

International VIEWPOINT

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**A social
movement
grows around
British miners
strike**

**Special on
Solidarnosc:
The debates in
the underground**

India after Indira

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International Viewpoint

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Miners rally broad movement of resistance to Thatcher

The first British-state-wide conference of activists working in solidarity with the miners' strike was held in London on December 2. It attracted a very large number of participants. Despite the last-minute attempts of the organizers to limit the number of delegates because of lack of space, over 1,600 people turned up. An overflow meeting had to be organized to accommodate over 500 people.

Gerry FOLEY

This initial solidarity conference brought into focus for the first time the movement that has grown up around the miners' strike and the changes it has set in motion in British politics. A more structured conference is scheduled for January.

The December 2 gathering was able to point up more clearly and dramatically the political stakes in the strike because it opened only a day after the courts appointed a trustee to take over the miners' union apparatus.

The court ruling put the fighting union leadership in a position where in order to plan the next stage of the strike it had to consider big new steps toward developing a way of functioning radically different from the traditional methods of British unions. In fact, if the British state continued to press its assault, the union could only continue to operate in a semi-legal way, relying on its regional organization.

At the very time of the conference a battle was underway in the miners' union executive over what course to take. That prevented the NUM leader Scargill from addressing the gathering, as he had pledged to do.

The political confrontation between the militant leadership and the reactionary Thatcher government was sharpening, and the political stakes in the struggle were escalating apace.

Coming from outside Britain, I was struck by the way the conference demonstrated the rallying of a full spectrum of social and political opposition movements in the British state around the miners' strike and the National Union of Miners. That also corresponded to the other story I went to Britain to cover. On the continent, a touring Lancashire miner had explained to me that the historic regions of north and south Wales, a small nation subordinated to the British state had come together for the first time behind the miners' strike. "It's made them a nation."

Historically, the major obstacle to the development of a national movement in Wales had been precisely this division between the predominately English-speaking industrial south of Wales and the predominately Welsh-speaking, largely agricultural, north and west of the country. [The small coal-mining area in the north-

eastern part of Wales is not typical of this region.] Shortly after this, I noticed that the national conference of the Welsh nationalist party, Plaid Cymru, had elected a new left-wing leadership committed to supporting the strike.

Obviously, the miners' strike was having some very broad reverberations. The conference on Sunday, December 2, before I went to Wales, put them in perspective.

In general, the political framework for this broad movement was provided by the existence of a broad, pluralist Labour Party with a radicalizing wing. The Welsh development was closely related to this, but took a combined form. The Labour Party is dominant in south Wales, but as a party, is mainly a right-wing machine. The Welsh nationalist party, while much weaker in this region, is still strong enough to challenge Labour in a number of areas and has taken a more radical stance of support for the strike. Moreover, it is stronger than Labour in the Welsh-speaking rural area.

At the same time, the growth of a left wing in the British Labour Party, in particular its tendency to break with economic positions that have been a cover for British chauvinism in the past, has been a strong encouragement to the left in the Welsh nationalist movement.

The Plaid left's major leader, Dafydd Elis Thomas, MP for a West Wales constituency and now president of the party, later told me in fact that the Welsh nationalist left no longer sees its struggle simply as organizing the Welsh people to achieve independence but as a part of a broader fight against the British capitalist state.

In his address to the London conference, Ken Livingstone, one of the principal Labour-left leaders, stressed the importance of the Labour Party offering a governmental alternative for the miners, in particular in the face of strike breaking by the state and its courts:

"I believe it's time that we started to hear from those that lead us in parliament that another government will repay every penny that has been stolen from the miners.

"We will repay to every miner's family the money that's been stolen by this government through the DHSS [Department of Health and Social Services] in order to try to starve the miners and their fam-

ilies back to work.

"When statements are made by those who lead us, it undermines every judge that's bending and twisting the rules, it undermines every part of the DHSS that's responding to the pressure of this government to hit the miners and their families.

"And we need to be saying quite clearly that we soon start the process of selection of parliamentary candidates. We need to demand of everyone who sees themselves getting into parliament: "Will you actually vote to restore the money that's been stolen by this government? Will you vote to retire those judges who have twisted every rule and every law?"

That the strike had united all the victims of state repression was stressed by the spokesperson for the Kent Miners' Wives Committee, Kay Sutcliffe. She mentioned youth and the unemployed, blacks, the Irish, feminists, pacifists and gays. Of all these groups, she said, "they have helped us and we will not let them down."

This unity of the oppressed was illustrated by a story told to me about a London gay group that adopted the Dowlais mine in South Wales, one of the areas in the state least affected by the new radical currents of the 1960s and 1970s. But as the strike progressed, a strong feeling of comradeship developed between the members of this mining community and the London group, representatives of which were given a royal welcome when they visited the area.

Gay and lesbian activists held a workshop at the conference and reported that they were regularly collecting for the miners and their families in the gay bars and meeting places in London.

In his speech to the conference, Tony Benn, the recognized leader of the Labour left, stressed that a new Labour Party had to be built on the model of the movement in solidarity with the miners:

"I am absolutely confident that the organisation that the NUM, the women's support groups, and other groups represented at the conference today have been able to achieve is going to transform the British Labour Party.

"Because I'll tell you something that has come to light in the course of the last nine months. That is the end of electoral parliamentarism.

"The idea that all you've got to do is be quiet, then canvass for a Labour candidate, and then when he or she gets into power wait for five years, be loyal to everything that's done, and then turn out again. That is not a way forward for us.

"The electoral politics that we tended to regard as being the nature of the Labour Party has got to be replaced and supplemented by the sort of action that the miners and the women's support groups and this conference have carried out.

"I believe that what has happened over the last nine months [during the strike], apart from educating people has been to establish in every single constituency party miners' groups, women's groups, women's action groups, that have no in-

tention whatsoever of disbanding when the strike is over and are instruments ready and able to support any issue that is in the interests of working people. This means defending trade unionists, defending the blacks, defending the Irish who are under similar attack."

Benn's reference to the Irish drew a big round of applause. It was also notable that every speaker identified as coming from Wales drew a special round of applause. In fact, south Wales is the solidest area for the strike.

The report from the women's action groups' workshop was given by Hazel Jones from Mountain Ash in the Cynon valley of south Wales. The central point she made was the determination of women to maintain the role in social and political action that they have won in the framework of the strike and solidarity movement.

The importance of the women's support groups and the mobilization of women was a theme that ran through the conference from beginning to end. It was clearly one of the main results and driving forces of the radicalization in the strike movement, a constant in the thinking of the activists.

Dafydd Elis Thomas told me later, moreover, that he thought that feminism had been one of the most important forces breaking down the narrow economism that has separated the British labour movement from the movements of minority nationalities incorporated in the British state.

Another clear tendency in the thinking of activists and speakers was internationalism. Kay Sutcliffe, for example, stressed the importance of the strike and solidarity movement as an example to the working class of other countries that were facing the same sort of austerity drive from the governments of the world capitalist crisis. Benn himself, although more implicated in the Labour Party past, pointed up this aspect:

"...a Labour Party that has to do its job has got to be comprehensive in character. It's got to be a party fit and appropriate for the magnitude of the struggle that faces us and truly representative of all the interests and problems that confront working people in the age of high technology, nuclear weapons, multinational business and multinational finance. It's got to be an international movement as well."

In this context, the conference also became a challenge to the Labour left itself. It was held, for instance, in the Camden borough hall. The local council is dominated by forces identified with the Labour left. But the record of this council has some outstanding black spots, in particular as regards providing housing for poor families. A black mother and her children, rehoused in a firetrap, had been burned to death not long before. That sparked the formation of a housing action committee with a mainly black membership, which then proceeded to occupy the council chambers in protest against its dereliction. This committee also became

active in support of the miners, and therefore was invited to send a speaker to the conference. The spokesperson pledged support for the miners in strong terms, but denounced the council in words that were no less resolute.

Livingstone responded, pledging that he would see that the council changed its attitude. A representative of the council's employees also spoke, supporting the miners while denouncing the council as a bad boss.

The NUM representatives who addressed the conference expressed a powerful determination to win the strike, declaring that after nine months of sacrifices and confrontations with the police and courts, after the deaths of five brother miners in clashes and nine killed trying to scavenge coal for their families. A Yorkshire miner stressed the need for money for the strike above even human needs: "I have four kids myself, but the best Christmas present I can give them is to tell them that thousands of men are fighting with their father for their future. A future is more important than toys or turkey."

A surprise for the fox hunters

A representative of railway workers in a scab mining area told how much a few determined activists could do in mounting secondary strikes. He and thirty other unionists, "the dirty thirty," have succeeded in blocking a good part of the area's coal production. The action that he enjoyed the most, he said, was dumping coal waste on the favorite fox-hunting run of the local gentry. Indeed, he expressed a salient lack of respect for his country's monarchical and aristocratic traditions.

All proportions guarded, the conference reflected a movement that begins to give a concrete idea of what a mass revo-

lutionary movement in a developed country will probably look like, a movement involving all sections of the working people, a whole society reorganizing itself in struggle.

In some ways, this process of unification is broadest in Wales, where the factors at work in Britain as a whole combine with specific Welsh features, such as the existence of a national liberation movement, a tradition of rural radicalism, and very tight-knit miners' communities with a particularly strong tradition that are the core of the nation.

The objective adopted by the Welsh nationalist party, Plaid Cymru, which has its greatest strength in the Welsh-speaking rural areas but also has substantial pockets of strength in some of the mining valleys, and a traditional attraction for radical young people in the high schools and universities, is to foster this unity. The new left leadership has thrown the party strongly behind the miners.

For example, under the headline "Why the Miners Must Win!" the editors of Plaid Cymru's English-language organ, the *Welsh Nation*, wrote in their November issue: "A victory for the miners in their historic struggle against the Thatcher government is vital to the very future of the Welsh nation." The article ended: "The political priorities of a free Wales will be those of the Welsh working class and not those of Thatcherite Tories."

In the October issue, Dafydd Elis Thomas wrote: "The miners' struggle is indeed the national struggle, and Plaid Cymru branches throughout Wales should ensure that miners' support committees are established in their own locality." He explained:

"Free market forces cannot be allowed to destroy Welsh communities and the attack on our extractive industries and the communities dependent on them, must be resisted by all of us who are con-

Black delegation in the Kent coalfields (DR)



cerned about the rights of communities to determine their own future."

In fact, one of the themes that emerged most clearly from the London solidarity conference was the need to attack the logic of the capitalist system itself. Benn stressed that Thatcher's attack on the NUM had nothing to do with declining profitability of the mines. Her objective was to break the NUM to make way for selling off the country's coal to private business interests.

Gerald Howells, national organizer of Plaid Cymru, made the same point to me about Thatcher's policy in the Welsh mining areas. He said that that was the only way to explain why the government had left such promising finds as the Margam field in south Wales undeveloped.

The Welsh Farmers Action Committee leaders that I talked to in west Wales explained that they have come to realize that Thatcher's policy is to plow under the agricultural economy in Wales in

order to replace it with forest plantations and tourism.

Somewhat haltingly — he had got out of the habit of speaking English, he said — John Howells, chairperson of the Farmers Action Group, asked me what I thought the answer to that problem was. I started to make some very cautious points about the logic of the capitalist market.

"Yes," he said suddenly, his eyes lighting up, "that's exactly the problem. The market economy doesn't work." What was needed, he said, to the approval of the others, was a new kind of economic organization based on providing for the needs of human beings and communities.

That response bore out what Tyrone O'Sullivan told me, who is a leader of the miners in the Cynon valley and a representative of the Labour left. "The one enduring lesson of this conflict is that capitalism offers no solutions." ■

Statement from December 2 miners' solidarity conference

The following statement was adopted by the December 2 miners' solidarity conference. It represents the common ground of agreement between all the political organisations at the conference and with the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). Amendments and additions will be further discussed at a delegate meeting in January.

This conference recognises the current industrial action of the National Union of Mineworkers as an official strike, conducted in accordance with the union rule-book: it fully supports the union's demand that the National Coal Board and the government should withdraw the March 6 pit-closure programme, keep open the five pits in line with previous agreements and define exhaustion of reserves in line with the Plan for Coal, the signed agreement between the government, Coal Board and the mining unions.

Conference condemns the Thatcher government's premeditated introduction of state intimidation and violence into what began as a peaceful industrial dispute.

In particular, we condemn the outlawing of normal picketing practices through the use of baton-charges, riot shields, dogs, horses, curfews and armoured convoys on the part of the police.

We applaud the courage of those who have been defending themselves and their communities against such violence and we pledge ourselves to participate in, help coordinate and strengthen such defence — under the guidance of the NUM — by all necessary means.

We condemn those speeches made by leaders of our movement in which legitimate self-defence in support of the inviolability of the picketline has been shamefully equated with the deliberately planned and executed state violence of the Thatcher government and its illegally-constituted police force.

Those who urge compliance with such violence thereby collude with it; conference reaffirms, with the miners, our refusal to collude.

Conference recognises:

a) that the Tories and the NCB have set their sights on the total defeat of the miners, and are preparing to move coal from the pit-heads to power stations, etc;

b) that the future prospects for trade unionism in Britain, along with those for the GLC, Metropolitan Authorities, rate-capped local councils (1), the unemployed, women, black people and the labour movement generally, are indissolubly linked with the outcome of the miners' struggle;

c) that therefore the full industrial, financial and political resources at the disposal of our movement should be mobilised immediately behind the National Union of Mineworkers, whose struggle must take priority over all other concerns until a successful conclusion is reached;

d) that responsibility for taking this action rests above all with the leaders of the TUC and Labour Party. We call upon them to implement to the letter their official policy of "total support" for the NUM. Meanwhile, we must be prepared to make the necessary moves ourselves.

Conference therefore instructs the Mineworkers' Defence Committee, having organised this conference, to convene in January the first meeting of a delegate-

based committee, chaired by a representative of the National Union of Mineworkers and including representatives of sympathetic Regional Councils of the TUC, union executives, broad lefts, Labour Parties, shop stewards committees, trades councils, miners' support committees and other bodies committed to a miners' victory.

The function of this committee will be to take all measures necessary to ensure victory.

It will develop a mass solidarity movement based on elected, recallable delegates from all miners' support organisations, and will publish a weekly national bulletin, with regional supplements, giving information as to the mass picketing and other actions requested by the national and area executives of the NUM.

We resolve to abide by all such requests, including:

a) the building of representative miners' support committees or groups in each locality, workplace and, where necessary, nationally in the trade unions.

b) the stepping up of levies, food collections, etc., in every workplace, meeting, high street, etc. This is a priority, with the collection of Christmas food supplies and toys essential in the remaining weeks before Christmas;

c) the winning of industrial action in support of the miners. This is vital, particularly in light of the legal attacks on the NUM, and with the possibility of attempts to move coal stocks. We should not wait for the TUC before campaigning for industrial action, including trying to win all workers in dispute into a joint fight with the miners against the Tories;

d) the organisation in every workplace of the mass circulation of *The Miner*, along with bulletins and leaflets to counteract the bosses' media lies. We support the demands of the NUM for free access to all forms of media, and call on media workers to ensure the NUM's right of reply;

e) the stopping of all movements of coal and substitute fuels in accordance with TUC guidelines, but without waiting for initiatives to come from the TUC before taking action ourselves: we request and expect full support in this from the Parliamentary Labour Party, including the presence of at least one MP on every picketline;

f) a massive national demonstration in support of the miners, to be organised at a date to be agreed with the NUM. We expect the leaders of the TUC and Labour Party to march at the head of this demonstration.

1. The Greater London Council (GLC) and the metropolitan authorities are to be abolished by the Tory government in this parliamentary session. They are city-wide government bodies which for the most part are Labour controlled.

At the level of the local (borough) councils, the government is trying to restrict their spending powers on local services by delimiting the amount they are allowed to raise through local taxation i.e. rates. This is again leading to confrontation with, for the most part, Labour controlled authorities.

Fourth International campaigns for the miners

The struggle of the British miners is the most important for the British working class since the general strike of 1926. If the miners win, it will be a major step to socialist advance. If they lose, an utterly remorseless government will try and spread their defeat to the rest of the working class.

But the strike is also of great international significance. If successful, it will be seen as a victory against all those governments pursuing the policies of austerity. This is particularly so given the open way in which the Thatcher government is used as an example of the course to be followed by these governments. The miners' strike represents the highest point of the wave of struggles initiated by the West European working class in 1984. Its success or failure will influence the possibilities for further development of those struggles.

For this reason a major campaign of solidarity was launched in May of this year by the Fourth International and its sections to build international solidarity with the miners' strike. Below we reprint extracts from a report made to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International at its November meeting, assessing that campaign.

Steve ROBERTS

The aims of the campaign of solidarity were set out as follows:

- to get the truth out at an international level about the miners' strike through the organisation of speaking tours of miners and miners' wives.

- to raise material aid for the strikers and their families through initiatives of the sections, united-front campaigns and through the official trade-union and labour movement.

- to try to stop all coal bound for Britain through alerting the relevant unions in each country and waging a campaign within them for support of this kind.

The results exceeded expectations and are testimony to the resonance that inter-

national solidarity has amongst the working class. Our comrades have so far been involved in organising a total of 16 speaking tours for miners and miners' wives in Belgium, France, West Germany, Portugal, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland, the USA, Canada and Australia.

The miners and miners' wives on these tours have spoken at trade-union branch meetings, factory gates, in canteens, to union executives, on TV, radio and at press conferences. In addition, they have been able to meet miners from other countries to discuss the fight against pit closures.

Altogether £30,000 was raised through these tours. Supporters of the Fourth International have also been involved in the setting up of united front solidarity committees which have raised significant sums of money, for example, in the case of Denmark a national collection based

on the shop stewards' organisation raised over £100,000.

In Denmark, too, supporters of the Fourth International were also able to play a full role in stopping the movement of coal from the port of Aarhus to Britain. The blockade of the coal by the local support committee in collaboration with the dockers (see IV, No 63, November 12, 1984) is an example of what can be done in other ports engaged in shipping coal to Britain. Belgian Fourth International supporters discussed with officials of the Kent coalfields what sort of action could be taken to stop coal going through Ghent and Antwerp.

One of the main political lessons of the strike has been the role of the miners' wives. The comrades of the GIM, German section of the Fourth International, organised a tour especially for a miner's wife and a woman from Greenham Common. This had a positive impact both within the women's liberation movement and the broader labour movement. Such tours could be organised now on a wider scale to renew support for the strike and spread the message to a wider audience in different countries.

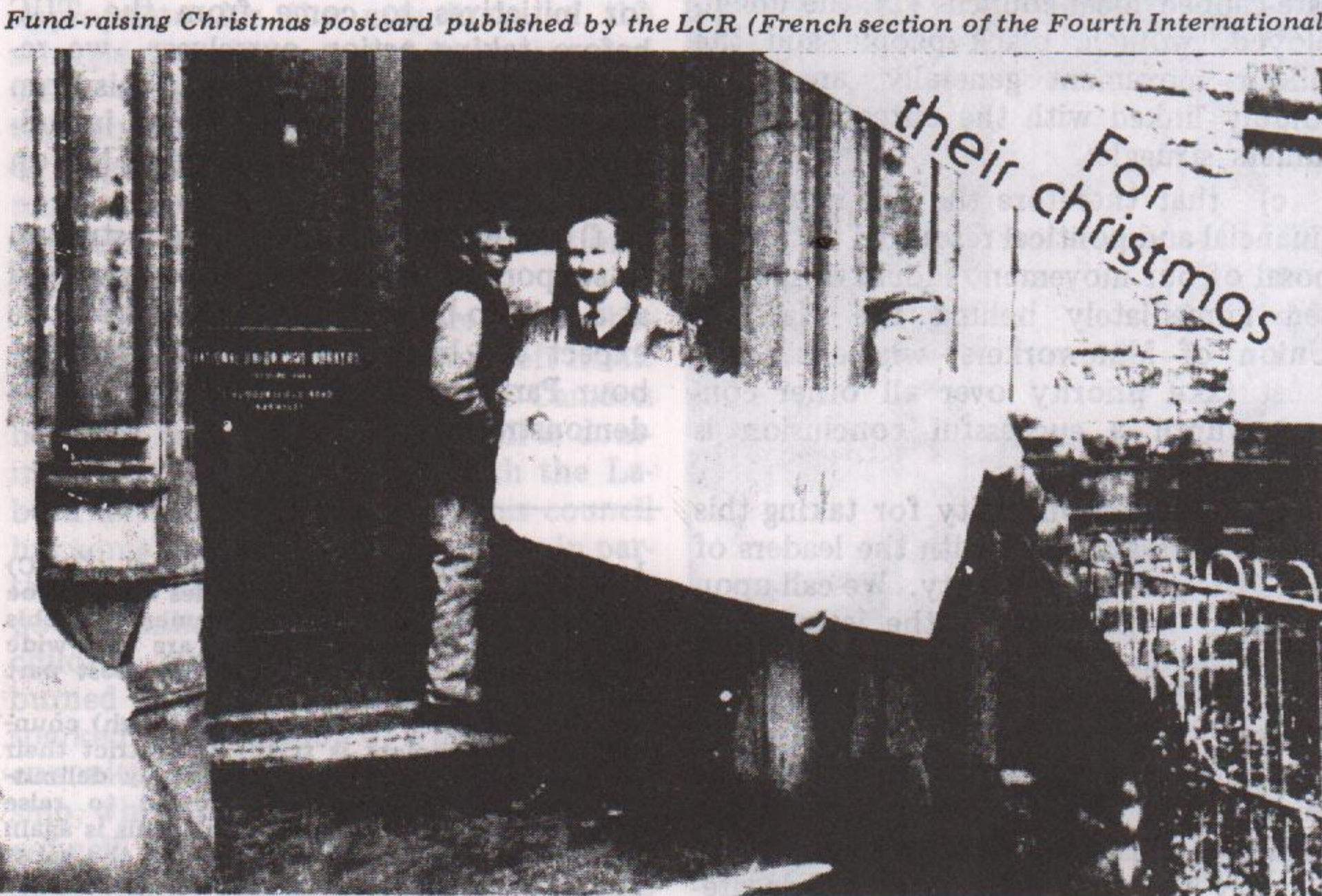
The press of the sections of the Fourth International has done much to publicise the miners' cause and leaflets and posters have been produced in most European countries.

The Polish journal *Inprekor* (a journal that presents the point of view of the Fourth International) published dossiers in two issues on the miners' strike which put forward the initial positions taken by Polish miners on the strike and appealed for support amongst Polish workers. Some material from these dossiers was published in the *Front Robotniczy*, a bulletin published by Solidarnosc members.

Through the work done in this strike the Fourth International has been able to reaffirm the practical necessity of internationalism as a strategy for the working-class movement. This has also shown the role an international combat organisation can play in taking action in a concerted and politically effective way.

On a wider scale, international support is becoming more and more vital. The international bourgeois press is trying to kill off the strike based on the propaganda campaign about working miners underway in Britain. The British bourgeoisie pretend to have secured victory through legal manoeuvres and the sequestering of funds. But the majority of miners in Britain are determined not to give in to Thatcher, and concrete international support, that is, the blacking of all coal, could be decisive as the winter draws on.

The Fourth International has appealed to all its sections to do their utmost to get this kind of support. In the meantime, each and everyone of them is involved in stepping-up the collections of money, food and children's gifts for Christmas. In the New Year they will be organising specific tours of miners' wives and campaigning for more support in the labour movement as a whole. ■



Fund-raising Christmas postcard published by the LCR (French section of the Fourth International)



Miners' strike: early morning picketing, April 1984, Staffordshire (England) (DR)

Greens federal delegate conference calls for solidarity with British miners

The following resolution was introduced at the Federal Delegate conference of the Greens in Hamburg on December 2. While various problems blocked the motion being debated, it is being circulated among the Greens with the authority of the leaders and the leading bodies that signed it.

The Federal Delegate Conference resolves

— that the media coverage of the British miners' strike in the Federal Republic has been either nil or false and one-sided; the Greens want to counter this.

— at the same time the Greens want to help alleviate the material want that the miners face owing to the length of the strike and the repressive measures taken by the Thatcher government; we want to express our admiration and sympathy for their courage and their tenacity.

— finally, the Greens want to express their solidarity by actively participating in the miners' struggle.

1. The Federal Delegate Conference welcomes the solidarity initiatives already undertaken: the initiatives taken by the Nord-Rhein-Westfalen, Schleswig Holstein and Hamburg groups, together with the GEW [Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft, the teachers' union], (the two-week-long hosting of the NUM general secretary, Peter Heathfield, during which he spoke at 12 solidarity rallies and the call was raised for donating a day's wages to the miners).

We also welcome the decisions of the BuVo [Bundevorstand, National Committee] and the Green-Alternative European Alliance (at the urging of the Greens) to contribute respectively 20,000 and 10,000 German marks to support the miners.

2. We instruct the BuVo, along with the state groups, to build two "Solidarity Weeks." During these weeks of action, at regional, transregional and local rallies, the KVs [Kreisvorstand, district leaderships] could hold discussion evenings, literature tables and other such activities.

3. We instruct the BuVo, the federal and state parliamentary fractions, as

well as the European parliamentary group, before and during these Solidarity Weeks, to mount a truth campaign, by means of placing ads in publications, holding press conferences, issuing leaflets and so on.

4. The KVs should check to see how best they can organise local solidarity actions, based for example on already existing twinning arrangements between cities (such as exchange visits, fund collections for specific purposes and so on.)

5. The Greens will send a combined delegation (BuVo, BHA [Bundeshauptausschuss, National Leadership Committee], Green members in the federal, state and European parliaments) to Britain to participate on the picket lines alongside the British miners. This is to expose the police brutality (use of horses, dogs and clubs) and insofar as possible to deter it. Thus, the precise times and places of such participation will not be announced beforehand.

6. The BuVo and the state groups, supported by the European group, will prepare two summer camps for miners' children.

7. The Federal Delegate Conference condemns the lack of solidarity shown by the IG Bergbau [West German miners' federation], and calls on this union to stop undermining the strike of the British miners by allowing increases in the exports of West German coal to Britain.

8. The Federal Delegate Conference urges the DGB [Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund, German Confederation of Labor] to support the striking miners by extending them special financial aid on an adequate scale, which means millions of marks.

The British miners' strike against the mine closures forced by the Thatcher government has been going on for over nine months now. Their strike is not just

about wages or even about saving some 20,000 jobs. They are also fighting a premeditated and calculated attempt to convert to the use of nuclear energy, which is inseparably linked to arming for nuclear war. 'Jobs, not bombs,' as the striking miners' wives demand!

The problems of nuclear waste disposal, radioactivity and so on, have in fact not been solved in Britain any more than they have anywhere else. One only needs think of the Sellafield case [where the British government renamed an area where there had been illnesses and birth defects caused by high radiation levels in an attempt to take the curse off it], to say nothing of the predictable development toward an atomic police state [because of the alleged special needs for protecting nuclear facilities from all sorts of spies and 'terrorists'].

Thatcher's so-called policies of cutting down to the bone, which favor new production methods and new technologies, mean simply writing off whole regions, sweeping away the historically evolved structures of the mining communities. These plans have no regard for the problems of the health, human needs or dignity of the population. To the contrary, the Iron Lady is trying to crush the resistance to such antihuman schemes. To this end, she is confiscating all the funds and property of the NUM, and has deprived the miners of most of the social benefits that they are entitled to. A miners' family that takes part in picketing has to make do with some 244 German marks [£67] a month, and a weekly food packet.

It is clear that Thatcher's aim is to mount a head-on attack to weaken, cripple and demoralize independent, strong unions.

Given the 'forced marriage' character of the EEC, we Greens in the Federal Republic are affected not only indirectly by these developments, because of the call of solidarity. We are directly affected as a result of the pressures for economic integration fostered and exerted by the EEC.

Supporting the British miners is also supporting our own struggle. We must not be so blind as IG Bergbau. This union, in fact, has not only been conspicuous by its absence from the solidarity campaigns but it has also short-sightedly sought to feather its own nest in this case by going along with a 35% increase in coal exports from the Ruhrkohle company to Great Britain.

In the long run, such an attitude means sawing off the branch on which IG Bergbau and all trade unionists are sitting.

We have to fight this with all our strength. Solidarity with the British miners is not just a moral question. It is our own interests, our own concerns, that are at stake.

Signed for the Greens' European Group — Dorothee Piermont, Wilfried Telkaemper, Frank Schwalba-Hoth, F. O. Wolf — and the Bonn Kreisvorstand. ■

The threat of Hindu communalism

The Indian people will go to the polls on December 24, after what has been one of the worst outbreaks of communalist violence in the country's history, following the death of Indira Gandhi.

The new prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, declared the elections for that date in order to cash in on the sympathy vote. It can be confidently predicted that the Congress (I) Party will achieve a comfortable majority of the seats. A swing of between 6 to 10 per cent would give them a landslide.

It is unlikely that the honeymoon period with the new government will last long. The basic problems of Indian society will not be solved by the new regime and the communal card will be used by this government as it was under the last. All the tensions and pressures which have created an endemic political crisis of the Indian state will rapidly resurface.

The death and destruction which followed the assassination of Mrs Gandhi, in which over 1,000 people lost their lives, showed up very clearly the role of Hindu communalism which has been whipped up against the minority populations. And yet there were many incidents of Hindu-Sikh cooperation also. Out of a population of 730 million, Hindus form 80 per cent. In the following article our correspondent describes the situation in the country and gives a first response to the tragic events that have taken place.

M. NAVID

At 9:16 a.m. on the morning of October 31, two Sikh security guards pumped 16 bullets into the body of the Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, as she was making her way from her residence in Safdarjung Road, Delhi to the adjacent lawns of her office where she was to be interviewed by the British actor Peter Ustinov and his television crew. Her bullet-ridden body was taken to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences where the doctors fought an ultimately futile battle to save her life. She died the same afternoon at 2:23 p.m.

Gandhi's assailants had clearly acted in retaliation for "Operation Bluestar," the army assault on the Golden Temple on June 3 which resulted in the death of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and many of his closest supporters who had turned the holiest of Sikh shrines into a fortress. In addition, extensive damage was done to the Akal Takth, the temporal seat of the five high priests who constitute the highest body of spiritual and religious authority for the Sikh community. Most ordinary Sikhs were justifiably embittered by this assault.

But if "Operation Bluestar" was an avoidable tragedy which only compounded the alienation of Sikhs from the government and the majority of Hindus who had supported the action, this act of revenge was yet another tragic mistake which, as events soon confirmed, was to drive a deeper wedge between Sikhs and the rest of the nation.

What followed was the politically most serious communal riot and carnage since

the Partition of 1947. (1) The politics of assassination are rarely, if ever, the way to resolve basic political and social problems. All too often such actions prove to be politically counter-productive in the extreme. For this, if for no other reason, Mrs Gandhi's assassination has to be strongly condemned. The political repercussions of such an act should have been apparent to anyone with a modicum of political sensibility. Indeed it is possible that the assailants did not act merely out of short-sighted revenge, but as part of a wider conspiracy which was well aware of the likely consequences and which sought to precipitate just the kind of situation that was to develop.

In any event, the question of motivation and possible conspiracy is of secondary importance to the objective impact of the assassination, immediate as well as long-term. The announcement of Mrs Gandhi's death on the afternoon of October 31 was met with genuine and widespread grief throughout the country. The response of the Sikh community was more complex. If many Sikhs in Punjab welcomed the news of her death, most of those outside Punjab were subdued in their responses out of fear of the possible reaction because the assassins were Sikhs. If some Sikhs (including a few expatriates) openly celebrated her demise, this number was wildly exaggerated and became grist for the rumour mills and justification for the unjustifiable and obscene acts that were to follow.

Starting in and around the area where Mrs Gandhi was hospitalised, mobs of young males — lumpens, right-wing students, sons of shopkeepers and others

began to go on a rampage. Sikh taxi stands and drivers were assaulted as impromptu road blocks were set up, shops looted and burnt, and their houses in various parts of south Delhi similarly assaulted. Sikh passengers pulled out of buses had their turbans set alight and replaced on their heads, others were beaten up and in many cases doused with petrol and burnt alive. In a few isolated cases even women were not spared.

By the afternoon of November 1, the rioting, killing, arson and looting had spread to all parts of Delhi, not just the wealthy housing estates of the south which had been the initial battleground. News of similar acts, though on a lesser scale, began to come in from other states like Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu, Kashmir and West Bengal. The killings were much more limited in the last two states. Trains travelling in the north, west and central parts of the country were stopped at and between stations by organised hoodlums and spontaneously embittered villagers, to pull out Sikhs and murder them.

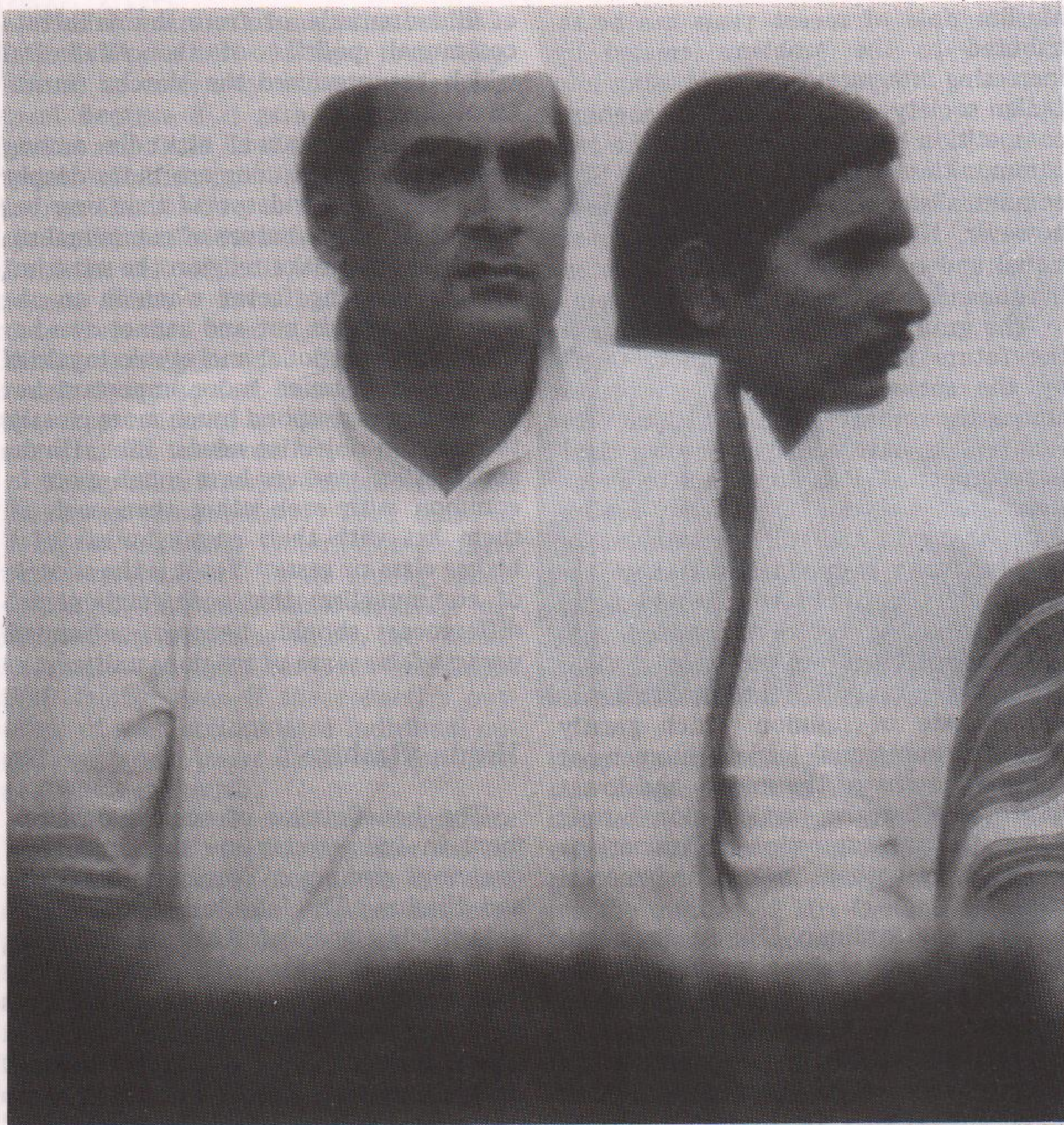
At the same time there were innumerable instances of Hindu fellow passengers in trains hiding Sikhs at risk to their own lives and of Hindu neighbours on housing estates doing the same. This was the one bright spot in a saga of brutal communal and politically motivated violence. Had it not been for such humanistic solidarity, the death toll would undoubtedly have been higher. It was only in the late afternoon or evening of November 1 that the government decided to call in the army to restore order in the capital and up and down the country. This was a criminal delay since actual deployment and properly organised patrolling in riot-affected areas would take another one to two days. This was particularly true of the capital and its immediate environs which in normal peacetime has no significant army presence in or around it.

Divide and rule

Why this delay? First, the civilian authority hesitated to publicly declare its inadequacy and inability to control events by calling in the army. Secondly, the funeral of Mrs Gandhi was deliberately staged so as to become an international media event with the attendance of all sorts of foreign dignitaries. Too much emphasis on the need for army rule in the capital might have dissuaded many foreign visitors from coming. In fact, the decision to hold Mrs Gandhi's funeral three days after her death instead of immediately within a day was unforgivable creating as it did unnecessary tension as she lay in state.

Calling in of the army early on was made all the more imperative because of

1. In 1947, at the time of the collapse of British rule in India, a partition of the country was created along religious lines. There was a Muslim majority in Pakistan.



Rajiv Gandhi at his mother's funeral (DR)

the complete failure of the capital's metropolitan police force to limit, let alone stop, the rioting. Out of a 30,000-strong police force, 6,000 were on leave. Furthermore all Sikh policemen (another 6,000) were removed from active duty. This was a major mistake, for the Delhi police force were either passive spectators to what was going on or else active collaborators with the rioters, looters, arsonists and murderers. The Sikh police contingent if judiciously used in mixed patrols and large groupings, would have been the one arm that would have genuinely sought to control the destruction and mayhem.

If in the early phase (October 31 to the evening of November 1) there was a strong element of spontaneity and class war (the looters were invariably from the resettlement villages which surround almost every middle and upper-middle class housing estate in New Delhi), the subsequent escalation of violence was almost entirely organised by second rank leaders of the ruling Congress (I).

If in the rest of north and central India things were staggering back to normal by November 2, in Delhi the worst carnage was still to come. The scenes of violence now shifted to east Delhi to places like Shahadra, Trilokpuri and Kalyanpuri where the poorer sections of Delhi's population live, whether Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. If in New and Old Delhi the numbers and proportion of Sikhs are greater, many Sikh families, apart from the psychological trauma of

those days, did manage to escape relatively unscathed with no damage to life and little or none to property.

Across the river Yamuna, although the percentage and numbers of Sikhs were much less, each and every Sikh family was affected by the rioting in one terrible way or the other. Overall it was the poorest of the Sikhs who suffered most from the violent aftermath of Mrs Gandhi's assassination. Their ability to protect themselves with or without the help of Hindu neighbours was gravely limited by the ruthless and calculated organisation of murder by these Congress (I) leaders and their goon gangs in the party. For the first time rape and molestation of Sikh women became a feature of the rioting.

But the Congress (I) goons would not on their own have been able to cause such immense damage. They acted also as the vital instigators and organisers of the Gujars (shepherds who are responsible for much of the capital's milk and dairy needs) and Jats from Haryana who live in the resettlement villages adjacent to the houses of the urban poor in the trans-Yamuna area. The Congress goons were able to mobilise them because of factors which had little to do with religious or communal passions, or even with anger at Mrs Gandhi's death. Originally most of the land across the Yamuna which now houses the urban poor (Sikhs and Hindus) had belonged to the villagers. This land was acquired by the government with minimum compensation promised to

the Gujars and Jat villagers. But even this meagre commitment was often not kept to. The urban poor were then allowed by the government to build their small dwellings on this land. Owing to skilful manipulation by Congress politicians it was these settlers rather than the government that became the focus of resentment by villagers. Thus, instead of the urban poor and the villagers uniting against the government, they have long been divided against each other. This created extremely fertile ground for the communal carnage of the first days of November which on occasion also affected some Hindu households. That is to say the worst carnage took place when the army was supposed to be already deployed and patrolling in the trans-Yamuna settlements.

The relief camps that sprung up were almost entirely located in the two worst hit areas of the capital — west and east Delhi — particularly the latter. If the official figures of total deaths in Delhi are around 700 (1,300 throughout the country), the unofficial and more realistic death count in Delhi is between 1,800 to 2,000 deaths, possibly more, and around 50,000 people displaced in the capital.

Most of the displaced persons took refuge in hastily set up refugee camps where a large part of the administrative responsibilities fell into the hands of voluntary relief agencies (Mother Teresa, Oxfam, etc.) and citizens' groups which had been formed during the riots. About all the government was capable of doing was providing essential food and medical supplies. But without adequate administration the situation was little short of chaotic in many of the camps. Thus the large camp in Shanadra with about 10,000 people soon became a serious health hazard. Inequitable distribution of necessities added to the tension, and government pressure on families to return to their homes when they continued to feel insecure hardly helped. Even the payment of the paltry compensation of 10,000 rupees (about £700) for each death suffered by a family or 5,000 rupees (about £350) for property damage was made contingent on families returning to their homes.

By now those affected by the riots are slowly picking up the pieces of their previous existence and patching them up into some sort of pattern because life must go on. "Normality" of a kind is slowly returning. But in a more fundamental sense nothing now can ever be "normal" for these families or indeed for India as a whole. The political implications of what has happened are nothing short of profound. It would be absolutely no exaggeration to say that the assassination of Mrs Gandhi and the communal carnage that it triggered off constitute the most serious crisis of Indian society in the post-independence period. It represents a qualitative leap in the de-secularisation of Indian society and of the state. The secularism of the Indian state has always been deeply flawed and

weaker than that of the society as a whole, but its deterioration in this sense has now been sharply accelerated.

Communalism represents the biggest threat to the body politic not only because it means greater repression of minorities, but because it accelerates the tendencies towards a break up of the nation, and of the drift towards a "strong," more authoritarian state, thus undermining the bourgeois democratic character of Indian society. Even if this does not immediately result in a generalised authoritarian system of rule, it does mean the extension of selective repression, growing enclaves of strict military control and administration (e.g. Punjab today) and systematic erosion of various democratic rights, through legislative enactments.

But it is the directly communal consequences and implications that are the most serious. The chances of a future carnage and massacre of Sikhs not necessarily through communal riots, but through direct repression by the state is now frighteningly high. Such a carnage would be on a scale as to make what happened already look like a picnic. The complex of factors leading to such a terrible outcome have now achieved a powerful dynamic.

The alienation of the ordinary Sikh and Hindu from each other is now deeper than ever before and this in spite of the fact that the bonds that link Hindus and Sikhs in everyday life are deeper and more complex than those between Hindus and Muslims. This closeness, for example, has not prevented carnage on a scale which rivals, even though it does not exceed, the scale of the worst riots that have taken place between Hindus and Muslims since independence.

Attitudes entrenched

Indeed, the Hindu-Sikh problem is today more acute and dangerous in its implications than the Hindu-Muslim conflict. For one thing, the Muslim population is much greater, around 13%, and it is dispersed in significant concentrations throughout the country. Sikhs by contrast are less than 2% of the population and barely outnumber Hindus in their home state of Punjab. Elsewhere they are an even more insignificant minority and are also much more dispersed. Their capacity to unite and resist communal assaults outside Punjab is limited.

There is another important reason why the Hindu-Sikh conflict today constitutes a more serious phenomenon than the Hindu-Muslim communal conflict. The ultimate logic of minority communalism (Sikh or Muslim) leads to separatism (Khalistan [the demand for a separate Sikh state] or Pakistan). But Pakistan has already come into existence. The worst riots between Hindus and Muslims were associated with Partition. Subsequent Hindu-Muslim riots have never come close to that scale of horror and carnage. Indeed, many of the Hindu-

Muslim riots of recent years can be attributed to the problems created by increasing *integration* (2) of Muslims into Indian society, such as growing economic competition between sections of the two communities. The logic of growing Sikh communalism, a newer phenomenon is, however, Khalistan and this adds a national and more dangerous and frightening dimension to the Hindu-Sikh problem.

The ground for communal carnage in the future has been made more fertile by the spread of communal attitudes among the ordinary Sikh and Hindu. Recent events have added their own significant impetus. It is important to understand that one can be sincerely against communal riots and still be communal or harbour many communal attitudes. The same Sikh or Hindu who would never dream of killing someone — indeed, who goes out of their way to protect their neighbour — can still contribute to a general climate of opinion which greatly facilitates communal leaders, lumpens or insecure youths of the middle and lower classes who perceive participation in riots as an effective expression of frustrations which have other more fundamental causes.

Thus the ordinary Hindu in north India who may shake their head at the "excessive" massacre of Sikhs and indeed have protected their Sikh neighbour can also feel that to some extent "Sikhs deserved what they got for killing our prime minister." Or that "we Hindus have been tolerant for too long. We have been pushed around too much. Look at what Bhindranwale did to Hindus in Punjab and where were the majority of Sikhs then? It's time they got a taste of their own medicine. Maybe secularism is not worth it and we are better off having a Hindu *Rashtra* (Hindu state)."

There is, of course, no rational basis for such feelings. But they are as deep and as widespread as they are because such attitudes feed and flourish on a partial and selective vision of events and society. Thus, the fact that Bhindranwale killed almost as many Sikhs as Hindus in Punjab, or that he never succeeded in provoking indiscriminate mob violence against Hindus is forgotten. The idea that the Hindu giant (85% of the population) can ever be "pushed around" is frankly absurd. Indeed the ultimate logic of majority communalism (Hindu communalism) is in a sense more dangerous because it leads not to separation, but to the massive repression and domination of the minorities.

The ordinary Sikhs outside of Punjab feel more insecure than ever before. Their bitterness towards the central government and its failure to prevent or control the rioting is deeper than ever, justifiably so. But their communalist attitude expresses itself in an unwillingness to condemn their own communal organisations and leaders with the same force, or to reflect in a way which can recognise and acknowledge the failure of the Sikh masses to strongly dissociate themselves from the murderous tactics

of Bhindranwale or from the deliberate communal politics of the Akali Dal which has organised the *Morcha* (movement) in Punjab.

In sum, communal attitudes among both Sikhs and Hindus are more deeply entrenched and widespread than ever before. It is in the nature of communalism that it should make religion the most important unifying factor when in an objective sense it is not and cannot ever be. Class, caste, regional and ethnic loyalties are generally much more important because they correspond much more closely to common objective needs. Sikh, Hindu and Muslim workers have much more in common with each other than each of them has with their co-religionists of a higher class or caste. Yet it is the success of communalism that such fundamental differences should become subsumed under a false sense of religious unity.

Hindu 'Rashtra'?

The beneficiaries of such a development in India today are the active and conscious communal forces among Sikhs and Hindus. The false, unattainable and unjustifiable goal of Khalistan will not attract greater support among Sikhs. Such an objective cannot be supported by revolutionaries because Sikhs do not constitute a nationality let alone an oppressed nationality. Nor, despite their very real secular and to a more limited extent, religious grievances, has Sikhism been an oppressed religion. Khalistan must not be supported, not because "Indian unity" is some mythical ideal that must be preserved but because Khalistan does not correspond to the objective interests of the oppressed classes among Sikhs. Furthermore, it is simply not attainable. The Indian state is too powerful and will not ultimately hesitate to unleash the most brutal repression of Sikhs to "preserve the Indian union." Nor, contrary to the expectations of many Khalistanis will Pakistan commit suicide; that is, go to war with the powerful Indian state in order to help Sikhs carve out a Khalistan. Islamabad is not above utilising the Hindu-Sikh divide for its own purposes and in order to make things difficult for New Delhi. But there is a definite limit to their support to Khalistanis.

On the other side, the idea of a "Hindu *Rashtra*," the goal long propagated by the RSS (*Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* — National Volunteer Corps), one of the strongest and most deeply rooted of Hindu communal forces, will now have correspondingly greater resonance among the Hindus of north and central India, parts of western India and among Brahmins elsewhere. (3)

2. See *International Viewpoint*, No 60, October 1, 1984.

3. The RSS was established in 1926, and was an organisation designed to provide the 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.

The momentum of migration of Sikhs to and Hindus out of Punjab is growing. This is an extremely dangerous development because if it gathers force, it will lead to a de facto Khalistan-type situation which will then provoke the government into an all-out effort to forcibly subordinate Punjab and reduce its "independence" from the rest of India, that is physically repress Sikhs. Even before the latest riots there had been a steady trickle of Hindus leaving Punjab. They have more reason today to feel insecure because of the expectation of a "Sikh backlash" at some time in the future.

Today Sikhs outside Punjab have been shaken as never before. Their sense of being a vulnerable minority is stronger than ever before. To be among "their own kind" in Punjab must seem the logical and natural thing to do, the "safer" alternative at least for each individual Sikh family, even if the collective outcome of such accumulated individual migrations would prove disastrous for Sikhs as a whole in Punjab.

Although there was no immediate "Sikh backlash" in Punjab after the recent riots, as news begins to circulate among Punjab's Sikhs of what has happened elsewhere (Punjab is under army rule with tight censorship) the alienation and resentment between the two communities will grow, only tempered by the fact that some Hindus also went out of their way to save many Sikhs. The "Sikh backlash" in Punjab, when it comes, is not likely to take the form of Sikh mobs on indiscriminate rampage against Punjabi Hindus, but the form of an escalation of terrorist killings of individuals. If in fact the former were to occur, the consequences can easily be imagined. Even individual terrorist killings might be sufficient to initiate a pattern of future Hindu-Sikh riots that parallels the Hindu-Muslim situation. The events of October 31 to November 4 mark the first time in the history of Hindu-Sikh relations that there has been such mob violence and rioting.

The Sikh community has no leadership capable of stemming the rising tide of communalism. The leaders of the Akali Dal (4) have proved themselves utterly bankrupt in the recent crisis. The top-ranking leaders, although in prison following "Operation Bluestar," could have issued statements from prison condemning the assassination of Mrs Gandhi, dissociating Sikhs as a community from the act of two misguided individuals, calling on the government to fulfil its responsibilities to protect Sikhs and assuring it of its full support in this task during this period of acute crisis, and called on the Sikhs in Punjab to refrain at all costs from any retaliation. Instead, this leadership did nothing. It remained silent.

In their absence, effective leadership of the Sikhs has been in the hands of the principal religious leaders, the five high priests of the Akal Takth in the Golden Temple. One of the more positive outcomes of the recent riots has been the



Rioting Hindus in the Punjab earlier this year (DR)

sharp disillusionment among Sikhs outside Punjab with this leadership for their shameful and criminal role during the crisis. Jathedar Kripal Singh, the head priest, first issued a statement condemning the murder of Mrs Gandhi and then soon after retracted this statement "clarifying" that while the assassination was a tragedy he neither condemned nor supported it. Furthermore these leaders indulged in absurd politicking (which could have been left to later) at a time when the most urgent need was to save Sikh lives by cooling tensions and bringing the rioting to a halt, by demanding that the government fulfil its responsibilities and assuring it of all support in this task from the Sikh community at this juncture.

Today the leadership of the Sikh community is in a complete mess. It is unable to provide any perspective of what to do in Punjab or of how to stop the growing dynamic which is polarising the two communities, the migration in and out of Punjab, and all the other factors which presage a possible massacre of Sikhs in the not too distant future.

On the other side of the communal fence, Hindu communalism has become more powerful than ever. Despite the much more aggressive and overt communal ideology of the RSS and its political front organisation, the BJP (the Bharantija Janata Party) and the basic communal perspectives of the other bourgeois opposition parties, it is the ruling Congress (I) that is the driving force of Hindu communalism today. This is something that traditional leftists (the CPI, the Communist Party of India, and the CPM, the Communist Party-Marxist (5)), have failed or refused to grasp. There are obvious distinctions to be made between the RSS-BJP which talks overtly in terms of a Hindu Rashtra, and the Congress (I) which maintains the language of secularism and nationalism. Nevertheless, the Congress (I), simply by virtue of holding power at the level of central government and in the various states, represents a greater actual

danger than the potential danger of a "Hindu fascism" as embodied by the RSS-BJP.

Thus, in the Bhiwandi riots of May-June 1984 in Bombay (6) the massacre of Muslims was largely the responsibility of the Shiv Sena and the Congress (I), not the RSS. Today it would be impossible to convince any Sikh and understandably so, that while the RSS is communal the Congress is essentially secular — not when the organisation of the recent carnage was undertaken by Congress (I) leaders. What is more, these murderers in the Congress (I) party will not be brought to book or punished by the coterie of top leaders surrounding the new prime minister and head of the party, Rajiv Gandhi. At best these murderers may be denied a ticket for the coming elections. Rajiv Gandhi and his club of "computer boys" are even less capable than Mrs Gandhi of overhauling and cleaning the party of its criminal and lumpen elements. She at least was able to establish a long-term personal dominance within the party that the new prime minister has yet to emulate. Indeed, the deepening communalism of the Congress (I) has to be justified, endorsed and covered up. Thus, Rajiv Gandhi, in his maiden public speech as prime minister, indirectly condoned the communal outbreak when he declared, regarding the death of his mother, that when a giant falls there are bound to be tremors. It is also, above all, the Congress (I) which can provide Hindu communalism with the most effective garb of nationalism. Thus a future massacre of Sikhs in Punjab would be justified as necessary in order to prevent the emergence of Khalistan and to preserve the "unity and integrity of the nation."

4. Akali Dal, founded in 1920, is a party composed essentially of Sikhs.

5. The Communist Party of India was founded in 1928. The Sino-Soviet split in 1961 created different factions inside the party. An important section of the base left to form the CPI-M.

6. See IV, No 57, July 16, 1984.

He was followed on the same platform by another Congress (I) leader who launched — obviously with official approval — a tirade against the recently published finding of two Delhi based civil liberties organisations which accused by name a number of Congress (I) leaders of organising and fomenting the riots.

It is precisely this growing communal character of the Congress (I) that has created a dilemma for organisations like the RSS which now have an extremely ambivalent attitude towards the Congress (I). On the one hand the RSS can have no quarrel with the Congress's increasingly communal orientation and practice, which indeed they endorse and support. On the other hand, support for the Congress (I) weakens its own front organisation, the BJP, in which there is already a conflict between the "liberal" minority led by Atal B. Vajpayee which wants the BJP to dilute its strongly Hindu ideology in favour of a more "national" image, and the majority which sees the bonds tying the BJP to the RSS as indissoluble.

But the fact remains that the RSS is increasingly lending its support to the Congress (I), further testimony, if it were needed, of the "vanguard" communal role played by the Congress (I) today. The RSS attitude to the recent riots expressed another ambivalence. The RSS did not condone the riots but opposed them, declaring that Sikhs were in fact an integral part of the Hindu faith and historically its frontier guards for a 1,000 years. This is historically inaccurate; in fact, Sikhism emerged in the middle of the fifteenth century.

However, the point is that the RSS preferred to adopt a more subtle communalism denying the separate religious identity of Sikhs. Why this approach? In effect the Pan-Hindu ideal of the RSS pushes it to try and incorporate minorities like the Sikhs, Buddhists, Sindhis even as it excludes the biggest minority, the Muslims. Were its pan-Hindu ideal to exclude Sikhs then this would undermine another of its principal goals — an "Akhand Bharat" or an Undivided India. While Muslims can theoretically be packed off to Pakistan, where would the Sikhs go if they are to be excluded from a Hindu Rashtra?

Nevertheless, the RSS can be satisfied that the idea of a Hindu Rashtra enjoys increasingly greater popularity. It is of course no solution. Indeed this growing pressure must be strongly combatted. A Hindu Rashtra solves none of the fundamental problems of poverty and social and political inequality. It would not only be fatal for the minorities like Sikhs, Muslims and Christians that make up 15% of the population, but disastrous for Hindus themselves. Quite apart from the fact that the oppressed classes and castes among Hindus would gain nothing, such an outcome would greatly accelerate centrifugal tendencies leading to the break up of the country.

For a Hindu Rashtra would mean in effect the dominance of the Hindi speaking north over the rest of India, a pros-

pect that would then be resisted with increasing ferocity by its regional victims. It is worth noting in this respect that the recent riots and certainly the killings of Sikhs were essentially confined to the Hindi speaking heartland of India though the grief over Mrs Gandhi's death was nationwide.

The example of non-secular Pakistan is a salutary one. An Islamic, avowedly non-secular Pakistan as it was created in 1947 meant in effect the dominance of the Punjabi speaking part of west Pakistan. Which in turn led to the break away of Bengali east Pakistan in 1971 and to growing hostility and resistance of Sind and Baluchi counter-nationalism in the west. A Hindu Rashtra would be the prelude to the balkanisation of India.

Anti-communal front

Objectively speaking, the increasing communalisation of Indian society and of the state represents the single greatest danger facing the country. Combatting this communalism is the major priority for this period in Indian history. How is it to be done?

There is not a single bourgeois political force that can claim to be essentially secular and non-communal let alone anti-communal. The communist left, the CPI and CPM although not above playing communal politics as part of the electoral game are fundamentally secular. But their ability to present themselves as an alternative pole in the struggle against communalism is decisively vitiated by their adherence to the view that the ruling Congress (I) for all its "authoritarianism" is a secular alternative to the communal RSS-BJP.

This stems partly from their misguided understanding of the role of the Congress during the national freedom movement, and partly from their assumption that the national bourgeoisie is secular, and it is above all the Congress (I) that represents this national bourgeoisie. It fails to realise that this national bourgeoisie is principally committed to preserving the national market, that is the nation, and in the face of a Sikh communalism gravitating towards Khalistan will fully endorse a communal onslaught against Sikhs by the "secular" ruling party in order to "preserve the nation." The CPI and CPM perspective can condone and justify such an outcome; it can do nothing to prevent it.

Thus both the CPI and CPM mourned the death of Mrs Gandhi as the passing away of a truly nationalist and secular figure willing to stand up to internally destabilising forces like the Khalistanis who are aided and abetted by foreign reactionary forces, for example American imperialism whose most courageous and principled opponent on the world scale is of course the Soviet Union, to which both parties are now very close. Incidentally, the USSR has been consistently putting pressure on the CPI and CPM to support the "progressive" Congress (I).

The CPI and CPM are unable or unwilling to recognise that the real danger comes not from the possibility of a Khalistan emerging, but of a genocide of Sikhs in Punjab by the Indian state as communal forces on both sides become strengthened and the two communities polarised.

Thus the CPI and CPM hailed the "smoothness" of the changeover in Congress and government leadership and committed itself to strengthening the forces standing for "the unity and integrity" of the country, even as it seeks to electorally oppose the Congress (I) in the coming elections.

All of which makes the task of setting up a nationwide anti-communal front which opposes the communalism of *all* bourgeois parties absolutely vital. This is something that will have to be built from scratch through the coming together of individuals and groups able to recognise the acute communal danger and the absence of any political force capable of combatting it effectively.

Such a front (initial efforts have been launched in places like Delhi and Bombay) must necessarily be independent of existing political parties, including the CPI and CPM. It must develop a programme which provides hope and perspectives to minorities like the Sikhs and Muslims. Such a front must demand that the murderers of the Congress (I) be brought to trial and punished (the Congress (I) has ordered a major probe into the assassination of Mrs Gandhi but not into the behaviour of its own members and leaders during the recent riots). Only this will serve to reassure the Sikh community somewhat and to expose to a larger audience the fact that the Congress (I) is the driving force of Hindu communalism.

Such a front must vigorously oppose the Khalistanis and the Akali Dal brand of Sikh communalism. It must vigorously oppose other Hindu and Muslim communal organisations. It must point out the dangers inherent in the concept of Hindu Rashtra. It must oppose the growing trend of migration in and out of Punjab. It must oppose the government's systematic and conscious attempt to reduce the numbers and proportion of Sikhs in the police and armed forces. It must challenge the flawed official secularist ideology inherited from the national movement which does not sufficiently separate affairs of religion from affairs of the state.

Such a front must concretise specific demands around each one of these perspectives and agitate vigorously around them. Only such a many-sided and collective opposition to all communalisms can offer the promise of a better future and a leap backward from impending insanity. The creation of such a front is the prime responsibility of this period and must be undertaken by all radical, progressive and revolutionary forces in the country. The Inquilabi Communist Sangathan, the Indian section of the Fourth International, commits itself firmly to this endeavour. ■

Dictatorship in crisis : one bloody hand washes the other

"I can no longer limit my ministry to the church grounds, even though so many 'people of good counsel' tell me that a real Polish priest should not go outside the affairs of his parish. I will remain among the workers as long as I can." That was how Jerzy Popieluszko explained his work. With his murder on October 19, 1984, Solidarnosc lost one of the most devoted of its worker priests, a fervent defender of trade-union rights, the rights of workers and of citizens. He was a man who courageously denounced the violence and the lies of the bureaucratic regime.

The assassination of Jerzy Popieluszko by agents of the security police deprived Solidarnosc of a man who, since the outbreak of the August 1980 strikes, linked his fate to the cause of the exploited and oppressed workers. He assumed this commitment to the workers of the Warsaw steel plants by celebrating the mass for them when they occupied their workplace.

The way in which Popieluszko was liquidated again highlights the real nature of the regime in Poland. The political and moral responsibility for this killing falls entirely on the authorities, and in the first instance on General Jaruzelski, as Professor Edward Lipinski stressed in a letter addressed to the chief of state (1), demanding that he resign. Professor Lipinski, now 96 years old, is a member of the Academy of Sciences and cofounder of the Workers Defense Committee (KOR).

The Polish authorities bear the responsibility for this murder, regardless of whether Captain Piotrowski's goons acted on their own or at the instigation of people higher up. Even if this attack on the mass movement was the result of the clashes between the cliques in power, it was no less a crime committed by the regime as such. What is more, the great majority of Poles have no doubt about it.

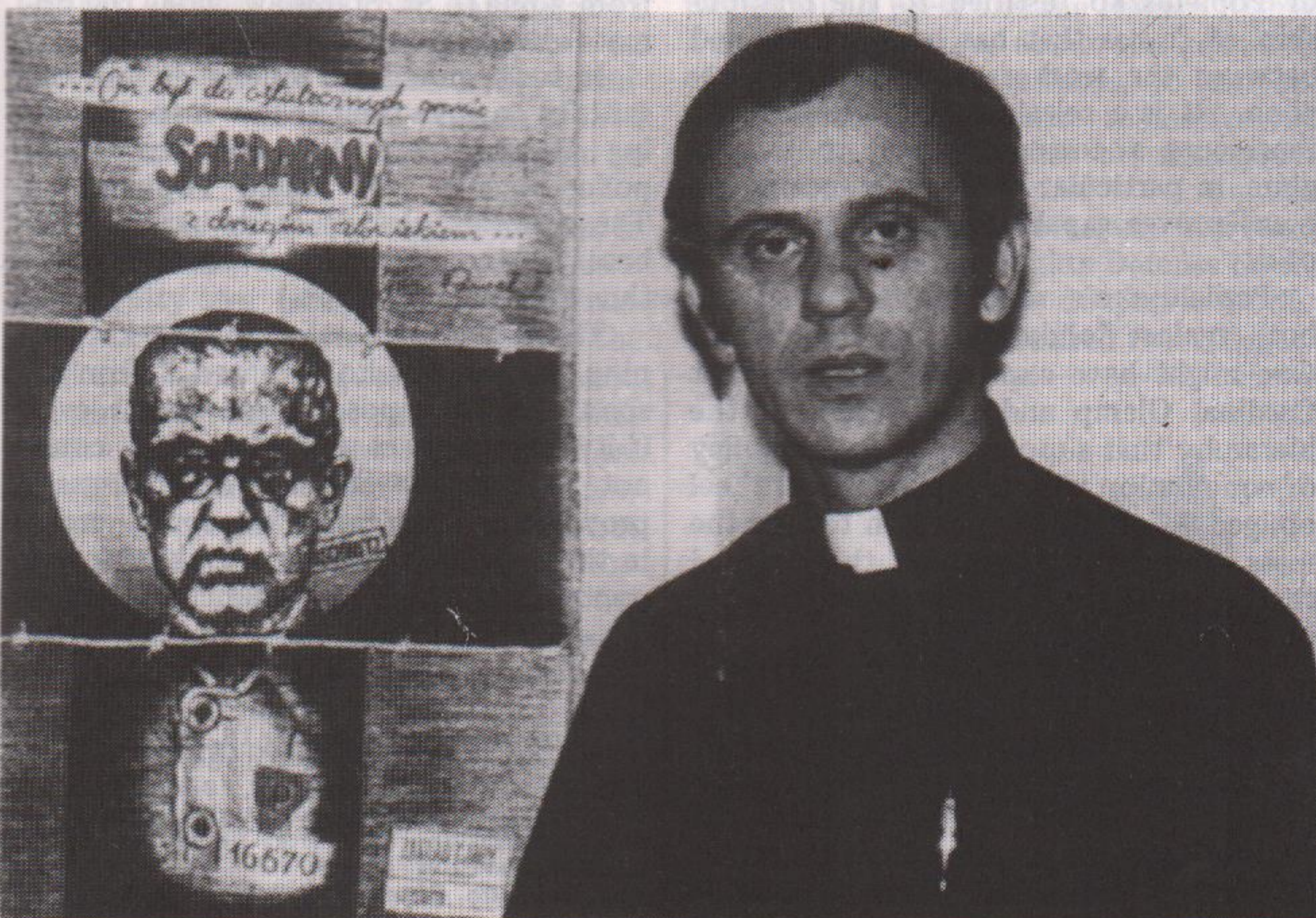
Jacqueline ALLIO and Cyril SMUGA

Since the December 13, 1981 crackdown, the repressive apparatus had already committed many murders. There were the workers at the Wujek mine, dozens of participants in street demonstrations killed or "missing." A few months ago, the peasant leader Piotr

Bartoszcze was murdered. (2) Like Jerzy Popieluszko, they were all victims of the same mechanisms of a regime based permanently on martial law.

There is no doubt that the latest crime was conceived of as a reprisal against the mass movement for its determined opposition to the bureaucracy's "normalization." In particular, this year has been

Jerzy Popieluszko by a Solidarnosc poster depicting a Polish saint (DR)



one of defeats for the bureaucracy. There was the successful boycott of the municipal elections farce. Then only a few months ago after the authorities had tried in vain to force the eleven leaders of Solidarnosc and KOR to leave the country, they were obliged to grant an amnesty to political prisoners.

It is evident that a whole section of the state apparatus reacted very badly to the amnesty, which Jaruzelski was counting on to demobilize and divide the resistance movement. From the time the announcement was made, the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP — the Polish CP) was literally inundated with telegrams of protest from its "base." This opposition hardened when the Solidarnosc leaders released from prison were given a hero's welcome by throngs of supporters at masses celebrated in their honor.

The authorities then threatened several of these leaders with reprisals if they persisted in their public activities. In particular, Wladislaw Frasyniuk and Josef Pinior were sent back to prison for two months for taking part in the August 31, 1984, demonstration in Wroclaw and for having met with workers from the factories in that city.

State of war

In fact, even if the hopes of many for a revival of open activity by Solidarnosc have not been realized, General Jaruzelski is far from having achieved his ends. And this is feeding a backlash in the state apparatus.

Last September, the journal of the MRKS (Inter-enterprise Workers Committee) of Warsaw, the *CDN-Glos Wolnego Robotnika*, noted a growing hostility to the Jaruzelski team among the bureaucracy, with its "vanguard" more and more proclaiming openly Stalinist positions. In fact, the present ruling team has never managed to bring to heel all sections of the state apparatus. This is particularly true of the economic apparatus, which is more broken up than ever, divided up between cliques based in certain localities and certain industries that compete for investment funds and control of means of production.

However, this is only one aspect of the affair. Paralleling the imposition of the state of war, we have seen a series of modifications in the relations among the apparatuses. The PUWP, which traditionally held supremacy, was elbowed out of first place by the military apparatus and the state bureaucracy. "In the good old days," the MRKS journal wrote, "a minister used to consult daily with 'his own' boss in the Central Committee. Now a head of a PUWP department has to apply to a minister. There was a time when Central Committee functionaries

1. *Le Monde*, November 7, 1984.
2. See *International Viewpoint*, No 57, July 16, 1984.

had direct access to ministerial offices. Today, they have to make appointments several days in advance." (3)

The members of the military apparatus have, at the same time, taken control of the Ministry of the Interior, including the political police, which also flies in the face of tradition. This does not suit the old cliques in the PUWP or the Ministry of the Interior because it puts in question their status in the state sphere, and with it, the accruing privileges.

The failure of the normalization makes the sections of the bureaucracy that feel cheated quick to challenge the Jaruzelski team in the name of a harder line calling for a more energetic struggle against the opposition. Some of them think that they represent an alternative for the Kremlin and its mercenaries.

It is against the background of these factional struggles that a tendency has appeared for certain sections of the Ministry of the Interior to want to administer their own "justice." We saw this with the kidnappings committed by the Anti-Solidarnosc Organization (OAS), which tortured people accused of taking part in the underground work of Solidarnosc. Although the victims formally identified a member of this commando group as being a secret police agent, and although Deputy Ryszard Bohr submitted a letter signed by forty intellectuals in Torun on this subject, the investigation has dragged on fruitlessly, and the attacks of the OAS have continued.

"Communique No. 1" of the OAS denounced "the incapacity of the Jaruzelski team and its security services" to wage an effective struggle "against the cancer that is eating away at the society — a conspiracy and a fashion of opposition," that is against Solidarnosc. Generals Jaruzelski and Kiszczak have not been inclined to go after the bandits of the OAS. No wonder! From the standpoint of the regime as a whole, they have done good work, even if they did not bother to get an OK first.

According to the information given by Kiszczak in a speech on TV, it seems that Captain Piotrowski, who admitted murdering Father Popieluszko, defended himself with arguments similar to those advanced by the OAS in its leaflets: The minister of the interior has even said that he suspects that "some powerful figure" is hiding behind the murderers and that he has taken special security measures to make sure that they are not liquidated in their cells. (4)

All of this may only be a smokescreen. The essential thing, however, is that the leading team has been obliged to admit that the assassins belonged to the state apparatus, thereby revealing the deep crisis at work in it. "An Eastern Bloc regime has turned on its own political police under popular pressure," a former Solidarnosc activist said. "And a regime that turns on its police is simply sawing off the branch it is sitting on." (5)

At first glance, it might seem that there was no reason why the regime could



Paris December 14, 1981: a demonstration in support of Solidarnosc (DR)

not cover up this political crime the same way it did the murder of Piotr Bartoszcze, or institute a phoney inquiry in order to stall for time, as it did in the case of the murder of Grzegorz Przemyk. (6) No reason except mass pressure and fear of the workers' reaction. The tension created by the kidnapping of Popieluszko forced the Jaruzelski team to move very quickly to head off developments of a scope that could have threatened it.

The arrest of Captain Piotrowski and his two stooges, followed by that of Colonel Pietruszki of the political police; Jaruzelski's decision, with the agreement of the PUWP Central Committee to purge the secret police apparatus; and finally the finding of Popieluszko's body were all the results of mass pressure. These moves were made under the threat of a strike in the Warsaw steel plants and in response to the fear that the masses who swept toward the church of St. Stanislaw inspired in the regime.

What happened after the kidnapping of Popieluszko testified to the relationship of forces that has been maintained between the workers and the Polish regime. It is a relationship of forces that represents a constant threat to the regime, in particular if the resistance movement proves capable of taking advantage of it.

Popieluszko's murder was an attack both against Solidarnosc and the church. One might have expected therefore that Cardinal Glemp and the section of the hierarchy that supports him in his policy of conciliation with the regime would feel obliged to shift their position toward the mass movement, on which they turned their backs long ago. However, nothing of the sort happened.

In an October 27 dispatch from Warsaw, Krzysztof Wolicki, a Catholic intellectual and correspondent for the Paris daily *Le Matin*, wrote: "The primate, Glemp, seems determined to make the faithful listen to reason. Since his return to Warsaw [from East Berlin] — alerted

perhaps by the letter addressed to him by dissident priests, in an initiative that must have reminded him unpleasantly of the hated horizontal structures in the party — Glemp has been trying to defuse what he regards as a powderkeg. On Saturday evening, at the request of the regime, he ordered the evacuation of the presbytery of the parish of St. Stanislaw, the parish of Father Popieluszko. It had served as a sort of command center of the crisis. The official press had denounced it that very day as a nest of the 'master provocateurs' of Solidarnosc." (7)

On the following day, Sunday, October 28, the date of the "mass for the motherland" that Popieluszko would have celebrated if he had been alive, Glemp decided to say mass at the same time as the one in the church of St. Stanislaw. His intention was to divert a section of the faithful and head off the demonstration that the mass in Popieluszko's church threatened to turn into. But that did not keep 50,000 people from going to St. Stanislaw, while the primate attracted only a paltry 1,500.

It took a hell of a nerve to ask the faithful to love their fellow man, including General Jaruzelski and the secret police agents who killed Popieluszko. The gulf that already exists between the base of the church and the hierarchy thus threatens to widen.

The situation created by the kidnapping of Popieluszko required a firm response by the opposition movement, even if it could only act with caution. It could not be excluded that the murder was a provocation instigated by some circles in the apparatus that were looking for an opportunity both to launch a brutal

3. *CDN*, No 83, September 18, 1984.

4. *Le Monde*, November 1, 1984.

5. *Liberation*, November 12, 1984.

6. Grzegorz, a high school student arrested at a demonstration, died after being beaten up in a police station.

7. *Le Matin*, October 29, 1984.

repressive operation and to take advantage of that to bring about changes within the regime.

After the institution of the state of war, Frasnyniuk, a leader of Solidarnosc in the Wroclaw region, warned on more than one occasion that the regime was determined to crush the resistance movement and that street demonstrations could offer a pretext for it to move. In this respect, Lech Walesa had good reason to warn against falling for any provocation by which the masses could be used as cannon fodder in the battle for a redistribution of power going on among rival factions in the regime.

However, on the other hand, Walesa adopted a position rather close to that of Glomp, offering the mass movement no political action perspective and in particular in saying that he hoped to see a "frank dialogue" develop between the regime and the masses. In taking this tack, Walesa demobilized the energies of the movement and paralyzed any initiative. For a long time, the democratic opposition circles have not concealed their fear that a social explosion could lead to a defeat. But what might have been understandable, if not justified, before August 1980, today represents an anachronism.

The fact is that the majority of Polish society, and in particular the working class in the big factories, has gone through very rich experiences of self-organization. And we can be sure that the masses would be able to put this to good use. A workers' leader like Walesa should have been convinced of this.

Counteroffensive

Channelling the energy of the masses in collective prayer will only allow the regime to gain time and reconsolidate its ranks. In other words, it will enable it to prepare for a counterattack. In front of the 15,000 persons assembled for a mass in the church of St. Bridget in Gdansk, Walesa said that Popieluszko's kidnappers "had played a nasty trick on all Poles, from the premier to the ordinary citizen." As if the workers shared a common interest with the regime in Poland!

The mass movement has no interest in whitewashing the head of state of the responsibility that falls to him for this murder. And Walesa's efforts to convince the workers that a "dialogue" is possible with the authorities can only lead into a blind alley. A favorable situation for the mass movement could of course lead to a new phase of negotiation with the regime, but only on the condition that the authorities thought that their backs were to the wall. In any case, it would not be a "frank dialogue," but a need on the part of the regime to make concessions and reach a tactical compromise. In any case, the authorities will not be forced to engage in dialogue by collective prayers.

Commenting on an interview in which Walesa said that "the Polish church has

shown that it is capable of giving a lead to the nation at crucial moments in our history," *Financial Times* correspondent Krzysztof Bobinski wrote that "Walesa is ready for Solidarnosc to take a back seat in any talks between church and state." He added: "This line will surprise many of the union's activists....But Mr Walesa's line is fairly clear. He is signalling to the authorities that they can rely on calm prevailing in the country while he demands that they establish control over their own security apparatus and follow this up with conciliatory policies." (8)

Whether or not this is really Walesa's orientation, and his propensity to make hasty statements that he contradicts the next day is well known, it is clear that if the mass movement adopted such a position, the regime would be able to limit the damaging effects for it of Popieluszko's assassination.

For their part, on their release from prison, Frasnyniuk and Pinior, another leader in the Wroclaw region, launched the slogan of "social control over the repressive apparatus." A few days later, leaders in a dozen Polish cities who were known during the period when Solidarnosc operated legally as representing the union's more militant wing, launched an appeal along the same lines: "Since December 12, 1981, the list of acts of terror has lengthened considerably. There is always only one way to stop the terror — social control over the repressive apparatus." (9)

Forcing the imposition of such control is the objective of those who formed the Committees to Defend Human Rights Against Violence in Cracow, Warsaw, Wroclaw, Gdansk and in many other cities. It should also be possible today to take advantage of the moral crisis that Popieluszko's assassination has certainly created among the functionaries of the repressive apparatus. On this basis, it should be possible to appeal to them to put up passive resistance during repressive operations, to funnel information to the underground press and the Human Rights Defense Committees about the activities of the repressive apparatus, to call on them to try to organize themselves in trade-union commissions or antirepression groups.

The question can be asked, however, whether the Human Rights Defense Committees will be able to do public work. The regime has just declared them illegal.

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Will they be able to operate openly despite this? That would unquestionably be a very great success for the mass movement. But only experience will show whether the existing relationship of forces will make it possible to force the regime to accept this sort of activity.

Regardless of what happens in this respect, the Human Rights Defense Committees cannot serve as a substitute for the mass movement. If they were to take the place of the mass movement, in fact, that would be a very important setback, a return to square one, to what the KOR represented before August 1980.

From this standpoint, Walesa was right to say that the goals of these committees are too limited in comparison with the objectives and tasks of Solidarnosc, and that it would be an illusion to think that social control over the repressive apparatus by itself would be sufficient to offer the country a way out of the political crisis. In the present situation, such control and its effects could only be very restricted.

Instead of being a substitute for the mass movement, therefore, the committees should be complementary to it, an initiative toward broadening its field of activity. In order for the work of these committees to develop in reality, they will have to base themselves on a greater activity of the social forces, in particular by the factory workers. The potential that had accumulated by the end of October and the beginning of November is favorable to such activity.

The immense demonstration of a half a million people on the occasion of Popieluszko's burial was the material expression of this potential. But in order to take advantage of these possibilities, it is necessary to reject the fundamentally wrong slogan of "Only calm can save us." On the contrary, it is necessary to link the activity of social self-defense against the terror and repression to reviving trade-union activity in the plants by mobilizing the workers around immediate economic and social demands and in the struggle for trade-union rights, civil rights and the rights of self-management.

The Human Rights Defense Committees will only be able to operate publicly if they are based on a rebuilding and reinforcement of Solidarnosc's underground structures in the factories, on the resistance and the struggle of the workers.

The regime has just launched a very violent campaign against a number of Solidarnosc and democratic opposition activists recently amnestied, and against those priests who continue to support the underground movement. It is a campaign of hatred very similar to the one waged against Popieluszko that preceded his death.

This is the government's way of trying to launch a counterattack. A great deal will depend on the movement's capacity to contain this new assault. ■

8. *Financial Times*, November 7, 1984.

9. *Bulletin d'information de Solidarite*, No 100, November 14, 1984.

The birth of a new left

Jacqueline ALLIO, Cyril SMUGA

During 1984 several currents or groups of the left in the broadest sense, or even of socialists, have emerged inside Solidarnosc. This process began out of a growing awareness that effective resistance to the rule of the totalitarian bureaucracy cannot be achieved through the sheer determination of the social and trade-union movement alone.

It is also necessary to organise politically within the movement in order to be able to draw up programmes and strategies for struggle against the bureaucratic dictatorship and for the construction of a self-managed republic. The enormous backwardness of the Polish movement in this regard is reflected more and more in its activity. Solidarnosc is continually plunged into a programmatic and strategic crisis which comes out more clearly in moments of heightened political tension. But this crisis is also felt very keenly in periods of relative calm in the midst of the routine day-to-day activities within the structures of Solidarnosc and particularly in the workplaces.

In response to this problem, certain attempts have been made to take political initiatives as in the case of the Fighting Solidarity Organisation which decided in the summer of 1982 to give itself a formal structure. Up until now most of the attempts to organise politically in the workplaces within Solidarnosc have come from the left except in the case of the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN), a nationalist organisation which has practically ceased to exist since 1981. The other exception is *Niepodleglosc* (Independence) which puts forward the idea of a setting up of a liberal-democratic party, but which has taken its distance from Solidarnosc, considering it to be a movement without perspective. The initiatives taken by the left are very limited, not so say embryonic, and at the same time very diverse.

The majority stand on the tradition of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) was the main reformist workers' party in Poland from the end of the nineteenth century until 1948, when it ceased to exist. This party played a leading role in the national and social revolution of 1905 and was the most influential party within the structures of the 'underground government' under Nazi occupation. The new socialists look to it mainly because this party not only defended the notion of the emancipation of labour, the demands of parliamentary democracy and independence for Poland but it was also anticommunist. Within Solidarnosc most people identify communism with Stalinism and totalitarianism of the Soviet type.

Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik were among the first to claim to stand in the tradition of the PPS when they broke from Marxism and began to work within the KOR before August 1980. The review *Krytyka*, which still appears intermittently in Warsaw, was the mouthpiece of this current. It is generally assumed that Kuron, Michnik and a number of other ex-KOR members have a perspective of building a socialist party in the future based on the traditions of the PPS. The point of departure, organisationally speaking, for this project was the building just before the declaration of the State of War, of the Clubs for a Self-Managed Republic and for 'liberty, justice and independence' (WSN).

Since 1983 this project has been continued. It is carried out under the banner of WSN groups although not much is heard about them and the publications have a very limited circulation. This comes from the fact that the main initiators of this current were in prison up until last July.

The Committee of Resistance (KOS) has a much more important influence. It was created immediately after December 1981 as an underground structure linked to Solidarnosc and was set up through a network of five-person groups. KOS itself

declares that, 'It is not a secret organisation of cadres based on discipline and hierarchy, nor a political party with a unified programme aiming to seize power.' The committee produces a weekly paper, *Kos* (Blackbird), which has a circulation of about 20,000 copies and which is one of the two main underground journals.

Kos is opposed to the setting up of a political organisation today because they are afraid that it would become a substitute for the wider social movement, thus weakening it and undermining unity. They do not call themselves socialists because they believe that 'in Poland, as in other countries in the Soviet empire, socialism is identified with a regime of violence, lies and exploitation.' It is, however, generally considered to be a current of the left. It has established contacts with certain social democratic parties in the West and initiated contacts with peace groups in END (the movement for European Nuclear Disarmament), the first group in Poland to do so. As with the WSN, the KOS represent the right-wing of the Polish left.

In February 1984 a political group was formed around the weekly newspaper, *Wola* (Willpower) which is produced by trade-union militants with links in the factories in the Wola district of Warsaw. This group bases itself on the tradition of the PPS. But the only group which for the moment calls for the construction of a socialist party is the group around the weekly *Robotnik* (The Worker). This paper has no connection with a bulletin of the same name set up within the KOR in 1977, and which today no longer exists. This journal has a circulation of several thousand copies. It is produced by members of the workers interfactory committee of Solidarnosc (MRKS) in Warsaw.

In some articles the *Robotnik* political group presents the view of Western social democracy, whose positions and real nature they completely idealise, as the reference point of the whole of the international workers' movement. On this subject it says, for example, 'Through the methods of gradual reform they [Western social democracy] try to limit the influence of private capital, to appease imperialism in international relations and to put into practice egalitarian principles in social relations. Above all, they try to contribute to the development of the standard of living, the welfare state and the culture of the workers.' In the following pages we publish two documents from this current.

This attitude towards social democracy combined with the methods that *Robotnik* puts forward for the construction of a workers' party, have been the object of a polemic which we reproduce here and which appeared in the monthly *Wolny Robotnik* (Free Worker), produced in Silesia. This polemic came from a current of the revolutionary left. It is this current which produced the journal *Front Robotniczy* (Workers Front) which started publication in August 1984. They stand for a programme of struggle for power through workers' councils put forward in the famous 'open letter' of Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski written in 1964 when they were still revolutionary Marxists. The appearance in Poland of a revolutionary socialist current is proof of the ideological and political radicalisation of certain sections of the Polish new left.

The following dossier is a selection of the most interesting aspects of the debates currently going on among the Polish left. We begin with some extracts from the polemic of KOS with Charter 84, a document drawn up by the trade-union underground commission (TKZ) of Solidarnosc in the Lenin shipyards in Gdansk. Following that we reprint two texts from the *Robotnik* group and two from the revolutionary left. We finish with a further article from *Robotnik* in which the themes of an important debate on the history of the Polish workers' movement are taken up. ■



March 1981: 'Independent and self-managed trade unions — Solidarnosc — are the guarantee for the renewal of the country.' (DR)

A reply to charter 84

In April and May 1984 the text of a mysterious document entitled 'Charter 84' was circulated by Radio Free Europe. Apparently put out by the underground trade-union commission (TKZ) of Solidarnosc in the Lenin shipyards in Gdansk, this document has a distinctly nationalistic and clerical flavour to it. The authenticity of the document has been neither confirmed nor denied by the commission in question. Charter 84 was ignored by practically the entire underground press of Solidarnosc but it excited a violent reaction on the part of the weekly *Kos*, paper of the Committee for Social Resistance (KOS). Among other criticisms mainly addressed to Radio Free Europe the paper published a lengthy analysis of Charter 84 written by one of the main organisers of KOS known under the pseudonym of Dawid Warszawski. Below we reproduce extracts from this article.

Dawid WARSZAWSKI

Charter 84 is made up of three sections. "An Appeal to Poles at Home and Abroad," "An Appeal to the Governments of the USA and Great Britain," and "An Appeal to the Russians, That is, All the Citizens of the Soviet Union."

The "Appeal to the Poles" concludes that "our strivings for independence are now gaining extraordinarily in purposefulness." On the other hand, "while the Russians keep trying to force their disastrous domination over us, we hesitate to let them know clearly what is on our mind."....

The contents are as follows: In the "Appeal to Governments," we read "the signatures the Western governments set on the Yalta Accords have served as tombstones weighing more and more heavily on the grave of Polish freedom

and sovereignty. Indeed, they create the impression that the "Soviet Union is not the guard of the East European prison house of peoples but rather the maintainer of law and order."....

The authors of the Charter say that failure to oppose the "Sovietization of East Europe" could help to open up the way for Russia to "swallow up the West altogether."

The main part of the document is, however, the "Appeal to the Russians." In the introduction, the authors stress that Poland's historical distinctiveness is due to two factors — its acceptance of Christianity from Rome and, with that, its incorporation into the world of Western culture. The first instilled into Polish consciousness the conviction of "the inviolable dignity of the human personality" and that "human beings are destined to live in freedom."

Secondly, our incorporation in the Western cultural world led to accepting certain "certain concepts and institutions in the social and political spheres." Thanks to these, we are aware of the possibility of "a social order called democracy, which means the state has to recognize the rights of the society, and of a type of state called a republic, which belongs to all citizens." This is supposed to be why "Poland did not set out a course of expansion and enslavement," and why "here it never came to the rule of the army, the police or a bureaucracy."

Next, the authors of the Charter proceed to characterize those to whom the appeal is directed. They base themselves "on the most recent events, thus, on the period in which, in our opinion, you showed your nature most clearly." The events in question concern solely "Polish-Soviet relations."....

"When, in an attempt to save the country, working people formed Solidarnosc, you decided that the course of events in Poland had to be reversed, and the ruling group subservient to you in one night trampled on the accord reached in August." The authors conclude: "You did not permit us workers and farmers to have even a share in the running of our country." They then proceed to make an indictment.

"We accuse you of doing everything possible to reduce us to being your slaves." "You are trying to block off our own course of historical development." "You are trying to take God out of our lives." "You want to drag us into the pit of your moral degradation." "You want to cut us off from the rest of our Western cultural world." "You are dragging us down to the level of your own backwardness." And so on.

"We accuse you, finally," the authors write, "of having the ultimate responsibility for all the shooting that led to our already blood-soaked soil being steeped with the blood of the workers."

The TKZ document goes on, picking up an earlier thread:

"You justify all this generally by saying that it is part of the established realities created by war. "However," the authors continue, "we do not feel bound by the decisions...that created those realities."

In summary, the document compares the strength of both sides and concludes: "In terms of physical force, you have the advantage...but the situation is reversed as regards moral strength. It is you who are afraid that your society will become infected with our spirit of freedom. You are afraid of all free nations...and above all of your own countrymen, those noble Russians who not only perceive the truth but who are more and more prepared to suffer for it."

The authors end by saying, "History is knocking at your door. Today, it is only knocking; tomorrow it will bang with its fists."

This is indeed a strange document. In it there is a mixture of political naivete toward the West, dizzy glorification of

our own past and present, and all in the context of arrogance toward the East. This is the stuff of all the nightmares in Polish political life, starting from the attitude toward the Uniates (1) and concluding with the demagoguery of the Confederation for an Independent Poland.

To be sure, this melange is the last refuge of Polishness in moments of peril, but it is only one more nightmare. The fact that this view has gained the endorsement of what is certainly the most important TKZ in Poland is both significant and deeply disturbing. Therefore, we must make a logical analysis of the contents of the Charter.

The basic idea is, of course, valid and important. The ultimate aim of our fight is regaining our independence. And we should speak clearly about this, even if immediate tactical considerations make it advisable to avoid raising this question in the union's official documents. Mobilizing Polish public opinion around this question at home and, above all, abroad is a very important and badly neglected task of our work. It deserves every support.

Moreover, the view that the Yalta agreements are a basic source of our misfortunes is quite correct, if you consider Yalta as the conclusion of a certain historical process.

From the West they want a repudiation of the Yalta agreement. From the East, they want recognition of the bases of Poland's distinctiveness, hoping no doubt that it will relinquish Poland, stricken with the pangs of guilt and repentance. It is striking that the TKZ directs its appeal to the Western governments on the one hand but to the citizens of the USSR on the other, and not the other way around.

In both the USA and Great Britain power is exercised, and was exercised at the time of Yalta, by democratic governments answerable to their own societies.

.... It is incomprehensible that appeals on this question should be addressed to governments. Today, as forty years ago, our bondage is the price the West pays for the sake of its own tranquility. There is little to indicate that they have come to think that this deal has ceased to be profitable for them, although lately there have been some new and promising political moves on the question....

The most astonishing section of the Charter, however, is concerned with the East and not the West. The title alone is mind-boggling. "An Appeal to the Russians, That is, All the Citizens of the Soviet Union." They choose to ignore the existence of the Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, White Russians and Ukrainians, to mention only our nearest neighbors. And that's not the worst of it. They submit their grievances about the West to the governments, since the peoples of course love Poland and would not let any harm be done to it except through inadvertence. But they have the audacity to turn to the Soviet citizens and accuse them of crimes committed



by their regime, a regime that before moving against Poland managed to slaughter about 15 million of its own citizens....

The picture of our country that emerges from this TKZ document is a dishonest glorification. We do not have any reason to be ashamed of our history. In comparison with other European countries and especially our neighbors, we come out quite well. As to whether "Poland never set out on the road of expansionism," the Ukrainians and Lithuanians should be asked about that. As to whether, "it never came to rule by the army here," the victims of Brzesc [the concentration camp set up by the dictator Pilsudski] and of the pacifications in eastern Poland [repression of Ukrainian peasant protests in 1930] should be asked about that.

The worst thing is not so much that this picture is a false one but that the authors of the Charter seem sincerely to believe in it. That is the only way to explain the curious "indictment" they make, blaming everything that has happened in the People's Republic of Poland on the Russians. But it was Poles who fired on the workers in 1956, 1970 and 1981. It was Poles — heirs of democratic and republican traditions — who made workers run the gauntlet in police stations, who slandered defenseless people in the press, who tormented people in Barczewo prison. We could go on and on adding to the list, but this is not the point.

It is an obvious fact that the ultimate source of power in the People's Republic of Poland lies in Moscow. At the time, it is Poles who rule Poland, and with a considerable freedom of maneuver....

Moreover, it is not true that the citizens of the present USSR never fought for democracy. From the nineteenth century conspiracies through the revolutions

of 1905 and February 1917, the civil war, the long tradition of anti-Communist guerrilla warfare (lasting in some regions up to the 1950s) prove, if any proof were needed, that these people are no less attached to the "distinctively Polish and Western" traditions of democracy and republicanism than any other nation. Nor has this involved only isolated cases, as the authors of the Charter suggest. Moreover, considering the incomparably higher level of repression there, I would like to be able to believe that in a similar situation, if it came to that, that we would be able to stand up as well....

It seems that the anti-Polish policies of the Czarist and Soviet authorities were and are still being carried out with the full approval of the population. But before getting carried away by righteous anger, we might recall the partition of the Ukraine between Poland and the Soviets by the Treaty of Riga [which concluded the Soviet-Polish war in 1921] and the fate of the Ukrainian minority in Poland in the past, as well as the fate of the colonial empires of the western democracies, the price that India or Algeria had to pay for its independence. Unfortunately, chauvinism is not something peculiar to autocracies....

The Charter's rhetoric is such that if the Soviets were to distribute it on a mass scale, it would efface the deep impact produced by the Appeal to the Nations of Eastern Europe issued by the First Delegate Conference of Solidarnosc [in September 1981]. What is more, it would seriously compromise the Solidarnosc movement as a whole.

The publication of this Charter is not only morally reprehensible but a display of the most incredible political stupidity. If, to use the language of the authors of this document, history is knocking at someone's door, this can only mean the "knocking of Solidarnosc" on the gates of the Kremlin. If history ever "pounds" there, it will only be with the fists of these so scorned, "degraded" Russian people.

Therefore, in my opinion, the Interim Regional Executive Committee in the Gdansk region should take an official stand on this document and distance itself from the contents. I also think that this matter should be discussed in the entire underground press and in the movement for Independent Education. Indeed, there are few matters so crucial for our future as whether the Soviet authorities will be able to keep alive the antagonism between the "Polaks" and the "Ruskis" and thereby prevent these two nations from turning against their common enemy. ■

1. Uniates are Catholics of oriental (Greek) tradition who are part of the Roman Catholic church. In the sixteenth century in Poland the Greek-Catholic church in the Eastern territories (mostly Ukrainian) annexed by Poland were incorporated into the Roman Catholic church. The Catholics of Greek tradition were the victims of discrimination by the feudal state in Poland which forced the unification on them in the framework of suppressing the aspirations of Ukrainian nationalists.

'Jaruzelski does not defend socialism'

Below we publish two texts by the *Robotnik* group. The first appeared in January 1984 and explains the view of this group on the need for political discussion within Solidarnosc. It is in this context that *Robotnik* asserts that 'among political currents there is room for a socialist current.' Although this is not apparent in the following article, this group nevertheless idealises European social democracy a great deal. The second article declares itself in favour of the reconstruction of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS).

Igor LEWY

Just before the December events, Jaruzelski's propagandists thought up the slogan 'We will defend socialism as we do the independence of our country'. There is little doubt that, for most people in Poland, the second half of the equation is a lie. The country is not independent, and therefore there is no independence to defend. But this slogan contains a further falsification: the pretence that Jaruzelski and the apparatus defend socialism.

This cannot be, since socialism does not exist in Poland, any more than independence does. Socialism is not some kind of ideal state. It is not a system that can be decreed to exist, in order to defend it later. There are no socialist states in the world, there are only states that are more or less constituted in accordance with socialist principles. There are certain institutional gains won in struggles by the socialist and workers' movements, such as the 8-hour day, social security, parliamentary democracy or even different forms of direct democracy, like workers' councils or the system of internal democracy in trade unions, as existed in Solidarnosc before December 13, 1981.

All visions of an ideal system in which we are asked to believe, which are supposedly sufficient to make us happy, bring in their wake a dictatorship of one or another skilful ideological group, trying to legitimise their power by basing it on their own supposed infallibility.

The Polish workers' movement that organised itself into free trade unions at the end of the 1970s, still exists and has grown since the December coup by Jaruzelski. It is a truly democratic movement, born of the rank and file, that leads the struggles against the system of economic exploitation and political enslavement that exists in Poland. The December defeat convinced all the working people of Poland that victory cannot be won in this struggle through negotiation, that the enemy will only bend when forced to do so, and that the only power that could so force it is the workplace and inter-workplace structures of Solidarnosc, backed up by its system of publications and clandestine education programmes.

Today, as new political programmes are continually put forward, the Solidar-

nosc movement faces two essential tasks. The first is to break with the artificial notion of unity of thought, and constitute different political currents. The second, just as important, is to preserve within the framework of Solidarnosc the united front in struggle of different political currents, to achieve aims as elementary as that of the foundation of real direct democracy, that is to say, the implementation of the programme of the self-managed republic.

Among these political currents, there is certainly room for a socialist current. To be a socialist in the People's Republic of Poland and to argue for the principles of socialism is a particularly difficult and important task. The so-called socialists of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP), who call themselves communists, have not only taken our national property but have also illegitimately appropriated the traditions and demands of the socialist movement. Their regime is essentially anti-worker, in the same way

that the repressive measures they use, and the exploitation of waged work in the factories they direct, are anti-worker and anti-socialist.

Our task, the task of Polish socialists in the 1980s, is the political and economic struggle within the trade union and political parties. It is to take up the ideas and expressions for which Ludwik Warynski and Janek Wisniewski (1), the workers of the Paris Commune, and the Polish workers of the shipyard 'Paris Commune' gave their lives. The first step on this path is to take back our workers' festival of May 1. The next step will be the creation of socialist groups that, in discussion and in struggle, will determine the forms of the Polish socialist movement.

We are facing the task of building a free Poland, in which an elementary sense of justice will be linked with modernism, the effective functioning of the enterprises and the whole of the self-managed economy. There is not such a state in existence in the world. But we can, through our unremitting work and our struggle, move towards such an ideal. Socialism is a movement and a way of thinking of the future, and not the automatic realisation of a vision thought up by doctrinaires.

Robotnik, No 45, Warsaw,
January 30, 1984

1. Ludwik Warynski was the founder of the first workers' party in Poland in 1882, the Proletariat. Janek Wisniewski was a worker. He was murdered in 1970 in Gdynia and then his body was taken by demonstrators all round the town. He became a symbol for all those who struggled from December 1970 to January 1971.



Meeting with Lech Walesa in Wrocław, July 1981 (DR)

The road to a new party

Jan MORAWSKI

In many social circles the question — should the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) be resuscitated and if so, when? — is being raised. The forced unification between the Polish Socialist Party and the Polish Workers Party (PPR) in 1948 (1) was nothing but the liquidation of the humanist, liberal and democratic current of Polish socialism. The banning of legal activity by opposition parties — contrary to the constitution — since 1947 has led to a situation where free discussion of

state affairs has been made impossible. Many people have lost the ability to decide their own ideological identity. It is only thanks to August [1980] and Solidarnosc that it has become possible to distinguish a social democrat from a Christian democrat, a liberal from a communist. This legacy must be safeguarded. It is a moral obligation for us to

1. The Polish Workers Party (PPR) was founded at the beginning of 1943 by Stalinists parachuted in from Moscow. The PPR fused in 1948 with the PPS which the Stalinists had taken over.

develop this ideological gain and organisational experience. Political parties will undoubtedly be the natural form of development of the democratic and libertarian ideas of August.

But it is a long road to the reconstruction of the PPS. To have political strength and authority it would have to have several hundred thousand members at least, and its leaders and programme would have to be widely known. To reach that point, we still need many months of hard work. *Impatient and premature attempts now could harm the possibilities of future expansion of the party.* This is why the task on the agenda now is to develop cooperation between the independent editors and journals, as well as discussion on different aspects of the alternative programme to the policies of the PUWP, a programme of democratic socialism adapted to the real conditions of the end of the twentieth century. Democratic socialism should therefore be first of all constituted as a current within the existing structures of Solidarnosc.

First of all, we have to elaborate a clear vision in the discussions of parliamentary democracy and self-managed democracy as well as the numerous conceptions of economic and social policies that are indispensable for Poland to emerge from the crisis, and avoid the danger of a further retreat of civilisation. We need, not a declaration of principles of a few pages, as for example already exists in the documents of the WSN [see the introduction to the dossier] but developed programmes that really express the interests of the workers. We should have more ideas than necessary in relation to our needs, and the possibilities of implementing them. Only on this condition will we have the moral right to demand a new distribution of political power in the state, and the introduction of new management principles.

For the time being, we still do not have this overabundance of ideas, nor do we even have enough. Nor are there established links between activists or a socialist or social-democratic orientation. We still have, therefore, a lot of work and consistent effort ahead. Every mistake and inconsistent action by the elite in power increases our chances. But their weakness must not be the main source of our strength. An alternative conception of the system could only be serious and expect a kindly interest from the international social-democratic movement if it is based on the Polish experiences, on our internal traditions.

If this work is carried out during 1984, then perhaps the political council of the reborn PPS could appear publicly from the beginning of 1985. Only an open, public presentation of the socialist alternative by *people of public esteem, and known for their commitment to democratic socialism* would be a challenge of historic importance. ■

Robotnik, No 44, Warsaw,
January 23, 1984

Perspectives of a current of the revolutionary left

The article we publish below appeared in July 1984 in bulletin No 20 of Wolny Robotnik (Free Worker), the organ of the Union of Workers Councils, National Resistance Movement (ZRP-PRO) of the region of Silesia. This text was preceded by the following introduction.

The abridged version of the article which follows is an introduction to a discussion aimed at working out concrete forms of action. This is a subject to which we have returned more than once in our columns in order to explain the views and conceptions of the PRO. The editorial board is in full agreement with the ideas of the authors in the article published below. The latter estimates that the criticisms levelled at the editorial board of the journal *Robotnik*, which we have been collaborating with for some time, do not constitute an attack on a political adversary but are rather an attempt to promote a concrete discussion on the perspectives for the Polish left in the current situation, on the national as well as the international level.

Robotnik, the Warsaw journal, published an article at the beginning of the year entitled 'The road to a new party' (see page 19). The article begins in the following way: 'In many social circles the question — should the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) be resuscitated and if so, when? — is being raised.'

The first part of the question, that is, should the PPS be resuscitated, has indeed been raised by some activists in Solidarnosc. This is an important question and implies another to which we absolutely must find a reply: What are the perspectives for the Polish left? Or, more directly: What are the perspectives for the revolutionary current within the Polish opposition movement?

To avoid any misunderstanding let us define straight away the main characteristics of this current. They are that it struggles for the revolutionary overthrow of the current system of power and for its replacement by a self-managed republic. It sees the working class as the motor force of such a revolution. It upholds the traditions of revolutionary thought of the workers' movement, counterposing workers' control and socialism as the alternative to the current Stalinist system.

Although still limited in strength, such a revolutionary current exists in Poland and is struggling within the structures of Solidarnosc. Its views find a growing echo among members of the opposition. Many of the latter would never define their views as revolutionary or to the left, but they, nevertheless, support the main proposals of the revolutionary current. This is because, in their eyes, these positions best answer the political situation in Poland and the conditions in which the working class finds itself.

The journal *Robotnik* has a clear and simple vision of the future of the Polish left: it will be necessary to reconstruct the PPS and to make it into a social democratic party. The first error of the

editorial board of *Robotnik* lies in the way they pose the question of organising the left.

For these authors, the party — in the case the PPS — is the only possible solution to the problems of organisation, and its construction must be undertaken immediately. And this must be done in several ways, mainly from above, by people with some social standing, who are known for their contribution to the cause of democratic socialism, presenting the socialist alternative.

The article in question states that 'the task on the agenda now is to develop cooperation between the independent editors and journals, as well as discussions of different aspects of an alternative programme to the policy of the PUWP, a programme of democratic socialism



sued to the real conditions at the end of the twentieth century.'

Unfortunately, we will not construct a workers' party with just an alternative programme to that of the PUWP. It is not this sort of programme that we need but a programme of struggle against the PUWP and the bureaucracy.

It is significant that the articles on programme and organisation published in *Robotnik* fail totally to mention the problems of the present struggle of the working class and of the strategy that the structures of Solidarnosc should adopt. For the authors of *Robotnik* there is a complete separation between on the one hand, the party and the programme, and on the other the perspectives for the struggle against the authorities.

Viewed from this standpoint, the problem of building a new organisation of the left no doubt seems very simple. But this is just an illusion. The building of an organisation is not just a matter of raising a slogan 'Build the PPS' and putting out an attractive programme.

On the contrary, it is necessary to combine two levels of activity, to draw up a class-struggle programme and, on this basis, to build an organisation of the most active militants. Posing the question of whether it would be useful today to resuscitate the PPS, without raising the question of the role that this party should play in the perspective of overthrowing the totalitarian bureaucracy cannot amount to more than an abstract exercise. That is, unless the party they mean is one made up of a small group of intellectual dreamers... But we know that this is not the sort of party under discussion.

The second major error committed by the editorial board of *Robotnik* has to do with the political character of any new party. The name itself — Polish Socialist Party — is not crucial. But the assertion that the new organisation of the left must have a social-democratic outlook involves a misunderstanding.

In fact, there are many political ideas put forward in *Robotnik* that are in direct contradiction, and justifiably so, to the programme and the practice of social democracy. Nonetheless, the authors of the articles published in this journal not only state that social democracy must be the political creed of a future PPS, but they are full of praises for the achievements and work of these Western social-democratic parties.

In another article, the author draws the attention of the reader to the intrinsic stability of the capitalist system, comparing it to the instability of the Polish system. Then drawing the conclusion that 'the communists and their system cannot be negotiating partners for the PPS comparable to what the capitalist system is for the Western social democrats.'

Such a gross oversimplification cannot be allowed to pass without comment. The capitalist system is not merely in partnership with the West European social democrats. These parties are integrated into the system; they provide an

indispensable safety valve, defusing the spontaneous uprisings of the working class and diverting social protest into the parliamentary road.

Moreover, the main leaders of these Western social democratic parties often occupy leading posts in the banks and in the large capitalist enterprises. It would be more accurate to compare the Western social democrats to the liberal currents in the PUWP. Like them, the Western social democrats criticise certain isolated socio-economic phenomena whilst fiercely defending the system itself.

Is the *Robotnik* editorial board trying to fool its readers or fool itself? Because in other articles about the current situation in Poland and about the problems of the opposition movement, one finds ideas that are a million miles away from the reformist conceptions of social democracy. '...the task of Polish socialists in the 1980s is... to take up the watchwords and ideals for which Ludwik Warynski and Janek Wisniewski, the workers of the Paris Commune, and the Polish workers of the Paris Commune shipyard gave their lives', Igor Lewy wrote in an article reaffirming that Jaruzelski is no defender of socialism (see page 19).

In another article, the same author talks about 'a total transformation of the power system', because 'no compromise is possible any longer today'. These words express the political conceptions of the revolutionary left. They have nothing, absolutely nothing, in common with social-democratic ideology. So why has the editorial board of *Robotnik*, a journal which, without doubt, is one of the best currently produced by activists in Solidarnosc, decided to launch this proposal for building a new party immediately and what is more for building a party of a social-democratic character?

Perhaps the determination to form such a party as soon as possible derives in part from a loss of faith in the effectiveness of political struggle now being waged by the underground mass movement. Some texts published in *Robotnik*, suggest a certain feeling of disillusion with the attitudes of Polish civil society: 'The silent majority watch television, drink vodka, spit, sigh, hate and pray for lightning to strike from a cloudless sky. Civil society allows itself to be easily frightened by the thinking of the vanguard, and that is true in all strata'.

But the choice of a social-democratic orientation for the new party seems even more bizarre. One might accept that in present conditions the editorial board of *Robotnik* considers the term 'social democrat' to be less repellent than the terms 'socialist' or 'left-wing' or 'revolutionary', even though they frequently use these words themselves as synonyms — except for the last one of course.

Perhaps the position of *Robotnik* is explained by the hope expressed in the article entitled 'The road to a new party' that the new PPS 'could count on a lively interest from the international social-democratic movement.' However, it is

out of the question that any European social-democratic party would undertake the risky operation of giving material help to an opposition party in Poland that no one is familiar with.

The reality is that the Western social democracy remains one of the biggest obstacles, in these countries to revolutionary changes similar to the building of workers' self-management as called for in the programme adopted at the Gdansk congress. (1)

The questions raised at the beginning of this article still remain: What are the perspectives for the revolutionary current in the Polish opposition? What are the organisational forms necessary for the consolidation of this current? The time has not yet come for building a revolutionary socialist party. But the class struggle itself forces us to build and develop, within the structures of the union, a broad tendency that declares its support for a revolutionary solution to the Polish crisis.

Such a tendency — the workers' opposition to the totalitarian bureaucracy — will not be united organisationally. The workers' opposition will be made up of various structures, commissions, journals, publications, bound together by a common strategy of struggle for a workers' republic.

Forming such a workers' opposition, which is basically a form of the working-class struggle, is becoming a more and more urgent task. But this requires organisers, a group of activists who will get down to the job of building the workers' opposition as a tendency within the union. The first task of the revolutionary left in Poland is to set up such a grouping.

Let us end by quoting from an article which appeared in issue No 13 of [Polish] *Inprekor*, the journal of the Fourth International: 'What is needed is to develop an agreement between people willing to take action and united around a common conception of immediate and long-term tasks for the movement, which flow from the objectively revolutionary dynamic of this movement, as well as by a determination and capacity to work together to accomplish these tasks.'

This conception seems to us to be quite correct. The construction of the first organisational structures of the Polish left created on the basis of an understanding among the revolutionary left can only be carried through successfully if we concentrate on the needs of the class struggle itself.

Any elaboration of programme must be linked to this and the struggle itself will show us the right time to transform the revolutionary left into a qualitatively superior form of organisation. ■

Wolny *Robotnik*, ZRP-PRO
of Silesia, July 1984

1. The first national congress of Solidarnosc which took place in Gdansk, September-October 1981.

The international logic of the situation

It is not national antagonisms that frighten the Nomenklatura people in the Kremlin and Warsaw contrary to what might be thought. They exploit these antagonisms, setting workers of different nationalities against each other, and thereby keeping them from organizing joint workers action on an international scale. This has made it possible, for example in the USSR, to build up an ideological underpinning of Great Russian chauvinism for the rule of the Nomenklatura, in addition to the regime's base in the administrative and police apparatus.

Moreover, this has a reciprocal effect. Anti-Russian phobias serve as a "national" compensation for the oppression and exploitation suffered at the hands of the native Polish totalitarian bureaucracy. The Russians are fed on descriptions of the hatred that the Poles have for them. In this respect, unfortunately, the Soviet Communist Party propaganda does not have to make up a lot. By way of reaction, this fosters a still greater aversion to Poles among Russians, and so on. While all this is going on, Chernenko and Jaruzelski are having a good time. They would rather not think about what would happen if the workers on both sides of the River Bug [the river running along the Polish-Russian border] got together one day and stopped hating each other.

The Nomenklatura people are not worried about the lack of friendship and still less by hatred among nations, in particular in those countries under the domination of "fraternal parties." Because this is an essential precondition for the functioning of reciprocal interventions (1) within the framework of the "camp." What they are afraid of is that people will take the official friendship seriously, because from that it is only one step to internationalism, that is international solidarity among the workers and revolutionary struggle against the Nomenklatura and capital.

If we do not want to see antibureaucratic movements and uprisings continually end in an impasse, it is necessary to combine social and national objectives with a clear definition of an international strategy. In the present geopolitical situation, we should regard every sort of non-internationalism as — to call things by their proper name — the concentrated expression of political cretinism. And this is both from the standpoint of the struggle for the liberation of the working class, as well as from the standpoint of the national struggle for the right of peoples to self-determination.

The national gulf deliberately widened by the totalitarian bureaucracy, that

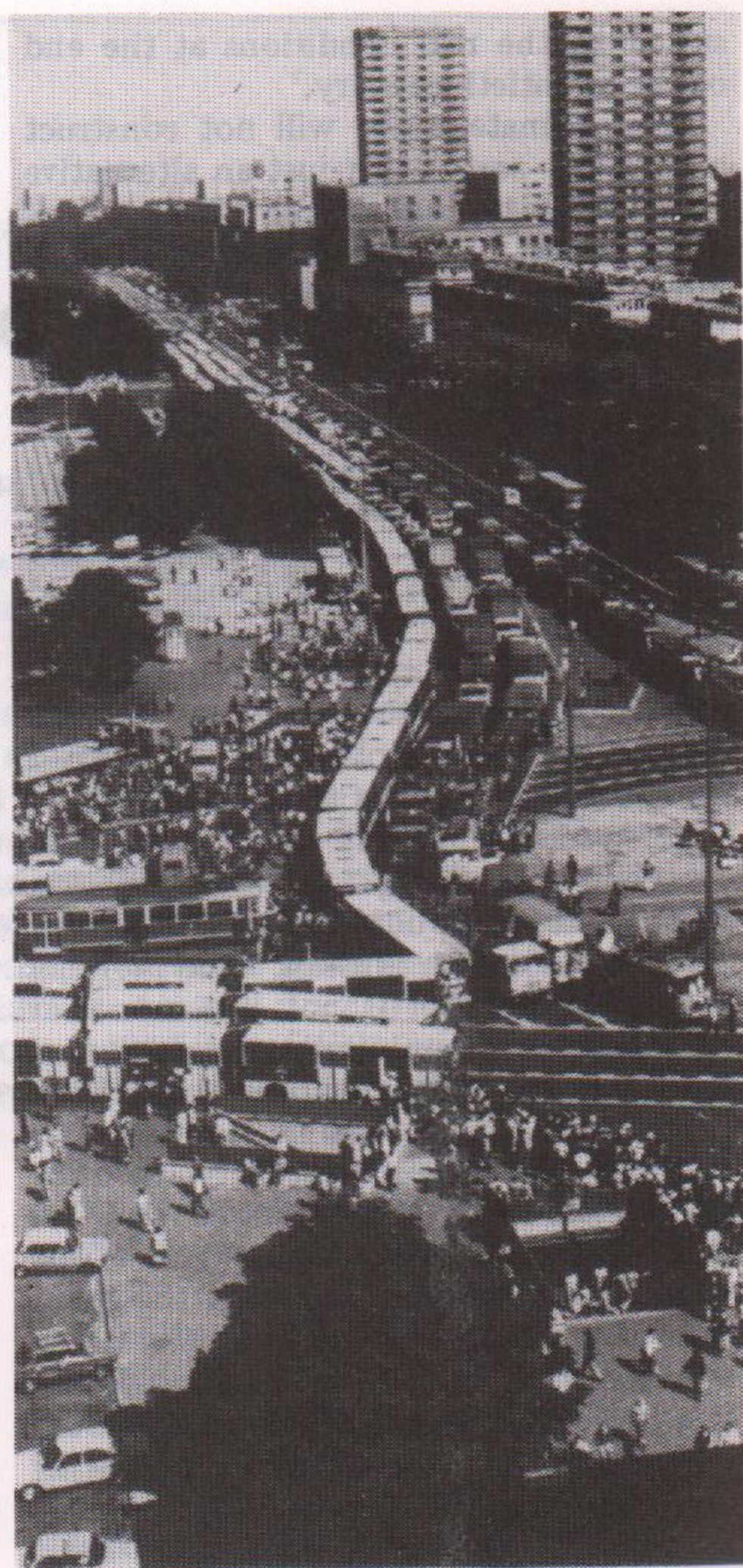
separates Polish workers from Ukrainian, Czech or Russian workers represents exactly the distance that separates these workers from freedom and these nations from independence, both internally and externally.

There is an objective need for internationalizing the dynamic of the processes of the August revolution that have arisen in Poland, which, as history has shown, is the weak link in the chain of the rule of the totalitarian bureaucracy. The only alternative to this is suicide in isolation. We do not have the means to afford the luxury of a philosophy of struggle confined to a national ghetto in the conditions of a determined political geography in the international arena.

Despite the bureaucratic counterrevolution initiated by the December 1981 putsch and which is continuing today, the revolutionary forces set in motion in August 1980 are continuing to operate. But whether they will be the spark that lights a future flame or the slowly dying embers of the past depends on solving the principal dilemma. Despite the metaphorical way this was put, the dramatic choice before us is quite clear: Either these forces will continue to develop along a revolutionary axis of internationalism, or they will continue to decline in the downward spiral of isolationism.

If we do not want to see Soviet tanks sent against a workers' revolution in Poland or in some other countries, we have to begin eliminating the antiworking-class repressive forces and their social base in the Soviet Union itself. Exactly forty years after the export of the bureaucratic anti-imperialist revolution from the USSR to Poland, we find ourselves obliged to begin to export the antibureaucratic workers' revolution from Poland to the USSR. This is not only possible and feasible, in particular considering the means at the disposal of the leading bodies of *Solidarnosc* and if there is a strategic reorientation and an attempt to find the concrete way of relating to the working class as the fundamental protagonist in the struggle. It is also necessary.

The present phase can, and must, be characterized as a "revolution halted at the crossroads." The revolutionary situation has to be defined as one that demands a choice between two alternatives — internationalization or continuing self-limitation. Internationalism, so much besmirched by fools and rightists, is first of all a historical social question of achieving the essential precondition for the workers' movement to act to emancipate labor. But it is also, in the strict sense, a practical question, how to fight so as not



Transport strike in Warsaw, August 1981 (DR)

to lose again. It does not matter very much in fact whether defeat is the result of foreign intervention, as was the case in Hungary or Czechoslovakia, or of a domestic counterrevolution. The latter was possible in Poland as a result of the revolution being paralyzed by a general awareness of the external threat posed by the Soviet totalitarian bureaucracy.

If our fight for freedom and independence is not to resemble a labor of Sisyphus, we have to reject the substance of nationalism that leads inevitably to isolating the struggle that we are waging and to defeat. Historical and ethnic antagonisms cannot replace the struggle for social and national liberation in its international dimension.

To be sure, we do not want to revive the errors of [Rosa] Luxemburgism, that is, a mechanical notion of internationalism that leads to underestimating the question of national independence. But it will not do either to fall into the opposite extreme, underestimating the importance of international workers' solidarity. Without the latter, and we cannot have any illusions about this, we have no chance of overthrowing the system of

1. In 1969, the Polish army intervened in Czechoslovakia to crush the Prague Spring, along with the armies of East Germany and the Soviet Union. Now, if the Warsaw Pact undertook an intervention against Poland, Czechoslovak forces would probably be included. — IV.

rule of totalitarian bureaucracy. And we are not exaggerating!

As an appendix, we present some concrete proposals for exporting the revolution.

— To wage an informational and agitational campaign directed at the Soviet military units stationed in Poland (for example, distribution of leaflets and press statements in Russian on the bases of these units, either by dumping them there or passing them from hand to hand).

— Organizing radio broadcasts from Poland for Byelorussia, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, East Germany and the Ukraine, in the languages of these countries (for example, regular broadcasts from constantly moving transmitters, a means that is already used in Poland).

— Use of clandestine print shops and print shops outside the country for the needs of dissident and opposition groups in our neighboring countries, but also organization of Solidarnosc's own information service for these countries. Priority should be given to East Germany and Czechoslovakia, whose frontiers are particularly penetrable, and where we will get our first foreign readers.

— The establishment of durable international contacts and coordination of common antibureaucratic actions with opposition groups and independent groups in the nearest countries of the bureaucratic camp and the setting up for them of an independent information service in order to counteract the anti-Polish and antirevolutionary propaganda conducted in these countries, for example, by disseminating the major documents of the August [Gdansk] accords.

Besides this "outward work," it seems important to undertake "inward work" also that will facilitate the former.

— Condemnation of Great Russian chauvinism, which was combatted by Lenin in his time, and clear support for the fight for national independence by the Soviet nations dominated by Russia. This should go hand in hand with stopping and condemning anti-Russian propaganda in the underground press. Just as earlier not every German was a fascist, today not every Russian is a chauvinist.

— Combatting the national phobias, as well as having a critical attitude to tendentious nationalist literature and national history....

— Bringing pressure to bear from below on the Solidarnosc leadership for developing international collaboration in particular with the Eastern European countries, which should be accompanied by an extensive testing by Solidarnosc of a political strategy and of public and active positions for relating to the national and social problems in the USSR on a fraternal revolutionary basis. ■

Proletarians of the world, unite for your liberty and ours!

Front Robotniczy (Workers Front)
No 1, Warsaw, August 12, 1984

The birth of the people's republic

Debates on nationalisation

Stalinism has reduced historical science to the level of a method for justifying their errors at any particular point in time. It is also used to muddle society's awareness of history, by separating it from its real roots. For a long time now, their opponents have been trying to counterpose to this official history some kind of 'true' history made up of the oral tradition and of the official histories accepted in the past. The rediscovery, on a mass scale of the works of pre-war or emigre historians was an important phenomenon during the period when Solidarnosc could operate legally and it continues today. The historical debate is an important component of the process of political consolidation under way in Poland today. The different left currents are not outside of this debate as this article, published below, illustrates. (1) The article is anonymous and was printed in the form of a short pamphlet by the Warsaw journal, *Robotnik*, in 1984. *Robotnik* has also published several historical articles presenting different views to the ones expressed here.

The following article is interesting mainly for two reasons. First, it shows that forces in the antibureaucratic movement feel the need to combat the attempts of the Stalinists to claim all the credit for overthrowing capitalism in Poland. Secondly, it represents an effort by the underground movement to recover the truth about the mass revolutionary upsurge in Poland, toward which the Soviet authorities and their Polish acolytes in fact took a negative attitude, although they later went on, for their own reasons, to abolish capitalism and set up collective economic forms.

The following document is not clear about the contradictions of the Polish Socialist Party in the period in question. But since this party has not existed for decades and the official histories give only a Stalinist version of its history, this is not the first concern of antibureaucratic oppositionists in Poland today. It is, however, a question that oppositionists will have to deal with more as the debates progress, as other articles in this dossier indicate, for example, the article criticising *Robotnik* for identifying itself with Social Democracy.

The problem of assessing the West European Social Democratic parties is a current problem for the Polish opposition. The contradictions of left Social Democracy in revolutionary periods is not something that the post-war generations in Poland have seen, much less experienced. The fundamental thing for them is to rediscover the objective, democratic and pluralist nature of mass movements for overthrowing capitalism.

In the official histories it is common to hold up the Polish Workers Party (PRP) (2) and the Communist camp as the only consistent supporters of the socialisation of the means of production, in contrast to other groups (legal or illegal) which in some indeterminate way had denied this principle by defending, to a greater or lesser extent, the old capitalist relations.

In reality even a superficial knowledge of the period 1944-1945 allows one to put forward an opposing argument. That is, there were only a small number of isolated individuals who defended capitalism as the future economic system for Poland, and amongst the political parties only the most right-wing (the National Party — SN) supported the idea. The vast majority were in favour of changes in the direction of socialisation of the economy. Amongst these the PRP was not by any means the most left-wing.

In order to counter the official lies it is therefore useful to recall the main ideas for transforming the economy spelt out by the [World War II] underground in Po-

land. The proposals for reform were formulated on the basis of the objective situation in society. They cannot be assessed in abstraction from the reality of Poland between the wars and in the period of the occupation.

I do not pretend to be able even to sketch the history of the Polish economy here. Nevertheless, it is necessary to recall certain facts.

The economic system of the Second Republic (3) was a capitalist one. But it was a specific form of capitalism. Its peculiarity lay, first and foremost in the weakness of indigenous private property.

1. Readers interested in the period 1944 to 1948, when the workers' state was established in Poland could also look at the article produced in Polish *Inprekor* and then reproduced in English in *Intercontinental Press*, Vol 22, Nos 20 and 21, October 29, 1984 and November 12, 1984, under the headline, 'A strategy for Polish revolutionaries'.

2. The PPR fused with the PPS in 1948 to form the PUWP — the Polish United Workers Party, the Polish Communist Party.

3. The Second Republic is the term used to describe the national bourgeois state in Poland from 1918 to 1939.

The remarks of two well-known personalities representing opposite poles of opinion — R. Dmowski and J. Ryng (4) — defining Polish capitalism as a 'capitalism without capital' are symptomatic of this. In this situation, foreign and state capital played the key role. This is apparent in the statistics for company stocks and shares in Poland in 1935, where we read that state and foreign capital together made up about 72% of all company stocks in Poland, as well as 95% of all capital. Indigenous private property represented 28% of company stocks and shares and 5% of all capital.

It is therefore not surprising that the former minister of finance J. Zdziechowski concluded in his book *The myth of the gold standard* (1937) that: 'The nullity of the sort of ownership that exists makes a mockery of the idea of Polish initiative in the private sector.' He added that 'this is the main reason for the development of a system of state control of the economy in Poland.'

It is true that state control of the economy in Poland in the inter-war years had come a long way. The statistics for the year 1937 illustrate the role of the public treasury in the different branches of production and services: coal mining, 24%; oil refining, 20%; steel, nearly 70%; machine-tool industry, about 50%; car industry, 100%; chemical industry, 25%; electronic industry, 12.5% (but 84% in the telecommunications industry); merchant marine, 97%; banks, 46%; insurance, 48%.

Across all branches of the economy the participation of the state was estimated at around 44 per cent, which put Poland ahead of all other European countries as far as state intervention was concerned (apart from, of course, the USSR).

In the opinion of Boracz, the publisher of *Przebudowa*, the theoretical organ of the Polish Peasants Party (PSL), state intervention in Poland in the inter-war period played a dual role: economic, insofar as it complemented the weakness of the private sector; and political in that it was the basis of the influence on the bureaucracy, which dominated the Sanacja regime. (5)

In conclusion, we can say that the system in Poland before the war upheld only certain elements of a classic capitalist system. Important limitations on free competition (a strong private monopoly held by foreign capital, state intervention and a high degree of nationalisation) gave it a peculiar character, typical of a majority of the countries of central and Eastern Europe.

The 1939-1945 war and the double occupation (in 1941) of Polish territory [by the USSR and Nazi Germany] led to a new weakening, from the economic point of view, of the foundations of private enterprise. In both the German occupied territories and in the Soviet part, a resolute policy was instituted of expropriating private enterprise and unifying the structure of property. This meant either takeover by the state, or in the case of territories seized by the Reich, incor-



A Solidarnosc headquarters with a poster of Lenin (DR)

poration into German businesses and monopolies. These enterprises were then subordinated to the war policy of the state.

This process was reinforced as the war progressed. The remainder of private capital was systematically liquidated, and productive activity [that is, to meet positive human needs] was reduced to a minimum. As a consequence, in those Polish territories that were later included in the People's Republic of Poland, there came ready made, from the economic point of view, a state system dominated by state property and state capitalism, which were subordinated to political needs and to the war. This specific 'economic' revolution involved an important challenge to the pre-war property arrangements, shaking the already feeble foundations of Polish capitalism to its roots.

Assessing this state of affairs, the *Economic Bulletin* (organ of the Polish government in exile in London) wrote that 'a change in the economic and social fabric, which is revolutionary in its scope has been accomplished. It is characterised by the fact that the reestablishment of the previous state is not possible either from a technical or psychological point of view, as well as by the fact that this change has remained incomplete and has not established a new state. The first act of this revolution has already been accomplished. What the second act will be, we do not know'.

The objective changes in the structure of property weakened and even made impossible, the restoration of capitalist relations in post-war Poland, even to their pathetic pre-war level.

Alongside of these changes a perhaps decisive role was played by developments in the consciousness of the masses in an anti-capitalist direction. The 'process of radicalisation' which affected not only Poland, but nearly all of Europe (in a way similar to the revolutionary wave after the First World War) had several causes: internal, national and general. The major-

ity of society, although recognising the authority of the underground state and the London government based on the 1935 constitution, without any hesitation, were not prepared to accept a return to the political and economic system of the pre-war era. These changes developed all over occupied Europe, linked to the struggles of the broad masses against fascism and totalitarianism. Transformation of the political and economic structures in accordance with the principles of democracy was a general aspiration, expressed by everyone. Everywhere, similar demands came up; for nationalisation, economic planning, extension of parliamentary democracy, for social reform, etc.

In Poland, where a majority of society was subjected to economic exploitation and fierce political repression, which created an almost completely exploited class of wage-earners, radicalisation developed rapidly (especially in 1943-1944), reaching a level which was easily recognised by the bourgeois heads of the Army of the Interior (AK), as well as by the centre and right-wing components of the Polish underground.

In a special report to the commander-in-Chief dated May 22, 1944, the AK commander Tadeusz Bor Komorowski wrote, for example, that there was "a huge ideological turn to the left....A more or less general demand for control of economic life by society as a whole, for the ending of the concentration of wealth in private hands beyond a certain minimum and for the end to privileges for individuals or social groups. This is a strong radicalisation. The authorities who try

4. R. Dmowski was the main leader and ideologue of the National Party (SN) — the main reactionary fascist party before 1939. J. Ryng was the leader of the Communist Party.
5. Sanacja, literally 'cleaning up', is the general name given to the regime which emerged from the coup d'état of Marshal Piłsudski in May 1926. It was a repressive regime, which did not succeed, however, in crushing political and social resistance.

to halt this process will expose the country to many upheavals.'

The theory that it was only the PPR and the groups working with it that gave political expression to this radicalisation by developing a programme for the transformation of society is simply an obfuscation by the official histories. This theory counterposes the Communist camp to the underground 'London group' organisations, which were presented as if they defended the old social structures against the aspirations of the majority of society. This theory is just as schematic as the one that even denies the basic facts of the radicalisation or claims that it was the result of 'Soviet influence'.

The 'London camp' was never monolithic. From the beginning within its leadership there were representatives of the peasants' movement (the Peasant Party — SL 'Roch'), and the Socialists (WRN, which was the continuation of the Polish Socialist Party — PPS) had a strong influence. These two parties made up part of the 'big four' (Peasants Party, WRN, Workers Party and the National Party) which dominated Polish underground politics inside the country and in exile.

In the first years of the war (the SL in 1940 and the WRN in 1941), these parties published their programmes for social and economic transformation, in which great stress was placed on the need for transformation of important industrial and agricultural properties. They based themselves on the radicalisation at the end of the war in order to exercise ideological and programmatic influence on the leadership of the underground movement.

The general evolution of society towards the left found its expression in the documents of the underground movement. One example is the statement of the underground parliament, the Council of National Unity (RJN) (6) dated August 15, 1944, and entitled, 'What the Polish People are Fighting For'. Described in Communist propaganda as conciliatory, partial and 'a swindle' (as if the manifesto of the PKWN — Polish Committee for National Liberation, was not also 'partial' and 'a swindle'), this statement was in fact an important document illustrating the evolution of Polish political thought and reflecting the political opinions of both the broad masses and elite groups.

Proposing the reestablishment in the new Poland of a parliamentary republic and the realisation of fundamental socio-economic reforms (agrarian reforms, nationalisation of large industry, economic planning), this statement was the most radical of all the official expressions of underground movement. And it is not irrelevant to recall that it was a well-known Socialist militant, for a long time secretary general of the PPS, Kazimierz Puzak, who was president of the RJN.

The Warsaw insurrection was often known as the August revolution — a fact that the official histories never mention — and it was an important moment in the

crystallisation of the real social revolution. The description of it as a revolution is not accidental. The social content of the revolution and the political documents both accord to it the character of a revolutionary assault, which combined the goal of independence with social and democratic demands, although this revolution was limited territorially.

The August 15, 1944, manifesto of the RJN is significant from this point of view. There we read that 'the system of a future republic will be founded on political liberty and social justice. The foundations of the system in the democratic republic of Poland would be: a democratic electoral law for the election of legislative and self-managed bodies, which would accurately reflect opinions within society; the transformation of the agricultural system through the parcelling out of German possessions and all the landholding of more than fifty hectares; the socialisation of the main industries, the participation of white-collar and manual workers in the management and control of industrial production.'

Zygmunt Zaremba, one of the leaders of the WRN and of the PPS before the war, had this to say about the programme: 'Here we find the outline for a real democracy, going towards a fundamental transformation of the socio-economic system of the state. The Polish Socialist movement can be proud because these are the kind of programmatic principles that everyone here supports.'

The proclamation of the laws and decrees (three volumes of the 'Law Journal') was a revolutionary act of the Warsaw insurrection that determined the foundations of the new system. Before the decrees of the Popular National Council (KRN) (7), the organs of power in underground Poland voted for the principles of agrarian reform, for the socialisation of the means of production (the law on the factory councils), and for a self-managed society (the law on regional self-government).

This revolutionary aspect of the insurrection has been neglected both in Communist propaganda and in the propaganda of right-wing emigres. They show, however, within society — or at least in the political and cultural centres — the existence of a real vision of a new Poland.



Zygmunt Zaremba analysed this phenomenon in the following way: 'The ideological gains of the insurrection — which put forward new ideas for the transformation of society and which became rooted in Polish society during the struggle against the occupying forces — have lost none of their significance. They remain the fundamental basis on which Polish society needs to develop....The August Insurrection gave a clear picture of what the organisation and life of the new Polish state should be, based on the principles of socialist democracy. They show that the working class can cement the collective life of the nation.'

One year after the insurrection, in a political situation which was radically different, the RJN in its final secret session on July 1, 1945, proclaimed the 'Testament of Underground Poland'.

Here are some extracts from this little known document concerning the principal aspects of the system that they sought to create in Poland: 'The creation of full regional social, economic, educational and cultural self-management; the socialisation of large capitalist properties and the organisation of a fair redistribution of the national wealth; workers' management and control over the whole economy; freedom of struggle for the working class to fight for its rights within the framework of an independent trade-union movement; the implementation of agrarian reform.'

This document contradicts any attempt to explain in black and white terms debates on the social system in Poland. It also reflects changes in social awareness. It is the political expression of the radical tendencies that in 1944-1945 imposed a leadership pledged to fundamental change based on the socialisation of public life.

In light of these examples it would be difficult to doubt the revolutionary character of the events in Poland. The actual movement that spontaneously took control of the factories and got production going during the months following the liberation is the real expression of this revolutionary character. This mass movement, which created new forms of management and organisation of the factories based on the participation of the workers, was the expression of the spontaneous aspirations of the workers for the public ownership of the workplaces.

The complex reality of post-war Poland does not lend itself easily to generalised assessments. However, one general point can be made: the situation in society imposed a clear anti-capitalist dynamic to any reforms. This does not mean that a new model of society was clearly and definitely drawn up. The general anti-capitalist tendency expressed

6. The Council of National Unity (RJN) was the political expression of the anti-Nazi resistance linked to the government in exile in London.

7. The Popular National Council (KRN) was set up by the Stalinists as a kind of provisional parliament. The political sections of the main resistance force — the AK — were excluded from it.

in the programmes for widespread limitation on private property was, however, common to all political parties and groups of any significance.

The state of consciousness of the masses was the basis of this anti-capitalist dynamic. That is why in post-war Poland, you had all the elements of an authentic revolution. What is in doubt is only what was the social and political expression of this. Was this, as the official versions would like to claim, a 'Communist revolution', spontaneously carried through in the name of the broad masses of which the PPR was the motor force, with the help of its allies in the East? Was it something that was at first supported by a minority of Poles, but a minority which represented 'the most conscious workers and peasants'? Or was it rather a 'democratic revolution for independence' (as in the insurrection in Warsaw) with a broad programme of basically socialist reforms representing more the left of the 'London camp' and supported by a real majority of the population, whose demands coincided with the programme of the Communist camp?

Was it not this that allowed the latter to seize on these demands and use the movement for its own purposes to gain a limited social base which in turn produced an inevitable drift, to the right amongst the opposition in society, a drift that was all too apparent in the years 1947-1948?

It is in this way that Professor Tadeusz Lepkowski (8) in his recent book published by the underground press posed the problem of the Polish revolutions from 1944-1982 and rightly so, in my opinion. He presents the notion of two revolutions which were in conflict at the end of the war; the Communist one which came from 'above' and the spontaneous one with an independent and democratic character.

Pursuing the line of argument a question comes to mind: Were the majority of Poles in favour of socialist reforms?

The reply must certainly be negative, if we understand by socialist reforms a system generally along the lines of the Soviet model. The majority of society was without doubt, anti-Communist from this point of view. But we can assert without fear of contradiction that the basic concept of a new economic system — one involving the socialisation of the means of production was generally accepted.

Poland was not so much faced with the choice of socialism or capitalism. The differences were about the methods, the forms and the aims of socialisation. The positions taken by different parties and social movements was a reflection of these programmatic and ideological differences. ■

8. A historian known for many works on Latin America and Poland, T. Lepkowski was the president of Solidarnosc at the history institute in the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Problems and debates in the anti-imperialist movement

Interview with AMPO editor

The following is an interview with Muto Ichiyo, one of the founders of the Japanese magazine *Ampo* and one of the prominent personalities in the anti-imperialist solidarity movement in Japan. It was conducted at the end of the summer in Japan by Pierre Rousset.

The magazine *Ampo* takes its title — which stands for Anti-Military Pact Organization — from the big mobilizations of the 1960s against the US-Japanese military threat. Founded in 1969 and published in English, it was originally aimed at informing foreigners — first of all in other Asian countries — about the mass struggles in Japan. It rapidly set about covering anti-imperialist and democratic struggles in the region, from South Korea to the Philippines. Along with this, it has played a very active role in organizing solidarity with these struggles in Japan itself.

Question. How do you see the situation of the anti-imperialist left in Japan today?

Answer. To be frank, the situation of the anti-imperialist left in Japan is not good. But new possibilities are appearing now. It is this positive, hopeful aspect that I would like to stress.

These new possibilities are illustrated above all by the mobilization against the Tomahawk Cruise missiles on June 17 in Yokosuka outside the American naval base. Some five thousand people came to protest against the deployment of these missiles. This is not a very large number, in particular in comparison with other antinuclear mobilizations in Japan. But it was a significant demonstration because of its political content and the spontaneous participation of young people, who had previously not been accustomed to turning out for the traditional antinuclear demonstrations.

A new dynamic of mobilization at the grass-roots level is shaping up. This was evidenced in particular in the 1,500 kilometer march organized by a group of 11 persons. In 35 days, this march covered the distance between the US base in Sasebo in the southern part of the country and Yokosuka, where the June 17 rally was held. The marchers were able to discuss with many local groups, and this built local roots for the mobilization against Tomahawk Cruise missiles. The action grew out of coordination among local groups.

On the national level, the coalition that organized the June mobilization took the name of the National Movement Against the Deployment of the Tomahawks. This is a loose grouping of independent people's organizations and individuals. In early June, about 1,500 groups of workers, students, housewives and ordinary citizens participated in this coalition. It was formed in 1984 and represents a continuation of the movement organized in 1983 against the visit

of US president Ronald Reagan, which at that time was already centered around the issue of the Tomahawks.

The mobilization against the deployment of Cruise missiles has thus become, even if still only to a limited extent, a focus of national political life. It of course remains in the context of the traditional Japanese "antinuclear consensus," but it also reflects a new level of political consciousness and thinking. The meaning of this "national consensus" has become more and more unclear. The traditional movement has produced very broad mobilizations — hundreds of thousands of demonstrators in Hiroshima, Tokyo, Osaka, etc. — but it does not focus on concrete objectives that challenge the government. It often reflects an apolitical antinuclear sentiment.

The fact that the movement against the deployment of the Cruise missiles has been emerging in the framework of this antinuclear consensus gives it a mass legitimacy and prevents the regime from slandering it as a product of "extremists" and from isolating it. This is positive. But it also goes beyond this consensus by organizing around concrete objectives that do challenge the government's policy. This is also positive, because it reflects the start of a new process of politicization.

Q. But why has the workers' movement retreated, even with respect to the antinuclear mobilizations?

A. The situation on the trade-union front is indeed still miserable. The left wing of the workers' movement expresses itself through various publications, it acts through small organizations. But in general, as you know, the situation is entirely dominated by the slide of the trade-union apparatus to the right.

The right-wing national unions, which are based on the private sector and the new Zenminrokyo labor confederation



Japanese workers demonstrate solidarity with Solidarnosc (DR)

(1), have entirely taken the initiative from the Sohyo (the left union confederation) and the public sector. At the time of the last spring mobilizations on wage contracts [there is traditionally one bargaining drive a year, in the spring], Sohyo did not take any notable initiative. The government is systematically reshaping the public sector, dismantling it and turning over whole operations to the private sector.

So far, the government's policy has been applied with success. Trade-union bastions, such as the Railway Workers Federation, have not been putting up determined resistance to this process of capitalist rationalization and privatization, despite the reactions of the workers at the base level in the workshops and offices.

We have been seeing a rapid breakdown of the lineup that prevailed over the past two decades in the trade-union movement, with Sohyo leading the workers' movement. Naturally, in this context, the working-class left is in trouble. My impression is that the unions and groups of workers are retreating into themselves in an attempt to assure their

own survival in the face of the offensive by the government and the right.

These groups are trying to adjust to a changing situation by turning in on themselves. Thus, they are tending to isolate themselves. We have to understand that this attitude reflects the difficulties of the situation. We have to respect what each group does to defend itself and survive in the present situation.

However, to survive as an active political force capable of taking initiatives, you can't just retreat and defend past gains. You need a strategy for recomposing the workers' movement that takes account of the real situation of the Japanese working class, of which only about 30% is organized, and that mainly in the big plants.

The workers who most need trade unions are in fact precisely those who at present are unorganized. They are the most vulnerable, the most defenseless against the present policy of the government and the bosses.

It is necessary to organize the unorganized. But this is not a sufficient slogan. Even the right is trying to organize the unorganized. This formula is full of loopholes. We have to define bet-

ter what sort of unions have to be built, what sort of trade unionism is possible today and must be built. The thinking and action of the working-class left has to be focused on this. Otherwise, it will become impossible even to assure the survival of the left forces.

Q. How can this process be gotten underway?

A. That's a difficult tactical problem. Where to start? In addition to the fighting front that exists in the workers' movement organized as it is today, in addition to the fight in defense of past gains, we have to open up a second front. We have to address ourselves to sectors that are growing in importance and which have a rich potential for struggle. A key sector in this context is that of women workers, whose role is increasing with the expansion of temporary and part-time jobs. They have not yet been "ideologically conditioned" by the big capitalist enterprises, unlike many other workers who have been infected with "company patriotism."

These women workers are open to being drawn into struggle, and their fight can link up with that of women in the family. It can also be a concrete link between the feminist socialist struggle and the fight for regaining a militant base in the workers' movement. This also offers the possibility for winning a social base for the socialist feminist movement. We have to study the conditions of women workers and build an understanding of the need for women's liberation.

If such a dynamic can be set in motion, its impact will be profound. Even in the left, a current such as Rodo Joho (2) is almost 100 percent male. Cultural traditions weigh very heavily in this area, and a shock from the outside is necessary to change things inside the unions.

The problem is posed. Even the government has been obliged to make gestures to women. It is under pressure from the West, even in the context of the trade war, and has introduced a bill calling for equality between the sexes on the job. This is an ineffectual bill, since it sets no definite targets and provides for no sanctions for failure to observe its provisions. It is a formal gesture, offering the government a cover for a series of concrete attacks against working women.

Nonetheless, the bosses are raising a hue and cry that the bill could drive companies into bankruptcy and they won't have it. The reactions that the bill has elicited are interesting, inasmuch as they reveal the fear among employers of seeing a dynamic set in motion in this area.

1. See "The workers movement and the capitalist offensive," and "The recomposition of the trade-union movement," by Yokoyama Yoshio, in *International Viewpoint*, No 62, October 1984.

2. *Rodo Joho* (Workers News) is the name of a magazine representing a class-struggle united-front current in the unions. Rosoren is the united national council of the trade-union left wing, to which Rodo Joho belongs.

The discussions that have opened up on this occasion offer us the possibility of intervening on this issue. The women can be organized and can organize themselves.

The fight on the trade-union front will not be won by means of any superficial readjustments or through traditional struggles. In order to change the situation fundamentally, it is necessary to change the culture of the trade-union and workers' movement. We need a qualitative change affecting everything, the methods of leadership and functioning, political imagination. Without that, we cannot rebuild an instrument capable of intervening effectively in struggles, an instrument for social change. We can, and must, realize the difficulties of such a task, and we cannot abandon it because it is difficult.

The existing structures, such as Rodo Joho especially, have a very important role to play in this respect. Rodo Joho and Rosoren (2), even if I think that Rosoren was not launched in the best conditions, can address themselves to the unorganized. They are going to prepare a program, which is also a welcome development.

But a lot more is needed than raising slogans. It is necessary to have a vision of the future movement, of what the movement of tomorrow can be. I stress this idea — a vision. This problem was already raised three years ago. But the movement remained the prisoner of its need to respond to the events blow by blow, without any perspective other than defensive. The Japanese workers need a new kind of organization. We have to start from a critical balance sheet of the last twenty years, of what Sohyo was, of what the other movements were. This still remains to be done.

Q. Does this conviction that you express have any relation to what you said before about the potential for building an antiwar movement?

A. Yes. We have to break down the division between classical political campaigns and local social movements that involve a way of life, cultural problems, etc., movements that have traditionally struggled against nuclear weapons and in defense of the environment. For several years, the question has been posed of how to link these two levels of struggle.

The political groups have turned toward social action arenas, often to the detriment of their programs and their capacity to pursue their own political struggles, which does not resolve the problem. As for the groups engaged in the local struggles, they often reject politics and parties. So, there has been no constructive debate over the link between political struggle and the various social struggles. This is beginning to change, and it is one of the benefits that can come from the struggle against the Tomahawk missiles. But this tendency is still very embryonic and there is still no convergence between the groups involved in political struggle and the groups

involved in the social and cultural arena.

Most of the groups involved in social and cultural struggles confine themselves to such issues. But as I said before about the antigovernment dynamic of the fight against the Tomahawk missiles, they can begin to learn the importance of politics from their own experience, starting off from their own points of view.

There have been interesting experiences in this respect but not yet any developed political platform. In some localities, as in Nagoya, political and social groups have collaborated for several years. They are able to intervene in a great many fields, from the high schools to international solidarity with the struggle of the Philippine masses, and including the question of nuclear weapons, pollution, land grabbing by speculators and so on. This indicates the dynamic that these groups active on social issues could develop. But on the national level there is today no consensus in the "movement" in this regard.

The basis of mobilizations such as the one in Yokosuka is what may be called "citizens' groups." Often they have been working tenaciously for nearly twenty years. One of the main characteristics of the demonstration last June was that it developed from the bottom up. And these groups are beginning to open up to politics. At the same time, they are more and more rooting themselves in the communities. They have done an enormous amount of door-to-door canvassing, so much that it produced 50,000 signatures on the declaration for a "Non-Nuclear Yokosuka." This is a completely new experience.

On the basis of these experiences, it should be possible to have a real discussion on how to integrate these movements in a more organic, less artificial way and to coordinate them around a program of political and social action. It is necessary to create an atmosphere of debate. We have not experienced such discussions in ten years. The journals of the political groups polemicize, but they do not engage in real debates.

Q. In this context, how do you think that you can fulfill your tasks of international solidarity?

A. Given our present level of organization, we are not able to respond adequately to developments in the struggle in the Philippines and in South Korea. We are in fact confronted with the problem of US and Japanese intervention. We have to build our organization both for our own tasks here and for solidarity with the peoples struggling for their liberation. In this area, we have to operate on two fronts.

On the one hand, we have to force Japan to disengage, at least partially, from the US strategy. To this end, any ally, even only tactical ones, have to be accepted in order to weaken Japanese commitment to Washington. This is a front of practical action. But in itself this type of activity cannot impose real changes in Japan's relations with the re-

gion. So, also, we have to address ourselves to the potentially revolutionary forces that can bring about more deep-going changes and really shatter Japan's pro-imperialist policy.

At present, the peace movement, the antiwar movement, is an element that can help to accomplish these two tasks. On the one hand, we can continue activity that is immediately and directly an internationalist one. If we act correctly, we can also reinforce the activity of other forces that are fighting against the government's arms plans, and thereby increase the divisions in the ruling class over the question of arming.

Our political target is the US-Japanese military accords. This is the present focus of the struggle. It is symbolized by the name AMPO. This is what we want. But it is not yet the slogan for the movement as a whole.

Q. Can you specify what are the present objectives that the left could take up in the trade-union movement?

A. In the short and medium terms, the problem that is going to arise is the following one. Is Sohyo, which represents a tradition of independent working-class trade unionism going to commit suicide? This is implicit in the logic of the rightward slide that the union leadership has now embarked upon. But a lot of union activists don't yet want to face that eventuality, they don't want to believe that it is possible. That is why the moment when the liquidation of Sohyo is posed concretely will be so important. At that moment, the influence of the left can increase rapidly by rallying all those who want to defend the tradition of militant independent trade unionism that grew up after the war.

It would be wrong to take a sectarian tack and proclaim a new confederation today, when the forces for one do not exist. Rodo Joho has to accept the unions that say that they are ready to stick with Sohyo, even if Sohyo is tending toward dissolution. I am not against opposition work in the new rightist confederation. But who is going to be able to do this sort of work?

In the present relationship of forces, what was possible in Sohyo cannot be done in the Zenminrokyo. The left is too small and bureaucratic repression too strong. You need a party structure for working in the Zenminrokyo today. I think that we would be disarming ourselves if we were all to join this confederation in the present conditions.

But whatever choices are made in the short term, I would stress two things. First of all, we have to adopt long-term perspectives, know where we are going, in order to regain the initiative. And such clarification is still far from being achieved. Secondly, in the immediate period ahead, the future of Sohyo is not entirely decided. The victory of the right is not complete. It is when the survival of Sohyo is concretely put in question that things will be decided. We cannot relax our alertness in this fight. ■

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Entries reading 'Solidarity with British miners' refer to an entry in the 'International solidarity with British miners' round-ups. The symbol (NS) after a title indicates that the article referred to was a news short in the 'Around the World' column.

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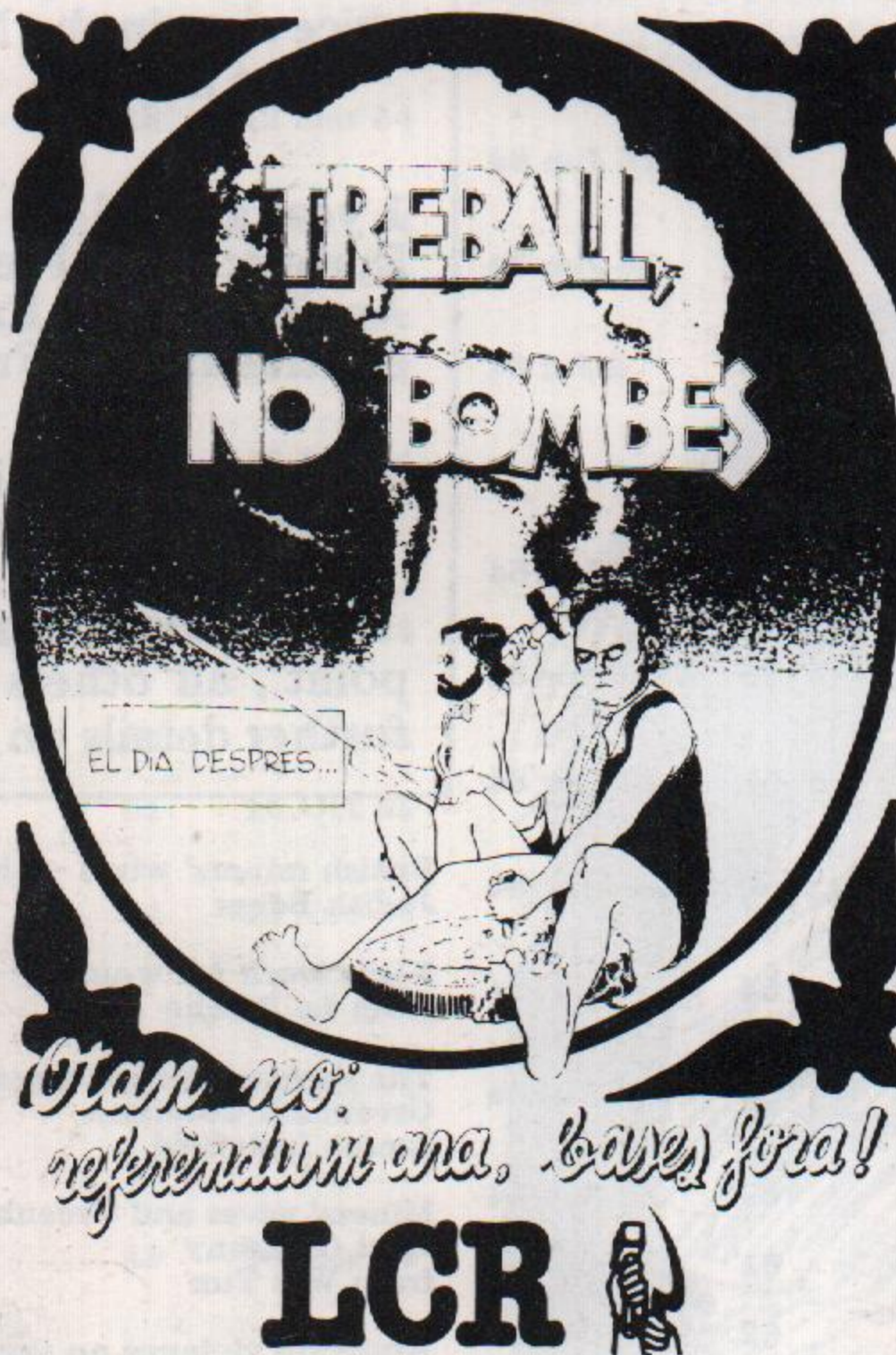
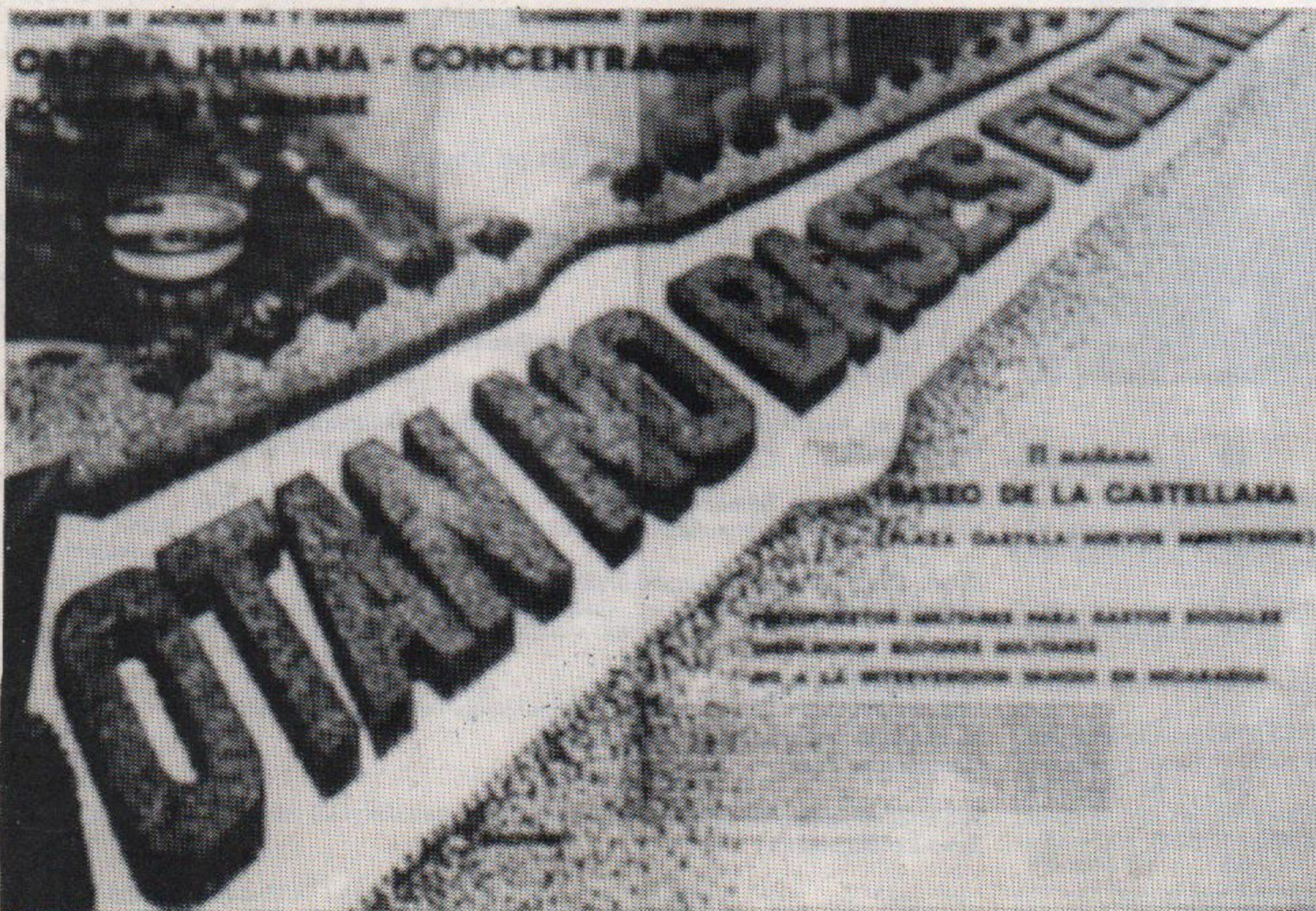
The demonstrations that took place in most of the large towns in the Spanish state on December 2 marked a new step forward for the peace movement in the country. They came in the wake of new opinion poll results showing 52 per cent of the Spanish people opposed to Spanish entry into Nato. The organisers were convinced that for every 10,000 people out in the streets this month there will be 100,000 in spring 1985.

Jacqueline ALLIO

In the capital 150,000 people assembled on the 'Paseo' de Madrid and spelt out in giant human letters: 'No to Nato', 'Bases out' and 'Neutrality'. In Barcelona, 70,000 people participated in five processions converging from different parts of the city, each one carrying their own colours and marching behind one of the five main slogans adopted by the national coordination: 'No to Nato', 'Bases out', 'Neutrality - Dissolution of military pacts', 'Social spending, not military spending' and 'No to Yankee intervention in Nicaragua'.

Human chains in Valencia drew in some 20,000 people. In Oviedo, there were 10,000 and the same in Seville. In Saragossa, 5,000 demonstrators marched behind huge effigies and mock windmills as a way of saying to prime minister, Gonzalez: 'Like so much wind, Gonzalez, everything you say is a pack of lies'. In certain areas of the Spanish state, such as in Galicia and Euskadi, the demonstrations were originally to take place on the same day as everywhere else but were put back to December 16 because of the strikes taking place in the shipyards in these areas.

Human chain spelling the words 'Nato No, Bases Out' (DR)



The objectives that the activists in the movement had set for themselves

have clearly been attained. It is very important today that people are broadly aware of the need to confront the government.

Having failed to fix a date for a referendum on this issue, Felipe Gonzalez has just confirmed without any ambiguity that he means to continue to participate in the 'political' structures of Nato (the Spanish state does not participate in the military structures at the moment). Only six months ago the Spanish leader had left open the question of the intentions of the government.

If the PSOE (the Spanish socialist party) was absent from these mobilisations, the PCE (Spanish communist party), Ignacio Gallego's pro-Soviet communist party, the LCR (Liga Comunista Revolucionaria), section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state, and the MCE (Spanish Communist Movement - an organisation of the far left), supported and participated actively throughout the country.

The UGT, the union federation linked to the PSOE and the Young Socialists also supported the actions, but reluctantly, with carping criticisms of certain slogans because they did not like the centrality of the slogan 'No to Nato'.

A firm 'no' had also come the week before in the referendum organised in the town of Hospitalet, one of the major concentrations of workers near Barcelona. Out of 300,000 inhabitants, 25,440 took part in the referendum organised by the peace movement - a figure which surpassed the highest expectations of the organisers.

The send off for the referendum was given in the morning with the launching of 13 coloured rockets from the 13 different districts of the town. For five hours Hospitalet became a 'Nato-free' city with voting tables on every street corner and placards bearing the words 'We want a clear referendum, now, to get out of Nato.'

From midday onwards they started to run out of voting slips in several areas, which showed the success of the action. About 500 people participated in organising the referendum, which was announced the day before by a procession of musicians led by a huge effigy of Reagan who 'stopped off' at the Town Hall to greet his 'colleague', the Socialist mayor of the town.

A group of officers' attempts to intimidate people by knocking over a voting table run by a group of women did not interfere with the success of the ballot.

The count took place after more fireworks had announced the end of the referendum, and it showed 9,789 for getting out of Nato and 9,802 for the dismantling of American bases in Spain. The day was brought to a close by solidarity action with the shipbuilding workers struggling to defend their jobs. Gonzalez should be very worried now. The peace movement in the Spanish state is on the march.