

International VIEWPOINT

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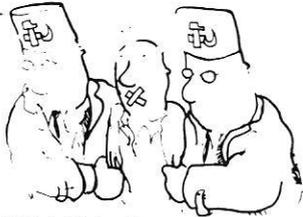
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READERS' SURVEY

WE HAVE received a very good response so far to our Readers' Survey, sent out with issue 136 of *International Viewpoint*. This is just a small reminder to those of you who've forgotten to send the survey back to us! Send it now — remember, there's a chance of winning a free year's subscription. Results will be published in the May 16 issue. ★

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The roots of Palestinian combativity

THE UPRISING of the Palestinian masses under Israeli rule has entered its fifth month. There is still no sign of a letup, and the Israeli authorities are stepping up the level of their repression. The number of Palestinians shot down rose notably during the three-day period at the end of March when the occupied territories were put off limits to the press.

The shootings have continued steadily now for months, with an almost daily body count. This obviously has a brutalizing effect on Israeli society and political life that has begun to embarrass seriously even the staunchest supporters of the Zionist state.

GERRY FOLEY

AN EXAMPLE is the *New York Times* editorial reproduced in the April 11 issue of the *International Herald Tribune*, which declared: "Inexcusably, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir says that Palestinian rioters will be crushed 'like grasshoppers.' Does this man, a leader of Jews who were trampled on for centuries because they were Jews, believe that human beings are insects?"

That sort of attitude, however, is more or less inevitable when an entire people are seen as enemies. The only answer then is to crush them or eliminate them as a community. And that requires a slaughter and massive terror that, in the present international political conditions, the Zionists rulers are unable to carry out. For that they would need an atmosphere of all-out communal warfare. There are forces in Israel that are trying to create that, as the provocative hike organized for Jewish settler children near the Palestinian village of Beita shows. In particular, the guard who turned a clash into a bloody battle was known as a Zionist "Rambo."

A basic aim of Zionism

It is in fact almost inevitable that in a situation where one people are oppressed in the name of another, that the underclass will tend to see members of the privileged group in general as oppressors or symbols of their op-

pression. That has happened everywhere such conditions exist, from US and British inner cities to South Africa. This tendency can be restrained by an effective political leadership of the oppressed, but it can only be eliminated by ending the oppression that generates it.

The Beita incident shows that the most reactionary forces in Israel are trying to take advantage of this tendency to convince the Jewish population that it is "us or them." The only way to resolve this conflict, it is suggested, is to get rid of "them," which, of course, has been a basic aim of Zionism from the beginning, as of other colonialist ventures. But it is not just international political factors, including public opinion and real or pretended human values, that stand in the way.

A super-exploited labour force

There are inherent limitations to such colonialist ventures. In a two-tier society under capitalism, certain economic and social relationships develop. The oppressed population can be more easily exploited economically, and therefore it becomes valuable to the exploiters in the dominant population. They begin to become dependent on it. Secondly, the relatively privileged population tends to lose its aggressiveness, while the exploited population becomes more and more desperate. These factors, for example, blocked completion of the English colonization of Ireland. They began to become obvious in Israel at the time of the Lebanon war. In the Palestinian uprising, they have emerged in a still more pronounced way.

The Palestinian youth confronting the Israel occupiers do not simply represent a dispossessed people. They are a super-exploited labor force. They do not just look from a distance at lands that once belonged to them. They are exploited every day in the society created by the conquest; they have had to learn to know their oppressors and how to defend themselves.

The following article, which was written early in the rebellion in the occupied territories, illustrates these roots of the desperation and the self-confidence of the Palestinians who confront the Zionist military forces every day and who have not been intimidated by a daily toll of deaths that has now continued for over four months. ★

"We must take our destiny into our own hands"

"IN THE YEAR 2,000 there will be a million Arabs. What do you want us to do? They will need food, water, jobs. This is a burden that our society will never be able to bear." It was in these terms that Shimon Peres, minister of foreign affairs and leader of the Labour Party, justified his plan for disengagement from the Gaza Strip over Israeli TV.

MICHEL WARSCHAWSKY

EIGHT YEARS AGO, the last time I went to Gaza, I promised never to set foot again in this place whose poverty and desperation could only be compared with what you find in the shantytowns of Latin America. Moreover, everything indicated that the "pacification" undertaken in 1971 by General Sharon had been effective — at the cost of killing hundreds of people and dispersing tens of thousands.

Gaza and the refugee camps around it seemed to have passed the banner of resistance to the Israeli occupation to the universities and urban centers of the West Bank. There at least something was happening. In Gaza, the Israeli order prevailed. And now, in the space of a few weeks, this region forgotten by the journalists, ignored by the foreign work groups that come to study the situation and offer their solutions, has become the focus of attention and of the dilemma facing Israeli politicians.

For weeks, the TV channels have been bombarding us with pictures of crowds flooding into the streets and besieging military units, of the youth who forced an Israeli soldier to flee, of refugee camps that once again have become liberated territories at

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night and for a good part of the day.

Every evening on television we see those youth in Gaza that only yesterday were to be found in the "slave markets" of Jaffa, Ashqelon and Jerusalem. But they no longer have anything in common with the desperate heros of David Grossman's *Ghetto Gaza* or *Yellow Time*.

If the Gaza Strip has been compared with Soweto, it is because for many of its inhabitants it is a dormitory, where they come to try to recover in a few fitful hours of sleep, a minimum of energy that will be exploited by the Tel Aviv industrialists, by the street cleaning services in the south Israeli cities, by the Jewish hospitals in the region and above all by restaurant owners and farmers in the coastal region.

"We live here as if we were in prison"

In the extraordinary fresco of the occupation presented by *Yellow Time*, the young Israeli writer Grossman gives a powerful description of the lives of these young workers from Gaza. He uses their own words: "I work in a store in Tel Aviv. At 7am, I leave [the hangar where about 15 other workers are shut in] and I work until 5pm. Then I go to the factory to work until 8pm. I eat and sleep. Organize myself? Where would I find the strength? I don't even dare look out of the window at what is happening outside...."

"We live here as if we were in prison. It is hard work until late into the evening. Your head explodes. After work, you don't have any strength left to think. You only want to sleep. In theory, I live in Tel Aviv, but outside of work, I know nothing of the city. Once a week, I go back home. I arrive at 5pm and go to sleep. On Saturday, I sleep until midday. Afterwards, I make little repairs in the house and look after my daughter. She doesn't know me...At 7am on Sunday I am back at work...."

Shut away in hangers or warehouses in the industrial periphery of Tel Aviv, such workers at least have the good fortune not to have to face checkpoints every night. These checkpoints haunt the young workers that I have met, who go back to Gaza every evening in buses or trucks. They are stopped for an hour, two hours, sometimes even for four hours at the point where they leave Israel and enter the planet of Gaza. Cars and trucks are searched, identities are checked. Sometimes they are interrogated, and not just verbally. This is done with the help of fists and feet.

Once a month at least, the checkpoint is closed. Collective punishment of those working in Israel is the reaction of the military authorities every time there is an incident in the Gaza Strip.

As Hamdi (21 years old) from Jebalya put it: "At times because of the *Mahsom* [checkpoint] — he uses the Hebrew term — we get home at 11 at night. The truck comes to pick us up at 5 in the morning.

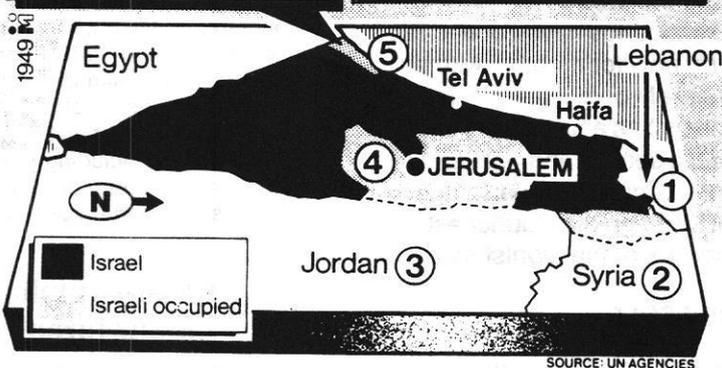


Palestinian refugees

(in thousands)

1 Lebanon	279
2 Syria	258
3 Jordan	845
4 West Bank	374
5 Gaza	445

Total 2,201



They want to stop us from thinking, to wear us out, to keep us from having anything to do with politics. But I, and many others along with me, have gone on strike and attacked the soldiers precisely because of the *Mahsom*."

Hamdi and his brothers all work in the building industry in Tel Aviv. Their father is an agricultural worker on a farm near Ashdon, a few kilometers from the village where he was born.

The young people in the Jebalya camp have never known their ancestral villages, but when they are asked where they come from, they all reply "from Kabatyeh," "from Kaukaba," "from Yibne." Nonetheless, they have deep roots in Jebalya, where they were born or where they have lived the first 20 or so years of their lives.

Abdallah is 19. He has just finished high school. One of his brothers is working as an engineer in Libya. The other two are workers in Israel. All three have diplomas from universities in Cairo and Beirut. "We went through all the procedures so that Ali could return. But to no avail. He is considered to be an emigré, and we can only see him for two months of the year."

The music of the future

Wouldn't Abdallah prefer to continue his studies abroad and be an engineer in one of the Gulf countries? "Never, I love my camp; I would leave it only to return to Kabatyeh. But that is the music of the fu-

ture." Kabatyeh; he has only seen it once. "There was nothing left, only trees. I imagined it differently. I did not feel anything special, but I know that it is my village, that my home is there. In the meantime, I would not leave Jebalya for all the gold in the world."

A ghetto within a ghetto

Jebalya is a ghetto within a ghetto — 65,000 inhabitants in four square miles. The population density of Gaza is higher than that of Hong Kong. Despite the rain and the mud, the children run barefoot through the gutters where the rain water mixes with the slime from the sewers. There are houses everywhere. Nonetheless, unpaved roads run through the camp, whose breadth would be the envy of people in Tel Aviv.

They are one of the momentos General Sharon left behind when he "pacified" the Gaza Strip in the 1970s. They are called the "strategic roads," and in all the refugee camps thousands of homes were destroyed to make room for them, forcing the refugees to "re-establish themselves" in new places of exile.

We drove through the camp in a car, coming close many times to getting stuck in the mud. A friend accompanied me from the Erez checkpoint, which is the nightmare of the local people who work in Israel. I left my car there, with its yellow licence plates, which are not very welcome these days in Gaza. My friend was well known in the

camp. He was born there, and was put under house-arrest for more than a year, after the military authorities forced him to interrupt his studies at the University of Bir Zeit on the West Bank.

Tear-gas grenades and truncheons

Every 20 meters, we were stopped by groups of youths, who gave us news or asked us to tell them what was happening. The radio had announced in the morning that calm had returned to Gaza, but virtually no one had left for work.

A patrol passed in front of the mosque, but it was not the sort of patrol of four or five bored soldiers that we were used to seeing all over the occupied territories. Today, it was 15, armed for battle, with tear-gas grenades, truncheons and gas masks. They walked in line, two abreast, carefully, their fingers on the triggers of their guns. They were parachutists. I recognized them by their red berets, the elite of the Hebrew army

"In the camps, the paratroopers rule. In the cities and streets, it is the Guivati Brigade. You see, we have become specialists," Abdallah, who had gotten out of our car, said proudly. What strikes you most is the way that the soldiers try to avoid contact with the population at any cost. The Palestinian youth advance straight toward them, forcing the patrol to stop for a few seconds or to turn aside. Some children follow the soldiers, laughing and from time to time throwing insults at them.

Before the uprising got underway, things were different. The appearance of a patrol created a vacuum, and those who did not have time to get away hugged the walls to avoid being stopped and often picked up.

A car from the ACNUR, the UN agency formally responsible for the refugee camp,

stopped near us. A young American, who seemed to know my companion, took him aside and whispered a few words in his ear. When he came back to the car, he told me: "We don't have much time. Jim just told me that one of those wounded last week has just died in Ashqelon hospital. He was a 17-year-old from Jebalya. The body will not arrive back before tonight, but the news is spreading like wildfire, and before another hour there will be trouble. There may be a curfew."

There were a dozen of them, sitting on mats in a house in Shatti, which is sometimes called "Beach Camp." This camp, like Jebalya, is tacked on to Gaza city. A few years ago, a few thousand of its 40,000 inhabitants were forcibly dispersed by the Israeli authorities in the context of a plan for "relocating refugees." But their homes were quickly occupied by other families in the camp. The rate of demographic growth is almost as great as at Jebalya.

The generation of the occupation

There were a dozen of them, all born since 1967. They became known as "the generation of the occupation." They talked first about their daily lives, about the checkpoint obviously, but also about fishing. As the name "Beach Camp" indicates, the place is on the sea, not far from the detention camp called "Ansar 2," where suspects and the so-called ringleaders of the most recent demonstrations are being held. Many families live, or lived, from fishing. The occupation has made them into importers of fish, but also often of hashish.

"Before the occupation, my father and my brothers came back with a lot of fish," Tariq recounted. "Since then, they have been forbidden to fish too close to the coast, for security reasons. Then, also for

security reasons, the places in the north and south where we could fish were limited. Since there are a lot of us, and there are few places we can fish, there are few fish left."

Sometimes, at the limits of the territorial waters, fishing boats from Shatti meet Egyptian fishing boats and buy their catch, which they resell on the Gaza markets. Thus, Zionism, which was supposed to transform the Hebrew people into producers — without much success, moreover — has succeeded in making the Palestinians of Shatti into merchants.

However, today the youth do not want to talk about fishing, about humiliation or about poverty. They want to talk about their own brave actions, and what one of them calls their resurrection.

Abdelmajid is 21. He comes from Ashqelon, but he was born in Shatti. He has finished high school and would like to go to one of the universities on the West Bank next year. He is a "political," and his language tends to be a bit emphatic. "What happened last week is the final uprising of the Palestinian people. Nothing will stop us. All of us are taking part, even the old people, even the rich neighborhoods of Gaza. In other times, our parents would say: 'We don't want you to get into trouble, to get involved with politics, to go to the demonstrations.' Today, they are proud of us. We have shown the entire world what we are capable of. The soldiers are afraid of us. They run away like rabbits."

"We are not afraid of dying any more"

Each one relates his personal fight. One tells how they captured an Israeli soldier near the Shiffa hospital in Gaza. They stripped him, disarmed him and sent him back to his comrades. The Israeli press played up this episode a few days ago.

Drawing by Naji Al-Ali



Another tells how they held off a whole army unit that was trying to get into the camp, and how he saw his best friend killed by a bullet that hit him head on.

"Even when there is a curfew", said Omar, 21 years old, "there are demonstrations of 20,000 people at night. We are all there, we young people. We give the orders — not the PLO like they say on TV, not the Islamic leaders, but us." Abdelmajid spoke with pride about his 12-year-old brother who takes a shower every morning so that he can die in a state of purity.

The central concern of these 19 and 20 year olds is death. "We are not afraid of dying any more," Omar explains. "With the death of Intissar [a young high school student murdered in cold blood by a Jewish settler a week before the mass explosion] and after the so-called incident where four people were found dead at the entrance to Jebalya, we have been condemned to death. If you are going to die, it is better to die attacking the army."

This credo is expressed without heroics but naturally and with great sincerity. It is rather reminiscent of the attitude of soldiers on the battlefield, who are forced to think of death as an immediate and unavoidable possibility.

I have heard such remarks in Shatti and in Gaza, in Beit-Hanum and in Jebalya. Abdallah from Jebalya said: "It all started after the incident. But it was not an incident; it was a murder. The blood of Arabs counts for nothing. For the Jews, our lives mean nothing, so it is up to us to give them a meaning. All of us, even the old people, understand that today. If we have to die, let the whole world at least know why. When we went to visit the families of the victim, we swore not to let ourselves be slaughtered like lambs any longer."

Deaths are not accidental

Don't let yourself be led like lambs to the slaughter. Two generations of Israelis have been educated in accordance with that maxim. It has been a banner for Israeli youth for 40 years.

In Gaza, no one believes that the deaths are accidental or owing to the nervousness of some soldiers. "We have learned that the soldiers do not shoot when they are in danger; they run away. They shoot when they have received the order to shoot and to kill. The military governor of Jebalya, Halabi, has killed two people here in the camp. Death is ever present, it threatens us everywhere. We have decided to go onto the attack. No, I am not afraid."

When we passed near Direl Bala'h, in the center of the Gaza Strip, we visited the school where Intissar was murdered. You can still see clearly the impact the bullet made on the wall. The murderer had just been released, three days before, on bail.

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The murder charge was changed to involuntary homicide. My companion told me

that in the days following the murder, hundreds of youths came to swear to avenge Intissar.

Beyond the absolute desperation that I found eight years ago and which was described so powerfully by Grossmann in his book, there is death. But death can take another form than suicide or a slide toward a vegetative state. Heroism today is the answer of this generation to the desperate situation into which the occupation has plunged them. They have surmounted the wall of fear because they know that they no longer have anything to lose. They have become heroes ready to challenge the Israeli army because they know that they can win honor and maybe even freedom.

"Our backs are to the wall"

"Maybe it will take us many years more," Qassem explained, "but we have no choice. Our backs are to the wall" — once again a very Israeli expression — "and we will fight until we win. All oppressed peoples win at last, don't they? Do we count less than the Blacks in South Africa?" After a bit, he feels obliged to add, "If we do not take our destiny into our own hands, nobody else will, not even the PLO can do anything without us. Without us, all the Arab regimes will do nothing, and we are not expecting anything from negotiations. I, in any case, don't have any confidence in this International Conference..."

For years, the Palestinians in the occupied territories have waited. They have waited for the Arab armies, they have waited for the PLO commandos, negotiations, the International Conference, the Arab summit. Today, they no longer believe in this and they are no longer ready to wait. This waiting for salvation from outside created a very tense situation, and the disillusionment today is serving to ignite an explosion that is not just throwing the occupied territories into turmoil but all of Israeli society.

The Gaza YMCA is the only cultural center in the area. Over the last years, it has opened branches in most of the refugee camps. And there you find youth who want to engage in sports, learn languages or use a library worthy of the name.

Gazi teaches Hebrew there. He learned the language of the occupier in the 17 years he spent in prison for taking part in the actions of a commando unit of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in the heroic days of Guevara-Gaza, the legendary leader of the resistance from 1967 to 1971. After the exchange of prisoners in 1985, I wanted to find the person who wrote the Palestinian prisoners' requests to the prison authorities in a Hebrew that would be the envy of more than one Israeli. And so I found Gazi for the first time and subsequently I saw him again often.

He told me, "In Gaza, there is a great demand for Hebrew courses. After a long per-

iod of boycotting it, the new generation has learned that its best weapon is knowing the enemy, reading their press, understanding their language. The most political want to get to know the Israelis because they understand that the future will be either coexistence between the two peoples or perpetual war."

The generation of the occupation has learned to know Israelis, in particular their contradictions, their weaknesses. Hamdi from Jebalya told us, "We, unlike our parents and our older brothers and sisters, were born under the occupation; we have learned to know the occupier. They are not the invincible monsters that paralyzed our parents. We meet Israelis at work. They are human beings like you and me, with their weaknesses, their fears, their egoism and sometimes their feelings.

"Between us, it is war. They have houses, nice books, a chance to study, a state. We have nothing. But they are empty. Behind their hatred of the Arabs is their fear of losing all that they have. We on the other hand have only our muscles to sell, for two shekels an hour. And that is why the Israeli soldiers run away when we attack them, because we are not afraid of dying a martyr's death."

"This generation are not taking orders from anyone"

Another veteran, like Gazi, confirmed this: "The generation of the occupation feels more sure of itself than ours. They grew up when the PLO and Palestinian national feeling were already accomplished facts.

"They were seven years old when Israel got its first major drubbing in 1973. At the age of 15, they witnessed the Israeli breakdown in Lebanon. But above all, they are not waiting for orders from anyone. In my time, there was only one Guevara-Gaza; today there are thousands who are taking their responsibilities without waiting for orders from anyone."

And later, we were back at the Erez checkpoint to pick up my car. There were no long queues of cars. Most of the workers preferred to stay in Gaza. The soldier who checked my papers was the same age as the youths with whom I had spent an intense day.

He and his comrades encounter them every day, from the other side of the barricades, but they have never talked to them, except to ask for their papers or to order them to move on.

Nonetheless, they are also of the occupation generation, the one that has known Israel only as Great Israel, for whom Gaza has always been part of their country. Handing back my identity card, he asked me, "But what could an Israeli go to Gaza for? It's a madhouse. If we don't get rid of it quick, it will drive us crazy, like Lebanon. But everyone to his own taste. Goodnight." ★

Hanging in Pretoria, assassination in Paris

THE DULL THUD of the trapdoor opening beneath the feet of Black militants on the gallows is no longer enough to quench the hatred of Pretoria's killers. State terrorism is an established method inside as well as outside their frontiers. The murderous military incursions against the ANC and South African refugees into Botswana, Zimbabwe or Lesotho have provoked so little international reaction that they now seem commonplace.

By assassinating Dulcie September, Pretoria's agents have extended the scope of their terrorist actions, thus continuing their crazy escalation against the mass anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

In one week, 11 ANC activists executed

The official repression (arrests, two years of state of emergency and censorship), accompanied by the gradual outlawing of all the forces opposing the racist regime, has not succeeded in annihilating the spirit of revolt of the Black population. In addition, the racist regime has had to resort to "clandestine" repression: liquidating anti-apartheid and trade-union leaders, blowing up union offices and so on. The murders of Black militants by death squads — usually including police or other government agents — have multiplied following threats made by the minister of defence, who recently declared: "The ANC can be hit anywhere in the world". Thus, in one week 11 ANC activists have been executed in different countries.

So there can be little doubt who was behind Dulcie September's assassination, or about the identity of those who have twice attempted to murder the ANC's Belgium representative.

What do the defenders of apartheid in France think about it now? What do the nine deputies of the right and extreme right, who recently visited South Africa and didn't see apartheid, think about it? We can expect nothing from these types, who fall over each other in the rush to denounce non-state terrorism. The same goes for Foreign Minister Bernard Pons or Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, who are dishing out the South African whites' well-tested recipes in New Caledonia....

The minister of security, Robert Pandraud, knew very well that Dulcie September had been threatened over the last few months. The representative of SWAPO (South West African People's Organization) in France testified to this: "She had been getting death threats and insulting let-

DULCIE September, the representative of the African National Congress (ANC) in France, was assassinated on March 28 in Paris. She was shot down in front of her office, and was found with two bullet wounds in her head.

So far, nobody has been arrested for the murder, but it is widely believed that PW Botha's racist government is behind the string of attacks in Europe against the ANC and other anti-apartheid organizations.

The following article is from *Rouge*, the newspaper of the LCR, French section of the Fourth International.

VINCENT KERMEL

ters since last July. Someone snatched her bag, full of documents, in the métro. She had demanded protection from the French police, without ever getting a reply, either positive or negative". The authorities try to deny this evidence. But their past silence, like their present denials, makes them accomplices in this crime.

Underlying this, it is the political legitimacy given by France to the racist regime that is at stake. The pro-South African lobby is well represented, not only in the ranks of the extreme right, but also in the RPR and UDF [the two right-wing governing parties]....

France's trade links with apartheid

Trade with apartheid is going well. Some nationalized or state supported companies are still active in South Africa. Total, which provides apartheid's fuel, is the most glaring example. Imports of South African coal and Namibian uranium continue. French sports men and women still play in Botha's country. According to the US State

Department, France — which collaborates in the Koeberg nuclear power plant — was also reported to have delivered arms to South Africa, in spite of the international embargo that has been in force since 1977.

Even a kind normalization of relations occurred when President François Mitterrand formally recognized the South African ambassador in October 1987. Business trips follow one after the other, and the South African Chamber of Commerce acknowledges this when it says: "Some commercial loans have been renewed by French banks". The right has undeniably contributed to the "re-establishment" of relations with Pretoria. But this trend was already in evidence when the left government was in power.

Initial declarations of principle against apartheid by the Socialist Party government in 1981 were hardly followed by a political will to go beyond some symbolic measures (diplomatic sanctions, measures concerning sporting links and the suspension of new investments). The government of the time was to contribute nothing either to divulging the scope of economic links with the racist regime or to developing a mass protest movement against this shameful collaboration.

Complicit silence of left and right governments

Of his two visits to France, Botha made one when the left was in power. And was it not Roland Dumas, Mitterrand's foreign minister during the left government, who agreed in 1985 to meet his South African counterpart, Pik Botha? As the *Quotidien de Paris* noted at the time: "At the economic level, exchanges between the two countries have really not suffered from the political deterioration". What were they waiting for, those people who in 1981 made the denunciation of racism their battle cry and who hollered loudly and stridently for sanctions, and promised to put them into operation if they came to power?

In Pretoria they practice hanging; in Paris, assassination. All of this with the complicit silence of governments. The mixed reactions following Dulcie September's assassination also raises the problem of mobilization around this whole question. Isn't it about time to start building a massive, non-exclusionist anti-apartheid movement in our country?

For its part, the LCR salutes the memory of Dulcie September, who was murdered while fighting the racist regime. We pledge to redouble our efforts in solidarity with the ANC and all those forces fighting apart-
heid. ★

Kremlin launches witchhunt against Armenian protest leaders

THE GENERAL STRIKE in Stepankert was finally over, *Pravda* reported April 7. The article began by noting, "the first workweek in the Stepankert electrotechnical plant began with unencouraging results — 1.8 million rubles, that is how much the plant owes the government. That is the price of the absenteeism related to the events around Nagorno Karabakh. It would have been less if everyone had gone to work Monday. But despite the decision of the plenum of the city party committee, at its start this week could be hardly be called a workweek.

"On Monday, only 30% of the workers showed up, on Tuesday, 60%. Only on Wednesday was all the workforce there." Thus, by the Soviet Communist Party organ's own account the protest strike in the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, a town of about 35,000 inhabitants, had lasted nearly two weeks.

It was an unprecedented act of defiance of the Kremlin rulers, and can only be compared with the mass resistance to Soviet occupation in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

GERRY FOLEY

THE PROTESTS in the Armenian republic itself are harder to measure because the leaders had called for passive protests, a stay-at-home on Saturday, March 26. The Armenian capital of Yerevan was occupied by special police and military units, including a large number of troops from other republics. Nonetheless, the response in *Pravda* indicated that the Soviet authorities were shaken.

On April 2, *Pravda* published its first long article on the protests since the March 21 article that rejected the demands of the movement. It was an interview by A. Chernenko, a "special correspondent" in Yerevan, with an Armenian academician, Gevorg Bagratovich Garibdzhanian. The article was obviously designed to offer a balanced response to the Armenian events, and to cover some holes that had been made in the promises of *perestroika*.

Chernenko asked: "In discussing the maintenance of order, I would like to touch on a question that in many people's minds

is still taboo. I am talking about the MVD [Ministry of the Interior] detachments that arrived in Yerevan to assure order. Police forces were concentrated in the city. Some nights, there were even military patrols."

No problem! Garibdzhanian assured him. He could understand why they were necessary: "In the first place remember that I am a veteran of the front lines [in the second world war]. I know that a concentration of people in a limited area can lead to things that an unexperienced person would not think of. Let's call things by their right name. Were provocations possible in those days? Undoubtedly.... Frankly, I slept more soundly, knowing that our soldiers were in the city — I stress, our soldiers."

One might wonder why Garibdzhanian needed to stress "our soldiers." But he also said: "Let us ask each other some questions. Was anybody arrested? Where any general searches carried out? Was there any shooting?"

Garibdzhanian concluded his remarks by stressing that his family had suffered in

Stalin's purges both at the end of the 1930s and at the beginning of the 1950s, and that there was no question now of any repression like that. "As a Marxist historian, I assure you that there are neither any political, economic or social bases for such suppositions. I am deeply convinced that the Communists of the republic will be able to deal in a Leninist way with what occurred in Opera Square."

"Healthy class instincts prevailed"

While the "taboo" was broken about speaking of the Soviet troops sent into the city, there was an odd omission in the discussion. Before raising this theme, Chernenko had asked about the material losses caused by the protests. Garibdzhanian answered that they were indeed terrible, but that the "worst thing that could have happened on the square was a discrediting of the ideas of *perestroika* and *glasnost*.... And the Yerevan workers understood that well. The date on the anonymous leaflets, March 26, was not observed. Healthy class instincts prevailed."

The obvious question of whether there might have been some connection between the "concentration of police forces" in Yerevan and the "healthy class instinct" that kept the Yerevan workers off the streets was not raised.

Nonetheless, the Armenian academic did make a certain justification of the reactions of the Armenians. Chernenko had begun the interview by dividing the protesters into sheep and goats: "The sincerity of some is unquestionable, as is the attempt of others to exploit the wave of emotion. Others simply became disoriented:

Garibdzhanian replied: "I support the idea that some were sincere and that others were distressed and politically disoriented." He went on to say offer an explanation that would be normal enough for a bourgeois sociologist but was rather peculiar for a self-proclaimed Marxist historian. "The events in Yerevan are a classical example of how people with completely different motivations can be brought together by one common idea." Any mass action is like that, as was the Russian revolution.

But in this case, people had been saved from this quicksand of unity by a wise word in time from Gorbachev: "It is not surprising that the statement of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, M.S. Gorbachev quickly made an impact on the hearts and minds of people." On the other hand, "a series of one-sided reports in the papers, both in the central and the local press, aroused only irritation and whipped up emotions."

The problem was that "great masses of the people thought that what they were doing was in the spirit of *perestroika*. Although in unusual form, a debate was going on. And the answer was the old labels."

Here there was a clash between the two. Chernenko argued that strikes had nothing to do with *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Garibdzhanian said that democracy included the right to "make mistakes." Later on, the Armenian stressed that the debate would continue, and that there had been Communist Party members in the crowds of protesters.

The academician's basic explanation of the protests was that they were touched off by a long accumulation of economic and social deficiencies: "On the square it wasn't just people that gathered. Hundreds of questions gathered there, which at one time or another a secretary of some district, or a director of a factory or a leader of a district social security service did not solve."

Once again, it is hardly an original idea for a Marxist that all sorts of grievances come together in mass explosions. But Garibdzhanian's approach seemed to be following a common line set by the Gorbachev leadership of dissolving the specific political grievance of the Armenians into a whole body of social and economic problems.

Concessions could lead to other problems

In that way, it can answer that *perestroika* will eventually solve such problems, and here and now it can offer specific limited measures such as new investment, restoration of Armenian historical monuments in Nagorno-Karabakh, providing more Armenian textbooks and so on. In this way, it can avoid having to respond to the big political questions raised by the protests — the nature of decision making in the USSR, the relations among the nations and national rights.

This is not to say that even such concessions cannot lead to other problems, especially in a situation where Armenian claims are counterposed to those of the authorities of a Turkish republic. Whatever the difficulties with Armenian books, after all, there is Armenian literature available. In the case of the Turkish peoples of the USSR, book publishing is strictly a token affair. In practice, virtually nothing is available.

The next major article in *Pravda*, published on April 4, was more official, as indicated by its title, "Instigators: once again on the events in Nagorno-Karabakh and around it," which placed the piece directly in the continuity of the March 21 article. One of its two authors, G. Ovcharenko, also signed the previous article, as a "special correspondent" of *Pravda*. It made little effort to defend the democratic pretences of *perestroika*. The "old labels" were flung with a vengeance, although it seemed to be beating the drums only for selective repression.

The article denounced both Armenians and Azerbaidzhanis for failing to trust the

Soviet press. It accused them of falling victim to false reports from the Western radio stations designed to wipe up national antagonisms. Examples of fantastic rumors were cited with the obvious aim of portraying Armenians and Azerbaidzhanis as gullible, addled by nationalistic passions.

Blame was focused on Parour Airikian, leader of the Union for National Self-Determination; and Sergei Grigoriants, editor of the barely tolerated independent journal *Glasnost*. Airikian's group played a vanguard role in organizing the protests. Grigoriants reported on the events to the Soviet dissident movement and to the Western press.

The attack on Airikian was in tune with traditions of the Stalinist press and the sort of pillorying engaged in by the right-wing gutter press as well. "Parour Airikian, a man of about forty, who has never worked anywhere, with a beard on his puffy face. He has usually preferred to stay in the shadows, hiding behind people he has befuddled. Nonetheless, since his youth he has been whipping up nationalist quarrels. He pushed others onto the criminal road, and finally ended up in the dock himself. [He spent 17 years in prison.]

Leader jailed twice for "anti-Soviet activity"

"This self-proclaimed leader was twice called before the bar of criminal justice for anti-Soviet activity and once for bribing an official. Released from prison in early 1987, Airikian kept quiet. He concealed himself. He took a wait-and-see position. However, it has become clear that he has not renounced his old schemes. Changing only his tactics, he presented himself as a supporter of democratization and *glasnost*."

Airikian was said to have become a collaborator of Grigoriants, "whose biography is similar. More than once sentenced for speculating in antiques and anti-Soviet activity, he also hides behind the mask of a defender of democracy and *glasnost*, but in fact is continuing to engage in subversive activity."

At the moment, Grigoriants was said to be trying to defend Airikian who "has been arrested, along with some of his co-thinkers from among the most active instigators of national discord....He is bandying



about the idea of forming some sort of committee in the country to defend his co-thinker Airikian. But problems have already developed in the selection of the committee members. Because Grigoriants has not changed his spots and is trying to form such a committee in the West....

"Grigoriants and his ilk know very well that their irresponsible statements helped to whip up passions and emotions. In fact, by spreading slanderous fabrications with the help of the Western press, they carried nationalist moods to extremism. In that way, they provoked people to collective absenteeism from work, boycotting studies, to actions that disorganized normal life."

The article also took a swipe at I. Muradian, the other main leader of the protests, who was accused of advising people not to pay any attention to the Soviet media. It was obviously launching a witchhunt against the leaders of the actions. Given the contradictions of Gorbachev's policy, revealed by *Pravda* itself, it is not clear how far this will go. It certainly seems, in these circumstances, that progressive and working-class public opinion in the West could have an effect in restraining victimization of the Armenian leaders. ★

“Back to the Soviets”

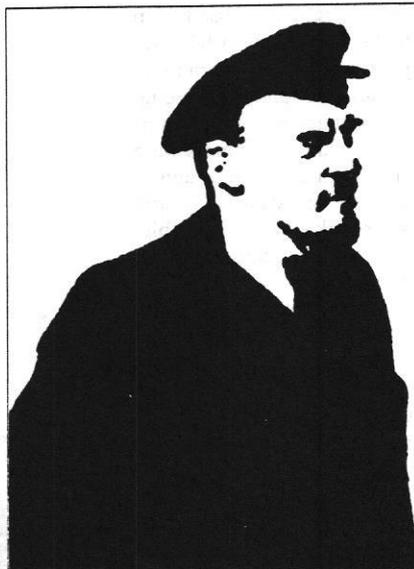
HOW QUICKLY political debate can deepen in the Soviet Union once there is even a small opening is indicated by the following article. It is from the October 6, 1987, issue of *Merkury*, the journal of the coordinating committee of the independent social clubs in Leningrad.

The clubs are the first legal independent organizations to exist since the establishment of the bureaucratic regime. The policy of *glasnost* and *perestroika* has obliged the bureaucracy to tolerate them. [For an extensive account of the clubs, see IV 129, November 9, 1987.]

Since the possibilities for political discussion have been so limited in the USSR, it is almost inevitable that the first attempts will reflect some illusions. Nonetheless, the following article includes a radical challenge to the rule of the bureaucracy and some of the ideological pretences that have been used to justify it.

IN RECENT ELECTIONS for the local Soviets of People's Deputies, more than one candidate ran in certain districts. This is the first experiment for many decades to try to find a solution to the impasse represented by a facade that all is well and voters' indifference.

Today, at election times there is no mobilization by the voters. They show no interest in those “elected,” they are not familiar with the backgrounds of the candidates, they do not try to find out what the



deputies elected do. Most citizens see the very procedure of electing a single candidate as meaningless — an understandable reaction.

It is no accident that in a large number of countries in the same situation, it is usual not to hold elections. This saves a lot of money and time. By way of example, I might quote a TASS [Soviet press agency] dispatch of August 22, 1987, which said “Shankar Dayal Sharma was proclaimed president of India before the elections (which were scheduled for September 7), because he proved to be the only candidate for the post.”

You have to admit that is an argument! But arguments based on reason are not accepted when a bureaucratic apparatus needs an appearance of democracy to cover up governmental administrative procedures. The media then have to repeat that participating in this sort of election is performing “a civic duty.” And people go to the polls, because tradition demands it, because everyone does it, because they do not see the harm done to them indirectly by this procedure.

But this is shortsighted. In fact, by our votes we help the bureaucracy place its preferred candidates in the Soviets, who remain docile and silent, regardless of the disastrous consequences of incompetent management by these functionaries, such as pollution of the environment, chronic shortages of goods or low productivity.

Which of us remembers the name of the candidates we voted for? What useful thing have they done as deputies? Who has turned to them for help? Everyone knows that to settle a problem, you have to go to see the executive committee functionary and not deputies, who themselves are unwelcome visitors for such functionaries.

And what about the role of the Supreme Soviet deputies? Twice a year, in short sessions they in practice rubber-stamp the bills prepared by the bureaucracy in the ministries and cabinets. In form, the system in force is parliamentary — that is, the voters elect their deputies directly on a territo-

rial basis. But the essential difference from bourgeois parliamentarianism (leaving aside the recent experiment with multiple candidates) is that this system does not accept a battle of ideas, confrontations of alternatives.

In imposing a new constitution in 1936, the bureaucracy sought to assure total control by the apparatus over promotion of people useful to it and to guarantee their election to the Soviets. It succeeded totally.

Today, as a means of challenging the existing system, many citizens have chosen to refuse to vote. This is a vain illusion! The boycotting of the elections by a growing number of voters does not appear in the figures released on the elections. No! The fight for democratization will be victorious only when broad layers of society realize the need for a radical reform of the electoral system and of the functioning of the representative bodies!

Our slogan must be “Back to the Republic of the Soviets!” Attempting to introduce multi-candidate elections, with a contest over the positions and effectiveness of the candidates in the election campaign, deprives the bureaucratic apparatus of its 100 per cent control. But for the moment, it will not change fundamentally the position of the deputies in the Soviets.

The work of the Soviets after the revolution

Let us look that the experience of the work of the Soviets in the first years following the revolution. Such a retrospective is useful, in particular since it will enable some readers to discover that the present system of representative bodies does not have a whole lot in common with the Republic of the Soviets established in 1917.

For decades, all information about the system of Soviets that functioned up until the adoption of the “Stalin Constitution” has been wiped out of the collective memory. Today, the statement by Lenin that the Republic of Soviets was better and more democratic than any bourgeois republic figures in every civic manual. But what this superiority might consist of is absolutely incomprehensible.

The first constitution of the USSR provided for a system of elections of Soviets at different levels. The deputies were elected in the workplaces. In this way, only people who knew the candidates through their work and could assess their political qualities in production or in their work in a grass-roots Soviet had the right to vote. This was what distinguished the Republic of the Soviets in a positive way from bourgeois republics, where the merits of one hopeful or another are advertised like a brand of soap or toothpaste, and where the political baggage of candidates is less important than how photogenic they are.

Only peasants, because of the specific nature of their work, voted on the higher, territorial level. That is, in the provinces and

republics, a somewhat different principle was applied. Congresses of Soviets were called, which elected standing bodies, the provincial executive committees and the central executive committee of the Union.

In the Republic of the Soviets, deputies were delegates. If their work in the Soviets did not correspond to the position of the majority of the members of the collectives that elected them, they immediately resigned. But, on the other hand, in debates and conflicts they felt strongly supported by their collectives.

The top levels of the pyramid

The system of election by levels made it difficult to "parachute" people into the top levels of the pyramid, because those who elected the delegates knew them quite well personally. It kept "useful" people from turning up in the Central Executive Committee, and for this reason was not to the liking of Stalin and his entourage. They dismantled it.

It has to be said, however, that the system of the Soviets had certain disadvantages. At the lower levels of the hierarchy, it enabled a majority of supporters of one political position or another to deprive the minority of any representation in the higher Soviet or Congress of Soviets. To totally control the composition of a delegation, it was enough to get 51 per cent of the vote. Nonetheless, in the first years of Soviet power, the deputies not abuse this possibility, and all parties present in the Soviets were represented in the Central Executive Committee.

Today, a Republic of Soviets has been maintained and undergone creative evolution only in Yugoslavia. In that country, the citizens elect delegates on three levels — at their workplaces, in their localities (on a basis of mini-districts, "local associations") and as members of socio-political organizations. The enterprise collectives, local associations and local soviets send not isolated deputies, but representative delegations to the higher Soviets, which contain a larger number of members than there are seats.

Although, for historical reasons, there is only one party in Yugoslavia, the Union of Communists, the third level of elections in principle offers a possibility for a confrontation among the platforms of different political parties and mass organizations when the ways forward for developing the socialist society are being discussed. It makes it possible, in fact, to elect well-known political figures or sociologists, prominent researchers, without their having to go through the system of elections at different levels. It is quite normal to have renowned researchers in higher bodies of the state, where they can be useful, without their having to go through a purgatory in a local Soviet.

The presence in the representative bodies

of deputies elected by producers, consumers and socio-political organizations makes it possible to solve the problem of a balanced representation of various interests. It would be an error to think that one or another industrial group influencing the domestic politics of a country is exclusively a feature of bourgeois parliamentary republics. In our country, for a long time, we have been fighting unsuccessfully against this kind of lobby, which goes by another name, "the interests of such and such a ministry."

The delegates to the Yugoslav Soviets are very active. They discuss scrupulously proposed laws and exercise strict supervision over the work of the executive bodies. As proof of this, bills are quite often rejected and submitted several times for amendment. In the present state of things, that situation is simply inconceivable in our Supreme Soviet.

It should not be thought, however, that through the system of Soviets based on delegations Yugoslavia has entirely solved the problem of bureaucracy, that bureaucracy has been eliminated from the state bodies. As the Yugoslav comrades write, because of a series of defects in the system, the influence of the bureaucracy and the technocracy has been maintained, especially at the republic level. This is primarily due to the fact that the self-management collectives have gained the right to determine for themselves the ratio between accumulation and consumption. This has led to a shortage of jobs and a backlog in investment, which some members of executive bodies have not failed to exploit in a self-interested way.

Let us suppose, anyway, that in the course of the restructuring of the electoral system, we finally get active Soviets. How, then, should they establish their relations with the executive bodies in order to put an end to the bureaucracy that corrupts them?

On several occasions and in different forms, there have been proposals to extend the authority of the standing committees of the Soviets up to the point of endowing

them with all the functions of executive bodies. Sverdlov best put this idea into practice in organizing the work of the All-Russian Executive Committee. Of course, transforming the deputies from being subjects [that is, decision makers] removed from the actual management of affairs, to subjects responsible for the management of affairs is attractive, and corresponds to Lenin's idea of transforming the Soviets into "working bodies."

But how can this be reconciled with the desire not to cut the deputies off for too long from the collectives from which they come? How can the requirement of professionalism for members of the executive be met? In fact, the makeup of the body of deputies changes after every election. And even though most of them are worthy and respectable people, able to judge what is good or bad for the country, they are far from all able and qualified to take responsibility for management or propose alternative strategies.

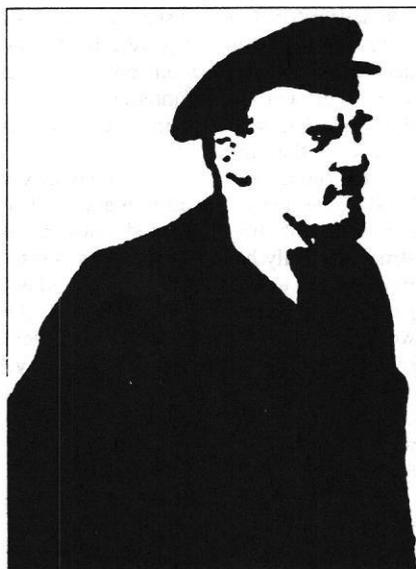
Another approach is necessary, based on a confrontation between the positions of the standing committees of the Soviets and groups of specialists. The relations between the two have to be of the same order as those that prevail between an editorial board of a magazine and the writers. Members of an editorial board cannot write all the articles in an issue; they can only read and judge the articles, and choose the best of those offered. The same thing applies here.

Measures against the bureaucracy

The standing committees have to commission contributions, and the groups of specialists must become temporary enterprise collectives. Obviously, people are not used to that. But imagine for a minute that the standing committee on public health opens up a competition and makes inter-enterprise accords with groups of specialists on perfecting programs for developing the network of medical establishments. The specialists could themselves determine the composition of their groups and would not leave room for the kowtowing to the bureaucracy that presently prevails in the ministries and scientific research institutes.

Having groups of specialists perform the functions of executive bodies is an effective measure against bureaucracy. It is one of the most promising methods for breaking the monopoly of decision-making power held by the ministerial cabinets.

It seems to us that the consistent advocates of democratizing our society today must propagate among their fellow citizens the idea of representation, the idea of a Republic of the Soviets in improved versions. And to this effect, they must utilize all possible means — public actions, the periodical press or artistic expression. This idea must take hold among the masses, and then it will become a force. ★



“The biggest working class and popular action since 1975”

THE GENERAL STRIKE of March 28, 1988, was the biggest working-class and popular action in Portugal since 1975. For the first time, the major union confederations — the CGTP (the biggest one, influenced by the Communist Party) and the UGT (smaller but growing, up till now influenced by the Socialist Party and the right-wing parties) — joined forces in a form of struggle against the government.

FRANCISCO LOUÇA

THE STRIKE'S central objective was to defeat the “labor package,” the new labor laws that the government has submitted to parliament. Given the absolute majority held by the ruling party, the PSD, they could be approved.

The debate is centered on trade-union freedoms in the workplaces and “flexibility” for layoffs, an old demand of the employers’ associations. In fact, the law would have little impact in private industry, where some years ago the bosses won a very favorable relationship of forces and imposed “short-term contracts” as a general rule. These are informal contracts of a few months’ duration. The “package” is directed mainly toward the needs of an overall reconversion of the public sector.

The basic reasons for these laws are the prospect of privatizing a major part of the profitable public enterprises and of a single European market in 1992. It is in these areas also that the ideological battles are being waged between the supporters and adversaries of the strike. For example, the myth of an Eldorado over the horizon of high wages for some and fat profits for others features in all the propaganda. It can be said, from that point of view, that the strike was the first mass action against the European myth.

The severity of the proposed new laws and the wage ceiling that the government tried to impose on contracts touched off a wave of strikes in the transport sector. This followed two years of distinct prosperity for wage earners and especially for the “middle classes” (a prosperity, moreover, not unrelated to the volume of EEC credits, large in relation to the size of the country and the source of spectacular cases of corruption). The transport strikes led the government to resort to civilian conscription under a mitigated form of a state of

siege, which impedes exercise of the right to strike.

It was this situation that led to the radicalization of the trade-union confederation, the UGT. The UGT has always followed a policy of collaboration with the bosses. Up until two years ago, it had a political conciliation procedure that gives a good picture of this confederation. The Socialists, who are the majority in the unions, infallibly accepted parity with the representatives of the right-wing parties.

Internal conflict within the UGT

However, through the 1988 struggles, in which it played a predominant role, the UGT opposed the government’s project head-on, and decided to take the initiative of the general strike.

At first, even the right-wing sectors of the UGT supported this strike. Then only two days before it was to start, as a result of direct pressure from the government, they decided to dissociate themselves from it. This set off a process of internal conflict in the UGT that will have important consequences in the future.

In the run up to the strike, the country’s “underlying forces” went into action. The archbishop of Braga declared that general strikes “usually have revolutionary aims.” In the public enterprises, the chiefs and department heads circulated lists for all the workers to write down whether they were supporting the strike or not, and if so why.

In the countryside, the Rural Guard went around the parishes trying to find out who was promoting the strike. A trade-union leader and a well-known leader of the PSR (Revolutionary Socialist Party, Portuguese section of the Fourth International), Manuel Graça, was stabbed by a boss when he

was organizing an assembly of workers in a small footwear factory in the Aveiro district.

The main public transport companies tried to force their workers to provide a “minimal service,” which was exactly the service that the company normally provided. That is, you have a right to strike as long as you don’t use it.

In the face of this sort of pressure, the strike was a success in every respect. Between a million and a half and two million workers went on strike. The strike was between 80% and 100% effective in transportation and industry. It extended throughout the country, and the private sector was significantly affected.

Crushing electoral victory for the right

However, the action was mainly a passive strike, with symbolic pickets, and the workers stayed away from their workplaces. There were some exceptions. In the Feira area and in Aveiro, thousands of workers stopped all traffic and went into the small factories calling on workers there to come out on strike. In some cases they confronted the bosses — for example, an administrator of a German transnational company, who threatened them with a shotgun.

This strike occurred only six months after a crushing electoral victory for the PSD, the main right-wing party, which for the first time got a comfortable parliamentary majority. Those elections were the culmination of an ebb in social struggles, of division of the left parties and unions and of the incapacity of the reformist left to offer a political alternative, after two austerity governments headed by Socialist Party leader Mário Soares.

Despite the erosion of confidence it has suffered, the government may still retain strong electoral and social support. The petty bourgeoisie had a very mixed reaction to this strike. A large section did not participate or opposed it. Thus, the privatization of the public sector — which the bourgeoisie calls the “end of March 11 in the enterprises” — and the new labor laws may be imposed by a parliament in which a disciplined majority supports the government.

What has changed — and this change is a radical one — is the fighting spirit, a will to unity, that took hold, increasing confidence in the possibility of organizing palpable struggles against the government and not just symbolic protests.

The process is tending to change the national political panorama. The UGT is

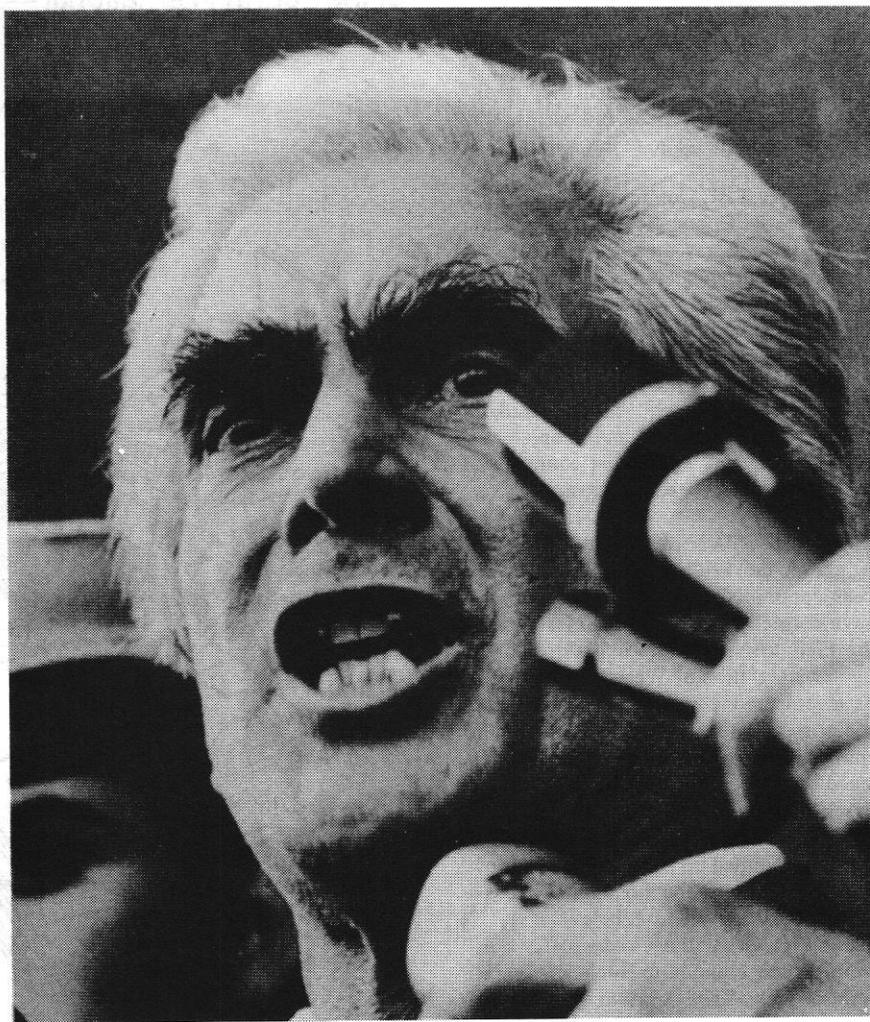
1. March 11, 1975, was the date of the failed right-wing coup led by the head of the military government, General Spínola. The coup was launched to stop the radicalization of the political and social situation after the toppling of the Salazarist dictatorship in April 1974. After the failure of the right-wing move, the radicalization speeded up dramatically and many radical measures were adopted: nationalizations of banking, industries and land. Most of the big capitalists left the country.

being shaken by the conflict between the Socialist majority and the pro-governmental minority. In the confederation's biggest union, the Southern Portugal Bank Workers, a united SP-CP slate could win the elections and thereby marginalize the right, which has predominated in this sector.

On the other hand, within the CGTP, the consequences are less obvious but no less important. The general strike turned unity with the UGT, which up until now has been taboo, into a key question for conducting protests against the government's policy. Forms of united action are being consolidated, like general assemblies of factory workforces led not by the unions but by the Workers' Commissions, local united-front organs, as a means of achieving more representativeness and overcoming trade-union divisions.

However, the most profound and long-term consequence is that a large section of the trade-union leaders are taking their distance from the Communist Party's traditional conceptions for the trade-unions,

Portuguese Communist Party leader Alvaro Cunhal is presiding over a profound crisis inside the party (DR)



which have favored self-affirmation and propagandistic sectarianism. These ideas stem from the "third-period" education of the central cadres of the Portuguese Communist Party.

Opposition currents inside the Communist Party

In the context of the crisis pervading the CP today, this trade-union angle is undoubtedly the most important in the thinking of Communist Party members.

Until now, only two opposition currents have expressed themselves within the party. One of them functions underground. It publishes a bulletin that parodies the party's official publication. It calls itself *SIP-Transperencia* ("Information Service-Openness"). According to the press, it is made up of veteran CP cadres who criticize the party's strategy on the basis of Leninist principles and radical opposition to Brezhnevism.

The other more outspoken current, the "Group of Six," is made up of very well-known Communist cadres, including one former member of the Central Committee. They have publicly issued projects for a party congress, specifically as regards its statutory functioning. And they claim they are presenting a draft program.

The emergence of these currents has aroused a lively internal debate, despite a very harsh response from the leadership, which has attributed the whole development of criticism to the influence of the bourgeois press.

The CP's impasse, which has been reflected in a decline of its activity and even its electoral work, is the result of the *exhaustion* of a strategy that had its moment of glory in 1974 and the first half of 1975 — the conquest of positions of influence in the state apparatus as the fundamental instrument for participation, in no matter how indirect a way, in the state administration. This period ended.

However, re-adaptation is very difficult, if not impossible, in the framework of the mythology of the CP's old program of "national democratic revolution," which the CP leadership claims should be carried further. In fact, the objective of this revolution is a government of the democratic bourgeoisie. That clearly has been established. And it is obviously antagonistic to CP influence in the society as well as to the left as a whole.

Although the answer of the Group of Six seems to follow the lines of the Italian CP, and has had a big impact on the intellectual elements in the party, many intermediary or leading cadres have stood apart from the conflict, waiting for natural laws to change the top echelons, given the age of the CP leaders. The party's trade union leaders are probably in this category.

CP leaders hostile to perestroika

However, the CP's worst problem is that this crisis is being aggravated by the fact that all the opposition currents are associating themselves with *perestroika*, toward which Alvaro Cunhal and his leadership are not hiding their reservations and objections.

In the internal investigation carried out against the Group of Six, it was even insinuated that the latter might have been promoted or financed by the Kremlin. For a party whose political culture has always centered around the USSR, that is quite a change. We are seeing a tumultuous opening of this process, but it has a long way to go yet.

Haunted by the specter of a Carrillo on one side and the threat of a Juquin on the other², the CP leadership rightly feels very insecure.

In all its ramifications, the general strike and the change in the climate for working-class mobilizations that it involved will have a fundamental importance for the future of the left. ★

2. Santiago Carrillo, the leader of the Eurocommunist turn of the Spanish Communist Party, which opened the Juquin, leader of the *renovateur* current that has emerged out of the French CP, a current breaking from traditional Stalinism toward the left (see IV 138).

IN AUSTRIA, EEC fever seems to have broken out. All the "pillars of society" are for the quickest possible entry into the European Community. Poll results are being passed around that are supposed to support such a course. In the business magazine *Gewinn* ("Profit"), managers could calculate what "EEC membership would offer them personally." The left is still asleep on the EEC question. We don't think that this should continue, and so we are opening up a discussion with the following contribution.

1 THE EEC is a supernatural imperialist institution. Its aim is to bring capitalist Europe economically, politically and eventually militarily under a single roof. Then, alongside the USA and Japan, there would be a third Western "center."

The central decisions in the EEC are made in the top bureaucratic bodies (for example in the EEC Commission). The European parliament leads a shadow existence. Despite all the myths, the EEC is a profoundly political construction. Among other things, there is an EEC standpoint on the Middle East problem, on the situation in Central America and on the situation in South East Asia. There is a plethora of plans for "European strike forces" (including atomic weapons). As early as 1983, a resolution was passed aiming at a common EEC arms industry.

Robert "Bobby" Graf himself, the People's Party [OVP, the main bourgeois party] economics minister, could not get away from the close intertwining of the political and the military. "What did NATO do in the Falklands war? In this case, I have to equate the EEC with NATO."

Even if social democratic illusions are being spun out (take Peter Jankowitsch's statement, for instance: "The European societies have become more open to the world (including the third world), more social and more modern"), and the Eurocommunists fantasize about "democratizing the EEC," European imperialism is not one whit better than its American and Japanese counterparts.

2 TODAY, the EEC is marked by numerous crises. It suffers from an especially serious one in agriculture (gigantic overproduction), which eats up more than half of the EEC budget. Nonetheless, the outlook is for further integration. The next major stage is supposed to be the achievement of a "free internal market" for goods, services, capital and labor by 1992. The locomotives of integration are France and West Germany, which are also establishing joint military units.

3 THE APPROACH of 1992 and the changed political situation in recent years (the end of the Socialist Party [SP] government, the "Austro-Turn") have put wind in the sails of the Austrian EEC lobby. The Great Coalition [of the OVP and the SP] is striving for "the greatest possible

integration and collaboration." Vranitzky [the social-democratic premier] is not excluding membership at a later time, if a way can be found to get around the problem of Austria's neutral status. This process cannot go fast enough for the industrialists' association, big agri-business (Raiffeisen) and the FPO [Freedom Party, the far-right bourgeois party], which would like to see Austria become a full member of the EEC overnight.

Reservations about closer links with the EEC (today it already accounts for 68% of Austria's imports and 63% of its exports) are held by sections of the rather middle-class Federal Chamber of Commerce and the farmers' organizations. They fear, rightly, that they will be flattened by the EEC monopolies. The big papers (*Kurier*, *Krone*, *Presse*) are all out for the EEC. As so often happens, nothing has been heard from the unions, except that they are gallantly relaying the government's policy downward.

The public argument of the EEC advocates is a simple one. What is involved is access to a market of 320 million people. Inside it, there are a lot of possibilities and also, to some extent, opportunities for exercising influence; outside of it, we face marginalization and isolation. Privately, the argument goes quite differently. Generally, markets are contracting, the pressure of competition is rising, only the toughest will survive. Therefore, we need rationalization (that is, more unemployment), increased cooperation with the multinationals, deregulation and so on, even if the "weak" sectors (the nationalized industries, sections of the farmers) go to the wall.

4 FOR THE Communist Party (CP), the EEC question offers another chance to to replay the old record of "defending Austrian interests" and of "anti-monopoly coalition." Characteristically in the CP's positions on European integration, the working class takes a back seat. What is in the forefront is "the threat to our status under international law," "the danger to our economic independence" and so on — as if Austria were not a capitalist country and did not have a bourgeois class state.

5 THE STATEMENTS of the Greens on the EEC question so far have been contradictory. On the one hand, they have correctly pointed to the closeness of the EEC to NATO and explained that a tighter integration of Western Europe will be accompanied by more democracy, more social security and more concern for the environment. Austria is said to be threatened by a sort of "cold Anschluss" and to risk becoming "the eastern frontier of the Western alliance."² Quite correctly, they have also pointed up the fact that the transnational activity of the monopolies needs a transnational answer from below.

However, what the Greens offer concretely runs counter to such an overall point of view. "The agrarian question can

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Drawing by Plantu from *Ça manque de femmes*, éditions La Découverte/Le Monde, Paris

be more easily and better solved nationally than internationally," "small, manageable units are better and more human," "our own [sic] production and our farmers have to be protected..."

6 AS REVOLUTIONARY Marxists, we have no interest either in a primitive process of concentration and centralization of capital or any backwardness, no matter how it is organized. Therefore, we do not make any fetish out of the "ceaseless growth of the EEC" and so-called progress in it. But nor are we going to fall back into narrow nationalism and sing the praises of the red-white-red Alpine Republic.

We are against the EEC, because it goes hand in hand with more influence for the big bourgeoisie, more unemployment, less respect for the environment, a new impetus to the arms race, a tighter grip on the third world and so on. However, we do not in any way defend Austria's small-time capitalism and its political wildlife preserve against its international competition.

7 IN ORDER to understand the negative consequences of joining the EEC, the most important thing is not to refer to the disastrous results of the integration of the "border lands" such as Greece, Spain or Ireland. It is enough today to take a closer look at the expertise of the apostles of the EEC to understand what we are facing.

For example, in order to "bring Austrian universities closer to the EEC standard," a "Council for Educational Reform" has already been set up. The chair of this illustrious body is the general director of the Neusiedl paper mill. The concrete objectives of this council are to "reduce study time," "to change the content of studies" and to introduce "accelerated courses" — that is, to tighten the screws of the technocratic university reform.

For the VOEST-Alpine Donawitz steelworks, entry into the EEC would be a death sentence. Enormous overcapacities in the EEC steel industry would mean immediate "adjustments," that is, closures. In the language of the VOEST-Alpine personnel paper, *Blick*, it is put as follows: "Above all, the production and supply quotas that exist in the EEC would replace current export relations."

While the weekly *Profil* is taking up the cause of the EEC, to bring down the "monopolies," narrow trading margins and bring fresh air into Austria so that it will finally become "a competitive country," it is precisely the Austrian sugar industry that is centralizing further in order to prepare for the EEC. It is planning to close its factories in Enns and Siegendorf.

8 ANY nationalistic measures (protective tariffs, quotas, still more subsidies for agriculture) will lead us into an abyss, above all because they split the international working class. The manifold crises of capitalism demand international

answers. The problem of unemployment calls for an international campaign for the immediate introduction of the 35-hour week without loss of pay (on paper, the European Confederation of Labor has already decided this). The steel crisis calls for a conference of European steel workers to adopt measures for a cross-border struggle.

Defenders of the environment have to cooperate internationally against the ecological catastrophes. A Europe of the workers, unemployed and oppressed has to be counterposed to the Europe of the monopolies through real activity from below.

9 THE LEFT in Austria has so far hardly given a thought to the question of the EEC. That situation has to be changed quickly. Haider [leader of the FPO, a far-right demagogue] goes along with the demand for a referendum, which in and of itself is not incorrect. To counter the manipulative oversimplification in the Euro-craze, there is a need to explain concisely how the EEC is in fact set up...

In the present unfavorable relationship of forces, it is appropriate to concentrate on clarifying the left, parts of the workers' movement, the Greens, "sensitized layers" and so on. A serious policy of alliances (with farmers threatened by economic extinction) will be possible only when "heavy battalions" have gone into motion, to which potential allies could really relate.

Even if alliances, by definition, involve certain retreats from pure proletarian positions, the support of sections of the petty bourgeoisie can serve only to win such a future, not to defend their present miserable status quo. An effective answer to the problem of agriculture would therefore have a transitional character — nationalization of agri-business under the control of the small- and medium-sized farmers, as well as the consumers; nationalization of the Raiffeisen complex under similar conditions; voluntary combination of small farmers in producers' cooperatives.

10 BESIDES carrying on its own activities, SOAL has to confront the Greens with the EEC question. The problem of Austria moving still closer to the EEC is much too important a matter to be left to the government and the parliament. As in the cases of Zwentendorf, Hainburg and the fighter planes³, the decision should be left to a referendum. So that the EEC lobby and FPO leader Haider will not win, "EEC-No Thanks!" committees should be formed throughout Austria at the proper time that are able to wage a colorful, imaginative and forward-looking campaign. ★

1. A "Turn" toward openly anti-labor policies; the term is borrowed from the Kohl government in Germany, which proclaimed a turn to free-enterprise principles, a sharp break from Social Democratic policies.

2. Austria arose as an eastern frontier state of medieval Catholic Europe. Its name derives from that role.

3. Zwentendorf and Hainburg were ecological struggles; the fighter planes were a major military purchase against which a struggle was waged.

Krupp-Rheinhausen — an exemplary struggle for jobs

WORKERS at the Krupp Rheinhausen steelworks have launched strike actions and a “stop-go” work protest since last November, when the management let slip plans to close the plant [see IV 134]. Their struggle — massively supported by other workers and the local population at large in Duisburg-Rheinhausen — has become a national and international focus for the fight against closures and redundancies.

Darrel Moellendorf interviewed Hermann Dirkes on February 27 about the steel workers’ fight and the difficulties they face from all sides, including their own union leadership. Hermann Dirkes lives and works in Duisburg, being a member of the factory council at the Thyssen Eisenbahn und Häfer inland docks, where 2,250 people are employed.

WHAT distinguishes the struggle at Duisburg-Rheinhausen from others in West Germany?

The Krupp Steelworks’ struggle in Duisburg-Rheinhausen is now in its fourteenth week. That makes it the longest struggle in one factory in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). What’s special about it? First, the 5,300 workers employed at Krupp-Rheinhausen have been extremely militant. They have developed very strong strike methods, unlike any others in the FRG, but similar to those in other countries. The struggle has spread widely alongside the union, but not against it. Officially, there is no strike today in Rheinhausen. Nonetheless, there is a very sharp labour struggle.

There has been resistance to massive lay-offs before in the FRG. What’s new is the duration of this particular struggle, and its radicalism. The workers at the Krupp Steelworks are not alone — they have had broad support and solidarity from the entire Rheinhausen community of Duisburg, where 60,000 people live. They have the sympathy and solidarity of broad circles inside the unions, not just in IG Metall, but also in the public service workers’ union, print workers’ union, business, banking and insurance union and even the police union.

The current stage began on November 26 last year, with a more or less spontaneous work stoppage. It achieved its highest point so far on December 10, where the situation

was reported by the bourgeois press as “resembling a general strike”. And that was right. Streets were blocked, important bridges over the Rhine were blocked, the autobahn was blocked, production stopped and a variety of other spectacular actions occurred.

In Rheinhausen itself, a “town committee” is active, which meets twice a week. At first there were a couple of hundred people attending; today, at least a thousand show up for each meeting.

Solidarity is coming not only from the unions and the community, and not only from those steel workers who are affected, but from the entire region. It’s coming from the churches and the schools. The Rheinhausen grade school and high school students have gone on strike twice. Both times there were massive demonstrations of over 10,000 young people. There have also been a number of days of action, when the largest steel plants in Duisburg (which is at the centre of West German steel production) have been closed down.

There have been massive and repeated strikes: parades of 1,000-1,500 have marched to other steel plants and a nearby mine to win solidarity from other workers.

But these experiences have also been mixed. In some factories, the workers were prepared to talk, give solidarity, lead demonstrations, distribute information and collect money. But in others, such as Krupp in Bochum and the “Rheinpreussen” pit, the process has been more complicated. The workers there have been very reserved.

This is no accident. In these sorts of places there hasn’t been any good union work for many years, and the majority of the factory councils are committed to a social partnership perspective.

■ Why has this struggle become so militant?

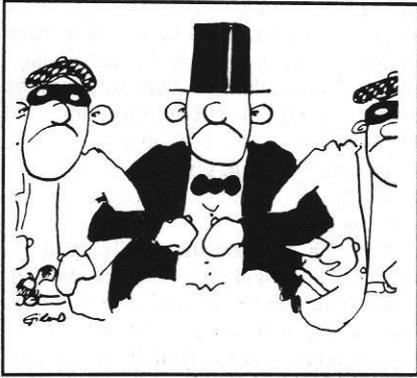
On November 26, by chance, the factory council discovered some news that was a bombshell for Rheinhausen. The leaders of Thyssen and Mannesmann — both big steel companies with their main production centres in Duisburg — had secretly agreed with Krupp to a “cooperation concept”. Krupp was to give its production of trains and tram rails to Thyssen by mid-1988, and its smelting process to Mannesmann by the end of the same year. The entire Krupp foundry, rolling process, cokery and training centre in Rheinhausen were to be closed. Some 5,300 jobs were hanging in the balance.

You must remember that at the high point of steel production, in the early 1970s, 16,000 people were employed in this works. In Rheinhausen there’s a Krupp hospital; parks, streets and lakes are named after members of the dynasty. Rheinhausen could just as well be called Krupphausen. Steel has been produced there for generations. And its 60,000 inhabitants are economically dependent on the Krupp works.

Originally, the plan was to have been made public on April 1, 1988. The discovery of the plan by the factory council on November 26 last year sparked off an immediate strike the following day in reaction to this callous manoeuvre. On the following Monday [November 30] there was an enormous public factory meeting. Normally these occur four times a year and are not open to the public. Twelve thousand people attended this meeting from all the steelworks in Duisburg, from other industries and from the regional population. The management sought to justify its policy. This brought forth a torrent of eggs and the director had to take cover.

Another important reason for the militancy of the Krupp workers is that since the high point of production in the 1970s, thousands upon thousands of jobs have been eliminated. The unemployment rate for Rheinhausen already stands at 20%. The steel companies have been claiming that

“There has been massive resistance to lay-offs before. What’s new is the duration of this particular struggle, and its radicalism”



they must rationalize production, reduce the number of employees in order to remain economically competitive with foreign companies. At the beginning of the 1980s there was clear rank and file resistance to this systematic elimination of jobs. In 1982-83 a town committee appeared for the first time to support the struggle within the factory. Then in 1986-87, many steel companies began a series of mass closures. This time entire communities were affected, like Thyssen-Hattingen, Thyssen-Oberhausen and Kloeckner-Max Huette in Bavaria.

In early 1987, the director of Krupp-Rheinhausen tried to eliminate 2,000 jobs. He sought the cooperation of the factory council leaders and the rank and file by saying: "We must rationalize production. We have to release 2,000 wage earners, and if you don't accept this then we'll just have to close down the entire plant." There was massive resistance against this ultimatum. During this period an important change occurred: as a result of the elections held every three years in the steel industry, the majority on the factory council changed. The new majority was heterogeneous, but politically to the left.

On the present factory council there are declared communists, revolutionaries and left socialists supporting a wide spectrum of parties and political orientations. In the last few years a layer of progressive union functionaries has arisen as well.

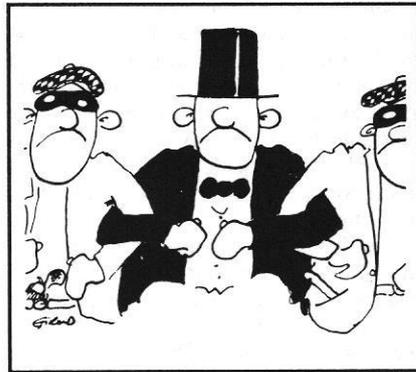
■ How has the union reacted to this employer's offensive?

IG Metall called for an industry-wide strike on January 18, 1987. But it was not willing to push for a duration of the strike. The leaders of this union continually tried to reach an agreement with the bosses in the form of pension plans or compensation for the job losses through retraining programmes for younger workers and the so-called Employment Associations. These were something that IG Metall demanded during the entire year of 1987 in opposition to a plan put forward by the employers' association called the Steel Fund. The steel companies, with public financial aid, proposed to fund an endowment that would provide for retraining younger workers, while older workers were to receive their usual retirement payments early, beginning at 55. IG Metall correctly refused this plan and put forward instead the proposal for

Employment Associations.

In distinction to the Steel Fund, with this plan no worker was to lose employment. All the surplus labour power was to be transferred to the Employment Associations. There, workers would receive full wage compensation, whereas in the Steel Fund plan the ceiling was around 77% of the previous net wage. The Employment Associations were to develop alternative forms of production.

It was a nice model which, naturally, could only function if there were a harmonious capitalist society. It had a certain impact on the rank and file and the population of the area, but it never became a reality. It quickly became apparent that IG Metall was never really prepared to push for these Employment Associations. We took note of this when, in May 1987, a document on IG Metall's negotiations with the steel bosses came into our hands. The central themes of the discussions were the continuation of old ways of cooperation and a "solution" that included a new industry-wide plan for closures. In total, 35,000 workers were to be signed out of their jobs. Of these, 16,000 were to go through early



retirement.

We protested. We went on television. In the union, we applied pressure, protested against the time plan and looked for solidarity. In a coordinated action of unionists from five or six of the most important steel plants resolutions were written proposing an alternative. We demanded that the IG Metall leadership struggle for "rationalization protection". We thought it was necessary to wrest a contract from the corporations for no lay-offs, no plant closures and the immediate reduction of the working week from 38 to 35 hours.

We also put forward a unified pension plan for the entire industry. Under present conditions there are quite varied pension plans for those taking early retirement. With one company it might be 100% of the wage, with another 90% and with yet another even lower. Another of our demands was a complete ban on the "loaning out" of workers. There are corporations that "loan" their workers out to others. We wanted this abolished across the whole industry.

This plan could have been realized by industry-wide strike action. But not a single factory council received even a letter from

the union leadership explaining why the proposals weren't taken up.

■ A demand has been put forward to socialize the steel industry. Is this a realistic goal at this point, or even a solution at all?

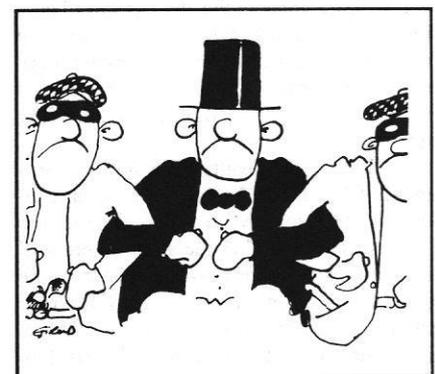
There have been many forums which have dealt with the question of the socialization of the steel industry. IG Metall is traditionally on record, in paragraph two of its statutes, as being for the socialization of the largest capitalist industries and the banks.

At the beginning of the 1980s there was an intensive debate within the steel industry that centered around updating this demand. The discussion was initiated from the base of the union. The focus, then, was Dortmund-Hoesch, the large Hoesch steel plants. There were resolutions from union members in practically every steel factory demanding that IG Metall take the call for socialization seriously.

At that time the Schmidt government, the Social Democratic Party (SPD)-Liberal coalition, was in Bonn. But that was near the end of the coalition. And the debate was broken off quickly after the Kohl government came into office on March 6, 1983. It was clear that with this reactionary government the demand to socialize the industry could not be carried through. One could demand it, but it was not a concrete political goal.

On the other hand, the union bureaucracy was revealed as never being serious about this demand. A majority of the IG Metall congress in 1983 voted for nationalization, and the programme containing the demand was published in 1985 as the "Steel Policy Programme". But with the change in government diminishing the prospects for a campaign to socialize the industry, a new space for manoeuvre was created for the bureaucracy. The programme was pushed further and further into the background. Yet some very important things are included in it, among them the declaration that they want to realize the socialization of the entire industry — both profitable and non-profitable alike. Unfortunately, this programme stands only on paper. It was an important political success for the left in the union, but it exists only on paper.

In Rheinhausen, the Steel Policy Programme played a role in the discussions very quickly. The social-democratic mini-



sters who came here were confronted with its demands. They responded: "Take a look at Britain, at France, at Italy. There the steel industry is nationalized. What's come of it? Nothing. Rationalization and the elimination of jobs occurred there even more quickly than in Germany".

It's true that in Britain 60% of the steel industry was destroyed by 1980-81, that in France over 40% of the industry is lost and that now new rationalization steps are happening in the Italian steel industry, putting 25,000 jobs at risk. But, of course, what the social democrats didn't say is that these nationalized industries have functioned exactly like normal capitalist industries. They are controlled by the big banks, they have the same profit orientation, the same lack of regard for social needs, for jobs and for the interests of working people. In refusing socialization of the steel industry they entangled themselves in a curious contradiction, because in one and the same breath they declared that in these countries production levels had been artificially sustained.

One problem, of course, remains unchanged. We have a reactionary national government in Bonn and a social-democratic government in Nordrhein Westfalen that is on the right wing of that spectrum. They both want no intervention in the existing system of property relations. So, it is still very difficult today to make the demand for the socialization of the industry into a concrete one. Most of the workers know this, although in principle they are in favor of it. Most of the left knows this too and up to now, unfortunately, we have not been able to unify around a common perspective, although this is being discussed now.

■ Recently there was a new steel conference. What's the significance of this?

In this sort of situation where there is so much resistance, the politicians have to get active or at least simulate activity. And that is what's happening. On February 24 there was a conference on the steel, iron and coal industries. Taking part in this conference were business people from the biggest capitalist concerns, politicians and a handful of unionists — very moderate, right-wing unionists.

What were the results? The state government of Nordrhein Westfalen is to contribute 500 million DM to politico-economic "structural reform" in the state. There will also be contributions of 400m DM from the federal government and 100m DM from the EEC. The "reform" is to consist of luring employers to Nordrhein Westfalen,

opening new factories and supporting new research projects.

But what does this mean for Rheinhausen? Not many Krupp employees put much hope in this conference, although Rheinhausen was a topic of the discussion. Above all, those gathered agreed that the plant could no longer be maintained. Formally, it is to remain a decision of the management whether or not the plant remains open. And Krupp has declared that there

are no other financial alternatives to closing the plant in coordination with Thyssen and Mannesmann. It was agreed that training centres should be maintained and built up in Rheinhausen and that a regional training centre should be established there.

The Krupp management announced that it would make a

formal decision on the closing of the Rheinhausen plant some time after the conference. This could occur any time within the next few months. But if one listens to the commentary of the politicians with respect to this conference, if one reads the press attentively and between the lines, it is perfectly clear that all those who took part in the conference agreed that Rheinhausen must die.

The Krupp workers understood this immediately. As the results of this conference became known through the media on the evening of February 24, the night shift went on strike again. The early morning shift went on strike and led a demonstration of a thousand workers through Rheinhausen to the other side of the Rhine and the city hall in Duisburg.

So the rage and the fury of the Rheinhauseners has further increased. The question is, though, what perspective can advance the struggle and how long can this high level of combativity be maintained before it falls into resignation?

Yesterday morning it was made known in the media that the IG Metall negotiating commission and the employers' association sealed an agreement which will shorten the length of the working week from 38 hours to 36.5 hours with full wage compensation, beginning on November 2, 1988 and running through to October 1990. Wages will rise 2%, first on March 1 this year and again in August 1989. Taking inflation and tax increases into account, this

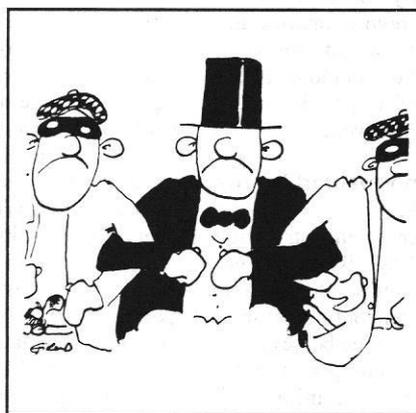
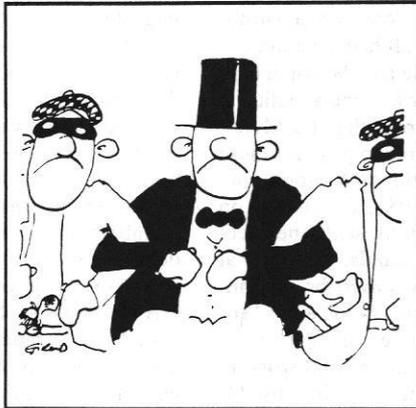
means a decrease in wages. This agreement so far has not been viewed as a catastrophe or even a serious set-back. Yet the employment effects of the 36.5-hour week will be absolutely minimal. Even the immediate implementation of the 35-hour week in the steel industry would save only 8,000 of the currently existing jobs, and not create a single new one.

Although, for now, the possibility of widening this struggle has been knocked out of our hands, the Rheinhauseners will fight on and they will count on the solidarity of other unions — not only in the steel industry but in other industries — and the solidarity of the local population. I'm pretty sure of this.

The first reaction after the February 24 conference was a display of the will to continue. They know that they do not stand alone. And they also know that Krupp-Rheinhausen is not the only workplace threatened in the region. Just in the last few days we have read in the papers that Philips will release 1,500 employees in the neighbouring community of Grefeld. The BBC factory in Mannheim will close an operation, laying off 1,500. The mining industry is to cut 35,000 jobs between now and 1995, threatening 30,000-40,000 more in related industries. The automobile industry declared recently that the high point for employment has passed by. It's only a matter of time until new lay-offs occur. The paradox is that this produces the possibility for the Rheinhauseners to widen their network of solidarity and increase the intensity of the strike.

Still, the Rheinhauseners are involved in a very difficult struggle. Whether or not it advances will depend on many factors. The pressure grows stronger every day; it reaches them from the leaders of IG Metall, from the SPD and from the government. Even in the media a certain trend is apparent. In the beginning, the reports were largely positive. With a few exceptions, this is no longer the case.

The courage which the rank and file needs to struggle is dependent on solidarity now more than ever before. Such solidarity can be expressed concretely in donations, in sympathy actions, in the dissemination of information, in solidarity strikes, in sending solidarity delegations and in inter-union discussions. Such solidarity knows no borders. It's important for unionists in Europe and North America in particular to keep themselves informed about this exemplary struggle and to pass on the information. It's not a unique struggle or a unique problem. And this could be the successful example of a struggle against the capitalist crisis. ★



AROUND THE WORLD



CANADA

No Pasaran!

ON MARCH 19, 1,200 people gathered in front of the US consulate in Toronto to express outrage at the deployment of over 3,000 US troops in Honduras. Here, as in the USA, demonstrators met with instances of police violence and arrests. This report is from the April 1988 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, newspaper of a Fourth Internationalist group, the Alliance for Socialist Action:

WITH CHANTS of "No Pasaran!" — "They shall not pass!", an anti-fascist slogan from the Spanish civil war — the angry, militant crowd, many of them youth and university students, sat down on the pavement in front of the consulate effectively blocking off traffic for up to an hour. The demonstration, called by Canadian Action for Nicaragua and the Toronto Anti-Intervention Coalition (TAIC), was addressed by speakers from Nicaragua, from anti-intervention and solidarity groups, and from the Toronto Labour Council.

Barry Weisleder, speaking on behalf of the TAIC, pointed in his remarks to the danger of a false sense of security which began to affect some activists following the defeat of contra aid in the US congress earlier this month. In the light of this week's events, the anti-intervention movement cannot afford to relax its efforts. To this end, he pointed to preparations currently underway in the US for a series of actions to culminate in nation-wide protests in the week of April 30.

The groundwork for this explosive response to Washington's most recent aggression was laid by months of considerable activity on the part of solidarity and anti-intervention groups in southern Ontario.

On February 2 over 300 people picketed in front of the same US consulate in opposition to Reagan's request to congress for an additional \$36.2m for the contras. A few days later, 200 activists gathered in Toronto to discuss ways to pressure Ottawa and Washington to end US intervention throughout Central America...

NICARAGUA

FSLN appeal

A WEEK after the Sapoà meeting between the contras and the Nicaraguan leadership, the FSLN, and the 60-day cease-fire agreement, the FSLN issued the following statement from Managua on March 25, 1988:

"THE SIGNING of the Sapoà accord sets the tone for a solid and lasting peace in Nicaragua. This accord asserts the sovereignty, the self-determination, the independence and the will for peace and democracy of the legitimately constituted government of Nicaragua, which defends the programme and the perspectives of struggle of the Sandinista Front.

"The Sandinista Front will continue to defend peasants' right to land, the right to work, the right of workers to organize and the right to freedom of expression by the workers, peasants and all social and economic sectors in the nation.

"The Sandinista Front supports the Sapoà accord, which does not put into question the bases and transformations of the revolutionary process, whose constitution reaffirms political pluralism, the mixed economy and non-alignment. The Sandinista Front appeals to all the heroic people of Nicaragua to demand in a combative manner that the counter-revolutionary hierarchy, as well as the US government, apply and respect the accord.

"The Sandinista Front demands that the US president and the democratic and republican parties stop all open or covert aid and respect the Sapoà accords. It demands that the US government withdraw all North American troops sent to Honduras... The Sandinista Front urges the Honduras government to no longer remain a tool of North American politics...

"The Sandinista Front appeals to workers, peasants and all the Nicaraguan people to continue to fulfill the tasks demanded by the nation in terms of military, economic, political-ideological and political-diplomatic defence in the face of the aggressive policies that the US deploys in every way possible against Nicaragua... The Sandinista Front urges the US government to establish a direct dialogue with Nicaragua so that relations between the two countries can be normalized." ★

Some recommendations were adopted at the February conference with near unanimous approval, including the following: 1) Participation in mass Central America anti-intervention protests at the World Economic Summit scheduled for Toronto, June 19-21. 2) Participation in similar protests on or around April 30, in conjunction with actions expected to occur across the US. 3) That there be another Ontario-wide Central America solidarity conference, to be held in the summer or fall, with a dual emphasis on "popular education" and developing strategies for the Ontario movement. Such a conference may create the framework for an Ontario anti-intervention coalition.

Undoubtedly, the situation on the ground in Central America will be a primary factor in determining the pace of the next period of activity, not only in Ontario, but also in Quebec, the Maritimes and the West. Already, coalitions are forming to respond to the rapidly unfolding developments in a number of cities. ★

USA

Victory against FBI spying

AN UNPRECEDENTED victory for constitutional rights was registered at a federal court house in New York on March 17. "The government's decision to throw in the towel in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) case brings this 15-year fight to a successful conclusion," Jack Barnes, national secretary of the SWP, told a news conference.

Attorney General Edwin Meese decided to withdraw a Justice Department appeal of the August 1986 ruling of US District Judge Thomas Griesa that declared it illegal for the FBI and other police outfits to use informers, disruption programs, or break-ins against political organizations and activists [see IV 105]. Meese was joined in this action by 11 other heads of government agencies.

Griesa's ruling in favor of the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), and his 1987 injunction barring the government from using information in the 10 million pages of files obtained illegally by the FBI, are now the law of the land.

"This places a valuable weapon securely in the hands of every fighter for democratic rights and political liberties. It is a weapon that can and should be used widely and enthusiastically to win broader freedoms for everyone," Barnes noted.

"The court decision states that the use of FBI or other police informers to infiltrate and spy on people engaged in political activity is not a neutral act — it is a violation of the right of privacy and freedom of association. This is a historic victory that expands the space for political action free from government interference," Barnes emphasized.

The SWP's general counsel and attorney in this case, noted constitutional lawyer Leonard Boudin, pointed out that Griesa's decision was also the first time that a federal judge has ruled that burglaries carried out

by the FBI to steal or copy private papers or to plant microphones are violations of the Fourth Amendment, which was written to protect the people against illegal searches by the government.

And for the first time, a federal court ruled that a surreptitious campaign of disruption operations is against the law. In addition, the court awarded the SWP and YSA \$264,000 in damages. ★

● From *The Militant, newspaper of the SWP, March 25, 1988.*

ISRAELI STATE

Derech Nitzotz closed

DESPITE heavy local and international pressures, on February 18 Eli Suissa, the Jerusalem District Commissioner, implemented his threat and ordered the closure of the paper *Derech Nitzotz/Tariq A-Sharara* [see IV 136]. He did not give reasons for his decision, which was preceded by the arrest of Ribhi al-Aruri, a journalist on the paper.

The editorial board of the paper condemned the decision, which it described as "a black day for democracy and a dangerous new precedent, which will harm first and foremost the Israeli public".

Ribhi al-Aruri, from Ramallah, and his brother-in-law, Jamal Zakout, a trade unionist from Gaza, were arrested on February 16. They were beaten, starved and threatened during their interrogation.

Ribhi told his lawyer on February 28: "I was brought into detention, and some policemen entered the room, between six to eight I believe, and started beating me...with their fists and kicked me for about an hour, and beat my head against the wall, screaming 'PLO journalist'....They ordered me to undress the upper half of my body without stopping the beating even for a second...then they brought me into a yard, covered with an asbestos ceiling through which the rain entered. They handcuffed my hand to a wall with a piece of iron around my back and covered my head with a sack, without letting me dress again...."

"The next day, another interrogator...threatened to keep me tied until I died, and reminded me of Muhammad al-Hawaja, who died during an interrogation, and of Awad Hamdan....They tied me again in the same way, but this time my hands were pushed higher up my back. I stayed like this until Thursday night, without having anything to eat....On Friday morning, they put me into a tiny 'cupboard', where I was kept standing with hands tied to my back until the evening...."

"On Sunday morning, they took me out [of his cell], handcuffed my hands to my back and put me in the 'cupboard' again, where I stayed until Tuesday morning without food....I saw my lawyer for the first time only on Friday, February 26, and had the court session two days later in the presence of my lawyer. During that whole period I couldn't wash or change my

clothes." (As we go to press, we hear that Ribhi al-Aruri has been sentenced to six months administrative detention.)

According to the *Nitzotz* editorial board, "The closure of the newspaper is a McCarthyite step, and flows from purely political considerations, connected with the government's embroilment in the occupied territories. This is a desperate attempt to close the mouths of those calling for an end to the occupation and recognition of the PLO as the only way to achieve peace".

The board promised that it would continue its journalistic work, and, in accordance with the press law, which permits publication of a single issue of an unlicensed paper, the *Nitzotz* publishing house issued *Sawt al-Sharara* in Arabic on February 19, and *Ve Af Al Pi Hen* ("Nevertheless") in Hebrew on February 28, which continue the journalistic direction of the banned paper.

On February 28, the Israeli Journalists Association called for the abolition of the law empowering the District Commissioner — a relic of British colonial rule — to grant or deny a licence to a paper. They also demanded the restoration of *Derech Nitzotz's* licence. ★

● From News from Within, March 14, 1988

SWEDEN

Left union victory

A MAIN speaker at the May 14 all-Scandinavian rally in Copenhagen to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Fourth International (see page 27) will be Göte Kilden, a trade-union leader in the Volvo car plants in Sweden's main industrial center and a leader of the Swedish section of the Fourth International. The following feature is from the March 14 issue of *Klassekampen*, the paper of the Socialist Workers Party (SAP), Danish section of the Fourth International:

GÖTE KILDEN will speak not only as a representative of the Swedish section, but also as one of the leaders of the most extensive trade-union work carried out in recent times by a revolutionary organization in the developed world. The scope of this work was confirmed again by the union local [*fällesklub*] elections just held in at the Volvo plants in Göteborg, which, with 13,700 workers, form the biggest workplace in northern Europe. In this election, the trade-union opposition, of which Göte is one of the leaders, got more than a third of the votes. Göte himself was re-elected as shop steward for 800 workers at the Lundby truck factory.

"We waged a more solid election campaign than any time before," Göte said in a commentary of the results in the Socialist Party (Swedish section of the Fourth International) paper, *Internationalen*. He continued: "If we analyze the election results in the various departments, we see that we got our best results in the departments and club

districts that we have been doing trade-union work in for a long time.

"In the Lundby truck factory, where we have a deep roots, we won between 70% and 80% of the votes. In some of the shops, we got our best results ever. On the other hand, in the present situation we have no way to counter various unfound arguments and fabrications, especially in the club districts where the opposition has only individual supporters. Leaflets are not enough. We have to have an organized presence. In big units, such as the paint shop, we got only 15% of the votes. And that the same time, a lot of the workers do not vote at all.

"We have to remember, too, that the social democrats had an election budget of 250,000 crowns [about \$50,000]. If you compare that to our 12,000 crowns, you get an idea of what we were up against. The social democrats paid up to 200 people to do full time election work for three weeks for their election machine. But we had volunteers who, besides missing work, got up at 4am every morning to distribute leaflets.

"At the same time, we have seen censorship operating against working-class points of view. For example, *Dagens Eko* called me up to get my comment on the election. When they published an article later on the election, there was not a word of mine in it. On TV, there was a report that the social democrats got 75% of the vote. There was no rebuttal, nothing. A long interview with me was reduced to a few seconds.

"In 1980, the trade-union opposition got almost 45% of the vote. But at that time we were present in more of the big shops. We had significantly more people involved in the election work.... Today, the opposition is reduced essentially to the Socialist Party and a number of unaffiliated activists. In the light of that, it is not bad to have won almost 37% of the vote at northern Europe's biggest workplace. And this was against a ruling party given around 45% of the vote nationally by the polls. Our vote should be compared with that of the Communist Party a decade ago. It was the strongest at the time, but it never got more than 15% in union branch elections.

"Through our election campaign we managed to press the union branch leadership to the point that it 'pledged' to assure us an 8% wage increase both locally and centrally. If they stick to that, social-democratic finance minister Feldt's wage ceiling will be shattered. That would not have been possible if the union opposition had not pushed the demand for 1,000 crowns more a month so forcefully.

"All in all, it was not so bad that more than one in every three workers at Volvo said 'no' to the metal industry contract and voted for a radical trade-union alternative," Göte concluded.

The strength of the trade-union opposition was also confirmed from another point of view. The social-democratic daily *Aftonbladet* described the election result at Volvo as a grave warning to the metalworkers' union leadership. ★

Lessons of a major student rebellion

A WAVE of student protests welled up in Greece at the end of 1987 that not only rocked the government but shook up the left as well. It was a sudden explosion after eight years of apparently growing passivity and conservatism in the universities.

GERRY FOLEY

THE MAIN demands of the struggle were material. One of the problems most acutely felt by the students was housing. There is not a lot of university housing in Greece, and rents on the free market have skyrocketed out of sight. Students demanded that the government rent hotels to meet the most urgent needs. They also protested against a delay in the distribution of course manuals. In Greek universities, one manual is used for each course and given out for free by the government. But for the current academic year, the government had not yet distributed the books. In general, the actions were in protest against the "privatization" of higher education.

The financial squeeze on Greek universities had become very severe. At the beginning of November 1987, University of Athens president Mikael Stathopoulos announced that the funds for higher education had essentially been exhausted since the end of September, and that about a million dollars in supplementary credits would be necessary for the universities to meet minimum expenses until the end of the year.

The situation in higher education was clearly so bad that even the student fraction of the ruling PASOK party, the PASK, was forced to go along with the protests. The minister of education, Andonis Pritsis, even said originally that he would march at the head of the student protests. Needless to say, he quickly started talking out of the other side of his mouth, saying that the lack of money in higher education was the result of the poor management of the universities.

At the time the protests began, the largest fraction in the Greek national student organization, the EFEE, was the DAP, the student fraction of the right-wing New Democracy party. It got 31.38% of the vote in the 1987 EFEE elections. The second largest was the Communist Party fraction, the PSK, with 30.38%, followed by the PASK,

with 18.27%. PASK has been losing strength rapidly, alongside the declining credibility of the PASOK government.

The leading force in the student protests, however, was not the EFEE, but the Coordinating Committees of the occupied schools, the SEs, in which the Left Student Regroupments (ASF) held the majority. In the 1987 EFEE elections, the ASF got only 4.1% of the vote.

Thus, the student protests were an extremely important, unhoped for opportunity for the far left. They also had the advantage that the protests coincided with the fourteenth anniversary of the 1973 Polytechnic uprising against the dictatorship of the colonels, which has a great symbolic significance. It was the only mass rebellion against the dictatorship, and thereby in a sense saved the honor of the Greek left and of the Greek democratic movement. The dictatorship was finally ended by an agreement among bourgeois politicians in 1974.

Failure of far left to lead the struggle

Unfortunately, the far left let the opportunity of the 1987 student protests slip through its fingers. The following articles from the press of the Greek section of the Fourth International, the Organosis Komuniston Diethniston Elladas (OKDE), explain why. The unexpected explosion and the failure of the far left to lead it forward



have aroused a considerable interest in the behavior of the student generations of the economic crisis and in the tactical lessons of this most recent struggle.

The first article that follows is from the December issue of *Spartakos*, the paper of the OKDE. It explains the political dynamics of the struggle and the basic reasons for the failure of the ASF. The second article, from the January issue of *Marxistike Sypeirosis* ("Marxist Regroupment," journal of the OKDE), takes up the character of the new generations of students. It was part of a dossier in the magazine on the student movement, alongside another more theoretical article on the problems of developing a revolutionary Marxist program for education. The final article, from the February issue of *Spartakos*, deals with a recent reform of the examination system, which represents a continuation of the right-wing re-conversion of education.

In the 1988 EFEE elections, analyzed in

the March issue of *Spartakos*, all of the big political fractions lost, either in percentage or in the absolute number of votes that they got, and there was also a notable increase in abstentions.

The PASK dropped from 18.27% to 14.56%. The DAP increased its percentage from 31.38, but its absolute vote fell from

24,737 in 1987 to 22,827. The PSK increased its percentage from 30.38 in 1987 to 31.06, but its absolute vote fell from 23,950 in 1987 to 20,815. The only political fraction that increased both its percentage and its absolute vote was the ASF, which rose from 4.10% to 6.10%, and from 3,243 votes to 4,094. ★

A critical assessment of the new student movement

THE STUDENT actions have once again have revealed the subjective weaknesses of revolutionary forces with respect to the problem of confronting reformist mechanisms. The inability to take the correct political initiatives and to apply a correct tactic (the united front) are not just due to a lack of understanding of what should be done, but unfortunately have more deep-seated causes.

DEMETRES KATSONIDES

AN EMPIRICIST approach to the problem of reformism leads either to avoiding any collaboration with the reformists, or to adapting to them. The conception that reformists do not fight, that reformism is in all circumstances a strike-breaking mechanism and so on produces "surprises" and "disillusions."

In the recent events a combination of many factors led on the one hand to losing a political opportunity to radically alter the relationship of forces in the student movement in favor of revolutionary views and, on the other, to the breaking (hopefully only temporarily) of the dynamic of the student movement itself. Since this problem will reappear (and not only in the student arena), these weaknesses need to be analyzed so that revolutionary forces can be more effective, give impetus to the movement and at the same time change the relationship of forces in their favor.

The conditions that gave rise to the student explosion are more or less well known. Accumulating deficiencies on all levels (economic, teaching and the organization of education) led to it. Thus, occupations of the schools followed one after the other.

The relationship of forces in the schools took on a dynamic favorable to the revolutionary forces and unfavorable to forces that opposed the occupations. Coordinating committees (SEs, *Syntonistikes Epitropes*) were elected in the occupied schools in

which revolutionary forces, mainly organized in the Left Regroupment of Students (ASF, *Aristeres Syspeiroseis Foiteton*), gained the majority. From that time on, the narrowness of their outlook, and to a certain extent "big chiefism", took over.

Occupation committees were not centralized

Instead of coming together and electing a central coordinating body, the SEs remained separated from each other. Every school, and similarly every dominant group, tried to play the role of the center of the student movement. Everyone else was supposed submit to "domination" of one group in one school or another. The student movement as a whole and its demands disappeared from the horizon of these "leaders."

Not only was there no activity to unify the SEs of the various schools but no reasoned concrete idea was developed for getting out of the "ghetto" of the schools and for carrying out central demonstrations. On the other hand, it was not easy to make such a proposal because nothing was done to unify the committees. After this the death agony of the struggle began.

The PSK-KNE, after losing one school after another, came to understand these weaknesses in the movement. It shifted the center of gravity from the schools to the EFEE and to the ESEE [the national stu-

dent organizations], where it outweighed the ASF organizationally. Through these national organizations, the KNE [Communist youth] took the political initiative for organizing central demonstrations.

The "block of the occupations" was forced to follow in the train of an initiative that it should have taken itself. Regaining the initiative on the central level, the KNE drew the occupations politically and organizationally into its tow; where it could not control them, it sabotaged them.

The battle with the repressive forces on November 13 deprived the ASF of its only argument against the reformists, that they did not fight and were trying everywhere to hold the struggles back. Their primitive notion of reformism was upset in practice by a skirmish, and the ASF was left inarticulate and demoralized.

The ASF's impasses become worse. From then on, the KNE played with the "Block" of the occupations like a cat with a mouse. In all the demonstrations, it continually proposed an action front (even if indirectly) to the "Block" in all the demonstrations. But the "Block" had fallen into complete confusion, since yesterday's "strikebreakers" had become the "heroes" of the day.

The fact that the ASF were dragged, on the anniversary of the Polytechnic uprising, into a KNE political and organizational framework was the result and not the cause of the problems, as some claimed. The acceptance of this framework was the result of a lack of any alternative, in particular of any other organizational one, on the part of the "Block." Therefore, a sterile rejection of the "bad" framework could not be a panacea for saving revolutionary purity; it did not have, and could not have produced, any results.

The fundamental fact is that the ASF and the "Block" had let the (political and organizational) initiative slip through their fingers long before, and after that they could not regain it so easily from the KNE, inasmuch there were no concrete proposals, other than mere evasions.

A "dual power" existed in the movement

The EFEE is a higher representative body that emerges every year from elections of the "parliamentary type." The SEs, on the contrary, were base organs of struggle which were elected during the fight. At the level of the schools, the Administrative Councils (CDSs)— which are the only recognized base organizations — lost all validity in the conditions of the struggle. The SEs of the occupations upset completely not only these bodies (the DSs), but also the relationship of forces.

The direct relationship between the struggle and the SEs led to a toppling and disappearance of the elected DSs in every school that was occupied. The problem was that in this process the base organs of the student



choosing. The "Block" of the occupations should itself have proposed to the KNE a front of struggle based on the occupations. If the EFEE wanted to become the organ of struggle, it should have called for occupations in all the schools in order to have the right to lead the struggle. (Such a proposal, obviously, would not have been accepted either by the PASK or naturally by the KNE).

Parallel to this, the "Block" should have taken the initiative for the central demonstrations, outside of the EFEE-KNE, and not waited for it to make an unusual display of energy. The KNE, standing with one foot in the occupations and the other in the EFEE, tried, successfully, to hold the center of gravity of the central demonstrations.

The lack of an alternative policy and an alternative organizational solution made it easy for the KNE to play the gambit of an action front to suit itself. While it should not have rejected the front, the "Block" should have shifted the center of gravity away from the EFEE (in which it had no presence) to the SEs and a central organ of the SEs.

No political force should have been excluded from the SEs, inasmuch as it wanted to actually participate in the struggle of the student movement. Every political force that fought would similarly have had its place in the SEs of the schools and in a central coordinating body.

movement were not extended and they did not coordinate among themselves.

A "dual power" existed in the movement between the new base organs and the EFEE, which tended to lose all its authority, like the DSs in the individual schools. In fact the problem was not organizational but mainly political. The "Block" of the occupations, which the ASF dominated, did not think about mobilizing centrally, with the result that it did not feel the need for a central coordinating body.

Lack of an alternative policy

Since no such central coordinating body of the SEs existed, the KNE, by intelligently taking the central initiatives, restored an authority to the EFEE that it had been losing. Inasmuch as the SEs of the occupations could not coordinate and centralize the struggle of the student movement, they could not gain the authority of a centralizer of struggle. Remaining "inactive" bodies of a passive occupation, they relinquished the role of central leadership to the KNE-EFEE.

The conflict between the KNE-EFEE and the "Block" of the occupations was decided at that level.

The KNE, through the EFEE and by taking the central initiatives, pulled the "Block" of the occupations into a front of struggle that was not of the occupiers'

Sectarianism of groups in the ASF

What strength did the SEs of the schools have in the EFEE? None. What strength could the PASK or the DAP [the student fraction of the main bourgeois party] have had in such a new body of struggle? None. The united front of struggle is a united front of struggle and not an electoral combination.

If the EFEE had lost the initiative in the central demonstrations to a coordinating committee of the SEs (and it would have lost, because its position was determined entirely by the KNE), then a united front would have been a challenge for the KNE and its supporters to participate in the organs of struggle and not in the electoral den of thieves with the PASK.

Only in this way, could the EFEE-KNE "front" with the "Block" and the ASF have had a real meaning in an organization of struggle. Such an organization, after the extension of the occupations throughout Greece, would have been very well able to take on the character of a national body of the struggle. The KNE would have been forced to leave the EFEE to the PASK and to participate in the new body, or else isolate itself still further in the schools.

Unfortunately, however, the narrow-mindedness of the individual groups in the ASF kept them from giving precedence to the broader political and organizational needs. ★

Reasons for the student explosion

RECENT EVENTS among the youth oblige everyone to study the reasons for the mobilization-explosion of students in order to find the right conclusions and perspectives.

S NIKOLAIDES

EVERY generation experiences its own problems. Thus, the recent youth mobilizations have come after eight years of inertia, passivity, atomization, indifference and conservative choices to which young people had been driven. This was the result, on the one hand, of the attack they suffered from the right-wing bourgeois policy of the PASOK leadership and the government; on the other, of the domination of the bureaucratic mechanisms of the PASK and PSK (the PASOK and CP student union fractions), which blocked activity by the student movement.

Today, the problems students are experiencing are different. It is the material conditions they face — such as buildings and equipment, catering, the content of their studies, as well as the problems of unemployment — that are the basic impetus to the development of consciousness in the rebellion of the student youth and in their further politicization. It is these things that are forcing them to understand the bourgeois-modernizing role which the universities and technical institutes are trying to play, that are forcing them to move on to more political demands, to anti-capitalist demands.

Comparisons to the 1960s and 1970s

For the sake of a better understanding of the reasons for the explosion among students, it is useful to make some comparisons with the rebellions of the 1960s and 1970s in order to draw some conclusions.

These earlier rebellions, like May 1968 in France, were the result of the post-war phase of the development of capitalism.

The new examination rules

MISLEADING public opinion is the stock in trade of bourgeois journalism. Numerous reports about the new examination rules have evoked a lot of reactions, both positive and negative. They have even gone so far as to make the "original" — if sensational — observation that these measures were closing universities off to working class children.

These reports, however, have deliberately avoided saying that the new examination rules do not introduce any fundamental innovation into the already rotten Greek educational system. They simply change the relative grading of subjects, leaving untouched the overall logic that predominates today:

- selection, intensification, specialization for the few;
- mass unemployment, under-employment, decay, valueless diplomas for the many.

The basic "innovation" of the new examination measures consists in introducing the rule of basic studies in each track. Specifically they are the following:

Track A (polytechnic and scientific schools): The basic subject is mathematics. Exceptions are physics faculties (in which the basic subject is physics), and faculties of chemistry, agriculture etc. (where the basic subject is chemistry).

Track B (medical schools): The basic subject is biology. Exceptions are faculties of dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmacology (in which the basic subject is chemistry) and some faculties of the Technical Institutes (where the basic subject is physics).

Track C (philology, law, theology schools): The basic subject is ancient Greek. Here there are no exceptions to the rule.

Track D (economics schools): The basic subject is mathematics.

In which of these areas of education is there a consistent division of studies into basic and non-basic up to the end of university level education? On the basis of what scientific criterion do economists need mathematics more than chemists, physicists or agronomists? There is no use waiting for the ministry to answer these questions, they simply have no arguments.

The "reformers" of the ministry of education are limited to playing the role of employees of the EEC and other such mechanisms of the bourgeois class. These reformers have chosen the Polytechnic as a "good" school (on the basis of the criteria mentioned at the beginning). Thus, otherwise, the Polytechnic is the only Greek school which has any relation — a weak one of course — with material production.

The physics and mathematics schools produce only teachers (there is an abundance of those; you only have to read the papers). The philosophical and law schools have produced thousands of humanities graduates and jurists who are consistently under-employed. Why, then, should the Greek bourgeoisie concern itself with these schools, when it cannot derive a profit from them? It is only interested in the engineering schools, and only a few of them.

From now on it will be more difficult for teachers to play the role of mandarins among the classes. Along with the authority of education, which has been crumbling for a long time, now the authority of the "educators" will also crumble — an "authority" that they acquired mainly through the terrorism of grading.

The critique that we make of education under capitalism starts out from the separation of manual from intellectual labor that it creates. Consequently, under capitalism, the problems of education are "solved" only to the advantage of the ruling class. Therefore, we have to demand the following:

- the possibility for all to go on freely to the university (without exams);
- the opening of study centers for the workers' movement, which alone will be responsible for their activity;
- the overcoming of the professional differences among working people so as to reinforce their common character. ★

The tempos of the development of science and technology were rapid. There was an unprecedented rate of innovation in production. The universities, to an extent, ceased being the province of a limited number of young people from the upper stratum of society. Intake began rapidly to assume a mass character in order to meet the needs of booming capitalism.

In this context, the idea started to develop among large numbers of students that universities were not "neutral" ground but an ideological mechanism of capitalism for reproducing its own ideology. As a result, both radicalization and alienation began to develop. At the same time, these young people started to gain a confidence in their own strength.

Another important cause of these rebellions was the successes of the left internationally, the war in Vietnam, decolonization, the victory of the Cuban revolution and the cultural revolution in China. These events exercised a catalytic influence on the consciousness of the masses, and especially young people.

Anti-capitalist dynamic of previous rebellions

To start with, the watchwords raised by these rebellions were sexual liberation, the abolition of the disciplinary rules in the university and educational reform. Quickly, they were extended to a critique of consumer society. They took on an anti-capitalist character. This, however, was not expressed in a framework of a rounded and radical theory of social reality. Nor was it accompanied by any clear-cut political orientation. The main reason for these limitations was the lack of a strong, mass revolutionary party.

Today, making a general comparison with the period of post-war development of capitalism, we find that boom capitalism has given way to a prolonged economic crisis, whose effects we see everyday.

The class barriers to education are increasing. Fewer working-class children go to university. Budgets are being cut, investment is being reduced, unemployment is increasing. However, at the same time we are witnessing a rapid development of the new technologies, as in the period of the capitalist boom.

1. Lambrakis was a radical left political figure murdered by the right in the 1960s. The most radical section of the youth in the orbit of the Communist Party identified with him.

Article 114 was a guarantee of democracy defended by the masses oppressed by the monarchical-parliamentary machinations in the mid-1960s, by which the liberal government of Papandreu was ousted.

The Polytechnic rebellion in November 1973, was the major uprising against the dictatorship of the colonels, which was brought down by the events in Cyprus in the following year (a rightist coup, the Turkish invasion, the threat of war with Turkey).

Law 814, adopted in 1978, was a right-wing reform of education, introducing selection, among other things. It touched off major struggles in 1979.

Thus, the schools are losing their mass character. Individualism is being pushed, along with two-track education. The latter is dividing students into a few "sheep," who will be the elite; and the many "goats," who will make up the broad mass of unemployed [see box]. This represents the needs of capitalism today.

To be sure, today's youth mobilizations have not yet taken on a clear anti-capitalist character.

No sources of inspiration

We should not ignore the fact that today's youth do not have sources of "revolutionary romanticism." Disgusted by politics and the social situation and by the bureaucratic manipulations of the reformist parties, they have no source of inspiration because there are no evident successes of the left movement internationally. These are the most basic reasons why the demands of today's youth movement are more on the economic level and only gradually taking on a systematic form.

Greece, as is well known, is a country with a dependent capitalist development, and this has played and is playing an important role in shaping the country on all levels. Up to and after the post-war period, the society's lack of a bourgeois democratic framework for a whole period became a focus of the radicalization and growth of the mass movement of youth and strong organizations of the left.

The generation of the Lambrakis Youth, Article 114, the Polytechnic Rebellion and Law 815 had clear political anti-rightist aims and raised demands for freedom, democracy, independence, for education and work.¹ As already mentioned, they were inspired by the successes of the international workers' movement. The radicalization of this generation therefore took on the character of challenging capitalism.

Today, two-track education is being pushed, whereas previously they pushed the production of cheap, semi-skilled labor power.

There is now a long tradition of bourgeois democracy. It dates in general from the period of the transition to parliamentary rule after the fall of the dictatorship of the colonels [1974], and in particular from the rise of PASOK to governmental power [1981]. And the anti-rightist orientation that dominated strongly until that period made it difficult to respond to the new needs that were taking form. A gap therefore started to develop between young people and the left and therefore between young people and politics.

For a long period young people were led into indifference, atomization, depoliticization and conservative choices by a whole series of factors: the lack of concrete political goals suffered by the left as a whole; the bourgeois policy of the leadership of PASOK; the disappointment of the

young people's hopes; the authoritarianism; the intensification of study; the military rules; the sharpening of the economic crisis and of unemployment; the lack of professional perspectives; the crisis of the educational system and so on

Young people ceased to challenge bourgeois values and stopped radicalizing. All this, together with the lack of successes of the workers' and left movement internationally, led to the formation of a different sort of consciousness on a series of questions.

These are the reasons why we are seeing quite different sort of demands being raised today in student mobilizations than those that were raised by the older generations. Their demands do not arise from specific political goals, but start out from their current problems.

Today, the young people, the students who mobilize are those who pursue their studies regularly, who read, who do their homework and take their exams, who have gone through the rat-race of accelerated study, who are finishing their work according to the rules, who are looking forward to settling down and so on.

But they find that the studies they are pursuing are barren. Their studies become tiresome. Professors are the lords and masters. The material and technical facilities are insufficient to the point of wretchedness. Libraries and recreation are non-existent. The future is uncertain. They begin to understand exploitation and to feel like commodities.

Because of PASOK's bourgeois education policy and the bureaucratic manipulations of the reformists, for eight years all of these problems impelled students toward individual solutions, to resignation, to settling down, to conservatism. At the same time, they prepared the way for the 1987 developments, the powerful mobilizations and occupations — despite all the important weaknesses that exist. They created what could be called a "new type of radicalization."

Danger of return to apathy and atomization

Here one thing has to be said: If this youth movement does not find a solution, if it does not adopt concrete goals, directions and a clear political orientation, the danger exists that the steam will go out of it again, that it will fall back to the point where there will be the same phenomena of apathy, conservatism and atomization as before.

Therefore, this struggle for the reorientation and re-politicization of young people will be decided on the basis of the social and political problems and the answers offered. From this also flows the need for developing a convincing program of action.

On one hand the accumulation of discontent and indignation gave rise to the recent mobilizations. On the other, the

bankruptcy and the austerity policy is imposing cuts and reducing investments. And that in turn inevitably leads to authoritarianism and to attacking the gains of the people's movement, with the aim of marginalizing it.

By the same token, likening the 1987 occupations to the 1979 ones is wrong. A comparison of these actions shows us that the relationship of forces in 1979 was completely in favor of the left organizations. At that time, there was an intense anti-rightist climate.

But today this has largely faded. Then, there was systematic opposition to Law 815 and to the orientations that were being set in education, against the policy of the right. Today there is neither an anti-rightist climate nor concrete goals.

In 1979, there were national organizations of the extra-parliamentary left that played an important leading role, while today the Aristeres Syspeiroseis [Left Regroupments] and some others do not have a structured national organization, or concrete goals or coordination. This is one of the most basic weaknesses.

Re-politicizing the youth movement

Today, there are no goals, because there is no leadership that can project concrete goals. The PASK is sabotaging things, and the PSK is trying to cool things down. At the same time, the EFEE-ESEE [Student Federation], which is led by these two groups, does not enjoy confidence among the students.

The problems of youth are problems of society itself. Along with the failure of the left to offer a convincing alternative, they form the basis of the crisis of the movement and of its conservative behavior on many occasions. The main goal that has to be posed today is rebuilding unity and of re-politicizing the youth movement.

The left can win back young people only if it restores values of socialism in the consciousness of the youth, which PASOK and the rest of the "official" left made bankrupt with their policy.

The left has to propagate and defend the principles of socialism, namely collectivism, equality, unity and universal solidarity, against the arguments of liberalism and individualism. Collectivism must become the alternative to liberalism, individualism and privatization.

The defence of freedom and minority rights is the answer to the logic of the subjection of the majority to the minority. In this regard, we cannot overlook the important contribution of the Committee to Defend the Rights of Youth. It is striving to organize young people nationwide in the framework of their own self-managed, genuinely democratic organization, which would struggle in the vanguard of the youth movement for a solution to the social problems. ★

4 NEWS FROM THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Fourth International statement on Polish organizations

THE FOLLOWING statement was adopted at the March 1988 meeting of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

FROM 1985, the publications of the Fourth International and its sections reported on the actions and statements of a Polish grouping of trade-union and political revolutionary action groups acting under the name of the "Workers' Opposition Alliance-Solidarnosc" (POR-S).

In October/November 1986, *International Viewpoint* and *Inprecor*, the English and French language publications of the International, followed by Polish *Inprekor* in February 1987, reported on the creation of an "organizing committee" of the "Workers Party for the Self-Managed Republic" (RPRS) applying for the title of section of the Fourth International. The statement of the foundation of the RPRS published in its organ *Zryw*, was reproduced in our press. [See IV 107, October 27, 1986.]

Since then, an investigation by our international organization, on the basis of information coming from Polish revolutionary activists who participated in the activities of the POR-S and the constitution of the RPRS, made it possible to establish the following facts: the group which presented itself as the major component of the POR-S and RPRS and playing, on this basis, a predominant role in these two organizations, turned out to have largely fabricated the reality of their group. The leaders of this group, emerging from the "Union of Workers' Councils-Polish Resistance Movement" (ZRP-PRO) which published the journal *Wolny Robotnik* in Upper Silesia, requested aid for trade union and political activity that was largely fictional. The group functioned with criteria which had nothing in common with those of a workers' political organization.

Our comrades in Poland, like ourselves, were victims of this dupery. As soon as they realized this, in early 1987, they withdrew from the POR-S and RPRS and broke off all their relations with the Upper Silesia group. The Fourth International also states that it no longer has any relations with the said group. It continues its efforts to help the emergence of a revolutionary Marxist organization in Poland, in the perspective of the anti-bureaucratic revolution.

We think it is our duty to warn the different tendencies of the Polish and international workers' movement, which could be the object of a new approach from the group in Upper Silesia. That is the purpose of this communiqué. ★

International VIEWPOINT

AFTER THE CRASH

Our next issue will be a special on the economy, including articles from Ernest Mandel on the world economic situation after last October's stock market crash, and Claude Gabriel on the international raw materials crisis.

Order your extra copies now!

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WESTERN EUROPE

Political Bureaux meet

A MEETING of representatives from the Political Bureaux of the European sections and fraternal organizations of the Fourth International was held from March 25-27 in Paris following a meeting of the United Secretariat. Representatives attended from 14 countries: Austria, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spanish state, Sweden, Switzerland, Portugal and West Germany.

Three major reports were introduced by comrades from France, Belgium and the Spanish state. The reports and discussion that followed focused on the political situation, perspectives and party building strategy in each country. The final discussion, around the situation in Western Europe as a whole, represented an initial exchange on views in the framework of preparing an agenda point on Western Europe for the next meeting of the International Executive Committee, due to be held at the end of this year.

In its turn, the IEC and future European meetings will be preparing documentation for discussion at the next World Congress of the Fourth International.

In addition to the general discussions, three commissions were held at the meeting of European Political Bureaux. The commission around work in the car industry proposed to organize a Europe-wide car workers meeting in the autumn to bring together union activists to discuss a workers' response to the present employers' offensive.

On anti-racist work, the commission also decided to organize a wider meeting for activists later in the year. For the moment, the focus of this work is around the initiatives proposed by the recent Stockholm conference for European days of action on March 21 and April 23 (see IV 137 and 138).

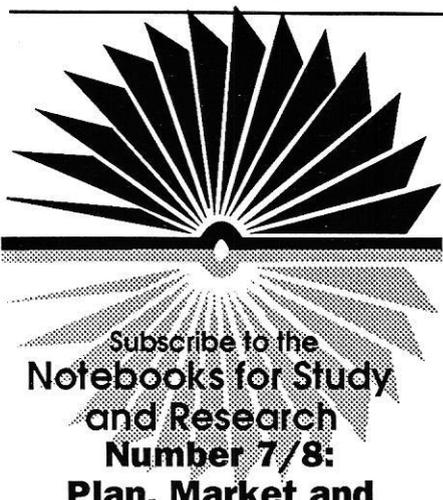
Finally, comrades met to discuss the initiatives planned in Europe to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Fourth International and the twentieth anniversary of May 1968 (see box). ★

Fourth International youth summer camp

THE FIFTH summer camp for youth organizations in political solidarity with the Fourth International will be held this year from July 23-30 near Clermont-Ferrand in central France.

During the camp, visits will be organized to the local region, renowned for its beauty. As in past years, over 800 young people are expected to come to the camp, which offers an unrivalled opportunity for international political discussion.

Details of costs, travel arrangements and so on can be obtained from local IV sellers or by writing to "Summer Camp" at the IV address on page two. ★



Subscribe to the
**Notebooks for Study
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Number 7/8:
Plan, Market and
Democracy —
The Experience of the
So-Called Socialist
Countries**
by Catherine Samary

GORBACHEV proposes to introduce market mechanisms in the Soviet economy. East German and Czechoslovak leaders react unenthusiastically. Many currents in Polish Solidarnosc advocate a combination of self-management and the market. From Nicaragua to China, debates emerge about the role of material incentives or the "mixed economy." In the Western left, Alec Nove argues that planning is necessarily bureaucratic.

A serious discussion, Samary argues, must begin with a balance sheet of real experience. She analyzes the social and economic effects of the three main models put to the test so far: bureaucratically centralized planning, typified by the USSR under Brezhnev; the use of the market by the plan, tried in combination with self-management in Yugoslavia from 1950 to 1965, and, without self-management, in Hungary under Kadar; and "market socialism" introduced in Yugoslavia from 1965 to 1971.

These recent developments are then examined in the light of the seminal Soviet economic debate which pitted Bukharin against Preobrazhensky in the 1920s. Samary points out that long-term effects and social, ecological and cultural needs must be integrated in cost calculations. She concludes that the "associated producers" must be able to choose their priorities after a full and free discussion of existing economic experiences; unsuspected sources of productivity may then appear.

This is the first attempt to synthesize the lessons of the economic evolution of post-capitalist societies from a revolutionary Marxist standpoint. It deserves to be read and circulated widely.

Also available:

N°1 - The Place of Marxism in History, by Ernest Mandel - 20FF, £2, \$3.50.

N°2 - The Chinese Revolution - Part I:

The Second Chinese Revolution and the Shaping of the Maoist Outlook, by Pierre Rousset - 20FF, £2, \$3.50.

N°3 - The Chinese Revolution - Part II: The Maoist Project Tested in the Struggle for Power, by Pierre Rousset - 25FF, £2.50, \$4.00.

N°4 - Revolutionary Strategy Today, by Daniel Bensaïd - 20FF, £2, \$3.50

N°5 - Class Struggle and technological Change in Japan Since 1945, by Muto Ichyo - 48 pages. £2.50, \$4.00, 25 FF.

N°6 - Populism in Latin America, essays by Adolfo Gilly, Helena Hirata, Carlos M. Vilas and the Argentine PRT, introduced by Michael Löwy, 40 pages, £2, \$3.50, 20FF.



A NUMBER of activities are planned to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Fourth International, founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938. We will be publishing a regular column to advertise these events, so make sure you send us details when speakers and so on are finalized.

Denmark and Sweden: Copenhagen, May 14. The Socialist Workers Party (SAP, Danish section of the Fourth International) and the Socialist Party (SP, Swedish section of the FI) are jointly organizing an all-Scandinavian celebration. Speakers include Ernest Mandel, Lea Tsemel, Hugo Blanco and Göte Kilden (see page 20), plus speakers from Nicaragua and South Africa. An International Festival Against Racism will be held in the evening, featuring Tariq Ali as a main speaker.

Delegations are expected from the Danish left, from Norway and West Germany among others. The comrades organizing the event would like organizations who cannot actually attend to send greetings to the rally. These should be sent as soon as possible to: SAP, Nørre Alle 11 A, 2200 København N, Denmark. For more information telephone the SAP: Denmark 01-39 79 48.

Luxemburg: the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) are planning a

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meeting for June 18.

Italy: the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) have two days of activities planned for September around the rehabilitations of the Moscow Trials defendants and building the Fourth International.

Canada: On May 20-23, FI supporters from the Alliance for Socialist Action and the Quebec group Gauche Socialiste will be meeting in Montreal to lay the foundations for a pan-Canadian organization of revolutionary socialists. On May 21, they plan to hold an event commemorating both the founding of the FI and the anniversary of May 1968.

Mexico: the comrades of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) are planning a number of events this year. First, around July 26 to celebrate the anniversaries of the Cuban revolution and the foundation of the PRT. Second, when Gorbachev is due to visit Mexico in August, the PRT will use the event to publicly present the Moscow Trials campaign petition. Finally, the comrades are planning three days of activity on September 14-16 around the anniversary of Mexico's independence from Spain, which will include a rally to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Fourth International.

Britain: supporters of the journal *Socialist Outlook* are planning a rally in London at the end of November.

Anniversary of May 1968: A number of organizations in political solidarity with the Fourth International are also planning events around the anniversary of May 1968. These include a rally at the end of May organized by supporters of the *Socialist Outlook* journal in Britain, with Tariq Ali and a leading member of the FI as featured speakers; a national weekend fête on the last weekend of May in Paris organized by the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR); and events in Canada on May 21 and in Mexico on July 26 (see above). ★

Dynamic of the Palestinian uprising

TWO THIRDS of the population of Jordan are Palestinians. Some 800,000 people are registered as having fled from the Zionist forces. Of those, about 200,000 continue to live in refugee camps in conditions of the greatest deprivation and without hope. And yet, after months of a mass uprising of their compatriots living across the Jordan river under Zionist rule, the Palestinians in Jordan have not been heard from.

A report from the Bakaa camp outside the Jordanian capital of Amman did appear, however, in the February 17 issue of *Le Monde*, which both explained the difficulty the Palestinians have in expressing themselves and revealed what they are thinking.

“OF COURSE the camp is open,” Veronique Maurus wrote. “But it is so closely watched by the Jordanian security forces that a foreigner is immediately sealed off. The people you try to talk to say immediately that there is no right to discuss politics.” But once you manage to find shelter from the ever present surveillance, you find that “politics is all that people talk about” and that “the uprising on the West Bank, which is called ‘the revolution’ here, is seen as the expression of real Palestinian self-determination after decades of manipulation by Israel, the Arab states and even the PLO, which is accused clearly of impotence and collusion with ‘politicians’.”

Most of the refugees have relatives in the occupied territories. “At first incredulous, then surprised by the persistence of the rebellions, they are now following the events passionately, hour by hour, better informed by the ‘Arab telephone’ than by the Jordanian press, which for a long time remained silent, and has kept a deliberately measured tone for fear of stirring up feelings.”

“It is as if a cage burst and let us out,” a young Palestinian said.

“A man of a mature age,” Maurus said, looked further ahead: “There will be a revolution, here and everywhere we are oppressed. All compromises have to be rejected. If this revolution is sponsored by the Arab governments of the PLO, it will be aborted.”

Camp inhabitants of all ages reportedly showed the same determination: “We have nothing to lose.” A young woman, dressed in Islamic fundamentalist style, said “This is a prison.” Her mother said “We are free but we have nothing to do outside. The men cannot find work any more, and young people and women have no money to go

out.”

The situation in the camp, always wretched, has been made worse in recent years by the international economic crisis. Men who had been able to find work in the oil industry and send money home, have now had to fall back on their families and increase the pressure on the inadequate housing offered by the camp.

Legally, after 20 years, the camp remains “temporary.” It is not permitted to build any permanent structures. But more people are born in the camp every year than leave it. The opportunities for another life are limited. But also the people tend to cling to the camp as representing their identity and their hope of someday returning to their



homes. “This life is not good for us; we must go home,” an elderly woman said.

A camp doctor, Nabil Hesh, said: “Here, as on the West Bank of the Jordan, patience has evaporated because there is no longer any outside support.”

A young woman told Maurus: “The detonator was the Arab summit in Amman. Up until then, the people held on to a feeble hope of an international settlement. They found that the summit did not take up the Palestinian problem. This so-called Summit of Harmony, as they called it, was a Summit of Deception.”

The camp was a tinderbox, Maurus wrote. “Without any illusions about the possibilities for ‘help’ from the Arab states, disillusioned by a gagged and impotent PLO, the forgotten people of Bakaa seem themselves ripe for rebellion.” She quoted one of her informants as saying, “At the beginning, the refugees believed that the PLO was everything. Now the PLO has been hemmed in by Arab governments that are strangling us. It cannot make a move without permission. The people have realized that they have to help themselves.” ★

● See also articles on page 3

The leadership of the uprising

“WE ARE FACING a violent uprising led by a nuclei of activists enjoying the support and cooperation of the population,” General Ehud Barak, number two in the Israeli army command, has admitted. (*Le Monde*, February 19, 1988). “If there is organization, it exists only on the local level.” Yves Heller, *Le Monde* correspondent in Jerusalem, quoted Palestinian sources as saying that ongoing coordination was limited to individual camps, villages, cities, or sometimes neighborhoods, and that it was organized by committees of young activists. On the other hand, a “United Leadership of the Uprising” has called Palestinian actions throughout all the territories under Israeli administration.

The autonomy of the committees has come to be considered a virtue in the movement, Heller wrote. “A Palestinian source stressed that both ‘notables’ and ‘former cadres’ of the national movement still free have been excluded from them. This is for two reasons. One is tactical. These people are often well known to the Israeli authorities and live more or less under surveillance. The other is political. A lot of young militants think that they ‘could not adjust to this new form of resistance.’” ★