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Interview With

Bernadette Devlin McAliskey

Upturn in the Irish Struggle



G. M. Cookson/Socialist Challenge

McALISKEY: "We've got to take up the task of building a revolutionary party." See p. 514.

Troops Stand By as Senate Votes on Panama

Political Consequences of Israeli Blitzkrieg

'Dagens Nyheter' Interviews Hugo Blanco

Russell Tribunal Verdict on German 'Blacklist'

Workers Upsurge Spreads in Peru

Portugal—Steep Hike in Food Prices

USA—10,000 March in Antiracist Action

Van Heijenoort: 'Seven Years With Trotsky'

Documents

France After the Elections

Troops Stand By as Senate OKs Panama Treaty

By Fred Murphy

"If the Senate of the United States had rejected the Panama treaty," columnist James Reston wrote in the April 21 *New York Times*, "the Carter Administration was ready with a series of actions designed to minimize the damage."

According to Reston, Carter would have gone on television to "appeal to the Panamanians to maintain order and avoid any provocative moves on the Canal Zone."

Meanwhile, "an air- and seafight of military reinforcements" would have been ready to move "in case the United States troops in the zone were not able to handle massive demonstrations or acts of sabotage."

As it happened, the Senate voted 68 to 32 on April 18 to OK the final canal treaty, and Carter's mobilization plans were not implemented.

Nevertheless, Reston's account stands as a stark reminder of Washington's ability and willingness to take military action in Panama whenever it chooses. And that is the real meaning of the now-ratified Panama Canal treaties.

In the original texts, U.S. military prerogatives were alluded to in vague formulas about "defending the canal's neutrality." This was to make it easier for General Torrijos to put the pacts across in Panama.

But to ensure Senate ratification of the "Neutrality Treaty," Carter accepted an explicit declaration of Washington's "right to take such steps as it deems necessary . . . including the use military force" to keep the canal open. Senator Dennis DeConcini, who pushed for this change, said he wanted to make sure "labor unrest or strikes, the actions of an unfriendly government, political riots or upheavals" could be dealt with.

Such a bald-faced assertion of the treaties' true content accelerated the growing opposition to the pacts in Panama. Torrijos kept universities and high schools closed for an additional four weeks to stave off student protests. He even felt compelled to protest himself, and sent a letter to 115 governments stating that the DeConcini reservation violated the charters of the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

So Carter was faced with what *Newsweek* magazine called "the absurd task of redecorating Treaty II so that it would both preserve DeConcini's language and nullify it."

The sleight-of-hand was accomplished in a new reservation stating that "any action taken by the United States of America in

the exercise of its rights to assure that the Panama Canal shall remain open, neutral, secure, and accessible . . . shall not have as its purpose nor be interpreted as a right of intervention in the internal affairs of the Republic of Panama. . . ."

In other words, U.S. intervention shall not be interpreted as . . . U.S. intervention.

Nevertheless, Torrijos hailed final pas-

Secret Negotiations Over Future of Zimbabwe

By Ernest Harsch

During his visit to Nigeria, President Carter declared April 2 that Washington "now will move as quickly as possible to call together the parties who are in dispute in Zimbabwe."

As usual, Carter tried to assume the mantle of an unbiased intermediary concerned only with achieving "peace" in southern Africa. But his announcement, along with the subsequent flurry of American and British diplomatic activity, reflects an acute fear among the imperialists that the struggle of the Zimbabwean masses against the racist Rhodesian regime could yet spiral out of control, endangering the substantial Western interests in that part of the world.

The Carter administration was impelled to launch a new diplomatic initiative by the establishment on March 21 of a coalition regime between Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith and three prominent Zimbabwean figures: Abel Muzorewa, Ndabaningi Sithole, and Jeremiah Chirau. The agreement that forms the basis for the new regime aims to preserve significant white privileges for many years to come, even under a "majority rule" government that will supposedly take power at the end of the year.

The imperialists are of course not opposed to the provisions of the accord that seek to safeguard white privilege. But they are worried that the new regime is too narrowly based to be successful in diverting the struggle for real Black majority rule in a neocolonial direction.

Thus the White House, in close collaboration with the British government, has been seeking to broaden out the agreement to include at least some of the Zimbabwean nationalist leaders involved in the guerrilla campaign against Smith.

sage of the pacts—which still contain the original DeConcini reservation—as "one of the greatest and most awaited triumphs" in Panamanian history.

That the people of Panama do not share this assessment is already evident. "There is none of the euphoria that might have been expected," Marlise Simons reported from Panama in the April 20 *Washington Post*.

Hundreds of students demonstrated in Panama City the day of the Senate vote, denouncing the "dirty treaties" and the "traitor amendments." Four bourgeois opposition parties disavowed the pacts in a joint statement and called for a new plebiscite.

Torrijos's and Carter's "triumph" may be short-lived. □

American Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and British Foreign Secretary David Owen began a series of discussions in southern Africa April 14.

They met for two days of secret negotiations in Tanzania with Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, who are allied within the Patriotic Front.

The participants said afterward that they had discussed aspects of an earlier British and American proposal that called for a direct imperialist role in any agreement leading to the establishment of a Black regime. The Anglo-American plan, as originally outlined last year, called for the sending of a United Nations "peace-keeping" force to Zimbabwe and the appointment of a British administrator to run the government for a period.

Making major concessions to the imperialists, Nkomo said April 16 that he and Mugabe had agreed to a UN military force in the country, but only if it had a "strict mandate" not to suppress the population.

In a separate news conference, Mugabe raised some objections to the plan, not to UN involvement, but to the overtures it makes to the Patriotic Front's rivals, Muzorewa and Sithole. He insisted that the front play a "predominant" role in any settlement. He also rejected a parliamentary system as a "luxury" and said he favored a one-party state.

Both Nkomo and Mugabe agreed to attend a future round-table conference involving all the parties in the conflict.

From Tanzania, Vance and Owen flew to South Africa, where they won cautious support from Foreign Minister Roelof F. Botha for the projected conference.

Their next stop was Salisbury itself, where Vance and Owen met with Smith, Muzorewa, Sithole, and Chirau. Little was

revealed about those talks, except that the coalition regime would consider the Anglo-American proposals.

Vance's willingness to actually go to Salisbury and talk with Smith, thus formally violating the UN sanctions against the regime, was an indication of how concerned the White House is with the situation there.

Summing up the imperialist fears, correspondent Bernard Gwertzman reported in the April 15 *New York Times*, "The Americans and British believe that unless a conference of all parties and a compromise can be arranged, a major war will break out, possibly involving Cubans and Russians and threatening to spread to South Africa."

They are also worried that the struggle of the Zimbabwean masses could reach massive proportions, possibly escaping the control of both the imperialists and the nationalist leaders themselves.

To head off such an outcome, Washington and London have been trying for several years now to steer the conflict toward the negotiating table, from which they hope to see a stable Black neocolonial regime emerge. But Smith's reluctance to abandon effective white control or the substantial privileges of the settler community has thus far hampered these efforts.

The rivalries among the various Zimbabwean nationalist leaders, while a complicating factor to an extent, at the same time gives both Smith and the imperialists greater room to maneuver. Smith has already played on these rivalries to win the backing of Muzorewa and Sithole for his "internal" settlement. It now appears that the imperialists are trying to split the Patriotic Front as well.

Gwertzman reported in the April 19 *New York Times* that Vance "is pinning American hopes in southern Africa on somehow enticing Joshua Nkomo, the more flexible of the two Rhodesian guerrilla leaders, to join in a negotiated settlement with the Salisbury Government even if Robert Mugabe, the other guerrilla leader, refuses."

Unlike Mugabe, whose own guerrilla forces are faction-ridden, Nkomo controls a tightly organized and disciplined military force, a valuable asset for any future neocolonial regime for maintaining "law and order."

On April 12, Smith publicly declared that he would welcome Nkomo's participation in the coalition regime.

It remains to be seen whether the imperialists and Smith will be successful in reaching a broader agreement that includes Nkomo, if not Mugabe as well. But in the meantime, the war continues.

In late March, a battle between Rhodesian forces and hundreds of guerrillas was reported in the eastern part of the country, and on April 8 the regime announced that twenty-eight persons had been killed in the previous twenty-four hours. □

In This Issue

Closing News Date: April 22, 1978

FEATURES	518	"Seven Years With Trotsky"—Jean Van Heijenoort Discusses His New Book
SWEDEN	500	"Dagens Nyheter" Interviews Hugo Blanco
PERU	501	Workers Challenge Junta's Antilabor Decree—by Fred Murphy
SRI LANKA	503	Unionists Condemn Antilabor Moves
PORTUGAL	503	Soares Announces Steep Rise in Food Prices
WEST GERMANY	504	Russell Tribunal Issues Verdict on Political Blacklisting
BANGLADESH	506	130 Political Prisoners Executed
MIDEAST	508	Political Consequences of the Israeli Blitzkrieg—by Tamara Nir
GHANA	512	Opponents of Military Rule Arrested
IRELAND	514	Interview With Bernadette Devlin McAliskey
USA	528	Washington—10,000 March in Antiracist Action
NEWS ANALYSIS	498	Troops Stand By as Senate Votes on Panama—by Fred Murphy
	498	Secret Negotiations Over Future of Zimbabwe—by Ernest Harsch
SELECTIONS		
FROM THE LEFT	507	
AROUND THE WORLD	513	Freedom Fighters Sentenced in South Africa
DOCUMENTS	520	The Political Situation in France After the Elections
	526	Interview With a Lebanese Trotskyist Leader
DRAWINGS	511	Menaheem Begin; 512, Gen Kutu Acheampong; 522, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing; 523, Raymond Barre; 524, François Mitterrand; 525, Georges Marchais—by Copain

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'Dagens Nyheter' Interviews Hugo Blanco

[Hugo Blanco returned to Peru from exile in Sweden on April 12. He was greeted at the Lima airport by a large demonstration organized by FOCEP, a coalition of workers parties and union organizations. Blanco is a candidate for the constituent assembly on a slate supported by FOCEP.

[Before leaving Sweden, Blanco was interviewed by a number of Swedish papers. The following interview, given to Johnny Gammel and Anders Gunnartz, was published in the April 6 issue of the Stockholm daily *Dagens Nyheter*, Sweden's most prestigious mass-circulation daily. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

The Peruvian peasant leader Hugo Blanco is returning to his country on Tuesday [April 11]. Except for a short period two years ago, he has been a political refugee in Sweden since 1973.

The Peruvian military government has granted an amnesty to political refugees as part of the preparation for the elections this summer to a constituent assembly.

"The elections are a farce," Hugo Blanco told us.

The elections are scheduled for June. They are supposed to be only the military government's first step toward handing power over to a civilian regime. The next step is to be presidential and legislative elections in 1980.

Two and a half million illiterates have no vote [out of a total population of about sixteen million]. To get on the ballot, parties have to present the signatures of 40,000 supporters, but the time granted for collecting petitions is extremely short.

"Besides this, the authorities have obstructed the petitioning and falsified the results," Blanco said. He continued:

"There have been cases where police have arrested petitioners and destroyed their petitions. I am running on the slate of FOCEP [Frente Obrero, Campesino, Estudiantil, y Popular—Workers, Peasants, Students, and Popular Front]. This group collected 47,000 signatures but the court recognized only 19,000, even though the rest were perfectly legal. Now there are only ten days left in the period allotted for the recognition of parties. In this time, we have to collect another 21,000 signatures."^{*}

^{*}FOCEP collected 25,000 additional signatures and on March 7 the National Elections Court granted ballot status to the coalition.—IP/I



HUGO BLANCO

USLA

The traditionally largest party in Peru is the APRA [Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana—People's Revolutionary American Alliance]. In previous elections in which this party has been allowed to participate, it has gotten at least 30 percent of the vote. It was originally a left party but now stands on the right. The other right-wing parties are ex-President Belaúnde's party, Acción Popular [People's Action], as well as the Christian People's Party, the PPC.

The splintered left includes the Moscow-oriented PCP [Partido Comunista Peruano—Peruvian Communist Party] and the PSR [Partido Socialista Revolucionario—Revolutionary Socialist Party].

Besides these parties, so-called grassroots organizations are allowed to run. The FOCEP, on whose slate Hugo Blanco is running, is one of these. It is a left front including union organizations and the Trotskyist party, the PST [Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores—Socialist Workers Party].

"The left has no illusions about the elections," Blanco stressed. "It is assumed that the right will win. The military government's aim is to remain in power with the support of APRA.

"But the government's position has weakened as a result of the severe economic crisis and increased freedom of expression."

The country is beset by galloping inflation. The economy is dependent on foreign credits, especially loans from the International Monetary Fund.

"Dependence on foreign capital must be reduced," Blanco said. "The establishment of foreign firms in the country must be stopped."

In 1976, protests against the military government grew as a result of the economic crisis. The government responded by declaring a state of emergency, instituting a curfew, and banning what independent publications existed.

In 1977, the situation worsened, and there was a spontaneous popular uprising in southern Peru. These conditions forced a national general strike. The government had 5,000 union leaders fired from their jobs. But at the same time, it was forced to lift the state of emergency and the ban on independent publications.

The union leaders still have not got their jobs back. Hugo Blanco thinks that it is important to fight for their reinstatement and he believes that support from other countries can play a big role in achieving this goal.

"In the Volvo factory in Peru also, union leaders have been fired. The Peruvian Volvo workers have appealed for help in a letter to the Swedish Volvo workers, and it is important that they get support here in Sweden [where Volvo is centered]."

The land reform the military government carried out after 1968 resulted in the transformation of some big estates into cooperatives. But according to Blanco, these cooperatives are run in an exploitative way by the state, which has stepped into the shoes of the landlords.

"It wasn't really a land reform," Blanco said. "What happened was that the peasants in certain regions took over through a struggle against the landlords and thereby gained a higher living standard. That was the case in the valley of La Convención, where I helped to organize a peasant uprising in the 1960s.

"The local trade-union organization to which I belonged bought a caterpillar and two trucks. It built a road, and the sons and daughters of illiterates are able to go to school as a result."

The left hopes to utilize the elections to propagate its views. The pretense of allowing free elections makes it more difficult for the regime to suppress opposition.

"But we should not have any illusions about democracy. In the crisis situation that prevails, the people will certainly utilize every increase in human rights to

improve their situation. But when the class struggle becomes too sharp, repression will increase."

We asked if there were a danger of a rightist coup.

"Yes," Blanco replied. "Former President Belaúnde wants to carry out a coup not only to avert the elections but also to crush the resistance of the people.

"But on the other hand, a rightist coup involves a risk of touching off a full-scale popular uprising. When the regime had a hard time crushing the resistance in the valley of La Convención, how much harder a time would it have in putting down an uprising throughout Peru?"

Hugo Blanco thinks that the amnesty for himself and the other political refugees is a result of the pressure the Peruvian masses have brought to bear on the military regime, and not pressure from outside.

"It would be a disappointment to those who have fought if I didn't go back," Hugo Blanco continued. "But I am not indispensable, and the regime knows that. It knows that the struggle will continue, with or without me. Moreover, the regime has used my name for its own purposes."

Blanco is not worried about his safety when he goes back. In the nine months he spent in Peru in 1975-76, the regime kept him under constant surveillance. A

number of security policemen with cars and motorcycles were permanently stationed outside his house and followed him wherever he went.

"There is so much unrest in Peru today," Hugo Blanco said, "that they cannot assign so many people to me alone. The conflicts are much sharper than they were when I was last home."

Hugo Blanco does not think that his political role is exhausted and he still regards himself as a peasant leader. He is still a member of the leadership of the union of peasants and rural laborers, the CCP [Confederación Campesina del Perú]. It is there that he sees his main political task. □

General Strike in Arequipa, Miners Shut Down Copper Fields

Peru—Workers Challenge Junta's Antilabor Decree

By Fred Murphy

A fresh wave of workers struggles is challenging the Peruvian military government. Copper miners in Toquepala, Ilo, Cerro de Pasco, and La Oroya have held a series of strikes; workers have downed tools at the PICSA shipyard in Chimbote; railroad workers have struck on several occasions; and in Arequipa, Peru's second largest city, an indefinite general strike has shut down most industry, commerce, and transportation.

Continuing government-employer attacks on workers' rights have been the key reason for these strikes. The attacks began last year with the firing of 5,000 union militants after a general strike last July, and were sharply escalated when the military regime decreed harsh new antilabor legislation on March 22.

The new "labor stability" decree, DL-22126, gives employers the right to carry out mass firings in the event of a strike or production slowdown; provides for the firing of workers who show "lack of respect for the employer, even away from the workplace"; facilitates layoffs and unilateral abrogation of union contracts; extends the probationary period for newly hired workers from ninety days to three years; and severely curtails the rights of workers to appeal employers' measures before government arbitration boards. The provision for mass firings effectively abolishes the right to strike.

As the workers have fought back against this challenge, the regime has stepped up police repression against the workers movement, and is reportedly considering suspending or cancelling the constituent assembly elections now scheduled for June

4. It is already backtracking on some recent concessions: union militants who carried out a fifty-one-day hunger strike were promised their jobs back but now may not get them; and harassment has begun against labor leaders who were allowed to return from forced exile in March.

The current strike wave began soon after the new labor law was decreed. Four thousand miners and metal workers employed by the U.S.-owned Southern Peru Copper Company in Toquepala and Ilo, on the southwestern coast, struck March 27 to demand rehiring of 117 workers fired in July and August of last year. These strikes were declared illegal the next day. Although the Toquepala workers returned to their jobs on March 29, workers at the foundries and mines in Ilo remained off their jobs through mid-April. On April 13, the regime declared a state of emergency throughout Moquegua Province and issued an ultimatum to the copper workers to end the strike within twenty-four hours or "suffer the consequences."

Meanwhile, more strikes broke out among copper miners in the central part of the country. On April 5 workers at the La Oroya mine went out. Miners and their families attempted to hold a march and were fired on by a Civil Guard unit. Troops again fired later that day as 700 miners were leaving a meeting at their union headquarters. Twenty persons were wounded altogether.

On April 7, 2,500 miners in the main copper-mining center of Cerro de Pasco went on strike against DL-22126 and to demand rehiring of fired unionists.

Workers at the PICSA shipyards in Chimbote, an industrial center on the northern coast, have been struggling to save 1,192 jobs that the management of the state-owned plant is trying to eliminate. This rationalization move is part of the regime's attempts to solve its deep financial crisis.

The PICSA workers conducted a sit-down strike and occupation of the shipyards on March 14 but withdrew before troops and police moved to dislodge them. On March 30, they went out on strike.

The struggle has enjoyed wide support throughout Chimbote and Ancash Province. Workers and peasants there carried out three general strikes in December and January in support of striking SIDERPERU steelworkers, and another province-wide work stoppage was to have taken place on April 6 to show solidarity with the PICSA workers.

In Arequipa, an indefinite general strike began April 5, called by the Arequipa Departmental Workers Federation (FDTA). The strike demanded rehiring of nineteen fired workers, resignation of Interior Minister Luis Cisneros, and abrogation of DL-22126.

According to the April 13 issue of the Lima weekly *Marka*, the first days of the Arequipa strike were marked by "a climate of intense agitation, an active strike with pickets in the streets, demonstrations, confrontations with the repressive forces—the most notable outcome of which was the death of an aged woman who fell attempting to flee a police attack."

An assembly of 200 FDTA leaders reaffirmed the strike and its demands on April

9. On April 10, 400 persons were arrested when police broke up a demonstration in the Plaza de Armas. As of April 12, the general strike in Arequipa had lasted seven days and was still continuing.

Fired workers have continued to go on hunger strikes since the March 20 government announcement that seventy-eight hunger strikers would get their jobs back. Twenty workers began a hunger strike in Trujillo on March 23, and several days later hunger strikes were started by twenty-five workers in Ilo and Toquepala and twenty-nine in Arequipa.

But even the situation of the original seventy-eight hunger strikers remains unclear. Two days after the March 20 presidential statement, the Sociedad de Industrias (Industries Association) declared that employers would refuse to rehire the seventy-eight workers because this would "generate indiscipline not only in the workplaces affected but in all the rest." Notices to that effect were posted outside the plants from which the seventy-eight workers had been fired.

In addition to this defiant attitude on the employers' part, the Interior Ministry has failed to take any action to drop charges brought against the hunger strikers, despite promises to that effect by President Morales Bermúdez. The workers remain under guard at police hospitals where they are recovering from the ordeal of voluntary starvation.

More evidence of the government's hardening stance against the workers movement came April 11 with the detention of Isidoro Gamarra, president of the CGTP,¹ Peru's main trade-union federation. Twenty-two other union leaders were also being sought—ostensibly for questioning in a reopened inquiry into the July 1977 general strike. Most of these union officials are also candidates for the constituent assembly.

On April 13, a march in Lima called by the CGTP and a number of independent unions to protest the new labor law was broken up by police firing tear gas. About 100 persons were arrested.

In response to the copper strikes, the government is trying to victimize two recently returned exiles. Interior Minister Cisneros issued a statement April 6 regarding the events in La Oroya:

... preliminary investigations have established that the violent situations have been promoted by the union leaders Ricardo Díaz Chávez and Víctor Cuadros Paredes, who, after being in La Oroya, have traveled to Arequipa and Toquepala, where they are continuing to carry out acts of instigation.

3. The union leaders cited returned to the country under the provisions of the amnesty granted by the government. . . .

4. The acts of violence and disorder described, a negation of the spirit of concord and humanism that inspired the amnesty, are sufficient proof to affirm that determined elements have no other interest than the creation of chaos and disorder in the productive activities of the country and that they constitute a threat to a normal development of the electoral process. . . .

Cuadros is the general secretary of the principal miners union, the FNTMMP.² Díaz Chávez is an attorney affiliated with the union. An FNTMMP statement, responding to Cisneros's charges, said that even before the events at La Oroya, Díaz Chávez had returned to Mexico to finish teaching a university course, and that Cuadros had been in Lima during the entire period in question.

Nevertheless, PIP³ agents surrounded Cuadros's house on April 10 and tried to intimidate his nine-year-old daughter into revealing his whereabouts. The union leader was still in hiding at last report.

Cuadros heads the slate of constituent assembly candidates put forward by the Democratic People's Union (UDP), a coalition of working-class parties and the FNTMMP. Díaz Chávez is also on the UDP's slate.

Despite Cisneros's demagogic charges against the union leaders, it is the government itself that is the principal "threat to the electoral process." In addition to arresting and harassing working-class candidates, the military regime may be considering outright cancellation of the June 4 elections.

According to a report in *Marka* April 13, navy chief Parodi Galliani proposed the following steps to a meeting of the junta in late March:

1. That the political-electoral process . . . be suspended and, concretely, that the June 4 Constituent Assembly elections be suppressed;
2. that on the basis of political coordination and consultations a Technical-Civilian Cabinet be installed; and
3. that this new council be granted extraordinary powers for 90 days.

Marka explained that "the Governmental Junta would continue to exercise its functions, as would the naval, war, aviation, and interior ministers. In the other ministries there would be 'well-known civilian technicians' empowered to make final decisions and assume responsibilities for dealing with the [International Monetary] Fund."

Among the "well-known civilians" Admiral Parodi has in mind may be former president and leader of the People's Action Party (AP) Fernando Belaúnde Terry.

2. Federación Nacional de Trabajadores Mineros y Metalúrgicos del Perú (National Federation of Miners and Metalworkers of Peru).

3. Policía de Investigaciones del Perú (Peru Investigations Police), the regime's political police.

Belaúnde abruptly announced March 16 that his party would not present candidates for the constituent assembly. The ex-president sparked speculation about a coup by the navy earlier this year in statements insinuating that that wing of the armed forces disagreed with Morales's elections plans. Belaúnde gained the presidency in 1963 with the aid of a coup, and lost power under similar circumstances in 1968, so he is experienced in such matters.

Marka said that the junta had postponed action on Admiral Parodi's proposals until the return of delegations sent abroad to seek relief from some of the regime's \$1 billion in foreign debts that fall due this year. So far, the only success in that regard has been an agreement by the Soviet Union to postpone arms debt payments until after 1981.

No new austerity measures have yet been announced, despite the fact that the government's credit with the International Monetary Fund and the big imperialist banks depends on rapid implementation of harsh new steps. The IMF is reportedly demanding a currency devaluation, new taxes, fuel price increases, and elimination of government price subsidies on cooking oil, milk, and wheat flour.

The Peruvian workers and their allies are continuing to show combativity and willingness to fight these austerity measures and the sharpening attacks on their democratic and trade-union rights. But they do not as yet have a leadership on the national level that can organize the political fight against the military government that the situation requires.

The main trade-union federation, the CGTP, remains under the control of the PCP(U),⁴ the faction of the Communist Party most disposed to seeking cooperation with the junta. A national delegates' assembly of the CGTP voted April 7 to remove federation officials identified with the other Stalinist faction, the PCP(M).

The PCP(M) union leaders have sought to ally the CGTP with the United Struggle Command (CUL), a coalition of independent unions whose leaderships identify either with forces to the left of the CP factions or with the PSR,⁵ a party led by radical ex-military officers.

The CUL and the more militant CGTP unions have been in the forefront of the

4. Deep differences inside the pro-Moscow Partido Comunista Peruana (Peruvian Communist Party) erupted in an open split in January. A dissident faction challenging the old leadership's efforts at "dialogue" with the Morales Bermúdez government and earlier uncritical support of the Velasco Alvarado regime claims to represent a majority of the organization. This faction now publishes a paper called *Mayoría* (Majority) and is referred to as the PCP(M). The old-guard faction has retained the party's traditional organ *Unidad* (Unity) and is called the PCP(U).

5. Partido Socialista Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Socialist Party).

1. Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú (General Confederation of Peruvian Workers).

recent strikes and struggles and are seeking to offer their leadership as an alternative to the old-guard Stalinists now atop the CGTP. About 100 delegates walked out of the April 7 CGTP assembly and issued a statement denouncing the undemocratic maneuvers of the bureaucrats and calling for another assembly "in a headquarters that can guarantee the democratic functioning" of such a gathering. (The last two assemblies have been held at the CGTP's headquarters in Lima; the bureaucracy's control has been assured by false credentials, goon squads, and, at the February assembly, police assistance.)

The statement by the opposition delegates has received the support of several regional CGTP federations; national unions of leather, gas, metallurgical, and mining workers; and important local unions of telephone workers and the SIDERPERU (Chimbote) steelworkers. □

Save Solomon Mahlangu!

Solomon Mahlangu, a twenty-one-year-old former student from Pretoria, was sentenced to hang by a South African court on March 2. He was convicted of involvement in the killing of two whites in Johannesburg last year.

Mahlangu was charged under nine counts, including murder and attempted murder, as well as offenses under such repressive laws as the Terrorism Act and the Internal Security Act.

During the trial, which began February 13, Mahlangu told the court that he had joined the outlawed African National Congress shortly after the massive Black uprising that began in Soweto in June 1976. He said that he had left the country to undergo military training and that he returned to South Africa in June 1977 with two others. The three were soon discovered, leading to an alleged shootout in which two whites were killed. Mahlangu testified that he himself had not participated in the shooting.

Of the other two, one escaped and Mondy Motloung, who was arrested, was so severely beaten by police that he suffered irreversible brain damage, later being declared unfit to stand trial.

The judge accepted Mahlangu's testimony that he did not participate in the shooting, but nevertheless convicted him of murder. As sentence was passed, Mahlangu shouted "amandla" (power) and gave a clenched-fist salute.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement, based in London, had called for an international campaign to save Mahlangu's life. "Mahlangu is a South African patriot who was prepared to struggle for the freedom of his people," the group declared.

"If the South African authorities persist and carry out this death sentence it will be an act of provocation and will set a precedent for all the other detainees languishing in South African gaols awaiting trial."

'Hands Off Trade Union Rights!'

Sri Lankan Unionists Condemn Antilabor Moves

Many of the most important trade unions in Sri Lanka have banded together to oppose threatened government attacks against the workers' right to strike. Sixteen unions, encompassing virtually all major labor bodies except for those controlled by the ruling United National Party (UNP), formed a Joint Trade Union Action Committee (JTUAC) to carry out picketing and other protest actions against President J. R. Jayewardene's proposed labor laws.

The protests were prompted by the publication on January 31 of a government "White Paper on Employment Relations." In it, the regime proposed to severely restrict the right to strike by making all strikes illegal in sectors deemed to be "essential services," by providing for compulsory arbitration with no right to strike in all industries where the minister of labor established so-called Employee Councils, by requiring written notice for any strike at least three weeks in advance, and by making any employee subject to automatic dismissal for participating in an illegal strike.

The proposals also suggest the setting up of "Employee Councils," which the government hopes to "substitute" for

workers' right to collective bargaining through their trade unions. If enacted, the measures would also give employers extensive powers to fire workers for any reason, with no provision for any right to challenge a dismissal.

Thirteen of the unions in the JTUAC issued a joint statement that said, "In the circumstances, we declare that the real purpose of the draft law is to prevent the workers of Sri Lanka from exercising their fundamental rights as workers, and to deprive them of any security of employment, in order to enable their more ruthless exploitation in the interests of foreign and local capital" (emphasis in original).

One of the signers of the statement was Bala Tampoe, general secretary of the Ceylon Mercantile Union and leader of the Revolutionary Marxist Party, Sri Lankan section of the Fourth International.

One of the slogans under which the unions are organizing their protest actions is "Hands Off Trade Union Rights!"

In a display of international solidarity, the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan (Sohyo), which has a membership of 4.7 million, sent a letter to Jayewardene March 8 protesting the threatened restrictions on the Sri Lankan union movement.

But IMF Still Not Satisfied

Soares Announces Steep Rise in Food Prices

The working people of Portugal got more bad news the weekend of April 8-9, when the "socialist" government of Mario Soares announced big rises in food prices.

Trade and Tourism Minister Basilio Horta said that prices in a "shopping basket" of subsidized foods would rise between 10% and 38%. Imported meat will no longer be subsidized, and future consumption will have to rely more on home produce, he said. (Portugal now imports about half of its food.)

The belt-tightening measures are part of an "economic stabilization plan" that Soares presented to parliament in early April. The austerity program is aimed at satisfying demands of the International Monetary Fund for slashing the government's budget deficit and easing the country's massive trade imbalance. The IMF and other foreign creditors are holding up \$800 million in badly needed loans, until Portugal proves itself "credit-worthy."

In addition to the food-price increases, the plan calls for a steep rise in the sales

tax, from 12% to 16%, and new taxes of between 10% and 15% on hairdressing services, movie and theater tickets, and restaurant meals.

Also part of Soares's austerity plan are new increases in electricity, gas, and water rates.

According to a report by Robert McCloughin in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* of April 16, "People are likely to find their housekeeping budgets cut by about a third" as a result of the price and tax increases.

Soares has also promised the IMF that public spending will be held down to last year's level, after adjustment for inflation, and that workers' real wages will be cut by more than 10%.

The IMF is not satisfied, however. The negotiations are secret, but rumor has it that U.S. imperialism's financial cop is demanding a further 30% devaluation of the escudo, in addition to the measures already announced. □

Russell Tribunal Issues Verdict on Political Blacklisting

[The following is the preliminary report and verdict issued by the Third International Bertrand Russell Tribunal April 4 upon conclusion of its investigation into political blacklisting in West Germany.

[The tribunal, initiated by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, has attracted political support throughout Europe in face of bitter attacks from the Bonn regime. Among those serving on the twenty-eight-member International Jury were American drama critic and playwright Eric Bentley, Italian SP leader Ricardo Lombardi, historian and Tito biographer Vladimir Dedijer from Yugoslavia, and Dutch professor of philosophy Lolle Nauta.

[Future sessions of the tribunal will look into censorship and the denial of rights in criminal court proceedings in West Germany.*]

* * *

Preamble

The Third International Russell Tribunal on the state of human rights in the Federal Republic of Germany has held its first session in Frankfurt/Harheim from March 28 to April 4, 1978.

The investigation at this session related solely to the question of *Berufsverbote*, namely:

—Are citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany and West Berlin being denied the right to exercise their professions because of their political views?

The Tribunal received expert reports relating to:

—The origins and development of *Berufsverbote*.

—The legal aspects of *Berufsverbote*.

—The procedures through which the practice of *Berufsverbote* is applied.

—The psychological aspects of *Berufsverbote*.

More than 500 cases were reviewed in the process of selecting the 12 cases which were thoroughly researched and documented before being presented during the public hearings. Presentations were made from summaries prepared by rapporteurs who are members of the legal profession and through the testimony of 9 of the persons whose cases were selected for public scrutiny. Both the rapporteurs and

the case subjects were asked unrehearsed questions by members of the Tribunal after they testified in narrative form. In the course of taking this testimony, the members of the Tribunal heard details of other similar or related cases and received documentation revealing additional information about the practice of *Berufsverbote*.

Pursuant to the Launching Statement of the Tribunal (October 28, 1977), an effort was made to present evidence in support of the propriety of the *Berufsverbote* policy. Accordingly invitations to appear were sent to the administrations involved in the 12 cases which were heard by the public. Only half bothered to respond; none appeared. In addition three university professors and two well-known journalists, whose expertise and position in favour of the government policy were known through their published works, were also asked to appear. Four responded negatively; the fifth merely failed to respond at all. The Tribunal appealed to the federal and state authorities to send representatives and documentation in support of the necessity and constitutionality of the institution of *Berufsverbote*. In the absence of any response, the Tribunal received in evidence the documentation published by the authorities on this question.

Summary of the Evidence

The Tribunal found that the cases presented to it were investigated and prepared with thoroughness. No case was heard unless each principal aspect was corroborated by verifiable documentation. In one instance, a report was rejected for lack of sufficient documentation, and will remain outside the Tribunal's consideration unless and until it is properly supplemented.

It is impossible in this preliminary report fully to analyze all of the evidence received. An analysis of the evidence will be made in the coming months and will be published in a more detailed report on *Berufsverbote*. However, a clear and consistent pattern has emerged and is presented below.

The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany guarantees the basic human rights recognized in International Law. In particular, it declares that each citizen shall enjoy freedom of expression and association and the right of assembly and petition. In addition, the Basic Law provides that political parties may be freely established and may continue to function unhindered unless declared unconstitu-

tional by the Federal Constitutional Court. Of particular relevance to an inquiry on *Berufsverbote* are the constitutional guarantees that all Germans shall be able to choose their occupation or profession as well as their places of work and training, and, most significantly, that no one may be prejudiced because of his/her political opinions.

There is a long-standing tradition in the Federal Republic of Germany concerning the behaviour and attitude of civil servants and other government employees. Indeed, the constitution requires that the public service be regulated with due regard to the traditional principles of the professional civil service. Foremost among the special duties of the government employee is the obligation scrupulously to obey the letter of the law. Presumably every such employee is bound to uphold each mandate of the constitution, the supreme law of the land.

More than 15 percent of all employees in the Federal Republic and West Berlin work in the public service sector, and their number continues to grow. A wide range of occupations is governed by the laws and regulations controlling public service. It is not only those working in the federal, state and local administrations who are affected, but also teachers and others working in schools and universities, railway and postal employees and hospital workers, to mention some of the largest categories.

On January 28, 1972, the federal chancellor and the prime ministers of the states issued a decree concerning radicals, in which they declared:

The federal chancellor and the government heads of the constituent states have ratified a set of principles concerning the membership of civil servants in extreme organisations. In accordance with the laws for civil servants on federal and regional level and the corresponding stipulations valid for employees and workers, those appointed in the civil services are obliged to profess their loyalty to the free democratic basic order according to the constitution and to commit themselves to its preservation. Endeavours hostile to the constitution represent a violation of this obligation. The membership of civil servants in parties or organisations which oppose the constitutional order—as well as any other sort of support for such parties and organisations—will lead as a rule to a conflict of loyalties. Should this result in an abnegation of duties, then it must be decided in each single case which measures the employer takes. The appointment to the civil services presupposes in accordance with the stipulations stated above that the applicant ensure that he actively support the free democratic basic order at all times according to the constitution. Should there exist well-founded

*Additional information on the tribunal may be obtained from the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Ltd., Bertrand Russell House, Gamble Street, Nottingham NG7 4ET, England.

doubts in this respect, then as a rule, this justifies a refusal.

It is readily recognized that such public declarations are not legislative acts and do not have the force of law. Nevertheless, the declaration of January 28, 1972, quickly became an official standard without regard to whether any aspect of the pronouncement was in conflict with any constitutional guarantee. Bureaucrats thereafter acted as if the legislature had enacted a standard of loyalty and a criterion of suitability for public employment.

The ease with which the Radical Decree was universally adopted and employed reflects the abnormally hostile reaction to any progressive (left) political effort in Germany. The issuance and use of the Radical Decree was the first major step in institutionalizing the undermining of what might have developed into an effective political force to counter the ruling center and the right parties in the years to follow. The failure of the Federal Constitutional Court to invoke the relevant constitutional guarantees, thereby restricting the encroachments of the executive branch and ending the practice of *Berufsverbote*, has been the most significant factor in the successful implementation of this conservative policy.

The manner of the implementation of this policy is a reflection of the substance upon which it is based. The pattern of the consistent methods employed was readily obvious from the evidence which showed that:

a. The intelligence service (*Verfassungsschutz*) operates on a huge scale to gather information about every kind of lawful political activity by German citizens: i.e., membership in legal groups and parties, signing letters and petitions, attending public meetings, distributing pamphlets, participating in demonstrations, making speeches and publishing.

b. Applicants for employment in the public service are informed that doubts exist as to their political loyalty on the basis of lawful activities, often only occasional or long-past, on the basis of reports by the *Verfassungsschutz*.

c. Legal political parties and groups, as well as individuals, who are critical of any government policy, including *Berufsverbote*, can be considered "hostile to the constitution" by the authorities. Not only membership in such organisations, but any kind of association with such parties, their members or sympathizers, may be enough to create doubts as to a person's "loyalty." As a result, *Berufsverbote* affects Communists, whose party is legally constituted in Germany, and in addition those who participate in virtually any left-of-center political activity.

d. Usually the information that prompts a loyalty hearing is sent to the prospective employer by the data-gathering intelli-



Here in Bavaria, the decree on radicals is applied with thoroughness.

gence service. Sometimes the hearing is required because of an accusation by an informant, such as a neighbour or a co-worker. The hearing is behind closed doors, where persons who are summoned are subject to interrogations as to their political opinions. The process, as described by many witnesses, confirms what the notice of the hearing intimated: that a nightmare has begun, from which there is no honest escape. The suspects are assumed to be guilty of being enemies of the constitution unless they can prove their "innocence." Their attempts to explain complex political matters are met with interruptions and demands to answer "yes" or "no." Refusal to answer or attend the hearings is taken as an admission of guilt. What is required is a recantation of disapproved opinions, and an unequivocal profession of officially sanctioned views. Often, denials of radical views, even in the absence of contrary evidence, are disbelieved.

e. All the concepts—loyalty, hostility to the constitution and the free democratic basic order—in this process are vague and undefined, thereby exposing the subjects of the hearings to uncontrolled and arbitrary rulings.

f. In some cases, an even more dangerous extension of the horizon of guilt has been made: people may be considered loyal, but, because of their associations, it may be judged that there is a risk that they might become disloyal.

The evidence considered by the Tribunal mainly concerned the practice of *Berufsverbote* by state (*Länder*) authorities. Some evidence was received that similar forms

of discrimination were applied by trade unions and professional bodies to their members. There was also evidence that there was considerable collaboration and exchange of information between these bodies and the Intelligence Service.

It was not possible to determine the number of people directly affected by *Berufsverbote* because the government has not released such information. It was however clear that the extent of surveillance by the *Verfassungsschutz* was vast and increasing.

EVALUATION

Principles

The Third Russell Tribunal bases itself strictly on internationally codified human rights and the growing demand for their further extension by people throughout the world. The Tribunal derives its legitimacy from these human rights: they constitute its sole criteria.

Applying these criteria to the *Berufsverbote*, which were the subject of the first session of the Tribunal, the following principles are basic:

- that there be no restriction on the right of free access to professions;
- that freedom of expression exists without any kind of discrimination;
- that there be freedom of association;
- that membership in an organisation be free from the fear of sanctions.

A legal order based on the rule of law calls for the full application of these principles. Restrictions upon their application

can only be justified if the exercise of rights can be shown directly to interfere with the basic rights and freedom of other citizens.

The Tribunal states emphatically that, in the types of public service which it has studied and where it has found that *Berufsverbote* is practised, the denial of employment on the ground of adherence to disapproved opinions, or association with disapproved organisations, is not compatible with human rights. Professional competence and the conduct of workers in the performance of their work, are the proper criteria for determining engagement and dismissal.

Inseparable from any process of discrimination against the holders of certain opinions is the machinery of surveillance and inquisition through which it is enforced. It is claimed that these methods protect the freedom of the people; but in reality they enhance domination by the state.

There is a particularly strong need for the exercise of critical judgement by public servants and for freedom of debate inside and outside government institutions at the time when vital decisions are increasingly being removed from open debate and taken in secret by the state administration.

The Consequences of *Berufsverbote*

For the individuals affected, exclusion from the public service is likely to be devastating. Often there is no possibility of alternative employment; for even when the state is not the major employer the alleged "disloyalty" will become known wherever one goes. Much more than material loss, there is the loss of a major source of self-fulfillment; the psychological damage from being made to feel outcast from society; the humiliation of the investigative interviews; and the long delays, uncertainties and anxieties which occur before a decision is reached.

Apart from the individuals affected, large sectors of the population are led to feel fearful of exercising their political rights. They have reason to fear that any action which those in authority may consider to be of subversive character, or show subversive associations, may one day be denounced and held against them should they wish to enter the public service. Either of two results is likely to follow. Many may censor their words, refrain from engaging in political debate, suppress

their own creative possibilities and yield to the pressure to conform. Many others may turn to defiance and some to acts of private or public despair. Both these tendencies are profoundly damaging to society. No society can progress, particularly at a time when enormous economic and social problems have to be faced in the world, without the participation and unrestricted flow of ideas from all sectors, especially its youth.

From the evidence we received, it became clear that there may be a real possibility that individuals wishing to enter private employment are confronted with the further extension of the measures taken by the state, and that the domestic intelligence agency (*Verfassungsschutz*) transmits its information to private employers. We did not, however, receive any specific and direct evidence on this point.

The extent of human rights violations by the practice of *Berufsverbote* and the consequences which have resulted must be regarded as extremely serious. Those in authority are becoming more demanding in their criteria of loyalty and in the proofs required to satisfy them. The distinction between loyalty to constitutional principles, loyalty to the State and loyalty to those who administer the State is fast disappearing. The *Verfassungsschutz* is growing rapidly, and, like most bureaucracies, tends to acquire its own momentum. A continuation of these developments can only point in one direction: to a society

where only those who are in positive conformity with the status quo can hold posts in the public service. Must this road be followed? Can it lead anywhere but to an even greater loss of liberty?

CONCLUSIONS

The Tribunal put the following four questions to the vote of the members of the International Jury. The vote was taken by secret ballot; the members of the German advisory committee did not vote.

1. Are citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany being denied the right to exercise their profession in the public service on account of their political views? For: 16. Against: nil. Abstaining: nil. Requiring more evidence: nil.

2. Does the practice of *Berufsverbote* represent a serious threat to human rights? For: 16. Against: nil. Abstaining: nil. Requiring more evidence: nil.

3. Is the practice of *Berufsverbote* applied in a discriminatory way against people holding opinions of a particular political character? For: 16. Against: nil. Abstaining: nil. Requiring more evidence: nil.

4. Is the practice of *Berufsverbote* linked with discriminatory practices perpetrated by other bodies, especially, trade unions, professional organisations and in churches? For: 7. Against: nil. Abstaining: 1. Requiring more evidence: 8.

10,000 Remain Behind Bars

130 Political Prisoners Executed in Bangladesh

At least 130 dissidents, and perhaps up to several hundred, were executed in Bangladesh in late 1977, according to a report released by Amnesty International February 27. In addition, Amnesty International charged, there are between 10,000 and 15,000 political prisoners in the country.

The executions followed two rebellions in the ranks of the army in Bogra on September 30, 1977, and in Dacca on October 2. The defendants had been tried under martial-law regulations by military tribunals, without recourse to the usual legal procedures. The regime of Gen. Ziaur Rahman admits that it has executed thirty-seven persons, but Amnesty International had a list of 130 who had been executed, and of another twenty-seven who were awaiting execution as of December.

The bulk of the 10,000 to 15,000 political prisoners are said to be members of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD—Socialist National Party), the largest left party in

the country, which was outlawed after the recent military rebellions.

Amnesty International reported that a number of top leaders of the JSD, who had already been sentenced to long terms by military tribunals in July 1976, were again being tried. M.A. Jalil, A.M.S. Abdur Rab, and Shahjahan Siraj have reportedly been charged in connection with a demonstration against late President Mujibur Rahman in March 1974.

Replying to the Amnesty International report, Joint Home Affairs Secretary Manzoor Ul-Karim claimed that its estimate of the number of political prisoners was a "gross exaggeration." However, he admitted that dissidents are arrested on the basis of their views, stating that "persons having different political persuasions are detained . . . with a view to preventing them from indulging in prejudicial activities." □

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Selections From the Left

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"What Is To Be Done," weekly paper of the International Marxist Group. Published in Frankfurt, West Germany.

Writing in the March 23 issue, Christian Dettmann explains how the Third Bertrand Russell International Tribunal on political blacklisting (*Berufsverbote*), which opened in Frankfurt on March 29, lays the basis for a broad campaign to defend civil liberties in West Germany:

"Beginning with the *Berufsverbote*, a tendency toward the systematic buildup of the repressive tools of the bourgeois state gained the upper hand at the start of the 1970s. Under the pretext of 'combating terrorism,' paragraph 88a, surveillance of defense attorneys, and other measures were enacted. And all this without any resistance to speak of, with the exception of the movement against the *Berufsverbote*, initiated essentially by the German Communist Party. The responses of the left groups, whether demonstrations or other forms of activity, continued to go unheeded, at least by the mass workers organizations, the trade unions.

"There were two reasons for this. On the one hand, there was the working class's lack of practical experience with the bourgeois state itself—the confrontations in the 1976 printers strike, for example, represented basically the first conflicts after a prolonged period in which the class struggle seemed to be at a standstill. Crippled by the threat of unemployment, and further restrained by the Social Democratic ideology of 'we're all in the same boat,' there was scarcely any opportunity for the left groups to gain a hearing inside the trade unions.

"On the other hand, there were the left groups themselves. Their responses to the repression, their forms of activity, basically remained confined to their own ranks. Blind forays against the mass reformist organizations led for the most part to strategies of "unmasking" and "pillorying" them. The left groups had no access to the trade unions, and got no response inside them, as long as they were not in a position to link up with the consciousness and experiences of the working class itself. What was needed was to develop a policy, to develop common forms of activity going beyond the inadequate organizational structures of the radical left. What was needed was to integrate forces that were profoundly imbued with Social Democratic consciousness. These questions have been posed anew to the entire West German left by the Russell Tribunal, precisely because its conception

and whole framework demand not a 'revolutionary,' but a radical democratic outlook as a precondition for supporting it.

"Precisely because of its independence and methods of work, it is possible for the tribunal to generate publicity that can reach into the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions. A new attentiveness to and interest in the fight against the growth of repression in West Germany are being created. However, this is not an end in itself. This interest, this increased eagerness for political discussion, must be put to use and turned into actions. And that is exactly where the task of the left groups lies. The Russell Tribunal is no substitute for our own struggles and mobilizations.

"The task of the left groups is now to make use of this public attention and put forward perspectives for common actions, develop plans, so that the attention is not allowed to fall back into everyday lethargy. Developing the initial work against the further restriction of democratic rights in West Germany depends especially on one point. What is needed is to break with ultraleft "unmasking" strategies—the policy of the left groups in past years; to break with the idea that common actions should have as their precondition an organizational break with the Social Democratic Party or other reformist organizations, for example. Both the citizens' initiative committees against the *Berufsverbote*—however different the assessments of these structures may be among the various currents of the left—and the joint support to the Russell Tribunal show that common actions and activities are possible on a limited basis. When all is said and done, this is one of the most important results of all the work up to now around the Russell Tribunal."

Lutte Ouvrière

"Workers Struggle," Paris weekly supported by a grouping of militants who view themselves as Trotskyist in orientation.

The April 15 issue reports on the new plan for the steel industry currently being drawn up by the French government.

"Apart from the fact that the state is apparently preparing to pass the sponge over the nine billion francs [about US\$1.8 billion] it lent over the last ten years to Sacilor and Usinor, and that it will probably reopen its coffers to the steel industry, 10,000 to 15,000 new layoffs are envisioned between now and 1983. These are in addition to the 16,000 already provided for in the 1977 version of the plan.

"In Lorraine, the layoffs continue. Since March 31 hundreds of immigrant workers



Lutte Ouvrière

"Instead of cleaning up the 'black tide,' the government has decided to wipe out the debts of the steel barons."

have been let go. The entire steel basin of Metz-Thionville-Longwy, already hard hit by unemployment, will undergo massive new layoffs if the bosses are allowed to carry out these new measures, as seems likely. The state, which not only authorizes the layoffs but subsidizes them, is still talking about a plan of 'reconversion' for Lorraine, promising to create jobs in the future. While awaiting these future jobs—which at any rate will not replace those that the restructuring of the steel industry denied to all the laid-off workers and youth who cannot find jobs—the new measures are being taken in the steel plants with resignation. But the trade unions and parties of the left, who since 1975 have held out the prospect of nationalizations through a victory of the left in the legislative elections, bear a heavy share of the blame for the current downturn in struggle, and have left the workers without any perspective."

Political Consequences of the Israeli Blitzkrieg

By Tamara Nir

"We view the Arab question through a rifle's sight"—that is the famous declaration of the Israeli general Abraham Yofe some years ago.

After expelling the Palestinians from their homeland and establishing a Jewish state in 1948, the Zionist regime at first considered the Palestinian question merely a diplomatic nuisance, which its delegate to the United Nations had to deal with whenever an Arab state raised the refugee question.

Since 1965, however, confronted with the armed and political struggle of the Palestinian national movement, the rulers of Israel have been determined to eradicate the problem—which has grown into an international question—through the rifle's barrel. And it was this "final solution" that Israel sought to achieve by means of the recent "purifying operation" in the south of Lebanon.

Aim of the Invasion

With an army of 30,000 soldiers, backed up by the air force and navy, Tel Aviv's objective was to strike a deathblow to the Palestinian resistance. Begin's original plan was to invade southern Lebanon, destroy the Palestinian resistance in a blitzkrieg, and create a ten-kilometer "security belt" controlled by the Zionists through their Phalangist ally.

Israel assumed that Syria would respect the tacit agreement that exists between the two countries and thus would not cross the "red line" [i.e., the Litani River]. And, indeed, Syria was unwilling to get into a confrontation with the Israeli army—an attitude that was manifested by all the Arab regimes.

However, the Zionist forces failed to attain their objective, because the Palestinian combatants offered stout resistance and then fell back toward the north and continued to fight.

Aware of its failure, the Tel Aviv government decided to advance its forces north up to the Litani River, hoping that within that territory they would be able to carry out their mission.

But the second stage of the operation failed too. In spite of heavy losses, the Palestinian resistance retained its capacity to wage war.

The Israeli forces succeeded, it is true, in bringing death and destruction to Lebanon: more than 200 Palestinian combatants killed and another 200 wounded; more than 2,000 Palestinian and Lebanese civili-

ans killed; 265,000 civilians turned into refugees (many for the second, third, or fourth time) seeking shelter in Saida and Beirut; and many villages turned into rubble.

Planned Long in Advance

The Israeli plan was not new. According to some Israeli newspapers, it had already been prepared when the Labour Party was in power. But beyond the details of this specific plan, one can state without hesitation that for years the Zionist army has wanted to perform a "purifying operation" in southern Lebanon. During the Lebanese civil war, the Israeli government intended more than once to carry out an incursion beyond its northern border, but was held back by Washington. It was the latter's estimate that an Israeli attack would provoke a mass mobilization of Palestinians and Lebanese; and hence, although they were militarily much weaker, it was safer to rely on the Arab regimes to deal a blow to the Palestinian resistance.

Israel had to content itself during the Lebanese civil war with patrolling southern Lebanon, giving military training and aid to the Phalangists, and carrying out a naval siege. After the war, it deepened its alliance with the Phalangists, widened the range of its relations with the pro-Phalangist Christian population to include economic ties, and launched small-scale military attacks against the Palestinians and the Moslem villagers.

The timing of the massive Israeli invasion was not accidental. Begin used as a pretext the "bus operation" claimed by Fatah, to justify the offensive as a retaliatory measure. But it is the wider political context that accounts for the timing of such a large-scale, destructive operation.

A Kick in the Teeth for Sadat

The negotiations between Sadat and Begin had reached a dead end. The Egyptian president had offered something beyond what any Zionist had ever conceived of—recognition of the Israeli state by the biggest Arab country, paving the way for a settlement with the Egyptian regime, and perhaps with other Arab governments; and no less important, a clear

hint on Sadat's part that he was prepared to exclude the Palestine Liberation Organization from the negotiating table.

However, the belly-crawling of the Egyptian leader, the split within the Arab world, and the fact that the United States was not about to exert pressure on its Zionist ally only increased the arrogance of the Tel Aviv government and whetted its appetite.

Thus, Begin rejected Sadat's peace initiative by refusing to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, to consider any political "solution" to the Palestinian question, or to evacuate the Jewish settlements in the territories occupied in the 1967 war (and moreover created new ones during the peace talks).

That arrogance explains the decision made by Begin's government to destroy the Palestinian resistance once and for all. But, intoxicated by its previous successes, it committed one basic mistake—it completely underestimated the determination and capacity of the Palestinian movement to fight back against the Zionist army. That fundamental error spoiled the entire plan.

Counting on a blitz war, Israel believed the fighting would be over before any international factor would interfere. And had it worked out as the Zionists wished, this would not have contradicted American interests; nor would it have been regarded unfavorably by the Egyptian government, which is seeking a peace settlement for which the PLO constitutes the central obstacle.

But faced with tremendous resistance on the part of the Palestinian national movement, the battle turned into a war, and the Israeli plan was doomed to fail. Acting very quickly, the United States pushed for a UN Security Council vote to establish the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL); and, indeed, the "blue helmets" arrived in Lebanon on the eleventh day of the invasion.

Role of UN Troops

The primary role of these troops is to move the Palestinians out of their positions along the Litani River and to prevent them from entering the south. The Syrian regime, for its part, offered its forces to restrain the Palestinian resistance in the north. The second step planned by imperialism is to replace the Israeli forces in the south.

But Israel has not yet decided on its next

1. The March 11 Palestinian commando operation north of Tel Aviv that resulted in the deaths of forty-four persons.—*IP/I*

move. The Zionist leadership had not foreseen the complications that arose. It could not. It has never taken into account the possibility of failure.

The failure of the Israeli forces to achieve their objective does not only mean that Israel will be obliged to go on confronting the Palestinian struggle; it has wider political implications both domestically and internationally.

The invasion of southern Lebanon was the first large-scale military confrontation between the Zionist state and an Arab force since the October 1973 war. Since the defeat, which was primarily political, experienced by Israel in 1973, the Israeli leadership has wanted to prove to the world as well as its own citizens that the October War was nothing but a blunder of the army intelligence service. Some army officers have even favoured waging a new war for the sole purpose of proving that the Zionist army cannot be defeated. Such a demonstration has taken on considerable importance in light of the growing alliance between American imperialism and the Arab regimes, and, hence, the mounting fear of the Israeli state that it would no longer be the only force upon which the U.S. would rely.

Differences in Israel

But the October War created deep fissures within Israeli society and opened a period of severe economic, social, political, and ideological crisis. Begin's election to the office of prime minister nourished hopes among the Israeli population that the new strong government would be capable of solving the crisis.

And, indeed, Begin seemed to be in luck during the first months in power. Shortly after the government had introduced its New Economic Plan, which was an open attack on the working class, Sadat made his spectacular visit. Begin was given credit for the renewed dream of peace. His hard-line policy appeared to be paying off. However, the false hopes soon began to evaporate.

The peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt opened a debate within the Israeli leadership—between those who are prepared to make some minor concessions, and those who adhere to the program of the Likud.²

The impasse in the Begin-Sadat talks has sharpened the differences between those who argue that Israel should seize the opportunity and establish political and economic relations with Egypt—although their proposals are far from what could be accepted by Sadat—and those who argue that since peace between the Zionist state and the Arab states can only be temporary, territories controlled by the Israeli army constitute a far better guarantee of its security than any settlement.

Moreover, one should not underestimate the ideological component, which usually accompanies the latter argument, that evacuation of Jewish settlements (a condition for any agreement) implies a negation of Zionism and thus the beginning of its end.

The debate along this line—Zionist hawks vs. Zionist doves—actually began in 1967 with the conquest of new territories. It occurred between political parties, and even more within them. However, since Sadat's visit, it has had concrete implications and consequences.

In spite of the debate, Begin seemed rather well in command. He launched his baptism of fire . . . but failed. And that was not a failure in a confrontation with an Arab state, but with the resistance movement of the Palestinian people, whose very existence is denied by Israel. It is the invasion of southern Lebanon that brings into the open all the aspects of the crisis of the Israeli state, which Begin sought to hide with a magician's gesture on May 17, 1977, the day he took office.

The invasion of southern Lebanon alerted the United States and convinced it that events were getting out of its control. During the first days of the incursion, Washington observed the developments without comment; but as it became clear that the Israeli forces were meeting fierce resistance and were pursuing their operations and extending the territory that they occupied, Washington was determined to get things back under its control and to keep a firm hand on a situation that was becoming more and more dangerous.

Carter Tries to Pick Up the Pieces

Israel's offensive jeopardized the gains of reaction during the Lebanese civil war. In addition, it could not be watched indifferently for long by the Arab regimes. The U.S. decision to intervene through the United Nations was the first link in the present chain of clashes between Washington and Tel Aviv.

Since the October 1973 war, the United States has been under mounting pressure from its Arab allies, notably Saudi Arabia and Egypt, to compel Israel to withdraw from the territories occupied during the 1967 war, or at least a significant part of them, and thus to pave the way for a peaceful settlement in the Arab East.

However, the course taken by the American government was just the opposite. Except for the case of the interim settlement between Israel and Egypt in 1975, no significant pressure was exerted on the Zionist state; U.S. policy was to grant Israel greater military and economic aid than ever and to exert pressure on its Egyptian ally instead.

But then Carter's plan to sell F-15 fighter aircraft to Saudi Arabia, the difficulties Begin met in his recent visit to Washington when Carter introduced his

"peace plan," and Carter's statements hinting that the United States has the means to exert pressure on its stubborn ally who refuses to make any steps towards Sadat once again uncovered the contradiction that characterizes the Zionist colonialist regime: Its very existence and strength is based upon its dynamic of expansion and colonization, but it has to subordinate its expansionist policy to the global interests of the imperialist power that it serves.

Options Not Attractive

Begin succeeded in uniting the whole Zionist camp around him after rumors circulated that the U.S. was attempting to bring about his replacement. But that unity can hardly last long in the face of the options open to the Tel Aviv government, none of which seem to it satisfactory:

(1) Whether to withdraw from Lebanon and keep the surveillance of the south in the hands of the Phalangists with the aid of the UN force, neither of which is capable of preventing the return of the Palestinian resistance combatants; or to keep an army of tens of thousands of soldiers there, which means it would have to pay a heavy price, especially in face of U.S. objections.

(2) Whether to accept the U.S. "peace plan" under which the West Bank would be internationalized for five years and its inhabitants would decide whether to join Israel or Jordan or remain in an "international" status; or to insist on no withdrawal from the West Bank and thus face the possibility that the United States would depart from its policy of using the carrot alone and start operating with the stick as well.

Begin's "hard-line" declarations on his return from the United States, as well as the statement of Ruhas Eliav, a member of the Israeli delegation to the UN, that Israeli troops would probably remain for a long time in Lebanon, indicate that the Tel Aviv government intends to continue its present policy.

But the defense minister's call—without prior consultation with his prime minister—for the formation of a "national peace government," which did not raise great enthusiasm in the opposition, is an indication that while the Israeli leadership needs a national front in order to face possible American pressure, it is not immune from cracks even in its own government.

The Peace Demonstration in Tel Aviv

However, the discord within the Zionist leadership and the disagreements among the various Zionist political parties in regard to the tactics that the government should employ in the negotiations with Sadat, or to prevent pressures from the U.S., or to control southern Lebanon, are

2. Begin's governing coalition.—IP/I

completely overshadowed by the new phenomenon that the Israeli state faces: A spontaneous demonstration of 30,000 persons took place on April 1 in Tel Aviv under the slogans "Better peace now than a greater Israel"; "Peace is not a dream"; and "The future of our children matters more to us than the graves of our ancestors."

The failure in peace as well as the failure in war shattered the confidence that military means constitute the solution to all political problems.

The new mass reaction to the government's rejection of Sadat's peace initiative, which awakened just after the invasion of southern Lebanon, is in the opposite direction to that taken by the "protest movement" which developed after the October War. Then, the demand was to remove those directly responsible for the "blunder" that "caused" Israel's failure in the war; today, the protest is against the very claim that war is inevitable.

Just as failure in war alone could not provoke a movement for peace, Sadat's peace initiative in itself was insufficient to create mass opposition to the militarist policy. It needed the failure in the invasion to create mass support to the ideas that were expressed in petitions of reserve army officers and students following the Israeli offensive.

No doubt, the demonstrators in Tel Aviv are far from having broken from Zionist ideology. And Sadat's peace initiative creates illusions that a settlement between the Arab regimes and the Zionist state can bring peace to the masses in the Arab East. But the outcry against the claim that there is no alternative but war collides with Zionism, which is doomed to be engaged in permanent fighting against the Arab masses, creating a deathtrap for the Jewish masses.

This mass reaction provides a glimpse of the possibility of the Arab socialist revolution breaking sectors of the Jewish masses from Zionist ideology.

In that sense one can understand the hysterical reactions of the Israeli leaders ("It smells of a military putsch," the minister of finance said) and the fact that no Zionist party is willing or able to lead a movement for peace, although each Zionist party has its "peace plan."

Israel Failed But the PLO Did Not Win

For the Palestinian combatants, the very existence of their national liberation movement was at stake in the fighting in Lebanon. It was not just another battle against the Israeli forces, but a war to maintain their sole base. After its defeat in Jordan, in September 1970, and after the heavy blows struck against it during the civil war in Lebanon, the Palestinian resistance has defied the Zionist attempt to crush it.

Forced to move north by the Israeli

attack, while Syria kept its forces at a certain distance from the "red line," the resistance forces consolidated themselves beyond the Litani River. Attacking from there south of the river, they prevented the Israeli joint force of armoured units, warships, and paratroopers from invading Tyre and Rashidiyeh.

However, the losses suffered by the resistance are enormous: Hundreds of combatants were killed and wounded. Its bases in the south were destroyed. The majority of the Muslim population fled to the north and the remaining Shiite inhabitants have usually been neutral toward the Israeli invaders. Several hundred additional Christian militiamen moved from the north to the territory occupied by Israel, to create a southern army based upon mixed units of Christians and Shiites.

Whatever the extent of success of the latter project and whichever force controls the south—the Zionists, the Phalangists, the "blue helmets," or a combination of these—it will be much harder for the Palestinian resistance to operate in southern Lebanon (one should bear in mind that it has been restricted since the end of the civil war). North of Litani, Syria deployed its forces, making no secret of its intention to restrain the Palestinian resistance. And along the Litani, the PLO leadership consented to evacuate the Palestinian positions and to hand them over to the UN forces.

Arab Regimes Tighten Grip

Since its creation, the Palestinian national movement has always found itself alone in the battlefield facing its enemies—whether Israel, the Hashemite forces, or the Syrian army. However, it has been less and less able to determine its own policy, as the grip of the Arab regimes on its leadership has tightened.

The acceptance by a majority of the PLO leadership of the proposal for a Palestinian mini-state within the framework of a peaceful settlement in the Arab East has largely conditioned the armed activities initiated by it. That, in turn, has weakened its political power.

Thus, four years ago—when the adoption of the mini-state proposal by the PLO leadership was considered by the Arab regimes as a great achievement by them—the Palestine Liberation Organization gained diplomatic victories that surpassed its gains in the field. Today, PLO gains in the field can hardly be translated to political advantage.

The Tel Aviv Commando Operation

The spectacular operation on the Tel Aviv-Haifa road was meant to serve as a signal to all political forces in the region—notably Egypt, the United States, and Israel—that no peace would be established in the Arab East without the PLO.

Moreover, knowing that Israel would not let it pass unanswered, it probably expected an attack (although not on the scale that occurred), which would oblige all Arab regimes, including Egypt, to form an alliance with it.

Hence the PLO aimed at achieving one of two possible outcomes: either halting altogether the Israeli-Egyptian peace talks or, even better from its point of view, forcing the negotiating parties to integrate it in the settlement.

However, neither one of these seems to have been achieved; and, paradoxically, it is probably the Egyptian government that has benefited from the situation. The growing tension in the relations between Washington and Tel Aviv, on the one hand, and the Palestinians' stout resistance to the Zionist army on the other, will only place Sadat in a better negotiating position in regard to the West Bank and Gaza strip. But the chances that the PLO will be integrated in the peace talks is as slight as it ever was. Washington has made crystal-clear statements backing Israel on its rejection of the PLO as a partner in a peace settlement.

At this very moment the PLO leadership is demonstrating most emphatically how it turns its victories to naught. The UN forces, which were sent to Lebanon as a tool of imperialism in its plan to impose order there, took upon themselves as their first task to remove the Palestinian combatants from positions that enable them to fight the Zionist forces—along the Litani. And they were given a warm welcome by Yasir Arafat, who said the following, after his meeting with Maj. Gen. Emmanuel Erskine, the UN commander in southern Lebanon: "On behalf of the PLO and the joint forces, I say that we are giving all facilities to the UN interim force in order that it may carry out its mission in Lebanon."

By "mission" Arafat obviously meant forcing Israel to withdraw. But in the meantime he was ordering his forces to evacuate their positions. In the interim imperialist settlement in Lebanon, Arafat is clearly a partner in the negotiations.

Arafat's policy is not carried out without obstacles. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine declared that there was no cease-fire as far as it was concerned, and among the Lebanese left there is opposition to the UN military presence. The Palestinian combatants and their Lebanese allies, encouraged by the failure of the Zionist operation, reveal no wish to evacuate their positions for the benefit of American and French imperialism.

The West Bank and Gaza Demonstrate Their Solidarity

While facing mounting difficulties in their offensive in southern Lebanon, the Israeli forces were confronted with a new wave of mass mobilization by the Palesti-

nian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Strikes at schools, a shutdown of the shops, demonstrations, volleys of stones, and fires set to tires expressed their determination to continue the struggle against the Zionist occupation and their total solidarity with the Palestinian combatants in Lebanon. In spite of the repressive measures—firing on demonstrators, killing and wounding some, arresting others—for a few days the military forces were unable to establish their rule.

That was the first mobilization on such a mass scale in the West Bank since 1976. The weakening of the Palestinian resistance in the civil war in Lebanon, the political blind alley into which the PLO has been placed, and the steep decrease of its armed struggle have been reflected in the West Bank by a lower level of combativity compared to 1975 and 1976. Hence, Sadat's peace initiative created no active reaction among the masses in the West Bank.

However, the fact that the Zionist army failed to crush the Palestinian resistance gave an impetus to the recent mass demonstrations and strikes in the West Bank.

Spectators at the Invasion

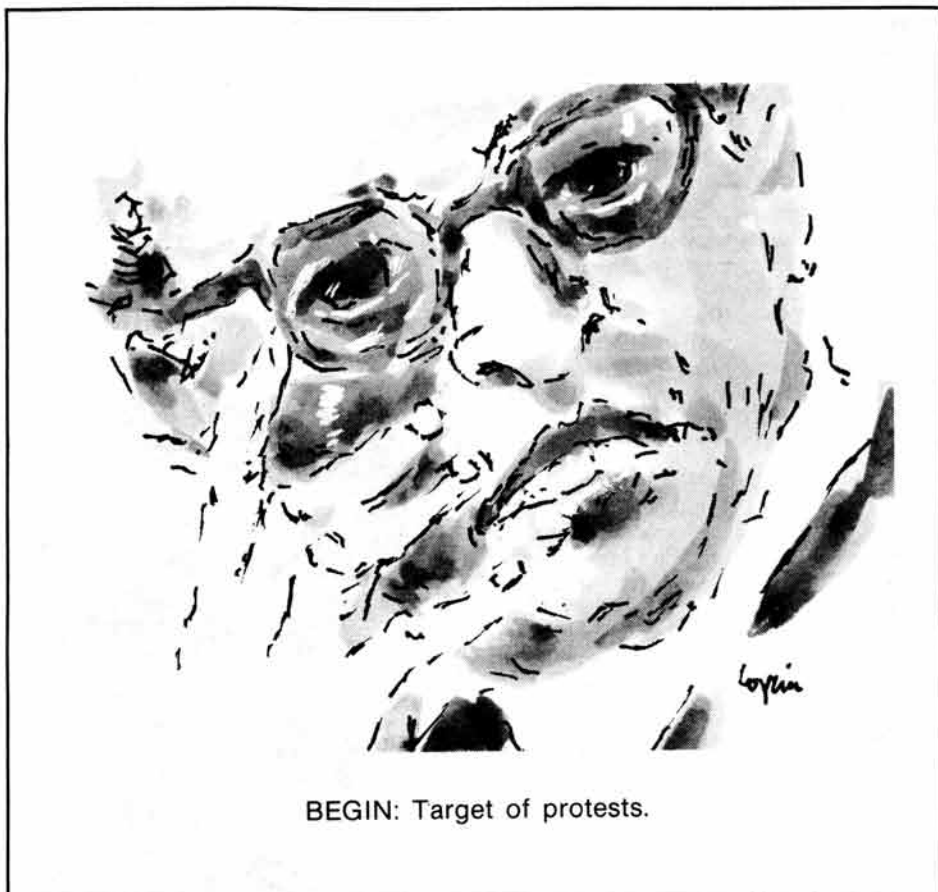
While the Zionist army was attempting—unsuccessfully—to strike a deathblow to the Palestinian resistance, it succeeded—unintentionally—in breaking up former alliances and creating new ones in the Arab region.

The Arab "Steadfastness Front,"³ which had never put up any resistance during its short life since Sadat's initiative, collapsed. Its conference of foreign ministers ended in a split pitting Syria and Algeria, which approved the entry of the UN forces, thus joining the states favoring a settlement with Israel, against Libya and South Yemen, which opposed the UN occupation. Egypt came out of its semi-isolation and hosted an Arab League foreign ministers meeting in Cairo. All member states were in attendance except Iraq and the four states of the "Steadfastness Front."

Although they have different and conflicting interests, all the Arab states were united in their determination to keep out of the Israeli-Palestinian fighting and to put an end to it if possible. Not one of the bourgeois Arab regimes wanted to confront Israel militarily.

At the same time, however, they cannot afford to remain aloof while the Palestinian struggle stands as a living proof of their own weakness. A continuing war

3. At a summit conference held in Tripoli December 2-5, 1977, following Sadat's visit to Israel, representatives of the governments of Syria, Iraq, Algeria, South Yemen, and Libya called for a "front for resistance and confrontation" to oppose Sadat's "high treason."—*IP/I*



BEGIN: Target of protests.

could undermine their stability—feeble, in any case—at home even more. And the only way to get out of the impasse was to exert pressure on Washington so that it would exercise its power over the Israeli state and compel it to withdraw.

Although acting as spectators—active ones, indeed—in the bloody scene, there are winners and losers among the Arab regimes, too. For the "Steadfastness Front," things are moving from bad to worse. Sadat's statement that this front was ineffectual proved to be correct, and their noisy defense of the Palestinian cause appears now more ridiculous than ever.

But it is Syria that got the worst of it. The Israeli invasion challenged Syrian control over Lebanon. Wishing to avoid any confrontation with the Israeli army, the Syrian regime had to become its collaborator. Its 30,000 soldiers stationed in Lebanon respected the tacit agreement with Israel to stay north of the Litani. Furthermore, after the UN decision to send the "blue helmets" to Lebanon, it declared a complete ban on entry into Lebanon of arms and reinforcements for the Palestinian resistance.

A Lift for Sadat?

It is the Egyptian regime that relatively benefits most from the situation created by the Israeli invasion. Sadat, who was critic-

ized on account of his peace initiative with Israel, has a chance now to regain his place in the Arab world, as his critics did not move a finger to prevent the Zionist forces from invading Lebanon. Furthermore, the Israeli invasion has made a peaceful settlement an urgent task for American imperialism, for the Palestinian question proved again to be a central factor undermining the social order in the Arab East. Thus, the chances that Washington will exert pressure on Israel over the question of the West Bank and Gaza are higher than before.

* * *

The Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon has raised three principal issues, the focus of which is the Palestinian question.

The most immediate issue is Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. Whatever alternative it chooses—withdrawal and letting the Phalangist and the UN forces take control in southern Lebanon, or leaving its army there—the Tel Aviv government will have to pay a very heavy price. Neither the Phalangists nor the UN troops are capable of preventing the Palestinians from returning to the south. The Christian militias are too weak and a mixed Christian-Shiite army does not seem to be a realistic prospect.

As far as the "blue helmets" are con-

cerned, although the PLO leadership is reluctant to engage them in an armed confrontation (UN approval is needed in order to be integrated in the peaceful settlement), it is unlikely that the PLO will stop its armed struggle when nothing is given in exchange.

Keeping its forces in southern Lebanon would mean that Israel was maintaining a large occupation army permanently engaged in war against the armed resistance. But that is not in the interests of the financial backers of the Israeli army. The U.S. aim of restoring order in Lebanon and marching toward an overall settlement rules out an Israeli presence in another country.

The second issue is the future of the Lebanese state. Bringing troops to Lebanon through the intermediary of the UN, the interest of American imperialism is to rebuild the Lebanese state. And the Palestinian resistance is the major obstacle to that goal. In spite of its policy of noninterference in the internal affairs of the Arab states, its very existence as an autonomous armed force engaged in struggle against Zionism has undermined bourgeois order in Lebanon. Its very presence was a dominant factor in the upsurge of the Lebanese mass movement, and in bringing about the collapse of the central authority of the Lebanese state.

Thus, it is indispensable for imperialism to get rid of that threat. However, neither the UN force nor the Lebanese right is capable of carrying out that task. The control exercised by the Syrian army over the Palestinian resistance has proved insufficient; and furthermore, the reconstruction of the Lebanese state will imply removing the Syrian forces. Syria, however, is interested in prolonging the existence of the Palestinian resistance, under its surveillance, as a bargaining chip in negotiations for a settlement.

And in regard to the issue of a peaceful settlement in the Arab East, the Palestinian question is the bone of contention among the negotiating parties—actual as well as potential.

Egypt is proposing "self-determination" for the Palestinian people, the forms of which will be determined by itself and its negotiating partners. Syria's interest is a Palestinian state handcuffed by the Syrian regime. Carter proposes to "internationalize" the Palestinian people. And Israel, which prefers a separate peace with Egypt, relies on its own forces to control the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and to destroy the resistance movement, since it is well aware that as long as the Zionist state exists, so will the Palestinian struggle.

Thus, while all the forces of reaction in the Arab region carry on plans to liquidate the Palestinian resistance—by means of clipping its wings, curbing it, or physically destroying it—the PLO leadership is pro-

posing its own project of liquidating the Palestinian resistance on condition that it receives an autonomous Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. However,

today, the political forces that advocated such a solution in the past have removed even this compromise from their agenda.

April 2, 1978

Acheampong Claims Victory in Referendum

Opponents of Military Rule Arrested in Ghana



ACHEAMPONG: Claims divine assistance.

Within days of claiming victory in a countrywide referendum on the future form of government in Ghana, the military junta headed by Gen. Kutu Acheampong banned three opposition groups and arrested scores of persons opposed to military rule.

The three groups that were banned on April 4 were the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice, the Front for the Prevention of Dictatorship, and the Third Force. All had campaigned for a "no" vote in the referendum, rejecting Acheampong's proposal for a nonparty "union government" that would include some civilians but in which the military and police would continue to wield a direct hand.

Amnesty International charged April 13 that up to fifty persons had been arrested, including William Ofori Atta, Victor Owusu, Komla Gbedemah, and J. E. Jantuah, all former government ministers in the regimes of either Kwame Nkrumah or Kofi Busia. John Bilson, leader of the Third Force, was likewise detained. Amnesty International called on the Ghanaian regime to confirm or deny the reports and in addition demanded that Acheam-

pong release several hundred persons detained without trial under the Preventive Custody Decree.

Acheampong originally called the referendum following protests against military rule last year. The "union government" proposal, which Acheampong claimed god had revealed to him in a dream, was designed to give the appearance of moving away from direct military rule.

But the referendum itself offered the population little real choice. A "yes" vote signified acceptance of continued military and police participation in a future regime. It was unclear whether a "no" vote meant approval of the present junta or a desire for the legalization of political parties and the establishment of a parliamentary regime, with greater democratic rights.

However, some of the opposition groups campaigned for a "no" vote on the basis that it would be a display of no-confidence in Acheampong's present economic and political policies. Consequently, supporters of Acheampong's "union government" proposal were accorded ample newspaper space and were allowed to hold public meetings, while opponents were severely harassed by the authorities and a number were beaten up by gangs of hired thugs.

Following the March 30 referendum, in which under half of the electorate voted, the regime claimed to have won about 54 percent of the vote, a bare majority. But even that result is suspect.

The agreed upon system of counting the votes in full public view was overturned when police descended on the polling stations, seized the ballots, and "counted" them in secrecy. After Justice Isaac Abban, the person presiding over the referendum, objected, he went into hiding for several days, charging that his life had been threatened by troops.

In one case, six ballot boxes from a constituency known to be opposed to the "union government" proposal "accidentally" fell into a river. When they were later "recovered," a majority of the ballots were reported as marked "yes."

Acheampong used the announced referendum results as a justification for banning the three opposition groups, claiming that they had been rejected by the voters.



Six Freedom Fighters Sentenced in South Africa

At the end of one of the longest trials under the Terrorism Act in South Africa, six Black activists were convicted April 6 and sentenced the following day to prison terms ranging from seven to eighteen years. Six other defendants were acquitted.

The racist regime charged the defendants, known as the Pretoria Twelve, with belonging to the banned African National Congress and to its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). They were accused of sabotaging railway installations, bringing arms and explosives into the country, recruiting people to undergo military training, and conspiring to overthrow the South African government.

They were originally arrested in late 1976 and went on trial early last year. The judge in that case died, and a new trial began in January 1978.

The trial was held in secret and some of the witnesses have testified that they were tortured into making statements against the accused. One of them, Ian Rwxaxa, said during the initial trial that he had been beaten, suffocated with wet clothes, and kicked. He said that Lieutenant Coetzee of the security police had threatened him with death. Rwxaxa was forced to testify in the second trial as well. Another prosecution witness, Alpheus Ramokgadi, said that his testimony had been rehearsed by the police.

The six who were convicted were Martin Ramokgadi, Naledi Tsiki, Mosima Sexwle, Lele Motaung, Simon Mohlanyeng, and Jacob Seathlo.

Support for Janata Party Fades

In a prominent by-election in the Indian state of Haryana, the candidate of the ruling Janata Party barely managed to win a seat in the Lok Sabha (lower house of Parliament). He won by a mere 18,400 votes, compared to the majority of 276,800 the Janata nominee won in the March 1977 elections in the same constituency. The results were seen as another indication of the Janata Party's eroding popular support.

In the same election, the candidate backed by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi came in second, trouncing a candidate put up by a rival faction of Gandhi's Congress Party. Gandhi, who had ruled India under a repressive state of emergency for more than a year and a half, was able to turn to account the Janata regime's

own repressive policies, reportedly drawing large crowds when she campaigned for her candidate.

Coup Attempt in Somalia

The official Somalian radio announced April 9 that an attempt to oust the regime of President Mohammed Siad Barre had been put down. It claimed that the army officers said to have been involved in the abortive coup were influenced by unnamed "foreign powers." A later broadcast referred to "new imperialists," a term recently employed by the Somalian regime to describe Moscow and Havana.

General Siad Barre himself went on radio and claimed, "All is well, all is normal." He urged Somalis to be "vigilant against the agents of colonialism who are out to disrupt national unity."

The attempted coup came just a few weeks after the Somalian armed forces withdrew from the Ogaden desert region of eastern Ethiopia.

All Hail to the Chief

It didn't look like a typical defense rally. In fact one NBC television commentator called it the "strangest" demonstration ever to be held in Washington.

No placards, no chants. The protesters dressed neatly in suits and ties. And—although the single speaker claimed to speak for "every man and woman of this bureau"—nearly all the demonstrators picked up by the TV cameras seemed to be white men in their forties, fifties, and sixties.

Thus did 500-700 current and former FBI agents pay homage to the three high-ranking bureau officials arraigned April 20 in the federal capital on federal conspiracy charges. Undoubtedly the protesters were motivated as much by the realization that their own necks could end up in the same noose as by any sense of FBI loyalty. Sixty-eight rank-and-file burglars have already been told they face administrative discipline within the FBI.

Former FBI head L. Patrick Gray, former number two man Mark Felt, and former intelligence chief Edward Miller are charged with civil-rights violations for authorizing illegal break-ins to search for information on radical fugitives. Although they presented a united face as they entered "not guilty" pleas, their defense strategies show the proverbial lack of

honor among thieves. Felt and Miller claim they were acting on Gray's orders when they authorized the burglaries; Gray denies ever giving such orders.

Theoretically the three could be sentenced to ten years in jail and a \$10,000 fine if convicted. This undoubtedly seems quite stiff to Gray, who escaped with only mild embarrassment when, as acting director of the FBI, he tore up important Watergate records and had them burned.

Gray belted out his "not guilty" plea in a manner befitting a former submarine commander. He did trip over a television cable as he left the courthouse, but the crowd of FBI faithful outside gave him a big round of applause anyway.

Soweto Snubs Council Elections

Reflecting the widespread opposition among Blacks in South Africa to any participation in government-imposed institutions, 94 percent of eligible voters in the Black township of Soweto stayed away from the polls during the April 15 elections to the Soweto Community Council.

The apartheid regime has been attempting to set up the council, which is to have limited administrative powers, to replace the old Urban Bantu Council that collapsed last year under direct pressure from student activists. An earlier attempt to hold elections in February also foundered as a result of widespread opposition.

Amnesty Announced in Chile

The Chilean military junta decreed an amnesty April 19 for all persons sentenced under the state of siege that was in force from September 11, 1973, until last March 10.

According to an Associated Press report from Santiago, the amnesty affects 1,200 persons in exile and 280 persons serving sentences in Chile.

The junta also declared that persons in exile could return to Chile upon requesting permission from the government.

Newly appointed civilian Interior Minister Sergio Fernández warned that the decision "should not deceive the enemies of Chile, or lead them to believe that these normalization measures mean leaving the field open to their destructive action."

The April 19 amnesty followed an earlier declaration by President Pinochet that 224 political prisoners would be released and sent into exile.

'We've Got to Take Up Task of Building a Revolutionary Party'

[The following interview with Bernadette Devlin McAliskey was obtained by Gerry Foley in Coalisland, Northern Ireland, in early April.]

Question. The conference of antirepression groups in Coalisland in February seems to have been the most important political event in Northern Ireland in the recent past. It has been the main point of reference in most of the discussions I have had with politically active people here. What do you think was accomplished by it?

Answer. The first thing the conference accomplished was to prove what almost all the groups on the left here have been saying for some time, that is, that the downward trend in the struggle that set in in 1973-74 has begun to be reversed. Outside Belfast, where the Relatives Action Committees¹ first developed, it had been hard to see this clearly, although it was indicated in very small ways. But almost everyone found it hard to judge the extent of the upturn and still harder to know what could really be done now.

The Relatives Action Committee in Coalisland, which called the conference, developed as a result of the example set by the Relatives Action Committees in Belfast. But it was not a part of that structure. It therefore had the benefit of being independent of Provisional Sinn Féin in particular. At the same time, it was not opposed to Sinn Féin or alienated from it.

The people who formed the Coalisland Relatives Action Committee were the mothers, fathers, and families of young Provisionals in prison. Therefore, they were very sympathetic to the Provisional movement, but independent enough of it to enable them to do things that they might otherwise have been prevented from doing.

When the conference was first suggested, it was visualized as attracting some 150 to 200 activists, who would discuss the present situation and what could be done.

The idea of how to build such a conference, inviting unions, antirepression groups, and individuals, came directly from my own experiences of seeing how the Socialist Workers Party helps build conferences in America, in particular from seeing the work of building the Chicano conference, which was under way when I was in the United States last August.

It became clear very soon from the replies that we were getting to our invita-

tions that the underlying feeling that there was a need to come together to discuss our experiences over the past ten years and come to some basic agreement about what to do in the future was far deeper and more widespread than we had imagined. It became obvious that we would have a much bigger conference than we had planned for.

What actually happened was that about a thousand people came to the conference. One of the most striking things about the attendance, and it was a fact from which we all learnt a lesson, was that less than a third of those who came were active members of any organization, republican or socialist. Many of these as yet unorganized people were veterans of the struggle from the days of the civil resistance movement, the rent and rates strike, and the early civil rights marches, who were coming back into activity for the first time.

Another important aspect of the conference was that it was the first time in quite a number of years that people not directly involved in political organizations actually participated in discussing united action. They went through a day-long conference, spoke themselves, and took part in the argument and decision making.

This conference also represented the first meeting since possibly 1973 or 1974 that drew together in the same room organizations representing the left, the republican movement, and various moderate elements. It also drew in a number of community organizations, local advice centers, and groups of people not normally associated with antirepression work.

We ourselves were surprised by a number of things that came out of the conference. For example, there had been an argument on the left for quite some time about the importance of the demand for the withdrawal of the British army. It was generally felt that whereas people would take up the issue of torture, and that in fact was where you could see the main motion, they were not prepared to take up the issue of the withdrawal of the troops.

However, one of the motions passed unanimously by the conference was one calling for the immediate withdrawal of the British troops. This was the first time since the beginning of the struggle that a meeting of such size and representativeness in Ireland, as opposed to Britain and America, made a clear call for the immediate withdrawal of the British army.

Nonetheless, in the wake of the conference, some comrades have expressed disappointment and adopted a pessimistic attitude. I think that this is because they

expected more from the conference than could really come out of it. As it was, it was a major step forward, in that it drew back into activity people who over the past ten years in one way or another had withdrawn from the struggle. It also led immediately to the formation of Relatives Action Committees in a number of areas, such as Dungiven and other areas in south Derry, Lurgan, Strabane, Dungannon, Galbally. This was a spontaneous development as people who had attended the conference went back to their own areas and took the initiative themselves.

But some of the comrades thought that the conference should have led to some larger-scale concrete result. They thought that we should have come out of the conference with a united front, or a broad front, that had a list of demands and an agreement to work on them, something that could have rolled right on from there. But I think it was a mistake to hope for that much out of it. I think we had to be realistic and see that it was at least a start. A number of crucial resolutions were discussed at the meeting and passed.

One such resolution was on the question of political status for political prisoners. This was the first time this issue was raised outside the immediate orbit of the Provisional republican movement. And it was raised not simply in terms of the right of the Provisional republican prisoners to political status because they are not like other people in prison. This issue was taken up in the framework of discussing Britain's whole campaign to brand all those here who resist imperialist domination as criminals.

The whole situation of the prisoners was also discussed, as well as the problem of torture. For the first time since 1973-74, sections of the rank and file of the Social Democratic and Labour Party [the bourgeois nationalist Catholic party] were involved in the discussion.

But, following on the conference, the work has seemed very slow. And people, thinking back to the days of the mass struggle, are impatient. It is difficult for them to realize that getting five or six hundred people on the streets of a small town outside Belfast is a major step forward from the situation two or three years ago, and has to be seen in that light, not compared with 1969-70.

I think that for the most part the results of the conference have yet to be seen. They are slow and ongoing. One of the most promising results of the conference was that it provided the basis for much more freedom in cross-organization discussion,

1. Committees organized by relatives of political prisoners.

much more understanding of the extent of our agreement on the question of repression and what to do about it. It has laid the groundwork for beginning to remobilize the mass movement.

If we are not able to move ahead from the conference as fast as comrades would have liked, to do with the conference, for example, what might have been done with it by the SWP in America, it was simply because we don't have that kind of organization here. Since the Provisionals have the only effective organization, it was natural that most of the immediate building power from the conference would fall to them, and sadly they're not doing a great deal with it. But I think that was inevitable, and it's not something to be pessimistic about.

The basis was laid for working together with the Provisionals in the framework of a broad front in which we can maintain our own independence. I would not agree that that is coat-tailing the Provisionals. In fact, I think that for the first time in a long while we were able to offer a perspective that Provisionals had to relate to, instead of our just constantly reacting to what they do, and that's an important step forward.

Q. How has the British campaign of repression developed in the most recent period?

A. The British security forces have astutely exploited the errors of the Provisionals. There has been a series of disastrous mistakes, culminating in the La Mon bombing.² These incidents left people very confused as to what the basis of the military struggle was, what was supposed to be gained from it. These activities seemed to them to be foolhardy.

When something like the La Mon bombing occurs, which leaves the people unsure as to what is actually happening, the army moves into the republican areas. Instead of going to arrest known republican figures or known activists, they go about two steps down the ladder to the people with the least involvement. They move into homes where they know that the extent of the involvement is likely to be no more than the provision of a safe house, or the turning of a blind eye, or the keeping of a watchful eye on a road. And these are the people they're arresting, taking into prison, brutalizing, and charging with crimes such as "withholding information," "giving succor and sustenance to a person known by him to be a criminal," and "harboring persons knowing them to be suspected terrorists."

This kind of charge is being used against the most harmless people, people in the fifty to sixty-five age group, young

married couples in quiet houses. In this area alone, a sixty-four-year-old man, Peter McGrath, was hauled into Castlereagh torture center for "interrogation." As a result of his experiences there he ended up in a mental institution for six weeks. A man of fifty-four was arrested. He was the sole support of the household and as a result of his being imprisoned and denied bail, the family have been unable to maintain their small dairy herd, and the cattle have had to be sold. A pregnant young mother, who was in fact in the last stages of confinement, was arrested.

The British are not picking on such people out of sheer brutality. They have a clear political motive. And that is to terrorize the population. They hope that by doing this they can cut the Provisionals off from the community.

Of course, the fact that the British army is now attacking the broad masses of the republican supporters themselves could spark an upsurge of mass resistance. That is, it could if the Provisionals were prepared to become more actively involved in remobilizing the mass movement. They could do a lot of work in mobilizing people in protests and demonstrations.

On the other hand, if the Provisionals continue to neglect this problem, they will pay a big price. Because the British army is trying to isolate them by terrorizing the population itself, and the Provisionals are giving the people no effective weapons with which to fight back. The people who are being attacked are not the kind who are prepared to fight back with M-6's.³ They feel that they are on the front lines, taking the brunt of the British army's response to the Provisionals' military strategy, without anybody to back them up or without any voice to protest.

In this situation, it becomes still more urgent to build Relatives Action Committees and antirepression groups, and to begin to offer some concrete means of expression for the anger that exists among the people. I think that the British army has underestimated the people here, and I am not just talking about people like ourselves, socialists, I mean the people in the traditionally republican areas such as the one in which I live. These people have never accepted defeat, except in the most temporary terms. And now the repression has built up to a degree that they find almost unbearable.

I am not talking just about the conditions in H-Block but in terms of massive use of torture and brutalization. I am not just talking about the most dramatic cases either but the day-to-day cases, where people are simply taken into police stations to frighten them, to rough them up,

3. The Provisionals have recently begun to use this type of machine gun, which they have portrayed as a powerful new weapon that can alter the course of the military struggle.

where kids are stopped on the road and harassed. All this is building up to a situation where, even though the people don't see victory in the offing, they have decided they will not take any more. The feeling of confusion and almost despair that existed among the people is turning to anger. Our job is to build something that can assure that this leads to something more lasting than an explosion of rage.

Q. How successful do you think the British have been in their campaign to criminalize republicans arrested for alleged involvement in the armed actions?

A. The one thing you can say with certainty is that they're making no headway where they'd like to make it. They are not making any progress in convincing the Catholic population that the Provos are criminals and that those arrested do not deserve political status.

The problem in the campaign in defense of political status is that there are still large numbers of people outside Belfast and Derry who do not understand the concrete issues. The reason for this is that nearly all the prisoners who have been denied political status come from these two cities.

This problem is illustrated by one small example from the Coalisland conference. A Belfast man came out simply dressed in a blanket, like the prisoners in H-Block, and the point was lost on a large number of people at the meeting. They didn't know until he explained why he was naked except for a blanket.

The term "on the blanket" has been widely used, but those who do not have relatives or friends in H-Block do not understand what it really means. The people in H-Block in Long Kesh and in Armagh prison [for women] who are denied political status are in fact held in permanent confinement in their cells for twenty-three hours a day. Some of them have been there now for two years, and in all that period of time they have never had any clothes except for a blanket. They're denied access to letters, to reading material, to conversation with anyone except when overcrowding forces prison authorities to put two or three of them in a cell.

There is a sinister system involved in this. A prisoner comes in charged with offenses that supposedly occurred after an arbitrarily chosen date, after which it was decreed that acts of resistance to British rule no longer constituted political offenses, but were simply criminal acts. The young men and women charged with offenses after that date refuse to wear a convict's uniform. Their own clothes are taken away, and they are given no more. They're called up the next day to the governor [warden] and because they've no clothes on, they're accused of breach of

2. An operation in the Provisional "economic" bombing campaign that went awry, resulting in a number of civilians being burned alive.

discipline, for which they're put into solitary confinement.

Then, the next day, they're called up to the governor again, and they still refuse to wear the prison clothes, so the system of penalties continues, either day by day or week by week, until very shortly the prisoner is left with no so-called privileges at all. That is, no bed, no chair, no table, no letters, no visits, no reading material, no contact with other prisoners.

Once the prisoners reach the position of having no clothes, no furniture, nothing to do, and no contact with any other human being, they are maintained in that position until they agree to wear a convict's uniform. But despite the fact that political status was taken away two years ago, none of the prisoners who have gone on the blanket have agreed to accept the prison uniform.

And so you have growing numbers of young people, every week more and more persons, going into these conditions of absolute inhumanity. And sooner or later one of them is going to go insane or die. Reports coming out of prison indicate that these people suffer from disorientation, weight loss, they have become anemic, most of them have begun to shave off all their hair in order to keep clean. They get no exercise, they don't get outside at all. They're not allowed out of the cells except to empty their chamber pots, and in fact they empty those in the toilets but they're not allowed to use the toilets while they're there. They wash in basins in the cells, and they take these to the washrooms, but they're not allowed to use the washrooms.

All these punitive measures are just to get these young people to put on a convict's uniform and accept criminal status, because a British official has said that after a certain time there can no longer be a political struggle.

But H-Block is only the most extreme aspect of a whole system of intimidation, torture and dehumanization. Beating and torture are used on a massive scale to force persons to confess to alleged offenses. The most ludicrous example of this to date is the case of Ronnie Bunting [a leading member of the Irish Republican Socialist Party]. He was taken into police custody and had the letters UVF⁴ scratched on him.

He reported it to his doctor, and in fact when he was medically examined in the prison, the UVF initials were there and the bruises were there. He was subsequently released without charge. Now he has been found guilty of maliciously accusing the police of assault. To be precise, he was found guilty of "wasting police time." What they have said is that this young man went to prison, beat himself up, defaced his own body, and then wasted police time by accusing them of doing it.

4. Ulster Volunteer Force, one of the Protestant terrorist organizations.

It is obvious what a ridiculous situation this is, but it is also very sinister. It is the final touch on the development of a consistent method of extracting confessions, which to a considerable extent has gotten the British what they want. The number of



Oberlin News-Tribune

BERNADETTE DEVLIN McALISKEY

those sentenced to prison is escalating at dramatic proportions. For example, in this past month seventy-seven persons have been charged.

Father Faul of Dungannon, who does a lot of work in researching and documenting these cases, showed very recently on the basis of evidence presented in the courts, that over 80 percent of persons convicted are found guilty solely on the basis of their own testimony. Thus, the British are succeeding in putting increasing numbers of people in prison.

The British pick them selectively from crucial areas. Sometimes they go for the young activists. Sometimes they go for political activists as in the case of John McNulty [general secretary of People's Democracy, a group involved in fusion with the Irish section of the Fourth International]. Sometimes they go for the broadest layer of republican supporters, for people charged solely with "withholding information." They have been giving sentences of three or four years in prison for that offense.

The British now make little attempt to conceal their complicity with Orange reaction and terrorism in Northern Ireland. Some time ago there was a robbery of something over 200 weapons from an Ulster Defense Regiment station in Magherafelt. Last week, seven members of Loyalist paramilitary organizations came up before the court on various offenses. Three of them were released on bail.

The charges against the three released on bail were conspiring to rob the UDR of 140 self-loading rifles, burning four Catholic houses, and robbing sums of money

amounting to £3,000. And yet they were released on bail. But our neighbor here, aged fifty-four, who was charged solely with withholding information and "harboring persons knowing them to be wanted by the police," has consistently been refused bail, despite the fact that his entire family depends on him for its livelihoods.

Q. What do you think would happen if someone died or went insane in H-Block, or if there was a general hunger strike by the prisoners there?

A. There would be an immediate outburst of anger and protests. The Provisionals would certainly try to escalate their military activity.

What is important is to build an organization that can mobilize mass resistance that can force the British to retreat when they try a repressive move or at least expose what they are doing. Because, as the reaction to Bloody Sunday showed, where there is no organization, you simply have an outburst of emotion and an escalation in violence, and then it dies away and you have a feeling of frustration, a feeling that if the same thing happens again there is nothing you can do about it.

Q. Why do you think that in recent months in their press and statements the Provisionals have been making the armed struggle into a kind of sectarian dividing line, suggesting that they will not work together in opposing repression with forces that do not support their armed struggle?

A. This attitude on the part of the Provisionals is a big problem. It is totally unrealistic. Outside Ireland, it is simply ridiculous to pose such ultimatums. Within the north of Ireland itself, and certainly within the south, which is crucial to the building of an effective movement, you simply realistically cannot make such a demand.

There are large sections of the population that cannot and will not commit themselves to armed struggle. The idea of having to give total commitment frightens them, and repels them from other activities. It confuses them. What they see is a vicious circle of people being forced into military actions and then being imprisoned for it. However well they may understand that the British presence here is fundamentally responsible for this, they are not prepared to commit themselves to something that does not seem to be leading anywhere.

If the Provos think that by basically saying you're not allowed to take up the case of our prisoners unless you support our armed struggle, that they are increasing the backing for their military campaign, they are totally wrong. They are not increasing support for the prisoners or for the armed struggle. In fact, they are decreasing support for both.

The attitude of the Provos is extremely dangerous because it helps the British army in its campaign to isolate them.

I suspect that the reason the Provos have adopted such an attitude is that a conflict is sharpening between their right-wing and an emerging left. Some leading republicans such as Jimmy Drumm and Gerry Adams have called for involving the people but this whole development seems to have become blocked. The traditional reaction in the republican movement when a political difference arises is to stick to the path of unity, and the path of unity in the whole republican tradition is armed struggle against oppression.

But the Provisionals are mistaken if they think that at this stage they can maintain their unity just by pushing ahead with their military campaign and shouting down all criticism. If things continue as they have, there are going to be more divisions, and their right wing may surprise them. It is hard to believe that the Provisionals can think that at this stage they can win a military victory on their own and that everything else is unessential.

Q. What about the attitude of the Provisional supporters?

A. People look at the overall results of a military operation. They say, we have ended up with six people in prison, perhaps a Provisional arms dump raided, weapons lost, the area terrorized, saturated with troops. They are prepared to put up with British intimidation, and have done so for ten years, if they see the fight leading somewhere. But when the Provisionals' actions appear to make no sense, and at the same time the Provisionals refuse to involve the people in the struggle, they get the feeling of being isolated on every side. When the Provisionals shout down the criticisms of these people, who in a general sense would support the armed struggle, when they write off the criticisms of what these people see as foolhardy actions and treat them as if they were against the whole struggle against imperialism, the tensions mount. And I think you've got tensions between Provisional supporters and the organization. You have tension between the rank and file, and the leadership.

Q. How close are the revolutionary Marxists to being able to offer a perspective for the forces engaged in the struggle? Where does the regroupment of the revolutionary Marxist forces fit into this picture?

A. I think that a number of major obstacles to building a united revolutionary party have been overcome. There is a much greater seriousness on the part of the left in recognizing the need for regroupment, the need for building a revolutionary party. As a result, there are much better possibilities for cross-organizational dis-

cussion, joint activity, exchanging ideas. But at the minute, the process of regroupment has slowed off a bit. I'm not quite sure of the reason why. Perhaps it is a natural thing.

Over the past ten years we have arrived at an understanding of the need to build a revolutionary party. We have learnt the lessons of the ultraleftist days, overawe with the mass movement, the drift to economism, workerism, and the sort of trail back to coat-tailing the Provos. We've gone through all those mistakes.

At the minute, I think there is a bit of hesitancy in that essentially we think we know what should be done, but we're not quite sure we know how we should go about doing it.

We've got to the stage where we have a fusion under way between PD and the MSR [Movement for a Socialist Republic, Irish section of the Fourth International]. We have ourselves in the ISP [Independent Socialist Party]. Other groups have gone into the Socialist Labour Party [a left split from the Irish Labour Party]. That organization needs to be looked at.

I think we've got to push on not just in the work we're doing on repression and in building the mass movement, we've got to take up the serious task of building a unified revolutionary party.

I speak for myself because I know that there are many differences in our own organization as to how close we are to being able to form such a party. I know that there are still a number of major issues to be resolved. But it still remains my contention that given the situation on the ground, given the developments, the upturn in the struggle, that the differences between the organizations, particularly those between PD-MSR and ISP, are insufficient to justify maintaining separate groups.

At the moment, the question is being approached from the standpoint of what are the arguments for joining together in one group. But I would like to hear the arguments for not having one organization. I think that that is what has to be justified.

I think that this process of regroupment in Ireland has an international importance as well. I think that it has a crucial importance for the Fourth International and the world Trotskyist movement. I think that it is important to realize that almost all the groups that claim to be Marxist in this country are within the broad confines of the Trotskyist movement.

Maoism, which in various ways was present at the beginning of the process, has never produced anything like a serious working organization. The Stalinists are in all groups that are obviously degenerating and cut off from the struggle. The left is not numerically very large of course, but almost without exception the small left-

wing groupings and parties that have survived, developed, and which continue to grow and do serious work within the struggle are essentially Trotskyist groupings.

Q. One thing that revolutionists in Ireland seem to have realized much more clearly in the recent period is the need for an all-Ireland revolutionary party and a strategy that includes the south as well as the north.

A. That is true. And I think that it is in this context that the defense of the four members of the IRSP in Dublin takes on special importance. It raises issues that are essentially the same as those raised by the antirepression movement in the north. It exposes the whole system of repression necessary to maintain imperialist domination of the country as a whole, both in the direct form that exists in the north and the neocolonial form that exists in the south. These young men are on trial for allegedly robbing a train and threatened with fifteen to twenty-five year sentences. But the real reason they are before the court is that they are leaders of a party that raised awkward questions and made life difficult for the authorities.

No evidence has been offered against them apart from confessions extracted under torture. In fact the use of torture against them was so blatant that it was one of the things that began the mass reaction against the last Dublin government, which was overwhelmingly defeated in the elections last June.

The continuation of this case, after the government and the police chief that initiated it were thrown out of office by a massive vote of the people in the south, shows that the Fianna Fáil regime is basically no different from the one that preceded it. But the victory of Fianna Fáil [traditionally considered the more anti-imperialist of the two bourgeois parties] shows that the conditions for fighting this kind of repression are much more favorable than before.

The fact that confessions obviously extorted by torture have been ruled admissible as evidence shows that the special criminal courts set up in the south to try political cases are basically kangaroo courts. We have already seen here in the north how a police force can put away a large number of political oppositionists by systematically beating confessions out of them. The IRSP case is the beginning of this in the south. And we saw in the case of internment, how the Dublin regime waits for the British to test a repressive technique in the north before they apply it themselves.

If the authorities get away with convicting these young men on the basis of extorted confessions, they will not be the last to be sent away on long terms of imprisonment on the same basis. □

'Seven Years With Trotsky'

[The following interview and accompanying introduction appeared in the April 3 issue of the French Trotskyist daily *Rouge*. The interview was conducted by Rodolphe Prager. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

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From Prinkipo to Coyoacán, Jean Van Heijenoort spent *Seven Years with Trotsky*.^{*} That is the title of his new book, published by *Lettres Nouvelles*. In it the man who was one of Trotsky's secretaries and bodyguards in exile gives us a fresh picture of the "everyday" Trotsky. Van Heijenoort shows us the revolutionary leader at work, but also describes the bitter trials that marked his personal life and the little annoyances of his day-to-day life. We met with Van Heijenoort when he visited Paris, and he spoke to us about his book.

* * *

When I first arrived in Prinkipo I felt like a person without a country, a little bit bewildered, plunked down in a totally new environment with responsibilities I had never had before.

My work was very intense in those days. Besides the secretarial work and the translations, it involved dealing with the local authorities, taking care of domestic chores, and paying constant attention to security. Organizing the day-watch took a lot of time, and the night-watch even more.

Trotsky's stays in France (1933-35) and Norway (1935-36) were quite eventful. There was a lot of coming and going, there was the risk involved, and there were delicate relations with authorities subjected to hysterical campaigns by both the Stalinists and the ultraright.

But daily life in Mexico was very different. We had many contacts with Mexicans from the most varied walks of life. Diego Rivera put us in contact with a number of artists and poets, and others introduced us to high officials, journalists, and so forth. In addition, there were frequent visits from American revolutionists. From the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party, of course, but also from ordinary members and Trotskyist sympathizers. In cars jammed full they would come from Chicago, Los Angeles or elsewhere, armed with a letter of introduction from the SWP Political Com-

mittee. The atmosphere was entirely different from Prinkipo where the three or four of us lived in isolation.

In Mexico a new relationship developed between Trotsky and myself. During those long rainy Mexican nights at Coyoacán I was alone with him and Natalia. This led to a certain intimacy. Actually in my book I don't spend enough time on the Coyoacán period. I ought to expand upon this in a later edition.

The Great Trials of Trotsky's Life

Changes occurred in Trotsky's personal life that did not affect his personality but that were noticeable to those of us who were close to him. During the first months of 1933 he suffered a series of heavy blows that affected him deeply, although they did not cause him to deviate from his political beliefs.

First there was the terrible shock of his daughter Zina's suicide in Berlin. He shut himself in his room with Natalia for several days. When he came out his face was ravaged with sorrow, with deep furrows in his cheeks.

Two weeks later Hitler came to power in Germany. Around the same time we lost contact with the Soviet oppositionists Trotsky knew personally who had been deported to Siberia. We had been able to maintain correspondence with them through the years 1930-32. The sudden break in communications affected Trotsky deeply.

But things seemed to be going a bit better when Trotsky first arrived in Royan at the end of July 1933. During August he was visited by many Trotskyists from Paris whom he had not known before. He began discussions with the British Independent Labour Party and the German Socialist Workers Party (SAP), two centrist parties. He was full of energy. He seemed to be happy.

But a letter from Trotsky to Natalia in September indicates a certain disappointment; in it Trotsky said that perhaps they made a mistake in leaving Turkey.

In Mexico Trotsky received the horrible news of the murder in Paris of his son and collaborator Leon Sedov. There was a replay of the scene that had followed the death of Zina. I was the only one who was with them during both tragedies. Trotsky shut himself away for four or five days.

The Purpose of My Book

The political writings by and about Trotsky do not tell us very much about

Trotsky the man. That is the gap I wanted to fill. Therefore I concentrated on the personal side of his life. It is true that the decision to include something in my book was often made on the basis of whether or not it was already known from other sources.

Just to take an example, I include an episode with Diego Rivera that is not accurately described elsewhere and is entirely distorted in Deutscher's book. I go into this in some detail because I am the only person who really knows what happened.

So my book takes into account what other people have already said or different versions. Deutscher's book, for example, is very useful in some ways, but historians will have to begin all over again because it includes so many errors. And his errors have been picked up and expanded upon by other writers.

Trotsky as a Member of the 'Besançon' Cell

Trotsky was not a person to engage in idle chatter. But discussions that took place in an organized way were something else. In Prinkipo we used to meet at 4:30 in the afternoon in Trotsky's study. Whoever was present in the household at the time would attend: Frank, Schussler, Frankel, Swabeck and myself. The transcripts of the discussions on Germany and those with Swabeck on the Black question, are in the archives. Some of them have been published.

At Royan we had the famous "Besançon" cell. We named it after a distant city. Trotsky was a member, along with Craipeau, Beaussier, Vera Lanis, Jeanne Martin, and myself. There was a tendency struggle going on, and it would have been wrong not to have counted the votes of those French comrades who were working in the Trotsky household. The "Besançon" cell discussed and drafted resolutions, with Trotsky's participation. My book contains an interesting passage from a discussion about the name of the new international, taken from the transcript of one of these meetings.

In Mexico, meetings were set up when Cannon arrived with half of the SWP Political Committee. Discussions took place morning and afternoon for four or five days, and a transcript was made. It was all very well organized.

Secretaries Without Pay

I never received what you could call a paycheck. When I needed a toothbrush I

*An English translation is scheduled for publication later this year by Harvard University Press.—IP/I

would buy it and get the money from Natalia. We would take turns making an expedition to Istanbul every three weeks—Frank, Schussler and myself—to do the shopping. Natalia would give us the money and when we returned we would give her an accounting; it was that simple.

Only the American comrades who worked at Coyoacán were paid as full-timers by the SWP. My finances continued to be worked out with Natalia. Breton has described me as being poor. This shocked me. I didn't know what he was talking about. I never considered myself poor.

Most of the income for the Trotsky household came from the royalties he received, largely for *My Life* and for the *History of the Russian Revolution*. We lived quite well on these royalties in Prinkipo. But the reserve was quickly exhausted. The trip to Copenhagen at the end of 1932 depleted our resources severely. The money Trotsky received for his interviews with students and with the American radio did not even cover the expenses of the comrades who had to accompany him.

There were times when things were really tight, when Natalia and I would go over our budget repeatedly. When we were completely out of money, Trotsky would

sometimes sell an article to *Life* or to the *Saturday Evening Post*; the \$500 or \$600 this brought would keep us going for two or three months.

Trotsky never worried about money problems. Natalia would discuss them with me and then just tell him, "You know, there is nothing left."

Trotsky's Asceticism

People might be surprised at my description of the absence of odds and ends and souvenirs in Trotsky's house. This was a reflection of his asceticism. Trotsky was not attached to material possessions. The only thing he cared about was the quality of the pen he wrote with, the tool of his trade. He was totally indifferent to material wealth. This seems amazing, since he was a man who had actually been in power at the head of a great state. He owned nothing. Not a painting, not even a real library. His books were accumulated here and there from what people brought him and sent him.

Trotsky and Surrealism

I have to make a few more comments on this subject. The books that Trotsky found

most absorbing were Jules Romains's *Men of Good Will*. He had read seventeen or eighteen volumes of the series and watched for the publication of the next one. He called Romains an "incomparable artist." His evaluation of Céline, Malraux, and Malaquais' *Men From Nowhere* are well known. In 1936 when he was in Norway I sent him a copy of *I Won't Eat That Bread* by Benjamin Péret. He responded very negatively in a letter.

Before Breton came to visit, I bought a few of his books and put them in Trotsky's office. Trotsky set them down in a far corner and left them there. Maybe he leafed through them from time to time. He allowed himself only a brief period for reading literature, during his afternoon rest. He always had a book with him, generally French novels, sometimes Russian books, and later an occasional American book. He was not familiar with the poetry of the surrealists.

Through his writings, I am going to try in my next book to draw a kind of intellectual portrait of Trotsky, starting from the time he first joined the revolutionary movement. One thing I will try to indicate is the intellectual difference between Lenin and Trotsky. □



Photo taken in France at St. Palais, Royan, in 1933. In front, Jean Van Heijenoort. In back, from left to right,

Rudolf Klement, Leon Trotsky, Yvan Craipeau, Jeanne Martin, and Sara Weber.

The Political Situation in France After the Elections

[The following resolution adopted by the LCR Political Bureau was published in the

April 5 issue of *Rouge*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

1. Electoral Defeat Does Not Mean Ebb in Workers' Militancy

The March 19 electoral defeat of the CP and SP constitutes a political defeat not only for those parties, but also for the workers who were looking forward to a victory at the polls as a way of getting rid of the Giscard-Barre government and its austerity policy.

But the key aspect for the time being lies in the confirmation provided by the elections of the class relationship of forces. The workers parties won a majority on the first round relative to the governmental coalition, and they exceeded 49 percent on the second round. Such an outstanding result in the context of bourgeois democracy and a bourgeois electoral setup reflects—in the unfavorable electoral arena—the unstable equilibrium of the relationship of forces between the two fundamental classes, and its extreme polarization.

Within the context of the period inaugurated by May 1968, we are entering a new political situation, characterized by the persistence of the economic crisis and attacks on the working class, by the latter's capacity for resistance and strong politization, by the instability of institutions and lack of an immediate political outlet.

The electoral defeat does not mean either a reversal of this trend or an ebb in

working-class militancy. While awaiting the arrival of March 1978, the workers deferred their battles against inflation, unemployment, and working conditions. The effects of unemployment have not made a dent in the workers' potential for struggle (except perhaps in the Lorraine region, given the magnitude of the blows to steelworkers), as attested by the membership gains of the workers organizations and the outcome of trade-union elections, irrespective of the shift in votes from the CGT to the CFDT.

There is no reason today to assume that the workers, cheated out of an electoral victory, will be passive spectators to the blows that the government appointed by Giscard cannot fail to deliver. Though centralizing them will be difficult now that the right has won, struggles stand to be more explosive, even if they will inevitably have a sectoral character at first.

But if the division that was the immediate cause of this defeat is perpetuated and deepened, it may be reflected in the long run, especially in terms of the unions, in the demoralization of those sectors of the working class that have been severely hit by unemployment for several months, and in isolated outbreaks of resistance lacking an overall political perspective.

2. The Divisions Have a Long History

The first question asked by millions of workers, who thought for months, especially after the municipal elections, that a victory over the right was guaranteed, is, How did we get to this? Whose fault is it?

The CP and SP put the blame on each other. The CP accuses the SP of having disoriented the workers by "swinging to the right." The SP accuses the CP of having shattered the momentum toward unity by opening up an artificial polemic,

and by engaging in blackmail over the issue of standing down, only to come to an agreement on March 13¹ that could have been signed on September 22.²

While from the standpoint of the workers' basic interests the CP and SP can be lumped together, from the immediate standpoint of the election results the CP is especially to blame for having placed conditions on its withdrawal on the second

round, subject to an accord on the program and government, at its January 8 conference.

If the CP had really wanted to obtain the maximum number of guarantees against any kind of austerity policy, whatever the government in office, it should have separated the two questions. On March 19, on the second round, what was in order was eliminating the right, by making a commitment and mobilizing early on for an unconditional vote for the workers candidate with the best chances, against the Radicals and "left" Gaullists. An electoral victory over the right on March 19 would have inspired such feelings of strength and confidence in the workers, who have put up with this regime for more than twenty years, that it would have been infinitely harder for anyone to force sacrifices on them on the grounds of the crisis of capitalism.

A commitment to stand down would have removed bitterness and mistrust, and paved the way for a discussion of program, and for mobilizations. But the CP's real motives were the polar opposite of such concerns. Its criminal position on standing down is what makes it appear to many as the main, and indeed the sole culprit.

In fact, the roots of the division go back to the Common Program itself, and to the electoralist outlook of the parties that signed it. The CP and SP are thus equally to blame, at bottom, for the March 19 defeat.

The division and defeat do not stem from the municipal elections, the negotiations on updating the Common Program, September 22, or March 13. They go back much further.

What made them possible was that since the signing of the Common Program, the CP and SP did everything in their power to shatter the dynamic that could have brought about unity between the two main workers parties. They did everything in their power to prevent self-organization of the masses, which could have sealed unity at the grass roots, and to repulse a working-class offensive against the Giscard government that could have upset the timetable for the elections.

The fact is that the trade-union leaderships consistently subordinated the struggle against austerity and defense of workers' demands to a presumed electoral victory. Following the municipal elections, they refused to widen their lead by centralizing struggles, demanding immediate dis-

1. The day after the first round of the French legislative election. French elections are held in two rounds. Only candidates who poll 12.5 percent of the vote or more are eligible to run in the second-round run-off.

2. Eve of the open split between the Communist and Socialist parties. See "The Split in the French Union of the Left," *Intercontinental Press*, October 10, 1977, p. 1102, and "Why the Union of the Left Blew Apart," *Intercontinental Press*, October 31, 1977, p. 1192.

solution of the discredited parliament, and calling for a CP-SP government. They dissipated the fight against the Barre plan in one-shot days of action—October 7, May 24, and December 1—that were neither economic struggles around clear demands with provisions for following them up, nor political mobilizations to bring down the government with a general strike. At that rate, the scattering of struggles and the more or less enforced inactivity in the plants paved the way for political divisions, and disarmed the workers in face of the bureaucrats' division.

In the process, the SP and CP remained completely faithful to the Common Program and to the Union of the Left. Ever since it was signed, the Common Program has been a program for class collaboration, one that does not start from the common, basic interests of the workers, but from what the bourgeoisie is able to accept within the confines of the profit system and respect for its state apparatus, and which contains the seeds of division. By accepting the principle and constraints of the capitalist economy, it engages in a succession of compromises and concessions to the bosses that can only lead to selling out the workers' interests, and thus to dividing their ranks into categories, layers, and sectors, into jobless and employed, men and women, French citizens and immigrants.

Not once in the course of their polemic did the CP and SP question their alliances and pacts with the bourgeoisie. They remained in agreement on the NATO alliance, the 1958 constitution, and Giscard's tutelage. After the first round, the SP withdrew thirty-four of its candidates in favor of the Left Radicals, but the CP, which had been so critical of the SP, withdrew its candidates in favor of the Gaullists Gallet and Binoche. Right up to the end, they both ran after the Radicals, whose function was illustrated by R. Fabre's "outbursts" in defense of private ownership, and by the haste with which they took to their heels following the defeat.

All of these compromises chain the workers to the conditions and dictates of the bourgeoisie, at the price, inevitably, of division. For while it is difficult but possible to forge unity of the workers on the basis of the class interests that they have in common, asking them to choose the best way of protecting the bourgeois order can only divide them.

The CP used the cover of programmatic differences over subsidiaries, the minimum wage, or wage differentials. But rather than give workers an opportunity to give their opinion in a united way on the issues in dispute, it organized a kind of plebiscite under its own emblem, demanding 21 to 25 percent of the vote as the sole guarantee against austerity. Then it wound up signing an agreement where neither subsidiaries, wage differentials, a tax on capital,

French Political Groups and Trade Unions

CCA—Comités Communistes pour l'Autogestion (Communist Committees for Self-Management), emerged from a 1977 split from the PSU (see below). One of its main leaders is Michel Pablo.

CERES—Centre d'Etudes, de Recherches et d'Education Socialistes (Center for Socialist Study, Research and Education), a minority grouping in the French Socialist Party.

CFDT—Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (French Democratic Confederation of Labor), close to the SP.

CGT—Confédération Générale du Travail (General Confederation of Labor), close to the French Communist Party.

FEN—Fédération de l'Education Nationale (National Education Federation), the country's largest teacher's union.

FO—Force Ouvrière (Labor Force), a smaller trade-union federation.

LCR—Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League), French section of the Fourth International.

LO—Lutte Ouvrière (Workers Struggle), a Trotskyist grouping that publishes a weekly newspaper by the same name.

OCI—Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (Internationalist Communist Organization), a Trotskyist grouping belonging to the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, of which Pierre Lambert is one of the major leaders.

OCT—Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs (Communist Workers Organization). Emerged from a 1971 split in the LCR. Formerly known as Révolution. Fused in 1976 with the Workers and Peoples Left, a Maoist current that had split from the PSU (see below).

PSU—Parti Socialiste Unifié (United Socialist Party), a centrist grouping.

nor an immediate return to a forty-hour week are mentioned!

As for the SP, it found itself in a weak position in face of this offensive, because it was vulnerable to the charges, because it was in fact getting ready to administer austerity, because it took a lot of coaxing to get it to support a demand as popular and elementary as a 2,400-franc [about US\$480] monthly minimum wage. It was for these very reasons that the SP could only respond to division with division, and that it was impossible for the SP to appeal to the workers' united judgment in the workplaces, at the risk of being unmasked and repudiated itself.

That is why we say that in the race to collaboration and division, the CP and SP tied one another in a deplorable way, to

the detriment of the workers.

For us, unity and the most open discussions of program were not incompatible, just the opposite. An open comparison of positions and full democracy allow all points of view to be expressed in a struggle or mass meeting, without endangering unity in action.

In this way, the role of the Union of the Left is confirmed. It brought about unity between the two major parties of the working class in a distorted way, and channeled the desire for change that has been outspoken since 1968 wholly into the electoral arena. But as a front for class collaboration, because of its program, alliances, and electoralism, it carried with it compromise, division, and defeat for the workers.

3. CP Preferred Risk of Electoral Defeat to Risk of Losing Control Over the Workers Movement

Considering the way in which the CP carried out its campaign, many workers are asking whether it wanted to come to power or not.

The question is framed in the wrong way; it confuses cause and effect. Why would the CP not want to enter the government?

• *So as not to have to administer the crisis?* That would be giving it more credit than it deserves. As a reformist party, the CP knows very well that it will never be called on to govern when business is booming for the bourgeoisie, but when the

workers must be made to swallow a bitter pill. It would therefore be more accurate to say that the CP did not wish to administer the crisis at the risk of provoking its own crisis.

But isn't the lack of a central political perspective just as dangerous for the CP? The Common Program was signed in 1972, four years after May 1968, precisely to divert the working-class upsurge, and the prospect of March 1978 and alliance with the SP were effective means of warding off an offensive by the workers.

• *Because it was complying with a turn*

in the international Stalinist line laid down by Moscow? The whole history of the last few years shows that there can be an effective convergence between the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy (its way of perceiving the international status quo) and the policy of the mass CPs in western Europe, without implying a political and organizational subordination of the latter to the former. Earlier, the same theory was put forward in 1974-75, when the CP launched its first polemic against the SP in the wake of the presidential elections.

However, since then, the CP muffled the polemic at the time of the municipal elections, when the pact with the SP enabled it to win new municipal posts. But above all, between 1975 and 1978, the CP has not softened, but rather intensified its criticism of the Eastern Europe regimes on the question of democratic rights. In the eyes of the Soviet bureaucracy, this constitutes a much more serious point of difference than repudiations of doctrine on the dictatorship of the proletariat, which do not threaten or challenge its system of domination over the masses as directly.

The only explanation that can account for the CP's policy since 1968 in a consistent way is the one we have offered. Within the context of its partial Social-Democratization and distancing itself from Moscow, the CP has undertaken a march to power that is modifying its ties both with the masses and with the state apparatus.

To speed its course and enhance its electoral standing with executives, small businessmen, and the "middle strata," the CP has come out for pluralism, variety, has become the champion of "just wage differentials," "democratic" order, and "efficient management." But each new step in this direction brings greater benefits to the most credible electoral alternative, the Socialist Party, as every election since 1973 has shown. At the same time, the CP is being exposed on its left flank. The first warning of this came during the 1977 municipal elections, with the vote for the far left in the big cities, notably in the working-class districts. The CP was further alerted to this peril by the discrepancy in votes between the SP and CP in Spain and Portugal, to the detriment of the CP.

A victory for the Union of the Left, far more than participation in the government after the liberation under exceptional domestic and international circumstances, would have indicated a qualitative step forward in the CP's integration into the state apparatus, but a step fraught with peril at a time of economic hardship.

Imagine for a moment that the March 13 agreement had been signed as of September 22. Once more, the electoral trend would have worked to the advantage of the Socialist Party, with a new danger for the CP—the business of standing down for the candidate with the best chances might

have resulted in a diminishing of the CP's strength in parliament within the context of a left victory. On the other hand, for six months the CP had allowed the far left to monopolize the campaign against austerity, a campaign that corresponded to real



GISCARD D'ESTAING

needs and expectations, as its unmistakable echo in the campaign the CP carried out among certain layers proves.

4. Crisis of Giscard Regime Has Not Been Settled

We have said that the electoral defeat did not mean an ebb in working-class militancy. This assessment can be verified from two angles.

a. From the point of view of the crisis of the regime.

The bourgeois media rushed to hail Giscard as the big winner in the elections. This is true only to a certain extent. The electoral groundswell of Giscard's Union for French Democracy should not make us lose sight of the fact that it is only an electoral coalition and future parliamentary bloc, and not the big liberal party that Giscard seeks. Especially since the Assembly for the Republic remains the principal formation of the presidential majority, and fully intends to take its distances from administering the crisis, state its terms (rejection of a tax reform), and put Chirac into the running for 1981.³

Moreover, a broadening out to a center-

3. The date of the next French presidential election.

Eroded on both flanks, the CP thus ran the risk of being nothing but a second-rate political force that the Socialist Party could get rid of once it had been used. For the CP, the evolution of the relationship of forces in the trade-union movement foreshadows what might happen in the political arena. And the fact is that for ten years the membership of the CGT had remained at the same level, while that of the CFDT had grown by 50 percent.

For the CP bureaucracy, relative voting strength is one element among others (such as implantation of factory cells, influence in the trade unions, posts in municipal governments and institutions) in determining the vital issue—whether it still has control over the majority of the organized workers movement.

So for the CP, the question did not consist of whether or not to participate in the government. Or at least, this question was dependent on two prior conditions—containing or smashing the SP's drive, and strengthening the CP itself—whatever the cost of this absolute imperative, up to and including the risk of ultimate defeat.

An electoral defeat was not the goal deliberately pursued by the CP, but it consciously took this risk to keep control over the majority of the workers movement. The contradiction between maintaining its dominance over the working class and its penetration into the bourgeois state apparatus reached a critical threshold for the first time. The pursuit of the process of Social-Democratization, rather than proceeding in a linear fashion, can only aggravate internal conflicts and provoke a major internal crisis.

left coalition does not seem likely to be achieved in the short run. In the first place, the present majority has exhausted all its resources in the center, at least until such time as Fabre or someone else manages to resurrect the Radical family (reduced to a bare minimum, both caucuses included, in these elections), or until cracks appear in the SP.

Secondly, the crisis is not over with. If there is a partial recovery, it will take place at the cost of eliminating businesses and sectors maintained through "transfusions" while awaiting the elections (and thus an increase in unemployment as well), and of continued austerity to try and restore the bosses' profits without any guarantee of industrial investments. It already appears that the bosses have precious little to offer to revive a climate of negotiations (a fifth week of paid vacation and wage increases for certain categories of workers, but no 2,400- or even 2,000-franc minimum wage), in exchange for removing price restraints.

b. For the same reason, the reformist

parties may sanction the demise of the Common Program, but they cannot bring themselves to totally bury the prospect of the Union of the Left, at the risk of no longer having a solution to offer in the event of social mobilizations. Therefore, they are putting it in cold storage, leaving the details of its possible revival to a later date. The CP insists that it has no other strategy but the Union of the Left, while [SP National Secretary Michel] Rocard has taken up the cudgels on behalf of a union that would no longer be weighed down by the cumbersome provisions of the Common Program, which was overlaid with specific economic demands.

In other words, the SP cannot respond to the Giscardists' overtures without risking internal divisions, and especially without the risk of canceling out the advantages of its reintegration into the workers movement as a result of its alliance with the CP since the Epinay congress.

For its part, the CP cannot return to political isolation, which would set it back dozens of years, to the time when it relied on its apparatus, defense of the USSR, and propaganda for soviets. Therefore, it will pull the alternate levers of class collaboration and division as the occasion calls for, while keeping the prospect of the Union of the Left on the horizon.

The conduct of the traditional political and trade-union leaderships in their [post-election] meeting with Giscard bears the stamp of their contradictions. They are determined not to precipitate a test of strength with the regime; accordingly, they fear the social explosions predicted by Mendès and many others, if the right were to trail on the first round and come out the winner on the second. They cannot sign a pact with the Elysée in the name of the "national interest" that would provide authorization for austerity and serve as the French equivalent of the Moncloa pact in Spain; but they know that there will be no central political focus, from their point of view, until 1981. The SP and CP are already beginning to line up their respective candidates for that decisive contest.

Finally, for the first time in nearly half a century, the trade-union movement finds itself unarmed, with no immediate hope for a change brought by the elections, and with the economic crisis in full swing. Hence the renewal of negotiation proposals by the CFDT, as well as by [CGT leader] Georges Séguin in his interview in *Le Figaro* after the second round. What the reformist parties are ultimately after, via the endless discussions over the status of the opposition, is a negotiated status quo enabling them to resist a possible loss of control over their ranks, without destroying their usefulness by rallying openly and prematurely to the government's austerity policy.

Giscard's inability to unravel the institutional crisis of the regime, and the inability

of the CP and SP to forgo their alliance gives practical proof of the maintenance of

the relationship of forces between the bourgeoisie and the working class.

5. What Kind of Workers Unity and How to Achieve It?



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The struggle against austerity remains a priority, and is given special urgency by the number of issues and demands left hanging on the assumption that there would be an electoral victory over the right.

But in order for this struggle to get under way with some hope of success, it will be necessary to bandage and overcome the wounds of division. Those resulting from the division between the CP and SP, from top to bottom, will not heal so quickly, inasmuch as each leadership needs to make the other shoulder responsibility for the defeat. Above all, however, political division threatens to be extended by trade-union division. The conduct of the union leaderships during the campaign—the way the CGT leadership lined up totally with the CP, the more cautious support given by the CFDT leadership to the SP, the rejection of any joint campaign by the trade unions between the two rounds—paved the way for this.

The CFDT leadership, taking its cue from Michel Rocard, is already considering de-emphasizing its alliance with the CGT in favor of an alliance with the FEN and FO, whose leaderships are tied to the SP. In the absence of an immediate political outlet that would enable them to "control militancy" by wearing it out in one twenty-four-hour joint strike after another, the leaderships of the CFDT and FEN seem ready to move in the direction of the policy

of negotiations practiced by FO. [CFDT leader] Edmond Maire's request to meet with Giscard can thus be seen as nothing more than a belated, farcical tribute to Bergeron.⁴

As for the CGT leadership, after having denounced the threat of austerity "of the left," it has nothing to offer as a means of struggle against austerity of the right except the search "for real solutions via discussions, so as to reach a compromise acceptable to all." Thus, after having subordinated struggles to the prospect of elections, after a verbal game of one-upmanship with the SP, after having contributed its share to dividing the workers and compromising the chance of an electoral victory, the leadership of the CGT is bending over backward to Giscard and again relegating struggles to oblivion.

It can be expected, therefore, that the trade-union tops will intensify class collaboration and division. Nevertheless, the level of militancy and heightened politization of many trade-union activists are likely to dim the hopes for trade-unionism Italian-style, with demands for "class austerity," that the CFDT bureaucrats are expressing more and more openly, and that the CGT does not criticize.

For Trade-Union Unity, For Workers Democracy

In view of such a policy on the part of the trade unions, which draws the wrong lessons from the electoral defeat, there is a chance that currents will develop among youth, in the women's and ecology movements, and even among a section of the working class, that equates the unions with their leaderships. To counter these dangerous tendencies, our guiding principle will continue to be workers unity. This policy of unity and independence of the working class is rigorously opposed to class collaboration in any form—not only political alliances with the bourgeoisie, but also participation in management by the trade unions.

Under such circumstances, the battle for unity is first and foremost the battle for unity in action of the trade unions around their demands. What was promised through an electoral victory must be wrested by means of struggle: a 2,400-franc monthly minimum wage, a sliding scale, a thirty-five-hour week, the reopening under workers control and nationalization without compensation of businesses that shut

4. André Bergeron, leader of trade-union federation Force Ouvrière.

down, free abortion on demand, abundant high-quality social services.

Struggles must be organized democratically and the platform of demands discussed in union meetings and joint trade-union assemblies, in shop meetings and mass assemblies. To fight unemployment, it should be up to the workers themselves to decide on working conditions and the necessary number of employees. In the plants and neighborhoods, once the shock of the electoral defeat has passed, the heightened determination of the workers to take matters into their own hands must find expression through the implementation of workers control.

Unified mobilizations of the rank and file, jointly drawing the lessons of division, should make a discussion on trade-union and workers democracy timely. This should culminate in the prospect of a fusion of the trade unions and of a single trade-union federation.

As a matter of fact, in the CGT a priority should be placed on discussion of the relations between the CP and CGT. This discussion cannot fail to be stirred up both by the loss in CGT votes in the trade-union elections, and by the impact of debates within the CP itself.

In the CFDT, a debate is unavoidable over the methods of a leadership that claims to be for self-management while flouting the authority of its national councils (from involvement in the "Sessions for Socialism" to the Moreau report, once repudiated and now implemented, and by the proposal to shorten the workweek without maintaining full wages) and dissolving opposition groupings.

The crisis of teacher unionism ascribable to the inertia of the FEN leadership will reactivate discussion of the federation's corporatist structure and lobbying methods. Such discussions should make it possible to raise the prospect of trade-union fusion in terms other than simply merging the bureaucratic apparatuses, while unleashing the powerful dynamic of unity that a single trade-union federation would have.

But unity means not only trade-union unity; it also means unity in action of the various social movements with the unions. This means unity of the independent women's movement with the trade-union movement, Family Planning, and various organizations (of doctors, parents) for the right to free abortion, and for high-quality child-care centers in sufficient number. It means unity of the soldiers' movement and union movement in the campaign for free transportation, for the establishment of commissions of inquiry into health and safety conditions, for the defense of soldiers' committees and the right of soldiers to organize unions. It means that trade-union bodies should participate in antinuclear demonstrations. It means unity of the blue-collar and teachers unions and the university, high-school, and technical-

school movements against the Haby reform.⁵

The Need For A Political Focus

It is quite clear that after the electoral defeat of the workers parties, and the



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victory of the right by a more than eighty-seat margin, that the main political slogans of the campaign—such as "kick out Giscard, for a CP-SP government that breaks with the bourgeoisie and meets our demands, repeal the 1958 constitution"—no longer have the same appeal and timeliness for direct agitation. They will shift to the background, without being dropped from our propaganda.

To win our demands, scattered movements will not be adequate. Struggles must be extended and centralized around specific goals by branch of industry and region. But each step in this direction that is the least bit successful will inevitably raise the question of the government and

6. To Build the Revolutionary Party, Turn Toward the Mass Workers Parties

Ten years ago, the workers went through the experience of a general strike, both of its strength and of the impasse that results when it does not culminate in the question of political power. Today they have experi-

enced their strength at the polls, as well as its ineffectiveness when it is not based on powerful, united mobilizations of the rank and file.

In both cases, the workers have experienced the treachery of the reformists—and the need for workers unity. Not unity at any price, making an electoral victory a foregone conclusion. Such an outcome would only intensify the electoralist illu-

rienced their strength at the polls, as well as its ineffectiveness when it is not based on powerful, united mobilizations of the rank and file. Any wide development of social struggles, any general strike—even occasional ones—will inevitably place the question of its political goals on the agenda. Today, the Common Program is dead; the Union of the Left is under discussion. The great mass of workers view the political avenues as blocked. It would be a mistake to respond to this situation by saying that the electoral phase is over with and that the time has come for the "alternative of struggles," or by creating the illusion that the influence of the CP and SP among the working class is going to collapse, in favor of a "revolutionary alternative." It is first and foremost in the arena of struggles that the basis for a working-class program to deal with the crisis will emerge. But this remobilization will remain deadlocked if it is not linked to the fight for political unity of the workers organizations and the establishment of a workers government.

For a May Day of Unity and Struggle

With this concern in mind, we should seize on the questions that both CP and SP members and many trade-union activists are asking: What kind of unity do we need? What is the relationship between unity at the top and among the ranks? What kind of program do we need and how can we work it out? With whom should we unite? Revolutionary militants will elicit these discussions and take part in them, not by being satisfied to draw the lessons of the past, but by pointing these lessons toward the future. Unity? Agreed—but with no exceptions within the workers movement, and to the exclusion of all bourgeois parties! Unity at the top? Agreed—but also at the bottom. Unity around a program? Agreed—but around a program of struggle taking up the demands raised in mass mobilizations!

For the time being, preparations for a May Day of struggle, based on a platform of demands discussed in a united way in the plants and leading to joint contingents should constitute the first step in the direction of a unified mobilization of working men and women for their demands.

5. See "Massive Protests in France Against University 'Reforms,'" *Intercontinental Press*, May 3, 1976, p. 727.

sions fostered by the bureaucracies. But unity from the ground up, rooted in the workplace, cemented by a democratic discussion of demands—such unity opens up the possibility of organizing a struggle against the bosses continuing beyond the elections, as well as the extraordinary possibility of winning an electoral victory by the power of attraction that the achievement of unity and the determination to struggle would have.

Divisions to Be Expected Within the Reformist Parties

It is to be expected that the discussions and ripening of the debate will be reflected by divisions within the mass reformist parties, the CP and SP, which revolutionists should be able to take advantage of.

Within the SP, the discussion in the top echelons over what tactic to adopt from now on with regard to the CP, and over the race to fill the post of first secretary, may be relayed to the ranks by way of criticism of the Social Democratic perspective of administering capitalism and of the SP's way of functioning from the top down. The policy of the CERES leadership, of seeking to act as a go-between between the CP and SP, not by relying on mass mobilizations, but by playing off intrabureaucratic rivalries inside the SP, is likely to open the eyes of many activists who had seen in CERES a possible instrument for breaking out of the two dead ends of Social Democracy and Stalinism.

The CP has recruited and educated the absolute majority of its members to the prospect of the Union of the Left. To tighten its grip on the ranks, it was able to turn the issue of struggling against austerity to tactical advantage, and in its initial stages, the CP's polemical onslaught bore some fruit. But starting in January, when bureaucratic concerns broke through the programmatic cover, it has been at a standstill.

In the final analysis, the CP's results were very mixed. It did manage to partially block the SP's momentum, but was not able to strengthen its own position significantly, and its electoral gains in forty-four départements do not even make up for the erosion in its traditional strongholds. It revived its image as a workers party, but resurrected that of a Stalinist party at the same time, an image it was trying to lose, by claiming to be the only party of the workers, and by strictly subordinating the CGT to its political interests.

Finally, after having spent six months denouncing the threat of austerity of the left, it has no intention of launching a determined struggle against the imminent application of austerity by the right.

These are some of the contradictions that are bound to roil the membership and shake up the party.

While the leadership has been able to

temporarily contain the SP drive, it has, on the other hand, weakened its own authority in a lasting way. The appeal to party patriotism and loyalty to the general secretary will not be able to stifle questions



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about past practices and democratic functioning. The criticisms made by the Spanish CP of the policy of the French CP can only intensify discussions of the question of unity. The persistence of criticism of the USSR by the French CP, accompanied by its change of position on self-management and feminism, can only intensify the membership's demands for democracy.

Despite its anticipated decline in comparison with the 1977 municipal elections and owing to the CP's propaganda campaign, the vote for the far left, which was over 3 percent on the first round, testifies to the existence and tenacity of a skeptical current to the left of the Common Program. The growth and organization of this current, however, remains blocked by the serious strategic errors of most of the organizations, and the limits they place on revolutionary unity.

The OCI met with undeniable success by championing the cause of unity without a program. It did not run candidates; it carried out its entire campaign around the theme of standing down, without taking a position on the issues under debate. It based everything on the assumption of "victory on the 19th" (as its posters said), without explaining what kind of victory it would be, whether of the workers or of the "popular front," and by suddenly muffling its condemnation of the Radicals.

Criticizing us for having signed an agreement, under which we campaigned under our own banner and around our own

program, with the OCT, which was calling for a vote for the candidates of the left on the second round, the OCI used this as a pretext for refusing to call for a vote for our candidates on the first round. Accordingly, without having independently explained its program on the key issues, on the demands that prepared the way for either of the two possible outcomes of the elections, the OCT chose to vote on the first round for the declared allies of the "left" Radicals and Gaullists. For the sake of unity without a program, unconditional withdrawal on the second round turned into de facto unconditional support on the first round.

The OCT, in the name of building a revolutionary alternative or a revolutionary opposition to a possible government of the left, turned its back on the key issues and tasks, rather than see its sand castles washed away by the first wave. Refusing to distinguish between the parties that are answerable to the workers and those that, like the Radicals, are not, it called for an indiscriminate vote for the candidates of the left, only to behold the spectacle of Robert Fabre switching hats once the second round was over, with the votes of the OCT in his pocket.

Above all, the OCT refused to consider workers unity as anything other than unity of the rank and file, while ignoring the workers' most representative organizations, the trade unions and political parties. Such an approach can only be understood as a battle for unity around the revolutionists' program, that is, as an additional kind of division. This error was given practical ratification with respect to the second round, when the OCT agreed to give lip service to the call for withdrawal without really campaigning for it, while at the same time explaining that a victory over the right would be more favorable to the workers. If the OCT really thought so, it should have led a real fight for unity of the working class and its organizations to beat the right.

Finally, Lutte Ouvrière, which had rejected any kind of unity pact, even for dividing up election districts, on the grounds that it had a harder line on the characterization of a possible government of the left, carried out a campaign in which no mention was made either of unity or of program. LO did not ask for votes on the basis of clear demands, preparing the way for a struggle against austerity, but on the basis of confidence in its candidates, who as honest workers would not be like other politicians. Nor did LO state prior to the first round what it would do with the votes entrusted to its candidates, which in effect were mandates. It came out for withdrawal only after the first round, without carrying out any campaign around it, and even refusing a common approach to intervening in support meetings for CP or SP candidates.

If we add to this that the PSU for

months held the CP up as the motor force for change, that it adopted the CFDT program as the basis of compromise between the CP and SP and as the platform of a fourth partner of the Union of the Left, that it gave up all thought of running its own campaign and strictly dissociating itself programmatically to run through the vehicle of the Self-Management Front, in the hope of getting ministerial posts, the record is hardly an encouraging one for the future.

Only the LCR and CCA put forward a line of workers unity in a consistent way.

Building a Revolutionary Workers Party

This does not mean in any way that we should turn our backs on the far-left organizations, at a time when the discussion is going to crisscross the workers movement. But these organizations too must be able to draw their own lessons. Any united efforts on their part must be directed toward the mass workers parties. Revolutionary unity does not constitute an alternative to the Union of the Left. It has no meaning unless it is consciously applied in the fight for unity of the workers and their organizations.

The electoral defeat of the Union of the Left starkly raises this question of unity while at the same time putting the debate on revolutionary strategy in a new light.

Interview with a Lebanese Trotskyist Leader

[The following interview with a member of the Executive Committee of the Groupe Communiste Révolutionnaire (GCR—Revolutionary Communist Group, Lebanese section of the Fourth International) was obtained in Beirut April 2, 1978.]

* * *

Question. Zionist propaganda has portrayed the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon as retaliation for a commando action carried out by Fatah north of Tel Aviv. What do you think about that?

Answer. The very scope of the invasion by the Israeli army proves beyond any doubt that it was planned well in advance. The coordinated air, land, and sea invasion that the Zionist troops carried out against the Palestinian resistance, the Lebanese left, and the Shiite population of southern Lebanon was certainly not a spontaneous reaction to a particular terrorist operation.

In fact, the Zionist army had been planning the occupation of southern Lebanon for a long time. They had already begun to intervene before the invasion, using as cat's-paws reactionary bands of local Maronites, armed by the Zionists and encouraged by them to continue fighting against

The answer to these two questions points to the need, which is clearer than ever, to build a revolutionary party rooted in the working class and capable of working for unity around a clearly anticapitalist program. Recent events have taught a cruel lesson to those who believed in the possibility of "reforming" the reformist parties under pressure from their ranks. They should not cherish any opposite illusions as the possibility of rapid regroupments around minimal platforms. On the contrary, the greatest possible programmatic clarity is the key to fraternal debate that can lead to real progress.

As the French section of the Fourth International, the LCR intends to be the best builder of such a party, with neither sectarianism nor shortcuts. Without shortcuts—for it would be illusory to think that the far left could advance significantly toward building a revolutionary workers party without winning the thousands of workers who are still active in the traditional organizations, even though they are more and more critical of their leaderships.

Without sectarianism—for self-proclamations have never been a substitute for fraternal debate, the unity in action that is essential, evaluations and discussions carried out on the basis of common activity. □

the combined Lebanese-Palestinian forces.

In one sense the Israeli military intervention was more a result of the impasse reached in the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations than of any desire to "avenge the Jewish blood spilled," as Begin said. Sadat's peace initiative was itself partially designed to forestall an invasion, which seemed imminent.

The real causes of the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon were Begin's cynical expansionist policies and the Zionist concept of the security of Israel's borders.

So far as the commando operation on the road between Haifa and Tel Aviv goes, it is important to note that this operation turned into something quite different from what the commando members planned. They were planning only to take hostages that could be used to obtain the liberation of Palestinian fighters in Zionist jails. The operation was turned into a bloodbath only by the response of the Zionists, including one of the hostages who has described how he fired upon the commando members in the bus, causing the bus to explode.

In any case, it is not our business to pass moral or pseudopolitical judgments on this operation, which marked a renewal of armed struggle against Zionism, long ig-

nored by Fatah. Whatever the degree of violence employed by the resistance inside Israel, it is only a pale response to the atrocities committed by the Zionists throughout their history in their attempt to physically and politically annihilate the Palestinian people.

Q. Did the Israeli occupation accomplish what it set out to accomplish? Do you think it will become a permanent occupation?

A. First it is necessary to spell out what the Israelis were hoping to accomplish. Obviously the Zionist army was trying to deal a severe blow to the Palestinian resistance and its Lebanese allies. But it is also clear that the Zionist ruling class had no illusions that they could annihilate the Palestinian resistance with this type of intervention. So it seems that the primary goal of the Israeli aggression was to begin some type of permanent occupation of a ten-kilometer "security belt" beyond the Lebanon-Israel border.

The Zionist army hoped to be able to maintain military outposts that—with the help of right-wing Christians—could prevent any type of anti-Zionist activity originating in southern Lebanon. So they were taken by surprise by the reaction of the United States, which is anxious to avoid any complication of the Israeli-Arab question, and which above all wants to make sure that the situation in southern Lebanon does not disturb the semblance of a state created with great difficulty in the rest of Lebanon.

The Americans put pressure on the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution providing for the withdrawal of Israeli troops and their replacement by UN forces. This forced the Zionist rulers—faced with the possibility that their army would have to retreat from southern Lebanon under American and international pressure—to expand the area occupied by their troops right up to the Litani River, so that UN forces would move into that whole area.

The Zionist rulers, while claiming that they are going to withdraw from southern Lebanon, say they will hold the UN responsible for any return of Palestinian guerrillas below the Litani. The Zionists say they are withdrawing but will return if the UN forces are not able to prevent the Palestinian fighters from establishing bases south of the river. But the way in which UN troops have been deployed up to this point cannot possibly satisfy the Israeli conditions.

The strategy of the Zionist leaders seems to be to extend the occupation until the UN troops have effective control over the routes south from the Litani, and in any case only to withdraw a little bit at a time, presenting new conditions every step of the way, all the while keeping the reactionary Lebanese on their payroll and forcing the UN troops to recognize them. In fact, if

it were not for strong American and international pressure, there would be a very great danger that the Israeli invasion would turn into a permanent occupation of all or part of southern Lebanon.

*Q. What is your analysis of the role of the United Nations and the intervention of UN troops?**

A. The problem is more complicated than it seems at first. What makes it complicated is the dual character of the UN intervention. It is directed both against the Israeli occupation and against the armed Palestinians. We are as much in favor of the first aspect as we are opposed to the second. This is what defines our attitude toward the UN troops. Insofar as they are able to force the Zionist army out of southern Lebanon and to protect the Lebanese border against Zionist intervention, we support the UN forces; to do anything else would be to allow the occupation to continue.

On the other hand, whenever the troops try to quell the Palestinian resistance and that of the Lebanese left, they will be treated like anyone else who makes such an effort, whether they are French, Norwegian, Iranian, Senegalese, Syrian, or Lebanese. At the present time the UN troops have not yet effected any Israeli retreat and are deployed between the two camps. Furthermore, the French UN troops have tried to take over some key points in the Tyre region that are extremely important for the Lebanese-Palestinian forces and are not occupied by the Israeli army (the port of Tyre, the Kasmieh bridge over the Litani). The UN troops were halted by the resistance they encountered, but they still plan to go ahead with this effort. On this, no concession is possible.

The flexibility of our position on the UN troops flows from the fact that the only

alternative right now seems to be the continuation of the Israeli occupation and of the misery it has caused for tens of thousands of refugees. The anti-imperialist forces cannot do anything that could possibly be used as an excuse to continue the occupation (and a people's war for the liberation of southern Lebanon is not a realistic alternative in the short term). Rather they have to throw the ball back into the Zionist camp.

Q. Could you describe for us the Arab and Lebanese reaction to the invasion?

A. The Arab regimes made their usual response: verbal solidarity and messages of support. The most flagrant example is that of the Syrian regime, whose troops in Lebanon stood by and passively watched the occupation of southern Lebanon. But there was nothing surprising in this.

And the powerlessness of the phony Lebanese state has been revealed more clearly than ever before during the most recent period; it has been unable to take any kind of straightforward position because of the variety of pressures it is subjected to.

The reactionary Lebanese Christians, for their part, are very unhappy about the UN resolution. They are afraid that the deployment of the "blue helmets" in southern Lebanon will no longer give them the same free hand to use as a club the threat of Israeli intervention, and that it will leave them face to face with the Palestinian and Lebanese fighters and with Syria, where relations are strained already. This is why the Christians are threatening to insist that Syrian troops in Lebanon be replaced with UN forces until Syria breaks its current alliance with the Palestinian resistance.

The joint Lebanese-Palestinian resistance to the Israeli invasion has been truly heroic. You only have to look at the difficulty the invading forces experienced this time in comparison to the ease with which they took over Arab territories in June 1967, even though this was the first Arab-Israeli war in which the numerical balance of forces was clearly in the Zionists' favor, to say nothing of their superior material strength. This was just one more proof of the fact that people's war is the best counter to imperialist technology.

Having said this, we must note that the National Lebanese Movement (the coordinating body of the Lebanese left) did not attempt any real mobilization of the Lebanese masses on a national scale. They contented themselves with issuing calls for mobilizations without doing anything to bring them about.

This is ascribable to the political weakness of the reformists who make up the movement, who are afraid of cutting their ties with the official Lebanese government. These reformists are frightened by the prospect of an extended people's war that

would necessarily spread to the whole country and would have to go beyond the bourgeois framework of Lebanese society. Obviously, if the Israeli occupation continues, the reformists, like all the anti-imperialist forces, will have to begin fighting for the liberation of the south.

Q. How has the GCR responded, and what have been the main issues it has raised?

A. The GCR could not just stand by as observers while Zionist troops invaded southern Lebanon. Groups of fighters belonging to our organization took part in the military effort in southern Lebanon, in collaboration with the Palestinian Liberation Front, which is the dissident left wing of Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command, and which is also part of the Palestinian Rejectionist Front.

When the invasion began the GCR, Palestinian Liberation Front, and another Lebanese far-left group issued a common call for a mobilization against the Israeli invasion and for the unconditional withdrawal of Zionist troops; several thousand copies of this were distributed. The GCR is also involved in Beirut in organizational activity and aid for the refugees from southern Lebanon.

The principal demands put forward by the GCR in the current situation are:

- Total, immediate, and unconditional withdrawal of the Zionists troops from southern Lebanon.
- A general mobilization of the Lebanese and Palestinian masses to force the Israelis to withdraw.
- Full freedom of operation for the Lebanese-Palestinian struggle against Zionism.
- Opposition to any UN operations against the Lebanese-Palestinian anti-Zionist struggle.
- Opposition to the disarming of the Lebanese masses.

*The position of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on Zionist aggression in Lebanon is expressed in a statement published in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, April 10, 1978, p. 410. Concerning the use of United Nations troops, the statement says:

"At the urging of the U.S. government, which wants to enable the Arab ruling classes to save face, the United Nations has adopted a hypocritical resolution that avoids explicitly condemning the invasion of Lebanon in any way, and calls for a fresh dispatch of 'blue helmets.' Their job can only be to protect the new status quo from the Palestinian movement, once the Zionist army has carried out its 'mopping up' operation. . . .

"Working-class organizations the world over . . . must demand immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon and condemn the deployment of UN troops, moving in behind the Israeli tanks."

That is the official position of the Fourth International.

On some of the other questions raised in this interview, readers may refer to this statement for the point of view of the United Secretariat.—*IP/I*

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Lou Howort/Militant

Part of April 15 demonstration of 10,000 in Washington, D.C.

Washington—10,000 March in Antiracist Action

Ten thousand persons, mostly young Blacks, Latinos, and Asian-Americans, rallied in Washington D.C. April 15 in defense of affirmative action and against the *Bakke* decision. The demonstration, sponsored by the National Committee to Overturn the Bakke Decision, was the largest of the many anti-*Bakke* protests held over the last year.

The *Bakke* case involves a California court ruling that white engineer Allan Bakke was the victim of "reverse discrimination" when he was rejected by a medical school that set aside sixteen out of one hundred places for minority applicants. The case was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court in October 1977, and a ruling is expected within the next several months.

The lawsuit is widely regarded as the most important civil-rights test case since the 1954 Supreme Court ruling outlawing school segregation. If upheld, the *Bakke* ruling will give universities and employers an excuse to dismantle the affirmative-action programs they have been forced to institute to compensate for decades of

discrimination against minorities and women.

Women have a direct interest in defending the affirmative-action programs through which they have begun to break into jobs previously reserved for men. A speaker from the National Organization for Women addressed the April 15 rally, and there were several contingents of NOW members.

The demonstration was endorsed by the Greater Washington, D.C., Central Labor Council, and many trade-union banners could be seen on the march. William Simons, representing the D.C. labor movement and the coalition of Black Trade Unionists, told the crowd: "We know that once affirmative action is turned back—no matter whether it is on the job or in the schools—we will see everything pushed backward and further backward."

Bakke's "reverse discrimination" argument is already being widely used to challenge all sorts of affirmative-action programs in jobs and education. There are now between 2,000 and 3,000 such cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In New Orleans a federal judge overturned an affirmative-action job training program. A California court last November upheld the contention of some white contractors that an affirmative-action measure in the construction industry was unconstitutional. A group of Baltimore steelworkers has brought suit against the "consent decree" in which the steel industry agreed to facilitate the hiring and advancement of minorities and women.

The *Bakke* case and those patterned after it attempt to pit Blacks against whites, men against women. They argue that gains made by minorities under affirmative-action programs are necessarily made at the expense of whites. In fact, job-training programs and open admissions plans won by the civil-rights and women's liberation movements have also benefited white male workers and students. It is discrimination against minorities and women that causes crippling divisions—and this discrimination will be reinforced if *Bakke* is upheld. □