

International VIEWPOINT

ISSUE No 45

30 January 1984

Lebanon : Occupiers sinking in quagmire

French car
workers fight
bosses' jobs cuts

Bread riots spark
explosions
in North Africa

New technology's
impact on workers



International Viewpoint

ISSN: 0294-2925

Fortnightly review of news and analysis published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

| | | |
|------------------|--|----|
| LEBANON | Imperialists, Zionists, trapped by their own game by <i>Gerry Foley</i> | 3 |
| | Divide-and-rule game leaves imperialists with losing hand by <i>Cees Groen</i> | 4 |
| TUNISIA | After the hunger riots — Solidarity with Tunisian people by <i>Rene Massignon</i> | 8 |
| FRANCE | Car workers jobs struggle at centre of French politics by <i>Philomena O'Malley</i> | 10 |
| SPANISH STATE | Another round in Communist Party crisis by <i>F. Cruells</i> | 12 |
| DENMARK | The missiles, hidden issue in elections by <i>Richard Bisgaard</i> | 13 |
| NETHERLANDS | Fighting experience for public service workers by <i>Herman Pieterson</i> | 17 |
| WEST GERMANY | Invasion of robots threatens labor by <i>Winfried Wolf</i> | 22 |
| UNITED STATES | The 'big change' for US workers — new technology by <i>Jack Marsh</i> | 19 |
| BOLIVIA | Fourth Internationalists fight for workers solution Interview by <i>International Viewpoint</i> | 24 |
| AROUND THE WORLD | East German peace movement, European Women | 26 |
| OBITUARY | Marcel Lorent 1921 - 1983 by <i>La Gauche</i> | 27 |
| POLAND | Support Polish <i>Inprekor</i> | 28 |

News closing date 23 January 1984

Subscribe now!

French francs preferred. Cheques to PEC. Postal transfers to PEC, CCP No 2 322 42T Paris. Bank transfers to PEC, BNP Robespierre, Account 230179/90.

Sterling: Cheques to International Viewpoint. Bank transfers to Williams & Glyn's Bank, Account 14612874, Code 16-00-58, Islington, London.

Mail all subs to: IV, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES : 6 months 1 year

Surface mail, all countries 95FF 175FF

Air mail

Europe, Middle East, N.Africa 105FF 195FF

The Americas, Africa 130FF 240FF

Asia 145FF 270FF

Exchange rates :

FF 95 105 130 145 175 195 240 270

£ 9 10 12 14 16 18 22 25

US dol. 16 19 22 25 31 37 42 47

Can dol. 19 21 26 29 37 40 49 55

1983 collection

A limited number of full collections of *International Viewpoint* for 1983 are available for 100 francs. This price includes surface mail postage worldwide.

These issues nos 21 to 43 contain consistent coverage on the anti-missiles mobilisations, the Central American revolution and the continuing activity of Solidarnosc in Poland.

Included in the collection are major documents of the Fourth International on the Iranian revolution and Southern Africa, and a major theoretical article by Ernest Mandel on permanent revolution.

Individual copies are also available of most issues during the year at a cost of 8 French francs including postage.

Rush your orders now!

BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

LAST NAME FIRST NAME

ADDRESS

CITY COUNTRY CODE

RENEWAL

SUBSCRIPTION

Imperialists, Zionists trapped by their own game

The Israelis' favorite gang leader in southern Lebanon, Saad Haddad, picked a good time to die.

His exit gave a personalized, theatrical flourish to the foundering of Zionist and imperialist policy in Lebanon. Haddad died of cancer on January 14. He had been the leader of a rightist militia, mainly Christians, armed by the Israelis and used against the Palestinians and the left.

Gerry FOLEY

Under Israeli overlordship, Haddad ruled with a mailed fist over a section of southern Lebanon that grew with every new Israeli incursion.

After the Zionists occupied all of southern Lebanon in the summer of 1982, Haddad's forces served mainly as police auxiliaries for the occupation authorities. They were distinguished by their clumsy, pointless, politically counterproductive brutality.

A few days before his death, on his hospital bed, Haddad asked his Israeli superior, General Yanosh Ben Gal:

"Yanosh, tell me, has everything we have done in southern Lebanon over all these last years really been worth it?"

Since Ben Gal divulged these dying words to the press, they have become part of the debate in Israel on the failure of Zionist policy in Lebanon.

Haddad's loss was in itself a blow to Israeli policy in southern Lebanon. The Jerusalem correspondent for the Paris daily *Liberation*, Michel Sniatyn, noted the lamentations of the top Zionist circles.

"General Ben Eliezer, coordinator of Israeli activities on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, said: 'Southern Lebanon will never be the same. Israel has lost the cornerstone of its policy.' Government and opposition leaders agreed for once in paying homage to a 'Lebanese patriot and friend of Israel.'

"There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of these regrets....He will be hard to replace..."

"In southern Lebanon, Haddad was one of the few with enough prestige to weld together Christians of various factions and give a minimum of discipline to a conglomerate of Christian and Shiite militiamen."

The Israeli paper *Maariv* commented: "There was a unity in the area under Haddad's control not achieved in the rest of the country."

As unfortunate as it was for the Israelis, the loss of one important collaborator was only an incidental misfortune that pointed up the general wreck of a long-term policy in which Haddad had played a part.

sing for disengagement from the Lebanese quagmire."

The report expressed particular concern about the deteriorating relations between the Israeli army and the Shiite population in southern Lebanon. In the past, in particular, manipulating the Shiites against the Palestinians and the left was an important part of the Zionist game. Now a former base of support has become an even more dangerous minefield.

The report came out for a withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon. But at the same time, it called for leaving behind a "defensive system."

The problem is that the report's own observations make it doubtful that the Israelis now can build up useful local auxiliaries.

The new minister of defense, Moshe Arens, has revealed the outlines of a plan for this. It calls for setting up a Shiite militia and keeping Israeli units at strategic points.

The first aspect is decisive. If Israeli forces remain in Lebanon without effective local allies, they will continue to be the targets of resistance attacks, which have already exacted a heavy toll.

However, since the 1982 invasion the Zionists and the imperialists have suffered one disaster after another in their divide-and-rule game.

These tactics have been becoming counterproductive even in long communalized Lebanon. Instead of allowing the Zionists and the imperialists to intervene through proxies, they have been dragging them deeper and deeper into the quicksand of a civil war, in which every step they take increases the array of forces opposing them and their stooges.

The situation in Lebanon is rapidly coming to a very dangerous turning point for the imperialists and their allies. ■

Games for imperialists, destruction for Lebanese people (DR)



Divide-and-rule game leaves imperialists with losing hand

It is useful, now that influential circles both in the US and Israeli governments have begun to raise the alarm about a deterioration of the "balance" in Lebanon, to review the long-term policy the imperialists, Zionists and their allies have pursued in this country.

Cees Groen wrote such a review in the December-January issue of *de Internationale*, theoretical journal of the Dutch section of the Fourth International. The following is a shortened version.

Cees GROEN

Since during the civil war, the Lebanese state broke down completely in southern Lebanon, and since an occupation by Syria or Israel was not possible, the role of the state was in fact taken over by the PLO and the Lebanese National Movement.

The militias of the two organizations took over the police and security functions, and more and more the tasks of civil government. Schools, clinics, public services and administrative bodies were set up to keep daily life going.

Likewise, cooperatives were set up and local businesses supported. The PLO and the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) (1) had no political program, but all these actions set a revolutionary process in motion in the south.

This alarmed Israel, the right-wing Lebanese Movement, the US and Syria as well. A counteroffensive was launched.

In March 1978, an army of 30,000 Israeli soldiers invaded the south to put an end to the liberated zone. This so-called Operation Litani had the support of the Lebanese government and the US, and was tolerated by Syria.

The resistance was unexpectedly strong. The PLO and the Lebanese National Movement suffered heavy losses, but they stood up to the invaders. What was supposed to be a blitzkrieg became a creeping war. But that was unacceptable for the US and Syria. Speed was essential for the action, because otherwise the international reactions would become too dangerous. If the conflict dragged on, neither Syria nor Egypt could long remain aloof.

After eleven days, the United Nations reacted with unusual speed. With the support of the US, the UN demanded that the Israelis withdraw, and a UN armed force (UNIFIL) was sent to take over the region.

UNIFIL's objective was to take control of the region south of the Litani river, especially the coastal strip, away from the PLO and the LNM. In fact, UNIFIL served as a watchdog against the Lebanese revolution. The LNM and sections of

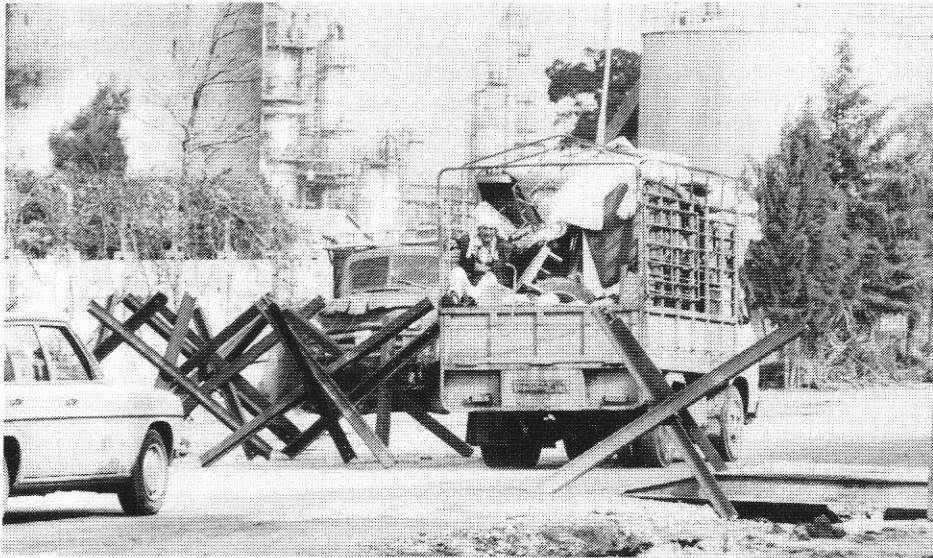
based himself above all on the Christian enclaves, such as Maryayoun.

To the dismay of the UN, there was a certain fraternization between the UNIFIL soldiers and the left Lebanese and Palestinians, especially when Israel and Haddad were waging a campaign of indiscriminate terror in southern Lebanon. The Tyre-Sidon-Nabatiyeh triangle remained a sort of free state.

The tactic for bringing this area under rightist control had three aspects.

1. Israel started a terror campaign of unprecedented dimensions, there were daily bombardments from the air and sea, as well as commando raids, against civilian targets — schools, homes, factories, orchards and roads. Nothing was spared.

As a result of this terror, between 1978 and 1980 about 800,000 people fled to the north (Sidon and Beirut). As



Power games force Lebanese from their homes (DR)

the PLO were opposed to this. But Yasser Arafat supported the UNIFIL as a means for getting the Israelis to withdraw, in the hope that he could make gains by diplomatic means.

This shortsighted approach damaged the alliance between the PLO and the LNM. The UNIFIL was never an effective guarantee against Israeli aggression, as the Dutch soldiers who have been in Lebanon, learned from their own experience.

'Normalizing' Southern Lebanon

Israeli fighter-bombers daily overflowed the UN-held area to sow death and destruction to the north and west of it. This, however, did not reduce the sympathy of the local inhabitants for the UNIFIL. For them, the presence of UN soldiers meant that they remained largely outside the war zone. Most of the local people had never been involved in the revolutionary process, but simply suffered from the conflict.

The liberated territory in southern Lebanon shrunk severely. In the south, the Israeli puppet Haddad formed a sort of militia. It was totally under Israeli control. All its equipment, down to the last shoelace, came from Tel-Aviv. Haddad

soon as an area became depopulated, the bombing stopped. If the inhabitants came back, the bombardment started again. The liberated area was systematically wrecked and depopulated.

2. The central government in Beirut began cutting off all support to areas outside the Christian enclave. This led to a sort of starving out of the rebel areas, including the south that had already suffered so much.

Refugees could not go into the rich Christian enclave. They had to remain in the western part of Beirut, under appalling conditions.

3. Taking advantage of the fact that the Shiite masses had been very little involved in the revolution, the Lebanese government, Israel and the US tried to mobilize these Shites against the left.

The instrument for this was the AMAL organization that had been set up by a number of religious leaders at the time of the civil war. Its proclaimed objective was to better the lot of the Shites. It was thus a religious organization.

From its standpoint, the woes of the

1. A front including the PSP, the Communist Party and other reformist left organizations. — This and following notes by IV.

Shiites were the fault of foreigners (that is, Palestinians) and unbelievers (i.e. Communists). Peace could thus be achieved by eliminating these forces. This seemed convincing to a lot of Shiites. They had seen many time how PLO actions led to retaliation by Israel against their homes. AMAL grew rapidly and established its own militia in more and more places.

West Beirut was originally the Islamic part of the city. The eastern part was predominantly Christian. Traditionally, the west was controlled politically and economically by the Sunni Muslim compradore bourgeoisie, headed by Saeb Salaam, who served several times as premier.

In the 1975-76 civil war, this compradore layer, which collaborated with the right-wing Christians, lost all authority. The Sunnis flooded en masse into the left and national movements, such as the Communist Party and the Marabitoun. (2) The PLO, which operated out of big refugee camps, also had a lot of support among the Sunni population. This made West Beirut also into a sort of liberated area, like the south.

PLO base in West Beirut

The PLO and the left Lebanese organizations had a lot of offices and facilities there. A strong economic link also developed with the south. The southern farmers brought their products to West Beirut. The Israeli war of extermination in the south drove hundreds of thousands of uprooted Shiites to settle in the southern outskirts of the city.

People were packed together incredibly tightly in these refugee camps, such as Bourjel-Branieh. The AMAL built up strong support in them, including armed forces, in the same way as in the south.

The important Chalde airport, which lies to the south of the city, remained under the control of Syrian troops for a long time after the civil war. The Syrian forces were unable to penetrate into West Beirut itself because of the military strength of the LNM and the PLO. But Syrian control of Chalde posed logistical problems for the left.

West Beirut had to contend with the same sort of terror as the south. The Lebanese government cut off all help step by step, and at the same time a large number of terrorist actions were carried out that made life insecure. Israeli attacks were less common, but the Lebanese secret service organized innumerable attacks. At the same time, the right helped AMAL organize the Shiites against the left and the PLO.

Under this pressure, forms of self-organization developed on a district-by-district basis. They took on a more and more revolutionary character in the old districts and in some refugee camps.

During the civil war, thanks to the Syrian invasion, rightist militias managed to overrun some of the refugee camps in the northeastern part of the city (that is, in the middle of the Christian area). The

massacre at Tel Zaatar is the best known case.

The survivors then fortified themselves in West Beirut, including in the Sabra and Chatila camps. It was no accident that these camps were chosen for massacres by the rightist militia after the Israeli invasion in 1982.

The Druze area around the Awali river and in the Chouff mountains forms a more or less separate region of southern Lebanon.

The Druze economy is based on agriculture organized around traditional villages. The old clan structure still plays a major role, with the land being divided up among various families. An example is the Jounblatt clan, which now holds the leadership of the Druze in Lebanon.

For a long time there were members of the leading Druze Arslan clan in the Lebanese government, which gave the Druze access to some crumbs. A lot of Druze were not satisfied with that, so many of them joined the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), which was formed in 1946.

The PSP is not made up entirely of Druze, but they continue to constitute the majority. The party itself claims not to be a communalist party but one that was formed to liberate the minorities by doing away with the communalist (3) system in Lebanon. It is led by the Jounblatt clan.

In the 1975-76 civil war, the PSP fought on the side of the PLO and the LNM. The PSP militia is particularly well armed and highly motivated. Within the Druze community, there was a conflict between the right wing led by the Arslan clan and Jounblatt's PSP. Over the course of time, the PSP has decisively won this struggle.

The PSP is a party with a bourgeois program, led by bourgeois politicians. Nonetheless, its program is progressive under the Lebanese circumstances, since it calls for the abolition of the communalist system.

Fighting for territory and power

The collapse of the state power in the 1975-76 civil war and the "starving-out tactic" followed by the central government, subsequently led to the PSP assuming more and more military and governmental functions in the Druze area.

However, unlike the LNM-PLO area, the PSP made no revolutionary pretensions. It clearly wanted a capitalist Lebanon, with equal rights for Druze (and other minorities).

So, the PSP made an agreement with the Lebanese government after 1980, which in fact represented a break from the LNM-PLO. This pact, moreover, led to the neutrality of the PSP militia at the time of the Israeli invasion in 1982.

Central Lebanon, with East Beirut, is the stronghold of the right-wing Christian Phalange. Since the 1975-76 civil war, this area has more and more become a separate state. The civil war fairly well wiped out the authority of the central state. Its role was taken over by the Phal-

angist militia, the national Liberal Party of Camille Chamoun and the militia controlled by the Franjeh family in the north, around the city of Zgolta.

After the Syrian intervention saved these Christian militias from total defeat, they went on the offensive in the last phase of the civil war.

Their main target was the belt of refugee camps that cut off East Beirut from its hinterland. With the conquest of Tel Zaatar, this operation was completed. But in other places the population was also "purged." Religious war was stirred up by such provocations as pogroms against Muslims. Muslims fled from the Christian area, and Christians fled to it.

In the following phase of "consolidation," the various right-wing factions had it out among themselves. The Phalange went ahead to liquidate what remained of the central state authority. It took the government base in Jounieh and openly humiliated the soldiers who had been stationed there.

These actions were directed against the puppet Edde government boosted into power by the Syrians after the intervention. Naturally, the Syrians did not just sit there and watch this happening, so a war broke out between the Syrian troops and the Christian militias.

The Syrians were forced to withdraw from East Beirut to the Bekaa valley. This was the result in particular of extensive Israeli support to the Christians. The Syrian army lost hundreds of soldiers in the fighting. In the Bekaa valley itself, it had to conduct a months-long siege before it finally managed, with the greatest difficulty, to take the Christian stronghold of Zahle.

Within the Christian area, the Phalange settled accounts with its rivals. First Chamoun's National Liberal Party was smashed in 1979, after heavy fighting. In the north, the Phalange was less successful. The Franjeh clan that dominated this area was linked to the Syrians. The head of the Franjeh clan, his wife and three-year-old daughter were murdered in a raid apparently organized by the Phalange.

The result of this outrage was that within a few days all the Phalangists were cleared out of the north. Finally, in the Phalange area, more progressive parties were rooted out. Such parties have to work underground.

Thus, in 1980, the Phalange's power was concentrated in the East Beirut area, Metn, Kesrouan and the coastal strip from Jounieh to Batroun. Under the pressure of the Phalange, all the central state's income was channeled to this area.

The Phalangists levied their own taxes, formed their own army and police, and

2. An Arab nationalist current, sometimes called the "Nassirites."

3. According to an agreement on which the independent Lebanese state is based, in a 99-seat parliament, 30 seats are allotted to the Maronite Christians; 20 to the Sunni Muslims; 11 to the Greek Orthodox Christians; 6 to the Greek Catholics; 1 to the Armenian Catholics; 1 to the Protestants; and one is variable. The president of the republic is always a Maronite, the premier a Sunni, the chair of the parliament a Shiite and the vice-premier a Greek Orthodox.

set up their own government. Led by the Gemayel family, the Phalangists had the support of the US and Israel. Furthermore, they held all the keys to the Lebanese economy in their hands.

The Christian area became a paradise for the rich. While the other parts of the country were subjected to systematic terror, the Phalangist zone was an oasis of peace.

There was enough wealth to give a few crumbs also to the less well off. Although there is a labor shortage in the area, workers were deliberately not brought in from other parts of Lebanon. That would be too risky. So, immigrant workers have been brought in in great numbers from Egypt, Pakistan and India.

In the north, the division of power after the civil war was as complicated as in the other parts of the country. The outlines of the picture are as follows:

Around the city of Tripoli, the LNM and the PLO were in control. As in the south, the Syrian interventionist troops were badly defeated in June 1976. Tripoli became a kind of free state.

The Zgortha area was controlled by the Franjehs' right-wing militia. It was driven out of Tripoli, but able to establish itself in the mountains, with Syrian support.

The source of the Franjehs' conflict with the Phalange was the question of Syria. The Franjehs did not want to break with the Syrians, because that would undermine the basis of their power. The clan is economically, politically and militarily too dependent on Syria.

After 1978, the Franjehs' militia controlled the area up to Batroun, and collaborated with the PLO and the LNM in the fight against the Phalangists.

Islamic fundamentalism

The area along the border with Syria is inhabited by people belonging to the Alawite sect, a minority that plays an important role in Syria. Here the Syrian army exercises a strong influence over daily life.

The Tripoli free state has been regularly bombarded by Israel, getting the same sort of treatment as southern Lebanon. The PLO and the left parties (the October 24 Movement, the Communist Party, the Baath) have had more and more difficulties with an Islamic fundamentalist group, the Islamic Unity Movement.

These fundamentalists are violently antagonistic to Syria, and against organizations that are not religious. In a certain sense, they played the same role as AMAL elsewhere in the country. Up till 1982, the role of this group was still limited. After the Israeli invasion, it went on the offensive.

Since the 1976 civil war, the eastern part of the country, the fertile Bekaa valley, has been under Syrian control. Before, almost the entire area, with the exception of the Zahle Christian enclave, was run by the LNM. It fought a hard but losing fight against the Syrian intervention.

In this part of Lebanon, the Syrians perform most of the functions of the

state. This area is also closely tied to Syria economically. Thus, since the Syrian occupation, a lively smuggling trade has developed, in which the Syrian army participates.

Syria has also given PLO units which are considered pro-Syrian bases in the Bekaa valley. The Syrian high command is also located there. The AMAL movement has also gained support in this area, where the population is largely Shiite. But unlike the south or Beirut, the Iranian revolution has won considerable influence, mainly as a result of the Iranian militia force sent to the Bekaa. For Syria, which is an ally of Iran, this has the advantage that the AMAL there is not so closely tied to the right-wing forces in Lebanon.

The 1982 Israeli invasion drastically upset the precarious balance of forces in Lebanon.

South Lebanon came completely under Israeli control. The UNIFIL could and would do nothing to oppose this. The invasion was designed to wipe out all the left and Palestinian resistance. Tens of thousands were made homeless because their camps were bulldozed. Every hospital, every school, every facility that flew the PLO or LNM flag was destroyed. All men between the ages of 15 and 55 in the Palestinian camps were arrested. With the help of informers, the members of the Lebanese left organizations were picked out. Thousands were jailed in concentration camps such as El Ansar.

In West Beirut, the same thing happened. During a 79-day siege, the city was shot to pieces. Phosphorous bombs, fragmentation bombs and other terror weapons were used against every sort of target. The industrial belt to the south of the city was destroyed.

Originally, the Israelis were not supposed to enter the city after the evacuation of the PLO in September. But directly after the murder of the Israeli supported presidential candidate, Bashir Gemayel, they sent their tanks into the city. The defense of the city had been seriously weakened by the withdrawal of

French soldiers search cars in West Beirut (DR)



the PLO fighters and by the dismantling of the defenses by the Multinational Force. With the help of the Phalangists, the Israelis began brutal raids in the city. Thousands were arrested, and many were never heard of again after they were handed over to the Phalange.

At that point, Israel and the Phalange started a second operation, institutionalized terror, to intimidate the unarmed masses with the threat of mass slaughter. The Sabra and Chatila massacre was carried out with the deliberate collaboration of the Israeli forces. It was designed as an example for the Lebanese and Palestinians.

In the wake of the Israeli troops, the Phalangist murderers got free reign throughout the south. Why? To create such fear that the people would think that anything was better than the Phalange. This was so the unarmed masses would turn to the Israeli occupiers, the multinational peace force and the new regime in Lebanon for protection. And this tactic had a certain success initially.

Israel's plans falter

All of this was designed to reinforce a strong right-wing government in Lebanon under Amin Gemayel.

Israel did not even want to sign a genuine peace treaty with Lebanon. It wanted a peace that would leave it the right to intervene politically and militarily in the country. What is more, southern Lebanon was to become an economic sphere of interest for Israel. The local economy was deliberately wrecked and made dependent on Israeli imports.

In 1983, however, this policy began to break down.

1. In the Israeli-occupied Chouff mountains, the PSP was originally neutral. In return for some Israeli concessions, Joumblatt was ready to let the Israeli forces move through undisturbed in June 1982. But at the end of 1982, the Israelis brought the Phalangists into the area.

The Druze were no longer spared from

the terror. The infamous Colonel Djadja got a free hand from the Israelis. As a result, fighting flared up in the Chouff in early 1983 and turned against Israel. The resistance was so fierce that the Israeli troops began to get demoralized and had to be withdrawn in September behind the Awali river.

2. In south Beirut the population suffered severely from the occupation and the policy of the Gemayel government. The population here was Shiite refugees, among whom AMAL had considerable support. When it became known that the government planned to expel these refugees and that Gemayel's army went into Wadi Abu Jamil to begin the operation, the dam burst.

There was a general insurrection, in which the AMAL militia fought against Gemayel. AMAL in Beirut dropped its pro-Israeli and pro-Gemayel leaders and went over to the resistance.

3. In West Beirut and southern Lebanon, the local population was fed up with economic strangulation, provocations and the continuing imprisonment of thousands of people. Committees in defense of the prisoners, against the economic strangulation and the terror sprang up like mushrooms.

In September 1982, the left underground organizations set up the Lebanese National Resistance Front (LNRF). This front quickly gained support among the population and started up a military campaign against the Israeli troops, the Phalange and Gemayel's army.

Since that time, in southern Lebanon the Israelis have lost 300 soldiers in actions by the Resistance front. This front has also gained extensive support among the Shiite population in the south. AMAL has split into one wing that works with Israel and one that opposes Israel. Religious leaders have joined the resistance front. There have been two general strikes against the occupiers.

4. Syria has been forced to move against Israel and its Phalangist allies. No compromise was possible with the Begin government.

The greatest provocation was Gemayel's signing a peace treaty with Israel. In fact, this treaty ratified the total subordination of Lebanon to American and Israeli interests. It made withdrawal of Israeli troops dependent on withdrawal of the Syrians, after which Israel would still have the right to intervene in Lebanon.

In one fell swoop the Gemayel government dropped all opposition to the Israeli occupation. Moreover, it became totally identified with the "Phalangization" of Lebanon. Through a series of decrees, the army, police, schools, courts and ministries were purged of oppositionists.

Seven thousand teachers were threatened with losing their jobs. Replacements were recruited exclusively among Phalangists. The token parliament was put in mothballs. It ceded its powers to the president. As a result, a lot of deputies resigned. Decisions by the Phalangist leadership were broadcast over radio and



Walid Joumblatt, leader of the PSP (DR)

TV as government statements. What remained of a "loyal opposition" was forced to take its distance from Gemayel.

In July the bourgeois opposition joined in a National Salvation Front, including the Muslim bourgeois leader Karame, the Christian leader Franjeh, and the Druze chief Joumblatt. Its main demands are for a sharing of the power and repudiating the peace treaty with Israel. This front knows that it can count on support from Syria, from the AMAL groups, and from the LNRF. Virtually every force but the Phalangists were against Gemayel.

Between August and October the situation got out of hand for Gemayel. In West Beirut, the so-called national army ran into heavy opposition in its attempts to purge the area. Then came the mass uprising of Shites in south Lebanon. These uprisings made it impossible to defeat the Druze uprising in the Chouff mountains. The Phalangists there were decisively defeated, losing half their forces.

'Multinational' force takes sides

The Israelis could not send help because of the big problems they themselves had in the south. In the Israeli army there is nothing so unpopular as a new operation in the Chouff. Of course, the Israelis did make major air strikes against the opposition when it attacked strategic points. In this way, they helped give the butcher Djadja a breathing space.

The national army that had been armed and trained by the US began to disintegrate. Thousands of soldiers deserted, in particular Druze and Shites. Druze in the Israeli army petitioned to be able to join in the fighting on the Druze side.

Facing this disastrous situation for them, the US and its allies had to give up

their pretence of neutrality. The Multinational Peacekeeping Force joined in the fighting on Gemayel's side.

The reaction of the resistance was clear. The Multinational Peacekeeping Force was seen as an enemy, and came under fire. Heavy pressure led to a ceasefire and the holding of a conference in Geneva on the future of Lebanon.

In this conference, Gemayel did not seem to have the strength to maintain his policy. He was forced to make concessions. The Phalangists, with US and Israeli support, however, did not go for that, and the conference died a quiet death.

The confrontation moved back to the battlefield. In the meantime, the French and US military headquarters in Beirut were blown up in suicide attacks. Hundreds of soldiers in the "Peace Force" died.

These actions are an indication of the intensity of the struggle. Although these bombings occurred during the Geneva conference, it is unlikely that the National Salvation Front or the Syrians had a hand in them. But that was not necessary. The resistance is very broad and deep. All sorts of groups take part in struggles everyday against the "Peace Force," the Israeli occupiers or the Phalangists.

In south Lebanon shortly after this the Israeli headquarters was blown up, killing a number of top officers. The "search and destroy" missions that the Israelis carried out after that led to still more bitterness among the population.

In particular, the National Guard that Israel set up with the help of collaborators managed to make itself particularly hated. But also the reprisals against the local government officials, economic reprisals such as closing the roads, poured oil on the flames.

A new general strike broke out and got mass support.

How great the mass hatred for the occupiers and their allies had become was shown during a Shiite religious festival in Nabatieh. After an incident, tens of thousands of people attacked the Israelis and the National Guard en masse. With stones, sticks and ceremonial swords they drove the soldiers into flight. Twenty-five Israeli soldiers are still reported "missing."

It is probably this mass resistance that induced Israel to release thousands of prisoners from the concentration camps. This was a concession to the central demand of the population. But there are still a lot of people in these camps.

The relationship of forces in Lebanon is clearly evolving in a way more and more unfavorable to Gemayel and his US and Israeli allies. This means that there is a real possibility that larger-scale military actions will be undertaken against the armed resistance. Since such operations would pose a fundamental threat to the interests of Syria and the USSR, there is a serious chance that this could lead to further escalation.

After the hunger riots

Solidarity with the Tunisian people

A week of popular demonstrations representing a veritable revolt shook Tunisia from December 29, 1983. This spontaneous movement was in response to a price rise for foodstuffs of 70 to 120 per cent, particularly for cereals and bread. These rises were decreed by the Mohamed Mzali government, to take place at the beginning of 1984. This was under the pressure of the 'true price' policy demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

There were two phases to this explosion of popular anger, the biggest since January 1978. (1) The first was the revolt in the mining and rural regions of the South. The second wave took the form of solidarity demonstrations in Sfax, Monastir, Tunis and its poor suburbs, at the initiative of the unemployed and

Rene MASSIGNON

These 'bread riots' mark a new stage in the political and social crisis that has existed in Tunisia since 1977. However, unlike the January 1978 mobilisations which followed a long period of rise in working class struggles culminating in a general strike, those of January 1984 above all revealed the immense explosive potential of the impoverished layers in the towns and country.

This crisis is the expression of the specific social inequalities in the structure of Third World countries. From the beginning of the 1970s, the social structure of Tunisia has been thoroughly shaken up.

A minimal economic development has led to the growth of a large working class, at the same time as the social structure of the countryside has been completely changed. A massive rural exodus has swollen the urban centers along the coast, where shanty towns have sprung up with enormous areas of poverty and unemployment.

There are an estimated 500,000 unemployed in a population of 6.5 million inhabitants. Sixty per cent of the unemployed are young people with nothing to do. In addition, as access to the land has become more and more difficult for the underprivileged masses, the extent of malnutrition has increased.

Faced with the economic crisis, the Mohamed Mzali government had no other choice than to take measures to satisfy their social base — that is the racketeer bourgeoisie that has developed during the past few years. The government's measures were, thus intended to develop the conditions to allow this neo-colonial bourgeoisie to integrate itself into the world market. As a consequence the country suffered from a heavier and heavier debt to the international financial organisations.

school student youth.

These massive demonstrations had an aspect of a real confrontation with the regime, attacking different symbols of bourgeois power: luxury goods, banks, the headquarters of the governing PSD (Destourien Socialist Party) (2), and the police stations. The demonstrators' only demands were the cancelling of the price rises and the departure of the government.

The reaction of the regime, that is of Habib Bourguiba and his head of government, Mohamed Mzali, was particularly violent. For the third time in six years, a state of emergency was declared, with the police and the army shooting on sight. (3) The outcome — 120 deaths and hundreds of wounded — show the bloody shock that the regime wanted to inflict on the popular movement.

Thus, the only choice for the regime was to attack the income and consumption of the popular masses and accept the plans dictated by the International Monetary Fund. One of the measures it demanded was the suppression of the General Compensation Fund. This institution intervened to keep down the prices of cereals and cereal products.

But, completely ignoring the contradictions, and preoccupied with socially integrating the workers and the UGTT (General Union of Tunisian Workers) into its political game, the bourgeoisie was incapable of imagining such a broad response from the masses, other than the waged workers.

Imperialist responsibility

Bread and other cereal-based foodstuffs are not like any other product for the Tunisian masses. They are not only a symbol but the basic staple for most of them. Since 1960 cereal products have remained at a steady 10 per cent of the family budget for 75 per cent of homes. Half the population spends 50 per cent of its budget on food. Thus, this governmental measure meant concretely more malnutrition and a more imbalanced diet for the masses.

Moreover, as in many other dominated countries, where similar social explosions have taken place — hunger riots in Brazil in 1983, Morocco in 1981 — the responsibility can be very clearly traced back to the imperialists. The measures recommended by the IMF are unrelated to the real state of world cereals production, which is in surplus.

The objective of these measures was to hold up the cereals market for the benefit of the imperialist countries, which dominate it by condemning millions of inhabitants of the third world to live in malnutrition, or indeed in famine. The United States play a particularly cynical

role in this situation. By dumping underpriced cereals on the market in 1983, they succeeded in becoming the primary supplier to Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. Relayed by the bourgeois comprador regimes, the imperialist manipulation of cereals prices had a particularly grave effect on Tunisia.

This social crisis also exposed the derisory aspect of the 'Tunisian democratic experience' and the politics of consensus. The legalisation of the two bourgeois opposition forces, the Movement of Democratic Socialists (MSD) and the Movement for People's Unity (MUP), a few days before the price rises, as well as the granting of some wage compensations, were not enough to avoid the confrontation. The recourse to savage repression was the only way for the government to save the situation, as in each of the previous tests of strength.

Certainly, the government finally withdrew and postponed the price rises. Bourguiba found the way to extricate himself, by playing on his declining Bonapartist role to appear as a saviour. But his manoeuvres did not inspire any illusions, and if the government drew back, it was mainly to avoid a spread of the struggle. It had no intention of making any major

1. On January 26, 1978, hundreds of thousands of workers took part in a general strike called by the Tunisian union confederation, the UGTT. This was harshly repressed: 400 deaths, thousands of wounded, 3,000 arrests, including all the union leadership of the time.

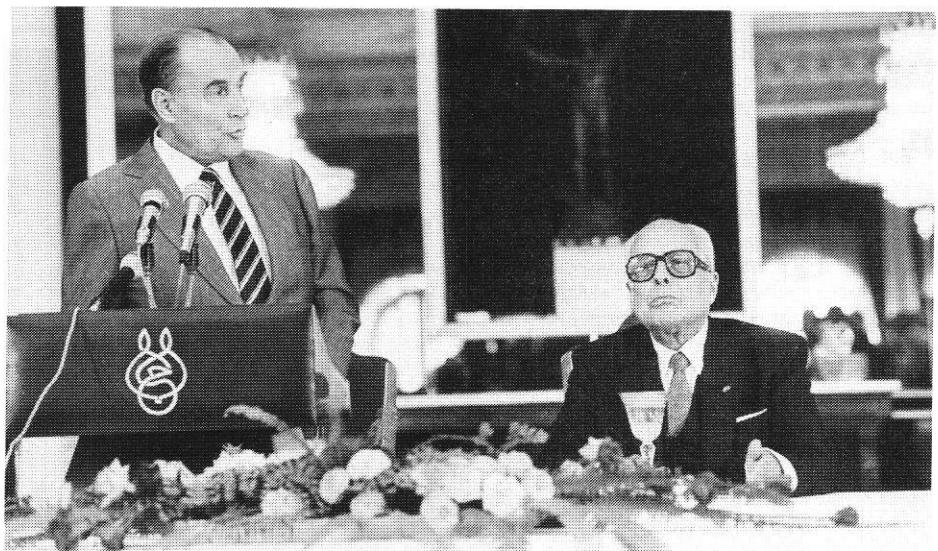
2. The Destourien movement was the former bourgeois nationalist movement led by Bourguiba. The name comes from the Arabic word for constitution.

3. Mzali and Bourguiba think they have found a scapegoat in the person of Driss Guiga, the minister of the interior, who has been dismissed. Without misestimating the role of this individual who was supported by certain factions of the bourgeoisie, it is as well to recall that it was the provocation to masses contained in the price rises decreed by the head of government Mzali that made their cup overflow. Thus it is the government as a whole which is responsible for the repression and its scope.

alterations in the fragile political edifice that has existed since 1979. For the government, maintaining a certain political liberalisation is the only way of keeping a small social base and to be able relatively to contain the struggle.

It is from this point of view that the attitude of the legalised opposition forces is the most shameful, particularly the position taken by the Tunisian Communist Party. While demanding 'a postponement of the measures', the CP denounced 'vandalism' and the 'recourse to street demonstrations'. The forces which present themselves as the democratic alternative have neither denounced the responsibility of the Mzali government nor demanded its resignation. These so-called opposition parties are essentially aiming at a compromise with the regime, and have once more discredited themselves in the eyes of the Tunisian masses.

The attitude of the only trade union, the UGTT, was not brilliant either.



Bourguiba welcomes Mitterrand on his first official visit (DR)

Throughout 1983, it could not figure out what position to take on the suppression

of the General Fund. At the time of the demonstrations, it thus found itself completely outside the active movement.

While some union activists took part in the demonstrations, and while solidarity sit-down strikes took place in enterprises like the RNTA (public transport), the SNT, the SNCFT (railways), the UGTT leadership's position was conciliatory from start to finish. It did not demand the cancellation of the price rises and contented itself with demanding wage compensation which would only put off the problem for a while. It was finally pushed to make an agreement on this basis with the government only a few hours before the 'supreme fighter' (Bourguiba) announced the suspension of the price rises.

The need for unity

The postponement of these measures mainly signified that the problem has to come up again within the next few months — with still more force. However, the government is hoping to win time between now and then to defuse the social explosions and divide the workers by giving them small wage rises that will be quickly eaten away by price rises.

A broad debate within the union and the adoption of a positive position on this question could help the UGTT to gain credibility with a number of sections of the population that it does not organise.

In these political conditions it is not surprising that the Islamic currents have at the moment taken on a weight that is out of line with their real influence. Being present in the poor quarters of Tunis, such as Melassine and Djebel Lahmar, where their populist rhetoric has a certain resonance, they have appeared in some places as the only radical alternative to the regime.

These fundamentalist currents have exercised a not inconsiderable influence among high school and student youth in the last few years, and have used fascistic methods to consolidate themselves. They were thus able to organise certain groups to profit from the demonstrations, in which in fact they got in-

Tunisian Fourth Internationalists declaration

We publish below major extracts from a declaration by the Revolutionary Workers Group, sympathising organisation of the Fourth International in Tunisia.

More than one hundred deaths and several hundred wounded, this is the appalling outcome of the riots that have taken place throughout the country.

Today, three days after the proclamation of the state of emergency, surprised by the rapid response and the breadth of the movement, the regime has gone back on its decisions. Whatever political motives may lie behind Bourguiba's manoeuvres aimed at defusing the mass discontent, the mass movement, despite its spontaneity, has inflicted a serious defeat on government policy.

The working class as an organised force was the major absentee from these recent events. The UGTT leadership, by supporting Mzali's leadership, by refusing to mobilise the workers around clear and unifying objectives, found itself in a false position in relation to the mass movement, despite the strong discontent in the union rank and file.

The workers demonstrations and strike movements, which were initiated by certain regional trade unions or at the sectoral level, and the widespread discontent at the base, will have to transform themselves into a broad movement of the working class to respond to, and confront, the austerity plans and policies of the regime in all their forms.

- Immediate unconditional lifting of the state of emergency and the curfew throughout the country!
- The army back to the barracks!
- Immediate unconditional release of all those arrested and an end to the trials!
- Compensation for the families of those who were victims of the bloody repression!
- Dissolution of the Destourien militias and judgements on their members and leaders!
- Dissolution of the BOP and all the repressive troops!

While the regime has today retreated on some of its decisions, it will not hesitate to use any means to get back what it has lost in the last few days. It will force the working class and the popular masses to pay for it at a high price, while continuing to apply its austerity policies and implement its policy of repression.

That means that the working class must go forward in united ranks to defend its buying power by putting forward unifying objectives through its own methods of struggle and organisation, defending the autonomy of its union organisation, and thus taking charge of the defence of all the interests of all the workers and underprivileged.

- For a price freeze for basic products!
- No to the austerity plan! For a policy of full employment!
- For indexing of wages to prices on the basis of the union index!
- For unrestricted freedom of organisation, expression and the press!
- For a general amnesty!

The Chamber of Deputies, which is only a rubber-stamp body and was not democratically elected, wholeheartedly defended decisions of the government right to the very end, despite the violent opposition of the population. It should be denounced and its dissolution demanded.

volved only quite late on. The absence of trade-union and political forces from the workers movement opened the way for the influence of these Islamic groups to grow.

Thus it falls on the workers political and union organisations to change their attitude and understand that defence of the exploited masses demands a clear position on these vital economic questions. Such an orientation can only be a general denunciation of the government and the demand for the dropping of these measures.

These struggles should not be only waged by the plebeian masses in daily revolt against poverty. In fact, they link up with the struggle of the union to preserve buying power, and the rejection of all forms of austerity policies or any social pact that the bourgeoisie wants to extract from the UGTT leadership.

These popular explosions against price rises are the continuation, on another terrain, of the 1983 workers struggles for the renewal of collective agreements. These struggles were often victorious.

The necessary alliance between the union militants who represent an important force, and the pauperised layers in the towns and country, is the only way to open the road to the overthrow of the Bourguiba regime that has been in power since Tunisia became independent.

Finally, the international workers movement must show its solidarity. Trades unions and parties must unconditionally support the demands of the Tunisian masses.

In France in particular, the reaction of the workers movement parties and union organisations has been lamentable. The Mitterrand government sent a message of sympathy to Habib Bourguiba, and has banned any solidarity demonstrations. Even Giscard d'Estaing did not dare to do that in January 1978, or at the time of the Gafsa riots in 1980.

The French Socialist Party does not look kindly on the destabilisation of regimes that are pillars of its neocolonial policy, and has thus refrained from any comment. The Communist Party — caught between support for its sister party in Tunisia and its desire to demonstrate its 'responsibility' in government — has not taken any initiative.

The Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR — Revolutionary Communist League) French section of the Fourth International, has thus been the only organisation in France to join with hundreds of Tunisians in the streets in demanding:

- The definitive dropping of the Bourguiba-Mzali government's economic measures;
- Support for the struggles to maintain buying power and against austerity policies;
- Immediate freedom for all those still imprisoned;
- Unconditional introduction of democratic freedoms;
- Down with the plans dictated by the IMF.

FRANCE



'We will not accept any redundancies' (DR)

Car workers bitter struggle for jobs at centre of political scene

Since the election of Francois Mitterrand at the head of a Socialist Party/Communist Party government on May 10, 1981, the most significant industrial struggles in France have been in the car plants of the Seine valley.

The car industry is one of the biggest in France. The Talbot plant at Poissy, site of the latest and most determined struggle, has more than 16,000 workers. It is owned by the PSA group, comprising Peugeot, Talbot and Citroen, which is the largest car firm in the country, and its largest privately-owned company.

The previous carworkers struggles, which have taken place in a series of waves since November 1981, were stimulated by a new feeling of confidence, particularly among the immigrant workers, as a result of the left victory in the elections. These struggles took up questions of pay, work-hours and the right to organise in the workers unions rather than the company unions belonging to the CSL (Confédération des Syndicats Libres — Confederation of Free Trade Unions).

Although the current general trend in France is towards a drop in trade-union membership, the two major trade-union federations, the Socialist Party-associated CFDT and the CP-led CGT won significant numbers of new members from these struggles, particularly where they gave a lead to the militancy of the workers.

The latest struggle at Talbot Poissy focused on the protection of jobs. Under the Mitterrand government unemployment has risen relatively slowly. However, over the next period it is expected to rise dramatically. The employers' journal *les Echos* recently estimated that between mid-1983 and mid-1984 some 200,000 jobs would be lost, including several thousand in the car industry both at Citroen and Peugeot, and in the rationalised car firm Renault.

These job losses are justified on the grounds of 'overstaffing'. The French media has coined the term 'degraissage', 'getting rid of the fat' as a euphemism for redundancies.

Philomena O'MALLEY

The struggle at Talbot Poissy started in July 1983 when the company announced that 10,000 jobs had to go.

The struggle came to an end in January 1984 after a militant strike that re-

vealed the bitter division between the CGT and the CFDT in the plant — a major cause of the failure of the strike; the determination of the immigrant workers — who comprise 53 per cent of the workers in the plant — to fight to protect their jobs; and the class collaborationist

attitude of the SP-CP government which intervened in the struggle in the interests of the management.

The actions of the two different unions in the strike revealed that the decision by the CFDT to take a verbally more critical stance of the government, combined with the activity of a local union led by the CFDT left opposition, enabled it to make gains over the CGT who stuck to the line of their last congress held in July 1982. There they decided to work for the rationalisation and profitability of French industry, avoiding 'waste' and calling on the workers to 'buy French'. In this particular struggle this led to the CGT leaders emphasising the need to 'preserve the trademark Talbot', to prevent foreign industry 'overrunning the country'. Therefore they were prepared to lose jobs if that meant 'saving Talbot'.

The CFDT on the other hand had realised after the elections for the social security management boards in November 1983 that those unions closely linked with the government (CGT, CFDT) had done worse than the others and had thus decided to make a verbal left turn.

When management proposals were revealed in July 1983 the response of the unions was unified. A massive one day strike took place on July 21.

However, when in October the government in consultation with the Talbot management accepted 4,510 early retirements, and demanded a 'social compensation' of further redundancies, the CGT considered this a victory.

A month later, on November 21, the Peugeot group management asked for government approval for 2,905 redundancies. The 'social compensation' in this proposal covered priority re-employment for redundant Talbot workers in the region and free retraining.

At the beginning of December it was heard that these proposals had been accepted by the government. There was an immediate reaction by the workers. On December 7 the CFDT in the plant denounced the proposed redundancies and called for industrial action. The CGT called for a one-day strike the following day. The strike started when the night shift came in on December 7.

Over the next week the strike continued, the factory remained paralysed, and the CFDT and CGT declared their opposition to any redundancies. The SP-CP government met among themselves and with the PSA management, while refusing to make any official statements.

On Thursday December 15 Peugeot decided that the 'presence of the workforce is pointless' and that 'the factory will be closed from Monday', in effect a lock-out. Despite this threat the CGT and CFDT decided to continue with an occupation of the factory. The following day the local CGT official stated, 'We are ready to restart work at any time from the start of negotiations on the basis of no redundancies.'

On Saturday December 17 an agreement was announced between the gov-

ernment and the PSA management. There would be 1,905 redundancies and added to the 'social compensation', at a later point would be a payment of 20,000 francs for immigrant workers to return to their country of origin.

Pierre Mauroy, the SP prime minister, who had taken personal charge of the negotiations, thus making the government directly responsible, considered this 'a happy and satisfactory outcome'. The secretary of the CGT metalworkers federation Andre Sainjon, called it 'a not negligible gain'.

The reaction of the workers was expressed through the statement of the CFDT at Talbot which declared, 'The struggle must continue so that all redundancies are rejected. The strike in the factory must be stepped up from Monday.' The workers at the plant on Sunday did indeed reject the agreement. That evening the CGT called for a strike on Monday to force the management to discuss the measures in the agreement. On Monday December 19, the CFDT called for the formation of strike committees while Sainjon stated that 'the [factory] occupation is not necessary at the moment.'

From this point the simmering divisions between the CFDT and the CGT in the plant became open warfare. The CGT denounced as 'irresponsible' the CFDT leaders locally who were for continuing the struggle, and aided the bourgeois media in portraying the strikers as a handful of 'extremists', stirred up by 'outside agitators' — always a favourite slander against militant workers.

The response of the CGT leaders locally to the government agreement, that there would not be redundancies, not be workers 'thrown onto the street', that thanks to the agreements on retraining and rehiring there would be only 'departures from the factory' did not stand up well, against those of the CFDT and workers in favour of continuing the strike that 'In seven days on strike we cut out 1,000 redundancies. With another two weeks we would have a chance of getting rid of the other 2,000.' (Jean-Pierre Noual, local CFDT leader).

This reaction caused confusion and dissension among the CGT members. However, at the same time the CGT had the credibility of being far and away the majority union in the plant — the last elections held gave it 45 per cent as opposed to 8 per cent for the CFDT — and as the union that led the strike at the sister plant of Citroen Aulnay.

The occupation of the plant continued while the individual redundancy notices were sent out on December 20 and discussions continued among the workers on how to continue the struggle. During this period it became clear that a dissident current existed within the CGT — particularly among the immigrant workers.

On December 30 the factory occupation was declared illegal and the following day the CRS riot police were sent to clear the plant and management announced that work would restart on

Monday January 2.

The management then sent individual letters to the workers that had not been made redundant calling them back to work. The strict control over the entry of workers to the plant on the morning of January 2, with the police, the CSL members and the management out in force, was not able to ensure a peaceful return to work and an attempt by a large number of striking workers to enter without their individual passes finally forced the factory to be closed down once again until the next day.

Over the following days the workers re-entered the factory although the strikers grew in number over the first few days, gathering in the B3 shop where the strike was based to discuss and organise. From this base the workers went out to the other parts of the factory, discussing and convincing workers to join the strike for 'zero redundancies'. During these days there were several violent conflicts between the strikers and the CSL, including vicious racists attacks on the immigrant workers.

Throughout the struggle the CFDT took initiatives in organisation, the 'strikers card' that workers filled in to declare that they were strikers, daily mass meetings, rotas for the occupation and picket lines, post cards of solidarity to be sent by workers and unionists from all over France to show their support. On January 3 the CFDT and CGT dissidents called for a strike committee. In one morning 400 workers signed up as candidates for this committee.

Throughout the strike the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR — French section of the Fourth International) played an active role in building support for the Talbot workers struggle. Through the leading role of comrades in the local CFDT they argued to win support for the line of 'zero redundancies' and 'a struggle to the end'. The weekly newspaper *Rouge* gave consistent coverage including eyewitness reports from inside the plant, articles discussing what was at stake for French workers, the bosses, the government and the unions in the struggle, and the fight for workers solidarity.

However, despite the militancy of workers in Talbot, despite the solidarity and support they received from many unions and workers elsewhere, the divisions between the two trade unions and the isolation of a struggle that was a test for the whole of the working class in France meant that the strike came to an end although the CFDT workers continued to state that 'the struggle will continue'.

Other bastions of the industrial working class in France will face the same test in the months to come, major job loss is projected in engineering, coal mines, the shipyards and steel. The proposal to cut 3,000 jobs at Talbot provoked a militant strike and forced a cut of one third in the proposed redundancies. What response will the proposed 200,000 other jobs to be lost provoke? ■

Another round in the crisis of the Communist Party

After being by far the strongest force in the clandestine opposition to the Franco dictatorship (at least on the all-Spain level), the Spanish Communist Party has been more and more marginalized since "The Transition," that is, the return to parliamentary democracy in 1975-77.

The fading of the CP first became evident in the parliamentary elections of June 1977, when it was outdistanced by the Social Democratic PSOE. One of the reasons for this was that the CP leaned over backwards to accomodate the Francoist government in the period when it was preparing The Transition.

Since 1977, the CP has been in steady decline. In the elections last year that brought a PSOE government to power, it was reduced to an almost insignificant position on the all-Spain level.

The discontent among the militant working-class base of the CP has also been fed by the party's support for the various social pacts that it has entered into, along with the PSOE. These amounted to a surrender to the bosses by the workers parties and trade-union organizations at the very time the economic crisis hit, reducing the living standards and level of employment of the workers disastrously.

Since in this period, the leadership of the CP, headed by Santiago Carrillo was identified with a liberal, or Eurocommunist line, the left opposition tended to be captured by Stalinist fundamentalists harking back to the "good old days."

The conflict came to be centered in the United Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSUC), the CP's affiliate in Catalonia, which is where the CP has its greatest strength. In this area in particular, a lot of oppositionists left the party and oriented toward the formation of a new party. The Congress of Communist Unity formed a new philo-Soviet "Communist Party" on January 15, unanimously electing Ignacio Gallego general secretary.

After last year's elections, Carrillo was obliged to give up the leadership of the party, but he quickly organized a fight against the new general secretary, Gerardo Iglesias. The following article analyzes the outcome of this fight at the CP's eleventh congress in mid-December, where Iglesias' main resolution was passed by 386 to 376 with 25 abstentions, the smallest majority in the party's history.

F. CRUELLS

Gerardo Iglesias' victory in the Eleventh Congress of the Spanish CP has by no means marked the end of the party's long crisis.

Even the PSUC magazine *Treball* could not summon up much optimism:

"We do not want to be so naive as to think that the tensions will disappear immediately, when in fact in the period preceding the congress we saw a tendency toward geographical consolidation of the differences."

In this article, I will analyze the reasons for the continuing crisis of the PSUC.

To explain the conflict between the Iglesias and Carrillo tendencies in the PSUC, it is useful to look at the body of problems both face. The common ob-

jective of the two tendencies was to give impetus to a revival of the PCE as a force in electoral politics and in the mass movement.

Both tendencies knew that in order to accomplish that, the party has to capitalize on the discontent with the PSOE government among elements that want more radical policies. However, both Iglesias and Carrillo are firmly committed to a generally reformist line, little different from that followed by the PCE in the period of transition to parliamentary rule.

The PCE needs to demonstrate some renewed vitality in order to stop the bleeding split of militant workers from which the party has been suffering for some time. Moreover, in particular, it has to keep a large left element from being attracted to the Communist Unity Con-

gress. The party has also to rebuild its strength among layers of professionals in order to be able to present a more attractive broad electoral image.

Within the framework of these common concerns, the main debates between the two tendencies in the congress developed around the balance sheet of the Transition and the PCE's policy after 1979, the characterization of the PSOE government and what sort of opposition to conduct toward it, and the kind of party they want to build.¹ This last point involves ideological definitions, relations with the various social movements, dealing with internal differences, as well as relations with the USSR and the other Communist parties.

Nonetheless, on all the questions I have just cited, the political and organizational differences were not clarified, at least not sufficiently to justify the violence of the conflict between the two tendencies. The differences are more comprehensible in terms of a power struggle in the party and maneuvers by the two tendencies to gain support for that purpose.

For the sake of this game, Carrillo tried to present himself as a left opposition to Iglesias. He stressed the danger of a coup, criticism of the PSOE government and the need for strong opposition to it. This left talk, which sounded funny coming from him, fitted in with his attempt to gain support among the rank-and-file worker members.

Many of these rank-and-file worker communists want a more left policy, and sections of them could be attracted by Ignacio Gallego's alternative and the Communist Unity Congress. To avert that, Carrillo did not hesitate to give a pro-Soviet turn to his international positions.

On the other hand, Carrillo made no criticism of all of the social pacts that have been accepted one after the other. This was precisely because that is one of the fundamental themes the PCE's working-class ranks could radicalize around, and this would have immediate practical consequences.

Carrillo's inability to offer a consistent criticism from the left enabled Iglesias to play the same game of talking out of the left side of his mouth, to keep Carrillo from stealing the thunder of the "left turn." He stepped up his criticisms of the PSOE and has made trips to Portugal and Cuba. At the same time, he raked up Carrillo's rightist past and his clashes with the USSR.

Iglesias obviously thought that the question of the party was his strongest point. Thus, he talked about intervening in the social movements, about collective methods of work and normalizing differences in the party. He put a lot of stress on the appeal to those who wanted change to return to the party. But he did not neglect the critical element on the left who might feel attracted to the Communist Unity Congress. He promised that the PCE would be a democratic party that would respect the right to have difference.

Words, however, are cheap. The question of the party's attitude to religion can be fuzzed over by saying simply that it is Marxist in inspiration. And Felipe Alvaraz did not take any big risks by inviting Ignacio Gallego to rejoin the party. But acts are something else.

Integration of the left wing was limited to putting a single representative on the Central Committee, Antonio Romero, who was surrounded by 109 representatives of the two other factions. And the differences are being "normalized" only to the extent that this enables the leadership to get through congresses.

This is what CP leader Francisco Palero had to say about it: "Would the publication of the various amendments make this congress more democratic? I don't think so, because far from promoting debate and synthesis, it would lead inevitably to polarization and division."

This original conception of democracy promoted factional methods of debate and lead to the strange situation where Carrillo could represent himself to the Eleventh Congress as a persecuted dissident.

Undoubtedly Iglesias drew support from the fact that no oppositionist has anything to hope for from Carrillo's return to the effective leadership of the party. The friends of the "reformers" have heard him say continually that he would throw them out of the party if he got the chance.

Party members who sympathize with the positions of Ignacio Gallego are not likely to forget that it was Carrillo who led the offensive at the Fifth Congress of the PSUC, which ended in splitting the party down the middle.

The confused debate went hand in hand with deep internal division in the PCE and an extraordinary violent discussion filled with mutual attacks. The PCE has come out of this congress without a new split but with a climate of crisis and internal warfare that it will be very difficult to dissipate.

Trying to build a left alternative to the PSOE based on a reformist policy is a difficult juggling operation. In fact, one of the sources of the crisis of the PCE is the lack of political space for two reformist parties. On the other hand, there is no sign of any letup in the internal tensions in the party. Carrillo is too strong and was to close to victory to let himself be pushed to the sidelines. Moreover, he cannot make an open compromise with Gerardo Iglesias without a large part of his base becoming demoralized or turning toward the Communist Unity Congress.

On the other hand, Iglesias cannot be content with his majority on the Central Committee and the Executive Committee as long as ten regional organizations (including the one in Madrid and in the Valencian country) are controlled by Carrillistas who are only waiting for him to make the first misstep before launching a campaign against him.

The conclusion is obvious. The crisis continues. ■

DENMARK

The missiles, hidden issue in the elections

The Danish version of Thatcherism suffered a surprise setback in the January 10 general elections.

Premier Poul Schlueter had been expected to add another to a string of electoral victories for the hardnosed right in Western Europe, following Thatcher in Britain and Kohl in West Germany.

The same basis was there. Schlueter offered a consistent policy, and his reformist left opponents did not. It was the Social Democrats in fact who began the austerity drive, and then deliberately turned the wheel over to the Conservatives when the road got bumpy.

The parties to the left of the Social Democrats, although they have a greater weight in Denmark than anywhere else in northern Europe, did not offer a credible alternative.

Nonetheless, Danish voters did not reconcile themselves to swallowing the bitter pill of a new and stronger Schlueter government.

The ruling four-party coalition increased its seats in the Folketing from 65 to 76 but it still ended up 14 seats short of a majority.

The shift in the popular vote actually was very slight. The Social Democrats dropped from 32.9% in 1981 to 31.6%. The Socialist People's Party went from 11.3% to 11.5%; the Left Socialists from 2.7% to 2.6%. The historically antimilitarist bourgeois party, the Radicals, went from 5.1% to 5.5%.

The main changes were in the spectrum of the right-wing parties. Schlueter's Conservative Party took a clearly dominant position on the right, increasing its percentage of the vote from 14.5 to 23.4.

The Conservative Party's gains about equalled the losses of its coalition partner, the Center Democrats, and the radical right Progress Party of antitax demagogue Mogens Glistrup. The Center Democrats dropped from 8.3% to 4.6%, and the Progress Party from 8.9% to 3.6%.

The following article was written before the elections. So, it reflects the general apprehension that Schlueter would be reinforced for a counterattack against the peace movement. The result was the opposite.

Richard BISGAARD

Denmark is the only country in Western Europe where it has been possible to get the popular majority against the missiles reflected in the parliament. This was accomplished here despite the fierce opposition of the bourgeois minority government.

In this sense the Danish campaign was the most successful of the peace movements of the various West European governments in 1983.

Although there are no atomic weapons stationed on Danish soil today and Denmark has not accepted the 572 US first-strike missiles, it has been possible to build a very broad understanding of the danger that these first-strike weapons represent.

According to the surveys that have been done by the peace movement, 70% of the population are against the missiles. That means that the opposition goes deep into the ranks of those who vote for the bourgeois parties.

On May 26, a resolution was adopted mandating the government to demand that the Geneva negotiations be extended so that the US and the USSR could achieve a solution. The settlement it called for consisted of a reduction of the

Soviet SS-20s sufficient to remove any reason for deploying the 572 American missiles.

Likewise, the resolution demanded that the French and British atomic weapons be included in the negotiations, and that preparations for installing the new missiles be halted during the negotiations.

Finally the resolution expressed support for all negotiations for a bilateral freeze and overall reduction of all types of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

This resolution was completely ignored by Nato. So, on December 1, a second resolution was passed mandating the government, in the December 10 Nato ministers meeting, to "decisively reject" deployment of the first Pershing and Cruise missiles. This resolution, moreover, called for Denmark not to pay a single penny for these missiles.

So, the Danish peace movement can note with some satisfaction that in general the objective of its 1983 campaign has been achieved.

This success was reflected not only in the comments by Nato officials, who lamented that Denmark had reduced itself to the status of a "footnote nation," in the same league as Greenland.

It was reflected also in the sour countenance of Uffe Ellemann Jensen, the

Danish foreign minister. He was obviously sick at the thought of having to present "this dumb, absurd and completely irresponsible" resolution to his friends in Nato.

It can quite rightly be asked how a government made up of the parties most committed to Nato could agree to implement resolutions that seriously conflict with the key features of the Nato and US plans for stepped-up armament. Why did the government not resign instead of waiting until December 15 before calling new elections? And why did it choose to do this over a question such as the finance bill?

The answer is easy. In all likelihood, the government would lose if the main issue in the election were stepped-up nuclear armament and national security policy.

By calling the election over the finance bill, the government hoped to be able to drown the missiles issue in a flood of talk about low profits, the balance of payments and the budget deficit. Moreover, there was a good chance this tactic would work.

The polls are predicting a significant advance for the four-party bourgeois government. The Conservatives, headed by Premier Poul Schlueter, are expected to double their vote, from 15% in the last elections to about 30%, just behind the Social Democrats.

Of course, the other three government parties, the Venstre [Liberals], the Centrum Demokraterne and the Kristeligt Folkeparti [Christian People's Party] are expected to drop somewhat. But the Conservative gains should more than offset.

If the polls are borne out, the election results will not only make it easier for the bourgeois government to advance its reactionary incomes and austerity policy in parliament. They will also have effects on the country's foreign policy and national-security policy.

Social Democrats balancing act

The indications are that the four-party government will be able to get an absolute majority on these questions, with the support of the thoroughly reactionary Fremstridsparti (Progress Party).

In this case, the majority against the missiles in the present parliament will be transformed into a clear majority for Nato's stepped up armament.

It is unlikely, however, that the bourgeois government would openly throw out the resolution on the missiles. That would complicate their relations with the sixth bourgeois party, the Radikale Venster, which supported Schlueter's antisocial economic policy in the last parliament.

Because of their antimilitarist historical tradition, the Radicals always vote against increases in military expenditures. This naturally put them on the side of those opposing the missiles, although they wavered time and time again and performed the most amazing acrobatics

to avoid putting the bourgeois government on the spot for its total, uncritical support of everything that came from Nato and the US.

However, one thing is certain. If the four-party government gets a majority, along with the Fremstridsparti, it will not lift a finger to implement the missiles resolution. And every attempt to get Denmark to take an independent and critical position toward the Nato armament schemes will be effectively blocked.

The responsibility for this situation falls mainly on the Social Democrats. In the past period, on several occasions this party had the opportunity to bloc with the Socialistisk Folkeparti (SF, Socialist People's Party, a group that has certain similarities to the Benn current in the British Labour Party), the Venstresocialister [Left Socialists, a left centrist group], and the Radicals to bring down the government over national security policy.

But despite the fact that the Social Democrats would certainly gain in an election focused on the missiles issue, they have deliberately tried to avoid provoking an election on this question.

The reason for this is that the result of such an election could make "broad collaboration with the middle-of-the-road forces" impossible for several years. This would not only mean breaking up the unity with the bourgeois parties on the main points in Danish national security policy that has prevailed since the second world war and the formation of Nato. It would also mean such large gains for the parties to the left of the Social Democrats that they would no longer rule out collaboration with the other workers parties.

Such a result would inevitably increase the pressure from the trade unions on the Social Democrats to form a workers government that would join with the rest of the workers movement to fight for deep-going reforms in the interest of the majority of the population. That is, such a development would increase the pressure on the Social Democrats to break off their collaboration with the bourgeois parties.

To avoid getting into such a position, the Social Democrats have staged a revolting show of parliamentary play-acting, trying to balance between deferring to the growing peace movement and maintaining their loyalty to Nato.

On the one hand, the Social Democrats have declared that they oppose the 572 missiles. On the other, they have consistently refused to come out clearly against the Nato Double-Track decision.

1. The demand that Denmark be declared nuclear free, not just in peacetime but also in time of crisis and war has a great importance because this would totally detach Denmark from Nato's nuclear strategy.

At the same time, achieving this demand would mean throwing out the treaties with the US and Nato that permit bringing more troops and aircraft into Denmark in the event of so-called crisis situations.

In accordance with these treaties, this year a long series of depots and bases are being built. They are for the 70,000 soldiers and 200 aircraft that are allotted to Denmark as "rein-



Like elsewhere in Europe there have been mass protests.

Likewise, they have declared that they are against having nuclear weapons on Danish soil "under any circumstances." But at the same time, they have refused to come out for declaring Denmark a nuclear-free territory, not only in peace time but also in times of crisis and war. (1)

In the election campaign, the Danish peace movement mobilized all its forces to get citizens to vote for candidates opposed to the missiles. The question now is how the movement will respond if the

forcements."

These treaties mean that Danish airfields can be transformed in two hours' time into operational atomic bases from which fighters and fighter bombers from the US or Britain could launch a surprise attack on the Soviet Union.

This increases the danger that Denmark can be dragged into a war in which it has no say or interest, if for example the US decides, as a result of a conflict in the Middle East or Central America, to put all its forces in Europe and Nato as a whole on the alert to force the Soviet Union to stop all aid to the liberation movements in the third world.



against the missiles (DR)

January 10 elections wipe out the results that it struggled throughout 1983 to achieve.

To answer this question, it is necessary to look back at the experience of the peace movement over the past two years. The secret of the Danish peace movement's success lies in its form of organization and in its exceptional ability to maintain unity despite political diversity.

A multitude of peace groups have grown up throughout the country. Since the fall of 1982, the great majority of these have affiliated to the "Landskampagne Stop Atomraketterne" (National Campaign To Stop the Nuclear Missiles). Only groups belonging to the Danish offshoot of END [European Nuclear Disarmament, a third-camp peace group started in Britain by E.P. Thomson] have refused in a sectarian way to join in this united work. The reason they give is that not enough attention is paid to the

"Eastern end of things."

Up until now that basis for the work of the Landskampagne has been clear and simple — to get a clear and unambiguous Danish rejection of the 572 missiles. That means that Denmark should not do anything to help install the missiles and not pay a penny for this purpose, and that it should do everything possible to get the Double-Track Decision overturned.

On this basis of unity, clearly opposing the US's and Nato's plans for stepping up armament, it was possible to mobilize hundreds of thousands of people. Several mass demonstrations were built. The most recent was in Copenhagen on October 29, which brought out about a hundred thousand people in the main Danish city. Throughout the country, between 150,000 and 200,000 people came into the streets on that day to demonstrate against the missiles.

Success of the peace movement

At the same time, the peace movement also began to penetrate deeply into the labor movement. In contrast to 1982, a long list of district councils and unions sponsored the big demonstrations in October. A number of active trade unionists have organized the "Fagbevægelse for Fred" ("Labor Movement for Peace"). And in other cities, a lot of trade unions and even Social Democrat-dominated district councils have affiliated to local peace groups.

The best illustration of this development was on November 22, when the leadership of the Danish National Labor Council (Landsorganisationen — LO) felt itself obliged, because of the pressure from the membership, to follow the example of the West German National Labor Council (DGB). It called a five-minute general strike against the missiles.

The strike call was followed massively in all the country's bigger cities. Buses stopped, workers left the factories and marched down the streets carrying big banners, stopping traffic. The radio stations transmitted the signal for the stoppage. Public workers stopped work. And in the schools and other educational institutions people took advantage of the occupation to discuss peace and the arms race.

In a few short minutes, this action showed the enormous power the organized labor movement has. Not only is it able to bring society to a total standstill but it is also able to draw behind it broad layers of the general population, when it shows decisiveness and the will to use its power to back up its demands.

For the peace movement, this action should be a textbook example of why it is necessary to orient to the labor movement. However, in large sections of the peace movement there is a clear tendency to put the emphasis instead on drawing more and more bourgeois forces into peace work.

Not surprisingly, it is in particular activists from the pro-Moscow Danish

Communist Party [Danmarks Kommunistisk Parti — DKP] and from the CP-dominated peace organization, the Samarbejdskomite for Fred og Sikkerhed [Committee for United Work for Peace and Security] that are pushing in this direction.

This is not because the CPers are against involving the unions in peace work — to the contrary. This is just supposed to be something that the peace movement should not get involved in. They say it should be left entirely to the active unionists to spread the fight for peace in the labor movement.

In the peace movement, on the other hand, the CPers argue that the task is to maintain the breadth of the movement and to try to bring in new elements — mainly bourgeois or petty-bourgeois forces — into a growing people's front for peace.

This conception follows from the line the CPers are pursuing in the peace movement. For example, a section of the leading people were against calling on the peace movement to participate in the October 4 demonstration against Schleuter organized by the trade-union movement.

The CPers' argument was the following: There are a lot of people in the peace movement who vote for the bourgeois parties. And they will be frightened off if we call on them directly to bring down the missile government.

At the same time, the CPers did not do very much either to get the peace movement to mobilize against the Reinforcement treaties (see footnote 1) or to try to make the connection between the antiimperialist struggle and the fight for peace in Europe.

Behind this line there lies a general conception of the peace movement's function and tasks. For the DKP, the peace movement is not a movement to get results here and now but one to facilitate diplomatic victories for the Soviet Union.

DKP makes negotiations main axis

Therefore, the DKP activists in the peace movement have striven systematically to change the original basis of the Landskampagne Stop Atomrakkerne. Instead of keeping the movement focused on the clear demand for rejecting the Nato missiles — regardless of the negotiations in Geneva — the CPers have tried to tie the peace movement to these talks. This line has been expressed in slogans such as "Give the Geneva Negotiations Another Chance" or "Sincere and Honest Arms Reduction Talks Now!"

Furthermore, the CPers tried to make the May 26 parliamentary resolution the axis for all the activities of the peace movement. This resolution was, of course, an important victory for the movement. But the resolution did not amount to a clear rejection of the 572 missiles.

Instead of using this opportunity to press the Social Democrats to go further, the DKP activists stopped halfway. The

peace movement's task was suddenly no longer to force parliament to heed the demand of the people, but rather to get broader support among the population for the position of the majority in parliament.

Finally DKP members have proposed making the demand for a freeze the main one for the future struggle. The main argument they use is that the installation of the first Nato missiles and the counter-deployment of SS-21s, SS-22s and SS-23s in East Germany and Czechoslovakia means a new situation in the peace movement.

Therefore, the reasoning continues, we should concentrate our forces on stopping the arms race before it gets fully underway. So, the peace movement should agitate for a negotiated settlement in Geneva leading to a reduction of nuclear arms in Europe, for example on the basis outlined in the May 26 parliamentary resolution.

It was only strong criticism from the SAP peace activists that kept this proposal from being accepted at the conference of the Lanskampagne in Fredericia in mid-December.

The SAP activists argued that we should not call for a freeze, that is, accept the 9 Pershing II missiles and the 38 Cruise missiles already installed. We should call for their immediate removal. And we should not make the question of arms reduction dependent on the US and the USSR being able to come to some agreement behind closed doors in Geneva. We should demand disarmament now, starting in the West.

There was a certain receptivity to these arguments among the 300 peace activists at the conference. In any case, the worst features of the CP's proposal were dropped.

Program for peace

The new program adopted includes the following demands:

1. Immediate cessation of the deployment of new missiles in both the East and West and removal of those that have already been installed. That goes for both the Pershing II and Cruise missiles, as well as for the new Soviet missiles that have been installed to counter them.

2. New negotiations to reduce the number of nuclear weapons and move toward a Europe entirely free from nuclear weapons.

3. Denmark must pursue an active policy for peace aimed at fostering dialogue and detente between East and West.

4. The government and the parliament must take the following steps to move toward making Denmark nuclear free:

- Declare Denmark a nuclear free area not only in peacetime but also in time of crises and war.

- Take Denmark out of Nato's nuclear planning group.

- Take initiatives to get the Scandinavian countries to work concretely to

establish a nuclear free zone in the Scandinavian area.

As is obvious, the Lanskampagne program is strongly influenced by the DKP's position. That is, the emphasis is put on bilateral arms reduction through negotiations, instead of on unilateral disarmament in the West through political strikes, mass mobilizations and blockades of Nato bases.

However, the decisive thing is not the exact wording and the specific program. What is decisive is the dynamic in the peace movement. Every mobilization against the missiles objectively opposes imperialism, even if it is built on the demand for bilateral arms reduction.

Therefore, the main question is what activities the Danish peace movement undertakes. And here a number of promising proposals have been made.

First, there is a proposal to work with the peace movements in the other West European countries to conduct an alternative referendum on the missiles in the period before the EEC elections in June 1984. This is an important proposal that points the way forward toward greater international coordination of the fight for peace.

Another important proposal is the one for contacting the West German peace movement to investigate possibilities for

propagating the idea of simultaneous monthly days of protest against the missiles in all the West European countries.

Besides this, the peace movement is preparing for mass mobilizations on the occasion of the traditional Easter marches. Additionally, a big peace conference is to be held in the spring.

In order to get rid of the missiles that have been deployed in West Europe — and therefore also the missiles in East Europe — the labor movement has to put all its weight behind the fight for peace. That means that it has to take action through political strikes.

The unions in West Germany, Denmark, Finland and Belgium have already shown the labor movement's opposition to stepped-up armament by warning strikes of 5 to 15 minutes. The next step is a one-day general strike against the missiles throughout Western Europe.

The main task for the peace movement in 1984 is to increase the collaboration between the peace movement and the peace movement and the unions throughout Western Europe, without being stopped by any national borders. Only if the opposition becomes so extensive that political stability is threatened, can the imperialist war-makers be forced to pull back. ■



Fighting experience for public workers – Pyrrhic victory for hard-nosed government

"There is very little either Christian or democratic about the Christian Democratic Party." (1) "One thing is clear, this government has to go."

When you hear talk like that at a Dutch union meeting, it means that something is going on. But when you hear these and many other such remarks at a meeting of the Christelijke Federatie van Overheidspersoneel (CFO — Christian Federation of Government Employees), you can talk about a new political situation in the country.

Herman PIETERSON

The change was brought about by a seven-week-long confrontation between the Christian Democratic-Liberal government headed by Ruud Lubbers on one side and the public-workers union on the other.

Since September, there had been grumbling among the public service workers. And this is a very important sector in the Netherlands. There are 700,000 public service workers, plus another 500,000 workers whose wages and working conditions are tied by law to those of the public workers. This is out of a total working population of about 4 million.

This 1.2-million-strong sector includes such important groups of workers as those at the power generators, on the railroad, all the mass-transport workers and those in the municipal services such as garbage collectors and street cleaners, as well as the post, telecommunications, customs and harbor-service workers. It also includes, of course, teachers, the police and those working in the offices of the various ministries and the provinces.

What prompted the confrontation was a 3.5% wage cut. Under the pressure of the public workers actions, this cut was reduced at an early stage by 0.5%. On December 14, parliament passed a law to meet this agreement. But, although the direct result of the October, November and December actions thus seems very small, it would be wrong to talk about a clear defeat.

Transport workers take lead

The terms of the conflict were already evident in October. The government showed in an initial round of negotiations on October 5 that it was not ready to make any concessions to the union representatives. Provocative statements by Rietkerk, the Liberal minister of the interior, provided the match that set the powder alight.

On October 17, the railroad workers in Amsterdam started it going with work-to-rule actions (this was three weeks ahead of the plans of the union leadership). The rest of the country followed. The local bus services started rotat-

ing strikes. The other public service workers also staged a couple of actions. (Bus and rail workers belong to the transport union, other public service workers to the big civil service union.)

The escalation of the actions can be dated from November 2. The second round of negotiations brought a limitation of the wage cut to 3%. But that was as far as the government was prepared to go. The negotiators for the state said that they were bound by the agreement on which the ruling coalition is based. And that was that.

Within five days the most important actions were underway. The railway workers went from work-to-rule actions to region-by-region rotating strikes. The post was paralyzed by strikes at the sorting centers and by the postal drivers.

The customs workers started work-to-rule actions, which led in particular to major delays for truck traffic. In Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the sanitation workers went on strike. At the same time, other municipal services started rotating actions. In Amsterdam public transport stopped totally five times for a morning or a day. In Rotterdam after a week the transport workers started an unlimited strike.

In a number of other places also, other public services conducted various forms of actions. In all, tens of thousands of people were directly involved in the actions.

To be sure, the numbers of actual strikers were kept down by the tactic of rotating strikes and strikes at key points, which made it possible for quite small groups of strikers to paralyze enterprises and services.

Between November 18 and 21, the strikes went into a third phase. A judge ordered a third round of negotiations. In the first place, the Algemene Centrale van Overheids Personeel (ACOP), the civil service union belonging to the Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (FNV — Dutch Federation of Trade Unions, the Social Democrat-dominated federation of unions), seemed to be becoming isolated.

A compromise proposal was rejected by the ACOP, but the Christian union and the two right-wing unions of higher

functionaries continued to discuss it all night long.

After a sleepless night, even these two conservative unions proved unable to reach an agreement with the government. Lubbers' hard line had brought the four unions together.

Finally, it was a combination of attrition and court injunctions that brought the actions to an end. In particular, when the postal workers and the Rotterdam city workers were ordered back to work, the public workers unions suffered a hard blow. The reiteration by the Liberal and Christian Democratic majority in parliament that they would continue to support the government also did not offer much hope. Between December 2 and December 9, most of the actions were ended.

The reasons for failure

How could a struggle with such mass support be ended in this way? And why was it practically only the public workers union that went into action?

Since the formation of the Lubbers' government in November 1982, the old days when this country was supposed to be an "oasis of social harmony" have been fading fast. But, overall, the union movement remained very much oriented to negotiating in the framework of the tripartite bodies (labor, government and employers) that abound in this country. The various strike waves that hit the Netherlands in the early 1970s hardly affected this traditional attitude.

When the crisis set in earnest in 1980, it led to a tougher austerity government here in the Netherlands as well. That is what the Lubbers' government represents.

Because of an unfavorable relationship of forces in parliament and the reactions by the union movement to attacks on the workers' gains in 1977, 1980 and 1982, neither the Christian Democratic-Liberal coalitions that ruled the country in 1977-81 and 1982 nor the Christian Democratic-Social Democratic coalitions that governed in 1973-1977 and 1981-1982 were able to push the austerity drive very far.

Nonetheless, since 1979 real wages in the Netherlands have declined by 8% in industry and by between 16% and 20% in the public sector. But this did not solve the country's serious fiscal problems, for a number of reasons. First of all, up to 1982 the number of persons employed in the public services rose steadily. Secondly, through a complicated mechanism the evolution of wages in the public sector is linked to that in industry. Of course, this system has been breached from time to time, which explains how wages could fall faster in the public sector. But the system as such remains in force. Thirdly, social-welfare expenditures have increased enormously as a consequence of unemployment. In this respect, the Netherlands leads the Common Market, with a

1. In the Netherlands, the Christian Democratic Party is a fusion of Protestant and Catholic political organizations. — IV.

17% unemployment rate.

It was impossible to pursue a severe austerity offensive and at the same time keep up the complex system of social partnership. But the previous governments proved unable to mount frontal attacks on it.

It is the Lubbers' government precisely that has taken on the goal of dismantling this system.

In what is presented as a "no nonsense" cabinet, the leaders of the two big bourgeois parties have worked out a complete program for demolishing the social welfare system and eliminating social expenditures. In every test, the parliamentary majority seems to have given the government very nearly a blank check.

Politically the Lubbers' government has not had an easy time of it. Obviously, an austerity program of this sort also harms the interests of a lot of Christian Democratic supporters. Thus the government's relations with the 350,000-member Christian union federation (Christelijke National Vakverbond, CNV) are already not the best.

Moreover, a considerable number of those who vote for the Christian Democratic Party (the Christen Democratisch Appel — Christian Democratic Appeal, CDA) are pensioners, and so were hit as hard as the public service workers by the 3% cut.

The government's operation as a whole is supposed to produce savings of 10.5 billion guilders (roughly 3.5 to 4 billion US dollars) at the expense of the public workers.

Three of these ten billion guilders are supposed to come from a reduction in the number of jobs. The 3% wage cut is supposed to have another 2 billion. That means that in the coming year still more stringent measures are going to be needed to save the remaining 5.5 billion. More wage cuts are, thus, inevitable.

Recently, the government has floated a draconian plan for social cutbacks. It is supposed to go into effect on July 1, 1984, but it will probably be implemented in stages spread out over a year and a half. This plan is designed to cut back social spending by another 10%. It is, moreover, another step toward a total revision of the system of social spending, which in turn would result in new and drastic cutbacks.

Lubbers is not altogether crazy. So, the government has drawn up an overall plan involving cuts in taxes and social insurance payments that will favor workers in industry in 1984. It needs to play the public and private sectors off against each other to get the political room to launch further attacks on the living standards of working people. In fact, about 180,000 minimum-wage workers in the private sector were also hit by the 3% wage cut.

The government has been able to create divisions. The tendency has always been to look on public workers as people who are paid too much for doing too little. Declining wages in industry have fostered envy against the supposed

advantages of public workers.

The fact that wages have been harder hit in the public sector is very little known. The wage differentials that existed before and the relatively small layoffs in the public services up till now have strengthened the impression among industrial workers that public workers are well off.

Of course, this is precisely where the unions had an important role to play in informing the workers of the real situation. The next largest union, the Industriebond-FNV [which includes most industrial workers] deliberately neglected this task. It formally supported the public workers. But in its paper, *ZIN*, generous space was allotted to opponents of the strikes. Moreover, the union leadership did not bother to correct any of these statements or reply to them.

The FNV (which has about a million members) as a whole supported these actions as a matter of course because they were against cutbacks. But no proposals for organizing concrete solidarity were forthcoming. In many cases, this kind of solidarity had to be organized against the opposition of the FNV. The isolation of the public sector, which naturally came under heavy fire from the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces and the media, did not make it any easier to carry out the actions.

There is a constant threat of division between the various unions as well. There are two big labor federations in the Netherlands, plus a number of smaller independent unions.

In the public workers actions, this meant that in addition to the FNV and CNV unions, two small right-wing unions were also involved, the CMHA (Centrale Middelbare en Hogere Ambtenaren — Federation of Middle and High Level Public Servants) and the AC (Ambtenaren Centra — Civil Servants Union).

Only the FNV unions went out on strike, although the CNV unions often participated in the actions. The two smaller groups were involved only in the negotiations. Time and time again they seemed ready to make a deal with the government ahead of the FNV unions, but finally the government's hard line did not permit this.

Thirdly, the forms of action adopted had their limitations. The pinpoint strikes did make it possible to paralyze large sections of public services and enterprises at minimal expense to the unions' strike funds. But this method was an obstacle to extending the actions. It was precisely in the last phase of the strike that this problem became clear, when court orders were sufficient to stop the decisive actions.

Lastly, from the beginning the political stakes of the actions were not clearly understood. The union leaderships apparently thought that they could get some more concessions by a show of force. By November 2, it was clear that this was not so. But the union tactics remained tied to this orientation.

If the actions had won any real success,

this would have led directly or indirectly to the fall of the government. Neither the Christian Democrats nor the Liberals wanted to run that risk, in particular since they faced the possibility of defeat in early elections. The polls indicate that the Social Democrats would make big gains and the government parties would lose their majority.

The most important development in this strike is that tens of thousands of people participated in actions for the first time. Before this there was scarcely any strike tradition among public workers, except in mass transport and certain municipal services. Now when the government makes the next round of cutbacks it will have to face a very widespread readiness for action on the part of the public workers.

The public workers unions have grown both in terms of members (the largest civil service union gained more than 10,000 members) and activists. Although a lot of the leaders are politically inexperienced, they continue to enjoy considerable confidence among the membership, especially in the case of the Abvakabo, the main FNV union for the public sector.

The actions were stopped by court orders that banned further strikes. There was a lot of grumbling among the ranks, but most of them did not feel that their leaders had let them down.

The defeat the public workers suffered in this round of cutbacks can, thus, be attributed to the political inexperience of most public workers. The courts have long been regarded as sacred. Now a whole series of decisions have made it crystal clear how judges act in big class conflicts. And the previous respect for the courts is fading. But this process takes time.

Some of the court decisions were quite significant. Although there is no formal strike ban, everywhere that the actions had a real effect the judges banned further strikes. This is an ominous sign. The courts banned strikes at the same time that they recognized the formal right to strike of public employees (except for the police). This sort of reasoning, thus, could be applied to industrial as well as public workers.

It was against this open class justice that the strikes at key-points strategy proved particularly ineffective.

The Netherlands has seen other such strike bans. In the engineering industry on more than one occasion banned strikes have been continued by elected action committees.

Such action committees also played an important role in this strike. The central decisions were left to the union leadership. But the committees had a say in the forms of action, about the most effective way of paralyzing the key point selected for a strike.

In view of this success, it can be expected that in subsequent actions such committees will again be called upon to play a role. Thus, the means is at hand for continuing strikes in the face of court

injunctions.

In the coming months there should be many discussions in the public workers unions. The most important questions are what attitude to take toward the courts and the policy of pinpoint strikes.

The Socialistische Arbejdernes Partij (Socialist Workers Party — SAP), Dutch section of the Fourth International publicized its ideas on these questions during the strikes through large-scale leaflet distributions.

Where possible, the SAP members played an active role in the action committees and worked in particular to build solidarity between the public and private sectors. In Amsterdam, for example, this led to the issuing of joint leaflets by leading unionists in various unions and to a common demonstration. The SAP's proposals for working toward a general strike of the public sector were generally well received.

This wave of strikes is the second big confrontation between the Lubbers' government and the opposition. The first, the fight against the Cruise missiles, is not yet decided. In the second, the government won a material victory but one that looks likely to prove politically a pyrrhic one.

Opposition to austerity is now widespread in the union movement. A whole sector that had been quiet has now gone through an important experience in action. And in large sections of the workers movement, there is a climate of strong political opposition to the Lubbers' government, even in the Christian unions.

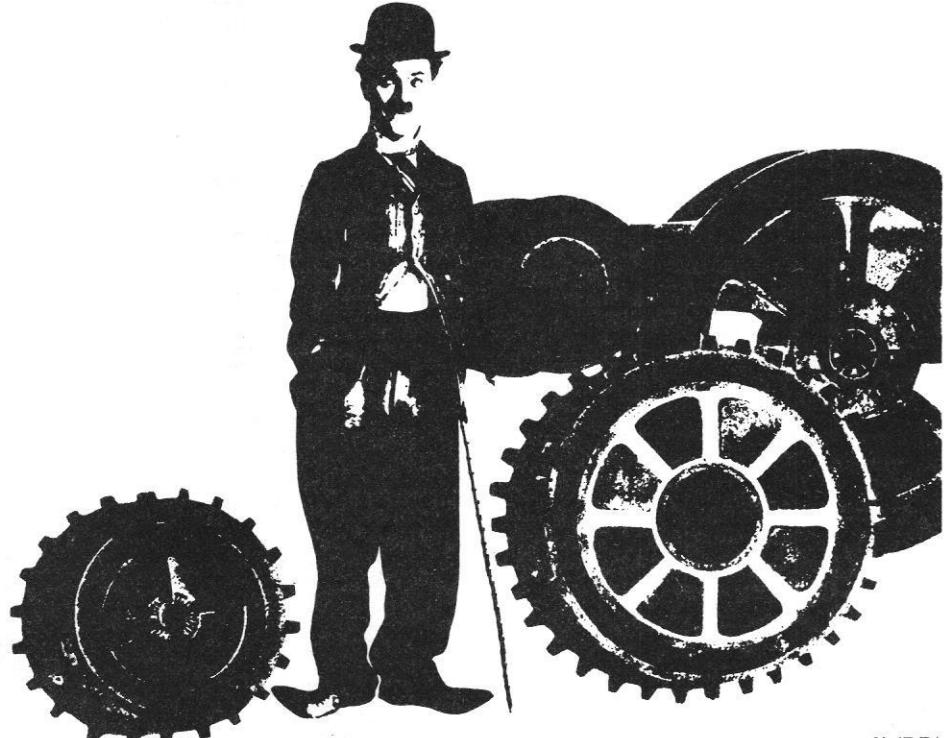
This does not mean that things are going to be easy in the union movement. This government is determined to push austerity, and so it is prepared for hard confrontations.

In June 1984 we will face the final decision on the Cruise missiles and a first phase of a new offensive against social spending. The need is more and more clearly posed for ousting this government and replacing it with a Social Democrat government not tied to right-wing coalition partners.

Many thousands of people in the unions are beginning to see this. At the same time, we are seeing a process of differentiation among various unions and in various unions between different layers of the apparatus. The most right-wing leadership, the one in the FNV Industriebond is now facing opposition in its own apparatus. Similar processes are going on in other unions.

In the coming six months, we should see important political developments in the Dutch labor movement. Discussion should begin on the most important labor contracts in industry, which will run out on January 1, 1985. There is every indication that the political stagnation that has reigned in the labor movement since the onset of the crisis in 1980 can be broken.

The task of the revolutionary socialists is to help to advance class-struggle answers and to promote the development of a militant left current. ■



Technology has come a long way since Charlie Chaplin started! (DR)

UNITED STATES

The "big change" for skilled workers — new conditions and new consciousness

By all accounts, 1983 was a good year for the bankers and business people, and not so good for workers and minority groups.

Despite the high rate of small-business bankruptcies and the constant queasiness in banking circles about insecure foreign investments, the US ruling class has been celebrating "a classical recovery" from the depths of the recession that began in July 1981.

Jack MARSH

Corporate profits rose a whopping 40 percent in 1983 to an annual total of 227.2 billion dollars and that's good reason for cheering among those who get the benefits.

Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige has said that the corporate profits picture "reflects the vigorous pace of economic growth combined with stepped-up gains in productivity and moderate increases in wage rates."

This is the pattern that the employers and their political representatives want to see — rising productivity and low wages. But the government economists admit some dark spots, cautioning that the future remains (as always) uncertain. The

big trouble ahead, they say, is growing inflation, rising interest rates, a federal budget deficit for the current fiscal year in excess of 200 billion dollars, an increasingly unfavorable foreign-trade balance, a steady flow at year's end of new unemployment claims, and a constant lengthening of the average workweek.

For the employers themselves, who are notoriously short sighted, the last two items in this list — mass unemployment and a longer workweek — are hardly a cause for worry. In fact, this is music to their ears — exactly the tune they are calling.

But long-term unemployment for an estimated 7 to 9 million workers, combined with a longer workweek and speedups on the job, spells trouble for the economy and greater social unrest in the

near future. This is a potentially explosive issue in the 1984 national elections.

Working people and minorities (including women, who are becoming actively aware of the economic exploitation and discrimination they suffer) will not look back on 1983 with the same glee as their employers.

The workers have not prospered. For them, the headlines about economic recovery have an ironic ring. It costs more to live today than a year ago. Millions have used up their unemployment insurance and are subsisting on meager welfare checks and food stamps. Many who in better times acquired homes have been dispossessed. The actual number of unemployed remains over 10 million.

In the 100-million-strong workforce, there is hardly anyone who does not have a friend, former shopmate or relative currently out of work, and in a lot of cases they have been jobless for long months and without any prospect of work.

In some regions, such as the iron range in Minnesota, the coal-mining areas of the Appalachian mountains and the mill towns in Pennsylvania, half the workforce is unemployed.

This does not mean that there have not been countervailing changes, or that many of the workers let go when auto plants and steel mills closed have not found other work. Some workers have been called back in auto and in steel, although fewer in the second case.

General Motors, for example, has recalled 75,000 laid-off workers. This giant corporation now boasts of a big gain in profits, and has announced that "the American auto industry remains competitive and able to provide secure, good-paying jobs." But the company has not said anything about the ratio of jobs to the projected increases in production.

The drive for competitiveness

One of the ways the auto industry plans to remain competitive is through "joint ventures and import agreements" with Japanese and other foreign producers. GM has nearly completed a 300-million-dollar manufacturing venture with the Toyota Motor Corporation, and it plans to reopen its Fremont, California, plant under the new joint management.

At the same time, in December GM announced that 50,000 former employees remain on indefinite layoff. When GM's robotized plants are in full operation, the number of cars produced is expected to break all records, and the number of laid-off workers may also break records.

Workers returning to work this year after long layoffs will find that the new jobs they are called on to do will be very different from the ones they left when their plants shut down. The old jobs are gone forever, as are many of the old plants themselves.

The new jobs are *combinations* of the old skilled trades. They tend to involve monitoring and adjusting the new automated assembly lines. And a new cate-

gory of computer operators has been created for the fully automated processes.

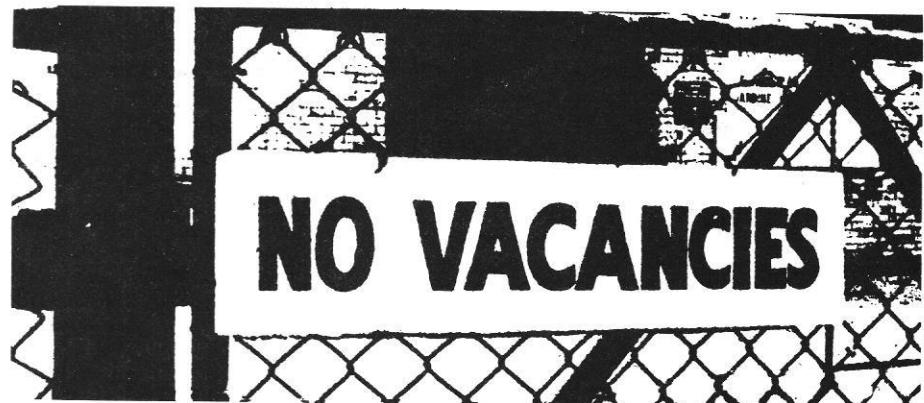
Many aspects of this have been written about in the general press and economic publications. But there have been few reports about the concrete effects on the workers themselves of this transformation of industrial production. That is what I propose to do here.

Millions of workers are now being retrained under these new conditions of work, and they are beginning to gain a new understanding of their relationship to production. This represents a new stage in the education of the industrial workforce.

Taken in its entirety, this question is a very big one. I will approach it here from the standpoint of my experience as a worker in the Chicago area who

ficialdom did not understand what was happening, and were incapable of doing anything to prevent the ruin of the old industrial plant. They saw no way to create or protect jobs except by trying to keep the corporations profitable and competitive. All the major industrial unions have agreed to wage concessions and are negotiating so-called tradeoffs with respect to craft jurisdictions.

Why these agreements are called "tradeoffs" remains a mystery, because the union negotiators are agreeing to combine several crafts under new classifications, and to accept the resulting reduction in the workforce. For this, they are getting nothing in return — except perhaps vague promises that the outdated operations will not immediately be closed down entirely and forever.



served an apprenticeship as a millwright at U.S. Steel's South Works, and after six years on the job, was laid off when the mill cooled its furnaces.

A look around the industrial scene in Chicago shows that South Works is only one of the many idle plants. In fact, the industrial wasteland extends into northwest Indiana. Journalists and commentators now refer to this area as the "Rust Bowl of the 1980s."

These once productive industrial facilities were alive not long ago with hundreds of thousands of "gainfully employed workers," as we used to say. These workers were mostly members of District 31 of the United Steelworkers of America. Few of them ever thought there would come a time when the mills would stand cold and empty. They thought they were fixed for life. Not well fixed, of course, but people in the skilled trades often had the illusion that once they completed their apprenticeship they "had it made."

Reorganizing the work force

Such illusions are now shattered, along with the old brick shells of the factories. With the massive unemployment — especially the layoffs in the skilled trades in heavy industry, in auto, steel, rail, mining and oil — the prospect of going back to work or looking for another job is a nightmare for workers. It is an "employers' market" for the corporations and the shoestring operators alike.

The story of what effect this process has had on the unions has been told many times, and is well known. The union of

How this affects the work at the point of production has not been much written about, but it is the subject of almost constant discussion on the job.

Formerly, in the industrial unions (in particular the Steelworkers), every craft was separate and distinct, and there was a clear definition of the work that came within its jurisdiction. The lines of craft jurisdiction were sharply drawn and strictly limited. There was no crossing of craft lines.

The theme song of skilled workers was "that's not my job." Everyone understood what that meant, and most workers adhered to the established definition of each particular task. For example, a millwright would refuse to do the job of a pipefitter regardless of how small the task might be. The foremen would almost always call for another worker in the proper trade classification to help when something developed that required a different skill than those included in the classifications of the workers already on the job.

This long-established practice has now been almost completely abandoned. The reason is the drastic transformation of the productive process. This, in turn, is largely a result of the economic crisis that set in during the 1970s as a consequence of overproduction on a world scale.

Competition in the world market has since forced the modernization and reorganization of US industry. And the shake-out effect of this has been a further reduction and downgrading of skilled workers in the mass production industries.

Without being aware of the process that has overtaken them, the union bureaucrats have succumbed to its pressures.

The Rubber Workers union, for example, has negotiated national contracts that establish five trades in plants where there used to be fifteen.

Rail unions have agreed to eliminate firemen, conductors and in general reduce crew sizes, while extending the length of trips workers are called on to make.

The Steelworkers union has signed contracts in major mills that establish "super crafts," and which create a new category called "operating technicians." These jobs require workers to perform both skilled electrical and mechanical tasks.

The new "super crafts"

In the steel industry, this has taken the form of establishing "circle crafts." A skilled worker has to pass tests in six to eight crafts, involving both physical and mental capacities. In this way, employers can eliminate older workers with high seniority, who are less likely to be able to meet the physical tests. Moreover, those workers who manage to pass will have to do multiple jobs.

The employers gain both by circumventing seniority rights and merging crafts. The smaller workforce also becomes more efficient and more productive. Productivity rises, profits increase.

When a laid-off or displaced industrial worker begins to look for a new job in the present "employers' market," he or she has to be prepared to top a whole new set of hurdles.

A worker applying for a skilled job these days has to be a welder, pipefitter, plumber and a heating technician. He or she has to be able to do electrical circuit wiring, to assemble and disassemble machinery and equipment, to operate lathes, lay brick and perform other masonry work, to do rigging and all the troubleshooting required in these trades. That is what you have to be able to do to get and hold mechanical and maintenance jobs.

For electrical maintenance jobs, workers have to be qualified electricians, motor inspectors, instrument-repair experts, armature winders, lathe operators, welders and sometimes riggers.

The employers gain in a number of ways, and two in particular. The new job classifications are generally coupled with lower pay rates, even though greater skill and more work are demanded. Secondly, the old "down time" that the other workers got while they waited for workers with the required skills to handle a particular job has now been eliminated.

Today, the trial periods for qualifying for a job are much longer. And screening of applicants and work records is more thorough. The economic insecurity created by high unemployment among skilled workers promotes a grinding intensification of labor — a pyramiding of tasks, as well as a speedup — on the better paying maintenance jobs.

The employers are demanding and getting more work and more careful attention to the quality of the product from workers re-entering the job market after long periods of unemployment and layoff.

Both union and non-union shops make these demands and screen all new hires at the employment office and on the job. Applicants have to produce proof of experience and recent training as skilled workers, and after being hired they have to perform. Otherwise the gate opens, and another statistic is recorded in the unemployed column.

With workers in the mechanical or electrical trades being required to do all sorts of tasks in order to hold their jobs, the only way to survive is to study, to try to learn new techniques, to go to school to acquire more skills, to get training certificates and experience recommendations from every possible source.

You need all this to get past the employment desk. You have to show an elementary understanding of the multiple crafts and give the impression that you know the work backwards and forwards. But the real test is on the job.

A new worker (who may be middle aged and highly skilled in any one of the old crafts) has to pay close attention to how all the other sorts of jobs are done, otherwise you can easily get disoriented and find yourself unable to complete a job assignment. But there is another side to this.

Today all the old skills trades are being combined under the conditions of a brutal speedup. Workers on ships in the Great Lakes, on the railroads, in the steel mills, mines and auto plants are all coming into the same labor market.

No one can be a master of all trades, as all workers pretty much recognize. So, in general, they know that they are all in the same boat at this stage of what they realize is the "big change," and only the beginning at that.

Cooperation, productivity and caution

So, skilled workers have had to acknowledge their limitations, many of them for the first time. And there is a new willingness among these workers to help each other. A new sense of cooperation is developing. It is necessary for survival from the workers' standpoint, and it also contributes to greater productivity and higher profits for the boss.

When workers from different industries, backgrounds and work experience are thrown together, they learn quickly and easily from each other. A natural process of selection occurs, not according to acquired skills but according to helpful character traits and the ability to cooperate. This is not a matter of "all good fellows get together." Quite the contrary. It is essential to learn from each other and to be mutually helpful.

The attitudes of workers of widely different ages and backgrounds change. They quickly recognize the limitations of their past experience when they have to perform in these new "supercraft" jobs.

By teaching each other and learning from each other on the job, they overcome feelings of inadequacy and acquire a new sense of solidarity.

For the moment, the bosses are getting big gains. Some of them are less tangible but more valuable than the latest jump in profits.

This assemblage of workers from various industries, many of them with years of experience, the employers gain a highly skilled workforce, without any need for special on-the-job training or apprenticeships. This is a workforce that is reliable (free from absenteeism or chronic lateness), and which meets all production standards, however grudgingly.

These early years of the 1980s are a time of great insecurity for most workers in the United States. It is a time of change. Most workers have no realistic perspective of early retirement, no confidence that they will have a job for the rest of their working life, no way of knowing whether this new factory or shop will close or whether they will be laid off.

The attitude of most workers today is dominated by their most vivid recent experiences, the shock of suddenly finding themselves out of work without a job in sight.

This is another side to the new consciousness. It does not make for militancy at this juncture but rather inspires caution. In part, this accounts for the failure of the union movement to organize any large-scale fightback against the offensive of the government and employers over the past several years to undermine the unions and drive down wages.

The decisive factor in the failure of the union movement to defend the interests of the working class, however, is the incapacity of the present union leaders. They have kept the workers trapped in the political maze of the capitalist two-party system.

Until the workers find new leaderships who can find their way out of this trap, there is little likelihood that the unions will find effective means for tackling the problems of jobs and rising prices.

What is happening to the rather narrow stratum of semi-skilled workers, as I have described here, is far from telling the whole story about the situation today in the very stratified American working class.

But most workers now face the same general conditions. Almost all of them recognize now that these are times of big change, and hardly any see a change for the better.

Almost every job is new today and requires more cooperation among workers. This applies as well to jobs now opening up in the new computerized operations, even in the highly robotized plants.

These sweeping changes in working conditions are creating a new sense of working-class solidarity. It is a higher form of class consciousness that will contribute in an important way to the development of a working-class political leadership in this country. ■

Invasion of the robots threatens labor

For a half century, the auto industry has been the testing ground for large-scale application of the most modern technology in the capitalist production process.

In the US automobile industry, this began in the 1920s with the introduction of the assembly line. The production line that was set up in Wolfsburg after the second world war for VW beetles set the European record for division and intensity of labor.

Once again, at the end of 1983 and the beginning of 1984, the "Halle 54" of the Volkswagen factory in Wolfsburg has set a world record for automation with the robotized and computerized production of the new Golfs ("Golf II").

Winfried WOLF

What was true before is even more so today. These exceptionally highly automated factories that stand out now, in a few years will become the model for the entire industry.

Therefore, it is useful, and not just for those working in this industry, to take a closer look at this laboratory to get an idea of the conditions all the workers are going to face.

"If you look at all the individual technological innovations in one individual VW factory, and imagine a factory in which they are applied, you get a factory empty of people."

This perspective is confirmed by the examples given by workers from VW-Kassel and the complementary examples given by other workers from Opel, Ford and Daimler-Benz at the Second Automobile Workers Meeting organized by the *Falken Review* in early December 1983. The future belongs to factories empty of people.

"Factories empty of people"

In 1969, when the first robots were introduced on production lines at General Motors in Detroit, it all still seemed to be harmless, yet another labor saving device.

Then, in the 1970s, the Japanese auto companies introduced industrial robots into their factories on a large scale. In this case, however, two-digit growth rates for the Japanese economy as a whole covered up the fact that living labor was being squeezed out of the production process.

In particular, the first generation of "automated manual-operations machines" were still completely inadequate as a general substitute for human labor. These robots carried out a few preprogrammed movements. They moved mostly around one axis, were awkward and "insensitive."

This generation of robots replaced on the average 1.4 to 1.6 workers. The new "second generation of intelligent robots," however, in the opinion of those who carried out a study for the Commerz-

bank, represents "social and political dynamite."

These robots are equipped with visual and tactile sensors (in most cases using video cameras). They will soon be able to actually "feel" (that is, distinguish warm from cold and soft from hard) and distinguish colors. They will be able to move around more than one axis, in most cases three. But most importantly, they are fully reprogrammable.

"Computer Aided Manufacturing" has two big advantages over the sort of fixed production lines previously in general use.

— Production can be shaped much more flexibly. Breakdowns at specific points can be adjusted for without stopping the process as a whole.

— Models can be changed without having to scrap the old equipment, as was generally the case before. The industrial robots can be reprogrammed in accordance with the tasks involved in producing the new model.

This second generation of robots covers ranges of jobs that remained out of the reach of previous forms of automation. One of the most important of these is assembly, the putting together of the motor, the drive mechanism, the axles, the chassis, the installation of the headlights, the attachment of the wheels and the exhaust pipes, unwinding and flexing the belts, etc.

Soldering, which the first generation of robots did to some extent, is now almost entirely done by the industrial robots (except for some spot welding and seams). The same goes for painting.

A few jobs have been saved even after the introduction of robots in the production of the Golf II. For example, human workers are still needed to install the cooling systems and electric wiring. In the second case, however, this is only an intermediate solution.

The entire electrical system used in cars has scarcely changed since the 1920s. It will not last much longer. The wiring is going to be replaced by electronic and electric circuits built into the body.

Experience shows that no work previously done by hand is outside the range of the robots.

At Audi-Neckarsulm, robots already put in the ceiling under the car roofs. At Mercedes-Mettingen, a robot already "works" as an inspector of the final product, checking the seams that its fellow robots have welded (it shows up deviations as small as a tenth of a millimeter).

It would be entirely wrong to lament this replacement of human labor as such. In fact, through the changes in the factory routine of the 1980s, the possibility is appearing for a humanization of labor. Humanity and the mass of workers can do without this kind of work the robots are starting to do.

Most of the jobs taken over by robots — welding, lifting heavy weights, painting and so forth — are harmful to the health of human beings because of noise, poisonous gases, glare and physical strain. The least that can be said about them is that they are monotonous, uncreative activity. No workers who have spent long years in the belly of this industrial Moloch come out unscathed.

Potential for liberation or destruction?

This indicates the potentially liberating perspective the new technology offers. Ignoring this is quite fashionable on the left today, but such an attitude leads politically into a hopeless blind alley.

It is only on the basis of understanding the new technology's liberating potential that the effects of its introduction under capitalist conditions can be properly assessed and fought. In fact, the destruction this technology can cause, if it is introduced into the capitalist labor process, is as great as is its potential for humanizing work. Under capitalism, the first result is massive unemployment instead of a shorter workweek for all.

The capacities of the second generation of robots are such that since the middle of 1983 hundreds of them have been installed. Every robot now replaces four to ten workers. This process has been fully underway in the West German car factories since the spring of 1983. It was already foreshadowed by the massive investment programs that were postponed in 1979, at the beginning of the last recession in the industry.

Retrofitting for the new models has been combined with revolutionizing the production lines. In BMW's main factory in Munich, the No. 3 Plant has been robotized. In the Sindelfingen and Bremen Daimler plants, the "little Mercedes" is being produced by robots (by the end of 1983, 300 robots had been installed).

At the Opel plant in Bochum, 150 robots have been installed to make the new "Kadett." At the Ford plant in Cologne, 150 robots have been installed to assemble the new "Scorpio."

Whereas in the past Opel produced 13 cars per year per employee, in four or five years it will build 45 cars per employee. Other car manufacturers have aimed for, and in part already achieved, productivity leaps of this order.



Workers are being replaced by other workers who don't need breaks—robots (DR)

Volkswagen, which since the end of the 1970s, has been the pacesetter in West Germany in the installation of robots, puts all this in the shade. In the production of the Golf II, robots and computerization will take 20% off the total worktime per car. If these cars were made the way the Golf I's were, VW would have to employ 1,000 more workers.

"The wave of automation is becoming an avalanche," warns *Metall*, the journal of the engineering workers union, which until a short time ago showed no inkling of what was happening. "Robots are at work on the assembly line, in press work, body construction, painting. And now in parts assembly, with labor-cost savings to the company of up to 40%." (*Metall*, September 23, 1983.)

A few have ventured estimates for the economy as a whole. Thus, the robot producer Kuka estimates that before the end of this decade 120,000 robots will be installed throughout the world and 12,000 in West Germany, 5,500 of them in the West German auto industry. This would result in the loss of 100,000 jobs overall in West Germany and 40,000 in the West German auto industry. This is quite a "soft-hearted" estimate.

The head of the Ford company in Belgium is more forthright. By the end of the decade, 50% of all jobs in the West European auto industry may be eliminated, that amounts to a million jobs, and those are just the direct job losses in the auto industry itself.

Work time "reorganized"

The Commerzbank study cited above considers that in the West German auto industry, half the assembly line jobs are in danger, that is there are 600,000 workers who can be replaced by robots. The number of new jobs that might be created in robotized industry are estimated by this study at a meagre 20,000.

In Japan, the example of the three biggest electronic concerns, shows how rapidly such a process can take place. In only ten years, the workforce was cut by half, while at the same time production increased. In particular, badly paid women workers were replaced by robots.

"Adjusting labor organization to the demands of modern production tech-

niques is a constant task for industrial society that is undergoing a process of structural change." That is how the most prestigious German newspaper of big capital, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), described the second negative effect of the introduction of the new production techniques under capitalism — computer-directed intensification of the labor of those who still have jobs.

This is what the "reorganization of labor at Volkswagen" represents, which the FAZ considers a pilot project for all West German industry, in particular auto.

The VW management is trying to impose two new regulations on the workers: maintaining production during breaks and the computing of worktime on an annual basis. For computer-directed production, breaks are an "unnecessary interruption of production." Eventually this sort of production could go on without a human workforce at all.

In the immediate, what the companies want to do is program the production lines so that they continue through the breaks provided for the workers in the union contracts, without being attended by human workers, or at least only by a reduced monitoring crew. This would produce a new labor saving and, if the work time and level of production remain the same, it also means a loss of jobs. The pilot project for this scheme is to be started in the VW factories.

Workers at Ford in Cologne report that the management there is also making moves that point in the same direction. Food wagons are being brought in. On each line, the canteens are being dismantled. The crews will be able to eat their "meals" in sight, if not in reach, of their half-automated production lines.

What could prove far more important than the elimination of breaks at VW is the project to introduce "yearly worktime." VW wants to force its "coworkers" to accept a contract selling labor time for a year in advance, so that the company can then use it as it chooses.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* claims this would "enable the company to use labor when it is really needed." Concretely what it means is part-time work for some and overtime for others. Special shifts will not have to be negoti-

ated anymore on an individual basis with workforce representatives. The company would simply impose them on the basis of electronic computations of the market and inventory situation.

The result will be a lot of involuntary time off in the winter and overtime in the summer months. Bonuses for overtime will be eliminated or "paid in a lump sum," which means that they will be reduced.

The workers will be pressured into accepting such an agreement by the threat of "unemployment." In return for agreeing to these "yearly worktime" contracts, the workers will get the assurance that they cannot be fired for that length of time.

If you add to this the practice followed in 1982-83 in cases when there was a lot of extra work (for example, during model changes) of the so-called "cotton-picker contracts," that is, hiring workers for short periods limited in advance, the result approaches the system used in Japan.

Thus, a somewhat more job-secure core of workers, conditioned to regard themselves as a labor aristocracy, would be backed up by an army of much less secure short hires. A new instrument for dividing the working class would be created.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*'s paean to the VW management, also reveals an important side-effect of these new yearly contracts. "On the basis of an established 40-hour workweek and only on this basis, the company will agree..."

What this means in plain German is that VW, which bargains nationally with IG Metall (the engineering union), will be able, through these yearly labor-time agreements with its various workforces, to undercut IG Metall's campaign for the 35-hour week.

The FAZ proclaimed with hypocritical glee that the VW factory council is "taking a surprisingly open attitude to the management's new plans." ■

This article is from the December 15, 1983 issue of Was Tun, the paper of the West German section of the Fourth International. It has been slightly abridged for space reasons.

Bolivian Fourth Internationalists fight for workers solution to the crisis

The military relinquished power to a civilian government in Bolivia in September 1982. The following interview by an *International Viewpoint* correspondent with a leader of POR-U (Bolivian section of the Fourth International) looks at how the political situation is developing and the reactions of the workers movement.

Question. What can you tell us about the governmental crisis that opened up on December 14 last year when all the ministers resigned?

Answer. You should remember that this government that just resigned was formed last August after a long crisis. At the time it was a question of the MIR's (1) return to the government it had quit in January, although it had formally remained a member of the UDP. (2) But the attempt to reconstitute this at the governmental level did not succeed. The president Hernando Siles Suazo installed a government comprising 8 members of his own party, the MNR-I, two from the Bolivian Communist Party (PCB), two from the Christian Democrats (PDC) and two independents — a personality from the MNR-H and a military figure. (3) Rightists predominated among the MNR-I members: Alvarez Plata became minister of the interior, Fernando Baptista minister of finances and Colonel Cardenas Mallo minister of defence.

This operation by Siles — which did however close the door to participation by the Bolivian Workers Confederation (COB) and the Peasants Confederation — failed to stop the rightwing offensive. The right continued to exploit the relationship of forces it had, particularly in the Senate. The ADN's and MNR-H's technique, as well as the MIR's, is to rely on parliamentary questions, putting the government on the spot. At the same time it is continuing the campaign it has been waging for months on the guerrilla operations that far left groups are supposed to be preparing for. In fact a group of 7 people — five Bolivians and two Chileans — was arrested at the end of October while they were — according to the prosecution — undergoing military training somewhere in the province of La Paz.

What the right wants is not to put a stop to these events which are after all very minor, but to find pretexts for attacking the MNR-I as well as the PCB who are accused of complicity. The sister of a leader of the left in the MNR-I, Rospigliossi, was suspected of having been involved with the 'guerrilleros'. Finally, the right launched attacks against the November 17 package of economic measures that it considered insufficient,

although they favoured certain layers of the exploiting classes.

The whole rightwing campaign led up to a censure motion adopted by the majority of the Senate on December 14. Although they were not constitutionally obliged to do so the ministers resigned, provoking the present crisis.

It should be added that the Church took the opportunity to intervene in its turn. The bishops issued an appeal in which they preached 'a political pact with a social truce allowing us to look forward with hope'.

In fact, the guiding motif of the party declarations and the comments in the bourgeois press is now for national unity or convergence and the social truce which will follow. The objective of this campaign is not in the short term to prepare for a military coup. What the bourgeois parties and the bosses organisations want is a government that has clearly shifted to the right.

Siles Suazo, who had already in August outlined the perspective of a 'government of national convergence' to be set up precisely at the end of the year, has been quite cautious up to now. He could keep the present coalition while changing the ministers, return to collaboration with the MIR or include MNR-H representatives in the government. The situation is quite complicated. Not least because of the divisions that are tearing apart the parties. Thus it is quite difficult to make predictions. In any case, there will probably be a shift to the right of the axis and orientation of the government. Its relationship with the masses will deteriorate further which particularly will create problems for the PCB — already wracked by rather sharp internal debates.

Q. The political crisis is to a very large extent fostered by an economic situation that, according to all the indicators, is going to continue worsening. Can you tell us more concretely what the situation is?

A. In fact the political crisis is conditioned to an extraordinary extent by a deep economic and social crisis.

In March, while completely rejecting the idea of a fixing of a basic subsistence

wage and a sliding scale, the government had decided that wage adjustments would be made every time that the price index rose by 40 per cent. In practice, the catching up was always late and in no way compensated for the loss of buying power caused by galloping inflation. For example, at the time the economic measures were adopted in November, wages were increased by a little less than 40 per cent while the cost of living had risen by 150 per cent.

According to the first calculations, 1983 was marked by a reduction of around 7 per cent in Gross Domestic Product — other calculations have even put this at 10 per cent. The private entrepreneurs say that only 50 per cent of industrial capacity was utilized. Unemployment is continuing to rise. Since October 1982 more than 200 enterprises — small or medium-sized — have been closed down. That's a lot in a country that is so little industrialised as Bolivia. It is unnecessary to also point out that the problem of the foreign debt remains extremely serious and weighs very heavily on the government's policies. This debt has now reached 6,000 million dollars.

The government appears to be primarily occupied with giving assurances to the private sector. The November measures implied, among other things, that the Central Bank would itself take over the foreign debt of this sector. On the other hand it is manoeuvring to the detriment of COMIBOL, the state mining company, although it remains the largest source of foreign currency. Since last May the government should have given COMIBOL 50 million dollars, in fact they have only given 7!

Such behavior is quite obviously inspired by the wish to create problems in an industry where majority workers co-management has been, in principle, introduced.

Q. Can you make a first balance sheet of workers co-management?

A. No. Up until now the workers majority co-management leadership has been formed at a central level, but the discussion has not yet started on the concrete norms of functioning. At the local level, the parity bodies installed following the miners action last April remain in place.

1. MIR: Movimiento de Izquierdo Revolucionario, Movement of the Revolutionary Left, traces its origins from pro-Cuban guerrillas but now a conservative formation standing on the right wing of bourgeois nationalism.

2. UDP: Union Democrática Popular, a coalition of the Communist party (PCB) and the two offshoots of the old bourgeois nationalist party, the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario.

3. The MNR-Izquierdo (MNR-I) is led by the president Siles Suazo. The parliamentary faction led by Alvarez Plata favours unification with the MNR-H but this is opposed by the party apparatus and the left.

The MNR-Historic (MNR-H), led by Víctor Paz Estenssoro, represents the sections of the former party that collaborated with the General Hugo Banzer dictatorship at the beginning of the 1970s.

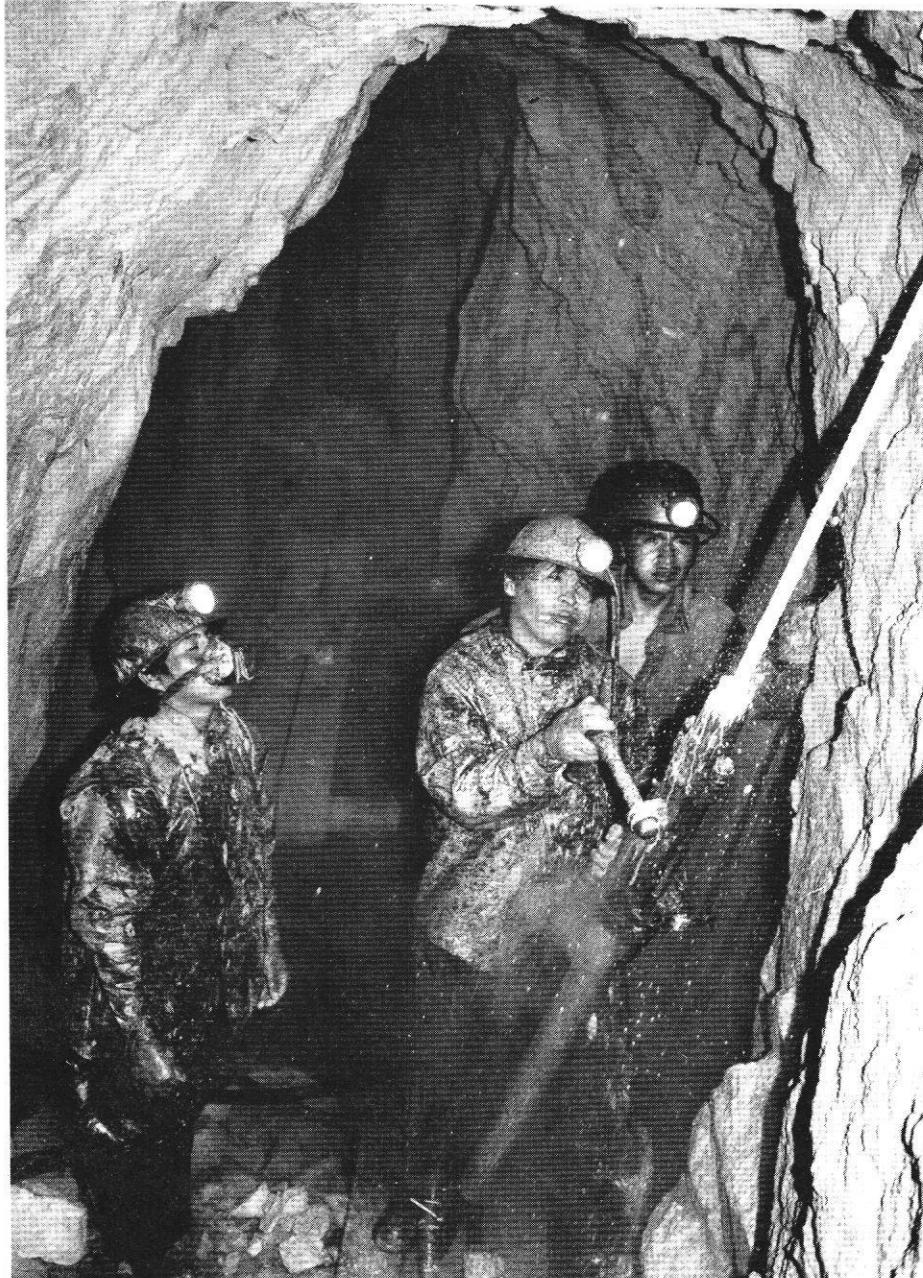
Q. The international press only mentions in passing the struggles of the last few months. What can you tell us about them?

A. In August, on the 2nd and 30th, there were demonstrations organised by the COB in La Paz and other towns. These were centred on the objectives outlined in its economic emergency plan.

This opened a new phase of struggle characterised by a considerable growth of sectoral struggles. Strikes and demonstrations by industrial workers, miners, teachers, different sections of the service sector increased. The peasants in turn mobilised several times. In the Yungas region in particular they once again used the method of struggle that they consider most effective — roadblocks. Essentially, the demands concerned wages.

As the sliding scale with the minimum living wage has not been introduced, every one on their own is fighting to get rises. The miners — among whom the Huanuni workers as always play a van-

The Bolivian miners play a vanguard role (DR)



guard role — have outflanked the FSTMB (the miners federation) itself, demanding the regular supplying of their canteens which often lack the most essential consumer goods. They continue to demand a living wage and the sliding scale.

The peasants got concessions on the organisation of peasant markets, transport, technical aid. But they keep on having to go into struggle again because the government does not keep the undertakings it has made.

The economic measures on November 17 provoked very sharp reaction. The COB realised that a new wave of struggles was starting up. It retook the central initiative by proclaiming a national work stoppage for December 13 and 14. This was an undoubtedly success. However, there was no demonstration organised in the capital city. On the other hand in the mining region there were massive mobilisations almost everywhere. In Oruro particularly there was a very militant march, the biggest since the UDP came to power.

Q. Are there discussions in the trade unions on the objectives and orientations for this stage of the struggle?

A. There are discussions and differentiations. On the crucial problem of the living wage and sliding scale there are two opposing positions. The PCB current — partially supported by the president of the COB Economic Commission — have come out against this demand which they consider 'unrealistic' in the present situation. The other current includes different forces — among them the Trotskyists. First of all it won in the FSTMB, and then in an extended meeting of the COB leadership. This forced the leadership — in which the PCB remain the majority — to include this demand in their emergency economic plan. However, it is one thing to have a resolution on paper — it is another to make it the focus of a real mobilisation. That's the problem at present.

It should be said in passing that the PCB paid a high price for its position. A lot of activists and organisers are against the official line. Even at leadership level there are conflicts. One effect of this has been the replacement of Ramiro Barran- chea by the more malleable Horst Grebe as minister of labour.

Finally, there is a more general problem of orientation. Despite the sharp arguments and the conflicts the COB leadership has maintained a dialogue with the government. Others would like to have an open break.

Q. So the COB congress which starts on May 1 will be an important event...

A. Undoubtedly. Delegates representing all the workers in the country will meet to discuss the crucial problems we face and the line to adopt in the present situation. There will be very sharp discussions at every level.

The trade-union activists who are members or sympathisers of our organisation and who have responsibilities as organisers, or even sometimes as national leaders, will fight above all on the question of the living wage and sliding scale as the central focus of mobilisation. At the same time they will insist on the urgency of establishing a joint platform of demands for all sectors. This is the only way of avoiding the increase of dispersed sectoral struggles that would entail a risk of wearing down the workers.

They will emphasise the need to struggle for majority co-management to be applied in practice in the nationalised sector, and for workers control to be introduced in the private sector.

The battle for these objectives will go along with the battle for a united front of the left including the COB, the Peasants Confederation and all the parties and organisations of the working class. The COB will be the backbone of this front. Its congress should transform itself into a popular assembly that represents the alternative to a bourgeois parliament. From such an assembly popular power bodies could and should develop throughout the country.



AROUND THE WORLD



East German jail peace activists on hunger strike

The development of independent peace groups in East Germany became generally known after the publication of the January 1982 Berlin Appeal by the veteran opposition communist Robert Havemann and Pastor Eppelmann, leader of the radical wing of the East German Lutheran church.

P. LUDWIG

These groups grew up in connection with the older struggle of conscientious objectors, with the demand of a layer of young people for a form of civilian service, or a real "peace service."

Facing an extreme militarization of daily life, these groups protested in many forms both inside and outside the Lutheran youth centers. In this way, a "mini-mass movement" movement developed, which raised a number of themes and promoted a number of discussions.

Among the issues brought up were the destruction of the environment (which is catastrophic in East Germany; 300 demonstrated in Halle last June on this

question), militarism in the schools, critical culture, the specific problems of women (the real nature of the "equality" the regime boasts about). They also included problems of daily life, of the communities, sexuality, and the problems of homosexuals.

As it became clear that the Geneva negotiations were likely to end in failure and when the Soviet Union announced the installation of new SS-21 and SS-22 missiles, the peace movement faced a new situation.

The peace groups responded on a national level by circulating petitions in more than 15 cities. The appeals people were called upon to sign had the follow-

ing common axes:

1. Rejection of all systems of nuclear destruction.
2. A call on the Honecker government to take "a unilateral first step to initiate momentum toward disarmament in order to promote confidence" (the Dresden Appeal), even if the Cruise and Pershing missiles are deployed on the other side of the Berlin Wall.
3. Setting up of a nuclear-free zone in central Europe, the area of greatest tensions in the present status quo.

These demands were summed up in the Rostock Appeal, which was issued in mid-November and which we give below.

The East German bureaucrats struck back rapidly. After the big peace demonstrations in West Germany were over, they launched a wave of repression in several provincial cities, in particular in Weimar and Potsdam.

A dozen young peace activists were arrested on the most absurd charges. In East Berlin, Barble Bohley and Ulrike Poppe, the main leaders of the group called Women for Peace were arrested on December 12. They are charged mainly with having had contacts with women belonging to the British peace movement organisation END, with the West German Greens and French journalists.

These two women have rejected in advance any offer to deport them to West Germany. In January, they started a hunger strike, demanding their immediate release. ■

The Rostock Appeal

The signers of this appeal, who include both Christians and non-Christians, were dismayed by the statement issued by the German Democratic Republic's National Defense Council on October 25, 1983, announcing plans to deploy Soviet tactical missile systems.

On the basis of our humanist or Christian commitment and our conviction that no new war must ever again spring from German soil, we are totally convinced

- that the deployment of these missiles will not reduce, but increase the threat of war to the German people;
- it is intolerable for us and our children to have to live in the future alongside these systems of nuclear destruction in our own country;
- applying these measures would mean abandoning the Swedish proposal for a denuclearized zone in central Europe, which has been accepted as valid up to now.

Therefore, fully realizing what is at stake, we protest against the measures decided on by the National Defense Council. In this, we are in complete agreement with the decision of the Synod of the Evangelical [Lutheran] Church adopted on September 20, 1983, which called on the government of the German Democratic Republic to exercise its influence in the Warsaw Pact to assure that no short-range nuclear missiles were deployed in the GDR, either during the Geneva negotiations or after.

We appeal to the National Defense Council to reverse its position without delay.

We call on all those who are not ready to reconcile themselves to a more and more real possibility of the destruction of human life to sign this appeal and send it to the chairperson of the GDR National Defense Council and to E. Honecker.

The stakes are too high for us to be able to leave the choice of life or death to politicians and the military. ■

Rostock
November 11, 1983.

European women meet to plan 'Women Against the Crisis' Tribunal for 1985

The first international co-ordination meeting for the 'Women Against the Crisis' Tribunal planned for International Women's Day 1985 took place in Brussels on January 14 and 15.

This proposal was initially made at the European-wide conference on Women and Work in Turin in April 1983 (see *International Viewpoint* No 33, June 27, 1983). That conference revealed that throughout Western Europe women are facing similar problems as a result of the economic crisis and the efforts of the governments and bosses to make the working class pay for the crisis and the arms race.

This has led to attempts to divide the workforce by giving some workers (male, white, middle-aged) more right to

a job than women, immigrants or young people, for example by the introduction of part-time work directed specifically at women, or the use of the 'head of family' notion in the allocation of jobs or benefits. There have been cuts in social services, forcing women back to the home, alongside a propaganda campaign aimed at the same objective. Gains previously won, in the field of contraception and abortion for example, are also under attack; justified by both economic and moral argumentation.

The aim of the Tribunal is to demonstrate how these attacks on women are taking place, with individual experiences as well as information from official and unofficial sources being presented. The Tribunal will thus demonstrate the inadequacies of governmental or European policies, even when they are implemented, and that women have to fight to defend their interests.

The meeting was attended by the Women Against the Crisis co-ordination in Belgium which includes both the major trade-union federations, the Socialist FGTB and the Catholic CSC, as well as women's movement groups, the national women's secretariat of the Socialist trade union in the Netherlands the FNV, the women's movement and the women's union bodies in Luxembourg. A representative of the CGT (Communist Party-led union federation) from Portugal was present, as also were women from the women's movement in France, the National Abortion Campaign in Britain and the Greenham Common women and other women's peace groups in Britain. Women from the 'Women Against the Crisis' co-ordination in Turin, formed after the conference was held there, also attended. The Comisiones Obreras (Communist Party-led unions) from the Spanish State and the Madrid Abortion Co-ordinating Commission sent letters indicating their support and interest.

The meeting agreed to hold the Tribunal in March 1985 and to build up to it through a press conference around March 8 this year and some public activity around the time of the European elections.

In the meantime, it is planned that co-ordinating networks will be established in the different countries to win further support from the women's movement and the trade unions and workers parties, as well as helping to gather information for the Tribunal itself. The January meeting agreed in principle to work around the themes of equality at work, including taking up the question of part-time work, and a shorter working week for all; economic independence for women through the right to work as well as equality of treatment in allocation of benefits, etc.; the particular situation of immigrant women; the decriminalisation of abortion, and the contradiction between the vast amounts spent by governments on defence and the continual cuts in social services justified on the ground that there is 'no money to pay for them'.

It is hoped that different countries

Marcel Lorent (1921-1983)

Our comrade Marcel Lorent is no longer. He died on December 22, 1983 following a short but incurable illness. Marcel was a steelworker at the Cockerill plant in Ougree. He was an active member of the FGTB (Socialist-led trade-union federation), who joined the Parti Wallon des Travailleurs [PWT — Walloon Workers Party — Wallonia is the name for the French speaking part of Belgium] with the team around Louis Goire, the trade-union vanguard of the Liege steel industry.

In 1971 Marcel participated in the foundation of the Ligue Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs [Revolutionary Workers League, Belgian section of the Fourth International] from the fusion of the PWT and the Jeune Garde Socialiste [these two organisations had resulted from splits and expulsions in the Socialist Party and its youth organisation]. With a dozen other workers in Cockerill he worked patiently to build the LRT. Above and beyond his union work he would sell up to 100 copies of *La Gauche* every Saturday morning in a door to door sale with another comrade in his working-class neighbourhood in Ougree.

In 1973 Marcel had to confront the most difficult political and trade union event in his active life. In that year the union team built around Louis Goire, of which Marcel had been a part for so many years, was hit by bureaucratic and employers repression. In fact, the FGTB union fulltimers of the Liege metalworkers had decided to break up the union vanguard in steel. In the middle of a strike the bureaucracy decided to suspend 30 delegates [shop stewards]. These 30 delegates continued to lead the strike that more than 80 per cent of the workers in their sector wished to continue, according to a secret ballot held by the bureaucracy.

The bureaucracy itself had ordered a return to work. *La Wallonie*, the FGTB daily paper, in Liege, falsified the facts, thus on this occasion joining its colleagues of the rightwing press. One read that it was only a handful of leftists led by the LRT preventing a return to work at the Thomas and LD steelworks. The Cockerill management took advantage of the withdrawal of union protection to sack 7 of the 30 suspended delegates. Among these were 3 LRT members, Louis Goire, Henri Dams and Henri Fischbach. Their comrade Marcel Lorent was not a direct victim of the repression because he did not hold any union post. But he was very affected by this betrayal.

Of the Cockerill workers who were members of the LRT, Marcel remained the most inclined to continue fighting. He was very active in the committee for the reintegration of the 7 delegates. We remember particularly his contribution to the Central Committee of the LRT at the end of 1973 when it discussed how to wage this campaign.

Marcel took early retirement in 1976 but remained active in his local area. In 1981 he once more headed the joint LRT-PLS list of candidates for the Senate.

We remember him with great feeling. He held tenaciously but always with great modesty to his course as an unremitting fighter for workers emancipation. There are (too) few like him. ■

La Gauche
January 13, 1984.

will take on responsibility for co-ordinating the preparation of information on a specific theme for the Tribunal, particularly where one of the themes is of particular importance for them, as for example the Spanish women volunteered to do on abortion, or the British women are considering doing on the arms race

and its effects on women.

After this initial meeting the next international meeting is planned for June 2/3, again in Brussels. For further information, contact the Belgian co-ordinating group: Anne Grauwels, 1 rue des Oeillets, 1000 Brussels, Belgium. ■

SUBSCRIBE TO INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

PEC, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France

Support the Polish 'Inprekor'

Since the Polish *Inprekor* was first published in October 1981 twelve issues have appeared.

Inprekor is published every two months as a journal reflecting the point of view of the Fourth International. It addresses itself to the debates that are going on in the Polish workers movement. For example, see the dossier on the strategy of the general strike in July 1982, on the place of street demonstrations in Solidarnosc's strategy in September 1982, on the 'line of the factories' developed by the activists in Lower Silesia in September 1983. In the same month was a dossier on the economic situation and the roots of the crisis, and then in the next issue, November 1983, on relations at work and the possibilities for struggle in the workplaces.

Inprekor also reports on the mass struggles in other countries — Salvador, Turkey, Bolivia, Brazil, the anti-war movement in Europe — with particular attention to the activities of the democratic and workers opposition in the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, as well as to solidarity with Solidarnosc activities. *Inprekor* also gives space to other political currents and to fraternal debate with them. There have been articles from Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Josef Pinior, Wladyslaw Frasyniuk, Zbigniew Romaszewski, Zbigniew Bujak and the organisation 'Fighting Solidarnosc'.

Inprekor has won a certain audience in Poland itself. The articles that we receive for publication bear witness to that, as do the letters like this one from a leader of a clandestine unit of Solidarnosc:

'Four or five copies for a network like ours is simply ridiculous. People are fighting over who gets it first! Since we have been receiving the last few issues people have begun to ask, 'When's the next one? Why are there so few?' *Inprekor* represents hope, plans for the future. I think that it is sufficiently well known, sufficiently respected, that even if there is something that one disagrees with, which could happen, that we're not going to start fighting about it, but sit and discuss calmly.'

To make sure that *Inprekor* can appear regularly, to increase its distribution in Poland, we need your help. You can take a supporters subscription, or simply make a donation as an act of international solidarity.

A subscription for one year (6 issues) is 75 French francs, 12 US dollars or £8 sterling. Make cheques payable to PEC (Polish *Inprekor*) and send to *Inprekor*, Polish edition, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93100 Montreuil, France. For bank transfers, etc. proceed as for *International Viewpoint*, but always with the addition 'Polish *Inprekor*'.

