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The two sides of imperialist policy

Legislative and municipal elections took place on March 31 in El Salvador. The Party of National Conciliation (PCN) and the National Republican Alliance (Arena) who represent the ruling oligarchy, presented joint slates. They held the majority of seats in the previous parliament. Contrary to most predictions, which assumed that they would emerge the victors, it was the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) of Napoleon Duarte, the Salvadoran president, who eventually won.

According to the first estimates, they won 33 deputies out of a possible sixty and two hundred municipalities out of 262. *El Pais*, the Spanish daily newspaper states in its issue of 10 April, 1985, that although not all the results had by then been counted, no fundamental change was expected in these figures.

This is the first time that the Christian Democracy has obtained an absolute majority. Napoleon Duarte was only elected on the second round in the May 1984 presidential elections and then only with the support of the other parties.

Out of 2.7 million registered to vote, one million people voted which represents a smaller turnout than in previous elections (according to *Le Monde*, the French daily newspaper of 4 April 1985). The elections took place in a country torn apart by terror and war, where barely 40% of the voters turned out because of, according to *El Pais* of 3 April 1985, 'the general climate of insecurity'; they took place in a situation where whole regions did not vote at all and where there was no contest from any left-wing parties (the FMLN having called for a boycott). None of this prevented president Reagan's spokesperson, Larry Speakes from welcoming 'the fourth free election in three years' (*El Pais*, 2 April 1985). He was followed by the international press who heralded the 'democratic' functioning of the ballot.

In Nicaragua, in the November 1984 elections, the turnout was nearly 80% with the FSLN obtaining 67% of the votes and the bourgeois parties together gaining 30%. Out of the hundreds of observers and journalists present, not one detected the slightest irregularity or contested the legitimacy of the ballot. But according to democracy Reagan-style, these elections were undemocratic and the Nicaraguan government, unlike the Salvadoran government, does not represent 'true democracy'.

This argument is all that is needed to justify sending aid to the *contras*, a policy which certain eminent people in Europe (see box on next page) have chosen to support.

Nevertheless, whatever the outcome, for the time being the Christian Democracy does hold the absolute majority in parliament and at the municipal level.

Janette HABEL

As a result of this victory, Duarte and his party will not have any further excuse for failing to implement some of the reforms he promised after the last elections. Such measures include the agrarian reform policy, which is currently in a stalemate; the bringing to justice of members of the death squads; respect for basic democratic rights. All these pledges have, until now, remained a dead letter.

On the other hand, it must be remembered — as Guillermo Ungo, spokesperson of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) pointed out — 'the election does not change the situation because in El Salvador the power is not with the assembly, it is with the military.' (quoted in the British daily newspaper the *Guardian*, 3 April, 1985). And this is a military force that even the imperialists try to keep their distance from.

The imperialists, in fact, have several means at their disposal. They are employing repression, mass murder and torture in an attempt to bring the guerillas and the FMLN to their knees. But at the same time, they are trying to disguise this policy behind the mask of democracy and peace seeking.

Duarte and the PDC are also masqerading as democrats and peace lovers in diplomatic manoeuvres in El Salvador and internationally, trying to make FMLN fighters appear to be extremists, responsible for the continuation of the war and for the increasingly horrific massacres and bombings.

These elections and the victory of the so-called peace candidate were intended to make people forget the massacres of the civilian population and the killings, which have been on the increase under Duarte.

A report issued by the Salvadoran Commission for Human Rights shows that for the first two months of 1985, 474 people were murdered by government forces or death squads (see FMLN bulletin, 15 March, 1985).

The United Nations Human Rights Commission has also just dealt the regime a blow by recording in a resolution published on March 13 that, 'violations of human rights are continuing in El Salvador'.

The same UN commission recognised the efforts of the FMLN towards a more humanitarian approach, in accordance with pledges made during negotiations in La Palma and D'Ayagualo, commitments, on the other hand, that were openly flouted by the army.

On the military level, the objective of the imperialists is to do everything possible to isolate the enemy. In order to cut the FMLN off from its popular base, the air offensive has been expanded, in accordance with the strategy adopted by the air force at the end of 1983. The massive bombardments are aimed at forcing the population to flee the areas controlled by the guerillas.

In particular the tactics of using small helicopter-borne units able to strike unexpectedly at selected points and move in quickly to reinforce positions could alter the outcome of future confrontations.

In less than eight months, from January to July 1984, 100,000 people had to flee their homes.

By these means, the imperialists are trying to demonstrate to the people of Central America, that their defeat in Vietnam cannot be so easily repeated. They are combining mass slaughter of civilian populations with encirclement and militarisation of settlements through the civilian defence patrols, which are similar to those operating in Guatemala. The aim of this is to isolate and then eliminate the bases of support for the FMLN. This is the objective of the Conara plan.

The stepping up of military activity in the towns by the FMLN has coincided with a new rise of strikes against increases in the cost of living and for the defence of trade union and human rights.

Since the beginning of the year, work-

ers have been entering into struggle for wage rises. Teachers have called a national strike involving 29,000 people. And struggles have broken out in the banks, demanding the release of the general secretary of the Bank Workers Union who, with his brother, has been captured by the death squads.

So despite the repression and the killings, workers are fighting back and advancing their own demands. But, as part of their platforms, they are also taking up the issue of the release of political prisoners and the continuation of negotiations.

For this reason, despite the conditions under which it came about, the vote for the PDC does, to some extent, represent an aspiration for a continuation of talks, which Duarte had committed himself to if his party won.

The victory of the Christian Democracy has several consequences. On the one hand, it will facilitate the imperialist operation by giving an apparent legitimacy to a repressive regime that only remains in power thanks to US support. It offers a facade of democracy to a country where war has already taken 60,000 lives. A particularly negative consequence of the PDC victory could be to defuse American public opinion and, in the process, make it possible to bring more pressure to bear for the granting of war credits.

On the other hand, the vote for Duarte, in a limited way, reflects the real aspirations for peace to which the FMLN has sought to respond through its own proposals. And a very intense political battle is going to be fought over this issue.

Yet, because it is true that control of the executive and legislature is not the real source of power in the country, differences between sections of the ruling oligarchy and the army opposed to any reform or negotiation, on the one hand, and Duarte, on the other, are likely to grow and open up a period of political tensions and instability.

The test of strength unleashed by Arena and d'Aubuisson on the Central Electoral Council (CCE) is a storm signal of such conflicts between the bourgeois and the military diehards and Duarte. The withdrawal of the PCN (1) and the Arena representatives from this specially tailored electoral authority was intended to challenge the legitimacy of the electoral process. They even hoped that they might force an overturning of the elections. The CCE is made up of representatives of the three parties, the Arena, the PCN and the PCD. It is the final body of appeal to resolve disputes in the elections. Appeals to the supreme court are not provided for. They would, at any rate, be pointless since the court is also controlled by the same parties.

On April 4, d'Aubuisson appeared to be aiming to cut down the DC's seats by three, to a total of thirty, thus preventing the Christian Democrats from obtaining an absolute majority in parliament and thereby provoking a constitutional stalemate, before even the vague Duarte reforms could be adopted.

The American ambassador, T. Pickering temporarily put a stop to this blackmail represented by d'Aubuisson's attack on the election board, warning about a 'coup d'etat that would be fatal for the future of the country and for the aid provided by the American government' (quoted in the Spanish daily *El Pais*, 3 April 1985).

Not long afterwards, the defence minister, Eugenio Vides Casanova and the commander in chief of the army called on all parties to 'respect the will of the people as expressed through the ballot box' (*El Pais*, 5-6 April 1985).

Such moves, in fact, only confirm the small importance attached by the real holders of power to universal suffrage, except of course when it comes to invoking it as a pretext for decrying the 'gulag' in Nicaragua.

On the regional level, the Reagan government will try to use the example of the Salvadoran elections to make false comparisons with Nicaragua in order to attain its objectives there. Its tactic will be to campaign for 'truly free' elections in Nicaragua, that is to say elections in which the *contras* can participate following negotiations and a ceasefire.

Currently engaged in reorganising forces in the region, the imperialists are stepping up military, economic and political pressures. They are refining their tactics, waging a war of attrition and preparing the political conditions for intervention justified by the existence of 'democratically elected' regimes. ■

1. The executive committee of the PCN later disassociated themselves from the move of their general secretary.

The forces of reaction line up against the Nicaraguan Revolution

The following paid advert appeared in the French daily newspaper, Le Monde *of 21 March 1985. Headed 'The International of Resistance, the Resistance International,' it was signed by well-known personalities from nine European countries.*

The future of democracy is currently being threatened in Nicaragua. After four years of dictatorship (from May 1980 to November 1984) a totalitarian party — the FSLN — has not succeeded in breaking the resistance of a people. As the elections demonstrated, more than half the electorate of Nicaragua, despite pressure from the FSLN, refused to vote.

The declaration of the state of emergency shows that despite the comparative opening represented by the elections the FSLN's political project remains to establish a totalitarian state.

That is why we consider that aid to all sections of the opposition is essential for the Nicaraguans to be able to smash the dictatorship of the totalitarian party and to exercise, finally, the right that seemed to have been guaranteed with the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship; the right to choose freedom as their political future.

In a spirit of democratic solidarity we must therefore ask the US congress to renew aid to the Nicaraguan resistance.

The renewal of this aid is necessary from a strategic point of view. The Sandinista junta has never concealed that its goal is the integration of the Central American region into one Marxist Leninist whole. In this eventuality, the USA would be compelled to retreat from one of its main overseas commitments. This is precisely the objective of Soviet strategy — to force the United States to withdraw from the areas that represent a vital importance to it and to the free world. In this respect, the issue of Central America, Europe's fifth frontier, is also a problem.

The aid is equally necessary from a moral point of view. The West must support those who struggle to gain those rights which your own Declaration of Independence proclaims inalienable and which, consequently belong to us all.

We say to the US Congress that to refuse aid to those who seek to exercise their rights is equivalent on your part to renouncing the spirit of your country. If you should fail in Nicaragua, the strategic situation in which the US would find itself would be less serious an issue than the betrayal of the very principles on which your country was founded.

The freedom of Nicaraguans is your freedom and our freedom. In this sense we are not divided. If you fail in Nicaragua we are right to ask you where you will fail next time? If freedom and democracy are not worth defending in your own hemisphere where are they worth defending? The free world awaits your response. So do its enemies. ■

Signatories include:
Eugene Ionesco; Bernard-Henri Levi; Leonid Pliouchtch; Vladimir Boukovsky; Winston Churchill, Member of Parliament (GB); Lord Hugh Thomas, historian; Lord (sic) Frank Chapple, ex trade-union leader; Malcolm Fraser, ex Australian prime minister.

The people's anger

Even as these lines are being written, the news is coming over the radio that armed troops and police are being permanently deployed in the black townships of the Eastern Cape, the scene of the recent and continuing violence triggered off by the massacre of 19 people, peacefully marching in a funeral procession on March 21 — the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fateful Sharpeville shootings in 1960, when 69 people were slaughtered and 180 wounded under a hail of machine gun fire. These armed forces are completely mobile and can be moved to other areas should the need arise.

The necessity for this move was spelled out by the minister for law and order, Louis Le Grange, when he justified the deployment of 7,000 armed troops and police in the townships of the Vaal triangle, with his statement to the South African parliament that South Africa 'was moving into a potentially revolutionary situation.'

'NDABENI

The main causes of the growing tension in the townships are undoubtedly economic. South Africa is experiencing a deep recession. Unemployment is rising. In 1983 unemployment had reached two and a half million. By now it must be well over three million. The great majority of the black workers in South Africa are not covered by unemployment insurance. The 1980 Report of the department of manpower (sic) estimates that only 3,590,849 out of an economically active population of 9,490,000 were covered. Of those not receiving any benefit when unemployed, the vast majority are black workers.

Inflation was standing at over 12% even before the recent budget, which worsened conditions by increasing sales tax, the price of petrol, postage costs, etc. — all of which contributes to rising prices generally. Over the past two years there have been several increases of rent and taxes in the black townships.

When to these increasing economic hardships are added the perennial grievances of the black population — the pass laws; the forced removals and influx control; the humiliations piled on them by the inhuman apartheid laws — it is easy to undestand why the situation has reached boiling point.

The government is reacting almost hysterically to the situation which has developed in the Eastern Cape. Since the shooting of the 19 black marchers on March 21, at least forty more blacks have been killed by police action. The total death toll in South Africa this year already exceeds 300 — and this is only April.

It is impossible to understand what is happening in South Africa today without examining the developments over the past decade or so. Above all it is necessary to understand the changes in the relationships between classes and within classes; between the state and the economy within the state itself.

When the (Afrikaner) National Party took power in 1948, the party was based on a class alliance of white (mainly Afrikaner) farmers, white workers and the emerging Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie. The economic needs of this alliance were ideologially expressed through the apartheid legislation of the 1950s. What was required was a deepening of the existing 'colour bar' legislation, which preserved skilled work and managerial positions for the white workers; and which ensured a supply of cheap, unskilled labour for the mines and farms by developing the labour reserves in the proposed bantustans in order to perpetuate the hegemony of the white minority — and within this of the still smaller Afrikaner sector — in the exercise of state power through Verwoerd's concept of *'baaskap'*.

But, almost from the day it came into power, the National Government began to create the conditions which have landed it in its present predicament. Through state enterprises and lavish state aid, it set about the task of developing the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie into a fully fledged capitalist class. Inevitably, this led to a convergence between the newly emergent Afrikaner capitalism and the older, established 'English' and foreign monopoly capital.

First under Vorster and then at an accelerating speed under Botha, the Nationalist Party has become increasingly the party of monopoly capital. This in turn has meant that monopoly capital has become dominant at the level of state policies.

With the change in the class relationship of the ruling alliance came a change in the needs of the economy. Instead of the need for cheap, unskilled migrant labour there was now a growing demand for a smaller, semi-skilled, skilled and stable labour force. This process is, of course, far from complete and has not touched large sectors of the economy, but the general trend is there, stimulated by the need for the South African economy to remain competitive in the world market. Hence the need to import increasingly sophisticated and labour-saving technology.

The changes in the economic structure have also resulted in the emergence of a small black capitalist class and a somewhat larger layer of black petty-bourgeois who have been incorporated into the existing capitalist enterprises, mainly as managers and skilled professionals. In the urban areas we have seen the establishment of a relatively privileged working class — i.e. privileged as compared to the mass of unemployed and 'subsistence' producers in the so-called homelands.

With these fundamental changes in the economic and class relationships, the Verwoerd model of absolute apartheid began to show cracks. The state, now acting in the interests of monopoly capital, saw the need to try to split the more privileged sectors of the black population. This was the prime motive for the moves which culminated in the new constitution and the establishment of 'autonomous' communal authorities in the townships. The need for change was also impressed on the ruling class by the explosion of anger in the black communities during the 1976 uprisings (Soweto). It became clear even to the traditionally conservative Afrikaner nationalist that some sort of change was really necessary.

The deepening organic crisis led the dominant classes to seek new alliances and policies. The exclusive white parliamentary structure no longer met the needs of the times.

The new constitution, which provided for a tri-cameral parliament — one for whites, one for 'Coloureds' and one for Indians, had a two-fold purpose. It was part of the grand strategy to create a split in the oppressed. But it also sought to get the white middle class and white workers used to the idea of 'sharing power'. this strategy was aptly defined by H. Giliomee, at a Conference on Economic Development and Racial Domination, held at the University of the Western Cape in October 1984, as 'trying to find the secret of sharing power without losing control.'

Botha's aim of using the elections to the 'Coloured' and Indian sectors of the oppressed in order to give legitimacy and credibility to the Coloured and Indian collaborators and to further the aim of creating divisions received a short sharp answer from the 'Coloured' and Indian voters. Under 20% of those eligible for the vote went to the polls. No single party in the Coloured or Indian chambers of the new parliament got more than about 5% of the vote. In no way could it be claimed that they were legitimate representatives of the oppressed and exploited.

There was also a further purpose in the government's aims. Protests against apartheid policies throughout the world were bringing pressure on governments in Europe, America, Australia, etc., and on multi-nationals with big investments in South Africa. South Africa's imperialist friends were forced to voice their disquiet at some of the worst features of the racist regime and to apply gentle pressure for some changes. These pressures became more acute after events like Sharpeville and Soweto showed the vulnerability of the regime to revolt from within — revolt which, if successful, would not only put an end to apartheid but to the capitalist system with which it is enmeshed.

Changes in ruling class alliances

Botha's answer was the new constitution. This was quickly hailed as a 'step forward'. In fact, it was nothing of the kind.

Although ostensibly widening the franchise, the new constitution actually dilutes the already restricted power of representative institutions in South Africa. In addition to the three-chamber parliament, it also provided for a dominant executive president who would be chosen exclusively by the white chamber and, in practice, by the largest party in that house. Under the former Westminster-type constitution, if prime ministers lost a parliamentary majority, they would either have had to resign or form a minority (or coalition) government. Under the new constitution, the National Party would be able to exercise full power even if it only has 34% of seats in the white chamber, except in the unlikely event of the Progressive Party blocking with the extreme right-wing parties. With the president and cabinet no longer answerable to parliament, the white electorate has, in effect, abdicated some ot its power to the new oligarchy, which is closely integrated with the military. The reaction of the Indian and 'Coloured' people to the new constitution was a great blow to the government. Their abstention at the polls was a positive demonstration for black unity.

The changes in the class alliances of the dominant classes do not mean that apartheid is being dismantled or that the process has even begun. South African capitalism is based on the exploitation of a labour force still largely defined in racial terms. Economically, South Africa is still crucially dependent on exports of minerals and agricultural products, which earn the foreign exchange needed for the purchase of goods for the industrial sector. As stated in the Document of the Fourth International 'Land and National Question in the South African Revolution' (see *International Viewpoint*, No 25, 7 March 1983), South Africa remains a dependent capitalist economy.

Because the South African economy is integrated into the world capitalist economy, South Africa, despite its gold reserves, cannot escape the effects of the crisis which has prevailed in the capitalist world since the 1970s.

Since 1948, the South African state has been dominated by the National Party and because it has adapted to the changing demands of the changing economic forces, this domination is not threatened from the side of the white population. It controls the largest and most efficient military machine in Africa and a police force well versed in the ways and means of brutal repression and an all-encompassing net of security laws. While a significant proportion of white South Africa is prepared to see some cosmetic trimming of the worst features of apartheid, as they indicated when 60% voted for the Botha Constitution, they look to the National Party to maintain their privileges and the reality of continued white rule.

The other side of the picture to the development of the ruling class alliances during the past decade is the changes which have manifested themselves among the oppressed.

In the 1960s, after Sharpeville, the main liberation organisations, the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-African Congress (PAC) were banned and their leaders incarcerated in the hell-hole of Robben Island. The Communist Party-dominated South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) withered in the climate of repression and today exists only as a grouping in exile. For a time, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) appeared to fill the vacuum left by the banning of the traditional organisations. It too was banned in October 1977.

The first decade after Sharpeville was one of quiescence in the black political scene. Deprived of leadership, subjected to ferocious oppressive laws, the regime appeared to have achieved its objective of taming the black revolt.

The wave of strikes which swept Durban in 1973 marked the beginning of the upturn in the struggle of the oppressed against their oppressors, with the working class now emerging in the vanguard of the struggle. From Durban the strike wave spread to engulf the main urban centres. From January 1973 to mid-1976, over 200,000 Black workers went on strike. The overwhelming majority of strikers were Africans but a sizeable number of Indian and Coloured workers were also involved. From the Durban strikes of 1973 can be dated the re-birth of the trade union movement among South Africa's black workers, despite the initial set-backs — in 1974 and 1976 trade union leaders in key unions were banned and prevented from taking part in union movements for five years — the unions took root and grew.

The state, of course, did not stand idly by while these developments were taking place. Union officials and shop floor activists have at times been savagely attacked but the government was faced with a dilemma. The shortage of skilled white labour has made industry more dependent on the skills of black workers. While in the 1960s, when the resistance movement was at its nadir, an entire workforce could be dismissed and replaced without cost, this was now no longer a feasible option. With the recognition of their economic strength, the organisation of black workers reflected the growing confidence of the workers. As a black worker at General Motors commented, 'Our strength is in the economy. We have the power to bring the economy to its knees'.

As a consequence, the black unions have been able to breach the state's apparatus of labour control and repression. Union organisers simply ignored laws which made strikes illegal and which excluded black workers from the state controlled system of industry-wide wage determinations. In 1979 and 1981 the government brought in legislation which effectively legalised black trade unions, under certain limited conditions. By 1983, African trade unions claimed 545,000 members as against 360,000 in 1981. Since these figures were published, the unions have continued to grow and the National Union of Mineworkers — the first legal organisation of black miners, claims a membership of over 50,000.

Parallel to the growth of the black trade unions, has been the revival of political movements. The first open manifestation of this was the founding of the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) in April 1978. Although it had its roots in the Black Consciousness Movement, there were some marked differences. The old BCM had preached 'One people, one Azania.' Azapo recognised that there had developed some class differentiations within the black camp, and that some blacks would collaborate with the authorities because it was in their class interests to do so. They also

recognised the importance of 'trade unions as an instrument that can bring about the redistribution of power.' AZAPO, they claimed 'has taken the Black Consciouness beyond the phase of Black awareness into class struggle.'

This past decade has also seen the mushrooming of student, youth, community, women's organisations and orgainsations in support of political detainees.

The revival of the national liberation movement received a great impetus with the formation of two nation-wide bodies, the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Forum (NF). Broadly speaking, UDF can be characterised as a Charterist tendency because its platform embraces the Freedom Charter adopted by the Congress Alliance, of which the African National Congress and the Transvaal Indian Congress formed major constituents, in 1961. The Charter recognises and allows for 'national groups' in the broad South African spectrum. They hold that these ethnic groups are a South African reality and that the task confronting all South Africans is to build on the common desire for full democracy among all race groups and unite them in a national drive to win political freedom for all. The NF of which AZAPO forms the principal constituent, maintains that this is simply a mirror image of the apartheid state which is also based on the recognition of these ethnic differences.

AZAPO and NF have been accused of being anti-white. This is certainly not true of NF because one of its affiliates is the Cape Action League, which has members of all ethnic groups in its ranks. But AZAPO also denies that it is anti-white, agrees that whites have a role to play in the liberation struggle but insist that role must be confined to their own community. 'Democratic Whites' should mobilise their own communities and not try to guide blacks. They point to instances where the UDF have made demands on its black affiliates, such as the boycott of exams by black students during the stay-away strikes last November, calling on the black students to 'make sacrifices for the struggle' but did not ask the white National Union of Students (NUSAS), which is affiliated to UDF to join in the struggle.

There are also marked differences in the strategies of the two groups. While the liberation struggle is an end in itself to the Charterists, the National Forum is more concerned with a direct attack on the capitalist system. It is capitalism, it says, which oppresses the working class (which is mainly black) while the owners of the means of production are mainly white. Liberation in itself, the Forum argues, has done little to help the downtrodden workers in most African countries. The struggle against apartheid is no more than a point of departure in the liberation effort.

The UDF, undoubtedly, has much the more effective publicity machine. Although AZAPO, the trade unions, the Cape Action League played an effective role in the struggle against the new constitution and the boycott of the election campaign, the media only seemed to recognise UDF. After the Uitenhage massacre, the media announced the banning of 'UDF and 29 other organisations'. These organsations included AZAPO, trade unions and other organisations.

Undoubtedly, after a period of quiescence there has been a revival of ANC influence with which UDF has close political sympathies, in the black community. But despite the regime's repression of UDF and other organisations, the current outburst of uprisings in the Eastern Cape has the clear appearance of spontaneous eruptions. Neither UDF nor NF are structured to give this kind of organised lead. Even the ANC, in the January edition of its journal *Sechaba*, states that they do 'not claim that every mass popular resistance to the regime in the townships is organised by the ANC.' For minister of law and order, Le Grange, these events appear to be the fulfilment of his statement that South Africa 'was moving into a potentially revolutionary situation.' And a revolution in the eyes of the ruling class can never be simply the spontaneous expression of anger of a people who are no longer prepared to be ruled in the old way. There must be agitators and leaders at the back of it. Hence the bannings and arrests; hence the increased role of the military in the field of civilian administration.

The anger of the people in the townships has been vented principally against the black councillors, officials and black police — the collaborators with the apartheid regime. This mockery of self-government which the government has tried to foist on the people has been practically wiped out. Today it is hard to find a black mayor or councillor in any of the townships of the Eastern Cape. They have either been killed by the aroused people or fled for their lives. The ruling class can no longer go on ruling in the old way. They now have to try with the use of brute force to do what they could not do with persuasion — keep the people in subjection. In this too they will fail. Le Grange may have spoken with more wisdom than he knew. ■

The workers wanted a general strike

The end of the Easter holidays was marked by a spectacular resumption of mass protests against the wage settlement imposed by the Schlueter government on all Danish workers. On Wednesday, April 10, a huge mass rally took place in front of the Danish parliament building, perhaps even larger than the March 29 demonstration, which was already reckoned to be the largest seen in the country since the Second World War. Once again the main centers were paralyzed by a de facto general strike. Workers rallied outside union headquarters demanding that their organizations open up the strike funds. Such action by the unions would mean direct defiance of the law, since after the parliament imposed a settlement all strikes became illegal and any move by labor leaders to support strike activity makes them liable to draconian fines.

The sentiment for a general strike to force out the right-wing government was clearly running strong. Even the long Easter holiday had failed to break the momentum. A number of picket lines were maintained over the vacation period, cutting off oil supplies to Copenhagen and stopping some transport systems. In the Danish capital, where nearly half the country's population is concentrated, the bus drivers worked, but put up signs in their buses saying: "We're driving so that people can visit their families and friends during the Easter holiday and discuss how we can get rid of this government." The day people should have returned to their jobs, Tuesday, April 9, transport in the population centers was blocked by picket lines and a number of workplaces went out. Most of the participants in the April 10 demonstration who were interviewed on BBC-4 radio expressed strong support for a general strike to force the government to resign.

Gerry FOLEY

The upsurge of militancy brought an overflow attendance at the Copenhagen area shop stewards' meeting on April 9. Three thousand shop stewards crowded into the hall, and another thousand gathered outside. "A motion calling for the convening of a national shop stewards' meeting to organize an all-out general strike would have carried," Soeren Soendergaard, a leader of the Danish section of the Fourth International, told me in a telephone interview.

However, the chairperson was a member of the CP and managed to prevent such a motion from reaching the floor.

So the meeting called a national day of action for Wednesday, resulting in another de facto general strike, but offered no perspective for organizing the fight beyond that.

"Only a national shop stewards' meeting could organize a general strike," Soendergaard said, "since the union leaderships and the major workers parties are against it." With no perspective for continuing the fight, after large numbers of workers had already been on strike for three weeks, about two thirds of the strikers returned to their jobs on Thursday. On that day also the Communist Party began to oppose a general strike openly.

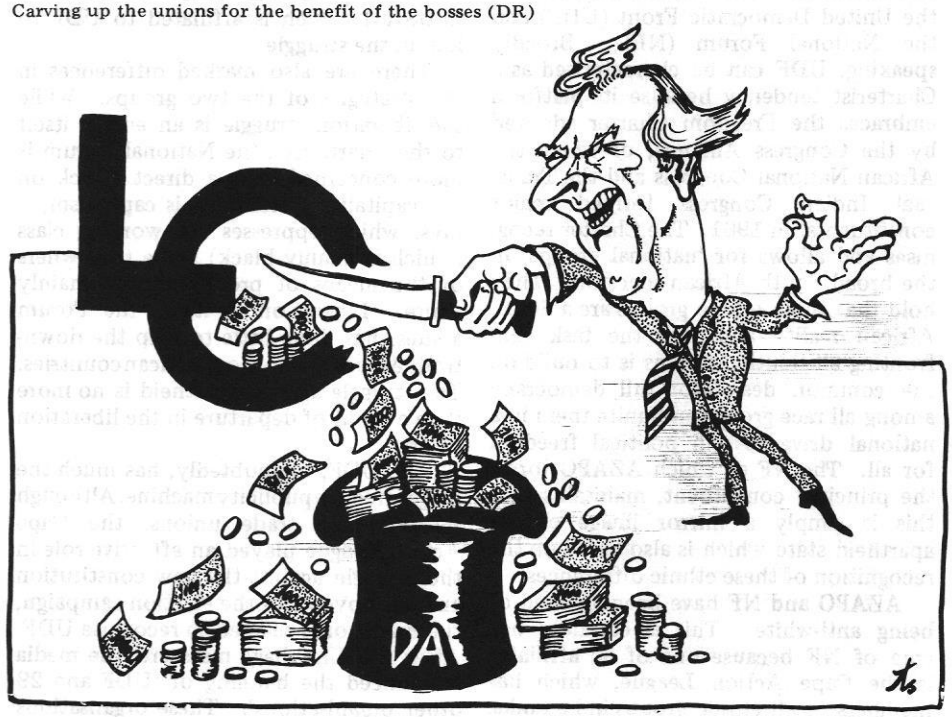
Thus the CP seemed well on the way to liquidating the second general strike movement in postwar Danish history.

It was the Communist Party that defused the general strike of 1956. Two years after that, the CP split and lost its position as a major political force in the country. In the immediate sense, this crisis was the outgrowth of the reaction against the crushing of the Hungarian revolution. But the way was prepared for it by the steady decline of the CP in the 1950s, in which its betrayal in the 1956 general strike was a factor.

The Communist Party started out in a strong position after the Second World War because of the role it played in the resistance. In the first election after the war, the CP got 12% of the vote and was able to challenge the Social Democrats in the labor movement. This historically weakened the control of the Social Democracy over the labor movement. But after the 1958 split, the CP's vote in the parliamentary elections fell to a low of 0.6%. On the other hand, since the CP was excluded from the parliament, in order to survive as a political force, it had to build a rank-and-file movement in the unions. On the basis of a series of strong strikes at the end of the 1960s, it gave impetus to the development of the shop stewards' organizations. Its influence here has now enabled it once again to defuse a decisive workers struggle at the key moment.

Following the failure of the Copenhagen shop stewards' meeting on April 9 to offer a lead, on Friday April 12, most workers had gone back. Strikes continued mainly where leading activists were fired. In fact, the rightist govern-

Carving up the unions for the benefit of the bosses (DR)



ment responded to the rise of the strike movement with a brutal repression that was a smaller version of the methods Thatcher used against the striking coal miners.

Before the Easter holidays, the police attacked a demonstration in the city of Odensee, putting sixty people in the hospital. On April 11, they attacked a picket line at the main railway station in Copenhagen so violently that they provoked the first strike at least since the Second World War by the train drivers, who are legally prohibited from striking. The train drivers stopped work for an hour in protest against the brutality of the police.

Large numbers of activists were dragged off by the police. They were quickly released, but it is likely that the government will bring charges against them and victimize them when the strikes and protests ebb. Workplace activists, including shop stewards, across the country have been fired.

Danish Fourth Internationalists playing an important role

Members of the Danish section of the Fourth International, the Socialist Workers Party (SAP), have been playing leading roles in the strike in many workplaces, and a number of them have also been fired. The SAP is beginning a campaign to defend them. If the protest movement is demobilized, as appears to be happening, the defense of the large number of victimized class-struggle fighters will become an important task for supporters of democratic and trade union rights in Denmark and internationally.

The April 12 shop stewards meeting in Copenhagen was probably the last chance to give new impetus to the strike movement. The SAP supported a motion from shop stewards representing 4,500 workers at a Copenhagen brewery calling for the meeting and representatives of major workplaces in particular to support a call for forming a national strike committee. The CP shop stewards were the decisive force in defeating it. The real attitude of the CP thus became clear to the workers vanguard, even though here they agreed to a national shop stewards meeting April 18, when it can be expected that the momentum of the strikes will have been lost.

Also in some workplaces, like the Aarhus shipyards, there has been a hard-on confrontation between CP and revolutionary shop stewards. At Aarhus, the SAP activists have played a crucial role in keeping the yards out.

In Denmark today, unlike in 1956, there is a new layer of union militants formed by the struggles at the end of the 1960s. They have now gone through a powerful political experience. There is also a presence of revolutionary activists in the workplace and unions who can begin to crystallize an alternative, even if this strike movement ends in defeat, as now seems likely. ■

Why ANZUS must go !

The following article is taken from the March 27, 1985 issue of Direct Action, *the newspaper of the Australian section of the Fourth International.*

In the 12 months since 250,000 people marched in anti-nuclear protests across Australia last Palm Sunday, the antinuclear movement has shaken the traditional framework of Australian politics. New Zealand's stand against nuclear warships and the Nuclear Disarmament Party's (NDP) strong performance in last December's federal elections have led to considerable questioning of the ANZUS alliance.

Greg ADAMSON

While it was not the intention of either the NDP or the Lange government to challenge this alliance, the inherent logic of their actions does so. Any move towards a less dangerous, and therefore less aggressive, international policy must inevitably have this effect.

For it is this alliance that directly ties Australia nad New Zealand into the United States nuclear terror network. Because of ANZUS, United States war bases are dotted across the Australian continent.

Supporters of nuclear weapons development have rushed to predict the defeat of New Zealand's stand. For example, in the introduction to a "defence" supplement in the March 19 *Australian Financial Review*, Peter Robinson writes:

"Of course, it is inevitable that ultimately New Zealand's Labor Government will be defeated and the succeeding government may well reverse its anti-nuclear policy and embrace port visits, nuclear weapons and all the other costs and benefits of the alliance."

That's not nearly as inevitable as some might like it to be, as Glenda Korporaal, the paper's New York correspondent, points out in the same supplement:

"Having made its point against New Zealand loud and clear, the only problem for Washington is the possibility of having its hard line backfire — of New Zealand Prime Minister Lange's becoming the international hero of the disarmament movement and of growing sympathy with his position within other states of the Pacific basin, particularly among the emerging Pacific Nations.

"At this stage, it looks like this is the only factor that would have any chance of modifying the tough stance that Washington has taken in response to the New Zealand ban."

New Zealand's stand did not become an issue because the Lange government went looking for a fight. It was the United States government which brought the ships issue to a head by demanding that NZ admit nuclear-armed warships for the 1985 Sea Eagle exercises.

This was a break with tradition. In both the 1983 and 1984 Sea Eagle exercises, according to the US Pacific Naval Command, no US ship called at a New Zealand port.

But the present United States government has decided that it must go to war in Central America to shore up its declining international position. All over the world, people locked into a permanent cycle of poverty and repression have seen a spark of hope in the course taken by Vietnam — the path of national independence.

In Nicaragua and El Salvador, attempts to take that road have won huge popular support. Such developments threaten giant US investments, from South Africa to the Philippines to Brazil. The only way the US government can see to stop them, is to provide a counter example to Vietnam. It aims to convince the impoverished masses of the Third World, not that there is another way other than national independence to overcome poverty and underdevelopment, but that resistance is futile.

To achieve this, and avoid becoming increasingly isolated in the world, it needs the support of other governments — support that the US's European allies, with their own experiences of the futility of trying to hold onto empires, are sometimes reluctant to give.

So, the US is prepared to discipline its allies. If New Zealand gets away with its stance, Holland or Belgium may be next, not to mention colonial countries in the Pacific and elsewhere.

The Lange government did not set out to challenge the ANZUS alliance, in fact, its stand has contradictory elements.

While advocating what most Labor supporters undoubtedly see as the beginnings of a new direction in international policy, the Lange government maintains that it really upholds the traditional policy — minus nuclear ships in New Zealand ports. Thus the New Zealand deputy prime minister recently predicted very large increases in New Zealand's

"defence" spending.

Since New Zealand is under no military threat, such expenditure can only be designed to prepare the country's armed forces for their traditional role of participating in aggressive actions against other countries in the region.

New Zealand, like Australia, was one of the few countries to provide troops for the US war effort in Vietnam. It presently has troops stationed in Singapore, and has participated in actions such as the Sarawak independence movement at the time of Britain's shotgun marriage of the unwilling partners in the Malaysian federation.

Australia's and New Zealand's traditional "defence" policies have in fact been aggressive policies, that's why any attempt to change those policies, even to maintain the traditional framework while making them non-nuclear, challenges the whole framework.

To be consistent, the Lange government would need to adopt a non-aligned international policy, and to support movements for national independence, such as the present struggle in Kanaky, West Papua, East Timor and the Philippines.

In Australia, the formation of the Nuclear Disarmament Party was virtually forced on anti-nuclear activists by the media circus that masqueraded as the Labor Party's federal conference last July. In the process of dumping virtually all initiatives towards a more peaceful internaional policy from the ALP's platform, the Hawke-Hayden axis laid bare the traditional framework of Australian foreign policy.

It's a policy that opposes struggles for national independence and democracy while tying Australia firmly to the US nuclear war machine. When that was laid out clearly and brutally, hundreds of thousands were outraged, as was shown by the NDP's vote in the federal elections.

The fact is, Australian governments have traditionally lied about their military policies — calling them "defence" rather than war policies is the first lie.

The NDP won thousands of members and hundreds of thousands of votes in a few short weeks, advancing just three policies: end uranium mining; refuse to accept visits by nuclear ships or planes; and get rid of foreign military bases on Australian soil.

It was no accident that the new party offended every one of the existing parliamentary parties. Even the Labor Party left resented it as a threat. The NDP did represent a threat — the threat that a party fighting for a political principle would break into the parliamentary arena — an arena dominated by individuals selected mainly for their willingness to bow before the power of the dollar.

From the other end of the spectrum, the NDP roused wails that it would leave Australia "defenceless." The fact is that it is Australia that has been in the business of invading defenceless countries such as Korea, Vietnam and Malaysia, not the other way round. The treaty was negotiated during the Korean War (the failed United States attempt to invade China) and signed in 1951.

The treaty was signed for the United States by Secretary of State Dean Acheson. He, and the rest of the US administration at the time knew very well that Australia was under no foreign threat. His single purpose was to build up a series of alliances to guarantee US investments and other interests against any movements for social or political change.

Acheson later boasted in his memoirs that he lied to US Congressional leaders about the Soviet role in Iran and elsewhere to secure their support for the Truman Doctrine. This accepted responsibility for guarding the interests of "free enterprise" worldwide, a responsibility held previously by Britain.

Not surprisingly, this United States outlook involved massive investments in both nuclear and conventional military expenditure.

Today, the United States government has the same aim, but its actions become more frantic as its empire is increasingly threatened. In Central and South America, southern Africa, South-East Asia and elsewhere, United States interests are under threat.

In these circumstances, the Reagan administration is involved in an enormous military build up, including the development of further nuclear weapons and of the nuclear-related Star Wars technology.

Absolute and unchallenged military weapons superiority, think the US leaders, would allow free use of US forces in the manner of the 1983 Grenada invasion.

Because of its global corporate interests, the United States needs military bases around the world. New weapons cannot be used unless they can be put into position with the agreement of local governments.

The US still has to complete the positioning of the 572 Pershing II and Tomahawk cruise missiles in Europe, because of the opposition of the host countries: West Germany, Britain, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands.

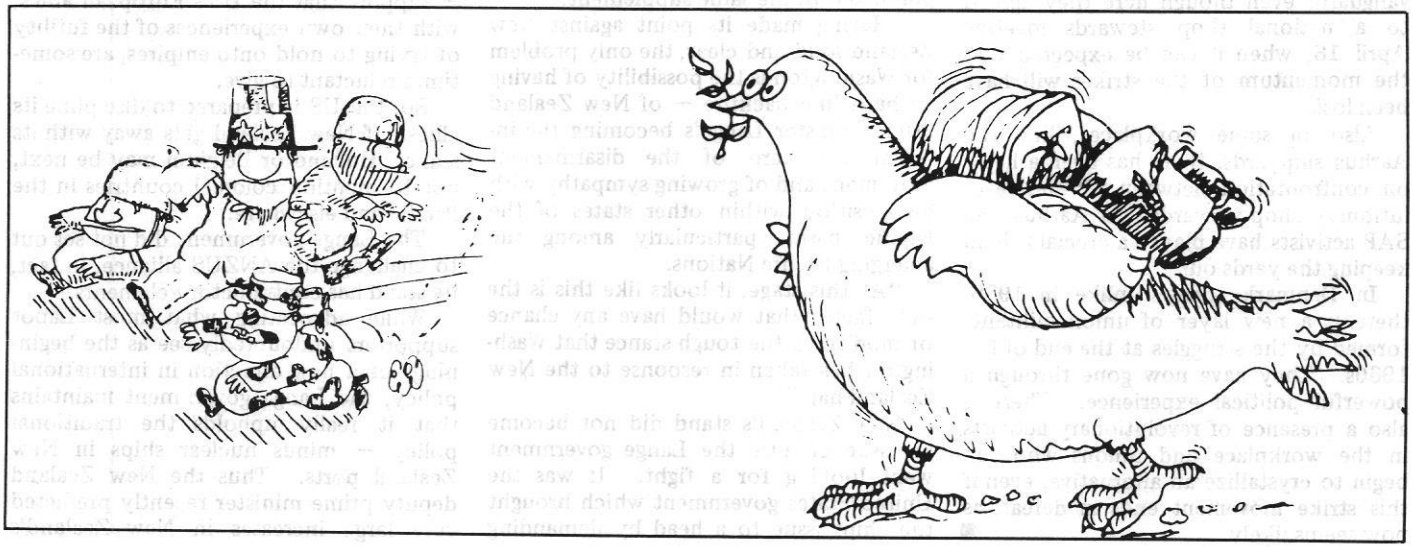
It is also having increasing difficulty in its military relations with Greece, and in Japan US nuclear-armed ships are allowed in only because the Nakasone government refuses to stand by its own ban on nuclear weapons.

If New Zealand successfully stands against the US on the warships question, it will give hope and confidence to the peoples of the Pacific who continue to suffer from nuclear testing, to the peoples of the Philippines and South Korea, each of which hosts tens of thousands of US soldiers, along with their warships and warplanes. The people of Japan could also be spurred on to demand enforcement of their government's anti-nuclear policy.

Australia could also make an important contribution to world peace by cutting its ties to the US worldwide military network. A first step in this direction is outlined in the demands of the Nuclear Disarmament Party.

A second step would be for Australia to get out of ANZUS, and other military alliances that contribute both to the threat of nuclear war and to continued repression of the peoples of our region.

To fail to do so condemns us to fight in future Vietnam-type conflicts and to continue to contribute to the risk of nuclear holocaust. ■



The test of the March general strike

On March 4, 1985, about 50,000 people demonstrated in La Paz, including more than ten thousand miners who had arrived in the city that morning. This was the first time in twenty years that the miners had come into the city en masse. But this time they had come for a direct confrontation with the People's Democratic Union (UDP) government that they had helped to come to power in 1982 by overthrowing General Garcia Meza's dictatorship.

The miners, the backbone of the Bolivian Labor Confederation (COB) came to the demonstration on overloaded trucks from the Oruro and Huanuni mines, starting out in the early dawn hours. They were joined by massive contingents of La Paz workers and in particular by contingents from the housewives committees. The slogans that predominated were "Death to Banzer and Banzerism! We've had enough of Siles, death to the hunger government." (1) The miners also shouted, "Long live the unity of the left!" and what has by now become a classic refrain, "The people armed will never be crushed!" However, just as in Chile at the time of the "tancazo" ["tank operation," the rehearsal for the September coup], the Bolivian people are not armed.

Finally the slogan of "Down with the elections!" against the elections set for April, was widely taken up. A more political variant, "The elections are no solution" was also shouted, but it did not catch on as much. It is true that these early general elections, which were decided on at the end of last year after the November and December general strikes, are a maneuver by the right. This decision was made in response to the demands of Hugo Banzer, the Historical Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNRH) of Paz Estenssoro, but also of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) of Paz Zamora, which had been an integral part of the government up till then. However, a simple rejection of these elections is not sufficient in and of itself to lay out an alternative political perspective.

Andre DUBOIS

The March 4 demonstration in La Paz launched four days of constant marches and mass assemblies in the capital's open-air auditorium, during which more than 10,000 miners met every day to discuss how to continue the fight.

In response to these mobilizations, a network of solidarity with the miners began to build up, concerned at the beginning with feeding them. The demonstrators were given food in the university restaurant, in popular canteens, but also in canteens organized by the housewives committees. The latter demonstrated their effectiveness by distributing about 20,000 rations of food a day, in a situation in which food is scarce, mainly because of speculation.

As the miners settled in in the city, an enormous potential of solidarity with them began to express itself more strongly. The central bank employees gave them money. The students organized collections of funds. The machinery of support went into operation in the other unions.

From the first day that they were in La Paz, the miners decided to maintain ongoing assemblies. Every day they discussed the state of the struggle and the best way to win their demands. Their 14-point platform focused on an urgent social need, raising the demand for a living minimum wage and a sliding scale; and on a political need, calling for "Siles out!" The continuing assembly of the miners decided to stay in La Paz after the initial day in order to force compliance with their demands.

On March 6, the government made it clear that it was rejecting 11 of the 14 points advanced in the struggle. The miners' union responded by pushing the COB to issue a call for a general strike around the central and unifying demand of a living minimum wage and a sliding scale.

The following day, the expanded leadership of the COB, including a hundred union delegates, decided to call an unlimited general strike. On March 8, the Executive Committee of the COB drew up the traditional document defining the terms of the general strike.

The document set down what services were to continue functioning during the strike, the methods of struggle, etc. It was decided, for example, to keep the telex links open for the international press but to interrupt internal communications. This plan was respected, although unevenly. But it still had a defensive and limited aspect.

For example, the assignment of the task of blocking the roads to the peasant movement paradoxically helped the army to make a demonstration of strength on the cheap more than it facilitated a link-up between the mobilization of the peasants nad the struggle of the miners and the workers in La Paz.

This was the sixth time that the COB called a general strike since September 1982, when, precisely by this means, it put the UDP government in power. This sixth general strike, in March 1985, was now aimed directly against the UDP government. This fact illustrates how rapidly a chasm had opened up between the mass movement and the UDP.

On March 15, to put the COB leader, Juan Lechin, in a difficult position, Siles Suazo issued a call for cogovernment, that is, a coalition government including the COB. But the confederation had demanded a COB-majority cogovernment, in which the union representatives would dominate. Siles Suazo offered a formula only that would leave the COB representatives in the minority. Under the pressure of the mass movement, this proposition was rejected. Moreover, Lechin's own political plans did not dispose him to accept a solution of this sort in collaboration with the Siles Suazo government.

The strike lasted for more than two weeks. On March 23, the miners had to climb back on their trucks to return to the mines. For some, this meant going back to work. But for many, it was only going back to unemployment without any prospects. The jobs of a lot of miners have been wiped out by the crisis in the tin-mining industry, tin being the country's traditional source of wealth and the material basis of the miners' power as a social and trade-union force.

Formally the strike ended in a compromise, with the workers getting a 400% increase in their incomes, payable partly in food tickets. But in fact, this solved nothing, when inflation is running at over 2,000% a year and there is no sliding scale of wages that can maintain the workers' buying power.

The two-week general strike was spurred on by daily street demonstrations. Parallel to this, the Bolivian capital was

1. Hugo Banzer, leader of the Democratic Nationalist Alliance (ADN), ruled the country as a dictator from 1971 to 1978. Siles Suazo, leader of the Left Revolutionary National Movement, is the present president and the head of the U DP government.

steadily militarized (in a process directly planned and coordinated by the American services). With the government's authority, the police and army presence was beefed up, and surveillance was tightened.

The government's mouthpiece, Minister of Information, Rueda Pena, orchestrated a campaign against the miners through all the media, portraying them as terrorists and putchists out for a coup d'etat. For his part, the vice president, Garett, did not hesitate during President Siles Suazo's trip to Montevideo, to declare publicly that it was necessary to institute a state of siege to restore order.

On the directly political level, the government's counteroffensive was focused around three key ideas — rejection of the miners' demands; denouncing them as terrorists; and maintaining the principle of early general elections, postponing them only until July 14, 1985.

The exasperation of the masses and the political tension that exists can be explained clearly by citing a few figures, even though scientifically accurate statistics are unavailable. In the parallel market, the dollar was worth 260 pesos in November 1982, 1,200 pesos in November 1983, 15,000 pesos in November 1984, 150,000 pesos in February 1985, and 170,000 pesos on March 4, 1985.

On the official market, which reflects the devaluations decreed by the government in accordance with the policy imposed by the IMF and implemented by the UDP government, the exchange rate went from 200 pesos to the dollar in November 1982 to 45,000 pesos to the dollar in February 1985. But from November 1984 to February 1985, in one sudden leap, the dollar went from 8,571 pesos to 45,000 pesos. This plunge in the value of the peso was the result of the economic agreement that the government made on February 9, and of the abrupt devaluation that went hand in hand with the other economic measures adopted on this occasion.

Devaluation on this scale and such galloping inflation inevitably bring to mind the situation in Germany in 1923. The Bolivian government had to lay out 60 million dollars just for bank notes to be shipped in by plane from Britain. Under the conditions created by this sort of inflation, it is becoming impossible to import goods and spare parts. The enterprises cannot function any longer. Every product is becoming the object of frenzied speculation, especially medecines, whose dollar price is ten times higher than in West Europe.

The cost of a box of powdered milk sufficient to feed a child for two weeks is higher than the monthly wage of a worker in La Paz. The minimum wage for workers is 16 dollars a month, and, according to official statistics, the average wage is 39 dollars a month. In these conditions, the inflation figures themselves lose their meaning.

Speculation in food products is particularly shocking. What we are seeing here is a classical pattern of hoarding. While there is no absolute shortage of food products, speculative hoarding is driving up the prices and starving the people.

The country's chronic poverty is being aggravated by the UDP's policy and the general economic crisis. In this situation, the effects of the IMF's policy are being compounded by a flight of capital and massive fiscal fraud that is increasing the budget deficit and bringing on new cuts in the already desperately inadequate social spending.

According to a UNICEF study done recently, 80% of the population was considered to be living in poverty. The soaring inflation comes on top of unemployment and underemployment. When the workers demand a living minimum wage, therefore, the word "living" has to be taken literally. What is in question is basic survival, the right to eat as the most elementary democratic right (see box).

This is the context for understanding the sixth unlimited general strike called by the COB and the fact that the miners stayed twenty days in a place that is more than 4,000 meters above sea level, living on starvation rations and having to find places to sleep where they could. These miners, who have a long tradition of militancy, organization and political consciousness, have really nothing more to lose but their chains. And they express that by repeating over and over again, "Nothing could be worse than this."

From the outset of the strike, a problem was posed still more urgently than during the previous strikes. On the social level, it was difficult to force the government to meet the workers' demands. A minimum living wage guaranteed by a sliding scale is in direct contradiction to the policy of the IMF and to the interests of the bosses, who unleashed a furious press campaign against the workers.

So, the most immediate economic demand sets the stage for a social and political confrontation, in fact poses the question of power. That is what was expressed by the slogans demanding that Siles Suazo get out and denouncing the upcoming elections.

The COB leadership

Nonetheless, difficulties loom large on both the economic and political level.

On the economic level, as on the previous occasions, but now with more stubborness and aggressiveness, the government said "no." In reality, contrary to what the Western press reported, it was ready to negotiate, but in strict limits. Thus, a large part of the wage increases granted as a result of the strike will be paid in food tickets. They will, therefore, not have a multiplier effect on the fragile but nonetheless real social welfare systems (pensions, insurance, retirement), which are vital for a population exposed to silicosis, work accidents, and with a very large number of people unable to work past the age of 35.

What is more, the granting of a concession in the form of food tickets can only be made good to the extent that the food is available in the stores run by COMIBOL, the state mining board. And it could be expected that speculators are not going to be very likely to release their hoarded stocks for the sake of food tickets issued by a government that is living on borrowed time!

On the political level, while the miners demanded the departure of Siles Suazo, they did not propose an alternative solution. The historic leader of the COB, Juan Lechin, has proposed absolutely nothing in this respect. He called for the departure of Siles, while refusing to add, as the militant forces in the strike mobilization did, rejection of Banzer and Paz Estenssoro. This attitude is no accident. Confrontation with the government has begun. The question of power is objectively posed. But there is a vast gap between the strength of the mass movement

Bolivian workers demonstrate 4 March 1985 (DR)

and the capacity of its leadership.

It is this vacuum that enables a figure such as Juan Lechin to use the mobilization as a lever for an operation to remove Siles in order to open the way for an alternative government around Paz Estenssoro and G. Garret. From the standpoint of the immediate beneficiaries, this solution has the advantage of cutting the ground from under the feet of Hugo Banzer by delaying the elections and enabling them to use the levers of the state to organize elections at a later date in accordance with their interests.

It is from this angle that you have to interpret the verbal radicalism displayed by Lechin during the strike. He declared again and again grandiosely, "If we had the guns, the bourgeoisie would be hiding under their beds." These militant-sounding phrases reflected the feelings of the mobilized workers. But Lechin always ended with the conclusion, "but we don't have the guns, so it's not possible. That leaves the lesser evil as the only solution." That is the traditional dialectic of maximalism in words and opportunism in practice. It reflects the radical aspirations of the mass movement, while leaving it without any concrete perspectives, the better to manipulate it for the benefit of unprincipled political maneuvers.

In this operation, Lechin could also utilize the positions of the PRIN, a small party linked to him. Like many other left formations, the PRIN is nursing the idea that an action coordinated with "patriotic military officers" would be a good way of dealing with the situation and of avoiding general elections, from which Hugo Banzer could be the gainer. The formula put forward in the left weekly magazine *Aqui* in its March 9, 1985, issue pointed in this general direction.

Aqui proposed "forming a government of national salvation, in which the people would participate through their trade-union organizations, and organizations representing other sectors, and which would also include groups of military officers who want to block a rightist backlash." This was the most worked-out formulation of such a solution.

However, realizing the pitfalls of such a perspective, the editors of *Aqui* immediately tried to hedge their bets: "But this sort of alternative cannot be the product of improvisation. And every available basis for judgement shows that there is no sort of organization that offers the slightest guarantee that this road will lead to a solution in the interests of the people."

To be sure, what this notion of "patriotic military officers" refers to is quite vague and fluid. Some officers promoted under the UDP government do in fact fear the consequences for their careers of a return to government by the right and the representatives of the drug traffickers.

All these elements indicate the limitations of this sort of left alternative to the UDP. In fact, the situation offered the best possibilities for a general strike, to gain an even partial success in the miners' economic struggle, so as to maintain, build up and reorganize the mass forces. These circumstances made it necessary to develop a policy of unity going far beyond the so-called revolutionary organizations, without worrying about trying to appeal to the other reformist components of the workers' movement.

People's Assembly

The task was to widen the framework of the mobilization by bringing about a convergence of structures such as people's committees, or workers' and peasants' organizations in a forum or a people's assembly — the name does not much matter — in order to set up an instrument of mass involvment more representative than a meeting of COB delegates alone. The latter was an inadequate expression of the social movement, and proved easily manipulable by the old apparatus grouped around Juan Lechin.

A series of problems appeared, on the other hand, in the struggle that puts limits on the initiatives that revolutionists could take to respond to the situation, if they wanted to take account both of the real relationship of forces and set concrete goals for the struggle that would not disappoint the mobilized masses.

The first problem, which the miners themselves had the greatest difficulty in realizing, is that this sector is out ahead of the rest of the Bolivian working class. The workers and people's movement as a whole is not advancing at the same rate, and this fact threatens to create dangerous gaps. The miners are confident of their strength. (2) They remember that they played the decisive role in overthrowing the last military dictatorship. They have become accustomed to going into struggle alone. But, given the stakes involved in the test of strength that is now underway, their example and the sympathy that it might arouse in other popular strata are not sufficient to solve all the problems of the mobilization. For that, what is needed is a solid and well-structured front bringing together all sectors of the workers movement, the popular movement, the peasant movement, and even a movement of the pauperized middle classes, middle-range earners and petty bourgeoisie.

The growth of people's committees in the neighborhoods that could fulfill the vital functions of assuring food supplies and provide the basis for a united national structure to fight for a plan to safeguard the nation could modify the situation.

In fact, one of the major weaknesses in the struggle lies in the extreme dispersion of the forces, including the political forces, of the working class. In the early fall of 1984, some of these organizations, by forming the United Revolutionary Leadership (DRU — which won considerable influence in the leadership of the COB at the September 1984 congress), offered an example and a hope for a dynamic of unity developing. (3) However, when the crisis of the UDP was already building up, the capacity of these organizations for initiative was far from measuring up to the hopes they inspired. (The government's crisis took the form first of internal tensions, then withdrawal of the MIR from the coalition, and finally of the Communist Party pulling out.)

From the start of the fall of 1984, the Bolivian Communist Party (PCB) was caught in a vise between social and economic policy of the UDP government, in which it was participating, and the resistance of the mass movement. On the occasion of the Sixth Congress of the COB, the pressure and radicalization of the workers were reflected clearly. A split took place between a large wing of the delegates and the representatives of the PCB. The crisis in the Communist Youth, beginning at the end of 1984, is another expression of the contradictions eating away at the PCB. Its withdrawal from the government of Siles Suazo was a response to these difficulties.

So, the PCB was to support the mass mobilizations sparked by the measures the government took on February 9, 1985. It was to support the March 4, 1985, demonstration and the general strike called by the COB. But it would not offer any general organizational or political perspective for the movement.

The breakup of the UDP and the social polarization make it difficult for the PCB to propose a new alliance along the lines of the UDP. So, it is putting forward two symmetrical themes. On the one hand, it warns of the "danger of fascist regression." On the other, it is denouncing "the maximalist, unrealizable, and adventurist demands of the Trotskyists." (4)

While the Communist Party calls for "reconstructing an effective instrument for united political action," it is in fact rejecting the proposals for unity of the various left forces. To justify its policy in this respect, the PCB, can undoubtedly take advantage of the sectarianism of the organizations that belong to the DRU. The latter is a sectarianism that reveals the absence of a united-front policy, combined at times with an extreme light-mindedness in the way they conceive of political relations with the so-called patriotic sectors of the army.

The PCB, moreover, refuses to take up the program that has come out of the experiences of the Bolivian working masses (the COB Emergency Program, the fundamental agrarian law, etc.). Instead of this, it proposes a vague "advanced program involving mass participation." (5)

2. Because of the lack of an alternative leadership, the potential opposition to the bureaucracy among the miners can take incoherent forms, as happened in Huanuni for example. The miners there elected a "rank-and-file" candidate in opposition to the outgoing leadership, who turned out to be linked to Hugo Banzer and was removed from his position as a local union delegate in less than three months.
3. On the formation of the DRU, see *International Viewpoint*, No 63, November 12, 1984.
4. Editorial in the March 9-15 issue of *Unidad*, the Bolivian Communist Party organ.
5. Editorial in the March 2-8 issue of *Unidad*.

The responsibility of the PCB leadership for the extreme political difficulties the movement for economic demands has faced for several months is no secondary one.

The DRU has been unable to meet the challenge of the organizational dispersion of the workers' movement. In order to do that, it would have had to consolidate itself and put forward the broadest possible unity policy, starting with a proposal for unity to the PCB, which found itself in difficulty, its youth organization having broken from it.

Nor was the DRU able to bring forward a leadership of the COB equal to its tasks, although this coalition represented a decisive pole at the Sixth Congress of the COB in August 1984. Finally, the DRU was not capable of taking advantage of the crisis that appeared in the ranks of the PCB, which was forced to leave the cabinet carrying the burden of two years' responsibility for the policies of the regime.

Thus, the DRU had no clear project for creating an effective and united instrument of the left. In practice, the embryonic outlines of such an instrument can be seen only in still fragile attempts to link the COB structures to people's committees (see box).

The crucial problems revealed by the March 1985 mobilization thus remain entirely to be solved.

In an editorial in its organ *Unidad*, of March 1, 1985, the PCB recognized, after making a self-criticism that skipped as nimbly as possible over the question of the balance sheet of the UDP, that there was "a need to find a concrete form of unity involving all the people's parties and forces in order to provide them with political leadership."

In reality, the PCB is of course continuing to cast a longing eye at bourgeois forces, even marginal ones, and the so-called progressive military officers. Nonetheless, the revolutionary organizations could have taken it at its word to concretize such a policy of alliances, and offered the PCB, in its own words, "an effective united front of the left," based on a program that does not have to be invented, since it is already a historic gain of the Bolivian working class. This program is summed up in the COB's emergency plan — to which have been officially added demands for putting the banking system under state control and introducing a monopoly of foreign trade — the fundamental law on agrarian reform, and the setting up of a cooperative distribution network uniting production and distribution. (6)

A front established on such a basis would be an effective instrument for conducting the fight to assemble a mass forum. It would stimulate the emergence of an alternative pole that could undertake the fight for a genuinely anti-oligarchic and anti-imperialist workers and people's government.

However, if Lechin was able to maneuver so easily and to lead the struggle to a compromise that represented a partial political defeat for the miners, it was because he was able to take advantage of a vacuum that existed. In fact, it was left open by the DRU's failure to offer perspectives, which was owing to two weaknesses. First, this bloc of organizations that scored a success at the Sixth Congress of the COB did not have a network of cadres equal to the responsibilities and tasks that fell to it in the COB. Moreover, it itself lacked unity and a coherent political project.

The left and the defence of democratic liberties

So, in the final analysis, the results of the general strike on the economic front were negative, since the wage increases won are derisory by comparison with the rate of inflation and the dimensions of the mobilization of the miners and the popular masses in La Paz over a period of several weeks. But the same need not necessarily be said about the results in terms of accumulating experience and raising consciousness. On this level, the result of the recent mobilizations depends on the capacity of the revolutionary currents to draw the lessons of the events in those weeks, to point out the next steps forward, and to stimulate the working masses to organize to meet these needs.

The lack of a revolutionary alternative was of course, exploited by the bourgeois forces, which reacted to the crisis on three levels. (7)

With the backing of a major section of the army that takes orders from General Sejas, Siles Suazo leaned heavily on the need to maintain order and on expanding the role of the military. At the same time, he continued to negotiate with the strikers to assure the holding of elections. It is clear that the US imperialists are trying to promote a solution based on a strong regime organized around a more institutionalized and disciplined army than the one represented by General Garcia Meza, which had become corrupted by involvement in the drug trade and had no cover of electoral legitimacy.

So the response from the right for the moment has not been the traditional one of a military coup in direct confrontation with the masses. It has been rather that of a gradually expanding role of the army, which has caught off guard workers who are more used to direct tests of strength.

At the same time, the right has built up a "democratic" offensive, executing the neat trick of presenting itself as the champion of elections against the "putschists of the left." That is the world — and the history of Bolivia — turned upside down, in a country that has experienced 180 military coups.

The left is quite properly denouncing the electoral maneuver of the right, for which the stage was set from the outset of the UDP government in 1982, since the right retained its majority in parliament [elected before the struggle that forced the military to withdraw from the government]. Beyond denunciations, however, the left is not offering any real political alternative, other than hairbrained approaches to so-called military officers.

Nonetheless, the left could challenge the propaganda campaign of the right on the terrain of defending democratic liberties itself. After all, in the economic disaster in which the country finds itself, are not the first democratic rights that have to be guaranteed the most elementary social ones, starting with the right to eat? People who die of starvation are not going to cast any more votes.

In this conflict, the bourgeois offensive is aimed at defeating the miners, who are the backbone of the COB. The bour-

CALL FOR PEOPLE'S COUNCILS

The revolutionary, democratic and people's political parties declare the following positions:

1. They support unanimously, resolutely and actively the objectives of the mobilization and the call for an unlimited general strike issued by the miners of Bolivia.

2. They condemn strongly and with indignation the police repression and the order that was given to fire on peacefully demonstrating miners by the regime of Dr Siles Suazo, which has condoned hoarding of and speculation in, basic necessities by the private sector.

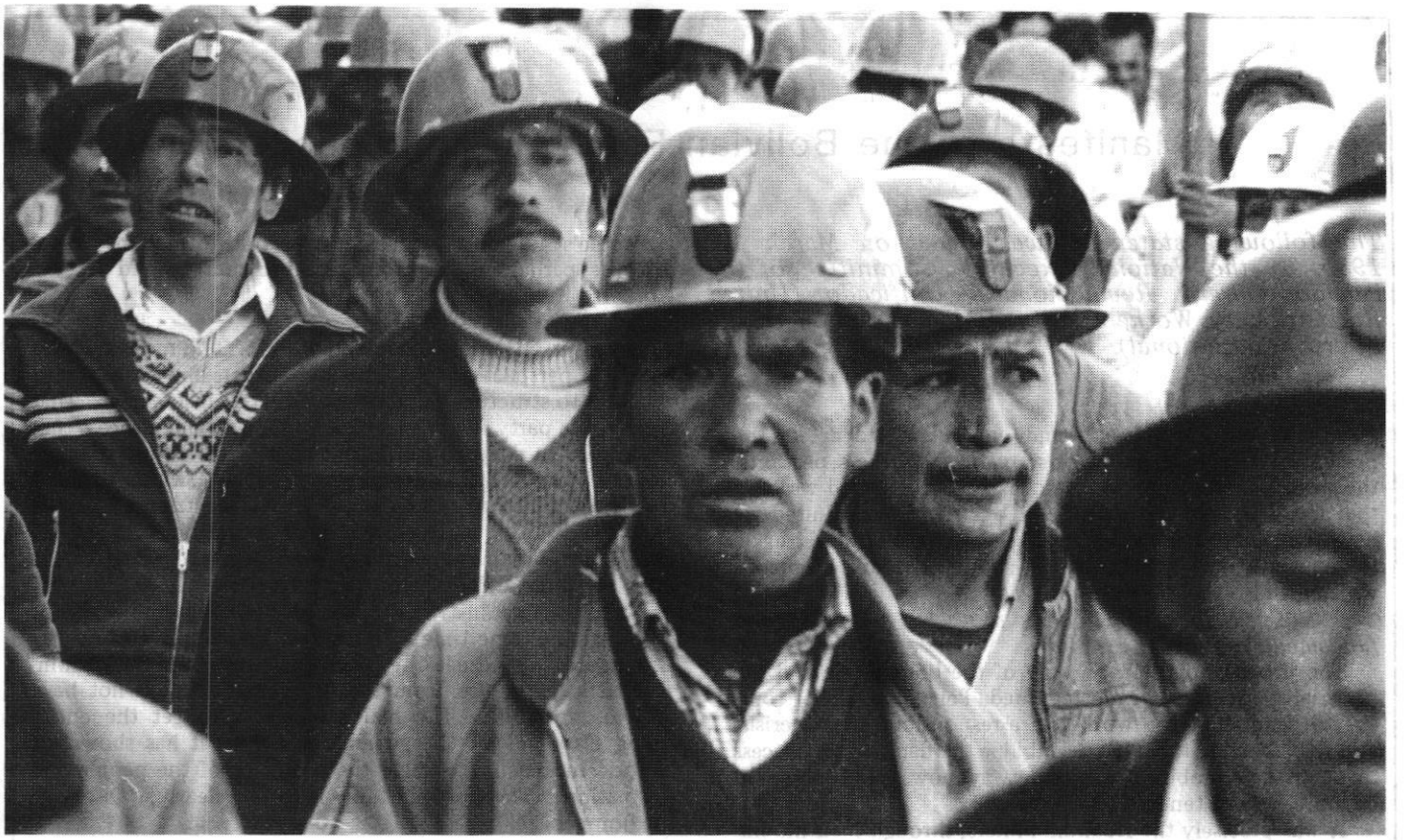
3. In view of the recent events, it is clearly urgent to organize people's councils in the countryside, the poor neighborhoods, and the unions — councils whose tasks would be to deal with the problems of food supply, to organize mass mobilizations, and to defend democratic freedoms against any attempts to take us backward.

Signed: PRIN, PS-1 (palacios), PCB, POR-Unificado, MIR (Masas), PCB-ML, PI, PS-1 (Cortes), MPLN, MIR (Aranibar), BPP, FRI (MD), PS (Aponte), PST.

La Paz March 7, 1985

6. On the COB emergency plan, see issue No 188, January 21, 1985, of *Inprecor*, *International Viewpoint*'s French-language sister publication.

7. Since the start of the struggle, the media have conducted a systematic campaign to divide the workers and break up any embryonic united front. A large part of this campaign has been denunciations of so-called Trotskyist or neo-Trotskyist provocations. These accusations which have been picked up by the European press, fit into a more general line of accusing the miners regularly of terrorism for throwing sticks of dynamite in the air during demonstrations. The miners are used to handling dynamite because it is one of their tools. In the March mobilizations, they used it to express their militancy, just as they explode sticks of dynamite to celebrate their traditional holidays. The antiterrorist campaign lumped together the "Trotskyists" and the miners, as well as Juan Lechin. The PCB did not restrain itself from conducting a campaign parallel to that of the media, using the pretext of the ultraleft propagandist line put forward by the POR-Lora. The general line of the latter group amounts to no more than propaganda for the dictatorship of the proletariat without any immediate or transitional proposals.



Bolivian miners (DR)

geoisie knows perfectly well that the material basis of the miners' power is eroding. Tin production costs are climbing more quickly than the selling prices. The bulk of productive investment is now going to the private mines and no longer into the nationalized mines. In these circumstances, defeating the miners means weakening the social counter-power of the COB, which is an old obsession of the Bolivian bourgeoisie.

At the same time, the bourgeoisie is waging a noisy propaganda campaign, portraying the record of the UDP government as the bankruptcy of a people's government, trying to put the responsibility on the workers for a policy that was not theirs. In fact, the "people" have never really been in power with the UPD government, even if some of the political parties to which they gave their preference at the polls were represented in it.

Today, with the UPD in crisis and the Siles Suazo regime breaking up, the right — i.e., the MNR-H of Paz Estenssoro, the ADN of Hugo Banzer, and the MIR of Paz Zamora — has clearly gone on the offensive. The government is resting more and more on an army that has been partially reorganized for two years now, and which is serving as a lever for installing a government strong enough to strike at the active wing of the workers' movement and apply the IMF's plans. The obstacles this project faces are continuing strong resistance from the mass movement and conflicts within the bourgeois leadership.

The elections now set for July 14 are intended to enable the right to speed up the implementation of its project, to provide a more solid constitutional cover for the state power, and to establish the framework for alliances among the formations of the right.

The extreme gravity of the social crisis makes it understandable why a very real radicalization among the workers and popular masses is being accompanied by elements of despair. This factor of despair, combined with the state apparatus's traditional methods of intervening in the electoral process, can enable the right to score electoral gains among the peasants, whose struggles have converged only partially with those of the workers in the last period, and even among sections of the urban poor worn out by chaos and privation. Such a development is not unlikely if the most determined struggles lead to no lasting advances and if organizational dispersion continues to prevail among the left.

The forces of the left must, therefore, counterattack against the bourgeoisie's offensive on the terrain of defending democratic rights itself by pointing up the fact that the formal right to vote is not all there is to democracy when a large part of the population is facing starvation. Secondly, while exposing the objectives of the electoral operation, it will be necessary, if the elections actually do take place, to put forward an "effective left united front" deriving its authority from its involvement in the struggles.

The convulsions shaking the country are announcing the end of a cycle in Bolivian history opened by the revolution of 1952. (8) From an economic standpoint, a key to the future is in the eastern region of Santa Cruz. It is in that area that the dynamic sectors of the economy are concentrated — oil; gas; stock raising; to say nothing of cocaine, the revenues from which are not monitored by the state but are equivalent to, if not greater than, those from the country's traditional mining exports.

However, this decisive region is separated from the valleys and the highlands (from Cochabamba to La Paz and Oruro). The bourgeoisie of Santa Cruz exhibits a "regionalism" that sometimes assumes a seccessionist tone. The workers' and people's movement is considerably weaker here, and the right and extreme right are much stronger, to say nothing of the paramilitary forces linked to the drug traffic. The cleavage between the bourgeoisie of the east and that of La Paz, whose wealth is based on tin exports, is giving impetus to the structural crisis of political leadership from which the ruling class suffers.

Finally, it is striking that the political and trade-union leaders such as Paz Estenssoro, Lechin, Siles Suazo and Banzer have essentially come out of the political generation of the revolution of 1952, which is today reaching the limits of its lifespan. One might see in this the symbol of the end of an era and one of the reasons for the difficulties both the bourgeoisie and the COB have been experiencing in recomposing a new leadership. (9) ■

8. In 1952, a mass insurrection brought the MNR to power. It was not yet divided and its central leader was Paz Estenssoro. The regime that came out of the revolution, in particular, nationalized the tin mines and adopted an agrarian reform.

9. Within the popular camp, the coldly premeditated murder of the Partido Socialista No 1, Quiroga Santa Cruz at the time of the 1980 coup d'etat had a major effect. It meant the elimination of a leader capable of organizing the political and trade-union forces who enjoyed great personal prestige and authority.

Manifesto of the Bolivian Fourth Internationalists

The following statement was issued on March 13, 1985, by the National Executive Committee of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario Unificado (United Revolutionary Workers Party, Bolivian section of the Fourth International).

In unity is our strength and our chance to defeat the present government's policy of starvation. Workers, peasants, the poor people, oppressed and exploited: united we have the power to win the essence of our demands. United we have the capacity to take a great step forward in this struggle to take into our own hands the solution of our problems, which are also those of the entire nation.

— The fight for a living minimum wage is a struggle for a fundamental right.

The propagandists in the pay of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists, including Minister Rueda Pena, have the effrontery to claim that the workers are responsible for the crisis, and that they are trying to destabilize the democratic process through their mobilizations underway now. Nothing could be more false or tendentious.

It was precisely the Huanuni miners, through their indomitable struggle, who made it possible to regain the measure of freedom that we enjoy today. These clumsy propagandists should be reminded that the ones who are disorganizing the country are those who are starving the people, those who are driving up the adult and infant mortality rates, those who are trying to destroy the creative and constructive social power of the working class and the toiling masses through starvation.

The disorganizers are those who are pillaging the country and ruining its natural and human resources. It is they who are harming the democratic process and not the workers who are coming into the streets today to demand bread and milk for the children.

The question has also to be put to those who claim that the workers do not want elections because they are afraid of losing them: What is more important for democracy in the present circumstances, the right to vote or the right to eat? In this context, the fight for a living minimum wage is an integral part of the democratic process. It is part of basic democratic rights.

— The mobilisations today must not be a springboard for deals behind the backs of the people.

The struggling miners, as revolutionists loyal to the workers and people's movement, must retain control of their mobilizations. We cannot, and must not, allow these mobilizations to be exploited by forces alien to the workers' interests. Our struggle must not be used as a lever in maneuvers at the top. No solution, from wherever it comes, that is imposed over the heads of the masses or behind the backs of the workers, can help us.

To block such maneuvers, our unity is essential. It must embrace all sections of the people's camp. We have to discuss together, we miners, industrial workers, peasants, housewives, white-collar workers, students, and politically committed professionals .... We have to move forward in building and consolidating our own instruments of struggle, instruments that will enable us to begin to resolve, by our own means, the problems of the people and the nation.

In other words, it is becoming necessary to build people's councils, committees and other rank-and-file bodies reflecting the self organization of the masses in the fight against hunger and the threat of a return to fascism. But above all, it is necessary to advance toward the foundation of a National People's Assembly, which must be transformed into a real people's parliament to promote a program by and for the workers.

— Build the alternative instrument.

However, in order to concretize all this and move forward with the perspective of a genuine workers movement, it is essential to structure a united and effective instrument. That is why our party favors speeding up the edifying process that has begun to shape up in recent days. It is an unavoidable responsibility for the revolutionary left as a whole to build this united instrument to bring about the triumph of the people's interests, to reinforce the mobilization, to block the irresponsible maneuvers trying to go over the heads of the masses and make deals behind their backs.

Building this instrument means preparing the way for saying at the same time: "Siles out! No Banzer and no Paz Estenssoro!" Because the problem is not Siles Suazo himself. His departure from the government would not be a solution in itself. The real problem is to get the entire ruling class out of the government, since it has shown its historic incapacity to solve the problems of the people and the nation. The essential thing is to say clearly, "Out with the bourgeoisie!"

In this framework, building a united and effective instrument, based on an anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchical program rooted in the gains of the COB emergency plan and the advances achieved by the peasants, would open the way for the formation of an anti-oligarchical and anti-imperialist government of the workers and the popular masses. Such a government would have to rest on the organized and mobilized masses in order, on this basis, to build a new and free homeland. In this process there would also be room for soldiers and officers who commit themselves to this independent plan advanced by the workers themselves and who integrate themselves into the work of carrying it out.

The program that the workers support and which must become the program for national salvation, has found an initital expression in the COB's emergency plan and in the platform of demands put forward in the present conflict. This program includes demands for state control of the banking system, a monopoly of foreign trade, a living minimum wage and a sliding scale, nationalization of major transport, renunciation by the state of debts contracted by the private sector, nationalization of the middle-sized mines in the private sector, application of the basic agrarian law, and strengthening the Coraca distribution network.

In order to pursue this perspective, it will be necessary to confront the moves of the right, which is trying to take advantage of the power vacuum, either through elections or through a coup d'etat. In the face of this threat, unity of the exploited people, that is of the entire nation, is the primary duty.

This unity must be widened by appealing to the commanders, commissioned and noncommissioned officers, and soldiers not to fire on the people but to join ranks in defense of democratic freedoms and for national sovereignty against imperialism. They must take their place in the struggle of the masses and link themselves to the work of building independent organisations to save our homeland, not just from being torn apart but from being shattered. They must understand that an anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchical government, that is a government of the working people, is the only way out of this crisis.

Given the bourgeoisie's historic incapacity to lead this country, it falls to the workers to take in hand the leadership of the Bolivian state. ■

A turning point for the SPD and the Greens

Midway in the term of the "turn" parliament, state elections have been held in the Saarland and Berlin, and municipal elections in Hesse. Their outcome shows that replacing the government of the bourgeois parties in 1987 with a Social Democratic (SPD) government supported by the Greens remains possible, if a credible political alternative is built up.

At first glance, the election results seem contradictory. In the Saar, the SPD gained an absolute majority, the bourgeois liberals (FDP) overcame the 5% hurdle for representation in the parliament and the Greens did not. In Berlin, the SPD got its worst result in the history of the Federal Republic. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) remained the strongest party, and together with the FDP — which also made it back into parliament there — it is now able to form a stable bourgeois government. At 10.6% the result for the Alternative List fell considerably below the expectations of about 13%.

In Hesse, the result confirmed the Red-Green alliance, with the SPD gaining more than the Greens. The CDU suffered massive losses, and the FDP got only 4.4%, failing to make it into the city councils.

However, if you look more closely at the differing results of the various local elections, especially the vote for the SPD and the Greens, the picture becomes more consistent. Overall, the bourgeois parties were the losers (they lost 220,000 votes). For the two winners, the SPD and the Greens, these elections marked a turning point.

Angela KLEIN

Where the SPD campaigned on the theme of defending jobs and the environment and showed an openness to the Greens (the Saar and Hesse), it won the election. Where it oriented toward collaboration with the CDU, as in Berlin, it lost. This means for the Greens that they are going to have to give up their cherished notion that they are the "only opposition party in the country."

Voters are not turning to the Greens automatically any more. The issue of defending the environment is no longer sufficient to differentiate them from the SPD programmatically. It is clear that the majority of the voters want a program of ecological and economic reforms. To the extent that the SPD appears to offer such a program (as in the Saar), the hopes of these voters for seeing such reforms put through center on the Social Democrats. The Greens on their own do not have the strength to introduce such reforms. To a large extent, people have voted for them as a "left corrective" to the SPD.

However, where the SPD dashes these hopes for reform by adopting a right-wing program, disillusioned and more backward voters turn to the CDU, which, according to public opinion polls, still gets more credit than the SPD for effective economic policy.

The Greens are facing a severe internal crisis. The issue is not just their tactical approach to the SPD, but fundamentally their programmatic identity and their position toward the bourgeois state.

Today, it is no longer any secret that the fall of the Schmidt government in the autumn of 1982 was brought about by direct intervention of the Industrialists Association [Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie]. From the bosses' standpoint, the new all-bourgeois government's first task was to prepare the conditions for the confrontation with the unions made necessary by a sharpening economic crisis. The objective, as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* said, was to bring about a "change in the climate," to put forward a "convincing overall perspective for the medium term."

The immediate objectives for the new government were to carry through the deployment of intermediate-range missiles in the Federal Republic; to "trim" the budget, that is, reorganize public spending to the disadvantage of the wage earners so as to be able to "finance the risks of private investments"; to eliminate the vestiges of the reforms introduced by the SPD-FDP coalition, such as limited abortion rights; and to end the "investment freeze" in spending on nuclear technology, which came about because the antinuclear movement in the 1970s forced a de facto halt to building nuclear power plants.

The bourgeoisie hoped that when the SPD was sent back into opposition, it would be able to recoopt the "protest potential" that had grown up to its left. In this way, the flow of support to the Greens would be halted, and the domination of the bourgeois parties would be restabilized. In fact, the Bonn government has not achieved this objective of the bourgeoisie.

The government, can, indeed, point to a series of successes. These include, first of all, carrying through the deployment of the missiles and reducing the national debt — that is, massive cutbacks in social spending, in particular for the unemployed pensioners, the sick, and for working mothers.

From 1982 to February 1985, the number of registered unemployed has risen from 1.84 million to 2.6 million. And this is despite two years of "economic upturn." Thus, we are seeing the emergence of a new poverty in the world's second strongest imperialist country. only 35% of the registered unemployed get unemployment compensation; 26% get only unemployment aid.

Half of the budget reduction planned for 1985 is at the expense of the unemployed. (Average unemployment compensation is less than 900 Deutschmarks a month.) This "budget cutting success" is in contrast to the failure in the 35-hour week fight to maintain the hardnosed capitalist line that "any cut in worktime is out of the question." It stands in contrast also to the failure of the attempt to undermine the fighting strength of the union during the 35-hour struggle through the Nurenburg Labor Institutes's refusal to pay locked out workers the compensation due them. This decision was later overturned by the courts.

The government has not yet dared to abolish the limited abortion rights included in Article 218. With respect to immigrant workers, although the laws have been toughened, the government has been obliged to make concessions.

The most important thing, however, is that the government's political calculations have gone awry. The political situation in West Germany has become more unstable. Already in the fall of 1982, the FDP split and lost its representation in a series of state parliaments. In Hesse, for the first time, a majority emerged for a "Red-Green" alliance.

Moreover, immediately after the federal parliamentary elections, a wave of mass mobilizations began, which have continued over the past two years. This dealt the government its first defeat in April 1983. It had to abandon its planned census because 25% of the population refused to cooperate with it. In the fall of 1983, 1.2 million people demonstrated against the deployment of the missiles.

In 1984, half a million workers engaged in the struggle for the 35-hour week, which turned for a time into a fight against the government. In a short time, the mass mobilizations politicized the climate in the country to a considerable extent.

The SPD played no role in these struggles, and gained nothing from them. In 1982, it managed, despite the widespread disillusion with its procapitalist austerity policy, to mobilize masses of workers against the Schmidt government's ousting by the right. On October 23, 1982, 500,000 people joined in a demonstration called by the National Confederation of Labor (Deutsche Ge-

werkschaftsbund — DGB) originally against the Schmidt government's austerity policy but which was then turned into a protest against the "betrayal of the FDP." However already in the federal parliamentary elections in March 1983, the SPD lost a considerable number of working-class voters to the CDU, because it would not take a clear position either for the demand of many unionists for the 35-hour week with no cut in pay or against the deployment of the missiles. To the contrary, it refused to make the deployment of the missiles an election issue at all.

The SPD in opposition

In the following mobilizations, moreover, the SPD formed the rearguard. It adjusted its demands to those of the unions and the mass movements well after they had organized powerful mobilizations without its help. In these circumstances, the SPD could obviously not co-opt any "protest potential." From state election to state election, the Greens kept gaining votes, while the SPD stagnated, and the bourgeois parties lost votes. Willy Brandt's statement on the evening of the March 6 election, "there is a majority on our side [to the left of] the CDU and FDP," came to evoke the spectre of a "Red-Green alliance," which is looming larger now as the 1987 federal parliamentary elections approach.

In the last two years, the SPD has tried to keep its head above water by following a line of political ambiguity. The outrage at the "rightist coup" made it easier for the party leadership to block the necessary debate over the errors that led to the loss of government power. The party's criticism of the bourgeois government has focused mainly on the latter's retreat from the "detente policy" and on arguing that in the economic field the Kohl cabinet has not proved any more successful than Schmidt, although it is more antisocial. The long overdue discussion about a general political alternative has been banned from the Program Commission, in which some maneuvering room is accorded to SPD left wingers such as Eppler and von Oertzen.

The SPD's approach to the Greens demonstrates primarily a determination to dispose of this competition on the left by resorting to the most varied methods. The right-wing of the party, which is aiming for a "Great Coalition" with the Christian Democrats, is attempting to accomplish this by means of reactionary demagogy, claiming that the Greens are out to destroy jobs and overthrow the bourgeois state, and that they are "politically incompetent." The left wing, in particular Oskar Lafontaine, are trying to eliminate the problem of the Greens by a tactic of embracing them. They will accept collaboration with the Greens, but only if they are ready to share governmental responsibility.

All these tactical subterfuges, however, cannot conceal the fact that the SPD still has no credibile alternative to offer. The state party organizations follow partially contradictory policies. The SPD state premier of Hesse, Holger Boerner, who is on the right of the party, has accepted an alliance with the Greens out of purely tactical considerations. For this purpose, he has made some concessions on the right of asylum and the granting of subsidies to alternative businesses, social institutions, training centers and women's centers. Two months after the alliance was formed, it broke up over the SPD's approval for the expanding of a nuclear fuel producing plant. After the recent municipal elections, Boerner is trying to continue with the same tactic, offering the Greens a coalition.

In Berlin, Hans Apel, a representative of the SPD right wing and a former minister of defense under Schmidt, campaigned on a clear right-wing, anti-Green program. He was for NATO, for tolerating a Christian Democratic minority government, and against any alliance with the Alternative Slate.

In Nordhein—Westfalen, where a state election is coming up in May, the Social Democratic premier, Rau, is running on a program of government-assisted capitalist modernization. On the basis of an annual investment of a billion Marks, the Ruhr is to be transformed into a new Silicon Valley, at the expense of the iron and steel industry, the industrial backbone of the region. The latter industry is to be "trimmed down." Among other things, this is to involve the fusion of Thyssen and Krupp into a supertrust, Rheinstal AG, this going hand in hand with mass layoffs.

Rau will not hear of IG Metall's recent demand for nationalization of the steel industry. And he has rejected out of hand the conditions of the Greens for tolerating an SPD government, that is, that the government get out of the nuclear energy business and drop the project of building a breeder reactor and a high-temperature reactor. At the same time, the Bavarian SPD is in the forefront of mobilizations against the nuclear-fuel treatment plant that is to be built in the Bavarian forest.

In this constellation, Oskar Lafontaine in the Saar has put forward a program that seeks to offer a coherent general political, and not just tactical, answer to the two questions that the opinion polls show concern the greatest number of people — unemployment and protection of the environment. It can be best described as "environmental Keynesianism." For the Saar, this program calls for public investment in energy-saving projects; nationalization of the Arbed Saarstahl steel corporation, the biggest employer in the Saar, which has been blackmailing the government for years with the threat of factory closures, and a massive paying off of Arbed's debts with federal money; and an extension of workers' participation in management (co-determination).

For the environment, Lafontaine's program calls for a 100-kilometer speed limit on express highways, building waste-treatment plants, and installation of smoke scrubbers in the coal-using power plants. Like Rau, he also wants to bring in high-tech industries through state-aid, but those that facilitate environmental protection, not the new rationalization technologies. This program, thus, does not challenge the capitalist system. The result would be a left austerity policy with an environmental twist. In fact, Lafontaine has said openly:

"I did not promise in the election campaign that unemployment would be reduced. The economic and financial facts in the Saar are so bad that I cannot promise anything .... The Social Democrats have never held back, when it was necessary for pressing economic reasons, from eliminating jobs. For us, the only question is the conditions under which this is done. We are against mass layoffs and for reasonable social planning." (Interview in *Der Spiegel* March 18, 1985.)

On the other hand, Lafontaine has bolstered his reformer's image by seeking discussion with the Greens and by appointing one of the organizers of the peace movement, Jo Leinen, minister for the environment. He even ventured into dangerous waters two years ago, proposing that West Germany withdraw from NATO.

In West Germany today, the sort of line Fontaine puts forward could clearly win the majority. It bases itself on the peace and environmentalist movements, as well as on the leaderships of the most advanced unions, the ones that fought for the 35-hour week in 1984. This has given the left wing of the SPD a new face. But it is not likely that this line can get majority support in the SPD before 1987. The party's right wing is on the rampage against the alliance with the Greens. Moreover, it is improbable that the left wing will wage an open struggle within the party for its positions.

The Greens developed out of the mass mobilizations of the 1970s as the political expression of protests against the policy of the Social Democratic government. For a long time, they saw the SPD, "the capitalists' party for modernization," as their main enemy. The spectacle of a "workers movement" co-opted into capitalism, along with the crisis of "socialist production relations" in the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed transitional societies, fostered the idea that the root of all evil was not class rule but industrialization in general.

Even after the bourgeois parties took governmental power, there was an open debate among the Greens about where they should seek support — in the ranks of the SPD or the Christian Democrats.

The ideological and political confusion that arose in the Greens out of their refusal to start off from a characterization of West German society as a class society should not, however, obscure the fact that their social base is to be found predominantly among the youth and the broad layer of wage earners. Only this can explain why they have been able to

come out for progressive demands raised by the unions, such as the 35-hour week, nationalization of the key industries, and others, although they stand outside the organised workers movement and have very little understanding for work in the factories and the unions. Moreover, the Greens' support for such demands often remains only verbal or limited to parliamentary initiatives, such as the bill against lockouts recently introduced by the Greens.

However, over and above all these weaknesses, the Greens stand to the left of the SPD on most political questions — defense of the environment against the profit economy; rejection of NATO; women's right to choose; full legal and material equality for foreigners; international solidarity with the liberation struggle of oppressed peoples in the Third World; and mobilizing against fascism and revanchism.

The Greens are now far from being a single issue party. Their unconditional support for all the mass mobilizations in the last two years, in contrast with the attitude of the SPD, has gained them the image of a party that stands clearly to the left of the SPD. This development has also led to a different sort of relationship with industrial workers and the unions. The turning point in this respect was the municipal elections in Nordrhein-Westfalen in October of last year. In these elections, the Greens made a breakthrough, inasmuch as they not only took away a quarter of a million votes from the SPD but also got high votes in the working-class neighborhoods.

The more progressive unions are rethinking their attitude towards the Greens. Just recently, Hans Janssen, responsible for wage policy in the IG Metall leadership, took the following position on the question of "the Greens and the unions": "Despite the problems and uncertainties of collaborating with a heterogeneous protest party, the unions, and not in the last instance for the sake of their long term interests, have reason to resist the transparent propaganda aimed at using them as a means to exclude the Greens from the range of political options."

Janssen saw the "workers who vote Green" as representing a "shift in the workforce toward the tertiary and quaternary sectors," toward the "working class type of the year 2020 .... These young people want an answer to the apocalyptic visions conjured up by the arms race, the crisis of the environment and of economic growth, the poverty and population explosion in the Third World."

Like Oskar Lafontaine, Hans Janssen is interested in co-opting the Greens: "The Green Party has a mandate from those who vote for it to push through political changes here and now, which is only possible through the SPD." At the same time, active class-struggle unionists are seeking support from the Greens for their initiatives, but so far in vain. The Greens have no organized relations either with the workers movement or the mass social movements. They are not structuring or leading these movements, but, at best, expressing their concerns on the parliamentary level.

The Greens have no conception of changing society from the ground up through advancing class struggles. In reality, they are far too much concerned with themselves, especially with their role in parliament, to have any idea of how they want to achieve their goals.

Nonetheless, it is the Greens and not the socialists who are the opinion makers for the left today. Their method of explaining the crisis of capitalist society as a crisis of faith in progress and economic growth has been readily adopted by progressive forces in the SPD and the unions. Hans Janssen himself is trying to build a bridge between economics and ecology, when he writes: "The destructive exploitation of nature and the shifting of the costs of environmental damage onto the public always means, in the last analysis, a saving in labor that eliminates jobs. Without an active and preventive policy of defending the environment, it will also not be possible to fight unemployment." That is the angle that Lafontaine takes as well, and it comes closest to the positions of the "Realpolitik wing" of the Greens.

Demonstration for 35-hour week organised by IG-Metall (DR)

Paradoxically, it has been precisely the Greens' electoral successes that have sharpened the debates in the party and put the pressure on it to clarify its programmatic and tactical positions. The concrete possibility that, with their help, the bourgeois government could be ousted in 1987, has brought the Greens under pressure from two directions. On the one hand, this has pushed them to seek unity with the SPD against the right. On the other, they are under pressure not to sacrifice their identity as a party standing to the left of the SPD.

As long as it is the SPD that rejects unity, the Greens can easily make the conditions for voting for a Social Democratic premier very high. As long as the SPD is not ready to depart from right-wing positions on questions of environmental protection, it is easy for the Greens to make this the central issue for differentiating themselves for the SPD. But the vote in the Saar showed that Greens face their first real test when they come up against the SPD left-wing. They cannot outflank the SPD left with the issue of environmental protection. For that, they need a socialist program.

On the other hand, the pressure for unity against the right in the Greens is strengthening those forces in the party who are out for a coalition with the SPD and are already openly saying that they are for it. The logic of this position leads in the long run to reintegration in the SPD. The greater the possibilities for a Red-Green Alliance in 1987, the greater will be the attempts to split the Greens. But so far there is no current in the Greens that offers a starting point for solving the problem.

Under discussion are not only tactical decisions regarding parliamentary combinations but in general what strategy the Greens should adopt to halt the stepped up offensive by the bourgeoisie that is already looming. (The bourgeoisie is out to get rid of restrictions on layoffs, to eliminate full-time jobs, for "flexible work hours," and a further tightening of the laws on foreign workers, among other things.)

Before a broad socialist current emerges that can attract the working class vanguard, we will see a series of political regroupments both inside and outside of the Greens. Socialists in the Federal Republic have every reason to intervene in these debates. With respect to the 1987 election, a united-front policy has to involve calling for an SPD government supported by the Greens which must be put under pressure by the demands and mobilizations of the mass movements and the unions. ■

Greens and Reds

The following interview was given to Gerry Foley in February in Zurich by Peter Bartelheimer, a leader of the International Marxist Group (GIM), German section of the Fourth International.

Question. How do you assess the general significance of the rise of the Green vote in West Germany?

Answer. West Germany has become a very interesting country. It is the most important country for European imperialism and US imperialism, for the policy of remilitarization and developing a new strategy toward the Soviet Union. But it is no longer a pillar of stability either for Europe or for America. In most recent years, we have seen a fundamental change come about in the political climate of the country.

There were two big shocks for the German people. The German working class escaped relatively unscathed in the first phase of the world economic crisis. Then in the three years between 1980 and 1983, unemployment figures tripled. Even today, with the economic upturn, unemployment continues to rise. And the official statistics themselves show that about a third of today's unemployed are long-term jobless.

The second shock was the Reagan administration's decision to deploy new missiles in Europe. This highlighted the US's use of West Germany as a military base, making the West German people hostages to American military policy. The impact of this has given rise to the biggest mass movement in Germany since the SecondWorld War.

In 1983, just before the Pershing missiles were due to arrive, 2 million people participated in three great demonstrations in different parts of the country.

On top of this, in the past year, we had the most important strike in the country's history, the metal-workers' and printers' strike for the 35-hour week, a trade-union alternative solution to the economic crisis.

The outcome of the strike gives a pretty good idea of what the situation in West Germany is today. This fight was a head-on confrontation between a government directly representing the bosses and a very powerful mobilization of workers that managed to achieve some gains. The unions were forced to settle for a compromise, which we consider a bad one, but the final outcome was not the defeat that the government wanted to inflict on the labor movement.

So, the salient features of the present situation are on the one side a weak conservative government, and on the other, a mass trade-union movement that has suffered setbacks, has been hurt by the crisis and the imperialist wardrive but has not yet suffered a decisive defeat and maintains its credibility for leading actions.

The most interesting thing in this situation is that the radicalization against the capitalist offensive and the war drive has found a new political expression that offers an important opening for radical socialist views to be taken among large numbers of people.

If you look at the opinion polls today about voting intentions, you find two important developments. First, the illusions of some sections of the working class that a Christian Democratic government could revive the economy by capitalist means and do something about unemployment have been exploded. Few believe in this anymore, after two years of austerity and rising unemployment. So, the parties in the ruling right-wing coalition have every reason to fear today that they will lose in new elections.

However, the threat to the right-wing government comes not so much from the Christian Democrats as from the Greens. The Greens were the big surprise in the 1983 elections. Their success was the only positive aspect form the standpoint of the left. For the first time since 1953, when the Communist Party was wiped out in the elections (it was made illegal a couple of years after that), a party to the left of the Social Democrats has managed to go over the 5% threshold to gain representation in parliament. This has begun to change the political situation in a fundamental way. It has opened up a period of political instability.

With new national elections coming in 1987, people feel that it is possible to stop the Kohl government and put a completely different one in its place. Since the March 1983 national elections, the Greens have been the winner in all regional and municipal elections [this was before the March elections in Hesse and the Saarland that marked the first setbacks for the Greens].

In all these elections, the Greens have taken 8% of the vote or more. They are in most state parliaments today. They are in hundreds of city parliaments. Today, it is not so much the SPD that is seen as the real opposition party as the Greens, who have been the most dynamic in publically attacking the Kohl government.

The tactical problem for revolutionary socialists today is that for the first time since the beginning of the student radicalization, we are confronted with a party to the left of the SPD, one that takes radical positions on the most important political issues of the day. They have an official position for taking West Germany out of NATO. They are the only party in parliament arguing for radical measures to solve the crisis of the environment. They came out during the strike in support of the demand for a shorter workweek to reduce unemployment.

However, the Greens do not have any traditional links to the workers movement. Most of them are young people who haven't been active in the unions. They have never been particularly attracted by trade-union politics. They are open to a lot of our ideas. But we cannot let ourselves be drawn away from our work in the unions and other working class structures.

Working in our own name, we have shown what a small socialist organization can do today in West Germany. We have been active in building a coordination structure of activists inside the unions, which was particularly important in the 35-hour week fight. The result of this project was a large congress in which we participated. On the basis of the balance sheet we made of the strike, we decided to continue putting out the bulletin of the 35-hour week movement in order to prepare workers for the next phase of the struggle.

At the same time, we are building our youth organization mainly in the movement against the missiles and in solidarity with Central America. The youth organization had its founding congress in the fall of last year.

Debate in the Greens

Q. Has the emergence of a broad radical alternative like the Greens caused problems for the GIM? Do radicalizing people who would otherwise come to the GIM tend now to be attracted more to the Greens?

A. No. In some ways the development of the Greens makes it easier to build the GIM. We present an overall socialist alternative. The traditional workers party, the SPD, is being challenged. A larger percentage of society is now open to discussion. More people see the need for nationalizations, to do something about the crisis of the environment, about jobs.

Of course, the Greens are seen from an electoral point of view as the political force that can bring about changes. Our approach is to present an elementary program that could be the basis of a political movement for change at the governmental level, for an SPD government supported in parliament by the Greens. This is a key issue today because all political forces are preparing for the 1987 election.

Everyone assumes that if present trends continue the ruling coalition will not get an absolute majority, and the various political forces are responding in their own way to that. The spokespeople of the right are whipping up a campaign about the "Green threat." They are trying to convince part of the SPD to reject any co-operation with the Greens and to consider a "Great Coalition" with the Christian Democrats.

The question of collaboration with the Greens is being discussed in the SPD, and it is also an issue in the unions. The same union leaderships that refused to support the fight for the 35-hour week have come out publicly saying that they would prefer a right-wing coalition to a government supported by the Greens.

We are trying to intervene in the debate that is going on within the Greens about how to bring about change on the governmental level without getting into the trap of sharing governmental responsibility with the Social Democrats. We present a position different from both of the currents that have dominated the debate.

The so-called *Realpolitiker* [realistic politicians] argue that while the 2 million people who vote for the Greens take on more radical positions on many questions, they also want some practical results out of the next election. They want a change in government and they want that to bring some practical changes, to stop the missiles and stop the cuts in social spending, for instance.

On the other hand, the so-called Fundamentalist current in the Greens opposes any co-operation with the SPD. We agree with them to an extent because there is a real danger of the Greens being coopted into parliamentary politics, becoming just another parliamentary party. This would be a blow not only to the Greens but to the entire left.

We are trying to get an initiative going directed toward the masses of activists both inside and outside of the Greens Party who want to get rid of this government and at the same time open the way for radical change. In the upcoming state elections in West Berlin and Westphalia, we have taken the initiative for workers electoral committees, action committees against a coalition of the Christian Democrats and the SPD, for an SPD government based on an action program.

Through these committees, we want to put forward key demands that we want to press an SPD government to implement, such as introduction of the 35-hour week, creation of public jobs.

Q. How would such a committee work, would it be a committee for the Greens?

A. It would be open to sympathizers and members of both the SPD and Greens. Its aim would be to campaign on these questions and create a public forum for debate.

There are not so many people in either party who would support such perspectives. We want to offer them a structure for raising these issues but at the same time provide a way for a lot of unorganized people who would vote Green but want to see some specific changes at the governmental level and don't see their positions being defended adequately in either party.

In Berlin we have been able to get two GIM members elected to run for the district parliament on the Alternative Slate in a poor neighborhood where Turkish and other immigrant workers form more than a third of the population. This indicates that we can become seen as defenders of united action including both the SPD and the Greens on the real issues involved in the government question. We know that without grass-roots mobilization, even if there is a change in government, nothing fundamental will change.

How to combine work with the Greens and the SPD

Q. Would these electoral committees undertake actions or just propagate ideas?

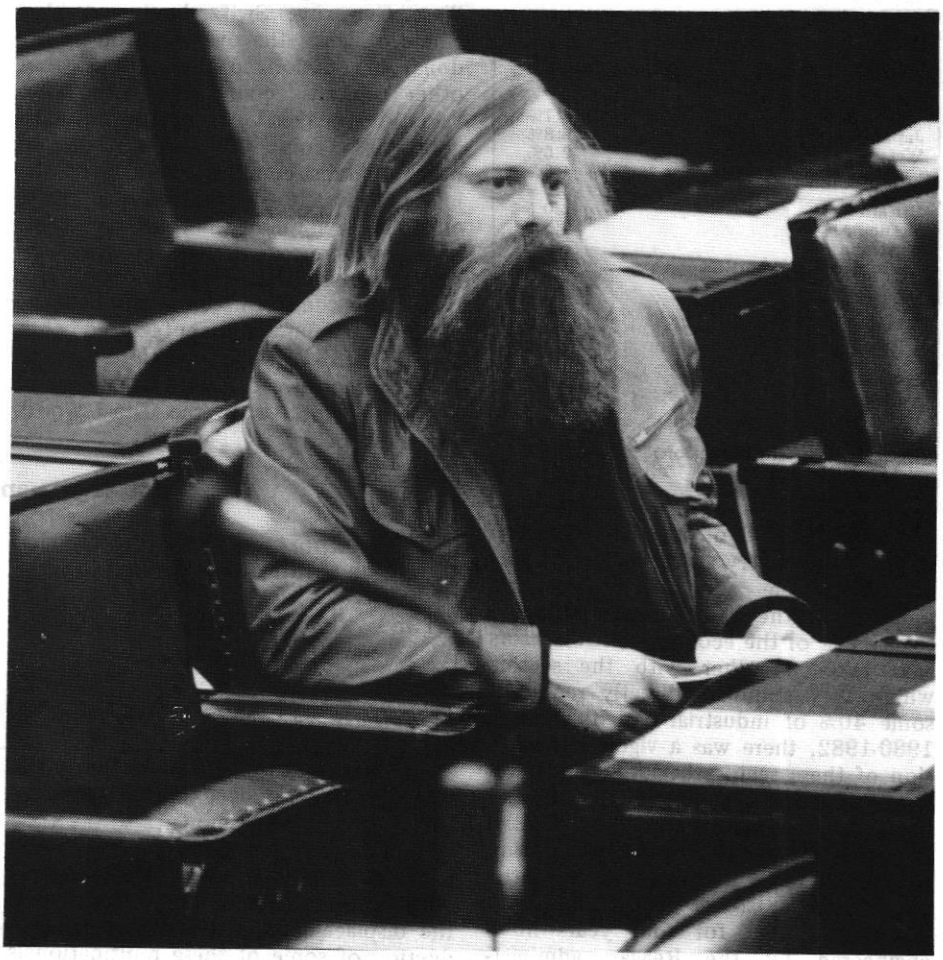
A. They are to be action groups as well. For example, in Berlin where such a committee has been formed, it will hold a big rally to debate prominent members of the SPD and Alternative Slate on the question of how to form a government if the Christian Democrats are defeated. But a lot of activities of this committee will take place after the election.

We have the experience already in the state of Hessen, where there was an SPD government for two years that could only survive with toleration from the Greens. The SPD government tried to overcome this problem by calling new elections. The election did not solve anyting, so in the past period they've had an alliance with the Greens, which led to the Greens voting for two SPD budgets. We criticised the Greens for this.

The alliance has broken down around the project of a nuclear plant. This is an issue that involves mass mobilizations. For example, after the alliance between the Greens and the SPD in the state parliament, there was a demonstration of about 15,000 people against the nuclear plant in question. I think there will be many possiblities to start mobilizations around aspects of the platform we advocate after the elections. This is a line not just for a few months but one that under today's conditions makes it possible for a small organization to force discussion on the real tasks of an SPD government.

On issues such as peace where we share some of the radical ideas of the Greens, we are trying to get into ongoing discussion with them. They have invited us to participate in their central commission on peace. On the local level, we are very interested in having discussions with them on questions that they don't really know that much about, especially trade union questions. Of course, we hope that out of such processes of discussions we will be able to reach agreements for more GIM candidates on the Green slates as has happened in Berlin. ■

Greens' representative in the German bundestag (DR)



The world economic situation in 1985

In the last two years the capitalist economy has undergone a new burst of activity. Beginning in the United States, the recovery has now extended to other imperialist countries as well as to some semi-industrialised countries in South East Asia and Latin America.

However, the upturn is uneven in scope and pattern. Even the origins of the recovery in the United States are linked to the federal budget deficit, which is in itself a factor of future potential crises.

The crisis of international finance takes on a new light when looked at from the point of view of the massive debts of the main capitalist countries. The fundamental elements of a structural crisis of the market economy are still the determining factor in the development of the international economic situation. It is within this framework that the following article looks at the state of the world economy in the different sectors (in the imperialist countries, in the dependent capitalist countries and in the bureaucratised workers states).

Ernest MANDEL

As 1985 begins, the world economic situation continues to be characterized by an economic recovery in the imperialist countries and the main semi-industrialised countries. (1) In all these countries, industrial production, foreign trade and the national income are on the rise. The table below confirms these trends.

1984 growth in Gross National Product (GNP) in relation to 1983

USA	6.7%
Japan	5.8%
West Germany	2.5%
Canada	4.3%
Italy	3.0%
Britain	2.0%
France	1.7%
Australia	6.2%
All imperialist countires	4.7%
All Latin America	2.6%
including Brazil	3.5%
including Mexico	3.8% *
South Korea	7.5%
Taiwan	8.5%
Hong Kong	8.0%
Singapore	8.0%
India (industrial production)	5.5%

* Certain sources give 1%.

The mechanism of this recovery is also clear. After a very sharp decline of production in the auto and construction industry in the USA (disproportionate to the rest of the economy), two sectors that taken together with the sectors which they stimulate directly represent some 40% of industrial activity, during 1980-1982, there was a vigorous expansion of these sectors beginning in 1983. This led to a generalized recovery of industrial production in the United States. This recovery was mainly stimulated by the enormous deficit of the public budget (over 200 billion US dollars per year for four years now) engineered by the Reagan administration and fostered by the sharp upward zoom of military expenditures.

To prevent this budget deficit from causing too sharp an increase in inflation, the Reagan administration is trying to attract masses of foreign capital to the United States where it is invested in US public loans. To that end, it must maintain US interest rates at a level several points higher than those of Japan, West Germany, Switzerland and elsewhere. Hence the overvaluation of the dollar in relation to the currencies of other capitalist countries. This overvaluation makes American industrial goods less competitive than those of other capitalist countries. As a result, the latter (especially the imperialist countries and the semi-industrialized countries) have experienced a genuine *boom* of their exports to the United States. This has led to the unforseen result that the exports of industrial manufactured goods of the Third World to the United States have now surpassed American exports of the same products to the Third World. (See table below)

Industrial manufactured goods

US exports to the Third World (billion US dollars)				Third World exports to the US (billion US dollars)			
1981	1982	1983	1984 (*)	1981	1982	1983	1984 (*)
61.5	54.6	45.3	47.0	35.0	36.8	45.7	55.0

(*) provisional figures

Of course, the figures for industrial manufactured goods exported from so-called Third World countries to the USA include everything that is part of the division of labour within multinational corporations of imperialist origin, that is the displacement of the centers of production of some of these multinationals towards the Third World countries. But this phenomenon only partially explains the sensational reversal of the trend. Indeed, the trend also reflects a real take-off of competitive national industrial branches of the semi-industrialized countries such as steel, shipbuilding, garment and toys, electronic components and even the petrochemicals industry. It is interesting to note that a book has just appeared which deals with the issue of multinationals originating in so-called Third World countries, that is to say, controlled by Brazilian, Indian, South Korean and Hong Kong finance capital without any influence or any significant share in those multinationals by imperialist countries. (2) We have drawn attention to this phenomenon on several occasions.

Thus, the economic recovery in the United States gradually spread to the entire capitalist economy, first Japan and West Germany, then the other imperialist powers, then the semi-industrialized countries of Asia, and finally, beginning in 1984, towards the semi-industrialized countries of Latin America and some other countries.

Nevertheless, the current recovery is even more partial and temporary than the recovery of 1976-1979. It has not made it possible to eliminate any of the structural causes that have caused a long term depression of the international capitalist economy since the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s. No restructuration nor expansion of the world market (not to mention an expansion comparable to that of the 1950-1970 period), nor fundamental reorganization of the labour and surplus value production process, nor fundamental alteration of the social relationship of forces (a radical rise of the rate of surplus value) that could enable capital to provide an expansion comparable to that of the post-World War Two years or of the pre-World War One years, has taken place.

Quite the contrary, the recovery has not prevented two fundamental features of the long depression from emerging despite the current upsurge in production:

— There is a persistent lack of productive investments and therefore a net drop of the medium- and long-term rate of growth, which demonstrates that none of the "new" industrial branches (including micro-chips and robotics) have developed to the extent where they could substitute

1. See *International Viewpoint*, No 58, 30 July 1984, an article entitled 'An economic upturn coupled with a financial crisis,' by E. Mandel.
2. A collection of writings edited by Lall and entitled *Les multinationales originaires du tiers monde* Presses Universitaires de France.

for the auto, household appliances and machine industries in the role of fundamental stimulant of production and the market, a role the latter played in the 1940-1970 period (or 1948-1970 in capitalist Europe and Japan).

— There is a continual rise of unemployment which, in the imperialist countries, jumped from 10 million in 1970 to 20 million in 1975, to 30 million in 1980 and to 35 million now. This will probably rise very quickly to 40 million which means that unemployment will directly or indirectly affect some 100 million human beings, if one takes into account the households of the jobless and of those who have been eliminated from the labour market and are no longer counted in the jobless figures.

In this way, contrary to the image of Reagan as creator of jobs which certain neo-liberals are so fond of putting about, it must be said that despite a relative rise in the growth rate of production in the USA, unemployment persists and remains around 7.5% of the labour force. This is without taking into account those who have withdrawn from the jobs market which itself has risen at a rate unknown in a period of growth.

The Third World and the crisis

Nor has the problem of the persistent indebtedness of the semicolonial and dependent countries been resolved in any way. It continues to bear down heavily both on the rate of expansion of the world market and on that of the economic growth of these countries themselves, independently of the ups and downs of the economy. At the same time, political instability has continued to grow in these countries. The possibility of explosive social crises shaking them remains more present than ever.

The effects of the economic upturn on the so-called Third World confirm the need for analysis to proceed on the basis of two sub-categories.

On the one hand, the poorest countries, although belatedly dragged down by the economic depression, have gradually experienced genuine cases of economic collapse, with the famine striking countries of the sub-Sahara, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia and Bangladesh, and the generalized deprivation of Bolivia, being only the most tragic manifestations but, by no means, the only ones. These countries suffer from the combined effects of a drop in the value of their exports, of an increase in their energy bill, of the disappearance of their outside sources of investment (with loans granted more and more on the sole criteria of short-term or medium-term profitability), and of a collapse of their domestic sources of accumulation, and sometimes even of simple reproduction. As a result, income has stagnated and dropped and per capita income plunged even more sharply. Beyond a certain threshold, that drop becomes cumulative and leads to an absolute drop in the productivity of labour in the subsistence agricultural-food sector, which is in turn made worse by a persistent tendency to extend the commercial agricultural goods export sector in the countryside.

On the other hand, in the dependent semi-industrialized countries, industry was able to start up again after the shock of the 1982-1983 recession in those countries. Even though some sectors, such as household appliances in Mexico, Argentina and Brazil, continue to stagnate at a level below that of the pre-crisis years (which reflects the lowering of the standard of living of the middle classes), these countries have generally not experienced a phenomenon of deindustrialization, even though their industry went through some structural transformations. Some key sectors of industry are even developing at a rapid pace, after reorienting mainly to foreign markets.

However, this economic recovery in the dependent semi-industrialized countries has revealed some distinctive features that differentiate it from the situation of the 1970s:

— There has been a much sharper reduction of the purchasing power of the workers and peasants than in the imperialist countries (except, probably, in South Korea and Taiwan), and therefore a contraction of the domestic market. The recovery is exclusively based on the export boom, particularly towards the United States. Hence the greater vulnerability of these countries to any new recession in the imperialist countries, to any new contraction of the world market.

— In these countries, industry has now expanded into sectors in which the imperialists already had an excess capacity (petrochemicals industry, automobile industry, electronics, shipbuilding steel), whence arises a risk of harsh protectionist measures of reprisal by the imperialist countries.

— There has been a sudden cut-off of the contribution of foreign capital to industrialization. As a result of the uninterrupted payment of the service of the foreign debt under the conditions imposed by the IMF, there is now a persistent net flight of capital from the Third World to the imperialist countries, a flight which is even further accelerated in the case of private capital going to the United States, Switzerland, Japan, etc. As a result, growth can only sustain itself at the cost of persistent inflation. (see table) Even so, it will be more modest than in pre-crisis years and will be accompanied by rapidly rising unemployment and a drop in the standard of living of the masses (or a 'stabilization' at a much lower level). Only a few semi-industrialized countries in Asia have escaped that tendency until now, but they will probably be hit too during the next recession.

— There is a worsening of the food deficit, fostered by the structural transformation of rural production.

— In some OPEC countries, the fall of the oil rent has likewise induced a shrinking of the domestic market (and therefore of the capacity to import from the imperialist countries). Thus, in Libya, per capita income fell from 10,000 US dollars to 8,500 US dollars in 1983 and to 7,000 US dollars in 1984. In Nigeria, the fall was even sharper.

Inflation rates in 1984

West Germany	2.1%	Egypt	15%
Japan	2.1%	Chile	16%
South Korea	2.8%	Greece	18%
Singapore	2.8%	Portugal	26%
Netherlands	3.0%	Nigeria	40%
Switzerland	3.2%	Philippines	44%
USA	4.5%	Turkey	51%
Britain	5.0%	Yugoslavia	59%
Hong Kong	5.0%	Uruguay	63%
Austria	5.2%	Mexico	65%
France	6.9%	Peru	104%
India	8.3%	Brazil	196%
Italy	9.1%	Israel	450%
Hungary	10.0%	Argentina	616%
South Africa	12.0%	Bolivia	748%

The relationship of forces between imperialist powers has changed since the 1980 recession and the 1983 recovery. Inter-imperialist competition has worsened. But, at this time, these two phenomena only appear on a very limited scale. True, the recovery of production and the reabsorption of unemployment have been more accentuated in the United States than among its rivals, greater in Japan than in capitalist Europe, and stronger in West Germany than in the other European countries. But this trend is partially compensated by the fact that the share of the United States in the world market continues to decline in comparison not only to that of Japan, but also to that of West Germany, and that the productivity of industrial labour is stagnating in the United States at a time when it is advancing by leaps and bounds in Japan and capitalist Europe. From 1977 to 1984, productivity of labour in manufacturing industry went up double the amount in West Germany that it did in the United States and three times the amount in France and Japan.

It is quite wrong to consider the rise in the value of the dollar in relation to other imperialist currencies as a 'victory' or a sign of the health of American imperialism. One just has to remember that the value of sterling also went through a similar rise in the 1980-1983 period to understand the lack of seriousness of such hasty judgements. In reality, the Reagan-Volcker (president of the US Federal Bank) policy means gambling on the rise of the dollar and sacrifices in a systematic way the interests of industry — and therefore of American *finance* capital, since finance capital is banking capital invested in industry — to holders of capital-money (speculators and those living on bond and security income). In the long term this orientation cannot be maintained.

It is certain that the persistence of the budget deficit in the United States will result in a rise in the rate of interest which will end up in stifling the recovery and will trigger off a new recession. This is even more shown to be the case since it is accompanied by a growing American trade deficit. The inflow of foreign

capital is no longer sufficient to relieve that problem. We are seeing the beginning of a liquidation of imperialism's foreign holdings for the first time since 1913, US foreign holdings being less than the debts it has overseas.

It is furthermore untrue to assert, as the European imperialists and their spokespersons and accomplicies in the workers movement do, that the high rate of interest in the USA is "strangling" or holding up the recovery in Europe. In reality productive investment is stagnating in Europe, not because there is a lack of capital but for structural reasons which have been many times analysed by our movement. In these conditions the inflow of European capital to the USA is a consequence of this stagnation and not a cause.

It is because the capitalists are looking for mainly non-productive investment that they export their capital to the USA. The moment they fear a new fall in the dollar, fostered by the inflation which is already higher in the USA than in Japan and many European countries, this tendency will be reversed without bringing with it any sort of boom in productive investments in Europe.

In the bureaucratised workers states

By and large the bureaucratised workers states — with the exception of Poland — have overcome in 1984 the accumulated effects of their own internal contradictions and the repercussions of the international capitalist economic crisis on their economies. Industrial production has grown in 1984 and this will doubtlessly be maintained in 1985. (see table) The scope of the fluctuations their economies have gone through has been determined by the degree of their integration in the international capitalist economy in the 1975-1982 cycle. These fluctuations have been stronger in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia than in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) Bulgaria or Rumania and especially less than in the USSR and in China, which import and export only a small part of their national product. Alongside the recovery there has been a reduction in their borrowing from capitalist countries and an alleviation (sometimes very limited) of the weight of the foreign debt, as well as a reorientation of foreign trade through increasing proportion of trade between all the workers states.

Nevertheless, in the workers states too, the recovery is modest and has not caused production to resume a cruising speed comparable to the average of the 1960s or 1970s, not to mention that of the 1950s. This slowdown of long-term growth is not mainly due to the effects of the long economic depression of the international capitalist economy. It is the product of internal contradictions of the bureaucratised workers states themselves. Among these contradictions, we should mention the increased resistence

Industrial production (annual variation)

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
USSR	+3.6	+3.4	+2.9	+4.0	+4.4*
GDR	+4.7	+4.7	+3.2	+4.1	+4.4
Czecho-slovakia	+3.5	+2.1	+1.1	+2.7	+2.6
Poland	0	-10.8	-2.1	+6.7	+3.4**
Hungary	-2.8	+2.0	+2.5	-1.0	+1.5
Rumania	+6.5	+2.9	+1.1	+4.8	+7.0
Bulgaria	+4.2	+4.8	+4.6	+4.6	+3.8

These figures do not include the building sector, in 1981 and 1982 Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia all suffered substantial declines in their construction industry.

*This is an official figure challenged by Western experts who trim it to 3.5-4%.
** a level still lower than 1980.

of the working class. This appears particularly in the following:

— The continual rise in the volume of 'frozen', incomplete investments, and its corollary, the fall of the additional production to new investments ratio.

— The inability to implement a coherent reform of the super-centralised system of planning without stimulating at the same time the 'parallel' sector of the economy, corruption, etc.

— The persistent lag in the applications of micro-chip and computerisation technology.

— The persistent crisis of cereal production and the continuing dependence on cereal imports from the imperialist countries that flows from it. The 1984 crop was about 170 million tons as against 190 million tons in 1983. The deficit that will have to be covered by imports from the capitalist countries stands at 50 million tons for this year.

Thus, the growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product of the USSR, according to the official statement by Gosplan, has gone from 3.1% in 1983 to 2.6% in 1984, largely as a result of the stagnation in agricultural production, for which the plan had envisaged an increase of 7.6%; and to the fall in oil production which has gone back to 1982 levels.

The People's Republic of China has, on the other hand, undergone an increase in agricultural and industrial production, due for the most part to NEP type economic policies. (3) These policies have been falsely seen by some as implying a return to capitalism. There is no question of this. But it is true that such policies have accentuated social inequalities in the countryside as well as in the towns and that they will inevitably produce an accumulation of social tension.

Despite the stringent measures imposed by the IMF on the most highly indebted independent countries — and the recession unleashed by these measures in 1982-1983 — the overall foreign debt of the Third World to imperialist countries did not diminish much in 1984, at a time of economic recovery. Both the overall volume of the debt and the ratio between these yearly services and the yearly income from exports (yearly foreign currency revenue), continued to rise in 1984. See table on Third World debts, p 25.

Any reduction of that debt would moreover lead to a severe contraction of the exports of imperialist countries to the Third World, because it could only arise as a result of a major surplus in the balance of trade in the Third World with imperialism.

It is, therefore, more than likely that, by the time the next recession strikes, with the concomittant drop in Third World exports to the metropolises, phenomena of insolvency comparable to those that occurred in 1982 and 1983 will recur. They will worsen the crisis of the international banking system, particularly in the United States itself, because they come with the indebtedness of the capitalist corporations which is growing heavier every year, as well as a dangerous swelling of the public debt. The total debt owed in dollars has now reached the fantastic figure of 7 trillion US dollars.

Share of debts * (in billion dollars)

	1974	1985
American public debt	543	1,573
Third World public debt	250	810
Public debt in other countries	100	400
Company debts	900	2,600
Household debts in USA	670	1,830
Total	2,500	7,100

*approximate figures

The indebtedness of American small farmers combined with the rise in interest rates has led to a disastrous situation in this area, which would merit a separate study. (4)

It is also important to look at the structural aspect of this phenomenon of massive debts within the international capitalist economy, a point which we have often made in the past. It represents a progressive strengthening of the hold of the finance sector, to give it its correct name, that is the speculators, as opposed to the industrial sector, within capital as a whole. (5) The following table demonstrates very clearly this development. (6)

Share of total profits in the USA

	Industrial Capital	Capital engaged in circulation (including ground rent)
1950	50 %	40 %
1965	42 %	40 %
1975	32 %	47 %
1983	22,9 %	58,2 %

3. Inspired by the policy adopted by Lenin in the Soviet Union in March 1921, which was know as the New Economic Policy, the Chinese leaders have adopted a strategy of encouraging private agricultural production. As a result, a layer of rich peasants has developed in the countryside. The policy, which is mirrored in the towns with one of the development of a private commercial sector, has important consequences in terms of aggravating social conflict and differentiation.
4. See *International Viewpoint*, No 72, 25 March 1985.
5. John Ross has already drawn attention to this phenomenon in Great Britain in his excellent book, *Thatcher and Friends*, Pluto Press, London 1983. Recently, a Dutch left-wing economist, Kees van der Pijl, has had to apply a similar analysis to all the imperialist countries in his book, *The making of an Atlantic ruling class*, Verso Publications, London, 1984.
6. Figures published in *The making of an Atlantic ruling class.*

Overall debt of Third World * countries (in billion US dollars)

1977	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985 (forecast)
327	469	559	650	741	782	827	863
including debt to private banks:							
161	240	276	326	379	413	460	469

Yearly service on the debt of the same countries

39.8	75.4	89.6	109.3	124.1	117.7	121.3	142.9
percentage of export revenues							
15.1%	19.0%	17.4%	20.2%	24.4%	22.1%	21.5%	23.0%
and for the main indebted countries **							
17%	35.7%	40.0%	52.0%	61.6%	53.3%	55.1%	65.7%

*except oil producing Middle—eastern countries

** Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Indonesia, South Korea, Venezuela and the Philippines.

It is necessary to guard against extrapolating any pattern from these figures but the evidence is undeniable. Deindustrialisation of the United States is inconceivable for big capital. It would imply, not only establishing the production of electronic gadgets or video cassettes overseas, but also the production of aeroplanes and rockets and computers. This would be disastrous for US military strength abroad.

Moreover, recent progress towards semi-automation has meant that it is now more 'profitable' to produce textiles in Switzerland and the USA because of the reduction in wage costs within the productive process.

Nevertheless, everything that has happened since the start of the current depression which is known as the long wave of depression, is reflected in part in the temporary preponderance of parasites and speculators within the Anglo-Saxon capitalist system. This is reflected most noticeably in the fact that company mergers in the oil sector — which never means any increase in oil production — are financed by tens of thousands of billions of dollars' worth of credit whilst hundreds of thousands of small productive farmers in the USA and abroad are driven to bankruptcy because they cannot get credit.

All this data can be summarised by putting forward the forecast that a new recession of the international capitalist economy around the year 1986, coming with a worsening of the crisis of the international credit system and a grave social and economic crisis in the dependent countries, and perhaps, with a one or one and a half year time lag, the beginning of a recession in the USA, will occur. The next recession will strike the USA and Japan more violently than the European countries and will probably be of greater magnitude than the previous one in Japan. ■

AROUND THE WORLD

OBITUARY

George Weissman 1916-1985
Faithful to the end

The following article on the death of George Lavan Weissman, a veteran leader of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, was written by the editorial board of the Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, *of which Weissman was a member until his death. He was expelled from the Socialist Workers Party late in 1983, in a wave of expulsions that were condemned by the leading bodies of the Fourth International at the time. This condemnation was reconfirmed by the Twelfth Congress of the Fourth International in February. The* Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, *is the publication of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, one of the two groups of expellees from the SWP that remain in the framework of the Fourth International. The following has been slightly abridged.*

George Lavan Weissman died of a heart attack in Concord, New Hampshire, on March 28, after almost half a century of service to the cause of revolutionary socialism. He had suffered from emphysema for some years, but remained politically active until he had a stroke in January.

He will be remembered as a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International in 1938 and as a founder member of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency in 1984. He worked on the *Militant* editorial staff from 1948 to 1967 and was a member of the editorial board of our *Bulletin in defense of Marxism* at the time of his death.

Weissman was born in Chicago in 1916. He grew up in Boston, where he was educated at prestigious schools — Boston Latin School and Harvard College. His father, of a Jewish background although not religious, had belonged to the Intercollegiate Socialist Society at Yale before World War I. His mother came of an Irish-American background and a family that was deeply involved in trade-union activity.

He became a Marxist during the Great Depression while he was at Harvard, and at the age of 20 joined the Young People's Socialist League and the Socialist Party in Boston. In the SP he met Trotskyists, including Dr Antoinette Konikow and the Trainor brothers (Larry and Frank), who influenced his continuing evolution to the left. When they were expelled from the SP in 1937, he went with them and helped found the SWP.

While still in college, Weissman became a volunteer organizer for several unions in New England. In this capacity he was active in a rank and file seaman's strike in Boston in 1937, a textile workers' organizing drive in Rhode Island, a shoe workers' strike in Maine, etc. He himself was a member of the CIO National Maritime Union and the AFL Retail Clerks when he worked briefly in those industries.

But he decided to devote most of his time and energy to building the revolutionary workers party, and that is how he utilized his many talents from then on. He spent his adult life reaching, organizing and educating revolutionary workers. This was true even during World War II when he was drafted into the US Army as a private and emerged as a captain of artillery (1941-46).

After the war he was what he called a "party functionary," an elastic term covering a broad variety of functions which the SWP assigned him to. He was a local or branch organizer in Boston (1939-41) and Youngstown (1946). At the SWP national center in New York he was a director and editor of Pioneer Publishers and Pathfinder Press (1947-81); organizer for the American Committee for European Workers' Relief after World War II; manager of Mountain Spring Camp in New Jersey (1948-62); as well as editor and writer for *Militant* and other party publications. He was also a member of the SWP's national and political committees for many years and a regular or fraternal delegate to most of its national conventions before the 1970's.

Weissman and another SWP member, Constance Fox Harding (1908-72), were married after he left the army, and they became an exemplary team of party workers. Together they worked in all kinds of defense and solidarity cases, and together they broke new ground for the SWP by getting its presidential ticket on the ballot in several states where there were no SWP members or branches. Over the years hundreds of people in the movement were guests at "Connie and George's place" in Manhattan — some overnight, others for months at a time. Their warmth and hospitality to people in need, both party members and non-members, were almost legendary.

Among the many organizations Weissman belonged to were the Boston youth branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; the American Student Union at Harvard; the NAACP in New York; the American Veterans Committee in the Bronx, NY; the Committee to Combat Racial Injustice, of which he was the secretary; the Civil Rights Defense Committee during the period when it defended Carl Skoglund, a revolutionary union leader whom the government repeatedly tried to deport to Sweden, and James Kutcher, the legless veteran purged from the Veterans Administration in Newark; and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, of which Weissman was East Coast regional organizer.

In addition, he found time to be literary representative in this country of the Leon Trotsky estate, and to write hundreds of articles for the party press. The subjects that evoked his best writing were the Black struggle in the US and American history. Perhaps a collection of these will be published some day.

Surviving relatives are Muriel McAvoy, Weissman's second wife, and three stepchildren — James Harding of Manhattan, Dorothea Lobsenz of Los Angeles and Timothy Harding of Los Angeles. We extend our condolences to them and to his many friends here and in Mexico.

The revolutionary movement has lost a steadfast fighter, an untiring builder, and a wise counsellor. We honor him by continuing the struggle he conducted for 49 years and by seeking to recruit and educate others in his mold. Young revolutionaries will not find a better model.

A memorial meeting for George Lavan Weissman will be held in Manhattan on Saturday, 25 May, at 7.30 pm. For further details about speakers, place, etc., write the FIT, PO Box 1947, New York, NY 10009, or phone (212) 673-9410 or (718) 934-6281. ■

QUEBEC

Five thousand protest Reagan-Mulroney summit

QUEBEC CITY — Chanting "Yankee, go home", "Reagan murderer", and "Reagan-Mulroney, no way!" some 5,000 protesters from across Quebec converged here March 17 to demonstrate their opposition to the "Shamrock Summit" between Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and US President Ronald Reagan.

Opposition to the deepening US war in Central America was a central theme of the overwhelmingly youthful demonstration. Banners and placards demanding British troops out of Northern Ireland, an end to apartheid in South Africa, US out of the Philippines, and Reagan out of Quebec were also visible.

Opposition to the US and Canadian nuclear arms build-up — cruise missile tests, "Star Wars", and the new radar warning network to be built in northern Canada — was another popular theme. Highlighting the failure of the summit to take steps to deal with acid rain, Greenpeace launched a 30-foot balloon asking Reagan: "Where's the fish?"

The demonstration was organised by the Coalition for Peace, Justice and Freedom, a broad coalition of unions, youth and women's groups, Central America solidarity committees, peace, ecology and left groups.

The Coalition's platform explains that "the American government is the principal leader of the anti-union and anti-social offensive of the bosses and their governments throughout the world ... We solidarize with the American workers, women, youth, and national minorities who are struggling against Reaganism and its effects ... We also solidarize with the youth of Nicaragua who are struggling to defend their country, their social and democratic revolution against US aggression."

The summit marked a further increase in the close collaboration between the Canadian and US governments in the war drive:

- An increase in Canadian troops assigned to NATO forces in Europe;
- Canadian participation in and support for the US space research program "Star Wars";
- A US—Canada treaty to upgrade the Dew line — the radar network in Northern Canada;
- Mulroney's reaffirmation that Canada is not neutral but a close ally of US imperialism.

Canada's Conservative government consciously chose Quebec City to host the highly publicized summit. Canadian External Affairs minister Joe Clark explained that this would help assure big business that Quebec is now a stable and reliable place to invest and that the danger of Quebec separating from Canada is a thing of the past.

In fact, the struggle for Quebec's national rights has suffered a series of blows at the hands of the Canadian government. By unilaterally amending Canada's constitution in 1982, it deprived the Quebec government of its veto power over future constitutional changes and undermined its ability to protect and promote French as the language of public education. Bowing to imperialists' pressure, the Parti Quebecois (PQ) leadership, who hold office in Quebec, recently decided to put aside the demand for Quebec's independence.

The Canadian authorities and the media did everything in their power to create the impression that the Quebecois welcomed and were honored by Reagan's visit. Quebecois artists, PQ government ministers and union leaders like Louis Laberge of the 400,000-strong Quebec Federaton of Labor were invited to the ceremonies. Massive security arrangements were put in place.

Despite all these efforts to discourage any form of protest, the turnout for the demonstration was double what the organizers had predicted. Questions and opposition raised in the Canadian parliament by the New Democratic Party and to a lesser extent the Liberal Party over closer US-Canada military ties, especially around nuclear weapons, are another reflection of the broad unease throughout Canada with the convergent war policies of both governments. ■

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
The LCR joins the Bloque Socialista

The Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR), a sympathising group of the Fourth International in the Dominican Republic, has recently decided to fuse with the revolutionary organisation, Bloque Socialista (BS).

The BS, which held its first congress in June 1984, (see International Viewpoint, *No 60, 1 October 1984) came into existence as a result of the fusion of the Communist Workers Nucleus, the Socialist Party and the Workers Socialist Movement, following a long process of coordination of these different organisations. The BS is also a member of the Dominican Left Front (FID), set up on 14 June, 1984. We publish below the joint statement adopted by the BS and the LCR concerning the integration of members of the latter into the Bloque Socialista.*

The Bloque Socialista and the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria are well aware of the need for unity amongst revolutionary Marxists at this crucial stage for our country and for the workers movement internationally and, having debated the decision of the LCR to join the ranks of the BS, we have agreed on the following procedure for their integration.

This is yet another step on the road to unity of Dominican socialists which is part of the trajectory mapped out by the Bloque Socialista. The BS itself is the product of a fusion of several organisations which, at the end of 1981, set up the BS as a coalition of revolutionary socialists which later fused together.

The LCR, the Dominican organisation in sympathy with the Fourth International, was founded in 1980 and since 1981 has been an integrated part of the United Left (IU) along with the BS and other revolutionary organisations. They later also formed part of the Dominican Left Front (FID) and decided at their most recent congress that they should be part of a current which fights for the construction of a socialist revolutionary workers party in the Dominican Republic.

At the present time the tool in this process is the Bloque Socialista. As workers, peasants, women, young people and as all the oppressed, we find ourselves facing the most brutal oppression we have ever experienced, flowing from the policies of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) government of Salvador Jorge Blanco, under the pro-imperialist diktat of the International Monetary Fund.

The most effective weapon that the people have is their fighting unity and independence. Those organisations which identify with popular interests are duty bound to channel all their energies into developing this potential. As revolutionary Marxists we must be the first to go forward on this road, rising above secondary differences. In this lies the significance of the advance which the BS and the LCR are making today.

Our unification is motivated essentially by the immediate and mid-term interests of the popular masses who are demanding the surest unity of their own organised forces. They are demanding rapid progress toward the construction of an effective instrument for the fight to roll back the offensive of the bourgeoisie and of imperialism, which causes both repression and hunger; and to take up the fight for a lasting equality for the oppressed of the country.

Such progress towards socialist unity will also prove a step forward for the FID, creating the best conditions to live up to the organisational tasks and objectives that the Front had set itself: that is to unite revolutionaries, in order to build a revolutionary alternative.

Finally we call on all those organisations that form part of the FID and all those who are not part of it and the large number of revolutionary activists who are not organised, to look upon this step as a stimulus toward the necessary unity of the popular forces in the Dominican Republic.

Free till victory or till death!

Bloque Socialista (BS)
Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR)
Santo Domingo, 17 January 1985

ERRATUM

An error appeared in the last issue of *International Viewpoint*, No 73, dated 8 April 1985. In the article entitled 'Revolutionary nationalism and the anti-bureaucratic revolution' in the last section on page 26, the paragraph beginning 'Secondly ...' should continue as follows: 'although the OUN leaders were for collaboration and alliances with all national liberation movements as well as for an alliance with the oppressed Russian working people they rejected proletarian internationalism.'

The next paragraph would then begin 'Thirdly' to be followed by 'although the OUN leaders recognised the October Revolution ...' as in the printed text.

Free subscriptions for fighters

In previous issues, we reported the launching of a defense fund for 150 British miners jailed by the union-buster Thatcher government. The imprisonment of large numbers of union activists, however, is not something specific to Britain under a regime determined to revive the "old-time virtues." It is becoming a sign of our times, the epoch of international capitalist economic crisis and of a general offensive against the rights and living standards of working people.

Two unionists are still in prison in Denmark on charges arising out of the dockers strike two years ago. The main leader of the dockers union was held for many months on frame-up charges before being finally released as a result of a large-scale campaign of solidarity in Denmark and internationally. In the current protests against the Schlueter government decreeing more deep cuts in real wages for Danish working people, many union activists have been arrested and face trial. Many others have been fired already from their jobs.

Today, when the great majority of people are wage earners, firings, denying "troublemakers" who live from wages their means of livelihood, is a more and more widespread method of repression — sort of an outdoor imprisonment. This device is used with the same brutality by Stalinist regimes and a government like Thatcher's, which proclaims its dedication to "individual liberties."

Both fired and imprisoned class struggle fighters need material support to survive and keep on fighting. But not the least material need they have is for revolutionary publications to keep them aware of the broader picture of the class struggle, both to maintain their morale and to help them fight more effectively when they get the chance.

Over the past two decades, it has been a usual thing for revolutionary publications in the developed countries to get requests from political prisoners asking for free subscriptions. We began to get such requests from our first issue, from countries as far apart as Ireland and Israel. Obviously, under the impact of the economic crisis, even a few free subscriptions are a serious expense for a publication such as *International Viewpoint*. We have the same economic problems as any small capitalist enterprise, with the difference that we cannot retrench in hard times; that is precisely when we have to make the biggest effort.

Now, we not only have to try to meet requests for free subscriptions from political prisoners in the strict sense, but we have to try to respond to the needs of more and more imprisoned and victimized union activists, even local union leaderships whose funds have been drained by strike-breaker governments.

For example, local leaders of the British National Union of Mineworkers have asked us to send them a number of copies of *International Viewpoint*. We look forward to many more such requests from Britain and countries around the world. Fourth Internationalists throughout Europe, moreover, have proposed sending *International Viewpoint* to NUM members and other victimized unionists they have worked with. Some have already begun doing this on their own.

So, it has become obvious that we need a special fund to finance sending *International Viewpoint* to activists who cannot pay because of capitalist victimization. This is the only way that we can ensure that such comrades who have already been sent *International Viewpoint* will get it regularly and that we will be able to meet the growing demand for complimentary subscriptions. We simply cannot afford to do this without the help of our readers and supporters.

If you can help, please send you check or money order to *International Viewpoint*, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, Montreuil 93108, France, accompanied by a note saying that it is for the *International Viewpoint* for Fighters Fund . The checks should be made out to *International Viewpoint.* ■