

International VIEWPOINT

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Special :
Youth fight back
against
the crisis



Why Amal
turned on
the Palestinians



What was
at stake
in
Greek elections



International Viewpoint

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Amal's war on the Palestinians

Over the night of May 19-20, violent clashes broke out between members of the Lebanese Shiite movement, Amal and the Palestinians in the Sabra refugee camp in the southern part of Beirut. They subsequently developed into a full-scale battle for control of the camp. On the following day, Amal launched a general offensive against the three camps on the outskirts of Beirut — Sabra, Shatila, and Bourj el-Brajneh. The fighting raged for nearly two weeks, causing heavy casualties, including among civilians. More than 400 people were reported killed and 1,000 wounded.

The Amal militia, joined by the Sixth Brigade (made up of Shiites) of the so-called Lebanese legal army, ran up against fierce resistance from the Palestinians, in which every tendency participated. While calling for an end to the fighting, the Syrian regime supported Amal's demands, in particular the demand that the

Palestinian camps be disarmed. It put the responsibility for the clashes on Yasar Arafat. This accusation was denounced as a false pretext by the anti-Arafat Palestinian left, which has been allied with Syria. It is this Palestinian left that led the resistance in the camps. It categorically rejects the demand for disarming.

The Lebanese Democratic Progressive National Front — which includes the Progressive Socialist Party of Walid Jumblatt, the Lebanese Communist Party, the Social Nationalist Party, and the pro-Syrian Ba'ath Party — played the role of mediator. The Islamic fundamentalists, both Shiite (the Hezbollahis, etc.) and Sunni (the Islamic Unity Movement in Tripoli in northern Lebanon), deplored the 'fratricidal fighting, taking the same tack as the Iranian regime. Libya resolutely supported the Palestinians against Amal.

Salah JABER

Once again the events in Lebanon have toppled the most stubborn political prejudices and disoriented the world press which went off on the wildest flights of conjecture in an attempt to interpret the meaning of the fighting and the reasons for the attitudes of the various contending forces.

It has to be acknowledged that it is in fact difficult to follow the strands of the Lebanese tangle. Besides the complexity of the situation in Lebanon itself, which is the result of the multiplicity of interests and forces involved, false allegations and disinformation are widely practised in Middle Eastern politics.

Therefore, in looking at events in the Middle East, more than in any other region of the world, it is necessary to beware of oversimplified schemas, which can be the source of great confusion.

To make it easier to understand the battle of the camps and the stakes involved, I will deal separately with the main parties to the fighting.

The offensive launched by Amal surprised those who see this organization as a pro-Khomeini or anti-Zionist one. In both respects, they were misled by the undeniable role that Amal played in defeating the Phalangists and forcing the withdrawal of the Israeli army.

In commenting on the debacle of the Amin Gemayel government in February 1984, I defined the Shiite current as follows: "Amal, or the 'Movement of the Outcast,' of which Amal is the military wing, was formed in the 1970s. Its clear objective was to organize the poor Shiite masses under a bourgeois leadership that, unlike the

traditional Shiite chiefs — who were the most backward hangovers from Lebanese Feudalism — was capable of using populist demogogy.

"In fact, the Amal operation was directed mainly against the Lebanese CP, whose spectacular growth in 1968-72 was based on the recruitment mainly among Shiites. From 1975 to 1982, Amal did not fight a single battle against the camp of the Phalangists and its allies. Instead, it built itself through battles against the Lebanese CP and the Palestinian organizations on the basis of anti-Communist and anti-foreign propaganda mirroring that of the Phalange ...

"Today, Berri [the leader of Amal] is not showing any sign of 'radicalism' beyond his opposition to Gemayel in person, whom he blames for the recent events [attempts by the Christian forces to trample on the Shiite interests]. At the same time, he is showing a very great concern to keep things from going too far as regards a breakdown of the bourgeois state. He has insisted that the militarized police and the ordinary police, or even Lebanese army troops under the command of Muslim officers, take charge of restoring bourgeois order in West Beirut." (1)

This description remains entirely valid. The growing involvement of Amal in the resistance to Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon since 1984 has changed nothing of the reactionary nature of this movement's objectives. Its plan is to rebuild a strong Lebanese bourgeois state in which the Shiite bourgeoisie, whose militia Amal is, will be represented in accordance with the numerical preponderance of the Shiites in Lebanon.

In fact, Amal was dragged into the anti-Israeli struggle in southern Lebanon,

which is the main Shiite region and Amal's principal base. If it had not joined in, it would have been outflanked by the Communists, who were the initiators of the armed resistance, and by the Khomeini current. In participating in this resistance, Amal in no way went beyond the bounds of its narrow bourgeois patriotism. It simply involved itself in united-front activity to liberate southern Lebanon from Israeli occupation.

Once this objective was achieved, with the Israelis withdrawing, Amal's reactionary project came to the fore again. It brutally eliminated the Morabitoun, the Nasserite Sunnis in Beirut who are linked to Libya and avowed opponents of Arafat, despite the disinformation campaign portraying them as agents of Arafat. Moreover, in the liberated areas of southern Lebanon, the Shiite militia has established itself as "the force of order" and forbidden all other organizations to maintain their own armed forces.

This was the context for Amal's offensive against the rearmed Palestinian camps in southern Beirut, which was aimed at disarming them and forcing them to submit to the Lebanese army. That has also been the main demand of the Phalangist militias for 15 years. In fact, it was in the name of this demand that the Christian militias launched the Lebanese civil war in 1975.

At the same time, Amal was fulfilling its part of its implicit bargain with Israel. It was showing the Zionist state that the latter could withdraw its troops

1. See 'A grave setback for world imperialism,' in *International Viewpoint*, No 47, February 27, 1984, p. 7.

without having anything to fear, since Amal would take charge of assuring the security of its northern frontier.

The Damascus regime today has many reasons for satisfaction. Among the most important are the resounding defeat of the Israeli operation in Lebanon; the obeisance of all Lebanese political forces to Syria; and the overthrow of Numeiri, who was a supporter of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

However, the Syrians also have causes for concern. The advanced state of decay of the situation in Lebanon threatens to make the authority over the country that the Syrians have gained into a trap. At the same time, there are a number of developments that could cause them problems in the region: Preparations are speeding up for dialogue between the Jordanians and their Palestinian allies and the Americans, and through them the Israelis, in the framework of the Reagan Plan. There is the Hussein-Arafat accord; the reconciliation between Egypt and Israel; the tightening of the alliance between Iraq, Jordan, Arafat, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Along with this King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, Hosni Mubarak, and King Hussein of Jordan have been making pressing appeals to the Reagan administration, and it has shown signs of offering a favourable response. Moreover, the Israeli premier, Shimon Peres, has given indications of relative flexibility in this regard.

So, the Syrian regime is more than ever isolated by the Arab reactionary axis linked to American imperialism. It has less hope than ever of regaining the Golan Heights — the Syrian territory occupied by Israel in 1967 and formally annexed in 1981 — in the framework of some overall Israeli-Arab settlement under the aegis of the US and the Soviet Union. There is, in fact, a broad consensus within the Israeli ruling class that the annexation of the Golan should be permanent. The US administration has not really opposed this.

Everything is proceeding as if US imperialism and its Zionist fortress have decided to offer Lebanon to Syria in exchange for the Golan Heights. In fact, experience has shown that only Syria could impose bourgeois order in Lebanon, Syrian order to be sure, but this is preferable to the prevailing disorder, which favors the development of all sorts of subversive currents and is helping to destabilize the region as a whole.

However, the Syrian regime fears precisely that Lebanon may be a trap. Today the various warlords of the Lebanese bourgeoisie, in particular the Christians and the Sunnis, are pressing Syria to deploy its troops throughout the length and breadth of Lebanese territory. But Damascus is playing hard to get! It understands that while it is easy enough to destabilize a country with so many political and military factions, it is quite another matter to restore a new stability that can last.



Amal militiamen (DR)

Obviously, the Damascus regime has an interest in seeing all the warring communalist factions neutralize each other so that it can dominate them all. This is why it has saved the reactionary Christian forces from a decisive defeat involving the removal of Amin Gemayel. This is why, also, while officially supporting the demands of the Shiite Amal movement for disarmament of the Palestinian camps, with which all factions of the Lebanese bourgeoisie concur, the Syrian regime has not really brought any pressure to bear on its Palestinian allies. And it certainly has the means to do this, if it chose to.

In the final analysis, Syria probably hopes that Amal will draw the conclusion from its own experience that only the Syrian army can restore order in the Palestinian refugee camp, as well as on the scale of the country as a whole.

For Hafez el-Assad, the best outcome of the fighting underway in Lebanon among the various factions is the wakening of all of them. In order to deploy his army throughout Lebanon, he is demanding that all the Lebanese factions get down on their hands and knees and beg him to, that they all agree to being disarmed, including the Palestinians, and that the imperialists give their blessing to the whole thing. So, could Syria annex Lebanon de facto? The Lebanese and Palestinian masses would certainly gain from this from the standpoint of security and their social and economic interests. They would lose their liberties.

The crocodile tears that Yasar Arafat has shed over the "war of the camps" in Beirut will deceive only the naive. In fact this has given him a golden opportunity to move another step toward the Reagan Plan. He took the occasion to get the Central Council of his Palestine Liberation Organization, which met in Amman on May 29, to ratify the accord he reached with Hussein on February 11, 1985, and which the most moderate

nationalists, including some of his own supporters, denounced as involving liquidation of the Palestinian people's struggle. This was quite in character for Arafat, who took advantage of the battle of Tripoli at the end of 1983 to go and give the accolade to Hosni Mubarak, thereby ending the five-year Arab boycott of Egypt for signing a peace treaty with Israel.

The Palestinian national left — the El Fateh dissidents, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) led by George Habash and the PFLP-General Command of Ahmed Jibril, which are united with the pro-Syrian Saika in the Palestinian National Salvation Front — today for the first time stand clearly in opposition to the Syrian regime.

It is quite revealing that this conflict has occurred over the question of the right of the Palestinian masses to arms and to self-defense in Lebanon. This shows all the opportunism of the so-called strategic alliance with Syria, which this left wing made so much of. They could not have been unaware of the fact that the right they demanded in Lebanon is not accorded to them in Syria itself.

The only support this left wing has left comes from Libya, which does not share the specific objectives of the Syrian regime. From the beginning, we warned the Palestinian left against the illusions that it was helping to sow about its Syrian ally. (2) It is to be hoped that it will be able to draw the lessons of its bitter experience today. There is still time.

The revolutionary Marxists in Lebanon and Syria will do what they can to help the Palestinian militants who grapple with these questions. At the same time, they will struggle alongside them and everywhere they can for the fundamental rights for which the Palestinian left has been fighting in the last weeks in Beirut. ■

2. See "Crisis in the Palestinian movement," in *IV*, No 46, February 13, 1984.

Papandreou won but what was his game ?

The June 2 parliamentary elections, among other things, were a challenge to the flexibility of the Greek language, and the press responded by inventing some terms. One of its favourites was "*dikommatismos*" ("two-partyism"). In fact, the two largest parties, Andreas Papandreou's Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and the right-wing New Democracy (ND) of Konstantinos Mitsotakis polarised the vote to an unprecedented extent. The PASOK got 46.84% and the ND, 40.16. The latter completed its absorption of the far-right vote, which had some strength in the years

following the fall of the colonels in 1974. On the other hand, PASOK tightened the squeeze on the Moscow-loyalist Communist Party (KKE), the largest of the "traditional left" parties, to use Papandreou's phrase. In fact, the ND did not have to be too unhappy about its vote, which was substantially higher than its score in the parliamentary elections in 1981 and even in the European elections in 1984. Moreover both the left and right press agreed that the ND had come out of the elections better organized and with a renewed credibility.

Gerry FOLEY

The major loser, the Greek press agreed, including the KKE daily *Rizospastis*, was the pro-Moscow party. In the 1981 parliamentary elections, the KKE got 10.93% of the vote. In the European elections of the same year it got 12.84%. The Eurocommunist CP-Interior (KKE-es) got 1.34% in the 1981 parliamentary elections and 5.29 in the European elections of that year. In the 1984 European elections, the KKE got 11.64% and the KKE-es, 3.42%. (1)

In the 1985 parliamentary elections, on the other hand, the two CPs got respectively 9.98% and 1.78%. The KKE-es. actually increased its vote by about 40% over its 1981 score. But since it lost out in the competition with the KKE long ago and was reduced to a trace element in electoral politics, an increase on that order did not change much. The important thing is that it failed to re-establish itself as even a minor electoral force, shattering the dreams aroused by its score in last year's European elections.

So, the 4% or so that PASOK gained over its vote in the 1984 European elections seems to have come mainly from potential CP voters.

In fact, in last year's EEC elections, PASOK seemed to be in trouble. It held only a narrow lead over the ND, which it had trounced in 1981. In 1984, PASOK got only 41.58% as against 38.05% for the ND. In particular, PASOK's vote declined disproportionately in the more politicalized urban areas. That pattern generally continued this time. In Athens-A, PASOK got 44% in 1981, 34.71% in the 1984 elections, and 38.39% in the recent vote. In Athens-B it got 48.73 in 1981 and 42.59% in 1985.

In the A constituency of Peiraius, the heavily proletarian port of Athens, PASOK got 48.17 in 1981, and 44.24% this time. In this constituency also the

KKE vote collapsed, going from 12.20 in the 1984 elections to 4.12% in these. On the other hand, in Peiraius-B, a very left district, the PASOK vote was down from 1981 elections, but not more than the national average. It fell from 51.16% in 1981 to 50.14, showing a sharp recovery from the 42.34% of the European elections. On the other hand, the KKE vote was down significantly from 21.28 in the 1981 elections to 17.28%.

In Salonika, the country's other main city, PASOK's vote fell in constituency A from 47.63% in 1981 to 41.74%, and the KKE's vote from 13.19 to 9.31%. In constituency B the PASOK vote fell from 46.75% to 41.19%, while the KKE vote increased somewhat from 10.53% in 1981 to 11.67%.

In commenting on the PASOK victory, Dimitris K. Tsikhogios wrote in the June 7 issue of the independent left weekly *Anti*: "It would be an exaggeration for anyone to call the results of these elections surprising but they represent a very great victory for PASOK. After four years of running the government, it has managed to cut its losses to 2.2%. That is, it has held 95% of its voters. No other government party has done this since the Second World War at least. The Radical Union (ERE) lost more than 12% of its vote between 1956 and 1958, and it had to use force and fraud to regain its 1956 percentage in 1961, only to see its vote collapse in 1963-64."

Moreover, the PASOK achieved this victory after seeing a clear erosion of its credibility, shown by the 1984 elections. It was suffering from the same ills as the Socialist Party government in France, having failed to live up to the expectations of the voters who put it in power. Living standards continued to decline, little concrete was being done about breaking from NATO and expelling the US bases, military spending has soared, and the government was floating schemes for increased militarization. (2)

On the other hand, the memory of right-wing dictatorship and repressive right-wing governments before that remains quite fresh in Greece. It, therefore, seems that Papandreou's move of removing the right's anchor man, Konstantinos Karamanlis, from the presidency on March 9 and staging a duel with the right paid off in a new four-year mandate for his government. He presented the elections as a straight left-right contest, in which PASOK was the only alternative to the right. The mass jubilation at PASOK's victory obviously reflected the belief that the forces of reaction had been defeated and that the way was opened for progress.

In addition, PASOK may have gained from the fact that Greek farmers are still enjoying some benefits from joining the EEC. This may also have been a reason for opting for early elections, because it is not likely to last. In fact, modernization of agriculture made necessary by EEC competition is going to impose heavy social costs in the Greek countryside.

After "*dikommatismos*," the Greek press's favorite new word seemed to be "*avodynami*," that is, "self-sufficient," a PASOK government that can rule on its own without needing the support of any other forces in parliament, although indeed it had a larger absolute majority before.

With 46.84% of the vote, PASOK got a majority of 162 out of 300 seats. It benefitted notably from a new electoral law it pushed through parliament. In fact, as the columnist Antenor noted in *Anti*, each PASOK seat represents 18,144 votes; each ND one represents

1. These figures are from the June 3 issue of *Elevthotypia*, and represent incomplete returns. The comment in the Greek papers a week later, however, indicates that there were no substantial changes.

2. See "Papandreou talks peace but steps up arms race, from *Ergatike Pale*, " in *International Viewpoint*, No 62, October 20, 1984.

20,634; each KKE seat, 42,459 voters. And for its 117,050 votes the KKE-es got only one deputy.

What an "autodynami" government means in effect now is that Papandreou's already considerable personal role has been still more reinforced. Among other things, the president is no longer a counterweight. The new one, Kristos Sartzetakis, does not have the sort of base of his own that Karamanlis did. Furthermore, it is an open secret that Papandreou intends to reduce the constitutional powers of this office. Moreover, in his first news conference after the election, he pledged to "separate the movement [PASOK] from the government." (3)

Despite all the right's denunciations of Papandreou in the past as a dangerous demagogue, the dominant forces seemed anything but worried by the outcome of this election. For example, in its editorial "The Lessons of the June 2 Vote," *Oikonomikos Takhydromos*, the most authoritative business weekly, made the following comments:

"The initial and perhaps the most important conclusion that can be drawn from these elections is that it is not the parties of the Communist left that expressed what the "Change" really meant and that PASOK would interpret the meaning of its 1981 vote and advance the wishes of those voters. Even if we assume that some supporters of the left voted for PASOK out of fear that the ND would win ... no one can say those who voted for PASOK reject the sort of "Change" it offers and prefer that advanced by the two Communist parties. On the other hand, the fact that despite the well-known desertions of Marxists from PASOK before the elections and their joining of KKE, the strength of the latter has declined substantially. This means that these people were an alien body in the governing party..."

"Today, it should be clear that PASOK and its leadership need not be so sensitive to left pressure or pay so much attention to the noisy phrasemongering of the left, which represents only about 10% of the Greek people ...

"The second conclusion, which follows from the first, is that the Greek people have approved not the failures and mistakes of the PASOK ... but its fundamental moderate political line. The latter, despite the party's extreme

rhetoric ["megalostomia," literally, "big-mouthedness"], has been sensible and realistic (despite occasional harmful backsliding) ...

"To be more clear, what the great mass of the Greek people who support PASOK have endorsed is not only what this party has done positively but what in the last analysis it has not done. What the Greek people have endorsed is remaining in NATO, the acceptance of the fact (which is bearing fruit) of EEC membership, equidistancing ourselves from the big blocks, equal condemnation of American and Russian nuclear weapons, a prudent handling of the question of American bases, a more favorable attitude to private enterprise, a realistic attitude to foreign capital ..."

The KKE, from its standpoint, drew a similar conclusion. It accused PASOK of having waged an anti-Communist campaign and preparing a reconciliation with US imperialism. "A Turn to the Right," the KKE daily headlined its report of Papandreou's first press conference after his victory.

"With the answers he gave yesterday in Zappeios, the premier left no doubt that both on economic and foreign policy questions his options will be still more conservative than in the past four years. He also made it clear that in order to follow this faint-hearted line, the PASOK leadership considers it necessary to continue to extend the anti-Communist attack that it mounted throughout the electoral campaign."

Rizospastis went on to cite the following examples: Papandreou called for improving relations with the US. He refused to give any clear answers when asked about the deadline for removal of US bases. He refused to say anything definite about the removal of US nuclear weapons, arguing that the denuclearization of the Balkans now depended on what the Romanian government did. He said that the EEC was not an issue now but rather "what policy to follow in it." He said that Greece's relationship to NATO would not change but that the problem was getting it to recognize the status quo in the Aegean. And finally the premier said that he would continue to follow an economic policy of "stabilization," that is, austerity.

The KKE daily noted with disapproval Papandreou's charge that the two CPs had waged a "one-front" war against PASOK and failed to recognize his government's "importance for the left."

Commenting on Papandreou's conference in its June 6 issue, *Augi*, the daily of the KKE-es, made similar points. In addition, it pointed out that PASOK had failed to abolish the special police units and that the promised "democratization and independence of the union movement" had turned into "total dependence, a new government unionism and exaltation of the spirit of splitting the workers."

On the other hand, the Soviet press hailed Papandreou's victory simply as an "Inspiring Triumph of the Democratic

Forces." (*Izvestia*, June 4.) That could represent appreciation for Papandreou's verbal opposition to US policy and his condemnation of Solidarnosc.

The KKE attributed its losses to PASOK's "political terrorism," that is, its forcing the left voters to cast their ballots for it as the only alternative to the return of the right to the government. In fact *Ergatike Pale*, the paper of the Greek Fourth Internationalists, wrote before the election "The impasse of the policy of the reformist CPs ... is becoming clearer every day to the broadest masses of working people. The weak profile of these parties in the campaign is an indication of their lack of any serious alternative. The emergence of the dilemma, PASOK or the right, for the working masses is an indication of their bankruptcy." It noted: "Especially after the rise of PASOK, the position of these parties has swung back and forth between full support of the policy of PASOK and faint-hearted criticism of it."

In the June 6 *Anti*, Stelios Kouloglou argued that the KKE had been suffering from the sort of loss of credibility among its more political urban voters as the PASOK, and that its major losses came precisely in its old bastions, where people could vote for it without worrying about wasting their votes. He presented figures showing that in absolute terms, the KKE vote had declined by 7.1% in Athens, Salonika, and Peiraieus, while rising about 6.9% in other areas.

On the other hand, both CPs pointed to seats that could have been kept from the right if PASOK had accepted a joint campaign.

The KKE argued that its relative losses had not fundamentally reduced its strength, which is evident, although they represented a serious immediate setback and a continuation of the party's long-term marginalization by PASOK. The emphasis in the KKE press and reports in the independent left press indicate clearly that the party is now going to try to show its strength on the social level to prove that it still has bargaining cards. It could give an important impetus to struggles. Unfortunately, besides its opportunism, the KKE has a very sectarian tradition. The sort of drum banging that it has started appears more useful in hardening up the ranks than uniting people in struggle.

Ergatike Pale opposed a vote for PASOK, while calling for a stand against the right. "By its position on the president and waving the bogeyman of the right, PASOK is trying to close the eyes of working people to the catastrophic effects of the policy it has followed for the past four years and conceal as much as possible what it plans for the future." The statement ended by explaining the need for a real anticapitalist left that could give leadership to the mass struggle against PASOK's right-wing policies after the election. ■





Dossier Youth mobilise for second international camp

This summer France will be the setting for the second international camp organised by European youth organisations in solidarity with the Fourth International.

Last year's camp held in West Germany attracted over 600 European youth who were joined by delegations from Japan, the Caribbean, Bolivia and the United States — as well as a representative from the Sandinista youth organisation JS-19.

This year's camp, held in International Youth Year, is expected to be as large with more representatives from Central America and the Caribbean in attendance. A central feature of the camp will therefore be the extension of the solidarity work already being done in Europe in defence of the people of Nicaragua and El Salvador against imperialist intervention, of which the latest initiative was a tour of West Germany, Austria and Switzerland by Nicaraguan youth (see page 28)

Solidarity with the struggle against imperialism worldwide will be one of the camp's main features with discussions with representatives of anti-apartheid organisations as well as young Kanaks fighting French rule in New Caledonia.

The camp will also express the radicalisation of youth today in Europe. Each day at the camp will be devoted to the central themes of the youth radicalisation, which are explored in the special youth dossier contained in this issue.

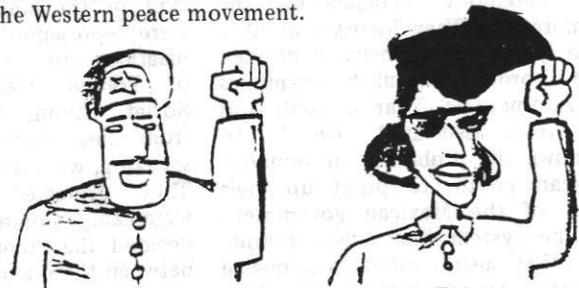


The first major theme will be against a Europe of unemployment and racism. There are 10.5 unemployed young people in the seven biggest capitalist countries today. In Western Europe over 40 per cent of the unemployed are aged under 25. The governmental response has been to introduce youth training schemes to keep youth off the unemployed statistics, to discipline them and undermine trade union organisation and conditions.

But youth are fighting back. As explained in this issue, Belgian youth have launched an effective protest campaign of marches and other actions which has brought trade union support and put the Martens' government on the offensive. In Britain youth played an important role in the events around the miners' strike identifying it as a struggle for all their futures (see page 20). In recent weeks 200,000 British school students struck for a day against the prospect of unemployment when they leave school.

At the camp young miners from Britain, and young trade union fighters from Belgium and Denmark will exchange experiences of their struggle against the austerity policies of the European capitalists. Over 200 French youth will be attending the camp. Among them will be activists from the young immigrants movement which has played a leading role in the fight against the rise of the right and against the racism fed by the disastrous policies of the Mitterrand administration. Their experiences are examined in an article here which will also be the theme of a major meeting at the camp.

The second theme of the camp will be for a non-nuclear Europe. As the threat of a new arms escalation looms with the 'Star Wars' strategic defence initiative of Ronald Reagan, debate on the direction of the peace movement has become sharper. The camp will hear from the experiences of the new anti-NATO mass movement in the Spanish state. Discussion will also take place on the possibilities for engaging youth in continental-wide struggle against the imperialist war mongers. Especially important will be the experience of those who like the Dutch youth have built their own campaigning anti-missiles movement as they explain in the dossier. The camp will be able to hear too the views of Eastern European activists on the links to be forged between themselves and the Western peace movement.



The ecology movement too has drawn into its ranks many radicalised youth against the dangers of nuclear power. In countries like Austria the mass mobilisations examined here have fuelled the growth of the green parties. A debate between representatives of the Greens and the Fourth International will be one of the highlights of the camp.

The third main theme of the camp will be the struggle against the oppression of women and for freedom from sexual repression.

In nearly all the countries of Western Europe youth are experiencing attacks on their contraception and abortion rights. In countries like Switzerland they are playing a leading role in these campaigns alongside the women's movement. A day of discussion at the camp will explore these and other issues.

A camp of international solidarity and for a Europe free of unemployment, nukes, sexism and racism will therefore be at the centre of the camp's discussions.

The camp will enable hundreds of youth from different countries not only to discuss together but also to relax together. For the active there will be all kinds of sports, swimming, and walking in beautiful surroundings. For the creative there will be workshops for photography, video, posters, dance, poetry and music. The music will not stop there with disco, live bands, folk music and cabaret in the evenings.

The camp and the dossier published here are entirely the product of months of discussion and organisation by the youth organisations themselves. Thanks to them, International Youth Year will feature at least one attempt to give a revolutionary socialist answer to the challenge facing youth today.

The rise of a new youth movement

Interview with Fourth Internationalist

The following interview was given to Gerry Foley in May in Paris by Sergio Rodriguez, a leader of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT — Revolutionary Workers Party), the Mexican section of the Fourth International.

Question. What has the International Year of Youth meant for you in Mexico?

Answer. The United Nations declared this year the International Year of Youth. The government has been organizing commemorations similar to those held to mark the International Year of Women. Obviously, its intention is to use these to present itself as the great patron of youth. For this purpose, it has invited representatives of the youth organizations of all the legally recognized parties to participate.

So, since the PRT is a legally registered party, our youth organization was invited to the ceremony inaugurating the commemorations. They discussed whether or not to participate. Finally, it decided to do so in order to use all the assemblies for the International Year of Youth and all the events associated with it to make known the problems and opinions of Mexican youth, to point up their criticisms of the Mexican government and of the system that exists internationally. They also wanted to publicize the struggles that are being waged in our region, fundamentally in Central America.

Ten members of our youth organization were in the presiding committee of the inaugural meeting of the International Year of Youth. And they got an invitation to speak for the daughter of Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, who is the mother of a political "missing person." Her son was a political activist who "disappeared" more than nine years ago. She is the chair of the Association of Mothers and Relatives of Political "Missing Persons."

By having Rosario's daughter invited,

we wanted to point up the fact that the Mexican government cannot present itself as the defender of the interests of Mexican youth, since the great majority of the "missing" were under the age of 25 when they were disappeared. We wanted to make sure that an important part of the Mexican youth who "disappeared" in the 1970s were represented in this affair.

So, from the start we showed how we intend to celebrate this year, and we will take a similar attitude in all the ceremonies to be held throughout the country. For example, in a commemoration in the state of Michoacan, there were representatives of the youth organizations of the Communist Parties of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union, along with diplomats from these countries. While they were speaking, we raised a Solidarnosc banner. They protested about this to the Organizing Committee. And so it was decided that there should be a debate between them and us. They did not show up. But we were able to speak to a large group of young people and explain Solidarnosc's objectives and all the democratic demands of Polish workers.

In other states, we have used the forums to denounce repression in Guatemala and El Salvador. At the same time, we are working in a coordinating committee that is not official but represents people's and left organizations. It is also organizing public meetings on the International Year of Youth.

Since this year is also an election year in Mexico, we are using our campaign to raise a series of demands for youth, such as the right to vote at

16 and the right to organize independently. At the same time, we are trying to give impetus to the formation of a youth organization independent of the parties that will be a product of the self-organization of the young people in their neighborhoods. This process has been developing in most cities.

Q. What sort of demands are these young people raising?

A. One is for the right to vote at 16. Another is for the right to a job. A third is for the right to organize independently. Because in Mexico when five or six young people gather in a street, the police immediately attack them, just because they have congregated. They are also demanding the right to their own culture, their own forms of expression, their music, etc., and obviously democratic rights in general.

Q. Why do they have to demand the right to their own culture?

A. In Mexico, rock concerts are banned. As soon as one starts, the cops come and start beating up both the musicians and the audience. The same thing happens at Latin American music festivals. What the government wants to prevent at any cost is more than 500 or 600 young people gathering in one place.

Obviously, such gatherings would open the way for political awakening. For example, we have had concerts in solidarity with Salvador. And the cops come and break them up.

These youth also have their own forms of literature. And the government has a campaign supposedly in defense of the language, as if it were a crime just to write in a different way, to express yourself in a different way.

Q. How long has this new youth movement been developing?

A. For six or seven years. This new youth culture has come fundamentally from northern Mexico, from the area bordering on the US. It is a product of Mexicans who have gone to the US but instead of assimilating into the North American culture have created their own. This is a continuation of the tradition started by Mexicans who went to the US in the 1930s and 1940s and were subjected to repression because of the way they dressed and talked. It was such people that the US Marines attacked during the Second World War in Los Angeles into the so-called Zoot-Suit Riots. There was a Mexican street party in a section of Los Angeles, and Marines went there looking for "Zoot-Suiters" to beat up. This tradition was continued by a current among the Chicanos (1), called the Cholos, and today it is being carried on by the youth movement in Mexico that I have referred to. These youth go by various

Youth on the streets ... (DR)



names. Some still call themselves "Cholos," others call themselves "gangs."

Q. Does this determination on the part of the police to break up gatherings of youth have anything to do with the mass demonstrations for democratic rights in 1968, which were ended by a massacre of demonstrators by the police in which many young people were killed? I remember that caused a great shock in the country. One magazine carried pictures of bodies of slaughtered teenagers stacked like cord wood under the caption, "The Future of Mexico!"

A. Yes this repression essentially dates from 1968. The government wants to keep young people from getting together at any price, in order to keep anything like 1968 from getting started again. But it has gotten worse. They have started stopping young people from gathering even where they live. The cops are always raiding the neighborhoods. And the authorities have been pushing a campaign on TV, on radio, and in the movies against these young people, portraying them as juvenile delinquents, antisocial elements, rebels without a cause, etc., trying to set the population against them.

Q. So, how have the youth organized?

*A. They have organized the Consejo Popular Juvenil (Young People's Council), which has demanded the right to organize and to participate in political activity, to combat police repression. It started because some young people got the idea that the fighting among the many young gangs that exist in Mexico should stop, that in order to defend their neighborhoods it was necessary to unite against the police. It was this idea of very elementary self-defense that led to the formation of the Consejo. Today, these youth have their own magazine, called *La Pared* ("The Wall").*

Q. Does the name come from the Cuban revolutionary expression?

A. No, actually it comes from a rock number by Pink Floyd.

Q. What does the Consejo Popular Juvenil represent?

A. Fundamentally, it represents youths who had been involved in robbing people and fighting. When I say "youth," I mean teenagers from 10 to 18. When they get older than 18, they are expelled from the gangs, they are considered already old people.

These youth are very poor, from working-class neighborhoods and from concentrations where people have little or no employment. Some of them work in industry, but very few. They call themselves "Panchitos," which is a very traditional Mexican name.



Q. Does that have anything to do with Pancho Villa the revolutionary leader?

A. No. Well, it does have something to do with it. After Pancho Villa, a lot of people named their sons Pancho. And so these youth have taken a name that seems to them to represent the Mexican people.

Q. Is there any consciously political aspect to this organization?

A. Once these youth organized, they began to discuss not their conflicts with private individuals but with the government and the police. They started to participate in left demonstrations. They started to take part in the committees in defense of El Salvador and Nicaragua, in organizations against repression. They even began to take part in rallies in support of Solidarnosc. They developed relations with the left parties, especially with us. We recruited some of them.

Q. What actually makes up the Consejo? What impact has it had on the neighborhoods where these youth live?

A. It is made up of delegates from the various gangs. It organizes assemblies. For example, before, there were problems between the parents and the young people. The parents did not understand the rebellion of their children. But after the Consejo was formed, it started sponsoring meetings with the parents. They were also attended by a lot of sociologists, psychologists, and other specialists.

So, today the relations between the parents and the young people are much better. The parents are generally unemployed or have little work. The economic crisis has also had a big effect in changing their outlook. They have begun to understand what the origin of the problem is. It isn't that their children are juvenile delinquents or anything like that but that the authorities have driven them to desperation.

Youth and the ecology movement

For more than two years, the Austrian government's scheme for building a dam and a nuclear power station at Hainburg on the Danube has met with massive resistance, especially among the youth. This affair has become a burning issue in day-to-day politics, and even the supporters of this project have had to retreat. At the start of 1985, the government in fact decided to yield to the mobilizations and to the activists who occupied the Hainburg site and who had faced violent police repression. The work was suspended until a referendum could be held on the question.

Herman DWORCZAK

In Austria in the past environmental questions played quite a secondary role. The workers' movement regarded them as irrelevant. Of course, the Social Democratic Party (SPOe) has a large organization called the "Friends of Nature." But its activities have been more or less confined to hiking, mountain climbing, and sailing.

For the radical left also, the question of defending the environment remained essentially a "dead horse" up until late in the 1970s. Concern for the environment was left almost exclusively to the "unpolitical" environmental defense organizations, individual scientists, or bourgeois personalities. Such people tended to be regarded as rather odd and unworldly.

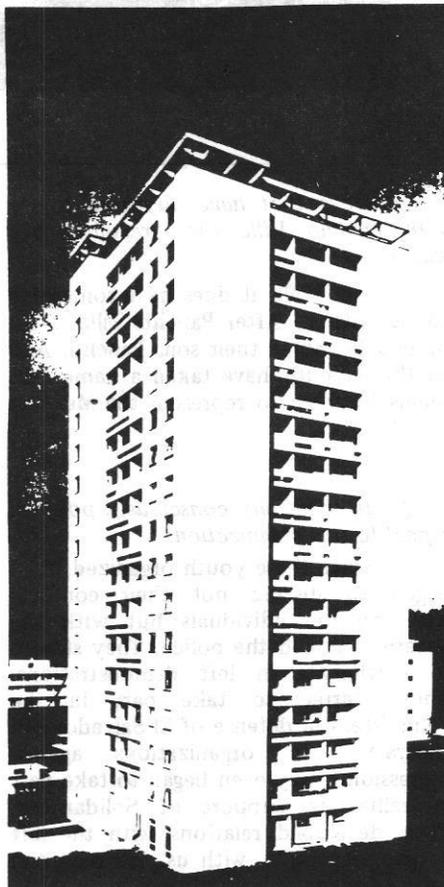
A break with this attitude first occurred over the project of building a nuclear power station at Zwentendorf. Under the impetus of international experiences, a broad antinuclear movement developed. In it the left, in particular the Maoists, who were still strong, set the tone. On the initiative of the Austrian section of the Fourth International, the movement took up the demand for a referendum on nuclear energy. Since the conservatives, the Oesterreichische Volkspartei, took their distance from the Zentendorf project for tactical reasons, the SPOe was threatened with being stuck with a pronuclear label in the upcoming parliamentary elections. So, the then SPOe premier, Bruno Kreisky, decided to hold a referendum on the subject on November 5, 1978. Nuclear power was defeated by a narrow majority, 50.5% against 49.5%.

The broad movement, whose influence reached deep into bourgeois circles themselves, broke up. A few small propaganda groups remained, which began reactivating when the nuclear lobby made new moves toward opening Zwentendorf.

Despite the breakup of the antinuclear movement, the awareness of environmental problems continued to

rise strongly after 1978. It was impelled by international developments such as the rise of the German Greens, the erosion of the Social Democracy, and the failure of the panaceas of the radical left. A Green-Alternative current developed.

From the outset, despite an ideological overlapping, two distinct projects were discernible. One was the bourgeois conception of the "pure Greens," who would work for environmentalist reforms in the framework of the market economy. The other was the conception of the "Alternatives," who did not want to limit their activity to defense of the environment and who looked to a "society beyond the profit principle." These two approaches are expressed



These struggles made it possible to relaunch the activity of the ecological and antinuclear movement, producing national and international reverberations. The question facing the Austrian Greens — Alternatives movement and the currents of the revolutionary left is whether the conditions have been assembled for undertaking the construction of a political party to the left of the Social Democracy, which could concentrate and magnify the capacity for mobilization shown in these latest struggles. The discussion has thus been opened on what should be the political foundations of such a party.

today in two different organizations, the first by the Vereinten Gruenen (VGOe, the United Greens of Austria), and the second by the Alternativen Liste Oesterreichs (ALÖe, Alternative Slate of Austria).

The post-1945 period in Austria, the period of the Second Republic, has been marked by a general process of depoliticalization. The reasons for this are clear. The conservatives and Social Democrats formed a "great coalition" that was to last until 1966. Conflicts were eliminated by "social partnerships" before they got to parliament. Every autonomous move by the working class was stifled before it could get anywhere.

Austria today holds the world's record for the least strikes, with 5.7 seconds per worker lost in strikes. Not only were criticism and study of the fascist past not wanted, intellectual debate in general, political culture went into decline. The Alpine republic became "Europe's Disneyland." (1)

While the older generations retained some rudiments of political thinking, the youth were nearly totally depoliticalized. A small young left swam against the stream in the 1960s (the Verband Sozialistischer Mittelschueler [Socialist High-School Students League] and the Verband Sozialistischer Studenten Oesterreichs [Socialist Student League of Austria]). On this basis, the student movement began to develop in 1967.

Unlike other countries, the Austrian student movement failed almost totally to make any impact beyond the campus. Despite operations to "unfreeze the climate" and some individual political successes, May 1968 and its effects in Austria were no more than a "hot quarter of an hour." (2)

In the second half of the 1970s and the first years of the 1980s, there were

1. Cf. Siegfried Mattl, "Europas Disneyland. Politik, Kultur und Unkultur in der Zweiten Republik," in *Die Linke*, No. 6, 1985.
2. Fritz Keller, *Wien, May 1968 — Eine heisse Viertelstunde*, Menna 1983.

limited youth mobilizations, mainly struggles for self-managed cultural and communications centers. They never managed to involve more than small groups.

However, the conflict over the nuclear reactor project in Hainburg last December, in which young people played the main role, showed that under the deceptive surface of passivity a considerable discontent has accumulated. And the generally repressive social climate for young people has shaped this process to a considerable extent.

At the beginning, Hainburg was "only" a dubious project from the environmental and economic standpoints. But the government's stubbornness and the cement-worshipping philosophy of the Austrian unions, which have learned nothing from the Zwentendorf struggle and have taken up the cause of the profits of the building and electrical industry, made the Hainburg project rapidly the focus of all sorts of social contradictions. Among other things, this issue highlighted the undemocratic character of Austrian parliamentarism.

When the police launched a massive attack on the occupiers of the Hainburg site on December 19, 40,000 persons came out to a protest demonstration in Vienna.

Confronted with these strong protests, the government opted for a "Christmas truce" and then for a year's "pause for reflection." So, the building plans were put on ice until next fall.

While the "bunker" faction in the Austrian Confederation of Unions is still pressing for the construction of Hainburg, in various unions the traditional ideas about "growth at any price" have started to slip. For example, Alfred Dolinger, president of the country's biggest union, the Private Industry Workers, turned away from the "traditional conceptions" in a Factory Council members conference in March, and raised a call for involvement of the unions in environmental questions. It is

no wonder! He estimates that in his own union, a third of the 350,000 members are concerned about environmental questions."

While in 1983, the "Vereinten Gruenen," who were favored by the media, got far less than the expected results in the parliamentary elections and in the vote for the Vienna city council, the Alternativen got quite a respectable vote. (3)

In the wake of this, however, the Alternativen went into hibernation, from which they were awakened only by the Hainburg conflict. In particular, they have had difficulty in developing their programmatic bases. They still hold to the already outdated "Programmatic Manifesto of the ALOe." While this statement has a few nice passages about self-management, antimilitarism, and women, it does not offer anything substantial beyond the four themes of "environmentalism, solidarity, grass-roots democracy, and non-violence."

The Social Democrats and bourgeois parties are thrown together without distinction into the category of "old parties." There is an insufficient understanding of the state, and at the same time the ALOe makes a bow to the constitution: "The ALOe acts on the basis of the constitution of the Republic of Austria." There is no specific appreciation of late capitalism nor any precise perspective for the future. The statement says:

"We want an economy that does not endanger the bases of life and that makes it possible for all to lead a full life." There are also very unfortunate evocations of the theme of "small is beautiful," such as "The alternative is not to live from the world market but from your own forces."

Even the more left Vienna Alternative Slate denounces the Social Democracy mainly for being "the nuclear party." Instead of orienting to the workers'

movement, which is particularly necessary in Vienna, it sees itself only as "a coalition of the discontented in this city."

In the most recent period the VGOe have assumed a more right-wing profile, and not the least important reason for this is their hope of getting into parliament even without a coalition with the Alternativen. Their representative Josef Buchner explained their economic and political principles as follows:

"We do not want to change the economic system. We want a free economic system. To some extent, our model is freer than the strongly regulated one that now exists." These conceptions are very reminiscent of the "neoliberal" rants of the Association of Industrialists. Moreover, the general secretary of the VGOe Wolfgang Pelikan, fired a blast at the nationalized industries:

"They have gotten too big, and the state bureaucracy is not necessarily the appropriate instrument for managing enterprises."

The action to stop Hainburg and subsequent successes in local elections in the states of Steiermark, Nieder-oesterreich, and Vorarlberg objectively posed the question, regardless of the will of those involved, of the way forward for the Green-Alternative current. Will it advance inch by inch in local elections or, like the Greens in West Germany, make a sudden leap into "big time politics?"

After the Alternativen and the Vereinten Gruenen engaged in a little unprincipled flirting around the Hainburg action and following it, the right turn of the Greens has caused a certain dismay among the Alternativen. In comradely discussions with the latter, the GRM (Revolutionary Marxist Group, Austrian section of the Fourth International) has stressed that founding a party which could combine the potential for protest and mobilization and raise it to a higher level would undoubtedly give an impetus to the possibilities for progressive political action. At the same time, we insisted that four points were essential.

In the first place, such a party would have to offer strong programmatic points, such as the 35-hour week without any cut in pay, opposition to any form of austerity policy, full support for women's right to choose, and solidarity with the Third World Liberation Movements.

Secondly, there is "no way around" the working people, especially those who have been expelled from the process of production.

Thirdly, internal democracy has to be guaranteed in the party, and not in the last instance for various ideological currents.

Finally, any members of the party elected to parliament must assume the role of speaking for the decisive extraparliamentary movements. ■

3. In the parliamentary elections, the VGOe got 93,000 votes; the ALOe, 65,000. In Vienna, in the municipal elections, the Alternativen elected people in ten wards.

A polluted river in Austria (DR)



Attacks launched on 'Youth for Jobs' campaign

Since 1979 the Socialist Young Guard (JGS), in solidarity with the Socialist Workers Party (POS), the Belgian section of the Fourth International has been campaigning by means of a petition, for the organisation of a youth march against unemployment. (1)

The decision of the Christian Worker Youth (JOC) to take up such a campaign made it possible for a broad united front campaign called Youth for Jobs to get underway. This united front campaign brought together all the political and trade union organisations representing young workers and the left-wing and far left youth organisations. On 24 April 1982, 30,000 young people demonstrated against unemployment in Brussels. The demonstration was attacked by police. This repression was to benefit the bourgeoisie because two years later on May 13, 1984 only 15,000 young people participated. This time the police actually put a stop to the demonstration through the use of physical force. The demonstrators were completely dispersed including those on the main platform where a JOC leader was intervening at the time to demand that the police withdraw.

The unity achieved by the Youth for Jobs campaign and the two mobilisations which it initiated are something unique in the whole of Europe. Today this movement is in danger of being killed off.

Jipi DE LEY

The Belgian bourgeoisie were terrified at the alarming success of the first Youth March for Employment involving 30,000 young people. What frightened them even more was the adoption by the Youth for Jobs campaign of a set of clearly anti-capitalist demands and the acceptance of these demands by the largest organisation of young workers, comprising thousands of militants, the Christian Worker Youth (JOC). This organisation is linked to the main bourgeois political party in Belgium the CVP/PSC (the Christian Democracy)

For the government it became necessary at any price to break the momentum of radicalisation of young people especially in the trade-union movement. The relative sympathy that the Youth for Jobs movement had been receiving in the bourgeois press during its first campaign entitled 'We want

work' was transformed into a diatribe against 'Youth for Jobs'. The aim was to discredit the movement just at the time when it had adopted, in the spring of 1983, clear, concrete and anti-capitalist demands for the Second Youth March.

The bourgeoisie were not content simply to campaign against Youth for Jobs through the media, either. All local activity leading up to the Second Youth March in 1984 was met with intense police repression, designed to dissuade youth from participating in the demonstration. A combination of police attacks on youth meetings, of a media campaign aimed at presenting the initiative as of interest only to a small group, and of police harassment all meant that the mobilisation on May 13, 1984, was less successful than the previous one. Finally the way in which the police dispersed the demonstration gave the trade union leaders the

perfect argument to begin to wind up the Youth for Jobs campaign.

From the beginning of the Youth for Jobs Campaign, the reformist leaderships of the two big unions (the socialist-dominated FGTB — Confederation of Belgian Workers and the CSC — the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions — dominated by Christian Democracy) were disturbed by the scope of the mobilisation and especially by the rather rapid political radicalisation which was characteristic of it.

One of the factors that explains the smaller mobilisation for the second march was that the union leaderships were very luke-warm in their support compared to previous mobilisations. They even came out publicly against the demands, calling them 'unrealistic'.

As far as the trade union leaderships were concerned, the time had come to get rid of the Youth for Jobs campaign for several reasons.

First, during the whole period of the mobilisations by Youth for Jobs the trade union leaderships had failed, despite all efforts, to channel the youth mobilisations into their own youth sections. The Youth for Jobs campaign remained an autonomous movement, and that was partly because the leaderships of those youth sections of the trade unions wanted it that way. This fact also led to the adoption of anti-capitalist demands.

Youth for a workers' party

Several factors determined the attitude of the CSC — the largest union in the Flanders area. First, the JOC, the largest force in the Youth for Jobs campaign had become, in the process of the radicalisation that had caught them up in its momentum, a real pole of attraction and a reference point for the trade union base of the CSC.

The broad unity with other youth organisations in the workers' movement was in stark contrast to the politics of class collaboration conducted by the CSC. The clear, anti-capitalist demands were the opposite of the CSC's acceptance of austerity. The strategy of struggle and confrontation with the government was a million miles from the policy of talks behind the workers' backs in which the CSC was engaged.

The process of radicalisation of the JOC also constituted one of the many factors in the historic crisis of the main bourgeois political party in Belgium (the CVP/PSC). For example, today 30 per cent of those affiliated to the Christian Workers Movement (of which the JOC is a part) are in favour of an immediate break with the CVP/PSC and for setting up their own Christian Workers Party, which would constitute an historic defeat for the Belgian bourgeoisie.

The whole of the JOC is more or less in favour of the establishment of such

THE 'YOUTH FOR JOBS' PLATFORM

1. Reduction of work hours at least to 32 hours per week, without loss of pay and with proportional new hirings.
2. A minimum income of 19,000 Belgian francs (£246) for all the unemployed.
3. Elimination of all second-class jobs and their replacement by stable jobs with the normal rates of pay.
4. Ending of the daily check of the unemployed, the 'delay', and of Article 143. (1)
5. Different more specific demands concerning training, public services, schools, etc.

1. The daily check of the unemployed is the requirement for every unemployed person to report to the town hall every day at a particular time (of which they are only informed the day before). The 'delay' is the period of six months after obtaining an educational qualification during which young people do not have the right to unemployment benefit. Article 143 is a measure that allows the state to deny unemployment benefit to a person whose period of unemployment is judged to be 'abnormally long'.

a workers' party. So, for the CSC leadership the aim of wiping out the Youth for Jobs campaign is combined with the need to call a halt to the mobilisation of thousands of young Christian workers that in itself is helping to strengthen a current in favour of breaking with the CVP/PSC.

The FGTB, which has always used the excuse that 'the Christians won't support us' in order to avoid struggle, also has its own reasons for wanting to dissolve the Youth for Jobs campaign. The leadership of the FGTB is preparing for a return to power in the elections on December 8, 1985, of the Socialist Party in coalition with the CVP/PSC. And so it is seeking to sabotage any struggles. This includes the still tentative proposal of the Youth for Jobs campaign of organising a People's March against Unemployment in 1986. The mobilisation for this would have to begin in the autumn of 1985, that is before the elections.

But the main reason that the CSC and the FGTB want to get rid of Youth for Jobs is that they want to put an end to the youth radicalisation that threatens their bureaucratic interests and their policy of class collaboration. By dissolving this movement the trade union bureaucracies want to get rid of one of the most significant autonomous youth movements that Belgium has ever seen. The radicalisation that this movement has brought in its wake is particularly dangerous for them because the Youth for Jobs campaign is centered within the trade union movement. Furthermore it provides an alternative line at a mass level to that of the reformist leaderships on the question of the need to struggle against austerity, and is doing so in front of hundreds of thousands of trade union militants.

In some ways this youth radicalisation was more important than any other form of political radicalisation for example, around the missiles question because it dealt with the key question of what strategy to adopt toward the capitalist crisis. It expressed unconditional rejection of austerity and the demand for making the banks pay for the crisis. The lack of a clear understanding of the need to outline a way forward on a political level, in terms of a perspective for a workers' government is, however, the main weakness of the Youth for Jobs campaign.

The reformist leaderships of the large youth organisations have finally capitulated to the pressure of their trade union bosses. Revolutionaries have been intervening, along with local Youth for Jobs committees, into the general assemblies after the second, 1984 march, in favour of retaining the programme of demands and for maintaining a struggle perspective. The reformist organisations proposed a project of broadening out the movement to embrace all youth organisations including bourgeois groups (such as the Boy Scouts). Their watchword was to limit struggle and to make

the 'platform of demands more attractive' in order not to alienate potential support. The Youth for Jobs campaign has, therefore, had virtually no mobilisations in the last year, and the much touted idea of broadening out has met with almost total failure.

The two trade union leaderships and the reformist youth leaderships have reached agreement on a virtual 'operation takeover' of the Youth for Jobs campaign. The trade union leaderships have proposed to their respective youth organisations that in exchange for liquidating Youth for Jobs, a trade union campaign on the issue of unemployment will be launched. The trade union leaderships have given a guarantee that they will give 'special attention to the youth' and will propose activities. This has satisfied the youth leaderships. But nothing has been said about the structures for the mobilisation, about the future of the local Youth for Jobs committees which exist or about the demands to put forward and the type and timing of mobilisations and activity, etc. At the last General Assembly of Youth for Jobs on May 4 the leaderships of the JOC, and the youth sections of the CSC and the FGTB presented all this as a great victory for the movement saying that 'what we have always wanted is that the trade union front should take up our demands' and that now this had become a reality. The CSC youth have now withdrawn from the Youth for Jobs and the JOC and the FGTB have yet to reach a decision. The exemplary united front that Youth for Jobs represented has now been all but taken over by the reformist trade union leaderships.

The main battle that revolutionaries and all those left currents amongst youth have to face now is the battle for a united front with the leaderships of the youth organisations (the JOC, the FGTB-J the CSC-J) against an alliance of these



organisations with the trade union leaderships and for the maintenance of the Youth for Jobs campaign as an autonomous movement of youth in struggle. This will be a difficult battle to wage but it is not impossible.

In the JOC in particular, which is the only organisation in the front with a mass base, the pressure from that base for maintaining the Youth for Jobs campaign will be very great and the leadership of the JOC has not yet come out clearly on the issue of the maintenance of the front. However, the JOC have just come out for an unconditional rejection of the austerity policies of the Martens' government. The Socialist Young Guard, JGS will do everything it can to ensure that the fight for the maintenance of the united front body of Youth for Jobs is victorious, thus paving the way for new mobilisations of youth against unemployment, austerity and the capitalist crisis. ■

The police intervene in a Youth for Jobs demonstration in Brussels (DR)



'Hands off my mate'

The struggle against racism has been one of the most important elements in the youth mobilisation in the last two years. Racist violence is mainly initiated against Arab youth on the feeble pretext that they make too much noise in the towns or cafes. Such violence is being met by mass demonstrations. This pattern of events is beginning to repeat itself on a day to day basis.

The main characteristic of these developments is that they mainly involve young people. Anti-racist demonstrations led by ranks of young students are now a common sight. The determination to do some-

thing about Le Pen's National Front (FN) and the racists is mainly expressed within the schools and the colleges, where students spend three quarters of their time.

This mobilisation is not a superficial phenomenon. It also receives a fair amount of media coverage. The daily newspaper, *Liberation* featured an article on youth last March, entitled 'From the Bof generation to the Pote generation' (1) in a reference to the badge 'Touche pas a mon pote' (Hands off my mate) launched by the organisation SOS-Racism at the time of the march against racism in December 1984.

Gilles ROBIN

What has made the media break with the image of young people as passive and apathetic? To answer that question you only need to go into some schools today and see all the young people wearing the hand-shaped 'Touche pas a mon pote' badge and discuss it with them. Not only do they label themselves anti-racist but they are also prepared to take action over it. For example, a few days after a racist murder had been committed in Menton meetings were organised in many schools, with one minute's silence, debates on racism and in some cases demonstrations were held in the streets to get 'their hands off our mates once and for all'.

Is the badge just a passing fashion or does it represent something more profound occurring amongst youth? The success of this anti-racist symbol cannot simply be explained by the fact that a handful of show business personalities and some members of the intelligentsia wear it.

For a start, the anti-racist mobilisation did not begin with SOS-Racism. There

had already been two national marches against racism in December 1983 and December 1984 which brought the first refutation to the theoreticians of the 'bof' generation (the generation of apathy). The idea of the first march was conceived by Toumi Djaidja, the organiser of SOS-Minguettes whilst he was in hospital following an attack by the Lyons police. It was the youth of the town of Minguettes on the outskirts of Lyons, together with the reverend Father Delorme, who organised it. (2)

The second march entitled 'Convergence '84', organised around the slogan 'France is like a moped, to go forward it needs a mixture'. Youth on mopeds criss-crossed the whole of France before the final convergence in Paris on December 1.

Anti-racist activity has been growing among young people for the last two years in a context where racial hatred has, due to various factors, become more and more systematised and legitimised. The issue of racism is increasingly polarising political life in France. Some parliamentary deputies have been demanding a debate on immigration in the national assembly (parliament). In a situation where the National Front is becoming a force on the political map, the structuring of a national movement against racism and fascism raises the stakes enormously.

The increase in racist violence and incitement of course stems from the economic crisis. The effects of this deep-going and long-term crisis have provoked disarray and malaise among certain sections of the population. For wide layers of youth, whether or not they are in school or college, the future is bleak. The consequence of the crisis for most young people is the impossibility of getting anywhere immediately or indeed of even conceiving of a future career in the long term. Many training courses today simply do not cater for such aspirations. Youth are either forced to retrain in the short term or to be content with unskilled work. The

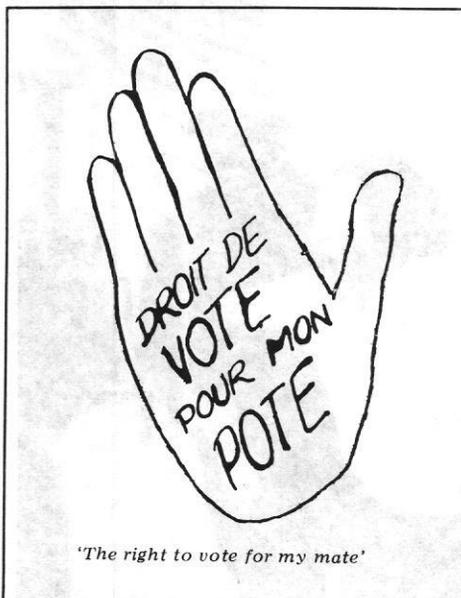
'public works' (TUC) schemes introduced by the government, which employ young people on derisory wages in boring work only help to institutionalise the precarious situation of employment which already exists.

The goal of the bosses and the bourgeoisie lies precisely in expanding such precarious jobs. All the speeches about work flexibility try to make out that this idea will improve the quality of life by extending leisure time. In fact, this policy represents an attempt to create a reserve army of labour for which women and youth are the guinea-pigs. Such a system of rapid turnover of labour creates a permanent lack of job security. This results in even deeper divisions among youth sparked off by the contradictions between the minority of youth who have been able to get training and a stable job and this reserve army of labour.

Such an explosive situation among youth provides a feeding ground for demagogery and oversimplification of the problems. Despair resulting from the lack of a future and from the absence of any short-term solutions can feed ideas that the responsibility for unemployment lies with immigrants. National Front slogans such as 'Two million unemployed equals two million too many immigrants' which are also endorsed by other bourgeois political groups in a more modified form, open the way for racist violence. Such notions encourage and even legitimise this violence. These views may not drive everyone to physical violence but Le Pen's racist equation between unemployment and immigration does have many passive supporters amongst the youth in the context of social divisions, lack of job prospects and the vacuum which results.

In the eyes of the younger generation the traditional political scene appears, and to a large extent actually is,

1. The 'bof' generation usually refers to the generation of the late 1970s who were considered to be less political and more apathetic than those of previous generations.
2. See *International Viewpoint* No 56, 2 July 1984.



fossilised, stale and unattractive. The vacuum amongst youth is evidenced by the limited attraction to them of political organisations. The reformist parties, who have no credible solution to the crisis have great difficulty in attracting young people. The workers movement and its traditional organisations no longer appear as a reference point for struggle. The period of the 1970s is a long way away and nowadays the rate of unionisation of young people and their participation in political parties is very low.

The question is, given that the organised workers movement has little attraction for young people and is not a reference point for their struggles, and given that bourgeois political figures have failed to unite around common political goals — is there a real danger of a growth of the far right amongst young people?

For the moment the electoral successes of Le Pen have not given rise to regular appearances by the FN at the

school gates or in the universities, although they do have a presence in the marketplaces.

However, even if the main danger at present is not a huge wave of youth joining the National Front, this organisation is nonetheless capable of latching on to the exasperation of young people who reject the policies of the traditional political parties but who want to fight on certain issues related to their work or studies. This was clearly in evidence at the time of the vast mobilisations of the right against the Savary laws, introduced by the then socialist minister of education, and proposing very mild changes affecting the private Catholic education lobby, during which extreme right activists tried to organise within that movement.

On occasions the far right really know how to use the potential for revolt amongst young people against laws and institutions and against the state, and they do not shrink from

proposing to go and do battle with the police, as was the case in confrontations in Paris in 1982.

Having said that, such developments are still marginal. But the university student milieu is characterised at the moment by a certain mistrust of Marxist ideas compared to a few years ago. Such attitudes come out in the form of anti-Communist propaganda which is already common in law departments, for example. Propaganda about the 'politicians' or those who want to control or 'manipulate' people always gets a certain hearing. The National Front have realised that in order to build up its electoral base around issues like unemployment they need some kind of network. In the town of Roubaix they have set up an unemployed committee and have gained a real influence in areas of high unemployment such as Perpignan, where the National Front obtained its highest vote in the bye-election. This method of operation is mainly effective in places where openings were left by the inactivity of the trade union organisations, usually at times when they were most strongly tied in with the policies of the Mitterrand government before the withdrawal of the French Communist Party (PCF) from it last summer.

Right attacks workers' movement

The danger of a possible growth of the extreme right amongst youth lies precisely here: in the networks (unemployed committees, youth centres etc) that would give credibility to the demagogery of the National Front and Le Pen's propaganda. It is those sectors of youth most affected by the ravages of unemployment that would be liable to turn to this organisation, if it had the means to really extend activities such as those in Roubaix.

Finally the growth of the audience for Le Pen has resulted in the dawn of new hopes for several small far right groups who are trying to take advantage of the new situation. For example, in November 1984 the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) organised a meeting in Paris that attracted 600 relatively young people and they are waging a campaign against international communism.

Elsewhere, local FN members are often less anxious to preserve their respectable electoral image than they are to put the ideas of their programme into practice immediately, that is to attack the workers' movement and its institutions. The Revolutionary Communist League (LCR — French section of the Fourth International) and the Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR) have already been the target of such activity; through being physically prevented from attending meetings on New Caledonia at Nantes university; through threats against LCR comrades

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in Quimper; or through FN members infiltrating a meeting addressed by Alain Krivine in Caen, with grenades in their pockets. Other organisations have also been threatened, for such is the inherent logic of the growth of the far right.

An anti-racist sentiment already exists amongst the youth and therefore the far right, if they want to make any headway amongst this layer will have to deal with the undeniably broad based response. There are already several examples of this type of response. In every town that the National Front leader has set out to hold a meeting, protests have been organised, and this has been the situation since the 1983 municipal elections. Something approaching this might have been expected in the 1985 cantonal elections especially in the towns where Le Pen had already been. In fact it turned out better than expected. This time most of the demonstrations against Le Pen's meetings that took place were bigger than the meetings themselves.

Youth challenge the racists

On February 13, for example, in Belfort, 600 people demonstrated following a joint call from the Movement against Racism and for Cooperation between Peoples (MRAP), the CGT [Communist Party dominated union], the PCF and the LCR. Also in that same town, 1,400 people attended a meeting addressed by, among others, Roger Hanin, actor-producer of the film *Train d'enfer* (Train to Hell) which tells the story of the murder of a young Algerian by Legionnaires in a train one year ago. In the town of Apt, one thousand people demonstrated against a fascist meeting at which only 150 people were present. In Quimper, 250 people gathered to heckle the National Front *service d'ordre* (advance guard). In Le Mans one thousand demonstrators responded to an appeal put out by the JCR and the LCR, organisations of Arab workers in the town and Senegalese students. In Pointoise, 400 people came out with the JCR, LCR and about ten immigrant youth organisations. There are several examples that are just as significant and which show that there is a very real possibility of a broad anti-fascist mobilisation.

The composition of these demonstrations is in general young, with a number of school students turning up in groups, having seen leaflets put out in their schools. Examples such as this give a real measure of the impact the campaign is having. Basically any anti-racist or anti-fascist leaflet put out at the school gates, is read straight away and always provokes a response, rather than being ignored as often happens on other issues.

This situation has sparked off the beginnings of a political revival amongst

youth, and has led to a greater awareness amongst many young people about the need to combat the far right. It is important to examine what the real driving force behind these mobilisations is, because they constitute an actual cutting edge among the youth which could continue beyond the parliamentary elections in 1986.

The anti-racist movement which began to develop on a national level in 1983, was not the work of any political organisations, unions or even of the traditional anti-racist organisations like MRAP or the Federation of Immigrant Workers' Organisations (FASTI). What was new about this movement, from the beginning, was that it was led by young second-generation immigrants largely of Arab origin.

These young people were making their entry onto the political arena for the first time and wanted to set up an ongoing movement. The youth collective was a structure which came out of the December 1983 march based in the suburbs of the large towns which aimed to organise young people against racism and for equal rights between French and immigrants. A series of demands such as for the right to vote for immigrants were advanced at the time of the two national anti-racist demonstrations in December 1983 and 1984. But several problems arose in the structuring of an ongoing and united movement that would centralise all the different local anti-racist organisations.

The breadth of the mobilisations nationally was not merely a product of the organisers' willpower. It was also due to the originality of the movement which escaped the social control of the traditional organisations. What possible credentials for initiating and leading a campaign could the PCF present when

Murdered by the racists ... (DR)



it puts forward a policy of quotas aimed at limiting the number of immigrants in each town and demands the strengthening of police powers? Similarly, the Socialist Party, subordinated to the policies of the government could not have directly launched such a movement. At the end of the first anti-racist march in December 1983, Georgina Dufoix, minister of social affairs was given a very cool reception by the demonstrators. On the second march in 1984, the socialist input was weak and any presence from the government was non-existent.

The JCR took part in the preparation of the 1983 march from the beginning. Although mistrust of political organisations still runs very deep among the youth because of the absence of any serious intervention in the fight against racism by these organisations, the JCR were nevertheless able to initiate, along with the march organisers, anti-racist committees and to organise various activities (days or weeks of action against racism, actions against Le Pen, replies to racist aggression etc).

SOS-Racism emerged out of the march in December 1984. This movement met with an unprecedented response when it put out the hand-shaped badge entitled 'Hands off my mate'. SOS-Racism managed to get the support of a whole array of show business personalities. Nearly two million people are wearing the badge and many of those are young people. It is the largest mass progressive movement of youth for ten years.

For the anti-racist movement to develop a firm basis equal to its media image it is important to build up active anti-racist committees on the basis of 'Stop racism'. Such committees could avoid the problems of two separate movements developing with the young second generation immigrants who have a long experience of campaigning on the issue on the one side and on the other, those who have just begun to be mobilised and who are developing their awareness, prompted by the sale of 'Touche pas a mon pote' badges.

Unite and fight

The gains of the 1983 and 1984 actions could be broadened and could get a second wind from the establishment of SOS-Racism. The concrete context of such an enlarged movement should be to call on those who buy the badge to take action as Harlem Desir, a leader of actions taken following a racist murder, did. An anti-racist rally is to be held in Paris on June 15 and this could bring together hundreds of thousands of people. This will really make Le Pen and his mob sweat!

The JCR is involved in building this movement and in organising anti-racist committees that could, on a local level in the schools for example, bring together several hundred young people to do something about the

racists. Many of these youth have, in the last two years, built up a certain experience in the anti-racist area which has helped them to make the correct response to the appearance of this new youth radicalisation.

What sort of intervention is required today? How can a revolutionary youth organisation be built in the context of such a mixture of anti-racist actions, including revolt against racist violence and propaganda and an often very clear rejection of political organisations and traditional politics. These are the sorts of questions that revolutionaries have to address. Having the correct programme and orientation, organising a 'systematic response to racist and fascist aggression', to quote the resolution adopted by the fifth congress of the JCR in March 1985, whilst at the same time taking part on a day to day level in the construction of an anti-racist movement, all this should allow the JCR to acquire vital experience for their development. Such an orientation does not mean either that the JCR should blindly follow the perspectives of the leaders of SOS-Racism, without sometimes making their own choices.

This radicalisation around anti-racism is bringing a new generation into politics. This generation did not know about the major struggles of students that marked the closing years of the 1970s. Following the last two anti-racist marches, several youth who had previously only been interested in anti-racism became, in a matter of a few days, real mass activists, taking the lead in preparing action. The possibilities of this movement also lie in the fact that anti-fascist sentiment forms the basis of the slogans being taken up by the youth in the demonstrations, it is not merely a distant memory of the period of May 1968.

The youth mobilisation is in some ways occupying ground, on issues like the right to vote for all immigrants or the struggle against expulsions, of issues of concern to the whole labour movement. The working class is not of course completely absent from these mobilisations. For example in December 1983, participants in the first march expressed their solidarity with the largely immigrant-led strike in the Talbot-Peugeot car factory by sending an impressive delegation to the factory. The emotion expressed in this meeting and the participation of sections of the trade unions and immigrant workers organisations shows that a coming together of the two movements is possible. Moreover, the sales of the celebrated SOS-Racism badges goes on in the workplaces where they are sold both by young workers who have always refused to join the union and by activists in the traditional trade union movement. This shows that when the youth reject the unions and the traditional workers' parties that does not mean that they are expressing a complete lack of interest in all activity and all forms of struggle in the workers' movement. ■

NETHERLANDS

Youth against nuclear weapons

The cruise missiles have not yet been deployed in the Netherlands, and the Youth Against Nuclear Weapons (Jongeren tegen Kernwapens - JTK) are determined that it will never happen. The JTK is an independent organization, and for some months it has been able to discuss on the national level with the 'adult' organizations.

So, we are evidently being taken seriously, finally. The JTK was set up as a national organization in February 1983. At that time, various youth groups decided at a peace activists conference to set up a national coordination and publish a national newspaper. Before that, JTK groups had already existed, some since 1981. A few months later, a National Secretariat was established in order to coordinate everything better.

Wineke 't HART

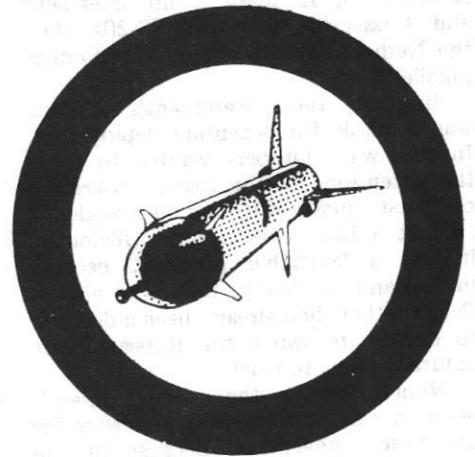
On November 21, 1981, there was a big peace demonstration in Amsterdam. About 400,000 people made it clear that the cruise missiles were not welcome. They included a lot of youth.

The most important organization in this demonstration was the IKV (Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad - Interchurch Peace Council). In 1977, the IKV began building its campaign for "A World Free from Nuclear Weapons, Starting With the Netherlands." This was a broad campaign that was also directed toward the high schools. Through this work and by offering internal democracy, they won more than half of their support outside the churches. As a result, the churches do not have so much say any more in the IKV.

The second biggest organizer of the 1981 demonstration was the Stop de Neutronenbom organization. This group was set up in 1977 on the initiative of the CPN (Comunistiese partij Nederland - Communist Party of the Netherlands). The Stop de N-bom is not organized in a terribly democratic way.

After the November 1981 demonstration, the government said that it would make its final decision in 1983. The various peace groups set up the LOVO (Landelijk Overleg Vredes Organisaties - National Coordinating Committee of Peace Organizations). In it are represented among others the IKV, Stop N-bom, Vrouwen voor Vrede (VvV - Women for Peace) and Nederland uit de Navo (Netherlands out of NATO, radical pacifist groups).

Also on the local level, peace councils were set up. In this way, the activities could be better synchronized. It was decided to build another big demonstration for October 29, 1983. After that, the KKN (Komitee Kruisraketten Nee - Committee Against the Cruise Missiles) was set up, which had the task of building the demonstration. In the KKN were represented the various peace groups, political parties, and the union movement.



Some 550,000 people came to demonstrate in The Hague on October 29, and the government decided to postpone its final decision until June 1984. In May the KKN organized a week of actions against the cruise missiles during which the unions called for a 15 minute work stoppage on May 10. On that day, the JTK staged a high school strike, in which 50,000 high school youth participated.

Over the peace week, a total of about 400,000 persons participated in the activities. The government (a coalition of Christian Democrats and Liberals) was in a difficult position. The Liberals wanted to deploy the missiles without more ado, and the Christian Democrats were also for deployment, but they were afraid of losing votes.

Ruud Lubbers, the premier, tied himself in knots, coming out with every conceivable variant solution. Finally, one of them was chosen. It said "We will decide definitively in November 1985. If the Russians have not deployed any SS-20s, then no cruise missiles will be deployed in the Netherlands. If the Russians have deployed SS-20s but the negotiations with America and Russia offer an agreement, then a few cruise missiles will be deployed in the



Netherlands. If there is no agreement and Russia has deployed SS-20s, then the Netherlands will deploy all 48 cruise missiles."

In fact, the government's formula was a mask for accepting deployment. In this way, Lubbers wanted to focus the attention of the peace movement on what Russia did, and he avoided a cabinet crisis. Very smart. Obviously, it was a laughable proposal, because in England, Germany, Italy, and also in Belgium there had already been a decision to deploy, to which the Russians were naturally going to react.

Nonetheless, the government's decision can be viewed as a victory for the peace movement. Because of the pressure of the peace movement, Lubbers could not just say "yes," and the final decision was postponed again.

After that decision, there was a lot of confusion in the peace movement. Unfortunately, it was not seen as a victory. An often heard question was, "Do mass actions still make any sense?" Three currents developed. The IKV tops said: "We have to try to convince the government with arguments. For example, we have to offer an alternative defense plan."

Stop N-bom leaders said: "We have to involve the Christian Democrats in our activities. So, we should tone down the demands of the peace movement."

The third current said, in reaction to the first two "tougher actions are needed." It lost all confidence in the leadership of the peace movement and did not want to work together with them anymore.

All three currents stood in the way of further mass actions. Fortunately, a lot of people still saw the importance of a mass movement.

For a whole period, nothing happened. Only the JTK was bringing pressure to bear by organizing an action conference and drawing up an action plan. The JTK did this in collaboration with other left youth organisations, the Jonge Socialisten, Comunistiese Jeudgbond, Komitee

Soldaten tegen Kernwapens, the Soldiers Union, REBEL (the youth organization in solidarity with the Dutch section of the Fourth International), and some others.

On November 10, an action plan was adopted at the youth conference. In this respect, the youth set a good example. This plan of action ran up to the time the government's decision is supposed to be taken in November 1985. After that decision we will hold another action conference.

What is in the action plan? Up to the summer of 1985, we are conducting an information campaign. After the summer, we will build a high school strike for October. In this period also, we will organize a youth peace festival and help with the People's Petition campaign [against the missiles].

Finally, a month after the conference various youth organizations agreed to unite in the JTK. That meant a big step forward in building the organization. Then, in January the JTK was asked to send two representatives to the KKN and to the LOVO. We can now discuss together with the adult organizations, and that is also necessary.

Naturally, we could not achieve so much in these organizations if the JTK were not represented. Without us a minimum age of 18 would probably have been set for the People's Petition. Fortunately, we were able to block that.

Through REBEL, a revolutionary socialist youth organization, we have played an important role in building the JTK, although we came to see its importance rather late.

In 1983, we started to orient to the JTK and put forces in it. The National Secretariat of the JTK then came to consist exclusively of REBEL members. The JTK was very weak and the REBEL members had more experience, especially in running a national organization.

After the summer of 1983, the JTK became a priority for REBEL. We then went to set up JTK groups in places where we are, and we tried to mobilize as many youth as possible for October 29 demonstration. This work went well, but it meant a lot of running around for

Youth demonstrate against the missiles (DR)



REBEL.

Nonetheless, with the example of the British Youth CND in the backs of our minds, we kept on working hard. After the high school strike and the government's decision, a national coordination was set up with the other youth organizations. That was fine for us, because we had to demonstrate our right to exist as REBEL, which we did effectively. At the conference, our proposals were adopted, and we stood closest to the "real" JTK people. We were the ones to give importance to bringing soldiers into the actions. We always stressed that the action plan should be made as concrete as possible.

In building the JTK, we try never to forget about building REBEL. That work has sometimes been neglected. This means that we also have to have other activities and that we have to have a profile in the JTK. So, we sell our paper in JTK meetings, take up the question of Nicaragua among the JTK left, put forward the slogan 'Jobs not Bombs,' bring the question of NATO into the discussions, and talk about the Star Wars notion. In the future, we must organize more open REBEL discussions to which we can invite our contacts from the JTK.

July 3-6 the Fourth Europe for Nuclear Disarmament convention is to be held in Amsterdam. At this convention, we are holding a workshop for youth in the peace movements in order to project new ideas, to call an international youth day of peace action, and discuss possible international actions.

It is important that a lot of youth come to this conference, and not just for the workshop. The youth must have a voice there, because youth are a lot more radical than the rest of the peace movement. Last year when the END convention was held in Perugia, there were far too few youth there. Almost the only ones who expressed radical views were the women. Now we also have to speak out about how we see the perspectives of the peace movement, how the cruise missiles and Pershings have to be kept out or sent back to Reagan.

The left, the young socialists and the miners' strike

The Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) is the youth wing of the British Labour Party. Its annual conference was held on April 5-8 and as such it was the first national labour movement conference to be held since the end of the miners' strike. It was therefore the first opportunity to judge clearly the impact of the political outcome of the struggle on a section of the British labour movement. Where to stand on the lessons of the strike — the examples of struggle, solidarity, and working class leadership — is the central question facing every section of the British labour movement. The answer to it is now dividing and recomposing the whole of the British left. Inevitably the LPYS is part of this process. Unfortunately the dominant current in the LPYS, Militant, a rightist British centrist organisation, chose the occasion to politically distance themselves from the key lessons of the strike and, in particular, from the record of Scargill. This is in continuity with Militant's hostility to almost every wave of youth and working class radicalisation over the last few years. This 'Marxist' current denounced the Greenham women and failed to oppose sending the British fleet to the Malvinas. The result is the current isolation of the LPYS.

Anne KANE

The decision by Militant to distance itself from the positive political results of the strike is in line with developments across the left since the end of the strike. The left has been riven apart on the basis of where it stands in relation to 'Scargillism'. The reason for this debate about 'Scargillism' which is now convulsing the labour movement is quite simple. British society has just lived through the greatest class struggle for sixty years. That struggle had the first class struggle leadership with a mass base to be seen in British politics since 1926. It was a leadership which broke from class collaboration, which argued class politics and which showed itself willing to stand and fight in defence of the working class throughout the strike and beyond. As such it was qualitatively different from the leadership the British working class has known for this whole period. It was different from other 'broad left' trade union leaders. It supported militant methods of struggle, such as mass picketing, and forged new social alliances with layers of the oppressed. As a result a new social movement began to be created which exists beyond even the defeat of the strike and has put new questions onto the political agenda of a section of the masses. This minority current began to go beyond the labourist framework of British working class politics.

The choice for the currents who claim to form the left of the labour movement is whether to stand with the lessons of the struggle, with 'Scargillism', or against it. It is a fundamental choice and one around which the left is now reshaping. The debate in all of the major left journals reflects this recomposition. This debate talks of 'Bennism without Benn', of the

'new realist left', and of the realignments on the labour left.

On one side of this divide, against 'Scargillism', are Neil Kinnock, the 'soft left' Labour Coordinating Committee, the Eurocommunists of *Marxism Today*, and Militant. On the other are Scargill, Tony Benn and thousands of militants in the NUM and across the labour movement, the women's movement and the mass campaigns. It is precisely because the miners' strike brought into sharp focus the fundamental political questions the working class has to address — the kind of leadership required to fight in its interests and its accountability, the need to organise mass political action, social alliances with the oppressed outside of the existing confines of the labour movement — that the true colours of every section of the organised left are revealed by where they stand on the miners' strike.

This is nowhere more true than in the LPYS. The historic struggle of the miners received the overwhelming support of working class youth. Young miners were the backbone of the strike. As Arthur Scargill put it 'How many times have we heard the saying "young people today are not like their forefathers. They're too busy making mortgage repayments". But now we are sick and tired of the Jeremiahs of the movement saying young people will never fight as well as the older generation that built the movement. I say without fear of contradiction, that if those who built our trade union movement could look on this scene today they would salute our young miners.'

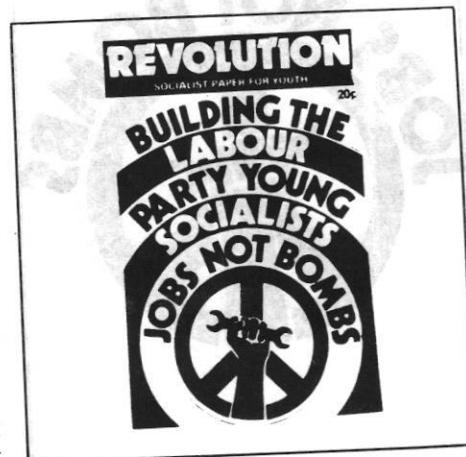
The young women and men who led this struggle in the mining communities dominated every demonstration, rally and picket. They led the support committees and organised fund-raising

and solidarity action. Young people led the building of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners groups, Women Against Pit Closures, and Black solidarity groups. Youth CND [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament] drew the political links between nuclear power, the attack on the mining industry and youth unemployment much more effectively than the LPYS even attempted to.

The political ideas of thousands of young people were forged in this struggle. All this added to the already existing struggles of youth in Youth CND, the women's movement, the Irish solidarity movement and all the campaigns of the oppressed. The alliances forged between young people active in these struggles and support for the miners raised the political consciousness of many thousands of young people onto a new, higher level. It has helped create a class struggle current among youth. This alliance strengthens the whole working class by struggling around the specific concerns of the oppressed and exploited.

The potential to organise this layer of young people who were inspired by the miners' strike was very great. It was done in limited ways around solidarity actions, campaigns like Youth CND and in certain regions of the country. The obstacle to organising them into the main left-wing organisation for youth, the LPYS, was the politics of the Militant leadership. During the strike Militant formally supported the miners, organised fund-raising and attended solidarity actions. But not one national LPYS demonstration of youth in support of the miners was organised which could have drawn together the young people who mobilised for the miners. At no point did the LPYS openly criticise the Labour Party leadership or present a clear political alternative to Kinnock. Militant's problem was counterposing building an open mass socialist youth organisation to building its own organisation. Party-building, Militant paper sales and Militant fund-raising were put above the opportunity to win many thousands of young people to the LPYS.

However the real problem Militant faced was a political one. This was most graphically represented at LPYS conference. The conference was much smaller than last year, with 69 less



branches sending delegates — remarkable for a socialist youth movement in the aftermath of the greatest working class struggle in Britain for sixty years. There was virtually no presence of miners or women from the mining communities. There was no attempt to identify with the political lessons of the strike.

The key event was a speech by Militant's top spokesperson, Ted Grant, to the Militant rally at conference. The core of this was an attack on the Scargill leadership of the NUM. Grant's view was that Scargill had been wrong not to organise a national ballot [on the issue of strike action] and that this proved that Scargill 'lacked faith in the working class'. This of the leadership of the longest and most political mass strike in British history. For Militant the problem was not the Thatcher government, the betrayal of the labour and trade union movement but the Scargill leadership.

The function of this attack was to distance Militant and the LPYS from the crucial lessons of the miners' strike and the forces which supported it.

The whole course of the strike was in sharp contrast with Militant's political framework. The miners and their supporters organised in ways and in support of issues which Militant did not support. This was shown most clearly at Labour Party conference in October where the NUM took positions to the left of Militant on women, Black sections, lesbian and gay rights and Ireland. Militant aligned itself with Neil Kinnock [leader of the Party] on all these questions. Whereas the NUM used its weight in the Labour Party to support the left and thus build its own struggle, Militant ran away from using the strong lever of the LPYS to support left policy or organise youth in support of the miners.

To fully identify with the NUM would have started a dynamic which could only have started to unravel Militant's political framework. Instead Militant confirmed its isolation from the left in the labour movement by opposing those issues around which the left is now inevitably going to organise.

However the political lessons of the miners' strike were also positively



Two generations: NUM pickets (DR)

reflected at LPYS conference, in the form of the emergence in embryo of a current to the left of the Militant leadership, linked to the left of the Labour Party and inspired by the miners' strike. The resolution on the miners' strike supported by these forces mentioned everything Militant omitted: unequivocal support for the class struggle stance of Scargill, for the organisation of women, black people, lesbians and gay men in support of the miners, and open opposition to the betrayals of Kinnock.

The best example of the potential of this left was a huge fringe meeting of the Labour Party Black sections and Liverpool City Black caucus. Here over 300 people heard of the capitulation to racism of Militant in control of Liverpool City Council. (1) The deep divisions created in the working class through Militant's refusal to recognise black self-organisation contrasts with the strengthening of the working class through the NUM's support for Black sections and the organised support of Black people for the miners.

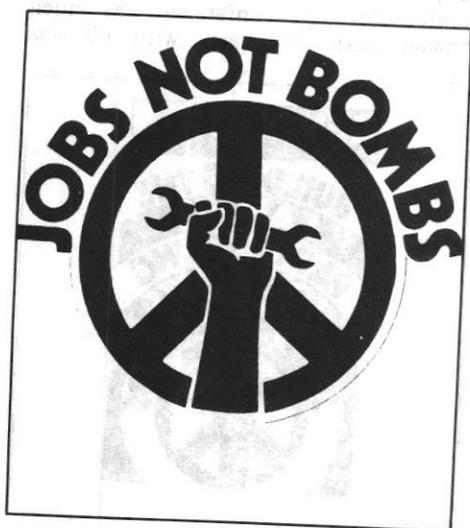
A further meeting of the left to discuss an alternative way forward for the LPYS attracted over one hundred activists and argued that the way forward to building a mass socialist movement was to identify with the record of the miners' strike. The miners had shown what kind of movement could be built by an uncompromising stance, by not fudging differences with Kinnock, and by

supporting the self-organisation of the oppressed.

These meetings represented the existence in embryo of a small but important left current which has the potential to rebuild the LPYS in the only way possible — in the image of the social and political alliances created during the miners' strike. The only other choice for the LPYS is to continue to stagnate under its present political leadership, isolated from the forces in the left in the Labour Party, the NUM and across the labour movement, and hostile to the political issues that the left is organised around. This would only increase the vulnerability of the LPYS to the threat of serious organisational restrictions by the Labour Party leadership which understands exactly the choices facing the LPYS and the threat of a youth movement which mirrored the forces brought together during the strike.

The fight to build a mass, campaigning LPYS, behind a leadership which also 'stands and fights' has taken one small step further at this conference. ■

1. In January of this year the Militant-dominated Liverpool city council entered into a dispute with Black organisations and local government employees, over the council's decision to employ one Sampson Bond as a race relations officer for the council. It was argued that Bond, a Militant supporter from London was not familiar with the community and was not supported by local Black organisations who should have been consulted about the appointment. Militant supporters persisted in the appointment despite widespread opposition.



Young women under attack

It is ironic that in this, International Youth Year, young people are confronting attacks on every front — on their rights to a job, on their right to a culture of their own, indeed on their right to a future. And as if this was not enough, in some countries governments are beginning to launch a new attack on the right of young people, and especially young women, to determine their own sexuality.

In the USA legislatures in 12 states have introduced bills to require women under 18 to notify their parents before obtaining an abortion. In Britain similar measures have been introduced through the courts. In Italy, youth are being threatened with legislation which will prevent young people from expressing affection in public and also increase police harassment.

Young people really are up against the wall in the capitalist crisis, but as the articles below demonstrate, they are fighting back.

Sue PIERCY

In December 1984 in Britain Victoria Gillick won a ruling in the appeal court giving her legal assurances that none of her daughters would be given treatment or advice on contraception or abortion without her consent. The ruling, which also applies to everyone else under 16, is based on the assumption that all young people but particularly young women, are the property of their parents, and takes away not only the right to seek contraception, but to confidentiality in virtually any other medical advice.

The consequences of this ruling so far have been horribly predictable. There have been countless cases of young women no longer able to obtain contraception becoming pregnant, and even two suicides attributed to the desperation caused by the judges' decision. A clause which mentioned exceptions in cases of 'emergency' has now been clarified to mean only life-endangering situations.

In 1983 17,000 women under 16 attended family planning clinics, nearly all were already sexually active and only one third had any support from their parents. It is now illegal for doctors not only to prescribe contraception to the other two thirds, but even to give them advice. Attendance at clinics by under 16s has dropped dramatically (more than a third in some cases), and of course more and more young women are confronted with the trauma of unwanted pregnancy. What is more, since advice on abortion is also conditional on parental permission increasing numbers of young women will be forced into having children they do not want or driven to backstreet abortionists.

And Gillick claims that all of this is designed to protect young women! If contraception and abortion, or even advice, information or education about sex are no longer available, the argument goes, pressures for young women to enter into sexual relationships will

suddenly disappear. Her real attitude was clear, however, when she let slip her view that,

'There will always be a hard core of silly girls who get pregnant. They'd be no more able to make contraception work than they can make their brains. Short of physically sterilizing them, there is little to be done'.

The Gillick ruling clearly has nothing to do with confronting the sexual coercion of young women, but is rather a further denial of what limited rights to make decisions about their own lives young women have ever had.

But Gillick can still be reversed. The case is due to be heard in the House of Lords [Britain's second parliamentary house] on June 24. So far the views of young people have been notably absent from the deliberations of the judges, so a demonstration has been called for June 23 to make it perfectly clear that young people are not prepared to have their rights to control their own lives and their own bodies taken away.

AND IN ITALY ...

Ruth CHENETTE

Five years ago, the women's movement in Italy put forward suggestions for a new law to counter violence against women. Since that time little campaigning has been done to defend these proposals. This has allowed the right-wing and the Christian Democracy to remove all the pro-women clauses, a removal made more easy by the socialists abstaining at every stage of its passage through parliament.

Each and every clause in the women's proposals has been so thoroughly amended that the current proposed law, which is due to go on the statute books

later this year, bears no resemblance to the original.

Instead of being a law which allows for greater freedom of sexuality for women, it is a direct attack on those freedoms it sought to express.

If the law is passed, it will be illegal for youth to express intimacy in public on pain of arrest, until proof of age can be verified. This particular clause is not included in order to stop sexual assaults occurring; if it was why make it illegal for a 16 and 14-year old to kiss or embrace in a public place? This section of the law makes it illegal for any 'intimate contact' to take place between two persons aged 16 or under if there is an age difference of two years or more, and illegal for a person over 16 to have any such contact with a person under 14. The new proposed law also makes it illegal for able-bodied and disabled persons of any age, to demonstrate physical affection in public. In both these cases, such physical contact would be seen under the provisions of the new law, as violence, regardless as to whether consent for such intimacy had been given.

Youth in Italy are rejecting these new restrictions on their sexual expression.

On October 19 last year the day after the law was agreed (but not passed), a campaign was launched to reject it. Unfortunately, this was not seen as an on-going campaign and because of this and the fact that the Italian senate are playing 'the waiting game' with this legislation, the campaign did not get off to a very good start.

Not to be deterred the OGS (Revolutionary Youth Organisation — in solidarity with the Fourth International) organised an action for December 1, 1984. It was originally planned in order to provoke other actions. However, it was much more successful than they dared hope (see *International Viewpoint* No 70, February 25, 1985). There were mass 'kiss-ins' in Milan, Brescia and Rome and in Milan alone 5,000 school students went on strike for the day. These actions were successful enough to be taken up not only by the Italian media, but also in other countries.

Since December 1, *Rivoluzione* the newspaper of the OGS has issued a series of postcards saying 'I've kissed a minor' (Ho Baciato un/a minorenne) which are to be sent to the Italian president. These have been very widely used by Italian youth.

International Women's Day was another day of demonstrations against this new repressive proposal. Most March 8 demonstrations were based on this issue. In the future, the OGS hope to set up local meetings to organise against the bill, in order to get the movement going again by September, when youth return to school after the holidays and also to begin to organise a campaign for a referendum on this issue. ■

The message of the World Congress of the Fourth International

Interview with Daniel Bensaid

The Twelfth World Congress of the Fourth International took place in February, five years after the last. Daniel Bensaid, a leader of the Fourth International and of its French section, was interviewed about the significance of this world congress in the April issue of *Critique Communiste*, the theoretical magazine of the French section of the Fourth International. Our translation of the text of this interview follows. Minor editorial changes have been made in the English version.

Question. The task of a World Congress is to determine the main features of the international situation now and in the period ahead. And the situation today is dominated by crisis in every part of the world.

Answer. The World Resolution adopted at the congress characterizes the crisis from the standpoint of its underlying mechanisms as the gravest ever experienced by capitalism on the international scale. This point is important in order to assess and put into perspective the situation in the European capitalist countries, in order to combat the notion that the crisis can be resolved by a new wave of technological innovations or simply through limited defeats of the working class. Whatever the timing, tempo, or obstacles, the crisis is going to persist and deepen.

The specific crisis of the Eastern bloc countries does not derive automatically from that of imperialism, although it is given impetus indirectly by some of the latter's effects. There are by now considerable indications that the mechanisms set in place when these states were established are losing their effectiveness, with major political consequences.

Q. When the effects of the economic crisis are becoming painful, we have not seen any more or less general challenge to a manifestly bankrupt capitalist system in the West European countries. The mood in the working class is not one of self-confidence. The social situation in France is eloquent in this regard. At the same time, the victorious Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua seems quite isolated, threatened by a US imperialism that has gone back to its old tricks.

A. You have to go back to the right turn that happened in 1970 between the end of the Carter administration and Reagan's entry into the White House. On the other hand, that was the year of the triumph of the Nicaraguan revolutionists. From Reagan's first actions as president, we began talking about an imperialist counteroffensive.

Such a counteroffensive has in fact developed on the general political level; on the military level, with the renewed arms drive; and on the social level with austerity offensives in the various capitalist countries.

However, we should try to assess how successful the imperialists have been in achieving their objectives. Their aim is to turn around the international situation that took form at the end of the 1970s and which was marked by the paralysis of the US after its defeat in Vietnam.

You refer to the devastating effect of the crisis on the European workers' movement. You should also include Japan. In these countries, the working class has experienced setbacks, defeats, although they remained limited in scope, for example the defeat at Fiat in 1981 or the recent outcome of the test of strength between Thatcher and the British miners. We will have to see now what effect this latter defeat is going to have on the social resistance of the workers' movement, since it's clear enough that the objective of the Conservative government is to undermine the organizational strength and even the democratic rights of the labor movement.

However, for the moment this imperialist counteroffensive has run up against working-class resistance whose potential is far from exhausted. If you just take the year 1984 in Europe, we saw the struggle by the factory councils in Italy in defense of the sliding scale of wages, the historically unprecedented strike of the British miners, the remobilization of the West German union movement in the campaign for the 35-hour week, general strikes of public workers in Belgium and the Netherlands, and regional struggles in Asturias and Sagunto in the Spanish state. In the latter country, at the start of 1984 social struggles came up more or less to the level of 1975 in the aftermath of Franco's death. So, there have been big fight-backs, often ending in compromises, without a decisive victory on the one side or the other.

The view of the present situation

that was developed in the pre-congress discussion and in the congress itself was one of a tug-of-war in which for the moment the two sides are more or less in balance without either one being able to gain a clear advantage. This is not because of the inherent strength of the opposing classes but because of the weaknesses from which each suffers.

The crisis of leadership in the working class movement has prevented it from winning victories. But this statement has to be qualified a bit in the light of the British miners' strike. It was not a lack of determination on the part of the miners' leadership that explains the defeat but the attitude of the other trade unions and a real split in the working class, which existed also in some mining areas. The mechanisms of solidarity in the workers' movement did not operate effectively enough to overcome the resistance of the traitor union leaderships.

At the same time, there is a parallel crisis of leadership on the bourgeois side. Thatcher has just won a victory on the front of social struggle, but she may face a defeat on the electoral and political front tomorrow. There is a general instability of the political setups. Whether it is the reformist left or bourgeois parties that take on the job of applying austerity, they very quickly have to pay the price for this on the electoral level.

On the level of the basic relationship of forces among the classes, we say that nothing has yet been decided. It is necessary to measure the points scored by the bourgeoisie against what they have to get, if not to resolve their crisis, at least to gain a serious respite and the time to carry through economic restructuring.

When the representatives of the bosses are saying openly that it is necessary to reduce the buying power of wages by 15%, the bourgeoisie is still far from having achieved that. Likewise, it is far from having dismantled past social gains, in particular the social security systems and unemployment insurance in the various countries. These battles have not yet been decided.

It is true, nonetheless, that there has been a real erosion of the strength of the trade unions, mainly in southern Europe because this has occurred to a limited extent at most in the North. The decline in trade-union membership has been spectacular in the Spanish state, and considerable in France. In response to the attacks the workers' movement has faced, one might have expected deeper going and more rapid processes of reorganization.

One of the reasons for the slowness of the processes of reorganization that are occurring (to some extent) in the unions but not yet very much on the political level is the fact that the inflow of youth into the centers of production has been slowed to a trickle. The statistics show this clearly in France and Spain.

On the other hand, one of the import-

ant elements in the combativity of the British miners' strike was the role played by youth. With the swelling of youth unemployment, there has been little rejuvenation of the work force except in marginal or temporary jobs.

There are some striking indications of this exclusion of young people from the industrial workforce. For example at the last congress of the Workers Commissions in Spain, the average age of the delegates was around 37 or 38, which is very high. The youngest delegate was 29! The generation that represents the center of gravity in the working-class fightbacks has lived through the end of Francoism, May 1968 in France, and the 1969 upsurge in Italy.

Since 1976, the younger age groups have been coming on the scene at best in reduced numbers. This has a major negative effect. It weakens the workers' movement more than the working class as such.

The second element is that the extent of unemployment is not provoking the reactions of self-defense and solidarity that were in fact seen in the 1930s, although they should not be exaggerated. The means that exist now for administering the problem of unemployment create a situation where the predominant mood is still a confidence in, and a looking toward, the established institutions rather than the idea that the workers' movement itself should take the responsibility for solving them. This obviously can last only as long as the bourgeoisie is able to finance these systems. We are in an intermediary situation.

If the working class is on the defensive, mass movements are nonetheless developing whose importance should be properly assessed. Some people are talking about a depoliticalization of the youth. But that is wrong. The political activity and mobilization of the youth today are more powerful and more extensive than they were in the 1960s at the time of the anti-Vietnam war movement.

The great mobilizations of the youth in Europe today against the threat of war, against the missiles, the marches against unemployment in Belgium have been massive. Even in France, where such mobilizations have been weaker, the anti-racist demonstrations have affected far more youth than the anti-imperialist mobilizations twenty years ago.

However, and this is an important difference from the 1960s and 1970s, political consciousness has not developed in a way commensurate with the mobilizations. There is a general mistrust of political organizations and a doubt that makes it difficult for people to see the way forward. But this blockage should not lead us to underestimate the extent of mobilization and readiness for struggle among the youth.

The third limit that the imperialist counteroffensive has run up against is obviously Central America. The US does want to intervene and the threat is

real. But for the moment there is still a considerable gap between Reagan's statements and his actions. His line of rebuilding imperialist power has made a certain impact on public opinion, the extent that he has gotten an opening for launching a new arms drive. But with respect to foreign interventions, the Vietnam syndrome continues to stand in the way. Direct intervention in the Middle East or El Salvador would still be difficult for the imperialists. That is why the central question in our congress was defense of Nicaragua, the only revolution in progress in the world today. It not only represents a national liberation struggle but a struggle for socialism, for the establishment of a workers state in the shadow of the United States.

Q. In the past in our movement, we have thought in terms of a dynamic, an interaction among what we called the three sectors of the world revolution — the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries, in the dependent and semi-colonial countries, and in the post-capitalist bureaucratic societies of the Eastern block. How does this dialectical interrelationship operate today?

A. You can describe the effects of the crisis that run through more or less all the sectors of the world revolution. But, and this is one of the features of the present situation, there is not any immediate unity of the world revolution. That is the problem. We maintain our overall view. There is a unity in the long run. But today there is no direct interaction among the various sectors.

A convergence did appear in 1968, when the Tet offensive in Vietnam, the Prague Spring, and May-June 1968 in France all came together to give the impression that the three sectors of the world revolution were marching in step. But that is no longer happening.

The Mexican PRT in conference (DR)



It should not be thought that the convergence was an optical illusion, a subjective shortcut dreamed up in Rome or Paris. That was a time, for example, when the Latin American revolutionary organizations looked to Europe and believed in the possibility of a revolution on the old continent. They saw the European revolutionary organizations as sister organizations facing similar problems.

Today, the prevailing view among the Latin American revolutionary organizations is that Europe is a big backup area for solidarity. It is useful and nice that people are still revolutionary in Western Europe, but revolution is no longer on the agenda there.

The Polish developments have had a dual effect on Latin American revolutionists. For a major sector, they brought a revelation of the fragility, the possible crisis of the bureaucratic states.

In Brazil and even in Nicaragua, sectors linked to the Christian Base Communities and liberation theology have been particularly sensitive to Poland, and not only because of the religious question involved.

However, the conclusion drawn by other revolutionary sectors, including even the more lucid, was that Poland proved that "it can't be done," that you can't defy the USSR on its own doorstep and that Jaruzelski is the lesser evil. You hear this being said in currents that can be regarded as revolutionary, where it is seen as realism.

So, there is a desynchronization among the various sectors of the world revolution. Among revolutionists in the dependent countries, it is considered that the effects of the crisis in the European or developed capitalist countries still don't amount to anything serious. There is unemployment, but there is still social welfare. The phenomena of economic collapse and social dislocation convulsing the dependent countries are unknown.

The unity of the revolutionary dynamic is hard to see, and this situation fosters a view that sees the international class struggle dominated by the relationships between the blocs, between the systems of alliances among states.

Q. You say that the Nicaraguan revolution was at the center of the congress. What tasks of solidarity with this revolution were adopted?

A. The Nicaraguan question was in fact central in the preparation for, and the proceedings of the congress. It is the only socialist revolution in progress, and it affects the political relationship of forces in the world for four reasons:

- It is taking place in the heart of the US sphere of influence.
- It is taking place in Latin America while the Cuban revolution continues to have an impact, when Cuba has not yet suffered a bureaucratic counterrevolution and still serves as a beacon for the continent.

— It has already become a domestic political problem in the US because of the proportion of the American population today that is Spanish speaking.

— It is a detonator for an explosive situation in Central and South America.

For all of Latin America, Nicaragua shows that Cuba is not an exception, that, in the context of the crisis, revolution is possible today.

So, solidarity with Central America is a long-term task for us in order to affect the international relationship of forces. It is also important for the new generations in Europe, which are active against nuclear weapons, racism, and famine. They are moved by a feeling of human solidarity but often also feel impotent. Solidarity with Nicaragua is one of the few activities where you can work directly for a revolutionary solution.

Q. In Europe, it has been hard to assess the impact of the Nicaraguan revolution on Latin America as a whole. Has this revolution really aroused the hopes of the entire continent? Is it helping to renew the strategic and political thinking of the vanguard in these countries?

A. After the trauma caused by the failure of the armed movements in the early 1960s, Nicaragua has demonstrated the possibility of a military victory. That does not mean that you have to copy a Nicaraguan model. The Latin American organizations are a lot more cautious today. They realize that what happened in Nicaragua was a combination of different sorts of struggles, self-organization of the masses, civil defense committees, guerrilla warfare, forms of insurrection. It is an example for study that is rich in lessons, if you are careful to keep in mind its specific features.

The Nicaraguan revolution has revived debate on strategy, how to fight for power, including on the political-military level. It is also food for thought about the problem of tactical alliances in a revolutionary struggle. The Nicaraguan case is quite special, because here the revolution took the form of an anti-dictatorial struggle at the same time as it represented the fulfillment of a nation that had never really existed independent of imperialism. It is necessary to point out this specificity without obscuring the more general problem that arises today throughout Latin America: that is, the costs of the crisis have been such that they have produced a breakup even in some sections of the bourgeoisie itself. It is inconceivable that in countries such as Mexico, Argentina, or Brazil the effects of the crisis will operate in such a way as to give rise to great mass proletarian currents overnight. We are going to see much more differentiated, complex, intermediate forms of reorganization and realignment.

We do not think that the structure of the bourgeoisies in the more industrialized countries such as Brazil or

Argentina is such that they can generate a new wave of nationalist bourgeois populism like Peronism. In the last analysis, even if they bridle at the reins they are renegotiating their debts and are highly dependent.

However, in these countries there are sections of the petty bourgeoisie that are going to break with populism without necessarily going over to hard-and-fast working-class positions overnight. How should this problem be dealt with? The working-class united front is not a sufficient answer.

In Brazil, the working-class united front is represented by the PT (Workers Party), which got an average of 3% of the vote in the 1982 elections, plus the Communist Party and the pro-Albanian CP, which are very limited groups. What is needed is an answer for popular sectors that goes beyond the PT, that politically expresses the unity in action that is possible around social, democratic, and anti-imperialist demands.

A third very important thing to think about is that in the vanguard, or at least in significant parts of it, the form of transition in Nicaragua after the overthrow of Somoza is being taken very seriously. It is not seen only as a way of maneuvering and gaining time in the face of imperialist threats.

What I am thinking of here essentially is democracy, pluralism, and elections. The experience of five years of pluralism in Nicaragua is becoming seen as an apprenticeship in politics, appreciated for the possibility it has offered for solving conflicts, for discussion, and regarded, moreover, as appropriate to the rate of social transformation.

While this phenomenon is still limited, an astonishing combination has developed between the trauma of ten or twelve years of dictatorship, in which tens of thousands of people were made "missing" and tortured in many Latin American countries, and the eruption of the Nicaraguan revolution. We have to try to imagine the extent of the trauma. These extreme forms of repression were not the result of foreign occupation, as we saw in Europe, but a phenomenon produced by the societies involved themselves. This has produced a concern for democracy that is likely to be long lasting. It goes very deep.

Then, on top of this has come the experience of Nicaragua, which seems to offer an answer to the aspiration for liberation while maintaining democratic guarantees. Its impact is enormous. This is contributed to in many countries by the role of the church and the effects, which may be indirect, of the Polish example, although this affects more limited sectors.

All this is helping to modify the behaviour and thinking in the vanguard. The revolutionary organizations of the 1970s were often militarized movements, with the discipline and absence of debate that this implies. Now you get the impression that a lot of these organizations are thinking that in order to achieve power

you will have to unite different components with different traditions, that you have to learn to live with such differences. This idea of pluralism that is being applied to social and political action as well as governmental organization is also influencing the way people see building organizations and their internal life. I don't say that this attitude is already an acquisition, far from it, but this concern is new.

Q. With regard to Nicaragua, you just mentioned Poland. The congress also rediscussed the portent and lessons of this temporarily defeated antibureaucratic revolution.

A. On Poland, there was a debate on two levels. The first was in response to a position held by a very small minority that tended to reduce the struggle against the bureaucracy to a fight for democratic reform of the institutions of the Polish state. Their view was that the task was not to overthrow these institutions, inasmuch as they were part of the defenses of the workers state against imperialism.

Our view, to the contrary was that one of the most interesting things about the experience of the Polish revolution was that it showed, or confirmed, the need to destroy the key elements of this state apparatus, its repressive supports, which serve to oppress the working class of these countries. This discussion, which I have simplified here, has other implications for understanding the tasks in a country like Poland.

The other discussion, which is far from being exhausted, was more of a thinking out of the terms of our strategy. There was a common framework regarding the perspectives of the Polish revolution. That is, we agreed that the political revolution is a real revolution and not a pseudorevolution. But we had a strategic discussion about how to assess the real development and above all the level reached by the movement in 1980-1981: What was the real extent of self-organization? To what extent did this rapid process of self-organization of the masses through Solidarnosc, the self-management councils in the factories pose consciously — not objectively but consciously — the question of an alternative form of rule? To what extent was this question taken up if not by the movement as a whole at least by an important network of cadres.

Linked to this was a second question: What were the real weight and roots in the working class of certain institutions, such as the Polish Communist Party? It had lost a lot of its members. Many of them had joined Solidarnosc, that's true. But could you expect this party to collapse, because it was built artificially by support from the state apparatus? Or did it have historic roots that meant that you had to have a policy for promoting differentiation within this party over a long term?



The Fourth International stall at the 1985 LCR/Lutte Ouvriere 'fete' in France (DR)

Society in such countries is not unorganized with only a bureaucratic lid on top. The tendrils of the CPs run through it, as well as the regime's transmission belts and the Church organization. How should you deal with these facts? Can a spontaneous mass antibureaucratic upsurge directly pose the question of power?

Mass movements in such countries may roll a lot faster than in capitalist countries, consciousness can rise a lot more quickly. But the problem of finding a real political strategy cannot be solved spontaneously just by the momentum of the movement. A strategy means more than just a general strike and fight for power. It involves something else besides. The more you think about the need for a political strategy, the more the question of a revolutionary party is posed.

However, in the East bloc countries, people are obviously suspicious of the notion of a party, which they identify with the ruling party. Along with this, there is a hope that the mass movement will resolve all the problems in a short time. If you accept, on the other hand, that there are political and strategic problems that have to be solved, the question of a vanguard organization, of forming a militant current on a defined political basis, then arises.

Another problem that was discussed was how to respond strategically to the argument of the threat of Soviet tanks. You can always criticize the positions that the KOR put forward in Solidarnosc for being weak-kneed. But what produced the notion of the need for "self-limitation" of the revolution was the search for some kind of standoff, at least a nonaggression pact, with the Soviet bureaucracy.

KOR's response to the problem, that is that social and economic questions should be left to the workers' movement and diplomatic and military ones to the bureaucracy in order to avoid a direct collision with the USSR, was an illusion.

The alternative that we put forward throughout the Polish events was that the more daring the movement was and the further that it went in the struggle for

power, the higher would be the cost the Soviet bureaucracy would have to pay in order to intervene. This response is the starting point for combating any reformist policy in the East European countries. But it is only a starting point. You have to answer another question: what sort of solidarity should be appealed for and built in the other East European countries and in the USSR itself? What sort of language should you adopt toward them? What sort of dialogue should you develop, and with whom?

If you think in this context, it is clear that divisions in the bureaucracy itself are important. The division in the Polish Communist Party, the crisis it underwent in the summer of 1981, like the crisis of the Czechoslovak CP in 1968, represent problems that can counter-balance the threats of intervention by Warsaw Pact tanks.

The document adopted at the congress offers an initial response to these questions. In it we stand on a strategic foundation — on a basis of experience in struggle, political lessons to be accumulated, orientations to be discussed in our ranks, as well as with the oppositionists in the East European countries who engage in dialogue with us.

Q. In accordance with the stalemated world situation that you have just described, it seems that the forces of our International have not experienced any notable growth in the recent years. Five years after the last world congress, how does the strength of the Fourth International look in those countries where it has organizations?

A. Except in Mexico and to a lesser extent in Brazil, the International has not grown numerically since the Eleventh World Congress. Overall, we have maintained our forces. There have been gains in terms of new sections, mainly in Brazil, Uruguay, and Ecuador. Our first African section has been recognised in Senegal.

The fact that we have maintained our strength might seem to represent

a static situation. But in Latin America, where we were badly weakened by the split that followed the Eleventh World Congress, the International has been rebuilt, consolidated, or advanced in most countries of the continent, leaving aside Central America.

In Europe, our strength has remained the same or declined in some cases. But at the same time we have made progress in terms of our organizations putting down social roots, stabilizing their functioning, and building leadership teams. This is very important when you remember that after 1968 the organizational continuity of the sections emerging from entryism was precarious. In 15 years this capital has been rebuilt. In the last years it has been consolidated. Finally, the dominant note at our congress was a determination to go about political work differently.

Q. There, you have to make clear what you are talking about.

A. You have to remember that in the past the International, not exclusively but mainly, served as a point of reference for analysis and for defending our program in the most general terms. That was in part the inevitable result of isolation and having to struggle against the current, even though there was a constant striving to keep the connection with practical work and to do the utmost with our limited resources, as is shown by the help we gave to the Algerian revolution.

For example, we defended the concept of permanent revolution against the Stalinist theory of revolution by stages, with a feeling that from that flowed quite naturally the answer to political situations. For many sections there was no difference between putting forward their general ideas in propaganda and political activity in the form of initiatives, tactics, operations, answers to day-to-day political problems.

This situation was particularly dangerous because every concrete political response to a given problem tended to appear either as a direct confirmation or betrayal of the program. There was no flexibility, no room in between. This mechanism is no doubt behind a lot of the splits we have seen.

What is new is the idea that we are trying to respond to concrete political problems. We could for example discuss in general terms the permanent revolution, the worker-peasant alliance, determine whether in the context of the democratic tasks in antidictatorial struggles, we can make alliances with sections of the bourgeoisie. But for all the Latin American sections today these questions are no longer something to be discussed on the level of principles alone or general theory. Because every one of them faces a concrete problem that it has to solve.

Should we be in the Izquierda Unida in Peru? How should we fight against

extending this coalition to the APRA, which is a full-fledged bourgeois party? How should the electoral battle be waged from this stand point? In Brazil our comrades took part in the formation of a mass workers party, the PT. But this is neither the major nor the only party of the working class. How should we appeal to other sectors and continue to build the PT? This party exists as an independent working-class party. But independence in and of itself is not a complete class program.

In Uruguay, should we join the Frente Amplio, a broad front which does include a bourgeois party but also embodies the united resistance to the dictatorship, which has been the political expression of the united reorganization of the trade-union movement, which gave rise to a thousand local and street committees, etc. in Montevideo? And if we should be in this front, what sort of fight should we wage in it? These are the problems that the sections want to discuss now.

Small organizations, once they have passed a certain threshold of development and begin to play a role in the crisis of the workers movement, assume responsibilities far exceeding their numerical forces. For example, our Bolivian comrades played an important role in the formation of the new majority that emerged at the last congress of the COB, the Bolivian Confederation of Labor. They can no longer just challenge the CP, as they could when it led the COB, to launch a general strike or organize mass self-defense! Now it is their responsibility to do that, or in any case a responsibility they share. This is the reason for the need for concrete answers that was deeply felt at the world congress.

In the same way, the functioning of the International must change. What the comrades expect is not to be offered programmatic orthodoxy in response to the concrete situations they face. Of course, this sort of answer remains important in polemics with other currents. But what our comrades need is a framework for discussion in which they can take up their problems of line in other terms than "censure" or "ex-communication." Outside the International, the Moreno and Lambert currents offer a caricature of such practices.

Within the framework of our common programmatic orientations, there is a place for political dialogue that does not involve making judgements of people but rather an attempt, between sections or between sections and the International leadership, to deal with political problems, to utilize common experience.

Over and above whatever political differences there may be, there is a conviction that we are trying to solve the same problems. We may offer different answers, but they do not necessarily involve differences of program, historic breaks, or capitulation on anyone's part.

This feeling was very strong and very

evident at the congress. It proceeded without any break, although there were on its agenda debates over fundamental programmatic questions that involved some of the points on which the Fourth International was founded. This was the fourth world congress that I have attended and by far the most tranquil because there was this broad majority for this conception of the International and a determination to transform it accordingly.

Q. Fine. But there are still the basic problems that arose in the International under the impact of the Polish and Nicaraguan revolutions. What is more, our movement is absent as an active force from the Central American scene. How did it respond to this situation?

A. In a way, the Nicaraguan revolution represents a challenge for us. It is a revolution made by others, and at the beginning we understood it badly. This situation could produce two extreme reactions in our ranks. One is to reject a programmatic guide that they think kept us from recognizing the Sandinista revolution and linking ourselves to it. For the comrades who are developing this position in the International, the theory of permanent revolution is a sectarian theory that leads us away from understanding real processes. So, we have to get rid of it. What remains valid about Trotsky, according to these comrades, is his defense of the traditions of the Third International, of its first four congresses. On the other hand, they think that what Trotsky added in the 1920s and 1930s handicaps us today.

This reaction could give rise to a debate counterposing revision and orthodoxy, which would have been disastrous. To the contrary, we tried through a concrete study of the Nicaraguan revolution to determine whether our programmatic guidelines were relevant and how they had to be updated.

Did the Sandinistas lead their revolution in spite of themselves, despite their policy of alliances with sections of the bourgeoisie, despite their conception of economic transition? Or did they do so thanks to their policy? Today, while we might make some criticisms of certain aspects, we recognise that the Sandinistas won thanks to their policy and not "in spite of it."

It is necessary to study this policy and to determine where it creates problems for us. We collectively reread Trotsky's work on permanent revolution and eliminated some confusion. While the bourgeois democratic and socialist tasks of the revolution are not separated in time by a Chinese wall, they are not totally telescoped either. The proletariat can have different allies at different times in the revolutionary process.

Unfortunately, some Trotskyists put forward a version of the theory of permanent revolution in the dependent countries that resembles the one that

the Stalinists criticize, that is, an ultra-leftist one, the struggle for power right away and not as the result of a revolutionary process that may begin by struggles around democratic, antidictatorial, and national demands.

Another danger was to fall into a certain masochism and false humility. Other people have made revolutions. We should learn from them. We reject this. Of course, we always have to learn from experiences. But we are a historical current that preserves one little thing in particular, an international view of revolution, and which from its origins has represented an alternative to Stalinism. Unfortunately, today even among revolutionists you don't find very many who share our position of supporting both Solidarnosc in Poland and the revolution in El Salvador.

In the same way, we, who have maintained a programmatic tradition for decades, should not run away from it at the very time that other people in Latin America are discovering that the democratic and socialist phases of the revolution are part of the same process, when the Salvadorean CP, under the pressure of events, is rejecting the old Menshevik and Stalinist theory of "two revolutions," a democratic one and a socialist one separated in time. It is not for us to retreat at a time like that! There is no reason to hang your head or eat humble pie when history proves you right.

We can integrate ourselves completely into this rethinking and re-examination if we are involved in the work and an integral part of the process. The determination to do this was general in the world congress and there was a confidence in the role that the International can play if we are clear about what can be done and achieved today.

Q. Integrating ourselves fully in this discussion, working together with other revolutionary forces — that's fine. But what perspective for building the International emerged from this congress?

A. An old notion was thrown out at this congress, the idea that the International could suddenly transform itself into a mass organization by making a breakthrough around a key event in the world class struggle. The reorganization of the vanguard on the international scale will be a longer, more complex, and more uneven process. There is not going to be such a great leap forward, such a transformation, at least not in the foreseeable future.

The idea of a sudden transformation of the International could seem logical enough in 1938 when our movement was founded. There were then three currents in the workers' movement — the Stalinists, the Social Democrats, and a Fourth International that represented the direct and still fresh heritage of the Russian revolution. Moreover, there was still a strong hope that a mass Russian section could reemerge from the



At a conference of the Japanese section ... (DR)

war, that the Moscow trials and deportations had not struck deep enough to destroy the revolutionary tradition.

The spectrum of political forces in the international workers' movement today is much more open ended. There are not only Stalinists, Social Democrats, and the Fourth International. There are intermediary positions that have many strong bases of support. The situation, therefore is much more complex. The question of forming new parties is being raised everywhere in Latin America. We must participate fully in these processes, while continuing to keep our sights set on the need for the Fourth International and defending its program. This goal requires different methods of work.

If the congress proceeded in this way, it was also because the process had been set in motion before, in particular through the transformation of the press of the International. *Inprecor* and *International Viewpoint* are now reporting extensively on the activities of the sections. It has become clear that the more we are led to collaborate with other currents, the more we have to do so on the basis of confidence in our own positions, and thus it is necessary to train and widen a layer of international cadres. It is ironic that our international, which holds the record for longevity over the others, waited more than fifty years before setting up its own international cadre school. This school has been functioning now for three years.

Regional meetings of political bureaus (in Europe, Latin America, and soon in other parts of the world) have created channels through which people can discuss politics, which offer a framework for exchanging experience regarding similar problems.

When we talk about centralizing the International, people tend immediately to think about the application of the decisions of a central committee. On the international level, things are much more complicated. There can be centralization in the form of making a decision. You pass a resolution on an important world question and apply it. But there are other kinds of centralization, and political dialogue is one of them. The machinery that has been set up, the dynamic that has been set in motion, and the congress demonstrate the common resolve that exists to persevere in this direction.

Q. From this new standpoint, what role is the leadership of the International called upon to play, and what sort of relations does it propose to build up with the sections?

A. The method that I have just spoken of has proved necessary and useful not only for dealing with proposals for programmatic revision. But let's take these as a starting point. They reflect within the International centrifugal tendencies that exist outside it. Because the Nicaraguan revolution exists, because the unity of the world revolution, while it exists as an underlying tendency, is not immediately apparent or visible to the untrained eye.

When you face real demands, you cannot respond to such pressures only by a reaffirmation of principle. That would be fatal. You could get a confrontation between sections facing more and more concrete problems and an International that would serve just to warn them against mis-steps and programmatic deviations — a sort of permanent red light!

The centrifugal tendencies can be controlled within the International only by facing up to the difficulties, not by taking refuge in abstractions. We do not have an international leadership based on the experience of a revolution, endowed with a great authority won in the test of the class struggle. This means that we have to find mechanisms of leadership that can build political dialogue by concentrating what is best in the accumulated experience of the International in order to make it easier to find answers to the problems as they arise. The result can only be an enrichment of the understanding and heritage of the International.

In discussing in this way, the International becomes interesting and useful for currents that don't necessarily have any intention of joining soon. Some organizations in Asian or Latin American countries are asking to participate in the schools of the International because they find in them a historical clarification they often lack.

In Asia, for example, the China-Vietnam-Cambodia conflict has made it necessary to rethink the entire history of the workers' movement in the region. In the International's schools, such organizations outside our movement also find elements for comparing political

experiences, so long as these experiences are dealt with in their own terms and not dissolved into programmatic generalities, which are important but do not in themselves solve the problems.

Obviously this change and this resolve at the same time create expectations. This resolve has to be matched by answers to these expectations. So, the congress posed a challenge. We have to prove able to carry forward, taking the time necessary, this transformation in the functioning of the International, its approach to political problems and its relations with the sections.

In accordance with this logic, it will be necessary to rethink the conception of future world congresses. The Twelfth World Congress was a typically transitional one. Some 80% of the time was devoted to discussing general programmatic questions and the remaining 20% to the conception and functioning of the International. The concerns were expressed, but little time was left for taking them up thoroughly. This, moreover, raises a problem in itself. How can a world congress discuss concretely the line in Bolivia? Either the discussion would be for the information of the delegates, or we would risk making decisions about questions with which people have only a superficial familiarity.

It has to be possible to discuss and adopt broad resolutions on key points, such as the problems of the imperialist military drive on Nicaragua, and reserve a considerable part of the time at the congresses for work in commissions. This, moreover, was roughly how the Third International functioned in its first congresses.

As for the specific role of the leadership bodies of the International, they should be left the responsibility for defining the position of our movement as a whole toward big events in the class struggle but also for dialogue with the sections about their problems of line, for preparing regional meetings, for publishing and setting the line of the international press, for adjusting the system of international education to the needs of the sections, and for coordinating and centralizing what can be centralized of the experiences of building the sections.

This objective is modest and ambitious at the same time. It can be accomplished only by relying more and more on the leaderships of the sections themselves; by internationalizing their work; by widening, on the basis of concrete tasks, the network of cadres involved not only in the discussion but in the activity of the International; and by assuring that the leadership bodies can reflect the living experience of the sections and their cadres.

We have to seek a real synthesis and not simply confirm a division of labor, which in the long term would be fatal, between the daily political work in which only the sections are involved and international leaderships devoted to theoretical and programmatic questions. ■

Revolutionary youth's answer to the imperialist summit

At the beginning of May, at the same time as the imperialist summit in Bonn, a delegation from the Sandinista Youth visited West Germany as part of a two-month tour of the German-speaking countries.

During their visit the members of the delegation learned of the refusal of the US House of Representatives to appropriate another 14 million dollars for "aid" to the contras and of Reagan's declaration of a total trade embargo against Nicaragua. Their assessment was that the House's decision meant only a delay in granting more aid to the contras, but that the growing protests in the US itself against Reagan's aggression against Nicaragua were strengthening the tendencies within the bourgeoisie itself that fear the results of a military escalation.

Wolfgang KREMER

Companeros Noel and Francisco expressed the response of Nicaraguan revolutionists to US threats:

"They may destroy our country, they may kill a lot of us, but they cannot extinguish the idea of freedom and international solidarity among the oppressed."

The first stage of their tour in West Germany showed that more and more young people are coming to understand this message.

In twenty cities, political youth organizations, solidarity committees, church and trade-union youth groups organized meetings, press conferences, receptions and visits in order to strengthen solidarity with the youth of Nicaragua.

The Roten Maulwurfe [Red Mole

groups], the youth organization in political sympathy with the Fourth International in West Germany, took the initiative for the solidarity actions in many cities. In their visits to schools, youth centers, unions, and with "prominent" politicians (such as the mayor of Cologne), as well as in rallies, festivals, and demonstrations, the Sandinista youth were able to tell tens of thousands of people about their work as a revolutionary youth organization and to denounce imperialist aggression against their country.

The Nicaraguan comrades also took part in the protests against the world economic summit. In fact, the motto for this "grand meeting" could have been "There's no business like show business." In particular, the bad taste of Reagan's

visit to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp could hardly have been exceeded. Nazism was presented simply as a one-off historical mis-step for which fundamentally only a few fanatics around Hitler were responsible.

This way of "overcoming the past" naturally suits a state where today thousands of ex-Nazis (today wearing the clothes of defenders of freedom and democracy) are sitting in key positions of power in the banks, the big companies, the parties and associations, and even in parliament and in the top positions in the state.

A still more sinister high point of this extravaganza was Reagan's "Speech to German Youth." The site he chose for this was the Hambach Castle, where in 1832 there was a big demonstration of students against the authoritarian state.

To a selected audience guaranteed to applaud his words — they were mostly members of the Christian Democratic youth organization — Reagan offered his patent medicine for youth unemployment, running down of education, and the feeling of youth that they have no future.

"I would like to encourage you today to think over whether with your friends you might want sooner or later to start a business, so that you can become part of this new great movement of progress — the age of enterprise." [Retranslated from the German.]

Reagan and Co. are indeed preparing the way for a new age — the age of the decline of human civilization. The economic summit was to work out the plans for this perspective for the future.

On at least two points, there was a common denominator:

— a common declaration of war on free Nicaragua and the anti-imperialist liberation movements throughout the world.

— a common declaration of war against the workers in the imperialist countries themselves, who are supposed to pay the costs of the capitalist crisis in unemployment, cuts in social services, and poverty.

However, the summit also showed the fragility of the imperialist world structure facing the expected deep recession in the international capitalist economy. European imperialism is still not in a position to challenge seriously the military and political supremacy of the US. In the economic arena, on the other hand, cut-throat competition among the "allies" is already in full swing. The only thing they really agreed on in this summit is who their victims will be.

The youth organizations in sympathy with the Fourth International will continue to oppose this policy by defending the revolution in Nicaragua, strengthening the antiwar and anti-NATC movement, and by giving impetus to the fight of young people for a life without war, exploitation, hunger, and oppression. It's socialism or barbarism!

No pasaran!



Nicaraguan militias discuss with supporters (DR)