International VIEWPOINT

ISSUE No 107 | 27 October 1986 | 12FF; £0.80; 1.50 US dollars

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INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

Fortnightly review of news and analysis published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, in conjunction with the French language *Inprecor*, which appears on alternate fortnights.

ISSN: 0294-2925

News closing date 20 October 1986

International Viewpoint is regularly indexed in the US Alternative Press Index.

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IV, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France. Published by Presse-Edition-Communication (PEC) — Administration: 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France. Directeur de publication: Christian Lamotte. Commission paritaire 64324. Imprime par Rotographie.

US Congress votes for sanctions

THE US Congress has finally adopted a series of severe economic measures aimed at South Africa. On Monday, September 29, the House of Representatives overrode the president's vote by 313 to 67. On Thursday, October 2, the Senate did the same by 78 votes to 21. So, a broad majority, including both Democrats and Republicans, gave the force of law to US sanctions against apartheid. All observers agree that this decision represents a significant defeat for Reagan in the field of foreign policy.

The White House's policy toward South Africa had been reduced to waiting for the "reforms promised by the Botha government." This approach, called "constructive engagement," has produced no substantial result. The last congress of the ruling Nationalist Party did not even dare discuss certain constitutional projects that Botha had evoked a few weeks earlier.

PETER BLUMER

The decision of the US Congress is thus quite indicative of the attitude of a growing section of the ruling class in the United States. Even among the conservative senators, Reagan's policy is now being challenged. The position taken by congress illustrates in a striking way the fear of seeing a more and more radical mass movement develop in South Africa.

It has become evident for a majority of US politicians that maintaining the apartheid system as such is a long-term threat to American interests and to capitalist interests in general. For a whole period, these people thought that Botha would be able to resolve the conflicts running through the South African white bourgeoisie.

The hope for a political recomposition within the Nationalist Party and using the South African liberal lobbies as a means of pressure came down finally to a vulgar policy of wait-and-see, dubbed with the pretentious name of "constructive engagement."

But Botha dragged his feet about committing himself to structural reforms, while the South African liberal current fissured and shilly-shallied. The state of emergency did not, at the end of the day, push back the mass movement, and US imperialism is very much afraid that the movement will come out of this test stronger and better organized.

The international press has focused attention solely on the sanctions against South Africa. But there are nonetheless catches included that illustrate quite well the concerns of the US members of congress. For example, the "Anti-Apartheid Act" calls for banning US aid to any group engaged in (or supporting) "necklace" actions or any other action involving "gross violations of human rights." (1)

This could refer both to a part of the Black movement and to the racist right. But where there is smoke, there is fire. The US Congress did not limit itself to voting sanctions but also wanted to intervene in South African political life. That is why the bill that it has just passed called for a 40-million-dollar aid fund for South Africans "disadvantaged by apartheid," notably in the trade-union field, or in private enterprise and the development of the Black communities.

This reflects the same concern as that of the Urban Foundation, a South African liberal body that is conducting a very active policy in the townships, or that of the various US union bodies whose activism in South Africa is beginning to worry the independent trade-union movement.

It is not hard to foresee what sort of use could be made of these funds, which pose restrictive conditions in the name of human rights and opposing violence. They are in fact an instrument for intervening in favor of "solutions" of the type represented by Buthelezi, the chief of the KwaZulu bantustan, or in favor of a moderate trade-unionism.

Before the end of the year, any new US investment will be banned. It will be impossible for the Pretoria government to place deposits in an American bank or to receive any American loans. All American purchases of South African businesses, all sales of computers to the official services and any export of petroleum products will be prohibited. Likewise, sales of South African gold coins or landings by South African Airways planes in the US will be banned.

Some of these sanctions can be bypassed, but some, by nature, cannot fail to be rigorously applied. These measures of retaliation can only be lifted if the following five conditions are met: lifting of the state of siege; release of political prisoners and first of all Nelson Mandela; legalization of the political parties; abolition of apartheid; and negotiation with the Black organizations.

According to the South African Trade Organisation, the sanctions will affect only about 5 per cent of total South African exports and about 15 per cent of commercial exchanges between the United States and South Africa. More significant, however, is the fact that this cut is going to be added on to the distinct decline in economic relations between the two

By PANCHO
In El National (Caracas).
C&W Syndicate.

1. "Necklace" — executions by placing a tyre filled with gasoline around a person's neck and setting it alight. This has been done to collaborators by youth in the mass movement and reciprocally by collaborators against progressive activists.

countries that started three years ago. Between 1984 and 1985, exchanges were already down by 15 per cent.

Moreover, the political significance of these measures will no doubt have greater weight. It is indeed difficult for the South African government to explain that the US Congress is a den of individuals who have decided to sacrifice South Africa to the "communists."

Thus, the coming weeks and months are going to be marked by sharp debates within the Nationalist Party and the liberal current over how to respond to these new facts.

The nationalist leaderships reacted first by making a show of counter-attacking. Pik Botha, the minister of foreign affairs, talked about the possibility of stopping purchases of US cereals and halting the sale of certain metals, such as platinum and gold.

For the moment, that is just big talk. South Africa's purchases of US wheat are relatively marginal, and the threat about mineral sales is more an attempt to push up prices in a situation of difficulty for South Africa's finances. On October 2, platinum went up by 41.6 dollars an ounce, topping 596.6 dollars. As for gold, the country's main export, a "political" price rise would not do an ailing economy any harm.

Gold prices

The South African economist Duncan Innes explained recently: "Since every dollar's rise in the price of gold is worth about 200 million dollars to the South African economy if sustained for a year, a rise such as we have just seen from 350 to 420 dollars would bring in an extra 1.4 billion [thousand million] dollars. This is more than we could reasonably expect from direct foreign investments in a year. So even if sanctions cut off our supply of foreign capital, a gold price of around 420 dollars would still give us access to the kind of foreign exchange we will need to grow. But can gold remain at 420 dollars for a full year, which it has to do to earn us a full 1.4 billion dollars?" (2)

Among the liberals, the latest events are going to favor some regrouping. Already in September, it seemed possible that the two liberal parties — the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) and the New Republic Party (NRP) — might unite, given both parties' stagnating electoral scores.

Moreover, the US sanctions are going to revive the debate in the white opposition between those who favor rapprochment with the United Democratic Front, and therefore may espouse the Black opposition's favorable view of a boycott of South Africa, and those — more in tune with the employers' concerns — who think that disinvestment will not promote reform of the system.

The latter current obviously thinks that the Botha government is responsible for the present situation, and it is going to pound away on that theme more often. But these people also think that a sharpening of the economic crisis can limit the government's inclinations toward reform. The first reaction of the PFP parliamentary leader, Helen Suzman, was along those lines.

All the liberals alike, regardless of tendency, have great difficulty in laying out a clear strategy, inasmuch as they are running up against a white Afrikaaner majority that is not ready to follow them in supporting a rapid dismantling of the racist system. Recent partial elections have shown that Botha held the initiative, even electorally.

This government is going to try to use the US sanctions as a pretext to appeal for the defence of a "fortress besieged." In this context, the attitude taken by the South African big bourgeoisie is very quickly going to set the tone of the next parliamentary debates.

It is not certain that South Africa can muster the internal resources needed to overcome this new economic attack. Often cited is the example of the sanctions that the white regime of Ian Smith in Rhodesia had to face in the 1970s. That country was in fact able to take advantage of the sanctions to build a modern industrial plant capable of substituting for goods formerly imported.

However, the South African case is quite different. On the one hand, the economy is more sophisticated and has much more ample resources. But Rhodesia, on the other hand, could count on its big South African neighbor to get around the sanctions. South Africa today does not have the backup to repeat that operation. Finally and most importantly the mass resistance movement is considerably stronger than it was in Rhodesia. Social agitation, strikes and confrontation are seriously affecting the health of businesses. Thus, given impetus also by several economic and political factors, the South African recession is going to continue.

It is, moreover, this recession — and not a moral point of view — that explains the substantial US disengagement from the country that has been going on for three years. Since 1982, more than 50 US companies have liquidated their holdings in South Africa, and companies such as Coca-Cola and General Electric have recently engaged in this withdrawal. In most cases, the American parts have been transferred to US investors, and in the final accounting US investment in South Africa has declined by half, falling today to 1,300 million dollars.

A victory for the solidarity movement

These points must be stressed, because nothing could be more false than to think that the representatives of US imperialism have turned into sincere democrats, motivated by a deepseated urge to see social justice granted to South African Blacks.

However, this does not mean that these sanctions do not *at the same time* represent a victory for the solidarity movement in the United States, which over the last years has been able to step up its actions to make the US policy toward Pretoria indefensible.

The result has also to be credited to the South African movements, starting with the ANC and the trade-union movement, which have come out clearly for a boycott and thereby thrown a spanner into the propaganda arguing that the first victims of sanctions would be the Blacks.

The US measures are now going to favor actions by the anti-apartheid movement in Europe. There are no longer reasons why South African planes should continue to be allowed to land in London, Paris or elsewhere. But the new policy of a part of the imperialist bourgeoisie makes it more necessary than ever to clarify within the solidarity movements the underlying reasons for the big political maneuvers underway.

In this matter, the imperialists can only follow a vacillating policy, hesitating between their desire to put pressure on the Pretoria regime and their fear of a revolutionary explosion. A genuine solidarity movement can only be based on the workers' and anti-imperialist movement.

Only a solidarity movement independent of official policies can highlight working conditions and repression in the Western firms operating in South Africa, actively support the unions, mobilize against the repression, and keep up the pressure to stop complicity with Pretoria. This is why the South African mass movement is now waiting for international support on the repression and the state of emergency. □

2. *'Weekly Mail,' September 12, 1986.*

Non-aligned summit goes off like a damp squib

THE EIGHTH SUMMIT of the Non-Aligned Movement took place in the first week of September in Harare, Zimbabwe. Some 100 heads of state and governments or their representatives were present. The evolution of the situation in South Africa was one of the subjects discussed.

A final document received a consensus of the participants around a denunciation of apartheid and of the policies of Pieter Botha's government. In addition, a special statement was adopted on southern Africa.

The latter document, however, simply held up some sanctions already being applied against the South African regime as examples. It did not involve any commitments by the participants in the summit.

"Awaiting the adoption of general and compulsory sanctions," this document put forward a catalog of thirteen measures "that have been taken by some organizations", and recommended that "the international community as a whole adopt them." (1)

The summit also took up the problem of the indebtedness of the dominated countries. Moreover it adopted a firm condemnation of Washington's policy in Nicaragua and in Central America, a move that unquestionably represents a diplomatic success for the Sandinista regime. The US raids on Libya were also denounced as "acts of state terrorism and a violation of international laws."

CLAUDE DEVILLIERS

As usual, the press went looking for the sensational at this conference. For example, Colonel Qadhafi's contribution drew more comment than the substance of the questions taken up.

But once again at this summit, there was a great deal of noise with very little to show for it.

This great assembly of representatives of third world states has become a ritual where formal statements, adopted by consensus, have no political importance for the masses of the countries concerned and little practical implications for the daily problems facing these countries.

It is nonetheless true that for liberation movements or states threatened by imperialism, the forum provided by the non-aligned conferences can serve as a diplomatic weapon in their general arsenal of propaganda and protective devices.

An example of this is the diplomatic battle waged by the Sandinista leadership demanding that Nicaragua be selected as the host country for the next non-aligned summit. In this regard the clear differences between the policy pursued by the Sandinistas against US aggression and the policies of the so-called front-line states (Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania) toward South Africa should be highlighted.

While the front-line states rely essentially on diplomatic measures, expecting the imperialists to put pressure on Pretoria, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) is consciously combining the diplomatic battle with mass mobilization.

At every turn, the fundamental contradiction of meetings like this summit comes up again. It is the antagonism between states with different or opposing social bases. So this non-aligned summit confirmed once again that these contradictions cannot be transcended, even by seeking agreements on resolutions that represent the lowest common denominator for all the participants.

It is important, however, to stress the fact that for movements involved in struggle — such as the African National Congress (ANC), which is fighting the South African regime, or the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) of New Caledonia, a guest in Harare — such assemblies, despite their contradictions, represent quite useful diplomatic forums.

Nonetheless, this eighth Non-Aligned Summit was very far from the spirit that prevailed at the founding of the movement in Bandung in 1955, at which some newly independent states and a great many nationalist leaderships were represented.

At that time, the crisis of the colonial empires and the rise of anti-imperialist struggles created the conditions for bourgeois governments — such as the Indian, Indonesian or Egyptian — to commit themselves, more or less jointly, to a deliberate policy of putting pressure on the imperialists.

Creating the political and economic space for building their states involved the governments concerned having considerable capacities for initiatives, even against the imperialists.

Thirty years later, the difference from the early years comes not only from the situation engendered by the world economic crisis but also from the evolution of the regimes involved, which has been marked by the degeneration or even the disappearance of bourgeois nationalism.

What at the time of Bandung seemed to be a new challenge helping to aggravate the contradictions of imperialism, is today no more than a damp squib. As a means for putting pressure on the imperialists and negotiating with them, the non-aligned movement has lost a considerable part of its effectiveness and its weapons.

The past 30 years have seen the growth of social conflicts within these states. The need for confronting demands from the workers and peasants has pushed these regimes into greater moderation toward imperialism, when they have not purely and simply been overthrown and replaced by openly reactionary governmental teams.

The economic crisis has obviously deflated the pretensions of these states. The evolution of the forms of imperialist domination and the indebtedness of the dominated countries have deprived their vehement appeals for reform of the world market of any credibility or effectiveness.

1. *'Le Monde,' September 9, 1986.*

The demand for a transfer of technologies to the south has come to nothing. In fact, the technological dependence of these countries on the great industrial powers has increased to an extent not seen before.

The appeal for a new world economic order launched from the platform of the United Nations in the early 1970s by Algerian president Houari Boumedienne has not led to anything. To the contrary, the scheme for increasing South-South trade within world trade as a whole has come to nothing.

Under the pressure of some participants interested in increasing their exports to other third world countries, the last non-aligned summit decided to form yet another commission to build South-South collaboration.

In the 1970s, the raw-materials market was a battlefield for an intense struggle between the producing and consuming countries. Today, raw materials prices are in a disastrous decline.

Deep political crisis for OPEC

Since 1981, the oil price has been collapsing, throwing the economies of countries such as Mexico and Nigeria into disarray and deflating the economic and political pretensions of a country like Libya.

As a result, against the background of the tangled political situation in the Middle East, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has been going through a very deep political crisis. OPEC has been unable to hold back the fall of oil prices, or even present a common front of its members against the oil companies.

In all these areas, the imperialists have left hardly any room for manoeuver to the economies of the so-called third world countries. No world conference, no North-South meetings have been able to blunt the appetites of the multinationals, the big financial groups and the trading companies. This is why we are seeing a paradoxical state of affairs.

While most governments of the dominated countries lack neither arguments nor reasons for opposing the imperialist economic offensive, they are left with scarcely any means for taking real action. They do not even have the means to put up any kind of common front, as is shown by the OPEC crisis and the failure of all groupings set up to defend the raw-materials producers.

On the other hand, most of these governments are taking a tougher attitude toward demands by the masses. For example, when the national economy was collapsing, the Bolivian government turned on the workers' movement and staged a confrontation with the Bolivian Confederation of Labor (COB).

In Peru, the Alan Garcia government's nationalist notions gave way quickly to a search for compromise with the country's foreign creditors and to repression of the workers and peasants. In Argentina and Brazil, under different names, austerity plans have been imposed in accordance with the directives of the International Monetary Fund.

In this context, from the standpoint of the bourgeois governments of the dominated countries, the ideology of non-alignment implies that the state and the nation have to unite to put up a solid front against the crisis and foreign appetites. This ideology becomes a real farce when these governments at the same time adopt economic measures designed to force the toiling masses to pay the cost of the economic crisis.

This obfuscating ideology tries to give credence to the false idea that the world economy comes down to a confrontation among nations. So they attempt to conceal the insurmountable contradiction within the dominated countries between the interests of the toiling masses and the interests upheld by the ruling classes.

There is, therefore, no real "non-aligned movement." No proposal for action has come out of it, and what most of the delegations have in common in their meetings is an excessive taste for phrase-mongering. In fact, the leader of Burkino Faso described this situation clearly when he said:

"If the racists went on the rampage against the South African Blacks and if they sent their bombers to crush the Zimbabwean people . . . . We would not be able to respond in any way except by sending messages of support." (2)

In fact, the way the Non-Aligned Movement functions makes it possible to indulge in all sorts of dubious associations without being compromised. Governments fall, regimes change, and the states remain members of the Non-Aligned Movement. No well-defined internal code of conduct, no structures and no obligations exist that could give the Non-Aligned Movement the aspect of a "third bloc."

The non-aligned summit is a mere forum for discussion where each delegation comes to defend a position that most often reflects special interests. Non-alignment is therefore a snare. In fact it was Qadhafi who, out of a penchant for provocation, took pleasure in pointing this out from the platform of the Harare summit, saying: "Non-alignment does not exist . . . . We have to be totally aligned against the United States, Israel and the members of NATO." (3)

For Colonel Qadhafi, non-alignment does not exist strictly speaking because the world is divided into two camps. On one side supposedly are the countries in the imperialist camp, and on the other the countries who oppose it, arrayed behind the Soviet Union.

This refutation of non-alignment is wrong because Qadhafi counterposes a camp grouped around the Soviet Union to one led by the United States, while the social divisions do not correspond to this campist dichotomy on the world scale. The real camp opposing exploitation and all forms of oppression is that of the masses of workers and peasants.

If you want to puncture the pretensions of non-alignment as it is preached by the likes of Mobutu in Zaire or De la Madrid in Mexico, it is the demands of the toiling masses, their democratic aspirations and the struggles for power that you should support, and not the demagogic proclamations of some of these bourgeois regimes.

Still, non-alignment can certainly be a tactical argument that a revolutionary government can use to wage a diplomatic campaign directed at the masses in the imperialist countries. The Nicaraguan government has legitimately followed such an approach in order to expose American propaganda and explain the right of the Nicaraguan people to determine their own destiny.

Contrary to expectations, the question of apartheid and the situation in South Africa was not the main point dealt with at this summit.

The semi-failure of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group that went to South Africa this year in a vain attempt to induce the Botha government to negotiate with representatives of the movement of the Black masses, as well as the paralysis of the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), have shown the concrete limitations of a policy aimed essentially at getting the imperialists to solve the South African crisis.

The attempt to achieve economic solidarity among the countries bordering South Africa so as to reduce their trade dependence on Pretoria was based on the expectation that special economic aid would be forthcoming for this purpose from the European Economic Community. Not only was

2. *'Le Monde,' September 4, 1986.*
3. *'Le Monde,' September 6, 1986.*

no significant advance made toward this goal, but the economic crisis is making these countries even more dependent on South African facilities. (4)

Since this non-aligned summit was held in southern Africa, it was clear that that was going to give a special role to the so-called front-line states. Thus Mozambique, Botswana, Angola, Zambia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, the host country for the summit, had a platform for denouncing South Africa's military aggression and the continual blackmail to which they are subjected by the Pretoria regime. Not the least of the paradoxes of this summit was to hear the radical-sounding speeches coming from governments that have in fact already bowed to Pretoria's demands.

For example, Zimbabwe and Mozambique have already reduced the facilities offered to the ANC to operate from their respective territories. And the Zambian regime headed by Kenneth Kaunda has made a speciality of diplomatic intrigues around this question.

Radicalism in words thus stood in contrast to actual deeds. But above all, everyone knows that with the economic and social crisis afflicting these countries and with the South African army camped on their frontiers, these states do not have the means for real action against the apartheid regime. (5)

Anxious to avoid a revolutionary crisis in South Africa, worried by the radicalization, and keeping a close eye on the policy of the ANC, these governments are more concerned about their own future than that of the South African masses.

Moreover, the South African organizations fighting apartheid have long ceased to have any illusions about firm support coming from these countries. Over and above the debate about the exact nature of these regimes, it has to be recognized that in any case they have no means for pursuing a policy of active solidarity with the South African Black masses.

The platform of the Non-Aligned Movement nonetheless continues to serve a special function for these governments. It enables them to maintain verbal opposition to Pretoria, aimed essentially at preserving their legitimacy in the eyes of their own peoples through evoking themes out of their nationalist past.

Three of these regimes — Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe — claim to adhere to "scientific socialism" and are the products of armed national liberation struggles. The theme of fighting apartheid thus has a very important function at home.

However, the result of all this, when all was said and done, could only be modest in the confines of the non-aligned conference. This emerges clearly from the only two decisions adopted on the question of fighting apartheid. They were to send a delegation of ministers of foreign affairs of non-aligned countries to "the main industrialized countries, notably the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan and the United States," and establish a "fund for resisting invasion, colonialism and apartheid" to "bolster the economic and financial potential" of the six front-line countries. (6)

Two-thirds of the countries of Black Africa maintain commercial relations with South Africa. And most of the governments fear like the plague that the revolutionary struggle of the South African masses might give youth in their countries ideas.

Contagious examples

How, in fact, could anyone fail to see that the forms of organization adopted by the movement of the oppressed and exploited in South Africa could also serve as contagious examples for the struggle against the African dictatorships and against neo-colonial domination on the continent? That is undoubtedly the reason why in 1985 Abdou Diouf, president of Senegal and also chair of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at the time, banned an anti-apartheid demonstration that was being organized in Dakar by a coalition of Senegalese opposition parties.

Another topic discussed in Harare was the debt. It was regretted that "North-South dialogue was at a dead-end" and that the indebtedness of the dominated countries was "unbearable." But on the debt question the summit finally came around to supporting the proposal of the Peruvian delegate. It called for each country deciding separately what percentage of the service on the debt that it was going to pay in relation to its export income.

This decision simply expressed in concentrated form the inability of the bourgeoisies of the third world, and especially the Latin-American ones who are among the most indebted, to form a united front against imperialist pressure for repayment of the debt.

Over and above the nationalist verbiage they are so fond of, in Harare the governments of these countries reaffirmed their refusal to stand up to imperialism on this question. The proposal made by the Cuban leader Fidel Castro to organize a collective refusal to pay the debt was rejected.

In the framework of the summit, the Cuban leader quite appropriately pointed to the extent of this indebtedness, noting precisely that the debt of the dominated countries went from 373,000 million US dollars in 1977 to 950,000 million dollars in 1985: "One day, we decided to estimate how much time a person would need to count up the Latin-American debt at the rate of a dollar per second — it came out to 12,000 years," Castro said. He concluded: "All this shows that the debt cannot be paid."

While the non-aligned summit recognized that the debt burden is unbearable for the countries concerned, the orientation it finally adopted relies on the good will of the imperialist countries and their financial institutions for finding a solution. On this problem of the debt the bourgeois governments belonging to the Non-Aligned Movement follow the principle of "every man for himself."

The orientation adopted by the summit, in the last analysis, by no means conflicts with the hopes of the imperialist creditors to collect at least a part of the interest on this debt, if they cannot get it all.

Many points were taken up in Harare — denunciation of apartheid, the call for "immediate independence for Namibia" and for "an immediate end to the hostilities" between Iran and Iraq, condemnation of the US raids on Libya, denunciation of the arms race and the call for the United States and the Soviet Union to reach "an agreement on a permanent moratorium on nuclear tests". But this eighth non-aligned summit displayed one salient feature. It demonstrated the scant capcities of its participants to commit themselves in any area to concrete actions to mobilize opposition to imperialism. □

4. The figures illustrating Zimbabwe's dependence on South Africa speak volumes: Some 85% of the country's foreign trade passes through South African ports. Half of its exports of manufactured goods are to South Africa. A quarter of foreign tourists are from South Africa. Some 60% of industry and 90% of mining are under South African control.

5. The shadow of the South African regime fell over the eighth non-aligned summit. According to 'Le Monde' of August 28, 1986, some consumer products offered to the delegates were of South African origin. For its part, the South African 'Weekly Mail,' which has an anti-apartheid orientation, wrote in its September 5, 1986, issue: "Just next to the press bar, at which journalists meet delegates for interviews, and exchange ideas through the night, is mounted a stand of Truworth's clothing — safari suits for women. The beer of choice here is Castle lager, which although brewed by Zimbabwe's Natbrew, is a familiar sight for those who have arrived from South Africa. And the computer technicians, essential to Zimbabwe's coverage of the conference, are South African and proud of it."

6. 'Le Monde,' September 9, 1986.

A victory for the right at Labour's conference

THE LABOUR PARTY conference in the first week of October was successfully stage-managed to create the effect of a pre-election rally for party leader Neil Kinnock. Right-wing policies supported by Kinnock were passed on most issues. (1) The only exceptions were a decision to maintain the present system of accountability of Labour Members of Parliament (MPs) to their local party and a decision to commit a Labour government to give cabinet status to a ministry for women. [See box].

On nuclear power, a motion proposed by Arthur Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which called for the phasing out of all nuclear power stations was carried, and only narrowly missed the two-thirds majority necessary for consideration to be included in Labour's general election manifesto.

But behind the right-wing victories what also began to emerge was a new left in the party which is beginning to hammer out a common agenda and an organizational shape through Labour Left Liaison and Campaign Forum. (2) [This article appeared in the October 10, 1986, issue of *Socialist Action.*]

JOHN LANE

The conference strengthened Kinnock's control over both the National Executive Committee and the party. The new NEC is significantly to the right of last year's. Left-wingers Eric Heffer and Margaret Beckett were removed — Heffer as a result of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee's block with the right-wing in the constituency section and Margaret Beckett as a result of the National Union of Public Employees and the National Union of Railwaymen voting for right-wing Diane Jeuda in the women's division. (3)

The expulsions by the NEC of members of the Liverpool District Labour Party, associated with *Militant*, were overwhelmingly endorsed. (4) A new internal party court called the "National Constitutional Committee" was set up and a new all-encompassing disciplinary offence created — "conduct prejudicial to the party".

Kinnock's speech and the economic and industrial relations policies adopted by the conference commit the party to the most right-wing positions it has ever held on these issues whilst not in office. The resolution which defended trade-union independence was remitted.

These policies indicate that a Kinnock Labour government on the economic and industrial front would be the most right-wing Labour government ever. They were a victory for Kinnock's goal of reducing the expectations of what a Labour government will do for those it represents.

Kinnock's right-wing line was the basic framework established by conference. But within that framework individual advances were registered.

The conference did not endorse a generalized political witch hunt in the party. The proposal to reinstate Amir Khan and Kevin Scally was only narrowly lost — and that was only because the NEC assured the conference that their cases would be reviewed. (5)

The NUM's resolution committing a Labour government to phase out all nuclear power stations came within a whisker of achieving the two-thirds majority necessary for it to be considered for inclusion in Labour's election manifesto. Lesbian and gay rights policy did achieve the necessary two-thirds majority.

Women achieved a major victory with the decision that constituencies must include at least one woman on every shortlist for parliamentary selection. This, together with the decision to review the structure of the party's women's organization — including the method of election of the women's section of the NEC — will open an enormous debate on women's rights and representation within the party. (6) The conference also voted, against the NEC's advice, to support the establishment of a women's ministry with full cabinet status in the next Labour government. These decisions will put the debate on women's organization at the centre of the party in the next year.

The Black Section continued its progress at conference. (7) It did not win the vote but it decisively won the argument — and threw the right into

1. Voting at Labour Party conference is unique in Western Europe and reflects the control of the trade-union bureaucracy over the party. The trade unions have over 90 per cent of the votes — a figure based on the union membership. The local Labour Parties — representing the individual members of the party — have 8-9 per cent of the total vote, so that the conference is controlled by the trade union block vote. [See box for voting figures].

2. Labour Left Liaison is an umbrella group of the most important campaigns in the Labour Party. Its affiliates include the Labour Women's Action Committee, the Labour Party Black Section, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Labour Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and socialist newspapers.

Campaign Forum — An Alliance for Socialism was set up on 20 September this year. It is a tri-partite grouping of the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, Labour Left Liaison and leading trade unionists. Its members include Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill, and it is associated with the newspaper 'Campaign Group News'.

3. The Labour Coordinating Committee is a left Kinnockite group which claims 1500 individual members.

The National Executive of the Labour Party is elected in separate divisions. Seven members are elected by local Labour Parties based on their individual memberships, this is by far the most left-wing section. Thirteen members are elected by the trade unions affiliated to the party. Five women members are elected by the whole conference.

4. The 'Militant' tendency is a centrist current which calls itself Trotskyist. It is rightward moving and does not support the main struggles against British imperialism, or the right of Black people and women to organize within the labour movement.

5. Amir Khan and Kevin Scally were expelled from the Birmingham Sparkbrook Labour Party — the constituency of deputy party leader Roy Hattersley — at the end of last year for exposing membership irregularities and supporting the establishment of Black Sections.

6. The National Labour Women's Conference of the Labour Party has adopted a series of proposals campaigned for by the Labour Women's Action Committee to increase the powers of the women's conference, including the demand that it elect the women's section of the NEC.

7. The Labour Party Black Section was set up in 1983. It is not constitutionally recognized, but it will have six Black supporters as MPs in the next parliament — the first Black MPs in Britain since the 1920s. It has won hundreds of municipal council seats, particularly in London, and is building up support in the trade unions.

a debacle in the debate. Alan Sapper became the first trade union general secretary to take the floor at party conference in support of Black Sections.

In a cynical move the NEC agreed to *Militant* supporter Frances Curran's request that she summarize against the Black Section for the NEC. This decision showed both the incoherence of the right-wing on race, and the fact that on the left *Militant* and the *Morning Star* are now virtually alone in opposing Black Sections. (8)

The Black Section debate was definitely the most inspiring of conference, and the Black Section successfully demonstrated that the Black and Asian Advisory Committee has failed. (9) The vote for Black Sections increased slightly.

Accountability of MPs

A major victory was achieved on the last day of the conference with the vote by 3.5 million to 2.6 million to defend the accountability of MPs to their local party General Committees — and to instruct the NEC not to bring any proposals to change this until after the general election.

The party's commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament was reaffirmed, including the promise to close all US nuclear bases within a year of taking office.

The position for the removal of all US bases, and for withdrawal from NATO, for the first time established themselves this year as coherent minority political positions in the party. Support for removal of US bases and withdrawal from NATO is no longer "fringe politics" and will increase — particularly because a Kinnock government will not get rid of nuclear weapons and nuclear bases, whatever the party wants.

The demand for British withdrawal from Ireland, and Irish unity, is also established as a minority, but coherent, position in the party. This was reflected less in the vote on the issue than in the Labour Committee on Ireland's spectacularly successful fringe meeting — and the fact that the debate on Ireland will be stepped up in the party. Replying to the debate the NEC promised a policy document in the new year — and that this document would contain commitments to abolish plastic bullets, "replace" strip searching and end the supergrass trials.

On South Africa, a resolution calling for a Labour government to implement an emergency programme of sanctions against South Africa, to aid the ANC and SWAPO, and provide aid to the front-line states was passed. Unfortunately, the resolution tied British sanctions to international actions — a loophole Labour's right-wing will exploit. The resolution did commit the party to work with the Anti-Apartheid Movement and urged party members to join it.

Labour leader Neil Kinnock (DR)

On Central America Labour's support for the right of the peoples of Central America was reaffirmed. The NEC was instructed to put pressure on the United States to withdraw support for the contras, for the British government to reinstate all trade links with Nicaragua and to launch a campaign for aid to Nicaragua.

The key issues were put onto the conference agenda and fought through conference by the National Union of Mineworkers, the Campaign Group, the Labour Women's Action Committee, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Labour Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Labour Committee on Ireland, the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights, and the Central America Labour Group — to name only the most important. (10)

Most of these came together in June this year, to form Labour Left Liaison (LLL), which unites the main campaigns in the party and a number of socialist newspapers. A week before the conference, Campaign Forum was set up, which establishes a tripartite structure linking the LLL, the Campaign Group and leading trade unionists.

The votes at conference revealed precisely the relation of forces on the main issues around which the left fought, in particular those voted for against the line of the platform.

On the maintenance of the accountability of MPs to local party General Committees, the most important of the reforms won in 1981, and opposition to the unjust explusions of Khan and Scally, the left has essentially maintained or won a majority.

Support for the demands of the women's conference fought for by the Women's Action Committee,

8. The 'Morning Star' is the daily newspaper published by the pro-Moscow Stalinist current in Britain — most of its contributors have been expelled from the Communist Party.

9. The Black and Asian Advisory Committee was set up last year by the Labour Party NEC to try to undermine support for Black Sections.

10. The Campaign Group of Labour MPs was formed in 1982 to link Labour MPs with struggles outside parliament. Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield of the NUM were made honorary members of the Group at the same meeting which set up Campaign Forum.

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy organized the campaign which won the democratic reforms of the party from 1979-1981, including the accountability of MPs to their local parties and the election of the leader and deputy leader by an electoral college at party conference instead of by the parliamentary fraction alone.

support for the demands of the Black Section, British withdrawal from NATO and the removal of all American bases, are issues which have won the overwhelming support of the constituency Labour Parties and are starting to gain ground within the unions — each notching up over a million votes. These issues are firmly on the agenda for the debate in the party.

The demand for British withdrawal and a united Ireland, for the disbandment of the Black and Asian Advisory Committee, against the establishment of the National Constitutional Committee and opposition to the new offence of "conduct prejudicial to the party" are as yet issues on which the LLL and the majority in the constituencies stand virtually alone. The task here is to get these issues seriously debated in the party — something not yet fully secured.

Taken very roughly, the issues which the Labour left grouped in the LLL takes up can muster 4-500,000 votes. Those with roughly a million votes are where progress is being made to cut into forces to the right of the LLL, and on a few issues the majority is already won, or almost won, with the leadership trying to roll it back.

These issues taken together, alongside support for those fighting for freedom and socialism internationally — and in particular today in South Africa and Central America — constitute a common agenda for the left which is put forward by Labour Left Liaison's campaigns and by Campaign Forum. It is one that is beginning to get a hearing.

The left which is emerging is the most coherent and strategic one to have been created in the party since the 1920s. Internationalism, support for the demands of the Black Section and women's conference, and defence of party democracy are at its core. At this year's conference it demonstrated the potential significant ability to reconstitute the left-wing of the party as a whole — despite the fact it is very obviously a minority at present.

Tribune's editor Nigel Williamson wrote in that paper's conference edition that "the soft left has become probably the least coherent grouping in the party". (11) He acknowledged that "social democratic" policies are being adopted and "the realigned left feels almost powerless to do anything about the situation".

A major crisis in fact broke out in the Labour Coordinating Committee left at party conference. The Campaign Group/LLL left in contrast, despite its minority position, was clearly putting together its agenda for the party. This agenda has already made substantial headway in the constituencies and the key task is to deepen its roots in the unions.

A clear victory for the right; the emergence of a much clearer and better organized minority left; and the beginning of a crisis in the Kinnockite left — that is the balance sheet of party conference. □

Key votes of the conference

	Result	For	Against
		Votes in thousands	
For a ministry for women with cabinet status	Carried	3,335	2,905
For at least one woman on every parliamentary shortlist	Carried	5,491	822
For women's conference to elect the women's section of the NEC	Defeated	1,232	4,471
For a review of the party's women's organization and the method of electing the women's section of the NEC	Carried	5,489	373
To endorse the NEC's expulsions of Liverpool District Labour Party members	Carried	6,146	325
For reinstatement of Khan and Scally	Defeated	2,715	3,443
Against expulsions of socialists	Defeated	496	5,870
For the constitutional recognition of Black Sections	Defeated	1,222	5,191
For Lesbian and Gay Rights	2/3 majority	4,792	1,262
To phase out all nuclear power plants	Carried	4,213	2,143
NEC statement on nuclear power	Carried	4,509	1,846
For an energy policy which includes nuclear power	Defeated	2,104	4,121
For the removal of all US bases	Defeated	1,159	5,209
For withdrawal from NATO	Defeated	1,033	5,411
For membership of NATO — and a so-called "new treaty" governing US bases which includes a British veto over action	Carried	5,417	1,023
For British withdrawal from Ireland and a united Ireland	Defeated	402	4,408
For the principle that the constituency General Committee is the best vehicle for maintaining the accountability of MPs, and against changes being brought forward until after the general election	Carried	3,500	2,600

[See Footnote 1 of main article on voting rights]

Labour's conference: a pre-election rally for Kinnock (DR)

11. Tribune' is the weekly newspaper of the left Kinnockites.

"I believe in socialism, not consensus"

ARTHUR SCARGILL, the president of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), made the following speech at the rally held during the Labour Party conference. It is taken from the October 10 issue of *Socialist Action*.

Within our movement there is a tendency to believe we can go and win the next general election, and the support of working people, through a softly-softly approach. That through a Saatchi and Saatchi soft-sell, we can win people that would not normally be won to the policies of our party and our movement. (1)

Well I happen to be one of those — as a disenchanted Yorkshireman — who believes that the Red Flag is dyed with the blood of people who sacrificed everything for this movement.

Our principles, it is said, are a little out of date. We've got to go for the middle of the road. Well, the only thing that you get in the middle of the road is . . . knocked over!

Ever since I was 14 years of age I understood we're not about winning elections. Some people may be. But I know that this is a class war and our fight is to take political power — and there's a difference. Millions of people unemployed, deprivation in our inner cities, Black communities not only deprived but blatantly discriminated against.

Well, at least there's the beginning of an understanding amongst working men and women of what our brothers and sisters in the Black communities have had to endure, and still have to endure. If there was one thing the miners' strike did it was to help miners understand the issues at stake. And one of the results is that miners will be voting at this conference in support of Black Sections as one of the steps towards securing the rights of Black people in this society.

Inner city difficulties and problems that we've seen are not the result of some mindless hooligans. The only hooligans that have been involved are the para-military police force. In relation to the chair's opening remarks [that photographers would be trying to get pictures of Scargill with Sinn Fein councillor Tommy Carroll], I'll tell you why the paramilitary police force is able to walk apparently unheeded and unhindered anywhere it wants in Britain. It is because we stood by and allowed it to happen in the North of Ireland.

The National Union of Mineworkers learnt a lot of lessons. I've been reading lots of books that have been published about the miners' strike — about what we did wrong. We've seen academics pontificating by the score about why the miners did this or didn't do that. And I was told by a colleague of mine — she's a parliamentary candidate — that she attended a dinner not far from Hampstead and there were people like Eric Hobsbawm pontificating about the miners' strike. (2) And he was saying that the problem with the miners' strike was that they should never have done it at the time they did.

Chartists and Tolpuddle martyrs

Why is it that people with first-class honours degrees, who can see the struggle of the Chartists and the Tolpuddle martyrs with clarity, fail to see the struggle of the miners right before their eyes with any clarity at all?

The destabilization of this government was not in spite of but because of the miners' strike. £12,000 million it cost them, as they sought to destroy the NUM. (3)

Many people are, of course, looking forward to Wednesday's debate on nuclear power. You'll have seen people like Gavin Laird [engineering workers' union leader] going on television and saying "if you think we're going to stand by while workers in our industry are attacked, then you've got another think coming". I wish he'd said the same thing during the miners' strike.

It's been suggested in the *Guardian* that there's been some kind of deal on the question of nuclear power. Well, I'm the mover of the composite and I'm not aware of it! What's really happened is that the Labour leadership on the NEC found out that they were going to lose and that's why there has been a decision to support, with reservations, composite 63 on this.

Let me make it absolutely clear: as far as the mover, the seconder, and the 252 organizations supporting that composite are concerned there are no reservations in our support for it.

It's been suggested that we're arguing for destroying jobs. This is absurd. We want people in the nuclear industry to be given the opportunity to work for people's real needs instead of for death and destruction.

If you close down nuclear power stations you create — with the establishment of coal-fired stations — 25 per cent more jobs. We also put thousands of people to work building new coal-fired stations and developing alternative power sources such as wind, wave, tide, geothermal and solar energy.

Why can't we begin to say positively to the British people: "the Labour Party will put an end to nuclear power"? If this party does what it should after Wednesday's debate, if it goes and and says "we're pledged to stop nuclear power, we are for the policy of alternative energy resources, we're for coal-fired generation, above all else we're for an end to a programme that threatens the lives of youngsters in this country and of generations yet unborn." If we do that then we'll win a massive victory at the next general election. But equivocation will not only lose us votes, it'll lose us the election as well.

There are people who say "look how many accidents you've got in coal mining, look how few we've got in the nuclear industry". I answer "I don't know how many accidents you've got in nuclear power. I don't know because they don't tell you.

1. Saatchi and Saatchi is an advertising agency who made their name through creating the Tory Party's electoral propaganda from 1979 onwards.

2. Eric Hobsbawm is identified with the Eurocommunist Communist Party, and its journal, 'Marxism Today'. He wrote a series of articles for the journal arguing for a coalition of Labour and other bourgeois parties to defeat the Tories.

3. 'International Viewpoint' has published extended coverage of the 1984-85 miners' strike and its political impact, including several major speeches by Arthur Scargill and other NUM leaders. Indexes of these issues and back issues are available from the address given for subscriptions on page 2.

Miners' leader Arthur Scargill (DR)

And if they did give the official figures I wouldn't believe them! But I do know about the hundreds and hundreds of people who have died and are dying today in uranium mines in Namibia. And I do know about the 300,000 who will die as the result of Chernobyl."

If we look at international questions there has been a mining disaster in South Africa. Many hundreds of people have been affected. Nearly two hundred have been killed. This rotten corrupt system, not content with slaughtering Black people on the streets and in the villages and in the townships, refused to allow the National Union of Mineworkers of Britain to send our mining engineer to help the NUM in South Africa. That's the kind of regime that you're dealing with! That's the kind of system that Thatcher and her government are wanting to prop up.

It's time that working people in this society began to realise that sanctions are not going to take place under this government. But why isn't there a ready understanding that for sanctions to be applied you don't need to have a government decision? You have it in your power to take sanctions, to impose them yourselves. It can be done. At least I tried to do it.

As trustees of the miners' pension scheme Peter Heathfield, Mick McGahey, and I were removed because we refused to allow money from British miners' pension schemes to be invested in South Africa. I'm pleased that they removed me, if that's the price I had to pay. . . .

Comrades, this week's conference has got to look at the issues. Not only the question of unemployment; not only the question of rebuilding a savaged and embattled Britain; not only the question of beginning to rebuild basic industry in Britain, and all the associated policies. It's got to go much wider than that. It's got to have a political perspective — and one that's, in my view, totally different from what we've seen for a long time.

There are those in our party, there are those in our movement who want to see consensus. Well, I believe in socialism, not consensus. And I think it's time that people in our party asserted exactly where they stand on the question of consensus politics.

If working people in Nicaragua had waited for consensus they'd never have achieved a victory. If people in Vietnam had waited for consensus it wouldn't have worked. They put forward revolutionary politics in order to win the advancement for their class.

It's time that our movement understood this basic lesson, the basic principle that it's socialist policies that are going to win in Britain.

You know, in our movement we seem to be a little bit down-hearted when we get setbacks. What on earth for? Don't we understand — even if the academics don't — the nature of the struggle, the nature of the system?

"We're on a winning trail"

I'm not down-hearted. I know we're on a winning trail. I know that in my party and my movement, a socialist policy will emerge from what we're seeing at the present time. Every single time that I feel at all in doubt, all I have to do is to look at the history of our movement and look at what happened in real terms to the Chartists, to the Tolpuddle martyrs and yes, in recent times, to members of the National Union of Mineworkers. And when you look at it in those terms, our problems, or our difficulties, or our set-backs, appear infinitessimally small by comparison.

We're talking about a better society. We shouldn't hide the vision of a better Britain. We should talk about a splendid vision. We should talk about a society where the means of production, distribution and exchange are taken into the hands of working people. We should say without question, without equivocation, that all the firms that have been denationalized will be renationalized on the election of a Labour government.

Above all else will be a policy for peace. It will be a policy that says "an end to US bases, an end to nuclear weapons, unilateral nuclear disarmament and withdrawal from NATO". There can be no question of equivocation on that central objective.

We owe it to ourselves to look in terms of a better vision. We owe it to ourselves to put forward to the British people an alternative policy, a policy that means something, that's different and radical compared to the Tories, the SDP and the Liberals. We don't want something similar. We want a socialist approach of defiance to this government and what was envisaged by the creators of our movement.

Let every single member of this party tonight reaffirm that we don't want witch hunts in this party. Expulsions and witch hunts may be for the colleagues at the back today [Khan and Scally] — but it'll be for you tomorrow. It's not all that long ago that they expelled the Communist Party of Great Britain from the Labour Party. I think that was wrong.

If there's one lesson that our party and the working class have got to learn, it's that we need unity, not disunity or splits and divisions. And you don't get unity by expelling people who are sincerely fighting for a socialist policy.

I ask that this party and the people at this rally go from here tonight and begin to campaign as hard as the right-wing movement in our party. Begin to campaign to win policies inside the trade-union movement. Begin to campaign to win a bigger say for the constituency Labour Parties in the conference.

Above all else, if you seriously mean what you say, then translate into action the policy decisions of this party. Let no spokesman, let no spokeswoman, "interpret" what we mean. This party conference must decide the policy as we go to the next election.

We need to go to the electorate on a policy of full employment, a policy of reintroducing into this country vision and hope, to regenerate Britain's battered industry.

We want an end to anti-trade union legislation. We want it wiping off the statute book. We want no fudge, no reintroduction of legislation in another form like in 1969 with *In Place of Strife*. (4)

If we do all this I'm confident that we shall not only win the next general election, we shall win it not on the basis of consensus but on the basis of socialism. □

4. 'In Place of Strife' was the name given to the anti-union laws proposed by Harold Wilson's Labour government, which were never put on the statute book because of mass working class opposition.

Alan Garcia's "dirty war"

ON JUNE 18 and 19 this year, while the Socialist International congress was being held in Lima, the Peruvian armed forces bloodily suppressed a revolt of prisoners belonging mostly to the Sendero Luminoso group. (1)

This massacre - there were hundreds of victims - revealed in broad daylight what President Alan Garcia had been trying to make people forget: the real fact of the anti-"terrorist" struggle, of the "dirty war". (2) That is, the massive repression that has developed since the proclamation of the state of emergency in 1982 in some regions where the Sendero guerrillas have been active.

Frank Slegers interviewed Hugo Blanco, secretary of the human rights commission of the Peruvian Peasants' Confederation (CCP). The interview took place on August 29 in Puno, where Hugo Blanco was attending the congress of the Puno Regional Federation (FDCP) which is part of the CCP.

Question. What is the general situation with human rights in Peru?

Answer. Peru is a country of contrasts, since it is formally a democracy, but there is a situation here comparable, if not worse, to those in Argentina or Uruguay during the dictatorship regarding human rights in those regions where the state of emergency has been imposed, such as Ayacucho, Huancuauelica, Pasco and so on. The same sort of deterioration has been noted recently in the Puno region, which was not put under a state of emergency.

In these regions, the military, police or special repressive units — the *sinchis* — sow terror. If they arrive in a community where Sendero has been, or simply if they think that Sendero has been there or somebody says that they were there, they raze the whole village. In the worst cases it is a general massacre. They separate the men, women and children. They torture the men, rape women and then murder everyone. Children are burned alive. Afterwards they throw the bodies into common graves or simply leave them on the ground.

These are the most extreme cases of repression. Others are more common. They will enter a community, and take some prisoners, who later "disappear". When we ask for news of them, not a single trace can be found.

They take with them chickens and all the small animals that the peasants raise for food. Those that they cannot carry, they kill. The same goes for the grain. They take as much as they can carry, and mix excrement with the rest. They make earthenware jars unusable by puncturing them. They burn doors and furniture. Anything they cannot take with them that has any value they destroy, they burn.

When they have passed through a community, the inhabitants of the village have to leave because they don't know if the *sinchis* will return to kill them. It could be the *sinchis* or the army or the marines, because these three repressive outfits are all on the rampage in these zones.

There are more flagrant cases of violations of human rights, but the "disappearances" of numerous people must also be mentioned. These happen even in Lima, the capital.

In the streets of Lima you can see automatic machine guns, or military lorries from which soldiers aim their guns on the population, on the people.

They carry out raids on the poorest neighbourhoods, making house-to-house searches, as in Ayacucho. When they find a watch, money or objects of any value, they take them. And when they find left-wing books by Marx, Mariategui, Lenin or Mao, which can be bought in any bookshop, they take away the people accusing them of being *Senderistas.* It's the same if they find a photo of Fidel Castro, or in fact any other pretext.

That is the situation in Lima. It should not be forgotten that, in the capital, there is a curfew from one o'clock to five o'clock in the morning, during which it is forbidden to move around. One of their most frequent practices is to imprison people and then to demand money from them if they do not want to be accused of being *Senderistas.* Those who have money can save themselves this way, they are set-free.

In addition, the official repressive units act as ruthlessly as the paramilitary groups who blew up the office of the Puno Regional Peasants' Federation, placed a bomb in front of the house of Deputy Cantanilla of the United Mariateguist Party (PUM), and another in front of the office of a centre supported by the peasants. These kinds of terrorist acts belong to *Aprista* paramilitary gangs. (3)

Q. What is the role of Alan Garcia's government? Has the situation changed since he was elected president a year ago?

A. At the beginning, he gave the impression that things were going to change. For example, when a communal grave was discovered in Ayacucho, he dismissed the head of the joint command [repressive forces] and the head of the Ayacucho military zone, declaring that he would not tolerate human rights violations. But afterwards the massacres and the "disappearances" continued as before. They have maintained the joint command, and no military officer has been punished.

The prison massacres were ordered by Alan Garcia, who knows full well how the armed forces are going to act, simply because the same facts already came to light regarding the revolt in Lurigancho prison in September 1985. In spite of this experience, he gave the order — unconstitutionally — to the armed forces to undertake the suppression of the revolts in the prisons.

What value can be placed on declarations appearing in paid inserts in the European press? Nothing. They are nothing but words. We have had this sort of talk here as well: "Either they leave, or I resign; those who are guilty, who are committing abuses, must go", and so on. And finally, what does this add up to? Some big talk! Nobody has left; Alan Garcia and the military are both still there.

The crimes committed in the prisons stay unpunished. None of

1. Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) — an ultra-left, Maoist guerrilla movement.

2. Alan Garcia, candidate of the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA — American Popular Revolutionary Alliance), was elected president on April 14, 1985. See "Political recomposition after the general elections" by Esteban Marcos in 'International Viewpoint' No. 76, May 20, 1985.

3. "Apristas" — supporters of the ruling APRA party.

those responsible have been imprisoned and human rights violations against political prisoners still continue. They are subject to inhuman conditions in the prisons. At the start, they were not even allowed visits. Now, they are, but only from direct relations. Files are kept on visitors, and at any moment they can be put into prison themselves as *Senderistas*. This fate has befallen many relatives of political prisoners.

Q. What is the response of the CCP to all this?

A. The CCP is the organization that is most concerned with the victims of these abuses. Because most of them come from the countryside, we, as a peasant organization, are particularly active on this question. The organization has a human rights commission that is very active. The similar commissions of other organizations are very weak or non-existent.

Our work consists of paying lawyers to defend political prisoners, peasants or not. The CCP shelters prisoners who have come out of jail, or their relatives, in local offices. Prisoners who are freed have no papers, because they are taken from them in prison, and they therefore have to go through all the steps to obtain new papers. Otherwise, they cannot go anywhere.

In addition, most of them come from zones subjected to the state of emergency, and if they return home they are killed. Very often they stay in Lima. In the capital, there are many refugees from the state-of-emergency zones. The CCP also helps refugees in Lima trying to find jobs. It is trying to create an agricultural market, a sector of street traders. It is also trying to see to it that the victims go to see the different human rights organizations.

On the other hand, the CCP has some links with Amnesty International, and as soon as there are new developments, new exposures, it makes them known to Amnesty. It helps victims with medical aid. Through its human rights bulletin it denounces the injustices committed.

But this is not the only role of the commission. The human rights commission of the CCP is trying to establish coordination between all the bodies that are active on this theme in the country, which has more or less succeeded.

Our goal is to raise the consciousness of the whole Peruvian people about all the atrocities that are being committed in the zones of repression, because these facts are unfolding today in Peru, but not outside. We want to demonstrate to the people that this is a threat against everyone,

Hugo Blanco (DR)

but also that they can fight against this situation. We try to hold forums on this subject and to send witnesses to the zones concerned from the trade unions and from neighbourhood organizations. We send out video cassettes to raise consciousness about the repression that seriously affects a section of the Peruvian people and which threatens all of them. This is one of the messages that we want to get across.

The other message is that the Peruvian people can halt the repression by mobilizing through marches, meetings and strikes. For example, in the valley of La Convencion, a province of the Cuzco district, they had a strike around human rights. (4) Following this, there was the strike in Puno, no longer simply provincial but on a scale of a whole district. Lastly, there was the strike in Huanta a little while later, also in defence of human rights.

We think that when this consciousness extends to all the Peruvian people, then we will be able to defend human rights.

Q. The armed forces justify their intervention by the presence of Sendero Luminoso. What is the position of the Federation on this?

A. We have a big strategic difference with Sendero Luminoso, in addition to many tactical differences. First, and this is true for Sendero and for all armed groups, we do not think that the mass movement today in Peru is in a state for armed struggle. In Peru, everyone is organized: workers, peasants, employees, street traders, the regions, the districts . . . .

For example, on September 5 and 6, there is going to be held the second preparatory meeting for the Popular Assembly in January, which must decide on a new direction for the mass movement, where all the components of what one could call the social movement will be gathered together. We must follow the tempo of this movement.

The peasants' federation congress in Puno will decide on some land occupations, so we must prepare self-defence at a district level. But this is totally different from what Sendero is doing.

What are they doing? They go into a village, attack the police office, and then leave. What did they do in Puno, for example? They divided up some cattle, some provisions and even some of the land of the communities. But afterwards they left — these armed groups do not hang around. And what happened? The armed forces came and razed the community, imprisoned the village heads and massacred the people.

It is because of this that we think that these are methods that disorganize the mass movement. This is how the peasant movement in Ayacucho was disorganized. In some places, very combative regions have been totally disorganized by these sort of actions. This is our fundamental difference with Sendero Luminoso. In addition we are against their authoritarianism and therefore the way in which they execute those whom they consider to be exploiters of the people.

Q. But the armed forces justify their intervention because of Sendero Luminoso — is this just a pretext? And when the mass movement is confronted by state violence, what will be the proposals of the peasants' organizations faced with the army's violence?

A. One example is the decision of the self-defence commission set up by the Puno peasants' congress to reinforce the peasants' guards. These guards exist and are working already. The congress itself was protected by peasant guards, which made night security rounds to watch the offices against any attacks from the repressive forces, Sendero Luminoso or APRA terrorists.

However, the peasant guards remain weak. They must be strengthened in each community. At the level of the Federation, we have decided to set up a peasants' self-defence school, because we know that we are going to face repression. Even if Sendero Luminoso did not exist there would be repression, as was the case in Convencion. There we have begun, in a very embryonic fashion, admittedly, peasants' self-defence.

It will also be started here in Puno. But I think it will be on a much larger scale — more systematic, more organized and more generalized than in Convencion. □

4. The valley of La Convencion, in the Andean district of Cuzco, became the centre of massive demonstrations for land in the years 1961-63. The peasants, in reply to army's attacks, organized the beginnings of peasants' militias. Hugo Blanco, who was one of the principal leaders of this movement, was sentenced and imprisoned at this time.

Perspectives for the Indian women's movement

FOR THE PREVIOUS two to three years, active women's groups in India had been discussing the possibility of holding a national conference to discuss some of the vital issues faced by the women's liberation movement. In particular, there was a need to begin a dialogue between rural and urban women's groups. (1)

This conference, "Perspectives for the Indian Women's Movement", took place in December 1985, and was hosted by the Forum Against the Oppression of Women based in Bombay.

Four hundred women from 18 Indian states enthusiastically participated in the debates and discussions, along with observers from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, South Korea and Indian women living abroad. The delegates represented 85 women's groups working among rural, tribal and working class women and from the far-left.

VIBHUTI PATEL

The idea that the women's movement in India is urban-based is no longer valid, as the decade 1975-85 has witnessed increasing participation of rural women in struggles for survival. The process of economic development and modernization in rural India has not only bypassed women but also adversely affected rural women's employment.

Increasing male migration has also added to the burdens on rural women. Women are now at the head of one-third of Asian households. In this context, it is extremely important to fight around the multi-faceted problems faced by rural women.

Establishing links between women's groups spread all over the country and establishing real communication networks was another area that needed collective discussion.

As a result of pressure from the women's movement most of the political groups have started taking up women's issues. Many of them have launched women's fronts, and the larger political parties have reactivated their women's organizations.

After a nationwide anti-rape campaign, the women's movement in India is now facing many challenges. Initially, their focus of activity remained fighting such atrocities against women as rape, dowry, murders, police violence and so on. Many women's groups also became involved in taking up individual cases of violence against women and fighting legal battles. Rural women's groups combining struggles for survival as well as fighting against patriarchal oppression felt an urgent need to establish links with urban groups.

The Bhopal disaster — the genocide by the Union Carbide company — created a lot of awareness regarding health issues and women's role in the environmental movement. The escalation of communal riots — anti-Muslim and anti-Sikh — made feminist groups extremely worried and they began to ask themselves how the women's movement could become an anti-communal force.

The context in which the conference was held was one of increasing state violence against the mass movements, the disintegration of left-wing and working class forces, a rise of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh fundamentalism and government attempts to coopt the most articulate middle-class women in innumerable bureaus, committees and government bodies. It was therefore important to make a forthright evaluation of the present state of the women's movement and to evolve a perspective for common action.

Workshops were held on the following topics: the participation of women's organizations in mass and other organizations; the relationship between consciousness raising and support to individual women; communication and the media; the politics of personal growth; the structures and functioning of women's groups; and the relationship of the women's movement to the state.

Discussions were also held on the themes of women, religion and culture; women and work; prostitution; domestic violence; and rural women's organizations.

1. For background information on the development of the Indian women's movement see "Right to life for females", interview with Trupti Shah, 'International Viewpoint' No. 94, March 10, 1986.

Women's demonstration in Maraharastra, March 1986 (DR)

Bhopal victim (DR)

To illustrate the scope and breadth of the type of discussions at the conference, the following are the outline notes for the discussion at one of the workshops, on prostitution:

"Prostitution is a very patriarchal institution whose primary assumption is that sex is a male right and that sex and women's bodies are commodities to be packaged and sold. It gives brothel managements absolute licence to induce more and more women into prostitution, without even the minimum of laws to enable a fight against this exploitation.

"The state, in sanctioning legalization, only acts as a pimp, sanctioning the enslavement of women and thus violating fundamental and human rights.

Double standards of male sexual morality

"We therefore condemn legalization of prostitution, prostitution racketeers, vested interests who look upon prostitution as a convenient release for their so-called natural and aggressive sexuality and the double standards of male sexual morality. We condemn the active connivance of the government, especially in Goa, in promoting sex-tourism.

"Since in today's society prostitution is likely to continue, measures should be taken on three levels: rescue, voluntary and prevention. Short and long term measures to be considered are: decriminalization; tightening up laws against brothel keepers and pimps; the formation of protective homes; education, health and counselling facilities and pressure on the government.

"All the women's organizations should come together to formulate strategies to deal with the problem and suggest concrete demands on the government."

At the end of four days of rigorous debates, three resolutions were passed on personal laws, women and work and on the Bhopal tragedy [see box].

Conference resolutions

Women and Personal Laws (majority resolution):

"WE BELIEVE that today no equality and justice is available to women of this country, regardless of the religion they practice. This is an outcome of religious as well as political structures in which women have had no power. These personal laws have meant inequality and subordinate the status of all women in relation to men. We therefore must strive for a civil code where all women get rights equal to men in matters of marriage, divorce, maintenance, custody, inheritance, property, adoption and other such matters. Women's organizations should strive to get adequate representation in framing these laws.

"We also believe that such laws, when enacted, will not encroach on the rights of any religious community. Religion should only govern the relationship between a human being and god, and should definitely not concern the relationship between man and man or man and woman. Therefore we strongly support the demands of any women or group of women who are striving to bring any change for bettering the position of women in this regard. We also condemn the Hindu communal designs at making the democratic issues into a threat to minorities.

"We also lodge our protest against the efforts by the state at restricting the scope of section 125 of the Criminal Procedural Code (CPC). (1)

Women and Personal Laws (minority resolution):

"WE STRONGLY support the rights of the minorities in India and feel that any move for reform must come from within the community.

"We strongly condemn Justice Chandrachud's communal comments on Muslim Personal Law.

"We support the right of Shah Bano and other women of all communities to maintenance as under section 125 of the CPC.

"We strongly condemn any move to amend section 125 in a bid to deny women of any community the right of maintenance."

Women and Work:

"WE CONDEMN the two notifications passed by the central government and the Maharashtra state government. The central government notification excludes from the purview of the Maternity Benefits Act all those women who are unmarried. Similarly, the state government notification excludes from the purview of the Act all those women who have not changed their names to their husband's name.

"We demand that both these notifications are withdrawn with immediate and retrospective effect."

Women and the Bhopal gas tragedy (2):

"THE MADHYA Pradesh government has started collecting from all women victims a proforma asking to give information on whether they are employed, unemployed, semi-skilled, skilled, highly skilled or unskilled. The motives of the government are to give compensation according to this categorization.

"They have categorized the women who are doing domestic work as self-employed and hence not eligible for compensation.

"The conference condemns the government's strategy to cheat the gas victims out of the compensation due to them. Also the conference condemns the government's attitude toward women which will result in the women victims becoming absolutely dependent on family and relatives for their existence, treatment, etc."

1. Section 125 of the Criminal Procedural Code deals with vagrancy law, but became the centre of a major controversy in December, 1985, when it was used as a basis for a ruling in what is known as the "Shah Bano" judgement. Shah Bano, a 73-year-old Muslim woman, won maintenance from her husband after a Supreme Court judgement. She appealed to the civil courts because of the limitations of maintenance provision offered by traditional Koranic law. This was seen to be an attack on Islamic Koranic law, splitting the Muslim community and sparking off massive mobilizations against the judgement.

In March this year, Rajiv Gandhi's government introduced the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights of Divorce) Bill, marking a codification in law of Muslim Personal Law based on the Koran.

2. On December 3, 1984, methyl isocyanate, a deadly gas, escaped from a tank owned by the Union Carbide Corporation at Bhopal and killed 10-20,000 people. Many thousands of others were injured. See 'International Viewpoint' No. 68, January 28, 1985.

It was felt that the women's movement must establish links with other mass movements such as tribal liberation movements, struggles of *Dalits* (untouchables) and working class organizations. At the same time, the women's movement must retain its autonomy so that it is not subsumed by the latter.

The Indian women's movement must pressurize progressive forces to fight against sexism not only in the public sphere as trade unions and so on, but also in the private arena. □

New developments in the Polish left

THE CRISIS of Solidarnosc has been discussed in a number of articles in *International Viewpoint* in the last two years. The relative decline of the anti-bureaucratic mass movement has been pointed out for some time by the capitalist press.

The following articles and documents describe steps by a section of the left wing of the underground workers' movement to offer an alternative to the "self-limiting revolution" strategy of the Solidarnosc leadership. The next *IV* will take up the general political situation after the recent amnesty.

ARTHUR WILKINS

Poland is a country that presents no end of surprises. At the end of 1984, a team of sociologists from the University of Poznan did a study on a sample of workers from four big heavy industrial plants located in various parts of the country.

A part of the study had to do with what sort of political system most closely suited these workers' aspirations. Some 78% said that they were in favor of genuinely democratic elections for parliament, with different electoral slates.

Around 65% were in favor of having various political parties, and 80% were for freedom of expression for all citizens, whether supporters or opponents of the political system. Some 58% were in favor of social ownership of the means of production.

It should be noted that the latter two concepts, unlike those of free elections and political pluralism, sound quite ambiguous to the average worker, since they are part of the ideological language of the bureaucratic rulers.

But the most revealing fact was that 87% expressed their support for the idea of "full workers' self-management." The term is a bit vague, but in Poland it means no less than full power in the factories for workers' councils, democratically elected by the workers. Moreover, it is seen as being in total opposition to any notion of "participation" or "co-management."

This massive loyalty to the idea of workers' self-management is undoubtedly the most formidable gain of the Polish revolution of 1980-1981. If we leave aside the very special case of Yugoslavia, it would be hard to find any country anywhere in the world today where the great majority of the workers aspire to be the collective owners of the plants in which they are working.

Commenting on the results of this study, one of the underground journals pointed out that they revealed to what extent Polish workers are for a "system different from the present one — for a human and democratic socialism." (1)

However, the same study also revealed something else, this time a disturbing fact.

Noting that the study "reflects quite faithfully the behavior and opinions of the workers," the editors of the publication closest to the underground national leadership of Solidarnosc pointed out: "The very strong support for the ideals and values of Solidarnosc dropped when it came to the underground Solidarnosc. Some 20 to 25 per cent of the workers said that they supported the latter."

At the same time, "those people who support the regime make up about 25 per cent of the workers in the big enterprises, while the rest reject the regime established after December 13 — that is the conclusion arrived at by the authors of this study." (2)

In a nutshell, the study indicates that half the workers, while opposing the bureaucratic dictatorship and maintaining their support for the democratic self-management project represented by Solidarnosc in 1980-81, do not see the activities and positions of Solidarnosc as it is today as expressing their aspirations.

This contradiction is where the impulse has to be sought for the development of the Workers' Opposition Alliance (POR) after May 1985. This group was formed outside the structures of the Solidarnosc underground leadership and the democratic opposition that holds hegemony within them. Its activity is threefold.

First of all, the POR is engaged in trying to consolidate those with a higher level of workers' self-management consciousness that have been left in an atomized state, since they have not found adequate expression in the leadership of Solidarnosc.

It is significant that the Solidarnosc leadership, which in the underground has moved away from its working-class base, has fallen under the influence of intellectuals who consistently offer only one remedy for the failure of bureaucratic management — "the values of the market economy."

Secondly, the POR is teaching the workers how to defend their basic material and moral interests, and how to organize themselves around their most urgent demands.

Thirdly, it is calling on them to establish minimum bases of support for a fight for workers' control over the organization of work, the use of resources and the quality of production.

"These are our factories"

"These are our factories," the POR declares. "We cannot let them destroy our property, because the more the bureaucracy destroys the less the society will have to divide up. We have to track the irrationality and economic sabotage of the bureaucracy at every step, denounce it, protest against it, bring complaints against those responsible to the courts, and, if need be, strike in defence of our factories, of our common national inheritance. The less the bureaucracy squanders, the more there will be for us, the more quickly it loses power, the less it will squander. Let's keep our eyes on the bureaucracy's hands!" (3)

Spreading out from its first networks, in particular from its most important initial base, the Union of Workers Councils of the Polish Resistance Movement (ARP-PRO) in Upper Silesia, the POR expanded considerably in the first year of its existence. (4)

1. 'Obecnosc' (Wroclaw), No. 10, 1985.

2. 'Tygodnik Mazowsze' (Warsaw), No. 157, 1986.

3. The POR-S "Program for immediate struggle in defence of the standard of living and the national heritage" is scheduled for publication in the magazine 'Quatrieme Internationale.'

4. For more information on the ZRP-PRO — today the POR-S of Upper Silesia — see 'International Viewpoint,' No. 100, June 2, 1986.

New POR groups have formed in many cities in the country, fundamentally through the adherence of nuclei of activists that previously worked in the framework of Solidarnosc.

While the POR is centering its attention on building its base organizations in the big factories among industrial workers, in some areas peasant and youth groups have also appeared.

Both the founding platform of the POR and its "Program for immediate struggle in defence of the standard of living and the national economy" are clearly attractive to radicalized sections of Solidarnosc activists who are looking for a working-class and socialist alternative. (5)

Convinced by their own experience of the failure the "strategy of self-limiting revolution," such activists are turning toward the POR, prompted by a desire to offer the Polish workers' movement the perspective of a democratic workers' revolution.

This tendency is strengthened by the fact that the POR backs up such a perspective with a body of immediate, partial and transitional demands — starting with the most classical, the demand for a sliding scale of wages — that correspond to the everyday concerns of the masses.

For example, the call for rent strikes launched by the POR had a major impact in several neighborhoods in North Praga, on Warsaw's right bank. All the local groups of Solidarnosc active in these neighborhoods joined together in building this initiative, which is the first action of the Polish social movement in the explosive area of the housing crisis.

In the same section of the city, *OBI*, the neighborhood news bulletin published by the POR, has won a large audience. In its May issue, *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, the most widely circulated underground periodical and the organ of the national leadership of Solidarnosc (the TKK) gave an account of the call issued by the POR, entitled "Down with poverty and the dictatorship."[See box.]

Also in May, the first anniversary of its founding, the POR changed its name, becoming the Workers' Opposition Alliance — Solidarnosc (POR-S). In this way, it sought to indicate its historic roots in the struggle of Solidarnosc during the revolution of 1980-81 as well as define its attitude to the union today, within the social resistance.

The existence of Solidarnosc, the statement of the POR-S Executive Committee declared, is indispensable for the liberation of the working class but it is not an adequate instrument. It is necessary to build a workers' organization able to take on much more advanced political tasks than a union can. This is the role that the POR-S wants to play, in close collaboration with Solidarnosc. (6)

The chair of the POR-S Executive Committee, the young Silesian worker Damian Dziubelski, has addressed an open letter to the TKK explaining that over six years of activity he found himself forced to reflect "on the errors made in the struggle for the liberation of the working class."

This reflection led him to take the leadership in the underground of "an organization that includes left-wing sectors of the working class, trained and educated under a common banner, the banner of Solidarnosc."

To liberate the working class from bureaucratic domination, he says, it is necessary to combine the fight for trade-union freedom with a fight for a self-managed, democratic independent power in the state.

Anti-Communist language

Dziubelski called the attention of the Solidarnosc leaders to the fact that anti-Communist language abounds in many publications that claim to represent the union. "We do not use the same sort of language. For us, the present 'people's power' is in the hands of pseudo-socialists, who have established a degenerate regime that has nothing to do with socialism."

Stressing that both Solidarnosc and the POR-S aspire to build a self-managed republic, the POR-S leader asked the members of the TKK "won't a free, self-managed and sovereign Poland, that is, one liberated from the bureaucratic dictatorship, be a socialist Poland?"

In his letter, Dziubelski insisted that the question be clarified. At the same time, he noted that over and above any difference that might exist, the underground leaderships of Solidarnosc and the POR-S have a duty to the working class to collaborate and to coordinate their activities. The fate of a new August 1980 will depend on the fulfillment of this obligation.

The POR-S leader expressed the hope that Solidarnosc leaders "among whom there is no lack of persons with a broad outlook," such as Zbigniew Bujak and Jan Andrzej Gorny (member of the TKK for Upper Silesia), would respond positively to his organization's invitation. (7)

As its program proclaims, the POR-S considers its main task to be to assure that the Polish workers movement maintains total independence from "any organization or


NR 1 ZRYW

RPRS

ROBOTNICZA PARTIA RZECZPOSPOLITEJ SAMORZĄDNEJ

SEKCJA POLSKA IV MIĘDZYNARODÓWKI

ORGAN PRASOWY TYMCZASOWEGO KOMITETU ZAŁOŻYCIELSKIEGO

IV RPRS

komunikat TKZ

DEKLARACJA IDEOWO POLITYCZNA RPRS

TYMCZASOWA

"Zryz", newspaper of the Provisional Organizing Committee of the Workers' Party of the Self-Managed Republic (RPRS), Polish section of the Fourth International

5. *The text of the founding platform was published in 'IV', No. 89, December 23, 1985.*

6. *'Przelom' (official bulletin of the POR-S), No. 3, 1986.*

7. *'Wolny Robotnik' (publication of the POR-S of Upper Silesia), No. 38, 1986.*

institution outside the working class." This means political and ideological class independence not only from the totalitarian bureaucracy but also from the Church.

In this latter respect, the POR-S leaders diverge from many Solidarnosc activists, who see the Polish Catholic Church as an institution independent of the bureaucratic power, and today tend often to lean on it, coming under its ideological influence.

While the POR-S welcomes religious activists without any discrimination and is open to collaborate with priests who take the side of the workers, it considers that the Church hierarchy is a tacit but powerful ally of the bureaucratic regime, and that this "red and black" alliance, as it is called, is a major obstacle on the road to the liberation of the working class.

A new element in the process of the recomposition of the Polish workers' movement initiated by the POR-S is the public appearance in May of the Workers Party of the Self-Managed Republic (RPRS) and of the periodical *Zryw* ["Take Off"], published by the Provisional Organizing Committee of the RPRS.

The Organizing Committee of the RPRS points out that a self-managed Poland can only be the achievement of an organized and conscious working class allied with the working people as a whole and progressive intellectuals. It notes that "the Polish people, oppressed, humiliated and deprived of dignity by a totalitarian bureaucratic regime, are obliged to achieve their aspirations by means of revolution."

To this end, it is necessary to have "a centralized cadre organization conscious of its objectives and tasks" basing itself "on the world proletariat and on all progressive workers' parties internationally that are fighting for the liberation of the working class, peace and social progress."

The RPRS has announced its desire to become the Polish section of the Fourth International, which *Zryw* describes as an organization that fights "for socialism, but genuine socialism, meaning a self-managed society that can only be fully achieved on the international scale. This sort of socialism has nothing to do with the so-called actually existing socialism." (8)

For its part, the Executive Committee of the POR-S declares that the RPRS is being built on the basis of the activity of the POR-S, and has its support and close collaboration. It has expressed its full agreement with the desire of the RPRS to become a section of the Fourth International, which it describes as "an international organization fighting to overthrow the regime of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy and to restore a lost socialism to society and in particular to the workers and to all working people." (9)

What is the reason for this position toward the Fourth International? In the pages of the Upper Silesian *Wolny Robotnik*, "Kryki," a member of the Executive Committee of the POR-S, answered this question in the following way:

"This international organization, while small, is very sound ideologically. I am convinced that its ideals correspond to the thinking of the current in the country that has not lost its head, either under the pressure of the Kremlin's propaganda or of pro-Western propaganda. Both these forms of propaganda threw the heritage of all communists into the same mire. The purveyors of one kind denounce the totalitarian bureaucracy as 'Communist.' The purveyors of the other kind, supporters of the regime, wave the revolutionary banner of the communists, although they are a flagrant negation of all the values this banner represents."

It is thanks to the Fourth International, Kryki said, that a worker can understand what, over and above their different nature, unites the systems of the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy — domination and exploitation of the working class — and that therefore "the fate of the workers is the same the world over." (10)

Below we are publishing an interview in which Kryki explains why in his opinion the Polish workers' movement needs a revolutionary party, along with the draft declaration of the principles of the Workers' Party of the Self-Managed Republic that was published in *Zryw*. □

8. 'Zryw,' No. 1, 1986.
9. Ibid.
10. 'Wolny Robotnik,' No. 33, 1986.

"For an independent self-managed republic"

THE FOLLOWING is the draft political-ideological statement of the Workers Party of the Self-Managed Republic (RPRS – Polish section of the Fourth International), "In the fight for an independent self-managed republic of Poland", first published in *Zryw*, No. 1, May 1986.

Our struggle, as well as the objectives we have laid out, aims at transforming Poland into a sovereign country, economically and politically independent of any other state or political system. A people's right to chart its own path of development and decide on a political system in accord with its historic conditions and its needs is a people's right to independence. Our objective is to fight for an *independent* Poland.

We recognize the historically established bases and principles of the socialist system, and oppose social exploitation by the systems of bureaucratic dictatorship that exist in the East, as well as by private capital. We declare our support for the full realization of the principles of socialism, which have been deformed and degraded by the rule of the Kremlin bureaucracy. These principles include, for example, the right of the society to sovereignty, the right of the workers to the means of production, the right of the peasants to their land, the right of the people to independent thought and creativity. (1) Our objective is to fight for a *socialist* Poland.

We reject both the anti-social system of bureaucratic totalitarianism and the pseudo-parliamentarian anti-democratic regime of imperialism. We reject systems that are based on exploiting the workers, and regimes that rule over society on the basis of usurped power. We stand firmly for a democracy based on self-management, for a people's power, for the right of the society to make decisions for itself, both in the framework of democratic institutions of self-management as well as in a system of political democracy. Our objective is to fight for a *democratic* Poland.

1. The term "society" and "social" in the writings of the workers' opposition movement in Poland means the civil society as opposed to the state, that is, the masses as opposed to the bureaucracy.

We reject the illusory belief in the possibility of evolutionary change or reform of the Stalinist system or the capitalist system. The conflicts of interest between the working people and the bureaucratic or bourgeois power elites are too powerful to be capable of solution through evolution or reform. The only road by which society can win its right to build socialism, the only road by which to overthrow the dictatorship of the degenerated party and state apparatus is *revolution*.

Revolutionary internationalism

It is impossible to fight the regime of the totalitarian bureaucracy, to overthrow it and to found a self-managed republic without collaborating and cooperating with revolutionary progressive movements fighting for the independence of the non-Russian peoples from the Kremlin dictatorship, for the independence of the federation of non-Russian peoples from the Kremlin dictatorship, for the independence of the federation of Czechs and Slovaks, for a united and independent Germany. Our struggle cannot develop in separation from the struggle of the workers of the entire world against exploitation by private capital. Our ally can only be the world working class. That is the content of our revolutionary *internationalism*.

We see the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie as the common enemies of the working people. History shows that the workers are adversaries of both systems, and that when the workers rise up to claim their rights, both systems are united by a common interest in seeing their struggle drowned in blood. Internationally, our struggle will be waged on two fronts — against the bureaucracy in the East and the bourgeoisie in the West. In our struggle we will not seek support or aid from the imperialist bourgeoisie. It is in the interest of all the workers of the world to fight against a third world war, to defend peace and to oppose the flareup of international conflicts contrary to our class needs or which are artificial in character. Therefore, we are for peace.

We recognize the need to assure the role of working class as a subject and the sovereignty of society. (2) Therefore, we stand for social ownership of the means of production and for the right of the workers to self-organization and self-management, and fight for social and national sovereignty. We are fighting for a *self-managed* Poland.

"Down with poverty and the dictatorship"

ALTHOUGH PRICES went up recently, between December 1985 and March 1986, the regime imposed a new price increase on us. After the increase in rents last January, the regime is already announcing an increase in the cost of house heating, gas, electricity, coal and urban transport. Undeclared increases, running around 4 per cent, are already a daily reality.

The fall in the standard of living is the price that the working people are paying for the parasitism, the incompetence and the dictatorship of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Unless we resist, there will be no end to price rises. We need to arouse our fighting spirit and begin to put up energetic resistance. Only an organized force of the workers can put a brake on the action of the authorities, who bear the sole responsibility for the economic crisis.

To defend ourselves, it is necessary to form:

- **_Statistical Committees_ in the underground Solidarnosc factory committees, in the workers' councils and in other bodies to evaluate the increases in the cost of living. We have to demand an automatic sliding scale of wages.**
- **_Independent Tenants' Committees_ to organize rent strikes, if the recent rent rises are not rescinded, or if they are followed up by new increases.**
- **_Protest Committees_ to organize work on petitions to be directed to organs of the state administration, to the official pseudo-trade unions, and so forth and to build mass actions against the price increases.**
- **_May Day Committees_ to build actions that will make May 1 a day of great battles in defence of our standard of living and of civil rights.**
- **_Self-Supply Groups_ to make contact with farmers and obtain supplies collectively from them at prices below the official rates.**

Moreover, it is necessary to declare a _state of alert against hunger_. Those who live under the subsistence minimum, which is 9 thousand zlotys per month per family member, are invited to put lighted candles in their apartment windows during the night of the 13th of every month.

Our best weapon is _self-organization combined with the threat of strikes_. We need to have a political awareness of the meaning of our struggle, to understand that unless we overthrow a regime that is socially and nationally alien, we cannot eradicate the causes of the crisis. We must be aware that the fundamental objectives of our struggle are _independence and self-management_ and that we are waging it in the interests of the workers, peasants, intellectuals and small artisans.

Workers' Opposition Alliance
Warsaw, March 17, 1986

There is no socialism without democracy.

Democracy means people's power, workers' power over their workplaces, cities and communities. It means that the society must be free of any dictatorship and that the state power must derive from the social power. The bureaucratic regimes in the East and the plutocracies in the West will never be a people's power. The basis of socialism is power by the people, that is, freedom for the people and a role of political subject both collectively and individually. The absence of democracy has led the present system to degenerate into an anti-social "actually existing socialism." There is no socialism where there is no democracy. Nor is there real democracy without socialism.

There is no socialism without independence.

The anti-social and anti-democratic bureaucracy bases itself on political subordination to the power of the Kremlin and on economic subordination to the also anti-social imperialist monopolies. Without the support of these two systems, the present political regime could not maintain itself in Poland. In order to achieve socialism in our country by the revolutionary road, it is necessary to deliver the people from this subordination, which means subjugation. Socialism will be possible only if we win national independence. There is no socialism without independence nor is there any independence without socialism.

There is no socialism without self-management.

Only a self-managed society can guarantee a socialist system, democracy and independence. The right of independent organs of workers' self-management to make the decisions in the factories; the right of the society to decide about the environment in which it lives and works; the

2. "Subject" means that the workers determine their own fate, instead of being an "object," that is, having their fate determined by someone else. — 'IV'

right of creative thinkers to propagate their independent opinions; the right of parties, organizations, groupings, associations or interest groups to function, mean the right to socialism. Only factory, industry, territorial, social and political self-management can guarantee socialism. Without self-management there is no socialism.

There is no socialism without revolution.

The experience of the working-class uprisings in 1956, 1970, 1976 and 1980-81 shows that the socialist reforms that have been demanded in the course of such upsurges cannot be carried out within the framework of the present ossified system. The notion that the creators of this system, the party and state apparatchniks, could turn over power to the society in accordance with the principles of socialism, carry through democratic changes or regain national independence, or that they could play any part in all this, is pure utopianism. The regime has made it necessary several times already to pay a price in the blood of the Polish workers even for small concessions. Taking power is possible only by the road of socialist revolution, which at the same time will be a revolution for national independence.

There is no revolution without organization.

As an opposition force to the regime, Solidarnosc has proved inadequate to carry through such a revolution. The spontaneous social upsurges have been channelled by the partisans of a self-limiting revolution or a revolution within the framework of the system. We need a revolution carried through to the end, that will overthrow and destroy this ossified system, generate structural changes and prevent a counter-revolution. Therefore, what is needed is a vanguard revolutionary organization conscious of its objectives and tasks, one that has a clearly defined program and ideology and which is based on the aspirations and support of society.

We have to be democratic revolutionary socialists, organized internationally to fight for the genuine principles of socialism.

For the moment, we base ourselves on the ten general political principles set forth in the draft platform of the Workers' Opposition Alliance — Solidarnosc (POR-S), until they are futher developed. On this basis, we have made the following decisions:

- To begin conscious organized work to build the Workers' Party of the Self-Managed Republic (RPRS).
- To this end, to form a provisional coordinating body, the Provisional Organizing Committee. □

"A party is indispensable"

"KRYKI" was one of the main leaders of the Union of Workers Councils of the Polish Resistance Movement (ZRP-PRO) in Upper Siliesia. Today he is a member of the Executive Committee of the Workers' Opposition Alliance — Solidarnosc (POR-S) and one of the founders of the Workers' Party of the Self-Managed Republic (RPRS). The following interview was published in *Wolny Robotnik*, No. 38, June 1986, the periodical of the POR-S of Upper Silesia.

Question. It is clear from your articles and statements that you are a socialist, convinced that in order to carry through to its conclusion the social struggle against the pseudo-people's power that we confront a political party is necessary.

Answer. That is true. I think that a party is an indispensable instrument to carry through the fight for power to a successful conclusion. That is precisely what any party is for. Palace revolutions or political cosmetics will change nothing in our bureaucratized regime. Only a workers' and social revolution will make it possible to achieve the changes that we need and guarantee that they will be lasting.

A party means above all disciplined cadres but also it means a program, a definition of who are its allies and supporters. It is a concrete political instrument.

Q. How then do you explain the aversion many activists have to forming parties?

A. The penalties are more severe for belonging to a party, but that probably isn't the essential thing. The regime has impressed strongly on the social consciousness that there is a single, supposedly infallible party. It presents every attempt to form another party as a betrayal of the homeland, as a preparation for a coup d'etat, and so on. This often creates a strong block. But that is a negation of political culture, not just European political culture but world political culture.

Q. What sort of new party do we need?

A. We need above all a workers' party, not just in name but by its nature and by the orientation of the changes this party seeks to direct. It must also be a socialist and democratic party, one that accepts political pluralism and which — and this is fundamental in my opinion — gives expression to the aspirations of the society, both in its activity and in the character of the process of changes that it directs.

Q. The party of the regime, the United Polish Workers Party (PZPR), claims to be just such a party.

A. As you say, the PZPR claims, and only claims to be that. I am thinking about a party that needs the workers and which they themselves will build around a program. Otherwise, it would be useless. □

Title page of the pamphlet with Trotsky's article from January 1935, "Where is the Stalinist Bureaucracy Leading the USSR?" published at the Olof Palme underground printshop by the Political Group of the POR-S in North Praga, Warsaw

A critical reappraisal after Healyism

SINCE THE expulsion of Gerry Healy from the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) the organization has undergone further division and splits. (1)

However, a number of the old leaders of the WRP, such as Cliff Slaughter, Geoff Pilling and Bill Hunter, remain in the organization and have embarked on a wide-ranging reappraisal and process of discussion with other organizations of the British left. This political openness, combined as it is with a preparedness to engage in broad-based joint work with other forces in the workers' movement, marks an important break from the past.

One discussion which has opened up in the pages of *Workers Press*, the WRP's weekly newspaper, is on the politics of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI), and on the problems of building the Trotskyist movement.

The following articles are an exchange of views between Paul Stevens of the International Group and Cyril Smith, a long-time leader of the WRP.

What is "Pabloism"?

WORKERS PRESS (July 15, 1986) published the WRP resolution "Perspectives for an International Discussion", which takes up the problem of the construction of the Fourth International. As supporters of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, this discussion can only be welcomed by us.

PAUL STEVENS

However, there are some formulations in the resolution which would seem to prejudge the discussion before it begins.

Your resolution affirms the "necessity to work out a definite attitude to the revisionist United Secretariat". But why do you have to work out a definite attitude towards revisionists if you know *a priori* that they are . . . revisionists?

Again, the document states that the long term aim should be "unity with all those who stand on the transitional programme, the history of the permanent revolution and the fight against Pabloism". Leaving aside that it seems strange to put the fight against "Pabloism" on the same level as the transitional programme and the theory of permanent revolution, what exactly is "Pabloism" and who, if anybody, today embodies it?

This seems a relevant question to ask, especially since the WRP under Healy used the term Pabloism as an item of ignorant abuse to evade real discussion and a serious analysis of the world Trotskyist movement. Moreover, it was guilty of virtually every sin traditionally attributed to Pabloism — capitulation to Stalinism, petty-bourgeois nationalism and so on.

Despite these reservations, the method of the WRP resolution — that of seeking a regroupment on the basic programmatic planks of Trotskyism — seems to us to be correct.

We would pose these basic programmatic planks as:

a) the Leninist-Trotskyist strategy for the conquest of working-class power in the imperialist countries, including acceptance of the method of the transitional programme and of the united front;

b) the theory of permanent revolution;

c) the Trotskyist position on the deformed and degenerated workers' states, including both defence of these countries against imperialism and the fight for political revolution.

We would of course add to this the organizational corollary of these positions — the fight to build the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. In our view, a regroupment of Trotskyist forces on this basis cannot go round the largest international Trotskyist organization, the USFI.

It is only natural that the WRP, in seeking to reorientate itself after the split with Healy, should seek to re-examine the history of the Trotskyist movement. But we would add a word of caution. A regroupment of Trotskyists is unlikely to take place on the basis of complete agreement about the history of the movement. Provided there is basic programmatic agreement, there can be many different shades and views on the history of the movement itself.

Certainly when the attempt was made to reunify the world Trotskyist movement, which led to the 1963 reunification of the International Secretariat forces and some of those which had been organized in the International Committee, it was precisely the programmatic criterion, correctly in our view, which was used and not the criterion of a common assessment of the 1953-54 split. (2)

To seek common agreement on the history of the movement can only be an excuse for refusing to reach a principled programmatic regroupment in attempting to overcome the damaging dispersal of Trotskyist forces.

The separation of the comrades now organized in the WRP from the USFI has its roots not only in the 1953 split, but in the refusal of Healy to participate in the 1963 reunification along with Pierre Lambert's group in France, the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI). (3)

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1. See "End of the road for a sect", by Pete Clifford in 'International Viewpoint' No. 90, January 13, 1986.

2. After the 1953 split in the Fourth International, Gerry Healy's group in Britain, along with the US Socialist Workers Party and others, formed the International Committee of the Fourth International, independent of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Following from the international reunification conference in 1963, which formed the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI), Healy, and his international supporters and allies who rejected unification, claimed that they were continuing the International Committee.

3. The OCI — now known as the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI), originated from the majority of the French section of the Fourth International, which split in 1952. They joined the International Committee after the 1953 split (see footnote 2 above), but subsequently broke with Healy in 1971 to form the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

It is well worth addressing the programmatic issues involved in this dispute. In fact, the central issue was the refusal of Healy and Lambert to recognise that, during the 1959-61 period, a workers' state had been established in Cuba, and their insistence that Cuba remained a capitalist state. While Lambert's OCI has, after more than 20 years, now recognised the existence of a workers' state in Cuba, to our knowledge Healy maintains this position to this very day.

This stubborness flies in the face of the facts. Today it is obvious that the social relations established in Cuba by the mass moblilizations which led to the nationalization of the economy between August and October 1960 are fundamentally identical to those which exist in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe — i.e. those of a workers' state.

By taking this stand against the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement on this issue, Healy set his face against a living revolution and constructed a sectarian shibboleth on which to base the separation of the WRP's predecessor, the Socialist Labour League (SLL), from the mainstream of the world Trotksyist movement.

In some of the writings in the SLL's *Fourth International* during that period, it seemed to be implied that only a section of the Fourth International could lead a successful overthrow of capitalism, a fundamentally secrarian theory, which did not however prevent the WRP's subsequent gross opportunism on international issues.

The opportunism of Healy towards certain bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist regimes in the Middle East is well known. Less remembered is the "prettification" of the Chinese cultural revolution and the Vietnamese Communist Party by Mike Banda and others in the pages of the SLL's *Newsletter*.

But despite this latter-day international opportunism, the fundamental characteristic of the Healy-WRP was (and is today in the Healy-Torrance *News Line*) sectarianism, sectarianism towards real revolutions, towards the real labour movement, and towards the world Trotskyist movement.

The sectarianism towards the world Trotskyist movement was justified by the catch-all accusation of Pabloism against the main forces of world Trotskyism. It is impossible to deal here with all the issues involved in Healy's ceaseless polemic against "Pabloism". But we would insist upon one point: it is necessary to make a distinction between some of the theories and practices of Pablo, especially those in the 1953 split — long repudiated by the world Trotskyist movement — and the politics of the United Secretariat.

Healy continued to make this amalgam, oblivious of the fact that Pablo had been expelled, and that no one accepted the obviously incorrect theories of Pablo in the early fifties — "centuries of degenerated workers' states", transformation of the left wing of Stalinism into revolutionary parties and so on.

If the accusation of "Pabloite liquidationism" is to be made to stick, where the United Secretariat have "capitulated" to Stalinism, petty-bourgeois nationalism and so forth have to be produced, and real facts about how the United Secretariat gave up the fight to build revolutionary parties have to be enumerated.

Such evidence was never produced by the Healy camp.

One final point. In 1970, Healy, behind the backs of the SLL membership and the International Committee, visited the late Pierre Frank, a leader of the United Secretariat, to propose a discussion to overcome the disunity of Trotskyists. Nothing ever came of it, and it seems likely it was part of an ill-thought-out manoeuvre.

Healy spoke of the negative effects, especially on the youth, of the dispersal of the Trotskyist movement and the existence of competing Trotskyist organizations. On this Healy had a good point. But if the disunity of those calling themselves Trotskyist is caused by genuine liquidationism, centrism, ingrained sect politics or whatever, then of course the division is justified.

If not, then disunity on a national and international level is an obstacle to making Trotskyism a real force in the workers' movement, which we should all strive to overcome.

But a real discussion to make a start on this process will be difficult if it starts with accusations of revisionism. □

Gerry Healy (DR)

Does history matter?

THE LETTER from Paul Stevens of the International Group raises questions which are vital for the future of the world Trotskyist movement.

There is no doubt that the expulsion of Gerry Healy from the WRP opened the way for the movement internationally to discuss its problems openly and honestly, for the first time in several decades.

CYRIL SMITH

This is not to exaggerate one man's personal position. The revolution in the WRP reflected the emergence of objective conditions in which the position of Trotskyism in the workers' movement can be immeasurably advanced. The upheavals in many other organizations throughout the world, among them the International Marxist Group [IMG — previously the British section of the Fourth International], expressed the same conditions.

However, I think the violence of last year's explosions forces us to dig much deeper than comrade Stevens seems prepared to go.

Let me agree wholeheartedly with Stevens on three points before I begin:

(i) I think that the term "revisionist", once a term with scientific significance for Marxists, has now become just a term of abuse;

(ii) We should stop using the designation "Pabloite" in talking about the organizations associated with the United Secretariat. It can only foul up the discussion;

(iii) The characterization of Cuba as some kind of bourgeois state (we never really explained just what kind) is nonsense.

Moreover, when it comes to describing just how to go about the reorganization of the International, I find myself disagreeing with many of the points raised in the letter.

Should we seek unity on the basis of a few programmatic points? Surely, the history of the United Secretariat itself contains enough lessons to answer this question with a decisive "no". It is not enough merely to try to overcome the "damaging dispersal" of the movement. To pose the problem this way is to suggest that the fragmentation of Trotskyism was caused by the failings of individuals. Were we just cantankerous, argumentative or big-headed? (Of course, Healy easily disposed of the whole problem: it was all the work of agents of someone or other.)

I think that we are obliged to undertake a really objective study of the International's history, not just to find out who was to blame for its difficulties, or establish just who did what to whom, but to prepare a fundamental advance in theory.

In particular, the split of 1953 must be carefully examined. At the start, we merely rejected Pablo's innovations and defended "orthodox Trotskyism". Later, we began to deepen our understanding of the problems faced by the FI. But, as with so many such discussions, this work was broken off and submerged in the small change of inter-group manoeuver.

The tendencies to adapt to Stalinism, social democracy or petit-bourgeois nationalism, which have characterized many in the FI since the late 1940's, were not the responsibility of Pablo or any other individual. They must be traced to the objective situation in which the movement found itself after the war.

We tried to fit the new world situation, in particular the apparent strength of Stalinism, into the framework of Trotsky's pre-war analysis. But this could not be done without major development of Marxist theory. Instead, we had at best some terminological experimentation, and at worst a series of attempts to find short-cuts to the building of revolutionary leadership.

Central to this was the tendency to place the responsibility for revolutionary leadership on to any shoulders other than our own. This implied the debasement of the whole of Marxism, its entire world outlook, and even the conception of socialism.

I was particularly struck by Paul Stevens' statement: "It seemed to be implied that only a section of the Fourth International could lead a successful overthrow of capitalism, a fundamentally sectarian theory."

Now, we cannot deny that capitalist property forms have been overthrown, and states set up to prevent their return, under the leadership of Stalinist parties, and, in the case of Cuba, of a petit-bourgeois nationalist one. In some cases, this involved the mobilization of masses of workers and peasants, but always under careful bureaucratic supervision. None of these overturns, in my opinion, constitutes a proletarian revolution like the one that took place in Russia. In not one case has the proletariat been led to take state power through its independent class action since the year 1917.

Call me sectarian if you will, but I contend that the transition to a socialist world demands the independent, conscious movement of the working class, and this is impossible without the construction of bolshevik parties, based on the most advanced theory. Only the Fourth International, fighting to take forward the theoretical work of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, can accomplish this task.

Unless we make this conception the bedrock of all our work, theoretical and practical, Stevens' "programmatic planks" are reduced to decorative ornaments.

So, while we must welcome wholeheartedly the renewed discussions about re-unifying the Trotskyist movement, I don't think Paul Stevens' approach to the question will do. An unkind observer could caricature it as "find the lowest common denominator and let bygones be bygones".

There is no way to grasp the chance now offered for constructing a unified International without tracing the history of the movement since the war, because only in this way can we uncover the objective problems which that history expressed.

We have to bring our theoretical armoury to the level demanded by the objective situation. Then we will be able to realise the opportunities which, I believe, have been in existence for three decades without being fully grasped. □

The Fourth International

CYRIL SMITH's reply to my letter on the history of the FI and Trotskyist regroupment, and especially the question of the United Secretariat — which the International Group supports — is serious and well-reasoned.

PAUL STEVENS

It is particularly welcome that he states unequivocally that the characterization of Cuba as a bourgeois state by the Healy-WRP was wrong, and that the WRP should put aside such epithets as "Pabloite" and "revisionist" when discussing with the USFI.

On the questions on which he takes issue with me, in relation to the role of the FI and the basis of Trotskyist regroupment, I think that comrade Smith will find that there is more in common between us than he suspects.

Comrade Smith says he was "particularly struck" by a phrase in my letter in which I said it was a fundamentally sectarian theory that only a section of the FI could overthrow capitalism. He replies that ". . . it cannot be denied that capitalist property forms have been overthrown, and states set up to prevent their return, under Stalinist parties, and in the case of Cuba, a petty-bourgeois nationalist one . . . [but] none of these overturns constitutes a proletarian revolution like the one that took place in Russia. In not one case has the proletariat been led to take state power through independent class action, since the year 1917." On this point I would tend to agree with what Cyril Smith says.

Yes, since 1917 there have been bureaucratic overturns of capitalist social relations — bureaucratically deformed revolutions if you want to describe them that way — but in any case the establishment of deformed workers' states under non-Trotskyist leadership. The only point I was making was that the Healy theory of Cuba tended to deny that Cuba was a workers' state precisely because there were no soviets or a bolshevik party.

There is a second point on which there seems to be agreement with Cyril Smith, when he says: "Call me a sectarian if you will, but I contend that the transition to a socialist world demands the independent, conscious movement of the working class and that this is impossible without the construction of bolshevik parties, based on the most advanced theory. Only the Fourth International, fighting to take forward the theoretical work of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, can accomplish this task."

Well, I don't want to call Cyril Smith a sectarian because there is agreement that the transition to socialism requires the construction of a mass revolutionary international, and that the only way to fight for it is building bolshevik parties in every country as part of the Fourth International. I really don't see where we have a difference on this.

Essentials for regroupment

On the final point though, I am still not sure how much agreement we have. This is the question of whether complete agreement on the history of the Trotskyist movement and its development is essential for Trotskyist regroupment. Cyril Smith says that an unkind observer might say my position was one of "find the lowest common denominator and let bygones be bygones". Well, an unkind commentator might, but not with much justice. The point I was making is that *complete* agreement on the history of the movement is unlikely to be achieved. Why should complete agreement about the 1953 split be essential to regroupment, if basic programmatic agreement on the major issues of the world revolution and the building of Marxist parties is achieved?

The history of our own movement is one which of course should be studied, to help us enrich our understanding of building mass revolutionary parties. And it is a history upon which it may well be possible to draw up some preliminary common assessments. But complete agreement? That is, to say the least, unlikely, just as much as even complete agreement about the history of the Third International is unlikely.

Let's give some examples. Were Rosa Luxemburg and the Spartacists right to split from the centrist USPD [Independent Social Democratic Party] in Germany in December 1918, or should they have stayed in longer to win the USPD majority more rapidly to the Comintern? (4) Did Trotsky always adopt the correct tactics to fight the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party between 1923 and 1926? Was he too slow in taking up the fight against the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev triumvirate? And did he make too many concessions on the China question in the early stages of the controversy?

Surely there is room for disagreement inside the Trotskyist movement on these questions. But there is no room for disagreement that Luxemburg and the Spartacists were right to fight to win the USPD centrists to communism, or that Trotsky's fight against the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party and the Comintern was historically correct, because these basic points inform central programmatic questions (the fight against centrism, the struggle for revolutionary Marxism against Stalinism).

We therefore have to sort out the basic historical questions from the secondary ones: the historical questions which are central from the point of view of determining programme, and those which can be discussed and disputed by those who share the same basic programme.

My original letter was given an unfortunate title by the editors of *Workers Press*: "Historical agreement not necessary for Trotskyist regroupment". Posed that way the statement is an absurdity. In a certain sense the Trotskyist programme is nothing else but the summing up of the history of the international working class movement. But the criterion of separating out basic questions which affect programme from secondary ones has to be applied to the history of the Trotskyist movement itself.

For example, it surely must be agreed, as a basis for regroupment, that the Trotskyist movement was correct when it gave unswerving support to the Hungarian Revolution. This question affects a basic programmatic question, the struggle against Stalinism and for the political revolution. But is complete agreement on the "Open Letter" of Cannon in 1953 a question of the same order? Or that the tactics of Healy toward the Bevanites were absolutely right, wrong, or partially right or wrong, a necessary basis for regroupment? (5)

Leon Trotsky (DR)

Of course there have been programmatic disputes inside the Trotskyist movement. But it is a feature of sectarian "Trotskyism" that it has raised each and every dispute in the Trotskyist movement to one of world historic principle, thus failing to distinguish between programmatic questions and secondary questions of tactics and assessment, and in the process grossly inflating the real influence and the ability to change the real world of the Trotskyist movement.

By all means, comrade Smith, let's trace the development of the movement. But let's make sure in the process that we sort out the basic historical wood from the secondary historical trees. □

4. The USPD was formed by some deputies in the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) in January 1917, after they had voted against or abstained on new war credits. They wavered back and forth between the SPD and the Spartacists. Its leadership eventually returned to the SPD after the war, while many of the rank and file of the USPD joined the Communist Party.

5. The term "Bevanites" describes a left-wing current in the Labour Party in the early 1950s, led by Aneurin "Nye" Bevan.

AROUND THE WORLD

West Germany

GIM/KPD fusion

FROM 4-6 October, the fusion conference between the International Marxist Group (GIM), German section of the Fourth International, and the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) was held in Dortmund in the Federal Republic of Germany. The 150 delegates adopted virtually unanimously all the documents presented jointly by the central committees of the two organizations.

The conference took place in the presence of numerous observers, from organizations of the German extra-parliamentary left to representatives of the sections of the Fourth International in France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Belgium and Israel — as well as representatives from *Solidarity* in the United States, Lutte Ouvriere in France and the United Mariateguist Party (PUM) in Peru.

The congress opened with greetings from Sergio Baltodano, first secretary of the Nicaraguan embassy in West Germany. He stressed "the crucial significance of the unity of revolutionaries in the face of the imperialist offensive" and he added "this unification in West Germany is a victory for revolutionary forces and a valuable help for the revolution in Nicaragua."

The new organization, which brings together more than 500 members, is called the Unified Socialist Party (VSP). It will have a newspaper, *Sozialistische Zeitung*, and will be led by a 36-member central committee representing equally the two old organizations.

This fusion is the result of a process of discussion which has lasted almost two years. The KPD, which was a large organization of the extreme left in the 1970s, drew its inspiration from Maoism, and later flirted with pro-Albanian currents. Since then it has undergone a considerable political development, allowing a common programmatic platform with the GIM to be drawn up.

There is agreement on the essential revolutionary tasks in West Germany and internationally. But on certain not insignificant points, discussions will continue — notably on the characterization of the countries of Eastern Europe and on the Fourth International — of which the new organization is not a member.

However, the KPD recognises the necessity for workers to struggle against the bureaucratic power of the Eastern European countries and also the necessity to build a revolutionary international. By common agreement it has been decided that the new party will, whenever it requests, be able to participate as an observer at meetings of the Fourth International. As for the old members of the GIM, they will continue to be individually affiliated to the Fourth International, and will distribute German *Inprekorr*.

This unification will be an asset for revolutionaries in the forthcoming struggles in West Germany — particularly in January with the campaign on the 35-hour week which is planned by IG Metall, the metal-workers' union. In 20 years of existence the KPD has succeeded in assembling a relatively sizeable number of workers who are well implanted in their workplaces. More than half the GIM-KPD delegates at the congress had more than 10 years of activism behind them. Finally, in the federal elections next January, the congress decided to call for a vote against the incumbent conservative government, without making a choice between an SPD or Green vote.

The conference marks an important stage in the development of the West German revolutionary movement in spite of the totally different traditions of the two organizations and the general crisis of the extreme left. The common willingness demonstrated by the conference to build a new party augurs favourably for the climate necessary to pursue the internal discussion of those differences which still exist. The Fourth International, for its part, indicated its intention to undertake fraternal relations with the new VSP, both in debate and in united action. □

Nicaragua

Women workers' assembly

MORE THAN 600 trade unionists participated in the second National Assembly of Wor en Agricultural Workers on September 6 and 7 in Managua. They represented 19,000 women organized by the Agricultural Workers Association (ATC), who work both in the state and private sector.

The meeting was to discuss progress registered by the workers and also the problems remaining since the first meeting held in 1983, which had only 100 women present. A delegation of 200 women industrial workers were present at the event.

Before the revolutionary victory of July 1979, the overwhelming majority of women in the countryside could only find jobs as seasonal workers at harvest-time. This situation has changed a lot: in 1985 women represented 35 per cent of permanent labourers, and this figure has undoubtedly reached 50 per cent in 1986. Many women now do work traditionally alotted to men. But, as the document finally adopted by the Assembly underlined, women still have to fight to be integrated in administrative and skilled work. "We cannot accept the fact that there are only 30 women who drive tractors", it was commented.

For some years, the ATC and the government put the emphasis on the urgent need to increase production and productivity, particularly by lengthening the working day, which fell to two and a half hours after the revolution.

So new norms of production and wages, based on a working day of six hours, were introduced in June this year. But because of the double workload of women, they found it more difficult to reach, never mind exceed, these targets and therefore get better wages.

Looking after children is certainly the acutest problem that women face. In some state enterprises women, in conjunction with the union and the management, have set up creches for children. Since 1983, around 30 creches have been set up, looking after around 6,500 children. Against this, the private enterprises are distinguished by the complete absence of any provision in this area.

In 1984, women represented 40 per cent of the ATC. But today there are still only 20 women secretaries of local union offices.

The final document concluded: "Our demands are not concerned solely with women. They are problems for the whole union movement. In spite of progress and the efforts of our union, we still meet resistance in taking on these tasks [leadership responsibilities], in being fully part of the class struggle. We must resolutely fight these backward positions." □

Mexico

Electoral fraud

AN UNPRECEDENTED meeting was held in a Mexican town on September 6 and 7, when 26 political and social organizations from differing ideological and political tendencies came together to discuss organizing a mass movement for the respect of universal suffrage in Mexico.

The electoral fraud — stuffing ballot boxes, reversing results and so on — is standard practice for the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). It is one of the characteristics, along with corruption, that has maintained the PRI in power for nearly 6 years now.

For example, in the legislative elections of July 1985, our comrades in the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT — Mexican section of the Fourth International) according to their calculations should have had about a dozen deputies. The PRI agreed to give them six. With the development and the strengthening of the opposition to the PRI, this fraud has become ever more blatant, and the Mexican people accept it less and less

For example, in the 1986 elections for the governor's post in many states, the PRI grabbed all the places in flagrant contempt of the real results of the ballot. This led to demonstrations of tens of thousands protesting against the impudence of the PRI in Chihuahua, Oaxaca and Durango.

Following these events all the opposition parties decided to call for a meeting in order to set up a National Forum for Effective Suffrage. The four parties sponsoring the initiative are the PRT, the United Mexican Socialist Party (PSUM, communist party), the Mexican Workers Party (PMT, left populist) and the rightist National Action Party (PAN).

During this important meeting, Edgardo Sanchez of the PRT declared: "The present Mexican economic crisis has made the despotic and anti-democratic structure of the country more blatant. From 1982 to 1986 the Mexican people have expressed their dissatisfaction with many aspects of the regime, among them the elections . . . . The real independent opposition has never had so much strength or so many roots among the people as it has today, but there have never been such limits and obstacles to prevent its success as there are today.

"The struggle against the government and against the PRI comes up against an intolerable electoral fraud, with the government fiddling the votes it wants, electing the opposition most attractive to it and through the most cynical behaviour marginalizing the true opposition."

Alluding to steps taken by the PAN, which is appealing to US members of congress, Sanchez warned: "It would be incongruous to claim to defend democratic rights here while simultaneously appealing for political or other intervention by foreign political powers, even in the name of defending democratic rights. Our moral, social and political strength lies in the Mexican people. If we get the support of the majority of the people, who are tired of the PRI's domination, we will win.

"Our strength is here and not in an external appeal. Of course, violations of democratic rights must be denounced everywhere. But this is one thing. It is another thing entirely to appeal to powers who are clearly characterized by their support for bloody dictatorships."

He concluded: "Building this massive movement is the task of the hour for all consistent defenders of democracy in our country. As for us, we are ready to devote all our efforts to it." □

India

Female infanticide

THE following petition is being used by the Forum Against Sex Determination and Pre-Selection to draw attention to new reproductive technologies which are giving horrific possibilities for advanced scientific techniques to increase incidences of female infanticide.

Readers can reproduce the petition and collect signatures, or send letters of support to the Forum at the following address: Forum Against Sex Determination and Sex Pre-Selection, c/o Women's Centre, 307 Yasmeen Apts., Yeshwant Nagar Vakola, Santacruz (E), Bombay, India.

Memorandum to the Prime Minister:

"The Forum Against Sex Determination and Sex Pre-Selection strongly condemns the growing abuse of modern medical advances, such as amniocentesis, chorionic villi biopsy, super sonography and other techniques for the purpose of sex determination. These techniques are being employed by greedy and unscrupulous doctors and hospitals to facilitate selective abortion of female foetuses, often in the name of population control.

"India is one of the four countries in the world (besides Australia, Pakistan and Iran) which has an adverse female to male ratio. The present sex ratio according to the 1981 census is 1000:935 in favour of males and the census records from 1901 onwards show that the proportion of women in the population is declining. The misuses of the above-mentioned techniques will no doubt abet this alarming trend and Indian women may soon become an 'endangered species'.

"We urge the government to end its inaction in this matter. We demand that existing technologies and further advances in the field of reproduction should be used for approved medical purposes. Their misuse to facilitate selective foeticide or sex pre-selection at birth must be banned. We further demand that offending practitioners must be strictly and demonstratively punished." □

Sweden

SP congress

THE TENTH congress of the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International, was held from September 20-22 in Stockholm.

It was a very open conference, with around 30 organizations invited, as well as the press, to be present at some of the proceedings. A representative of the Salvadorean FDR-FMLN spoke, saluting the active participation of our Swedish comrades in solidarity actions with Central America.

A number of greetings were given to the congress, among others from the African National Congress, the Committee for Justice in Africa and from Sinn Fein, as well as from many sections of the Fourth International. Enthusiastic applause greeted the speeches of two party veterans, both members of the Swedish section in the 1950s.

Among the items on the agenda was in particular the question of the crisis, and more precisely a concrete response to the government's austerity policies.

The struggle against the oppression and exploitation of women was the subject of a specific agenda point, reopening a discussion that everyone agreed had been neglected in the past years. On these first two agenda points, the resolutions were adopted by a two-thirds majority.

Two further motions were presented on specific points: on the fight against racism and on South Africa. Beyond some differences expressed — in general of a tactical nature — it should be stressed that among the delegates there was overall agreement in regard to political perspectives and concerning building the party. □

Guns against the hungry

ON AUGUST 28, at 6.30 in the morning, T33's left the military airport of El Alto near La Paz. They flew to Calamarca and San Antonio, which lie a few dozen kilometers from the capital. The "elite" troops, just good enough to kill defenceless workers and farmers, surrounded the procession of miners and their families. The latter had just passed their sixth night in cold and bad weather - and now the soldiers were preventing the clergy from bringing them food and medicines.

CHARLES-ANDRE UDRY

The miners, with their wives and children, came from the two mining centers of Potosi and Oruro, and had covered more than 180 kilometers. On the "road of sacrifices," they wanted to go to the government palace in La Paz to stage a hunger strike to press demands for withdrawal of closure plans announced by the state tin-mining board (COMIBOL).

Since August 1985, more than 7,000 miners had already lost their jobs, and now another 8,000 were to follow, out of a total of 23,370 in March 1986. [*Latin America Regional Report*, July 31, 1986]. For months hundreds of families had been driven out of the highlands to the tropical areas, where they sought to become farmers or start panning for hypothetical gold. Did they leave the highlands for an Eldorado? Not exactly!

"My grandfather was a miner. My father was a miner. What else should I do but go down the pit too? They pushed me down into the tropical zone, and I am dying from pains. There is too much light here, brother," a miner grumbled.

In particular, in the new settlement area, there is no infrastructure. Children are dying from diseases. The dietary habits here are completely different.

But on August 29, the "elite" soldiers came and poked their submachine guns in the backs of women and children, forcing the people into trucks and carting them back to the mining villages, which had become ghost towns.

Paz Estensorro had declared a state of emergency, under the pretext that an insurrection was being prepared. An Associated Press correspondent correctly noted, "This is the second time in a year that the government has declared a state of emergency to suppress a workers' mobilization." [*International Herald Tribune*, August 29, 1986.]

Brutal austerity program

The first time he did this, in September 1985, it was to impose a brutal austerity program on the people. The second time, he did it to silence "a starving mass, a marching mob, most of them with bleeding feet," as the weekly magazine of the London financial establishment cynically remarked. [*The Economist*, September 6, 1986.]

The repressive forces, which in all absorb half of the budget, while only four per cent is spent on health, arrested about 25 union leaders, along with left and Christian activists. As in the days of the military dictatorship of Garcia Meza (1980-1981), they were banished to jungle villages in the province of Beni, the same area that the laid-off miners were supposed to seek their fortunes.

In March 1985, when a giant general strike paralyzed the country, the workers were unable to seize the opportunity and pose the question of power. Then the pendulum swung brutally in the other direction.

Against the background of the defeat of the workers' movement and the confusion of the socialist and revolutionary forces, the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (MNR) of Paz Estenssoro managed to win the presidential elections. On August 29, an austerity plan was adopted, freezing wages, removing price controls, and blocking investments in the state sector, with the perspective of eliminating it. Food and gasoline subsidies were removed. The currency was devalued, and restrictions on layoffs in the public sector were lifted.

The press has written a lot about the 15,000 per cent inflation in 1985 and the success of the free-enterprise economic policy in this area. It is true that inflation was cut to 50 per cent in the first half of 1986, and that many items reappeared in shop windows. But most Bolivians could not afford them. The deflationist medicine had killed the patient.

Competition from imports is killing the weak domestic industry. Poverty has never reached such a level. Underemployment and unemployment afflict two-thirds of the population. For those who have jobs, the minimum wage is 15 dollars a month. A teacher gets 20 dollars, a doctor 25, but an officer gets at least 150. Infant mortality has reached a rate of 16.8 per cent.

Since June 1986, the Bolivian labor movement (the COB) has retaken the initiative. It organized a people's referendum against the new tax law that rewards the rich and punishes the poor, and against payment of the national debt. The action was a success. Hundreds of thousands participated in the vote, which the minister of defence declared illegal.

On June 30, 30,000 peasants came to La Paz out of the highlands to support the COB's popular referendum. On August 1, the employees of the Bolivian airline and of the University of San Andres went on strike. At the end of June, 21,000 COMIBOL miners also began a strike. With their backs to the wall, they said "no" to the government's plans and proposed a plan for saving jobs.

Since May 1986, the US has been building up its military presence in Bolivia. Joint military maneuvers have been carried out, in which the Yankees have spread insects that are supposed to destroy the cocaine plantations. The despatching of 170 military men at the end of June to fight the drug mafia went far beyond the declared goal. Washington wants to get the region used to a US military presence.

Now that the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile is tottering and Washington is no longer entirely sure of Peru, the Pentagon is establishing itself in Bolivia. The state of emergency in the Andean country fits into that perspective. □