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IRAQ-IRAN WAR

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- **Behind Iraqi Regime's Rightward Evolution**
- **Algeria, Syria, Libya Denounce Iraqi Invasion**



Iranian anti-aircraft gun in Tehran demonstration.

Interview with Brazilian Workers' Leader 'Lula':

'Nicaragua Can Be Example for All Latin America'

**German Elections:
Why Two Biggest Parties
Were Afraid to Win**

NEWS ANALYSIS

War in the Middle East: Why Socialists Back Iran

By David Frankel

In any war, those who suffer the most are the masses of working people. That has certainly been the case with the Iraqi regime's invasion of Iran. Whole towns and cities have been shattered. Damage to both countries will take many years to repair. And lost lives can never be restored.

But working people around the world have a stake in supporting the Iranian side in this war. Why is this?

If we look only at the two governments involved, the conflict does not seem so clear cut.

Both Iran and Iraq are underdeveloped countries with a history of imperialist domination. Both of these countries have capitalist governments that have sought to overcome this legacy.

Although the Iraqi regime is seeking better relations with the imperialist powers, it has been a strong opponent of U.S. attempts to win legitimacy for the Israeli state. It has joined Cuba in sponsoring a UN resolution supporting independence for Puerto Rico, and it has given economic aid to the revolutionary government in the Caribbean island of Grenada.

It is possible to point out other points of similarity between the policies followed by the two governments. Both have been guilty of using military force against the Kurdish people seeking their legitimate national rights. Both are guilty of trying to repress the independent struggles and parties of the working class.

But such an approach misses the essential point. There is a revolution going on in Iran, and a revolution is the most important thing that can happen in the politics of any country, or in the relations between countries.

A Living Revolution

The Iranian revolution did not come to an end with the overthrow of the shah in February 1979, any more than the Cuban revolution came to an end with the overthrow of Batista in January 1959, or any more than the Nicaraguan revolution came to an end with the overthrow of Somoza. The Iranian workers and peasants are continuing their mass mobilizations, they are continuing to organize themselves and to engage in political discussion. Their revolution is still alive, it is still developing.

Looked at from this angle, the superficial similarities between the policies pursued by the Iranian and Iraqi regimes pale into insignificance beside the actual relationship of class forces inside the two

countries.

Iraq is governed by a brutal military dictatorship that has eliminated all open political opposition, that has prevented the growth of independent workers organizations, opposition newspapers, or opposition parties.

However much the Iranian capitalists would like to follow this example, and whatever repressive steps the Iranian government has taken, the fact remains that it has been unable to achieve the same results.

Gains of Workers and Peasants

Thousands of political prisoners were released due to the Iranian revolution, and the shah's secret police and torture apparatus was dismantled. Attempts by the new government to jail socialists and other working class activists have met with widespread opposition, and the regime has frequently been forced to back down.

Political parties, including workers parties, function openly in Iran despite attempts to intimidate or repress them. Groups like the Tudeh (Communist) Party and the Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) put out legal newspapers and maintain public headquarters. The leftist Fedayeen and Mujahedeen have organized big rallies and demonstrations.

Most important of all are the gains made by the masses of workers and peasants because of the revolution. In the villages, the peasants have organized their own popular committees and in many cases have taken over the land and redistributed it. Workers have set up committees in the factories and have won considerable control over working conditions and production. Although top government figures have repeatedly complained about the activities of these popular committees, the regime has been unable to put a stop to them.

Oppressed nationalities within Iran, who played an active part in the struggle against the shah, are well aware of the freedom of action that they have won as a result of the revolution. Attempts by the Iranian government to suppress their struggles have not been successful, and both Arabs and Kurds within Iran have rallied to the defense of the Iranian revolution against the Iraqi invasion.

As *Time* magazine noted in its October 13 issue, "The Iraqis assumed they would receive the support of the estimated two million Arabs living in Iran's Khuzistan province; in fact, the Khuzistan Arabs . . .

were inclined to rise to the defense of Tehran."

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has used the pretext of a border dispute with Iran to justify his invasion. But what made this longstanding dispute suddenly assume such importance that it merited going to war over?

Hussein was simply afraid that the Iranian revolution would spread to Iraq. He wants to deal with this threat by doing what the Iranian government has been unable to accomplish—crushing the workers and peasants, and imposing on them the kind of regime that he heads in Iraq. This is the only answer that is consistent with the Iraqi regime's previous actions, with its stated political goals, and with the allies it has attracted.

What the Facts Show

Let's take a closer look at each of these three considerations—Hussein's past actions, his political goals, and his allies.

To begin with, the Iraqi regime has been consistent in its hostility to the Iranian revolution from its inception. In 1978, as the mass upsurge against the shah's dictatorship gathered power, Hussein expelled Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini from Iraq and demonstratively invited Empress Farah, the shah's wife, on a state visit to Baghdad.

Hussein has made no secret of his desire to see the new government in Iran overthrown and replaced with one that would be more in the tradition of the shah. He has allowed Gen. Gholam Oveissi, one of the shah's most brutal commanders, to set up military bases inside Iraq. He has given Oveissi arms and other aid, and has helped him coordinate his activities with Shahpur Bakhtiar, the shah's last prime minister.

"Bakhtiar has made at least six trips to Iraq, at least one on an Iraq government plane," the New York *Daily News* reported October 6.

There is no way that figures such as Oveissi and Bakhtiar could be returned to power in Iran without a bloodbath against the Iranian workers and peasants. Success for Hussein in his invasion of Iran would open the way to the destruction of the vanguard of the Iranian working class.

Hussein's Allies

Finally, such an outcome would represent a defeat for the working class and for the struggle against imperialist domination throughout the Middle East. That is why the most reactionary forces in the region, from King Hussein of Jordan, to Sultan Qabus of Oman, to King Khalid in Saudi Arabia, have all lined up behind the Iraqi war effort.

Washington, of course, claims neutrality in the current war, just as it claimed to be neutral during the Chinese invasion of Vietnam. But where revolution and counterrevolution are involved, U.S. imperial-

ism is never neutral. The State Department's diplomatic declarations are intended to deceive the people of the world, not to inform them of the actual intentions of the U.S. ruling class. Having failed in its previous attacks on the Iranian revolution, Washington is now hoping that Hussein can do better.

To insist in this situation on the similarities between the capitalist government in Iraq and the capitalist government in Iran is like using a clock without benefit of any reference to the real world. Nine o'clock is nine o'clock, but the difference can be between night and day. □

Courtesy Course for Salvadoran Gorillas

By Fred Murphy

As part of Washington's attempts to prop up the beleaguered military/Christian Democratic junta in El Salvador, hundreds of Salvadoran army officers are being given special courses at the School of the Americas, the Pentagon's main counterinsurgency training center at Fort Gulick in Panama.

Training of the first batch of 100 Salvadoran officers began on August 11, following a secret decision by the Carter administration. The presence of the Salvadorans in Panama was quickly denounced by the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), the broad coalition of popular and revolutionary organizations in El Salvador that is leading the fight to bring down the repressive junta.

Washington has since acknowledged that the training program exists, but has tried to paint it as a "humanitarian" effort. In fact, according to a report by correspondent Christopher Dickey in the October 9 *Washington Post*, the course is entitled "Human Rights Aspects in Internal Defense and Development".

Gen. Wallace H. Nutting, chief of the Pentagon's Southern Command, shed a little more light on the training program in an interview with Dickey. Nutting said the course would teach the Salvadoran officers "how to be nice to people while you force them to do what you want them to do."

Is the Pentagon really preoccupied with teaching good manners to the henchmen of a regime that is responsible for the deaths of more than 6,000 Salvadorans since the beginning of this year? General Nutting apparently has a more realistic view of what is needed to safeguard U.S. imperialist interests in El Salvador. "This is not a purely political problem," the general told Dickey. "There's violence, military action. The solution as it appears to me would be a political-military solution."

Dickey cited the views of U.S. officials that "the revolutionary forces in El Salva-

dor are better trained, better equipped and better able to mount major assaults on the Salvadoran government's troops than ever before."

Washington's latest moves have not failed to evoke protests. Outrage in Panama over the Salvadoran training program is so widespread, Dickey reported, that "the entire status of the Panama Canal Area Military Schools during the transition from United States to Panama-

nian control over the canal area has been brought into question."

In Honduras, students occupied the main cathedral in Tegucigalpa during the first week of October to demand the withdrawal of U.S. military advisers recently sent to their country.

It seems that no matter how many human rights courses the Pentagon sets up, it just cannot convince its victims to hold still. □

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As U.S. Steps Up Threats Against Iran

Syria, Libya, Algeria Denounce Iraqi Invasion

By Janice Lynn

As the Iraqi regime's invasion of Iran enters its fourth week, the destruction and casualties on both sides continue to mount, but Iran has begun to win new support. At the same time, Washington continues to beef up its military forces in the Persian Gulf region.

On October 11 the U.S. Defense Department announced that the guided missile cruiser *Leahy* was being sent to the Persian Gulf.

With the Saudi Arabian monarchy backing the Iraqi invasion, Carter sent U.S. electronic surveillance planes and hundreds of air-force personnel to that country September 30. Since then additional equipment and personnel have been dispatched. There are now more than 800 U.S. military personnel in Saudi Arabia.

"America's cloak of neutrality in the Iran-Iraq war was beginning to wear a bit thin," *Newsweek* admitted in an October 13 article.

A top U.S. specialist, Major General John L. Piotrowski, was sent to Saudi Arabia to coordinate the operation of the new equipment.

U.S. officials said that the Air Force equipment sent to Saudi Arabia enables all American units there to communicate with Washington's thirty-three-ship task force

in the Arabian Sea, as well as with U.S. military headquarters in Europe.

Officials also disclosed that eight to twelve Air Force A-7 attack planes would accompany 1,400 U.S. troops to the Egyptian base at Ras Banas, across the Red Sea from Saudi Arabia, next month.

On October 7 Washington announced that it was offering military aid to other Persian Gulf nations under the pretext that this would enable them to stay out of the war.

"We have vital interests at stake in the Persian Gulf region and, as President Carter has made clear, we will defend them," declared U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher in a major policy speech October 7.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown reaffirmed Washington's position in a major speech of his own October 9. "Our forces are ready to go to war—if need be—and we are increasingly able to sustain our forces in combat," Brown threatened.

Meanwhile, Jordan's King Hussein announced October 5 that he would give all-out support to the Iraqi regime's invasion of Iran. He ordered the mobilization of Jordanian trucks to carry supplies to Iraq and allowed ships carrying arms and

spare parts for Iraq to unload at the port of Aqaba.

Although U.S. Secretary of State Edmund Muskie expressed mild concern at King Hussein's decision to drop the mask of neutrality, there was no indication that Washington would stop supplying weapons to Jordan.

In fact, New York *Daily News* correspondent Lars-Erik Nelson reported from Jordan October 10 that "The United States has quietly given Jordan's King Hussein the green light to use his U.S. supplied weapons, if need be, to defend the tiny oil emirates of the Persian Gulf against Iranian attack."

The constant warnings from Washington about the threat of "Iranian attack" are intended to set the stage for new assaults on the Iranian revolution.

Reports have indicated that some 40,000 Jordanian troops have already massed along the Iraqi border for possible use against Iran.

"Using Jordan to defend the Persian Gulf sheikdoms is viewed by many U.S. officials as more acceptable than deploying U.S. forces in the region," Nelson wrote, explaining how Hussein's army could be useful in putting down what he termed "local insurrections" in countries like Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

It is the danger of popular uprisings by workers and peasants in the Persian Gulf monarchies—inspired by the massive mobilizations that overthrew the Iranian monarch—that has Washington and the Persian Gulf sultans worried.

But the façade of a solid Arab front against the Iranian revolution was shattered by the October 7 issue of the official Syrian newspaper *Al Baath*, which strongly criticized the Iraqi invasion. The Syrian paper described Iraqi President Hussein as an "imperialist agent out to play the role of the shah."

"The purpose of the war is very clear," *Al Baath* said. "It is to divert attention from the main struggle with Israel and give the United States and Zionist forces the alibi to interfere in the Gulf region with the blessing of Arab reactionary regimes."

On October 8, Syrian president Hafez al-Assad signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union.

Joining Assad, Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi sent a telegram on October 10 to Saudi Arabia's King Khalid and other Persian Gulf rulers urging support for Iran.

"It is the Islamic duty that we, the Arabs, should align ourselves with the Moslems in Iran . . . rather than fight them on behalf of the United States," Qaddafi said.

Qaddafi also urged that Khalid send back the U.S. surveillance planes and denounced them as an "expansion of the U.S. military presence" in the Arab world.

Free Nemat Jazayeri!

Nemat Jazayeri, a leader of the Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) was arrested in Tehran September 8 (see *Intercontinental Press*, October 13).

Although no charges have been brought against him, he is being held in Evin Prison in Tehran. On October 6, he was finally allowed to have visitors, who reported he was well and in good spirits.

While in exile in the United States before the overthrow of the shah, Jazayeri served as national secretary of the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI), helping to focus international attention on the crimes of the Pahlavi dictatorship.

Prior to his arrest he worked as a lathe operator in the repair shop of a Tehran factory.

Jazayeri's coworkers, friends, relatives, comrades, and others in Iran are campaigning for his release and pointing out how his skills can be put to use in defense of the Iranian revolution against the Iraqi invasion.

International pressure from supporters of the Iranian revolution can help secure Jazayeri's release. The following telegram should be sent to Iranian Prosecutor General Ali Ghodosi, Office of the Revolutionary Courts, Tehran, Iran:

I am a supporter of the Iranian revolution and an opponent of the U.S. government's threats and the Iraqi regime's criminal military aggression aimed against your revolution.

I am deeply concerned about the arrest of Ray-O-Vac worker Nemat Jazayeri, a staunch anti-imperialist fighter who is being detained without any charges.

I call on you to secure his immediate release.

Copies of the telegram should be sent to President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, Tehran, Iran; Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, Tehran, Iran; *Enqelab-e Eslami*, Tehran, Iran; and *Kargar*, Box #43/174, Post Area 14, Tehran, Iran.

The Algerian regime has also opposed the Iraqi invasion. The Algerian Press Service broadcast a message to all those countries siding with Iraq in the name of Arab solidarity. The statement reminded them that "the destruction of the shah's regime and its replacement with an authentically Iranian regime strengthened the anti-imperialist struggle in the world and especially widened the front for the liberation of Palestine. . . ."

In an attempt to justify its military buildup, Washington has conducted a disinformation campaign in the capitalist media accusing the Soviet Union of re-supplying the Iraqi regime with weapons. Articles in the bourgeois press have reported that Soviet ships have been unloading arms for Iraq at Jordan's port of Aqaba.

This is a clear attempt to divert attention from Washington's backing for the Iraqi invasion by making it appear as though it is really Moscow that is behind the Iraqi regime.

However, the U.S. State Department has repeatedly admitted that there is no evidence of a major Soviet resupply of Iraq, and Soviet officials have strongly denied the charges.

Although Moscow has failed to come out squarely on the side of the Iranian revolution, the *Daily World*, the newspaper of the U.S. Communist Party, has been highly critical of the Iraqi regime and its invasion of Iran. On international issues of this



scope, the *Daily World* checks carefully with Moscow before saying anything.

In an interview with Iranian President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, conducted by *Le Monde* reporter Eric Rouleau, the Iranian president said he had received assurances from the Soviet ambassador in Tehran that Moscow had stopped giving supplies to the Baghdad regime.

"I have no information to contradict the diplomat's statement," Bani-Sadr said. "The Soviet Union is convinced that this war can only serve the interests of Ameri-

can imperialism."

Meanwhile, the Iraqi regime continues to escalate its offensive against Iran. On October 9, Iraqi forces fired long range ground-to-ground missiles into two Iranian cities, inflicting heavy civilian casualties.

Oil production and refining has been paralyzed in both countries. Work at major industrial projects in both countries has stopped. Iran's main oil-loading terminal on Kharg Island has been attacked repeatedly and the Abadan refinery has incurred extensive damage. Villages in both countries have been devastated and the loss of lives continues to mount.

Commenting on the war in an October 10 column, *New York Times* correspondent Flora Lewis pointed to two factors that have Washington worried:

"One is that Iraq's President Saddam Hussein gravely miscalculated and may be overthrown as a result. The other is that the war has reinforced Iranian national support for the Khomeini regime rather than toppling it in favor of a military government, as Hussein and Iranian exiles had hoped."

And as Washington had hoped.

These factors help explain Washington's military buildup.

The urgent need continues to be to demand the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops, planes, and ships from the Persian Gulf region and an immediate end to the Iraqi regime's military aggression against the Iranian revolution. □

The Limits of Radical Nationalism

How the Iraqi Regime Arose and Where It Is Going

By Janice Lynn

The Iraqi regime's invasion of Iran is a direct attack on the Iranian revolution.

Why has the Iraqi regime, which states that it is opposed to imperialist intervention in the Middle East, especially Washington's support to Zionist Israel, launched a war that directly serves imperialism's interests?

Shortly after the massive uprising by Iran's workers and peasants a convergence of interests developed between the Iraqi regime and Washington. Both were determined to prevent the example of the Iranian revolution from spreading to other countries throughout the Middle East. And both were seeking ways to try and impose a more stable regime in Iran like that of the shah's—one that would be better able to put a brake on the massive mobilizations of the Iranian toilers that, if unchecked, could lead to a socialist transformation in Iran.

This recent convergence with Washington, however, is the product of a long

political evolution of the Iraqi regime.

Overthrow of British-Backed Monarchy

Like most of the Arab countries in the Middle East, Iraq was ruled by the Turkish Ottoman Empire until World War I. After that war, the British and French victors divided the Middle East between themselves. In order to bolster their position, the British set up monarchies in Iraq and Jordan in 1921. Abdullah Ibn Hussein was given the Jordanian throne, and his brother Faisal was named king of Iraq.

Faisal and his heirs faithfully served the interests of imperialism. In fact, Iraq was the only Arab country to formally join the system of anti-Soviet military alliances built up during the Cold War. In 1955 the Iraqi monarchy entered into an alliance with Britain, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan that became known as the Baghdad Pact.

The Baghdad Pact was aimed more against the radicalization of the Arab masses and the growth of anti-imperialist,

Arab nationalist movements than against Moscow. During the 1950s the Arab world was swept by an upsurge in the colonial revolution. The Egyptian monarchy was overthrown in 1952-53, and the continuing radicalization in Egypt was symbolized by the nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956. The shah of Iran almost lost his throne in 1953, until the CIA-engineered coup restored him to power.

In 1958 the Iraqi masses had enough of poverty and tyranny under the rule of King Faisal II. They rose up against this British-backed monarch. Nationalist army officers responded to this upsurge and carried out a coup that successfully overthrew and completely crushed the monarchy.

The new regime, supported by the Iraqi Communist Party, quickly earned Washington's hatred. Iraq withdrew from the Baghdad Pact, effectively scuttling it. The influence of the feudal landlords, on whom the imperialists had counted to protect

their interests, began to be destroyed.

Powerful sheikhs who held vast tracts of land had not been paying any taxes. The new regime announced that the land would be taxed and that a new land reform program would be implemented. It announced a new five-year plan was being prepared to stress agricultural reform and expansion, industrialization, and housing and social reforms.

The new regime also issued decrees cutting rents, reducing the price of bread and other consumer items, and placing limitations on landlord's shares of harvests.

After Israel's June 1967 blitzkrieg, the Iraqi regime severed diplomatic relations with Washington and London, protesting their support to Israel, and even banned oil shipments to them. Later that year, the oil embargoes were removed and relations with Britain resumed. Relations with Washington, however, were never formally restored.

Baathism and Nasserism

Over the course of the ten years following the overthrow of the monarchy there were a series of military coups. These culminated in 1968 with the Baath Party coming to power in Iraq.

The Arab Baath Party was founded in 1941 in Syria. It was an Arab nationalist party that aspired to throw off the yoke of imperialism and to unite the Arab world. Although it called itself socialist, its ideology was anti-Marxist.

The Baath Party was based primarily among military officers, intellectuals, and the petty bourgeoisie. It was a petty bourgeois formation that came to power in Iraq without the involvement of the masses. There are many similarities between Baathism and the Arab nationalist current led by Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt.

In trying to solve the problems of underdevelopment that are the legacy of imperialism's exploitation of the colonial world, the Baath Party kept within the confines of capitalism. This is similar to the approach that was followed by Nasser.

Within this framework, both Nasser and the Baathists struck some important blows against imperialism and carried out some measures that represented real advances for the Egyptian and Iraqi masses. For the first time, industrialization was encouraged. Agricultural projects were initiated and housing was constructed. Education and medical care began to be provided to the masses. Wages were raised.

In Egypt, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956 and turned to the Soviet Union for military aid that the imperialist powers refused to provide.

In Iraq, the Iraq Petroleum Company—previously owned by British Petroleum, Shell, Standard Oil of New Jersey, and Mobil—was nationalized in 1972. The same year, Iraq signed a fifteen-year friendship treaty with the Soviet Union.

But all of these progressive measures were carried out from above. Both Nasser and the Iraqi Baathists, while at times encouraging the mobilization of the masses as a counterweight to imperialist pressure, always sought to maintain tight control over such mobilizations. They feared the independent action of the workers and peasants, and clamped down with harsh repression whenever independent organizations began to develop.

This fear of the masses reflected the class character of Nasserism and Baathism. While striking blows against the landowners who had been dominant under the monarchy, the cadres of these petty-bourgeois nationalist currents used the state apparatus to enrich themselves. The capitalist class was partially transformed, not abolished.

No Substitute for Revolution

Because the Nasserists came to power in Egypt prior to the Baathists in Iraq, it is easier to see how the Egyptian regime evolved. During Nasser's last years, Egypt had reached an economic and social impasse. The workers and peasants, left without any independent mass organizations and facing repression from the Nasserist police apparatus, were unable to move forward toward the establishment of a workers state.

On the other hand, the capitalist class that had been nurtured within the state apparatus under Nasser became increasingly bold in its demands for greater access to the international market and for greater scope in its commercial activities. Its hand was strengthened by the pressure exerted by world imperialism on the Egyptian economy.

Nasser died before these pressures came to a head. It was left to his successor, Anwar el-Sadat, to carry out the changes being demanded by the Egyptian ruling class.

Although Sadat has been accused of "betraying" Nasserism, the fact is that there are no lack of examples of radical nationalist regimes in the underdeveloped countries which come to power, play an anti-imperialist role for a number of years, carry out radical reforms, but in the end are unable to lift their countries out of the imperialist trap. Two of the better-known regimes of this type were those of Juan Perón in Argentina and Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana.

As Fidel Castro explained in his speech this year on the anniversary of the July 26 uprising in Cuba, there is no substitute for a socialist revolution. There is "only one road to liberation: that of Cuba, that of Grenada, that of Nicaragua. There is no other formula."

In the case of Iraq, the influx of oil revenues since the mid-1970s has strengthened the capitalist class and accelerated the Baathist regime's turn toward the imperialist powers. The Iraqi regime's

intervention against the Iranian revolution marks a watershed in this process.

Repression Against Working Class

Baathist hostility to the slightest expression of political activity by the working class is nothing new. In 1963, with the aid of the CIA, the Baathists inflicted a bloody defeat on the Iraqi Communist Party. The Baathist regime has never allowed real trade unions to function. It has relied on continual arrests, torture, and executions to maintain its political monopoly and to stifle any opposition among the Iraqi workers, peasants, and oppressed nationalities.

Even the literacy campaign the regime carried out was accompanied by threats of jailings or fines for not attending classes.

But the Iraqi regime's resistance to imperialist domination, its genuine opposition to Zionist Israel, and its support for Arab nationalism was strongly supported by the Iraqi masses. The measures it felt compelled to take were a real threat to imperialism.

Washington's Destabilization Efforts

The CIA and Israel responded to the Iraqi regime's hostility to imperialism with efforts to destabilize it. In 1972, they began to provide covert aid to the oppressed Kurdish people in northern Iraq who had been fighting for their national rights for decades.

In 1958 the Kurdish movement had joined in the overthrow of the British-backed monarchy. But in 1961 the new regime launched a full-scale attack on the Kurds beginning a war that was to last off and on until 1970. In that year the Iraqi regime was forced to sign an autonomy agreement to end the civil war.

But the regime refused to implement the terms of the agreement and in 1974 fighting was resumed.

Despite the current regime's hypocritical claims to be defenders of the rights of the Kurds in Iran, the history of the Iraqi regime's brutal repression of its own Kurdish population is a matter of record.

The Iraqi Kurds, today numbering nearly 3 million, suffer from extreme economic, educational, and cultural discrimination. The regime's policy was to extract raw materials from the Kurdish region and process them elsewhere. Major industries, like oil refineries, iron and steel plants were all built outside of Kurdistan. The few industries that were located in the Kurdish areas followed a policy of hiring Arab workers in preference to Kurds.

In 1972 U.S. President Nixon approved a request from the shah of Iran for military support to the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq. Some \$16 million in arms aid was provided. Nixon and the shah hoped to maintain the Kurdish rebellion as an ongoing internal problem for the Iraqi regime, while not giving the Kurds enough aid to attain their objectives.

A CIA memo dated March 22, 1974 confirmed this "destabilization" policy towards Iraq. The memo, made public in 1976 by the U.S. House Select Committee on Intelligence stated:

"We would think that [our ally] would not look with favor on the establishment of a formalized autonomous government.

"[Our ally] like ourselves, has seen the benefit in a stalemate situation . . . in which [our ally's enemy] is intrinsically weakened by [the ethnic group's] refusal to relinquish its semi-autonomy. Neither [our ally] nor ourselves wish to see the matter resolved one way or the other."

Kurdish Rebellion is Crushed

In March 1975 the shah decided that his interests could be better served by an agreement with Baghdad. The Iranian and Iraqi regimes resolved a long-standing border dispute over the Shatt al-Arab waterway. The accord, signed by the shah and Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, changed the border between Iran and Iraq from the Iranian side of the waterway to its middle. It was this treaty that Hussein abrogated as a pretext for launching the invasion against Iran.

In return for the concessions from Iraq, the shah agreed to cut off all aid to the Kurds. Washington and Tel Aviv quickly followed suit.

Baghdad, of course, was forewarned of the aid cutoff and launched a brutal search-and-destroy mission against the Kurdish rebels. More than 200,000 Kurdish refugees had escaped into Iran, but the shah forced more than 40,000 of them to return to Iraq where thousands were placed in concentration camps.

The Iraqi regime began to evict hundreds of thousands of Kurds from Kurdistan to desert areas in the south. Arab families were then settled in the homes of the evicted Kurds. Names of Kurdish towns and villages were changed to Arab names. Teaching in the Kurdish language in schools in Kurdistan was stopped. Hundreds of Kurdish rebels were executed, and some 1,500 relatives and children of Kurdish fighters were arrested and sent to prisons in southern Iraq.

And today, the Iraqi regime claims to be the defender of the oppressed in its invasion of Iran!

Hussein Reacts to Iranian Revolution

The Iraqi workers and peasants could not help but be inspired by the overthrow of a hated dictator in neighboring Iran. Fearing the same kind of massive mobilizations that led to the toppling of the shah, the Iraqi regime began to move closer to Washington and other imperialist governments, despite its anti-imperialist declarations.

In 1978, shortly after the revolution in Iran began, the Baathist regime expelled Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini who had been living in exile in Iraq.



Iraqi tanks inside Iran.

In a deliberate show of support for the shah, the Iraqi rulers welcomed Empress Farah on a hastily arranged visit to Iraq.

After the revolution's triumph, the Iraqi regime expelled thousands of Shi'ites of Iranian origin. There were a number of demonstrations among Iraqi workers in support of the Iranian revolution, resulting in widespread arrests. Iraqi oil workers, in their majority Shi'ites, looked to the positive gains oil workers in Iran were able to make—winning wage increases, better working conditions and beginning to take control over their workplaces. In April, Ayatollah Bak'r Sad'r, the religious leader of Iraq's Shi'ites, was secretly brought to Baghdad and executed.

Severe repression was also directed against Iraqi communists and socialists. In 1978 thousands of suspected Communists were imprisoned and at least twenty-one Communist Party leaders were executed for alleged subversion in the army.

In June of 1980 Amnesty International reported that since 1974 an average of 100 people per year have been executed solely for political reasons, with more than 100 executed just in the six weeks beginning in March 1980.

Nonaligned Movement and Iraq

Iraq is scheduled to host the 1982 meeting of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries. To try and bolster its image in the Nonaligned Movement, the Iraqi regime recently began an experimental program of providing \$254 million to some twenty underdeveloped countries. Beneficiaries of aid from the Iraqi regime include such diverse countries as Vietnam, Pakistan, North Yemen, Jordan, and Cuba.

The Iraqi government has provided considerable aid to revolutionary Grenada as

well as to Nicaragua. It cosponsored along with Cuba a United Nations resolution calling for independence for Puerto Rico. It has consistently refused to support the Camp David Accords, denouncing this attempt to sell out the Palestinian struggle.

But the military aggression launched against Iran only benefits the world's imperialist powers, not the countries adhering to the Nonaligned Movement, which are themselves subject to imperialist exploitation.

Nor is the Iraqi regime's vaunted support to the Palestinian liberation struggle advanced by its attack on the Iranian revolution. The Palestinian people were inspired by the example of the Iranian revolution and encouraged by the new Iranian government's cut off of oil to Zionist Israel and its recognition and support to the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In contrast, in April 1980 the Iraqi regime expelled two Palestine liberation organizations from the country—the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Popular Front leader George Habash charged that Hussein's actions were part of the "rightist cause" being promoted by the Iraqi regime against the Iranian revolution.

Habash is right. The Iranian revolution represents the biggest breakthrough for the anti-imperialist struggle in the Middle East since the Iraqi revolution of 1958. By standing against the upsurge of the Iranian people, Hussein and the Iraqi Baathists have confirmed their rightist course and clearly indicated their aspirations for the future. □

100,000 March in Paris to Protest Right-Wing Terrorism

By Janice Lynn

More than 100,000 people marched through Paris October 7 to protest a right-wing terrorist bombing attack in front of a Jewish synagogue that left four people dead and dozens wounded.

A small right-wing outfit called the European Nationalist Fascists took credit for the October 3 bombing, the latest in a series of terrorist actions carried out by fascists in a number of European countries.

A protest march was supported by France's trade-union federations and workers' parties. French trade unions, human rights organizations, antiracist groups, Jewish organizations, feminists, and others condemned the bombing and participated in the march. A two-hour strike was called to coincide with the demonstration, enabling workers to attend. Similar demonstrations took place in a dozen other cities throughout France, and 5,000 marched in Rome.

Prominent among the marchers in Paris were Socialist Party leader François Mitterrand and Communist Party leader Georges Marchais.

The demonstrators carried banners and chanted slogans condemning racism and fascism, and strongly denounced the French government's complicity in the attacks. French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Interior Minister Christian Bonnet, who is responsible for France's police department, were branded as "accomplices and assassins." Other banners proclaimed "We are all French Jews."

The march wound through the working class districts of Paris, following the traditional May Day route. Noticeably absent from the march was any official representative from the Giscard government.

The French bombing followed similar right-wing terrorist attacks in Italy and Germany. In August, Italian rightists claimed responsibility for a bombing at a Bologna train station that killed eighty-four people and wounded 180. In September, a West German Nazi group planted a bomb in a trash can at Munich's Oktoberfest. Thirteen people were killed and more than 200 injured.

In all three cases, no charges have been brought against those responsible for the attacks, despite the fact that the police admit they know the identities of the members of these rightist groups.

Less than a week before the October 3 bombing at the Paris synagogue, gunmen sped through the streets of Paris firing machine guns at a Jewish day care center, a school, two synagogues, and a monu-



GISCARD D'ESTAING

ment to victims of the Nazi death camps of World War II. Interior Minister Bonnet had shrugged off these incidents, declaring that the danger from the extreme right should not be exaggerated.

The recent rise in terrorist attacks by small right-wing groups comes in the context of the worldwide economic crisis. Workers throughout Europe, as in the rest of the advanced capitalist countries, are faced with massive unemployment and soaring inflation as the capitalist class does its best to try to make working people pay for the anarchy and decay of the capitalist economic system.

It is precisely the policies carried out by these capitalist governments that serve to encourage the rightists' attacks. The resulting class polarization creates the kind of atmosphere where these small ultrarightist groups are given a green light to carry out their operations.

Part of the ruling class strategy is to maintain and encourage divisions within the working class to try to prevent a united response by working people. Thus racial, ethnic, sexual, and other divisions are used by the capitalist class to try to keep workers fighting among themselves, rather than against their real enemies and exploiters—the employers and the capitalist politicians who represent big business interests.

Workers in France, for example, are told they are losing their jobs because immigrant laborers are coming in and taking them away. The French government has been carrying out a concerted campaign to restrict the number of foreign students attending French universities, and has stepped up its harassment of immigrant workers—especially those from North Africa.

Two days after the synagogue bombing another right-wing group, the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, took credit for setting a bomb under a car with Dutch

license plates, saying it was to protest the "foreign invasion" in Paris.

These rightist terrorists are further emboldened by the failure of the capitalist government to forcefully pursue any of the perpetrators. Two police unions in France have pointed out that the French police force is riddled with pro-Nazis. They say that these extreme rightists were welcomed into the police during the offensive against leftist groups following the May-June 1968 upsurge by French workers and students.

José Delthorn, head of one of the police unions, told a news conference October 4 that about one-fifth of the 150 known members of the European Nationalist Fascists were policemen. A list of thirty of these right-wing police was compiled. Many were said to be in high positions.

But rather than putting their efforts into apprehending these right-wing criminals, French government officials have tried to blame the wave of fascist terrorism on the left.

"Our inquiries are going in many different directions," Interior Minister Bonnet declared October 8, and turning to the head of the Communist deputies in France's National Assembly, he added, "Including one that might surprise you."

One representative of the French Jewish establishment, the millionaire Baron Alain de Rothschild, even implied that the French government's relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization was what was encouraging anti-Semitic terrorism.

But this attempt to make some of the victims of racist and rightist attacks into criminals was answered by many. The Palestinian student union of Paris denounced the synagogue bombing and pointed out that Palestinians and Arabs have also been victims of racist outrages in France. "These odious acts have absolutely no relation to our struggle for a democratic and secular Palestine, in which Jews, Christians, Muslims, and non-believers would all have equal rights," they declared.

An Algerian workers organization in France also sent a message condemning the racist attacks.

The unity displayed by the French trade unions and workers' parties in organizing to protest these attacks is a powerful example of how to begin to build a united movement to put an end to such right-wing outrages. The interests of the working class are diametrically opposed to the kind of racist and anti-working-class ideology spouted by these Nazi-type grouplets. □

Prospect of Economic Decline Haunts West German Elections

By Gerry Foley

The most significant thing about the West German parliamentary elections on October 5 is that neither one of the major parties, the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats, really wanted to win.

The leadership of the West German Social Democratic Party (SPD) was afraid that if it won a parliamentary majority it would come under intense pressure from the party ranks to junk its coalition with the capitalist Free Democratic Party (FDP). This would leave the Social Democratic leaders without anybody to blame their more blatant anti-working-class policies on. Therefore, the SPD leadership did its best to throw the election, and it achieved a certain success.

The SPD vote went up by only four tenths of a percent, from 42.6% to 43%. The vote for its bourgeois coalition partners in the FDP however, increased by more than a third, rising from 7.9% in 1976 to 11%.

The Christian Democrats, the main bourgeois party, also appeared anxious to avoid the embarrassment of victory. The Christian Democrats could not get the trade unions to accept capitalist austerity measures without major battles. But, characteristically, they threw the election with more panache and show of determination than the SPD's lukewarm opportunist leaders.

The big bourgeois party ran Franz Josef Strauss as its standard-bearer, an abusive rightist rabble rouser, who few thought had a chance to win.

The result was that the Christian Democrat vote dropped sharply, from 49% to 45%. However, in view of the weakness of the Social Democratic leaders' response, Strauss may have made some progress in making violent anti-Communism more acceptable in West German political life.

Schmidt and Genscher Celebrate

When the election totals were announced, SPD head Helmut Schmidt declared that he had won a case of beer from Free Democratic Party leader Hans-Dietrich Genscher.

Schmidt was willing to wager that the FDP would be the main winner. Genscher was not so confident. Of course, Chancellor Schmidt was in a better position to make a prediction.

The *New York Times* reported October 6 that the lion's share of the extra vote for the FDP came from SPD voters, obviously the right wing, which was most in tune with Schmidt's thinking.

Schmidt didn't say whether he and



SCHMIDT AND STRAUSS: Both the Social Democratic and Christian Democratic leaders were looking over their shoulders at the working class.

Genscher intended to celebrate together. But the relationship could hardly be cozier.

The fact is that the FDP represents Schmidt's convictions. It is a thoroughly bourgeois party, which specializes in defending the "free market economy," the alliance with U.S. imperialism, and cut-backs in social spending.

The presence of the FDP in the government allows Schmidt to carry out his real program—administering the capitalist system for the capitalists. The stronger the Free Democrats are, the more independence the chancellor can achieve from his own party, which has the highly disagreeable feature for him of still being a workers party, even if an extremely corrupt and decayed one.

Since the SPD is still based on the workers and the masses of socially conscious youth, the slow radicalization of the labor movement and broader and broader strata of young people is being reflected in it.

Capitalists Worry About Growing Tensions

In reporting on the West German elections October 6, the U.S. business daily *Wall Street Journal* made it clear that the radicalization of the SPD's base was what most worried the capitalists, and certainly also Schmidt, whose aim is to carry out their program.

"Mr. Genscher acknowledged . . . that

there are some clashes within the coalition already in the offing."

The first, it is predicted, will be over limiting union representation on company supervisory boards. Such provisions served to tie the unions to management in the past.

But now that the capitalists are gearing up for an offensive against the workers' standard of living, they are anxious to reassert the full prerogatives of management. And they are running up against the opposition of the SPD, which, as the *Wall Street Journal* put it, is "highly dependent on union support."

These tensions would grow, the U.S. business paper warned:

"With the German economy slowing and growth expected to be low for most of next year, unions have begun to call for economic stimulus measures to head off an expected increase in unemployment.

"The left wing of the Social Democratic Party is likely to come under increasing pressure to honor the unions' request. But the Free Democrats, largely committed to a policy of restraint on government actions in the economy, are seen as wanting to hold off on any such stimulus."

Moreover, the SPD's trade-union base is reflecting the radicalization. "In the last month, a number of unions have experienced splits between leadership and members, with the younger generation of workers chaffing under the older, more

conservative leadership's tight control."

So, the FDP was essential both to the SPD leaders and the capitalists as a chain holding the coalition to big business.

SPD Afraid of Workers' Mobilizations

In its September 11 issue, *Was Tun*—the paper of the International Marxist Group (GIM), the German Trotskyists—described the close ties of the FDP with big business.

"Even on the level of personnel, it can be seen how the nature of this party as a representative of big capital has not changed a bit during the so-called Socialist-Liberal coalition.

"After he left the cabinet, the former FDP Economics Minister Friedrichs went directly into the management of the Bank of Dresden, one of the largest in the country. The FDP is the only bourgeois party that does not even consider it necessary to set up a subsidiary to try to attract and organize workers' support."

(The Christian Democrats claim to be a multiclass bloc with organizations specifically for "Christian workers.")

The Trotskyists pointed out that in this election it was clearer than ever that the best way to oppose Schmidt's bourgeois program was to fight for the biggest possible vote for the SPD.

"The SPD fears nothing more than that after a victory over Strauss the working-class voters will expect to be able to further their own interests and achieve the goals of their trade-union struggles more easily.

"That is why, for instance, after the surprise victory of the SPD in the North Rhine/Westphalia elections, in which the party won an absolute majority, we heard louder laments about the FDP's poor showing from the SPD leaders than from the Free Democrat tops themselves."

Was Tun continued:

"The SPD is afraid of mobilizations against Strauss. It fears an electoral victory that would enable it to rule by itself, because then it would have to show its colors."

The electoral slogans raised by the Trotskyists were the following:

"No vote for the capitalist parties, the Christian Democrats and the FDP! Vote SPD to stop Strauss! No confidence in Helmut Schmidt! For a fighting program to defend the workers' interests! Against a continuation of the 'Socialist-Liberal' coalition!"

A big victory for the SPD, *Was Tun* wrote, would also open up the class divide in the Christian Democrats:

"The bigger Strauss's defeat, the bigger the SPD's victory . . . the deeper division will open up in the Christian Democrats' ranks, and the better the chances will be for a class-struggle united front on the trade-union level, including both SPD and Christian [Democratic] workers."

Not Enough Money

After the October 5 elections, the capital-

ist press claimed, the political stability of West Germany, the second strongest pillar of the NATO alliance, had been even further reinforced. The most "moderate" of the two candidates for premier was put in office and the "moderate" wing of his coalition was strengthened.

The truth is exactly the opposite, and it explains why none of the two major parties wanted to win this election. This was the first national vote in Germany held under the shadow of the economic decline of West German imperialism.

For example, in its election eve issue, *Der Spiegel*, the most influential of the West German magazines, published a feature article explaining the basic problem facing the new government of the German capitalists, regardless of which parties formed it. The article was entitled: "We Don't Have Enough Money Anymore." It said:

"In the past, whenever the government faced either domestic or foreign problems, it could always buy its way out. For the new cabinet, that will not be so easy.

"In 1976, when Italy faced bankruptcy, Bonn granted them billions of marks in credits. When the world economy weakened, the Germans promised a big investment program to fuel a new international upturn.

"Whether it was help for Turkey or credits for Poland, money for the hard-currency-hungry other Germans [East Germany], or relief for the British who have been growing weary of the Common Market, it was the West German regime that could and did pay.

"If the unemployment rates rose, the state promptly financed an upturn. Bonn's money sweetened the policy toward the Soviet Union and East Europe, blocking a return to the Cold War. It saved NATO and the Common Market from collapse. It maintained social peace at home.

"But the good days are over. The budget is overburdened. The Federal Republic is reaching the limits of its financial capacities. A few weeks ago, it had to turn down a major appeal for credits from Yugoslavia. For lack of money, the rapprochement between the two parts of Germany is stagnating."

Moreover big problems were looming within West Germany itself, practically the only major capitalist country that has maintained a glitter of prosperity in the recent period.

"The economists in the Ministry of Economics predict a modest increase in the gross national product. The researches at the Kiel Institute for Study of the World Economy predict a small decline. That would mean that in 1981, instead of about 900,000 unemployed, we would have well over a million. It would mean billions of marks less in tax income and conflicts in upcoming contract negotiations, since there would be nothing to give."

The lack of money, *Der Spiegel* said,

would also force the government to renege on some of its main promises of social reform:

"The most expensive reform, equalizing the social security pensions for men and women, has been put off to 1984. It is by no means sure, however, that this measure can be financed."

Furthermore, the German capitalists have been losing their interest in investments that would build up the West German economy and create jobs. In the October 6 *New York Times*, John Vinocur described this situation:

"For the first time in 15 years, West Germany has a foreign trade deficit, which was attributed during the campaign to the increased cost of imported oil. Actually, about 40 percent of the outlay was used to buy finished and semifinished goods, as compared with 25 percent in the 1960's, which suggests that a significant part of the country's consumption can no longer be satisfied by the goods that West German manufacturers produce.

"As a man whose economic credo is one of free trade and free market, Mr. Schmidt is in a difficult position philosophically to complain that the West German banks find it more profitable to lend money to foreign countries than to local industry."

So, the new government is going to become a focus of scorn, and perhaps hatred, from the masses of the West German working people. There is no way it can meet their minimum needs and expectations without attacking the capitalist system itself, to which all the coalition leaders are committed heart and soul.

In this situation, the Christian Democrats preferred to harden up the reactionary prejudices of their supporters. And the Social Democrats preferred to hide behind a small unashamedly capitalist party. □

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Italy: Fiat Workers Strike Against Company Layoff Plans

By Will Reissner

Eighteen million Italian workers staged a four-hour general strike on October 10 to protest a move by the giant automaker Fiat to place 22,844 workers on a three-month layoff. Fiat workers have been on strike against the plan since October 1. Their mass picket lines have blocked all shipments into and out of the factories.

The struggle of the Fiat workers against management plans to cut the work force has been going on since early September. Their fight has highlighted the biggest labor upsurge in Italy in more than a decade, as Italian workers resist attempts by the employers to make them bear the brunt of the capitalist economic crisis through increased unemployment and speedups.

Recent government figures indicate that Italian inflation is running at 17 percent. Unemployment, which stood at 1.7 million in July, is expected to rise substantially before the end of the year.

The struggle of the Fiat workers is of crucial importance to the Italian working class because Fiat is by far the largest private employer in the country. With eleven divisions, Fiat controls some 600 companies. Last year the 114,000 workers in Fiat's automotive division, the company's largest, produced nearly 1.5 million cars.

The offensive against the auto workers and their union, the Metalworkers Federation (FLM), was publically launched by Fiat chairman Giovanni Agnelli at a July stockholders meeting. At that meeting Agnelli outlined plans to make major cuts in the work force before the end of the year while substantially increasing productivity by forcing the auto workers to give up benefits won in previous struggles.

'Invasion' of Imports?

Agnelli and other Fiat executives, echoed by the big business press, have raised the specter of being overrun by an "invasion" of Japanese imports, an argument dear to capitalist auto companies throughout the world. But Italian law limits Japanese car imports to only 1,200 per year. Fiat executives also point to the U.S. auto industry as a serious threat to the future of Italian and other European car manufacturers.

On September 8 negotiations began on a new contract between Fiat and the FLM. Management proposed laying off some 24,000 workers for 18 months, institution of a hiring freeze to further reduce the workforce through attrition, and de-



Fiat workers demonstrate in Turin.

Rinascita

manded the right to reassign workers to different jobs within a plant and between different plants, which is presently restricted by the contract.

The very next day Fiat began to layoff 13,200 workers in its auto division and another 1,400 in a steelmaking division. The response of the workers was immediate and massive. Demonstrations took place at a number of plants, and on September 11 and 12, strikes took place at car factories throughout the country. Picket lines were set up to prevent management from moving goods into or out of the plants. In some cases these picket lines were maintained over the weekend.

There were also daily marches of up to 10,000 auto workers. In Turin, workers marched on sites such as the television headquarters, the employers' association building, the Fiat corporate offices, and the newspapers. One of the grievances of the Fiat workers is that *La Stampa*, the Turin daily owned by the Agnelli family, which provided copious coverage of the demands of the striking workers in Poland, provides only limited information about the demands of Fiat workers in Turin.

Following the Example of Polish Strikers

The impact of the Polish strikes could be seen in a number of ways. Picking up a demand won by the Gdansk shipyard workers, Fiat workers called for negotiations between the company and the union to be held in public and in Turin rather

than in Rome, so the workers could listen.

In addition, as in Poland, democratically organized mass meetings were held almost daily in the factories to discuss tactics for the struggle and to develop trade-union and political strategies. These meetings involved as many as 20,000 workers at a time. At one, workers from the SEAT auto plant in Barcelona, Spain, which is partially owned by Fiat, brought solidarity greetings. At another, representatives from all the political parties were invited to speak to the 10,000 assembled workers. The representative of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the Italian section of the Fourth International, got a very good response. The LCR proposes a campaign for a thirty-five-hour workweek to fight unemployment.

In recognition of the crucial importance of the struggle at Fiat for the entire Italian labor movement, the Metalworkers Federation called its members out on a nationwide solidarity strike on September 25. The call was answered by 1.5 million metalworkers. In addition, 1,200 delegates of factories in the Piedmont region, where Turin is located, had expanded the call of the metalworkers to include all workers in Piedmont, where 1.3 million workers struck on that day.

On the day of the strike, 100,000 workers staged a militant and spirited demonstration in the main square of Turin. Many demonstrators carried banners and placards calling for the thirty-five-hour week.

The workers won an initial, partial vic-

tory on September 27, when Fiat's management rescinded its previously announced dismissals. This move was announced two hours after the sudden fall of the six-month old government of Premier Francesco Cossiga. Fearing a continuation of the high pitch of workers struggle at a time of political crisis, a Fiat representative announced that "out of a sense of responsibility at a difficult time in the life of the nation," all hiring and firing would be suspended until the end of the year.

But this limited victory did not last long. Two days later, on September 29, the company announced that it would place 22,844 workers on a three-month layoff. The true purpose of this layoff became clear when the list of those affected was released. On the list are a majority of the rank-and-file union activists in the plants as well as some of the union delegates.

The workers saw this move as an attempt to seriously weaken, if not destroy, the trade-union movement at Fiat in order to enable the company to press ahead with its planned firings at the end of the year.

When the contents of the layoff list became known, the Metalworkers Federation called an "indefinite strike" against Fiat. While most Italian strikes are called for a specified period of time (such as four hours, eight hours, or whatever), an "indefinite strike" corresponds to the usual practice of unions in the United States, Britain, and other countries, where a strike does not have a preannounced termination, but rather continues until an agreement is reached.

In addition to calling the indefinite strike, which began on October 1 and is now in its second week, the union resumed its blockade of all factory gates at the struck plants. It is in support of this struggle that the October 10 national general strike was called.

Negotiations have resumed between the FLM and Fiat management, but little progress is expected in the immediate future since Fiat management is deadly serious in its attempts to force big concessions from the auto workers.

The month-long struggle the Fiat workers have been waging against the attempted layoffs and "give backs" is of crucial

importance to the struggles of all Italian workers. If the powerful Fiat workers suffer a defeat, the employers' offensive against the living standards and working conditions of the rest of the Italian working class will be greatly stepped up.

The struggle at Fiat is also of direct importance to auto workers throughout the capitalist world, who face similar attacks. In the United States, for example, more than 240,000 auto workers are out of work. The Fiat workers are showing how a struggle against layoffs can be fought and won.

Italian trade-unionists have asked that international solidarity activities be undertaken in support of the Fiat struggle. Among the suggested activities are solidarity resolutions by trade unions outside Italy, the sending of trade-union delegations to Turin to meet with the FLM and the struggling workers, and solidarity demonstrations at Fiat facilities around the world.

Messages of solidarity should be sent to: Federazione dei Lavoratori Metalmeccanici, Corso Unione Sovietica 351, Torino, Italia.

Quebec Independence Movement the Real Target

The Debate Over Constitutional 'Reform' in Canada

By Jim Collins and Jean Lépine

[On October 2 Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, after failing to win the support of Canada's ten provincial governments on a formula for constitutional change, announced his plans to proceed unilaterally. Although Canada achieved full independence from Britain in 1931, its constitution remains based on the British North America Act of 1867, and amendments to the constitution are passed by the British Parliament at Canadian request. Trudeau proposes to "patriate" the constitution by bringing it fully under Canadian control.

[However, Trudeau's constitutional plan grew out of his government's reactionary campaign against the struggle of the French-speaking people of Quebec for their national rights. Thus, one of the items in a proposed "charter of rights" that Trudeau wants the British Parliament to add to the constitution before relinquishing its control would guarantee the perpetuation of English-speaking schools in Quebec. One of the main demands of the Québécois national liberation movement is for compulsory schooling in French, both as a means of preserving the culture of the Québécois and in order to help eliminate the privileged status of the English-speaking minority within Quebec.

[The following article analyzing Trudeau's failure to win support from the provincial governments for his constitutional proposals appeared in the October 6 issue of the Canadian Trotskyist newspaper, *Socialist Voice*.]

* * *

What lies behind the failure of the constitutional talks at the first ministers' conference September 8-13? And what is their meaning for working people?

Throughout history, new constitutions and progressive constitutional reform have generally come about through huge social upheavals, big mass struggles by working people, and revolutions. Constitutions of this kind have codified in law important rights and gains of working people.

Codifying the rights of working people was not the purpose of these constitutional talks, which broke up in a shabby spectacle of bickering over questions like the division of Alberta's oil revenues between the provinces and the federal government.

Far from codifying rights, the Trudeau government tried to use the constitutional talks to deny the people of Quebec their national rights, and to deal a body blow to the Quebec national independence struggle.

In this Trudeau failed miserably. Not so much because of differences between the provincial premiers and the federal government, but because of the deep opposition of the people of Quebec to challenges to their rights and the refusal of workers in English Canada to join Trudeau's crusade against the struggle of the Québécois.

Two Round Battle

The real battle was fought in two rounds: during the Quebec referendum and in the following month when Trudeau announced his basic proposals.

The massive confrontation during the Quebec referendum between the Yes and No forces reflected growing determination by working people in Quebec to end the discrimination and injustices they face within Confederation and fight for control of their own destiny as a nation. On the Yes side were the Parti Québécois (PQ) and the masses of workers and their organizations. On the No side, the American and Canadian corporations, the federal government, and the privileged anglophone minority in Quebec.

In the very middle of the referendum battle, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) affirmed its support to Quebec's right to self-determination. Despite strong

opposition from the major federal political parties, polls showed a majority of people in English Canada favored negotiations with Quebec in the event of a Yes majority for the PQ's sovereignty-association proposal.

The pressure for change ran so deep that Trudeau and the federalist forces had to promise that a No vote was a vote for basic change in the federal system in the direction of satisfying Quebec's grievances. This helped the No position win a majority—but almost half the francophone votes went to the Yes side.

The 'People's' Package?

After this brief retreat, Trudeau returned to the attack with his proposals to the first ministers. His proposals were aimed at whipping up support for measures that could be used by the federal government to push back and undermine the nationalist movement.

- Trudeau put forward a preamble to the constitution which specifically denied the existence of the Quebec nation. Such a measure would codify in the constitution the denial of Quebec's aspirations and right to self-determination as a nation.

- He proposed a charter of rights with a specific twist. The charter, by giving the federal government the say over provincial language legislation, would lay the basis for stepping up the attack on Quebec's language Law 101, already under attack from the Supreme Court. Law 101, which makes French the sole official language in Quebec, is seen as one of the most important acquisitions of the Quebec national struggle in the past decade.

These anti-Québécois proposals are the heart and soul of Trudeau's "people's package" and repatriation scheme. They underscore the fear of Canada's ruling class of the Quebec independence struggle—fear that as the determination of Québécois workers to demand their rights grows, they will become a threat to capitalist rule itself.

Mass Opposition

The government's constitutional proposals went down to a stunning defeat. Why? Firstly, because the Québécois weren't fooled about the real aims of the conference.

Trudeau's "people's package" was immediately denounced by every major political party and personality in Quebec. The opposition included not only René Lévesque and the Parti Québécois, but also Claude Ryan's Liberals and the Quebec Conservatives.

The three main union federations—the Quebec Federation of Labour (FTQ), the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), and the Quebec Teachers Federation (CEQ)—held press conferences condemning any attempt by the federal government to increase its powers at the expense of the people of Quebec.

As in the period of the referendum and despite another multi-million dollar federal advertising campaign, working people in English Canada refused to be drawn into the federal government's campaign against Quebec's national rights.

Through common struggles against layoffs, plant closures, speedup, inflation, and unsafe working conditions, workers of both nations have formed strong ties. As a result of the Quebec referendum, many in English Canada now understand and sympathize more with Quebec's struggle. Plant occupations in Ontario and the strike of federal government workers show that the interests and concerns of workers in English Canada, as in Quebec, lie in an entirely different direction from Trudeau or the provincial premiers.

The Quebec Liberals and even the [Toronto] *Globe and Mail*, fearing the response of the Quebec masses, backed off from Trudeau's measures. Using the lever of Quebec's refusal to kowtow to the federal government, Tory premiers east and west began to raise their own demands for a bigger slice of the resource pie.

By mid-summer, the latest attempt at constitutional reform was dead. Shot down, not by the provincial premiers—though they were the main actors in the media show—but by the working people of Quebec, indirectly assisted by the workers of English Canada.

Rights Are Won Through Struggle

The first ministers who gathered around the conference table, in front of television cameras, and behind closed doors at Trudeau's home were, for the most part, Tories and Liberals. While they discussed issues of concern to working people such as civil rights and energy prices, as faithful political servants of the capitalist class their proposals in no way met the needs of working people or the Quebec nation.

Not one first minister from English Canada supported the concept of Quebec as a nation. None proposed nationalization of the oil industry from the wellhead to the gas pump, for example, as part of an economic plan geared to meeting human needs rather than profit.

The only NDP [New Democratic Party] premier, Allan Blakeney, didn't do any better, for the most part acting as a mediator between the squabbling premiers and the federal politicians.

As a representative of the labor movement, of which the NDP is the mass political expression in English Canada, Blakeney completely blew this golden opportunity to champion the demands of the labor movement and the need for solidarity with the Québécois national struggles. Instead he went along completely with the bosses' game.

Québécois Premier René Lévesque, while taking a firm stand against the "people's package" and in this way reflecting the power of the nationalist movement, ac-

cepted the federalist framework of the conference. He could have used the conference better to explain the case for Quebec's sovereignty and independence to working people across Canada and around the world. Caving in to federalist pressure, Lévesque failed to make this case.

Other spokespersons for the oppressed who requested a voice at the conference, like the native people, the Acadians, and francophones outside Quebec, were rejected outright.

The overriding weakness of the talks, and the ultimate reason for their failure, was that working people and the oppressed were denied any real voice in the constitutional discussions.

Real rights can only be entrenched through the struggles of those who toil themselves. This is the lesson of Poland and Nicaragua.

The Polish workers through their strikes have begun to change Polish society from top to bottom, winning for instance the right to strike and to form independent trade unions.

In Nicaragua, the mass uprising against the Somoza dictatorship brought to power a workers and farmers government. The rights of workers and peasants have been codified in the new Nicaraguan constitution.

Only the actions of working people in Quebec and English Canada can block Trudeau's hand in coming months as he returns for a third time to the attack with his threat of unilateral patriation of the constitution.

The October 16 demonstration called by the main Quebec union federations against the Liberal government's imposition of the War Measures Act in 1970 is the kind of action that can force Trudeau back, and push the PQ to stand up to the federalist attack.

To defend and extend national and labor rights, the Quebec labor movement needs urgently to discuss building a mass labor party based on the unions.

In English Canada, the unions have an important role to play in bringing the NDP into line to ensure that in coming months its parliamentary spokespersons defend the real interests of working people and the Quebec nation. □

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Government Workers Strike Across Canada

By Ernest Harsch

TORONTO—For more than a week, a strike by federal employees brought the day-to-day functioning of many government departments and agencies in Canada to a standstill.

It was one of the largest country-wide strikes in Canada in recent years. At its peak, more than 100,000 workers joined militant picket lines and participated in mass rallies and marches in Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Québec City, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and numerous other cities.

During the night of October 7-8, a tentative settlement was reached between the leadership of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) and the government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, covering nearly 50,000 federal clerks, who have long been the lowest paid federal employees.

The clerks won a 24.7 percent wage increase over a two-year period, starting retroactively from November 1979. The tentative settlement, however, did not include a number of the key demands of the strikers, such as a cost-of-living clause in their contract, a shorter workweek, and amnesty for strikers who walked off their jobs illegally.

Shortly before the tentative pact was announced, one woman picketer explained to this reporter that the cost-of-living clause was the main concern of the strikers. "Without it," she said, "we'd have to come out here every year."

The union leadership, however, asked the strikers to return to their jobs and to accept the pact. Most did go back to work by October 8, but pickets remained up in Toronto, Montreal, Hamilton, and other areas in opposition to the settlement terms.

Tony McGrath, the president of PSAC Local 543 in Toronto, said that union locals throughout the Toronto metropolitan area were "screaming" against the terms. In Montreal, Jean Bergeron, a leader of the Quebec wing of the PSAC, called the settlement "treason" and urged union members to vote against it.

While the strikers have so far been only partially successful in winning their demands, they have displayed their organized strength—for the first time in the union's history.

The federal clerks—who were supported since October 5 by the more than 100,000 other PSAC members—shut down many government offices. Imports into the country were bogged down. In St. John's, ships sat idle in the harbor as dockworkers stayed away from their jobs in solidarity with the clerks.

Postal services in Montreal, Toronto,

and Vancouver were seriously disrupted. The Toronto International Airport was shut down October 6, and other airports were affected, when firefighters refused to cross the picket lines. Many customs employees did likewise, causing massive tie-ups at U.S. border crossings.

Picket lines by civilian personnel were set up at many military bases, including one of nearly 400 workers at the giant Borden base north of Toronto. According to the October 2 Toronto *Globe and Mail*, some soldiers refused to cross the lines.

Despite government victimization and threats, the workers displayed considerable determination. The picket lines, many of them composed largely of women, were very vocal and visible. Enthusiastic marches and rallies were staged.

The determination of the strikers was strengthened by the widespread support they received, both from other sectors of the labor movement and from the public in general. At an October 5 news conference, Dennis McDermott, the president of the Canadian Labour Congress, threatened to bring out the federation's more than one million members in a series of rotating solidarity strikes, pledging to "invoke the kind of collective action we deem necessary to bring the government to heel."

One reason for the level of support for the strikers was the obvious justness of their demands. The wages of the federal clerks were as low as \$9,000 a year, much

less than those of workers doing similar jobs in private industry. More than three quarters of the clerks are women, and many of them are also heads of households.

The federal clerks were "basically being stomped on," Mark Krakowski, a PSAC regional representative, told this reporter.

It was conditions such as those that fired the anger of the union's ranks. The PSAC leadership had never before called a strike, but the clerks, through a series of wild-cat actions beginning in early September, were finally able to compel the union tops to issue a formal strike call.

This new militancy of the PSAC is only the most recent reflection of the growing combativeness of the Canadian labor movement as a whole, especially of women unionists. Since the beginning of the year, labor actions have included a militant telephone workers strike, two strikes in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick against discriminatory regional wage rates, and factory occupations in Oshawa and Bramalea.

In addition, the Ontario Federation of Labor has called a province-wide march and demonstration in Toronto for October 18 to protest against plant closures, layoffs, and cutbacks.

Against this background, it is not surprising that the federal employees won so much support. Their struggle for a decent standard of living is the same as that of all workers in Canada. □

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Portuguese Elections: Workers Seek Alternatives

By Gerry Foley

Despite the inflated claims of victory for the bourgeois coalition in the October 5 parliamentary elections in Portugal, and despite the gains it did make, the workers parties held their overall majority of the popular vote.

After five years of setbacks and declining living standards owing to the betrayals of the big workers parties, the class consciousness and socialist aspirations of the majority of Portuguese working people have remained basically intact.

According to unofficial figures published in the October 7 Lisbon daily *A Tarde*, the bourgeois coalition increased its vote from 45% in the December 2, 1979, parliamentary elections to 47.1%. The combined total for all the parties that claim to represent socialism and the working class was 50.1%, down from 51.1%.

These are percentages of the total number of ballots. In this election 2.4% of the ballots were blank or voided. In 1979, this figure was 2.8%.

Thus, the left seems to have maintained a slim absolute majority of the valid votes. However, because of the dispersion of this total over several parties, the bourgeois coalition obtained a clear majority in parliament. It got 131 seats, against 115 for the workers parties (73 for the Socialist Party, 41 for the Communist Party, and 1 for the Maoist People's Democratic Union [UDP]).

The biggest loser was the Communist Party. Its vote dropped from 19.0% to 16.9%, equalling the gain for the bourgeois coalition.

However, in relative terms, the Maoist UDP suffered greater losses. Its vote dropped from 2.2% to 1.4%. But it kept its one deputy from the shipbuilding center of Setúbal, where centrist and ultraleft groups gained their strongest electoral base during the 1974-75 upsurge.

The biggest gainers in a relative sense were the two groups that speak in the name of Trotskyism, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR)—the Portuguese section of the Fourth International—and the Workers Party of Socialist Unity-Socialist Workers Party (POUS-PST).

The gains of these two small parties almost equalled those of the bourgeois coalition. Their combined total was 2.4%. Thus, for the first time in Portugal, the organizations identified with Trotskyism emerged as the strongest electoral alternative to the left of the CP.

The increased vote for the PSR and the POUS-PST more than compensated for the UDP's loss. It also made up for a good part

of the decline in the CP vote. The PSR percentage nearly doubled, going from 0.65% to 1%. The vote for the POUS-PST rose from 0.2% to 1.4%. In a number of districts this party got the fourth-largest total.

The POUS-PST slate was headed by two former SP deputies, Carmelinda Pereira and Aires Rodrigues, who were nationally known leaders of the left wing that was driven out of the Socialist Party.

The CP's losses were more serious than the overall total alone would indicate. They suggest that the party has ceased to attract working people looking for a way to fight the austerity drive. They also point to a weakening of what have been the CP's strongest bastions, the districts of Alentejo, where the big landed estates were confiscated after the fall of the dictatorship and turned into cooperatives.

After the SP presided over governments that began cutting back the gains the working people made during the 1974-75 upsurge, the CP vote started to grow.

However, the overall CP gains were small, even though it was the only mass alternative to the SP that existed in the workers movement. The party had too thoroughly discredited itself in the eyes of the broad masses of Portuguese working people during the upsurge in 1974 and 1975.

Although the CP leaders have talked a tough line against the capitalists, they were thoroughly exposed in 1975 as bluffers. And they have continued to expose themselves in the past four years.

Now, apparently, even the small gains the CP made at the expense of the weakened and purged SP have been reversed. Lisbon was one area where the CP lost heavily. This is a highly politicalized swing area, and the CP's losses probably reflect the continuing decline in its general credibility as a fighting party.

In Alentejo, where the CP's other losses were concentrated, the support for the party had been the most solid. This is the area where the CP has a fighting tradition. Under the dictatorship, it organized the brutally oppressed and exploited farm workers and led strikes.

The collective farms and agricultural workers unions that developed in Alentejo since the fall of the dictatorship became bastions of CP power and it has conducted some sharp battles to defend them. Now even in Alentejo, the belief in the CP as the defender of the working people seems to have begun to wane.

The SP vote remained essentially un-

changed on October 5, dropping only .1%. This represents the plateau to which it fell after it took on the job of running the government for the capitalists.

The 1980 vote for the SP shows, however, that although it has been in opposition now for some time, and shifted its line toward talking about defending the workers' interests and the need for unity against the capitalists, it has been unable to regain its lost credibility.

In face of betrayal after betrayal by the big workers parties and the bitter disappointment of the hopes raised by the fall of the dictatorship, Portuguese working people have remained remarkably constant in their support for socialism.

The relatively large shift in this election toward the parties that speak in the name of Trotskyism indicates that the Portuguese masses are still looking for a leadership that can give expression to their aspirations for unity and a counteroffensive against the capitalists.

Only the PSR and the POUS-PST stand on this program, and they are the only workers parties that made gains.

However, in the present situation in Portugal and internationally, the continued erosion of the overall strength of the workers parties becomes more and more grave. After six years of "disorder," from the capitalist point of view and in the conditions of a sharpening world economic crisis, the Portuguese bourgeoisie and their international backers are impatient for a knockout.

Even SP head Mário Soares has expressed worry that a military coup in Turkey signals a danger that the capitalists will resort to similar methods in Portugal, also a debtor country.

For example, in the October 5 *New York Times*, correspondent James M. Markham quoted Soares as saying:

"We never thought that a coup was possible in a Western European country, and we have said that one was never possible in Portugal. But here the nostalgics for the past might now think it's possible after Turkey. And I think that the great danger of Sá Carneiro [leader of the bourgeois coalition] is that he is capable of going up to a solution of force."

In fact, the victory of the bourgeois coalition was followed by rightist mob attacks on the headquarters of the workers parties in Oporto, the country's second largest city.

The same thing happened in Lisbon, where there were particularly sharp clashes outside the headquarters of the SP.

These attacks highlight the importance of the demands of the Portuguese working people for unity of the workers movement and for a counteroffensive. □

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Mass Movement Reviving in Chile

By Lars Palmgren

SANTIAGO—Early on the morning of September 11, a number of luxury cars rolled down the streets of José María Caro, a working-class suburb of about 300,000 inhabitants in the southern part of this capital.

Many residents, enjoying the beautiful spring weather and trying to fly the first kites of the season, opened their eyes a little wider when they noticed the elegant cars pass by.

"Who are they? What do they want here?" people asked each other.

But most already knew why the cars with license plates showing they were from the bourgeois neighborhoods of Providencia and Las Condes had arrived. They were bringing poll-watchers to supervise and control the plebiscite being held in Chile on the seventh anniversary of General Pinochet's bloody coup.

In José María Caro, as in many other working-class areas, the voting would be closely watched by bank managers, business executives, and their wives.

This and other measures were taken by the dictatorship to make sure nothing unforeseen happened in the electoral farce being mounted by Pinochet.

Nonetheless, the bourgeois poll-watchers in José María Caro had quite a troublesome day. At the voting places they were met by groups of activists, young and old, who were ready to watch the poll-watchers.

Forty-five different popular organizations and groups in José María Caro—from trade unions to youth and women's organizations and health centers—had signed a common statement declaring the plebiscite a farce and calling on the people to refuse to participate in "this attempt by the dictatorship to legalize itself."

During the weeks leading up to the vote, these organizations had carried out a series of anti-plebiscite activities. Watching the poll-watchers was the culmination of this work.

More than once, the "people's poll-watchers" confronted the bourgeois servants of the dictatorship, fighting to save a "no" vote from being annulled or counted as a "yes."

Of course, this had no effect on the announced results. The "yes" vote triumphed, just as the dictatorship had decided it would at the time the plebiscite was planned.

The whole thing was indeed a farce: One could only vote "yes" or "no" on a package of measures that included an authoritarian new constitution that will not go into effect until the late 1990s and an extension of

Pinochet's term in office for at least eight and possibly as much as sixteen years.

The entire state apparatus was used to back up the dictatorship's proposals. All the major communications media—the television above all—carried propaganda for the "yes" vote almost exclusively.

Voting was compulsory, and those abstaining were threatened with prison sentences. All blank ballots cast were counted as "yes" votes.

Nonetheless, despite Pinochet's objectives, the plebiscite contributed to the slow repolitization and organization of the masses that has been under way in Chile for the past two years.

The plebiscite was the point of departure for activities and political discussions among the new formations that have been taking shape in working-class areas like José María Caro.

Opposition to the regime was expressed in public demonstrations and meetings. On the eve of the plebiscite, groups of demonstrators milled around the streets of downtown Santiago for hours. At midnight the main thoroughfares were littered with leaflets calling for abstention in the next day's vote.

The plebiscite results struck a blow against illusions in a gradual reformation of the dictatorship. The Christian Democratic Party (PDC) and the Communist Party had put forward such a perspective and agitated extensively for a "no" vote. They presented themselves as a real alternative to Pinochet—not so much to the masses as to the "honest" military officers and the Economic Group. (The latter term is applied to the several families that have come to control much of Chile's banking, industry, and commerce in recent years.)

Christian Democratic leader Eduardo Frei explained the content of the "no" vote at a large rally held at the Caopolicán Theater in the center of Santiago several weeks before the plebiscite. He proposed the formation of a civilian-military government that would call for a constituent assembly. To guarantee "social peace" during such a process, the workers would be called on to limit their demands through a social pact to be signed by the trade-union bureaucracy.

After initially calling for abstention, the Communist Party supported the PDC proposal. The CP-controlled National Trade-Union Coordinating Committee (CNS) and the PDC's "Group of Ten" union leaders also supported Frei's call for a social pact.

Despite this effort to reassure the bourgeoisie, which even involved secret meet-

ings with the Economic Group and the "honest officers," Frei failed to win their support. He was unable to demonstrate that the PDC and CP had a sufficient base among the masses to guarantee that such a project could work. Moreover, the outbreak of demonstrations against the plebiscite showed that Frei could not control the forces that he himself had helped to put into motion.

The plebiscite also served to clarify political positions within the opposition. The PDC and the CP, with the support of sections of parties that had been the CP's allies in the old People's Unity (UP) coalition, will continue to press for a deal with the bourgeoisie, using more militant rhetoric and tactics.

The Christian Democrats and the CP want to use the masses as a source of pressure to win "political space" for themselves; they are not interested in organizing and mobilizing the masses in preparation for a real fight against the dictatorship and the system it represents.

The Chilean workers have had considerable experience with the methods of the PDC and the CP, however, not only from the period of the UP and the Allende regime but also from more recent episodes. For example, the CNS did not support any of the strikes that have taken place in the past year. The PDC-controlled magazine *Hoy* and Radio Cooperativa censored all opposition voices that did not agree with their approach to the plebiscite.

Political currents that base themselves on the independent organization and mobilization of the masses made headway in the agitation around the plebiscite. The coordination established among the forty-five organizations in José María Caro is one example of this. On the trade-union level, currents opposed to the CNS and "Group of Ten" bureaucrats were strengthened. Foremost among these is the Workers United Front (FUT), which called for abstention and used the opportunity of the plebiscite to deepen its organizing efforts among the rank and file. The FUT established links with some 100 popular organizations before the plebiscite.

Regional trade-union bodies with a perspective of independent organization and mobilization have taken shape in the Cerillos industrial zone of Santiago and in Concepción and Valparaíso.

On the political level, the plebiscite dealt a severe blow to the myth of the People's Unity coalition. The UP exists almost entirely now as an agreement among exiled leaders of the parties that once made it up. Inside Chile, these parties are internally split and are divided among several organizations that have often continued to use the old name.

Some of the UP parties supported the positions of the PDC and the CP in the plebiscite.

The main current calling for abstention was the recently formed Socialist Front

(FS), made up of factions of the Socialist Party, the Coordinadora Nacional of the SP, the United People's Action Movement (MAPU), and the Radical Party. The first public statement of the Socialist Front declared:

"The problem facing Chileans . . . is not a mere change in rulers (civilian for military), but a total change, a change from the capitalist system itself and all that this entails—the construction of a socialist society in which property in the means of production would belong to and be at the service of the great majority of the people; a new system with political, juridical, and economic institutions that give full sway to the fullest participation

and exercise of democracy. . . .

"The FS maintains that the people themselves will bring about their own liberation; it rejects all forms of adventurism carried out in the name of but behind the backs of the people."

As for current tasks, the FS says:

"The independent power of the people develops under conditions in which the relationship of forces generally favors the capitalist class in power. . . . This means that the main task of the FS of Chile is to contribute to the organization of all the people in self-defense; in defense of human rights, health care, housing, and education; in defense of trade union rights, jobs, and wages; in defense of the rights of

women and of children, of culture and the right to freedom and justice against attacks and repression."

While the plebiscite showed that seven years after the coup it is still Pinochet, the Economic Group, and imperialism that control the country, it also showed that the reorganization of the masses has taken a weak and uneven but nonetheless real step forward. The fight for the leadership of the mass movement as it emerges is forcing the existing political organizations into clearer definitions: either collaboration with the bourgeoisie on its terms, as the CP proposes, or support to the independent mass organization and mobilization that is beginning in Chile today. □

Interview With Brazilian Workers Party Leader 'Lula'

'Nicaragua Can Be a Model for All Latin America'

[Among the guests invited by the Sandinista Workers Federation to attend the celebrations of the first anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution on July 19 was the Brazilian workers leader Luis Inácio da Silva (better known as "Lula").

[Lula heads an important layer of combative union leaders who have been instrumental in the powerful strikes and mobilizations of metalworkers in the industrial suburbs of São Paulo during the past few years. An independent working-class political party, the Workers Party (PT), has emerged out of these and other struggles. Lula is the president of the PT.

[The following interview with Lula about his visit to Nicaragua appeared in the July 31-August 13 issue of the São Paulo fortnightly *Em Tempo*; it was conducted by Flavio Andrade and Marcelo Zugadi. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question. What is your overall impression of Nicaragua after one year of the Sandinista revolution?

Answer. Magnificent. When I left Nicaragua I told the compañeros we should spend about three days without talking to anybody, just reflecting, before coming back to Brazil.

What we saw there was really a different world—the people's participation, their happiness, the extent of internal democracy—in sum, the people fully in power. What is unfolding in the country can become a new political model for Latin America.

The joy in children's faces, the willingness to rebuild the country, the desire of the trade unionists to establish effective unions, the literacy plan that is under way, the agrarian reform—all this shows how

certain the people are that they are building something for themselves.

Every sector participates in all the plans and projects of the society; they don't involve the government alone. Contrary to what certain people here in this country think—that popular participation in such affairs amounts to meddling with decision making—Nicaragua is now going to provide an example of how popular participation alone can assure a successful government.

Q. Did you have any contact with the Nicaraguan armed forces? What impression did you get of their discipline and democracy?

A. The military aspect also made a great impression on us—no difference or distinction could be seen between the army and the people or between the police and the people. On the contrary, the army and militia are the people themselves. For example, in the streets, in the popular festivals organized by the Sandinista Workers Federation, in the neighborhoods, it is common to see soldiers, armed youths with machine guns on their shoulders, dancing normally with civilians as if they were not soldiers at all.

There is mutual respect between the people and the authorities. Just to give you an idea, all the people relate to each other as compañeros. A minister of foreign affairs calls the janitor of a building "compañero," and the janitor does the same with the foreign minister.

Q. What was the extent of mobilization you saw during the activities on the first anniversary of the revolution?

A. It was astonishing: in a country of just 2.5 million inhabitants, half a mil-

lion—practically one-fifth of the country—were in the plaza the day of the celebration. That is not an easy thing, and it was achieved because of the close relationship between the government Junta, the union federation, and the people.

Q. What did you think of Fidel Castro's speech? It was said in the press here that the Cuban leader's presentation was very moderate.

A. The Cuban leader impressed me greatly. The ultralefts think he was very moderate; those on the right think he was extremist. But I think his speech was just right. Because Fidel didn't have to prove to anybody that he is a revolutionary—that is already clear to everyone. What was necessary was to have the good sense to call for aid to Nicaragua. And that was what he did.

His charisma is fabulous. Really, he was like the host of the festival—everybody expected him to be the central figure of the day. The people were anxious to see the legendary Fidel up close.

Q. What about the economy, and the situation of the cities under reconstruction?

A. Managua today is a city destroyed by war. Now, as part of the postwar reconstruction, they will plant gardens on the barren lands that the city has because of earthquakes. I hope this will soon make Managua the city with the most gardens in the world.

As for the economy, the situation is more advantageous than that of Cuba. Nicaragua is not tied to one-crop agriculture. They have various options and now they are also discovering gold in great quanti-

ties in the country. So I think they will have more latitude.

Q. Did you visit any factories under workers control?

A. Yes, I visited two factories administered by the workers, a metal factory and a food enterprise. It would be quite important for someone from the Brazilian government or some businessman to visit these factories as well. They would see first that the working class having the means of production is not a bad thing for the country.

In the metal factory, for example, the workers were soon producing 40 percent more than the output of the most productive period in previous times. In addition, the perspective of the workers in this factory is clear: they do not want what belongs to the owner or the business's capital. What they really want is to gain what is just, what they actually produce. I think this is fundamental in order to debunk the myth that there is a dictatorship of the proletariat in Nicaragua; the Nicaraguan people are a long way from that. They could change, however, depending on what attitude the capitalist class takes. I think that the capitalists will have to learn to coexist, obtaining profits but permitting the working class to at least win what is just.

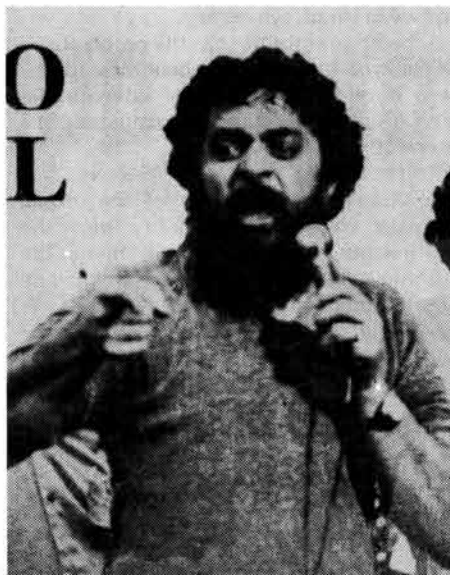
Q. Going on to a brief question, but one that is also broader and more general, do you think socialism is on the order of the day in Nicaragua?

A. Look, I think it is rather premature for people from outside to be talking about this. Leaving aside what each member of the junta or each trade-union leader thinks, I believe there is something much more important than discussing whether the country is moving toward socialism or not. I think it is a question of time. It will depend on what happens in Nicaragua in the next few years.

Every leader in Nicaragua could have socialism in mind. But they are leaving that for a second phase, so that the people themselves can discover through their own struggles what model is best. The leaders have put in first place the organization of the people, the recovery of the country. Later the people will decide what the best kind of society is for the country. And I think that is the important thing—they want to advance by means of their own experiences and not according to the dictates of the theory or practice of other countries.

Q. Even though it remains to be seen, do you think there is any other alternative for the country besides socialism or a return to some form of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie?

A. I would prefer not to judge Nicaragua's possibilities. I think it would be best



LULA

to ask Daniel Ortega or some other Nicaraguan that question. But I do think it is practically impossible to turn back.

Q. Let's return to what you were saying earlier. At the metal factory you visited, you said the workers didn't want what belonged to the boss but only wanted to earn what was just. Does this imply some third way, neither capitalism nor socialism? In particular, a third way that you would agree with?

A. No, that's not it. I suppose that if the workers there think that way it is precisely because of the short time the revolution has been going on in the country. I think they are conscious that capitalism could return to Nicaragua—not to imply that capitalism has already been finished off there—but I also think they are passing through an apprenticeship. I sincerely cannot say what is best for them.

But I am sure of one thing—there will never again be a regime like the one here in Brazil or like the one of Somoza's time. But whether or not there is some other alternative, I prefer to rely on the creativity of the Nicaraguan people.

Q. Do you see more similarities than differences between the Nicaraguan process and the process that took place in Cuba?

A. I think the differences could be said to result from different moments in history. There is one common aspect between what is happening in Nicaragua and what happened in Cuba—the people are in power. For me, that is a great similarity. If in Cuba the people are represented by Fidel and in Nicaragua by a Front, those are secondary differences. What is important is to know that the people are governing their own country.

Q. At the beginning of the interview you were talking about a new model for the entire continent that is being demonstrated by Nicaragua. Could that model be summed up by saying, the people in power?

A. I would not say that is the way forward for the continent as a whole. Look, by saying "the people in power," what we mean is the working class. But then we see how the Machiavellians say, well, that is the dictatorship of the proletariat! For me, a dictatorship is government by a minority. Where the majority governs one can never speak of a dictatorship. I think it is the majority that should govern. Now, if the workers are the majority, they are obviously the ones who must govern, in all countries of the world. This is the perspective for Latin America.

It's nothing new for people to say this. The idea of the Workers Party is nothing new. And it is clear that if one organizes a party it is in order to achieve power. Not only the government, since having the government is not worth anything if we don't have power.

Q. In your opinion, are the people fully in power in Nicaragua or only in the government?

A. It's more than simply the government. They still don't have all the power, but that is a question of time.

The country was destroyed. There has only been one year of revolution. I don't think anyone has the right today to criticize the Sandinista Front because it didn't socialize the means of production once and for all, or eliminate capitalism with one blow. I think the Sandinistas have had the wisdom to advance according to the gains of the people themselves. Because it isn't enough to have power, it is necessary to know what to do with it.

Q. Let's finish up this point. Both processes involve—to use the term we've been using here—the people coming to power. In Nicaragua and Cuba this took place through violent, armed revolution, liquidating in a radical way the violence imposed for centuries by the dominant classes on those dominated. You say the message "the people to power" is valid for the entire continent. On the other hand there is a big question, on both the Brazilian left and the Brazilian right, about the ideology, the political thought of Lula. The characterizations run from "CIA agent" to "communist," passing through a whole range of labels. But leaving this aside, what kind of ideas have you returned to Brazil with after closer contact with these two revolutionary experiences of the people coming to power?

A. I return with the following ideas: There are two peoples that conquered their freedom after long struggles. One has

already managed to change their society to what they think it ought to be, and the other is still seeking that road.

You know that it has never bothered me that some call me a communist and others a CIA agent, and others say I am confused. Because my practice is not based on theory but on my day-to-day struggles. So it doesn't interest me to say what I am but rather to say what I do.

And we are not in Nicaragua—we are in Brazil. So I think that the Brazilian people will find their model of a perfect society, the kind of struggle to engage in so as to broaden their participation. Whether they take the peaceful road or some other road, I think depends a lot on the level of organization of our people.

Some were expecting me to come back to Brazil and say, "Now I am a revolutionary." But that isn't important. I'm not a revolutionary or a counterrevolutionary. I think that we all have to subordinate ourselves to the will of our people. And from the moment the people are organized, they will know what to do to achieve their objectives.

Q. You are always very much against theory, against using other experiences as a model, and so on. You always say the people will say or do this or that. But look, neither in Cuba nor in Nicaragua can the launching of the armed struggle in any way be attributed to the people, at least in the strict sense that you use the expression "on the basis of the people." In those two countries the launching of the armed struggle was the work of the guerrilla vanguard. Even without setting forth a complete model for Brazil right now, doesn't this common aspect of these two revolutions have anything to do with Brazil?

A. I think there's some confusion here. The success was due to the entry of the people . . .

Q. The success, obviously. But the origin, the launching of the process that the people entered, the creation of the preliminary conditions so that the people could at least decide that victory was possible or probable, wasn't that . . .

A. Well, I think the conditions are quite different. Look, let me tell you something—the Brazilian left has always erred greatly by making proposals for struggle that are quite far from the real situation of the people. And therefore it has gotten stuck. This doesn't work, you know. You have to go to the people to discuss problems and organize. That's where the solution is to be found. And that is why I say that the PT, whatever its faults, has already done much more than the Brazilian left has in some years of struggle—at the level of organization.

It isn't a question of Lula showing up



São Paulo strike rally, 1979. Lula is a leader of these militant metalworkers.

and saying, "listen people, we are going to do this or that." If that were so it would be enough to shut me up or get rid of me and everything would come to a halt.

In Nicaragua things are different. The country is small, and the struggle did not just begin but has been going on since the 1920s. But certainly the success of the struggle was guaranteed only when the people entered.

Now, this is a warning to the capitalists: It is necessary that these persons understand that if it were not for their profits I think there would be far less possibility—from their point of view—for these revolutions. Because it is the poverty of the people that provokes this, not abundance. In Sweden, there is no possibility of a revolution. . . .

Q. Well . . .

A. No, it isn't the same. Look: so long as there are people for them to exploit and so long as they can provide a good standard of living to the people—and the living standards in such countries is good, even if it is at the expense of the Brazilian and other peoples.

But from the moment that capitalism begins to concentrate wealth instead of distributing it, for me the revolution is inevitable. This is a warning to the business class that I was making long before going to Nicaragua. For years I have been telling the bosses and ministers, "You are distributing poverty in this country and you are going to be the victims." It isn't a question of Lula, or the newspaper *Em Tempo*, or anyone in particular. It is the error that the capitalists themselves are making.

Q. What do you think of the continent-wide offensive the bourgeoisie has launched since the victory in Nicaragua? Is there any possibility of a coup there?

A. There certainly is an attack by the bourgeoisies against Nicaragua. But I don't think there could be a coup there. The revolution was made by the entire people, not by one group. It is something

much more serious and important; that's why the Nicaraguan people are so calm.

There does in fact exist the danger of an imperialist intervention, since the local bourgeoisie has no armed forces at its disposal. There are those who say, for example, that if Reagan wins in the United States, this danger would be still more immediate. My personal opinion is that any stupid action by the United States would cause Nicaragua to ally with Russia, Cuba, or some other socialist country.

Q. Did you perceive any disagreement, conflict, or clash between the mass organizations and the Sandinista Front that could serve as a point of support for an eventual imperialist intervention?

A. No, there is a perfect link-up. They have achieved the unification of all the ideological currents in the country into something very important, the Sandinista Front. Today it is practically impossible for anyone to leave the Sandinista Front. And despite disagreements this does not prejudice the unity of the Sandinista Front.

Q. What is the internal situation of the Front, of the three tendencies—the Terceristas, Prolonged People's War, and Proletarians?

A. These tendencies may still exist—I did not get around to discussing such details. But in any case the tendencies are subordinate to the Front as a whole, to the will of the people. They have had the good sense not to force people to change their political and ideological positions.

Q. What did your presence, at the first anniversary of the revolution, mean for the Sandinista Front? And what did the invitation mean for you?

A. It's hard to say what it meant for them. For me it meant a great deal. It showed the comradeship that exists today and that could exist still more tomorrow between the PT and the Sandinista Front. The celebration was for me the coming together of representatives of the people's

movement of the entire continent.

It was very important to be invited by the Sandinista Workers Federation and to be treated as an official guest. It meant that they have confidence that better days are coming for Latin America and that—this goes without saying because people say it on their own account—I think they have confidence in the future of the PT.

Q. You said you met people in Nicaragua from other countries who are interested in building parties like the PT. Could you tell us something about these contacts?

A. This was quite a surprise for me. I met compañeros from Mexico who told me that in their country they were discussing the need to organize the workers in their own political party, the need for a party of the workers. And they told me they also knew people in the United States that had the same concern. I don't know about these initiatives in detail. But some of our compañeros stayed there in Nicaragua to discuss these ideas more thoroughly, to see what can be done about common initiatives.

Q. After this trip through Latin America, what seems to you to be the central question facing the workers of the continent today?

A. What the PT expects and wants for the workers of the continent is that they organize themselves in a political party of their own. This has to be a party that unifies the workers massively, beyond the ideological positions of any group.

It is fundamental that the people begin to organize politically on the basis of their grass-roots organizations. The time has come to stop being slaves. What is lacking is organization.

There is a very old and hackneyed phrase, "Workers of the world, unite." It is necessary to put it into practice, to do the organizational work so that such unity can exist. And this goes for the workers of the greatest imperialist country, the United States, as well.

There is one thing that is important—patriotism. It always falls to the workers to express patriotism. For the bosses there is no commitment to be a patriot. If there were, there wouldn't be so many exploiters as there are today. For the owner of Ford it's the same thing to make money in the United States, in Brazil, in Russia, and so on. What interests them is making money, it doesn't matter where.

The problems of the North American workers are the same as ours. Even though they live in a different country, more democratic than ours, the problem of racism still exists, the problem of unemployment. In general, the problem there is also that it is the exploiters who are in power and not the workers. If it is true that the United States is democratic today, I think

it could be much more democratic if the workers had someone to vote for and did not have to vote for the bosses as they have been doing.

We have to be conscious that the workers' problems are the same throughout the whole world. So it is very important that the workers understand that their well-being, the well-being of the American people, or of the German people, is now

In Effect Throughout India

Gandhi Reintroduces Detention Without Trial

By Sharad Jhaveri

JAMNAGAR—On September 22 the president of India, under the directions of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, proclaimed the National Security Ordinance, which revives preventive detention on a country-wide scale.

The ordinance empowers the central or state governments to resort to preventive detention without trial for up to one year.

As an editorial in the September 24 *Economic Times* remarked, the sheer sweep of the ordinance is "ominous." It covers not only detention without trial of persons accused of endangering the defense or security of India or acting in a manner prejudicial to the relations of India with foreign countries. It also applies to those undermining the maintenance of public order or the supply of goods and services essential to the community. This will bring trade union and labor activities under the purview of the ordinance.

Under this ordinance, preventive detention is automatically extended to states like West Bengal and Kerala which are at present ruled by parties other than Gandhi's Congress Party and which have not used the enabling powers already conferred on them by existing laws.

Conferring wide powers on the executive, powers of arrest and detention are vested in the district magistrates or commissioners of police. The detention order may be executed anywhere in India, and the detainee may be moved from one area to another.

On paper, the detainee will be afforded the earliest opportunity of challenging the detention order before the regime and before an advisory board comprised of members of the judiciary. The detainee can even be released on the recommendation of such a board and shall also be furnished with reasons for the detention.

In these respects, this new measure appears less pernicious than the hated Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) used during the period of Gandhi's state of emergency in 1975-77.

But in its earliest stages MISA did not

based on the poverty that is imposed on the people of Africa, of Latin America. So I think that if the workers were in power in all countries, there would not be such misery in the world as there is today. That is why I think that the North American workers also need to begin to discuss their political organization instead of serving as mere instruments of the bourgeoisie at election time. □

have those pernicious features either. They were introduced only later, with such tragic results. The customary assurances that the ordinance will not be used against legitimate trade-union activities or labor struggles were also flouted in the case of MISA.

Under this new ordinance, the review of the case of a detainee will take place only after the arrest. Moreover, past experience with such advisory boards shows that they are unlikely to act as an effective and significant guard against the arbitrary use of the power of arrest.

The Gandhi regime's justification for imposing such a measure, as officially stated, arises from so-called communal disharmony; caste conflicts; social tensions; extremist activities; atrocities against lower castes and tribes, minorities, and other weaker sections of society; secessionist activities; regional movements; and so on. This is quite a fairly exhaustive list of the difficulties plaguing Indian capitalism today.

Even in "normal" times, preventive detention is a standard antidemocratic institution of Indian bourgeois democracy. It has a place in the very chapter on fundamental rights in the Constitution of India, providing for preventive detention under Article 22. A central Preventive Detention Act was in force from February 1950 to August 1978, with a short gap from January 1970 to May 1971. Even when the Janata Party formed the central government from March 1977 to July 1979, it stood for preventive detention and introduced a bill containing such provisions. But because of much opposition, it was subsequently withdrawn.

The new ordinance is one of a series of undemocratic laws enacted by the central and state governments since Indira Gandhi was returned to power in January of this year.

The central trade unions and various political parties have voiced their opposition to this measure. Mass mobilizations are needed to fight it. □

The Bolivian People Under the Military Boot

By Jean-Pierre Beauvais

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All the imperialist powers hailed the June 29 elections as a step toward the stabilization of the Bolivian political situation. But less than three weeks after the elections the military had once again seized power in La Paz.

This coup, and General García Meza's brutal dictatorship, should not be viewed simply as a new version of the many *pronunciamentos* and military regimes that Bolivia has lived through, particularly in the past fifteen years. Because of the methods employed, the goals proclaimed, and the national, regional, and international framework in which the coup took place, the García Meza regime has characteristics that are relatively new for Bolivia and even for Latin America as a whole.

"This coup is the first one of the Reagan era," wrote an Argentine editorialist in the service of the Videla regime shortly after the events in La Paz. While this comment is based on a very iffy anticipation of the results of the coming U.S. elections, it does reveal the perspective in which Latin America's Southern Cone dictatorships are operating, dictatorships that are calling the tune in La Paz today.

But it would be much more meaningful to note that the victorious coup in Bolivia was the first one after the triumph of the Nicaraguan revolution.

I. The Build-Up to the Coup

The July 17 coup put an end to, and marked the failure of, the halfhearted attempt at "democratization" begun in early 1978 as the final phase of General Banzer's dictatorship.

Banzer had seized power in August 1971 in order to put a bloody end to the prerevolutionary crisis Bolivia had been going through since 1970. His seven-year rule was one of the most difficult periods the Bolivian working class and people have ever lived through.

Banzer systematically opened the country to imperialist capital, and to the multinational corporations and their Argentine and (above all) Brazilian partners. He unleashed fierce repression and imposed superexploitation on the workers in the cities, the mines, and the countryside.

Along with generalized corruption, these were some of the scarcely unique features of the period.

But Banzer's regime proved unable to even partially bring under control a catastrophic economic situation that was made worse by the effects of the international economic crisis. Mounting conflicts inside the military hierarchy and the exposure of numerous scandals led to the fall of the dictator.

In a chaotic economic and political situation, a halfhearted and continually threatened "democratic process" was opened up under the obvious pressure of the U.S. embassy.

Although limited and cautious, this attempt at a democratic opening failed to give the bourgeoisie any stability whatsoever. The extremely divided bourgeois political formations, most of which had arisen out of the breakup of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR), were tearing into each other, usually over personal feuds rather than solutions to the deepening crisis.

A two year period from early 1978 to the first months of 1980 saw a veritable breakdown in the traditional bourgeois political formations.

During that short period there were two totally fraudulent general elections, three successful coups and many abortive attempts, and two governments that were only accepted officially as "provisional" governments.

In addition to this disintegration of the bourgeois political formations, in addition to the ludicrous impotence of successive parliaments and the resulting paralysis of part of the state apparatus, two new factors—and the danger that they could come together—alarmed the key sectors of the bourgeoisie in Bolivia, Argentina, and Brazil, and along with them, U.S. imperialism. These were the deepening divisions within the armed forces and the revival of the Bolivian workers movement and its resurgence on the political scene.

Divisions Within the Armed Forces

Divisions within the armed forces are nothing new in Bolivia. Conflicts and differentiations within the military hierarchy constantly arise because of the direct and quasi-permanent intervention of the military in Bolivian political life. This constant intervention is, in turn, the result of the fact that the atomized bourgeois political parties lack any base and any coherence, which makes them incapable of

playing a role in stabilizing the system of bourgeois rule.

Conflicts in the military arise over quite concrete problems, such as the distribution of "benefits" and privileges related to the day-to-day administration of the affairs of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state.

But above all, the divisions in the military are simply the expression of the specific interests of different sectors of the ruling class, which in other places are expressed within the framework of its political organizations. This state of affairs, when kept restricted to upper echelons of the hierarchy, has always proved to be manageable.

But the real danger for the established order is that in the event of intense polarization of class conflicts in the country, it becomes much easier for that polarization to be expressed throughout the military institution as a whole, as was made evident in the prerevolutionary period of 1970-71.

Of course, at no time between the fall of Banzer and the July 17 coup did a similar situation develop, even embryonically, inside the armed forces.

But as the breakdown of the bourgeois political groupings accelerated, and the economic crisis got worse, the divisions among the top officers, the formation of clans and cliques, also got worse.

Each splintered and declining political group, each political sector, needed its own contacts and its own clique among the officers in order to try to influence the course of events.

This situation was revealed in all its scope by Col. Alberto Natusch's coup on November 1, 1979, and his short-lived but bloody dictatorship that was overthrown on November 16.

Natusch launched his operation without the support of a large part of his fellow officers, who considered it premature and ill-prepared. But his coup was carried out in close connection with politicians close to ex-President Víctor Paz Estenssoro, today the leader of the most conservative offspring of the MNR (the MNR-Alianza), and the Maoists of the CP-ML!

Rebirth of the Workers Movement

The Natusch coup showed the deepening divisions inside the top military hierarchy, and the risks that these entail for the cohesion of the military as an institution.

But Natusch's coup also inadvertently revealed a new and more basic factor in the political situation: the rebirth and resurgence of the workers movement and

the exploited masses onto the political scene. This factor had not entered into the calculations of either the Bolivian or imperialist supporters of a cautious and limited democratic opening. On the contrary, they were counting on the masses being relatively passive following the Banzer dictatorship.

The reentry of the Bolivian workers movement on the political scene, after the accumulated defeats that marked the black years of Banzerism, was seen in the increase in economic and democratic struggles during 1978, the preparations for and the holding of the May 1979 congress of the Bolivian Workers Federation (COB), and the general strike the COB launched in August 1979 against the gross and massive electoral fraud perpetrated in the July elections.

And in their response to Natusch's coup the Bolivian workers and masses gave a true demonstration of the revival of their strength.

Despite the military occupation of the main cities, especially La Paz, and despite the state of siege, Natusch's supporters had to confront a true mass popular insurrection. The miners, the workers of the main industrial zones, students, and numerous peasant groups mobilized massively and spontaneously behind the COB.

Following confrontations that left more than 300 dead, 200 "disappeared," and 400 wounded, and abandoned by other sectors of the armed forces whose conviction that this was a premature adventure was confirmed, Natusch had to retreat and give up power.

The Turning Point of the Crisis

Natusch's adventure, however short-lived, is in many respects the key moment of the chaotic period that came to an end with the July 17 coup.

Revealing the divisions and the crisis inside the military hierarchy, it was also the culminating point of that crisis. Once the military officers were back in their barracks, all of them were traumatized, despite their disagreements, both by the defeat of one of their own in face of the popular mobilization and by its potential consequences. The officers set about reconstituting their unity, not without difficulties and jolts, while setting narrow limits on the freedom of action of the provisional president named after November 16, Lidia Gueiler.

At the center of this operation was Gen. García Meza. Initially he forced President Gueiler to name generals Rubén Rocha and Armando Reyes—who had supported Natusch—to head the army; later he thrust himself into this post.

While showing the extent of the radicalization and the extent of the Bolivian workers' ability to mobilize, the response to the Natusch coup was also the high point of this wave of mobilizations.

Of course the Bolivian workers felt and

understood this mobilization had been a victory. It immediately opened a new stage in the radicalization of important layers of the oppressed masses. It strengthened the COB. It stimulated the spirit of unity among numerous sectors. This was concretely expressed among the peasants by the development of the United Federation of Bolivian Peasants (CUCB), in which the majority of the peasant parties and associations participated, and which joined the COB, giving a new dimension to the workers-peasant alliance.

However, we should point out that this victory also created dangerous illusions about the relationship of forces in the country. The mobilization and the street fighting forced an adventurist—and temporarily isolated—sector of the armed forces to retreat. This was a vital experience for the masses to go through. But, for all that, it was not a victory over the army and the ruling classes as a whole—as many on the left believed.

Electoral Maneuvering— Disunity and Class Collaboration

Soon afterwards the political maneuvering with an eye to the June 1980 elections began. These maneuvers were to be impediments to the new spirit of workers and popular mobilization.

Although the leaderships of the main reformist workers organizations—the Bolivian Communist Party (PCB) and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), which is a Social Democratic organization linked to the Socialist International—had remained largely passive during the anti-Natusch mobilizations, they felt it was necessary to use those mobilizations as the jumping off point for the election campaign. They ran in the elections in a coalition—the Democratic People's Unity (UDP)—with one of the most important bourgeois parties, the Left Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNRI) led by Siles Zuazo, who had clearly remained apart from the popular insurrection of November 1979.

This orientation was nothing new for these two organizations. In this crucial period, despite the still-fresh experience confirming the potential of an independent and united mobilization of the workers and the masses, this orientation led a very important sector to focus its energies and strength behind a coalition whose program and goals were those of an important faction of the Bolivian bourgeoisie and imperialism.

The U.S. State Department, through the intermediary of its embassy in La Paz, and especially the German Social Democracy, openly provided the UDP with material and political support throughout the campaign. They felt that in the chaotic situation in Bolivia, Siles Zuazo, the UDP's candidate, would be the best able to channel and contain the upsurge of the masses.

This orientation of the PCB and the MIR

also caused a deepgoing division inside the workers movement, which had been united in the insurrection. The COB, whose weight and prestige were considerably strengthened on the basis of its leading role in the mobilizations against Natusch, paid the price for this.

While during the November confrontations, the PCB and MIR leaders did not make use of the important weight they have in the COB leadership apparatus, leaving their union leaders to do as they pleased, they took a totally different attitude when it came to the elections.

They did everything they could to oppose a COB candidate or a candidate supported by the COB, which could have extended the recent independent and united mobilization of the workers and the masses onto the electoral arena as well.

The candidacy of Juan Lechín, COB general secretary, must be viewed in this framework. A portion of the COB ranks and the majority of the revolutionary organizations—including our comrades of the Revolutionary Workers Party (POR-*Combate*)—favored his running for president of the republic as the candidate of the COB. After many hesitations and negotiations, Lechín finally became a candidate, but not a candidate of the COB as such. He said this was to "preserve the unity and independence of the union," but in fact it was in order to avoid having to directly confront the orientation of the leaders of the PCB and the MIR.

Lechín was supported and put forward by a coalition basically made up of his own party, the PRIN, which is a small formation made up of members of the union apparatus who are unconditionally loyal to him, and several revolutionary organizations including the PRTB, the POR-C, and the VC-POR.*

The initial impact of Lechín's candidacy, which the workers looked at as the candidacy of the COB general secretary, led to new pressures from the PCB and the MIR, and to new and confused negotiations—largely secret—between them and Lechín.

Finally, Lechín withdrew from the race without even consulting his allies. This left them unable to put up another candidate owing to the constraints of the electoral laws. Lechín dropped out of the race in order to preserve his situation and post in the union apparatus, which the PCB and the MIR claimed was incompatible with his candidacy.

The contradiction between the electoral panorama—marked by collaboration with a party of the bourgeoisie and its imperial-

*PRIN—Revolutionary Party of the Nationalist Left; PRTB—Revolutionary Party of Bolivian Workers; POR (*Combate*)—Revolutionary Workers Party (*Combate*), Bolivian section of the Fourth International; VC-POR—Communist Vanguard of the POR. For further information on this electoral front, see *Intercontinental Press*, June 16, p. 622.—IP

ist mentors, division, confusion, and the absence of a working-class alternative—and the content and meaning of the November mobilizations was total. It had a considerable demobilizing and disorganizing effect.

In the elections the workers' only choice was between Siles Zuazo and Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz's Socialist Party-1 (SP-1), an organization with a radical but confused program. While the SP-1 is independent of the bourgeoisie, it has little presence in the union movement and workers mobilizations.

In face of this situation Gen. García Meza, with his efforts to rebuild the cohesiveness of the army and his preparations for a coup well under way, declared with total cynicism, but also with a certain realism from his own point of view: "The armed forces will respect the results of the June 29 elections, depending on which candidate emerges victorious."

II. Election Results and the Coup

Despite pressures and threats from the military and the unpunished terrorist activity of extreme right civilian groups, the general elections took place on the scheduled date, June 29.

Among the factors that contributed toward making these elections, paradoxically, the least dishonest in a long time were the international pressures, the number of bourgeois candidates, the attitude of President Gueiler, as well as the strategy of the military general staff around García Meza, which primarily concerned preparations for and choosing the moment for its coup.

Polarization

The election results expressed, in a partial and deformed way, the class polarization and the increased weight of the workers movement on the political scene. The UDP and Siles Zuazo, who were put forward by the Bolivian CP and the MIR as the working-class and reformist alternative, had a great many resources for carrying out a demagogic nationalist and populist campaign, while remaining within a framework that was perfectly acceptable to their bourgeois and imperialist supporters. The UDP received about 40 percent of the vote, the majority being from workers and peasants.

The SP-1, whose vote totals had been extremely modest in earlier elections (2 to 3 percent), this time got a little over 12 percent of the vote. Despite the SP-1's confused positions, this total expressed a rejection by some of the most radicalized and advanced sectors of the workers of class collaboration, of the collaboration with the bourgeoisie practiced within the UDP.

The SP-1 scored its biggest totals in the workers' neighborhoods of La Paz and the main cities, and in certain mining areas, often doing better than the UDP in those places.

Thus between them the SP-1 and the UDP won a majority of the votes cast.

The polarization was also obvious on the

right. It was expressed by the serious decline in the vote for Paz Estenssoro, the candidate of the MNR-Alianza, and a corresponding gain for the Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN), which ran Gen. Hugo Banzer, the former dictator. Banzer received a little over 20 percent of the vote. Although he did not make striking gains



Troops occupy the Siglo Veinte tin mine.

compared to previous elections, where he was the beneficiary of massive vote frauds, Banzer did succeed in extending the influence and consolidating the structure of the ADN during the elections, to the point where it is now the main political force on the right.

This was a big step forward in the achievement of his plans, which were parallel to but separate from those of García Meza. Drawing the lessons of his eight years of dictatorship, especially the weakness that resulted from the absence of a politically organized social base, and from the disintegration of most of the traditional bourgeois political formations, Banzer threw himself into building the ADN as a "new party," while maintaining close links to many officers.

As the gathering point for the most reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie, the far right fascist or semi-fascist activists, and many officers who were personally loyal to him, the ADN under Banzer's leadership systematically sought, through anti-Communist and patriotic chauvinist propaganda, to bring in a sector of the petty-bourgeoisie and the most backward sectors of the peasants, who were victims of the economic crisis and were frightened by the chaos and by the resurgence of the workers movement.

The aim was to consolidate and organize the potential social base for a future semi-military, semi-civilian dictatorship. In each of his election speeches Banzer projected himself as the head of such a dictatorship.

Final Concessions by Siles

When none of the candidates won an absolute majority, it fell to the new parliament to elect the next president. In that parliament the relationship of forces was more or less the same as the results of the presidential voting.

In preliminary discussions, Siles Zuazo, with the agreement of the CP and MIR, gave the right wing and especially Paz Estenssoro every possible assurance in order to guarantee his election. These assurances were also aimed at the military. They included promises that there would be no nationalizations, that a plan for economic reforms would be prepared in conjunction with the employers and the International Monetary Fund, and that in his government the representatives of the MIR and CP would at best be a small minority and military officers would be designated as ministers of defense and the interior, with the choice in fact to be made by the general staff. The CP even stated that in order to facilitate a broad agreement it was not asking for a single ministry!

It would have been hard to go any further than that. . . .

With the elections over, Siles, certain of being named president by parliament, made special concessions to satisfy the



Former dictator Banzer.

most demanding military officers. For the first time in many months the threat of a coup in the short term seemed to recede. The vigilance of the most combative working-class, trade-union, and political organizations tended to relax.

This was the moment García Meza chose to launch his coup. The coup was obviously a long time in the planning, with little room left for improvisation, and it was very careful to try to avoid the errors committed by Natusch.

Objective: Smash the Workers' Movement

The precision and brutality of the first declarations of the conspirators left no room for doubt about their goals. They aim to end, for a long time to come, the moves toward a political opening which García Meza describes as "favorable for disorder, instability, and subversion."

This is the Pinochet school, though even more rough hewn, more brutal if that is possible.

Everything in the way the coup unfolded and in the first governmental measures was done in that spirit. They wanted to arrest—and if necessary murder—as many political and trade-union leaders as possible, as quickly as possible, before any organized resistance could start. In operations carried out in La Paz five hours after the uprising by the Trinidad garrison, they were able to seize a large number of leaders of the trade-union federation and of the left political parties when they attacked the COB headquarters, where these workers leaders had gathered to discuss their response to the Trinidad events. Among those seized were COB leader Juan Lechín and Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz of the SP-1.

The initial actions, such as that assault on the COB offices, the taking of the presidential palace and the arrest of the whole council of ministers, the occupation

of the radio and television studios, the newspapers, and the central telephone exchange were carried out by paramilitary commandos dressed in civilian clothes and traveling in ambulances to avoid attracting the attention of the population and to delay the possibility of mobilizations.

Each city was cut off from the rest of the country and divided into quadrants. First there were indiscriminate dragnets, and then, under the curfew, the systematic search for all the political cadres and activists known to the Military Security forces began.

Within a few days thousands of people had been arrested in La Paz and the provinces and were being held in stadiums, tortured, or were deported into the Amazonian jungle.

Who knows how many of them were—like Quiroga Santa Cruz—executed in cold blood?

At the same time, political parties were banned, the unions were dissolved, the newspapers, radio, and television were placed under the direct control of the army, the university was closed for an unspecified period, and so forth.

But all these measures and all the terror could not prevent the Bolivian people from showing their massive opposition to the coup. Despite the arrests and the threats, the country was paralyzed for more than forty-eight hours by what was virtually a general strike of great scope.

In the poor quarters of La Paz, Santa Cruz, and other cities, military patrols were harassed for several days by groups of snipers.

The main access roads leading to La Paz were cut by mobilized peasants.

In the mining areas, especially, the resistance was massive, supported by the entire population. The military had to call in the air force to bomb the miners' radio stations into silence.

The army carefully surrounded the mining centers to starve out the entrenched strikers and their families. Given the catastrophic economic situation of Bolivia, the government could not permit mining production to remain paralyzed for very long. Therefore the government adopted varied tactics.

In some cases they held negotiations to assure a return to work, while in other cases there were massacres, as in Caracoles where, according to testimony gathered by Amnesty International, more than 900 people were killed or "disappeared" after the army and artillery moved in on August 4, eighteen days after the coup itself.

But uncoordinated and increasingly isolated acts of open resistance could not continue without turning into suicide missions. Work has resumed everywhere. But in the mines, according to foreign engineers, production has declined 60 percent.

Within the perspective of a long term struggle, resistance of this type increased;

slogans against the regime appeared on walls; the first underground publications began circulating. Finally Siles Zuazo, basing himself on his election victory, set up an underground "legal government," which considerably hampered the dictatorship's attempts to gain international recognition.

Workers' Resistance and International Isolation

Two months after the coup we can draw up an initial assessment of the situation.

Although the military controls the country, for the present their regime has no significant and organized social base.

This fact would to a large extent change, however, if Banzer and the ADN finally decided, under pressure from Argentina and Brazil, to support the new regime and even to enter a restructured government, as several reports lead one to think.

The reason they have not done so up to now is that the coup cut short their own plan.

Such a decision by Banzer, moreover, would strengthen the junta in the coming discussions on renegotiation of the foreign debt.

If, despite the sabotage and despite the fall in production in the mines, activity is normal, on the whole the dictatorship has not yet achieved its objective: to crush and destroy the workers movement.

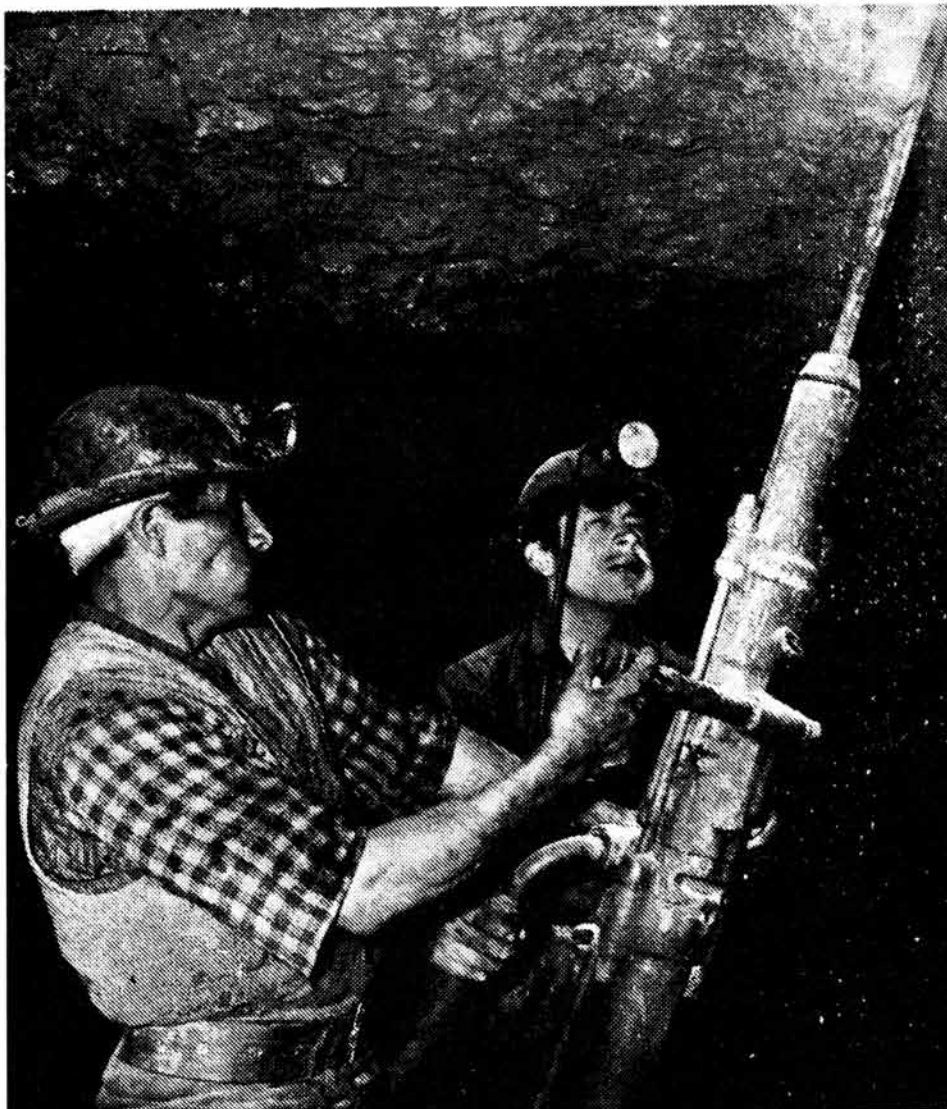
Despite the betrayals and divisions that were so evident during the election campaign, despite the arrest and the disappearance of a large number of workers' leaders and activists, the organizers of the coup once again underestimated the traditions of struggle and organization, and the combativity and courage of the Bolivian workers and their vanguard, the miners.

The putschists, whose tactic was to strike quick and hard, could not wipe out these traditions, with the effects and lessons drawn from the rapid resurgence of struggles in the past two years.

The fact that the military had to negotiate the resumption of work in an important number of mines, that it had to give up the idea of completely militarizing the mines for the time being, is a symbol of the extent to which the military officers have had to back off from their initial and openly stated objectives.

In the long run, this is a considerable weakness of the dictatorship. This weakness combines with two other factors that are even more threatening in the short run. First is the situation within the army, where signs of opposition to the present course could be seen. Second is the regime's international isolation.

There were desertions by soldiers during the battles in the mining regions and recently the junta has acknowledged the difficulty it has enrolling new recruits for the projected growth of the enlisted force. In a country where more than 50 percent of the potentially economically active popula-



Bolivian tin miners. Production in the mines has dropped sharply since the coup.

tion is out of work, this is an extraordinary admission of isolation.

The harshest repressive activities are still being systematically carried out by paramilitary groups of officers in civilian clothes, activists in the Bolivian Falange (a group with a fascist ideology), and lumpens linked to the drug trade. And it has been confirmed that several units have refused to get involved in such operations.

There have been numerous transfers in the officer corps, which have been strictly handled by Argentine Military Security specialists. Col. Mario Vargas Salinas, commander of the Cochabamba garrison, and Gen. Hugo Echeverría, commander of the Santa Cruz armored corps, while declaring they would respect chain of command discipline, announced that they did not support the government. In addition, no officer from the La Paz garrison agreed to take part in the government.

Although Gen. García Meza was able to consolidate tight control over the military apparatus in the time between the failure of Natusch's coup in November and the

successful coup on July 17, this does not mean he has been able to suppress all the effects of the previous divisions.

The inability to suppress all the effects of the previous divisions is a partial cause of the present unrest in the armed forces. But that situation is also the result of the crude and hasty methods of most members of the government, especially the minister of the interior, Col. Arce, and of the feeling of many officers that these figures are too openly and conspicuously linked to the drug trade and the mafia, which is an additional cause of the regime's international isolation.

This brings us to another weakness of the regime, its most serious weakness at this moment: its international isolation.

Although the regime is politically supported and financially and economically aided by the neighboring dictatorships, especially by Argentina, which is a basic factor we will return to later, it has been unanimously condemned in one form or another by most of the other Latin Ameri-

can countries and by all the imperialist powers.

At the initiative of the Andean Pact countries, and of Mexico and the United States, the Organization of American States issued a strong condemnation of the methods of the new regime. Only Chile and Paraguay opposed the statement, while Brazil and Argentina preferred to abstain, since to a considerable extent those condemned methods are the methods of the Argentine officers and "specialists" who are in La Paz.

Even though this abstention is above all a cover-up of their activities in Bolivia—during and after the coup—it illustrates quite well how isolated the Bolivian regime is.

The economic effects of this situation are catastrophic. The blocking of all governmental aid from the United States and nearly all the European countries—even if only temporary—has immediate impact on a country that is on the verge of bankruptcy, whose total foreign debt now exceeds its Gross National Product, a country which urgently needs to renegotiate its entire debt if it is to avoid total strangulation.

On this level neither Argentina nor Brazil can refloat the Bolivian economy by themselves.

The combination of the developments within the country—especially the fact that a real—even though still weak and embryonic—workers resistance exists, and the regime's international isolation mean that campaigns by the international workers movement in solidarity with the Bolivian people can take place and can have a political impact within Bolivia itself.

Together with solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution and with the Salvadoran fighters, solidarity with the Bolivian workers should now be a central part of all activities in support of the struggles of the peoples of Latin America. The character, meaning, and implications of the Bolivian coup give it an international dimension.

III. The Coup's International Dimension

The international dimension of the coup is shown in an immediate way by the direct—and from all evidence decisive—role that Argentine officers played in it.

Political and technical participation of this scope, carefully planned, and without U.S. involvement, is a new and important political fact in Latin America, which we will have to analyze more fully at a later date. But we can already outline its main aspects and implications.

According to the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, high-ranking officers of the Brazilian general staff visiting Argentina last May were informed of a plan for a coup in La Paz. These officers, again

according to *Folha de São Paulo*, interpreted the move by their Argentine colleagues as a way of feeling out the Brazilian government's attitude.

Later, but still before the June 29 elections, members of a Cuban theatrical group were arrested in La Paz along with some Bolivian artists. Several of the Cubans were positive that some of the police in civilian clothes who interrogated them had strong Argentine accents.

Many people—including foreigners—who were arrested in different places immediately after the coup and later released make the same assertion.

The few witnesses to the assault on the COB headquarters who are now free and dare to speak—including a journalist who was inside and was able to escape—are positive on this score: the assault group, made up of civilians, was partially headed by two or three Argentines, who were readily identifiable by their accents.

In the hours immediately following the coup, Bolivian television broadcast grossly anticommunist Argentine programs, which were on hand in advance, and some of which had already been used in the past by the military in Buenos Aires to encourage the population to "cooperate with the antiterrorist actions."

We could give other confirming examples. Moreover, corroborating reports from high-ranking Peruvian and Ecuadoran officers that were published in several Latin American newspapers mention 200 specialists in antisubversive struggle "loaned" to the new Bolivian regime by Argentine President Gen. Videla.

The systematic use of paramilitary groups dressed in civilian clothing is itself a special tactic of the Argentine military, which they have used for a number of years.

In addition to the immediate diplomatic recognition, the significant aid that was rapidly given to the new regime is further evidence of this direct Argentine involvement.

We should recall that the day after the coup, García Meza announced that Buenos Aires had promised an emergency loan of \$50 million in the event of a temporary suspension of credits to Bolivia from other countries.

At the end of August a \$200 million grant was announced, as well as a major gift of grain that had not been projected in trade plans between the two countries.

Economic motives put forward to explain the intervention are not very convincing. While it is true that Argentina has certain interests in Bolivia, they were in no way threatened by Siles Zuazo coming to power. Trade relations between Bolivia and Argentina are important, especially for Bolivia since Argentina is its number one trading partner in Latin America (\$235 million in 1978), far ahead of Brazil (\$100 million in 1978) and Peru (\$25 million in 1978).

The sole potentially serious bone of contention between the two countries concerned renegotiation of the price of the natural gas that Bolivia sells to Argentina at prices well below the world levels. The UDP proposed doubling the price of the gas. But obviously this move would not in itself lead to the role Argentina played in the coup.

The hypothesis that the Argentine role could be a new aspect of the old struggle between Brazil and Argentina for influence in the region is contradicted by many facts—from the close ties between the Bolivian and Brazilian officers going back to the time of Banzer, to the fact that the Argentine officers themselves gave reports to their Brazilian counterparts on the preparations for a coup.

Furthermore, the hypothesis that the Argentine moves were directed against Brazil does not take into account the recent rapprochement between the two dictatorships. They have increased their cooperation on all levels, especially around the question of so-called conventional security, and they want eventually to create a real political axis that could, in many respects, change the political situation in the region.

Why Argentina Intervened

The Argentine military's motives for intervening in Bolivia were solely political. But they have to do with much broader considerations than simply the Bolivian context. The intervention was motivated by the same concerns and objectives as their rapprochement with Brazil.

By intervening they moved powerfully to put an end to a situation that could potentially have threatened their own military regime in Argentina. In particular they were trying to stop, to deal a blow to the policy, however timid, of "democratic openings," the policy of "institutionalization" in the vocabulary of the countries concerned.

The Argentine, Brazilian, and Chilean militaries have an identical analysis of the Latin American situation, whatever the secondary differences and bilateral conflicts between them, such as the conflict between Argentina and Chile over the Beagle Channel. Those secondary differences largely stem from internal factors.

For at least a year, in fact since the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution, the editorials of the official spokesmen for the military high commands and studies published by institutes working in liaison with the war colleges have come to similar conclusions about the regional and international situation. Their conclusions are:

- There is "growing instability" in many countries and on an overall basis on a continental level.

- This situation "encourages the development of subversive organizations and the spread of their activity," with Nicara-

gua and Central America being at the center of their concern.

- There is a growing interdependence of the different national situations on the continent. This means that the concept of "national security," through which the military establishments have long sought to provide an ideological pseudojustification for their repressive policy, must be expanded into a concept of "regional security" or "continental security."

- There has been a relative decline in the influence and political initiative of the United States in the region.

- The dominant tactic of the Carter administration, together with the growing influence of the European governments, leads them to favor and support so-called democratization processes. This tactic is "seriously mistaken" and "dangerous." It is "one of the factors in the growing instability and the spread of subversive activity."

In other words, this policy of "democratic opening," of "institutionalization" must be stopped because it leads to instability in the region, and given the growing regional interdependence, instability in one country is a direct threat to all.

This is the specific political framework and the justification for the Argentine participation in the Bolivian coup.

In an editorial entitled "The Lessons of Bolivia," an Argentine journalist who is known to express the government's positions wrote several days after the Bolivian coup: "The elections in that country had been artificially premature and the notions of democracy imposed from Washington cannot be exported to Latin America, particularly to a country that lacks protection against the Marxist threat, infiltration, and subversion."

This tactical difference of opinion that the Southern Cone military establishments have with U.S. imperialism is intrinsically connected to the character, justification, and survival of these dictatorships, which are products of imperialist domination.

But this difference is also nurtured by an objective contradiction inherent in the "democratic opening" policy supported by imperialism and important sectors of the Latin American bourgeoisie. That contradiction was revealed more clearly than ever in the modest attempt to establish the Bolivian democratic opening.

The attempts at "democratization" and "institutionalization" tried to deal with the fact that military dictatorships such as in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia had become discredited internally and were suffering a dangerous political erosion.

It was an attempt to create the conditions that would make it possible to carry out political changes in those countries that would guarantee the maintenance and stability of bourgeois and imperialist domination.

But here is where the contradiction arises. By their very nature, these attempts

are necessarily accompanied by a reanimation, a revival of the mass movement. The explosive character of the social contradictions in Latin America, further worsened by the world economic crisis, make it difficult, if not impossible, to keep this revival of the mass movement within the hoped for limits.

The whole context of the "democratic opening," however limited it might be, makes it possible for the workers and the exploited layers to remobilize, to reorganize, and to regain their strength. Obviously the power and the pace of this inevitable process depends on factors such as the traditions of struggle and organization and the weight of earlier defeats.

At the same time, on the economic level, the conditions of imperialist exploitation, the generally disastrous debts of the previous regimes (the dictatorship in crisis), and in recent years the effects of the international economic crisis, make it impossible to contemplate any policy of significant concessions that would make it possible to satisfy at least some of the elementary needs of the masses.

Instead the situation requires the rapid imposition of so-called austerity measures; in other words, increasing superexploitation and unemployment. This can lead to sharp conflicts, to real explosions when the workers movement is remobilizing and gaining in strength.

By heavily and no doubt decisively contributing to the success of García Meza's coup in Bolivia, the Argentine military, acting for its counterparts in the region, gave evidence of the contradictions and the dead-end of this tactic of "democratic opening" that imperialism and its allies are trying to carry out.

By stopping it in Bolivia they hope to put an end to it elsewhere on the continent (especially at home).

Within this perspective, moreover, they

are placing a great deal of their hope in a Reagan victory in the coming U.S. presidential elections.

What will be the effects of this offensive policy, a policy that obviously has some support and sympathy in the United States?

Does it, regardless of the results of the U.S. elections, prefigure a new tactical course by imperialism, in which a Brasilia-Buenos Aires axis would ultimately constitute the spearhead?

Will the precedent of direct, independent, and wide-ranging participation in a coup in another country on the continent—like the Argentine army's participation in Bolivia—be invoked in the future in another context? For example, this time with the agreement and support of imperialism?

These are some of the basic questions posed for all of Latin America by the La Paz coup. These questions have real relevance because, despite some unevenness, the development of workers mobilizations and, more generally, the resurgence of struggles is occurring on a continent-wide scale. The course of the revolution is deepening in Nicaragua, the confrontations are taking on new breadth in El Salvador, and in Peru, which was the prototype of a "process of institutionalization," newly-elected president Belaúnde Terry is faced with a wave of labor struggles of unanticipated breadth.

The answer to these questions will, to an important extent, be determined by how the Bolivian situation develops; by the ability of the proletariat and the exploited masses as a whole to reorganize and mobilize to prevent García Meza from achieving his sinister objectives.

The level of our solidarity efforts must rise to the needs of this difficult battle and its tremendous stakes.

September 17, 1980

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Statement of the Fourth International

Down With the Military Regime in Turkey!

[The following statement was adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on September 28.]

* * *

The September 12 military coup was a major blow to the working people in Turkey. It was inspired and supported by imperialism and coordinated by NATO. Its aim is to impose social stability at the expense of the working class and its mass organizations. A wave of repression has been launched against the working people and the economic screws are being tightened against them.

The extent of NATO involvement in the coup was demonstrated by the simultaneous military maneuvers being conducted in Turkey at the time. These maneuvers continued after the coup with only one country, Belgium, withdrawing.

The reason for the heavy involvement of the imperialists lies in the increasingly severe social and political crisis in Turkey and adjacent countries demonstrated by the Iranian revolution, the Iraqi war against Iran, the working class struggles in Syria, and the struggle of the Kurdish people for their right to self-determination.

For U.S. imperialism, the necessity of consolidating the eastern flank of the NATO alliance after the massive insurrection that toppled the shah and the impact of the unfolding Iranian revolution has become a top priority. They are using the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan to win acceptance of this goal.

The imperialists pretend that the new regime has popular support for its actions. But this is a lie. Despite its camouflage of a government composed of civilians and retired military figures it is a military regime which aims to deepen the attacks of the previous administration on living standards and democratic rights by repressive military methods.

The political crisis that preceded the coup involved the failure of governments led successively by the two big bourgeois parties and had resulted in the last months in preventing the election of a president of the republic. It is only the reflection of an even deeper economic and social crisis. This has stimulated a polarization that has been concretized on the one side in very hard fought workers' struggles and mobilizations of students and the radicalized petty bourgeoisie, and on the other side in the emergence of a fascist current with considerable mass influence.

In carrying out the coup after a series of warnings, the army, which is also closely linked to the economic structures, wanted to counter the paralysis of the institutions

and political leadership. It sought to put an end to the constant deepening of the crisis at every level and to prevent the polarization from worsening even more and thereby provoking even deeper social explosions.

Its spokespeople declare that a new constitution will be adopted. They want to create the illusion that they are ready to enforce and respect constitutional norms. If they were sincere in this they would only have to prepare elections to a true constituent and democratic assembly which would respect the popular will.

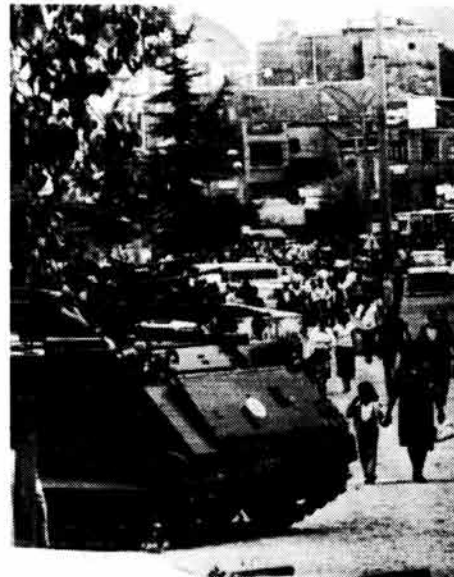
Their objective is, on the contrary, to impose an even more conservative constitution than the present one. This would both be an instrument for consolidating the system and for giving legitimacy to systematic repression—prolonging what has already characterized Turkey for many years, particularly since Suleyman Demirel came to power (65,000 people were in prison for political reasons before the September coup).

The decision of Turkish chief of Staff General Kenan Evren and company to proceed in this direction has already been confirmed by the fact that much harsher repression has been directed against Bulent Ecevit's Republican People's Party than against Demirel's. While the trade unions, and in particular the DISK have been suspended, the procapitalist Turk Is (the right-wing union federation) can function normally and its leader Side has become a minister.

Besides this Evren has drawn up an economic orientation which recommends the "functioning of the economy within the framework of natural laws." It is clear that the new regime is applying an austerity program along the lines dictated by the International Monetary Fund. Such severe measures have already been imposed in various countries with disastrous social and political consequences for the toiling masses.

The continuation of Demirel's policies by the present regime in regard to both the constitution and the economy is symbolized by the appointment of Torgut Ozal, the economic minister in the Demirel government, as the director of state planning in the new regime.

The basic cause of the chronic crisis of the country has been, and remains, the increasingly catastrophic economic situation which involves the pauperization and uprooting of larger and larger layers of the peasantry, massive unemployment of nearly 15 percent of the working population, and the blocking of any future for the young generation coming out of secondary



Istanbul after the military coup.

and university education. The policy that the military want to impose could bring at most a partial "rationalization" and recovery, however small in concrete terms, and in any case would be achieved through a brutal aggravation of the oppression and exploitation that the great mass of workers already suffer.

In addition, an eventual reestablishment of order can only imply a greater oppression of the Kurds, who will continue to be deprived of their most elementary national and democratic rights and submitted to the most severe repression.

Internationally, a solidarity campaign must be launched. The involvement of the imperialist governments in the coup must be denounced and their further support for the military regime halted. The campaign must be developed by trade unions internationally, but particularly in Western Europe where there are hundreds of thousands of Turkish workers.

This campaign must support the actions of the Turkish workers organizations and the oppressed nationalities in Turkey, especially the Kurds, in the struggle against the new regime.

The campaign should demand the freeing of all political prisoners, the right of political parties and the trade unions to function freely, and the right of self-determination for the oppressed nationalities.

The trade unions in the imperialist countries should demand that their governments cut military, diplomatic, and economic links with the military regime.

The coup also demonstrates once again that NATO is not only a vehicle for imperialist war, but an instrument to repress the workers movement. NATO must withdraw from Turkey. Down with the military regime! Full support to the Turkish workers in the struggle against reaction! □

Political Currents in the Polish Opposition

By Peter Green

[The following was written in March 1980, before the recent strikes in Poland. It appeared in the September 11 issue of the French-language fortnightly *Inprecor*, published in Paris.]

* * *

Since the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) leadership's attempt to cut the living standards of working people at a single blow in June 1976, Poland has been living through a new crisis. The most obvious, daily symptoms of this crisis are economic and social: rising prices, chronic and acute shortages, especially of agricultural produce, a severe energy shortage, dislocations in industry, great strain on the social services—the housing shortage, shortages of medical supplies—heavy indebtedness to the bankers of the capitalist West, and so on.

But these economic and social problems are seen by many, of all different political persuasions, as symptoms of a deeper crisis of the whole social and political order in Poland, a more general crisis requiring new global solutions. The political regime has not itself come forward with any overall program of renewal, but the sudden fall of Piotr Jaroszewicz and Stefan Olszowski¹ at the party congress is a clear indication that the regime's political paralysis over the last four years has produced growing tensions at the summit of the party and state apparatus.

In these conditions the various political groupings within Polish society are beginning to define their own programs and strategies for overcoming the crisis and are starting to turn to those social groups inside and outside Poland which they hope will be the main agencies or allies for carrying through their programs.

Let us look at the diagnoses and proposed solutions to the various main political currents.

Economic Managers

The managerial elite responsible for organizing production is quite satisfied with the general arrangements within the Polish state under Edward Gierak, but it sees the main cause of the current crisis in the indolence and indiscipline of the Polish working class and in the absence of effective weapons for making Polish workers work harder. The most conscious currents

1. Stefan Olszowski was dumped in February 1980 at the last conference of the PUWP. He was sent to East Germany. He has just been taken back into the PUWP Politbureau.

among the economic managers, those who have raised their thinking to the level of overall programmatic solutions, have expressed themselves quite clearly in the pages of *Polityka*. They want the regime to attack one of the most basic gains of the Polish workers in the post-war period—the right to work. They want a pool of unemployed workers so that every worker feels the threat of unemployment. In this way they think that the workers will be forced to work harder, produce a larger surplus product enabling the regime to overcome the crisis.

The Party leadership has shrunk back from this program because it fears reaction of Polish workers to such a proposal. It knows that working people would resist unemployment with all their strength and it does not feel confident that it could win such a battle with the working class—Polish history suggests the contrary.

Catholic Hierarchy

The Catholic hierarchy offers its own diagnosis of the crisis and its own program for the solution of Poland's problems. While Catholicism in Poland is embraced by people in every social group and of every political persuasion, the Church hierarchy has its own distinctive standpoint, corresponding to its collective interest in strengthening the Church as an organization and in increasing the hierarchy's own influence over the course of events in Poland.

It is often said that the hierarchy is not political, that it is concerned with the salvation of souls not the affairs of the Polish state, but this is a naïve view. The task of protecting and furthering the power of the Church makes every important event in Poland a matter of great concern to the hierarchy, which is not shy of attempting to exert influence to gain advantage for the Church from the turn of events. The fact that it does not use conventional political language and methods in order to achieve its ends does not alter in the slightest its deep involvement in politics.

What does the hierarchy want, what is its view of the crisis? First of all, despite its official anti-Communist ideology, the hierarchy is not seeking to overthrow the social and economic foundations of the Polish state as they were established at the end of the second world war. Nor is it seeking to overthrow the existing political regime or even to support those who are struggling to rid Poland of the bureau-

cratic dictatorship. As Cardinal Wyszyński said during President Carter's visit to Poland in 1978, indicating the hierarchy's thinking, "Gierek has the interests of Poland at heart."

Why do the Polish bishops adopt this standpoint? Is it because such support for the existing regime is the duty of Catholic dignitaries everywhere? Certainly not. In many countries Catholic priests and bishops have played a very active and militant role in struggling for the rights of the oppressed. Why not in Poland?

Because the Polish hierarchy is thriving in Poland as part of the established order of society. It has great prestige and support within the population, its religious organization is able to function without repression and it feels itself to have a strong stake in the existing status quo.² That is why the Catholic bishops seek only a quantitative expansion of their own powers, not a basic change in Polish society.

Cardinal Wyszyński's policy is one of persuading the regime that it is in the PUWP's own interest to increase the powers of the Church. Only the Church, he tells the party leadership, has the authority to make the Polish workers work harder. The bishops want the institutional rights of the Church to be expanded, especially through gaining greater access to the mass media and education. At the same time they want an end to atheist propaganda and they want to spread the influence of their social policies throughout the society—against homosexuality, against divorce, against contraception and above all against abortion. They label these things as morally degenerate and want their view of them to prevail in Polish society because in that way the influence of the Church will grow.

Some say that the Polish bishops stand for democratic freedoms and Polish independence. But when have they thrown their weight behind a struggle for these demands? Such aims had the best chance of success in 1956 and in 1970-71 and Polish students struggled for them in 1968. What was the record of Cardinal Wyszyński and the bishops in these crises?

2. The appeal made by Wyszyński at the time of the Czestochowa pilgrimage on August 26 most clearly illustrates the line of the religious hierarchy. "I think that there are times when you should not demand too much, as long as there is order in Poland. This is all the more true when the demands, although they are just, and for the most part they are, cannot be met immediately."

Was it not to urge all Poles to support Gomulka in 1956? Was it not to urge upon Polish workers that they should seek peace and reconciliation in December 1970 with a regime which had massacred hundreds of working people on the Baltic? And why did the hierarchy remain silent in the face of the vicious, anti-Semitic and reactionary campaign of Moczar in 1968?³ Is it not because the bishops put the narrow, institutional interests of the Church before the general interests of the working people of Poland and because they find the interests of the Church best served by peaceful coexistence with the bureaucratic dictatorship?

Reformist Intelligentsia

Among the official intelligentsia in the fields of science and culture various diagnoses of the crisis and programs for its solution have been advanced. The most prominent of these groupings was that known as Experience and the Future. The letter to Gierek by Edvard Ochab and other former reformist leaders of the Communist Party is another example of such a program. A third that we could mention was the analysis of the economic crisis by a number of economists around the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR) produced with an introduction by Professor Lipinski in autumn 1978. All such programs have certain basic features in common.

All these programs rest on the assumption that the interests of the existing bureaucratic regime can be reconciled with the interests of working people in Poland. They take as their diagnosis the fact that errors have been made by the regime in the past and their programs offer a guide for the regime to correct these errors in the future.

They call for greater democracy within the existing political institutions and for economic reforms. In the case of the Ochab letter little is offered in the way of practical economic proposals, but there is a stress on the need for inner party democracy, the autonomy of the various existing parties in the National Front and greater choice in elections, as well as an opening of a real dialogue between the party and the masses.

In the case of the economists' document, there is a suggestion for a sort of "Italian solution" to the crisis: that the working class should accept a cut in its living standards and austerity in return for some political concessions and reforms on the part of the regime. The proposed reforms on the part of Experience and the Future are of roughly the same sort.

What all these ideas have in common are the following assumptions:

1. that through persuasion, the regime

3. General Mieczyslaw Moczar, a nationalist and anti-Semite, was one of the main persons responsible for the repressive measures in 1968.

can carry through a reform adequate to the tasks of reconciling its interests with those of working people in Poland;

2. that mass, working class mobilization and the creation of a working class movement entirely independent of the regime is not necessary;

3. that root and branch transformation of the political system in Poland is unnecessary.

Yet the experience of thirty-five years of post-war Poland suggests that such assumptions are profoundly mistaken. Each move for reform of the system from above has eventually run out of steam and been succeeded by a new, explosive crisis: this was true of the Gomulka regime after 1956 which ended ignominiously in the upheavals of 1970; it was true of the Gierek regime whose promises of lasting change were succeeded by the upheaval of June 1976 and the subsequent crisis.

Secondly, all the serious moves for reform at the top have been wrung from the regime through the extremely painful and costly struggles of the working class, whether in Poznan in 1956, on the Baltic and in Lodz in 1970-71 and in the great strike wave of June 1976. Each such working class mobilization has been followed by strenuous efforts by the party leadership to bring the working class again under strong bureaucratic control and once that objective has been achieved all real impulses to political reform have been easily neutralized and destroyed.

Thirdly, the bureaucratic stranglehold over political and social life is not the product of erroneous thinking or erroneous policies on the part of this or that leadership team: it is rather the natural and necessary consequences of the monopolistic and monolithic political system as such. The structures of the system inevitably entail a gulf between the mass of working people and the regime. They inevitably produce a situation where, before the June 1976 upheaval all but one of the district party organizations reported to the party center that the proposed price increases would be accepted by the population!

During the last four years since the June strikes, unofficial opposition groups have emerged outside the framework of the PUWP, directly appealing for support from the mass of the population. These groups also have come forward with their diagnoses of the crisis and their programmatic answers to it. The two main types of programs advanced from these opposition groups have been nationalist programs and programs put forward by various leaders of the nationalist programs and programs put forward by various leaders of the KOR. We will look at each of these in turn, taking what we think are characteristic expressions of the views of these currents of opinion.

The most consistent and coherent expression of the nationalist program is that

put forward by the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN) and by its main ideologist and leader, Leszek Moczulski. This current sees the fundamental source of all the problems faced by Polish society today as coming from Poland's subordination to Russia at the end of the Second World War. In the words of the KPN's founding declaration, that period saw "the final dismemberment of the republic, and the subordination of Poland to Soviet hegemony."

The nationalists are of course right, and far from alone, in focusing on the crucial role played by the Soviet bureaucracy in determining the fate of the Polish people. Insofar as they diagnose the basic problems of Polish society as stemming from the bureaucratic form of state imposed upon the Polish people by the Soviet state they are absolutely right, (although some nationalists such as Moczulski, by denying the existence of a Polish state altogether and thereby equating Poland with the Ukraine or the Baltic republics, make a serious error of judgment).

However, in the field of programmatic solutions, the nationalists make fundamental errors. In the first place, they seek to divorce the struggle for national self-determination from all other international and domestic political and social problems. In the words of the founding declaration of the KPN, "The KPN unites the activities and the efforts leading towards independence. It assembles various groupings with different outlooks on various ideological, social and political questions, yet is faithful to the overriding aim of independence."

This notion that in the national struggle all social groups and political tendencies can be united is quite unrealistic. In reality, as Jacek Kuron has pointed out there are powerful forces within Polish society, by no means confined to the leading group in the PUWP, which have a basic stake in the existing bureaucratic dictatorship. There are also groups and forces in Polish society who would like to replace the present oppression of the Polish workers with another form of oppression, through the restoration of the old Pilsudski⁴ order of the pre-war years, a regime which bound the Polish economy hand and foot to the capitalist interests of Britain, France, and Germany.

Secondly, the notion that independence is the absolute value to which all other issues are subordinated overlooks the fact that nationalism is the religion of the state machine and it is a popular religion within the Polish state bureaucracy itself. The possibilities of currents like that of Ceausescu in Romania coming to the surface within the bureaucratic dictatorship itself cannot be ruled out. And would such a bureaucratic nationalist regime help the Polish working people? Not in the least.

4. Marshall Jozef Pilsudski took power in Poland in a military coup in May 1926.

National independence cannot be an absolute value for those who struggle for a better life for the working people of Poland. It is only a lever for gaining real, material advances in the economic, social, political, and cultural life of the working people of Poland. And once the yoke of Soviet domination has been thrown off, these real advances will require the closest possible cooperation between the Polish working people and the peoples of the surrounding countries of Eastern Europe.

In the long term such cooperation can best be expressed through the establishment of a federation of the peoples of Eastern Europe. And in this context it will be vital that the Polish people struggle today in the closest collaboration with the other oppressed peoples of Eastern Europe and of the Soviet Union itself, against the yoke of the Stalinist bureaucracy. And it will also be a crucial task to help to stimulate and to support the struggle of Russian working people themselves to overthrow the Russian Stalinist regime. The idea that the Russian workers and farmers benefit from the oppressive Russian chauvinist regime in Moscow and would suffer from its overthrow is completely false.

In this struggle for national self-determination, it should not be forgotten that pre-war Polish nationalism was itself deeply reactionary and chauvinist. The record of National Democracy was one of unremitting persecution of the Polish Jews. Pilsudski systematically oppressed the Ukrainian and Belorussian communities, refusing to recognize their right to self-determination. In order to establish a real cooperation with the other peoples of Eastern Europe in the vital, international struggle to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy it is necessary to repudiate this reactionary nationalist tradition.

Committee for Social Self-Defense

The KOR, which is organized as a "self-defense committee," does not present itself as a political grouping with an overall program for the solution of the crisis. Yet the form and name of the committee do suggest a general line of action and the committee does attempt to speak on behalf of society as a whole.

When KOR was first formed as a defense committee campaigning for the unconditional release of all the workers jailed in June 1976 and for a Sejm inquiry into police brutality against the strikers and their families and friends, it was performing an absolutely essential function, taking up one central problem of the day and attempting to mobilize all possible people around its demands. But when the KOR had succeeded in gaining the release of the imprisoned workers it entirely transformed its function by becoming a general "social self-defense" body, speaking out on all manner of issues affecting the various social groups.

The general theme on which all members of KOR seem to be agreed is that the problems of Polish society stem from the divorce between the political regime and the society, and from the regime's role in stifling social initiative. Their consequent starting point for a solution to the crisis is for society to organize itself so that it can defend itself against the anti-democratic actions of the state. In the KOR's "Appeal to the Nation of October 10, 1978"—perhaps the committee's most comprehensive statement of its collective political views—the KOR states: "We consider it our duty to turn to the Polish people with an assessment of the situation and an attempt to indicate remedial measures within their reach."

The appeal proceeds very correctly to examine the crisis in the country from the standpoint of the real lives of working people: the covert inflation, the crisis of the health service, the housing crisis, the ever increasing pressure for greater work bearing down on the workers, the lawlessness of the repressive and judicial organs, the strangulation of cultural life by the party dictatorship, increasing social inequalities, the agricultural crisis, the authorities' systematic falsification of the situation in the country, and the arbitrary nature of political decision-making.

But the appeal is far less decisive in spelling out a program to solve the crisis. Its central programmatic objective is spelled out in the following terms: "The objective is to secure the freedom of convictions, freedom of speech and information, the freedom of assemblies and meetings, the freedom of the press, the responsibility of the state authorities towards society. Action aimed at attaining this objective should create social links, consistently destroyed in a system of a monopolistic, centralized rule."

The appeal further links itself with the opinions expressed in the Declaration of the Democratic Movement, published in October 1977 in the first issue of the unofficial magazine *Glos* and signed by more than 100 people. This declaration champions the following demands: freedom of convictions, freedom of speech and information, freedom of union association and assembly, "the freedom to work," the right to strike. Through winning these demands, the declaration envisages the working out of methods of "social cooperation." It also looks forward to "authentic elections" and it sums up its basic objectives in the following words: "... at the present time it is possible to undertake the struggle for democracy and sovereignty on a wider scale and in a lasting manner. We the undersigned are convinced that this program can be realized *here and now*..."

The call contained in these statements for democratic liberties and for sovereignty should be accepted by all concerned with

overcoming the crisis. But what exactly do these demands involve? What social and political regime does the KOR envisage as necessary in order to give these demands life? Can they be won through improving the existing political system or through overthrowing it? Can they be won through agreement with the Soviet regime or through a root and branch struggle against it for an alternative to it? Should the socioeconomic foundations of Polish society remain those of a planned economy, or should these foundations be replaced by a new Western capitalist system? Which social groups stand to gain from the achievement of KOR's aims, which social groups stand to lose? In other words, which social forces does the KOR seek to gain support from in order to carry its aims through to a successful conclusion?

These are surely the crucial programmatic issues which an opposition group such as the KOR must surely confront and answer. Yet KOR as a group has systematically avoided any clear answer to these problems. It has on the one hand rejected any solution to the crisis which involves making working people in Poland foot the bill for the crisis. But it has evaded the question of who exactly must foot the bill, and how big the bill for the crisis must be. It has, in other words, evaded the question of political power.

Yet this problem of political power is absolutely fundamental for the working people of Poland. Can the present system of power and the social groups which have a stake in it be remoulded to accommodate wide democratic rights and national sovereignty? If so the road towards a solution of the crisis can be quite short and fairly painless, provided "irresponsible" elements do not disrupt the process of reform. If not, if the present system must be broken up and overthrown, then the anti-bureaucratic forces must embark on quite a different road, must spell out concretely what alternative system they are struggling for, why it can work, and the methods that must be used to destroy the existing order and construct the new one. The KOR does not spell out such an alternative. At the same time, it does not indicate that the existing order can incorporate its ideals. It leaves these basic programmatic issues unresolved. □

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Colombian Regime Steps Up Repression in Countryside

By Eduardo Medrano

BOGOTÁ—The government of President Julio César Turbay Ayala has launched a military campaign against the peasants in extensive areas of the provinces of Huila and Caquetá. Thousands of smallholders have had to flee their plots in fear for their lives. Air Force planes have bombed several areas of El Pato in Huila Province.

To justify these actions, the government claims the area is infested by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas (FARC—Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces), a peasant-based guerrilla organization. The military campaign began on August 19 when the regime's forces clashed with a FARC patrol. Three soldiers and a noncommissioned officer died, and three soldiers were captured by the rebels. This battle took place in the village of Puerto Crevaux in Meta Province. The fighting then moved south until it centered around El Pato, a region of some 3,000 square kilometers.

Troops from three army brigades were sent in from Villavicencio, Cali, and Neiva. The bulk of these forces was concentrated in El Pato beginning August 24 in an effort to surround the insurgents.

The government said this operation would bring about the destruction of the FARC's main bastion. But the desired results have not been achieved. As of this writing the expected decisive confrontation has not taken place, and the rebel group has continued to carry out actions in various parts of Huila and in the neighboring province of Cauca.

Attention has now been focused on peasant marches from El Pato and from Guayabero in the Llanos Orientales (eastern plains). After twelve days on the road, more than 1,500 people, including many women and children, arrived in Neiva and in San Vicente de Caguán to demand a government cease-fire and withdrawal of troops.

The military had asserted at the beginning of their operations that the occupation of the area was to "protect" the peasants from the guerrillas. But they responded to the marches by claiming the peasant exodus had been organized by the guerrillas themselves in an attempt to hold back the government assault. Two days later they changed their story and said the peasants had been infiltrated by "agitators from Bogotá."

There is no doubt that the peasants evoked solidarity in the towns along their march route to Neiva. Two days before they arrived, the Neiva Municipal Council voted unanimously to demand that the



Fred Murphy/IP

government withdraw its troops from El Pato. Despite the militarization of the city, workers from a number of unions, peasants from an agrarian league, and students gathered alongside the peasant marchers in front of the Interior Ministry building in Neiva to demand a halt to the military campaign. The government broke up the demonstration by force.

The army is being aided by the bourgeois press, especially the pro-Liberal Party daily *El Tiempo*. Support for the invasion is being sought among the citizenry, but with little success. As part of this effort, Ninth Brigade commander Gen. Luis Enrique Rodríguez Botiva acknowledged that the affected regions had been without civil authorities for fourteen years and had been abandoned by the central government.

"Those who exercise dominion over the peasants in that area . . . are the communist organizations," General Rodríguez said. "There, terror reigns and armed subversion radiates to the rest of the country."

But what the peasants themselves say is quite different. Without hiding the fact that the "*muchachos*" of the guerrilla movement are well known to them, the peasants affirm that the guerrillas "never enter our houses unless they are invited"—as César Tobar, a farmer from Alto Pato, put it.

According to the peasants, all the children born in the region have been treated by guerrilla physicians for the past fifteen years. Guerrilla teachers have taught read-

ing and writing. The peasants have long suffered from continual military searches and from the limits the army has placed on the entry of foodstuffs and medicines into the malaria-ridden area. The peasants are generally the ones who have had to leave the towns and villages because of unemployment and the scarcity of land, which has been more and more concentrated in the hands of a few big landlords.

This is not the first time the government has attacked this region. In 1964 troops invaded El Pato, Río Chiquito, and Marquetalia, with the support of reactionary propaganda and with military assistance from the United States.

On June 13 of this year—two months before the full-scale invasion of El Pato began—a peasant delegation from the region visited the interior minister in Bogotá to denounce military harassment. A few days later, Defense Minister Alfonso Camacho Leyva replied that there was no civil population in El Pato—only guerrillas. This was no doubt part of the preparation of public opinion for the attacks that were already being planned and that were carried out in August.

Everything indicates that the repression in El Pato will continue. A peasant delegation, accompanied by representatives of the Human Rights Commission, visited President Turbay Ayala on September 19. While promising a social rehabilitation plan for the area, Turbay would not rule out a military solution.

The government is accusing the Communist Party of Colombia (PCC) of being the ones who control the FARC. But the PCC denies this. The FARC's origin dates back to the late 1950s, when the Liberal Party's guerrillas were betrayed by their urban chiefs, who joined in the National Front agreement with the Conservatives. The rebel organization is in fact a response by the peasant masses to the official terrorism in the rural zones. For decades they have survived powerful attacks by the government's repressive forces.

The current attacks in El Pato take place at the precise moment when the Colombian Congress is studying the draft of an amnesty law that would affect all those who have taken up arms against the regime. Thus Turbay has cast a cloud of doubt over the viability of such an arrangement. He is opening up a different perspective: to emerge victorious in El Pato and then pass on—just as in 1964—to further repressive actions in the cities. For this reason, international solidarity is essential right now. □