

Intercontinental Press

combined with

inprecor

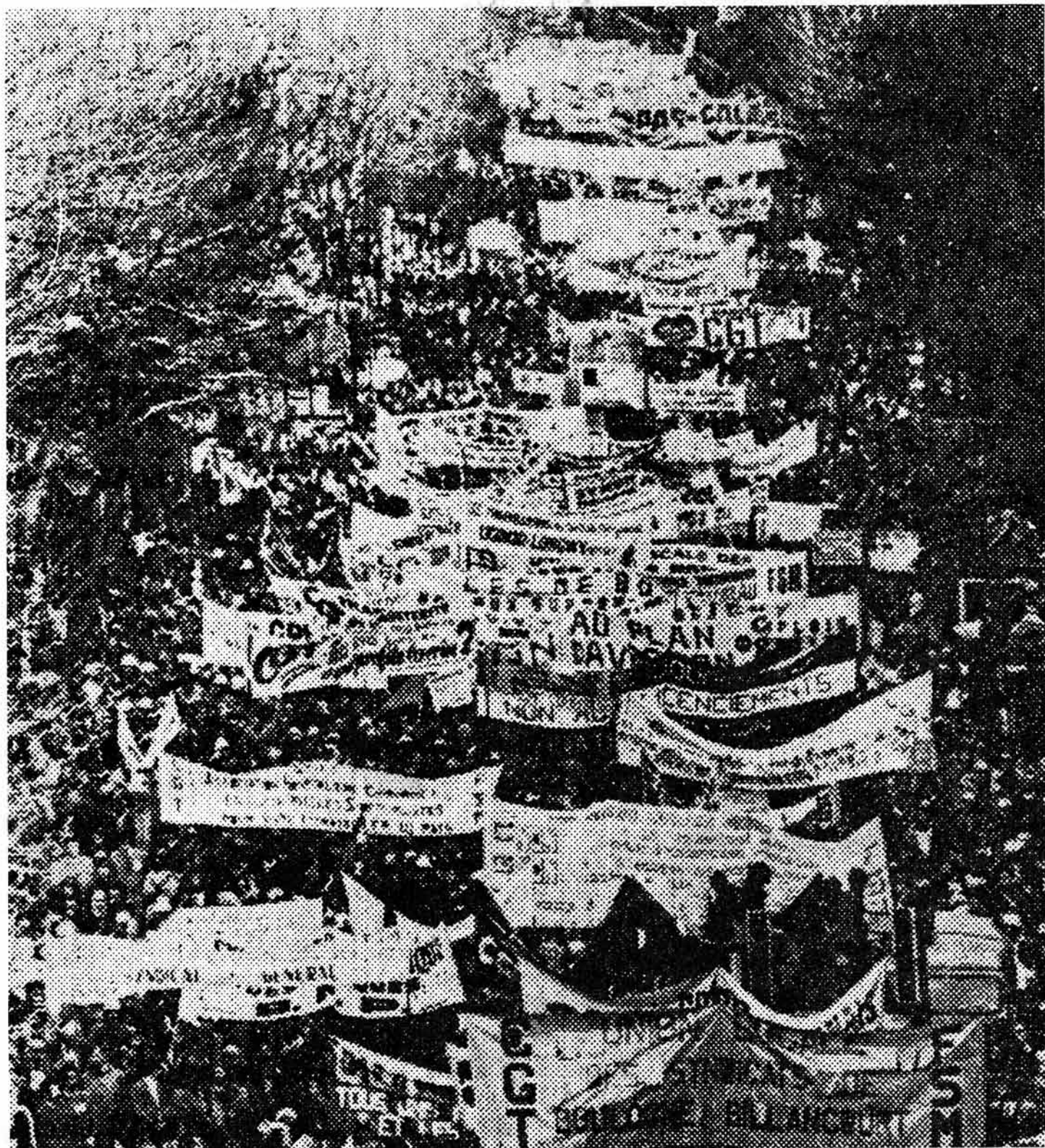
Vol. 17, No. 12

© 1979 by Intercontinental Press

April 2, 1979

USA 75¢

UK 30p



Steelworkers March on Paris

Evelyn Reed Dies in New York



Flax Hermes/Militant
EVELYN REED

Evelyn Reed, noted Marxist anthropologist and a long-time leader of the Socialist Workers Party, died in New York of cancer March 22. She was seventy-three years of age. Reed is survived by her companion of nearly four decades, George Novack.

Reed was recruited to Marxism in 1939 in Mexico, while assisting in the Trotsky household.

Beginning in 1945, when she joined the staff of the *Militant*, Reed wrote extensively on all aspects of women's struggle

for their liberation, especially on the origins of women's oppression.

Her major work, *Woman's Evolution: From Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family*, published in 1975, was the product of more than twenty years of research into the origins and development of primitive society. It has since gone through five printings in the United States, has been translated into Swedish and Spanish and is scheduled to be published in five other languages.

An earlier work, *Problems of Women's Liberation* (1969), has been translated into eight languages. It was this book that won Reed international prominence as a Marxist and a spokeswoman for the rising feminist movement. Over the next ten years she lectured at more than 100 universities in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, and Japan.

Prior to her final illness, plans had been made for a tour of Scandinavia and West Germany.

A memorial meeting has been scheduled for Reed on Sunday, April 8. It will be held at 1 p.m. at the Tishman Auditorium, New York University Law School, 40 Washington Square South, New York City.

Messages to the meeting should be sent in care of the *Militant*, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014.

Next week's issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* will carry more on the life of this outstanding leader in the fight for the emancipation of women and all working people. □

union federation, the CFDT, as well as by the FEN (the teachers federation) and the Force Ouvrière federation.

It was also supported by the Communist Party. At the last minute the Socialist Party decided to participate, after having criticized the action from the beginning.

The demonstration was totally unlike any action seen in France in recent years.

Most Parisian demonstrations have very large contingents of public and government workers, teachers, hospital and other service workers, and white-collar workers, who often make up half of such actions.

The rest is generally made up of industrial workers from the Paris suburbs. These are often from the smaller shops. The 30,000 workers at the giant Renault auto plant at Boulogne-Billancourt, for example, have not taken part in large numbers in such actions in a number of years.

By contrast, this action was almost wholly composed of industrial workers. The teachers contingent was small and limited to those willing to defy the FEN's opposition to the march. The public workers participation was also limited to isolated groups. Even the turnout of industrial workers from the Parisian suburbs was smaller than usual.

The overwhelming bulk of the protesters were workers from France's large industrial regions in the north, the east (which includes Lorraine), and the areas in the south near the Rhone River.

In these large contingents, the hardhats of the steelworkers mingled with those of the iron and coal miners. Some of the miners contingents were nearly 1,000-strong. "If they close the steel mills," they asked, "won't the iron and coal mines be next?"

Workers from the aircraft construction industry joined with chemical workers and over-the-road truck drivers from the steel town of Longwy.

Each of these different contingents advanced their own demands. A contingent of workers who produce telephone equipment and who are organized in the metalworkers federation of the CGT, handed out leaflets protesting plans to lay off 20,000 of the 90,000 workers in the telephone industry by the end of 1981.

A leaflet issued by teachers protested the elimination of 5,600 teaching posts. Teachers from vocational schools protested plans to close down state-run apprenticeship programs and turn them over to the companies.

But above all was the solidarity expressed with the steelworkers. The steelworkers are clearly seen as the first heavy units of the working class to have struck back at the government plan to increase profits through speedup and layoffs. The steelworkers' demand for a thirty-five-hour week with no cut in pay was picked up everywhere. They are seen as the cutting

NEWS ANALYSIS

The Steelworkers March on Paris

By F.L. Derry

PARIS—The French capital was suddenly submerged by a wave of hardhats as 100,000 steelworkers, iron and coal miners, and other workers converged on Paris for a massive demonstration March 23.

More than 600 buses, 6 special trains, and thousands of cars brought demonstrators from all over France to protest the rising threat of unemployment.

The chief demands of the demonstrators were for a halt to all layoffs and for a thirty-five-hour week with no cut in pay, so as to spread available work.

Spearheading the action were steel-

workers from Lorraine and the north of France. These regions have been hard hit by major factory closures, which have had a devastating effect on the entire local economy.

They were joined by tens of thousands of others who used the demonstration to show support for the steelworkers while advancing their own demands.

The action was initiated by the CGT union federation in Longwy, a steel town in Lorraine. It was supported by the national CGT but opposed by the other big

edge in the struggle against unemployment.

As the banner of the workers from SEITA, the state monopoly of tobacco and match production, said, "Today steel, tomorrow SEITA."

In the regions hit hardest by the steel crisis, the mobilization for the Paris action was very deep. All industries were represented. Some small towns had 200 and 300 demonstrators behind the banner of their local union.

This was not true in the Paris area, however. Here all unions, including the CGT, did what they could to limit the action. The Renault plant at Boulogne-Billancourt called a two-hour stoppage but no demonstration. The CGT tried to limit the turnout of public workers. The national CGT federation of public workers, the UGFF, called a strike for March 29, a week after the Paris demonstration.

A major battle took place inside the CGT unions affiliated to the UGFF to support the March 23 action. This was opposed by the UGFF leadership. Supporters of the demonstration won a majority, however, in the union representing workers at the Labor Ministry and at the unemployment offices. They organized a spirited contingent of several hundred in common with the local CFDT workers, who had also opposed the decision of their national leaders not to take part in the action.

In addition to trying to limit the action to the steel regions, the CGT opposed slogans aimed at the government. Few banners pointed to the Giscard-Barre government as responsible for the crisis in steel or the high unemployment levels.

Opposition to the government did break through, however, in the spontaneous songs and chants organized by each contingent.

Only the contingent of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, the French section of the Fourth International, and the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire, the youth group affiliated with the LCR, pointed at the bourgeois government as responsible.

The Trotskyist contingent, which numbered more than 1,000, marched behind an enormous banner that said, "Throw out Giscard and Barre! For unity among the unions and workers parties against this government of austerity! For the thirty-five-hour week!" □

... Next Week

Special issue on Indochina wars. Featuring a contribution by Ernest Mandel, in reply to earlier articles by Steve Clark, Fred Feldman, Gus Horowitz, and Mary-Alice Waters.

Also included: articles by Tariq Ali, Camilo González, and Livio Maitan.

Reserve your copy now.

In This Issue

Closing News Date: March 24, 1979

USA	306	Evelyn Reed Dies in New York
	328	Contributions From Around World to Hansen Fund
BRAZIL	308	Auto Workers Lead Massive Strike Wave —by Fred Murphy
IRAN	309	On Eve of Referendum —by Gerry Foley
	311	Workers Speak Out—by Karim Suleiman and Mariam Danna
POLAND	312	Wage Cuts, Forced Overtime Spark Strikes
CANADA	313	Why Trotskyists Launched Turn to Industrial Unions—by Jim Upton
SWITZERLAND	314	Vote Shows Impact of Antinuclear Movement
ISRAEL	315	Arabs Under Increasing Attack —by Michel Warshawsky and Asaf Adiv
FRANCE	316	Biggest Working-Class Battles Since 1968—by Jean-Claude Bernard
INDOCHINA WAR	320	The War Between China and Vietnam —by Pierre Rousset
WESTERN EUROPE	324	French CP Waves Flag, Italian CP Hails Austerity—by Livio Maitan
CHINA	328	More Demands for Democratic Rights —by Dan Dickeson
NEWS ANALYSIS	306	The Steelworkers March on Paris —by F.L. Derry
COVER PHOTO	305	Demonstration of 100,000 in Paris, March 23, demanding halt to layoffs.

Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 116, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014. Published in New York each Monday except the first in January and third and fourth in August.

Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

Editor: Mary-Alice Waters.

Contributing Editors: Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, George Novack.

Managing Editor: Michael Baumann.

Editorial Staff: Jon Britton, Dan Dickeson, Gerry Foley, Ernest Harsch, Fred Murphy, Susan Wald, Will Reissner.

Business Manager: Harvey McArthur.

Copy Editor: David Martin.

Technical Staff: Paul Devezze, Larry Ingram, Arthur Lobman, Kevin McGuire, James M. Morgan, Sally Rhett.

Intercontinental Press specializes in political analysis and interpretation of events of particular interest to the labor, socialist, colonial independence, Black, and women's liberation movements.

Signed articles represent the views of the authors, which may not necessarily coincide with those of Intercontinental Press. Insofar as it re-

flects editorial opinion, unsigned material stands on the program of the Fourth International.

To Subscribe: For one year send \$24 to Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 116, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014. Write for rates on first class and airmail.

In Europe: For air-speeded subscriptions, write to Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 50, London N1 2XP, England. In Australia: Write to Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box K208, Haymarket 2000. In New Zealand: Write to Socialist Books, P.O. Box 3774, Auckland.

Subscription correspondence should be addressed to Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 116, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014.

Please allow five weeks for change of address. Include your old address as well as your new address, and, if possible, an address label from a recent issue.

Intercontinental Press is published by the 408 Printing and Publishing Corporation, 408 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Offices at 408 West Street, New York, N.Y.

Copyright © 1979 by Intercontinental Press.

Auto Workers Take Lead in Brazil Strike Wave

By Fred Murphy

More than 200,000 metalworkers in the industrial suburbs of São Paulo walked off their jobs on March 13, demanding that their employers grant a 78% wage increase and recognize the workers' right to elect their own trade-union delegates in the plants.

The day before, 80,000 public-school teachers throughout the neighboring state of Rio de Janeiro began a strike for higher pay and a shorter workweek.

Both strikes were continuing as of March 23. At the same time, bus drivers in the São Paulo suburbs were on strike for an 80% wage boost, students were on strike in several parts of the country protesting attacks on academic freedom, and work stoppages were being threatened by metalworkers in the southern city of Porto Alegre, by doctors and nurses in Rio de Janeiro hospitals, and by teachers in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

The upsurge of labor and student struggles coincided with the swearing-in on March 15 of Brazil's fifth military dictator since the 1964 coup, Gen. João Baptista de Figueiredo, the former head of the secret police. Protest demonstrations involving several hundred to 1,000 persons greeted Figueiredo's inauguration in Brasília, Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, and at least five other cities on March 15.

In the forefront of the strike wave are the auto workers of São Bernardo do Campo. In this city southeast of São Paulo are located automobile-assembly plants of Volkswagen, employing 45,000 workers; Mercedes-Benz, 18,000; Ford, 12,000; Saab, 3,000; and Chrysler, 2,200. All have been shut down by the strike, along with scores of smaller electrical-equipment, metal-fabricating, and other plants organized by the metalworkers unions.

Negotiations between the Metalworkers Federation and the São Paulo State Federation of Industries (FIESP) began March 6. The employers rejected out of hand the unions' demands for a 78% across-the-board wage increase and wage upgrading for the lowest-paid workers; a shorter workweek (forty hours instead of forty-eight), job security after ninety days' employment (Brazilian workers at present have virtually none), and recognition and job security for elected union delegates (who have often been the victims of retaliatory firings).

The unions' demand for a 78% wage hike is based on the official cost-of-living increase over the past year of 44%, plus an additional 34.1% to compensate for wages lost in 1973-74 owing to illegal manipulation by the government of the cost-of-living figures.

The bosses offered only a 49% to 58% wage increase. This was accepted by the officials of the state union federation, but the more militant leaders of the Santo André, São Bernardo, and São Caetano unions (the region known collectively as ABC) decided to present the employers' offer to their ranks for a vote.

São Bernardo metalworkers president Luis Inácio da Silva ("Lula") reported the settlement proposal to an assembly of 20,000 metalworkers on March 12 and said "if you want my personal opinion, we shouldn't accept this offer." The workers responded with chants of "strike, strike, strike" and the work stoppage began at midnight the same day.

Assemblies of metalworkers in the other two ABC suburbs also rejected the bosses' offer.

Squads of pickets were dispatched from the unions' headquarters to encourage

metalworkers in smaller plants in the ABC area to join the strike. They met with an enthusiastic response, and were also greeted with cheers of solidarity from teachers, students, and housewives as they passed through the streets.

As word of the ABC workers' actions spread to other suburbs, metalworkers assemblies were held at plants where the leaders had accepted the bosses' offer. The 10,000 auto workers at General Motors' São José dos Campos plant voted to overturn their leaders' decision and join the strike. Thousands more metalworkers did the same at other São José plants and at plants in Santa Barbara d'Oeste, Jundiaí, Jacareí, Campinas, and other São Paulo suburbs.

On March 16, the dictatorship decreed the strikes illegal and told the workers they had no right to demand more than a 44% wage increase. At the same time, the regime opened a redbaiting campaign against the workers. "Infiltration by the Socialist Convergence in the ABC metalworkers' strike is a proven fact," declared São Paulo state Security Director Octávio Gonzaga March 17.

(Socialist Convergence is a legal organization that is seeking to organize a new socialist party in Brazil based on the working class; twenty-five of its leaders are currently on trial in São Paulo on charges of violating the dictatorship's National Security Law. See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, March 12, p. 245.)

São Bernardo union leader "Lula" responded in advance to the regime's decree that the strikes were illegal. He told a March 14 rally of 80,000 metalworkers—one of an almost daily series of rallies of that size in São Bernardo—that "the strike . . . is just and legitimate. Its 'illegality' would have to be based on laws that were not made by us or by our representatives."

As for the redbaiting, "Lula" declared March 17 that "I am not in the habit of demanding a statement of ideological beliefs before a worker can join the union or go on strike."

On March 22-23 President Figueiredo's newly appointed Labor Minister Murilo Macedo joined talks in São Paulo between the metalworkers' leaders and the FIESP. He threatened the union leaders with prosecution and forced them to present a compromise proposal to the workers for a new vote. But the São Bernardo workers rejected the new offer on March 23, and workers in the other São Paulo suburbs were expected to do the same. □



Part of crowd at March 14 rally in San Bernardo.

Iran on Eve of Referendum

By Gerry Foley

TEHRAN—On the eve of the scheduled referendum that is supposed to determine what kind of regime succeeds the crowned dictatorship toppled by the Iranian masses, the procapitalist forces are trying to put a lid on the movement of the masses toward social and political liberation, and the movement of the workers and the oppressed toward organizing themselves.

Army Sent in Against Kurds

By the third week of March, the reactionary offensive of the authorities had gone as far as a military attack on the Kurdish people, resulting in hundreds of deaths.

The new regime did not hesitate to send in surviving units of the shah's repressive forces against the Kurdish people in Sanandaj. No newspapers are being published during the five days of the Iranian New Year holiday, March 21-26. However, reports reaching Tehran by other means tell of the use of helicopter gunships and heavy weapons against the crowds.

Tens of thousands of persons have reportedly taken to the streets in the Azerbaijani towns bordering Kurdistan to demonstrate their solidarity with the Kurdish people.

The central government was not able to extend its authority to Kurdistan after the insurrection. The people have kept their weapons and give their allegiance to Kurdish-controlled committees. As an oppressed nationality, they are demanding the right to set up their own local government.

There is no indication here in Tehran that any major section of the Persian population supports the attempt to impose "national unity" now being tried by the authorities. In fact, the government has sought to carry out its operation in Kurdistan as secretly as possible.

It is doubtful that the government will be able to carry out the referendum, scheduled for March 30, in Kurdistan, and it may not be able to do so either in other areas where oppressed nationalities are beginning to organize.

The referendum was designed to win a mandate for an "Islamic republic," which would sanction the attempt to keep the masses within the limits of the capitalist system. The procapitalist forces are trying to reestablish the bourgeois order, at the moment through the ideology and organization of the Shi'ite religious establishment and the personal prestige of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

As the only institution independent of the state to survive the shah's repression, the Shi'ite hierarchy was able to play the

central role in uniting the masses against the monarchy and to become the symbol of the anti-imperialist feeling of the people of Iran. The masses came to see Khomeini as the most intransigent leader of the fight against the bloody Washington-backed dictatorship.

By assuming a leading role in organizing the fight against the shah nationally, the Shi'ite clergy managed to keep a grip on the organizations the masses themselves threw up in the course of the struggle.

As soon as the shah's repressive apparatus disintegrated, the religious leaders started a furious campaign to gain total control of the struggle committees, and to use them as the means for "restoring order." The "Islamic republic" was the general political slogan for this demagogic operation, and the referendum was to be its crowning touch.

The slogan of an "Islamic republic" has been utilized in a whole series of attacks on the democratic rights, the gains, the living standards, and the aspirations of the masses. It has been wielded against workers demanding their own elected committees to run the factories.

It has been aimed at women, who had been awakened to political life in massive numbers by the struggle against the shah, and had participated in it with full equality and with combativity equal to that of the men. Khomeini announced that all women would be expected to wear the veil, and his son explained that Khomeini meant what he said: "We are calling on women to wear the veil. We also think that non-Muslim women should wear the veil as a token of their support for the Islamic revolution."

The slogan of "Just the Islamic republic, not a word more and not a word less," a quotation from Khomeini, began to appear in posters on the walls and in the streets of Tehran. What it obviously meant was "no socialism." For example, it was the main chant of right-wing counterdemonstrators who on March 22 prevented some thousands of students from reaching the Ministry of Labor to show their support for the workers sitting in there, demanding that wages owed to them be paid.

Behind Campaign for 'Islamic Republic'

The whole way in which the campaign for the "Islamic republic" has been conducted has made it clear that it is intended to roll back the gains of the people of Iran. According to the scheme originally announced, voters would be given only one choice, and the question was to be posed in

such a way that a "no" vote would imply support for the monarchy. Furthermore, voters would have to put their names and addresses on the ballot.

However, even a few days before the time scheduled for the referendum, it was still unclear what the actual form would be. In response to criticism in the press and apparently widespread and growing uneasiness, the government and religious leaders have continually shifted ground.

At the moment there is an uneasy consolidation of power in the hands of the religious leaders and those procapitalist forces advancing under their cover.

This situation is not satisfactory to the bourgeoisie. Even dominated by the religious leaders, the committees that arose in the struggle against the shah are a poor tool for exercising the functions of a capitalist state. They are still linked to the masses and heterogeneous in their makeup, including many radicalized militants. As irregular bodies without a well-established command structure, they are hard to control. Even the religious leaders are evidently uneasy about letting the committees continue to carry out certain functions of the state. Khomeini has tried, for example, to shore up the authority of the Bazargan government. But the fact remains that the new prime minister and his cabinet cannot govern without the backing of the committees.

On the other hand, Bazargan and other bourgeois political forces, such as the Democratic National Front, apparently hope that they can exploit the uneasiness over the undemocratic attitudes of Khomeini and the other religious leaders to regain some credibility for bourgeois parliamentary politics.

Role of the 'Imam's Committees'

The process of organization among the masses that began in the fight against the shah has not been broken off. It continues to give political life to the organizations that remain from the period of the insurrection, such as the neighborhood defense committees, although these have been brought under the tutelage of the religious hierarchy.

In most of these organizations, there was little consciousness of the need for class independence. As a result, the religious leaders were able to assert their control over the local groups through coordinating committees—the so-called Imam's* committees. These were set up on the basis of the committees that organized the welcome for Khomeini when he returned to the country. They are not elected, but are chosen through a combination of appointment and co-optation. The local and factory committees have been subjected to a process of purging and to introduction of right-wing elements, including former SAVAK agents.

The features and contradictions of this

*Khomeini is more and more being referred to as "the Imam"—a title connoting "messiah" in the Shi'ite religion.

process are well illustrated in Ahwaz. Harassment and intimidation of left activists by the Imam's committees have been widespread in the last few weeks. But this has been particularly intense in this hub of the oil industry and has focused on the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) branch in that city. Its members report that they are continually arrested by the local committees, often several times a day. They are taken to committee headquarters and threatened. They are followed by members of the central Imam's committee and committee cars are stationed in front of their homes. They are subjected to physical attacks.

But when they are taken in front of the committees and subjected to anticommunist inquisitions, they are able to argue with the groups and sometimes make such an impression on the members that the red-hunters have to back off. On some occasions they have been able to win over members of the committee to their political views.

Thus despite the purging of militants and the introduction of agents of the old regime, the political struggle continues, even in the Imam's committees.

Although the masses still look to Khomeini for leadership, confidence that he can solve their mounting problems seems to be fading.

Shortages of such necessities as milk and meat are already multiplying here in the Iranian capital. Unemployment is massive, and a large section of workers who are actually working have not received the wages due them, with arrears often amounting to several months' pay. A group of workers is now on hunger strike at the Ministry of Labor to protest this.

On March 18, the international edition of *Kayhan*, one of the main afternoon papers in Tehran, featured parallel statements by Khomeini and Bazargan calling on the people to "work" and making it clear that they could not expect any satisfaction of their demands. Bazargan said that they should pay more attention to work regulations and discipline, and that this would be "an indication of their loyalty to the sacred Islamic revolution of the Iranian people."

Kayhan commented:

Although it is more than five weeks since the revolution triumphed, work in the government offices and industrial estates has yet to return to normal. This is being blamed on over-zealous revolutionaries, who continue to insist on their own terms on how to run the places of work.

There has not been a whisper from Khomeini or Bazargan that the workers' wages should be raised, or their conditions of work made easier.

The most that has been offered are some free public services and such things as free medicine for some. These promises are sporadic and some have been taken back after protests from the capitalists. The fact that they have been made, however, shows

the pressure the new rulers are under to offer something to the masses.

The new regime would have little or no hope of being able to hold back the masses from fighting for their demands, if it were not for the policies of most of the forces that claim to be for socialism.

Lineup of Forces on Iranian Left

The Tudeh Party, the pro-Moscow Stalinist party, is still the largest and most influential organization on the left. Although the Bazargan government has not yet legalized the Tudeh Party, it is continuing its policy of tail-ending and supporting the regime and the religious hierarchy. It has decided to come out from clandestinity to open up headquarters for its official organ *Mardom* (People). But it is doing its best to avoid confrontation with the new authorities.

On March 15, the Central Committee of the Tudeh Party published a statement calling for a vote for the Islamic republic. It explained that it was the content of the Islamic republic that was important and the Tudeh Party had no doubt that it would amount to the same thing as the democratic republic that remains their objective in this "stage."

The attitudes of the guerrilla organizations, the Fedayeen and Mujahedeen, have evolved perceptibly. In a communiqué, the Mujahedeen have said both that they are for the "Islamic republic" and that the referendum is undemocratic.

The Fedayeen have announced that they will not participate in the referendum and that they are for immediate elections for a constituent assembly.

The gravest failing of both groups is that they continue to give "critical support" to Bazargan and the religious hierarchy. No matter how sharp their criticisms may be, their support to the authorities does not help to clarify for the masses the class nature of the regime and the future "Islamic republic."

Another failure of the guerrilla organizations, especially the Mujahedeen—and of the Tudeh Party—is their refusal up to now to undertake any major campaigns to build the workers movement, in particular unions, or even to wage a systematic and sustained struggle for freedom of expression and for guaranteeing democratic rights.

The Revolutionary Tudeh Organization—Iranian Maoists who continue to follow Beijing (Peking)—are calling for a vote for the Islamic republic. Their position is hardly distinguishable from that of the Tudeh Party.

The Union of Iranian Communists—Maoists who identify with the "gang of four"—say:

We have no doubt that even an "Islamic republic" can be a democratic and nationalist government. . . . But the method of deciding on this government is undemocratic. In this undemocratic referendum, we will vote for a democratic republic.

We ask the government officials to revise and review the present referendum and allow for voting for a democratic republic.

However, the fact that a bourgeois organization such as the Democratic National Front has decided not to participate in the referendum indicates that there is already opposition to, or at least questioning of, Khomeini's plebiscite. By taking this position, what is apparently the strongest political organization of bourgeois liberals moved considerably to the left of the Tudeh Party.

Iranian Trotskyists Call for Workers and Peasants Republic

The Iranian Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party are still a relatively new and small organization. They are not able by themselves to mount a campaign for a boycott of the referendum. However, in their press and by every means available to them they are explaining the undemocratic nature of this operation.

In opposition to the demagogic plebiscite of the religious leaders, the HKS is calling for an immediate election of a constituent assembly so that the Iranian people can discuss how to move forward and express their opinions about what they want.

The Socialist Workers Party is combining its campaign to expose Khomeini's plebiscite with a campaign in defense of the Kurdish people. In a special issue of their weekly paper *Kargar*, published just before the scheduled referendum, they explain that the Bazargan-Khomeini government's attacks on the Kurdish people make it absolutely clear that the "Islamic republic" will be just another bourgeois government, that this government will continue to repress the peoples of Iran. They call on the workers, the women, the youth, all the peoples of Iran to mobilize in defense of the embattled Kurdish nation.

In opposition to the "Islamic republic," under whose banner the most fundamental rights of the Iranian masses have been subjected to successive assaults, the banner that has been used to provide a cover for SAVAK agents going back into action against the workers movement, the banner that has now been stained with the blood of the Kurdish people, the Iranian HKS is raising the call for a workers and peasants republic, the only kind of government that can meet the demands of the Iranian masses that tore apart the dictatorship of the shah. It calls on the Iranian masses to resume the march forward toward taking full control of their lives, their society, and their economy—the march toward socialism. □

Intercontinental Press/Inprecor will give you a week by week analysis of the most important world events.

Subscribe now!

'We Made the Revolution—We Want Our Rights!'

By Karim Suleiman and Mariam Danna

[The following firsthand account of what workers are fighting for in Iran comes from the February 27 issue of *Kargar* (Worker). Thousands of copies of this first issue have been sold in Iran by supporters of the Hezb-e Kargar-e Socialist (Socialist Workers Party), the Iranian section of the Fourth International. The translation is by the *Militant*.]

* * *

TEHRAN—Workers and their friends were invited to meet with Darioush Farouhar, Minister of Labor, on February 23 to discuss their demands. The three central demands were: 1) rehire the workers fired under the old regime; 2) stop the layoffs caused by factory closings; 3) give the workers their back pay.

At 9 a.m., as workers began to gather across from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, two representatives of Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic Revolutionary Committee asked them to disperse.

Several workers responded that the government was demanding they pay their water and electricity bills, but they'd been fired and couldn't pay. "We've assembled here and we're staying until Mr. Farouhar talks with us," they insisted.

Eventually the crowd grew to 1,500 workers. They gathered in the ministry chamber. Farouhar attended the session.

Spokespeople for the workers made speeches in which they articulated three main slogans:

- "We want control over production and distribution."
- "We workers want the right to strike, and freedom of speech and press."
- "We want new labor laws drawn up with input from real workers' representatives."

The first speaker talked about the important role workers play in society.

'Workers Threw Out Shah'

"Society moves by the strength of the workers' arms," he explained. "In the Iranian revolution a fundamental role was played by the workers. Through their strike, the oil and dock workers' powerful hands seized the shah by the throat and threw him out."

"The workers hurried to the aid of the *homafars* [the workers in the Air Force who started the February insurrection]. We fought in the barracks and drove the revolution to its conclusion. You didn't see any minister, businessman, or boss disarm any barracks or get martyred."

Another delegate said, "The bosses want a clean record before they will rehire me. A clean record means having no political file, it means you're not a 'troublemaker.' But is wanting to elect a real trade union being a troublemaker?"

The third speaker for the workers outlined their other demands. These included control of rules in the plant; a forty-hour workweek; increases in wages as prices go up; and workers' right to be paid their wages when they are forced on strike.

The workers also called for equal rights for women; freedom of assembly; an end to foreign interference in industry; and abolition of taxes.

They demanded a workers' newspaper and representation of workers in a constituent assembly.

In the discussion that followed, one worker declared, "The government must not crush us. A memo from the Ministry of Labor said that we must work as hard as we can and raise production. It said we must pay taxes. It warned if anyone causes trouble, they must be reported to the proper authorities. If this memo is not from the ministry, the government should say so."

This worker reported that the Islamic Revolutionary Committee was arresting those in the factories who objected to its decisions or put out their own statements.

"We don't want political prisoners," he explained. "The revolution was accomplished by the workers. We are not weak. We want to be involved in politics. We want to break our chains."

Need Trade Union

Many workers talked about the need to elect representatives to a trade union. "The most honest and vigorous of the workers must be elected to represent us," said one. "We don't want the boss choosing our delegates."

"But whenever we pass out a statement on our demands in the factories, the Islamic Revolutionary Committee tells us we're communists. If we are communists because we stand up for our rights, then all of Iran is communist!"

"We want freedom—freedom to strike, to organize. We want bookstores. The book is the worker's weapon. We are looking for a human existence, not slavery."

After hearing the workers, Farouhar said the demands for rehiring fired employees, stopping layoffs, and settling back-pay claims would be met. But when the gathering asked him when, he said, "I

don't know. I must consult my aides."

People were not satisfied with his answer. Workers pressed for immediate settlement of their demands. They also raised more questions.

When Farouhar denied that his ministry had issued the memo on worker "troublemakers," the crowd demanded that an official denial be broadcast on television. "Why is the workers' voice never heard on radio or television," asked another person. Farouhar, stumbling over his words, said "I am not responsible for radio or television. I can't take someone else's responsibilities."

Another worker pointed out, "The labor laws favoring the bosses must be changed. Do you think the workers' committees should be involved in changing them?" he asked Farouhar.

The minister would only say, "The labor laws must be reconsidered and nonspecialists must be represented."

Farouhar said a commission to review the workers' demands might be formed. The workers demanded the right to participate on this commission.

Women Workers' Demands

A woman textile worker spoke bitterly about the conditions in her factory. She received vigorous applause from the other workers.

"I work all day running a machine, but they only give me thirty *tomans* [less than \$5]. This is less than the male workers receive, although they are also exploited," she explained.

"We are told that because we are women, we don't have the right to speak or make decisions. We are just good for being exploited as workers."

"We disagree. We are capable. Women must choose our own representatives. We demand equal pay for equal work, child care, paid pregnancy leaves, and a lower retirement age."

Are You Missing Copies?

Keep your files of Intercontinental Press/Inprecor complete and up-to-date. Missing issues from recent years may be ordered by sending 75¢ per copy.

Wage Cuts, Forced Overtime Spark Strikes in Poland

[The following article has been excerpted from the Polish opposition publication *Robotnik* (Worker). We have taken the text from the March 2-8 issue of the French Trotskyist weekly *Rouge*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

The editorial board of *Robotnik* has received reports on workers strikes that have taken place in several factories. Below is information on some of the strikes that occurred in the last quarter of 1978.

October 9-11: A strike by workers at plants manufacturing Paso medical dressings in the city of Pabianice. Due to a change in packaging while pay rates remained the same, the workers lost several hundred zlotys per month in wages.

October 10-14: A strike by workers at the Polfa pharmaceutical plants in Pabianice in protest against the withholding of bonuses on the pretext that the plan had not been fulfilled. In fact only the delivery plan had not been fulfilled, and that was management's fault.

End of November: A strike at the Pabianice factory where Polam light bulbs are made. The strike was in protest against the elimination of a free Saturday.

December 1: Spinning workers struck the Pabianice synthetic fabrics plant. Second quality yarn had been reclassified as first quality, meaning that workers lost the supplementary pay rate for work on poorer quality yarn [which breaks more often, resulting in less output per hour].

October 26: Strike by workers at the Optima sugar refinery in Lodz against a cut in wages following insufficient deliveries of the raw material (sugar).

November 18: Workers in a concrete plant in Myszków struck when they were not paid on schedule.

December 22: Violent protest action by miners in Pit Five of the Gliwice mine. They were protesting the twelve-hour day and mandatory work during the Christmas holidays. Other strikes against increases in the workday took place the previous year among the miners of the Rybnik basin and in Upper Silesia.

Reports on these strikes reached us by chance. Because work conditions in factories as a whole resemble those that led to these stoppages, the strikes we report on probably represent only a fragment of a larger workers movement on a nationwide scale.

The strikes usually broke out following a cut in wages, an increase in production quotas without the workers being consulted, the elimination of a free Saturday,

or a decision to impose obligatory overtime (Saturday or Sunday work or a twelve-hour day).

Plant managers have tried to fulfill the plan by economizing on workers' wages and have sought to unblock "assets" by lengthening the work day or intensifying the pace of work. In the second and third quarters of 1978 a whole series of plants were unable to fulfill the plan or operated at only half capacity because they repeatedly had to stop work due to lack of raw materials and energy, irregular deliveries, and, in the final analysis, poor organization and disorder in the whole economy.

Political and economic leaders at various levels are trying to make the workers bear the costs of a crisis that the workers are not responsible for. All this is taking place at a time when everyone is experiencing a decline in the standard of living (price increases, commercial stores*), when the food supply is deteriorating, when there seems to be no prospect for improvement in the situation of the workers and their families.

We have to oppose any attempt to make the living conditions of the workers even worse. All the workers actions we know of dealt with economic demands. The workers wanted to defend themselves against excessive exploitation of their strength, or against completely unjustified wage cuts. In addition, they were asking for increased food supplies. They were not putting forward new demands; they were only defending what they had already won.

In the conflict between workers and management, the unions, which are subordinated to the party, defend the party apparatus and the managers of the economy. As a result, the workers cannot depend on the unions. Strikes or strike threats are seen as the only way they can defend their rights.

In general, the strikes are brief and win immediate success. The plant or company managers pay the workers the wages they are owed and reestablish the old production norms or the free Saturday.

But these concessions are generally granted as isolated acts, or are implemented in a way that does not satisfy the workers. For example, the workers are given a bonus, which provides no future pay guarantee, rather than higher wages. It is the same with short-term improvements in food supply following workers actions.

*Shops in which goods that are scarce in regular stores can be purchased, but at a considerably higher price. —IP/I

Later, when the tension in the plants has diminished, the active strikers begin to be victimized, fired, or reassigned to harder work.

The major weaknesses of the workers actions that have taken place up to now have been the absence of solidarity activities in defense of the workers who are victimized and the inability to hold on to the gains won by the struggles.

Therefore it is necessary to set up lasting forms of workers self-organization, such as strike committees or independent unions. These would represent the workers in negotiations with management, would see to it that the gains won in the struggles are maintained, and would ensure that victimized workers are defended.

The Committee for Social Self-Defense/Committee to Defend the Workers (KSS/KOR) and the editorial board of *Robotnik* want it to be known that we will continue to provide aid to the persecuted worker militants. This includes legal aid in the case of firings or deterioration in work conditions, and/or financial aid in the form of an unemployment allotment to those who are fired and cannot find work elsewhere.

This aid is furnished by a workers fund based on contributions from workers and intellectuals, with the participation of the KSS/KOR workers self-defense fund.

The KSS/KOR and the editorial board of *Robotnik* declare that, in light of the official mass media's silence on strikes in Poland, we will report to society on all workers actions about which we receive verified reports.

We therefore ask that people send verified reports on strikes to members of the KSS/KOR and to the editorial board of *Robotnik* at one of the following addresses:

Bogdan Borusewicz, Sopot, 23 marca 98 m 24; Anka Kowalska, Warszawa, Estonska 4, tel: 175307; Jacek Kuron, Warszawa, Mickiewicza 27 m 64, tel.: 393964; Jan Józef Lipski, Warszawa, Konopczynski 4 m 9, tel: 1273472; Lan Litynski, Warszawa, Al. Wyzwolenia 9 m 125, tel.: 287104; Zbigniew Romaszewski, Warszawa, Kopiniska 36 m 77, tel.: 222925; Józef Sreniowski, Lodz, Laurowa 2, tel.: 73470; Henryk Wujec, Warszawa, Neseberska 3 m 48, tel.: 426338.

All reports should contain the name of the city and plant, or the workshop or department in case of a partial strike; dates of the strike, causes, outcome, demands, number of strikers. We request that the reports provide details on the following: who negotiated with the strikers; the form in which the demands were put

forward; whether they were won; who was victimized (and how) after the strike.

We intend to verify all the reports we get and, to that end, we ask that you furnish us an address where we can get further

details. Non-verified reports will not be brought to public attention.

The KSS/KOR and *Robotnik* will provide support to all peaceful forms of workers self-defense. A policy of pushing

down the standard of living of citizens and increasing their exploitation does not help to overcome the economic and social crisis. Such a policy can only lead to deepening the crisis. □

Why Canadian Trotskyists Launched Turn to Industrial Unions

By Jim Upton

[The following article appeared in the March 5 issue of *Socialist Voice*, a revolutionary-socialist fortnightly published in Toronto.]

* * *

Is it an error for socialists in English Canada and Québec to launch a turn to the industrial unions in this country?

This is the question raised by a letter appearing in the February 5 *Socialist Voice*.

Hugh English, the author of the letter, said that while he felt socialists should be active in industrial unions, a campaign to make this a priority would be "disastrous" if it were "at the expense of an active and expanding role in the women's movement, the lesbian and gay movements, and the public sector unions."

English said: "To suggest that public sector workers are not at the center of the class struggle in English Canada and Québec is wrong. Indeed it is the public sector unions which are being attacked the most ruthlessly."

His comments were in response to an article in the January 15 *Socialist Voice* which reported that "over the New Year's weekend, the Revolutionary Workers League Central Committee voted unanimously to make industrial implantation a central axis of the League's activity in coming months."

In order to carry out this turn to industry, a campaign was launched to "qualitatively increase the number of RWL members in key industrial unions."

Why the Industrial Unions

A turn to the industrial unions is necessary because of the increasingly central role being played by industrial workers in the class struggle.

Since the end of the postwar boom in the early 1970s, the capitalist class, in Canada and internationally, has been confronted with the need to inflict decisive defeats on the working class in order to lower production costs, increase the rate of profit, and open a new period of capital accumulation.

As the economic crisis deepens and further restricts the capacity and willingness of the ruling class to grant concessions and reforms, the strikes of service workers and struggles of women, lesbians and gays, students, and Québécois will increasingly be won or lost depending on

the degree of active support they receive from the major industrial unions.

Given this political situation, it would be "disastrous" for socialists *not* to make a turn to expand their activity in the key industrial unions.

Economic Power of Industrial Workers

The collective labor of working people produces all the wealth of society—from potatoes and oil to cars and refrigerators. The power of the working class is registered in its ability to withhold labor power and thus affect the production of wealth.

However, the economic and political power existing within the working class is not evenly distributed. Some sections of the class have more power than others. The power of any particular group of workers depends not on their racial or ethnic origin, their gender, or their sexual orientation, but on how central they are to the production of goods for the market and profits for the bosses.

In Iran, for example, millions of workers took part in recent strikes against the shah, including teachers, employees in the mass media, and civil servants. However, the strike that paralyzed the Iranian economy and put most pressure on the shah

was that of 38,000 oil workers, because of the central role oil production plays in the Iranian economy.

In Britain, 100,000 truck drivers recently broke through the government's 5 percent wage ceiling to win a 21 percent pay boost. In contrast, a series of strikes by 1.5 million government service workers have failed to force the government to offer more than a 10 percent raise.

The truckers strike prevented the transfer of raw materials to factories where they could be turned into saleable goods and the transportation of finished products to the market where they could be sold for a profit. This had a crippling effect on the British economy. The strikes by service workers have not paralyzed production in this way.

Although Canadian postal workers do not produce goods for the market most of the mail they handle involves business transactions, not personal correspondence. Consequently, when postal workers go on strike, as they did last fall, they can directly affect the volume of business within the country and with other nations.

That is why the government pulled out all the stops, including strike-breaking legislation, fines, possible jail terms, and



Ford Facts

UAW strikers at Fleck Manufacturing in Ontario celebrate victory.

raids by the RCMP to force the postal workers back to work.

Basic industry represents the single biggest source of profits for the Canadian ruling class. It is the ultimate source of most revenues that keep the government, service, and "professional" sectors of the economy going.

Among industries that fall into this category are: agriculture and food processing; energy—coal, oil, and electricity; raw materials—rubber, mining and refining of metallic ores, plastics, chemicals, lumber, cement, etc.; transportation—rail, shipping, and trucking; and production of things such as machine tools, major electrical components, and automotive equipment.

The workers who run these industries are mainly organized in industrial unions. As the ruling class seeks to increase its profits and improve its competitive position on the world market by driving down wages, the brunt of the attack must increasingly be directed against industrial workers. This is true despite the fact that to date the public sector unions have been hardest hit by the capitalist offensive.

Political Considerations

The role of the industrial unions in the class struggle has become increasingly central since the ruling class launched its austerity drive. Industrial unions were in the forefront of organizing the March 22 demonstration and the October 14 general strike in 1976 against Trudeau's wage controls.

The growing militancy among industrial workers is reflected in the comments of Dave Patterson, president of Local 6500 of the United Steelworkers, whose 11,700 members have been on strike against Inco since September 15.

"Everywhere, they're trying to take things away from the workers. It's got to stop," Patterson said. "Someone's got to take a stand and it might as well be the miners of Sudbury."

The recent victory at Fleck Manufacturing in Ontario, where women members of the United Auto Workers won union recognition and a first contract after a bitter strike, provides an indication of the important role women can play in the coming struggles of industrial workers.

To an increasing degree, the success of government and service sector workers in winning strikes, defeating government efforts to limit wages, and blocking attempts to ban the right to strike in the public sector will depend on the support that can be won from the powerful industrial unions. The failure of the leadership of the Canadian Labor Congress and the brass of the big industrial unions to actively support the postal workers' recent strike was a major factor contributing to the strike's defeat.

In shifting its attention to industrial

workers, the RWL will not be turning its back on the struggles of women, Québécois, lesbians and gays, and other oppressed layers of society.

These struggles, along with the need for solidarity with public sector workers, will

Swiss Vote Shows Impact of Antinuclear Movement

A national referendum initiated by opponents of the Swiss government's nuclear-power program was narrowly defeated on February 18. Forty-nine percent of the 1.9 million voters cast their ballots in favor of the initiative, while 51 percent voted against it.

The proposal would have given persons living within a twenty-mile radius of each plant—both those in operation and those being built or planned—the final say over where and when nuclear plants should be built.

The government and the nuclear lobby mounted an intensive propaganda campaign against the initiative. The Swiss Trotskyists of the Ligue Marxiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Marxist League), who campaigned for a "yes" vote along with other antinuclear activists, pointed out that this was a major factor in explaining why the proposal failed to win a majority.

Many workers, especially those employed by nuclear plants or electric companies, were convinced that they would lose their jobs. Despite a broad campaign, the antinuclear movement was hampered in its efforts to combat these fears by a lack of resources and by the pronuclear stance of the trade-union leadership. In addition, young people under twenty years of age were barred from voting.

Therefore, the Swiss Trotskyists explained, the fact that nearly half the voters supported the referendum should be seen as a victory for the antinuclear movement. In the March 3 issue of their fortnightly newspaper *La Brèche*, they wrote:

"In any case, it has become clear—and this is important—that there is a polarization around this class question, in which the two camps are almost evenly divided. This should be carefully studied. Despite the confused situation, the bourgeoisie and the workers movement are indeed confronting one another. . . .

"No blank check for the unrestricted development of nuclear energy—that is indeed the best way to formulate the results of this referendum. . . .

"For the antinuclear movement, this means that we must continue to fight for a general moratorium [on nuclear-power plants] and to expose the demagoguery surrounding the unsolved problem of nuclear wastes. . . ."

La Brèche went on to point out that in

be taken into the industrial unions in order to bring the decisive weight of industrial workers behind them. This will strengthen the RWL's ability to provide leadership in struggles outside of the industrial working class as well as within it. □

the areas where the antinuclear movement has a large following, as in Basel, or where the workers movement has traditionally voted left (as in French-speaking Switzerland), working-class voters cast their ballots in favor of the referendum. "Once again . . . the correctness of our conception of orienting the antinuclear movement toward the workers and the trade unions first and foremost has been confirmed." □

'Error' in Safety Estimates Shuts 5 U.S. Nuclear Plants

Five U.S. nuclear-power plants were ordered shut down within forty-eight hours March 13 after it was discovered that an "error" had been made in the analysis of their ability to withstand earthquakes.

A spokesman for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which ordered the plants closed so that the design of their piping system could be reexamined, said that the discovery "had thrown the safety of the plants into question," according to the March 14 *New York Times*.

The error consisted of using incorrect calculations to determine the strength needed for the piping in a plant's cooling system to withstand earthquakes.

Attempting to put the best possible face on the shutdowns, a nuclear industry executive said they merely went to show how "safe" nuclear power is. According to a report in the March 14 *New York Times*, "He said that, under strict regulations and a close watch, errors were caught by utility and industry engineers."

Smog Alert at North Pole

A "mysterious" haze that hangs over Alaska, Greenland, and the Arctic Ocean in late winter and early spring may not be such a mystery after all, according to researchers gathered at the World Climate Conference in Switzerland.

Tests have shown that as much as four-fifths of the Arctic pollution is made up of sulfur compounds, which are known to blow north from West Germany's Ruhr Basin and other industrial regions of Western Europe. The resulting haze can become as intense as Los Angeles smog at certain times of the year.

A less intense version of the haze has also been observed at the South Pole.

Arabs in Israel Under Increasing Attack

By Michel Warshawsky and Asaf Adiv

JERUSALEM—After a campaign of slanders in all the media against Arab students in Israel, and particularly against the current called the Progressive Nationalist Movement (PNM), restriction orders against six Arab students in Jerusalem were issued by the Military Commander of the Northern Region.

The six are forcibly restricted to their homes for three months, have to present themselves to the police twice a day, and are forbidden to leave their houses during the evening hours.

These orders were served without any charges being filed by invoking, for the first time in seven years, the "Defence Emergency Regulations," inherited from the British Mandate. These regulations give the military commander unlimited powers, including the right to detain a person for a period of six months without trial, expulsion from the country, blowing up the houses of suspects, and even executions.

The pretext was a declaration the PNM put out on the occasion of the meeting of the Palestinian National Council in Damascus in the beginning of January 1979.

The statement expresses opposition to the Camp David settlement and to the Zionist entity, and the authors declare that they see the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian Arab people. As against allegations aired recently, the document contains no call for armed struggle, open or implied.

This was by no means the first time that such positions have been expressed—the PNM itself put out a political platform more than a year ago in which its principles were formulated in a similar spirit. In addition, the prime minister's legal adviser failed to find anything in the statement justifying legal charges. In spite of this, the statement became the topic of major headlines in the Israeli newspapers almost daily.

The center of attack was at the universities, where the heads of the student unions, as well as various academic spokesmen, demanded expulsion of the students responsible for the declaration.

With the support of Likud [Begin's ruling coalition] members of the Knesset [parliament], the heads of the Student Federation of the Jerusalem University issued an open call for violence against the Arab student body, and supporters of Rabbi Meir Kahane from the Jewish Defense League (JDL) distributed leaflets

calling for the expulsion of all Arabs from the country.

In isolation, the serving of restriction orders against six students would perhaps not be sufficient to indicate a hardening in the Likud government's policy toward the Arab inhabitants of Israel. However, a number of similar steps have been taken in the last few months.

- At the beginning of February, Rabbi Kahane, along with supporters from the JDL, appeared at the University of Haifa to give a speech entitled "The Final Solution—Expulsion of the Arabs from the Land of Israel to Arabia and the West."

A number of Arab students expressed their opposition to Kahane's proposals. The result: despite the fact that Kahane delivered the speech without permission from university authorities, it was eight of the Arab students who were arrested.

- Heads of Arab Local Councils, including many people who belong to the Labour Party, were questioned by the Security Services following publication of a statement that indicated they see the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. In the course of the interrogations it was unequivocally made clear to the heads of councils that in future they were to abstain from such declarations.

- The Ministry of the Interior has lately begun conducting a campaign against the municipality of Nazareth. The goal is to bring the CP(Rakah)-controlled municipality to financial collapse, and thus to bring about the replacement of the elected municipality by a council nominated by the Ministry of the Interior.

- A new wave of demolitions of Arab houses has begun in the villages of Galilee. In light of the fact that hundreds and perhaps thousands of houses are built without permits in the Arab villages, this wave threatens almost every village. What characterizes this new series of demolitions is that every one is accompanied by a large police and military force. In the same spirit, income-tax inspectors have begun to make spectacular raids on the business premises of Arab traders.

- Dozens of activists connected with the Sons of the Village Movement (a radical organization in some Arab villages) have recently received restriction orders banning them from the occupied territories.

These measures have been accompanied by a media campaign claiming that the "soft hand" applied in the last few years brought about a "Palestinization" of Is-

raeli Arabs and intensification of their national pride. Despite differences between various currents in the Israeli establishment, all are united in the call to "do something before it is too late."

Opposition to the government's offensive has focused around the case of the six Arab students.

Among the initial protests registered were a news conference organized by the PNM, the Arab Students Committee, and Campus (a left-wing body at the Jerusalem University which includes Jewish and Arab students); a statement issued by lecturers and intellectuals in protest against the restriction orders; and petitions signed in all the universities demanding cancellation of the orders.

The high point of the struggle thus far was a meeting organized at Jerusalem University by Campus and the Arab Students Committee, which members of the Knesset and well-known personalities attended.

The Arab Student Committee of Jerusalem, which is led by the CP, adopted a policy of full defense of the expelled students. Unfortunately, however, they have not yet managed to convince the rest of the CP to follow this policy. Leaders of the CP have instead used defense platforms to attack the PNM as an objective collaborator with the authorities.

In contrast, Israeli Trotskyists have mounted a major campaign for the abolition of the restriction orders and for defense of freedom of expression at the universities.

A special issue of *Matzpen Marxist/De-rekh Hanitzatz*, which included an interview with members of the PNM, was printed and distributed at universities, Arab villages, and at special conferences.

The Trotskyists explain that the latest attacks are not an expression of the strength of the government, but rather of its weakness; and this, in the face of a public that is prepared to struggle for its rights.

This struggle must find its expression in other countries also. Israel's dependence on international aid places a responsibility on progressive forces outside Israel to defend the Palestinians. Vigorous action against the suppression of Palestinian rights has succeeded in binding the hands of the Israeli administration in the past. There is every reason to believe that it will succeed again today. □

France—Biggest Working-Class Battles Since 1968

By Jean-Claude Bernard

The first quarter of 1979 marks the end of the breathing space the Giscard-Barre government benefited from after the March 1978 elections. The wave of workers struggles in the steel industry, as well as in insurance, the postal system, rail, and television, has clearly revealed the real relationship of forces between classes and the weakness of the regime's social base.

The government has used the political situation created by the division between the CP and SP and by the renewal of its parliamentary majority to speed up the restructuring of the French capitalist economy in face of sharpening international competition.

Within a few months after the elections, factory closings and layoffs increased in the textile, marine repair, and shipbuilding industries. Entire regions, not to mention zones of industrial concentration, were written off. Immigrant workers in massive numbers were forced to return to their countries of origin.

Simultaneously with these selective attacks, moves were also made against the general gains of the working class. According to official statistics the growth in wages in 1978 was the lowest in ten years, social security was reduced, and the rise in taxes led to an additional decline in workers' purchasing power of nearly 2 percent.

Throughout most of last year, workers' response to this broad offensive was scattered, largely because the union leaderships adopted tactics that were aimed precisely at preventing any response by the whole class. This was clearly illustrated on December 21, 1978, when the government's attack against social security brought only a derisory response, and that from the CGT¹ alone. The CP and SP, which were directly responsible for their own electoral defeat in March 1978, followed a policy of division and class collaboration, offering no alternative to the austerity carried out by the Giscard-Barre government. They tried to wash their hands of any responsibility by pointing to the supposed absence of working-class mobilization.

Steel—Mainstay of Workers Resistance

The steel industry had already been cut by nearly 30,000 jobs between 1972 and 1978. In December 1978 the government

announced that more than 20,000 more steelworkers would lose their jobs between now and 1980, and that additional cuts would be made in related industries.

The government hoped to carry out this attack without encountering serious resistance from the workers. In 1977, at a time when the possibility of an electoral victory by the Union of the Left contributed to practically demobilizing the workers in the steel industry in Lorraine, they had been able to close the recently built blast furnace at Thionville.

A series of setbacks in negotiations over the past six years had, moreover, led to disaffection with the union organizations. This was shown in the fact that 55 percent of the members of the CGT in the metallurgical industry in the department of Moselle did not renew their union cards in 1978, as was the case with 20 percent of the members of the CFDT.²

Far from leading to a serious and long-lasting demoralization, this situation deepened working-class protest. One confirmation of this came in the September by-election in the district where the Neuves-Maison ironworks is located. Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, the president of the Radical Party, was overwhelmingly defeated by the SP candidate.

The Breadth of the Mass Movement

In contrast to what the government had hoped, the announcement of the layoffs in December 1978 sounded the signal for a mobilization that has now encompassed all the steel centers in Lorraine. The sector around Longwy, which received a death sentence, is the heart of this resistance that says "No layoffs!"

The first general strike of the whole Lorraine region took place on January 21, 1979. The strike was totally successful—not only among the steelworkers of Longwy and Thionville, but also among the iron ore miners, the coal miners, and all the public services. Out of a population of 30,000, 20,000 workers demonstrated in Longwy.

The explosions of mass violence, such as the attack on the Longwy police station, were supported by the great majority of the working population. In face of this response, the local CGT leadership had to try to make people forget its first communiqué, which condemned "provocateurs

from outside the working class." The CP, in a statement aimed at its own members, noted that it had not publicly condemned the attack on the police station. "It is violence carried out by and accepted by the workers as a whole," the secretary of the Longwy CGT local explained to *Rouge's* reporter.

On February 16 there was a national strike in the steel industry, accompanied by a general strike in the Nord and Ardennes regions. The walkouts extended to steel centers that had for the time being been spared the layoffs, such as Neuves-Maisons in the south of Lorraine; Dunkerque; and Fos, near Marseilles. On that day the town of Longwy was literally occupied by union militants. A thousand workers set up barricades at the border with Belgium and Luxembourg and all the roads entering the town were closed.

In all the town halls in this area the portraits of the president of the Republic were taken off the walls. Tractor-trailers were requisitioned, with the agreement of their drivers, and were used to block access to supermarkets whose owners had decided to stay open despite the strike. The post office, the office of the national employment agency, and the railroad station were also occupied. A workers radio station sent out CFDT union communiqués from the occupied headquarters of the employers association.

The very breadth and massiveness of the February 16 action dissuaded the unions from then taking the step of calling a demonstration. The CGT wanted to avoid having a demonstration that would get beyond its control. The CFDT recognized its inability to put forward objectives corresponding to the depth of the workers' determination.

Continued pressure from the government made this tactic inoperable in Longwy. A week after the February 16 strike, the town of Longwy was brought to the edge of an explosion by a police provocation—the clearing out of the regional television station, which had been occupied by the steelworkers.

For several hours hundreds of steelworkers staged a veritable siege of the police station, blocking access with trucks and trying to batter down the doors. The local union leaderships had neither the will nor the ability to reestablish calm. The direct intervention of the CP member of parliament for that area was needed to persuade the workers to lift the siege after he carried out direct negotiations with the

1. Confédération Générale du Travail (General Confederation of Labor, the Stalinist-led federation).

2. Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (French Democratic Confederation of Labor, influenced by the Social Democrats).

prefect [the local official representing the central government].

This working-class anger, which took on the most intense form in Longwy, can also be seen in Nord and particularly in the Denain basin, which is also threatened with economic strangulation by the government's decisions. It is spreading in all the sectors of the working class that are threatened with layoffs and factory closures.

The Unions' Tactics in Steel

While the influence of the CGT and the CFDT are roughly equal in the steel industry as a whole, the Longwy basin is one of the "old" bastions of the working class where the CP and the CGT have the majority influence. At the same time, while on a national scale the divisions between the union federations are extremely sharp, in Longwy there is a regularly functioning central council in which all the unions participate. This body decides on measures that all can agree to, while leaving the individual unions free to carry out their own. In France, this is unique; the normal way of functioning is for the central council to try to control all union actions in this area.

So far this has led to a situation in which the different federations in Longwy try to outdo each other in struggles outside the factory. For example, while the CFDT occupied the post office, the CGT was blocking the railroad, and the FO³ and CGC⁴ were occupying the French embassy in Luxembourg.

The aim of this competition in harassment tactics is to try to respond to the anger of the workers while avoiding the immediate tasks of centralizing and spreading the movement to the entire steel industry. Nevertheless the multiplication of these "clenched-fist operations" is seen by the rest of the working class as a sign of a determination that cuts across the embarrassed declarations of the federation leaderships. While the union leaderships are tempted to take up the government's offer to hold negotiations that deal only with social benefits for those who will lose their jobs, for now the union locals in Longwy are constrained to state their resolute opposition to any layoffs.

The union leaderships, on the national level, speak a completely different language. They thought they had found a step forward in the way in which the minister of labor, Robert Boulin, sent them back for discussions with the minister of industry. Only the technicians organization, the CGC, timidly maintained that in the discussions with Boulin opposition to layoffs should be the precondition for carrying on negotiations.

The CGT, CFDT, and FO made no

preconditions and want to examine the range of industrial solutions. This means a discussion, removed from the immediate concerns of the workers, that opens the way to compromises on the crucial question of layoffs.

The CGT is taking on the role of flag-waver for the maintenance and development of the "national steel-making potential," which can be interpreted in many ways in terms of jobs.

As for the CFDT, its metallurgical federation fully accepts the need to reduce the work force in steel, in the name of economic realism and of the conditions flowing from European integration.

It will be difficult to defuse the test of strength that is taking place in the steel industry. *The majority of the working class* is aligned behind the slogan "no to layoffs." It also supports the demand put forward by all the unions in the steel industry—a thirty-five-hour workweek with no cut in pay.

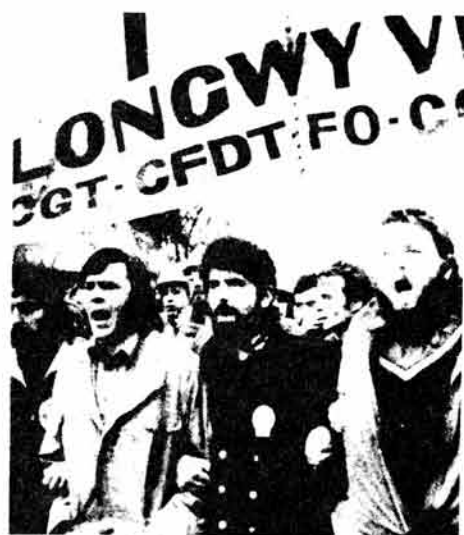
After the long strike of the West German steelworkers, the French steelworkers have massively taken up this demand for reduction of the workweek in order to share the work among all and to allow the workers to benefit from technological innovations.

Combined with the creation of a fifth shift in an industry where nearly all production workers work in continuous heat, the thirty-five-hour week would effectively eliminate the projected layoffs. It is a demand that makes possible much more effective mobilization of the workers than negotiations in which experts take up questions of industrial jurisdiction with the bosses and the government. The call for a thirty-five-hour week poses the need for an international struggle on a European scale, since decisive sectors of the European working class have already taken up the demand.

The Poison of Chauvinism

The struggle for European-wide coordination of the struggles in the steel industry is especially important since the French Communist Party has become the advocate of the worst forms of chauvinism. In the name of national independence, the Communist mayor of Longwy has enacted a municipal decree "prohibiting the transport of iron ore and steel products from abroad" through the territory of his town. A CP cell has even put out a leaflet calling for "France for the French." The struggle now taking place is being presented as the repetition of the interimperialist wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45 and the French workers are called on by the CP to enlist in the first ranks in defense of the threatened French fatherland.

This chauvinist propaganda is finding an echo among the least advanced layers of Lorraine workers. But it also runs up against a growing demand for effective solidarity of the European working class. The geographic situation of the northern



Thousands took to streets in Longwy.

part of Lorraine, where the "national" borders of France, Belgium, and Luxembourg come together, results in a growing number of workers on both sides of the borders bearing the same costs of the same economic crisis, which encourages the growth of this consciousness. The meeting at the beginning of February of a "three borders committee," encompassing unionists from these three countries, is evidence of this. The public meeting for Jacob Moneta⁵ organized on February 23 in Luxembourg by the Belgian, Luxembourg, German, and French sections of the Fourth International, is part of this indispensable battle.

Tactics of the Workers Leadership as Struggles Continue to Spread

The open resistance of the steelworkers is the jumping-off point for the extension of workers struggles. It comes together with the unfolding of another struggle of long duration, the struggle of the television workers. These workers, of course, represent a much smaller sector, one that has fewer ties to the historic traditions of the working class. Nonetheless, the television strike concerns the whole population and cannot be buried by the communications media. It is a tangible sign of open and prolonged resistance to boosting profits through layoffs.

This objective situation also explains why the most explicit calls for a coordination of the struggles has come from the SFP⁶, the production company for television programs. An outreach committee is making it possible to establish horizontal relations between enterprises mobilized against attacks by the bosses and government.

Other branches of the economy are com-

3. Force Ouvrière (Labor Force).

4. Confédération Générale des Cadres (General Confederation of Cadres, the technicians union).

5. Former editor-in-chief of the West German steelworkers union newspaper *Metall*.

6. Société Française de Production (French Production Company).

ing into motion at varying tempos. For several years the Post and Telecommunications Office has been a particularly combative sector because of the influx of young workers and the worsening of conditions of work. Their general strike in 1974, several months after the election of Giscard, had already shown the strength of their movement. In late 1978 the union leaderships increased the number of days-of-action, which were very quickly dropped because of the obvious ineffectiveness of this form of struggle. In fact the rapidity with which disillusionment with the days-of-action developed is a sign of the maturing of the discontent and consciousness of the workers in this branch. At the same time isolated but massive actions swept the bulk-mail centers.

The changes that have taken place in the recent period are seen in the spread of these struggles to the majority of bulk-mail centers in the Paris region, even though no central strike call had been issued by the union leaderships since the beginning of March. In this subordinate branch of the public sector, which is less immediately subjected to the consequences of the rise of unemployment, the demands that were put forward are, as all can see, the same as those put forward by other sectors of the working class—an immediate thirty-five-hour workweek with no reduction in pay and an increase in staff.



German steelworker demonstrates for 35-hour week during recent strike.

In insurance and the railroads the walkouts that are taking place are also bigger than anything seen there in several years. In all these sectors, the call for a movement that involves everyone, for a general strike, is finding growing support.

This spread of struggles to whole branches of the economy is combined with important regional mobilizations. To protest the layoffs in steel, twenty-four-hour general strikes involving a number of industries have taken place in the regions of Nord and Lorraine, resulting in mass demonstrations of a scope that has not been seen since 1968. The Rhône, Loire, and Loire Atlantique regions and Nantes have also had massive demonstrations. With the exception of the Paris region and Marseilles, all major industrial centers have seen a show of strength by the workers. This is an incontestable sign of the tendency for workers mobilizations to spread, a tendency that tries to express itself whenever the union organizations propose initiatives that have a mass character.

The antigovernmental sentiment expressed in these struggles is a new characteristic in the present period. This willingness to go up against the government appeared clearly in the steel industry where, following state intervention in the sectors to be eliminated and restructured, Giscard and Barre appeared as the main forces responsible for the layoffs.

The fact that public buildings, and particularly police stations, were targets for the struggling workers is a sign of this willingness to directly confront the representatives of power. The desire to drive the Giscard-Barre government out of office through workers mobilization is, as a result, increasing, since it seems to be the only way to eliminate all layoffs and win a reduction of the workweek to thirty-five hours.

The mayor of Longwy, a member of the Communist Party, had to echo this aspiration, which is beginning to take on a mass character, when he told a *Rouge* journalist: "This government must go as soon as possible."

The rise of these protests will not, however, proceed in a linear fashion, owing to the obstacles thrown up by the workers leaderships to a general mobilization of forces that could lead to a test of strength with the government.

These leaders no longer have the pretext of a future electoral victory of the Union of the Left to justify their policy. Trying the other side of the coin, today they explain that they oppose a generalization of struggles because there is no political way of changing the government. Because of this, as one CFDT leader in steel put it, a test of strength would be transformed into an "adventure." The continuation of political divisions between the CP and SP obviously strengthens this argument. On this basis, divisions between the trade-union

federations at the national level are growing, while at the same time the scope of the struggles forces the local or regional unions to work together.

Throughout the federation, CFDT members are seeing their leadership carry out its openly collaborationist turn. This new tactic rests on the hypothesis of a long economic crisis, in the course of which the unions will have to propose that the workers make sacrifices, in the style of the Italian unions.

Obviously the wave of struggles has thrown a monkey wrench into the CFDT leadership's plans, making it more difficult to carry out this policy. But they are continuing this policy because it is based on the belief that the CGT—which is no more anxious than the CFDT for a confrontation with the government—will have to adopt it as well. Under this orientation the CFDT leadership has explicitly rejected any generalization and centralization of the struggles and turned its back on trade-union unity in action.

The CFDT would like to open discussions with the government and the bosses on "realistic" industrial solutions, remaining content for the time being with the deals being cooked up in the Labor Ministry antechambers. This has been reported with satisfaction, if indiscreetly, in the bosses' press.

The CGT finds itself in a temporarily favorable situation. It can go on the offensive, making declarations in favor of unity that it knows have no practical consequences given the attitude of its union partners. The most mobilized sectors of the working class are seeing with increasing clarity the contradiction between the CGT's resolute verbal declarations and its activity in practice. Concretely the CGT is trying to contain the struggles within limits that are compatible with the maintenance of the present regime. That is why it favors sporadic days-of-action that serve as a safety valve, while rejecting any genuine form of coordination between the sectors in motion.

The union federations' tactics do not correspond to the needs arising from the present struggles. In this situation the proposal to organize a united march of all sectors of industry against the government has all the hallmarks of a mass initiative that may make it possible to centralize the struggles, which is exactly what is needed to strengthen and develop them. The response to this proposal—first raised by the CGT departmental unions in Nord, Loire, and Lorraine—reflects the desire that exists to see all the workers struggles brought together.

For the union leaderships that refuse to engage in a test of strength with the government—and this includes the CGT—the massive success of a united march of all branches of industry on Paris would set in motion a process that would be difficult to retain control over. That is why they are

engaging in maneuvers aimed at cutting across the united, multi-industry, and anti-governmental character of this proposal.

The CFDT and FO have come out against any initiative that would take on a political character—that is, that would challenge the government. Thus the FO metalworkers federation broke the united interunion relations that had been established in the metal industry.

The CFDT's mass audience forces it to adopt a more subtle tactic to achieve an identical objective. Under the pretext of rejecting an adventure, the CFDT leadership fought for the projected march to involve only steelworkers. The aim, they said, was to avoid a situation in which the specific demands of the steelworkers would become lost in a much larger context.

The CGT, which found itself alone in defending the idea of a march, tried to limit its multi-industrial character to the regions of Lorraine and Nord.

As a result of these polemics, the divisions between the unions have reached the point where there are two separate dates being projected, one for the CFDT march, one for the CGT, a week apart. A last-minute agreement is still possible, but it is clear that everything has been done to make sure that the display of divisiveness would limit the scope of the mobilization.

In this way the grossness of these divisive maneuvers by the upper levels of the federations shows how far they have to go to keep the workers' resistance to austerity within limits that are compatible with maintaining the regime and the government. Since the question of the government is now beginning to be discussed in the present struggles, and since the CP and SP do not want the struggle to take on a political character, the workers leaderships want to divert the present movements into the parliamentary arena, thus legitimizing the National Assembly that was elected as a result of the divisions between the CP and SP in March 1978.

Consequences of Rise in Workers Struggles

The Giscard-Barre government's nine-month breathing space is now finished. Its continuation in office after the March 1978 elections had seemed to cement Giscard's victory. This was the analysis of all the bourgeois commentators and the leaders of the workers organizations, who rushed to the Elysée Palace to swear allegiance to the president.

However, the factors behind the developing crisis of the institutions of the Fifth Republic were still in operation, beginning with the maintenance of the relationship of forces between classes, which the results of a single election cannot reverse. These same factors explain why, despite the electoral results, Giscard has not been successful in asserting himself. Instead, the precariousness of his situation has been shown in the first serious wave of workers struggles.

The divisions in the bourgeoisie between those forces tied to the president of the republic and those linked to Jacques Chirac's Gaullists of the RPR⁷ are still alive. Every period that shows the strength of the workers movements shows the bourgeoisie's need to have parties that are implanted in society. Giscard has never been able to make his party, the UDF,⁸ anything but a mosaic of notables and miniparties, without any real base. The RPR, on the other hand, remains the only bourgeois party that has a social base—which is indispensable when serious clashes in the class struggle take place.

The RPR's opposition to the government's policy is increasingly vigorous, being aimed as much against Giscard's European policies as against his economic policy. The limits of this opposition are still fixed by the fact that if Chirac were to open a governmental crisis that would lead to new elections, there is still a possibility that the CP and SP would win a majority. Nevertheless the RPR's verbal escalation testifies to the social weakness of a government that can count only on the support of a single party representing only 20 percent of the electorate.

While the influence of the president of the republic is traditionally protected by placing a prime minister, changeable at will by the president, in the first line of fire, Raymond Barre is less and less playing his role as a filter for the president. The discontent of the majority of the workers is directly aimed at the president of the republic, the linchpin of the institutions of the Fifth Republic. This political weakness makes the government vulnerable in the eyes of a growing number of workers.

Although the divisions in the bourgeoisie are creating an objectively favorable situation for a workers offensive, the workers leaderships are trying to use it to restore importance to the National Assembly. Ever since the beginning of the wave of struggles late last year, the CP and SP have called for the convocation of a special session of the National Assembly, as if such a meeting would be able to grant satisfaction to the demands of the workers. Their proposal received a boost from Jacques Chirac, who also called for convocation of the assembly. The CP and SP deputies were thus led to countersign the text of the demand for convocation written by this champion of confrontation with the workers movement, the president of the RPR.

While the CP rejects any cooperation with the SP on the pretext that the SP has turned to the right, the general secretary of the CP proposed a joint meeting of the three presidents of the parliamentary

7. Rassemblement pour la République (Assembly for the Republic).

8. Union pour la Démocratie Française (Union for French Democracy).



Workers at Usinor mill in Longwy.

groups of the CP, SP, and RPR. This audacious initiative for unity did not prevent the CP and SP from presenting, for the first time in the history of the Fifth Republic, two competing motions of censure within the same parliamentary debate.

The aim of diverting the struggles into parliamentary channels is to present as the sole solution support to the deputies of one or the other of the two workers parties—whichever can pretend the best to defend the interest of the workers in an assembly whose majority was elected thanks to the split between them. In this way the CP and SP are reaffirming their refusal to offer themselves as a governmental alternative and are demonstrating their readiness to allow Giscard to apply his anti-working-class policies until the end of his term in 1981. This policy can only work if the mass movement is sufficiently limited so that it does not call for throwing out the government to assure that its demands are won.

The objective of building a mass movement to compel the CP and SP to put themselves forward as a governmental alternative responds to the growing desire in the significant parts of the workers movement for a political solution to the current struggles. Although the mass struggles began simply as a refusal to accept the layoffs and other attacks on the gains of the working class, the Giscard-Barre government is now increasingly seen to be the force directly responsible for these attacks, a force that one must be prepared to drive from office through a general strike.

These are the first lessons of the rise in workers struggles. The new battles confirm the nature of the relationship of forces between the classes and the political weakness of a government that won an electoral victory, less than a year ago, as the result of the divisions between the workers organizations.

March 7, 1979

The War Between China and Vietnam

By Pierre Rousset

The Chinese invasion of Vietnam, launched on February 17, has now lasted twenty days. While it appears that Beijing's (Peking) forces are now in the process of withdrawing, it is not yet certain that the operation is really over.

A sizable military force was mobilized. According to Chinese sources, 170,000 soldiers entered Vietnam, backed up by several hundred thousand troops massed in the border area. Major weaponry was also brought into the fighting, including heavy artillery, a great deal of armor, and major aircraft consisting of a thousand or so planes (which seem to have been used only for tactical support missions). The Chinese troops entered Vietnamese territory through penetration routes spread along the entire 1,200-kilometer border separating the two countries. They sometimes pushed up to fifty or eighty kilometers inside the country, capturing several provincial capitals.

Obviously, what is involved is not—as Beijing implied at the start of the operation—a “border incident,” or an action of “limited” scope aimed at stopping Vietnamese “incursions” and “provocations.” It is a genuine act of war. This means that the situation that has been created in the area, with the rapid worsening of border battles between Cambodia and Vietnam, the overturn of the Pol Pot regime by the FUNKSN (Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation) and the Vietnamese regular army, as well as the Chinese intervention in Vietnam, is without precedent in the history of conflicts between workers states.

There is no simple explanation, relying on a single cause, that makes it possible to understand how the situation could have deteriorated so swiftly and completely so soon after a revolutionary victory over American imperialism that remains one of the biggest events in the history of the international workers movement. It is necessary to bear in mind the different factors and contradictions, and the way in which they combined and overlapped with one another to the point of making the disputes between the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Chinese regimes degenerate into military conflict.

The Chinese Bureaucracy's Reasons

While maintaining the fiction of a “limited retaliatory operation in response to border encroachments by the Vietnamese,” in various press statements and interviews the Chinese leaders made known several of

the reasons that had prompted them to intervene massively in Vietnam. Their aim was simultaneously to:

Retaliate for the toppling of the Pol Pot regime.

Strike a blow at Vietnam's military prestige and capacity.

Weaken the power of the “Asian Cuba.”

Limit the influence of Soviet “social imperialism” over its Indochinese ally and throughout the peninsula.

Take advantage of the general relationship of forces in Southeast Asia, a strategic zone owing to the existence of the maritime straits between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific.

In addition, at a time when U.S. imperialism had just suffered a major defeat in the region, Beijing wished to show the West—whose weakness in Africa and the Near and Middle East was publicly deplored by Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-p'ing)—that it paid to stand up to the USSR.

Beijing probably knew that its occupation of a large portion of Vietnamese territory could only be temporary. The toppling of the Pol Pot regime, a government that was supported financially and militarily by the Chinese leadership, was definitely a factor in determining the timing and scope of the intervention, if only because the drive into Cambodia by the Vietnamese regular army had given the Chinese bureaucracy—and imperialism—the signal to launch a furious campaign of invective against Hanoi.

But the statements by the Chinese themselves confirm what an earlier analysis of the events of the last few years in Indochina and China had indicated—namely, that the Chinese intervention in Vietnam is basically not a specific response to recent moves by the Vietnamese leadership, but is part of the Chinese leadership's total policy, in the region and internationally. It is necessary to understand the roots of this policy.

The political conflict between China and Vietnam is nothing new. Signs of a budding struggle for influence can be found very early on in the history of the Indochinese Communist movement. Less than a year after the victory of the Chinese revolution, for example, Ho Chi Minh felt the need to point out that the Communist Party of Indochina was numerically the strongest in the region after the Chinese Communist Party, that it was the first to have seized power in Asia (in 1945), and that it would have a special duty and

responsibility to aid in the liberation of Southeast Asia (Conference of Party Cadres, January 18, 1949).

For his part, Mao Zedong (Mao Tsetung), in a document published in 1939, listed Burma, Bhutan, Nepal, and Annam (Vietnam's former name) among the “territories” and “independent states” of China that had been captured by the imperialist forces (“The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party”). A map published in China in 1954 reflected the same opinion in graphic form.

But it was during the course of the wars in Indochina that political relations between the two parties gradually became strained. By the time of the Geneva conference, Beijing, together with Moscow, was already pressing the Vietnamese Communists to allow the fate of Laos and Cambodia to be separated from that of Vietnam and to accept a temporary partition of Vietnam along the seventeenth parallel. In the years that followed, the Vietnamese CP was still closer ideologically to Beijing than to Moscow. But in the 1960s, differences began to multiply, hardening in 1971 when Hanoi learned of the Chinese leadership's invitation to Nixon to visit Beijing.

The Chinese goal is to weaken the Vietnamese regime . . .

at a time when attacks on Vietnam were escalating (see “The Deepening Conflict Between Peking and Hanoi,” *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, October 16, 1978, p. 1138).

From that time on, the Chinese leadership's policy on Indochina combined four elements: (1) the desire to ensure political control over its “own” sphere of influence; (2) the final crystallization of bureaucratic interests in China proper; (3) the worsening of the Sino-Soviet conflict; and (4) the new opportunity for Beijing to embark upon a policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism, which, because of its difficulties in Vietnam, had been forced to abandon its policy of “containment and rollback.”

From then on, the Chinese bureaucracy followed a policy analogous to the one initiated by the Soviet bureaucracy. Corresponding to the latter's determination to ensure its control over the world Communist movement and to weaken the revolutions and leaderships that did not bend to its dictates was Beijing's determination to do likewise in Asia, to ensure the stability of the bureaucratic regime in its own country. The needs of peaceful coexistence made it all the more important to control revolutionary developments, and made the emergence of independent communist powers that much more threatening. Finally, interbureaucratic conflicts were exacerbated by the rivalry between Moscow and

Beijing for leadership of the workers movement, national liberation struggles, and the third world, and for the good graces of imperialism.

The Chinese leadership has set itself the goal of weakening the Vietnamese regime—not because it has made a deal with U.S. imperialism on this point and wants to prove its good intentions in this way, but because of the logic of the Chinese bureaucracy's own interests. It wants to bolster the stability of its internal rule, while at the same time strengthening its own influence in the region, its capacity to counteract Moscow's anti-Chinese policy (once again, we should remind ourselves that it is the Soviet bureaucracy that bears the historic responsibility for the outbreak of the Sino-Soviet conflict), and its ability to carry on a policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism.

Only in this way is it possible to understand the importance Beijing places on weakening the Vietnamese regime. The Chinese leadership must pay a considerable price for its intervention in Vietnam. It enables Hanoi to regain the initiative in relation to certain third world countries which had condemned its occupation of Cambodia; it is costly in terms of lives, matériel, and financial resources; it might stir up considerable opposition among the Chinese people, and even within the bureaucracy; and it worries the industrial and financial circles that are investing in China and counting on the regime's stability to guarantee their profits.

The Imperialists' Reasons

If Beijing was able to act as it did against Vietnam, it was also because it had assurances that Washington would not condemn its moves. At the time of Deng Xiaoping's visit to the United States—during which he made resounding statements about the need for a China-U.S. alliance against the USSR—it is very likely that he received assurances on this point. The response of the Western capitals to the Chinese intervention did in fact show that the imperialists were not neutral in this conflict. These reactions were not, of course, completely homogeneous. But in general, the major Western powers were satisfied with a few diplomatic protests, often, moreover, linking the demand for withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam with the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, which could only make Beijing happy.

In particular, the concrete attitude of the imperialists contrasted glaringly with what it had been in January 1979, after the Vietnamese forces entered Phnom Penh, and even in January 1978, after the outbreak of the Cambodian-Vietnamese conflict. From this standpoint, it is extremely significant that U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Blumenthal went ahead with his official visit to Beijing and signed new agreements concerning U.S. holdings in

China, which were very favorable to Beijing. It is also very significant that the British government signed a trade agreement with China, which probably included the sale of the Harrier vertical-takeoff military jet, at a time when battles were raging inside Vietnam.

This does not mean, however, that Washington is prepared to pay the price of a break with Moscow in exchange for an alliance with Beijing. The fact is that U.S.



imperialism is following a global policy based on maintaining peaceful coexistence with the USSR, at the same time that it is embarking upon a new policy of peaceful coexistence with China. It needs the USSR for key strategic reasons, having to do, among other things, with the worldwide military balance of forces in which Beijing plays only a small role, and with the need to do all in its power to block serious revolutionary developments in areas where Beijing's influence is negligible, such as Europe, the Near and Middle East, and Africa. It needs China, because the consent of the Chinese leadership is indispensable to the U.S. effort to restabilize its system of rule in East Asia, where its domination has been deeply shaken after the defeat of U.S. forces in Indochina.

Thus, the response of the U.S. government reflects the partially contradictory needs of its international (and domestic) policy. East Asia is one of the great strategic areas in the world today. However, U.S. imperialism's ability to act—and that of the imperialist powers in general—is at present limited there, especially since Washington must concentrate its attention on other areas, beginning with the Near and Middle East.

In these conditions, its pursuit (with Tokyo) of peaceful coexistence with China is doubly important. In this regard, it should be recalled that the recently signed treaties between Beijing, Tokyo, and Washington include the famous "anti-hegemony" (i.e., anti-Soviet) clause, which the Chinese leadership insisted on including, and which the U.S. and Japan could just as easily have done without (see "Japan-China Treaty a Kick in the Teeth for Peoples of Asia," *Intercontinental*

Press/Inprecor, December 11, 1978, p. 1372).

What's true for East Asia is all the more true for Indochina. That is where the imperialist foothold has been most weakened by the defeat of the U.S. expeditionary forces. That is where the gap has been made, and where the danger of a new "domino" falling within a few years has appeared—Thailand, where since 1973 the political and social crisis has been glaringly apparent. It is also—and this is no small fact—where U.S. imperialism was beaten for the first time when it directly committed the full weight of its authority and counterrevolutionary resources.

But just because imperialism has been weakened does not mean that it has become inactive and has pulled back from Southeast Asia. On the contrary, it responded to the victory of the Indochinese revolution the same way it always has in the past—by refusing to recognize an accomplished fact, by doing everything possible to isolate and weaken the new revolutionary regimes. It is this fundamental response of imperialism, aimed at limiting the repercussions of the revolutionary victory it was unable to prevent, that explains the U.S. decision to keep up the economic blockade of Vietnam, to deny diplomatic recognition to the new regimes, and to use Thailand as a base for stepping up its provocations and pressures. And it is precisely because its capacity for direct action remains limited today that it has an interest in letting China pursue (for its own reasons) a policy of strangling the Vietnamese regime.

Historically, imperialism aims, in Indochina as elsewhere, to restore its domination through counterrevolution. The same cannot be said for China, which seeks to ensure its own sphere of influence. But Beijing and Washington have now united on the need to weaken the Vietnamese regime by taking advantage of its economic, social, and internal political problems, the tensions that have arisen within the Indochinese revolution, Vietnam's isolation in the region and internationally, and the possibility for keeping up strong military pressures on its borders. The current crisis in Indochina has become so explosive both because of the gravity of interbureaucratic conflicts in the region, and because the imperialists have kept up their counterrevolutionary pressures.

The Crisis in Indochina

The extraordinary revolutionary dynamism that characterized the liberation struggle in Vietnam, and the potential power of a unified Indochina under Hanoi's leadership, explain why both the Chinese leadership and the imperialist powers in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) place so much importance on a new type of containment policy in the area. The gravity of the situation—resulting from the extreme state

of deprivation the Indochinese societies are in after a century of colonial and neocolonial domination and forty years of imperialist wars; the sharpness of the tensions that have emerged in Indochina, chiefly because of the importance of the national question, which is visible in many forms in the region; and the weight of the original bureaucratic deformations of the regimes that came out of these revolutions—is such that the effectiveness of the measures both Beijing and Washington are using to strangle them should not be underestimated.

The Indochinese revolutions are now harshly feeling the backlash from the fact that the revolution in the imperialist countries has been delayed. The countries of Indochina, which are extremely underdeveloped, cannot look to the highly industrialized socialist countries for fraternal aid. Left to fend for themselves for too long, this cutting edge of the world proletariat, has been exhausted by the unimaginable devastation wrought by forty years of war, including more than ten years of bloody military escalation that is unparalleled in world history.

In face of imperialist intervention in countries where peasants constitute the great majority of the population, these revolutions had to dissolve into prolonged wars of national liberation, a process that, despite its strength, encouraged the development of nationalist ideologies, the preponderance of the military in society, and bureaucratic deformations in the young workers states.

This should be remembered by those in the imperialist countries who are quick to wax indignant over "human-rights violations" in Vietnam, but are just as quick to forget the responsibilities of imperialism; who are ready to denounce the Vietnamese regime alongside the same people who were responsible for the colonial and neocolonial wars; and who do not concern themselves with appeals for solidarity actions, including organizing material aid to these struggling revolutions.

It is impossible to understand either the rapidity with which the situation in Indochina has deteriorated, or some of the choices that have been made by the Indochinese regimes, without really weighing the economic, social, demographic, and ecological difficulties—which, moreover, have been aggravated by three successive years of natural disasters—that these countries had to face upon emerging from war.

For one thing, it is essential to understand these difficulties in order to grasp the importance that the Cambodian question has gained since the victory. The unity of the Indochinese Communist movement could not withstand the unevenness that existed among the revolutionary processes taking place in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. In Cambodia, a new leadership was installed in 1960 at the head of the

CP, which increasingly began to come into conflict with the Vietnamese leadership (see "Origins of the Conflict Between Hanoi and Phnompenh," in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 27, 1978, p. 240).

The policy of the Cambodian leadership in the wake of the April 1975 victory combined very thoroughgoing anticapitalist measures (to the point of a nearly total abolition of private ownership and the almost complete elimination of money), the temporary sealing of the country's borders (except for its ties to China), the immediate introduction of terrorist methods of rule (which led not only to the destruction of potential hotbeds of counterrevolution, but also to the deportation and political atomization of the majority of the toiling population), the forced collectivization of economic and social life, and the development of an exaggerated kind of nationalism that provided practically the only ideological cement for the regime, along with calls for productivity.

These measures are not unremindful of Stalinist methods during the period of forced collectivization. They are ascribable to the Khmer Rouge regime's desire to consolidate a very weak social base, given the country's extreme economic backwardness and the Pol Pot leadership's decision to seal off the country and to systematically break the ties linking the Cambodian revolution to the general dynamic of the Indochinese revolution. These policies and methods, put into effect in a country like Cambodia, ushered in a series of deep crises.

- New splits occurred between the so-called Khmer Rouge wing and the "Khmer Vietminh" wing (of Indochinese tradition) within the Cambodian Communist movement, as well as within the Khmer Rouge wing itself. Wider and wider purges swept down on dissidents, who were accused of being agents of the Vietnamese. A number of localized rebellions occurred in 1978 in several regions of the country, particularly in the army.

- The regime benefited for a while from the weakness of the opposition (both bourgeois and working-class), and from the political apathy that the population had been plunged into. But its policy nonetheless endangered the very existence of the young Cambodian workers state that came into being in 1975, based on the collapse of the imperialist forces and the destruction of the social, economic, and political basis for bourgeois rule. The mass disaffection aroused by such a terrorist policy could not, in fact, but encourage the eventual return in force of right-wing nationalist currents, unless an opposition determined to preserve the gains of the revolution while doing away with the terrorist methods of rule gained the upper hand.

- The tensions inherent in the Indochinese revolution were exacerbated by the breaking of ties between Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Not only did this make it

impossible to implement joint development plans, but in addition, the common front dissolved in the face of imperialist maneuvers. This was particularly apparent in 1977, when Thailand decided on a temporary blockade of Laos, which is heavily dependent on Thai supply routes, and when Phnompenh openly renounced its ties with Hanoi and Vientiane.

- The political conflict between the Khmer and Vietnamese regimes, which was inevitable under these circumstances, falls within the framework of the interbureaucratic clashes that are tearing the region apart. Despite the deep contradiction between the ideological orientation of the Pol Pot leadership and that of Deng Xiaoping, Beijing in fact decided to give general support to the Cambodian regime, both in the military and in the financial and diplomatic spheres.

Beginning in mid-1977, the situation began to deteriorate rapidly with respect both to relations between Vietnam and Cambodia and between Vietnam and China. In September, Pol Pot made a triumphal visit to Beijing, at the very moment when fighting of unprecedented severity had broken out on the Vietnam-Cambodia border. While unofficially making sharp criticism of the Pol Pot leadership's policy, the Chinese leadership continually deepened its support to Phnompenh.

By the end of 1978, the number of Cambodian troops massed on the Vietnamese border was said to have reached 70,000. The army's military equipment was improved considerably through Chinese deliveries of artillery and planes (MIG-19s). Its officers were aided by a large number of Chinese "advisers." Vietnamese casualties were significant, and economically important cities and districts were within shelling distance of the border areas. In several places, the Vietnamese army set up headquarters several kilometers inside Cambodian territory.

In March-April 1978, Hanoi decided to nationalize private commerce in order to smash the social resistance of the Sino-Vietnamese bourgeoisie in the Cholon district of Saigon. Beijing grabbed the opportunity to launch a vast campaign of denunciation against the Vietnamese leadership, and to officially suspend its economic aid. In this climate, 160,000 Hoas (Vietnamese of Chinese ancestry) fled to China from northern Vietnam. Tensions mounted rapidly on the Sino-Vietnamese border. In the international arena, the Sino-Japanese and Sino-U.S. treaties were signed, while Vietnam joined Comecon and signed a twenty-five-year treaty with the Soviet Union.

It was in this context that, only a few weeks after the official creation of a Khmer opposition front, the FUNKSN, Hanoi sent its regular army into Cambodia and ensured the toppling of the Pol Pot regime.

It was essential to support the development of any Cambodian opposition that could ensure preservation of the gains of the revolution, while promising to do away with the methods of forced collectivization and mass terrorism of the Pol Pot leadership. The future of the Cambodian revolution was at stake, and the program of the FUNKSN includes those two points. But it was necessary to give the FUNKSN time to demonstrate its growing implantation among the masses, to show that it was capable of overturning the Pol Pot regime on its own—with whatever aid, of course, that Vietnam could provide; but above all, owing to the authority that it had gained in the struggle.

However, in December-January, the Vietnamese leadership grew dissatisfied with supporting the FUNKSN's development politically and militarily, and with attacking the battle force massed along its border. It provoked the downfall of the Pol Pot regime, and set up the Heng Samrin regime, by organizing an invasion of its regular troops over the entire country before the FUNKSN had had time to really develop.

The reports that reach us on the situation in Cambodia remain contradictory and difficult to verify. "Khmers Serei," tied to the former Lon Nol regime, and unlikely to be suspected of pro-Vietnamese sympathies, report that the population has given a favorable reception to the Heng Samrin regime. Whatever the case, Vietnam's decision must be condemned. What is involved is not merely a question of tactics and timing, but a deeper issue related to the decisive importance of the national question.

Given the way it was set up, the new regime cannot help but be extremely dependent on its Vietnamese ally. But in any case, the pace at which an opposition to the Pol Pot leadership develops could not be artificially accelerated without doing grave harm to its qualitative political and social strengthening. The only way to avoid endangering the quality of relations between the Vietnamese and Khmer nationalities is to promote the creation of a Cambodian leadership capable of showing in practice that it makes autonomous decisions and is politically independent from the Vietnamese leadership.

Such is not the case today. And we cannot expect a leadership like that of the Vietnamese CP, which, in its own country, defends the monopoly of the bureaucracy over information, discussions, and political decisions, to fully recognize the right of national minorities to self-determination. However, such practical recognition of the right to self-determination on the part of national minorities is indispensable to the establishment of a genuine socialist federation of the united states of Indochina. In these conditions, the intervention of Hanoi's regular forces in Cambodia can only reinforce the power of the Vietnamese

bureaucracy in Indochina, nationalist tendencies, and the weight of the military in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

The Indochinese revolutions are going through a period of very great social, economic, and political difficulties. This is true not only for Cambodia and Laos, but also for Vietnam (see "Vietnam—Three Years After Victory," in *Intercontinental*



DENG XIAOPING

Press/Inprecor, November 13, 1978, p. 1250). It is these difficulties that the Chinese bureaucracy is betting on in carrying out its policies toward the Indochinese regimes.

The results of its military intervention in Vietnam—at least in the present state of affairs—seem greatly limited. The military "lesson" is not convincing—Chinese casualties appear to have been heavy, and the performance of China's army mediocre, if the voluntary "indiscretions" in Beijing, which Deng Xiaoping will take advantage of to speed up his "modernization" program, are to be believed. As for the Vietnamese, they did not need to mobilize the bulk of their regular troops in head-on battles in order to hold back the Chinese forces (except perhaps around Lang Son), and apparently have not withdrawn many of their divisions from Cambodia.

But Beijing knows that the economic and social price Hanoi must pay to defend itself is quite high, and getting higher as long as the military pressure is kept up. The international situation gives the Chinese leadership relatively free rein to follow a policy aimed at weakening, isolating, and wearing out the Vietnamese regime. One of the lessons of the February-March events, in fact, is that the Soviet bureaucracy is not about to stick its neck out too far to help its Vietnamese ally.

In the speech he gave at the height of the Chinese offensive, in Moscow, Brezhnev made it clear that the number-one priority, in the eyes of the Soviet leadership, was still peaceful coexistence with imperialism. Following in Deng Xiaoping's footsteps, he proposed an alliance with the West against China. As in the past, during the imperialist war, the USSR gave Vietnam the military aid that it desperately needed. But, also as in the past, the Soviet

bureaucracy refused to make a total commitment and to launch an anti-imperialist political offensive capable of forcing the U.S. government to step back in Asia. The USSR wants above all to see the SALT treaty signed, and for the Soviet leadership, as well, the Near and Middle East are now a matter of first priority.

Thus, Beijing knows that nothing threatens to force Washington to reconsider its policy of rebuilding its system of domination in East Asia, and that the USSR will be satisfied with pressure, threats, and warnings to the Chinese leadership "not to go too far." However, the options open to the Chinese bureaucracy in Indochina are sufficiently varied to give it the necessary flexibility to pursue its policy. In the last few years we have seen how Beijing was able to have an effect on the domestic difficulties of the Vietnamese regime (by cutting off aid or playing up the hostilities between the government and the Chinese community in Vietnam), on the contradictions with which the Indochinese revolution is riddled, on the stubbornness of the tribal populations, on the opposition of the ASEAN countries to the strengthening of a unified Indochinese entity, and on Vietnam's international isolation.

Imperialism is profiting from the situation to strengthen its hand in Southeast Asia. It has just considerably increased its military aid to the Thai dictatorship. Thus, the liberation movements in the region must now continue their struggle under much more difficult conditions than those that prevailed in the aftermath of the U.S. defeat. In particular, the Thai resistance risks being isolated politically and materially, and its various components may come under heavy pressure to take sides in the Sino-Soviet conflict (the Thai CP and SP have not taken a position up to now on the current conflicts).

But U.S. imperialism may also try to intervene more directly against the Indochinese revolutions. The return to international prominence of Prince Sihanouk, who has made contact with Thai and Western representatives in Beijing and issued an appeal for the holding of an international conference on Indochina, may enable him to organize a diplomatic and political campaign against Vietnam, and may facilitate the reorganization of counterrevolutionary guerrilla groups based in Thailand. As for Laos, it may suddenly become the scene of new conflicts. The Chinese have strong influence in the northern part of the country, while imperialism may try to reactivate dissident groups starting with the remnants of the Meo general Vang Pao's army, and members of the old feudal caste of southern Laos.

These new threats make it urgent to proclaim our unified, militant solidarity with the liberation struggles in Southeast Asia, and to organize a united front to defend the Indochinese revolutions. □

French CP Waves Flag, Italian CP Hails Austerity

By Livio Maitan

One of the main axes of the theses presented by the party leadership for approval at the upcoming Fifteenth Congress of the Italian CP is an attempt to define the concept of a "third way," which the authors of the document offer as something original. (In fact, this notion was utilized in other periods, notably in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, by Socialist or centrist tendencies.)

A "third way" is supposed to be justified historically by two parallel facts. In the first place, the experience of the USSR and the other "socialist" countries has been marked by "limitations, contradictions, and errors." And "the models followed in these countries cannot be offered as a guide for the socialist transformation of countries such as those in Western Europe."

On the other hand:

While the Social Democratic parties, notably those who have headed or are heading governments in a number of European countries, have brought about important improvements in the economic and social conditions of the working classes, they have not led society outside the logic of capitalism.

The interpretation of these historic experiences is supposed to be the source of Eurocommunism, which Thesis No. 7 defines as follows:

Eurocommunism is not a movement in opposition to the Communist parties and the revolutionary and progressive forces in other countries. Nor is it a movement that claims to offer universally valid solutions. The real situation is that the worldwide movement for emancipation is polycentric. Eurocommunism seeks to offer a specific contribution to the overall process of the affirmation and development of socialist ideals in Europe and throughout the world.

Eurocommunism and Social Democracy

The Italian CP's theses provide new elements for the dossier on the question of the "Social Democratization" of the Communist parties, which, beginning in the 1930s, underwent the process of Stalinization. This document tries, in fact, to draw a dividing line between the Italian CP and the Social Democracy. The keystone of this differentiation remains the position taken toward the October revolution, the USSR, and the other "socialist" countries. Thesis No. 6 states:

The October revolution and the building of new societies first in Russia and subsequently in other countries represented a historic breach in the system of imperialism and capitalist exploi-



BERLINGUER: Extols austerity as road to "healthier . . . freer way of life."

tation, giving impetus to national and social revolutions. Great gains were achieved in economic, social, and cultural development. The states that emerged from this revolutionary process have played a decisive role in the world and their contribution is essential in solving any problem.

In other words, for the leaders of the Italian CP, the existence of "socialist countries" continues to constitute an eminently favorable factor for the Communist parties and for the workers movement in general.

Moreover, the Italian CP does not seem ready, at least for the moment, to hold its own Bad Godesberg congress, that is, to explicitly remove all references to Marxist theory. It is true that Thesis No. 15 says that the formula used in the party statutes is "restrictive,"¹ explaining that the thought of Marx, Engels, and Lenin must not be conceived of as a "doctrinal system." It says, also, that "the formula Marxism-Leninism does not reflect the full

1. Article 5 states that members are expected to "acquire and deepen their knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and apply its teachings in the solution of concrete questions." Article 2 affirms, on the other hand, that membership in the party is not denied to persons with religious beliefs or with non-Marxist philosophical ideas.

richness of the party's theoretical and philosophic heritage."

But this thesis rejects the fundamental idea of the old and new revisionists, of the theoreticians of a "crisis of Marxism," of the "new philosophers," that is, that the main cause of the degeneration of the USSR and the other "socialist" countries lies in the thought of Marx and Lenin itself.

With respect to Lenin in particular, who in recent months has been the favored target of the Socialists and of a number of Italian intellectuals, Thesis No. 42 says:

Lenin's theoretical and political work must also be examined with a rigorously critical spirit so that its limitations can be understood. But Lenin remains the greatest revolutionist of our century, and his teaching remains essential for studying reality and for attempting to transform it.

Leaving aside the banality of these remarks, there is an obvious concern for maintaining the identity of the Communist Party as distinct from the Social Democracy.

It should be noted that this document tries to offer a little more precise assessment of the process of degeneration in the USSR than other similar texts. It repeats the well-known comments of the French CP on the "limitations" of the critique made in the Twentieth Congress [of the Soviet Communist Party] and about the course culminating in the intervention in Czechoslovakia. Among the causes of degeneration, it mentioned the backwardness of the old Russia and "the failure of the socialist revolution in the West."

It deplores the "defects and errors" in the course followed and in the economic and political orientation, such as rigid centralization of planning, total state control of the economy, the forms and tempos of collectivization in agriculture, the fusing of the party and the state.

Thus, the Italian Eurocommunists draw on the legacy of critical analysis left by the oppositions in the USSR in the 1930s and by the principal Marxist historians of this period. But they do not drop the term "socialist countries," which represents an apology for the bureaucracy. What is more, they still consider the bureaucrats who run the Soviet state and CP as the force with which they want to maintain a special relationship. They seek to "normalize" their relationship with these bureaucrats, although in forms different from those of the Stalin era.

The differences between the Eurocommunism of the Italian CP and Social Democracy are less perceptible in the section of the Theses devoted to the party's political-strategic perspective.

First of all, as regards Europe, the document repeats all the themes that the Italian CP has been pushing for years, and which can be summed up as a concept of "democratizing" the Common Market. This is supposed to take the form concretely of endowing a future European parliament with "powers necessary to take initiatives, set political orientation, and exercise supervision over the executive bodies," that is, the form of a supranational state, or at least "a new supranational authority."² In this area, there are no differences with the ideas put forward by a certain number of Social Democratic parties.

A no less important point of convergence with Social Democratic parties lies in the fact that while the Italian CP calls for "gradually overcoming" the division of Europe into opposing blocs, it does not challenge "the need for Italy to remain in the Atlantic Alliance." I might add that the Italian bourgeoisie is not going to lose any sleep over the document expressing hope that Europe will abandon "all forms of neocolonialist policy"³ or its vague references to the celebrated "new international economic order," which now has become a leitmotiv in the ceremonial speeches of heads of state and peripatetic ambassadors.

In the area of national objectives, the document introduces no changes. It combines an ahistorical notion of democracy ("political democracy is the highest institutional form of state organization, including for a socialist state") with the perspective of a mixed economy lasting for an indefinite period. A public and private sector are supposed to coexist under the aegis of "democratic goal setting."

If this perspective were realized, which I think is unlikely in the present stage, even in the form of the "historic compromise," it would not amount to anything substantially more than the British Labour Party, for example, tried to do in its best days.

The essential continuity of this document with the past of the Italian CP also shows up in the area of norms for the party's functioning. Thesis No. 16 talks about "new steps forward" that "have to be taken," and Thesis No. 84 indicates the possibility that "the results of consultations and positions taken" will be reflected

"also in rules of the day and documents" that the leading bodies will have to examine and communicate their opinion to "those concerned."

However, the stress is put on reaffirming democratic centralism, as it has been traditionally interpreted by the bureaucrats, needless to say. This means that the right to organize factions or tendencies is explicitly denied under the pretext that they would harden divisions and corrupt the life of the party, by obstructing a "real democratic dialectic."

In fact, the leading group, with a massive and complex apparatus at its disposal, is the only force that can put up an organized fight to put over its point of view. Its critics can express their disagreement only in very small units of the party, or in articles in discussion columns that are few and far between.

Theorizations and Real Context

The authors of the document could not avoid giving a balance sheet of the period following the 1976 elections. They note that there is a serious crisis in the country, specifying that "one of the causes of this crisis lies in the fact that changes in economic policy and political leadership have not been as extensive as required or carried out in the necessary way." That's putting it mildly.

In reality, the Italian CP is going through one of its worst times in the entire postwar period. This is because since it has joined the majority in parliament its conceptions and its orientations are being put to a more rapid and clear test in practice.

For a long time, the leading group in the Italian CP has been presenting its strategy for reformist rationalization, which is often outright minimalist, with a fanfare about "democratic renewal" that is supposed to be prelude to socialist transformation. These declarations are subject to being interpreted in accordance with the most disparate aspirations and desires.

But now, the direct responsibility that the CP has assumed for the decisions in parliament and by the government itself has revealed more and more clearly the gap between the proclamations in the party's documents and the actual context of its policy. Here are a few of the more significant examples.

The Italian CP has traditionally pushed the notion that "rank-and-file democracy" and "representative democracy" are complementary. However, this combination was supposed to involve a certain hierarchical order. So, Thesis 76 explains, in relation to the initiatives taken by the unions on the political level, for example in connection with the economic "plan" presented by Treasury Minister Pandolfi, that in the democratic system "national decisions" have to be made by the parliament.

Thesis No. 59, which deals with the participation of workers in making economic decisions, specifies that "in the

process of setting goals for the country, the fundamental decisions must be made in elected assemblies, ultimately, in parliament." Thesis No. 75 says, moreover, that "mass movements have their own independent role to play." But it adds that "the task of making a synthesis and of giving political leadership in the interests of the country belongs to democratic institutions acting in accordance with the will of the majority."

All this means that any bodies that the working class might have or create (delegates councils, producers conferences, etc.) can play only a consultative role. It means, despite all the denials by Lama and company [the CP union leaders], that at best these bodies will not be allowed to do anything more than operate within a framework of "joint labor-management decision making."

A second example concerns the policy of alliances. Thesis 53 proposes for the dozenth time "an alliance between the working class, the poor masses of the south, the masses of women, the young generations, the productive middle layers in the cities and in the countryside, and the intellectuals." This discreet term, "the productive middle layers," is used as a cover for collaboration with broad sections of the bourgeoisie. This is to be done both through collaborating with the most representative bourgeois party [the Christian Democrats] and in more direct forms, which are now being openly tried.

On a third theme, one that has been traditional for thirty years, the need for unity with the Catholics, the document says absolutely nothing new. However, recent practice has shown, more clearly than in any other period, that the CP leaders seek to solve this problem essentially on the level of an alliance with the Christian Democratic Party.

To achieve this, they are even willing to pay the price of compromising their chances for working with Catholics who are breaking away from the ruling class, and partially at least, from their organizations and their ideology. The obfuscation in the Italian CP's theories lies in the use of an ideological concept—Catholics—to fuzz over or hide the concrete social and political content.

Since the end of the Second World War, the Togliatti and post-Togliatti leading group has covered up the essential fact that the Christian Democratic Party was the main political instrument of the bourgeoisie, just as it is now glossing over the fact that for a third of a century it was the backbone of the system. The idea that such a party can become the joint partner in a strategy for democratic renewal opening the way to socialism is a theoretical and political monstrosity. It shows once again that the opportunists' so-called realism hides a real utopianism in the strategic perspectives.

The fourth example is the CP's attitude

2. Thesis 37 calls for the elaboration of a common electoral law for the entire European Community.

3. It is necessary to state that the criteria of the Italian CP on the subject of neocolonialism are not very rigid. For example, it has made many favorable references to the Lomé Convention, which was concluded between European capitalist countries and African neocolonial regimes.

to the question of austerity. Thesis 54 says:

Austerity has been proposed by the Italian Communist Party as an instrument for a policy of transformation. It has been proposed as a means of changing the condition of the broad masses in the direction of a healthier, more civic-minded, and freer way of life. We see it as a means of eliminating the waste, due among other things, to the practices of the government. It is a way to change the mode of functioning and the social end-results of the economic mechanism, the orientation of investment, of production, of public expenditure, the quality of consumption itself. It is a means of influencing the way of life linked to these factors, the models of culture and behavior of whole sections of Italian society.

This borders on the grotesque. One would like to ask the authors of these theses either to find another word to express all this extraordinary content, or to demand that the dictionary definitions of "austerity" be revised. Jokes aside, it has been shown all too clearly in practice what is hidden behind these conceptual and terminological games.

The government that the CP has supported has made it clear that it has a very commonplace notion of what austerity means, by making repeated attempts to cut the workers' standard of living. If it has succeeded only partially in this, it is not because the Italian CP managed to gain acceptance for its fantasies about what austerity should be, but because the workers put up stubborn resistance. Moreover, the document contains an inadvertent admission. It endorses the party's attitude during the past year of favoring "wage restraints."

As I mentioned, these theses raise the problem of the difficulties that the workers movement and the Italian CP must confront. They point up in particular the "fragility" of the unions and the youth organization—that is, to put it plainly, their failure as mass organizations. As regards the party itself, the theses refer to "limitations in the understanding of the new phase of the political fight and of the possibilities and demands it involves."

The theses also mention "a disproportion between the attention given to work within the institutions and to the relationship of political forces, on the one hand; and to initiating united movements by the broad masses for concrete objectives and to deal with concrete problems, on the other." They also talk about "difficulties in maintaining and consolidating the relationship between the party and the various layers of the working population in every phase of the struggle."

What the authors of the document do not recognize, or pretend not to recognize, is that the difficulties they point to are directly linked to the line the party has followed, especially after July 1976 [the last parliamentary elections]. Likewise, they fail to recognize that the "disproportion" they refer to cannot be so easily

overcome in actual day-to-day work as it can in their conceptual gymnastics.

When a party is part of a parliamentary majority that passes laws that do not change the status quo in any way, and supports a government that the Italian CP leading group itself had finally to attack and provoke a governmental crisis by doing so, it is difficult to promote or lead big mass mobilizations. And it is hard to "consolidate the relationship between the party and the various layers of the working population." Those mobilizations that have developed could not help but have a dynamic conflicting with the strategic options taken by the Italian CP, and the same will be true for the mobilizations that have been put on the agenda by objective conditions. This is the source of the party's difficulties and the reason for its loss of influence.

The French CP's Draft Resolution

The French CP draft political resolution for the party's Twenty-Third Congress, which was adopted by the Central Committee about two months after the theses were approved by the Italian CP Central Committee, also presents a continuity with previous documents in recent years. On three points, it stands on the same ground as the Italian theses: on the attitude taken to the October revolution and the "socialist countries"; on the norms of party functioning; and on Marxism and Leninism.

"Socialism exists," it says in the section entitled "The Socialism that We Want." It continues:

Socialism became a historic reality in October 1917, when the Russian workers and peasants, led by their Communist Party, won power and abolished capitalist exploitation. After the Soviet Union, other countries went through this decisive transformation. . . .

To the question of what contribution socialism has made to the historic movement in the countries concerned and to humanity as a whole, we answer: The overall results in the socialist countries have been positive. Neither recognizing this nor taking account of the necessary diversity of the forms of socialism means that we are trying to blot out what people have gotten into the habit of calling "Stalinism."

During the period in which it was headed by Stalin, the Soviet Union experienced massive repression, authoritarian leadership in the party and the state, the development of dogmatism in thought, and grave errors both in the method that were used to build socialism and in applying the rules that must govern the relations among Communist parties.

After Stalin's death, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union began to try to put an end to these errors and these crimes, which it denounced in its Twentieth Congress in 1956. Moreover, there are in the Soviet Union and also in other socialist countries problems whose scope we think is related to a persistent failure to recognize the full importance of the universal demand for democracy which is embodied in socialism.

The Italian CP's analysis is more precise and the general characterization it gives is

more nuanced and cautious. But both parties regard the Soviet Union and East Europe as socialist countries, whose existence represents an essential element of strength for the workers movement and the Communist parties. The French CP draft says:

Loyalty to the line of the Twenty-Second Congress leads us to reject any idea of breaking with the socialist countries and falling back on ourselves.

This means that the French CP continues not only to regard the states in question as "socialist countries" in general but that more concretely it considers their leaderships as its partners and allies, regardless of the criticisms it makes of them. It means that all the French CP's efforts to put an end to the "practices and defects that we condemn" are placed within the context of the existing political and institutional framework.

As for the internal functioning of the party, the French CP draft reaffirms the norms in force, explaining that "tendencies, or attempts to form tendencies, could only divide and weaken our party, paralyze its democratic life, and its revolutionary effectiveness." In presenting the document, Marchais did not hesitate to give himself a gold star for deportment, exclaiming: "It is our party, in fact, the Communist Party, that has the most democratic internal life, and by far."

Finally, the preamble to the proposed modification of the statutes reaffirms that the French CP "bases itself on the scientific socialism founded by Marx and Engels and later developed by Lenin and other leaders and theoreticians of the workers movement." (The discreetness of this formulation "other leaders and theoreticians" will not go unappreciated!) This has not kept the French CP from following a course in practice for decades that had nothing to do with Marxism and Leninism, and it is not going to prevent the continuation of this course in the future, regardless of the fact that the language used is sometimes a little less openly "revisionist" than that of the Italian CP.

As all the commentators have pointed out, the draft involves no change with regard to the conceptions of the democratic road to socialism, the union of all the people's forces, and the Union of the Left. On this level, both major similarities and some partial differences may be seen with respect to the Italian CP document.

Over and above the variations in terminology, the French CP also maintains a perspective of what the CPs since the end of the war have been calling "progressive democracy." What we could call it today is a perspective of reforming and rationalizing the system. This is made unmistakably clear in the section entitled "The Socialism that We Want," which says that France needs "economic democracy" and "political democracy."

Although the French CP document does not use the expression "third way," it is clear that it traces an overall strategy that corresponds essentially to that of the Italian CP. You have only to consider the series of statements about the need for "reconstructing" the public institutions and about regional autonomy; the allusions to a democratic transformation of the European Community, the use of the concept of a "new international economic order" and the adherence to a conception of internationalism that limits this to solidarity, or at most occasional convergences.⁴

This is the context in which the differences between the two parties, which have now become known and are confirmed by the two documents, must be seen. Over and above any immediate needs of the situation, the Italian CP seeks long-term collaboration with the largest bourgeois party. The French CP, on the other hand, opposes the "Giscard bloc," which includes the two main political formations representing the ruling class.

The Italian CP accepts NATO as an established framework that is not to be put in question. On the other hand, the French CP is opposing the attempts to reintegrate France completely into this framework. It is obvious that these are nuances that do not imply any fundamental difference in strategy. The conception of a union of all the people's forces does not exclude bringing in bourgeois formations, quite the contrary (in fact, at least the "progressive Gaullists" are included). The Union of the Left included the Left Radicals. In the area of international policy, the French CP bases itself to a large extent on the options taken by de Gaulle. It need only be noted here that the document comes out explicitly for maintaining an independent nuclear deterrent force.

It should be added that an analysis of the document reveals a combination of schematism and opportunism. It is essentially schematic to talk of a "Giscardian bloc" without mentioning its Gaullist component and the serious internal crisis within the bloc. Its opportunism rests in the fact that its conceptions concerning Europe (to which we will return) closely resemble those of the Gaullists. In fact, the leaders of the French CP do not seem to regret very much a possible convergence with the Chirac reactionaries.

It is above all on Europe that one of the greatest differences exists with the Italian CP. The French Communist Party does not hesitate to utilize the ideas and even the terminology of the chauvinist conserva-

tives, by raising the bogey that "France is dictated to by foreigners" and that France is becoming "the doormat of German imperialism." It does not shrink from saying that "the French people have an interest in



MARCHAIS: Urges workers of France to unite—against German imports.

opposing the scheme that aims to scuttle our country in a Europe of austerity and unemployment—as if "independence" would allow France to be an island of happiness in a Europe ravaged by austerity and unemployment!

The French CP goes so far as to offer the following theoretical justification:

Our nation constitutes the most propitious framework for the realization of a relationship of political forces favorable to the satisfaction of the needs of the people of France and to a socialist transformation. The attachment of our people to their independence, their patriotism, constitute a precious basis for unity, a force for rejuvenation. The productive forces in France are structured along their own lines, with specific national characteristics. They form a unique whole that, along with the weaknesses stemming from bourgeois policies, offer unexplored possibilities for development."

So here we have a new version of the theory of socialism in one country that Stalin borrowed from the German Social Democrats of a century ago; here we have a shameless manifestation of a veritable messianic nationalism!⁵

We should note in passing that it is probably on the altar of their anti-

European campaign for "national independence" that the leaders of the French Communist Party, contrary to those of the Italian CP, have sacrificed the expression "Eurocommunism," which is no longer used in their documents.

The second important difference between the Italian and French documents concerns their attitude toward Social Democracy.

On the international plane, the Italian CP, in spite of the historical balance already referred to, insists on the possibility of future rapprochement and collaboration. The French CP, on the other hand, puts its emphasis on denouncing the "active participation [of the Social Democracy and the Second International] in the strategy of counteroffensive of the forces of capital."

On the national level, things are even clearer. The Italian CP, while criticizing the SP leadership's (real) offensive against it, preaches collaboration and unity in action. The French CP, on the other hand, has returned to all the refrains of two years ago. Following the logic of that orientation, the French CP concludes that it is through "action from below" that unity will mature. This recalls in particular the "united front from below," which was one of the classical Stalinist distortions of the concept of the united front developed by the Third International in the epoch of Lenin and Trotsky.

Finally, the French Communist Party continues to declare war on austerity, ignoring all the subtleties of its Italian sister party. The reason for this difference is evident. The French CP has not had and does not have the parliamentary and governmental responsibilities that have been assumed for nearly three years now by the Italian CP. That allows it to play the opposition game.

More generally, the French CP's attitude toward austerity is determined in a more immediate manner than that of the Italian CP by the necessity of safeguarding and renewing its relations with large sectors of the masses and defending itself from the attacks of the SP, which has already gained a lead on the electoral plane and is seriously threatening the CP's dominance within the working class. That is why it very explicitly underlines, in its congress document, the need to "retain and highlight" its "revolutionary character."

It may appear paradoxical but the Eurocommunist parties, at the very time they are striving to maintain their identity, continue to slide down the slope of Social Democracy. As they accentuate their integration into the system and affirm their strategy of a "democratic" and "national" road to socialism, they have a tendency to diverge from each other even more with regard both to national conditions and to differentiations among their own national bourgeoisies or sectors of those bourgeoisies. □

4. The Italian CP document talks of a "new internationalism" that assumes a "process toward rapprochement and collaboration with respect for the autonomy and independence of each party and each movement" and a "critical, free, and constructive comparison between different experiences and assessments."

5. It is worthwhile to emphasize that for the authors of the French CP document "the attachment of the peasants to national independence no longer constitutes a decisive basis of their alliance with the working class."

More Demands in China for Democratic Rights

By Dan Dickeson

Social protests and dissident activity have continued to spread throughout China during and after the regime's invasion of Vietnam.

Few details are yet available on protests against the invasion itself. Antiwar wall posters and public discussion of the war were banned by the government. Nevertheless *Newsweek* reported March 12 that "the antiwar poster campaign has spread to nearly every important city in China. . . ."

At the same time, large numbers of young people who were banished to rural communes during the past ten years continue returning to cities across China, converging on employment offices and staging protests to demand urban residence permits.

The Communist Party newspaper *People's Daily*, forced to take note of these protests, complained that "a few people incited the masses to cause disturbances, storm government organs, block traffic, surround and attack officials, occupy officials' offices by force and assault and beset people." (Quoted in the March 8 *Washington Post*.)

Radio broadcasts monitored in Hong Kong have reported protests by unemployed workers or other victims of Mao's regime in Beijing (Peking), Shanghai, Wuhan, and Chongqing (Chungking), and in Shandong (Shantung) and Yunnan provinces.

The regime has been forced to make certain concessions to demands for greater freedom of expression. Reports from Beijing say officials "have come to a decision on what to do about Xidan Democracy Wall. It is to be left alone, no matter what goes up, barring such obvious things as military secrets. . . ." (March 13 *Toronto Globe and Mail*.)

The regime's ban on wall posters about the invasion of Vietnam shows how limited this freedom still is, however.

Along with the wall posters, unofficial publications by dissident groups are spreading. In Beijing alone, at least seven dissident journals have begun circulating. One of them, entitled *Reference News for the Masses*, is now said to publish 20,000 copies per issue. Similar publications are known to exist in Shanghai and Nanjing (Nanking).

Although the majority of wall posters deal with individual grievances against the government, many posters and much of the unofficial press are carrying on a wide-ranging discussion of broader political

questions.

Perhaps the most common theme of this discussion is what some dissidents are calling the "Fifth Modernization"—democracy. The March 16 *Far Eastern Economic Review* quotes a smattering of views expressed in posters and conversations one day at Democracy Wall in Beijing: "Democracy means people can say what's on their minds. . . . Democracy is electing officials and dismissing unpopular ones. . . . Democracy is living without party interference. . . ."

In the wake of publicity surrounding Deng Xiaoping's (Teng Hsiao-p'ing) visit to Washington, there has been a surge of interest within China about the United States, and some of the wall poster discussion clearly reflects illusions in the American brand of "democracy." Nevertheless, a striking feature of the dissident movement in China, in contrast to dissidents in the Soviet Union, is the large number of writers who are trying to approach China's pro-

blems from a Marxist standpoint.

The *Far Eastern Economic Review* reports that one article in the dissident journal *Beijing Spring* "attacks the system of appointing party officials from above. . . ."

The author proposes that with the waning of the class struggle—a common theme in much of the [dissident] literature—the need for a party withers away, and the best example to follow in replacing the party's role at the lower levels is that of the Yugoslav workers' committees.

References to the Paris Commune, however, suggest that the current movement is not necessarily liberal-rightist in character. . . . It seems also to contain some germs of Trotskyist or even anarchist thinking. *Peking Spring*, for instance, admits only with regret the need to retain a standing army in a post-revolutionary state.

These discussions among the dissidents still involve only a small fraction of the Chinese people. But in the context of China today, their ideas can win a much wider hearing.

Thousand of Chinese soldiers have just been sent to their deaths in the regime's criminal adventure in Vietnam. At the same time, as China's drive to industrialize gets under way, numerous breakdowns and delays are pointing up the gap between what Deng has promised and what can actually be achieved. The impact of these events will be felt throughout the country. □

Contributions From Around World to Hansen Fund

The Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund is within a few hundred dollars of meeting its goal of raising \$20,000 by March 31. As of March 22, contributions and pledges totaled \$19,340.

The fund was established to begin publication in book form of some of Hansen's major writings. Hansen, the founding editor of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, died January 18.

Donations and messages have poured in from many countries, including Scotland, Mexico, Canada, Sweden, West Germany, Venezuela, and France.

From Gaborone, Botswana, two contributors sent the following letter, along with a \$50 contribution:

"As a personal tribute to Joseph Hansen and in recognition of his forty-five years of tireless devotion to the cause of international socialism, we enclose US\$50 towards the Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund.

"We hope that the inspiration and education that has been gained by today's revolutionaries through Joseph Hansen's personal example and political and theoretical contributions may be extended to future generations through the publication of his works."

Sharad Jhaveri, *Intercontinental Press/*

Inprecor correspondent in India, sent this message:

"I received news of the death of Comrade Joseph Hansen with a sense of personal loss. For I had a unique opportunity to work with and learn much from him during my stay in Europe. In the process, I was also privileged to receive much affection from both Comrades Joe and Reba.

"I vividly recall the way he used to take up points and tackle them in the debates in the Fourth International. Being a very close student of Comrade James P. Cannon's contributions to the theory and practice of building a Leninist combat party, I was all the while evaluating the SWP leadership at that time. Comrade Joe provided an excellent material for such study.

"I associate myself with the excellent tribute paid by Comrade Jack Barnes. I can only say that in India, the best tribute that we can pay to his cherished memory is by building a Leninist combat party, which still remains the central strategic task of Indian Trotskyists."

Contributions to help bring the fund over the top may be sent to Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014. □