

International VIEWPOINT

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Target Libya



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Apologies.....
 To Kosovar exile Muhamedim Kullashi, wrongly identified as Kullashi Muhaludin in our interview with him in issue 227.
 Also to Michel Warschawsky: an interpolation inserted in his article on Zionism and racism wrongly identified "Ratz youth" as being the youth wing of the Israeli Mapam party, rather than the Ratz organization. ★

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Falling into line behind Washington



SIX months almost to the day since the US air raid of April 15, 1986 the military, air and diplomatic embargo against Libya voted through by the United Nations (UN) Security Council has come into effect. To justify the new sanctions, one year after the Gulf War, the UN has been careful to characterize them as being "selective, measured and precise".

That means that imperialism's margin of manoeuvre is not exactly the same as that which it enjoyed against Iraq and that many lessons have been drawn from the preceding conflict. For its part, the Libyan regime, which has been trying to gather support for six months, has only managed to gain an equally "selective and measured" assistance.

LUIZA MARIA

THE new regional balances emerging from the Gulf War have complicated the relationship between US imperialism, the European imperialist powers and the Arab regimes. The latter two fear a military option, but their margin of manoeuvre is limited by the imperatives of the "New World Order", something which the Libyan regime seems to have underestimated.

Unexpectedly, the United States has even had to convince Israel of the basis for the sanctions against Tripoli. At the beginning of the crisis, according to the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, the US accusations of Libyan responsibility in the blowing up of the Pan AM Boeing above the Scottish village of Lockerbie in December 1988 were contested by the experts in Jerusalem. Instead, they argued that the Syrian-backed Palestinian group led by Ahmed Jibril had been responsible, a viewpoint supported by a Scotland Yard report, made public on January 21, 1992 by the British Labour MP Tam Dalyell. It was difficult for the United States to accuse Syria at a time when the latter had agreed to participate in the US-sponsored negotiations with Israel.

This imperialist hue and cry against Libya follows the same logic as the campaign against Iraq — opposition to all

attempts at mediation, conciliation or propositions. But, Washington has not been able to immediately launch military action. It has had to maintain the semblance of a desire for conciliation to guarantee the success, at least in media terms, of the opening of the Madrid Peace Conference.

After that, the Paris-Cape rally, routed through the Gulf of Sirte, the wait for the end of Ramadan, and the final collapse of negotiations postponed any opportunity for a new escalation back to the beginning of April.

This has not prevented imperialism from taking certain measures. Since 1986, \$2 billion in Libyan holdings have been frozen by the United States, while the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has established a blacklist of companies belonging totally or partially to Libya, which US companies are forbidden to trade with. Those who break the boycott risk fines of \$250,000-500,000 and prison sentences of up to twelve years.

Twisting the arm of Europe

In the meantime, the United States and their faithful British ally have tried to convince the European imperialists to accept their conclusions and to sweep away their last doubts.

The declarations of the 12 Foreign Ministers of the European Economic Community (EEC) on December 2, 1991, showed that it was vain to hope that the differences between the EEC and the United States could lead the former to distance itself from Bush's strategy. On the other hand, the sanctions decreed by the UN take account of the interests of the European and Arab bourgeoisies.

At first sight, the sanctions against Libya run counter to the plans of the EEC, or at least its Mediterranean component — mainly Italy and France — who have been seeking partners in North Africa, so that "the Mediterranean can form a counterweight to the Baltic".

The Libyan partner

In the view of the European imperialists for whom Libya is one such partner, the embargo should have only been diplomatic. In October 1991, the Italian and French foreign ministers declared themselves ready to lift the sanctions in force since 1986 in order to facilitate a dialogue with the Union of the Arab Maghreb (UAM — comprising Mauritania, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Morocco). The summit of the "5 + 5" — five member countries from Southern Europe and five from the UAM — scheduled for January 1992 in Tunis had to be postponed because of the victory of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria in December 1991 and now it seems definitively compromised — it is difficult to imagine Mitterand and Qhadafi sitting at the same table today!

Thus, the sanctions are "selective" not, as is claimed in high places, in order to ease the suffering of the Libyan people but rather to preserve European interests. In all, 22 companies from 14 countries participate in the exploration of oil in Libya, two Italian (Agip and Selm), two German (Wintershall and Veba Oil), two British

1. Other countries involved in oil exploration include South Korea (five companies), Bulgaria, Rumania and Canada.

(Lasmo and Napl), one French (Elf-Aquitaine), one Spanish (Repsil), one Belgian (Petrofina), one Austrian (OC Mv) and the British-Dutch Royal Dutch Shell.¹

Libya has been using its oil income to pay off its debt towards its European suppliers — 65% of Libyan oil is bought by Germany and Italy. The latter remains Libya's main commercial partner — with trade valued at 30 million French francs in 1990 — and has supported the conciliatory approach of French foreign secretary Roland Dumas and Egyptian president Mubarak.

German foreign minister Genscher, on the other hand, has had more latitude to denounce the "clear responsibility of Tripoli" and to support the demands for extradition. Germany has felt itself obliged to join in the anti-Libyan action, since many of its firms have been involved in supplying military and chemical technology to Libya.²

France seeks rapprochement

France, already unpopular in North Africa because of its commitment in the Gulf War, feared that the countries of the UAM would no longer be inclined to prefer it to other partners. Trade with North Africa is France's primary outlet outside of the industrialized countries. With this in mind, Dumas has been seeking a rapprochement with Libya. However, the obligations of imperialist partnership have carried the day in the French foreign ministry, at a time when it had been preparing to hold a joint Franco-Libyan commission in January 1992 in Paris and was trying to defuse tensions exacerbated by the alleged participation of Libya in the uprising of the Tuaregs and in the intrigues of Hissène Habré in Chad against France's protégé, Idriss Déby.

As for the Arab ruling classes, beyond the verbal support given by this or that regime concerned to forestall popular demonstrations of solidarity, it is noteworthy that no government has sought to justify the *Jamahiriyah*. While most have sought to compromise and soften the sanctions, once these latter were pronounced, they have applied them obediently.³

The Egyptian regime fears the impact of an oil embargo against Tripoli, Libyan oil income currently being of great importance to the Egyptian economy. Since July 1991, co-operation agreements concerning capital goods, tourism and oil have been signed between the two countries, while customs posts and frontier formalities have been abolished.

The oil embargo would mean the halting of currency transfers by millions of Egyptian emigré workers in Libya, as well as the possible exodus of a labour force

which would swell the ranks of the Egyptian unemployed, the loss of an export market, and Libyan tourist currency transfers into Egypt. This explains why Qhadafi has seen Mubarak as a mediator with imperialism.

But Egyptian "support" ends where the "New World Order" begins. Once Cairo had reassured itself that the embargo decreed by the UN would not apply to Libyan companies, banks or investments in Egypt,⁴ and was authorized to replace its air links with Libya by road links, the air embargo was applied.

Qhadafi funds PLO

Finally, the support extended to Tripoli by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is certainly not disinterested: Libya subsidizes the PLO at a rate of \$4 million a month, compensating in part for the suspension of financing by the oil sheikhdoms⁵; furthermore, the 80,000 Palestinians living in Libya make currency transfers to the occupied territories.

The PLO has revealed the results of its own inquiry into Lockerbie, which demonstrated the culpability of Syria and a fraction of the Iranian regime. This was, it is true, just before the Assad-Arafat "reconciliation". The PLO also fears a new escalation, at a time when it has just confirmed Palestinian participation in the next set of Israeli-Arab negotiations.

Libya's partners in the UAM have also sought a negotiated solution and a loosening of sanctions, as much because of their economic links with Tripoli as through fear of the reaction of their peoples. But allegiance to imperialism remains determinant.

Thus, Morocco, elected a permanent member of the Security Council on January 1, 1992 voted for resolution 731 without reservation, whereas article 14 of the UAM charter states: "Any aggression to which any one of its members is exposed will be considered as an aggression against the other member states", while article 15 says: "The member states commit themselves to abstain from association with any alliance or military or political bloc directed against the political independence or territorial unity of the other member states".

The UAM has not responded to Libya's request for an emergency summit in Tripoli, nor has it demanded to be shown the evidence against one of its members. The summit of heads of state scheduled for the end of April at Nouakchott (Mauritania) has been put off.

Among the North African states, it is Tunisia which fears the sanctions against Libya most. The United States has understood this and, not wishing to repeat Jordan's experience with Iraq, resolution 748 includes a clause taking account of the par-

ticular economic difficulties which Libya's neighbours could encounter.

Libyan petrodollars paid for 1.2 billion Tunisian francs of Tunisian exports in 1991, on top of the currency transfers made by some 60,000 emigré workers and the Libyan tourists who daily cross the frontiers. The Ben Ali regime, permitted to bypass the air embargo through desert roads, is hurrying to apply the sanctions and is very determined to respect "international legality" in anticipation of any popular discontent against the widespread repression in the country (see box).

The ruling party has already withdrawn from the committee of solidarity with Libya, which has organized several demonstrations of support. The regime is fearful both of military escalation against Tripoli and of popular demonstrations which would hit tourist income for a second successive year.

Expulsion of African workers

The Libyan regime has succeeded in annoying a number of African regimes and peoples. The priority given to Egyptian residents meant the expulsion of thousands of workers from Mali, Nigeria, Ghana, Chad or Burkina-Faso in September-October 1991.

Qhadafi has been left only with the circumspect support of Nelson Mandela — Libya has given political and financial support to the African National Congress (ANC). On December 3, 1991 Mandela interceded with Mitterrand in relation to the blowing up of a French DC10, in which Libyan complicity is also alleged, while "exhorting the Colonel to collaborate more thoroughly in the search for the truth".

Conscious of its isolation, the Libyan regime has abandoned its initial attitude of defiance to adopt a defensive policy. In July 1991, Qhadafi threatened to strike NATO bases in case of aggression against Libya: in August, the *Jana* press agency labelled the tour by US Secretary of State James Baker as a US-Zionist plot while Libya denied any involvement in the Lockerbie explosion.

Subsequently, however, Qhadafi has

2. On August 1, 1991, the former director of the German firm Salzgiller was arrested for having participated in the construction of the unit at Rahta. On August 6, the trial opened in Mannheim of three industrialists and on August 20 a former director of Inhausen Chimie was arrested.

3. Only Sudan has said it will not implement the sanctions.

4. *El Ahrum*, March 24, 1992.

5. In exchange, the financial experts of the PLO have helped Tripoli to redeploy its investments, notably to the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, so as to avoid the freeze on its holdings in the imperialist countries.

made a string of political concessions to Bush and Baker: "Libyan law condemns terrorism... The Palace of the People became the seat of liberation movements... These movements no longer have a raison d'être. Nothing remains, neither armed action, nor clandestinity, neither left, nor Marxism, nor Leninism.

The third universal theory

"We continue to teach the third universal theory which has nothing to do with violence and terrorism. The Green Book... envisages a peaceful evolution towards socialism and has supporters in the United States and in Great Britain... The operations of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) smack more of terrorism than of the demands of a liberation struggle... In the Middle East, the question at the moment is the peace process and it is not in the interests of the Palestinians to undertake military action... Bush is not Reagan... Bush is a gentleman, he is cultivated... capable of objectivity. He is a great politician... Baker is a moderate and reasonable man — I am reassured that he is at the head of the State Department".⁶

And again with regard to France: "We wish to alert France to the consequences of the policy followed by the United States in the Arab world and to the risks that it would take in blindly backing it. Because France represents for us the country of law".⁷

This conciliatory turn has been combined with the sending of emissaries and an intense media campaign arguing that Libya would be ready to put its residents on trial and to condemn them if their guilt was proved. A judge has been named, an international commission of enquiry demanded, and the secret services reorganized. The *Jamahiriyah's* argument is founded on the prerogatives of sovereign states. At the same time, the Libyan regime has taken precautions by withdrawing its holdings from European banks⁸ to place them in Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and South Korea. Stocks of medicine and food have been built up, the import of certain products has been stopped, non-priority projects frozen and the use of the dollar for transactions avoided.

Tripoli is preparing for the worst and it would be difficult for it now to deliver the two men claimed by Washington and London. One of the two accused belongs to the same tribe as the Libyan number two, Abdelassam Jallud, who is supported, it is said, by the 25,000 armed members of the Revolutionary Committees, which call for a *jihād* against the west.

Extradition of the accused would lead to increased tension between the uncompromising Jallud and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Snouss-Bechari, who advocates an

Tunisia – opposition outlawed

THE Tunisian regime has decided to crush all forms of opposition and will no longer tolerate the existence of organizations which are in the slightest degree independent. This is the real meaning of the amendments to the law on associations adopted by the Chamber of Deputies on March 2, 1992.

After having ferociously repressed the fundamentalist movement, the Ben Ali regime has attacked the revolutionary left, and has now turned its attention to the democratic associations and in particular the Tunisian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LTDH), guilty in its eyes of having dared to denounce (notably in two communiqués dated June 14, 1991 and December 12, 1991) the flagrant violations of human rights committed by the services of the Ministry of the Interior.

The new law envisages the banning of the simultaneous holding of responsibilities in an association and a political party, which would oblige the League to "dismiss" those of its leaders, elected by its congress, who are also leaders of political organizations. Moreover, an association will no longer be free to choose its members according to its own criteria of admission, in other words, the LTDH will no longer be able to refuse admission to members of the governing party.

On the other hand, membership of an association is henceforth forbidden to anybody who has been legally deprived of civil and political rights, which is the case of many militants who have spent time in the jails of Bourguiba and Ben Ali. If it does not submit to this law, the LTDH risks being dissolved.

But this possibility has not intimidated the LTDH's leaders: the National Council of the organization has denounced the new law and its president, Moncef Marzouki, said at a press conference that the League would "refuse to function under this law because it is unconstitutional", adding that "no law or court of justice can impose on an association its mode of functioning or forms of membership".

Moreover, a collective of associations (composed, alongside the League, of women's, students' and lawyers' associations) has just been set up to organize the response. A committee for the defence of the LTDH has been set up in Tunis, at the initiative of intellectuals and militants of the democratic and left movement. Another committee has been formed at Kairouan. But in the context of the current state of demobilization which exists in Tunisia, these structures remain fragile, something of which the regime is aware.

This new repressive offensive demonstrates once more the purely demagogic character of the democratic professions of faith by Ben Ali and his acolytes and the urgent need for a campaign of international solidarity in support of the democratic movement and the Tunisian left in their fight against police repression. The Fourth International is already engaged in this struggle.

Telegrams of support to the LTDH (Fax: 216 1/793 874) and telegrams of protest to the President of the Republic directly at the Palace of Carthage. ★

opening towards imperialism and who can count on the support of a section of the army officers. This combination of tribal complications with difficult political choices explains the bewildering variety of recent positions taken by Qhadafi.

The problem for the United States in Libya, as in Iraq, is their lack of a credible alternative to the existing regime: the CIA has made a start in this direction by supporting the *contras* of Colonel Haftar, directly advised by prince Bandar, Saudi ambassador to the United States. But the

only really existing opposition in Libya remains that of the Muslim fundamentalists, the Wahhabites, who are not really to Washington's taste. ★

6. *El Ahrām*, December 7, 1991.

7. *Le Monde*, April 8, 1992, interview with Abuizad Omar Dowda.

8. The Libyan government has deposits of \$2-3 billion held abroad. Its total liquid holdings were estimated at \$6.5 billion on September 30, 1991 (statistics from the Bank of International Settlements in Basle — the Libyan government has denied that this estimate is accurate).

Sanctions target the innocent

A MISSION from the French human rights association "Enfants du monde, droits de l'homme" visited Iraq between 8-16 February, 1992. Its aim was to monitor the situation of Iraqi children one year after the Gulf War, especially in the areas of health and nutrition.

PATRICK DEBREST*

IN A communiqué published on its return, the delegation said: "Despite an astonishing effort of reconstruction, the health and nutritional situation in the country is getting worse. The disorganization of the system of water purification and of water treatment, linked to the systematic destruction of Iraq's energy infrastructure, continues to lead to the development of illness carried by water pollution. To this must be added the infantile diseases provoked by the absence of vaccines. And this in a context of a critical shortage of medicines and medical equipment.

Chronic malnutrition among children

"The shortage of food and the prohibitive prices bring with them chronic malnutrition. This latter now affects one child in ten, or nearly 500,000 children under five years old: 100,000 children are already dead because of the blockade. UNICEF estimates that 340,000 are currently threatened.

"The country is cut off from the world. The embargo affects all the sectors essential to human survival. Iraq can no longer pursue its effort of reconstruction if the sanctions are maintained. And only the lifting of the blockade will allow the avoidance of a human catastrophe".

At the very moment when the imperialist powers are deciding on new sanctions against Libya, this testimony is significant — the "sanctions" taken against states weigh first and foremost on the peoples concerned, in particular the poorest and weakest.

The delegation was in Iraq for only a week, and its goal was to study the situation of children in the fields of health, nutrition and education. The towns it visited were the Iraqi capital, Baghdad and four others situated to the west and south-west of the capital — Falluja, An-Najaf, Karbala and Babylon.

According to the information gathered, there are 253 central water-purifying installations in Iraq, each of them treating a minimum of 10,000 cubic metres of water a day. There are more than 1,100 smaller treatment units, mainly in the rural areas. These latter suffered for the most part only "collateral" damage during the war, but they have nonetheless been virtually paralyzed by difficulties in electricity supply. In March 1991, they were functioning at only 20% of their pre-war global capacity. This figure is now 50% for the central network and 60% for Baghdad. But 75% of the rural installations are still out of action.

The quality of water has also slightly improved, thanks in particular to stocks of chlorine provided by UNICEF and the partial re-establishment of the capacity for water treatment. But almost all this chlorine has been used in Baghdad, the other towns continuing to use untreated water. Beyond this, the destruction of nearly 80% of the means of civil transport makes the distribution of water by tankers impossible.

Catastrophic situation in the south

The situation in the south, particularly in Basra, is absolutely catastrophic: the eight water purification installations in this region have been completely destroyed by the war and its aftermath, and remain unrepaired due to lack of spare parts, chlorine and electricity.

The consequences for children's health are a considerable increase in illness originating from absorption of polluted water (diarrhoea, gastro-enteritis, typhoid and even cholera). There has also been an increase, due to lack of vaccines, in infantile diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. Malnutrition affects more than

one child in five in the south of the country and one in ten in the country as a whole: 500,000 children under five are affected. The mortality rate for under fives has doubled in a year.

Before the war, Iraq imported about 70% of its food. The current system of rationing does not even ensure half of the pre-war level of consumption. Food prices have multiplied by between 20 and 40 times according to the product.

Iraqi children are experiencing grave psychological problems stemming from the war (fear, anguish, anxiety, and so on), and the country's educational facilities have been gravely damaged.

The authors of the report conclude: "In terms of this mission, it seems to us that the word "embargo" only reflects imperfectly the reality of the sanctions affecting Iraq. The country is cut off from the world, no international flight can land at Baghdad, the only link with the outside world being the land road linking Baghdad and Amman. That is why the word blockade is more appropriate to describe the organized suffocation of the country, notably in the food and medical areas.

Flagrant violations of UN charter

"To our knowledge, this is the first time that sanctions against a state in a time of peace have been applied to sectors vital to human survival, and this in flagrant violation of the United Nations charter. The human cost of this policy is very high: the everyday difficulties, the suffering and the powerlessness of an entire people before devastating diseases and malnutrition cannot be calculated; but the growth of the infant mortality rate reveals it in all its horror.

"The surprising effort at reconstruction which strikes the visitor to Baghdad cannot conceal the precariousness of the work undertaken and the critical state of the country...

"No improvement of the situation can be counted on: on the contrary, to avoid inexorable deterioration, there is only one solution; the lifting of the blockade. ★

* The following article first appeared in the French revolutionary Marxist weekly, *Rouge*, in its issue of April 23, 1992.

Health workers strike in Russia

ON April 20, 1992 health workers in the city of Chelyabinsk in the Urals region of Russia went on strike after having picketed the city administration building for ten days. This strike, in protest against miserable wages and the poor condition of the health service, may develop into an all-Russian dispute.

POUL FUNDER LARSEN — April 21, 1992.

CHELYABINSK, with 1.5 million inhabitants, is one of the main industrial cities in the Urals region, which is the backbone of the military-industrial complex.

During World War 2, the city was dubbed "Tankograd", as every third tank in the Soviet army was manufactured in Chelyabinsk's huge tractor works.

To this day the predominance of military-linked heavy industry remains an overwhelming fact; as much as 90% of the industry in and around Chelyabinsk is to some extent related to military purposes.

In 1957 the region suffered a major leakage from a nearby nuclear installation. The precise scope of this remains unknown, while local sources claim that a second (but never officially recognized) leak occurred in 1965.

As a result of these nuclear escapes and the overall pollution from the industry the ecological situation is critical, with major implications for the health of the population.

Health service hit by spending cuts

The Chelyabinsk health service is indeed in a serious situation, primarily due to public spending cuts by the Yeltsin government as it eagerly tries to implement International Monetary Fund directives.

Centralized distribution of medicine to hospitals and clinics has effectively ceased and the pharmacy is also empty.

There are, for example, hardly any antibiotics in Chelyabinsk. Medicine can be bought on the black market but only at outrageous prices.

Health service equipment and buildings are worn out. In Chelyabinsk's main hospital, the Gynaecology

Department is situated in a hut dating from pre-revolutionary times, while next to it an almost finished 12-storey building is crumbling because there is no money to complete the construction.

The collapse of the public health sector has very serious repercussions, aggravated by widespread malnutrition: diphtheria has become common, while typhoid fever and cholera, eradicated by 1929, threaten to reappear.

A large part of the population is now forced to pay for health care through one of the numerous medical cooperatives that are springing up — according to a recent estimate 65% of Muscovites use such services.

In many places it is becoming impossible to obtain certain operations unless you provide iodine, cotton wool and other necessities yourself.

When the healthworkers of Chelyabinsk started their protest, the city authorities tried to cow them.

As one of the striking doctors, Yelena Kuklina, who is also an activist in the workers club "Rabochii" explains: "The city administration is trying to portray us as supporters of individual payment for health care, but this is absolutely false.

"We want a health service that is free of charge. It is striking that, when people took to the streets a year ago, this was depicted as 'the voice of the masses', but now, when we take action the administration scorns us as 'the red-brown hordes'."

Rising prices spark new militancy

So far healthworkers have been considered one of the least militant groups, but sky-rocketing prices over the last four months and the lack of any real indexation of wages have been the final straw.

As the leader of the strike committee at Chelyabinsk's main hospital, Vadim Syamtyenko, put it: "we used to be firm supporters of the reforms, but we have been profoundly shocked by their recent trajectory.

"We are now in a state of utter poverty. Today, an experienced, well-educated doctor gets at the most 1,000 roubles a month, not enough to buy one shoe. Nurses and other groups of health employees get far less.

"A year ago we started to organize, at that time aided by trade union leaders, but they proved inefficient and this year we set up a strike committee on the level of the city and the *oblast* ("region"), relying on forces from below.

Trade union gives moral support

"The trade union has given a certain amount of moral support, but they are not leading the movement. There are suggestions about forming an independent union, but this is at present an embryonic project.

"In our struggle we are putting forward broad demands for the improvement of the health service, and also calling for a considerable increase in our own wages.

"We have received support from, among others, miners in the region, for whom we collected money during their strike. It is my impression that the population understands and supports our actions".

The Chelyabinsk health workers strike has attracted a great deal of attention, and has been reported on several times on national TV news.

It comes at a time when other low-paid public workers are on strike — for example teachers in the Kusbass in Western Siberia. All in all there have been more than 400 strikes in health and education since the January price rises, while industrial workers have been comparatively passive.

An all-Russian healthworkers strike has been postponed until the end of April because of negotiations with the government, but the example of Chelyabinsk shows that the situation at local and regional level remains tense.

In their turn such struggles could become transformed into a movement openly challenging the government's economic policies.

Telegrams of support and greetings can be sent to: CIS, 454080, Chelyabinsk, Ulitsa Vorovskovo 16, Chelyabinskaya Gorodskaya Bolnitsa no. 1, Profsoyuznyi Komitet. ★

From the front line in Karabakh

DESPITE efforts at international mediation, the conflict continues in the mountainous region of Nagorno-Karabakh in the Caucasus, claimed by both Armenia and Azerbaijan. *International Viewpoint* has received the following account of a visit to the disputed area in early April.

VICKEN CHETERIAN

THE plane that took us from Yerevan flew at a high altitude over the Azeri territories before it went down in spiral turns in a mountainous region and could land in Karabakh.

Since the Armenian fighters took control of Khojalu where the airport is situated, Yak-40 civilian airplanes make four or five flights a day when weather conditions permit to link Karabakh with Yerevan, the Armenian capital, and thus the outside world. In the plane we were three journalists with some civilians and fighters, sitting over flour bags.

The airport is seven kms to the north of Stepanakert, the capital of Karabakh. There were no cars on the highway, but we saw groups of civilians walking and carrying foodstuffs from nearby villages.

Trees provide only source of fuel

All the trees on both sides had been cut; during the cold winter, their wood had been the only source of fuel. Stepanakert had been heavily shelled; only a few buildings had escaped destruction.

Most of its 60,000 inhabitants had sought shelter in safer villages outside the region. The rest spent their nights in underground cellars, going out during the day to look for food and water.

When I arrived in Stepanakert on Monday April 6 the city was calm. The reason was the presence of the Iranian delegation, headed by the personal representative of the foreign minister, Mahmoud Vayazi.

He told me he was discussing terms for a new ceasefire, the placement of Iranian observers on the front and the lifting of the blockade. Afterwards, he said, political dialogue could start.

The time was not yet ripe for political discussion. The Karabakh Supreme Soviet declared an independent republic on September 2, 1991, three days after Azerbaijan declared independence.

This step was confirmed in a referendum on December 10 by over 90% of those taking part. On the other hand, according to the minister of Karabakh's Foreign Affairs' Commission, Levon Melik-Shahnazarian, the Azeri government is only ready to accept the cultural rights of the Armenians and rejects any form of political independence.

The other problem, he said, was the unstable political situation in Azerbaijan itself. The authorities in Baku are only partly in control of the fighters on the ground, while the most active are the brigades of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan, itself loosely coordinated.

Karabakh campaign bears on elections

Any defeat or victory in the Karabakh campaign will bear heavily on the Azerbaijani presidential elections scheduled for June. Already this February the loss of Khojalu by the Azeris and the killings that followed forced the Azeri president Moutalibov to resign.

As soon as Vayazi left Stepanakert the city came under fire from Shushi and five people were wounded. Shelling is part of daily life in Stepanakert.

When the Red Army started to withdraw last November, the guerilla skirmishes between Azeris and Armenians turned into open war. The two sides took over most of the material left by the Soviet army.

Serge Sarkissian, Karabakh's defence minister, claimed that the Armenian forces had ten T-72 tanks and over 80

armoured vehicles from the Stepanakert garrison. The Azeris may have inherited more than this from the Aghdam and Kirovabad bases.

The uncertainty and rapid movement of the war in its first months have created a cruel tradition; villages taken by either side are put to the torch so that the "enemy" population cannot return. Captured young men are usually killed.

However, the delegate of the ICRC (Red Cross), Mary Perkins, told me she had seen prisoners of different ages held by the two sides.

After the failed coup last year Moscow seems to have completely lost its influence in the South Caucasus, playing only a passive role.

The Azeris and Armenians both regard Russia with suspicion, fuelled by the experience of the Gorbachev era when the conflict was manipulated by the centre to force the two republics to stay in the union.

Furthermore, it seems that Russia is opposed to Karabakh's independence, fearing that a similar wave may plague its southern borders, composed of Autonomous Republics.

On the other hand, Red Army officers have found a new role in the Karabakh war, selling the army's equipment and fighting as mercenaries. In various villages in Karabakh I met Russians, Ukrainians and one Uzbek involved on the Armenian side.

Fighting preferred to unemployment

Some had deserted from the CIS units while others had joined after finishing their military service, preferring to fight in Karabakh than to return home to face unemployment.

"Avo", the commander of the Mardouni region, told me that the Armenians had bought twelve armoured vehicles in January for the equivalent of \$1,500. An Iranian diplomat told me that the Russian helicopter pilots are paid 10 thousand roubles (around \$100) for every twenty minutes of operation.

Since a diplomatic solution is not at hand, military scenarios are being tried out. In early April, Azeri forces tried to attack from Shushi towards Stepanakert and on April 10, they attacked over Maragha from Mir Bashir, causing the death of 45 civilians and five fighters from the Armenian side.

Because of their superior firepower, the Azeri forces keep the villages of Karabakh under artillery fire. The less well armed but better organized Armenians try to launch ground attacks to neutralize Azeri posts.

The Azeri media is accusing the

Armenians of preparing an attack to take Shushi, where the artillery that daily shells Stepanakert is situated.

Moreover the road that links Karabakh with Armenia passes through Shushi. Melik-Shahnazarian told me that if the Armenians took Shushi, the Kurdish population in Lachin would change their stand and let supplies pass from Armenia to Karabakh.

But it is not easy to take Shushi, which is protected on three sides by mountains and gorges, and whose defenders are better equipped than the Armenians.

Such an attack would also embarrass the Pan-Armenian Movement in power in Yerevan. After President Levon-Petrosian came to power, he changed his policy of demanding immediate unification between Armenia and Karabakh into a more pragmatic stance.

Azerbaijan tries to portray the conflict as being about Armenian claims on Azerbaijani territory, rather than about the right of self-determination for the people of Karabakh, according to Alexander Tadeosian, in charge of Armenia's relations with the CIS.

Armenian support for self-determination

Until now, Armenia had not officially recognized the independence of Karabakh in order not to complicate the situation, but now Armenia supports the right of the Karabakh people to self-determination, he said.

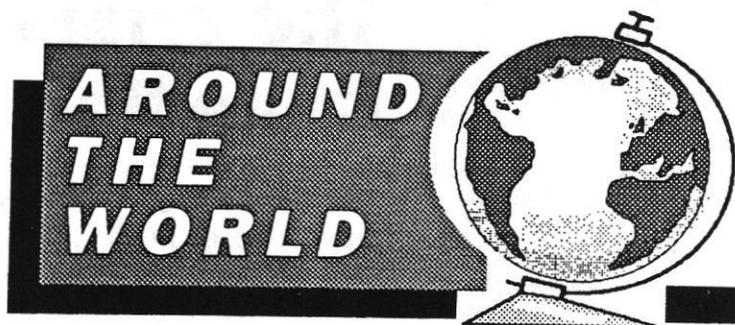
If Shushi were to be taken by the Armenians, a direct link between Yerevan and Stepanakert would be established, bringing the danger of direct conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The present ruling party in Armenia is trying to avoid this, unlike the opposition Dashnak party, which has great influence in Karabakh.

At Khojalu airport one can see families with their luggage awaiting the chance to get onto one of the planes. But only people with special permission can leave.

Factories have either been destroyed by bombing or closed because of lack of raw material. There are no electricity or telephone services and the threat of epidemics looms over Stepanakert.

The people of Karabakh appreciate the presence of foreign journalists. A family invited us for dinner; Krikor the grandfather explained to us that it was the Bolsheviks had placed Karabakh under Azeri rule, and that the Armenians were now fighting for independence and were ready to die for it. ★



SPANISH STATE

Maastricht versus the workers

THE signature of the Maastricht Treaty on European union by the Spanish State implies a drastic austerity programme in the attempt to meet the treaty's convergence criteria, including social spending cuts, and privatization of transport, health and education and some state-owned enterprises. Whatever the details, the programme does not allow room for any

agreement with the unions and must mean a wage squeeze. The "Socialist" government of Felipe Gonzalez is no doubt hoping that high unemployment will help in cowering worker protest.

The core of the plan is to reduce the public deficit and change the state's role in the economy. Public services are to undergo reforms, minimum wage regulations will be abolished for some professional sectors, monopolies in water supply, gas and electricity will be broken up and so on.

For workers the plan means an across the board onslaught, including measures to increase the geographical mobility of labour, reform of labour contracts to make sacking easier and reductions in unemployment insurance. At the same time the government is planning to reduce public spending on health.

Indirectly, all this will put pressure on wages and bring job losses. The union confederations, the General Workers' Union (UDT) and the Workers' Commissions (CCOO) have long hesitated to confront these plans, while calls from the ranks for a general strike have increased.

Finally, after statements from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) "advising" European governments to reduce unemployment benefits and the adoption of a decree to this effect by the



Spanish government, the UGT leadership finally felt obliged to take a stand, stating that it would organize a gradually increasing mobilization until the project was withdrawn.

In agreement with the CCOO the UGT has called for a half day of industrial action at the end of May and a general strike in October 1992. The UGT's general secretary, Nicolas Redondo, has declared that it is necessary to move towards a general strike because "we are not sure that these will be the last anti-worker decisions by the government".

The leadership of the Socialist Party has supported the government decisions, while offering to mediate between government and unions (Sources: *Pagina Abierta, El Pais*). ★

AUSTRALIA

Left candidate wins byelection

AN independent left candidate, Phil Cleary won a by-election in a Melbourne seat traditionally seen as a stronghold of the ruling Labor Party and once occupied by former Labor prime minister Bob Hawke, on April 11, 1992.

Cleary's campaign was supported by a

number of veteran leftists, and some left-wing trade unions publicly ditched the Labor Party to back him. Even the conservative ACTU, the Australian union confederation, declined to call for first preference votes for Labor.

Despite efforts to downplay the result, everyone knows that it is a referendum on the policies of the government, which has presided over the highest levels of unemployment since the 1930s and a depression that has meant growing poverty. A report in *Adelaide's Advertiser* on April 14 claimed that one out of every four children in that city of 1.5 million people goes to school hungry every day. The report stressed that poverty, not avoidable neglect, was the cause.

Furthermore, voters did not move from Labor to support the platform of the main opposition party, the Liberals, who are to the right even of the government but preferred to vote for a candidate clearly identified as being to the left — **John Tully** ★

NORTHERN IRELAND

Strip searches of women political prisoners

TWENTY TWO Republican women prisoners held in Northern Ireland's Armagh Jail have publicly protested about the torture they have been subjected to by the British state. According to their statement:

"On March 2, 1992, Women POWs were told that a search of the jail was to take place... a short time later women were informed that they would each be subjected to a strip search... They were threatened with loss of remission and solitary confinement if they did not comply... However, we decided to resist..."

"Gangs of screws [prison guards] armed with batons and shields entered the wings. A gang of up to 16 screws entered a cell and set upon the defenceless woman inside. The POWs were seized and dragged to the floor so that they couldn't see their assailants and their mouths covered to stifle their screams. Once inside the screws began to remove the woman's clothes until she was totally naked."

The women comment that the authorities have tried to portray this planned assault as a "routine search". They point out that all the 21 women who resisted the assault on the first day sustained injuries of some description. But it is the women prisoners who are to be charged with assault.

Our correspondents also report that these events have not been mentioned in the Irish media. A campaign is underway to press for the charges against the victims of this attack to be dropped. ★

The crisis of the Canadian state

THE Canadian state is currently going through one of the gravest crises in its history. Its very survival as a unified state is now threatened, under the impact of a strong revival of pro-independence sentiment in Francophone Quebec. Moreover, there has been a renewal of the struggles of the native peoples, who form around 5% of the population and occupy the majority of the country's territory.

FRANÇOIS MOREAU

THE history of Canada is, first and foremost, a history of conquest. The colonies established by France in the 17th century were then conquered by Britain in the following century, and the British settlement made Canada a predominantly Anglophone country, relegating the Francophones to the rank of dominated nation.

But they still account for a quarter of the total population and 82% in Quebec, the second most important province in Canada with 7 million inhabitants. As to the natives, they were reduced to the legal status of minors, cooped up on reservations and placed under the tutelage of the federal government and its Ministry of "Indian" Affairs.

The 1867 constitution had however granted a certain degree of autonomy to the provinces in the areas of education, culture and social affairs in particular: at

the time it represented a compromise with the regional bourgeoisies of the Atlantic provinces and with the French-Canadian nationalists.

However the Canadian big bourgeoisie has always wanted a stronger centralization, and the federal government in Ottawa has made energetic efforts to encroach on the jurisdiction of the provinces, using its superior financial resources.

It is in Quebec that these efforts have met the strongest resistance, for the Francophone majority considered the provincial government as its national government and sought to increase its powers, whereas the Anglophones had a tendency to see Ottawa rather than the provinces as their true seat of government.

This permanent conflict, inscribed in the very structure of the Canadian state, is now approaching the point of explosion. Indeed, the independence move-



ment which emerged in Quebec at the beginning of the 1960s now enjoys an unprecedented level of support, even a majority according to some surveys.

But Canadian bourgeois opinion is no more disposed than before to concede an increased autonomy to Quebec in order to divide the movement. On the contrary, it is insistently demanding greater centralization.

This leaves very little space for the efforts of the federalist governments of Quebec and Ottawa to concoct a new constitutional arrangement which would give at least the illusion of greater autonomy for Quebec.

But without this, it is very probable that the Parti Québécois (PQ) will win the next elections on a platform of sovereignty, which it defines as the recuperation of the exclusive power of taxation and of legislation in Quebec. This will take the crisis of Canada to a higher level.

The Anglo-Canadian left has a tendency to see the Quebecois bourgeoisie as the guiding spirit of the movement for sovereignty in Quebec, thus justifying its opposition to independence with seemingly progressive arguments.

This theme is even used by the Canadian Liberal Party, the principal governmental party of the Canadian bourgeoisie during the most of the 20th century, which affects to be worried about the fate of the Quebecois working class in case of independence! Only 2,000 bourgeois would profit from independence, its leader, Jean Chrétien, has said.

Yet it is among the Quebecois bourgeoisie, including its Francophone component, that one finds the strongest opposition to sovereignty, apart from among the Anglophone minority, too long accustomed to a dominant position in Quebec.

A survey carried out by the Employers Council of Quebec among its members revealed that 65% were opposed to sovereignty, the reverse of the population in general. What is new is rather that a minority of the bourgeoisie is now favourable to sovereignty, or at least ready to accept it, compared to the virtually unanimous opposition shown during the 1980 referendum.

On the contrary it is in the ranks of the organized working class that support for independence is highest, more than 80% according to internal surveys commissioned by the trade union leaderships.

The three principal trade union federations have taken a position in favour of independence by overwhelming majorities at their congresses, and it is they who have constituted the bulk of the attendance at the big national demonstrations, like the march of 300,000 people on June 25, 1991 on the theme: Quebec, our only country.

School students are another component of Quebecois society which is very favourable to independence. The Federation of Women of Quebec, the principal



feminist grouping, has also come out in favour of sovereignty.

The eternal problem remains that the Quebecois working class has still not conquered its political class independence. Inspired by their English-Canadian leadership, the principal currents of the international workers' movement, Social Democracy and Stalinism, have completely marginalized themselves inside the Quebecois workers' movement by their reticence on, indeed their open hostility to, the national demands.

Labour bureaucrats support bourgeois nationalists

The attempts to create a Quebecois Labour party have each time been checked because the trade union bureaucrats have preferred to give their support to the most nationalist bourgeois party, which would promise social reforms in exchange. For the support of the bourgeoisie goes massively to the least nationalist party, today the governing Liberal

Party of Quebec, obliging the other to seek the support of the working class. This is why the Parti Québécois, an officially pro-sovereignty bourgeois party, with a modernist and technocratic image, took on certain social democratic pretensions in the 1970s.

Coming to power in 1976, it paid its debt to the trade union bureaucracy by carrying out some timid reforms in the field of labor relations, despite the heated opposition of the employers, before turning against the public sector unions to impose draconian wage cuts on them during the 1982 recession. It lost power at the following elections in 1985.

Yet, despite a flagrant lack of enthusiasm for the PQ and in particular for its leader, the extremely bourgeois Jacques Parizéau, elected in 1988, the majority of the working class once more intends to vote for this party, as the sole way of defeating the detested Liberals of Robert Bourassa and in the hope of winning at least the sovereignty of Quebec.

All the opinion polls for two years indicate that the PQ will win the next elections, which must be held by 1994 at the latest. In this situation, the struggle to create an alternative working class politics is conducted within very narrow parameters.

Meanwhile, the rest of Canada is experiencing an incredible political crisis. The Conservative Party, in power in Ottawa, is in fourth position in the opinion polls after the Liberals, the Social Democratic NPD and a western regionalist right wing party, the Reform Party. The Conservatives are rejected on their left, because of their regressive fiscal policies and the massive job losses brought about by free trade with the United States.

This is why three provinces have elected NDP governments in the last year, in Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. But the Conservatives are also rejected on their right by those who find them too conciliatory towards Quebec and not conservative enough, above all the Reform Party.

There is even a rise of openly anti-Francophone currents still further to the right, like the "Confederation of Regions" which won a quarter of the seats at the last provincial elections in New Brunswick, which is still 40% Francophone.

In Quebec, on the contrary, the first

place went to the Bloc Québécois, an equivalent of the Parti Québécois which claims to fight for sovereignty on the federal level, and which would win the majority of seats in Quebec if elections were held today.

It would be extremely difficult for Quebec and Ottawa to concoct a new constitutional arrangement capable of cutting the grass from under the feet of the pro-sovereignty camp, for the minimal concessions required to regain a majority in Quebec are massively rejected in the rest of Canada.

This upheaval has opened the door to a political eruption of the native peoples, who are demanding the recognition of their right to self-government as an "inherent" right, that is previous to the arrival of the whites, and who are making claims on the majority of Canadian and Quebecois territory, without going so far as talking of secession. Although opposed to these demands, which they have no intention of satisfying, the federalist forces are doing their best to turn them against the independence project in Quebec.

In this they are greatly helped by the stubborn, rigid and authoritarian attitude taken by the PQ leadership towards the native demands on Quebecois territory, and still more by the heated efforts of the Bourassa government to construct a hydro-electric mega-project on a territory claimed by the Crees, despite the opposition of the latter, a project which has nothing to do with the demand for Quebecois sovereignty — it is already a matter for provincial jurisdiction.

Native leaders tempted by federal card

Moreover, a part of the native leadership is visibly tempted to play the federal card in exchange for possible concessions, furnishing Ottawa with the dream moral pretext for rejecting an eventual declaration of sovereignty on the part of Quebec.

Paying the PQ leaders back in their own coin, Ovide Mercredi, the president of the Assembly of First Nations, the principal native group in Canada, has denied that Quebec is a nation having the right to self-determination, to the great joy of the Anglophone chauvinists who would not dare to openly say such a thing.

The native groups of Quebec and elsewhere have however disassociated themselves from these declarations and recognized Quebec's right to self-determination, while continuing to affirm their own.

But the bridges between the natives and the Quebecois national movement

are very fragile, and the PQ, which simply seeks to take over from the federal government the domination of the native peoples, is not going to construct any more.

The Quebecois trade union federations have taken some timid steps and adopted some positions of principle in favour of the self-determination of the first nations, but they hesitate to go down a road which would put them in conflict with the PQ and oblige them to confront the anti-native racist attitudes among their members and the population in general.

The Canadian bourgeoisie still hopes that the pro-sovereignty current will flinch at the critical moment, faced with the campaign of political and economic intimidation currently being prepared, and that some symbolic concessions will be enough to win the "soft" pro-independence current back to the federalist camp.

But this strategy could well fail, in part because of the political crisis in English-speaking Canada, which makes it very difficult to formulate some kind of federal "offer" and is leading to an increase in anti-Francophone chauvinism. In this case, the Canadian bourgeoisie would use force to keep Quebec.

The technical preparations are already underway. The budget of the secret police has been increased and that of the army maintained — in the midst of international detente — while the troops stationed in Germany have been repatriated to Canada. So far as political preparation is concerned, what better than to claim to be defending the natives to justify the use of force against Quebec?

We are also now witnessing a resurgence of anti-Quebec literature, depicting the Francophones as a racist and xenophobic tribe, anti-Semitic and reactionary, hostile to individual liberties and to the rights of minorities, manipulated by the nationalist media, and so on. If this was true, Canada would not only have the right, but the duty, to stop a national movement which some go so far as to compare to Nazism!

Very much depends on the attitude of the workers' movement in English-speaking Canada. After having rejected it for 25 years, the NDP officially recognized Quebec's right of self-determination in 1987, while continuing to firmly support Canadian unity.

The same goes for the Congress of Labour of Canada, the principal trade union federation, whose Quebecois component is the pro-independence Federation of Workers of Quebec!

But the English-Canadian left is ill prepared to confront the political cam-

paign underway to justify the use of force in the name of the defence of native liberties and rights, supposedly threatened by Quebecois nationalism.

Worse, these views are widely current in the left itself. There is reason to fear that at the critical moment, it will be disoriented and paralyzed by the federal strategy.

Illusions in federal state persist

However, the principal political weakness of the left and of the English-Canadian workers' movement is its almost unanimous identification of social progress and individual rights with the central federal state.

Far from recognizing it for what it is, the principal instrument of domination of the Canadian imperialist big bourgeoisie, it idealizes this state as the defender of the weak, the minorities and the oppressed against the US multinationals and against the reactionary provincial governments, including if not above all that of Quebec.

This stems from the fact that the federal government was the principal agent of Keynesian welfare state policies in Canada from the 1940s onwards. But it is today the principal agent of their dismantling, in the interests of the Canadian big bourgeoisie.

For this latter, the stakes are sizeable. The independence of Quebec would be an unmitigated catastrophe which would reduce its international stature, amputate its internal market and challenge the current equilibrium of Canadian institutions. One can then expect it to do all in its power to block such a possibility.

However, the same degree of determination does not exist on the other side. The Quebecois bourgeoisie, in its overwhelming majority, desires a new arrangement which reinforces the provincial autonomy of Quebec, but at the same time avoids a dangerous rupture. This limits the PQ leadership to a stagist and gradualist drift whose final result would be provincial autonomy. The petty bourgeois nationalist currents which lead the national societies might sincerely wish for the complete independence of Quebec, but they do not represent a social force capable of achieving it.

The Quebecois working class is the only significant social force seeking to break with the Canadian state which has the ability to impose such a break, providing that it frees itself politically from the PQ. This is the struggle to which Quebecois revolutionary Marxists have committed themselves. ★

Free trade and social disaster

AS A safe haven for many Duvalierists, the Dominican Republic (DR) played a key role in the preparation and execution of the September 30, 1991 coup d'état which plunged Haiti into horror. The destiny of the two nations is closely connected to each other. Radical Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide aptly described the Dominican Republic and Haiti as "two wings of the same bird". President Balaguer of the Dominican Republic blames Haitians for all evils. He fears that the Dominican people will be inspired by the example of Aristide. For its part, the Haitian bourgeoisie holds up the Dominican Republic as an example to be emulated. What in fact is the Dominican model?

ANDY BROCK

THE relations between the two countries have been marked throughout the 20th century by the solidarity between their oligarchies in their struggle against the democratic aspirations of the two peoples. In 1937, the president of the Dominican Republic Trujillo massacred tens of thousands of Haitians without the then president of Haiti, Sténio Vincent lifting a finger. This solidarity of the rich has never been broken, even during the period, between 1978 and 1986, when the social democratic PRD was in power in the Dominican Republic. Balaguer, minister and then puppet president under the dictatorial regime of Trujillo and the Dominican bourgeoisie have always treated the Haitian ruling class and its armed gangs as allies.

However, the election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide as Haiti's president changed the relations between the two countries. President Balaguer began a big wave of deportations of Haitians, in the face of international condemnation. He also expressed himself in a grossly insulting manner about Aristide's speech to the United Nations defending the rights of Haitians in the DR.

For many years the political front men for the Haitian oligarchy have presented the economy of the DR as a model, showing what could be possible with the economy of Haiti. They have been supported in this by the United States, who are very fond of the DR's "model of democracy". The effect is to create an ideological obstacle to the "lavalas" of popular anger. Thus it is

well worth taking a closer look at what lies beneath the DR's development and model of democracy.

The argument seems based on simple common sense; the DR has higher growth rates than those of Haiti. Thus, in the DR per capita production has fallen by a mere 0.6% per year over the past decade as compared to 2.9% in Haiti.¹ The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Haiti was \$324 in 1990, and \$716 in the DR. Furthermore the indicators for social development are better in the DR than in Haiti.

A paper thin construction

However, in fact, the DR's economic development is a paper thin construction. In the first place that country is reaching the end of a decade lived on credit. The hour for paying the debts has arrived. After its re-election in 1990 the Dominican government gave in to the arguments of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It has had to stop printing money, which led to 100% inflation in 1990. It must also pay the interest on the foreign debt which has reached \$4.5bn. Once deprived of the stimuli of inflation and foreign debt, the Dominican economy has withered. Between 1990 and 1991 production fell by between 7 and 9% while the per capita GDP fell in 1991 to its lowest level since 1974.

A country's development prospects cannot be deduced from a few isolated economic figures, which are about as useful as a crystal ball. It is essential to look at the economic, social and politi-

cal structures. And from this point of view the Dominican "model" is a recipe for disaster.

The only dynamically expanding sectors of the Dominican economy are the Free Trade Zone industries, followed by tourism and agribusiness. The common characteristic of all three is that they rely on poorly qualified cheap labour. Indeed the Dominican authorities have been promoting the country to foreign investors with the slogan "the cheapest labour in the Caribbean", without caring much about how skilled it is. But the level of a community's consumption depends to a large extent on the productivity of labour, which is itself tied to investment in means of production and the skills of its people. From this point of view it is clear that the Dominican model is in fact a move away from the path of development.

A reading of IMF statistics well illustrates the logic behind this model: in 1987 the DR devoted 1.5 and 1.4% of its GDP to health and education respectively, compared to an average of 4.3 and 1.8% for Latin America and 5 and 5.4% for industrialized countries. Adding health and education to other social spending the IMF arrives at the following comparisons: 4.9% of the DR's budget goes on social spending compared to an average of 13.1% for Latin America and 17.1% for the industrialized countries.² Things become even clearer when absolute figures are used; the DR's education budget fell from 19 pesos per head in 1988 to 15 in 1989 and 11 in 1990, that of health from 7 pesos in 1988 to 4 in 1990 (at 1980 constant prices).

A president's place in history

President Balaguer, like his former patron Trujillo, prefers prestige constructions which he is convinced will win him a place in history. Thus the building of the Columbus lighthouse cost over \$10m. Planning in millenia he obviously sees it as his equivalent of the pyramids.

When the next century arrives one can wonder how much will remain of the assembly plants, in the face of competition from increasing numbers of countries with the same idea and the advance of automatization, with its tendency to replace unskilled labour. One can also wonder how tourism will do in a country with a rapidly deteriorating

1. *Progreso economica y social en America Latina*, BID, Washington, 1991.

2. *Government Finance Statistics Yearbook*, Washington, 1990.

environment and rising crime accompanying advanced social decomposition.

And finally one can wonder what will remain of agriculture on lands which are often impoverished by over use and suffer from the environmental destruction, including a decline in water supplies due to the cutting down of forests and the results of the deliberate use of an unskilled workforce.

Nobody at all is taking responsibility for the ecological disaster in this dustbin of the US. This January a joint declaration by environmental defence organizations denounced the arrival in 1991 of seven boats from New Jersey dumping industrial waste in the DR. On February 27, the country's national day, the president described ecological worries as "false alarms".

Finally, what is the future of the efforts to attract capital to a country whose social crisis holds out the risk of political strife and political change? The *Wall Street Journal* assessed this danger in August 1991 in a league table of political risk to business. According to the classification devised by the American branch of the London-based International Business Communications consultancy firm, in descending order of safety, the DR was 80th, between Papua New Guinea and the Congo. Under these conditions investments are confined to areas where quick profits can be made.

Exceptional corruption

On top of the absence of long or even medium term prospects should be added the other dimension of Dominican "development", a jim-crack "democracy" and an exceptionally corrupt and authoritarian political regime.

A study by the CIECA research centre revealed that in 1989 57% of Dominicans were living in poverty and 30% in absolute poverty, compared to 47 and 16% in 1984, the date of the first IMF-inspired economic reforms. The Institute of Dominican Studies (IED) has produced even more shocking figures. In 1969 the minimum wage applicable in big enterprises was 60 pesos a month, that is two thirds of the subsistence level of the time, estimated at 87,62 pesos. In 1991, the same minimum wage applied to the same enterprises was the equivalent, after inflation had been taken into account, of only 29 pesos at 1969 levels, that is a third of the subsistence level (the actual figures for the minimum wage and subsistence in 1991 being 1,120 pesos and 3,350 pesos respectively).

In 1977 the Central Bank calculated that 23% of Dominican households were living in extreme poverty, that is with less than 95 pesos a month (\$95 a year). In 1989 it found that 53% were in this condition — some 3,876,000 souls.

The sanitary situation is also getting worse. Doctor Mirtha Rose-Periago, representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the DR, declared on February 6 that that country has one of the worst records in Latin America for under-nutrition.

A survey by the Foundation for Nutritional Services (SENUTRI) reveals alarming and increasing figures for under-nutrition: in 1991, 89% of the population were suffering from under-nutrition according to internationally defined standards (2,390 calories and 59 grams of protein per day) helping

the spread of all kinds of diseases, notably tuberculosis (which affects 300,000 people in the capital according to one estimate) typhoid fever, pneumonia and dysentery. Doctors also note the mounting toll of physical and mental side effects of infantile malnutrition.

According to the most recent comparative statistics of the Pan-American Health Organization (OPS) the infant mortality rate in the DR has risen from 29.7 per 1,000 in 1980 to 56.6 per 1,000 in 1985, when the Latin American average was 24.3 per 1,000. The rate of maternal mortality had also risen from 7.2 to 9.4. More than 45,000 cases of AIDS have already been recorded. The number of children who have caught German measles owing to not being vaccinated is growing all the time (692 in 1988, 1,505 in 1989, 1,706 in 1990 and 7,380 in 1991).

Human rights in the Dominican Republic

THE annual report of the United States State Department classifies the Dominican Republic among those countries where human rights are not respected. Despite the fact that Washington is relying on Balaguer to suppress any popular uprising in Haiti against the military-macoute massacres, it cannot avoid the evidence. The report cites bad working conditions, child labour and the forced labour to which Haitians are subjected in the *bateyes* as well as the deportation of 6,000 Haitians in 1991.

The report states that "50 to 60,000 Haitians left that country mainly to avoid losing their property, and the Dominican military robs Haitians. According to such trustworthy sources as lawyers' associations, the Catholic church and human rights organizations, prisoners are sometimes beaten by the police to obtain information or testimonies... Although a significant number of policemen have been summoned before the courts, there have been no convictions for human rights violations". The report also cites cases of arbitrary arrest and detention.

On February 3, 1992, a teacher at the State University denounced the tortures he had undergone during questioning by police. He also stated that dozens of others were being tortured while he was in prison. Furthermore, on February 4, 1992, the Dominican Human Rights Committee spoke of the existence of "butchers whose names are known and who devote themselves to the torture of prisoners, in some cases to the point of death". They added that in the DR torture was "the rule during interrogations, while respect for the rights of the detained is the exception". Some organizations have also talked about the existence of secret police courts, claims confirmed by numerous complaints about the police's refusal to respect decisions taken by the courts to free prisoners.

The State Department report also records cases of sacking for attempting to organize unions, notably in the Free Trade Zones (FTZs). The main union confederation has also reported the sacking of 7,000 workers in the San Pedro de Macoris FTZ. Finally, freedom of the press is only allowed insofar as it does not trouble the regime and its allies. Thus the Creole language broadcasts of Radio Enriquillo, a Catholic station which supports the popular struggle in Haiti, have been prohibited. ★

Talking about cholera, Doctor Fabio Cabrera Polanco, director of the Health Ministry's epidemiology service, said on May 10, 1991: "We have tons of waste in the streets, tons of flies, tons of rats and a very low level of sanitary education. This makes it very likely that the conditions are highly favourable to a [cholera] epidemic. I would even say that they are ideal for it to establish itself here and spread. We cannot control this danger. How can we control all the places where planes loaded with cocaine land? We must put our faith in God."

Everyone admits that there is generalized corruption, including the Catholic church, which nonetheless remains as loyal to Balaguer as it was to Trujillo in his day. On March 7, 1992 the Bishop of Higüey admitted that the organizers of the voyages of boat people enjoyed military complicity. Balaguer has never taken serious measures against corruption in the administration. On the contrary, faced with wage demands from public sector employees some years ago he declared that they did not need the same wages as in the private sector since they had means for improving their income through extortion. Thus corruption has been given official blessing.

The inevitable results of democracy

Talking to the nation on February 27, 1992, Balaguer even launched a new theory: "People say that our country is submerged in chaos and disorder but they forget that this is the inevitable result of democracy. Our country's history offers us the proof of this. Corruption usually goes hand in hand with abundance and progress". This demented statement brought howls of outrage from many quarters, including from the former governor of the Central Bank, Miguel Gomero who stated: "corruption is the reflection of the ethical decomposition of institutions and the absence of efficient and exemplary mechanisms for punishing crime".

The logical consequence of all this is that the population is emigrating to the cities or overseas to escape from a countryside deprived of basic services, where agribusiness has seized the best land and wages have fallen. This is the reason for the uncontrolled growth of the capital, whose population has risen from 30,000 in 1920 to more than two million in 1992, and the growth of shantytowns. The process has accelerated since Balaguer's return to power; in 1986, 20,000 families were evicted by force and only half of them rehoused as

entire areas of the capital known for their opposition to the regime were turned over to prestige developments.

Emigration overseas, mainly to the US, is also increasing. And the overwhelming majority of Dominicans, both from the poor and among the liberal professions, say they are ready to emigrate. Even at those moments when speculation creates a shortage of some essential good such as sugar or flour the queues do not get as long as that always to be found outside the US embassy. But only a few get the visa they dream of, leading to the fleets of boat people who land on the coasts of Florida and especially Puerto Rico.

In some weeks the number of those forcibly repatriated to the DR is in the hundreds while dozens more die at sea. Each week the newspapers report new tragedies: on January 5, 1992, 17 people who had been smuggled into the Santiago Free Trade Zone were discovered just before embarkation in a state of advanced dehydration.

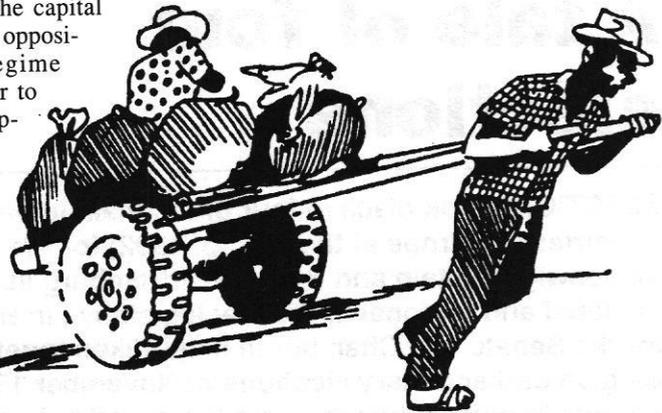
Dominican boat people

Although attracting less press attention than those from Haiti, the Dominican boat people represent precisely the same social situation, bearing witness to the despair in which most live. The Director of Civil Protection has estimated that 110,000 Dominicans have tried to get to Puerto Rico and the US illegally since 1980 with the help of state officials and elected representatives. Some 10% (11,000) have died in the crossing, while around 30% have achieved their goal.

According to Puerto Rico's Centre for Religious Services around 175,000 illegals are living in that country, for the most part working in coffee, citrus fruit and banana growing in conditions of "semi-slavery".

Another consequence of the fraying of the country's social fabric is a rapid growth in crime. In the medium term this could well threaten the country's tourist industry. The Dominican press details the increasingly violent crime wave.

In one week in February 1992 it reported the murder of a French businessman (February 2), of a Japanese



cooperative expert, whose wife was seriously wounded (February 3), of the son of the former Peruvian ambassador, whose wife was also wounded (February 3), of a Swedish tourist (February 5) and a German tourist (February 5).

Even though police statistics are without doubt far from giving an accurate picture of reality, and while the police are themselves a major source of crime, they announced a rise in crimes from 125,00 in 1990 to 192,000 in 1991 — an increase of 53% in one year.

Such a "democracy" can only be sustained by force. Balaguer, restored to power with the aid of US troops after a fraudulent election in 1966, hunted down his leftist opponents over a period of 12 years, physically eliminating the main leaders of the left. Returned to power in 1986 after the social democratic interlude, he has a range of well-equipped and trained repressive forces at his command which immediately suppress any popular protest. Such events end in deaths, injuries and hundreds or even thousands of arrests.

The voting ghosts

Balaguer furthermore enjoys a presidential constitution which he applies or violates as he wishes and which gives him pre-eminence over the legislature and judiciary.

The electoral system, meanwhile, permits fraud. Thus, according to the president of the Electoral Council, 460,000 people who have died since 1970 still appear on the electoral rolls.

Two figures amply sum up the nature of the regime in the Dominican Republic: 15% of the electorate were enough to put in power a president who, in 1991, had at his disposal 60% of the nation's budget, which he spends according to personal whim without any parliamentary control. At the same time health and education get 5% of the budget and agriculture 3.5%. ★

A tale of four elections

ELECTIONS took place in four of the main imperialist countries of Europe at the start of 1992; for the *Länder* of Schleswig-Holstein and Baden-Württemberg in Germany; cantonal and regional in France; legislative in Britain and for the Senate and Chamber in Italy. Taken together with the Belgian parliamentary elections of November 1991, they provide important insights into the broad political situation.

While caution is in order — since elections always present a barometer sensitive to that part of the electorate that is most volatile — and despite the influence of different and well rooted state and social institutions, there are clearly some broad supranational trends at work.

Four aspects of these recent ballots can be highlighted: the growing fragility of parliamentary democracy; the electoral advance of reactionary, populist and fascist movements; the deep crisis of Social Democracy and, finally, the first stirrings of a left alternative.

FRANÇOIS VERCAMMEN

ALL these aspects stem from the same source; while it is true that capitalism, with the aid of the reformist bureaucracies of the workers movement, has succeeded in managing its crisis, it is also true that it has had to pay a high price. The past fifteen years have worn down and undermined all the classic instruments of domination, marshalling and legitimation of the bourgeois order. By clever manoeuvring, whose “cleverness” is directly the result of the retreat of the workers’ movement and the absence of an overall response on the latter’s part, a brutal, head on confrontation has been continually postponed. Until when?

The governmental parties have slipped back, but the main opposition parties have drawn little profit from this. Despite appearances created by the electoral system, even the British case does not escape this framework. The theory that the opposition must get in when everyone is fed up with the government no longer holds.

The traditional parties are generally discredited, the strongest in particular. This is above all true for the Christian Democracy in Italy and Belgium and the Social Democracy in France, government parties for the past decade, if not since 1945. But the official opposition has also suffered. The Belgian Social Democracy has wasted its re-entry into government in 1987 after seven years in the wilderness, while the British Labour Party’s attempt to end 13 years out

of power ended in humiliation. The German Social Democracy, meanwhile, no longer knows how to cope, while the bourgeois parties in France have failed to profit from the spectacular collapse of support for the ruling Socialist Party. Italy, meanwhile, sees unprecedented fragmentation among the traditional parties.

The rise of spoiled ballots and abstentions, as well as the breakthrough of the ecologists and populist right show the lights on orange and moving towards red for the parliamentary regime. The debates on the electoral system reveal the concern which haunts the bourgeoisie in the face of the general disillusionment and the turbulence in the East: to achieve an authoritarian reform of the state which will guarantee stability while avoiding any provocative ideas of a fascist solution.

But this solution is not easy to attain. It is just as dangerous to deprive an important part of the electorate of their deputies by disallowing a proper proportionality between voters and their representatives — as in France and Britain — as to allow the real expression of public opinion at a time of chronic and worsening social crisis, as in Italy, where one can cast a “useful” vote and see and hear in the media parliamentarians who are not, at least yet, ready to play the sterile parliamentary game.

The debate on the principle of proportional representation (Britain), on how much

proportionality to have (France) or the height of the barrier to be achieved for representation to be attained (Italy) all revolve around the same fundamental idea: that of neutralizing the subversive effects of universal suffrage and representative democracy on the functioning of the executive. The personal campaign of Italy’s President Cossiga for a more authoritarian “New Republic” is a particularly explicit example of this.

The key is the strengthening of the executive’s power over society. While the material and legal powers of the state have hugely increased over the past twenty years, there remains a lack of coordination. In all these countries, the debate on electoral systems is part of a broader problematic: what political instruments and what price must be paid to maintain or even recreate a threatened social and political cohesion?

Far right becomes major force in big cities

Is the vote for the far right simply a protest vote or a lasting sign of political and social discontent? The advance of populist and fascist movements everywhere except in Britain is a significant change in the political map. With national support that today hovers around 10%, these forces embody a struggle for political power in the big cities, such as Marseilles, Antwerp or Milan, where scores of 25%+ were achieved by the far right, a sign of the social and moral crisis. Now installed in the heart of the “democratic” institutions, they are a permanent factor in the balance of forces, both on the institutional level and in society.

Whatever their differences, these movements grow from the same soil: social distress, insecurity, existential anxiety and, in the absence of any more collective way out, a search for individual salvation by the most deprived. The expression of the social frustration of the marginalized and their desire to punish “those up there” combines with a yearning for order and elitism on the part of better off sections of the middle class.

While the first group adopts the immigrant as the scapegoat for all its troubles, the latter are governed by the egotistical reflexes of prosperity which they feel to be threatened. While the first quote immigration statistics, the second refer to taxes and social transfers by the state. Nationalism, sub-nationalism and localism provide some sort of ideological basis for this jumble.

Calling for “priority for our people”, Le Pen in France, the Leagues in Italy and the German Republicans give effective expression to diffuse but widespread sentiments found throughout all sections of society.

Furthermore, one should not underestimate the lifeline that this sudden breakthrough may give to these Fascist-Nazi grouplets who have for a long time remained isolated in their nostalgia.

Even if they remain still at the beginning of their organization into a real party (except in France) they have now gained three advantages. Firstly, these organizations will now dispose of the material means attendant on their presence in the state institutions, going far beyond those at the disposal of the militant anti-fascist forces.

Secondly, they have won through these elections an aura of democratic legitimacy at a moment when all the established parties are severely discredited. The long-time fascist grouplets have been joined by a new generation of fascist leaders, often young and "up-to-date".

Civil war in the social catacombs

They intend to carry out a civil war in the catacombs of society under a respectable cover and employing a united front line on their "transitional demands"; on immigration, security, housing, education, social security, the struggle against corruption, the defeat of the "secret" and illegitimate political and financial power of unions and cooperatives, European unity, the rejection of American imperialism and so on.

Thus, and finally, they can act in concert with a new right wing produced by the overall toughening of bourgeois policy which is developing inside the traditional bourgeois parties in crisis.

The worrying advances of the far right should not lead us to overlook another burning issue: the electoral decline and crisis of the big Social Democratic parties. Eleven years of exclusively "Socialist" government in France have brought the Socialist Party (PS) to the edge of the abyss. Thirteen years of "Socialist" opposition in Britain, during which time the Conservative government has implemented an austerity policy of a brutality unparalleled in Europe, have led the Labour Party to a crushing electoral defeat. In both cases the Social Democratic leadership has violently confronted and discomfited its own rank-and-file in order to win the confidence of big capital: the PS to stay in government, Labour to get into it.

In both cases this has led into a strategic dead-end. The "culture of government" — in France — or the break with the trade unions — in Britain — seem as suicidal as returning to "anti-capitalist" and "class struggle" sources, however reformist

seems impossible.

One could say that the two experiences are chemically pure and thus exceptional, in countries where the electoral system favours homogeneous and long-lasting governments. But even where coalitions succeed one another in rapid succession, confusing the political picture, there is no mistaking the decline of Social Democracy. In Germany the SPD has seen a spectacular retreat. In Baden-Württemberg, the country's richest Land with 10 million inhabitants, it got its worst score since 1968 (29.4%), while the Christian Demo-



cratic Union (CDU) got 36.9%, a decline of 9.4%.

In Schleswig-Holstein the SPD slumped from 54.8% to 46.2%. In Italy the small drop of 0.6% in the score of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) does not accurately reflect the party's political defeat. In fact in the north the party lost 25% of its electorate, accentuating its character as a southern clientelist party and putting an end to the dreams of its leader Craxi of reorganizing the political landscape around his own person.

Enormous and disagreeable shock

This is an enormous and disagreeable shock for the European Social Democracy. Towards the end of the 1980s, its leaders hoped and dreamed that history was about to call on them. The exhaustion of the disastrous neo-liberal policies of the Reagan/Thatcher era would see them summoned into the arena of partnership. Meanwhile in the East, *perestroika* was to bring about the "socially amended market economy", propelling Gorbachev into the arms of the Second International. The future was rosy, from the Atlantic to the Paci-

fic!

However in the event Social Democracy was overwhelmed by the impossible reform of the (post-) Stalinist bureaucracy and the discrediting of "really-existing socialism". After that, the political balance sheet of the Socialist parties' response to the capitalist crisis returned to haunt them with a vengeance. Rather than attempting to fight against it, the Social Democracy had been fully implicated, in the name of the lesser evil or of the European way, whether in or out of government.

Called upon to break workers' resistance, it sowed the demoralization to which it is now itself falling victim. Over the past ten to fifteen years this balance sheet, which is more or less clearly grasped by workers, has undermined the place of the Social Democracy inside the traditional workers' movement. Furthermore, it has cut off its access to the youth. While one segment of its popular base, disgusted and bewildered, is tending to drift to the populist or extremist right, the young and the new sectors of wage workers are not, for all that, spontaneously attracted by a "modernist" Social Democracy which offers no future or hope, no global alternative or even concrete and relevant proposals.

It should also not be forgotten that, in the deep discredit that has struck it, and more than ever implicated in the cogs of capitalism, the

leading circles of the European Socialist parties have developed a taste for "easy money". Besides spectacular scandals and illegal excesses (robbery, fraud and so on) day-to-day corruption has created a layer of "Socialist arrivistes" whose lifestyle in times of austerity for the people is found unbearable by the rank-and-file to whom it has been wont to expand on the dangers of corporatism and egotistical demands.

While there are certainly debates, contradictions, conflicts and occasionally even a "left/right" polarization inside the Social Democracy, it is also the case that a really thoroughgoing recomposition in its ranks has yet to appear. The main apparent contradiction appears to be that between the Socialist Party, increasingly in the embrace of the bourgeois state, and the trade union movement which is under more direct pressure from the working class and social movements.

The weakness of the revolutionary left in these elections is striking. It reflects, of course, the relation of class forces at the international level and between reformists and revolutionaries inside the workers' movement. But it leaves questions to be answered, at a time when the Communist parties have abdicated their responsibility

or are shrinking, when the Social Democracy is running out of steam and when the Greens are nibbling away at the latter's left flank.

A wide ranging reshuffle is underway, but it is taking place against a background of a decline in struggles, of the traditional workers' movement and of socialist class consciousness. At the same time the prolonged crisis of capitalism, now the sole master of the planet, is producing enormous discontent which has not yet taken political form.

The impressive levels of voter turnout in countries where voting is not obligatory — seen in Britain, France, Italy and to a lesser extent Germany — indicates the limits of de-politicization and individualism when people feel that there is something really at stake. At the same time the Green vote goes way beyond ecological problems, protest voting and the neo-reformist projects of the leaders of this movement. It is one symptom among others of a broad and persistent aspiration to a change in ways of life and in society.

This is also the framework in which the patchy but positive results received by candidates to the left of social democracy should be analyzed.

Defending "Communist" continuity

The Italian Party of Communist Refoundation (PRC) did well, with 5.6% in the votes for the lower chamber and 6.5% in the elections to the Senate, giving it a parliamentary group of 55 (35 and 20). The PRC has been catapulted onto the national political scene, with a strong grassroots implantation and a presence in elected state institutions. Defending the "Communist" continuity (Togliatti and Berlinguer) of the former Italian Communist Party (PCI), the PRC has also continued to defend a "Communist" perspective within society.

It is opposed to the social democratization of the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS — former PCI) which thus distances it from the PSI. The PRC differs from the French Communist Party (PCF) of Georges Marchais in that the former has had to break with the former Communist Party establishment. Up until now its tendency has been to the left, despite its heterogeneity — it cannot therefore be compared to the Refounders and Renewers in France. However it remains to be seen how and on what basis this heterogeneous "former post-Stalinist" party will succeed in stabilizing itself.

In France, Lutte Ouvrière got an average of slightly less than 2%, with a high point of 3% in Seine-Maritime across the 30 departments where it presented lists. The Revolutionary Communist League (LCR

The crisis of citizenship and the future of Europe

THE FOUR elections that have just taken place in Western Europe have had the press digging out a variety of



metaphors to describe their significance. For the French, Italian and German elections the term "earthquake" has been a favourite. In these three countries, the traditional parties lost ground to movements more or less exterior to the state: ecologist movements, on the one hand, who have gained ground among the left electorate, and the far right on the other.

In Great Britain, the "surprise" of the Conservative victory in reality confirms the prolonged tendency of the relationship of forces in Europe to turn against the working class. But Labour's defeat also marks the end of an era. The Kinnock leadership, despite the prodigious right-wing turn it has made, proved incapable of carrying Labour to victory, and the price paid in terms of rank-and-file demoralization will be high.

Across the European continent, in the West as the East, a series of problems are posed: racism, the crisis of political representation and the traditional parties, new problems of political rights and of citizenship, and so on. Is there a general approach to these questions, which could lead to the development of a unified strategy? There are at least a certain number of common features which we will attempt to outline.

CLAUDE GABRIEL

— French section of the Fourth International) put forward some lists where it has some implantation. Its high point was 5.57% in Gérardmer in the Vosges, where an LCR member Raymond Vacheron is an adviser to the town hall on environmental questions.

Here the LCR proposed a grand coalition of the Greens and the revolutionary left, but this was met with a cascade of sectarianism, from LO, the Greens and PCF dissi-

dents. These latter also did well in some places where they could put forward locally known personalities, beating the official PCF candidates with scores of between 7.2 to 12.4%.

Such results show us the first stirrings of something to the left of the social democracy. It also shows how elections can permit the revolutionary left to come out of its marginalization by reinforcing its links with the real movements in society. ★

THE MAASTRICHT TREATY opened a new phase in European integration. It is at the moment hard to see whether real monetary and political union will be achieved by the end of the century. The much cited "political will" would not be enough by itself to overcome all the socio-economic hazards. However it is not necessary to assume that in 1999 everyone will be paying their bills in Ecus (the "European" currency) to draw certain conclusions:

1. The perspective of economic and monetary union (EMU) corresponds to the needs of capital. Besides the issue of competition with American and Japanese enterprises, the European single market corresponds to the cumulative tendencies of capital: exports and regroupments of capitals of different national origins; the development of production strategies and techniques whose costs are increasingly difficult to meet at a national level; and the inadequacy and lack of efficiency of the nation state in guaranteeing the general conditions of production.

The process underway in Europe, aiming at organic and ultimately political integration, although very bold and complicated, is only an example of a trend which is also shown by the development of new free trade zones such as the North American Free Trade Zone (NAFTA) or AFTA in Asia.

Thus, the project of European integration, as a form of the reorganization of capital, plays an important role in the changes underway in many fields of political and social life, independently of whether full EMU is achieved.¹

2. Insofar as this perspective is not merely a result of political and ideological will but of a structural need of capital, one can ask what the consequences of failure would be. Given the size of the interlinked interests and the growing importance of continental and global strategies for the main European industrial and financial sectors, an irreversible setback

for the Union would have vast implications.

The multiplication of financial and trade deals and the complexity of the already functioning European legislation does not permit a long period of marking time. Either EMU is proceeded with or there will be a chaotic return to the protectionisms of a past age. A regression on this side of the Single Act would lead the continent into an unprecedented socio-economic crisis.

This is the reason for the famous "political will". The states and their governments are perfectly well aware of the danger and are moving forward pragmatically, reaching the necessary compromises.

The "catastrophe scenario" could in fact come about, notably owing to the grave institutional and political crises. The rise of the far right in a number of countries, the possibility of the Maastricht Treaty being rejected in Denmark, Britain or Ireland and the worsening of the monetary crisis under the impact of the recession, could derail the consensus and compromises reached between the governments.

There must be a certain conformity between the establishment of the credibility of a single "Ecu" currency and the formation of a common proto-state. A credible currency always needs the institutional support of a state. And it is here that the biggest problem is to be found; the fact that the prospect of a genuine European federation lags far behind that of the internationalization of capital.

3. There are many connections between the project for European integration and the ongoing reorganization of industry in its search for increased profits and new ways of organizing the labour process. Here we find the economies of scale which involve the search for the critical mass that is needed for some kinds of research to be undertaken, and for new products to be produced and marketed worldwide. The amount of money needed and the risks incurred require going

beyond the national or even regional level at a time when the market is already highly monopolized.

4. It is thus no surprise that European unification is being accompanied by systematic attacks on social benefits or that it works to increase the trend towards a reduction in job security and increasing enterprise closures. The social democratic delusions about economic union with a progressive social colouration have sunk without trace. Nor is there any evidence of the Maastricht Treaty reversing the ultra-free market trend of the Single Act. The notion of a social amendment of the latter, so popular in European social democratic circles, has given rise to a piece of paper, the Social Chapter, which is entirely without effect.

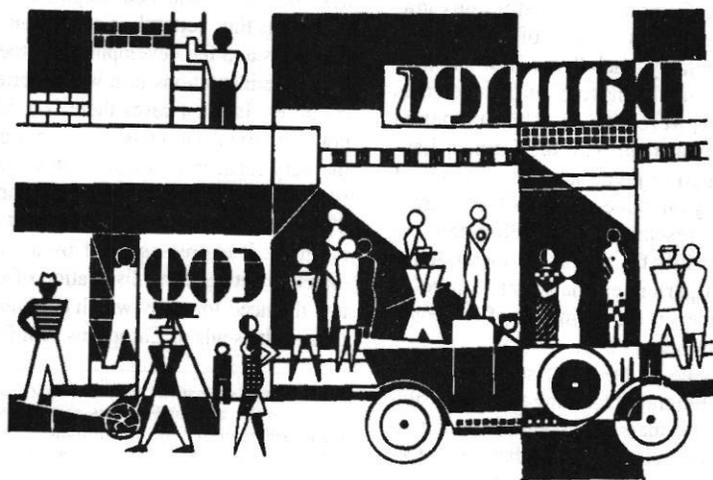
5. The upheavals are thus not being postponed until the last minute. They are happening now, as the capitalist reorganization upends, transforms and even destabilizes a part of its own foundations. And this is especially true for Europe's historic nation states, which have always played an essential role in ensuring, protecting and forming markets and underpinning the general conditions of production.

The institutional crisis is not the result of the growing powers of the Brussels bureaucrats. Its origin is in the loss of effectiveness of the national states as far as the regulation of an increasingly globalized capitalism is concerned. An overwhelming proportion of prices are realized at the international level and national anti-crisis policies lack all substance. External constraints are now decisive for all countries, however big.

The crisis of the historic nation states

The contradiction between the needs of capitalism and the restricted national spaces is stronger than ever, but the nation state remains the cornerstone of maintaining overall equilibrium. It retains a part of its former role in realizing value and in everything to do with social control, ideological production and the monopoly of force. But the state did not only operate through its territorial definition and specific legislation. Its legitimacy was imposed only by an idealized and often mythical relation to the national community.

Long histories in which wars and revolutions played the founding role have made the connection between national



1. This side of the problem is overlooked by the French Trotskyist group Lutte Ouvrière when they say, in relation to the Maastricht Treaty, that "it would be all the same an advance compared to the old society which remains burdened to suffocation with anachronisms" (*Cahier du Cercle Léon Trotsky*, January 17, 1992).

ideology and the specific needs of the bourgeoisie more or less invisible. The state has thus appeared as immutable, as necessary to material life as to the sense of identity. It has been at one and the same time the welfare state and the repository of the national identity. How, then, could it be suspected of working for a specific class and in defence of a regime of exploitation?

But the day comes when the internationalization of capital brings the complexity of the problem to light: the state loses a part of its usefulness for the capitalists themselves. Still useful and indispensable in many respects, it is no longer however the sole repository of the interests of some capitalist sectors, whose policies are worked out on another level.

The result is the Single Act, which seeks to set up a system which will lead to the disappearance of national barriers to the circulation of goods, capital, services and people. It is always possible to see this in a relative light by pointing out that the state remains a central instrument for many major firms and sectors of the bourgeoisie and one can also point to the limited powers of the Community itself. But this cannot hide the fact that the new formula EEC means the end of the old role of the historic nation states. This is a major development.

Indeed, sometimes, this or that government aggravates this crisis for electoral reasons. This is the case when they fraudulently present unpopular measures which they are wholly in favour of, such as the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy or the recent re-authorization of night work for women, as the work of "Brussels' directives". By disowning responsibility they add to the feeling that the state is losing its purpose.

The rise of the regions

The same historic movement is also speeding up the unequal development inside the European states. The crisis and the partial remedies offered by capital have upset the regional hierarchies. The poorest and most deprived regions have not got out of the rut despite all the aid and the various plans. The others, on the contrary have seen big changes in the past 15 years. Regions which for more than a century were at the centre of capitalist development have often had to give way to others in terms of investment and the coming of new high tech industries. The result is that unemployment rates can be very different between the former industrial bastions and the new dynamic regions.

The inequalities and disparities are aggravated all the more in that "European construction" accentuates them, notably

by offering compensation for deregulation by redirecting non-national investments towards the regions.

So-called "structural funds" have been set up to compensate for the inequalities. Thus the institutions intervene but only after the damage has been done. They attempt to correct what has been wrought by private capital by the use of public money. According to a top Euro-official quoted in *Le Monde* (March 1, 1992), to keep unemployment in the most deprived regions at present levels in the year 2000 would require the creation of 2 million jobs, while to reach 50 to 70% of average community GDP these regions would have to have 15 years of growth rates from 1.5 to 2% above average European growth rates.

Thus we now have the so-called "cohesion funds" which are mainly aimed at the four poorest EEC countries (Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain) in the hope that they can make up some of the lag with the more prosperous regions.

There are few states in Europe whose history and rules are as centralist as the French state. Many to one degree or another have constitutional forms which give power to regional or other entities. This is true of Britain, the Spanish State, Belgium or Germany.

The previous European treaties did not deal with the question of regions. Only a "consultative committee" of local collectivities was set up in 1989. Now a consultative council of regional structures has been set up by the Maastricht Treaty. This represents a recognition of the structural changes underway and the new contradictions they give rise to, albeit in a modest form (since the delegations are in the last analysis under the control of the national governments). Some indication of the size of the problem is given by the fact that there are 180 legally recognized regions in the existing Community.

A new division of powers

As the Community's institutions gradually extend their field of intervention they inevitably reach the point where they interfere in what have been considered as regional prerogatives. This happened before Maastricht with the German Länder, which enjoyed a wide measure of autonomy on matters such as the environment or research and development. In order to ratify the Single Act therefore the German parliament had first to involve the Länder in the definition of the country's European policy.

The same problem is also found in the case of Belgium regarding the responsibilities of Flanders and Wallonia over education and culture.² And what will become of the Swiss Cantons if Switzerland

joins the Community?

These processes have only just begun since one is seeing, even in France, a policy of regional decentralization running parallel to European integration.

The current idea is that the Community should only deal with matters that cannot be better addressed at other levels, thus avoiding too great a transfer of power to the supra-national level. But if this same rule was applied to the individual countries it would in many cases imply a substantial strengthening of regional powers at the expense of the national states.

And already we are seeing the rise of powerful regional lobbies working around the European administration as well as a multiplication of agreements or convergences of interest between the regions of different countries. In Spain, the "autonomous communities" controlled funds totalling \$300bn in 1991. The Basque country and eight other "autonomous communities" now have their own network in Brussels, from which some 7.3 billion Ecus will have been distributed to the 17 regions of the Spanish State between 1989 and 1993. Of France's 22 regions, 16 have ambassadors in the Belgian capital, from whence 17bn francs in structural funds are to be dispensed to France.

Many "regional cartels" exist, such as that linking Baden-Württemberg, Catalonia, Lombardy, and Rhone-Alpes region in France, or the Euro-region bringing together Northern France, Kent, Flanders, Wallonia and the region of Brussels.

In Germany, the Länder henceforth reserve the right to vet all European legislation. The Bundesrat will send a representative to the Council of Europe each time a point affecting the Länder's competence is raised.

Thus the national states are caught in a pincer movement between their growing difficulties in ensuring management of their part of world capitalism and regional strategies aimed at reaping the rewards of new forms of unequal development.

There is thus certainly a connection between this and the development of the crisis of the institutions in a whole series of countries. In most cases there is a debate not only about the constitution but about the very legal basis of the states. As the French president explained on February 29, 1992: "the contradiction is felt everywhere: it expresses itself by a sort of dialectic between the dislocation of today and the need for unity which continues to inhabit the souls of Europeans. But for the

2. The notions of "region" and "community" are different. In the case of Flanders community and region are expressed by one institution, since the cultural dimension has determined the administrative form.

moment it is the dislocation that prevails. The period ahead of us is that of exasperation".

National identity and the rise of racism

In this period of dislocation there is much talk of the crisis of political representation and also of the crisis of national identity. This latter plays a role in the rise of racism and the far right. A report from the official Human Rights Commission in France insists that racism results from, among other things, "a feeling of a crisis of order and of national identity". The regions begin to develop their own political identities, the nation states lose some of their powers, but remain indispensable, while the Community assumes more and more supranational prerogatives. The resulting incoherence favours reactionary regionalisms on the part of the rich regions: the Vlaams Blok in Flanders, the Lombard Leagues for a "Republic of the North of Europe", the strong influence of the Republicans in Baden-Württemberg and so on.

The far right itself, furthermore, is not immune to differences on the European question. Its credo can be that of the defence of national sovereignty against the Brussels Eurocrats or a regional identity critical of the existing nation state.³

Citizenship and self-determination

This is the background to the developing debate on citizenship. In the recent regional elections in France, decentralization and the confirmation of regional prerogatives were presented as a way of reinforcing the links between the citizen and the decisions that directly affect her/him. That remains to be seen. In fact the crisis of representation that explains some very high abstention rates in cities and in poorer neighbourhoods is not to do with the "distance" between the citizen and the centres of power.

The problem of absence of control over elected representatives is as old as formal representative democracy itself. However it is interesting to note that people are more and more intolerant of a delegation of power without regular control or the right to interfere.

This may seem a surprising development at a moment of declining class consciousness and a weakening of mass mobilizations. Indeed, it might be argued that the increasing tendency to feel frustrated by the façade of democracy is apolitical and negative insofar as it is not combined with class consciousness.

However, such an argument misses the point. In fact such individual conscious-

ness is not necessarily simply the fruit of the disintegration of the sense of belonging to a collectivity. It expresses — or at least can express in some forms — another aspect of class consciousness in new socio-economic conditions. The average cultural level has risen: urbanization has advanced to a point where it poses new problems for the environment and daily life; qualifications and the organization of work have changed; women have entered the labour market in great numbers; schooling has lengthened and so on. This has led to demands of a new type. The desire for control over one's own life could be at the origin of a new form of social consciousness.

For a long period the relation between the working class and the state and "citizenship" was more tenuous than has been the case in the period which began with the Second World War. Etienne Balibar has described this as "extra-territoriality".⁴ This situation gave rise to specific forms of worker representation, of culture and of solidarity. The big proletarian concentrations voted massively and regularly for those who spoke in the name of the proletariat. And the swift loss of control over these political and union bureaucracies seemed to be compensated for by real gains, won first in struggle but then guaranteed by negotiations and legislation. The heads of the workers parties and unions felt they had been granted a permanent mandate to do deals with the opposing class.

What the worker had for her/himself and her/his family was the result of struggles. S/he voted so that these victories would be protected by people who represented her/his class. The bourgeoisie did not view her/him as a consumer, a user or even as a full citizen. Bourgeois opinion oscillated between paternalism and fear: one felt pity for the "small people" while lashing out at the "rabble" of the workers' neighbourhoods.

This "extra-territoriality" has disappeared to be replaced by the question of the *banlieues*, the immigrant ghettos and the dirty popular housing estates. These are all things which are very different from the former working class community with its close links between dwelling and workplace. We are seeing the rise of new forms of political and social exclusion.⁵

A changing sense of social being

The welfare state has thus progressively



modified the individual's sense of her/himself. A double movement has taken place. The bureaucratic representatives of the class were more and more co-opted, integrated into and compromised by the overall management of the system. Then, the state increased and systematized its social management. The indirect "social" wage grew; social negotiations have taken on systematic form and the arbitrating functions of the public authorities have been extended.

The changes to the bourgeois state provoked and accompanied the changes to the representative bureaucracies of the workers' world. Prolonged management of local government meant increasing compromise with local business. The growing weight of co-operatives and co-management of social benefits increased the part of the funds they managed in the name of the state. As a result both in fact and in people's understanding the notion of class representation has lost its solidity. This development has found its own terminology: one talks of a "political class" which takes in both the parliamentary left parties and those of the traditional right.

3. See for example the ideas put forward by the leader of the Lombard Leagues, Gianfranco Miglio in *Le Monde* of April 1, 1992, where he explains that the Lombard identity makes them among the most European of Italians and argues in favour of a Europe of the regions.

4. Etienne Balibar, *Les frontières de la démocratie*, La Découverte, Paris, 1992.

5. Bernard Francq writing about the Belgian mining regions in *Contradictions*, no. 56, 1989 (Brussels). Alain Bihl in *L'homme et la société*, no. 98, 1990 (Paris) or François Bon in "Ouvrier, ouvrières", *Autrement*, January 1992, Paris.

Most people view this strange class as consisting of all those who engage in politics to get their slice of the cake, a sentiment exploited by the far right.

Social services have been undermined by austerity policies to the point where it has become difficult today to present policies based on defending nationalizations in a progressive light. Almost everywhere efforts at retraining have given way to a straightforward management of unemployment.⁶ Collective contract bargaining has been whittled away in many countries. The education system is in a crisis that removes any illusion of equality of opportunity. Exclusion is on the order of the day everywhere both in the social and the political fields. In these circumstances the state finds it increasingly difficult to present itself as standing above classes, enforcing justice through redistribution. On the other hand its class function is no more clear. For most people it is viewed simply as the lair of various *mafias*.

Can this suspicion of politicians be overcome by the development of a "new citizenship" based on regions or nationality? Will things get better if Scots vote as Scots and Walloons as Walloons? There is no chance of this insofar as the institutions remain at the convenience of the dictatorship of the market and of profits.

A "new citizenship" which simply reproduces at a local level the same delegations of power as at a national level, with the absence of the right of direct intervention by the populations, without the right to recall delegates, without a proper circulation of information and so on, will do nothing to resolve the present frustration. Worse, the argument that "small is beautiful" ends up by limiting people's field of understanding.

This is the first dilemma. The European Economic Community is developing a type of state intervention without a state. Bourgeois parliamentary democracy as conceived in the framework of nation states lacks any real expression at the Community level. In the prevailing conditions of institutional dislocation the search for a new right to expression and the desire to decide for oneself focus more easily on the "closest" institutions. However nothing can really be resolved without combining local means of social control with the national and European level of decision making. It is useless to try and separate these two levels and argue that European construction means that a large part of power must inevitably become increasingly inaccessible.

"To change life" (as the electoral slogan of the French Socialist Party promised in 1980) cannot only be done at the level of the enterprise, the city or the region. What is needed are forms of democracy that connect the general and

the particular.

It is not that we should deny the relevance of local, regional or national demands. On the contrary, the new society we want must be based on a great extension of local self-organization and self-determination. But such a perspective can only be credible if we invent new coherent institutions that can match up to the socio-economic changes, which means taking on the entire European dimension.

The rise of nationalism in Eastern Europe

It is in this framework that we must address the questions of nationhood and identity. In *Le Monde* of September 20, 1991, François Mitterrand opined that "I do not think that the end of human progress should be to recreate a Europe of ethnicities or tribes". But the current national crises in central and eastern Europe are not simply the product of a past unchanged in the Communist years. Even if they are nourished by references to the past their vitality is a product of more recent history. Or to put it another way, the speed and above all the unevenness of the introduction of the market has produced big social and political shocks without any social class or political regime being able to direct events.

This speed and unevenness requires violence. This has taken the form of war, since it is by this means that the reformed bureaucracies and the political cliques try to establish their national legitimacy. War is all the more necessary in that the capitalist transformation depends largely on Western investment.

This manna is divided up according to the rule: what Croatia gets, Serbia will not get. Capitalism can only operate by setting all the countries, regions and people in competition with one another. The new political regimes, which are under no direct control and which combine the old bureaucratic order with a charade of parliamentary democracy, sometimes need war to gain international recognition or consolidate a new sovereignty. No new stable social system has been formed but rather parties and leading layers which have inherited a portion of the old state, army and resources — enough to sustain a war. The feelings of the population and their right to choose plays hardly any role and in the general disarray manipulations and propaganda have an impact.

Nonetheless, let us not forget that at the outset those who took part in and rejoiced in the fall of Stalinism did so out of a desire to take control of their own destinies — whether as part of a national entity or as individuals.

The extreme weakness of class

consciousness and the absence of any political projects opposing at one and the same time Stalinism and the dictatorship of the market have ended up by exacerbating the divide between civic and worker consciousness. The search for democracy did not pass through the enterprise, and the issue of what one produces and why was hardly raised.

The rebellion in the East identified with the Western-style of parliamentary democracy, with its inherent tendency to detach political power from social control. This is why the diverse national questions did not come together into a radicalization involving self-determination and rank-and-file democracy, and why the demands for national self-determination did not result in a broad social movement that could definitively do away with the vestiges of the Stalinist past.

In fact various factions of the bureaucracy took over the national, regional or language questions and came up with chauvinist answers that corresponded to their own social interests.

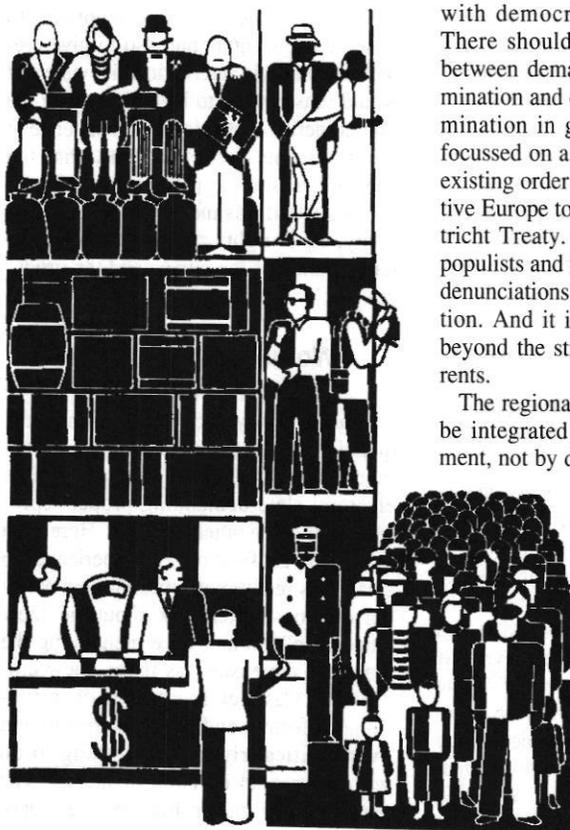
This is why there has not yet been any overall internationalist response to the crisis in what were formerly the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, where racist and exclusionist themes have dominated.

Not all forms of oppression are colonial. Third World experience has already shown, starting with Black Africa, that the rise of ethnicity is not the same as national demands. The ethnic or regional identity can overwhelm any other form of social consciousness when it appears to offer the easiest explanation of a situation of inequality and marginalization. In this it can furthermore give rise to a legitimate revolt, expressing the demands of the excluded.

However, there also exists another possible response to dependence, oppression or the effects of unequal development: a grassroots democracy, which allows the self-determination of all. In heavily urbanized societies where the overwhelming majority of the population are wage workers, such a choice is objectively possible — its absence cannot be put down to socio-economic backwardness.

And if, on the other hand, the nation exists or is in the process of formation having won sovereignty, it is necessary that this takes place as far as possible in connection with an internationalist, non-chauvinist project.

6. This is also the case in countries where there is a long tradition of apprenticeships. In Britain, the Industrial Training Act (1964) was replaced by the Youth Training Scheme (1980). The first was financed by businesses, the second by the state. The first was managed on a parity basis by business and the unions, the second by the bosses alone.



...and in Western Europe

Just as the rise of nationalism in the East, and the form it has taken, is the product of contemporary developments, so it is wrong to look at the various emerging or persisting national questions in Western Europe simply as the result of contagion from the East. These too are the result of the current economic and institutional crises of Western Europe.

However these demands, too, can take a reactionary form. It is in the name of regional identity that the Flemish Vlaams Blok gets its votes and the Lombard Leagues garnered around 10% in Italy, getting 23.4% in Milan, where they are the biggest party. The French National Front (FN) has employed demagoguery about local (anti-immigrant) identity to dig itself in in the Marseilles region. All the desires to become masters in one's own house can have reactionary interpretations.

This is also the case in France with the "hunting and fishing" electoral slates which claim to represent the real France and its rural traditions. There is also the possibility of a reactionary variant of ecology; the FN is currently working out a programme on the defence of the environment — and of the "species" known as the French people!⁷

Thus we have to find a way of linking up all the national and regional pressures

with democratic and social demands. There should be no separation allowed between demands for national self-determination and demands for civil self-determination in general. All this should be focussed on a strategy for overturning the existing order and constructing an alternative Europe to that embodied in the Maastricht Treaty. Here we can challenge the populists and the far right on the terrain of denunciations of the state and of corruption. And it is here also that we can go beyond the strategies of the ecology currents.

The regional and national questions can be integrated in a broader social movement, not by denying them but by placing them from the outset in an internationalist and anti-capitalist context. As the Basque revolutionary José Iriarte has written: "It is necessary to understand that a good part of the population has diverse national origins and that, in order to win it to a

Basque national project, it will be important to recognize and respect the cultural rights stemming from that origin.

"This destatization of the nation also involves a self-managing economic project, the free association of the producers and of units of production, an articulation between the social plan and those sectors where the market is judged necessary...

"The path of self-managed independence rejecting both the existing order and the statist and European capitalist road is on the agenda; it could help us to go beyond the limits of strictly national independence" (*IV* no. 221, February 3, 1992).

Racism and the labour market

Central to any discussion of citizenship and rights is the question of racism and of the situation of immigrants from the Third World or Eastern Europe. Here, furthermore, we again run up against the producer/citizen dichotomy. In any system of labour market segregation, a disparity in civil rights accompanies the stratification of the labour market. This was for a long time true for women's right to vote, as for South Africa's apartheid system. The end of extra-economic systems of discrimination does not at all mean that the segregations disappear. The fate of the majority of women workers or of Blacks in the post-apartheid South Africa show this clearly.

But, one way or another, a part of the

labour force does not enjoy civil rights. These segregations are justified in the name of a variety of "natural" prejudices — gender, nationality, culture or race. The state muddies its class nature in the eyes of the working class by taking a different attitude to different groups of workers. It grants rights to some and refuses them to others. Some are full citizens, others something less than that.

This state racism is part of the management of the labour force in the interests of capital and it is not a speciality of either the far right, the social democracy or the traditional right. It is a permanent feature of the bourgeois state, flowing from the overall conditions of production, rather than from the pressure of particular demagogic anti-immigrant campaigns. It is expressed in the Schengen Accord regulating immigration and refugee affairs and in the various European meetings dealing with immigration and "new migratory flows".

From this point of view it is interesting to look at what is happening with respect to Eastern Europe. In these countries, where the transition to capitalism remains slow, chaotic and inconsistent, there is a marked lack of harmony between the circulation of capital, of goods and of people. The conditions created by the fall of the Berlin Wall have meant that a substantial part of the labour force in these countries is free to sell its labour power at a time when the other parts of the market economy are still in their infancy. The result is that some of these people feel free (having been "liberated from Communism") to come to sell their labour power on the West European market.

This poses problems for our Communarians. We have seen the energy with which Italy has rejected Albanian emigrants, while the current debate in Germany on the right of asylum shows that more is involved than simply far right ideology and prejudices.

The states thus find themselves obliged to devise new rules to maintain existing arrangements and divisions on the world market in order to preserve the split between the free movement of capital and goods on the one hand and restrictions on the movement of people on the other. New laws and new repression. The state is developing its functional racism.

For this the state needs a communitarian, national or cultural justification. To break up the possible unity of all those who sell their labour power it presents an idealized fiction of the nation and of ethnicity. Segregation is to be built into the definition of citizenship.

The elusive citizen

The "citizen" as promoted in bourgeois

democratic theory cannot be found either in Western or Eastern Europe. In fact the desired-for separation between the citizen and the producer is painstakingly reproduced by the regimes. The less power the producer has the less the citizen can control her/his life and society. But now the economic crisis, the social changes and the very process of European unification itself increasingly expose the impotent emptiness inside the notion of the "citizen".

The populations are becoming just as preoccupied with their ability to determine their professional fate as their fate as users. They are no more inclined to accept layoffs as a simple act of fate than to accept the construction of a motorway outside their front door in the name of the "general interest". Many can no longer see why the public interest justifies military spending and the despatch of troops overseas. They are also less and less able to grasp what the point is in regularly voting for political cliques when this has no practical effect on the education system, on information, on decision-making and so on.

The far right seizes the initiative

Two frustrations live side by side: that of a formal citizenship without power and that of social insecurity. The political force that is able to respond to these problems will be able to give hope and even devise a social counter-project. At the moment it is the far right that is making the running on this. Taking the crisis of the state as its starting point, by demonizing "the others" (immigrants, the Third World or even simply other parts of their own country) it aspires to respond to the popular yearning for a rational world without corruption or misery, a "re-established", "natural" order of things.

Several things flow from this:

- The struggle for equal rights within the framework of the existing states is an important part of the democratic and anti-racist battle. But it cannot provide a strategy in and of itself. Furthermore, in, for example Britain, the struggle against racism cannot centre around the right to vote, since many "Black people" already have voting rights. In France also a large part of the immigrants originating from the former colonies have French citizenship, without for all that being spared racism or being considered as forming a specific contingent of the labour force.

Thus, in every case, the struggle against racism and for civic equality must be entwined with two other developments of a more strictly subversive kind: an anti-racism posed directly on the European level, calling for equal rights throughout

the EEC for all those who live and work there; and an anti-racism that takes up the issue of an extension of the political rights of all, as opposed to the present, formal and empty citizenship.

- We need to address the debate on the "new citizenship" and give it a radical and universal content which expresses the need for generalized social control, rank-and-file democracy and self-determination. We should conduct a systematic critique of bourgeois representative democracy. We should progressively disseminate the notion of and the demand for the right of veto, inspection and transparency and for the recallability of elected representatives.

We should not leave a monopoly on this kind of thing in the hands of the various ecologist currents who stop halfway, usually restricting their proposals for rank-and-file democracy to the small scale. In fact it should be extended and considered as a demand for all levels. It makes no sense to be in favour of the right of inspection or veto of the population of a village over a road project while remaining satisfied with the traditional national parliamentary system. We need to offer a coherent project that goes beyond national institutions and poses the problem of a different Europe to that on offer, based on generalized social control that allows priority to be given to society's fundamental social and ecological needs.

- This is the only way to respond to the debate on the Community's "democratic deficit". The problem is not to reform the voting system for the Strasbourg parliament or to referee the dispute between the Brussels Commission and the European parliament. This is why any notion of a European constituent assembly will be nothing more than a confused slogan if it does not come at the end of a long trench war on the right of veto or of rank-and-file control, in villages and cities, neighbourhoods and regions.

Only the multiplication of basic social and political battles over questions of citizenship and control will make it possible to conclude with a Europe-wide central objective such as that of a European constituent assembly. In the absence of such groundwork, such a slogan can only be interpreted in the sense of a "left democratic" management of the existing institutions, with no subversive dynamic. We are not in a situation where it is necessary to "found" or legitimate a nation by a constituting act.

What matters in a slogan is its ability to stimulate and mobilize. It is certainly true that the formula for a European regime is yet to be defined, but it is useless to attempt to reverse the natural sequence of events.

A mass experience is needed not only to raise people's sights but also to give credibility to a truly internationalist vision. It would thus be best to begin by taking the time to define strategies for a challenge at the grassroots level and show that the "new citizenship" can be more than a bit of sales talk if this means new social solidarity, equal rights and if it involves the reunification of the citizen and the producer.

Women and the "new citizenship"

Central to any such conception is the question of the place of women. In the French department of Alsace a women's electoral slate demanding proper representation for women got 6%. Here also there is a vast field of new experiences to clear. It is really quite striking how easily our opinion formers talk about the "new citizenship" without once mentioning the women's dimension, as if the "new citizenship" was merely a matter of institutional reforms, and as if discrimination over political rights had nothing to do with the sexual division of labour. The genuine "new citizenship" we are proposing will arise on the ruins of both capitalism and the patriarchy and the battle we are waging is at once anti-capitalist and feminist. A strong autonomous women's movement could be central to the battle for social control.

Producers and citizens

Various initiatives taking up the themes outlined above have recently appeared. In France, the March 1992 issue of the review "M" published a "citizens' manifesto" signed by various intellectuals, which highlighted "the right for all to be socially useful and for this usefulness to be recognized". Almost at the same time an appeal was launched entitled "The Left: After the End" in which, starting out from the crisis of representation, a "new balance of powers" is demanded to "revive public debate".⁷ The appeal concludes with the words "let us work towards a modern and modest utopia, which no longer sets the individual against society, but which sketches out a future; to make possible in one and the same gesture more individuality and more sociability".

In Belgium two parallel initiatives have seen the light of day. After the shock of the elections of November 24, 1990 in which the Vlaams Blok got 25% in Antwerp a "Charter 91" appeared in Flanders which presented itself as a "citizens' movement". It aims for the "setting up of

7. Speech of Bruno Mégret, conference of the Front National, Fréjus, 1991.

8. *Le Monde*, April 2, 1992.

new institutions permitting the direct control and participation of the citizen". It denounces the crisis, the deterioration of the cities, racism and an Economic and Monetary Union that has not been democratically worked out. A similar Charter has started up in Wallonia.

This March a "European citizens' conference" took place in the Slovak capital Bratislava, which gave special attention to the themes of nationalism and racism. Here, members of various movements from throughout Europe debated out problems of citizenship and Europe's political institutions.⁹ Thus the problems are already being exposed.

We should not let ourselves be fobbed off with various adjustments which give an illusion of fundamental change. The right of every citizen of an EEC country to vote and stand for office in local elections throughout the Community does not represent progress insofar as it introduces a "European identity" founded on the imperialist and security obsessed Schengen accord.

The recent failure of the local referendum in Amsterdam on the regulation of car traffic shows that it is not thus that one gives the power of decision to the working population. Furthermore, the right of immigrants to vote in local elections in the Netherlands, although evidently a gain that must be defended, does not resolve the problem of racism.

The bourgeois institutions do not offer the tiniest portion of real civil rights and can produce only a pretence of direct democracy. The desire and the real possibility for control will come from the mass mobilizations, independently of the institutions — nothing to do with any strategy of nibbling at the edges or of setting up a "counter-power" to that of the state.

A grassroots democracy will not be enough; it is necessary to challenge the established order from top to bottom. To do this the division between workplace struggles and social movements has to be overcome.

To do this two mistakes have to be avoided; one is to believe that workplace struggles belong to the past of the workers' movement, the other that social movements outside the workplaces represent nothing more than a distorted, insipid and temporary deviation from the "real" class struggle. In fact both reflect a separation consciously wrought by the bourgeoisie to undermine class consciousness. The first are tied to the struggle at the

point of production, the second take place in the sphere of the reproduction of the labour force. Here we touch upon a still developing debate on the nature and heterogeneity of the "revolutionary subject" and on the diversity of the emancipatory movements.

But let us dream a little around the subject of the "reconstruction" of the workers' and social movements... Let us imagine centres in neighbourhoods and cities where all the various associations and unions come together, where it will be possible to work in and construct alliances between anti-militarist, feminist,



lesbian and gay, anti-racist and housing movements, cultural and youth movements, alternative educational circles, unions and so on. Places where it will be possible to work to reunite the broken social tissue of the housing estates and working class neighbourhoods, places open to all, representing a counter power, centres for mobilization and vigilance.

This could permit the development of united mass campaigns which would bring together producer and citizen. At this level I am in total agreement with Andre Gorz when he writes "the workers' movement must remember... that it originated with workers' cultural associations. It can only continue as a movement if it takes an interest in human development outside as much as inside the workplace".¹⁰

The crisis of the state: a challenge to the left

The crisis of the state today offers us some opportunities to restore coherence and also credibility to new forms of radicalization leading to mass experiences of civil disobedience. By using the present institutional crises to denounce the way in which the system organizes the split between the two sides of our social being it will be possible to restore credit to the

idea of an alternative society. A mass rejection of conscription or a refusal to pay for military spending could lead to a rebirth of militant anti-militarism. Feminism can regain a broad audience by taking up issues that affect women at work and broader issues of equality.

We can recall in this respect the debate conducted by British workers at Lucas Aerospace, who, in 1975, discussed the reconversion of their enterprise from military to civilian enterprises, or the refusal to pay the Poll Tax or the campaign in Switzerland for the abolition of the army or the Swiss women's strike in 1991. All these struggles point in the same direction.

On the other hand we are not proposing a fragmented strategy; it would be the convergence of such movements and their independence of the states and the European institutions that could lead to a reactivation of anti-capitalist struggles. This implies at the same time a relaunching of the union movements and the development of revolutionary political forces in a pluralist and democratic framework. We need to think through a whole new anti-capitalist strategy, looking again at the whole issue of social control and dual power.

The development of capitalism is thus opening up for us a new field for reflection. The time is passed when transitional and anti-capitalist demands could be conceived in a strictly national framework (nationalization under workers control; "open the books"). The challenge now is to find ways of linking up movements of struggle and control in all fields of social life — education, transport, housing, workplace struggles, anti-racism, anti-militarism, anti-sexism and so on, with all this coming together on a European scale. That is to say we must renounce a backward looking defence of "national sovereignty" of the sort proposed by the French Communist Party.

Building this bridge is now a life or death question for the European revolutionary left: to find our feet in the crisis of the nation state, unify the different arenas of struggle and restore the credibility of the socialist project by defining an alternative Europe to that of Maastricht. ★

9. Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, second general assembly, March 36-29, 1992, Bratislava.

10. André Gorz, *Métamorphose du travail*, Galilée, Paris 1989.

Government fuels growth of far right

THE racist wave that has been sweeping across Germany since last summer has resulted in substantial electoral growth for right wing and fascist parties. While the bourgeois press talks of protest votes, the reasons for the far right's successes lie elsewhere.

DAVID MÜLLER

THE Republikaner's ("Republicans") score of more than 10% of the vote in the elections in the Baden-Württemberg Land (state of the German federation), traditionally held by the Christian Democrats, and the Deutsche Volksunion (DVP — German People's Union) vote of over 6% in Schleswig-Holstein, a traditionally Social Democratic Land in the north, show the far right capitalizing on the wider crisis in Germany.

This crisis is both economic and political. The German state debt will soon amount to more than 2,000bn Deutschmarks (DM). This implies interest payments of DM 200bn — half of the annual budget. Although it has been able to push through reunification, the Christian Democrat/Liberal coalition has been unable to formulate a coherent programme for restructuring the economy of what was once East Germany (the former GDR). Instead the government is pursuing harsh austerity policies, including higher taxes, pressure to keep down wage rises, proposals for social spending cuts and so on. They intend to take what they can from the working class, if they do not meet strong resistance.

Government launches campaign

In order to distract attention from this, last summer the government launched a campaign against *Scheinasyllanten* (fake asylum seekers) in order to whip up racism and deepen divisions within the working class. And it began to work.

After August 1991 the state was joined by a second force: fascist terrorists organized an attack on an immigrant hostel in Hoyerswerda in the former GDR, with the support or at least tolerance of much of the local German population. Such attacks have continued, with the gangs using diffe-

rent tactics in East and West Germany. In the East, where organized resistance is quite weak, they have openly attacked immigrants and refugees. In the West, where both racism and left resistance to racism are stronger, they have carried out hit-and-run assaults by night to terrorize refugees.

This violent racism was at first used by the government to step up its own racist campaign to force the SPD (Social Democrats) to agree to a change in the constitution to amend article 16, which guarantees that "people who are politically persecuted will be granted the right to asylum". Thus the fascists have effectively been used as a pressure group. The government claimed it was against violence but could nonetheless understand it since there were too many refugees.

CDU has three goals

In this way the ruling CDU (Christian Democrats) sought to achieve three goals:

- to distract attention from their austerity policies;
- to force the SPD to agree to a change in the constitution, for which a two thirds majority in parliament is needed;
- to win the elections in the city state of Bremen and the municipal elections in Lower Saxony and defeat the SPD in the two Land elections in Baden-Württemberg and Schleswig-Holstein, thus breaking up the SPD majority in the Bundesrat (Germany has a two-chamber system, with the Bundestag being the federal parliament and the Bundesrat the representative body of the Länder, able to veto Bundestag decisions).

The CDU won the elections in Bremen and although it was not able to replace the government there (which is made up of a Social Democrat/Liberal/Green coalition), its increase in votes made it look like the winner. The government then stepped up

its campaign and the SPD leadership agreed to a "national pact" which involved curtailing the time during which an asylum application is examined and the setting up of large camps (*Sammellager* — which translates literally as... concentration camp!) for refugees without the constitution being amended. However as soon as the pact had been signed the government resumed its campaign for a constitutional change.

However October 1991 saw a slight shift in government policy. The elections in Lower Saxony, which is governed by a Social Democrat/Green coalition, registered a defeat for the CDU, with only the far right and the Greens increasing their vote. At the same time the fascists had been stepping up their attacks to a point where they were becoming an increasing embarrassment for the government, above all abroad. And thirdly a movement against the racist terror was developing.

The ruling party reacted by sending prominent figures to visit refugee hostels to "express their solidarity with refugees" without, however, abandoning the calls for a change in the constitution.

Since then the government has remained consistent, and a law has been passed drastically restricting the rights of refugees. It has also put massive pressure on SPD mayors by cutting federal payments for social spending for the long-term unemployed (which is also paid to refugees) which has to be paid by the local districts. This led to many SPD mayors taking up the CDU's position.

But so far the CDU has not been able to capitalize on this electorally. Indeed, it lost many votes in the two recent Land elections, with only the far right making gains.

There are tens of thousands of organized fascists and members of far right formations. Terror against refugees helped to create a racist climate and fascist groups have been able to influence public opinion.

Fascists face obstacles

However, although there is a danger of the emergence of a real mass fascist movement, there are also considerable obstacles:

- Despite the weakness of the left, an anti-fascist movement could emerge.
- At the moment, the "electoral" far right formations are unable to build a movement on their own. The Republikaner have no clear orientation towards this; their cadres are more or less oriented to parliamentary politics. The DVU is explicitly fascist, but is mainly supported by wealthy fascists, despite links with terrorist elements.
- Although the bourgeoisie and the Conservative/Liberal government are in crisis they are still able to control society by "ordinary" forms of ideology, integra-

tion and selective repression. Although the Republikaner leader Schönhuber has had several meetings with small capitalists, big capital is so far not trying to approach the fascist or far right groups. It is true there is a conflict between the unions and the government, but the union bureaucracy's control of the working class is still strong enough to mute possible radical struggles.

Racism gains ground

Nonetheless, racist ideas are steadily gaining ground in the German working class and the left has been unable to mount an adequate counter-offensive. This is due to two reasons, one of a structural and the other of a more localized nature:

a) As in all imperialist countries the majority of the ("white" or Japanese) population is much better off than the majority of the population in the rest of the world where political repression is much worse. These facts are given a racist "explanation" by the majority of the "white" population ("blacks are lazy", not "ripe for democracy" and so on).

b) There is no strong or credible left alternative which could give a perspective to those willing to fight and neutralize racist feelings to a degree. Instead the SPD and union leaders have defended social partnership and "national well-being". The far right's line of "foreigners out" thus seems to offer a quick solution to many who feel the need for radical change.

The union leaderships have verbally protested against the racist attacks but there has been no campaign against racism in the factories.

The immigrant communities themselves have remained more or less passive. This is on the one hand due to the lack of support, especially from the unions, and on the other to a right wing shift inside the immigrant community, where religious (although not fundamentalist) groups have the upper hand.

The Greens have retreated from their "open borders" position and are now promoting an extended right to asylum and quotas for immigrants.

After the Hoyerswerda attacks a left anti-racist movement appeared, with committees being formed in almost every town. The peak of this mobilization was on November 9, 1991, the anniversary of the *Kristallnacht*. Afterwards deep problems made themselves felt in the movement, which split into two wings. One wing, which mainly consists of liberal forces (employers' associations and so on), Social Democrats and some Greens, campaigns "against violence and hatred" and gives practical help to refugees but avoids criticism of government policy. Many in this current are firmly opposed to alliances with the far left.

Strikes highlight unification crisis

THE attempt by West German capital to use the costs of German unification as a means of undermining the wages, conditions and organization of West German labour is reaching a critical point, as West German workers resist attempts to pass the bill for German unity on to them.

Rejecting their employers' offer of a 4.8% wage rise, public sector workers launched a programme of selective strikes on Monday April 27 in pursuit of a 9.5% claim, after an 89% vote in favour of strike action. Two days later some 190,000 engineering workers took various forms of industrial action, both to support the public sector workers and to express their rejection of a 3.3% pay offer. In the next week it will become clear if the 3.5 million IG-Metall engineering union is ready to take full-scale action.

The Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, has expressed his full support for the public sector employers' stance, which is justified by the sharp increase in public debt as a result of unification. Kohl had insisted that the unification could be carried without tax rises or public spending cuts, but it is now clear to everyone that huge sums of money will have to come from somewhere, whether through squeezing public sector wages, raising taxes or cutting social programmes. Kohl's economics minister, Mülleman has now publicly demanded drastic cuts in public spending and privatization.

While at the moment the strike movement looks immensely powerful, the German capitalists have some powerful political cards in their hands, in the first place the situation in the former East Germany. They are both able to play on the argument that the strikers are selfishly refusing to play their part in realizing the national goal and will certainly at some point use the mass of unemployed in East Germany as a tool to undermine wages and conditions in the West. It is not at all clear that either the West German unions or the Social Democratic Party have policies that can address these issues in the interests of workers in both parts of the country.

International Viewpoint will be covering developments closely. C.M. ★

The other current is made up of whatever remains of the far left, some of the libertarian *autonomen*, many refugee or left immigrant organizations and a minority of the Greens. They continue to defend slogans like "open borders" but are divided into two sub-currents, one more anti-nationalist, making propaganda against "the Germans", the other adopting an economic approach — "one class, one struggle".

So far, largely due to the "decentralist" ideology which is strong on the far left, it has not been possible to establish regional or federal anti-racist structures, and only the moderate wing has this kind of co-ordination.

The movement has been more centred on anti-fascism than anti-racism, mobilizing mainly young people and the traditional left against fascist attacks, around democratic and predominantly defensive slogans.

Given the attacks on living standards planned by the government and the public service workers strike underway, it is highly likely that the racist campaign will be vigorously renewed; racism is going to be

a permanent issue in German political life. It is thus important to develop a radical long-term anti-racist campaign focussing first of all on immigrants, but also on German workers and youth, around the slogan of legal and social equality between Germans and immigrants. Here special attention should be given to the local groups of young immigrants which have arisen in the past year.

This has to go together with the working out of social demands related to the material needs of all working or unemployed people, including cuts in working time until everyone has a job and decent housing.

While such a campaign would at the moment only be supported by the left wing of the movement, the left wing should take the initiative in promoting joint action wherever possible — in defence of refugees or against certain laws.

Groups and activities also need to be developed in workplaces and schools, either around general anti-racist work or in opposition to certain especially outrageous actions by the far right or the state. ★

AROUND
THE
WORLD

DENMARK

Bomb attack on socialist group

THE Copenhagen headquarters of the Danish revolutionary socialist organization Internationale Socialister (IS) was destroyed by a powerful bomb on March 16. The explosion, which took the life of 29 year old Henrich Christensen, was most likely the work of fascist circles who have been at the center of a racist and xenophobic campaign against immigrant workers in Denmark.

IS, along with other organizations that have been active in anti-racist work, such as the Socialist Workers Party (SAP) — Danish section of the Fourth International, the Left Socialists (VS), the Left Socialist Youth (VS) and the Federation of Immigrant Associations (IND-sam), has been victimized by threats and physical attacks over the last four years.

The Danish police have refused to take energetic measures to counter the climate of fear and hate whipped up by the far-right and fascist forces. For example, in

the summer of 1990 Lubni Elahi, an immigrant woman and socialist city councillor in Copenhagen was physically assaulted by fascist thugs. Though responsibility was claimed by Albert Larsen, leader of "De Nationale", a Nazi group, the police refused to bring charges against Larsen or his organization. This group has also threatened to bomb a mosque currently under construction in Copenhagen. Rather than pointing their fingers in the obvious direction of the fascist organizations, the bourgeois media has taken the occasion of the bombing of the IS headquarters to launch a scurrilous attack against the victims themselves. TV news reports and right wing papers have suggested that IS itself was involved in fabricating bombs in spite of that organization's openly stated policy of fighting fascism through building broad anti-racist mobilizations.

Messages of solidarity can be sent to: Internationale Socialister, Ryesgade, 8, 3. DK-8000 Aarhus C., Denmark, or to the weekly newspaper *Den Roede Traad* (Fax: 45 33 33 86 56). ★

UNITED STATES

Mark Curtis Defence Campaign

THE struggle against police brutality and for the vindication of Mark Curtis, the U.S. trade unionist and socialist activist imprisoned in the state of Iowa after being framed-up on rape charges, has recently registered a significant victory.

On January 31, a U.S. federal judge ruled that the two police officers who had severely beaten Curtis on the night he was arrested — March 4, 1988 — must pay \$11,000 to Curtis in compensation for the damages he suffered.

The court's judgement will strengthen the campaign to win Curtis' release from the Iowa prison where he is serving a twenty-five year prison term.

The ruling occurred during a campaign to protest a wave of police brutality by the Des Moines police force that has spread terror through the city's Black community. Public meetings attracting hundreds of people in support of Curtis and against police brutality have been held recently.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee has launched an appeal for funds to meet the expenses that will be incurred as this struggle enters a new phase.

Contributions and messages of support can be sent to the Mark Curtis Defence Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines IA 50311, United States of America. Please make checks payable to the Political Rights Defense Fund. ★

EUROPEAN DEPUTIES CONDEMN CUBA BLOCKADE

DEPUTIES to the European Parliament have recently addressed a letter to Frantz Andriessen, the European commissioner demanding that the embargo against Cuba instituted last January by the European Economic Community (EEC) be lifted. We publish below the principal portions of that letter.

"Your office has indicated that over the past eight days you have issued precise instructions to prohibit all direct or indirect aid to Cuba because 'the Cuban government does not respect human rights.'

"This decision has probably been made following the one reported in the January 23 edition of *El Pais* to suspend all plans for cooperation and that published in *Le Monde* on January 25 reporting on the cancelation of the planned trip of a commission to Cuba charged with studying the possibilities of cooperation. This decision, taken to protest the recent application of the death sentence, has shocked us. Firstly, because the EEC has close political and commercial relations with many states that still apply the death penalty. Secondly, because it holds a people hostage for the actions of its government. We see this action as a pure and simple indication of support for the American blockade against Cuba.

"Last October, 78 European deputies demanded in the pages of *Le Monde* that the blockade be lifted.

"Your decision, taken at the end of January, to prohibit even humanitarian aid has shocked us even more. As a consequence, thousands of innocent people will be condemned to death or to malnutrition!

"We demand that these disastrous decisions be reversed and that food assistance be delivered to Cuba's children, mothers, and elderly people."

SIGNED

D. Piermont (Germany); **L. Castellina** (Italy); **Ken Coates** (Britain); **A. Falconer** (Britain); **M. Elliott** (Britain); **A. Smith** (Britain); **H. Verbeek** (Netherlands); **R. Bontempi** (Italy); **M. Hindley** (Britain); **P. Napolitano** (Italy); **C. Oddy** (Britain); **R. Imbeni** (Italy); **R. Barzanti** (Italy); **D. Dessylas** (Greece); **R. Piquet** (France); **H. Barrea** (Spanish State); **M. Simeoni** (France); **L. Van Ostrive** (Belgium); **P. Canavaro** (Portugal); **K. Tsimas** (Greece); **R. Roumeliotis** (Greece); **J. Vandeuembroucke** (Belgium); **N. Blaney** (Ireland); **S. Santos Lopez** (Spanish State); **V. Ephremidis** (Greece); **R. Brito** (Portugal); **F. Wurtz** (France); **S. Elmalan** (France); **M. Gremetz** (France); **S. Ribeiro** (Portugal); **J. Miranda da Silva** (Portugal); **A. Alavanos** (Greece); **R. Barton** (Britain); **W. Ewing** (Britain); **D. Morris** (Britain); **H. McCubbin** (Britain); **G. Ruiz-Gimenez Aguilar** (Spanish State); **S. Mayer** (France); **S. Ainaudi** (France); **P. Herzog** (France); **D. Valent** (Italy); **W. Telkamper** (Germany); **N. Kertscher** (Germany); **S.-Y. Kaufmann** (Germany); **R. Trivelli** (Italy); **H. Breyer** (Germany); **K. Landa Mendibe** (Spanish State); **C. Roth** (Germany); **P. Crampton** (Britain); **C. Cheysson** (France). ★