

# International VIEWPOINT

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## Grenada US goes to war in Caribbean

Mexico's first  
National Day  
of Protest

The growth of  
US unemployed  
movement



# International Viewpoint

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# US troops out! No to imperialist invasion!

*Statement by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International*

The landing by US marines on Grenada on October 25 is a counterrevolutionary aggression. Its aim is to wipe out the revolution that has been going on in this small Caribbean island since the overthrow of the dictator Eric Gairy on March 13, 1979.

This invasion follows in the bloody tradition of US crimes in the region from the occupation of Cuba at the beginning of the century to the expedition by 40,000 marines to Santo Domingo in April 1965, and including the massive and prolonged interventions in Central America since the 1930s.

By using more than 3,000 men of the military forces of the most powerful imperialist country in the world to suppress the aspirations of the 110,000 inhabitants of Grenada for independence, democracy and social change, Ronald Reagan wants at the same time to make this expedition a show of strength and a warning to peoples in struggle.

The American imperialists intend to demonstrate to all the peoples of the Caribbean and the Latin American continent, who are exasperated by the crisis, poverty and hunger, that the United States will make them pay dearly for every serious attempt at national and social emancipation. In four years, the revolutionary regime of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) had improved the standards and conditions of life for the workers, developed health and education services, and stood up against the threats from imperialism. Such audacity and bravery — which could become contagious in a region that the US consider their 'backyard' — in their eyes required an exemplary punishment.

The marines' aggression is also a signal to the revolutionaries of Central America and Cuba to forewarn them of the scope of military means that the US is prepared to use to prevent the consolidation of new revolutionary regimes and the extension of revolution in this region. The landing on Grenada thus constitutes a direct warning to the Salvadoran revolution, Sandinista Nicaragua, and the Cuban workers state.

The United States acted with the greatest cynicism, and without the least diplomatic pretext usually used in these circumstances. Undoubtedly Reagan also wanted to put his own allies to the test, and test public opinion nationally and internationally on other major military actions in the region. The 300 soldiers of Barbados and other Caribbean islands,

kept out of the fighting, are not going to confer a 'multinational' cover on the US force. On the contrary, the imperialist manipulation of Caribbean states in its fight against Grenada illustrates the attempts of the same type of manipulation of the Central American states against Nicaragua.

From the beginning the US spokespersons plainly and straightforwardly explained their intention — stating that they wanted to punish those that they called 'leftist thugs' and 'bandits'. This is exactly the same process which led Nixon to bomb the North Vietnamese dykes, by treating the North Vietnamese as 'international bandits'.

However, there was nothing improvised or makeshift about the American landing. It had been planned well before the events that led to its being put into operation. From the time that the New Jewel Movement took power, the United States was hatching its criminal plot, organising a veritable economic blockade of the island, and increasing its military provocations.

The United States cannot stomach the idea that a people in the region may take their fate into their own hands, after decades of imperialist domination. The US could not forgive Maurice Bishop's government for having opposed a salvage operation for Somoza in July 1979 within the Organisation of American States (OAS).

Several times, including last March, Maurice Bishop put the island's population on the alert against the US preparations for aggression. But it was then still very difficult for Reagan to find any justification whatsoever for his imperialist crusade in the name of the struggle against totalitarianism, while the revolutionary Grenadan government had mass support among the population, was preparing a democratic constitution, and foresaw the election of a national popular assembly. This was at the same time as the US supported regimes like that of 'Baby Doc' in Haiti and supported at arms length the murderous military dictatorship in Guatemala and El Salvador.

Reagan therefore had to wait, and seize the first weakening of the Grenadan revolution to throw his marines into an assault on the island. The confrontations within the NJM, the overthrow and then the execution of Maurice Bishop and several of his ministers by the military on October 19, created confusion and dis-

array within the Grenadan masses, propitious for the American operation. The popular demonstrations in defence of Maurice Bishop had been repressed, the people's militias disarmed, the masses demobilised and paralysed by the curfew.

Faced with these events, the Cuban leadership condemned the execution of Bishop and his comrades, decreed three days mourning in their memory, and took its political distance from the Revolutionary Military Council of General Hudson Austin, while maintaining its economic collaboration with Grenada.

The Council of State and the Political Bureau of the Cuban Communist Party (CCP) stated on October 20 that, 'No pretended revolutionary doctrine, principle or position can justify proceedings as atrocious as the physical elimination of Bishop. The circumstances of the death of Bishop and his companions must be clarified. And, if they were executed in cold blood, the guilty must receive a worthy punishment. While we are profoundly shocked, we will take the interests of the Grenadan people into consideration above everything else as far as our economic and technical collaboration is concerned, if that turns out to be possible. But our political relations with the new leaders in Grenada will be subject to serious and deep analysis.'

This declaration also made clear that, 'now, imperialism will try to use this tragedy and the grave errors made by the revolutionaries in Grenada, to try to sweep aside the revolutionary process'.

Despite the American military might put into operation, relentless fighting took place for several days in different points in the country. The United States has maintained a black-out on information, and the number of victims is not known. The 3,000 marines landed represent the equivalent of 3 per cent of the local population, that is one for thirty-five inhabitants. This is a considerable operation, equivalent to landing 300,000 marines on Cuba.

However, the step by step resistance around the points where the marines landed (the two airports), in the mountains, and in the capital St. George's, show that the 'pacification' of this small island will not be as easy as expected, and the American troops will have some difficulty in putting a 'made in the USA' government into the saddle.

In order to re-establish in Ronald Reagan style the sort of 'democracy' Washington claims was 'trampled under

foot', the US troops will have to silence a people who have in fact had a taste of democracy during the last four years, to dissolve or bring to heel the mass organisations, and install a puppet team at the head of a pro-American regime.

The military resistance of the Grenadan revolutionary fighters increases the political price that imperialism will have to pay for its crime by a little more every day, and shows that the imperialist project of 'normalisation' is in no way assured of success. It demolishes the speeches of the Reagan administration and its local stooges about defending "liberty and democracy." Finally, it demonstrates that the other imperialist interventions projected in El Salvador, Nicaragua or Cuba will have to confront a still more relentless resistance. The determination of the revolutionary fighters in Grenada is a contribution to the liberation struggle of all peoples, and constitutes the most pressing appeal for international solidarity. To finish off this resistance the marines are undoubtedly quite capable of going as far as a massacre.

It is in the light of this back-to-the-wall resistance, in the tiny pocket handkerchief of an island that is Grenada, that the hypocrisy of the imperialist governments, allies of Reagan, appears most obscene. While Reagan violates the sovereignty of Grenada they discreetly look the other way, and wipe their feet on the principles of 'international law'. Francois Mitterrand, Margaret Thatcher, Bettino Craxi, Helmut Kohl and company have swallowed and digested the American fait accompli without too much trouble.

The prize for disgrace undoubtedly goes to the social democratic parties, who have contented themselves with mild protests, even though the NJM is a member of their so-called Socialist International. The Social Democratic prime minister of Portugal, Mario Soares, for his part has gone as far as to support the imperialist action to 'restore harmony in the island'. As for the French and Italian governments, one sees that it would be difficult for them to raise their voices, given that they are side by side with the USA in Lebanon, (and in Chad for France) and that they are demanding in loud voices the deployment of US missiles in Europe.

On its side the Soviet Union has confined itself to simple formal protests, which are not of the nature to reassure Cuba or Nicaragua about the firmness of its support in a similar situation.

At the level of the bourgeois governments in Latin America, the strongest condemnations have come from countries like Mexico, which in the context of their own economic crises, fear the effects that the US escalation may have in awakening and sharpening the anti-imperialist sentiment of the Latin American masses.

The American aggression in Grenada has added another blot to the ugly face of imperialism, after the British intervention in the Malvinas, and the starva-

tion policy imposed by imperialist exploitation and the International Monetary Fund in the negotiations on the foreign debts of these countries.

The example of Grenada therefore highlights the fundamental conflict between the interests of these popular masses and those of imperialism. Tens of thousands of workers have shown they understand this by demonstrating against US intervention in Mexico and Santo Domingo.

Cuba and Nicaragua are the only governments that have called for mass mobilisation in defence of Grenada, while a first response in the streets was getting organised in Latin America, Europe, and the United States at the initiative of the Central American solidarity committees, revolutionary organisations and Communist Parties. This international mobilisation must continue and broaden to demand the immediate withdrawal of imperialist forces from

Grenada, under whatever name they are disguised — multinational force, US marines, or Commonwealth force — and oppose the threat of American intervention in Central America.

In this framework there must also be the rejection of any recognition for any puppet government that may come out of the imperialist intervention and be installed in St. George's.

— No to the occupation of Grenada, US troops and their supporters out!

— No recognition of a government installed by imperialism!

— Immediate freedom for prisoners of war, and democratic freedoms for the Grenadan masses!

— Total support to the Salvadoran revolution!

— Hands off Cuba and Nicaragua! ■

Bureau of the United Secretariat  
of the Fourth International  
October 29, 1983

## The course of the revolution

The clearest thing about this US intervention in Grenada now that the smoke of the fighting has cleared a bit is that none of the justifications Reagan gave for it hold any water whatsoever.

The military junta that overthrew the People's Revolutionary Government was not a group of "left" extremists. The only political statement it was able to make before the invasion indicated a clear rightward direction:

"The RMC (Revolutionary Military Council) believes that the policy of a mixed economy, with state, cooperative and private sectors, is the correct one to ensure Grenada's most rapid development. However, the RMC also analyzed that in order to ensure the most rapid development of the tourism industry and also manufacturing, there is need to encourage much more positively the role of private investment, including both local and foreign investors."

The fact of the matter, moreover, is that the RMC probably would not have survived long.

The US most likely intervened as quickly as it did to prevent the Grenadian people from solving their own problems and assuring the continuity of the revolution.

The scope of the US intervention makes a joke of the claim that it was intended to rescue some American students.

Nor were the RMC acolytes of the Cubans. That was shown by the immediate condemnation of the coup by Havana.

The Cuban statement on October 27 gave what has been shown to be an accurate description of the political situation inside the country, which made effective resistance to the US expeditionary force impossible:

"The political situation inside Grenada in connection with the split in the people after the events that led to the death of Bishop and the other leaders considerably weakened the country's defense potential. This is the result of serious errors by Grenadian revolutionists. In this light, the present military and political conditions are extremely bad for organizing determined and effective resistance to the interventionist forces, which is impossible without the participation of the people. It is essential to consider how to achieve reconciliation with the people."

The Cuban statement said that these points were made to the new rulers by Havana's ambassador.

Nonetheless, the Grenadian revolution suffered a disastrous defeat, which the imperialists will try to exploit politically to strike new blows at the Central American revolutions.

The strength of the Grenadian revolution was political; its example and the perspectives it offered for the oppressed Black people of the Caribbean and the ghettos in Britain and the US. That was the only conceivable threat it represented to the US and the regimes that preside over hopeless poverty and demoralization in other Black Caribbean islands.

If it had not been for the coup and the murder of Bishop and the other experienced leaders of the New Jewel Movement, the US would have paid an incalculable political cost for the intervention.

This defeat is the heavy price that a small revolutionary party on a tiny backward island paid for "political mistakes" referred to in the October 27 Cuban communique. Under direct threat from the overwhelming, ruthless power of US imperialism, the Grenadian revolutionists did not have the time to learn from their mistakes and correct them quickly enough to avoid a grave defeat.

Revolutionists everywhere, and especially in the Caribbean, will study these errors. Other articles in this issue of *IV* offer some elements for beginning to understand them.

The fundamental weakness of the imperialists is that there is no way they can offer any lasting hope to the Caribbean peoples, when hundreds of millions of people in the countries dominated by imperialism are sinking into poverty and desperation.

That weakness cannot be overcome by military force. It assures that the example of what the Grenadian revolution achieved will outlast its defeat and ultimately prove more powerful than any interventionist force.

Vincent KERMEL

On March 13, 1979, taking advantage of the absence of the dictator, Eric Gairy, who was on a trip to the U.S., about fifty New Jewel Movement (1) activists seized the radio station and a barracks and called for the overthrow of the dictatorship.

On the same day, about a thousand workers took part in a general strike and several hundred others seized the leading figures in the Gairy regime and a number of police stations.

Finding themselves isolated in the country, and taken by surprise by the rapidity of the action, the repressive forces — about 500 men — were paralyzed. The total human cost of the revolution was thus the life of one policeman.

On March 20, 1979, 20,000 people, one out of every five people on the island, celebrated the overthrow of the dictatorship to shouts of "Freedom has come, Gairy is gone with the Flying Saucers." (2)

Although the involvement of the people in the insurrection itself was very limited, the seizure of power by the New Jewel Movement marked the culmination of several years of mass mobilizations against the dictatorship.

Gairy was named prime minister in 1967 by the British colonialist authorities. The former trade-unionist's credibility with the people waned rapidly and he became a puppet of Britain.

At the same time, the radicalization of the youth, which represents half the population, gave rise to several opposition movements. In March 1973, the bulk of the opposition fused into the New Jewel Movement. Some of the members were Marxists, others were inspired by the Black movement in the United States. But the example of the Cuban revolution was the predominant influence.

In 1973-74, the mobilizations were focused on the question of independence. In May 1973, the New Jewel Movement organized a rally of 10,000 persons demanding the resignation of Eric Gairy and a voice for the workers in the process of setting up an independent government on the island.

On November 18, 1973, "Bloody Sunday," six leaders of the New Jewel Movement were arrested and beaten up by the "Mongoose Gang," the repressive body Gairy set up in 1967. The political isolation of the dictatorship grew. Elements of the local bourgeoisie went into opposition and joined with the New Jewel Movement in calling a strike in January 1974.

G.F.

On January 21, during a demonstration, the police murdered Rupert Bishop, Maurice Bishop's father. The right to strike was suspended for public service employees and restrictions were put on freedom of the press. This crackdown coincided with the granting of independence to Grenada on February 1, 1974.

In December 1976, the New Jewel Movement concluded an alliance, which lasted no longer than the elections, with two bourgeois opposition formations. Nonetheless, by fraud and repression Gairy managed to win the elections with a bare 340 vote majority. Members of the New Jewel Movement headed an impotent parliamentary opposition. But the New Jewel Movement emerged more and more as the sole alternative to the dictatorship.

#### THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM AND THE GAINS OF THE REVOLUTION

After the formation of the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG), the Grenadian revolution had to confront an onerous economic and social heritage. Some 40 percent of the population were illiterate (70 percent of the women), 50 percent were unemployed, 60 percent lived in houses without running water. The median per capita income was only a few hundred dollars a year. About 80 percent of the exports were to Europe (cacao, nutmeg, and bananas), and about 75 percent of the food imports came from Europe. Industry was pathetically undeveloped (of the 120 enterprises surveyed in 1977, half employed less than five persons).

Given the nature of the Grenadian economy, the extent of its underdevelopment and its dependence on imperialism, the economic and social results obtained during the four and half years of the revolutionary process are far from inconsiderable.

Through a mass campaign illiteracy was cut down to 2 percent of the adult population. The wealth amassed by Eric Gairy and his ministers was confiscated. In all, 40 percent of the farms and plantations of over 100 acres (52 hectares), amounting to a third of the land under cultivation, was in the hands of the state and had been transformed into collective farms. (3)

The repressive laws restricting freedom of the press were abolished. The old army was dissolved. And the Mongoose Gang was disarmed and replaced by the People's Revolutionary Army made up of

political activists and by a people's militia.

The number of ministers and their wages were reduced, and these earnings were taxed. However, the 1980 budget exempted a third of the workers from income taxes.

The public health network was extended to cover the entire population (the percentage of doctors per capita increased from 1 per 4,000 inhabitants to 1 for 2,700). The setting up of a National Office of Import-Export Control made it possible, despite the bourgeois dominance of this sector, to cut the price of basic necessities (rice, sugar, and cement).

#### UNEMPLOYMENT CUT BY MORE THAN TWO THIRDS

In April 1982, a survey showed that the rate of unemployment had dropped from 49 percent to 14.2 percent. (4) The state investment program was doubled in 1979 by comparison with previous years, and this trend continued. In 1982, it was twelve times what it was in the last year of the dictatorship.

In 1982, inflation was kept to 7 percent, while wages rose by 10 percent. Overall, production increased, both in the state and private sectors. Specific legal rules were adopted to protect women against sexist discrimination. This included an "equal pay for equal work" provision and the right to maternity leave.

Under the impetus of the New Jewel Movement and the government, there was a considerable development of mass mobilization, and the democratic rights of the masses were extended. Progressive unions were formed to replace the old unions that had been close to Gairy. A law was adopted requiring employers to recognize any union that could show that it had the support of 51 percent of the workforce. The rate of unionization rose from 30 percent in 1979 to 90 percent. (5)

Under the slogan "let the working people take the reins," a process of mass organization was launched, which gave rise to revolutionary youth and women's organizations. Some 25,000 people came out for the rally commemorating the first anniversary of the overthrow of the dictatorship in 1980, showing the extent of the mass mobilization that there was on this small island.

Maurice Bishop's government also took bold initiatives to encourage the

1. The New Jewel Movement (the movement for Social Welfare, Education, and Liberation) came out of the fusion between Unisson Whiteman's Jewel and the Movement of Assemblies for the People led by Bishop and Kendrick Radix.

2. A fan of "Unidentified Flying Objects," Eric Gairy was at a conference on this question in the U.S. when his dictatorship was overthrown.

3. For this data, see *Quatrieme Internationale*, No 4, April-June 1981.

4. These figures were given by Maurice Bishop in his speech in New York in June 1982.

5. Cf. *Intercontinental Press* of November 19, 1979.

population to participate in public affairs. This included organizing a broad discussion on the budget and plan for 1982. In January 1982, a national conference was held on this question.

In June of the same year, a conference including hundreds of delegates and unemployed youth was conducted on the question of under-employment. The government announced its intention to create 6,000 jobs every three years.

A special ministry was set up — the Ministry of National Mobilization — to promote the development of organs for people's participation in running the country. In the spring of 1981, six district councils were formed to conduct monthly discussions, in the presence of the ministers concerned, of the government's proposals and the complaints of the population.

These district councils were then divided into thirty zonal councils, and then into "minizone" councils. The New Jewel Movement also proposed setting up "village coordinating bodies". These bodies were preparation for the election, according to a plan by the Ministry of Mobilization, of representative structures in the villages, which would then elect delegates from their ranks to a district assembly, which in turn would elect representatives to a national assembly. These structures were to be institutionalized by the new constitution that was being drawn up.

### THE NEW CONSTITUTION

In June, a commission of five members was formed to produce a first draft on the basis of the following principles: "People's democracy" and the creation of structures "to promote ongoing involvement by the people;" recognition of the government's efforts to transform Grenada, to provide a better standard of living for the workers, to build a just society, and involve the people in decision making; guarantees against any violation of democratic rights; public accounting by all officials and the right of recall for the population.

The chairperson of this commission said, moreover: "The PRG and the people of Grenada have regarded the development of the economy, the improvement of the standard of living, the development of education and employment, the extension of the people's organizations, and improvement of the nation's defense as taking priority over a constitutional reform. The time has come, however, to begin to carry the process of institutionalization to a higher level and to start work on a new constitution." He added: "The Grenadian revolution has anticipated the new constitution by achieving a high degree of participatory democracy." (6)

All of these gains of the Grenadian revolution are now being wiped out by the imperialist intervention. U.S. imperialism, like its local allies that keep their peoples in poverty and under the boot of repression in the other Caribbean islands,



Grenadians in mass meeting (DR)

have nothing to offer to the Grenadian people but the bayonets of their invading forces.

No government emerging from this imperialist intervention can guarantee to the Grenadian masses the sort of social rights and democratic gains they achieved over the four and a half years of the revolution. The function of such a government will rather be to destroy these gains.

Of course, the revolution was experiencing difficulties. There were many problems, and they were greatly aggravated by the imperialist blockade that Washington clamped down right from March 13, 1979. The weakness of the island's economic potential, the weight of imperialist domination, the maintenance of the bourgeoisie's economic power in commerce and tourism, and — to some extent — in agriculture were obstacles on the road to genuine economic and political independence.

While it was excluded from political power in effect, most of the bourgeoisie lined up with Maurice Bishop's government. But it nonetheless constituted a social and economic base for any capitalist project.

The social structure of Grenada itself, which has the highest percentage of independent peasant proprietors in the region, gives the petty bourgeoisie considerable weight. The industrial proletariat is very weak. In 1977, the biggest manufacturing enterprise, a brewery, employed 76 people. Between 1969 and 1979, the number of industrial workers dropped from 2,473 to a few hundred, with the largest concentration on the docks.

### IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION

Imperialist military provocations against Grenada — the weakest link in the revolutionary chain in Central America and the Caribbean — began almost immediately after the New Jewel Movement took power.

The U.S. ambassador's pressure to get the PRG to break relations with Cuba were followed up by covert actions and terrorist attacks, such as the one in June 1980 aimed at the representatives of the New Jewel Movement at a public rally.

In February 1982, when he presented his Caribbean aid plan — from which Grenada was excluded — Ronald Reagan complained about "the growing predominance of the totalitarian left in

Grenada and Nicaragua."

In early 1983, the *Washington Post* revealed the existence of a CIA plan put into practice during the summer of 1981 to "create economic problems for Grenada in the hope of undermining the political control of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop."

In the summer of 1982, Reagan said: "Grenada bears the Soviet and Cuban stamp, which gives grounds for expecting it will try to spread this virus among its neighbors."

Finally, in March 1983, the American president said: "It's not nutmeg that is at stake in the Caribbean and in Central America, it is the national security of the United States."

From this point on, there could be no doubt about the imperialist intention to intervene militarily in Grenada. They were just waiting for the opportunity to do so at the least political and human cost. In fact, Maurice Bishop was quite right when he said on March 13, right after Reagan's remarks:

"This is about as close as you can come to declaring war without actually declaring it....The imperialists tried to build up a propaganda operation in Grenada. They tried to carry out their economic aggression. In both cases, our people dealt them a severe setback. So, now they have to resort to armed aggression."

In denouncing the entry of former Somocistas into Nicaragua, the Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement raised a stirring alarm:

"Reagan is invading Nicaragua. Grenada is his next objective. Join the militia now." (7)

Unfortunately, the events in mid-October and their tragic outcome — the murder of Maurice Bishop and several historic leaders of the New Jewel Movement by officers of the People's Army — weakened the revolution and disoriented the Grenadian movements. Thus, the way was opened for the imperialists to send in 5,000 Marines to occupy the island. ■

6. Quoted by *Epices* ("Spice"), the paper of the French Comité de solidarité avec le peuple de Grenada, September 1983 (c/o J. M. Annequin, 86 avenue Pierre-Brossolette, 92240 Malakoff, France).

7. See *Inprecor*, No 146, March 28, 1983 and No 149, April 9, 1983.

## The events that opened the way for US invasion



Bernard Coard and Maurice Bishop address meeting (DR)

*The following account of the events leading to the overthrow of the New Jewel government in Grenada was compiled from sources on Grenada in the period immediately before and immediately after the American invasion. It is from the October 27 issue of Internationalen, paper of the Swedish section of the Fourth International.*

From sporadic contacts with sources in the Grenadian capital of St. George's, a picture is forming of the way in which the events developed. Many questions remain. But it is clear that a process of workers revolution has suffered a catastrophic defeat.

It seems clear that the events that led to the massacres at the army's central headquarters in Fort Rupert in St. George's began with a sharp conflict in the Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement. Some details have not yet been revealed but according to a spokesperson of the New Jewel Movement, the conflict was over the division of power within the party and state apparatus.

According to our sources, the Central Committee made a decision that Bishop should "devote more time to work among the masses." At the same time, the deputy premier and finance minister, Bernard Coard, was to "lead and organize the party's political work."

So far so good. Conflicts in the party were nothing unusual, and there was

nothing to indicate that the problem would not be overcome by democratic agreement. According to unconfirmed rumors, Coard was supposed to have had a majority for his line in the Central Committee. The problem was supposed to have arisen when Bishop refused to recognize a majority decision.

However, this seemingly unimportant conflict escalated into executions and the imposition of a military government. Something, what remains unclear, seems to have turned this conflict into a crisis.

The first indications we got that something was going wrong was Friday, two weeks ago, when Premier Maurice Bishop was reported to be under arrest. The situation grew murkier as rumors spread through the streets of St. George's that Bernard Coard was planning to oust and murder Bishop. The source of the rumor was supposed to be Bishop's chief of security, Cletus St. Paul, who was immediately arrested.

On Friday afternoon, Selwyn Strachan, Minister for National Mobilization, called for a rally in the main square of St. George's, where he tried to get a hearing for Coard's policy, but to no avail.

The people wanted Bishop, and it was feared that there was a basis for the rumors about plans to kill him. Later the same day, Coard responded to the rumors by leaving the government.

Strachan and the minister for women's affairs, Phyllis Coard, also resigned. They then disappeared without a trace.

Over the weekend, contradictory rumors were spread via the international news agencies. Coard was supposed to have taken power in the country. This was not confirmed in any way. To the contrary, Radio Free Grenada denied that there was any power struggle between Coard and Bishop at all.

On Monday, the situation in St. George's grew more tense, when Kenrick Radix, state prosecutor and a good friend of Bishop but not a member of the Central Committee, called for a demonstration on Bishop's behalf. Radix referred to the rumors about a plan to take Bishop's life, and he was arrested after the demonstration.

The same day, Foreign Minister Unison Whiteman returned from a visit abroad. Whiteman was a close associate of Bishop, and he tried to negotiate with the opposition in the Central Committee.

At the same time, one of Coard's supporters, Planning Secretary Victor Burke, criticized Bishop to a group of international aid workers. This was the only public criticism of Bishop by the opposition.

There was a crisis in the country, Burke said. He claimed that Bishop had followed too liberal a policy toward the petty bourgeoisie. The result of this supposedly was that the mass organizations and the party were functioning poorly. He went on to say that the government would be put under the command of the Central Committee.

On Tuesday, there was an expectant quiet in St. George's. But on Wednesday morning, the events reached their tragic and unexpected climax.

In the morning, Whiteman left the government to protest against the treatment of Bishop. No negotiations had ever taken place, he reported, and Coard had not even received, or been allowed to receive, him. Along with Whiteman, the minister of agriculture, George Louison; minister of tourism, Lynden Ramdhanny; and minister of housing, Norris Bain, resigned.

At 9:30 on Wednesday morning, Whiteman mobilized a march of 4,000 people to Bishop's house. They shouted the slogan "We are going to fetch Maurice."

The six soldiers guarding the house were disarmed after token resistance. The door was broken in, and the crown found Bishop and the minister of education Jacqueline Creft, who had also been arrested, in different rooms.

Bishop was then taken on a triumphal march through the streets. A reporter who got through to him asked him to comment. Bishop's only reply and his last public statement was "the masses."

The demonstration kept growing. Finally, according to eyewitnesses, it was about 15,000 persons as it approached the Ft. Rupert army headquarters. The mood of the crowd was festive.

At the fort, disarmed soldiers loyal to Bishop were supposed to be waiting. The weapons for the people's militia were also kept there. But according to eye-

witnesses, the crowd had no weapons other than those that had been taken from Bishop's guards.

At 1:00 p.m., two trucks filled with armed soliders under the command of Major Leon Cornwall drove up.

Minutes later, the crowd came under fire. It is unclear exactly how many were killed but it was around twenty. One source reports that 59 wounded were taken to hospital, of whom three later died.

According to the army's account, the soldiers started shooting in self-defense after they were fired on. It was claimed that Bishop and his colleagues were killed in the crossfire.

It is clear that this story was an invention.

After the first volleys, there was no resistance, either armed or unarmed.

The people surrendered, raising their hands above their heads. Bishop was in the middle of the crowd. But the soliders picked him out, along with other key persons — Unison Whiteman, Jacqueline Creft, and Norris Bain. They were taken together with the trade-union leaders Vincent Noel and Fitzroy Bain into the fort. Eyewitnesses, including Norris Bain's wife, saw them follow the soldiers without offering resistance, their hands over their heads. Seconds later they were shot.

The day that began with a festive mass demonstration ended in shock and horror. In the afternoon, the commander of the Grenadan army, Hudson Austin, declared that the New Jewel government had been dissolved. He introduced a strict curfew and declared that the country would be ruled henceforth by a revolutionary military junta. ■

on the radio that people would be shot if they ventured out of their houses. Shot on the spot.

*Q. Do you know if any people were arrested?*

*A. Yes, but nothing has been announced officially. I don't know what is true and what is only rumor. The telephones are working in the country, but there are a lot of people who cannot be found.*

*Q. It's your opinion that this was a right-wing coup?*

*A. It began as a reaction in the party, a power play I might say. The military is in power and has destroyed everything. When Bishop was under house arrest, everyone was against that.*

*Q. Have you heard anything about Bernard Coard's and Selwyn Strachan's role in this?*

*A. No. Not a word has been heard from them since Bishop was put under house arrest.*

*Q. The policy that was presented by Stroude does not represent Coard's thinking, if we have things right. Coard was supposed to stand to the left of Bishop. This policy is to the right of both of them.*

*A. Those that I have talked to who seem to have some inside knowledge say that Coard had been placing his own people in key posts from some years back. At the same time, elements that were not with him, such as Jacqueline Creft and Kenneth Radix, had left. That enabled Coard's people to get a majority in the Central Committee. They were very inexperienced. They have no support whatsoever among the population. The military junta is made up of twenty-year-old "Marxist-Leninist" nincompoops, who have gained power overnight.*

*Q. I don't see how things fit together. Wasn't it Coard who pushed his people into party posts?*

*A. Yes. That's right.*

*Q. But it isn't his line that is being carried out now.*

*A. No. The situation allowed the military to take over.*

*Q. As a sort of third force?*

*A. They have formed a 16-member Revolutionary Military Council, with three or four Marxists. The rest are lieutenants and the like.*

*Q. Where does Selwyn Strachan stand in all this?*

*A. He was for Coard. He was the only minister that backed Coard, other than Phyllis Coard. When Bishop was put under house arrest, he went out on the square and around workplaces. The people locked the doors and wouldn't let him in. He said that Coard was the new premier, but people didn't want to hear about it.*

## From Grenada on the eve of the US invasion

*The following is an interview with a Swedish nurse working in Grenada. It was done by telephone from Sweden to St. George's on October 22-23, two days before the U.S. invasion.*

*The text of the interview was published in the October 27 issue of Internationalen, paper of the Swedish section of the Fourth International, from which we have taken it.*

From ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA:

*Question. What are your reactions? What has happened?*

*Answer. It's ghastly what happened. It started as a simple conflict in the Central Committee of the party, and nobody in the party knew what it was about. Information was sent to no one outside the Central Committee before Bishop was put under house arrest for not going along with its leadership.*

*Then things went so far that the people liberated Bishop and took him to Fort Rupert, where the soldiers more or less put aside their weapons because they were happy to see him freed. Everyone was for Bishop; they shouted anti-Coard slogans and so forth.*

*Those who spoke for Coard thought that Bishop was not left enough. When Bishop was freed, the military intervened and apparently executed members of the government.*

*Q. Did they shoot back at all? Did Bishop fire on the soldiers?*

*A. I don't know. But it's said that they took out weapons to give to the militia men who supported Bishop up in*

*the fort. It's possible that they started shooting, but I don't know.*

*But it's quite clear that they shot Bishop at the end. Bishop's mother was up there, as well as Norris Bain's wife. They were taken off afterward.*

*After that, when the crowd had dispersed, there was shooting again, two bursts of fire, up in the fort. That was probably when Bishop was shot. And none of the government leaders shot were brought into the hospital.*

*I was at the hospital. The wounded were brought in. I saw 59 wounded.*

*Q. It was the people shot at the fort who were brought in?*

*A. Yes, and three of them were dead. They were mainly civilians. No other dead or wounded came in later. Now it has been reported that 17 people were killed outside Fort Rupert. None of the government figures executed were among the wounded.*

*Today the military regime has given an idea of how it intends to proceed politically. It is to the right of Bishop.*

*Q. To the right of Bishop?*

*A. Yes. They say they are going to install a civilian government including representatives of all the social classes. They are going to stress tourism, guarantee private initiative, strengthen ties with the U.S. and so forth.*

*On the radio Bishop was blamed for the fact that the incident ended in shooting. That is supposed to be Bishop's fault. In the evening after that happened, they imposed a four-day curfew and said*

Q. Is there any sign that resistance is growing to the military government?

A. In the days before Bishop was freed, there were signs. He was put under house arrest on Tuesday evening.

On Saturday, I was in the square, and the state prosecutor, Kenrick Radix, got up on a statue and said that Coard has plotted against us and that we had to free Bishop. A demonstration developed then, but it ran out of steam. Then it started on Monday again. At that time Radix was arrested. It is said that he is still alive.

Bishop was freed on Wednesday morning. On that day, the entire people was mobilized.

I have never seen anything like it before. These were demonstrations for Bishop against Coard. No one was ready to give up. Everybody wanted to fight.

It was fantastic. At the time Bishop was freed, a crowd of thousands of unarmed people went to his home and overpowered his guards. Now everybody is under house arrest. [This refers to the curfew clamped down to suppress mass protests.] You can't see anything, but the people are bitter.

Q. Do you think that the people will fight against the government now?

A. Yes. But it's going to take some time before the people can mobilize. All the leaders have been shot.

It is terrible. I talked with a youth who was a party member. He admitted that he was completely demoralized, and only wanted to cry. Another person — a reactionary neighbor of mine — said that he would go out and fight. The mood is contradictory. Another neighbor said that he wished the Americans would come in.

It's contradictory and there is a lot of confusion. But nobody is for the government. The new regime will never dare hold a parish council meeting.

Q. Are you going to leave Grenada in the morning?

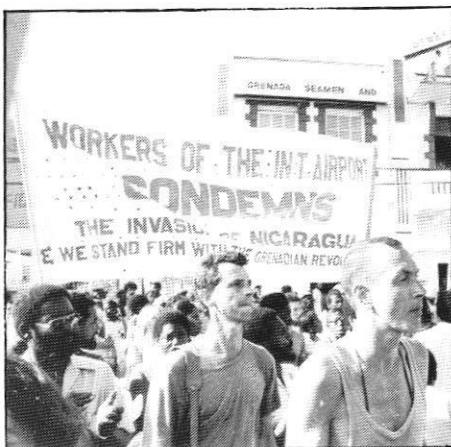
A. We want to stick it out. We want to talk to people and see what happens, and follow up what happens. But at the same time we have a chance to leave Grenada on Monday. We don't know if there will be strikes or whether the water and electricity may be cut off. And the Swedish Foreign Ministry has said pretty plainly that if we don't take this chance, they cannot take any more responsibility for us.

We Swedes have been in a quandary about this. The inclination now is to leave on Monday and stay in Barbados. We have to come back here anyway because we can't take our baggage with us. I would stay if I were alone, but we have children with us.

Q. Have you been threatened or anything?

A. No. We haven't been, but if the U.S. invades.

Q. What's the feeling about that?



Nicaragua support rally in Grenada (DR)

A. We haven't talked to very many people since the curfew, but we reckon that the U.S. is going to come in. In that event anything can happen. If there is a military dictatorship, we don't know if we want to continue working here.

Q. The situation seems terrible altogether.

A. Yes. I just want to cry. For us foreigners who can go home, the situation is grim enough, but it is particularly terrible for the Grenadians.

Q. What's the state of things like now in Grenada?

A. There are threats from all sides. We feel trapped. The countries that belong to CARICOM have threatened to invade. The propaganda over the radio is so fierce that you can't help being affected by it.

Q. How are the rank-and-file New Jewel members reacting to what has happened? What do they think?

A. Right now they're all in hiding. It was a small party after all.

On Monday evening, before the coup, Victory Burke, a planning secretariat in the Ministry of Finance and a party member, tried to defend Coard at a meeting with groups from the women's organization. Most boycotted the meeting. Only ten people were there.

Three young women close to the party defended the line. The others, ordinary young women who were there were furious and told Burke to "go back to hell where you belong."

The ones who were at the meeting and defended the line are not at home now. They have gone into hiding. One of them lives near us. She is a housewife and has gone underground now.

Q. So, you don't see the military council as a successor that will continue the New Jewel's line?

A. I can't think that they are going to continue the New Jewel's policy. The line put forward on the radio has nothing to do with the line that Burke explained to the women's organization.

Before Bishop was shot, while he was under house arrest, Burke talked about a crisis. He said that there was a decline in the women's organization, the party, and

the youth organization, that there was a crisis in the country, and that the leadership had to be twice as strong. He said that Bishop's policy had to be opposed, that Bishop was far too friendly toward the petty bourgeoisie.

Bishop had opposed shutting down the bourgeois paper *Torchlight*. Bishop had opposed arresting the 26 persons. Bishop was altogether too liberal, according to Burke and the Central Committee.

Moreover, Burke said that the Central Committee would be the leading organ and that the government would be subordinated to the Central Committee.

But now the military council is saying that it is going to appoint a civilian cabinet. This obviously is not the same line.

But I don't know how the people in general see this.

Q. Do you think that all of this was tied up with a showdown inside the party?

A. Yes, it started as a showdown between Coard and Bishop. But Coard was smarter and put his supporters in the key positions. And now it has degenerated into a military regime, and it seems as if the military is going to set up an ordinary bourgeois democratic government.

Q. Have they said so?

A. No, but that's how it seems to me. They have said that they are going to install a cabinet in which all social classes will be represented. They haven't said anything about parish councils and zonal councils or that people would work in the mass organizations.

Q. Are any of the three or four Marxists in the military council in the Central Committee?

A. Cornwall might be. But I'm not sure. Burke could not talk about who was in the Central Committee; that is secret.

Q. So, it isn't clear what sort of a regime this is?

A. No. But it will show its colors. At the moment it itself probably does not know what it is.

Q. What sort of reactions have there been to the threat of military intervention?

A. On the radio they are saying that there is going to be an invasion tonight from the CARICOM states.

Q. Is the military calling up the people's militia?

A. They are calling up the militia. But they are going around and bringing people in, because the militia members are not coming in.

Q. They are not coming in?

A. No. Not voluntarily. And the militia has no weapons of its own.

Q. Do you think that they are going to arm the people?

A. No. I don't think so.

## The defeat of the Peronists in the elections

The final official results of the Argentine election were announced on November 2. They gave the Radical Party an overall majority on all counts.

The results in the presidential votes were:

- Raul Alfonsin (Radical Party) 7,659,530 votes;
- Italo Luber (Peronist) 5,936,556 votes
- Oscar Alende (Partido Intransigente) 344,434 votes.

Raul Alfonsin has an overall majority in the 600-strong electoral college that will elect the new president on November 30, of 317 delegates, against 259 for the Peronist.

The new president will also have a majority in Congress. The Radicals won 129 seats, the Peronists 111 and the Partido Intransigente 3. The other 9 seats went to the other small parties.

Ricardo PASCOE

BUENOS AIRES — The results of the October 30 elections reflect better than all the talk what is happening in Argentina.

It has to be said that nobody expected such a smashing victory for the Radicals. What is more, the great majority of the people were expecting an "inevitable" victory for the Peronists.

Even when it was obvious that the Peronists had lost, they were not only reluctant to accept this fact, they were incapable of understanding a country where the Peronists were no longer the biggest force. So, they kept on insisting to the last possible minute that it was not certain that they had been defeated.

In 1973, Peron got 7,359,252 votes (62 percent of the total). The Radicals got 2,905,719 votes (24 percent). The Alianza Popular Federalista, a rightist party, got 1,450,996 (12 percent). And the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (1) got 181,474 votes (1.5 percent). These four parties were the only ones participating in the election that put Peron in the presidency for the last time.

In 1983, ten years later, the make up of the political forces, their alliances, and their role has changed completely. Instead of four candidates for the presidency, there were 13. Moreover, this proliferation of candidates reflected nothing more than splits in previously existing groups.

The socialists were divided into several groups. There were the Trotskyists of the MAS and the Partido Obrero, the nationalist socialists of the Partido Socialista Popular, the Frente de Izquierda Popular, the Alianza Democratica Socialista, and the Partido Intransigente. At the same time, the right also went through its own splintering process. There was the Alianza Federal, the Movi-

miento de Integracion y Desarrollo, the Union de Centro Democratico, the Partido Democra Cristiano.

The only two forces that maintained their continuity were the Peronists, in the Partido Justicialista and the Radicals, in the Union Civica Radical.

### A TACTICAL VOTE

For reasons that I will go into later, the campaign developed pressure for choosing between the two big parties.

The Argentine people did not vote for the alternative they wanted necessarily but for what seemed to represent the best guarantee against everything represented by the immediate past, which preoccupies the minds of Argentinians, that is, the military junta and the repression.

The results of this election can only be compared with the one in 1973, because that was the last. This time, with 90 percent of the vote counted, the Radicals got 7,117,167 votes (52 percent of the total). The Peronists got 4,462,432 (40 percent). The Partido Intransigente, up till now "the" left party got 326,993 votes (2 percent). And all the other parties of the left and right got the remaining 4 percent (2 percent of the ballots were blank or invalid for other reasons).

It is worth mentioning the score of the MAS because in 1973, then the PST, it got 181,000 votes and in these elections it got only 40,164 (0.29 percent). The Partido Obrero, which ran its first election campaign, came in last, with 12,844 (0.09 percent). The Communist Party had hoped to capture several local governments. It did not win a single one, and ended up with only 2 percent of the vote.

For the right-wing parties, it was a similar story. The Movimiento de Integracion y Desarrollo got 1 percent.

While the people thought that it was most important to vote for a party that could win, the choice the voters made

was also affected by an element of critical thinking. There is a more critical attitude now about how the 1976 coup came about and who was responsible for it.

Strange as it may seem, the Radical candidate, Alfonsin, said in an election speech, "We Radicals went banging on the doors of the military bases to get support against the Peronists, the Peronists did it against the Radicals, and the Conservatives against everybody."

Although this comment, which in itself was revealing enough, was made as a self-criticism, it certainly sums up the basic contradictions in the political situation within the country.

On the one hand, there is a general outcry against the military dictatorship. Even in the furthest right election rallies, you could hear people shouting: "It's going, to end, it's going to end, the military dictatorship is going to end." ("Se va a acabar, se va a acabar, la dictadura militar.")

On the other hand, the political parties have made deals with the military going back to before the 1976 coup d'etat. Given the contradictory position of the traditional parties, the key role in the political struggle falls to the workers organizations. Moreover, these organizations demonstrated their capacity for offering their own "answer" as a class to the economic situation by bringing out 98 percent of the workers on strike on October 4.

### RISE OF THE WORKERS MOVEMENT

This action was an impressive display of working-class solidarity and organization, uniting all the working-class forces in a single joint effort to press for a wage raise.

Still more significant is the fact that the central rally on October 4 did not have a distinct party-political character (that is, it was not Peronist) but was an action by and for the workers outside the framework of the elections, although they were only 25 days away. This showed that today the great bulk of the workers are active on two levels. On the one hand, they work in unions affiliated to Peronism. On the other, they are engaged in trade-union activity focused on restoring the working class' standard of living.

This is a fundamental contradiction that is generating major internal conflicts in the unions among the trade-union bureaucrats and between the labor confederations and the Peronist party. Obviously, the extent of the contradictions has an effect on the viability of the so-called National Recovery Plan that the next government will apply.

This highly unstable and contradictory political and economic situation, arises from the fact that the military are relinquishing the government after running the economy into disaster. Argen-

1. PST — Socialist Workers Party. This party was a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International at the time. It later split from the International in 1979.

tina, like Chile and Brazil, is another example that the force of arms is in no way able to overcome, and much less solve, the economic crisis of a neocolonial country.

The brute force of arms may intimidate big sections of the population but in no way can the armed forces restructure an economy whose contradictions are rooted in its ties to the economy of the industrialized capitalist countries. If the Argentine military have learned anything, it is that. The native bourgeoisie has also learned this lesson. It is for this reason that all the right-wing parties are

the backbone of militant trade-unionism in the country, suffered a similar process. In the 1975-81 period roughly, the workforce in the key heavy industries dropped from 1,056,012 to 738,524.

The effects of these economic blows against the key sectors of union activists were aggravated by the 30,000 "disappearances." About 50 percent of the "missing persons" were trade-union activists. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo [the organization of relatives of "missing persons"] have been able to show that most of these union activists were members, delegates, and official representa-

In Villa Constitucion, where the first massive repression against the unions was unleashed in 1975, the leaders of the engineering workers union were arrested and jailed. They were later released, and when they went back they found their union under the control of the bureaucracy and the military.

A movement then began for recognition of the rights of the rank and file. It was joined by other sections of workers. And finally it forced the bureaucracy to call a general strike on December 6.

## THE "GROUPINGS"

The engineering workers created a new form of organization, called "Groupings," within unions, something like a trade-union current. This new form of organization spread rapidly, and today it exists in practically all the important unions in the country. What is notable in this case is the natural convergence of economic and political demands.

Notable also is the atmosphere that preceded the October 4 strike. It brought out nearly all workers, and the leaderships of the two CGTs, both of which are Peronist, were not able to use their position of leadership to consolidate the Peronist movement's working-class base.

This July, 626,000 workers mobilized in work stoppages, strikes, marches, and protests to demand trade-union rights and improvements in wages and conditions. This included dockers, police, professors, doctors, bakers, oil workers, bank workers, store clerks, civil servants, customs workers, journalists, engineering workers, electrical workers, railroad workers, and movie house operators.

In August, 1,033,980 workers mobilized, including automotive workers, telephone workers, construction workers, bank workers, bakers, restaurant workers, professors, railroad workers, port workers, shipbuilding workers, electrical workers, and press workers. In this month, people began to notice the relationship between economic demands and demands directed against the dictatorship raised by the same workers.

In September, 2,241,770 workers in the same industries mobilized, along with airline and subway workers.

In this context of rising struggles, with continually more political demands, the leaderships of the national labor organizations were obliged to call a general strike. At the same time, they wanted to establish a new mechanism of control over the mass movement.

The contrast with the October 4 strike was the big windup election rally held by the Peronists. While Radicals mobilized broad layers of the middle class — about 500,000 — who shouted slogans against the military dictatorship, the Peronists brought out a million workers.

However, unlike the big working-class mobilizations in the heyday of Peronism, when the unions marched into the square behind giant banners, with union leadership at the head followed by disciplined ranks, the Peronist



Election campaign posters in Argentine (DR)

stressing the need for "a return to normalcy," or to put it another way, to return the military to their barracks.

They want the military out of the way so that bourgeois democracy can open up the channels and possibilities of the free market, in the hope that in this way Argentina can regain something of its lost prosperity.

However, no matter how much the bourgeois forces wheel and deal with the military, it is clear that the key to the Argentine situation is the working class.

## BLOWS TO THE INDUSTRIAL WORKING CLASS

The situation in the trade-union movement is very complex and contradictory. In the first place, the military followed a line of dismantling native industry in order to carry out their political and economic project. And in doing this, they set about dismantling the focus of the working class — the factories.

The workers' share of the national income dropped between 1975 and 1981 from 48.5 percent to 30.6 percent. The number of factories in the country declined by 18 percent. And the unemployment rate grew from about 20 percent in 1975 to 30 percent in 1981. It hit industries such as auto very hard. In 1974, there were 57,400 workers in this industry. In 1982, the figure had fallen to 23,300.

In general, all the key heavy industries,

tives of various types of the big industrial unions.

Since the military coup, the two trade-union confederations (which are divided because of interbureaucratic wrangling) have made some hesitant moves to initiate joint actions. There were several general strikes demonstrating the unions ability to stand up to the repression — April 24, 1979; July 22, 1981; December 6, 1982; and March 28, 1983. The latest one was on October 4, 1983, as noted above.

Nonetheless, it has to be pointed out that the union leaderships did not organize these general strikes because that was what they wanted to do. It was the ranks, which were involved in various struggles to raise their standard of living and get more democratic unions, that obliged the established union leaderships to undertake these actions.

A clear example of this was the December 6 strike. In reality, it was the result of the extreme pauperization of the masses of workers, but it united the movement. At the time, the rank-and-file workers were demanding control over the so-called Normalization Commissions, which were supposed to build a bridge between the trustees appointed by the military and the real union leaders. What happened in practice is that they became a discussion club for the military government and the trade-union bureaucracy, from which the rank-and-file workers were excluded.

this 1983 windup election rally in disorganized groups. They did not march in union contingents but in fact as individuals, although there were neighborhood organizations present.

You felt the disorganization of the workers and the deterioration of their standard of living. The people who came to the rally at the end of the campaign were angry. The demand rose for bread and work. The people in effect held the Peronist worthies on the platform responsible for this situation. But still they came, and this rally was much bigger and more militant than the Radical one.

The fact is that the petty bourgeoisie are not easy to get out on marches, whereas the workers are used to this.

So, the Peronist rally reflected the workers' continuing attachment to Peronism but also the disorganization of the working class and its impoverishment.

This explains the jeering that the trade-union bureaucrats faced at the ceremony on October 17 in Velez to celebrate the unification of the Peronist unions. The one who was supposed to be the main speaker, Lorenzo Miguel, was not able to make himself heard over the abuse he got from the crowd. National TV showed a bottle hitting the microphone and just missing the face of the country's top trade-union bureaucrat.

The incident created such a scandal that in the following days the union bureaucrats were obliged to visit Lorenzo Miguel to do homage to him and explain that they had nothing to do with the events. Nonetheless, at the Peronists' election windup rally, although he was on the platform, Lorenzo Miguel was not presented to the public. Despite this, jeering was directed against him. That is, today the rank-and-file workers are making a distinction between adhering to Peronism as an ideology and letting themselves be led by the traditional Peronist leaders.

So, the Peronists' electoral defeat is a reflection of what is happening in the Peronist structures for controlling the masses. This is the central problem, and here lies the key to their defeat in the elections.

However, another thing has to be taken into account to judge the mood of the masses in Argentina. Although the Peronists say the contrary in their electoral propaganda, they did not participate in the resistance to the military. Or more precisely, the Peronist leadership did not participate, because the ranks were in fact deeply involved.

In his campaign, Alfonsín presented himself as the champion of democracy and democratic rights. On the other hand, Luder did not identify himself so much with democracy. This fact created a lot of suspicion, and this has to be understood in all its implications. What the Argentines wanted, as shown by their tactical vote, was a return to democracy, the chance to live without fear.

The fear was terrible. Argentines from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat are sick of military rule. For this reason, the struggle of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo will continue to gain strength.

## Farrell Dobbs 1907-1983

Farrell Dobbs represented as few have the understanding of the best working-class leaders of the necessity of building a revolutionary socialist party to liberate the working people.

More than forty years ago, although he had gained a historic stature as a trade-unionist, he left trade-union work to head a small revolutionary Marxist party.

Farrell Dobbs led the Socialist Workers Party through the 1950s, the most difficult period in the history of the American socialist movement, symbolising the determination of the Trotskyist cadres in the United States to persevere at any cost in the work of building the revolutionary party in the central country of modern capitalism and imperialism.

Farrell Dobbs' stature and his total dedication to the aim of building the instrument necessary for liberating the working class and all of humanity is a testimony to the quality of the small group of revolutionists who rallied around Leon Trotsky to rebuild the international revolutionary party and to continue to develop revolutionary Marxism as a scientific tool.

The Fourth International honors the memory of Farrell Dobbs as an example of the dedication of the cadres educated by Trotsky to the task of building the world party of the socialist revolution.

United Secretariat  
of the Fourth International  
November 2, 1983

## Veteran American Trotskyist

With the death of Farrell Dobbs, the world Trotskyist movement loses one of its veteran leaders, a symbol of the unity of a worker militant and a builder of the revolutionary party. Farrell embodied for us all the leadership of the 1934 Minneapolis teamsters strike, with which, after the Charleroi miners strike of 1932, the young movement for the Fourth International demonstrated its initial capacity to successfully conduct important working class struggles. His conscious decision to abandon his position as a trade-union leader to become one of the key leaders of the Socialist Workers Party reflected for us the central understanding which lies at the basis of our Transitional Programme, the cornerstone of the Fourth International since its founding conference in 1938. The dramatic problems with which humankind is confronted in the 20th century — the very problem of the physical survival of the human race — cannot be solved but through the building of revolutionary parties and a revolutionary mass International, through the fusion of the real struggles of the proletariat in the three sectors of the world revolution with revolutionary vanguard cadre.

To remain faithful to the meaning of Farrell's life taken in its totality, more than ever means today to build the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International in the continuity of Marx and Lenin, of Trotsky and of James P. Cannon.

Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, Hugo Gonzales Moscoso.  
3 November 1983

## THE HUMAN RIGHTS CANDIDATES

In fact, in Buenos Aires, as soon as people found out what the vote for the Radicals and the Peronists was, their attention turned to the vote for the human-rights candidates. Augusto Conte ran on the Christian Democrat ticket, although he is not a member of that party. He is the most outstanding fighter for human rights, having risked his life to defend the political prisoners and the "missing persons." His whole campaign was focused on human rights, and he was elected a deputy.

A new period is now opening in the political history of Argentina. At least for a time, there will be a flowering of human rights, because the people are hungry for them and anxious to exercise them.

Moreover, the bureaucracy has two problems. One is internal divisions. They will be sharpened by the defeat and will continue to give rise to conflicts. The one is that the bureaucracy has to re-establish its domination and control over the trade-union movement. These two problems interact, each making the other worse.

What is more, the conditions exist for the development of a new movement of self-organization among the rank-and-file workers. The Groupings are spreading and beginning to assume new forms of exercising power within the unions and not outside of them.

Finally, the conditions also exist for building a political leadership, if this is done based on the rich experience that is accumulating in the broad mass movement. The election results show that calls from outside the movement to support the building of such a leadership have failed.

## Day of National Protest shows mounting tensions

Mexico along with Brazil, is one of the decisive countries in Latin America. It is also, like the other Latin giant to the south, one of the world's biggest debtors.

If anything, the political and economic contradictions are more tangled and explosive in Mexico than in Brazil.

The Mexican economy suffers more obviously from U.S. domination because, among other things, of the very proximity of the U.S. In fact, it lives to a considerable extent from the scraps of the U.S. imperialists' table.

The following article points out that the economic crisis is reducing Mexican industry to the role of producing detached parts for U.S. imperialist concerns.

Mexicans are directly confronted with the glaring difference between their standard of living and the one in the imperialist center, and with racist discrimination against the millions of Mexicans who have been forced to cross the 1,200 mile border with the U.S. to try to escape from absolute poverty.

Mexico is also directly affected by the revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean.

Yet in the past decades in particular, Mexico has been by far the most stable of the major capitalist states in Latin America.

The following article describes how the world economic crisis is rapidly undermining this stability. It is against this background that the first national day of protest against the declining standard of living was held on October 19. The article explains the importance of this action and the role that the Mexican Fourth Internationalists played in it.

Sergio RODRIGUEZ

Recently the magazine *Euro Money* chose Mexican finance minister Jesus Silva Herzog as its Finance Minister of the Year. This reflects the imperialists' recognition of the capacity shown by the Mexican government to fully implement the protocol of agreement signed with the IMF.

Unlike what happened in the cases of Brazil, Argentina, and even Venezuela, Mexico has followed the IMF accords to the letter, and up till now has met all the interest payments on the foreign debt punctually.

The government of Miguel de la Madrid has achieved this by striking the worst blows to the standard of living of the Mexican masses in living memory. But in so doing, it has not only dealt the masses blows but it has also shaken the traditional mechanisms of control that maintained the political stability of the government for more than 65 years.

The regime in Mexico has been based on a combination of various factors. One of them is a political system built around one strong party that wins all elections — the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional — Revolutionary Institutions Party). The fact that the workers, peasants, middle strata, and the military were locked into this party guaranteed considerable stability.

Another factor was a policy of providing social benefits to the masses (social security, education, housing, etc.). The regime has also enjoyed a considerable autonomy with respect to imperialism, essentially on the political level.

The economic crisis that set in in early 1981 threw this whole political structure off balance.

The 1974-75 economic crisis coincided with the discovery of extensive oil fields, which made Mexico into the world's fourth largest petroleum producer. This made it possible to deal with the crisis at the time without major problems. However, in the long run it actually aggravated the ills of the Mexican economy by giving rise to the imbalances typical of developing countries that depend on petroleum.

The Lopez Portillo government in power from 1976 to 1982 had the effrontery to say that the Mexican people had to learn to live with prosperity. In less than five years, petroleum sales brought 50 billion dollars into the country. Along with this, between 1976 and 1982, the foreign debt rose from 35 to 80 billion dollars. However, all this was not reflected in any significant increase in the productive plant.

What did happen was a geometrical growth in corruption and currency flight. Every year the Mexican government is obliged by law to give a report to the nation on its management of the economy. In the last year of the Lopez Portillo government, the authorities had to acknowledge that there had been a currency flight of more than 50 billion dollars to the U.S., where this money was deposited in banks.

Jorge Diaz Serrano, director of the Mexican state oil trust, Petroleos Mexicanos, under the Lopez Portillo government is now in jail under indictment for fraud involving 5 billion dollars.

So, the 1981-82 crisis hit Mexico with a terrible impact that had a deepgoing effect on the productive plant.

### NATIONAL INDUSTRY DISMANTLED, JOBLESSNESS SOARS

Moreover, one of the points included in the agreement with the IMF was that the Mexican government would push forward a process of re-privatization of the economy.

Up to a few years ago, the Mexican government had been increasing the state sector at a rapid rate. Today it is selling off a lot of these enterprises.

The automotive industry is the clearest example. The Mexican government had bought the majority of the stock in Renault and American Motors. Now it has sold all the stock it held to the Renault parent company in France, including its American Motors shares.

This has been accompanied by layoffs of 2,500 workers at Renault and putting the factory on a short week, leaving the workers only 55 percent of their previous wages.

And this is only one example. So far this year the Mexican government has sold off more than 85 state enterprises.

Most industries have had to cut production. In 1982 and so far in 1983 there have been more than a million layoffs in the building industry. In the automotive industry, there have been nearly 30 thousand layoffs and a similar number in the steel industry. Most small and middle-sized industrial plants have had to close their doors or reduce their workforces to the minimum. All this has boosted the number of unemployed to 3.5 million and the number of the underemployed to 9.5 million.

However, the Mexican government has not been content just to reduce the number of jobs. It has also attacked the wages of Mexican workers. In 1982, the real wages of Mexican workers fell to the 1942 level, and the trend in 1983 indicates that they will drop below the basic level attained after the Mexican revolution of 1910-17.

This decline in real wages has been brought about not just by a policy of keeping raises to a ridiculous minimum. Inflationary policies have also played a major role. From 1947 to 1975, inflation rates were around 7 percent, while the gross domestic product increased by 6 percent annually. In 1983, the inflation rate was 100 percent, while there was no growth at all in the gross domestic product.

So far this year, inflation has increased by 75 percent. This means it will probably top 100 percent by the end of the year, if you consider that December is the month with the highest inflation. On the other hand, the government has already announced that this year the gross domestic product has decreased by 3 percent. This sort of drop has not happened in Mexico since the first years of the 1930s.

Of course, this crisis is mak-

sible a reorganization of capital. The process of monopolization has stepped up. Nonetheless, the extent of the crisis has led to bankruptcies among the Mexican monopolies themselves. This happened, for example, in the case of the Alfa group, the strongest of the Mexican trusts. In fact this group had started the production of some capital goods and some consumer durables. Its failure indicates that we are not going to see a new international division of labor enabling countries like Mexico to produce most, or even a major part of, the capital goods their economies need.

#### A NEW SUBORDINATE TYPE OF INDUSTRY

This had led the government of Miguel de la Madrid to pose the possibility of turning Mexico into a parts-producing country. To achieve this, a law has been passed to protect the interests of foreign part-producers. It stipulates that if the Yankee companies close their factories, they can take all their machinery out of the country. On the other hand, it denies the workers in these plants the right to organize. All of this will generate huge profits for the imperialists. They will even be exempted from paying taxes. So, the only benefit to the Mexican economy will be that it will create a certain number of jobs, which in theory should improve the situation of the internal market.

Obviously, to advance such a policy, the Mexican government has mounted a major attack on the unions. But attacking the unions means also attacking what has been a fundamental mechanism for assuring social stability, that is, the trade-union bureaucracy (known in Mexico as *charrismo*).

While the trade-union bureaucracy has been locked into the PRI, there is no reason to think that the unions have ceased to be working-class organizations. The present trade-union structure is the result of great struggles by the Mexican working class, and the essential consequences of this have not changed despite the totally reactionary character of the trade-union bureaucracy.

This history has generated a two-sided process. On the one hand, the government needs the union bureaucracy to maintain its control over the workers. On the other, the bureaucrats have had to offer the workers something in order to maintain their control over them. This is because the fundamental basis for their gaining control was the achievement of some essential social gains for the working class.

#### PRESSURES ON THE UNION BUREAUCRATS

In fact, when mobilizations in the biggest unions have gotten out of control, the bureaucracy has resorted to repression. But this has not been the main method it has used. Therefore, the bureaucracy is under great pressure. On the one hand, it is under pressure from the gov-

ernment, which is demanding that it keep the masses under control without offering them anything. On the other, it is under pressure from the workers in the unions who want to fight.

This pressure has generated a series of contradictions within the union bureaucracy. Thus, on June 9, more than 5,000 strikes broke out. The great majority of the unions, which belong to the largest confederation, the Confederacion de Trabajadores Mexicanos (CTM), decided to ask for an emergency wage increase to compensate for the soaring inflation. When the government refused, this touched off a wave of strikes.

The other confederations, which are also controlled by the government, decided not only not to wage any strike actions but to attack the campaign of the CTM.

These 5,000 strikes reflected not only the contradictions within the bureaucracy but also the mood of the workers.

Most of the Mexican left was not able to respond to this situation. The majority of the organizations adopted an abstentionist position, seeing these strikes only as the result of an interbureaucratic wrangle.

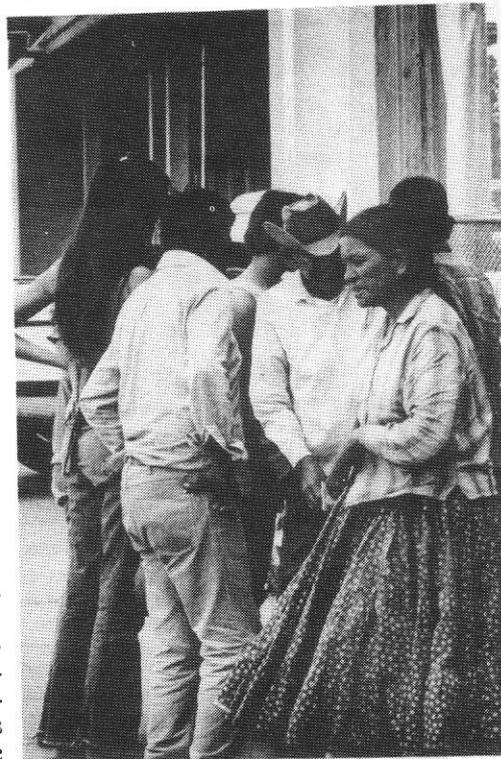
However, in various places, especially in Mexico City, June 9 was really a day of political action by the working class. In various working-class areas in Mexico City, demonstrations were held at 1:00 in the afternoon. The workers went from factory to factory demonstrating their solidarity and the importance of their united action.

However, after this the union bureaucracy retreated, fundamentally for two reasons. The workers were radicalizing and were responding favorably to the participation of the section of the left that was supporting them. But above all the bureaucracy retreated in the face of the counterattack from the government.

#### PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN GLASS HOUSES SHOULDN'T THROW STONES

One of the slogans of the new government presided over by Miguel de la Madrid has been for the moral rearmament of society. The depth of corruption reached by former rulers created very strong discontent in society. Before the eyes of the impoverished masses, there arose a layer of new rich, all of whom were functionaries in the previous government. Generally, they made an insolent display of their new wealth. For instance, the former chief of police built a house in the suburbs of Mexico City fronted with a replica of the Greek Parthenon made entirely of marble. And this is only one example.

The other major bourgeois party, the Partido Accion Nacional (PAN) began campaigning mainly around the issue of corruption. And on this basis it won a very large popular following, one large enough to really worry the PRI. For example, in the last national elections, the real results pieced together by a German



Indians constitute the poorest layers of Mexican so-

journalist (since the official ones were obviously faked) were 25 percent for the PAN, 10 percent for the PSUM (a coalition dominated by the Mexican CP), and 6 percent for the PRT, Mexican section of the Fourth International.

This trend also reflects the feelings of a substantial section of the bosses, who of course want a government that offers subsidies but not one whose officials divert millions upon millions of dollars into their own pockets.

Thus, from the beginning Miguel de la Madrid's government tried to clear itself from the stigma of corruption that marked all previous Mexican governments. To achieve this, it jailed several functionaries in the previous government and did everything to create the impression that it was going to continue doing so.

However, it is not only the government officials who have made corruption a way of life but also the union bureaucracy. There are multimillionaire bureaucrats who traffic with union dues and with jobs, who pocket millions of pesos for negotiating sweet-heart contracts, who sell out strikes for money.

For example, the petroleum workers union has a clause in its contract that says that 10 percent of the profits from any deal Petroleos Mexicanos makes with private parties has to go into the coffers of the union. And, of course, it is the union bureaucracy that controls the millions and millions of pesos that come in as a result.

It is well known, for example, that the secretary general of the petroleum workers union, Salvador Barragan Camacho, went every month to Las Vegas and to Reno in the U.S. and that on one night alone he managed to lose 100 million dollars gambling.

Given all this corruption, the Mexi-



(DR)

can government has very powerful weapons to pressure the union bureaucracy not to call any more actions like June 9.

Immediately after the day of action, the government set a trap for the petroleum workers union bureaucrats, and they began to fight among themselves, accusing each other of corruption. This led to the jailing of one of the union leaders and the publication throughout the country of facts about the corruption. If you consider the importance of this union (which has 110 thousand members and controls two state administrations and dozens of city governments) and the role it plays as the leading sector of the CTM, you can understand better why the government is putting on the heat. But all this has a boomerang effect, because the government is striking at its main ally. Thus, we can say that which ever side wins this struggle, it will also be a loser.

#### DESTABILIZATION OF THE ONE-PARTY SYSTEM

One of the other key features of the present situation is the division within the bourgeoisie over both economic and political questions. The growing electoral support for the PAN has reached a point where it makes the PRI's life rather difficult.

Most of the cities on the U.S. border are controlled by the PAN. Last year it won the elections in Hermosillo, the capital of Sonora, which is the most important agricultural state. This year, it won the elections in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua, the two most important cities in the state of Chihuahua; in Durango city, the capital of Durango state; in Monclova, where the country's main engineering industry is located; and in Coahuila. Moreover, recently the PRI had to fall

back on its old method of election fraud to keep the PAN from winning in Mexicali, the capital of northern Baja California.

The problem for the PRI is not just that it has lost elections but also that the employers organizations, including elements of the PRI itself, have openly or covertly supported the PAN. This development is important because it challenges one of the foundations of the system of political control, that is, the lack of parliamentary democracy. The one-party system produced the best results. However, it would be foolish to think that differences among the bosses are going to lead to a change in the form of political rule. The immense majority of the bourgeoisie is indebted to this system of political rule and is obviously not going to change it as long as it gets results in controlling the masses.

What is happening is that the extent of the economic crisis is generating serious political problems. The bourgeoisie wants an end to corruption among government officials and trade-union bureaucrats. It does not want any more nationalist flights of fancy. It does not want any more social spending, and it does not want any strikes. And at the same time it wants to leave the system of political rule as it is, although with some modernization. The problem is that it cannot have its cake and eat it too. That is, it wants to keep the present system of political rule but without corrupt bureaucrats and political bosses, and these two are mutually exclusive.

All this has generated a powerful political crisis in the country. This is not because major sectors of the monopolist bourgeoisie are against the government's economic policy. It is because they want to assure that the present economic policy will be maintained and that there will not be a reversion to the former one, that is, nationalizations, state takeovers, big social spending. In this context, the bourgeoisie is playing a more active political role today than ever before and it is acting with a relative autonomy vis-a-vis the government.

#### THE BOURGEOISIE'S "ANTI-IMPERIALISM" FADES

Traditionally, the Mexican government has enjoyed considerable room for maneuver with respect to U.S. imperialism. It has been able to use its foreign policy as a means for assuring tranquillity within the country. In this way, it has usually been able to control and channel the strong anti-imperialist feeling that naturally exists in the Mexican people. However, now the situation is more complex. Once again, the grave economic crisis has begun to upset this political relationship.

The Reagan government's brutal policy toward Central America is putting a lot of pressure on the Mexican government. Reagan is demanding that Mexico take a more conservative stand toward Central America. Dozens of U.S. sen-

ators, both Democrats and Republicans, have been coming to Mexico to press for more loyalty to Washington.

The problem is a simple one. The U.S. banks can continue lending, but they insist not just on economic interest but also on political dividends. Thus, Mexico has never had a Yankee ambassador who intervened so much in Mexican internal affairs as the present one.

Mr. Gavin gives press conferences in which he administers lessons to the Mexican government about what sort of economic policy it should follow. He meets with the leaders of PAN and the church [to which the PAN is linked], and this is immediately seen to be support for this party. He gives press conferences in which he says without the slightest compunction that he is sick of every catastrophe in Mexico being blamed on the U.S.

On one occasion, for example, Gavin said, "If there is an economic crisis, the Mexicans blame the U.S., if there is an earthquake they blame the U.S., if it doesn't rain, they blame the U.S." And the government let this provocation pass.

A few years ago, such a statement could have brought a great hue and cry from the government and all the PRI mass organizations would have declared Gavin "persona non grata." Today, the task of answering Gavin falls entirely on the left. It is the left that has to take up the defense of the nation.

Here another contradiction arises. The imperialists want a greater subordination to their international policy, but above all, they want a stable Mexico with the left kept in a tiny minority. But demanding the sort of subordination they are pressing for undermines the fundamental basis of the Mexican government's policy for controlling the masses, that is, the certain degree of anti-imperialism that it has exhibited. This has been understood by sections of the bourgeoisie, which are demanding that Reagan take a more discreet policy toward the Mexican government. Nonetheless, this situation is increasing the pressure on the Mexican regime.

The workers have seen the need to fight back against the government's aggressive policy. The first means for this has been the unions. However, the treacherous policy of the trade-union bureaucracy has enabled the government to attack and defeat every one of the unions in isolation.

In this respect, the crisis is aiding the bosses and the government. Every time the possibility of an isolated strike arises, the bosses and the government present the workers with an ultimatum: "If you want higher wages, that means less jobs. It's one or the other." Overall, they were freezing wages at the same time they are laying off thousands of workers. The result has been grave defeats for key unions, such as the auto workers and steel workers.

However, the pressure of the workers is generating movement toward unity. One of the first results of this was

formation of the National Front to Defend Wages and Fight Shortages (Frente Nacional en Defensa del Salario y Contra la Carestia — FNDESCAD). This front includes the unions free of bureaucratic control, the National Coordinating Committee of Educational Workers (more than 200,000 members), the National Coordinating Committee of the People's Urban Movement (CONAMUP), which organizes several tens of thousands of shantytown dwellers; and the Plan de Ayala National Coordinating Committee, which embraces most of the independent peasant organizations. Although this front is a minority force in the mass movement, it has been able to serve as a rallying point and a means of coordination for various struggles.

However, so far the most important response of the workers to the austerity drive has been the fight for the first national civic strike. It should be noted how this proposal arose.

In early February, a strike broke out in the Dina-Renault auto and truck factory. The union at this plant is part of the Independent Labor Confederation (Central Obrera Independiente — COI), an organization that stands outside the sphere of the bureaucratic confederations. It is led by an ex-Stalinist lawyer who is today strongly opposed to the PSUM, Juan Ortega Arenas.

The PRT has had a rather strong base in the COI for some years now. This enabled our comrades to play the leading role in the strike committee, which strengthened the combativity of the strike considerably. On February 5, a demonstration was held in Mexico City in support of the Dina-Renault union. The only party that took part was the PRT. The other left parties were against participating because of the differences they have with Ortega Arenas, whom they consider a union bureaucrat as corrupt and reactionary as the *charros*.

For the PRT whatever might be wrong with Ortega Arenas was no reason not to take part. In fact, during the strike a front formed between the followers of this bureaucrat and the trade-union backed by the PRT. Obviously, we have no confidence in Ortega Arenas, but today trade-union unity is more necessary than ever. During the Mexico City demonstration, Ortega Arenas proposed holding a big national civic strike. He made it clear that this had to be a united action, since he was perfectly aware that nobody has the strength on their own to undertake such an action.

This demonstration coincided with a plenum of the Central Committee of the PRT, which decided to make building a national civic strike the central axis of its activity. Thus, the PRT is the first party that supported this initiative, and in fact became the sponsor of this idea.

#### TOWARD THE NATIONAL CIVIC STRIKE

The first step was to convince the

FNDESCAD of the correctness of this initiative and to propose coordination with the COI. The second was to press the PSUM to join the work of building for such an action.

At first, the PSUM was totally skeptical about participating and continued to put forward a policy of cooperation with the government. However, the ultrarightist character of the government's policy, as well as a certain process of radicalization going on in some sections of this party, forced the PSUM leadership after several months to come out in support of the national civic strike idea.

Subsequently, the COI broke away from the united campaign and decided to work on its own for a Workers Civic Strike. What this really reflected was that this project was getting out of the control of the COI bureaucrats and they were frightened by the involvement of the left. However, the ground work had been done, and despite the COI's boycott, the idea of a civic strike kept its hold. We all realized that what we could accomplish would be more a national day of civic protest than a civic strike. We knew that we were not going to bring out the heavy battalions of the working class but that we could achieve a successful day of protest that could lay the foundations for a more extensive action.

The PRT threw all its energies into this task. All the TV time that is given to the PRT by the electoral law was devoted to the question of the civic strike. On our TV programs, trade union leaders, peasants, shantytown dwellers explained how to take part in this action and help organize it. On October 3, more than 100,000 people took part in a demonstration to build the strike. At this point, the government realized that the action was going to be bigger than it expected, and it arrested some people. But this did not stop the action.

On October 19, the National Coordinating Committee for the Civic Strike made the following balance sheet. The action was a success, going far beyond what was thought possible. More than a million and a half people participated. The action extended to 28 of the 32 Mexican states.

In several states, including Puebla, Guerrero, and Sonora, highways were blocked. In the states of Veracruz, Sinaloa, and Sonora, peasants occupied land.

But in the Valley of Mexico [the Mexico City area] the actions were far larger. Some 18 million people live in this area. In the working-class centers of Nezahualcoyotl, Naucalpan, Ecatepec, rallies and demonstrations of more than 5 thousand people took place.

In front of the Policia Federal de Seguridad, the political police body mainly responsible for the disappearance of more than 530 left activists, the Frente Nacional Contra la Represion held a mass rally.

In the Tlaltelolco Housing Project — where hundreds of students were massacred 15 years ago and where the PRT

held a rally of 50,000 in 1982 to wind up its election campaign — a huge mass meeting was held. And the great majority of the people living there turned off their house lights from 7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Then they marched to the city center banging on pots to protest the hunger that afflicts the country.

On this day also, the march of the Tzotzil Indians from Chiapas (the state bordering on Guatemala) came into Mexico City after a week on the roads. Some 700 Tzotzils, sick of the repression and hunger they suffer, decided to take part in this action. As they passed through the outdoor market areas in Mexico City the small merchants went to meet them carrying baskets of food and medicine for them as a gesture of solidarity.

Almost all the country's primary and secondary schools were paralyzed. More than 250,000 teachers announced that they were striking and called upon the parents to join them in the action. In all, on the day of protest there were more than sixty demonstrations in the Valley of Mexico.

The day of action was discussed in the Chamber of Deputies. The PRI, along with the PAN and two left parties that are accomplices of the PRI's policy — the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores and the Partido Popular Socialista — condemned the action and blamed the PSUM and the PRT for it. National TV and the papers also blamed the PRT and the PSUM for the action and accused them of wanting to destabilize the country. This put a lot of pressure on the PSUM, inducing some of its leaders to take their distance from the strike.

#### MAJOR ADVANCE TOWARD UNITY IN ACTION

On October 19, we got two phone calls in the PRT national headquarters warning us that a bomb had been planted and that if we wanted war, we would get it. These provocations were denounced by the civic strike coordinating committee, which declared that the Mexican government would have to take the responsibility for any attack on our party.

So, the first protest action was a success. This is not only because of the dimensions it assumed but because it was a day of unity.

A few months ago it would have been impossible to think that we would see activists from the PSUM, the PRT, and other organizations working together, holding mass rallies, organizing demonstrations, blocking highways, and so forth.

Moreover, we can also say that the day of action was a new success for the PRT, which had committed itself to advancing a united-front policy that can help to promote the process of extending and centralizing the struggle. The next step is to build the following action and to put forward a policy to get the workers to play the predominant role in action. The next strike has to be built in the unions. ■

## New civil defence brigades set up

*This article is taken from the November 4 issue of The Militant, a weekly newspaper published in New York, reflecting the views of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.*

Michael BAUMANN

MANAUGA, Nicaragua — "Civil defense has nothing to do with your attitude toward the revolution. Their bombs don't distinguish between Sandinistas and non-Sandinistas."

This was the message of one of the block's two Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) members to a CDS meeting October 18 in barrio *La Reforma*, a middle-class neighborhood in northwest Managua.

The CDSs — Sandinista Defense Committees, the 600-strong neighborhood committees that are a major part of Nicaragua's defense — have been organizing meetings block by block throughout the country.

Top priority is to organize civil defense to confront the new stage of war that was opened with the recent U.S.-organized bombing of the country's main oil depot in the northern port city of Corinto.

"No one should make any mistake," the Sandinista Front members said. "Reagan intends to try to stop the Sandinista revolution."

"The bombing of Corinto threatened the lives of 25,000 civilians. It is an example of what they intend to do to the rest of the country....If you're going to stay in Nicaragua, you'd better learn what to do when the bombs begin to fall."

Following an outline by the block's CDS coordinator of the tasks to be carried out, three committees were set up that night.

One is to begin immediately to learn first aid. Another was set up to take care of the block's 19 children when an attack comes. The third took responsibility for rescue and clean-up operations after a bombing. A fourth committee, fire fighters, will be established after the block's volunteer finishes a special three-day course being given on a crash basis by the city's fire department.

The meeting was attended by some 30 people, about a third of the adult residents of the block, and was the largest this CDS had ever held.

For at least two of those present, older women who had lived on the block for

more than 20 years, it was the first CDS meeting they had attended.

Neither of them sang the Sandinista hymn at the close of the meeting, but one told the *Militant*: "I support the defense measures taken by the government, and I wanted to find out what to do in case of an attack."

Leaflets urging opposition to Patriotic Military Service were distributed at a march of several thousand in a wealthy suburb south of Managua October 9. The march was sponsored by the Catholic church hierarchy, supposedly to mark a religious holiday.

The real aim of the march organizers was shown by the leaflets. They called for "conscientious objection" — the tactic adopted by the Catholic church hierarchy in opposing the new conscription law.

When a small group of prorevolutionary Catholics showed up with placards pointing out that nothing in Christian teaching prevents a country from organ-

izing in self-defense, they were attacked by some members of the crowd and had their signs torn up.

Participants in the march included many wealthy opponents of the revolution as well as U.S. Ambassador Anthony Quainton. Quainton, in keeping with the religious cover of the event, marched with a Bible under his arm.

On the other side of town in the working-class neighborhood of Monseñor Lezcano, the attitude toward defending the country from imperialist attack is quite different.

In a march there two days later, a public funeral for seven Managua reservists killed recently in fighting in the north, some 3,000 marched through the streets chanting support for the revolutionary government and for military service.

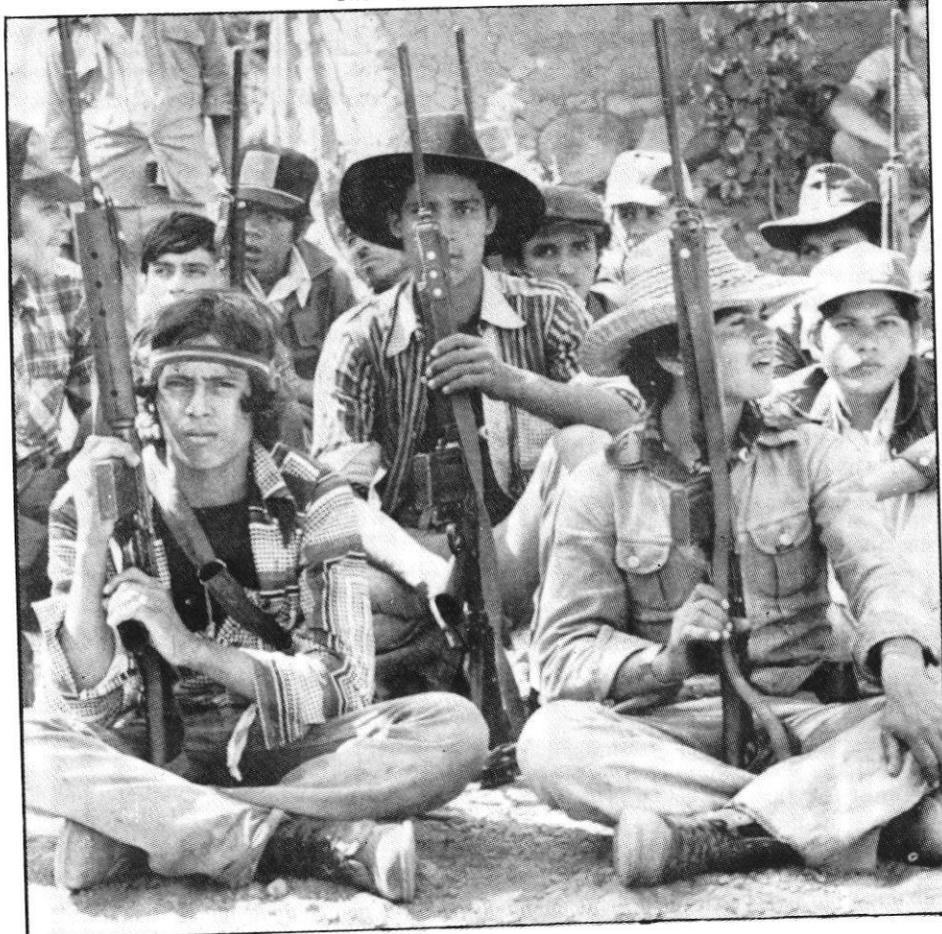
The main speaker at the funeral was Father Fernando Cardenal, FSLN adviser to the Sandinista Youth.

Referring to the march of the church hierarchy, Cardenal blasted "religious manipulation" as a "weapon used by the counterrevolution that can be more damaging than a bomb."

Cardenal then asked the mourners, "What do you say to the rich who are leaving the country to avoid military service?" "*Que se vayan!*" the crowd shouted back. ("Good riddance!")

In response to the need for a larger army, in the first 10 days of October 66,000 young men — 33 percent of the projected total for the month — signed up at registration centers.

*There is an increasing responsibility on Nicaraguan militia (DR)*



The new military service law, passed by the Council of State September 13, requires all male citizens between the ages of 17 and 22 to register for conscription by October 31. Of the estimated pool of

200,000 this will provide, 15,000 will be selected for two-years service in the Sandinista People's Army.

Registration has been under way since October 1.

worked slower than the others. This was discussed in the workers committee, in which all the women participate. It has a meeting every week.

Every morning, the women work. The afternoons are important for education. There is a cycle of vocational courses. Right now there is a course in shirt sewing, although with other forms of education. One of the women is in charge of the educational program.

Besides this, there are political discussions all the time, about how the society functions, about the history of the revolution. The educational program includes trips and outings, and the various mass organizations are invited to come in and report on their work.

The mass organizations play an important role in the entire project. AMNLAE, to which all the women belong, is responsible for further education. At the moment, discussions are underway with the building workers union about building housing for the women who still have no real homes.

The CDS, the Sandinista neighborhood committees, play an important role in the residential neighborhoods. They inform people about prostitution and its causes, as well as about this project.

They help the women to adjust to where they are living, they help assure that these women are accepted in ordinary social life.

"Now we aren't social outcasts anymore..."

"I'm not afraid even to say that I was a whore," Rosa said.

That is the fundamental thing in this project. Rehabilitation. That word is repeated again and again when we talked about these women. This collective is a step on the road. It is not the end of it.

The final objective is to see that the women get ordinary jobs, employment with a good wage and the same rights as other workers.

The Ministry of Social Welfare places the women who are able to work. So far fifteen women in this project have gotten jobs. Nine of them are working in a state textile factory, the other six have various jobs, including managing a day-care center.

These fifteen women come to the collective once a week to take part in a meeting to pool experiences and discuss progress and setbacks.

At present, the collective is led by three of the women plus a social worker. But Sandra, who "spent five years outside the railway station," will soon take over the social worker's job.

Similar projects are being run also in the cities of Corinto, Esteli, and Managua. They are part of a national plan that the government hopes can soon be extended to the entire country.

Before we shut off the tape recorder, we got this final message from Rosa:

"I still don't understand anything about politics. I can't really keep up with the discussions.

"But I understand very well what this revolution means for us."

## Human dignity and productive work for all Nicaraguans

Bjoern ROENBLAD,  
Kristina THORSELL

LEON, NICARAGUA — "Now we aren't social outcasts anymore, as we were before. Now I can associate with all sorts of people, talk to people. We can go out together."

That's what Rosa said. She is one of the women working in a producers collective in Leon, which was started to rehabilitate former prostitutes.

In the collective, there are 25 women, all former prostitutes. There is a sewing shop that makes sheets, dolls, and toys. There is also a shop for making textiles. Some of the women run a buffet at the gate, and there is also a store where the women sell their own products.

In the store, we met Montilia, who is in charge of sales. Before we managed to ask any questions, she told us that today it was exactly two years since she last sold herself. She said that with a happy voice, filled with pride.

"Before that I worked in a whore house for ten years."

Rosa Rostran is one of the women who work in the sewing shop. She took a short break from the waiting heaps of unfolded sheets.

"When they first asked me to come here, I could hardly believe it. It could not be. I had never done any other kind of work, only prostitution."

Rosa had that in common with all the other women here in the collective. Like the others also, she comes from a poor family of rural workers. There were no jobs, no way to get money.

Under the Somoza dictatorship, prostitution flourished. In a horrible and refined system, the whore houses often worked in close collaboration with the dreaded National Guard. National Guardsmen owned a lot of them.

When the revolution triumphed in 1979, all the whore houses were closed. But most of the women continued to prostitute themselves on the streets.

With the backing of the Sandinista government, the Nicaraguan women's organization AMNLAE took an initiative

to support the prostitutes and help them to find a place in the new society. In collaboration with the social workers and the Sandinista police, the women were lodged in a big confiscated mansion, which formerly belonged to Somoza's minister of agriculture.

The women got free medical care, clothes, food, psychological help, and child care. This was financed by the government through the Ministry for Social Welfare. There was also some international aid.

A literacy program was started up, since many of the women were illiterate. Classes in needlework were started. The Sandinista youth organization, Juventud Sandinista, helped by collecting sewing machines, fabric remnants, and surplus cotton.

The women started by making dolls and small cushions, which they sold on the street before they started their own shop.

They also went round to the other cities and towns. They divided the proceeds from the sales, and that provided their wages.

Rosa said that her first wage was 42 cordobas a week, which corresponds to 25 Swedish kronor [4 US dollars].

"In the beginning, it was very hard to learn to work. Since the pay was so low, a lot of us kept going on the streets on the side.

"Now the pay is better and regular production is underway. Most get 400 cordobas a week, and the Ministry of Social Welfare guarantees a minimum wage of 250 cordobas a week."

Although they get free medical and child care, this is still barely enough to live on. But Rosa has stopped going onto the streets.

"It took time. I couldn't change overnight, all told, it took nearly two years. But the day came when I did not go out. I said to myself 'It has to stop now.'

"Now, I have learned a job, and I like the work. Before I came here, I could only fold. But now I've gone beyond that."

Rosa explained, among other things, that it became a problem that some

# The growth of the unemployed movement

Dianne FEELEY

PITTSBURGH, U.S.A. — "If you think the system is working, ask someone who isn't." That is what is on the banner of the Mon Valley Unemployed Committee, the major organization of the unemployed in the greater Pittsburgh area.

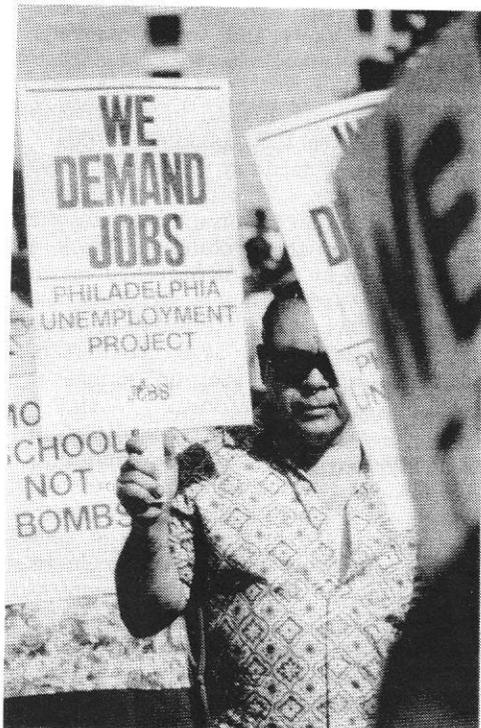
This message summarizes the shocking experience of many U.S. citizens who grew up in the post-World War II period, expecting that if they worked hard, they could dramatically improve their lives. As the economic crisis proceeds, they have become painfully aware that even when the economy "picks up," millions of workers will not be recalled.

Gains that women and minorities were able to make over the last decade, especially through affirmative action programs [preference in hiring for historically disadvantaged groups], have been wiped out. Older workers, who thought their seniority protected them, find their plants shutting down. They are too young to retire and too old to compete on the job market. And for the first time in decades, more and more young people are unable to find work.

This economic crisis is the worst since the depression of the 1930s. At that time, unemployed committees sprang up throughout the country, demanding relief and a public jobs program. What little protection laid-off workers have today is a result of that political movement. At that time, the unemployed groups — often led by activists belonging to the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, as well as Trotskyists who played an important role — were the catalyst that revitalized the trade-union movement. They provided it with a social program that built industrial unionism in the U.S. Afterward, especially in the late 1940s and 1950s, an anti-left hysteria led to the "deradicalization" of the labor movement.

Today, on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the Toledo Auto-Lite strike, the San Francisco longshore strike, and the Minneapolis teamster strike (1), the trade-union movement is facing a crucial test.

Employers are using the pressure of more and more drastic layoffs to demand far-reaching concessions from the unions, and in some cases are even seeking to destroy them. Moreover, the government is participating in the union-busting attempts. The Reagan administration's vindictive decertification of the air-



Jobs protest in US (DR)

traffic controllers union (PATCO) and its blacklisting of all those strikers to this very day symbolizes the aggressively anti-union orientation of the highest government officials. Under attack from powerful corporations and government agencies, the unions today — representing only 20% of the entire U.S. workforce, and for the most part guided by a limited social vision — find themselves in an increasingly vulnerable position.

While the impact of unemployment has created a severe challenge for the U.S. labor movement, it may also be creating new forces which could, one again, contribute to a revitalization.

U.S. unemployment — particularly in such key industries as steel, auto, mining, and transportation — remains quite high. More than 22% of all workers were out of work during part of 1982, with the proportion rising for Hispanic Americans (27.1%) and Blacks (33.4%). Among male teenagers the unemployment rate now stands at 21.1% among whites, but among Blacks it has soared to 56.8%. (2)

Although women as a group do not suffer a disproportionately high rate of unemployment, the reason is that they are a "cheaper" workforce, earning, on the average, 59 cents for every dollar a man earns. Nonetheless, women in certain job categories have suffered propor-

tionately greater losses. Between April and June 1982, women, who make up only 29% of the federal workforce, received 46% of all the job cuts. Additionally, the rate of unemployment for Black women is twice as high as the rate for white women. (3)

Nearly one-fifth of the total workforce now works part-time. By 1982 involuntary part-time work had increased 166% over the last dozen years. Nearly one-third of all women working are employed at part-time jobs. Sar A. Levitan, professor of economics and director of the Center for Social Policy Studies at George Washington University, has stated that many part-time workers are "in almost the same circumstances as the unemployed worker" because income hovers around the minimum wage. Part-time workers frequently have no health care coverage or lost-time benefits, and few part-time workers belong to unions. Of course, workers who belong to unions make higher wages and have a better benefit package. (4)

By August 1983 the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that, out of a total workforce of 120 million, 10.7 million U.S. workers were without jobs, with an additional 7.5 million either accepting part-time employment or giving up looking for work. The average duration of unemployment has jumped from 13 weeks in January 1982 to 20 weeks by August 1983. (5)

Yet of the 10.7 million workers officially counted as unemployed, only 45% receive unemployment compensation. This contrasts sharply with the 1975-76 recession, in which 78% of the unemployed received unemployment insurance. In a study, "Why Is Insured Unemployment So Low?" Gary Burtless, a senior fellow at the prestigious Brookings Institution, wrote: "A principal reason why the number of jobless collecting unemployment insurance was low during the 1981-82 recession is that the President and Congress decided it should be low." (6)

1. The Minneapolis strike was led by trade-unionists associated with the Communist League of America, the Fourth Internationalist organization in the U.S. at the time; the Auto-Lite strike was led by trade-unionists associated with the Workers Party, which later fused with the Communist League of America. Along with the San Francisco longshore strike, these strikes opened the way for modern mass unionization in the United States. All three strikes occurred in the first half of 1934, coinciding with the first upturn after the 1929 crash. — IV.
2. "26.5 Million Lacked Jobs in '82," *New York Times*, August 10, 1983; "Black teenagers face highest unemployment," *Militant*, September 16, 1983.
3. *Inequality of Sacrifice: The Impact of the Reagan Budget on Women*, pamphlet issued by Coalition on Women and the Budget on March 16, 1983.
4. "Up to a Fifth of U.S. Workers Now Rely on Part-Time Jobs," by William Serrin, *New York Times*, August 14, 1983.
5. *Statement of Bert Seidman*, Director, Department of Occupational Safety, Health and Social Security, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations before the Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation of the House Committee on Ways and Means, September 13, 1983, p. 1.
6. "Study Finds Low Level for 1982 Jobless Claims," by Peter T. Kilborn, *New York Times*, September 9, 1983.

The study also pointed out that the federal, state, and local governments paid out 24 billion dollars in benefits during 1982 to the more than ten million officially unemployed, while in 1976, when 7.6 million were out of work, they paid out 31 billion (in 1982 dollars).

In the U.S. health-care benefits are discontinued when workers are laid off. Unemployment insurance is approximately half of one's wage. Standard coverage is 26 weeks. This can be extended by 13 weeks. There is also the possibility of "supplementary" benefits for an additional period. But while in past recessions the government has voted to extend benefits to a maximum of 65 weeks, the longest benefit period currently available is 53 weeks. Nationally, only 51,000 of the jobless are able to secure the maximum. (7)

The system used for determining when extended benefits go into effect and when they are cut off is so tricky that at present there are only two states and the commonwealth of Puerto Rico that qualify for this federal program.

Twenty-two other states, with unemployment rates ranging between 9% and 14% (as of June 1983) have gone off extended benefits, or "triggered off," according to the officialese used in this case.

Once a state "triggers off," these extended benefits are suspended for at least 13 weeks. For example, Michigan's total unemployment rate stood at 13.4% in August, yet the benefit program "triggered off" in June, throwing 56,000 unemployed out of the program. (8)

The federal, state, and local governments have refused to provide either a meaningful jobs program to put the unemployed back to work or the kind of massive relief programs necessary to help those who are out of work. Many unemployed committees have pointed out that if there had been a natural disaster — such as a hurricane or a flood — special aid to help the victims would have been made available. But in the conditions of this "unnatural" disaster, the government has used the crisis to cut back on already inadequate social service programs.

### A CLUB FOR UNION BASHING

Employers are utilizing the economic crisis as a weapon to mount attacks on the unions. They do this through outright attempts to destroy the unions, as well as through attempts to extract concessions. They threaten plant closure unless concessions are made. Throughout the Northeast, plant closures — as whole industries have relocated to the non-unionized South or to other countries — have brought significant job loss. Since some areas have been dependent on one principal industry, certain regions have been devastated. However, as unionized workers see that concessions do not ensure job security, and as they see employer's profits on the rise, fewer workers are willing to vote to cut their pay and benefits.

The union movement has been significantly weakened through this combination of layoffs, union-busting, and concession-bargaining. Since 1977, the steel industry alone has eliminated 130,000 jobs. These were union jobs where workers earn 12 to 15 dollars an hour. On the other hand, the "high-tech" computer operator often makes little more than 3.35 dollars an hour in a nonunion job. As the U.S. workforce shifts more into the services, the proportion of unionized workers continues to drop. This will continue unless the trade unions become capable of effectively organizing service industry workers and the white-collar workers who are also largely unorganized. (9)

Although the Reagan administration claims that the U.S. economy is on the upswing, the recovery is irrelevant to many workers. This recovery rhetoric is disputed in an important study by the Committee on the Evolution of Work, a body set up by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). As the study points out, as many as 6 million U.S. workers may become a permanent "labor-surplus underclass." Harley Shaiken, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology specialist on labor and technology, has explained that "we are looking at the possibility of economic recovery and redundant workers at the same time." In other words, "economic revitalization no longer means re-employment." (10)

While millions of workers are unemployed, corporations such as U.S. Steel require those still employed to work overtime. It is much less expensive to pay overtime rates than to recall laid-off workers. According to the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 1397 in Homestead, Pennsylvania, as many as 46 workers could have been recalled to the mill the week of September 3 to cover the 1,480 overtime hours worked. This is a common experience in factories throughout the country. The union has filed grievances against the U.S. Steel Corporation, but the time lag in the grievance procedure works to the benefit of the employer. The union local distributed a flyer to those still at work: "We are asking you, please, don't work overtime. If they force you to, or try to make you hook up or do somebody else's job, come up to the union hall and file a grievance." (11)

### FIGHT BACK

Although U.S. unions have differing requirements for maintaining membership after a layoff — varying from the current two-year period of grace in steel to 30 days in rail — hundreds of local unions responded to the recession in the 1980-82 period by forming unemployed committees. Since layoffs occurred in certain key industries where the workforce was unionized, the unemployed first turned to their unions for aid. Committees would be set up inside the union, utiliz-

ing union contacts and resources. Often these committees would work with other union-based unemployed committees in the area on specific projects. That is, as these committees began springing up, they naturally generated other, similar groups and subsequently banded together in informal networks.

In other cases, independent committees of both union and nonunion workers have developed. Even where the unemployed committees are formally independent of the unions, usually they are led by union activists. Frequently these independent, grass-roots committees have a cooperative relationship with a number of the local unions. In many cases, they receive material aid from the unions for specific projects. But whether these committees are based within the union structure, or are independent from it, they have similar goals and similar methods.

One concrete task most of these committees immediately took up was the establishment of food banks, to serve the unemployed. Because they can buy in quantity and they actively seek donations, the food banks provide an important resource for the unemployed. Leon Lynch, International Vice President of the USWA, stated that by the summer of 1983 approximately 225 steelworker union locals in Western Pennsylvania alone had food banks. (12)

Some unions initiated a weekly check-off system through which workers still employed pledge a sum to those laid off. In some of the larger plants, this amounts to 5,000-7,000 dollars weekly. In other areas, the union organizes plant-gate collections. These funds are used for a variety of needs, including fuel, mortgage and rent assistance and emergency medical care. (13)

Unemployed committees that are a part of the union structure have also set up "hotlines," whereby union members facing emergency situations can call for help on legal problems, referral services, and even temporary employment. In the Pittsburgh area, the various steelworkers unemployed committees worked together from their formation. They

7. *Statement of Bert Seidman*, pp. 3-4.

8. *Statement of Dick Warden*, Legislative Director, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) before the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation Hearing on Federal Supplemental Compensation Program and Related Issues, September 13, 1983, p. 9.

9. "It's like an industrial holocaust," interview with Mike Stout, USWA Local 1397, *Multinational Monitor*, Volume 4, Number 6, June 1983, pp. 15-17; "High Tech' Is No Jobs Panacea, Experts Say," by William Serrin, *New York Times*, September 18, 1983.

10. "Recovery Irrelevant to Workers Left Behind," by William Serrin, *New York Times*, September 6, 1983.

11. "Steelworkers protest overtime at Homestead," *Pittsburgh Press*, September 23, 1983.

12. Speech by Leon Lynch at Pittsburgh Rally for "Jobs, Peace and Freedom," for August 27th Coalition of Conscience, at Macedonia Church, Pittsburgh, August 8, 1983.

13. Interview with Kwazi Nkrumah and Keith Brooks, *National Unemployed News*, Vol. 1, No. 1, July 1983, p. 4. Also see interview with Helen Antonishen and Gloria Snyder.

launched a campaign demanding federal extension of unemployed benefits, and jointly collected 10,000 signatures.

One of the first grass-roots unemployed committees to form was the United Committee of Unemployed People (UCUP) in Baltimore, Maryland. Open to both union and nonunion unemployed workers, UCUP has a close relationship to union-based groups. Its leaders are also active in the unions, especially among Baltimore steelworkers and machinists. Along with the AFL-CIO, UCUP organized an effective campaign to force the governor to call a special session of the Maryland legislature, which then passed a bill setting up the state's own 13 week extension of unemployed benefits after it had "triggered off" the federal program.

The Baltimore group also fought for, and won the elimination of a technicality in the extension program that had prevented 10,000 unemployed from receiving the full 13 weeks' benefits. As a result an additional 7 million dollars was allocated to the program. The group also initiated a campaign to pass a state bill which they called the Unemployed Citizens' Bill of Rights. Although the bill was ultimately defeated, the campaign for passage helped to educate people about the specific problems and needs of the unemployed. The bill of rights outlined basic protection to the unemployed against housing foreclosures and evictions, repossession of automobiles and trailer homes, shut-offs of utilities. It also provided for medical and legal assistance and job retraining. The United Committee of Unemployed People was able to build up enough of a campaign to get the bill through the morass of state legislative committees and onto the Maryland Senate floor. It took three days for conservative legislators to narrowly defeat the bill of rights. (14)

#### THE EXAMPLE OF THE MON VALLEY UNEMPLOYED COMMITTEE

Perhaps the best known of all the grass-roots groups is the Mon Valley Unemployed Committee (MVUC), based in western Pennsylvania's Monongahela Valley, where many Pittsburgh area steel mills are located. More than 1,500 people are dues-paying members. While the backbone of the committee is made up of laid-off steelworkers, it is open to all workers, both union and nonunion, and incorporates both unemployed members and workers still on the job. The committee evolved from local union unemployed formations which had worked together over a period of time. Formally it is an independent committee, but it still retains close ties with the trade-union movement.

The Mon Valley Unemployed Committee organized the militant April 1983 demonstration of more than 5,000 to denounce President Reagan and his policies when the president visited Pittsburgh. Reagan's advisers have since concluded that the event was a political disaster for

#### MORTGAGE AID CALLS

##### LENGTH OF TIME IN ARREARS

Not behind yet	118
1-3 months behind	127
4-6 months behind	147
7-12 months behind	80
More than 12 months behind	31

(When one is three or more months in arrears, foreclosure is probable.)

#### RECEIVED BY MVUC

##### NO. OF CALLS RECEIVED

the president, coming as it did at the opening of the campaign for his re-election. The committee launched a coalition consisting of more than 45 organizations to build the rally, receiving significant support from trade unions, women's rights and civil rights organizations, and antiwar groups. Local steelworkers unions provided buses to bring in protesters from outlying areas. (15)

The MVUC has also organized several jobs marches and rallies throughout downtown Pittsburgh and nearby McKeesport. These demonstrations have been very spirited, with a friendly and sympathetic response from most shoppers and workers on their lunch breaks.

#### THE FIGHT AGAINST FORECLOSURES

Although it has also testified before state and federal legislative bodies regarding unemployment insurance, and has organized speak-outs around issues of concern to the unemployed, the Mon Valley Unemployed Committee is best known for its work on mortgage foreclosure. Members of the MVUC mortgage committee have met with bank presidents in order to work out delayed or partial payments from unemployed workers. They have picketed banks, secured injunctions, and negotiated with the Veterans Administration — which insures homes for veterans — in order to obtain relief programs for unemployed homeowners.

In November 1982 the Mon Valley Unemployed Committee filled the courtroom for the sheriff's monthly foreclosure sale. The auction took place while cardboard vultures swooped down over the heads of the foreclosure attorneys who bid at these sales. The committee refers to these lawyers as the "vultures." The chanted: "No jobs, no sales." They bid pennies for the homes as a form of protest — a method used by the unemployed movement of the 1930s.

As a result of the publicity generated by the aggressive campaign, the Pittsburgh City Council unanimously passed a recommendation last December that lenders call an indefinite moratorium on foreclosures for the homes of the unemployed. When the MVUC attended the January sheriff's sale, they found that the sheriff — who was up for re-election — had pulled the homes of 42 jobless workers from the auction block. (16) Pitts-

burgh Judge Papadakos has backed the sheriff's decision with a temporary moratorium on the sale of owner-occupied homes. As of the September 1983 sale, the moratorium was still in effect. Between January and July 1983 the MVUC mortgage hotline received 503 calls. The above table indicates the character of these appeals. (17)

During the month of July 1983 — as steelworkers were coming to an end in their supplementary benefits — the various Pittsburgh area agencies that counsel homeowners on mortgage problems received 2,114 calls.

The Mon Valley Unemployed Committee and a similar group in eastern Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia Unemployment Project, have submitted a bill to the state legislature for up to three years relief when a delinquency in mortgage payment is caused by unemployment or illness. It has passed the state House of Representatives, and is still to be considered by the state Senate.

#### NATION-WIDE ORGANIZATION

The Mon Valley Unemployed Committee helped to establish the first national conference of unemployed groups on June 10-12. Held in Erie, Pennsylvania, the conference gathered 250 activists from 9 union-based unemployed committees, 29 independent unemployed groups, and 36 labor and community organizations in 16 states, to form the National Unemployed Network (NUN). Its program for action consists of four points:

"1. Secure a decent living standard for all:

- Jobs or Unemployment Compensation until jobs are found
- Save our homes
- Health care for all
- Food: full use of surplus food, increase in food programs
- Moratorium on utility shut-offs

"2. Build a unified force of all workers, employed and unemployed, around

14. "Unemployed Committee Wins Benefits Extension for Jobless Maryland Workers," Keith Brooks and Kwazi Nkrumah, *Labor Notes*, No. 45, October 26, 1982, pp. 1, 14.

15. "Thousands of Unemployed Protest Reagan's Visit to Pittsburgh," *Labor Notes*, No. 51, March 27, 1983, p. 11.

16. "Sheriff Calls Temporary Halt to Foreclosures on Pittsburgh Homes," by Linny Stovall, *Labor Notes*, No. 48, January 17, 1983, p. 3.

17. Report by Marion Curcio, MVUC Mortgage Counselor, September 1983.

our common interests, such as plant closure, unemployment compensation, job retraining and other vital concerns.

"3. Change the government's budget priorities — Money for jobs, not war; fund social services that help people, not kill them.

"4. Fight the disproportionate effect of unemployment on women, minorities and handicapped workers. Discrimination serves to divide workers. We must support and strengthen affirmative action programs." (18)

Since the conference, unemployed groups are continuing to spring to life. The existence of a national network has helped to stimulate local committees. And the first issue of the *National Unemployed News*, put out by the NUN, features short histories of how local committees got started and what issues they organized around. It provides a series of sketches about the unemployed committees' day-to-day work.

A second national unemployed organization was formed in Chicago on July 2-3, with 467 representatives from 22 states. The National Congress of Unemployed Organizations (NCUO) was organized by groups and individuals associated with Trade Union Action and Democracy — a group seeking to foster "center-left unity in the labor movement." This would include independent militants, liberal union officials, Communist Party activists, and others. The NCUO has attracted a number of local working leaders — for example, Frank Lumpkin, of the Wisconsin Steel Save Our Jobs Committee. A black steelworker who has proved to be an effective mass leader, Lumpkin was a keynote speaker at the NCUO conference. In his speech, he emphasized the similar purposes of the two national groups by saying, "We welcome the efforts of those who met in Erie, Pa. We want to work with them."

The opinion of some influential NUN activists was expressed in an article in the monthly newsletter, *Labor Notes*: "The two unemployed organizations have similar goals and overlapping strategies.... If the groups differ, it seems to be in terms of their attitude toward the labor movement's leadership and the Democratic Party....The NUN has...acted independently of labor officials when necessary and has kept its distance from politicians." (19)

Both the NUN and the NCUO have demanded passage of the AFL-CIO's jobs bill, and both were involved in building and participating in the massive August 27 March on Washington for "Jobs, Peace and Justice." The NUN seems to have much more of a grass-roots and activist character at this point. Yet for both groups, the real work has barely begun — that is, expanding local unemployed committees, while at the same time providing effective national coordination in fighting for the right of all workers to have jobs at decent wages.

The breadth of organizing that is occurring on the local level is indicated by the proliferation of newspapers and news-



letters produced by various unemployed committees throughout the country. In these publications, some activists have begun to initiate discussions on future directions for the embryonic movement.

In the Mon Valley Unemployed Committee's July newsletter, there is an article outlining the relationship between the Reagan administration's military spending and the lack of jobs. Currently, 60% of the federal budget is allocated to military spending. By challenging that priority, the unemployed are forcing a discussion within the working class over foreign policy questions that have not been so fundamentally challenged since the 1930s. The Vietnam War — however unpopular it became — was nonetheless carried out during a time of relative prosperity. The interrelationship between U.S. foreign policy and its domestic policy is becoming increasingly clear to U.S. workers and the unemployed.

#### DISCUSSION DEEPENS ON HOW TO GET FULL EMPLOYMENT

Another article in the Mon Valley Unemployed Committee's newsletter, entitled "We Want to Work," is a thoughtful discussion-piece raising questions about what kind of job program is needed. The author, Jim Benn, from USWA Local 1256, asks: "Should we underscore the influence of prejudice in hiring and the role of affirmative action? Should we include a demand for the re-industrialization of basic industry? What will our plan be for seriously trying to implement any proposal we decide upon?" (20)

This is an extremely important issue as employers and even some labor officials try to present the enemy as "foreign imports." For many unemployed workers, the question of how to provide jobs for all is still an uncharted field. Some might suggest bailouts to industries like steel and auto, where the corporations consid-

er the profits are too low to keep production going. Others may suggest higher tariff laws or "local content" laws. Some have fought for legislation limiting the employer's "right" to close a plant without advance notification, while others have initiated proposals for buying out the employer and operating the plant themselves. The community-based Tri-State Conference on Steel and the Denominational Mission Strategy (a church-based group) have initiated a campaign to withdraw funds from Mellon Bank, which has 5.5 billion in loans and deposits overseas. Their campaign leaflet states that "Mellon Bank is committing TREASON against the Mon Valley and America."

Still other activists propose a massive public works program, similar to the WPA of the 1930s, although on a larger scale. They point out that roads and bridges and schools are falling into disrepair, and they discuss the need for better health services and child care programs. Others propose shortening the work week from 40 hours to 30 or 35 hours. At the end of World War II a few unions raised this demand and passed resolutions for a shorter work week.

#### THE NEED FOR A WORKERS PARTY

The discussion over how to achieve full employment is still in its beginning stage. The immediate needs of the unemployed — who are faced with limited and shrinking unemployment benefits, mortgage foreclosures, utility shutoffs, inadequate medical care — are related to the government's inability to put human needs before business profits. One serious problem facing the unemployed movement is that the United States still does not have a labor party. Both the Democratic and Republican parties are controlled by the corporate interests, although the traditional voting base of the Democratic Party has been key sectors of the working class concentrated in the labor movement, along with oppressed minorities. With a reactionary Republican in office, there will be powerful pressures on the unemployed movement to seek a solution through a "dump Reagan" campaign orchestrated by the Democratic Party.

It remains to be seen whether the unemployed movement will prove capable of maintaining its independence, of keeping its attention focused on the issues as the unemployed — not the politicians — define them. If it is able to remain, this movement could do a great deal to change the political landscape in the United States, to the benefit of the working class as a whole. ■

18. "Program For Action," *National Unemployed News*, Vol. 1, No.1, July 1983.

19. "Second National Unemployed Group Forms at Chicago Meeting," by Dan La Botz, *Labor Notes*, No. 54, July 27, 1983, p. 15.

20. "We Want To Work," by Jim Benn, *Mon Valley Unemployed Committee Newsletter*, July 1983, p. 3.

# 'France is a major imperialist power'

The intervention of French troops in Chad and Lebanon has coincided with the rise of a right-wing campaign in France against immigrant workers, who are largely Muslim and African.

For example, early in the fall the main bourgeois party, the RPR, in coalition with neofascists, won control of the municipal government in Dreux, mainly on the basis of an anti-immigrant campaign.

For this reason, the public meeting held in the Paris Mutualite on October 13 by the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International, to kick off its fall season of political work focused to a considerable extent on the question of French imperialist intervention and the anti-immigrant campaign and the link between the two.

These themes were taken up extensively in the main speech by Alain Krivine. But they were also dealt with in more detail by the second speaker, Claude Gabriel, a leader of the international work of the LCR and a specialist in African affairs.

The following is the text of the speech given by Gabriel. It offers a general picture of the role of French imperialism in the world today and how this relates to a decisive aspect of the class struggle within France itself.

Claude GABRIEL

To listen to Francois Mitterrand, France is so much in solidarity with the poor countries, it is so concerned with the fate of these peoples, that you would think that our country has no responsibility for the situation of poverty and repression which reigns there.

To listen to the government, France, 'independent of the blocs', has only one concern, to defend peace and protect the people from the excesses of the two so-called superpowers.

In reality, France is an imperialist power. A major imperialist power. We have to be aware that our country oppresses entire peoples and exploits millions of workers and peasants.

All our work, all our positions as internationalist revolutionaries must start from this fact. Therefore, it is in this context that we have to situate the military interventions in Chad and Lebanon. It is in this context that we have to deal with, on the one hand, the delivery of weapons to Iraq, and on the other, the decision to stop arms sales to revolutionary Nicaragua under the pretext, in the words of Claude Cheysson, [the Foreign Minister] of 'not adding fuel to the flames'.

Since they came to power, Mitterrand, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, have tried to hide the im-

perialist and colonialist nature of the French state. Several times, Mitterrand stated that the policy had changed, that a new leaf had been turned in Africa, and that the neo-colonial policy had ended. All that is obviously just a lie.

First of all, let us look at this famous Franco-African summit at Vittel. Ten years ago it brought together ten countries. This time, there were thirty-eight. Is this not indicative of the huge increase in France's own responsibilities in Africa? Is it not significant that today the overwhelming majority of African states feel themselves obliged to come and discuss their future together with the French president?

And to top it all, this summit was held in the Club Mediterranee, one of the symbols of French snobbery and arrogance in Africa.

And remember also that this summit, like every meeting of this type, costs thousands of millions of francs for sumptuous meals and expenses. All that to discuss the poverty of the peoples.

## THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TAKE UP THE IMPERIALISTS' 'DUTY'

None of this set up is by chance. Our leaders have to demonstrate continuity. On one side they say that everything has changed, on the other they rush to keep up the African policy of the Fifth Republic, right down to the finest detail. Like

De Gaulle, like Pompidou and Giscard, Mitterrand responded to the African events with the same arguments, and above all by considering that a good part of the continent is a private preserve for France.

Let us look at the case of Chad for example. French imperialism, which is not even prepared to recognise the rights of the Corsicans, French imperialism, which in general could not care less about national rights, has got it into its head to impose a national consciousness by force on the peoples of Chad.

With a cardboard-cutout state that it has protected for more than twenty years, France imagined that it could deliver a Chadian nation by Caesarian section to suit the needs of its African policy. The result is there — 23 years of civil war, 23 years of French intervention.

Mitterrand, like the three other presidents of the Fifth Republic, has had to take the lead, relying on the army, the secret services and brainwashing to protect the strategic interests of France. Just like his predecessors, he began by calling the first troops sent to Chad 'instructors' in order to cover up his warlike policy. Regarding Lebanon, he defended the illusion of a so-called 'interposition force'. It is a curious form of 'interposition' between two sides which starts by dismantling the Palestinian defence lines, and closely controlling the only progressive neighbourhoods in Beirut.

But the government is not short of arguments. If it sends troops, it is — obviously — at the request of 'legitimate governments'. But what legitimacy do they have?

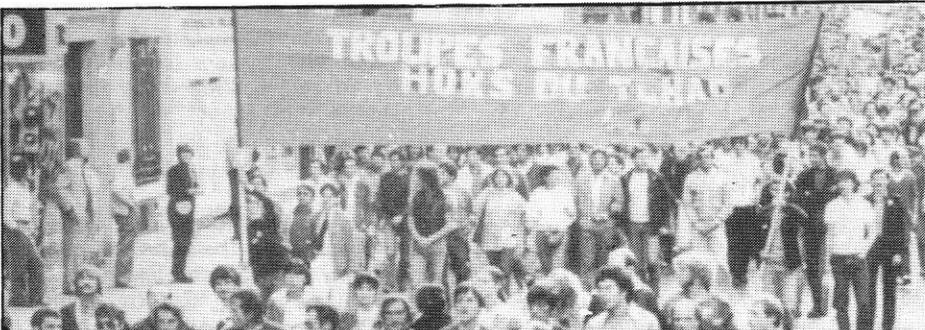
Gemayel — is he legitimate? His legitimacy comes from the Israeli occupation. What sort of legitimate leader is this, whose Phalangist forces have for a long time been supported by all the fascists groups in Europe? Need we remind the Socialist Party that it was only a few years ago that elements of the GUD [a far-right fascist group] in France went regularly to Lebanon to give a helping hand to Gemayel's Phalangists?

## THE 'LEGITIMACY' OF HISSENE HABRE

And Hissene Habre in Chad. It appears that he also is 'legitimate'. Having overthrown by force a government that was also 'legitimate', just a few months ago, Habre imposed his militias and took power without any popular support. There were neither elections nor mass mobilisations to confirm his regime. The only legitimacy that the Elysee could find for him is that he was recognised by the other African states.

For ourselves, we think that the legitimacy accorded by a band of dictators of the style of Mobutu or Hassan II of Morocco is a masquerade and an insult to the African peoples.

Habre is no more 'legitimate' than any of the other military tendencies that are fighting over the neo-colonial regime in Chad.



Moreover, the French press has noted, around the Vittel summit, that Mitterrand had mentioned the eventual possibility of elections to get out of the crisis in Chad. But, the press also noted that the word 'election' had never been mentioned. We know why. To talk about free elections in front of Mobutu and Houphouet Boigny, is like taking about rope in the house of a hanged man. And Mitterrand was not there to upset these gentlemen.

Before getting to the Elysee Palace, Mitterrand had declared that French policy in Africa had to be changed. He had even said that it was a matter of 'political will'. As if it was simply a question of good will or morality...

When the Thomson company wants to close a factory in France and open up in Morocco or Malaysia to profit from the extreme exploitation of the workers, and above all of the women workers, in these countries, is it a simple question of 'political will' to change the relations of exploitation? Obviously not.

More than eighty per cent of our companies have subsidiaries in the dependent countries: that is concrete reality.

Imperialist domination is the power of the French banks, the thousands of French people living there, the dozens of institutions — a veritable spider's web — that link these economies to foreign interests.

In fact, imperialism is first of all a material, concrete reality, on the ground. That is why, in France, one is so discreet about what actually happens in these countries. In black Africa there are 312,000 French, that is to say more than double the number of Africans living in France. And, believe me, these French do not live in substandard housing, they are not unemployed, and they are not the victims of discriminatory laws.

#### FRENCH OCCUPIERS AND FRENCH CHAMPAGNE

In a country like the Ivory Coast, there were already 12,000 French people at the end of colonisation, today there are 50,000. In a small country like Gabon which has 500,000 inhabitants, there are 25,000 French. All these people, who make up in fact a *foreign occupation*, control the most important aspects of the economy, politics, the military, police and even culture. This French emigration is a *secret* emigration because even the respectful left hide its existence.

Of course all this is profitable. It is even very profitable. The economies of these countries are not just plundered by French and European firms. They are also dismembered and thrown off balance by the princely consumption of the rulers and foreign occupiers.

For example, our champagne sells very well. The Ivory Coast imports 560,000 bottles per year. The former president of the Cameroons, Ahidjo, imported 1,500 crates of champagne for the marriage of his daughter. And Gabon imports at the rate of one bottle on average for three

inhabitants. This can offer some reassurance to the government about France's foreign-trade performance.

Never short of ideas, the government has chosen to present its military interventions as 'peace missions'. The troops will be, it appears, 'neutral' between the different Chadian factions, or the different Lebanese factions.

But, it was Gemayel himself who, on French television, informed the French that their soldiers were not only in UNIFIL, the United Nations force, in the south, not only in the multinational interposition force in Beirut, but also instructors in the Lebanese Army, that is the army organised by the Phalangists for the benefit of Gemayel. A strange way of being 'neutral'!

In Chad, the French troops will be equally 'neutral'. However, French officers have been heard to talk of the aid given to what they call 'their Chadian comrades' — that is Habre's forces. It also appears that they have even had difficulty in holding back their troops who wanted to go and deal with the Libyans as fast as possible. Anyway, how could these troops be neutral. We got a look at them as they were being shipped out. They are regiments trained for colonial war. It is a troop of racists that Mitterrand has sent to Africa. That is who is supposed to re-establish democracy, and a national understanding.

Many activists in France were paralysed in the Chadian affair, because at the same time there was the Libyan intervention. Let us remember this evening that the LCR considers that the aid that the Libyans give to Goukouni is a reactionary move, because he is no more progressive than Habre. But the LCR is not prepared to lay the blame equally on Libya and France. We are not going to subordinate mobilisations against French imperialism to a subtle analysis of Libyan policy. Libya is not responsible for the colonial plunder of Africa, it is not responsible for French chaos in Africa.

#### THE CRUSADERS AGAINST QADHAFI

As for those who denounce the Qadhafi dictatorship in order to justify their support for the French government, we would like to say this:

— Amnesty International has just confirmed what all the French journalists knew from the start, without saying or writing it. Habre is instituting repression and summary executions in the zones which he controls.

— Zaire, which is a major ally of France and the United States, and is also intervening in Chad, is a rundown, drained country. A country where the army robs the workers on pay day, where in 1982 more than four thousand million centimes of public funds [£3.34 million] were misappropriated, mainly to the benefit of Mobutu and his entourage.

— Finally, in neighbouring Sudan, also a supporter of Habre and imperialist intervention, new life has just been given

to so-called 'Islamic justice', for theft a hand cut off, for adultery the death sentence.

This is the famous progressive camp which opposes the Qadhafi dictatorship!

It appears that the Vittel summit has not found any solution for Chad. We can quite believe it. It is not hard to see either that, given the extent of the crisis of neo-colonialism, after Chad other countries are going to experience a similar chaos. This is why it is important to oppose French intervention. There will always be a 'legitimate government', a 'Russian danger' or 'Libyan danger'. But every time, whatever the government in power in France, there will be an intervention. And the turn will certainly come for the DOM-TOM [Overseas Departments and Territories], New Caledonia, the Antilles, or the Indian Ocean.

There will be two, three, many Chads. Therefore we should not spare any effort to fight this policy from now on — *Whoever is in the government*.

Mitterrand obviously does not intervene for fun. He intervenes in Chad and in Lebanon because he is at the head of an imperialist state. That involves certain duties, it appears. In any case, it does for officials who refuse to expropriate the big bosses here in France. You cannot forbid the CNPF [French employers federation] to do what they want in Africa if you let them do as they please in France itself. Once you accept that, in the name of the general interests of French capitalism, you have to send troops to defend the foreign markets.

#### THE LINK BETWEEN RACISM AND IMPERIALIST INTERVENTION

There is a link between these two problems. As there is a link between racism here and the defence of Christians in Lebanon. As there is a link between the fear of Arabs here and the fear of Qadhafi there.

It was logical that the government would one day find itself faced with an overseas military intervention, just as it was logical that it would one day face the events at Dreux [recent victory by the right including a fascist group in municipal elections] and elsewhere.

There is no autonomy, no separation between these two types of events. They are one and the same problem — maintaining the bourgeois state and imperialist and capitalist interests.

Finally, it was logical that this government, despite its professions of faith, would end up finding itself hand in glove with American imperialism.

Undoubtedly France has 'its' policy in Chad. Of course, France has 'its' policy in Lebanon. But the degree of autonomy Elysee Palace enjoys with respect to the White House makes no fundamental difference.

What has been shown in Lebanon and Chad is not just the kind of pressure Washington puts on the French government, but above all, that French policy fits well and truly into the framework of

American interests.

One can be 'autonomous' in Chad, up to a certain point. One can be 'autonomous' in Lebanon, up to a certain point. But the general framework is set by keeping France within the Atlantic Alliance. It is set by Mitterrand's support for the deployment of Euromissiles. It is determined finally by the complete integration of French military policy into the defence of world imperialism.

When Mauroy [the prime minister] explains that 'European solidarity enriches Atlantic solidarity' he perfectly expresses the complementary nature of the French and American policy.

And when the French government talks about its so-called independence, this is so that it can demand that French nuclear missiles not be included in the negotiations at Geneva. Even the vice president of the United States now admits this argument does not hold water. But, Mitterrand will not give up. There is no question of adding the French missiles to the American missiles...

But who can believe in the independence of this nuclear arsenal when Mitterrand signed the final communique of the Williamsburg summit? Who can believe the independence of French military policy when Cheysson states, 'For us, the Atlantic Alliance is the defence of fundamental values, I was going to say Christian values, the values of civilisation against totalitarianism.' And now comrades we find ourselves once again in an atmosphere of anti-Arab hatred and fear of Libya. We know that Chirac [former Gaullist prime minister, presently mayor of Paris] has come out finally in support of the operations in Lebanon and Chad. We can see now what sort of national unity Mitterrand has built around these overseas interventions.

#### NUCLEAR MISSILES AND IMPERIALIST EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

In any case, this confirms that there is a link between the nuclear arsenal and colonial interventions. The danger of war comes first of all from the crisis of imperialism, the deterioration of its domination.

What is regarded as essential for a balanced military posture by the US and France is to have nuclear weapons side by side with a Rapid Deployment Force. The two are complementary. The mission of 47,000 French men is to defend imperialist domination in the Third World. These include the infamous GIGN [Intervention Group of the National Gendarmerie], the super cops, who also intervened overseas under Giscard in Somalia and Saudi Arabia, and who today make up small GIGNs in certain African countries. If Mitterrand had really wanted to start afresh as he claimed, he would have started by dissolving the GIGN.

Imperialism has thus very well understood that, beyond the question of blocs, it first of all has to deal with the struggle

for emancipation and the class struggle in the Third World.

The Socialist Party has adopted the government's arguments word for word to defend these interventions. Not one of its leaders has expressed the least doubt. Motchane of the CERES [a leftwing tendency in the SP] has even had the insolence to talk of 'internationalism'.

The Communist Party for its part has put forward the leitmotif of negotiations for Lebanon as well as for Chad. But at no point has it denounced the sending of the troops.

Juquin, for the Political Bureau, went further in stating, 'It is obvious that it is the duty of every French government to respect the agreements to which France has given its word and its credibility. To be more precise, it is usual that in the world today states of the same or different strength make agreements for mutual assistance.' And Juquin concluded, 'that could be the moral thing to do'.

#### THE 'INTERNATIONALISM' OF CORRUPT UNION BUREAUCRATS

The trade unions have not been outdone...in doing nothing. The CFDT [Socialist-led union federation] published a statement on Chad that repeated the government's argument. It included the word 'duty' no less than three times. Just like Juquin, the CFDT seems to think that France has a 'duty' to fulfill in these countries. But what duty is this? The 'internationalist' duty Motchane talks about? Or Juquin's 'moral thing to do'? No, it is an imperialist 'duty' that the CFDT is supporting.

Moreover, this trade union confederation has just explained, to the peace movement, that it does not want to separate this battle from that for democratic rights — a story it concocted to justify its divisive policy. Let us take the CFDT leadership at their word. While we are happy to see its leaders demonstrate on occasion outside the Polish embassy, we would also like to see them in front of the embassies of certain reactionary regimes in Africa, when repression descends on these countries. That would be real internationalist and unconditional defence of democratic rights.

In reality, what the unions should have done for a start is to denounce a military policy that costs millions and millions of francs that the workers have to pay.

However, we are not in the least surprised by the positions of these leaderships. They are all compromised by complicity with one or the other African regimes. The CP and the CGT [CP-led union federation] with some, the SP with others. For example, let us remember that a delegation of the CFDT led by Chereque signed a co-operation agreement with Mobutu's labour organisation in Zaire — a puppet organisation, an organisation led by the dictatorship. That is no better, comrades, than collaborating with a union organisation directed by Pinochet.

In reality, all these leaderships gave up the fight against French imperialism a very long time ago. It even seems that we have lived through a miracle and that, on May 10, 1981, as if by magic, France ceased to be an imperialist country. To justify its policies, the left uses all the stereotypes of darkest Africa and the weird Third World. This is the same method used by the bourgeoisie for two centuries to stuff the French population with latent racism.

#### INTERNATIONALISM AND THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM IN FRANCE

As for us, we are not going to be accomplices of this bowing and scraping socialism, with a briefcase and three-piece suit, which talks about France in the tone of de Gaulle, and that makes the working class pay the bill for the chauvinism and vanity of the great imperialist powers.

Before his election, Mitterrand said in an interview 'France must give to the world another signal of security and solidarity than Transall, Jaguar and Alouette military aircraft. Recourse to guns has always been a sign of weakness.' For once, we would agree with him. And so we will draw the balance sheet of his policy in the Middle East and Africa. It is an imperialist policy, a policy of failure, a policy that clearly reveals the crisis and the rottenness of this society.

For the LCR the battle against French imperialism is a decisive struggle. This struggle is not separate from the rest of our activity. It is not a question of an anti-imperialist 'duty'. It is an anti-imperialist dimension that is an integral part of our programme and our daily activity.

There is a link between racism here and the lying propaganda about Africa. There is a link between austerity here, the arms race and colonialist expeditions elsewhere.

Therefore, the LCR takes as campaign slogans:

- for the withdrawal of French troops from Chad and Lebanon;
- for the withdrawal of troops from Africa, and against co-operation and defence agreements with African regimes;
- the LCR is against the 'force de frappe' and Rapid Deployment Force;
- the LCR will mobilise to build a powerful united anti-war movement, and within this movement we will fight unrelentingly to get it to also denounce French militarism and imperialism.

Finally, as an international movement, we well and truly have the intention to continue assisting all anti-imperialist militants in those countries that France dominates. We will always be at their side. And in the face of the reactionary imperialist intervention in those countries, we state forthrightly that we want to help build revolutionary Fourth Internationalist organizations among these oppressed peoples. ■



# AROUND THE WORLD



## VENEZUELAN TROTSKYISTS STAND CANDIDATES IN ELECTIONS

The Organizacion Socialista Revolucionaria (OSR — Revolutionary Socialist Organisation, sympathising organization of the Fourth International) which critically supports the left candidature of Jose Vicente Rangel for the presidency, has formed a Frente Unico Revolucionario (Revolutionary United Front) with the GAR (Grupo de Accion Revolucionaria — Revolutionary Action Group), the EPA (El Pueblo Avana — The People Advance) and the CUP (Comites de Unidad Popular — Peoples Unity Committees) on the basis of a revolutionary programme. Local socialist committees have been set up to support this initiative. These four organisations, which support Rangel, decided to stand candidates in the parliamentary elections in order to differentiate themselves from the other reformist parties that also support Rangel, such as the CP, the MEP, Nueva Alternativa, Liga Socialista, etc.

Within this common slate of the 'frente' or Revolutionary Convergence (Convergencia Revolucionaria), as the grouping of the four above-mentioned organisations is called, the OSR is standing Trotskyist candidates in some of the important regions — especially the industrial centres.

Ricardo Galindez is candidate for the Senate in the Lara region. He is a young worker, editor of the weekly newspaper, *Topo Obrero* (Workers Mole) and a leader of the El Salvador and Nicaragua solidarity committee.

Josefina Mujica is a designer and a plant-gate salesperson and militant for *Topo Obrero* and is standing for the legislature.

Jose Gonzalez is a young metalworker who is also standing in the legislative elections.

Ines Mujica and Ana Maria Onofrieti are two women workers who are standing as candidates for the Lara state legislature.

Miguel Galindez, a priest who is well known for his work with the rank and file Christian committees and his support

for the workers cause, is standing for the senate in Carabaodo, one of the three most important industrial zones of the country.

Filadelfo Aranguren and Domingo Figueira, are two prominent workers standing respectively as candidates for the state legislatures of Lara and Valencia. Domingo is a leader of the El Salvador Solidarity Committee.

Several of these Trotskyist militants took part in the 8 day strike and occupation of the Univensa factory by metalworkers carried out in October 1983 in Barquisimeto. It was one of the most important strikes that has taken place in Venezuela in recent years.

The OSR has organised public meetings, put up posters and most importantly set up various local Socialist Committees in a perspective which extends beyond the presidential elections of December 4, 1983. ■

## DANISH PARLIAMENTARIANS SUPPORT HUGO BLANCO

Twenty-two members of the Danish parliament (out of a total of about 150) have signed a petition protesting the withdrawal of parliamentary immunity from the Peruvian revolutionary leader Hugo Blanco on August 29.

Blanco was accused of affronting the military honor of an army commander by calling him a murderer. On that basis, the right-wing majority removed his parliamentary immunity, in violation of the accepted parliamentary rules.

There is a long history of brutal repression in Peru. The peasant union movement that Blanco himself led in the

mid-1960s was crushed by savage repression. And such repression is on the rise again.

The petition signed by these Danish members of parliament is being circulated by the Danish Support Committee for Hugo Blanco. The signers include representatives of all the parliamentary parties except the rightists — the Socialist People's Party, the Left Socialists, the Radicals, and the Social Democrats. The committee intends to deliver the petition to the Peruvian embassy after it gets the signatures of a few more members of parliament. ■

## Correction

In *International Viewpoint* No 39, two lines unfortunately disappeared from the top of the middle column on page 16 between our design room and the printers.

The sentence then left unfinished reads in full, 'This case is a clear indication of the present dynamic of the revolution.' This referred to the Nicaraguan government's handling of a labour dispute in a privately-owned bakery, which it rapidly settled in favour of the workers.

Please accept our apologies for this. We hope it will not happen again.

## PUERTO RICAN STUDENTS PROTEST AGAINST FORCED MILITARY DRAFT

*The following is the text of a leaflet distributed by 'Students Against Draft Registration' in the University of Puerto Rico. As the text explains, they are protesting against attempts by the Reagan government to force poorer students to register for the draft as a condition of receiving economic help for their studies.*

*The sympathising organisation of the Fourth International in Puerto Rico, the Liga Internacionalista de los Trabajadores, is active in this campaign.*

Recently a series of repressive measures have been implemented against the

most exploited class of our society — the workers and their children. These measures result from the militarist policy of Reagan who defends the interests of the North American capitalist class against peoples who are struggling to end social injustice and exploitation.

The Selective Service Law is one of these measures. This law requires that all males over 18 years of age born after 1960 must register with the army or else risk a fine of 10,000 US dollars and/or 5 years prison. Faced with the refusal of thousands of young people to register, the President, looking desperately to

tighten things up, got the US Congress to approve an amendment to the Selective Service Law. This amendment (the so-called Solomon amendment) was adopted in September 1982. Every male who wants to receive federal economic aid is obliged to prove that he is registered for military service. This highly repressive measure discriminates against poorer university students who cannot afford to pay for their studies.

The University of Puerto Rico is collaborating with this militarist policy. It sent out a document to all students, distorting what the law really lays down, calling on all *women* and men born before 1960 to register. Students are being coerced and pressured to say whether they are registered or not. The University has threatened us with cutting off our economic aid if we do not give this information.

If we analyse this situation in the capitalist colonial context, we can see how the system forces us to leave university, throws us on the dole queues, obliges us to emigrate or to join the army. We are obliged to join the same army that invaded us in 1898 and that is now trying to do the same thing against our sister peoples. Indeed, we question the type of democracy which reigns in our country, where only the working masses suffer the consequences of these measures.

The University is still being used as a filter to recruit young people to the North American army. It sanctions us not only for not registering but also for refusing to give information, for not collaborating with the army, in open violation of our privacy and normal safeguards against self-incrimination. The only alternative left for young people paying for their own studies who refuse to register or give information will be jobs available and paid on a day-to-day or short-term contract basis. But the University administration covers up our right to request that the officials of the Economic Assistance Board make a re-evaluation in order to grant us economic aid.

Students who do not register or who refuse to give the relevant information can request that their situation be evaluated and dealt with in relation to the funds that the legislature allocates to the university. The legislature funds have nothing to do with the federal aid. For this reason someone who does not register still has the right to receive economic aid from the legislature when they cannot pay for their studies.

According to Mrs Luz M. Santiago, Auxiliary Director of the Economic Aid Programme, in reply to questions posed by a group of students, any young person who refuses to fill in the whole document has a right to be enrolled and to receive a cheque for books (which is covered by the legislature funds) but cannot receive the three cheques corresponding to the federal grants distributed each term. The students have until August 30 to hand in this document.

This alternative of the legislature funds is only partial because the funds

are insufficient for the number of poor students and their needs.

The University of Puerto Rico, in addition to refusing to inform people of the legislature funds, is making students sign a document that classifies them as 'registered' or 'unregistered'. This, more than just refusing the grants to those who are not registered, will make it easy for the US government to identify young working class people (since rich people do not need to fill in documents claiming economic aid) who have not complied with the law on obligatory military service, thus facilitating legal action against them.

Many young people have not registered, others have done so under protest. Everyone is indignant about the com-

pulsory character of the law and the document. We have to be alert to all measures taken by the University to facilitate the work of the Selective Service Military Register. We have to organise various actions such as mass meetings, demonstrations, etc. to show our opposition to militarisation. ■

— FOR A DEMOCRATIC AND CRITICAL UNIVERSITY!

— FOR A UNIVERSITY FOR THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF WORKING PEOPLE!

— NO TO MILITARISATION!

— IF STUDENTS ARE UNITED, THEY WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED!

## SUPPORT GROWS FOR THREE FRENCH SOLDIERS

Support is growing for the three young French draft soldiers stationed in West Germany, on charges of 'incitement to insubordination'. The three, Olivier Lecour Grandmaison and Laurent Fritz of the 32nd Engineers Regiment at Kehl, and Etienne Patoor of the 13th Engineers Regiment at Treves, face possible sentences of two to ten years (see *International Viewpoint* No 39, October 31, 1983).

The charges arise because the three signed a call for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Germany, and in particular for the immediate withdrawal of the French troops. This appeal has now been signed by 150 members of the French forces in Germany.

The three at Landau prison can see from these actions that they are not alone, their ideas are shared by an increasing number of other young men forced to serve in an army protecting the interests of the imperialists and capitalists.

There have also been more direct expressions of support. Some 10,000 signatures for the national appeal in sup-

port of the three were collected in a few days in France. Around half that number were collected in West Germany in the same period. The appeal was launched over the signatures of many well-known French personalities including Simone de Beauvoir writer and feminist, Costa Gavras film maker, Pierre Broue Trotskyist historian, Alain Krivine of the LCR, and Arlette Laguiller of Lutte Ouvriere.

Statements of support have come from the UNEF (French students union) in which all three were active, and the national teachers union of which Laurent Fritz is a member. The FEN has called on the minister of defence to make a justification for the charges.

The three have also received many letters and telegrams assuring them of individual and personal support, which are warmly received. The address for such letters is: Landau Military prison, Mangin Dorenberg Strasse, Landau, FDR.

Statements of support to: Marie-Madeleine Millaud, 50 boulevard Jean-Jaures, 92110 Clichy-la-Garenne, France.

## POLISH INPRECOR No 12 IS OUT NOW!

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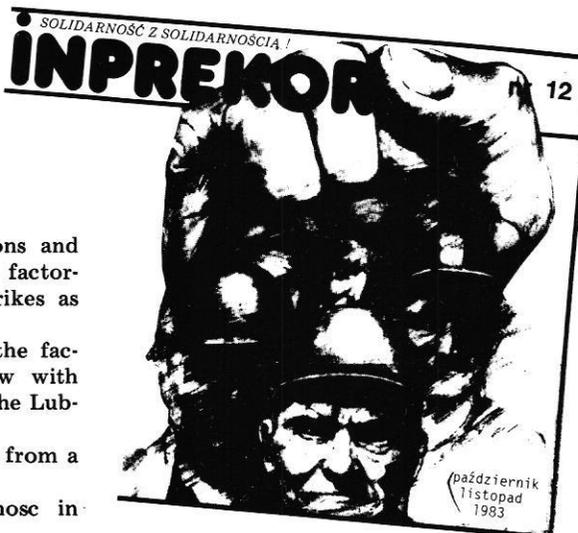
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## Mass opposition to Euromissiles

Philomena O'MALLEY

The last week of October saw over three million Europeans take to the streets in opposition to the ever-increasing military build up and warmongering stance of the imperialists — focused on the plans to install American medium-range missiles in five European countries.

The most massive demonstrations took place in those countries where the missiles are to be sited. In West Germany and Britain installation is planned to start at the end of this year. Italy is due to receive its Cruise missiles in Spring 1984, and Belgium and the Netherlands in 1985 and 1986 respectively.

— West Germany: The October 22 demonstrations, assembling one million people throughout the country, were the high point of a 'hot autumn' of anti-missiles activity.

In Bonn some 400,000 demonstrators marched through the streets, and then formed a human star chain to link the embassies of all the nuclear powers. They then assembled in the Hofgarten Park for a rally at which one of the main speakers was Willy Brandt, chairperson of the SPD.

The present involvement of the organised workers movement in the anti-missiles campaign is one of the main factors in these massive mobilisations, although this support was rather late in coming. However, the majority of the SPD federations are now opposed to the missiles, and on October 5 the main trade-union federation the DGB, called a 5-minute work stoppage in support of the opposition to the installation of the missiles.

The Bundestag will take its final debate and decision on the installation of the missiles on November 21, and once again probably pronounce itself for the missiles, despite the mass opposition that the West German people have shown.

— Britain: 300,000 people demonstrated in London at the call of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), backed by the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress (TUC).

Although an opinion poll published on the morning of the demonstration, October 22, claimed that opposition to Cruise

missiles had dropped slightly since the beginning of the year, the demonstration was as large, if not larger, than any previous demonstration.

However, CND, the most organised and centralised of the anti-missiles movements in Europe, is now subject to some political strain as the majority of the leadership are centring more on the nuclear freeze slogan than the traditional unilateralist stance of CND. The activists remain committed to this position, also reaffirmed by the Labour Party at their recent congress, and the women of the Greenham Common peace camp are still in the forefront of consistent activity by the movement. A major blockade of the Greenham base is planned for December 16.

— Italy: Over 600,000 people demonstrated in Rome on October 22 from the peace committees, trade unions, Communist Party, far left groups, women's movement, etc. in the largest demonstration in the country for ten years. The Socialist Party alone among the left and progressive forces was absent.

Despite the efforts of the Communist Party to keep the demonstration within the official slogan, 'No to missiles wherever they come from', a good part of the demonstration took up slogans specifically aimed against American imperialism and NATO.

The demonstration was not only one of the biggest in size but also in variety. The Paris daily *Liberation* reported that the demonstration had 'brought together the Anti-Vivisection League as well as the homosexual front. Even the prostitutes committee from Pordenone was there with a banner saying, 'Better to be a mercenary in love than a mercenary in war'. And along with these groups were monks, nuns and other Christian organisations singing and praying — in a demonstration primarily mobilised by the Communist Party.

— Belgium: 400,000 people swarmed into Brussels on October 23 to protest against the plans to site 48 Cruise missiles there.

All the political parties were there except the rightwing Liberals who are presently in government with the Christian Democrats, who themselves left the

decision to participate to 'individual conscience'. Both the Socialist and Catholic major union federations were present, alongside the peace movement CNAPD, the ecologists, Flemish antinationalist, etc.

Pierre Galand, president of the CNAPD, considered this 'The biggest pluralist demonstration since Belgium came into being.'

However, its meaning is a little ambiguous as the leader of the Francophone Socialist Party, Guy Spitaels, announced just a few days before the demonstration that he did not intend to put into question the NATO twin-track decision, to install the missiles unless there was agreement at the Geneva negotiations on arms reduction.

— Netherlands: The 500,000 Dutch to protest against the installation of their 48 Cruise missiles massed at the Hague one week later on October 29.

The protests against the American imperialists war drive took on an extra pointedness here in the wake of the invasion of Grenada. Banners showed pictures of Reagan entitled 'Wanted: The bandit of Grenada', or 'Grenada now, Woensdrecht next'. Woensdrecht is the air base where the missiles will be installed if the Dutch government finally agrees next spring.

Among the demonstrators were a strong proportion of women and young people, as well as some hundred members of the armed services in uniform. Unexpected support came from the younger sister of the Queen of the Netherlands, Princess Irene, who made a strongly anti-nuclear weapons speech.

Over the same period of time, demonstrations have taken place not only in almost every other European country, in the Spanish state for example demanding withdrawal from NATO, and the dismantling of US bases, or Austria in opposition to nuclear weapons in general, but also in many places in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere throughout the world.

The huge size and broad and varied composition of these demonstrations show once again how the threat of war, the fear of a nuclear holocaust, are real feelings that can mobilise literally millions of people in political activity for the first time in their lives.

These demonstrations marked a certain crescendo in the activity of the movement, focused on the start date for the installation of the missiles in Europe. Now, the movement has to grapple with the immediate questions of whether to take direct action or not to physically prevent the installation work, whether to use violence or not, and, beyond that, what strategic goals to aim for as the missiles have not been 'stopped in 1983', and the other complex political problems posed, in the fight against the imperialist war drive. In this context its capacity to not only mobilise but politicise thousands upon thousands of new activists, and win them to an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist perspective could be realised. ■