the Anandpur Sahib resolution speaks of the Sikh quom (1) as a nation, and it calls for a federal structure for India, with extensive powers to the provincial governments. Only four items including defence and currency are to be left with the central government, according to the resolution. This demand stems largely from the growing economic might of the Jat-Sikh kulaks, combined with their fear that without these changes, they would remain a minority community deprived of their 'just dues', and dependent on the central government and the Hindus.

The demands which mattered most, when the Akali 'moderates' were firmly in control of the movement, related to specific problems faced by Punjab. During the setting up of independent states on the sub-continent, it was decided to split Punjab. Lahore, the provincial capital, went to Pakistan. The new capital, Chandigarh, is not a part of the province. It houses the administrative centres of two provinces — Punjab and Haryana, and is itself administered separately. The creation of Haryana as a separate province was itself an act fraught with grave consequences. As we shall see, it was formed as much on religious grounds as on linguistic ones. Nor was this done very smoothly. Even now, Haryana insists that final territorial settlement has not been made, and that the Fazilka and Abohar enclaves belong to Haryana rather than to Punjab.

The economic problems are still more complicated. Punjab is one of the provinces in India where the Green Revolution has had extensive success. But the development of capitalism in agriculture was not followed by an equivalent industrial growth. Merchants and other non-entrepreneurial capitalists still have a strong grip over the economy of the region. This has led to demands for concessions to promote industrial investment by private capitalists. But this is being hidden behind a facade of complaints about 'deprivation' or 'oppression' of the Sikh community or the province.

At the same time, the very development of agrarian capitalism has created new problems. The Green Revolution cultivation areas require high irrigation. But Punjab's share of the waters of the rivers Ravi and Beas is quite low. All sections of the local peasantry are up in arms about this.

1. This Arabic word (plural *Aqwam*) entered the North Indian languages through Persian. It has a vague meaning ("people," "tribe," "relations," "family," "group," "sect"). It is generally used in the Middle East to refer to an ethnic group that is not necessarily, or not yet, a nation, something like "nationality," or "nationalist," in the Soviet usage. For the Anandpur Sahib resolution see IV, No 35, August 1, 1983. — IV

To understand the religious and cultural issues involved in the agitation, we have to start from the 1940s. The partition of India in 1947 was along communal lines. Pakistan was a separate state for the Muslims. India was formally a secular state. But it had a distinct Hindu bias. As the Sikhs complain, at least one clause of the Indian constitution treats them as Hindus. However, given the electoral base of the Indian National Congress at that time [in which minorities were important], it was not possible to be overtly communal.

Even in those days, the Akali Dal led by Master Tara Singh tried to get recognition as a separate group who should be invited to the negotiations in that capacity. But the small, mainly urban-based Akali Dal did not have adequate muscle power to achieve that goal.

Sikh grievances

In post-independence India, the status of Sikhism has often mixed with the political issues. On the political level, we should take note of two changes. The passing of the leadership of the Akalis from Master Tara Singh to Sant Fateh Singh reflected the transformation of the Akali Dal into a vehicle for the aspirations of the Jat-Sikh kulak peasantry. But in spite of their being the biggest group in Punjab, the Jats were kept out of power by electoral combinations against them. It was in response to this situation that they hit upon what seemed an ideal solution. If their movement could be given a religious colour, if the Sikhs could be shown as an oppressed community-cum-nationality, the electoral base could be widened substantially, as Sikhs comprise 52% of Punjab's population.

This approach was highly seductive, as Sikhs do have very genuine grievances. Moreover, Sikhism's history has been the history of forging a collective identity through political and military means.

The Sikhs have, as a community, no doubt done better than many other Indian communities. But some major legitimate grievances still exist. There is a basic feeling of insecurity. In the original province of Punjab in post-independence India, the language of the Punjabi people was formally a minority language. Punjabi Hindus, who often could not speak Hindi properly, still declared it to be their mother tongue during census taking. This prevented the formation of a Punjabi majority province. After a (largely Sikh inspired) struggle, in which religious sentiments were freely evoked for the purposes of mobilisation, Haryana was created. But this led to increased Hindu-Sikh mistrust. This was further fueled by the policies of the dominant bourgeois forces and the Central Government. Over the years, and especially since 1967, the electoral base of the Congress has been eroding. Centrifugal tendencies have been developing. In the face of this problem, an intensive 'national integration' campaign has been built up. Hinduisation and the imposition of the Hindi language have been two of its key planks.

Punjabi Hindus are encouraged to declare Hindi to be their mother tongue. Here we may add parenthetically that similar tactics are used in other parts of India as well. Thus, Bhojpuri, Chhattisgarhi, Maithili and some other languages have been declared to be mere dialects of Hindi.

In Punjab, this means that the 48% non-Sikh population also claim, mostly, to be non-Punjabis. On one hand, this has increased Sikh apprehensions about

the future. On the other hand, it has strengthened the false claim that the Sikhs are a nation, defined as such by their common religion.

Hindu communalism

The last two years have seen a sharp rise in Hindu communalism. It is not the activities of openly communal organisations like Viswa Hindu Parishad, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh or the Hindu Suraksha Samity that is most worrying, but the turn in Congress (I) policy and the policy of the government. The Congress (I) is even today the only 'national' party of the ruling class. As its old constituency, the so-called 'core minorities' turn away from it, it is making an all-out effort to rally the Hindu upper and intermediate castes behind it. This is noticeable at all levels — from Prime Minister Gandhi's display of religiosity to the open support given to intermediate caste-based private landlord armies which oppress the low-caste rural poor to equally open support to anti-Muslim, anti-Sikh or anti-tribal communal forces in every province.

The natural reaction of the religious minorities has been to come to distrust the government even more than they had done previously. Those who have a militant community religion tend to turn even more inward and reply to Hindu communalism by a growing minority communalism of their own.

Given this situation, and the necessity to combine religion with politics in order to build up a mass appeal, it was hardly surprising that the 'extremists' in the movement could seize and retain the initiative. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale represented the organised 'extremist' faction. As religious overtones be-

Akali negotiators on roof of Golden Temple complex (DR)



came ever stronger, 'moderates' such as former chief minister Badal, former union minister Barnala or even Sant Longowal, did not dare to oppose him too sharply.

At the same time, the 'moderates' realised that they had caught a tiger by the tail. They wanted to use the mass movement as a powerful weapon of pressure to achieve their specific economic and political goals. Not a few of them would have preferred to forge a long-term Akali-Congress (I) alliance. Some factions within the Congress (I) also wanted this to happen. But their hopes were dashed by Mrs Gandhi.

To return to Bhindranwale, as his influence grew, the movement became more and more 'uncontrollable'. The demand for Khalistan [a Sikh state] or even for the proposal for restructuring centre-state relations made in the Anandpur Sahib resolutions, was not actually on the negotiation table. Nor were the religious demands like an all-India Gurdwara Act (2), radio broadcasts from the Golden Temple, etc., the key demands. These gradually displaced the demands concerning Chandigarh, Fazilka and Abohar, Ravi-Beas waters, and the like.

The role of the left

This rise of extremism was a direct result of the government's tactics. For the last two years, dilatory tactics were adopted deliberately. Every time there was the possibility of a negotiated settlement, some attacks would be made on Sikhs, and the talks would receive a setback.

Equally important was the support given to Hindu communalists and their organisations — like the Hindu Suraksha Samity. In Haryana, chief minister Bhajan Lal, Indira Gandhi's creature, openly aided attacks on Sikhs. No effort was made to win over the 'moderates' and isolate the 'extremists'. On the contrary, one might say that it was undeclared government policy to let the 'moderates' be discredited.

The response of the left was weak and inadequate at best. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) was in a total mess right from the start. The CPI(M)'s social base in Punjab is practically the same as the Akali Dal's. As a result, the party took an opportunist stance. Eventually, it gained nothing. Narkisen Singh Surjeet, the Punjab CPI(M) leader, tried to act as a go-between. But he was ultimately treated as an emissary of Mrs Gandhi, rather than as an 'honest broker'.

At the all-India level, the CPI(M)'s call for restructuring centre-state relations could have been another theme to bring the party closer to the Akalis. But the CPI(M) is also extremely concerned about 'national integration', by which it means you have to oppose any movement against national oppression, regional imbalance, etc., the moment it steps out of the purely constitutionalist framework.



Rioting Hindus in Punjab (DR)

In recent times, more than one CPI(M) leader has voiced the idea that after the next parliamentary polls, they might be in a position to prop up a minority government at the centre, no doubt in return for concessions. With all these calculations, the CPI(M) eventually lined up against the Punjab movement when the crackdown began. The political bureau registered its formal unhappiness, but two political bureau members, M. Vasabpunnaiyah and West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu, also expressed the view that the central government had been left with no options other than sending in the army.

The Communist Party of India, which has its base among a wider cross-section of the Punjabi population, took a more formally correct position. It called for tripartite negotiations between the Akalis, the central government and the 'national' opposition for a political settlement. It supported a few Akali demands, while opposing terrorism and violence on either side, and so on. But when it came to the final reckoning, the CPI issued a statement saying that the 'entire responsibility' for the events leading to the army takeover and the mass killings lay with Bhindranwale and his followers. The CPI's English language weekly *New Age* talked of the relief that the assault brought to Punjab.

Most far-left groups supported a number of the specific Sikh demands, while opposing Sikh terrorism as much as Hindu communal violence, but they also pointed out that the former sprang from the tactics of the centre.

But practically all shades of the left failed in two crucial ways. The first of these related to the problems of the hundreds of thousands of seasonal (migrant) agricultural labourers. In peak season, they come to Punjab from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other provinces. Given the extreme poverty in their own areas, they are willing to work for lower

wages than their Punjabi counterparts. This forces down the wage rate. This in turn becomes a communal weapon used by Hindu and Sikh communalists alike.

The Anadpur Sahib resolutions are, quite naturally, practically silent about the rural poor. A guaranteed minimum wage, based on the Consumer Price Index, is the minimum immediate requirement for the agricultural labourers. Quite understandably, the kulak-based Akali Dal could not offer this and mobilise the agricultural labourers around this slogan. But for the left not to raise this as a major agitational slogan was an error of serious proportions. This was *the* class issue in Punjab. Even if one had the sole idea of combatting communalism, this slogan could have played a good role. The Sikh agricultural labourers' prejudice against their Hindu migrant counterparts could have been broken and the communalists on both sides given a rebuff.

The second failure of the left, including most of the far left, was their inability to understand the role of communalism and how to combat it. Communalism does not mean — contrary to a belief that it is a force that is declining, if slowly — the activities of the fringe groups or a few organisations like the RSS only. Communalism is present in the very fabric of Indian social and political life, including in the constitution and other laws. Even the much vaunted Nehru brand of secularism is a fake and a fraud. The Nehruite definition of secularism, accepted by most of the left, is equal toleration of, and equal patronage for, all religions. What criticisms are made are limited to the questions of how well this equality is applied in practice. This means that the left does not fight seriously for total separation of religion and education, for an end to state aid to

2. Temples. — IV

propagation of religion, etc. The left has failed to realise that the creation of multiple spheres of intolerance, kept from uncontrolled clashes by the army and the police, is not secularism. Given today's situation, there is perhaps no alternative to supporting, as a temporary measure, the demand for equal right to propagate all religions through the radio, especially as Hinduism is propagated in that way. But it is up to the left to challenge this pseudo-secular approach, which actually aids communalism, and to put forward boldly the view that religion is an individual's private matter, and that secularism means total absence of state involvement in the propagation of religion.

The failure to challenge the official version of secularism has often been compounded by a false attitude of sympathy to minority communalism, often for crude electoral advantage. A glaring example is the repeated alliance between the CPI and CPI(M) on one hand and the Muslim League on the other. Similarly, though not for electoral alliances specifically, many far-left groups failed to oppose Sikh terrorism. Instead of clearly pointing out the futility of terrorism as a weapon of struggle, and arguing that a communal response to Hindu communalism will not in the long run benefit the Sikhs, and especially the toiling masses among them, they often kept silent.

Against government repression

As a result of the near total disarray among the major (reformist) left even before the military crackdown, their response to that was shabby at best. After the first few days, the CPI and CPI(M) leaders finally stopped congratulating the central government on a job well done. Together with three other parties, they issued a call for the resumption of talks and a quick political settlement. But they remain firm in their overall appraisal of the situation, and have added their voices to the chorus about the foreign hand which is supposed to be trying to destabilise India.

The far-left groups' positions and campaigns are not all known. With the continuing ban on reporting from inside Punjab, and with total disruption of communications between Punjab and the rest of India, the role of the far left at the present stage in that province remains unknown. In Calcutta, a significant step was taken on June 12. Four organisations — the Provisional Central Committee CPI (ML), the Indian Peoples Front, the Organising Committee of Communist Revolutionaries and the Inquilabi Communist Sangathan (Revolutionary Communist Organisation — Indian section of the Fourth International) organised a public meeting to condemn the repression in Punjab. Several hundred people attended the meeting. Apart from the representatives of the organisers, several other far-left groups also sent speakers or solidarity messages. A lead-

er of the Akali Dal, West Bengal also spoke at the meeting. A resolution was passed, condemning the slaughter in Punjab, and pointing to the central government as the primary guilty party.

The resolution also demanded immediate withdrawal of the army from Punjab, a judicial enquiry into the shootings to be conducted by a Supreme Court judge, withdrawal of censorship, immediate halt to the use of draconian laws like the National Security Act, and the release of all political prisoners including Akali leaders Longowal, Tohra and Talwandi. It was also resolved to continue this campaign collectively. A number of street corner meetings were held.

The Sikh response was an initial stunned disbelief that this could have happened, followed by countrywide agitations. In Hyderabad, a several hundred strong demonstration was brutally attacked by the police. Demonstrators were also attacked in Dadar (Bombay), Ahmedabad and other places. In Calcutta, over 5,000 Sikh men and women responded to the call for a demonstration issued by the Akali Dal, West Bengal. A 48-hour-long Sikh strike was also observed successfully.

Even moderate Sikhs have become extremely embittered after the attack on the Golden Temple and the murder of hundreds of Sikhs. Former central minister Swaran Singh, Khuswant Singh M.P. and others denounced the massacre.

The large scale deployment of the army notwithstanding, incidence of terrorist attacks have increased sharply in the last fortnight. A small minority, now bereft of any control, is running amuck, and is merely providing grist to the government's mill by its action. At the same time, the Hindu Suraksha Samity continues its activities under virtual state protection.

The Sikh unrest also spread quickly inside the army. Sikh soliders stationed in Rajasthan, Bihar, Maharashtra, West Akali Dal leader Gurchuran Singh (DR)



Bengal, etc., rebelled, and in a number of cases shot down officers who tried to stop them. Eventually, over forty soldiers were killed in different parts of the country before these revolts could be quelled. In most barracks, Sikh soliders have been disarmed. Considering the quite high proportion of Sikhs in the Indian army, this poses a serious problem for the ruling class.

The 'foreign hand'

A favourite refrain of Mrs Gandhi has been the theme of the foreign hand, which is always trying to destabilise India by inciting internal dissent and external aggression through Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka.... This rhetoric has been getting more and more strident in recent times. From the third or fourth day after the army campaign started, the 'extremist menace' took a backseat in government propaganda to the foreign threat. Bangladesh and Pakistan were abused for misreporting events. Huge weapons caches containing Pakistani and Chinese weapons were allegedly discovered. The country was, predictably, asked to rally round the government in this perilous moment. This jingoism was inevitable. Once the 'extremists' had been crushed, or at least their main forces broken up (and that is certainly the case in Punjab, where several thousand people have been arrested), they could no longer be held up as the chief obstacle to 'national integration'. So, the campaign shifted to traditional themes. Pakistan is, of course, India's traditional enemy. One has to remember the complete unity that prevailed in the Indian parliament last time India waged war on Pakistan.

The threat of war is not illusory. As both India and Pakistan face increasing internal dissent, a rousing patriotic war may well seem the best device to extricate the rulers of both countries. The Indian bourgeoisie faces the need to restructure industry, and the corresponding need for a qualitative increase in attacks on democratic rights in order to accomplish this. This means more than the 'normal' attacks on the rights of striking workers, etc. The government is out to destroy totally the elementary organisations and defenses of the proletariat, as well as to curtail the rights of sections of the opposition bourgeois forces. In this context, war and the threat of war and accusations of lack of patriotism are means that can serve the government's ends.

At the same time, India also has to take on the task of policing the entire sub-continent and keeping it safe for world capitalist profits. As the weaker regimes in India's neighbouring countries totter from crisis to crisis, Indian intervention tends to loom larger and larger as a possibility. In that sense, the current repression in Punjab is a link in the chain of repression that the Indian bourgeoisie is trying to forge for the entire sub-continent.



Indian women building a dam (DR)

The Bombay communalist riots

May 18 saw the beginning of two weeks of violence between Hindu and Muslim communities in the Indian province of Maharashtra, especially in the towns of Bombay and Bhiwandi (north of Bombay).

Over 230 people, mainly Muslims, were killed and 780 injured in the worst outbreak in the province for over ten years.

As the economic situation of the country worsens, tensions between different groups in Indian society are rising. The Indian government is leaning increasingly toward implicit support for Hindu revivalist groups.

In this case the violence was directed against the predominantly Muslim population of Bhiwandi and was provoked by the actions of the Shiv Sena Party, a reactionary Hindu community organisation which opposes any Muslims living in India.

Anti-Muslim feeling is reflected in generalised discrimination at every level in Indian society. The police in the province were therefore quite happy to 'turn a blind eye' and in some cases connive in the violence. In one incident, 27 innocent women, men and children were massacred in a house in Bhiwandi. The police were called but failed to arrive until it was all over.

One of the more ominous aspects of this and the government's handling of the situation in the Punjab is the way in which the army is becoming the first resort.

Mogens Pedersen spoke to Vibhuti Patel, a member of Inquilabi Communist Sangathan [Revolutionary Communist Organisation], Indian section of the Fourth International, about the background to the violence.

Question. Communalist riots have been going on in Bombay for several days. What kind of confrontations are taking place, and what is meant by the term 'communalism'?

Answer. Communalism means communal disharmony. That is, different religious or religious-chauvinist groups coming in to conflict with each other. It can be between Hindus and Muslims,

Muslims and Muslims (among Muslims there are also sects, Shia-Muslims and Sunni-Muslims), among Akalis and Niran-karis — different factions of Sikhs, — Sikhs and Hindus, Hindus and Christians. But at present the most pervasive communalist conflicts are between Hindus and Sikhs and Hindus and Muslims.

Q. What occasioned these latest riots in Bombay, and who took the initiative

to start the riots?

A. The riots started in Bhiwandi. Bhiwandi has a history of the worst communalist riots. In 1969 it had very massive and sustained riots. At that time the main brunt — as in all communal riots — was borne by the minority, mainly the Muslims.

This year during the Shiva (a well-known Hindu Lord) celebration, the leader of Shiv Sena (1) made a very communalist speech. Shiv Sena is a fascist organisation with a middle class and lumpen base, which is well trained in hooliganism. The Shiv Sena leader made vicious remarks about Hazreti Mohmen Paygamber, a Muslim saint [the prophet Muhammad], and he also said that unpatriotic elements and traitors would not have any place in India. This was published in an Urdu journal and it hurt the feelings of many Muslims.

Now, Bhiwandi is a center for the power-loom industry. Bombay has a history of textile industry, textiles were the first industry in Bombay. In the course of rationalisation and mechanisation, when the old power looms became redundant, sometimes the mill owners, the factory owners, would give one or two power looms to their loyal workers as a gift (sometimes they would sell them at a favourable price), because they don't have any use for them. These workers are mainly Muslims, because Muslims are traditionally well-known weavers, and they had established themselves in Bhiwandi. In one corner of their small tenements they will keep their power looms to work on. So, we can say that they have a working-class or lower middle-class standard of living. Those who could acquire more power looms, might also hire labourers. Besides, in several places in India, some Muslims are well established traders — we can compare them with the Jews.

So now, especially with the economic crisis, communal sentiment is used everywhere and in fact in the last ten years a series of communal riots have taken place, all of them in industrial or trade union centers. The communal elements, like Shiv Sena, just to throw the Muslims out, have used techniques like hooliganism, arson, beating, mass rape and massacres of Muslims. The same thing happened in Bhiwandi this time.

To our knowledge this is the first time that such a serious massacre has taken place since partition. (2) At the time of partition such massacres took place in Gujarat, Punjab, West Bengal and Kashmir. Now many people are expecting that such an intense situation will continue, because it seems to be spreading throughout Bombay. The riots have spread even where Muslims are not a considerable element.

1. "Sena" means army.

2. The partition in 1947 of the former British India into two independent states, India and Pakistan, with provinces and princely states with a Muslim majority being included in Pakistan (except Kashmir and Jammu, which were divided after armed confrontations).

Q. *The Muslims are not able to defend themselves in any way?*

A. No, because they are just 14% of the Indian population, and in Maharashtra state probably about 12% of the population. So, how can they defend themselves? Besides, if you take any economic indicator, the Muslims are worse off — the level of education, cultural development, job opportunities and the per capita income are generally lower among the Muslims. Even in the bureaucracy, the military and government offices, Muslims are discriminated against, and this whole bogey of Muslims being traitors and Pakistani agents is always being used against them. In general they are worse off, except for a minor group of traders and shopkeepers.

Q. *You have said that maybe a thousand people have been killed during the last week. Is there any estimate of the number of refugees?*

A. At the Victoria Terminal Station alone a thousand Muslims have taken refuge; many of them on station platforms in Bombay Central. In areas like Bhiwandi, most of the Muslims have left the place. They are so demoralised and scared, that they don't want to enter that place again. So, tens of thousands of Muslims from the affected areas have gone.

Q. *So, Shiv Sena is the organisation mainly responsible for the killings, arson and robbing. Is it functioning completely independently or are there any connections with the major, traditional political parties?*

A. They have been used by Congress time and again. In 1969 Shiv Sena was formed with the blessing of Congress (I) (3), mainly to break the hold of Communists in the trade-union movement, to demoralise and break the Communist movement that was becoming stronger. In the industry and trade-union movement in Bombay, Communists played a very important role, and they also had strong organisations among squatters and in the slums. So, Shiv Sena goons equipped with arms and ammunition systematically beat up Communist activists. They murdered a big leader, Krishna Menon, in 1969. The main slogan of Shiv Sena is 'Our Bombay', 'Bombay is Ours', so among the targets are also Gujarat and south Indian people. Their activity was to burn their shops, throw stones sometimes, scare them, rob things.

But there was not such a great amount of massacre. Over the past four to five years many communal organisations have come up. After the emergence of Janata Party rule in 1977, communal forces got state patronage; organisations like RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh — National Volunteer Corps), Jan Sangh, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (Universal Hindu Conference), Patit Pawan Sangathan. (4) They are anti-Communist, anti-Muslim, anti-Dalit (5) and anti-poor organisations. A series of such organisations started

coming to the fore. Their main concern was to do strike breaking activity, and to break the new rise of self-organisation among untouchables and tribals. A strong and militant tribal movement has developed in various parts of Maharashtra. In the textile strike also, Shiv Sena played an active role in killing workers, and throwing stones at the public meetings of the workers.

Q. *Is it correct to say that Congress (I), Indira Gandhi and the government have been inspiring communalist sentiments, maybe because of the coming general elections? Is such an attempt to inspire Hindu chauvinism a partial explanation of the fact that the riots are occurring now?*

A. Earlier Congress (I) always claimed to be representing the interests of four sections of the Indian population: tribals, untouchables, Muslims and Christians. That meant Congress was sure of 30% of the votes, on the basis of which it won the elections in 1971 and 1980. But now the minorities have lost faith in Congress, because of the increasing experiences — for all these four groups — of social discrimination, riots and growing marginalisation from the Indian social mainstream. Now Congress wants to have a different image for capturing votes. That is why it is supporting Hindu revivalist organisations, and that is also why they talk less about secularism. Previously, Congress used to talk a lot about secularism. But now it keeps liaison with many rightist forces.

Q. *It has been mentioned in one of the daily papers that a specific reason for the extension of the riots — not the outbreak of the riots — is that owners of land and construction companies were interested in forcing out a great number of slum dwellers to be able to go on with their building projects, to get some more profits. Is there anything in that?*

A. The construction industry has a big mafia, it also has political patronage from Congress (I), and the latest series of frauds that created a stir in Indian politics were all related to the construction industry, because they are one of the main suppliers of funds to Congress. These business tycoons, these giants in the construction industry, maintain systematic political operations, they have strong connections with the underground, and they are in touch with Shiv Sena. They have used this opportunity to get this land, by calling on hooligans from outside, who are very good in butchering, who are very confident butchers. At present Muslims are bearing the brunt of it. But it is a threat to other slum dwellers also: 'Okay, if you don't listen to us, the same thing will happen to you also'. That is demoralising all slum dwellers, and now these Muslim people, after these experiences, will never go to that slum again. Either they will be pavement dwellers, or they might go to the far suburbs, the outskirts of Bombay, because in the villages they cannot get jobs. They will

have to work in Bombay, because Bombay provides relatively better opportunities for employment, but they will be marginalised, once more marginalised, even further marginalised.

Q. *Is it possible for the trade-union movement to mobilise against the right-wing organisations? The textile workers were on strike for a year and a half, and we still have the militant organisations of the textile workers, led by Datta Samant. You mentioned that Shiv Sena attacked the textile workers during the strike. What is the response? Does the organisation of Datta Samant take up the problem of communalism?*

A. When you meet textile workers, they all say that the masses are not involved in the riots. It is the professional hooligans who are creating terror among the Muslims. So, there is nothing spontaneous, two communities are not fighting; it is one-sided violence perpetrated by Shiv Sena goons. The workers grasp this very easily. They say 'whatever tactics they used to break our strike, now they are using against the Muslims'. So there is sympathy among the workers for the victims, and the scope of it will have to be seen in the coming period.

But neither the Communist parties nor other radical groups have taken the question of communalism seriously. There has been no systematic work done on this question, and always they are just harping on class issues: 'once we have a revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, all these problems will be solved'. That is the attitude of most of the left parties. Moreover, in the electoral field many of them, CPI (Communist Party of India) and CPM (Communist Party of India-Marxist) have made electoral alliances with communalist parties. They have always made compromises, to take votes on a caste and communal basis. And all parliamentary parties encourage and use communalist sentiments.

Q. *In this situation, what can and will be done by far-left organisations, including the Revolutionary Communist Organisation, to mobilise against the right-wing attacks?*

A. The first thing is to give moral support to the communities, to go and stay in that area, be with them, so that they can feel more protected. And whatever physical help that can be given, will be given. We will stress the need for

3. "I" stands for Indira.

4. In his book *Can Pakistan Survive?* Tariq Ali notes about communalism and RSS (established in 1926): 'the more extreme elements within the Hindu Mahasabha had initiated the formation of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) — National Volunteer Corps — an organisation designed to provide shock troops for Hindu communalism. The RSS organised systematic attacks on Muslims and carried out acts of arson and sabotage designed to demoralise the minority community. They were denounced by Jawaharlal Nehru: 'Hindu communalism is the Indian version of fascism'. A more precise analogy would have been with the Orange Lodges and Loyalist communalism in the North of Ireland.' (p.21).

5. Untouchables, caste-less people.

the unity of the working class and of uniting the working class and the minority under attack and show that this kind of unity can only serve the long-term interests of both the working class and the minority community.

After the defeat of the textile strike and a series of strikes of the last three to four years, people had predicted that now regionalist, communalist and castist forces would come to the fore and there will be a lot of demoralisation and cynicism among the workers. But, that such things as the present riots would happen on such a massive scale was not visualised, because Bombay used to have a tradition of liberalism and a long sustained left trade-union movement. But in spite of all that, it has happened. That is a very eye-opening experience, that we have to completely reaffirm in our perspective of the class struggle, in our understanding of unity of the toiling masses and how to concretely apply this concept of unity in practice. That is a great challenge, and at present a united front composed of humanists, Gandhians, different far-left tendencies, autonomous women's organisations and democratic-rights organisations must come together to propose and organise demonstrations such as the sit-in against the violence on Sunday (May 27). These are very mild programmes, but attempts to organise these activities are being made, although contacting people is also a problem right now, because many areas in Bombay are under curfew.

Q. What demands will be raised in relation to these activities?

A. First, a thorough investigation of the role of the police, because the police in many places have been just silent spectators, and they have connived with the hooligans. In many areas, police themselves have perpetrated violence against the Muslims. The minority has no faith in the police, because of the way they have behaved during the curfew, terrorising them. The role of the police needs investigation; that will be one of the demands. Then there must be a big relief activity for the rehabilitation of the refugees, and more protection should be provided to this minority community by government and non-government groups.

Q. For the future, do you expect that Indian social life and politics will be even more dominated by communalist problems and clashes?

A. With a demoralisation and defeats of the working-class movement, communalist, castist and regionalist forces will come to the fore. There are working-class struggles, but at present I see it as a period of demoralisation and defeat for the working-class struggle, because the traditional left parties are just not interested in doing even any token work related to this struggle. And the far-left groups at present are in a process of reorganisation. This has just started, so they themselves are still con-



A railway station destroyed by riots (DR)

solidating. Therefore, this is a very critical period.

Q. You talk about the possibility of a further demoralisation of the workers, but again: what has been the development of the organisation of the textile workers in the Bombay area? One thing is that they did not win their struggle, but have they maintained a basic strength?

A. After the defeat of this textile struggle, nearly 100,000 workers are out of a job. They do not consider Datta Samant as responsible for this defeat, because they were isolated and because of the treachery of Socialists and Communists, but that again is a subjective factor. Objectively the textile industry at this juncture is going into thorough restructuring, with a high level of automation and rationalisation. So, both the factors, the subjective and the objective, are

adverse to them.

This defeat has come after many such defeats — the defeat of the workers of the locomotive-running staffs, of the public-sector workers strike and others, and after so many black acts — The Essential Services Maintenance Act, Hospital and Education Institutions Bill, Disturbed Areas Act, National Security Act, Preventive Detention Act, all such acts to curb the working-class struggle — to demoralise the workers, to get activists arrested before the strikes start. So, the working-class struggle has been on the defensive. Therefore, a central task right now for us is to take up the direct struggle against communalism and to relate to that a struggle to defend and win democratic rights, and thereby also prepare to revive the more traditional trade-union struggles. ■

Towards a step forward for the European peace movement

Fifteen hundred peace movement activists will meet in Perugia, Italy, July 17 to 21. This is the third international conference for nuclear disarmament, following those in Brussels 1982, and Berlin 1983. (1) On the agenda will be a number of important discussions for the future fight for peace.

Particularly important will be the discussion of the Mediterranean and Nato, as well as solidarity with struggles in the Third World and Eastern Europe (see following article). One of the main discussions will also be on the evolution of the international situation and the 'strategies of opposition', given the latest American initiatives. This is a debate in most of the European peace movements.

These decisive questions have, to be sure, provoked divergences, often deep ones. Such controversies testify to both the seriousness of the peace movements and their decisive place in the current strategic debates in Europe. But, above and beyond this aspect, what has to be discussed is how to find the ways to wage a vigorous campaign in the autumn with huge unified mobilisations centred on opposition to the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles and the demand for those already installed to be removed.

The stunning success of the self-organised referendum in West Germany on June 17, supported by more than five million of those who voted in the European elections, bears witness to the immense support enjoyed by the peace movements. (See box.) The scope of recent actions in Britain, the Spanish state and the Netherlands points to the same conclusion: it is possible to build enormous demonstrations in October 1984!

Revolutionary Marxist activists of the peace movement, and a delegation of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, will take part in the Perugia conference, defending their own analysis of the different questions under discussion. But, above all, they will argue against all those who wish to challenge it, for the necessity and the possibility of building determined mass actions against the war and austerity plans that the governments of capitalist Europe are trying to impose.

Jacqueline ALLIO
and Jean-Louis MICHEL

Ronald Reagan declared in Dublin, just before the London summit of the seven imperialist powers, that 'he was "prepared to halt and even reverse" the deployment of US-built medium range nuclear missiles in Western Europe if the US and the USSR could reach a satisfactory arms-control agreement'. (*Time*, June 18, 1984.) At the same time he stated that the US had no intention of sending American Marines to the Gulf. Has Reagan the warmonger changed his spots?

If anyone would like to think so, they are going to be disillusioned! Imperialist spokespersons have always been quick to make soothing speeches when they think that they can gain any thing that way. And this is an election year in the United States, after all. To be convinced of the American president's real intentions, it is enough to compare these words with a series of facts that tell quite a different story.

There is the new provocation by the Pentagon, for example, which now claims

that the 572 Euromissiles planned for installation will not be enough to outweigh the Soviet missiles, and so the American generals are affirming their determination to install more. Or, take the admission of the American government that it might well go beyond the Salt II agreements on the number of multiple warhead missiles if 'the international situation and the security needs of the United States' require it. Or the decision to speed up the second phase of Pershing installation in West Germany. Or the adoption this spring by the Nato planning commission of seven new major conventional weapons programmes. Or the insistence by the American defence secretary at the Brussels summit last month, that the other imperialist powers of the Atlantic Alliance increase their contributions to the Nato budget, in particular to meet the growing costs of beefing up and expanding American bases in Europe.

The US's recent military success in intercepting an intercontinental warhead is not very reassuring either. There is no doubt that the Reagan government, raising the spectre of the Soviet 'menace' once again, will use this 'first' to put

pressure on the American Senate to grant it the finances that it has been holding back. Last month the Congress only agreed to appropriate money for 15 MX missiles, instead of the forty that Reagan had asked for.

This stepping up of the war drive has been aided by the counterrevolutionary policy of the Soviet bureaucracy. Every day the Kremlin entangles itself more in the trap of the arms race by responding to the American arms buildup with its own ruinous and ineffective build up. The Soviet bureaucrats have just announced an increase in the number of nuclear submarines off the American coast. They have forced the people of East Germany and Czechoslovakia to accept an increasing number of engines of death on their soil, announcing the deployment of new missiles in East Germany. They repress all those who try to organise independently of the official committees to fight for peace.

These bureaucrats practise the art of doubletalk. Did not Konstantin Chernenko call on the Americans to show 'a will to negotiate' after the success of their anti-ballistic missile in order, as he said, 'to prevent the militarisation of space'? But hadn't he threatened Bettino Craxi, the Italian head of government on a visit to Moscow, that if the Western powers launched a nuclear attack, the Soviet Union would make Italy a desert?

Mass actions against austerity and war drive

It is obvious that, in the West and in the East, the peace movements can only count on their own activity to stop the criminal offensive of the imperialists and to defeat the policy of the bureaucracies, who have got themselves caught in this framework of military competition.

After the failure of the anti-war movement to stop the deployment of the missiles, and the arrival of the first Cruise and Pershings in Europe, many predicted the death of the movement, convinced it would never survive such a blow. However, the movement continues to live and organise. While the Easter marches this year were not quite as big as last year, there have been the activities of the last few weeks to illustrate the vigorous popular response to the imperialists' policies.

On May 10, almost a million Dutch people supported the strike under the slogan 'No to the missiles; No to the July 1 packet' (a reference to austerity measures limiting unemployment benefits). Almost 200,000 British people demonstrated in London on June 9 against Reagan around the theme 'No to missiles; No to austerity'. In Madrid, it was the shout 'No to Nato; Bases out' that rallied half a million in the streets on June 6. And the people of West Germany proved, on the day of the European elections,

1. See 'Second European conference on disarmament', *International Viewpoint*, No 31, May 30, 1983.

their massive rejection of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's defence policy.

In West Germany, the participation in the referendum organised by the national co-ordinating committee of the peace movement far exceeded the organisers' hopes. Fifty-eight per cent of those who voted in the election for the European parliament responded to the question asked in the 'self-organised' referendum outside 18,000 polling stations. Of these, 84 per cent approved the text of the referendum (see box). This represents more than 5 million people, equivalent to the number of signatures collected in five years for the Krefeld Appeal, against the Nato decision in December 1979 on the deployment of the missiles.

The very diversity of these various actions shows that the missiles movement is no longer limiting itself simply to rejecting the deployment of the missiles. It is clear that the aims of anti-missiles activists are coming more into alignment with those of the workers' movement, as it fights against the closure of coal mines in Britain, against the challenge to the sliding scale of wages in Italy, and for the 35-hour week without loss of pay in West Germany.

At the root of these workers' actions

More than 5 million in West Germany said 'No' to Pershing and Cruise on June 17

On June 17, 58 per cent of the West Germans who voted in the European elections also took part in the 'self-organised' referendum organised outside the polling stations by the co-ordinating committee of the peace movement. More than 84 per cent of those who participated in the referendum, that is more than 5 million people, supported the following statement:

'I am against the deployment of Pershing and Cruise. I demand that the government take measures to ensure that the process of deployment is halted immediately and that the medium range missiles already installed are immediately removed.'

This would imply a stop, a 'freeze' on nuclear rearmament and should bring about disarmament measures in the East and the West, particularly the removal of all short and medium range missiles stationed in, and aimed at, Europe.'

is the refusal to accept as inviolable policies that aim to make the oppressed and exploited pay for the desire of the capitalist minority concerned to defend their rate of profit. The activists of the peace movement are also more and more driven to draw the connection between the imperialists' war drive and its social and financial implications. The scandal of world military spending, blandly put by the press at almost 1,000 billion dollars in 1984, cries out.

In Britain, where the Thatcher government has adopted an economic programme openly attacking jobs and social gains, and where the public sector budget

— for hospitals, child care and schools particularly — has been almost chopped away by years of cuts, the 20 per cent rise in military spending for 1984 can only provoke widespread anger and increase the support for the slogan 'Jobs not bombs!'

Behind the 'No to the American bases' in the Spanish state is not only the desire of the peoples of the peninsula to decide their own fate, but also the realisation that the pro-Nato policy of the government led by socialist Felipe Gonzalez, inevitably will, and has, led to a formidable rise in defence costs. This 'socialist' government has committed 2,150 billion pesetas (14 billion dollars) to reorganising the army between now and 1990.

The question of who is going to pay for all this is more and more current among the population, and opens the way for taking up other questions than that of simple nuclear weapons. There is also the question of conventional weapons, given the size of the budget allocated to this sector. There is the question of nuclear energy, as shown by the response of the Spanish peace movement to the successful struggle against the Lemoniz nuclear power station by the Basque anti-nuclear movement.

There is the question of women, young people and the unemployed also, as they are the first affected and the first concerned by the savage cuts made in the social budgets to pay the costs of maintaining the 'balance of terror'.

What course for the movement?

In this situation, although problems of what course to follow are not new, they are at least more acute than previously. Despite its strength, the anti-missiles movement was not able to stop the deployment of Cruise missiles in Britain or Italy, nor of the first Pershings in West Germany. The decision of the Dutch government to postpone the installation of Cruise missiles on its soil until 1985 is not a thoroughgoing victory, although it is a conjunctural retreat by the government in face of the massive protests. Each side is trying to win time in order to get its views accepted.

The anti-war movement is confronted with the following problem: what should be done now? How to go on? At this

'No to Nato, Bases out!'

On May 20, 350,000 people formed a human chain in Barcelona. On June 3, 500,000 people marched for peace in Madrid. This was the culmination of a campaign started last autumn and built up on the basis of an ascending series of mobilisations throughout the country. These days of action marked an important advance for the anti-war movement on several levels. One was the numerical growth, given the number of people who participated actively. Another was the consolidation on the peace coordinating committees, which appeared as the main actors in these mobilisations. Another was the politicisation of the movement, the participants being more conscious that these actions directly confronted government policy. Moreover, there was a radicalisation of a large sector of the movement, which went beyond pacifism to anti-militarism.

This campaign, axised around three essential points — the question of Nato, the American bases and military spending — openly challenged the arguments of 'Western defence' as well as those of 'national defence'.

Confronted with this mass activity, the government of socialist Felipe Gonzalez who, before he came to power, undertook to organise a referendum on the question of Nato, found itself in an extremely difficult position. Gonzalez cannot renege on his promises and abandon the proposal of a referendum for fear of the reaction of broad sections of the workers and peace movements that are questioning the government's economic and social policies. But he knows that he runs a big risk of defeat if he organises such a vote. Thus he is trying to gain time and reach a consensus in parliament. He does not even exclude the possibility of calling for a vote of confidence in the Cortes (parliament), thereby threatening to dissolve the assembly if he is put into a minority on his position of keeping the Spanish state in Nato.

The movement for peace is thus called on to play a decisive political role in the coming period. The Liga Comunista Revolucionaria/Liga Komunista Iraultzailea (LCR/LKI), section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state, which is fully involved in the movement throughout the country, proposed the following essential tasks for the peace movement:

— To safeguard its independence and the slogans around which unity was forged, that is: 'No to Nato! American bases out! No to the military budget! Anti-imperialist solidarity!'

— Demand a referendum on a clear proposal for leaving Nato, in order to put an end to the government's manoeuvres.

— Consolidate the peace organisations and their co-ordination, and to organise actions this autumn similar to the human chains in Barcelona and Saragossa.

— Following the example of the other European movements, to hold 'self-organised' referendums in schools, workplaces and localities.

— To do intensive counter-information work among the people to answer the pro-Atlantic Alliance propaganda of the bourgeoisie.



Anti-missiles protest in Athens during European summit in December 1983 (DR)

stage of activity and debate there are different answers.

For some, including revolutionary Marxists, the movement, far from having exhausted all its potential, can and must continue to grow and gain strength through mass actions on precise objectives, such as opposition to the installation of new missiles, demanding the removal of the missiles already installed, or the demand for bases to be closed and foreign troops withdraw. For this current, this is the best way to create a favourable relationship of forces and to highlight the fact for very broad sections of public opinion, that militarisation and austerity policies are being implemented by the ruling class against the wishes of the majority of the peoples of Europe.

The European anti-war movements should thus continue on the path they have followed up till now by organising mass actions. The surest way for these movements to achieve an advance toward peace is for them to force their own governments to take practical measures of disarmament. This can be done through street demonstrations, strikes or referendum-type initiatives that offer a way for huge majorities to express their opposition to war-drive policies.

On the other hand, for others, the present situation seems dangerous because they see no way out of it. They are searching for a 'reasonable solution'. In other words, some arrangement with the forces who support increasing militarisation,

in particular the 'liberal' sections of the bourgeoisie. This goes along with pressure within the movement to get the 'nuclear freeze' slogan adopted as a strategic perspective, as opposed to the demand for unilateral disarmament.

Thus, Mient Jan Faber, leader of the Ecumenical Council for Peace (IKV) in the Netherlands, has stated that 'the movement is not realistic', that it is not constructive because it is sticking to the letter of its original position: 'Not two, not one, not a single Nato missile'. Mary Kaldor of the British European Nuclear Disarmament (END) movement dreams of 'a truly defensive non-nuclear Western defence'. This is at the same time as the imperialist alliance is stepping up its war preparations; in the non-nuclear sector! And how many others are there who, although less well known, put forward perspectives that would be no less dangerous for the peace movement if they were to be adopted?

Activists should decide

Whether these proposals come from independent personalities or reformist leaders of workers' organisations, they have a common basis — fear of a movement developing that no one would control and whose political dynamic would lead it into open sharp confrontation with the Western European states. This is what explains the manoeuvres of the Italian Communist Party. For months and months, it tried unsuccessfully to prevent the movement launching a campaign for an official referendum on the missiles question.

The deliberate refusal of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in Britain to fully mobilise for the anti-Reagan demonstrations on June 9 should be seen in the same context. This paranoia is all the more frenzied since the peace movements in several countries have begun to make links with workers' struggles.

At the end of the day the terms of this debate can be summarised as follows: Who should decide? Who in fact decides today in the so-called democratic societies? And, more especially, who will decide within the movement on the course to follow in the fight for peace?

There is nothing to be feared in the verdict of really democratic assemblies of the peace movement, any more than there is any reason to worry about majorities making 'unrealistic' decisions. Quite the contrary, we should rely entirely on those who are mobilised in the fight for peace, on the workers and youth, to exercise a check on the choices that the capitalist governments are trying to impose on us. As for those who are making so much noise about 'democracy' — provided it does not go too far — they will resolve nothing. Everyone can put forward their point of view, make their proposals for action and be judged by those who have worked to build the peace movements and their work, and who represents its gains.

200,000 West German protestors formed a human chain in October 1983 (DR)



After the decision to deploy the Cruise

AMSTERDAM — At 3:00 a.m. on the morning of June 14, the Second Chamber of the Dutch parliament approved the decision of the Lubbers' government to deploy the Cruise missiles. The cabinet's bill included the following points:

- To decide finally on November 1, 1985, how many Cruise missiles will be deployed in the Netherlands.
- To decide definitively also on that date to deploy the missiles:
 - a) If there is an arms reduction agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States in which the Netherlands should accept a "fair" share of the nuclear weapons to be stationed in Western Europe. That could mean less than the planned 48.
 - b) If there is no accord, but the Soviet union stations new SS20s or SS21s anywhere in the world after June 1, 1984.
- Not to begin construction on the Woensdrecht base, where the missiles are to be deployed.

In short, this decision means that the missiles will be deployed, unless the peace movement can prevent that in the months between now and November 1, 1985. The government deliberately formulated this decision in terms that would mean that the missiles would inevitably be deployed and which would promote divisions in the peace movement by putting the responsibility for it on the Russians.

The fact that the government did not decide to deploy the missiles here and now is purely and simply a result of the strength that the peace movement has developed in the past years. On May 10, 1984, there was a national strike against Cruise.

But not everyone in the peace movement is convinced of that. Since the decision in parliament, a debate has been taking shape very rapidly.

The most important spokesperson for the IKV (Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad, Interchurch Peace Council), the "face" of the peace movement nationally and internationally, Mient-Jan Faber raised a big hue and cry against the PvdA (Partij van de Arbeid, the Labor Party) taking too rigid a position against deployment.

The PvdA has taken a stand categorically opposing the Cruise missiles, one of the few unambiguous stands it holds at the moment. Faber said that he thought that some Cruise missiles could eventually be accepted in the Netherlands if this was in the form of a contribution to overall arms reduction, if, for instance, it were part of an agreement between the US and the Soviet Union.

Faber's statements aroused a storm of protest. In the national united-front committee, the KKN (Komitee Kruisraketten Nee, No to Cruise Missiles Committee), he was called to account in particular by the PvdA and the FNV, the labor confederation that organized the May 10 strike. Even the churches, to which the IKV is closely linked, made it clear that they did not appreciate Faber's statements.

Fred van der Spek, leader of the parliamentary fraction of the Pacifist Socialist Party (PSP), which has three seats in parliament, said that Faber's statements were designed to back up the right wing of the PvdA in its attempts to water down the party's opposition to the missiles. This was necessary, he said, to open up the way for a PvdA-Christian Democrat coalition government after the 1986 elections.

So, a full discussion on strategy is developing in the peace movement. After the summer vacation, in a national activists' conference there will be discussion of plans for the period leading up to November 1, 1985.

The following article, written just before the parliamentary vote, is from the June 20 issue of *Klassenstrijd*, paper of the Dutch section of the Fourth International.

Oskar VAN RIJSWIJK

The deployment of the missiles has at least been postponed. Whatever else might be said about the government's

decision, one thing is clear: They have not yet begun to build a Cruise missile base in Woensdrecht. Lubbers boasts that the "preparations" are going to be carried through. But that is empty talk.

R.W.

The building plans have been prepared and are lying in the offices in the Witt-eveen and Bos te Deventer engineering firm. The specific jobs are ready to be contracted out. That is logical, since the Nato scheme called for the work to begin by July 1984.

But nothing is going to happen in Woensdrecht before November 1, 1985. So, the government is trying to win time and confuse and divide the peace movement. They have tried that before with little success. In fact, the peace movement has got time to build up the pressure more. As tired as we have been by the tension of the past months, that is precisely what we have to do now.

It was not pleasant to see on the TV how Nijpels and Van Aardenne were hailed as "victors" at a VVD election rally in The Hague. And it was not any more agreeable to see de Vries assure the country that the majority in parliament will support the government. (1)

Down-to-the-wire mobilizations

However, it is possible and necessary to make another massive demonstration of our opposition to deployment of the missiles before the vacation period. In various places actions are being built for the day before the parliamentary decision. The idea is to make this a Holland Tuesday, to gather people at peace rallies and then to take them from place to place to build a snowball demonstration. That is to go to schools, offices and factories and appeal to the people to join. That could build up to a massive march in a couple of hours.

The Komitee Kruisraketten Nee (KKN) is calling for delegations to go to The Hague with protest messages. Door-to-door canvassing is one way to collect signatures for such statements. It can also be done on the job and in the organizations you belong to. This activity should spread like an oil slick. Posters should be put up in windows and banners hung out at offices and factories.

Where it is organizationally possible, it is a good idea to hold indoor rallies. This was a big factor in the success of the national work stoppage against the missiles. In these rallies, the parliamentary debate can be followed and commented on. And, most important, this will be a first opportunity to discuss together plans and ideas for further actions after the vacations.

At worst, the government's decision means that we have got another year and a half to build such actions. So, there is no reason now to start thinking that "the whole thing was useless." To the contrary. In the past week of action, 4,600

1. Nijpels is the main leader of the VVD, or Liberal Party, which is the party in the ruling coalition most openly and truculently committed to Nato. Van Aardenne is a member of the VVD, minister of economic affairs, and vice premier. De Vries is a leader of the Christian Democratic Party, which has been divided on the missiles question.

actions were held. A million people participated in the National Work Stoppage, twice the number of those who participated in the massive demonstrations of October 29.

The peace movement has been expanding its network of activists quite rapidly. In particular, in the unions that belong to the *Federatie Nederlands Vakbeweging* (FNV — The Netherlands Union Federation), a lot of people have become active in the fight against the missiles. In and of itself, that is a great gain. It is something that we can build on solidly after the vacations. The first target is the Peace Week at the end of September.

It is important to bring the broad peace movement together. So, as soon as possible after the vacations, an action conference must be organized. In order to build the most effective one, we should learn from the mistakes that were made in organizing similar gatherings in February 1983 and 1984.

— The conference must be built democratically. That means that everyone should be able to present their views and proposals in writing. These documents should be distributed to the local groups in good time before the conference. They should be discussed at local conferences, at which the delegates to the national conference should be elected.

— This would also make it possible to go deeper into a number of questions we face now. There has not yet been any serious discussion in the peace movement about developments in the field of conventional weapons and the war threats in Central America and the Middle East, for example.

In the FNV, a discussion is to start after the summer on an answer to the Lubbers government's Defense Memorandum. This can link up with a similar discussion in the peace movement as a whole.

This sort of broad discussion can deepen the understanding of the peace movement and buttress it against the wave of propaganda about SS20s, gas prices, etc. that is being spread by the government and Nato. It would also be an opportunity to take up preparations for campaigns around other issues than just the Cruise missiles. In this respect, we need to think about the other six tasks assigned to the Netherlands in Nato's nuclear war plans. Some of these are being quietly updated.

Women are an important element of the peace movement (DR)



We also have to think about the recent observations by Mient-Jan Faber that it is becoming clearer and clearer that the Dutch peace movement, like the CND in Britain for example, has to direct its actions not just against Nato's decisions but against Nato as such.

Similarly, we can and must broaden the resistance to the setback dealt to the peace movement. A vote against the deployment of the Cruise missiles in parliament would not win the battle. A vote for deployment will not lose it either. Now is a good time to revive an old idea from the KKN headquarters — the proposal for a people's petition. This very labor-intensive action proposal was rejected as something sent down from above only a few weeks before the parliamentary debate. But now we know exactly when the question is going to come before parliament again, in November 1985. So, we can start the groundwork for a people's petition campaign now and launch it in January 1985.

What can peace movement do now?

There is plenty of time to take up this question not only in all the peace groups but in all the organizations affiliated to the KKN. So, it is organizationally possible to get the signatures of millions of people to support a categorical rejection of deploying Cruise missiles. This massive petition campaign could be concluded with a mass demonstration on a weekend in October 1985.

In this way, the peace movement could be further broadened. And the basis would be laid for a new work stoppage against the nuclear madness. Moreover, in his comment on the government's decision, Wim Kok (leader of the FNV) by no means excluded the possibility of another such action. The time available now can also be used to take up this question in a thoroughgoing way.

The experiences of the May 10 work stoppage, among other things, showed that where work to build the action got underway in time the majority of people followed the call. But this was not done generally, far from it. So, there is a lot of potential to be exploited there.

From Denmark an initiative has been launched for a European people's strike against the missiles to be organized by the trade-union movement and peace movement together in various countries. Now the government has given us until at least November 1985 to work on this. So, we should begin to discuss it seriously in the FNV and in the peace organizations.

This sort of preparatory work and systematic approach to building new, broad mobilizations can increase the pressure on the parliament and on Nato. There is no reason to be pessimistic about the result in November 1985. By then the elections will be approaching, even if this cabinet does not bite the dust before then. And, as everyone knows, in election times politicians make unexpected jumps.

We also have to prepare for the possibility that the government will decide to build Cruise missile storage silos in Woensdrecht. Further actions against this are now in preparation. Thousands of people have already signed "Don't Help Pay the Bill" lists, pledging to refuse to pay taxes if active preparations for deployment are started. As such, this is not an ideal method. But for many people, it is a determined step down the peace movement's path of opposition to abuses of public powers. In addition to this, there is the blacking campaign, that is declaring a boycott of everything and everyone that has anything to do with building a Cruise missile base in Woensdrecht.

Already a series of building firms have declared a boycott. The Brabant Building and Wood Workers Union has prepared a memorandum in which it proposes alternatives (including a hospital in Roosendaal) to wasting millions of guilders in Woensdrecht. This sort of initiative deserves support and imitation. In particular, in the FNV there is a lot of work to be done in this area.

A series of activities could be planned in advance, and boycott declarations made public. In particular, the peace movement could support consumer boycotts. Under the slogan "The Netherlands Is Not Cooperating with Deployment of the Cruise Missiles," a number of preparatory steps could be undertaken in the coming year and a half.

Lubbers and his cohorts are banking on the peace movement throwing up its hands and giving up. Lubbers wants to create the impression that we can carry out any action we want, but that the decisions will be made at the top political level. He can say anything he wants. Before him, Van Agt (2) always pointed to the Geneva negotiations as the place the decisions had to be made, and he got his comeuppance. Lubbers has to get it into his head that we are going to keep fighting until the Cruise missiles are thrown out, and his government with them.

2. Van Agt is the former Social Democratic premier.

What is at stake in the Mediterranean

The next conference of the European peace movements will take place in Perugia, Italy in mid-July. A central theme of this conference will be the militarisation of the Mediterranean. This new international meeting will be an important event.

First of all, it will offer the opportunity to discuss the new situation created by the first deployment of American Cruise and Pershing missiles in Western Europe, despite the biggest mobilisations against militarisation ever seen in Europe.

Secondly, the Soviet counter-measures, notably the deployment of nuclear weapons in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, give a new immediacy to the vital need for a linkup between the Western peace movements and their counterparts in the East, whether they are official or independent of their governments. Both are invited to Perugia.

Finally, and perhaps most important, the peace movement's recognition of what is at stake in the Mediterranean attests to its ability to respond to the manifold challenges of the capitalist governments' war-drive. The broader spread of the national delegations to include important components of the international anti-war movement that were not present at the previous conferences, such as certain forces from Greece, or the French 'Movement for Peace', also bears witness to the movement rising to the tasks that confront it.

There are, moreover, many delegations expected from the dominated countries. A delegation from the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and delegations from the revolutionary leaderships in Central America are expected to take part in the conference.

There are many reasons why all the currents of the international peace movement and workers movement should take part in these debates. This article contributes to that discussion, particularly on the question of the Mediterranean, which is decisive for the peace movement today.

Jean-Louis MICHEL

There are many received ideas current about the Mediterranean. One is that this 'enclosed sea' had been untroubled by the general process of militarisation up until the latest wave of it, which was touched off in the early 1980s by growing East-West tensions.

While it is true that today the Mediterranean basin is undergoing an increasing militarisation, both in its sea routes and in the land approaches to them, over the last forty years this reputedly calm sea has seen many spectacular military developments, particularly in the eastern basin and in the southern sector.

What is more recent is the insistence of the imperialist armed forces on strengthening their military capacity in the region, particularly in the west, and the justification they give for this to public opinion. They are trying to build up the idea that the fate of East-West relations overall will be decided by what happens there.

It is important, therefore, before anything else, to clarify the facts and, in doing so, highlight the political, economic and military stakes involved, to establish clearly where responsibility lies. While the overall relationship of forces between the European powers and the United

States began to shift in favour of the latter at the end of the First World War, it took several decades for this process to really take hold in the Mediterranean.

In the mid-1950s this evolution led to American forces replacing those of declining British colonialism. French imperialism, which had previously played a secondary role to its British counterpart, succeeded, however, in maintaining a very strong presence in the area. This was due both to its advantageous position on the Mediterranean and to the role that General de Gaulle's policies made it possible for France to play on the world political scene.

As a primarily colonial and maritime power, Britain held positions in the Mediterranean as important as the control of Gibraltar, Cyprus and Suez which opens directly onto the Persian Gulf. At the beginning of the 1950s, British companies such as Anglo-Persian, Shell or British Petroleum (BP) still controlled more than half the total oil production of the Near and Middle East.

The decisive turn came after the huge fiasco of the Franco-British expedition to Suez in October and November 1956. (1) Under the combined effects of the rise of national liberation struggles in the Arab world and the international

balance of forces that emerged at the end of the Second World War between the imperialist countries and the East European bureaucracies, the two traditional bastions of colonialism, Britain and France, were forced to loosen their grip on the eastern basin of the Mediterranean.

The American imperialists, however, had been preparing to replace them for several years, and on January 5, 1957, the 'Eisenhower doctrine' was put forward. This stated that the vacuum created in the eastern sector of the Mediterranean by the continued decline of the former colonial powers should be filled by American forces. It was in this context that the formidable armada of the American Sixth Fleet, unrivalled in the region, was to become the principal military force in the Mediterranean.

This fleet alone represents today the third largest nuclear force in the world behind the central American and Soviet systems, and well in front of the nuclear forces of Britain or France. In normal times it has, at a minimum, 41 warships, with 32,500 personnel and almost 200 airplanes and helicopters. As it did recently in fact off Beirut, it can rapidly double its combat potential. In this case it had no less than three aircraft carriers, along with the battleship *New Jersey*, which is in a class of its own, as it can fire a one-ton shell thirty kilometres (twenty miles) and carries 32 Cruise missiles with nuclear capacity.

The fake 'Soviet threat'

While the American forces have been the major component in a first-rate imperialist military presence in the region for almost thirty years, they are not the only ones. Other naval forces from the Atlantic Alliance, including those from the bordering countries France, Italy and Spain, keep squadrons, whose importance would be irresponsible to underestimate, particularly as in case of crisis their intervention capacity would be added to that of the American Sixth Fleet.

In addition, to appreciate the military balance of forces in the Mediterranean, the dozens of bases and port facilities that the imperialist forces have there should be taken into account. However, this article will confine itself to looking at the consequences of the new course in the American imperialists military policy for the Iberian peninsula on the one hand and Italy on the other. In fact, its major implications are for these two countries.

But it would be useful to once again show the falseness of the arguments about an increased Soviet presence in the Mediterranean, and the threat this supposedly poses. Such claims, in fact, are

1. After the nationalisation of the Suez Canal by the Egyptian president Nasser in July 1956, a joint British-French expeditionary corps occupied the canal zone; while Israel attacked Egypt under the pretext of opening up the port of Elath. Condemned by the United Nations, and facing a verbal threat of Soviet intervention, the two colonial powers had to finally withdraw.

used to justify Reagan's rearmament policy, and that of the European capitalist governments, who are completely integrated into this policy.

It is conventional wisdom among Western geopolitical pundits to point out that 'Soviet expansionism' is caused by the continual efforts of this continental power to find access to the warm seas to the south. (2) In this context, some of them even make a sort of continuity between the entry of the first Russian squadron into the Mediterranean in 1979 and the present Kremlin policy in the region. (3) It is easy to see that, however important geographical factors may be in military strategy and tactics, such a simplification cannot stand as a coherent explanation.

There is one thing in common in all the arguments about the 'Soviet threat' in the Mediterranean: they are built on the basis of a conspicuous lack of any real facts, and lead to the most fantastical hypotheses. One of the most fashionable is known as the 'Yugoslavia arc'. According to this theory, the USSR, in order to neutralise Turkey and Greece, and to put direct pressure on Italy, wants to make a springboard out of Yugoslavia, which has been rendered more vulnerable to Moscow's pressure because of its internal economic, social and political crisis. (5) Obviously, in this arena of political fiction almost anything goes!

The truth is that the concrete facts that are available to anyone by no means

supplying. It only has one permanent base, at Latakia in Syria. In addition, from the point of view of the 'Soviet bloc', the situation of Yugoslavia since 1948, Albania since the end of the 1960s, not to mention the uncertainty of Romania, pose a serious problem to the Soviet bureaucrats. (7) Thus, to claim that the Mediterranean is under a direct Soviet threat, or even that the USSR and USA confront each other there on an equal footing, is quite absurd.

The inescapable logic of Reagan

The American defence doctrine has been turned towards taking a more overall view of conflicts and American interests, since Reagan's arrival in the White House in 1981. (8) For the rulers of this main imperialist fortress, every conflict is a product of the worldwide confrontation between East and West. American military forces have been systematically redeployed to respond to the least hint of destabilisation of any pro-imperialist government. In the framework of this orientation, any crisis of a pro-American regime can only directly benefit the other side and put into question vital American interests, whatever their objective importance. The invasion of Grenada in October 1983 by thousands of GIs indicates that the imperialist threat flowing logically from this analysis must be taken seriously.

The practical significance of this orientation for a Central European theatre of operations has been analysed several times. The 'Airland Battle' doctrine projects the United States launching a preventive attack and a forward battle deep behind the Soviet lines at the same time, combining nuclear, conventional and nuclear attacks along the Soviet lines. In fact, this doctrine leads to an inescapable logic of a rapid escalation of every military conflict, in which the threat of a holocaust is counter-balanced by the, indeed illusory, hope that the Soviet bureaucracy can be forced to throw in the towel by a decisive blow at the start of the hostilities. The consequence of such a military orientation can only be to strive for a decisive advantage in all aspects of weaponry, in order to regain a sufficient 'margin of safety' for the imperialist aggressor in all areas, even if this is at the price of an unprecedented stepup in the arms race. There is no doubt that the main impetus to the present arms race comes from the deep



The Spanish peace movement focuses on opposition to Nato and US bases (DR)

The policy of the Soviet Union in the Mediterranean, as elsewhere, has to be looked at in the light of the general orientation of the bureaucracy on an international scale. This combines seeking to maintain a global status quo with imperialism and the attempt to renegotiate around the edges of this general status quo to gain as many secondary advantages as possible. The Soviet diplomatic games in the Near East are within this general framework.

Moreover, in this particular area, the failures have largely outweighed the successes. Consider, for example the irresponsible support the Soviet Union gave to the young Zionist state in 1948, or how quickly the diplomatic alliances it made with Egypt and the Sudan turned sour, to say nothing of the disappointments that the Soviet Union is likely to suffer in its relations with its present Syrian ally. (4)

As for the support that the USSR is supposed to give to national liberation struggles in the region, it takes all the hypocrisy of the imperialists' propaganda machines to build up such a false impression. The Soviet Union's odious desertion of the PLO during the siege of Beirut by the Israeli army is yet another striking illustration of how little backing the Kremlin is actually ready to give to anti-imperialist fighters.

support the claim that there is any Soviet threat that would justify the present imperialist military buildup in the region.

Since 1965, the USSR has had a self-supporting squadron, its Fifth Squadron, in the Mediterranean. This is said to give them access to the Atlantic via Gibraltar, access to the India Ocean via Suez...in peacetime, but imperialist forces tightly control the exit ports. The figure of 40 to 60 vessels is frequently accepted for this force. But this obscures the fact that the Soviets have only one helicopter carrying cruiser, which cannot be compared to the Western aircraft carriers, not just the American but also French and, soon, Italian and Spanish. (6)

What is more, the major and decisive handicap for the USSR in the Mediterranean is its lack of port facilities, other than those allowed for its peacetime

2. This thesis is defended in France by people as different as General Gallois, and the Socialist Party spokesperson on disarmament, Jacques Soppelsa.

3. Cf. Jean-Paul Cointet 'La Mediterranee et les Puissances', *Defense Nationale*, Paris, April 1984.

4. The USSR was the second country, on May 17, 1948, to officially recognise the Zionist state, proclaimed two days earlier. The USA waited until January 1949 to do the same.

5. Cf. Ivo Paparella, 'Les Balkans et la defense du flanc sud de l'OTAN', *Defense Nationale*, Paris, October 1983.

6. There are 14 American aircraft carriers in all, which makes it possible for two or three of

them to be assigned to the Sixth Fleet in times of crisis, as recently off Beirut. France has two aircraft carriers, and it has been decided to build a third, nuclear-powered carrier.

7. Having developed differences with Moscow, Albania suspended participation in the Warsaw Pact in 1961 and broke all links in 1968. Romania won the withdrawal of all Soviet troops in 1958, and often defends different positions on military and diplomatic questions within the Warsaw Pact.

8. Cf. particularly, 'La Nouvelle Doctrine de guerre nucleaire et la securite de l'Europe', *Cahiers d'etudes strategiques*, CIRPES, Paris, 1983.

crisis of the capitalist economy as a whole, but this politico-military doctrine has some not insignificant effects.

The significant growth in all sectors of the American military is particularly noteworthy in the navy, which will have some 600 fighting ships at the end of the present 'modernisation' programme. The Navy Secretary in the present government, John Lehmann, considers that 'a classical naval battle between the East and West could not be limited to the Oceanic [i.e., the Atlantic and/or Pacific] theatre alone'. (9) This justifies the deployment of American squadrons all over the world. In this context, the Mediterranean occupies a prime place as a point of contact between Europe, Africa and the Middle East. The US Sixth Fleet has accordingly been given a high priority, reflected by the strengthening of its firepower. This firepower is to be 'projected' forward, not only on sea but also against land-based targets. What this means in the latter case is shown by what the battleship *New Jersey* did in Beirut.

Another element that testifies to the importance of the Mediterranean in American warplans is that the US naval command in Europe has been transferred from London to Naples, where it has fused with the Nato southern command. This is significant because it shows how little importance the American leaders give to respective responsibilities and the geographical spheres that are in theory respected by Nato and to which the Europeans are committed.

In fact, imperialism has established a strategic continuity, a single scheme, that goes from the Iberian peninsula and Morocco to the Persian Gulf, through the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. Such a policy is not free from contradictions. Because it assumes that in practice all the US's allies around the Mediterranean will align themselves with Washington's policy, within a strategic framework that corresponds neither to their military capacity nor even to their conception of how they would treat this or that conflict in the light of their own interests. But, for the time being, it is this American policy that is being implemented, with a certain success, in the western part of the Mediterranean basin.

The Italian centre of gravity

American defence secretary, Caspar Weinberger, on an official visit to Rome in September 1983, declared that, 'the threat is global and we must respond at the global level...The Mediterranean in particular has increased in importance because of the problems we have had to deal with in Africa as well as the Middle East...Italy is the centre of gravity for defence in the Mediterranean.' (10)

In the same tone, the Italian minister of defence at the time, the socialist Lelio Lagorio, estimated that, 'Italy is no longer the southern flank of Nato. It would even be wrong to say that the Mediterranean constitutes the southern

flank, because the strategic situation has changed. Today, the Mediterranean is part of the central front of the Alliance, while the potential southern front extends from the Horn of Africa to the Gulf.' (11)

The militarisation of Italy in fact takes the form of United States use of a great number of installations in the country and the modernisation of the Italian forces themselves, the imperialist military forces as a whole thus extending further to the south. (12) The US Sixth Fleet already has huge bases at Naples, Gaeta, Maddalena and Sigonella. Sicily in particular deserves its nickname of the biggest American aircraft carrier, with the Sigonella base, the port of Augusta and the Palermo dockyards, the main function for all of which is to service the American fleet.

With the installation of 112 new Cruise missiles at Comiso in Sicily, Italy's function as an advance base for American imperialism in the Mediterranean will loom still larger, particularly as new American personnel will arrive with the missiles. (13) There were 13,000 American military personnel in 1983 and there will be 18,500 by 1988.

The logical consequence of this aspect of the pile up of American military hardware in Italy is that the national forces have also got a major boost in the form of

higher appropriations. The defence budget has risen by 105.7 per cent in three years, from 4,780 billion lire in 1980 to 11,149 billion in 1983. This, of course, for the Italian government, is a good reason for the austerity policies it has introduced, not without being caused some problems by the workers.

For the military forces, this new financing will make it possible to continue with the reorganisation started in the mid-1970s, which has mainly taken the form of slimming down the land army and giving increased priority to the air and naval forces.

The Italian navy, with already some 50 combat units, will get an aircraft carrier (the *Garibaldi*) for helicopters, two cruisers, five frigates and two new submarines. A rapid intervention force will be constituted. But, once more, because of Italy's crying lack of auton-



9. J. Lehman, *Statement before the Congress*, Washington, February 1983.

10. *Repubblica*, Rome, September 28, 1983.

11. Nato, 'Interim report of the sub-commission on the southern region', The Hague, 1983.

12. Cf. F. Tonello and J. Finkelstein, 'Un rôle accru dans le système de défense occidentale', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Paris, March 1984.

13. The installation of these missiles was part of the Nato 'double track' decision in December 1979. The first installations started in November 1983.

omous means of transport, it is difficult to see what role this could play, unless it were integrated into the American forces. The first elements of this force were tested in the dispatch of an Italian contingent in the multinational force in Beirut.

All in all, this reveals an undivided American control over the militarisation process in Italy. The United States of course hopes to win political, military and diplomatic advantages from this. But they also expect economic benefits: greater participation by Italy in bearing the costs of Nato, and openings for their arms industry. The combination between the process of militarisation, the introduction of drastic austerity measures to finance the war effort, and the loss of national sovereignty to the dominant imperialist power, have taken an almost caricatural form in Italy.

There are striking similarities between the process of militarisation in Italy and in the Iberian peninsula. Alain Echegut, summarising the conclusions of the Portuguese general Firmino Miguel, recently noted that, 'In the Western defence system, Spain and Portugal have three major complementary functions: as 'airsea platforms' for operations launched in Europe, the Mediterranean and the eastern Atlantic; as an air and sea staging post for the Central European theatre; and finally as a last defence and advanced base for the United States to prepare and develop a counter-offensive on the European continent.' (14)

In order to carry out this triple function, the military plans on the Iberian peninsula are organised around two big schemes that the United States, in conjunction with the governments concerned, has undertaken to build up still more in the last period.

The first is the strategic triangle formed by Portugal—the Azores—Madeira, in which the Azores archipelago constitutes the cornerstone with the American base at Lajes on the island of Terceira. The second is the dozens of foreign bases in the Spanish state, the most important of which are the air/naval base in Rota (Cadiz), and the Moron (Seville), Sanjurjo (Saragossa) and Torrejon (Madrid) air bases, with a permanent staff of 10,000 American military personnel. In addition, there are the armed forces of the two countries, 62,00 Portuguese military, and particularly the 347,000 men of the Spanish army who have an essential military function on the Balearic Isles-Gibraltar-Canaries axis. Nor should the British garrison of 6,000 men on Gibraltar or the German presence at Beja in the south of Portugal be forgotten.

While Portugal has been a member of Nato since its inception in 1949, with, it is true, a short break during the Portuguese revolution, Spain has only been a member since June 5, 1982. But formalities aside, the United States has exercised strict military control over the whole of the Iberian peninsula for the last thirty years. Old bilateral agreements,

that have never been discarded — dating from 1946 with Lisbon (renewed in December 1983) and from 1953 with Madrid (the Madrid Pact), and furthered by the 1976 Spanish-American Friendship and Cooperation Treaty, renewed on February 24, 1983, by the Gonzalez government — give the US veritable guardianship rights over the peninsula.

The Iberian air/sea platform

The only change in thirty years is that, while up till the end of the 1970s the peninsula was considered as simply a stopper in the breach for defence of the southern flank of Europe, it has since become a decisive link in the overall strategy of the USA in the region. What is involved in this is a shift in the axis of US policy towards the Mediterranean and its transformation into an advance base for the American rapid deployment force (RDF) on the way to the Middle East. This is obviously the pretext for a military buildup involving a stronger foreign presence and new bases, which are in fact envisaged by the USA. Negotiations are presently underway for bases — at Madeira (a submarine base at Puerto Santo) and in the Canaries (a base for the RDF on the island of Hierro and the Gando base on Gran Canaria). But this is also the justification put forward for a major reorganisation of the Spanish and Portuguese military forces.

As Portugal was reintegrated into Nato in 1976, it formed a mixed (land-air) brigade of 3,000 men under the direct command of the Allied Commander in Chief in southern Europe. This had first of all a big political significance. The USA and the leading circles of Nato wanted to definitively 'normalise' this army or, in other words, to purge it of all those who, to a greater or lesser extent, took part in the activities of the Armed Forces Movement. The return of Mario Soares, leader of the Portuguese Socialist Party to power, was for this reason accompanied by a series of dismissals, and a reorganisation of military decision-making centres. This made it possible to allow for a reshaping of the Portuguese military forces under American tutelage. In return, the US gave 1.3 billion dollars in 'aid' to Portugal when the 1946 agreement was renewed in December 1983.

Spain also got 1.4 billion dollars in American aid for the period 1976-81. This dropped in 1982 to 144 million dollars and rose significantly again in 1983 to some 400 million dollars. At the same time, the government of Felipe Gonzalez and the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) decided to devote 2,150 billion pesetas (14 billion dollars) to modernising and reorganising its army

14. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Paris, February 1984.

In Italy there is growing demand for a referendum (DR)



in the period 1983-1990. This war effort has been financed by particularly severe austerity measures.

Such injections of capital, moreover will go mainly to benefit the American arms manufacturers, once again confirming the unfairness of the cooperation between the European capitalist states and the USA on the military level. (15) In 1983 the Spanish government, for example, ordered 72 F-18 fighter planes from McDonnell Douglas, an aircraft in competition with the Tornado, produced jointly by Britain, West Germany and Italy. The bill for this order alone is 1.6 billion dollars. The Spanish navy will be given its first aircraft carrier, the *Principe-de-Asturias*, as well as three new submarines and 12 Harrier jets.

The land army, where the ultra-reactionary sectors, direct inheritors of Francoism, still have a big weight, will be 'slimmed down' by 90,000 men, including one-quarter of its officers. It will also be redeployed over the whole of the national territory, particularly towards the south. The number of military regions will be decreased from nine to six, and will be under stricter direct control from Madrid.

For Spain, as for Portugal and Italy, the conclusion is quite clear. The American imperialists have initiated a process of militarisation in these countries in all directions. This has reduced their already relative autonomy in this field, and integrated them still more into the defence lines of the 'pax Americana' in this region, that extends from the eastern Atlantic to the Persian Gulf through the Mediterranean.

What is at stake

In these conditions it is obvious that the situation around the Mediterranean constitutes one of the key areas in the fight against the imperialist war drive. It should be able to reach broad agreement on this point between the various components of the European anti-war movement. The experience of the pacifist forces in Spain, particularly the remarkable work of the Anti-Nato Commission in Madrid, should make it possible in a short period to mobilise a broad movement for closing down foreign bases, particularly American, in the Iberian peninsula, in Italy, Greece and Turkey.

Because of the very complexity of the problems encountered in this particular strategic zone, there is a danger that overly general and abstract responses may obscure the concrete issues at stake. Therefore, it is important to be clear about the practical objectives for which thousands of women and men in southern Europe could mobilise, since this is the only way to hold back the development of a process that would have very serious consequences for peace and freedom in this part of the world.

There are in fact many answers to these problems that are formulated in terms that are much too vague to have



Violent repression of anti-missiles protestors at Comiso (DR)

any useful effect in stimulating activity. During the last ten years the question of the Mediterranean has been examined by many international conferences and other bodies. The final declaration of the Helsinki conference on security and cooperation in Europe, signed in 1975, included a section on 'security and cooperation in the Mediterranean'.

The Sixth Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Havana in 1979, came out in favour of 'the transformation of the Mediterranean into a zone of peace and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state, the right of the peoples to take their own decisions, of non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs and equal rights.' (16) The general assembly of the United Nations adopted this position in its resolution 34/100.

The Madrid Conference finished on July 15, 1983, with a final agreement that repeated the same pious wishes, without the least tangible result. One can bet it will be the same at Stockholm, despite the growing movement in public opinion.

So, this is not the time for experts to draw up plans for denuclearisation, or indeed for total or partial demilitarisation. On the contrary, the fate of the people of southern Europe and the other peoples around the Mediterranean is being more and more left to the care of the Western governments, seconded by the Soviet bureaucracy and its allies, which are playing out a farce that goes by the name of the 'European Conference on Security and Cooperation.'

Given the dangers that the peoples of this region face because of the policies of the American imperialists and of the imperialist countries that border on the

Mediterranean, they can hardly put their trust in such negotiations. The solution is rather an involvement of the masses of youth and workers in the fight against foreign bases in Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy.

The objective conditions exist for a struggle of this sort. It is up to the anti-war movement in each country to initiate and organise such mass actions, and to the peace movements in other European countries to give them help and strong support in this task.

Such a campaign is made even more urgent and important by the fact that the governments in the Mediterranean countries, which are mostly run by social democrats, are using American aid as an argument to justify their refusal to keep the promises they made to withdraw from Nato and close down foreign bases, in Greece and in Spain.

Far from being mitigated by this so-called American aid, officially tied to keeping the US bases, the effects of the austerity policies are being increased tenfold by the militarisation process initiated by Reagan and Nato.

By taking up the fight against the foreign military presence, against American occupation, for the closure of foreign bases, the peoples of southern Europe could make a decisive contribution to the struggle against the US imperialists and their allies, whose common policy inextricably combines austerity policies and militarisation. ■

15. Jean-Louis Michel, 'Will there be a West European army tomorrow?', *International Viewpoint*, No 52, May 7, 1984.

16. 'A study of all aspects of regional disarmament', United Nations, New York, 1981.

The truce between the government and the guerrillas : The PSR's view

On May 28 the truce agreed two months previously between the Chief of staff of the Armed Revolutionary Force of Colombia (FARC) and the Commission for Peace (1) was finally brought into effect. This agreement was ratified by the president of the Republic, Belisario Betancur, and will last for one year. It allows the restoration of civil authority in the militarised zones and the use of identity cards instead of the military safe-conduct passes which had replaced them in these areas. The militarisation of several regions of the country has been condemned by the civil liberties organisation, Amnesty International. This system led to numerous exactions against peasants. In particular, it prevented them from moving around freely. Moreover, it brought on shortages and higher prices for food and medical supplies, which were under the control of the army requisition posts.

The truce involved a ceasefire between the army and the guerrillas and the cessation of all military operations and activity, but it did not mean, as far as the guerrilla organisations who accepted the agreement were concerned, that they should lay down their arms. Several commissions, charged with overseeing the implementation of the truce will be working in the main areas affected by military clashes, and will monitor the plan for rehabilitation of these zones.

Socorro RAMIREZ

The government has committed itself, in the guerrilla agreements, to present constitutional reforms to the normal session of Congress on July 20 and to draw up social reform measures. The agreement was backed by both the trade-union and popular movements, which considered it an important step on the path of negotiating with the guerrilla movement and as creating a democratic opening.

Having discussed with president Betancur at the time of his trip to Spain in October 1983, the leaders of the April 19 Movement (M-19), Ivan Marino Ospina and Alvaro Fayad, met with the Peace Commission and the government. Together with Ernesto Rojas, commander of the Popular Liberation Army (EPL) and his comrades; and Francisco Caraballo and Oscar William Calvo, members of the central committee of the Communist Party Marxist Leninist (PCM-L) they signed a joint statement.

In it they announced that: 'The government has taken an important step in recognising the guerrilla movements as a force engaged in war, and meetings will take place in the next few days to discuss a ceasefire in the framework of the agreements signed with the FARC'. (2) Both organisations demanded an all-party meeting and a national dialogue to accompany the negotiations.

The Colombian Communist Party (PCC), which is currently undergoing an internal crisis, recently made proposals for a plebiscite on political reforms and a truce with the guerrillas, if the Congress

failed to approve such reforms. (3)

A new group, a split-off from FARC, called the Franco column, has claimed a series of military actions and announced an urban guerrilla offensive. These moves were clearly designed to show their disagreement with the pact signed by the FARC leadership and with the latter organisation's condemnation of kidnappings and individual terrorism, which it underlined by ordering the release of the people it was holding.

The position of the PSR

The Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), the Colombian section of the Fourth International, welcomed the agreement between the government and the guerrillas as a positive gain for the democratic, revolutionary and people's movement, which had demanded that negotia-

tions with the guerrilla movement take place according to the terms set by the guerrillas themselves. The truce indicates that president Betancur succeeded in convincing the bourgeoisie that the method of negotiation and dialogue was the best way to deal with the guerrillas and to prepare the way for the counter-offensive against the masses. The regime will not, of course, withdraw its support from its so-called plan of civic-military action, the modernisation of the armed forces or the formation of new operational commands.

The signing of the truce does not mean that all sections of the bourgeoisie are in agreement with the strategy of negotiation and dialogue. Some major newspaper editorials, statements from the employers' federations and the military hierarchy have demanded that the guerrilla movement give up all arms before president Betancur announced the ceasefire. But the conclusion of the agreement means that the preference of the ruling class, in response to the events in Central America, has opted for confronting the guerrilla movement on a basis of bourgeois democratic legality.

For the left and the guerrilla organisations the framework of the truce offers the opportunity to highlight the need to oppose militarism by demanding the demilitarisation of the rural areas, the dissolution of the paramilitary organisations and the punishment of those responsible for torture such as General Vega Uribe.

Currently the commander of the army and a candidate for the job of minister of defence, before 1982 General Vega Uribe was head of the Military Institutions Brigade under the government of Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala. This was when Amnesty International raised an outcry about the existence of fifty centres where 35 different forms of torture were being applied on a mass scale.

It is the big landowners of Colombia, who hang on to their economic power by using gangs of hired killers and by maintaining direct links with the army, who are responsible for the widespread violence in the rural areas. Urban guerrilla activity, on the other hand, is a result of the straitjacket of the 'two-party' system (4), which makes it difficult to mount political opposition to the regime, as well as of the militarisation of the

1. The Colombian guerrilla movement has a long history. It developed as self-defence of the peasants against violence from the landowners and the army. The civil war of 1948 between the Liberal and Conservative parties gave rise to the birth of a Liberal guerrilla movement, an earlier version of FARC which came later and is currently linked to the Colombian Communist Party.

2. The Commission for Peace is a structure for dialogue with the guerrillas created on the initiative of the Betancur government and involving people independent of the regime, Socorro Ramirez, a leader of the PSR, being one of them.

3. M-19 is a more recent guerrilla movement than FARC. It gained some popular sympathy by engaging in offensive actions, whilst FARC tended toward a defensive strategy. But in the last period, the M-19 has squandered much of this support by trying, through military action based on an overestimation of the revolutionary potential of the situation, to bring

about a crisis of the regime in an artificial way. The EPL is an organisation linked to the PCM-L of Colombia.

4. The Communist Party of Colombia is facing an internal crisis which came out into the open with the resignation of Humberto Ciales de la Rosa who was an Executive-committee member and was elected Senator on the list for the Democratic Front. Two other leaders of the party, Alvaro Vasquez and Alvaro Delgado, also members of the EC announced their withdrawal at the same time.

5. After a murderous and fratricidal war, the Liberal and Conservative parties adopted a pact in 1958 called the Frente Nacional by which they agreed to alternate the presidency, and share equally all governmental posts. Initially envisaged to last until 1974, then extended to 1978, this agreement established the framework of the so-called two-party system. The capitalist political game was reduced to its crudest form, being restricted to the two dominant bourgeois parties.

country in the name of 'national security'.

This 'national security' doctrine was imposed by the Pentagon on the armies of Latin America at the end of the 1950s. In Colombia it was instituted by the 1958 National Front Agreement (Frente Nacional) between the two main bourgeois parties.

The question of the military struggle is, therefore, a tactical political problem. In view of the recent evolution of the regime and the level of consciousness of the masses, it seems to us that the best way to advance the struggles of the masses is to orient to their natural organisations — the unions, peasants' committees, citizens' committees, neighbourhood committees, popular committees.

We have to put forward the fundamental ideas of revolutionary Marxists, in the conviction that even if we do not get immediate results or success in the short term, we can move ahead towards building an organisation of workers and peasants that can offer a class alternative to the existing regime.

Tasks for revolutionaries

The vanguardism of the guerrilla movement presents an obstacle to such slow and patient work. We are opposed to the adventurist practices of individual terrorism and kidnappings which have sown confusion amongst the popular masses and given the regime an excuse to resort to repression.

For revolutionaries, the task is not so much to invent new forms of struggle as it is to work to generalise the forms that emerge naturally in the course of the mass movement by organising in action. This is why we support the self defence of the masses, which is developing in the rural areas in response to direct attacks by landowners and their hired thugs.

We emphasise daily the need to combat the violence of the semi-colonial bourgeoisie, the state and the repressive forces through exposing it, through protest action and by mobilising the masses. The people and the working class oppose this violence, especially in its most brutal form of torture and political killings, by mobilising and defending themselves through any means available.

Despite positive experiences such as the 15 workers' strikes last year and the peoples' strikes this year, the mass movement has still not developed a leadership capable of focussing its demands on the national level.

The workers and popular movement is thus caught in an ideological trap. In this situation revolutionaries are obliged by the official two-party system to fight in a highly undemocratic constitutional set-up in order to try to win the independence of the organisations of the exploited.

The fact does not mean the start of a process of expanding bourgeois democracy, because the bourgeoisie is combining a legalist approach with repression and will step up their attacks on the mass

movement in that context. This was shown by the recent judiciary reforms and the agreement amongst employers aimed at revising the labour code in a reactionary direction as well as by the re-introduction of the state of emergency on May 1.

All these circumstances have led the Colombian two-party system to decide to rely mainly on means that have a certain legitimacy in the eyes of society at large, such as constitutional mechanisms, judicial pretences and a limited parliamentary democracy, to exercise its domination over the exploited. It has opted for these means to prepare to confront, tie down, divide and divert the workers and the people.

Such a strategy does not alter the anti-working class nature of the Betancur government whose fundamental aim, which defines its attitude toward the masses as a whole, is to guarantee their super-exploitation by the ruling class. It is doing this, for example, by forcing working people to pay the cost of the crisis that is raging at the moment and by holding wage rises below increases in the cost of living, by imposing austerity plans and by assuring that unemployment will rise.

On May 1, a state of emergency was declared after the assassination of the minister of justice, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, by the drugs mafia. (5) The minister's main programme of action was to combat the involvement of sections of the mafia in politics. In fact, these criminal elements wield a considerable influence in the country's economic and political life.

The accusations got no real back up. If the government had wanted to support his campaign, it could have taken steps like applying the treaty that calls for extradition of anyone connected with the international drugs traffic.

Senator Lara had named the members of the drugs mafia who financed the activities of MAS (Death to Kidnappers). (6) The attorney general, Carlos Jimenez Gomez has begun inquiries into the terrorist activity of this paramilitary outfit that has murdered, tortured, threatened and been responsible for the disappearance of so many hundreds of trade-union and popular leaders.

However, the results of these investigations which incriminated more than fifty



high-ranking military officers in active service were covered up. Pressure from the military ensured that the trials were rigged. The weight that the armed services brought to bear kept the regular courts from concluding their investigations, kept these murder gangs from being checked and the guilty from being punished.

The minister was assassinated, therefore, to put a stop to the exposures he was making and to display the power of the mafia and the impunity they enjoyed. In fact, they wanted to provoke a state of emergency. Sections of the army and the bipartisan regime that opposed a truce and any moves toward liberalisation, took advantage of the new situation to push for a clamp-down by the government.

A state of emergency had already been established three months before in Huila, Caqueta, Cauca and Meta provinces as a response to the military occupation of Florencia, the capital city of Caqueta, by the M-19. Now that the state of emergency had been extended to the whole country, president Betancur justified it in public by saying that it aimed to confront the mafia, to fight crime and violence.

Ex-president Turbay Ayala used this method to justify the extremely repressive 'Security Law', which was used subsequently against strikers and protest actions of all kinds. Its results were the violation of human and trade-union rights with the military intervening in strikes, gaoling of workers, the murder or 'disappearance' of revolutionaries and the torturing of political detainees. Violence and insecurity increased, but the mafia was not touched.

The present economic crisis has had enormous social consequences especially in the main towns, with unemployment rising to nearly a million. The most alarming instance is the city of Medellin, where unemployment is running between 14 and 17 per cent of the economically active population, while in Bogota it has reached 12 per cent. This situation was aggravated by the introduction of a value added tax, which caused a sharp rise in the price of necessities.

The Betancur government still has support from wide sections of the population, even though it is implementing clearly anti-working class and anti-popular policies (which are embodied in its so-called Plan for Just Change). It was illustrated in a string of other measures such as wage controls, increases in tariffs (both open and secret), increases in tariffs in the public services, use of military methods in conflicts with dockers, petroleum workers and steel workers, the militarisation of rural areas where disappearances and assassinations have been rife, and in-

5. In June 1982, the Betancur government lifted the state of emergency and in November of that year took certain amnesty measures.

6. The MAS is a paramilitary organisation created by the drugs mafia in order to stop abductions of members or near relatives.

creases in redundancies with the endorsement of the Ministry of Labour.

The Betancur government has, to be sure, made a change in style from its predecessors. This has involved accepting a democratic amnesty and choosing to join the group of non-aligned countries known as Contadora (Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela) which is putting up a rather feeble resistance to the US policy of aggression in Central America.

But, basically Betancur heads a Liberal-Conservative government that still rules in the manner of the Frente Nacional, since the official two-party system continues to dominate the political life of the country. The deal between the two big bourgeois parties sets the tune for the means of communication and, by fraudulent means, it controls elections.

Workers fight back

Some important regional and city-wide strikes took place recently in the southwest of Antioquia and in Narino. Workers were protesting against price rises in the public services and the abandonment of any social policies in these areas. There were large mobilisations against the government's education policies and in defence of state education. There were strikes on the docks and in the textile industry. In telecommunications and the administrative services, the judiciary and other state services there were stoppages and protests.

The actions, led by the union federation FENALTRASE, defeated the government's wage control policy. This is a sign that new struggles can develop in the future. At the same time, the process of drawing together a unified, democratic, pluralist trade-union movement on a class struggle basis is gathering momentum.

During the municipal and provincial elections on March 11, the Colombian left presented a joint electoral platform called the Democratic Front. This bloc advanced working class, anti-imperialist demands. It called for trade-union and civil rights, for a negotiated truce, for dialogue and a democratic peace, for a single union confederation and for solidarity with Nicaragua, Salvador, Grenada and Cuba.

Unity of the left, excluding Conservatives and Liberals, was achieved in most areas of the country, except the towns of Barranquilla and Narino, where the Communist Party allied itself with the Liberals. The unity achieved by the left was a big political victory. It could undoubtedly develop and help to consolidate a policy of independence from the official two-party system and to promote popular and revolutionary action that we hope would carry over into the fight for political reform, for democracy and into the anti-imperialist battles on the agenda today. This orientation could be expressed in the 1986 presidential elections by presenting a mass political alternative based on mobilisation. ■

Portrait of a revolutionary

August 1984 is the tenth anniversary of the death of James P. Cannon. Cannon was a founder of American Communism and a central figure in the party until 1928. Subsequently he established the American Trotskyist movement and was the most important leader of the Socialist Workers Party for several decades. Following is a biographical sketch that will also introduce the readers of *International Viewpoint* to books by Cannon that contain additional information about his life and ideas.

Alan WALD

James Patrick Cannon was born in Rosedale, Kansas, on February 11, 1890, the son of Irish immigrants raised in England. His father, John Cannon, worked as a laborer in a foundry and introduced his son James to the Irish nationalist tradition of Robert Emmett, the Knights of Labor, the Populists and the Socialist Party.

Leaving school to start work at age twelve, Cannon was propelled into radical politics by the Haywood-Pettibone-Moyer defense case. He briefly returned to high school but left again to become a traveling organizer for the IWW and a follower of Vincent St. John. He later joined the Socialist Party, replacing Earl Browder as editor of *Workers' World* in Kansas when Browder was sent to prison during World War I.

Cannon quickly became a leader of the left wing of the Socialist Party. Following the 1919 expulsion of the left wing, he joined the Communist Labor Party led by John Reed and Benjamin Gitlow. When the United Communist Party was formed in the spring of 1920, he was elected to its central committee and assigned as organizer of the party's St. Louis-Southern Illinois District.

Toward the end of 1920 he moved to Cleveland to edit *The Toiler*, a party organ, and in 1921 he transferred to New York to participate in the top leadership of the party. After an internal struggle to create a legal party and end the underground existence of the Communist movement, Cannon was elected chairperson of the national committee of the Workers Party, the new above-ground organization.

In 1922-23 he served on the Presidium of the Communist International in Moscow, and between 1925 and 1928 he headed International Labor Defense. In that capacity he raised money and publicized the cases of the Centralia prisoners, Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, and the McNamara Brothers. He also organized the International Labor Defense's Sacco-Vanzetti campaign.

During these years Cannon's group of followers, including Max Shachtman and

Martin Abern, formed a bloc with William Z. Foster's group against the faction of Charles Ruthenberg and Jay Lovestone over such issues as the attitude toward a labor party, trade union strategy and tactics, the location of the national office and the nature and composition of the party leadership. Cannon's reminiscences of this period were later published as *The First Ten Years of American Communism* (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1962).

In the summer of 1982 he attended the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International where he received a translation of Trotsky's "Criticism of the Draft Program of the Communist International." Won over to the ideas of Trotsky's Left Opposition, Cannon and his followers were expelled from the American party in October for circulating Trotsky's views.

Cannon described the first decade of the American Trotskyist movement in *The History of American Trotskyism* (New York: Pioneer, 1944). Along with Schatman and Abern he founded the Communist League of America (Left Opposition) in mid-1929, and began publishing the *Militant* newspaper. They had only a hundred followers at first, but doubled their size over the next several years. A theoretical magazine, *New International*, was launched in 1934.

That same year members of the Communist League of America were in the leadership of the sensational Minneapolis Teamster strikes, and Cannon traveled there to provide political guidance. This success helped pave the way for a fusion of the Communist League of America with A. J. Muste's American Workers Party at the end of 1934. The new organization was called the Workers Party of the United States and its newspaper was called the *New Militant*.

In the spring of 1936 Cannon led the Trotskyists into the Socialist Party and then moved to California where he edited the Socialist Party paper *Labour Action*. When the Trotskyists were expelled from the Socialist Party in mid-1937, Cannon returned to New York. The Trotskyists founded the Socialist Workers Party in January 1938 with Cannon as national

secretary. The following autumn he participated in the founding of the Fourth International in Paris and was elected to the International Executive Committee. The Trotskyist movement had by now grown to over a thousand and had considerable authority in certain sections of the labor movement as well as among New York intellectuals grouped around the literary magazine *Partisan Review*.

In the fall of 1939 a dispute erupted between factions led by Shachtman and Cannon over questions relating to actions taken by the Soviet Union in the early days of World War II. However, at the heart of the controversy was the famous question of the class nature of the Soviet Union. Shachtman would later on embrace the position, advocated by his ally James Burnham, a New York University Professor of Philosophy, that a new bureaucratic class had come to power. Cannon held to Trotsky's view that the Soviet Union, due to hostile encirclement and a totalitarian political superstructure, was a "degenerated workers' state" (that is, despite the lack of democracy, a post-capitalist society in transition, not yet on the threshold of socialism), and that its nationalized economy should be defended against capitalist nations.

Shachtman's faction split in the spring of 1940, forming the Workers Party. Cannon recorded his version of the dispute in *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* (New York: Pioneer, 1942).

In 1941, Cannon and seventeen other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Minneapolis Teamsters Union were convicted under the Smith Act for their opposition to United States government policy during World War II. Cannon's courtroom testimony is contained in *Socialism on Trial* (New York: Pioneer, 1942); other writings from the early war period are available in *The Socialist Workers Party in World War II* (New York: Pathfinder, 1975).

Cannon served thirteen months of a sixteen-month sentence at Sandstone penitentiary in 1944-45, as described in *Letters from Prison* (New York: Merit, 1968). Following his release, Cannon participated in a factional struggle against two of his long-time associates, Albert Goldman and Felix Morrow. Writings of the late 1940s are collected in *The Struggle for Socialism in the "American Century"* (New York: Pathfinder 1977).

During the post-war labor upsurge the Trotskyists grew once more to over a thousand, but fell upon hard times during the McCarthy era. In 1953 there was a fierce faction fight, recorded in *Speeches to the Party* (New York: Pathfinder, 1973), resulting in a split in both the party and in the Fourth International. This was Cannon's last major intervention as the leader of the party. In 1952 he had moved to Los Angeles, and in 1953 Farrell Dobbs took over as national secretary. Cannon became National Chair and then National Chair Emeritus until his death in 1974. His first wife, Lista Makimson, had died in 1929; his second, Rose Karsner, died in 1968.

In addition to having the unique capacity to hold a small party together for several decades under difficult circumstances, Cannon was a talented popularizer of socialist ideas in his lectures and writings. This can be seen in a collection of his public talks, *Speeches for Socialism* (New York: Merit, 1971), and of his journalism, *Notebook of an Agitator*

(New York: Pioneer, 1958). Additional information about Cannon can be found in the following books: Les Evans, editor, *James P. Cannon as We Knew Him* (New York: Pathfinder, 1976); and Theodore Draper, *The Roots of American Communism* (New York: Viking 1957) and *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (New York: Viking, 1960).



AROUND THE WORLD



Petr Uhl is free

On May 28, Petr Uhl was released from prison, five years exactly after his arrest alongside several other dissidents who had just set up the Committee to Defend the Unjustly Accused (VONS). At the VONS trial on October 23, 1979, Petr Uhl received the heaviest sentence of five years in a maximum security prison. On the eve of his release he was the only one, out of the five convicted in 1979, still in prison. The four others were Vaclav Havel, Jiri Dienstbier, Vaclav Benda and Otta Bednarova.

It was Uhl's ninth year of imprisonment since the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact troops in August 1968. He paid dearly for his commitment to workers self-management and democratic socialism, argued during the Prague spring of 1968.

In the mid-1960s, Petr Uhl lived in France where he met the group of Communist student activists around Alain Krivine, who were soon to form the Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR). In their bitter opposition to capitalism as well as Stalinism, Uhl found an echo of his own preoccupations.

On returning to his own country he began to advance the struggle against the cancer of bureaucracy. This was not done in the name of a return to bourgeois 'democracy' or to achieve greater delegation of bureaucratic powers in order to present a more 'human face', as Dubcek proposed, but in the name of socialist self-management and democratic workers power. In the aftermath of August 1968, he was very active amongst students and took part in the organisation of the students' general strike in Prague when it was occupied by Soviet tanks. It was then that, along with other comrades, he helped to set up the Revolutionary Youth Movement (HRM). The programme of this movement expresses clearly the anti-capitalist and anti-bureaucratic beliefs of its founders: 'We live in a system', they stated, 'where capitalist relations of production and the capitalist

mode of production have been abolished but where the construction of a democratic, socialist society has not even begun. Spurred on by the aim of opposing any abuse of communist ideals and by the belief that it is our duty and our right to fight effectively for these ideals against all those who ridicule and abuse them, we proclaim (the foundation) of the Revolutionary Youth Movement.

'We are convinced that the way forward for the Czechoslovak people and for the population of the USSR — and all the so-called peoples' democracies — will be the destruction of the bureaucratic machine, the abolition of bureaucracy at all levels in society and the introduction of a system of self-management. This system of self-management would have to be expressed in all areas of life. In the workplaces, it would be reflected in the political and economic power of the workers councils. A system of self-management will make it possible to exploit the creativity and initiative of each individual; it will create the conditions necessary for the scientific and technical revolution which will put an end to the problems of supply and distribution and the social inequalities that flow from them and will lead, ultimately, to the abolition of the state and its institutions on an international level.' (*Informacni Materialy*, No 1/71)

Petr Uhl has always remained faithful to the ideas expressed in this programme as is shown in the 'Programme for workers management and socialism', which he compiled at the end of the 1970s (published jointly by Stock/La Breche under the title *Socialisme Emprisonne*, Paris 1980).

Because of their activity in occupied Czechoslovakia, 18 activists of the HRM were arrested in December 1969. Their trial, supposedly against the 'Trotskyist conspiracy' was the first under normalisation. Petr Uhl received the heaviest sentence — four years imprisonment.

On completion of this first spell of imprisonment Petr Uhl again took up dissident activity. He participated actively in discussions preparatory to the setting up of Charter 77 and in the elaboration of a tactic of open work to demand the implementation of laws in force in the Czechoslovak republic. Within the Charter group Petr Uhl was the leader of the left socialist current. In the spring of 1979 he played a key role in the creation of VONS, defending the notion that the opposition should not content itself simply with exposing injustice and repression but must organise to defend the victims. This initiative earned him his second arrest and conviction, once again with the heaviest sentence, which he served to the end and under such harsh conditions that on many occasions people feared the worst.

The repression of which he was a victim stimulated the development of a huge international defence campaign. This included appeals, petitions, delegations of various personalities to the trial, demonstrations and the production in the winter of 1979 of a play — 'Trial in Prague' — by the Soleil theatre in Paris. Amnesty International adopted Petr Uhl, including him in their list of the 15 most representative victims of political repression in the world.

Even if this campaign did not produce an early release (as it did in the case of his co-defendant, Otta Bednarova, who

became seriously ill and was released before serving her full term as the result of the intervention of various international personalities), it did at least mean that the conditions of his detention were improved and that the authorities did not attempt to prolong his sentence by a new trial as was feared at one time.

In fact, a year ago, Petr Uhl was transferred to a more modern prison near Prague and once again had access to a library and to foreign books. The campaign was also able to support his wife, Anna Sabatova, previously a political prisoner herself, and their two children throughout this painful ordeal.

The Czechoslovak bureaucracy is determined to break the will of the dissidents or force them into exile. Now more than ever, international support is needed to enable the dissidents to operate inside the country. We have seen very recently, in fact, that the Czech authorities have absolutely no intention of moderating their policy of repression. Ladislav Lis, the first prisoner to be conditionally released (he had to present himself everyday to the Prague police) has just been rearrested and sentenced to three months in prison for having left Prague for the weekend without notifying the police. Similarly, the young worker, Jiri Gruntorad, who served a four-year prison sentence has just been condemned to a further sentence of 18 months.

continued from page 28

Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN). All of them were subjected to ill-treatment in the following way: They were put in solitary confinement — in what were known as 'hunger bunkers', which were five metres square. They were handcuffed behind their backs and sometimes gagged with tape. They were put in straitjackets. Teargas was used. They were constantly threatened with having their bones broken.

These acts of violence aim to prevent revolts, such as the one in Barczewo prison last September, which ended in victory for the prisoners (see IV, No 50, April 9, 1984). The example had begun to spread and since then the authorities have refused to budge an inch.

In the case of the hunger strike in Strzelin prison, which lasted six weeks from the end of December 1983 to January 1984, eight of the 13 prisoners finally gave up their action after the other five had been taken to hospital in a serious state of health.

Some carry on resisting, but at what a price! On April 13, Andrzej Slowik, leader of Solidarnosc in Lodz, wrote: 'On April 11 they began to force feed us. Jurek is being fed intravenously (he is too weak to resist). I did resist. So, for three days now, they have strapped me down, put handcuffs on me and by means of torture and with a pair of tongs they have been forcing my mouth open.

'This is torture in the full sense, because after putting me in a chair they stamp on my toes and twist my arms and legs. One of my torturers sits on my legs and twists my knees round the other way or presses my shins against the edge of the bed.' According to the latest information, Slowik is still continuing his hunger strike...

The fight for dignity, for political prisoner status and for the release of all those in prison demands our active support. Solidarity must not come just from other detention centres or from other women and men suffering the same tortures. It must come from all those who have their freedom. As an open letter, written by ex-internees, pointed out a few months ago, the authorities are consciously trying to eliminate those who resist and continue to uphold the objectives of their struggle. And 'nobody can say that they did not know about this', the letter, addressed to the president of the Council of State, added.

The support of the workers movement in the West can also play a role, as the victory of the hunger strike at Barczewo showed. It is particularly incumbent on the trade unions to send fact-finding missions and to adopt political prisoners. But it is up to each and every one of us to ensure that the international workers movement takes up this struggle.

Free Jacek Kuron and the comrades of KOR!

Free the leaders of Solidarnosc, imprisoned without trial!

Freedom for all political prisoners in Poland! ■

Against frame-up of Armenian militants

A committee has been formed in Toronto to defend four Armenian activists charged with attempting to assassinate a Turkish consul.

Irresponsible terrorist attacks in recent years have created a public prejudice against militant Armenian nationalism. But most Armenian militants reject such tactics. And there has been a radicalization in the Armenian diaspora communities in the last decade, leading many activists to form alliances with Palestinian and Kurdish national liberation groups.

The Committee in Defense of Armenian Political Prisoners [CIDAPP] argues that the four activists charged with attempted murder — Melkon Gharakhanian, Haig Gharakhanian, Harout Kevork, and Raffic Ballan — have nothing to do with terrorism. The Canadian police are simply trying to pin the charge on them because they are under pressure

to get someone, and the four accused hold political views the Canadian authorities do not like.

The Committee stresses that the only evidence so far produced in the case is the testimony of a secret police informer.

One of the four, Harout Kevork, is the former editor of the journal *Azad Hay* ("Free Armenia"), which advocated a united socialist Armenia and never supported terrorism.

The list of endorsers for a petition to drop the charges against the four Armenian activists includes Ralph Schoenman, director of the Committee in Defense of Palestinian and Lebanese Peoples; former director of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, and trade unionists, civil libertarians and broad movement personalities. Further information can be obtained from the CIDAPP, P. O. Box 456, Station Z, Toronto, Canada.



The regime steps up repression

On July 13 the trial of four well-known militants of the Workers Defence Committee (KOR) — Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Henryk Wujec and Zbigniew Romaszewski — will begin (see *International Viewpoint*, No 38, October 17, 1983). These people have been imprisoned for two and a half years without being brought before the courts as have the seven jailed leaders of Solidarnosc who are still awaiting a trial date (see *IV*, No 23, February 7, 1983).

It is well known that in order to get rid of this embarrassing case, the authorities have not been above using the worst kind of blackmail, trying to tempt the eleven to emigrate. In this case, they tried to string the jailed leaders along by holding out a promise of freedom for all political prisoners on July 22, the date of the annual commemoration of the founding of the Peoples Republic of Poland. Nothing came of it. These people displayed courage and dignity at every turn. In the name of the struggle they were pursuing, even in prison, for the right to independent organisation and for Solidarnosc's demands, they refused to accept any kind of compromise with the bureaucracy.

Jacqueline ALLIO

What is taking place in Poland today is obviously not a process of 'normalisation', as the authorities are so fond of declaring but one of repression. Indeed, the regime seems to have an extraordinary need for repression to impose its authority. If any test were needed to show how little success this policy is having with the masses, the municipal and regional elections on June 17 provided it.

According to Solidarnosc, more than ten million people boycotted the election. The authorities announced a 25 per cent abstention rate. However, the figures collected by the underground union through an extremely systematic watch on the polling stations, involving a rota of

activists who took three turns of five minutes each throughout the day, draw a very different picture. They point to an average abstention rate of 40 per cent with rates as high as 50 per cent in several large towns.

Moreover, to grasp the full scope of the movement of resistance to Jaruzelski that this boycott reflected, you have to take into account the media campaign 'encouraging' people to vote and the reprisals which were threatened if they did not.

Lech Walesa had suggested that he might 'retire from the political scene' if the results amounted to a repudiation of Solidarnosc's underground activity. Now, he has no reason to carry out his threat. In the event, it was the authorities, not Solidarnosc, who got a kick in

the teeth. And all the self-satisfied declarations by the bureaucracy cannot cover up their silence about the specific election figures.

Although the figures show a favourable balance of forces for the underground movement, we cannot underestimate the difficulties it has been experiencing for many months, difficulties which have been aggravated by the scope and brutality of the repression that has been coming down on Solidarnosc's organising centres.

Today the political police are not content to do their dirty work by spying on people, following and stopping all suspects accused of writing or intending to write, print and distribute underground literature or participate in underground radio emissions. They are not just harassing individual militants suspected of underground activity in the factories, universities and schools. They are using systematic physical violence during interrogation and not hesitating to resort to torture in order to extract 'confessions' from the accused.

This is what the Lubin miners, accused of terrorist activities, brought to light in describing their experiences; 'Someone hits you with a cosh [truncheon] on the nape of the neck as if it were a hammer. The militiamen order you to kneel on a chair, to raise your hands and to count the blows. Then you lose consciousness.'

In the last few months we have even seen para-police units — similar to those used in Latin America in the 1970s. They are made up of brigades of political police acting under their own authority, making arrests and carrying out interrogations outside of Interior Ministry premises, for example in the woods.

In one underground press bulletin it reported: 'Having arrived in the wood he was tied to a tree and threatened with death. He received blows on the feet and head. Afterwards, he was dragged to an empty hut, handcuffed and then tied to a chair. He was beaten up and his torturers pretended to try to slash his jugular. They threatened that they would report he had died in a car crash.'

Some of these units have taken the name OAS (Anti-Solidarnosc Organisation). This is no accident, since the reputation of the French OAS (Armed Secret Organisation) is well known in Poland, where a series of films and writings told of their 'heroic deeds'. It is to such groups that the murder of Piotr Bartoszcze, a leader of rural Solidarnosc in the Bydgoszcz region before December 13, 1981, is attributed. And the underground press records many similar cases.

The authorities have also been taking more and more brutal measures against prisoners in an effort to break their resistance and morale.

Testimony about these practices has come from Wladislaw Frasyniuk and Piotr Bednarz, leaders of Solidarnosc in Wroclaw, as well as several leaders of the

Polish soldiers on patrol (DR)

