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KREMLIN CHIEF DIES IN MIDST OF GROWING CRISIS OF BUREAUCRATIC RULE

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Respond to the appeal of the Polish workers

Jacqueline ALLIO

Three new events, not apparently directly linked, have pushed the failure of the November 10 strike in Poland into the background: the decision of Pope John Paul II to visit Poland next June, the death of Leonid Brezhnev and the release of Lech Walesa.

However, General Jaruzelski's decision to end the detention of the Solidarnosc leader, who has been isolated for months in Ariamowo prison, is certainly not unrelated to the low response to this strike and the sudden disappearance of Brezhnev. This gave a little respite to the head of the military junta who is faced with incessant attacks from the hardline wing of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP). Over the last few months the 'orthodox' like Grabski have not found words hard enough for the 'spinelessness' and 'liberalism' in general towards the 'counter-revolutionaries' of Solidarnosc.

Thus, General Jaruzelski's gesture aims to conciliate that faction in the apparatus convinced that it would be impossible to restart the economy without giving something to entice the workers, and give back a certain credibility to the idea of 'national understanding'. The 'understanding', that the Catholic hierarchy have been shaking like a rattle since the crackdown on Sunday, December 13, 1981, even going so far as to make an appeal for social peace on the eve of November 10, enjoining the workers not to strike.

For those who have followed the development of events since the strikes of August 1980 this attitude is nothing new and confirms the position taken previously by leaders of the Polish church. They have consistently alternated their declarations of support for Solidarnosc with appeals to the 'peaceful spirit' and the 'reason' of the workers. The *apparently* up and down policy of the Catholic hierarchy towards the mobilisation of the working class only reflects the contradiction in which it has found itself ever since the strikes of August 1980. It is caught between the pressure of the toiling masses, which constitute the base on which it rests to assert its authority vis-a-vis the regime, on the one side, and its desire to win the good favour of the bureaucracy, on the other. For decades the Church has been ready to make an agreement with the bureaucracy, every time that it seemed necessary to safeguard its own interests, claiming the role of arbiter on the Polish political scene.

However, this is one of the first times for two years that it has so clearly spoken out against the hopes of the mass of workers. Whatever the doubts many of them have had on the possibility of this strike being successful, they considered it impossible not to react to the decision of the bureaucracy to outlaw Solidarnosc.

The appeal of the Polish primate, Monsignor Glemp, against the November 10 strike, which went so far as to describe his interview with General Jaruzelski as 'very constructive' — under the pretext that the authorities had in principle accepted the visit of Pope John Paul next June — provoked much anger and bitterness among the ranks of the Solidarnosc militants. It is impossible to know today if this step was made with the agreement of Lech Walesa, and if the release of Walesa fits in with an overall plan for ongoing dialogue with Jaruzelski.

WORKERS RESISTANCE ENTERS DIFFICULT STAGE

Nevertheless, it is clear that the working class which has received this avalanche of 'sensational' news is rather bewildered. The joy of knowing that Lech Walesa is free conflicts, for many workers, with doubts about the significance of this sudden decision. At the same time as they are taking part in masses and

gatherings to celebrate winning one of the principal demands of the resistance movement of the last eleven months, many of them have clearly expressed their fears that they are once again being manipulated by the minority in power.

Their disarray is of such a scope that one cannot attribute the failure of the November 10 strike simply to the demobilising appeal by Monsignor Glemp.

The workers, and in particular the workers in the big enterprises, did not follow the clandestine leadership of Solidarnosc, despite its reiterated appeals to prepare for an eight-hour strike throughout the country, and despite their own appeals for mobilisation addressed to all the population, as in the case of the Nowa Huta steelworks near Cracow. In many regions, after the appeal of the Temporary Co-ordinating Commission (TKK) on Saturday October 9, more than one worker expressed doubts about the possibility of successfully co-ordinating a strike on a national level, when links between various regions, and even between enterprises in the same town, prove to be very difficult. These doubts were reinforced by the relative paralysis of the Solidarnosc national leadership at the time of the recent strike in Gdansk, which ended up with the shipyard workers going back to work just as scattered support strikes and demonstrations were starting throughout the country, although without any clear directive on the part of the TKK.

Besides, the idea of four hours general strike as a warning, without any clear indication as to the following stage of the mobilisation, appeared to many as adventurist, especially after the thousands of sackings and the many arrests which marked the solidarity initiatives with the Gdansk shipyards. How could one hold out against security forces for four hours — or even more for eight hours — after the decision by the TKK to prolong the duration of the strike — without it resulting in terrible repression, given the lack of preparation for self-defence in the enterprises?

Contrary to the superficial statements made by the Western press, the failure of the strike was not caused by fear and demobilisation but by the caution expressed by the most combative workers, who refused to take part in an action they judged adventurist, and whose purpose they did not fully perceive.

However, the combativity of the Polish working class continues to express itself, notably by the broad scope of the boycott of the new unions. Even the official press is compelled to acknowledge this in a covert way. In that sense it really is a popular referendum that we are seeing, a referendum that is repudiating the minority in power.

The outlawed Polish workers and Solidarnosc more than ever need our help to surmount the organisational and political obstacles that the resistance movement confronts.

Since last August 31 the repressive policy of the Military Council of National Salvation (WRON) has become more and more brutal. Certainly, there are 'only' 600 or 700 internees. But, just before the demonstrations called by Solidarnosc, known militants — particularly ex-internees — were systematically arrested and put 'out of circulation' for forty-eight hours. Many were not released.

There are 3,000 prisoners already sentenced at least, and more likely double that number, if we take the estimates of the enquiry groups composed of militants and lawyers of Solidarnosc who have had to traverse the whole country to find the sparse information on the state of repression. As for the people waiting for trial, there were already 3,000 at the beginning of October. How many must there be now, after the arrests made during the mid-October and the November 10 demonstrations?

The conditions of imprisonment are worsening, according to the reports in the underground press. Many prisoners are

seriously ill — and precise information on their situation cannot be obtained.

Given this stark reality the solidarity demonstrations of the international workers movement with the women and men who have been imprisoned, brutalised, and tortured for having defended their most elementary democratic and trade union rights are more decisive than ever. Over the last year many initiatives have been taken, by trade unions as well as solidarity committees. These have given political, moral, and material support to the Polish workers in struggle, and to all those imprisoned.

The mobilisations of the international workers movement, inadequate though they may have been, have shown that it was possible to move the trade-union leaderships and to organise concrete solidarity actions. Very often it has been the workplace union committees and the local branches which have taken up this solidarity work, such as the meetings organised soon after the military crackdown of the Polish generals by the Workers Commissions of the General Workers Union (UGT) in the Basque country, as well as in other regions of the Spanish state.

Young workers have played an important role in this fight to make the trade-union leaderships take a position. In Austria, for example, the organisation of young trade unionists (OEGJ) demanded that the powerful Austrian Confederation of Trade Unions (OEGB) took responsibility for giving aid to the families of internees and exiles from Solidarnosc, and that it improved the information of the Polish trade union movement in the official trade union press.

When the trade union leaderships have taken the initiative in mobilising, as in France or Italy, after December 13, the breadth of the demonstrations has shown the response to their call among the workers, whose hopes have turned towards Poland for the last sixteen months. The unity in action of different confederations has each time been the strongest lever in convincing the workers to concretely demonstrate their solidarity.

Having said that, we cannot insist too strongly on the essential role of the solidarity with Solidarnosc committees — many of which date from before December 13 — with the public meetings and rallies they have organised, and the more or less regular bulletins that they have distributed. Their work has been vital in giving real information on the aims and objectives of Solidarnosc, and the evolution of the resistance movement after

the military crackdown. It has often been thanks to their initiatives that the trade unions have decided to do something.

SOLIDARITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS MOVEMENT

After the November 10 strike, we have to increase the steps to broaden the workers movement campaign and to prove that only the workers are really capable of giving support to the Polish sisters and brothers in struggle.

While we are seeing a systematic attempt in all the capitalist countries by the right wing parties to again use Solidarnosc for their anti-Communist aims, and to try and broaden their popular audience, the Polish working class must realise that the demagogic declarations of Ronald Reagan, or Michel Pinton, deputy of French Democratic Union — recently on television shedding crocodile tears over the fate of Walesa — have nothing to do with the solidarity of the working class. The working population in Poland must be able to see in practice that only the working class have an interest in the victory of an organised working class, which is going to fight against a minority to give meaning to its rights, and to take its affairs into its own hands.

'We are convinced that in supporting Solidarnosc you will also find an effective way for defending the fundamental interests and rights of workers,' stated the open letter from the Solidarnosc Warsaw Inter-Workplace Workers Committee to the trade unions and workers parties of the West.(1) 'For today and the days that lie ahead we are depending on you for help and solidarity. That is what we look for most of all from you.' We cannot allow them to hope in vain.

Monday, December 13, anniversary of the installation of the state of war, must be the occasion for us to show the Polish workers that we are with them and that the international workers movement is ready to engage itself with all its might to make the bureaucratic clique in uniform pay the bill.

Wherever they are active it is the duty of revolutionary Marxists to build the movement of solidarity with Solidarnosc, to give a positive response to the appeal which the Polish workers have made to us.

Solidarnosc lives and will live!

(1). 'Open letter from the Polish workers' International Viewpoint, Issue no 17, November 15, 1982.

"The left and us" From an underground militant

This article was published in the underground bulletin of Solidarnosc, Kos No 12, July 27, 1982. It was then published in the Bulletin d'Information of the Solidarnosc co-ordination abroad No 35. Translation is by IV.

Dawid WARSZAWSKI

When asked about his political opinions Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky, for many years a prisoner in the Gulag, replied 'I am neither in the camp of the right nor the camp of the left, I am in concentration camp.' This declaration caused a stir in the West at the time. For any politically conscious inhabitant of the East, taking the Elbe as the dividing line, it is immediately evident and comprehensible.

The categories of left and right only make sense when they relate to different political programmes and visions of society. When the political system makes it impossible to formulate such programmes and visions political conflict cannot be expressed in categories of left and right. There has to be a fight for right and a left to even be able to exist.

This is the fight which Solidarnosc has taken up during its existence. It was leading to, just before the military crackdown, a crystallisation of different political initiatives. However, the trade union itself was neither left nor right. This is difficult to understand, and even more to accept, for a Western observer, particularly of the left. They are used to organisations which, like Solidarnosc, declare themselves neither of the left nor the

right doing it most often in bad faith — to hide their real character, usually rightist.

What is more, the union led the struggle against a system which uses the notions and slogans of socialism. It did so, in the name of religious and national values, among others, which would put it decidedly on the right. But from another side Solidarnosc was unequivocally a workers organisation, which fought and organised strikes to defend the political and economic interests of the working class—a struggle of the left par excellence in the eyes of the left. Finally, while one could get one or the other reply from the trade union activists on this question it turned out that they were resolutely anti-Soviet, and often pro-American. More than one theorist tore their hair. . . .

Internationally Solidarnosc has received the declared support of the AFL-CIO, which is in practice quite reactionary (for example it unreservedly supported US policy in Vietnam), and also people like the head of the Salvadoran junta, Duarte. This was quite enough to consider it — on the principle that the friends of our enemies are our enemies — as definitely in the camp of the right. In an overall view of the world where the forces of reaction are set against those of progress Solidarnosc decidedly did not want to take a definitive stand. For some people this situation was the cause of revisions—sometimes fundamental—of the criteria of political analysis, for others, much more numerous, a source of irritation.

The Polish reader will ask, 'But how can that concern us, living in Poland occupied by pragmatic Marxists? We know that this is communism, we only know the other left by hearsay, and the intellectual heartsearchings of people living in well being and security are the least of our worries.' I think that this attitude, although quite understandable, is fundamentally wrong for at least two reasons.

The first, although immediately important, is in the last analysis less essential. This is that a considerable proportion of the material aid coming to Poland from the West comes from different organisations of the left, and in particular from the trade unions. There was a rather unpleasant conspiracy of silence on this question in Poland. The regime did not mention it because this reality was inconvenient for it for ideological reasons. For society as a whole, it was not interested in the origins of this aid, because the left for us has unpleasant connotations and we do not want to be indebted to it. It is important for us that questions of ideology and doctrine, which are the speciality of the left, do not lead to a drop in aid. This could happen if those that send it, seeing our indifference, come to the conclusion that Solidarnosc is finally 'rubbish'. This is equally the case with the Solidarity with Solidarnosc committees abroad, which owe their existence to the different left organisations.

On the other hand the second reason is fundamental. The fate of Solidarnosc and of the European left are indissolubly linked — although very few on either side of the Iron Curtain realise it. A longlasting victory of the Military Council of National Salvation (WRON) would result in political death for the left for many years. Because the first result of this victory would be a definitive weakening of Communism as a political doctrine in the eyes of all. One could rejoice in this if it was not going to affect all those to the left of Franz Josef Strauss. The massive shift of votes to the right and the apocalyptic vision of the WRON as the supreme stage of communism, would destroy in passing the socialists, social democrats, eurocommunists and all those on the left. Such a perspective is nothing to rejoice about in Poland. Only the left can in fact



Polish workers occupy factory (DR)

be our real ally, because only the left considers Polish society, and in particular the Polish working class, as an independent political subject. For the right Moscow is the only real concern, and Poland only counts inasmuch as it is able to upset Moscow. Poland defeated by Moscow would cease to interest the right, as Yalta has expressed the best. As for the industrial and financial milieus (the social base of the right) they already support Jaruzelski in the hope that they can make us cough up 28 billion dollars.

The victory of Solidarnosc in the struggle against the regime would be in turn an enormous success for the European left. It would prove the strength and capacity for resistance of the working class. It would strengthen the hope of political co-operation among the European labour movement, which is the only hope of political independence for our continent, where today politics is a function of the global strategy of two powers. In the short term this victory would reanimate the theory and practice of the workers movement which, stifled by the scolasticism of Moscow, has become more and more a methodology of how to struggle for pink marble washbasins in factory cloakrooms on one hand, and on the other hand an incubator for fools.

What does this mean in practice? For us in Poland not very much unfortunately. It would be good to translate our Polish specificity into categories comprehensible to the European left. But this is a task for our militants abroad. For us there remains the knowledge that President Reagan is not necessarily as sure an ally as he would like to appear. The

Western communists are not inevitably swine or fools.

On the other side it would be good that in the West one remembers, in the left and the milieus to which it is close, that the struggle 'to be or not to be' part of the progressive camp is today taking place on the banks of the Vistula. Because in these circles we are beginning to feel there is a certain lassitude about Poland while activity in support of the victims of the Turkish or Salvadorean juntas — of which moreover they have great need — appears as a political alternative to support for Solidarnosc, this irritating and equivocal movement. Political aid from the left is indispensable for us today to ensure that a curtain of forgetfulness and indifference does not fall on our struggle. Only the left today remembers Chile, Eritrea, or the Tartars of the Crimea. The left in its turn needs our victory so that it does not perish itself.

A post script for those who do not like the left. This article is written by someone who is sympathetic to the left and who, in the future, hopes to become a militant. This means that I myself would also like to fight in a free and democratic society, with political methods, against for example, the vision of society represented by the Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN — nationalist and pro-Western organisation). But for that to be possible I must fight today, side by side with those of the KPN, against the totalitarian regime, in occupation and abroad. Today still, the categories of right and left are meaningless in Poland. The struggle is going on so that they can have a meaning. The European left, in that struggle, is an ally for all of us!

The change of regime in the Kremlin

Gerry FOLEY

The despotic nature of the rule of the Soviet bureaucracy is revealed most dramatically on the occasion of the death of the supreme bureaucrat himself.

When Leonid Brezhnev's death was officially announced on November 12, virtually every publication in the Soviet Union appeared with exactly the same front page, the same communique, the same picture of the deceased boss, and the same bewailings of the "great loss" by the various levels of the party and of the "working masses."

The next day, November 13, once again all the Soviet papers had the same first page, showing the picture of the new general secretary, Yuri Andropov — "The emperor is dead; long live the emperor!"

The eulogy delivered by the new Kremlin boss also had the monstrously exaggerated, thoughtless, unmeasured character of the official eulogies typical of despotism since the age of the pharaohs:

"Our party and our country, the entire Soviet people, have suffered a heavy loss. The heart of the leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Soviet State, outstanding leader of the international Communist and workers movement, a fiery Communist, a true son of the Soviet people, Leonid Brezhnev, has ceased to beat.

"The greatest political figure of our time has passed away . . .

"Inseparably bound up with the name and works of Leonid Il'ich are the growth of the power and the all-embracing cooperation of the countries of the great socialist commonwealth, the active participation of the world Communist movement in resolving the historic tasks before humanity in our age, the reinforcing of the solidarity of all forces of national liberation and social progress on the earth."

On this and following days, the Soviet press carried long articles under headlines such as "The World Mourns."

Notably, the messages of condolence featured were those of the heads of capitalist states, such as Reagan and Thatcher. These were placed high above those from revolutionary figures such as the Cuban and Nicaraguan leaders.

The capitalist leaders did express a genuine-sounding sympathy with Brezhnev; he was apparently the sort of Soviet leader they like, completely cynical, and utterly mediocre. "You always knew

where you stood with Leonid Brezhnev," Willy Brandt wrote in *Der Spiegel*.

In a number of respects, the ceremonies over Brezhnev's body resembled the ritual for a dead czar. For example, the hall of the trades-union building where the bier was set up was filled with candles, which are an important part of the trappings of Eastern Orthodox church ceremonies.

According to legend, it was the great banks of candles in Constantinople's Saint Sophia that so impressed Princess Olga of Kiev that she adopted Christianity as the official religion of the first Russian state.

As changes of regime in a despotic set-up usually are, Brezhnev's death was preceded by rumors of a deadly struggle among his potential heirs, accompanied by the equivalent of muffled thuds in the corridors of power.

In January, General Tsvigun, a member of Brezhnev's family, died in mysterious circumstances. The name of the general secretary was notably missing from the list of signatures that are customarily appended to the obituaries of high Soviet officials.

At the beginning of October, Andrei Kirilenko, minister of industry and one of the top Kremlin figures, suddenly fell from the upper circle. On October 3, his name was among the signers of the obituary of the secretary of the first secretary of the Tatar Communist Party; on October 5, it was missing from the obituary of the second secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party.

On November 4, Kirilenko's picture failed to show up in a series of leadership portraits put up in Moscow. His son reportedly fled to the West.

There was also a perceptible disarray in the Kremlin apparatus after the disappearance of the high priest of the official ideology, Mikhail Suslov, who died shortly after General Tsvigun. For example, a rock theater group found itself the victim of an army commando attack despite the fact that it was praised in the official press.

The French CP organ, *l'Humanite*, wrote November 13 that the rapid ascension of Andropov should have ended "speculations as indelicate as they were ignorant" about skulduggery involved in determining Brezhnev's successor.

In fact, in normal legal succession, one would not expect the holder of such an imposing office — to judge only by the official eulogies for the former occupant

— to be chosen so quickly or without public debate.

Moreover, one would not expect a smooth transfer of power to be accompanied with such appeals to unity. For example, in his eulogy, Andropov said: "Comrades, in the most difficult moments there is a power that helps us resolve the most difficult problems. That power is the unity of the Party."

The next day, November 14, *Izvestia's* front page had two articles. One was on the funeral. The other was entitled: "The Unshakeable Unity of the Party and the People."

The November 18 *Pravda* had a front-page editorial entitled "The Feelings of a United Family," which said, among other things, "The workers of all nations and nationalities in the USSR unanimously approved the resolution of the special plenum selecting Comrade Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov general secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU." Lately the Soviet press has had a number of articles indicating increased concern about national resentments in the USSR.

The succession could be expected to be difficult, since the command of the bureaucracy has changed in effect only three times since the rule of the *apparat* was consolidated in 1928. In two of the three cases, the change has followed the lingering death of the top bureaucrat. Only Khrushchev left office while he could still walk. He was ousted by a palace revolution. In any case, he could be considered a figure thrown up by the post-Stalin crisis, representing both reforms and hare-brained schemes to try to overcome the basic problems of the bureaucratic system. With Brezhnev in 1965, the bureaucracy returned to its historical course.

Brezhnev's position as the continuer of bureaucratic despotism was confirmed by the development of a full-blown "cult of the personality" around him in the later years of his reign.

He became a "literary" as well as a political genius, and the press of all the nationalities began publishing his works in serial form. In the organs of the various republics — in the case of the smaller republics there is no attempt to maintain the fiction of separation between the government and the party and the same paper serves as the organ of both — many issues were largely taken up with Brezhnev's literary work.

Andropov's eulogy hailed Brezhnev as the defender of Marxism-Leninism and

the developer of such theoretical innovations as the "theory of developed socialism." In fact, he made notably less effort than Stalin or even Khrushchev to present himself as a Marxist thinker. His works are mainly memoirs. And the theory of "developed socialism" is nothing more than a propaganda slogan, a vague promise of a better, more dignified and civilized life for the Soviet people, one which was not kept.

The living standards of Soviets failed to increase significantly throughout the long reign of Leonid Il'ich, and in his last years even began to decline notably.

For the first time in the history of Soviet economist statistics, the government failed to publish the results of the 1981 grain harvest. It offered the population only the meagre reassurance "the state has sufficient grain resources to meet the needs of the people for bread."

In 1981, the production of milk was down by 2.6% from 1980, despite an increase of the milk herd in the same period by 0.5%. The most likely reason for the apparent contradiction is that there was not enough grain to meet the needs of both the people and the cows.

In the economy as a whole, the projected growth for the current five-year plan is only 3.4% annually. Given the relative backwardness of the Soviet economy and the fact that a considerable part of production is useless because of its low quality — to say nothing of falsification of statistics — this figure indicates that the lag of the Soviet economy behind Western imperialism in productivity and modernization is now growing.

Furthermore, the expiration of Brezhnev coincided with the closing of the modest democratic openings made in the Khrushchev period. The possibility of reaching world public opinion through telephone calls and contacts with foreign journalists have been virtually cut off.

In general, the most that can be said is that the repression has become more sophisticated and selective, directed toward accomplishing the objectives of the totalitarian regime without the enormous cost of the Stalin terror.

It is that sophistication of the repressive apparatus that Andropov represents; it is his historic achievement. This goes so far, reportedly, that as secret police head he used theologically trained cops to break religious dissidents.

Andropov is linked to the most sophisticated and therefore presumably the most cynical elements in the bureaucratic leadership — to figures such as Otto Kuusinen, the originally Finnish Stalinist leader; and to the chiefs of the Kadar operation in Hungary.

Kuusinen's career, for instance, spans the whole development of Stalinism. He was one of the early leaders of the CP in Finland, where there was a civil war between the workers movement and bourgeois forces. He was forced to flee to the Soviet Union. He was put in charge of the Republic of Karelia, established in the Finnish territory that remained under Moscow control.

Kuusinen in fact presided over the liquidation of the Finnish nation in the USSR, since the Karelian republic became so Russianized that it was determined to no longer require republic status. Thus, it was a model of the solution to the national question in the USSR to which the bureaucrats look forward.

Kuusinen is virtually the only figure in the Soviet leadership to survive from the revolutionary period through Stalin. In addition, he was virtually the only one with any real Marxist or humanist culture or with any intellectual ability. He wrote, for example, a serious Marxist study of the *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic.

Andropov was Kuusinen's protege, and presumably has his mentor's qualities. He is the first top bureaucrat with a knowledge of foreign languages and societies. He even speaks English. He has a diplomatic career behind him that allowed him to get to know all the Soviet bloc countries, even Mongolia.

Andropov was also Soviet ambassador in Hungary at the time of the Hungarian revolution and the Stalinist restoration. He was reportedly the mastermind behind the Kadar operation, both the split with the Nagy government and the post-restoration reforms. Kadarite experts now form an important part of his team, to the extent that the Yugoslav press has expressed concern that a Balkan revival may be acquiring dangerous influence at the seat of the mighty.

It was in Andropov's time as head of the KGB that such techniques were perfected as forcing dissidents into exile. In an interview published in the Paris daily *Liberation*, Vladimir Maximov, editor of an emigre publication, stressed:

"Today the KGB works with scientific and psychological methods. Before letting a dissident leave for the West, they evaluate his or her physical, psychological and moral characteristics. Then they try to estimate what the future behaviour of such a dissident will be.

"Today, if a gifted but critical young person shows up in a school or a kolkhoz, he or she is first observed, and then called in. They are offered an interesting assignment. Repression is only the last resort."

That does not mean that Andropov's KGB gave up strongarm methods. They were used in particular in the Ukraine. There is the case for example of a dissident priest found strangled in a dive, with his pockets full of drugs and U.S. capitalist cash.

The head of the Ukrainian KGB, Fedochuk, who worked under Andropov, has now replaced him as head of the all-union KGB.

Well informed Kremlinologists, such as Alexandre Adler, a former French CP leader charged for many years with Soviet relations, linked Andropov's rise to that of General Ogarkov, the most prominent modernizer in the military hierarchy.

Earlier this year, Ogarkov published a book that was virtually a manifesto of the modernizers. Among other things, it suggested the army directly take over certain

branches of industry, notably electronics, to assure that its needs were met.

Apparently, the more farsighted Soviet military chiefs are getting worried that the poor standards of bureaucratically managed industry are endangering the standing of the Soviet armed forces relative to the American.

With the pace of the electronics revolution, bureaucratic management results in more and more grave technological lags. That is a basic problem from which the entire Soviet bloc is suffering. It is logical that this should hit the military hardest.

The test of U.S. and Soviet equipment in the latest Mid-East war indicated that the U.S. is gaining an important lead in electronics weapons systems.

According to Adler and other such experts, it was the military professionals who tipped the balance in Andropov's favor.

Paradoxically, as the long-time head of the KGB, he could be expected to be the most enlightened of the available candidates for power. That is because in the totalitarian system only the KGB knows what the real situation is.

It is interesting in this respect to note that in the wake of Stalin's death, the leadership of the CP in Hungary, at that time the sick man of the Soviet bloc, were called to Moscow, where Beria, then head of the secret police, read them a full indictment of the failures of their bureaucratic management of the economy. (Tibor Meray, *Nagy Imre, Elete es Halala*, pp. 13-19.)

It is likely that the Andropov team will try to carry out some Hungarian-type economic reforms and to maneuver politically more than the Brezhnev regime. For one thing, under the supremely immobile Brezhnev problems have accumulated to the point of disaster.

Andropov can be expected to be a more wily defender of bureaucratic power than the ineffable Brezhnev. But he has gained the top position when the bureaucratic system is reaching the end of its possibilities.

It is perhaps a measure of how close the bureaucracy has come to the end of its rope that for the first time in its existence it apparently feels that it cannot afford to let the system be ruled by the sort of inflated nonentity that is the image of its own mediocrity, its moral degradation, and its false pretences.

But there is no way to maneuver very long with the exasperation of the immense Soviet working class, which has built up a gaint industrial system but after more than half a century of bureaucratic management sees little evidence of continued real progress toward a decent life.

The most extensive and sophisticated secret police apparatus will not be able to contain a hundred million workers once they have come to the end of their patience. And now they have the example of Poland to show that workers can organize themselves and take their fate into their own hands.

Salvadorean liberation forces make gains

Jean-Pierre BEAUVAIS

The revolutionists of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) waged a new offensive against the forces of the dictatorship in October.

Beginning October 10, units of the FMLN, including up to 700 fighters, launched a series of coordinated attacks against military objectives located in various points of the country.

According to Radio Venceremos, broadcasting from territory under the control of the revolutionists, major successes were scored. Three important areas were taken in Morazan province in the eastern part of the country, and two in Chalatenango province, north of the capital.

For the first time in many months, several actions were carried out in the capital, simultaneously with this offensive. Small units of uniformed guerrillas managed to occupy northern suburbs of San Salvador for a time, and then withdrew after having destroyed electrical and telecommunications installations used by the army.

Since then, the capital has resumed the appearance typical of it in recent years, which it lost to some extent after the electoral farce last spring. Once again, it has the look of an occupied city, kept under close surveillance by uniformed men ordered to spread terror as the best means of "maintaining order."

Elite units, buttressed by officers and specialists recently trained in the U.S. and "advised" by a growing number of American officers, have been sent to the eastern and western areas, those most "threatened" by the FMLN offensive.

After a week of very sharp fighting — "the sharpest in a long time," a colonel told American correspondents — the balance sheet was catastrophic for a regime that claims to "control nearly all the country."

In Morazan province, all telephone communications were cut and the towns of Perquin, San Fernando, and Torola remain under the control of FMLN fighters.

The various operations carried out by government troops to retake these towns have all failed. At the gates of Perquin, a whole company of government soldiers was decimated. A hundred and twenty-four soldiers were killed or taken prisoner.

According to Radio Venceremos, a battalion sent from the capital to the guerrilla-occupied towns was halted, and then forced to retreat after very violent

fighting. This report is confirmed by several international journalists.

In the province of Chalatenango, the government forces were also unable to take the towns of Las Vueltas and El Jicaro, also under the control of the FMLN. On October 13, government troops mounted two major attacks against these towns but were driven back.

According to a member of the military general staff, the government troops find themselves in a "critical" position in this area, where the population is actively engaged in the fighting alongside the guerrillas.

Reinforcements sent into these areas have to use the country's main road, the Pan-American Highway. But it has been cut at several points since the start of the revolutionists' offensive. The same situation exists on the other major road, the coast highway.

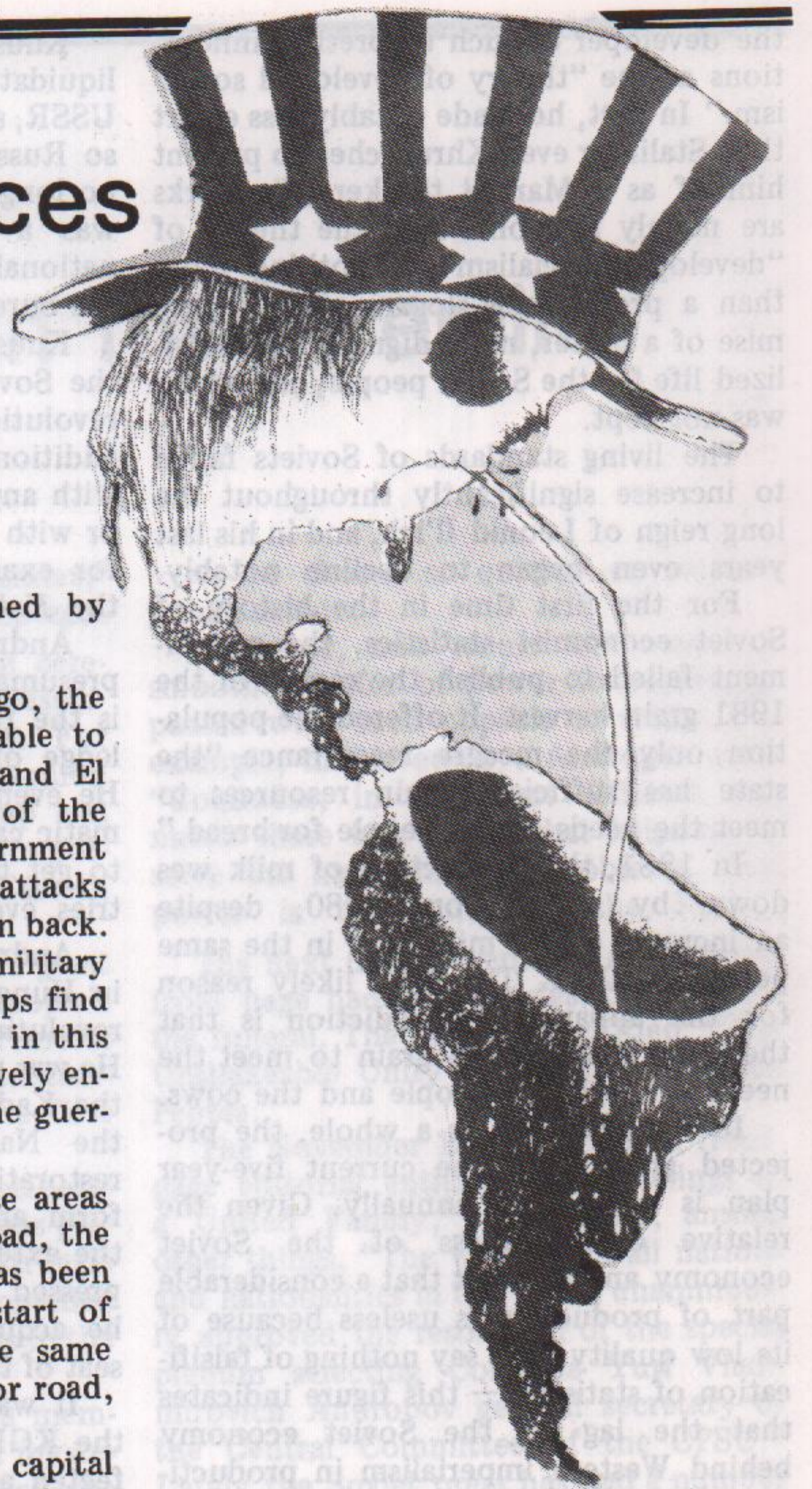
Transportation between the capital and a large part of the country has been virtually paralyzed, and troop movements have been seriously delayed and sometimes even made impossible.

Major operations have also been carried out in other regions where the guerrillas have traditionally not been so well established.

In the province of Cabanas, between Chalatenango and Morazan, two military posts fell into the hands of the FMLN. In the province of Usulután, in the southern part of the country, the port of El Triunfo was blocked and brought under the control of the guerrillas.

This latest offensive was launched on the second anniversary of the formation of the FMLN, which was founded on October 10, 1980, and the third anniversary of the coup d'état that installed the military clique that, since October 15, 1979, continues to hold real power in the country, although it does so behind the civilian facade of "President" Magana.

The breadth of the guerrilla operations, the extent to which they were coordinated over a large part of Salvadorean territory, and the extent of the popular support they enjoyed were the best answer the Salvadorean revolutionists could give to those who were claiming that their isolation and losses had made them "incapable of conducting any more major military actions." (This assertion was made, for example, recently in Washington by a high State Department official).



As for the dictatorship, the political advantages it hoped to gain from the "elections" last March 28 have proven to be quite meagre.

Imperialist financial and technical aid, massive arms shipments, and intensive training of elite units for counterinsurgency warfare have not succeeded in shifting the balance in favor of the government forces.

It is in this context that the new offers of negotiations that the FMLN made during its October offensive have to be seen. It proposed talks without any prior conditions. But even the idea of negotiations was rejected by the genocidal military chiefs in San Salvador. Their main concern remains to crush the revolutionary forces militarily. And this objective is shared by the American embassy, which does not care how much this will cost the martyred people of El Salvador.

"We have to liquidate 10% of the population of this country and peace will be assured for the other 90%," Major d'Aubuisson bellowed hysterically at his electoral rallies last March. At that time he was only the leading figure of the Salvadorean far right. Today he is one of the strongmen of the dictatorship.

How many others are there like d'Aubuisson in the government and the military general staffs who have become embittered by their repeated failures and now, like him, are thinking of going for double or nothing. ■

Debate on the Interposition Force in Lebanon

We publish below two articles. The first appeared in the issue dated October 15, 1982 of *The Militant*, weekly socialist newspaper published in New York by the Socialist Workers Party, signed by Cindy Jaquith and Doug Jenness, co-editors of the newspaper. The second is the response by the *Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire of France*, and the *Legha Comunisti Rivoluzionaria of Italy* to the article by Cindy Jaquith and Doug Jenness. The original declaration was published in *International Viewpoint Issue no 14, October 4, 1982*.

SWP position on PLO withdrawal

A statement on Lebanon appeared in the October 1 issue of the *Militant*. The introduction identified it as a joint statement by the French Revolutionary Communist League, the Italian Revolutionary Communist Group, and the U.S. Socialist Workers Party.

The appearance of the SWP's name on this statement was an editorial error. The SWP had not signed it, and it did not reflect the views of the SWP. The SWP's position was most clearly expressed in the front-page article signed by David Frankel that appeared in the October 8 issue of the *Militant*.

The joint French and Italian statement implied that it was an error for the Palestine Liberation Organisation to have organized the withdrawal of its forces from West Beirut last August under an agreement that included the presence of a multinational force of U.S., French and Italian troops.

The statement asks, "What good was the disengagement force sent to Lebanon in late August under the Habib plan? It organized the departure of the units of Palestinian fighters, legitimizing the Zionist military presence in Lebanon. By its presence it guaranteed the election of the Phalangist murderer Bashir Gemayel to the Lebanese presidency by a rump parliament that met in a barracks under the guard of Israeli bayonets. It dismantled the Palestinian defense lines in West Beirut."

An imperialist army of 70,000 troops — the Israeli army, armed with the most advanced and destructive military equipment financed or directly provided by U.S. imperialism — was already occupying

Lebanon before any members of the international force arrived. Its presence was "legitimized" by naked force, and it was that same military power that enabled the Israeli army to dictate the election of Gemayel to the Lebanese presidency.

Furthermore, it is not true that the U.S.-French-Italian force organized the PLO's departure and dismantled its defense lines. The PLO organized its own departure and dismantled its own defense lines in the face of the overwhelming military force that was threatening to pulverize West Beirut and kill thousands more civilians. To help ensure that its fighters would not be massacred by the Israeli army during the withdrawal, the PLO proposed that a multinational force be brought into Beirut to serve as a buffer between the Palestinians and the Israeli troops encircling the city.

Of course, as always, the U.S., French and Italian capitalist governments had nothing progressive in mind in agreeing to the multinational force. By its political stance and heroic resistance throughout the Israeli onslaught, however, the PLO had made the political cost for imperialism of any slaughter of the PLO fighters during the withdrawal very high.

As the *Militant* pointed out in the October 8 article by David Frankel, "an analogy could be made to the organizers of a progressive demonstration who, faced with an attack by a superior force of armed rightist thugs, call on the police to defend the democratic rights of the demonstrators. Such an action does not imply political support to the cops, approval of their role in society, or abandonment of the need for self-defense."

The article also stated that the PLO's only alternative to a negotiated withdrawal was to make a futile last stand in West Beirut.

"Such a decision would have led to more civilian casualties than even the massacre at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. . . The only thing a fight to the end would have accomplished would have been to help the Israelis in their aim of destroying the PLO and its forces."

Therefore, the article continued, the PLO "correctly rejected this suicidal course and chose instead to organize and lead a retreat. . . ."

Once this decision had been made, the tactics the PLO chose in carrying out its retreat were — like the decision itself — dictated by the relationship of military forces. As the October 8 article explained:

"Since the Palestinians were not in a position to force a pullback of Israeli

troops, they proposed an international force that would interpose itself between their forces and the Israelis as the only way to ensure that they would not be slaughtered during the withdrawal."

The joint statement of the French and Italian sections of the Fourth International further asserts that U.S., French and Italian troops that returned in September, following the massacre in West Beirut, "will not serve the interests of the Palestinian and Lebanese people any better" than the troops that went in August.

This confuses the concrete role of an international force that the PLO had to accept in order to obtain a withdrawal of its military forces from Beirut, with a military occupation force that will stay as long as necessary to prop up the most proimperialist, anti-Palestinian, anti-working-class government possible.

Both Washington and Israel are attempting to establish a stable, rightist government in Lebanon. That was one of the objectives of the U.S.-backed Israeli invasion of Lebanon. That is the purpose of the current so-called peacekeeping force — to help the Phalangist killers that carried out the massacre in Sabra and Shatila.

If it were true, as the joint French and Italian statement implies, that the agreement the PLO accepted for the withdrawal of its troops, rather than the U.S.-Israeli onslaught, was responsible for ensuring Phalangist control of the Lebanese government; for forcing the departure of the Palestinian fighters; and for the dismantling of PLO defense lines — then it would also follow that the PLO was in large part responsible for the massacre in Sabra and Shatila.

But this is false. A position that implies that the PLO's policies in any way contributed to the massacre in West Beirut is scandalous. The truth is that the PLO's policies were designed to prevent a much more devastating massacre.

We condemn the genocidal U.S.-Israeli policy that inevitably led to the holocaust in Lebanon. And we demand the withdrawal of all imperialist occupying forces — French, Italian, Israeli and United States — from Lebanon. ■

Response of French LCR and Italian LCR

1. The article by comrades Cindy Jaquith and Doug Jenness describes the publication of the joint declaration of the French Revolutionary Communist League, the Italian Revolutionary Communist League and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, on the role of the Multinational Interposition Force as an 'editorial error'. However this declaration was duly signed on September 21, and published in *Militant* on October 1, and

in *Intercontinental Press* on October 4. The comrades have the right to consider that they were wrong to sign it. But it is then a political error that they claim to be correcting today, and not a simple 'editorial error'.

2. The comrades reproach the joint declaration for 'implying' that the PLO bears part of the responsibility for the Sabra and Chatila massacres, for having accepted withdrawal from Beirut. They themselves 'imply' that we have mistaken the enemy. This is a grossly polemical and demagogic argument.

The sections of the Fourth International have not mistaken the enemy. All during the siege of Beirut we mobilised against Zionist and imperialist aggression and for unconditional support of the PLO. We are absolutely in agreement in saluting the heroic resistance of the Palestinian fighters, which went on for seventy-nine days. This resistance did much to diplomatically isolate the Zionist state, to expose its criminal character and to popularise the national demands of the Palestinian people. It also threw into relief the passivity of the Arab states and the Soviet bureaucracy, which amounted to betrayal.

But this is not a reason for covering up the character of the Habib plan. We have described it as a thoroughly imperialist diktat. It was drawn up by a 'mediator' who, from the first day, was implicated in the Zionist aggression. It has been implemented with the aid of a 'multinational' force, which is itself thoroughly imperialist.

The Habib plan did not give anything in exchange for the withdrawal of 9,000 defenders from Beirut. The Zionist army did not withdraw an inch. The fighters left under the surveillance of Ariel Sharon, to be disarmed on their arrival in the host countries, and put into camps. They left behind them a defenceless civilian population. The entry of Israeli troops into West Beirut, the searches, the systematic disarming of the population, the massacres, and the installation of the Phalangists in power were the logical follow up to the implementation of the Habib Plan. And this is unfortunately not the end. The Zionists and Phalangists are not hiding their desire to expel or again displace tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees.

The article by David Frankel, widely quoted by comrades Doug Jenness and Cindy Jaquith, reduces the purpose of the Habib negotiations for the PLO to knowing how 'they would not be slaughtered during the withdrawal (from Beirut).'

This is a little overquick to identify the PLO with its leadership and with the 9,000 evacuated fighters. There are 500,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon; the bulk of the resistance forces, and the population which supports them, have therefore remained at the mercy of the Zionist, imperialist and Phalangist troops.

The role of the Multinational Interposition Force is integral to the implementation of the Habib Plan, in which it plays an essential part. Comrades Doug Jenness

and Cindy Jaquith base their argument on a radical distinction between the role of the first Interposition Force, which, according to them, guaranteed the retreat of the Palestinian fighters, and the second which had the character of a 'military force of occupation'. The problem is that we cannot separate the different functions of the MIF since the month of August. At the same time as it guaranteed the withdrawal of the fighters it brought an international guarantee to the Phalangist regime, and opened the gates of West Beirut to the Zionist army by dismantling its defenses. Comrades Cindy Jaquith and Doug Jenness claim that it was the PLO themselves who dismantled their defence lines. This is contrary to the eye-witness reports, and fortunately this is not the case. French parachutists were pictured engaged in this mineclearing exercise.

It is no longer possible to separate the function of the first from that of the second Interposition Force. Moreover, Yasser Arafat himself established their continuity in only reproaching the first for not having stayed to 'protect' the camps after having protected the withdrawal.

Imagine an armed traveller, attacked in the corner of a wood by bandits with murderous intentions. Other bandits arrive who interpose themselves, but profit from the situation in robbing and then letting the traveller go, disarmed, in a wood infested with wolves. We can understand that the traveller would not be in a position personally to publicly draw out the moral of this story. But nothing forbids us from doing so and saying that a thief is a thief, even if claiming to be a saviour.

The Interposition Force justified its presence in the eyes of the world by the 'protection' it gave the Palestinian fighters. But it remained above all an imperialist military force which came, on the heels of the Zionist army, to fashion an 'American Peace' in the region.

3. For the whole duration of the war we gave unconditional support to the PLO in its struggle against Zionist aggression. But unconditional support does not mean uncritical, and does not imply that we take responsibility for the tactical choices made by the PLO leadership, that were furthermore disputed in its own ranks.

This is what the SWP comrades are now doing in considering that the withdrawal from Beirut, as it took place, was 'necessary', and marking it up on the positive side of the PLO leadership's balancesheet.

In insisting in their articles on the revolutionary qualities of this leadership the comrades suggest an analogy between it and revolutionary leaderships such as the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua or the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador. It seems to us, on the contrary, necessary to insist on the historical, political, and social differences between these organisations. The PLO is a front. Bourgeois components play a hegemonic



After the massacre at Sabra (DR)

role in its leadership. Economic and military dependence on the bourgeois Arab regimes influence it in a determinant way.

This is why the permanent confusion that comrade Frankel makes between the Palestinian resistance and the leadership of the PLO seems to us dangerous. He thus attributes to 'the PLO fighters' the decision 'to organise the withdrawal' whereas the negotiations and their outcome were the subject of bitter controversy among the fighters themselves during the siege. It is even more wrong to accept the PLO leadership's proclamations; according to which the withdrawal from Beirut would be transformed from a military defeat into a diplomatic victory. This would be to underestimate the gains made by imperialism and the lasting consequences.

4. We are therefore in disagreement with the position of the American comrades who are reverting to abstaining from any criticism of the first Interposition Force in the imperialist countries. Even if the leadership of the PLO had no other choice that would be no reason for us to stop denouncing in our own countries the role of these military expeditions which prepared the ground for an imperialist solution in the Middle East on the backs of the Palestinian resistance and against the interests of the Arab masses. It is even more important as in France the Mitterrand government was able to take advantage of the attitude of the Soviet bureaucracy and the Arab regimes to fraudulently present itself as the best protector of the Palestinians.

Today however we are absolutely in agreement in demanding the withdrawal from Lebanon of the Zionist troops and imperialist troops of the second Interposition Force. However it was Yasser Arafat and Walid Jumblatt who vehemently demanded the return of the MIF after the Sabra and Chatila massacres. Who could pretend that this second mission, in which the French parachutists actively participated in the sealing off and search and control operations in West Beirut does not have any relationship with the first?

Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire
French Section of the
Fourth International
Legua Comunista Rivoluzionaria
Italian Section of the
Fourth International

With the Mudjahedin in the Panchir Valley

The death of several hundred Soviet soldiers in the Salang tunnel explosion at the beginning of November highlighted the cost of the Kremlin's intervention in Afghanistan.

Two years after the start of a massive military intervention, the Soviet forces have not yet succeeded in smashing the guerrillas fighting foreign domination. They do not seem even to have made any serious headway. And they are paying a heavy and increasing material and political price.

Of course, the U.S. imperialists, as well as various conservative regimes in the region have an interest in seeing the Soviet forces bled and humiliated in Afghanistan. They also have an interest in developing their own local agents. And so, there is no question that they are sending in some financial and military aid.

On the other hand, it is equally clear that the outside military aid to the guerrillas is not a decisive factor. The type of material aid necessary to change the nature of the resistance to the Soviet forces could not be concealed. And its political effects would be even more obvious. Such aid would inevitably involve a major war with Soviet forces on the Soviet borders.

The conflict in Afghanistan does not have that kind of dimensions. And there is no indication that the imperialists or any of the local conservative regimes are prepared to risk such a confrontation.

In these conditions, only the determined support of the overwhelming majority of the population could enable the various forces fighting foreign domination to survive. This political reality is already well established, and it makes the perspective for the Soviets grim, at least unless they are prepared to make a qualitatively greater commitment.

The Kremlin's own press has begun to recognize that the Afghan operation has been a costly one. On November 8, the Soviet army's journal "Krasnaya Zvezda," published an article saying that the conflict was doing "enormous damage" to the economy of Afghanistan, and that the Soviet forces had had to "pay a heavy price" to "win the confidence of the Afghan people."

As the struggle continues and deepens, the forces fighting in defense of the Afghan people's right to self-determination tend increasingly to differentiate. This typically happens in national struggles as they mobilize the masses of working people, even in the most conservative ideological climates. The following interview points to some clear changes the struggles are producing in the leadership of the resistance, even though, in the case he cites, this has not taken the form of a conscious political difference. Along with this, there are already consciously socialist oriented currents in the resistance.

Against the background of this massive and deepening struggle, it is not surprising that the fact that Yuri Andropov held some of his first discussions as head of the Soviet bureaucracy with the Pakistani chief Zia El-Haq, Afghan president Babrak Karmal, and Mrs Ghandi of India encouraged speculation that the USSR might now be prepared to make big concessions to achieve some sort of compromise settlement in Afghanistan.

In its editorial November 17, "Le Monde" wrote: "Of course, it would be hasty to conclude from the discussions Monday that the Soviet position on Afghanistan is going to evolve. But that cannot be excluded, since it is reported that Andropov was opposed to invading the country.

"This question should be followed very closely because it will be important in any normalization of Sino-Soviet relations. Along with a settlement of its border conflict with Moscow and of the Cambodian question, Peking is demanding a gesture of good will from the Kremlin in Afghanistan in order to continue the rapprochement that started in the last weeks of Brezhnev's reign.

"One might suppose that Andropov is dreaming of playing the Chinese card to get Washington to take a more amenable attitude."

In any case, it is likely that in the uncertain situation that can be expected to accompany a change of leadership of the totalitarian bureaucracy in the USSR, problems as acute as those caused by the Kremlin's Afghan war will play an important role and increase the instability of the bureaucracy's rule at a critical moment.

Not the least important of these problems, moreover, is the encouragement the Afghan resistance has given to the peoples subjected to national oppression by the Soviet bureaucracy, such as the Poles in particular.

Neither they, nor the Kremlin chiefs can have forgotten that the last major change of leadership in the Soviet Union, Stalin's death, opened up the way for the explosion of resentments against the regimes imposed and maintained by the power of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Dr Jean-Philippe Tabard, a member of the International Medical Aid Association has just returned from Afghanistan. He was based in the Panchir region, north east of Kabul. It is a strategically important valley since it finishes up on the Kabul-USSR road.

An AMI medical team, which was looking after Afghan Mudjahedin fighters was there during several military offensives carried out by Soviet occupation forces and Afghan government troops. Dr Tabard spoke to Michel Lequenne in Paris in late October.

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We publish this interview as information material on the development of the situation in Afghanistan. We refer readers who want to know the Fourth International's position on Afghanistan to read the resolution adopted by the May 1981 International Executive Committee (IEC) of the Fourth International meeting, entitled "For an independent, federal and socialist Afghanistan" (publicly available in English from Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, 10014 New York, USA).

Question: You were in the Panchir Valley during the Soviet offensives this year?

Answer: Yes, there were two. I arrived as one of the replacements for a previous team around June 10, this year, after nearly a month-long journey, at the very moment when the fifth Soviet military offensive since the beginning of the war (January 1980) had begun. It was a very large offensive with the deployment of 10,000 Soviet troops, tanks, helicopters, planes etc. Due to this the Mujahedin commander of the Panchir valley, — his real name is Ahmet Shah — thought it was too dangerous for us and ordered us to return to Pakistan.

We returned to the same area around August 15 and we went to work caring for those wounded in the offensive (not that many) and the civilians mainly injured by the bombing raids. This 'mobile makeshift medicine' — since our hospital had been destroyed — continued for 15 days. Then on August 27 we found ourselves in the middle of a new offensive. It was a massive offensive, once again involving 10,000 men with 150 to 200 tanks from what I could tell from mountain-top observation, with at least 40 airplanes bombing the valleys, 80 helicopters, airlifted troops etc. . . This offensive finished on Thursday September 18 in a rather surprising way. Although the Soviets were in a rather favorable situation in the valley one night they all left — just like that. We did not really understand very well why they did so.

Q: Did these troops fight the Mujahedin?

A: Massud's tactic is to not stand and fight — which is understandable — since his fighting forces are only a tenth of those who are attacking him and they are much less well equipped. At strategic positions he has units which try and resist but he withdraws as soon as that becomes bad and opts for commando-style operations. Before they only did this at night since the Soviets did not move at night, but now the Soviets also move at night so Massud changed tactics and attacks both day and night but always with small groups capable of withdrawing very rapidly.

Q: It is more or less Mao Zedong's strategy of revolutionary war?

A: In fact they do talk about it and people say Massud has read Mao Zedong and Vo Nguyen Giap.

Q: So you have to mainly look after civilian wounded?

A: Yes, people injured by bombs, especially those notorious fragmentation bombs whose shrapnel cut people to shreds. If a fragment hits your foot it is torn apart, if it gets your arm, as a minimum you have an open fracture with large chunks of flesh torn away. I saw a kid who had his buttocks completely ripped away.

Q: How is the offensive going?

A: In practice they occupy the terrain.

Q: Do they destroy villages?

A: It's the helicopters which destroy them. They destroyed most during the first offensive. The whole south of the valley below a village called Bozorah was eighty percent destroyed. The rest of the valley up to a village called Omar was forty percent destroyed. All by air bombing, except in a few valleys where the Soviets have established positions and burnt some houses — but to a negligible degree compared to the bombings — especially by helicopters. The latter's missiles are very precisely aimed but because they are small rockets they do less damage than the planes whose missiles destroy everything for 100 metres when they hit a house.

Q: When the troops arrive have the inhabitants already left?

A: Almost all of them. During this second offensive — which I observed — I estimate there were at least 60,000 people who found refuge in the mountains and adjacent valleys out of a population of some 100,000 people. Only the old people — thinking they would not be harmed — stayed behind in the villages. In general they were right. I've heard contradictory stories from other provinces like the Logar region, but in the Panchir region the Soviets were content to lock them in.

Q: And we don't know why they withdrew?

A: There are various explanations. A British journalist I met out there, who had already been eleven times in Afghanistan, thinks that all the Soviet offensives are very precisely programmed down to the exact days required. Therefore once the day comes for ending the mission the troops go back to base whatever the success or failure of the offensive . . . Perhaps he's right. But in this case it seems very bizarre that the withdrawal was so quick. The Dara valley takes a minimum six hours to cross at a good walking pace but the withdrawal was made in one night. This was particularly rapid since a military withdrawal takes another four hours on top of this, and it is a region where neither tanks nor lorries can pass and one goes only on foot.

Q: Do the Soviets suffer losses?

A: The figures Massud gives are pretty high. I am naturally wary of figures given only by one side but I've observed that up to the May 1982 offensive all the figures given by Massud have been confirmed by diplomatic sources in Kabul — hence my confidence in him. For the May/June offensive he says 3,000 Soviet troops were killed, 180 tanks destroyed and 20 helicopters and Migs. I can assure

you that there were certainly significant material losses. I've seen wrecks of all sorts. In May the Mujahedin attacked Bagram airport (60 km north of Kabul) the main Soviet airbase and destroyed 24 grounded aircraft. This figure has been confirmed in Kabul.

Q: What arms do they have?

A: They have the classic Kalashnikov assault rifle. Nearly all the Mujahedin are now equipped with them. One no longer sees the old English Lee Enfield Mk III which is still used in other regions. They have 13 anti-aircraft weapons, including big tripod mounted automatic machine guns which can be transported over several kilometres in two hours and artillery cannon mounted on wheels.

Q: Where do these weapons come from?

A: From Pakistan and are all marked with the Chinese triangle which does not mean that they are supplied by the Chinese. There are also heavy weapons which come from Egypt, the only country which officially recognises its aid. Everything goes through Pakistan. The relations between Pakistan and the resistance movement established within its borders at Peshawar are rather good at the moment.

Q: What about the relationship between the internal resistance and the Afghan political parties based in Peshawar?

A: It is difficult to judge. The three 'fundamentalist' parties based in Peshawar seem to me to have eighty percent of the Afghan resistance behind them. The numerically biggest is the Harakat-e Enquelabe-e Islami (Movement of the Islamic Revolution); the second, the Jamiat-e Islami (Islamic Society) is the most important military force, and the third, the Hezb-e Islami (Islamic party of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar) is now rejected by all the other parties. The alliance between nationalists, fundamentalists, indeed some progressive forces in my opinion seems to work quite well in Peshawar in terms of dividing out financial aid and arms. The Hezb-e Islami is not only rejected by everyone else but it excludes itself from unity with the others. Massud himself went so far as to tell me that Hezb-e Islami was: "a worse enemy than the Russians!"(1) In the interior the resistance needs the Peshawar parties since arms can only pass through there. Some resistance leaders have good links — like Massud who is a member of Jamiat-e

(1). The *Le Monde* of 4th November 1982 reported fighting between the different movements in the Koh-e Safi mountains near to the Panchir valley. The Hezb-e Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a fundamentalist party, is carrying out an offensive to regain its influence over villages in this region which have fallen into the hands of rival factions. Hezb-e Islami supporters are therefore in an armed opposition to the coalition regrouping Jamiat-e Islami, Harakat-e Enquelab-e Islami and a dissident grouping from Hezb-e Islami led by Yunus Khes. The *Le Monde* journalist quotes a local Jamiat-e Islami chief who stated that the Hezb-e Islami 'had gone as far as striking the village women, even the Soviets did not go as far as that.' The journalist further notes that in this region such fighting has become more important than actions against Soviet and Afghan government troops.



Literacy class in Afghanistan (DR)

Islami. Others only use the parties for arms supplies.

Q: Is the resistance unified in the Panchir region?

A: Yes it is. It is entirely controlled by Jamiat-e Islami. Only one village is supposed to be favourable to Hezb-e Islami. The Tajiks who live throughout the north of Afghanistan, whose chief is Rabani, are all politically controlled by Jamiat e Islami. But in this country differences are sometimes much more related to ethnic divisions than ideology.

Q: Is it true that other resistance centres have sent aid to those in the Panchir region?

A: Figures are a bit contradictory, but it is certain that other resistance groups have sent reinforcements, particularly the Hazaras. I've heard reports of 1,000 fighters. In my opinion such a figure is difficult to accept — moving 1,000 Mudjahedin about is not an easy matter. But there is certainly support of men from Shamali, Nuristan and Hazarajat . . . And without doubt Massud's biggest victory is to have brought together these forces to support his front. He has thus become the symbol of resistance in Afghanistan.

Q: During your stay in Panchir did you get to know about military actions in other areas of the country?

A: Yes. In June there was another offensive in the Logar region which turned out very badly for the resistance because there all the parties are fighting one another. More than 2,000 Mudjahedins were supposed to have been killed. I found out about this in Peshawar because when you are in a region like Panchir, one knows practically nothing about what is happening elsewhere — except through the BBC which is listened to to get news from other regions of Afghanistan. News also reaches Kabul about the operations carried out by other forces on the Shamali plateau which are more or less controlled by Massud. Reports mention that

Mudjahedin actions inside Kabul itself have increased — which is confirmed by reports received by Islamabad (Pakistan) diplomats from their Kabul colleagues. These actions are said to have very much increased since December 1981: destruction of police stations, petrol stocks etc.

Q: Were there Afghan government troops with the Soviets during the offensive against Massud in the Panchir region?

A: Yes but the Soviets have changed their tactics of using them. At the beginning they always put the Afghan troops in the front line, but the Afghans are not very keen to do this dirty work and there are an enormous number of desertions. So now the Soviet elite troops go to the front and do the difficult work like going into the mountains. The Afghan soldiers never managed to do this while the Soviet crack troops do — preceded by helicopter bombing. Then airlifted troops are dropped on the hilltops — which permit the elite troops to cross the mountains. The Afghans follow. During the May-June offensive the Soviets took positions throughout the valley then progressively withdrew their troops. Finally after a month and a half they set up five military outposts held by Afghan government troops. When I arrived three of these military posts had been retaken by the Mudjahedin. Two outposts at the bottom of the valley still controlled by the Afghan government troops during the September offensive had still not been retaken a month after the offensive. Massud was aiming to annihilate them before the winter began to facilitate his arms supply lines. Generally this type of operation does not pose too many problems since the Afghan pro-government forces do not have the stomach for war. During my stay out there I saw about fifty Afghan deserters and there must have been certainly many more.

Q: How are the people putting up with the situation. What is the state of their morale?

A: It is difficult to say. They are very worried, especially the adults. However they are all very much in solidarity with the Mudjahedin. At the end of the offensive the people expressed themselves with one voice: 'We've kicked them out!' It was really their victory as much as the fighters. But at the same time they suffer from big psychosomatic problems, difficulties in sleeping, headaches, etc, which is understandable given the intensity of the bombing in the region. But they are holding out.

Q: Has there been a political evolution in the resistance?

A: We spoke a lot with Massud. His objective is the Islamic revolution. But what does that mean? When we asked him 'like Khomeini's in Iran?' he replied 'No, Khomeini has not put forward anything for the people in his Islamic revolution' and he added 'The Koran is not a political ideology'. He understands this very well and even compares the Koran to the Gospels, saying 'In your countries you can draw out two hundred political ideologies from the Gospels, from Pinochet on the far right to the left. It's the same thing with the Koran. We hope that the Jamiat-e Islami in Peshawar develops a policy from the Koran for us. Here on the front we have other things to do.'

We asked him precisely which policies he would like to come out of that but his answers were much more vague.

We took him up specifically on the question of women and he replied that the present condition of women in Afghanistan did not conform to the Koran. For example he said that women should not have to give dowry and should have the right to choose their husbands. According to him this problem has to be looked at when the war finished.

He even pointed out that all the problems which had caused the 1978 Noor Mohammad Taraki coup d'etat such as the problem of sharing out water, land reform, education, women, were going to

come up again at the end of the war — whether that was in five or twenty years. But he did not make any clear-cut proposals. Massud is an Islamic fundamentalist.

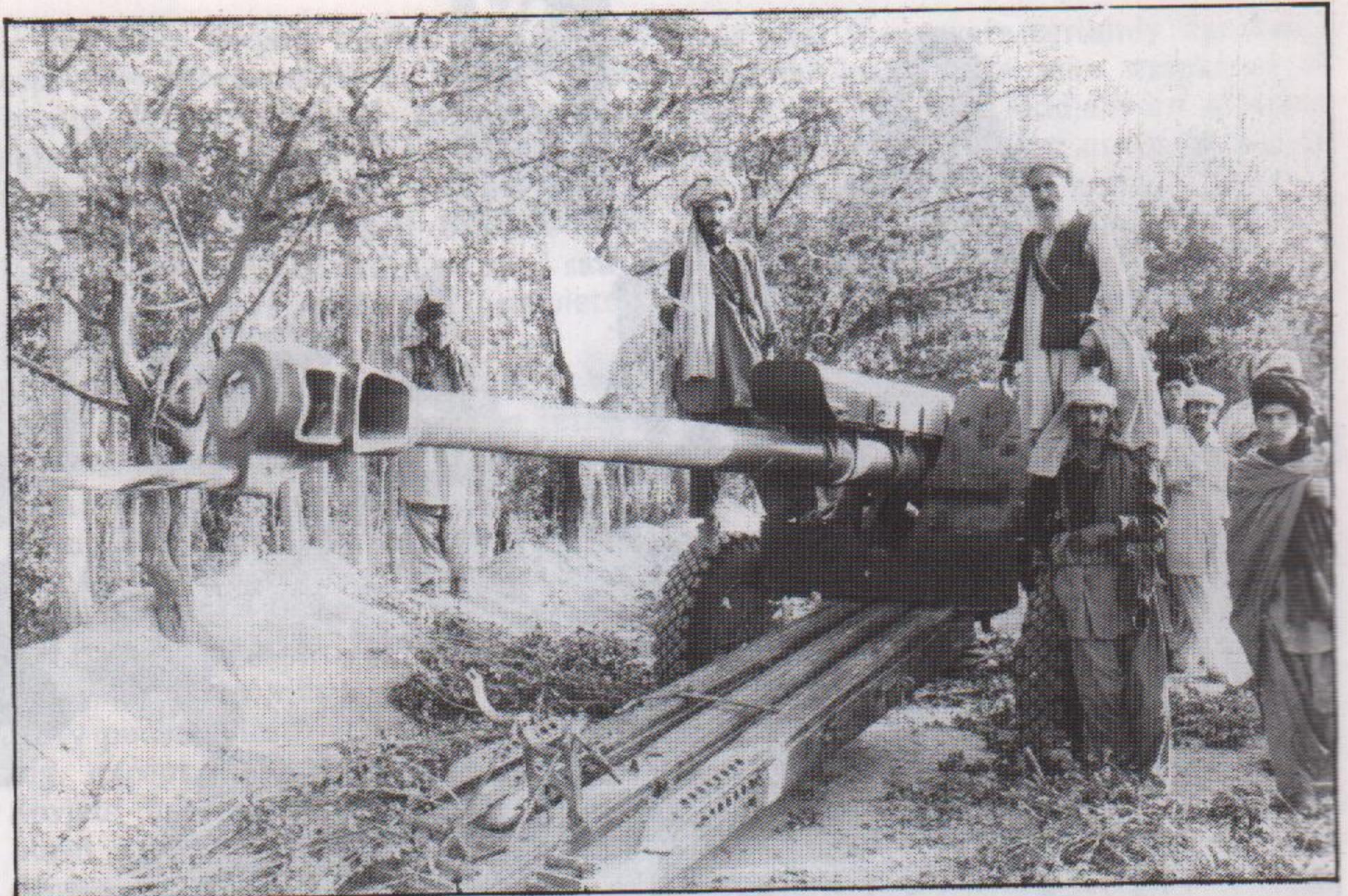
Q: Did you have any contact with anybody from the left parties in the Afghan resistance?

A: No! They are certainly a very small minority. The most important — one hears it talked about a little — is the SAMA which carries out some actions inside Kabul, has some members throughout Afghanistan(2) but which always fights in the ranks of other movements, because they are not big enough to act independently. It seems their relations with other movements are clearly better than those of these movements with the Hezb-e Islami, who are Pashtuns, but who are considered, for example by Massud, as 'bad Muslims'. The rejection is so strong that Massud let it be known that at Rabani, at the time of the formation of the Islamic Alliance of the Mujahedin of Afghanistan,(3) that if Hezb-e Islami were part of it he would leave Jamiat-e Islami.

Q: Do the Mujahedin know what is going on in Poland?

A: Yes, the Panchir region is a valley where cultural development is extraordinarily important. Practically all the Mujahedin know how to read and write whereas for example last year, in the Hazarajat region only two percent at the maximum of the people knew how to read and write. In the Panchir region on the other hand, information passes by small pieces of paper — for population evacuation, food supplies etc. They nearly all have radios and they particularly listen to the BBC in Persian. Therefore they get news from all over the world. I spoke about Poland with Massud who thinks that the best aid he could hope for would be a war involving the Soviets in Poland because he considers that in a choice between Poland and Afghanistan the Soviets would drop Afghanistan. He also knows what is happening elsewhere in the world such as events in El Salvador. This worries him. It causes him problems. He told us: 'There is also Fidel Castro. Where do the arms which go to El Salvador come from? They are Soviet arms aren't they?' This intrigues him. Furthermore since he meets lots of French people and he speaks the language, he follows the ins and outs of French politics. A person he finds difficult to understand is Regis Debray. He counts on him to get the French government to do something about Afghanistan, even if he is a friend of Fidel Castro. That is an enigma for him. 'How do the French people see him,' he asked. Incidentally, we should be aware that Massud is a Sunnite and Sunnites are generally more tolerant and open to ideas than Shi'ites. Thus I had a few problems with the Shi'ites of the Hazarajat region who I met last year. So did other French doctors, particularly on the question of women. Whereas even the Sunnite mullahs are very open, very hospitable.

Q: What about people's living conditions?



Afghan resistance (DR)

A: During the first offensive it was not possible to carry on any agricultural production since nothing had been irrigated and therefore everything died in the fields. In the second offensive some cultivation was carried out. But in the Panchir region the situation could become catastrophic. Already before I left I saw evidence of big problems for children. It is not famine but a state of malnutrition which weakens the body for future epidemics. The children have a lot of diarrhoea problems. This illness is generally part of the classic pathology of refugees.

Things could turn very bad this As soon as we arrived in France we did all we could to send out as much medical material as possible. It takes about a month to arrive. As concerns food aid we've made contact with organisations in Peshawar but these official bodies are always a bit blocked up because they depend on governments. We can only hope all the same.

The Mujahedin are standing up to the war quite well since they have few wounded. It is the civilian population which suffer terribly from the bombings. During this second offensive there were more than 200 civilians killed in bombing raids.

Q: From the point of view of social organisation has society changed through the experience of the resistance?

A: For women not at all. For us this was the most shocking problems: women stuck at home, who are put outside as soon as a man enters, who have no right to say or do anything. But it is true — and this is also the opinion of all the women doctors with whom I checked my impressions — that Afghan women, for the moment, do not seem to worry much about their status. For them what counts is that they stop bombing their children. Perhaps it isn't very progressive but that's the reality. In each family there are two or three kids who have been killed by the bombs and that is certainly what counts for them. As for the social hierarchy it has been very shaken up by the resist-

ance. Massud is only 27 years old. It is the young people alongside him and this leadership which is much more important than the 'whitebeards' who formerly were the masters of the region. To take another example. Noor Mohammad Taraki's (1978) land reform failed because it was not able to resolve the crucial water problem, (the essential condition for any such reform) or seed distribution. A wide-ranging change has come about in this domain.

The Mujahedin have transformed the water distribution system in the aim of achieving, quite simply, maximum agricultural production. They don't worry about the interests of those who won the sources, nor about a better social share-out — only in maximising production — getting water to the best land, to the best areas so that as much as possible is produced. Food is distributed in such a way that families of Mujahedin killed in battle or families whose homes have been bombed, can survive. The Jamiat-e Islami of the Panchir region also shares out its funds to these families. We're talking about very modest sums — 1,500 to 2,000 Afghans per month (about £18) — for a ten-person family it is not a great deal. But in present conditions this is very important. After the first offensive in Spring 1982 members of the French/Afghanistan friendship association (AFRANE) came to the Panchir region with 130,000 French francs which was shared out by Massud's lieutenants in accordance with the need caused by war damage. All money was distributed to meet specifically humanitarian ends.

(2). The SAMA (Sazema-e-Azadibakheh-e Afghanistan: Afghanistan Peoples Liberation Organisation, axis of the National United Front) replied to questions on this in an interview given to the Afghan Marxist bulletin, *Djerga* (the Council) which appeared in *Rouge* (Paris, weekly of the LCR, French section of FI) No. 1033, 8th to 14th Oct. 1982.

(3). The Islamic Alliance of the Mujahedin of Afghanistan is an organisation formed in March 1982 by the following three parties: National Liberation Front (Jebha-e-Nejate-Melli), the Movement of the Islamic Revolution (Harakat-e-Enquelab-e-Islami) and the Islamic National Front (Mahaz-e Melli-Islami).

Economic disaster for Spanish workers

The October 28 general elections in Spain showed a dramatic class polarization. The biggest workers party, the SP, got an absolute majority in parliament. The only other party that showed major national electoral strength was the Alianza Popular, which has ties of sympathy with the sector of the officer corps that openly favors establishing a military dictatorship. Obviously very sharp confrontations loom.

The following article describes in some detail the economic situation that impelled such a class confrontation, and which in a few years shattered the bourgeois democratic center party that was designed to establish stable parliamentary rule after the Francoist dictatorship.

Although the article was written several months ago (it appeared in the special issue of the French "Inprecor" on the world economy published last spring), it describes the basic dilemmas of the Spanish economy in the context of the world economic crisis. And in this respect, nothing has changed since it was written. The developments it describes have simply continued as predicted. For example, the rate of official unemployment in Spain is now 16% of the economically active population. It was 15% when the article was written.

This sort of economic situation puts the incoming Socialist government very sharply on the spot. As the article below shows, there is little if any room for reformist maneuver with respect to the basic ills of the Spanish economy, such as unemployment.

In its November 12 issue, the second since the general elections, the central organ of the section of the Fourth International for the Spanish state, "Combate," made the following points about the economic situation facing the new SP government.

"The coming of the Socialists into the government coincides with a worsening of what the economists call the basic imbalances of the system, that is the national budget deficit, the balance of payments deficit, accelerating inflation, and increasing unemployment. But for the capitalists, not all these ills have an equal importance. From their standpoint, it is the first that require drastic remedies because they could block the functioning of the system.

"In fact that state has a deficit of a billion pesetas (120.50 pesetas equal 1 US dollar), and it is going to be nearly impossible to keep this deficit from growing. If the deficit is financed by having the Banco de Espana print more money, inflation is going to rise. If the increase in the volume of money is restricted, there will not be sufficient credit for the capitalists. If the money is obtained by issuing bonds, the national debt will grow so large that it will crush the market for bonds issued by the

J. ALBARRACIN and P. MONTES

The intrinsic weakness of Spanish capitalism in unfavorable circumstances explains why unemployment is so high and the outlook for the future so gloomy.

In the case of Spain, the world economic crisis that began in 1975 hit a capitalist structure marked by a level of productivity that, despite the considerable capital accumulation in the country in the 1960s, has remained low by comparison with that of the other industrialized countries.

Therefore, to overcome the crisis in Spain in accordance with the interests of the capitalists, and to do so in conditions of overproduction in the capitalist world in general, major efforts were necessary to raise productivity. And this has to be done essentially by boosting unemploy-

ment. We will analyze further on the fundamental cause for this tightening up of the job market. Here it is sufficient to note that in 1973 the productivity of Spanish capitalism was estimated at 39% of the average for members of the OECD and 45% for members of the Common Market.

YOUTH FLOOD INTO TIGHTENING JOB MARKET

But there are other factors that explain the growth of unemployment. First of all, the world economic crisis coincided with a massive influx of youth into the job market. This is the result of the baby boom that occurred at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the

banks and the industrial companies. None of this is in the capitalists' interests, and so the budget is going to be cut.

"Moreover, the Spanish balance of payments is in deficit and the foreign debt is quite high (30 billion dollars) and currency reserves are low (just enough to cover three months exports). Only a few years ago, the dollar was worth 60 pesetas; now it is worth twice that, and foreign credit is getting harder and harder to get and more expensive.

"The situation could get still worse, as a result, among other things, of the capitalists' lack of confidence in an SP government and a resulting capital flight. (We need only note that the Mitterrand government in France has had to devalue the franc twice in a year and is studying a third devaluation)."

In this situation, "Combate" said, what the capitalists are demanding, and what they will demand from the new SP government also is a "stabilization plan," or an emergency austerity program. It commented:

"For the workers a stabilization plan will have disastrous effects in the short term. In the first place, it is going to increase unemployment in two ways, by reducing state expenditures and monetary and credit restrictions. In the second place, it is going to involve new losses of buying power, because the official inflation rate taken as a guideline for collective bargaining will continue to be less than the real one. In the third place, it involves putting off the progressive measures included in the SP's electoral program, which would require more state spending (extending, although in a limited way, unemployment insurance; lowering the age of retirement; raising of pensions; extension of education; etc), or higher costs for businesses (reduction of the workweek). This plan would involve a retrogression even from the present situation, since it would require budget cuts.

"These measures might be presented as short-term ones, but they will have to be prolonged, since the basic imbalances cannot be eliminated so easily."

"Combate" concluded: "The election promises that the SP made and the social consequences of the economic crisis, in particular unemployment, are obstacles to the adoption of a stabilization plan, but as we have seen, this is what the capitalists need.

"We do not know how quickly such measures will be imposed. It is probable that this will be presented as a necessity arising from the mess left by the outgoing Center government, as the only solution given the disastrous position of the peseta. It is even possible that they will delay it for a few months . . . But sooner or later we are going to have to confront this threat."

1960s, combined with the steady decline in the mortality rate. The number of youth between 15 and 19 increased considerably after 1970; that of youth between 20 and 24 after 1975. Between 1975 and 1980, the working-age population grew by 290,000 persons per year.

In order to absorb this influx of labor power and maintain the existing rate of unemployment, it would have been necessary to create 150,000 jobs per year, which Spanish capitalism failed to do. The consequences of this have been particularly severe for the youth. Youth unemployment is a national calamity. Only 34% of those under 24 years of age have a job. The percentage of youth in jobs declined drastically, partly as a result

of the extension of education but also of the conditions existing on the job market.

THE ECONOMY FAILS TO ABSORB FLOW OF WORKERS FROM THE LAND

Secondly, the crisis came in the context of a prolonged and rapid capitalization of agriculture, which has released large amounts of labor power from agricultural work. With the onset of the recession, this process by no means stopped but rather accelerated. Between 1974 and 1978, the number of people employed on the land fell by an annual average of 3.8%, which amounts to two million workers less in agriculture over that period. Taking only the last two years, the number of people employed in agriculture has dropped by 300,000.

Even if all of these people did not go on the labor market in the nonagricultural sector (since the population in rural areas has been aging as a result of earlier migrations to the cities), it is certain that this has helped to swell the numbers of unemployed and not just those of the retired.

This phenomenon is an outcome of the process of development that began at the start of the 1960s and of the corresponding rise in the living standards in the main industrial areas of the country. This gave rise to migrations and to a substantial jump in the wages of agricultural workers everywhere. In turn, the rising labor costs impelled a process of mechanization of agriculture. The result, on one hand, was big increases in productivity, releasing new quantities of labor power. At the same time, it made it impossible for a large number of small farms to survive. Their owners were lured away by the chance for better incomes and living conditions as workers in industry and the services.

With the economic crisis, the increases in agricultural productivity have continued (from 1975 to 1980 it rose by 8.5% per year). But the labor power released is not being absorbed any longer by other sectors. This is reflected in the development of major pockets of agricultural employment, such as in Andalusia, which have become the source of social conflicts and sharp struggles that have been difficult to control.

RETURN OF THE EMIGRANT WORKERS

However, the world economic crisis has not merely reduced the capacity of Spanish capitalism to create jobs. It has reversed the flow of Spanish emigrant workers. This is the third factor that should be highlighted. In the 1960s, emigration drained off a major part of the excess labor power in the Spanish economy. This outflow narrowed to a trickle after 1970, and all the information available now indicates that since 1975 emigration has been effectively nil. And since the start of the recession, large numbers of workers have been coming back.

By way of example, it is sufficient to note that the number of Spanish workers in Germany decreased by half in 1978 by comparison with the 1973 level, and the same drop must have occurred in France and Switzerland. The numbers of workers returning added considerably to the unemployment figures at the start of the crisis. But the weight of this factor has gradually diminished.

ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION DECLINES

In the crisis years, the growth of unemployment has been staggering. Nonetheless, the projections of soaring increases, which were made on the basis of employment patterns in the better years, have not materialized. The reason is that the percentage of the population in the economically active category has declined considerably, so that people who otherwise would have been considered unemployed were relegated to "economically inactive population."

In 1973, the percentage of the population economically active was 52.4%; in 1981, it was 48.2% (these figures refer to persons above 16 years of age). This decline reflects in part the expansion of education we mentioned above, as well as a lowering of the retirement age, which results both from the long-term historic trend and the encroachments of the economic crisis. On the other hand, the rapid increase in the percentage of women coming on the job market, which was stimulated by the previous expansion, has not only stopped but the trend has reversed.

Still, these mitigating factors have not kept the official unemployment figures from climbing to 1,878,000 persons, or 15.8% of the economically active population.

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS POINT TO NEW RISE IN UNEMPLOYMENT

Worse still, the factors that up until now have held back the growth of unemployment are going to accelerate it in the future, a fact that highlights what the trend is. Indeed, the expansion of education will promote an increase in the percentage of the population going into the economically active category (this is especially true of women, given their previous low level of education).

Moreover, this expansion of education has only delayed the entry of the youth concerned onto the job market. This delay has already ended, and the baby boom generations are now starting to come on the job market.

What is more, the lowering of the retirement age is tending to stop as businesses put into effect their plans for reducing their workforce.

All these considerations are aggravated by the fact that Spanish capitalism continues to lag far behind its competitors, which indicates that the future prospects for employment are rather bleak. The

political consequences this can have deserve special attention.

In the ten years preceding 1974, Spanish capitalism created an average of 142,000 jobs per year. During these years, which were also a period of rapid growth of the GNP (6.4% average annual increase), employment in agriculture declined moderately from 1965 to 1969 (50,000 persons per year); and then in the following five years, the drop sharpened to 150,000 persons per year.

These numbers were easily absorbed by industry and services, which created 161,000 new jobs annually between 1965 and 1969, and 285,000 annually in the following five-year period.

The moderate growth of the economically active population in the first five years (108,000 persons annually) was the result of a high rate of emigration and a slight decline in the percentage of the population economically active. The demand for jobs that it created was more than met, to the extent that unemployment dropped by 31,000 persons per year. Joblessness reached its lowest point at the end of 1969, 1.1% of the economically active population (and this was in a context in which there was a big increase in women coming on the job market and a slackening of migratory movements). After this, it began to rise again. But given the capacity of industries and services to absorb the growing demand for jobs, unemployment rose only moderately (64,000 persons per year). By the end of 1974, it had reached only 3.3% of the economically active population. (See Table 1).

Thus, the years preceding the onset of the worldwide economic crisis were marked in Spain by a massive shift of labor from agriculture towards industry and the services. At the same time, there was an appreciable growth of the economically active population, owing to the natural increase of the population and the growing numbers of women coming on the labor market. This represented a long-term historic development but it was impelled by the rapid economic growth in these ten years.

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS HITS

After the onset of the economic crisis, the pattern of economic development became profoundly altered. Since 1975, the overall number of people in work has dropped steadily by an average of 260,000 per year. This period has to be divided into two subperiods in accordance with the steepness of the decline and the social layers affected. From 1975 to 1977, the average annual loss of jobs reached 154,000.

The drop in agricultural employment accelerated as a result of the capitalization that had taken place in the preceding years and in response to the higher level of wages, which had been pushed up by the economic growth. But the creation of jobs in industry and the services was very sluggish. Nonetheless, there was an annual increase of 84,000 wage workers,

while the category of nonwage workers dropped by 36,000 a year, showing the effects of the crisis on the petty bourgeoisie.

In these years, the economically active population did not increase, despite the arrival of the baby boom generation on the labor market and despite the return of the emigrant workers. During the three years from 1975 to 1977, it declined by 9,000 persons per year. This is reflected in a decline in the percentage of the population economically active, in particular among youth and women. At the same time, there was a continuing decline in the percentage of the economically active among adult males, which went hand in hand with gradual lowering of the retirement age.

The result of all these trends was a sharp increase in unemployment over the three years from 1975 to 1977, although the increase did not exceed an annual average of 145,000 persons. By the end of 1977, the unemployment rate had reached 6.3%.

DEEPENING OF THE CRISIS

After 1978, we saw a resumption of these pernicious trends. But this time the weight of unemployment fell squarely on the wage earning population. One reason for the continuation of this evolution was the persistence of the economic slump. Moreover, the economic projections were becoming gloomier and gloomier, owing to acceptance of the fact that a resolution of the crisis required a deepgoing reconversion of the productive plant.

However, parallel to this, we have to look at the changes that occurred in the relationship of class forces detrimental to the workers, changes that can be dated from the signing of the Moncloa Pact on October 27, 1977. This inaugurated a period of class collaboration and capitulation by the reformist leaderships for which it is difficult to find an equivalent

in history. It was marked by such deals as the Interconfederation Guidelines Agreement (AMI) signed by the Union General de los Trabajadores (UGT — General Workers Union, the SP-dominated confederation) and the National Agreement on Employment (ANE) signed jointly by the UGT and the CCOO (Comisiones Obreras, Workers Commissions, the CP-controlled union federation), the government, and the bosses in June 1981. These documents embodied a policy that left the workers disarmed and sacrificed them to the voracious logic of capitalism.

From 1978 to 1980, the annual loss of jobs was 366,000, or about 3% per year of the economically active population. The fall of agricultural employment was slowed, but there was a drastic turnaround in the job market for industry and the services, with an average annual decline of 240,000 in jobs. Unemployment rose by less than the number of jobs lost (which was 291,000 a year). That is because during this period there was again a decline in the economically active population. The drop was rather steep (72,000 persons per year), despite the growth of the population and the return of the emigrants.

To sum it up, during the six years between 1975 and 1980, the drop in the total number employed was 1,560,000, representing 12.2 % of the number employed in 1975.

In agriculture, the decline in the number employed was 1,017,000, representing 34% of the 1975 figure. In other sectors, the drop was 543,000 or 5.5%. Of this, 468,000 was in the wage earning category.

However, in the last three years the trend has worsened. From 1978 to 1980, the number of non-agricultural wage workers fell by 720,000, that is, 9% less than the figure at the start of 1978.

This steady narrowing of the job market in quantitative terms has been accompanied by growing effects on the best

organized and most combative sections of the working class. This has happened as the economic crisis has hit the key sectors and plants and to the extent that the political conditions existed for striking blows to employment levels in the working-class bastions. In 1981, the tendencies that took form in the three previous years continued. It seems safe to say that the time has arrived for a major confrontation, since massive layoffs in the big plants are on the order of the day.

According to a recent publication of the OECD, among the members of this international organization, only Turkey has a higher level of unemployment than the Spanish state. In general, it can be said that the decline in employment that has occurred since the Moncloa Pact is without parallel with what has happened in the other industrial countries. The policy of pacts and consensus followed by the leaderships of the SP and CP have made this possible. But the ultimate cause has to be sought in the weakness of Spanish capitalism and the need it has to raise a low level of organic composition of capital to increase productivity, to even out the balance with the other industrial countries, and therefore to become more competitive.

THE HISTORIC LAG OF SPANISH CAPITALISM

In order to understand the present situation of Spanish capitalism, you have to remember that because of Franco's policy of seeking economic self-sufficiency and because of the isolation in which the country found itself in the 1950s, Spain entered the third age of capitalist growth only belatedly and on the basis of a very low organic composition of capital.⁽¹⁾ The years of rapid growth it experienced have not enabled it to seriously reduce this imbalance.

So, when the economic crisis set in, its effects have been graver and the requirements for overcoming it more drastic. This explains why, with the assistance of the parliamentary left leaders, the Spanish capitalists have cut back employment so sharply and moved to restructure the productive plant in such drastic and intense ways.

Today, going into 1982, the reorganization of the productive plant has not yet been carried far enough to meet the needs of capitalism. The restructurations and reconversions of the sectors in crisis that are now hitting the big bastions of the workers movement are encountering strong resistance from the workers at a time when the process has been only half completed!

In fact, because of the policy of economic self-sufficiency and the prolonged, excessive protection granted to Spanish industry in the early years of the dictatorship, capitalism in this country

TABLE 1

POPULATION (Average annual variation)
(in thousands of persons)

	Before Crisis		After Onset of Crisis	
	1965-69	1970-74	1975-77	1978-80
1=2+3 Economically Active Population	+108	+208	-9	-72
2. Total Employment	+139	+144	-154	-366
Agriculture	-50	-150	-201	-138
Nonwage workers in industry and services	+28	+9	-36	+11
Wage workers in services and industry	+161	+285	+84	-240
3. Jobless	-31	+64	+145	+291

Sources: For pre-1977 figures, Mo. Economia "Poblacion, Empleo y Paro, de 1964 a 1978." Post-1977, Instituto Nacional de Estadística, "Encuesta de Poblacion Activa" (for those above 14 years of age).

(1). The organic composition of capital refers to the ratio of capital and labor, or workers and machines, etc. The organic composition is high if there is a high ratio of capital to labor, as is typical of industrialized countries. — IV.

got into step with the international development only with the 1959 stabilization plan, and it joined the race only in unfavorable conditions.

After this, Spanish capitalism was able to develop by adopting the advances made in the third technological revolution. There was a shift of workers from the countryside into generally more productive jobs in industry and the services. Following this, it was necessary to mechanize agriculture, which resulted in rapid increases in productivity in this sector, reaching an average of 5% annually between 1974 and 1975. Employment in industry and the services increased every year and productivity increased sharply by 7.2% annually between 1974 and 1975.

However, the acceleration of this process of development did not enable Spanish capitalism to seriously reduce its disadvantage relative to the other industrialized countries. The productivity of labor and the organic composition of capital did increase. But that also happened in the other industrialized countries.

LABOR INTENSIVE VS. CAPITAL INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT?

The SP and CP economists have a tendency to say that the process of development was marked by an intensity of investment and economy in the use of labor. They see the cause of the high unemployment that exists now in the introduction of labor saving technology. The solutions that they propose call for using techniques that involve a less intensive utilization of capital and more use of labor power. They fail to recognize, however, that these solutions are in contradiction to the features of the third technological revolution and to the interests of Spanish capitalism, which needs to replace workers with machines.

What is more, this explanation does not answer the main question, which is not whether the process has been characterized by an intensive utilization of capital invested but why this intensity has not been sufficient to reduce the lag in productivity.

There can be no doubt that during the years of rapid development, the organic composition of capital failed to rise sufficiently. By way of example, we need only note that while in manufacturing in the OECD as a whole 62 wage workers were needed in 1975 to produce the equivalent of a million (1970) dollars and in the EEC this was 71 workers, the Spanish capitalists needed 112 workers to produce the same amount. In this respect, Spain was trailed only by Britain, with 128 workers needed to produce that amount, and Portugal, where it was 161. Moreover, this situation is not a coincidence. It is explained primarily by the fact that the Spanish ruling class has had less means for capitalization.

If we assess the intensity of the process of capitalization by examining the average annual investment per wage earner in 1964-75 (excluding the building

TABLE 2
PRODUCTIVITY TRENDS IN SPANISH CAPITALISM

	Productivity Difference in 1963 (in %)	Reduction of Difference (%)		% of Wage Increase Above Productivity Increases	
		1963-1973	1974-1980	1963-1973	1974-1980
U.S.	83.5	-7.3	-7.5	-0.7	-0.5
Japan	14.3	+37.2	-7	+0.8	-0.4
Germany	64.7	-3.9	-2.5	+1.7	0.7
France	64.7	-3.9	-3.6	+0.4	0.5
Britain	56.1	-13.0	-15.9	+0.4	0.6
Italy	47.0	-1.4	-8.4	+1.8	1.5
Canada	80.2	-7.4	-8.6	+1.3	0.7
The Big 7	71.0	-5.8	-5.0		
Spain	—	—	—	0.5	1.1

Note: The difference in productivity has been defined as the percentage that indicates to what extent Spanish productivity (defined as the GNP by employed person at 1970 prices and exchange rates) is lower than each country listed. The sources are OECD "National Account" and "Labour Force Statistics," and for recent years, OECD "Economic Outlook."

industry, where the figures include the construction of housing) Spanish capitalism stands in one of the last places in the OECD. The figure in Spain was 1,300 (1970) dollars per wage earner. In the U.S., it was 3,900 dollars, in France 2,900, in Italy, 1,700, and in Greece 2,400. A second factor in the low capitalization is that the Spanish capitalists had an abundance of cheap labor and favorable political conditions for super-exploitation.

In fact, if you look at Table 2, you see that in the years preceding the worldwide economic crisis the rise of wages relative to growth in productivity was less in Spain than in the rest of the industrialized countries, aside from Britain. The intensive growth of production made possible an increase in real wages along with a major increase in total surplus value.⁽²⁾ Spanish workers have continued to be relatively cheap, which explains why there was no incentive to increase further the organic composition of capital, in particular, if, as was the case, capital was scarce.

SPANISH CAPITALISM DRIVEN INTO A CORNER

With the onset of the economic crisis, and the stepup in competition flowing from it, the historical disadvantages of Spanish capitalism have become evident. Spanish capitalism had to increase its productivity, but it was obliged to do so in bad conditions created by the economic crisis and by the upsurge of the workers movement in the final years of the dictatorship.

While in the other industrialized countries, employment began dropping sharply in 1975, this process only began in Spain with the Moncloa Pact. For a long time, the capitalist concerns continued operating with workforces larger than what they needed to restore their rate of profit and the restructurations of the

crisis-hit sectors which were spaced out in time.

DROP BEGINS IN REAL WAGES

Since 1978, two phenomena have been particularly striking. First, the organic composition of capital has been increased by cutting back workforces and the disappearance of the least profitable companies. Secondly, real wages have been cut in order to make it possible to restore the rate of profit.

Since 1977, workers in nonagricultural sectors have lost almost 10% of their buying power, and in the last two years wage raises have been far outstripped by productivity increases (1.5% in 1979, and 2% for 1980). Nonetheless, these gains for the bourgeoisie were clearly inadequate to meet the needs of capitalism in the context of the interimperialist crisis and in view of the Spanish bourgeoisie's preparations for joining the Common Market. The productivity lag was lessened somewhat (by 5 points between 1974 and 1980). And while the organic composition of capital did increase, there are still many key sectors where this is not the case.

At the end of 1981, there were eleven industries in crisis, including steel, shipbuilding, automobiles, textiles, footwear, producers goods, and so forth. In these industries battles are going on over restructuration, and drastic cutbacks in the workforces are on the agenda.

It is in these industries fundamentally that the big bastions of the workers movement are located. And the struggles going on there indicate that these restructurations will not be easy and that they will not produce as good results as the capitalists want. In any case, the workers

(2). Surplus value means the value created by workers for which they are not paid. When the volume of surplus value goes up in general it means an increase in the rate of exploitation. —IV.

movement has a great deal at stake in this new stage of the bourgeoisie's policy for overcoming the crisis.

The conclusion that follows from all this is obvious. In order to get out of the crisis, Spanish capitalism has to make substantial new reductions in the level of employment and allow a considerable build-up of the pool of the jobless. It is also obvious that unemployment is a permanent cause of social tension. But the bourgeoisie has no policy options open for holding back the rise of unemployment, because that could collide with the objective needs of capital.

When the bourgeois and reformist economists talk about lowering real wages in order to reduce labor costs and stimulate the demand for labor power, what they are doing in essence is playing along with the readjustments the capitalists need to make. They demobilize the workers and thus make it possible for the capitalists to carry out their restructurations.

NO ROOM FOR REFORMISM

No cut in wages is going to keep unemployment from going up. Instead this would stimulate a sharper drop in employment by the effects it would have on consumption and the level of economic activity. At least on this point, there is no room for reformism. Either you aid the process of capitalist readjustment and you permit the growth of unemployment, or you oppose this logic and resist the attacks of capital. There is no third way.

The National Agreement on Employment signed in June 1981 specifies that in order to just keep unemployment at the level it was when this accord was reached until the end of 1982 it will be necessary to create 350,000 jobs. It was obvious that was not going to be done.

The national budget adopted at the end of 1981 did not permit that sort of job creation. The bosses were not interested in doing that, and could not do it. In fact, the fact that it is said that so many jobs would have to be created to keep employment at the present level indicates that quite a different sort of operation was being prepared. By signing this accord, the unions accepted the fact that there were going to continue to be big layoffs.

Over the first nine months of 1981, the number of people employed dropped by 196,000, and this figure was expected to decline by another 100,000 in the fourth quarter. The eleven sectors in crisis and which are now undergoing restructuration employ 700,000 workers. Even supposing that this restructuration cuts workforces by only 10% (which is minimal by comparison with the plans of the bourgeoisie), this would represent, for a start, a loss of 70,000 jobs.

In addition, you have to take into consideration the continual failures of small and medium businesses that are doomed inexorably to disappearance by the reconversion of these industries. As we have seen earlier, the only way that Spanish

capitalism can increase its productivity is by shedding excess workers and replacing them with machines, that is through increasing unemployment.

However, if the workers fail to stem this process, unemployment will continue to rise steeply. It has to be taken into account, moreover, that there is going to be a continuing flow of workers out of agriculture (temporary factors such as the drought may speed this up). Likewise, it cannot be forgotten that highly educated youth, both male and female, are coming onto the job market.

During the first nine months of 1981, for the first time since the Moncloa Pact, the number of unemployed increased by more than the number of jobs lost. That is, the number of unemployed went up by 258,000 while the number of jobs lost was 196,000. And the number of unemployed looking for their first job (131,000) was greater than that of those who lost their jobs (127,000).

THE SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

The devastating effect of this unemployment leads us to examine its social repercussions. In this respect, what strikes you first is the relative lack of conflicts engendered by a problem of such scope. A few years ago, when Marxists envisaged such an unfavorable evolution of the jobs situation, they always expected this to go hand in hand with a period of social and political convulsions directly produced by unemployment. Nonetheless, the events have been much less stormy than predicted. That does not mean that major tensions and conflicts have not arisen (as in the case of the Andalusian day laborers for instance) or that the social and political instability that exists is not the by-product, to an extent, of unemployment. And it does not mean that there will not be more conflicts in the future.

WHO ARE THE JOBLESS?

Among the reasons for the relative social calm that has persisted up till now is the fact that the impact of unemployment has been cushioned by its composition. Thus, 58% of the jobless are youth under the age of 24, and 60% are not heads of families but dependents of heads of families. There is no doubt that the fact that youth make up such a large percentage of unemployment has attenuated its effects.

It can be noted also that women account for 33% of the unemployed, while they represent 24% of the economically active population. Thus, the adult population has not been as hard hit by unemployment as the statistics would suggest. In fact, only 28% of those unemployed are heads of families. Only 19% of the unemployed belong to families where there is no breadwinner, and among these a large proportion are drawing unemployment benefits.

It has to be noted, moreover, that while 40% of the jobless have never

drawn unemployment benefits, this percentage is only 26% for those over 40, who are thus better protected by unemployment insurance. The result of all this is relative and not absolute poverty for the unemployed. A recent study showed that most of them have a refrigerator, a washing machine, and a black-and-white television set. What is more, over half have a car and their own accommodation. And with all this, their level of indebtedness is not much greater than that of employed workers.

Thus, a series of social mechanisms have helped to provide a cushion against the conflicts that could have arisen from such a high level of unemployment.

It has also to be taken into consideration the way unemployment has grown. We have already indicated how large a number of youth are looking for their first job. But if you look at the workers who have lost their work, you see that the hardest hit are those with the lowest level of education (79% of the unemployed have at best a primary education). So, in general, the skilled workers, the backbone of the industrial proletariat in the strict sense of the term, have been much less affected than temporary workers and laborers, who make up, by themselves, an important proportion of the total unemployed.

Moreover, only 40% of those unemployed after leaving jobs have been laid off (20% have quit and in the case of the other 40%, their work ended). And in general, the layoffs have not hit the major bastions of the working class.

In fact, of those laid off, 55% lost their jobs because of the failure or closing of plants and businesses. But closures have not yet hit the big plants. And only 23% of those laid off were working in plants with more than fifty workers. Finally, more than 60% of laid-off workers have been compensated for their job loss.

UNEMPLOYMENT STARTS TO HIT STRONGEST SECTIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS

Nonetheless, if the bastions of the workers movement have not yet contributed in a big way to the unemployment figures, things are beginning to change, as we said. According to the study cited above, the rate of unemployment is 3.5% higher than the official figures, that is, 18% of the economically active population, the sort of statistic typical of the underdeveloped world. What is more, long-term unemployment is increasing. Some 33% of the unemployed have been looking in vain for work for a year.

This unemployment is having major effects on the morale of the workers. Some 77% think that they are not going to find work in the coming months; 50% would accept work in another province; 83% would accept a less skilled job than the one they had; 80% would accept work at the minimum wage.

The fear of losing jobs has spread even among those who still have work. Some 33% of the population think that unemployment is the problem that touches them most personally, and 24% say that they are afraid of losing their jobs. Finally, unemployment is beginning to hit the better categories of jobs and better paid layers more than in the previous period.

This means that unemployment is undermining the fighting potential of working class (which is reflected also in the demands and in the contracts) and is giving a defensive character to its struggles. But it also has opposite effects.

The workers are convinced that unem-

ployment is going to continue to increase and that workers laid off will not be able to find new jobs. They have clear ideas about those who are responsible for this situation (in the plant cited, about 80% think that the bosses and the government are responsible for unemployment, 32% think that it is the economic crisis, and only 12% that it is the workers themselves).

Given the existence of such attitudes, the severe attacks by the employers, especially those related to the restructuration of crisis-hit plants, have provoked militant responses from the workers. In particular, large movements of solidarity have developed in support of workers who fight back.

These reactions give grounds for hoping that after the retreats of the workers over the last four years, a new stage of class struggles is opening up in the Spanish state. The pockets of unemployment in agricultural regions such as Andalusia and Estramadura are also powderkegs threatening to blow up in the faces of the Spanish capitalists.

We have not tried here to draw the political conclusions from our analysis of unemployment and the gloomy prospects for its further growth. But there is no doubt that unemployment will play an essential role in the coming political and social developments.

Bombay textile workers strike

On October 20, 1981, nearly 25,000 workers from several textile factories in Bombay, India, went into struggle over wages. The following January 18 they declared an indefinite general strike, involving 250,000 workers in 60 different factories (*International Viewpoint*, Issue No 17, November 15, 1982). After 10 months this strike can already be considered one of the most important in the whole history of the international workers movement.

The Bombay textile workers are demanding wage increases, paid holidays, better conditions of work, the abolition of the very reactionary Bombay Industrial Relations Act, and recognition of their trade union organisation, the Maharashtra Girni Kamgar Union.

For their wage demands to be successful, and to launch this strike, the textile workers did, in fact, have to turn to the union recognised by the Bombay Industrial Relations Act, the Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sing, affiliated to a confederation linked with the ruling Congress Party (I), which they have previously denounced for its collaborationist attitude to the mill owners and the government. They organised themselves in a trade union led by Dr Datta Samant, a former member of the Congress Party of Indira Gandhi, which has a reputation of radical trade unionism among the young industrial workers of the town. The unions led by the reformist left, which can no longer appear as an alternative for the workers, unhappy about this competition, have criticised the 'pure economism' of Datta Samant's union, but one has to note that the workers turned towards it

to lead one of the biggest strikes in workers history.

Although this strike is the most important that has happened in India, it is not the first general strike by the textile workers, a particularly combative section of the working class. This strike is a question of national importance, both because of the response to it from the working and rural population in the Bombay area because of the political dimension contained in the demand for trade union recognition, and because of the degree of workers self-organisation achieved.

Moreover, with the real popular support that it has, the textile workers strike has become an example, and a focal element, in all the protests against the government. When riots broke out on October 18, 1982, in Bombay, following a police strike, the textile workers were the main target of the repressive forces, and 24 were arrested. Today these workers have a dual problem, to confront the repression and make their leaders go further in action and mobilisation.

The Communist League, Indian section of the Fourth International, have contributed as they are able to the solidarity actions with the textile workers. Together with another Trotskyist group, the Bolshevik-Leninist group, and two other groups of the far left they have formed a defence committee for the strike. They have already distributed some tens of thousands of pamphlets and leaflets, and put up thousands of support posters. They have also undertaken several public initiatives.

Solidarity is a crucial factor for the future of this workers' struggle, the outcome of which will influence the future class relationship of forces. On this subject *Proletarian Politics*, the bimonthly journal of the Communist League, wrote in May 1982, 'The most interesting aspect of this strike is the support from several sections of the toiling class in the urban and rural regions of Maharashtra state. The majority of workers have decided to stay in the villages during the strike. They have been welcomed by their friends and relatives. During the tours by strike leaders who originally come from rural regions of Maharashtra, enormous quantities of cereals of great value were given to support the strike. The striking workers

were invited by their comrades from the country to give details on their class struggle in Bombay. From this resulted greater solidarity between the industrial and agricultural proletariats. During the month of April alone six tons of wheat were collected in the country areas of Maharashtra.'

On October 2 three to four hundred thousand workers attended a solidarity rally in Bombay. Between October 11 and 13 more than one million workers in Bombay struck in support. Even the usually passive bus workers went on solidarity strike for three days.

These massive demonstrations of support were met with extreme brutality by the police. Workers were beaten up by the police in the street, and in some areas the houses of textile workers were entered and women and children beaten up.

The 'Committee against the National Security Act', which includes the Bolshevik Leninist Group and the Communist League, have taken up these incidents, alongside the defence of textile workers arrested under the NSA, and the call for its abolition.

They called for a demonstration in front of the police headquarters on October 16, which was banned and participants forcibly driven away. The Commissioner of Police justified all this in the name of law and order.

Despite such brutal repression the workers struck for three days and there was much discussion of an indefinite solidarity strike in Bombay, and possibly throughout Maharashtra.

Under the pressure of the mass mobilisation in support of the workers the government has started moves to settle the strike. The morale of the workers remains high, and their determination to win their two main demands, abolition of the Industrial Relations Act, and refusal to accept job losses, and for the permanent employment of the hundred thousand temporary workers, solid.

These are the most important workers mobilisations in the Indian industrial centre of Bombay for a long time. Since the failure of the railway workers strike in 1974 all the big workers strikes have been defeated. Thus a victory for the textile workers would have an important effect in the country.

Uruguay dictatorship faces reviving workers movement

Mario SUAREZ*

MONTEVIDEO. It is clear enough now that the world capitalist economic crisis that set in following the post-war boom has become chronic and poses the possibility of massive breakdowns in the imperialist system.

But the very first ripples of this crisis were sufficient to shatter the frozen economic structure of Uruguay.

The bourgeoisie was divided, in the grips of its own political and economic crisis. At the same time it confronted the biggest upsurge of the mass movement in the country's history. It proved unable to cope with these challenges within the framework of bourgeois democracy.

In such circumstances, the growing momentum of the mass struggle was making it impossible to implement any economic and political plan that could even prolong the death agony of the system.

The combativity of the workers movement, which had assumed the leadership of the struggles, was becoming a threat to the survival of the capitalist system itself.

On the other hand, the imperialists were putting on more and more pressure, beginning to shift the weight of their own crisis onto the colonial world. They demanded that the Uruguayan bourgeoisie apply a plan for stepping up the exploitation of the workers in order to assure its own survival and at the same time get a bigger contribution of capital from the imperialist centers.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

This was the signal followed by the military, which, with the approval of the bourgeoisie, dissolved parliament on June 27, 1973, and prepared to take on the workers movement. That marked the culmination of the long process of a creeping military coup. At the same time, it marked the opening of the chapter of resistance of the workers and poor masses, who had to try to fight back in a context of counterrevolution and destitution.

Before the sun rose on June 27, the first-shift workers spontaneously stopped their machines and declared a general strike. A few hours later, when the strike was already an accomplished fact, the National Confederation of Workers (Confederacion Nacional de Trabajadores — CNT) issued a belated call for a general strike.

For two heroic weeks, the people fought back against the military coup. It took the most brutal repression in the history of the country to defeat them. The leadership that had unquestioned authority in the workers movement proved incapable of meeting the challenge of these historic events.

The class-collaborationist line imposed on the CNT by its Communist Party leadership led the workers to place their hopes on the emergence of "progressive" elements in the military, which never manifested themselves. The CNT chiefs led the general strike with the perspective of getting a Peruvian-type solution, with an Uruguayan analogue of Vasco Alvarado.(1) But it found itself face to face with a Brazilian-type coup.

From the outset, the workers struggle was led in a way that assured its defeat. This brought to an end the period of student and workers struggle that opened in 1968-69 and culminated in a mass upsurge that pushed the country to the brink of a revolutionary situation.

With the victory of the coup d'etat, the bourgeoisie launched a major offensive, pressing the advantage it gained as a result of the retreat of the mass movement and the brutal repression conducted by the Bonapartist junta that had been set up.

APPLICATION OF THE IMPERIALIST PLAN

The defeat of the mass movement was the precondition for the application of a new economic plan. But this was not the only thing that had to be done. It was necessary to drive out of the country half a million people, most of them skilled workers, who did not fit into the new economic scheme.

The forced mass emigration suited a specific political objective. This half a million exiles included the bulk of the political and trade-union activists involved in the preceding struggles. They could have served as a nucleus around which the workers movement could have regrouped to overcome the effects of the defeat.

In order to attain its end, the dictatorship was obliged to arrest and torture one Uruguayan in every fifty and bring one in every 500 before a tribunal. Unions were outlawed, along with political parties and all democratic organizations. In this way, the opposition that had continued to resist the plans of the dictatorship was crushed.

The defeat was driven deeper by the unbroken string of setbacks for the workers movement in the region. The 1976 military coup in Argentina marked the culmination of this series of defeats for the workers.

The new economic plan was conceived and executed in accordance with the interests of the section of the bourgeoisie most closely linked to imperialist finance capital. By the position it holds in banking and the packing-house industry, this wing of the bourgeoisie controls most capital movements in the country.

In these circumstances, the workers' real wages were cut to 50% of what they had been before 1973. They were eroded by inflation, while working hours were increased, working conditions deteriorated, and the gains made throughout the history of the workers movement were wiped out.

Through repression and super-exploitation, the dictatorship managed to slow the breakdown of the capitalist system in the country and prolong its death agony. The junta's minister of economics and finance drew up an economic plan of the type that some years later the imperialists would impose on the semicolonial world more widely.

DESTITUTION

The relative development that had existed before was wiped out. The industries that were built up to produce goods to substitute for imports collapsed. They were unable to compete with the industry of the imperialist centers. Thus, the electronics industry virtually disappeared, along with what little existed of an engineering industry and the automobile-parts factories. In their place, labor intensive industries were promoted, such as leather (footwear and clothing) and woolsens,

* The author is a member of the Socialist Workers Party (PST) of Uruguay. It has been outside the Fourth International since 1979, but is not now a member of any other international grouping and continues to stand on the principles of the 1963 reunification congress of the Fourth International.

(1) The Communist Party and the CNT leadership that it controlled had developed a lot of illusions in the intentions of the so-called Peruvian type military officers, who they saw emerging in the February 1973 dress rehearsal for the military coup. So, they devoted themselves to trying to pressure a military faction that they thought favorable to a reformist process of the type to which Velasco Alvarado gave impetus in Peru in 1968, doing everything they could to give the general strike that developed in response to the coup a defensive character.

whose products brought in a comfortable export income.

Through the penetration of finance capital and the deterioration in the terms of trade, imperialist exploitation increased. At the same time, the imperialists were able to take advantage of the effects of unemployment, which reached a record high of 15% in 1976, according to the official figures themselves. Inflation rose to three-digit levels and in some branches of the food industry the work-day stretched out to 12 or even 16 hours.

In order to encourage investment, the government stimulated the construction industry by means of state-subsidized public works such as the Palmar and Salto Grande dams, the Paysandu and Fray Bentos international bridges, and roads, and in general various projects to build up the economic infrastructure. Despite this, the balance of trade has remained in the red since 1974, and the large foreign debt, which had already become chronic, grew to still more threatening dimensions.

After the 1974-75 recession, the imperialists achieved a relative restabilization lasting to 1978. As soon as this began breaking down, they resumed their attacks on local industry. They began again to raise tariff barriers in the imperialist centers and open up the economies of the semicolonial world to further penetration, in particular in the Southern Cone.

The plan orchestrated from Washington led to the liquidation of the industries that had shown the strongest growth in previous years, by pushing them to increase their level of indebtedness, to make deals with the banks, or into bankruptcy pure and simple.

The agricultural bourgeoisie also started to be bled by the banks and the packing houses. Investment linked to real estate speculation and tourism was stimulated by the overvaluing of the Argentine peso. A large volume of capital was thereby diverted from productive investments. Foreign capital was attracted by very high interest rates.

The result of this was an accumulation of debt in the productive sectors which, according to the official figures, reached the record total of 4 billion dollars in 1981. Some 2 billion of this was in industry, 1 billion was in agriculture, and the rest was in commerce and mortgage loans.

The deficit in the balance of trade also showed a new jump, rising to 3 billion dollars at the end of 1981, that is more than 1,000 dollars for every inhabitant of the country, one of the highest per capita trade deficits in the world. In the first months of 1982, currency reserves fell to 266 million dollars, or 32% of the reserves that existed at the start of the year.

In order to fill out this picture, we should add that the growth rate, which was positive during the first eight years of the dictatorship fell to minus 0.8% in 1981.

At the time of the 1974-1975 international recession, the dictatorship was able to take advantage of the defeat that it had just inflicted on the working class.

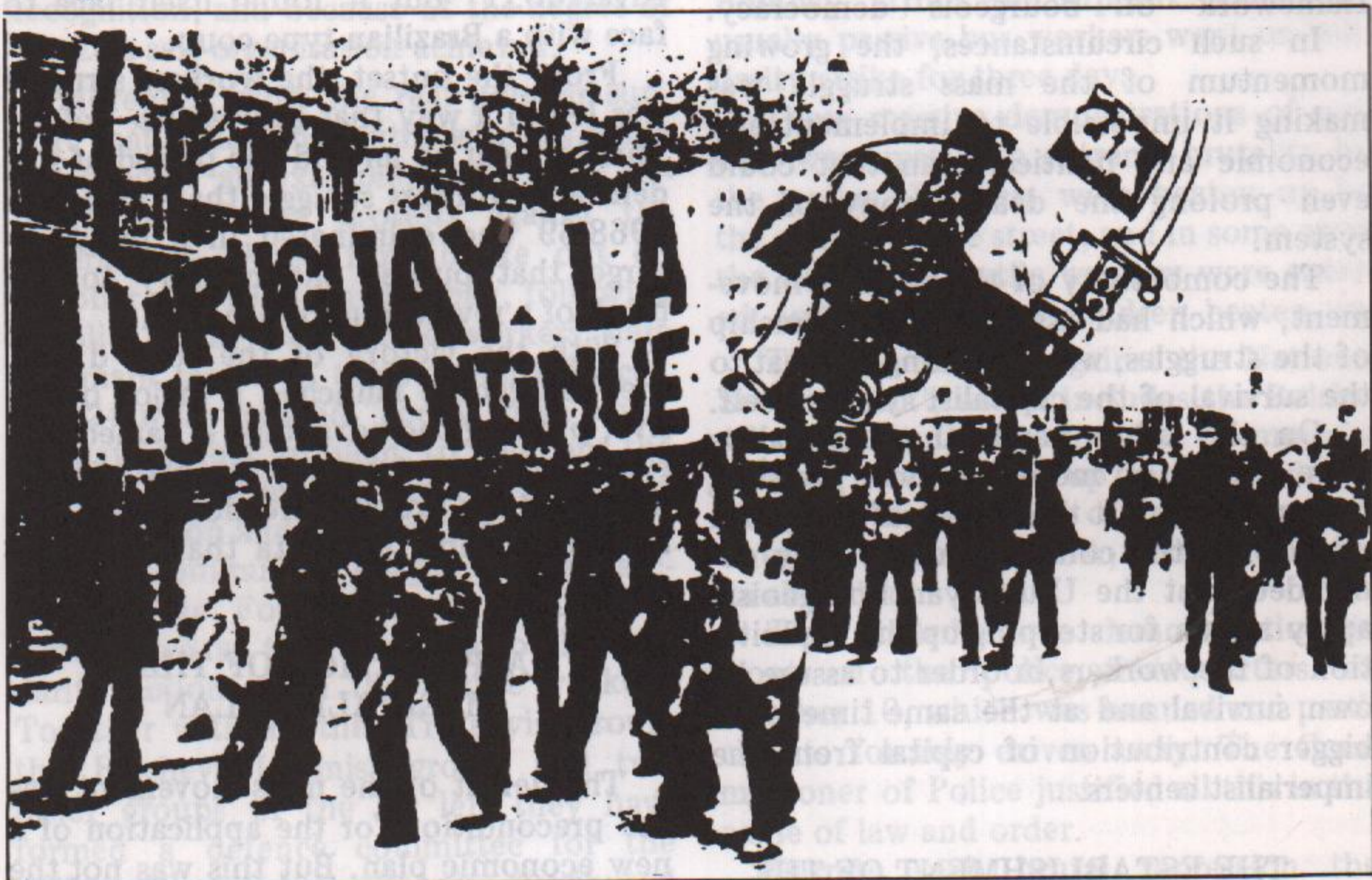
In the present international economic crisis, on the other hand, it has had to cope with a reviving mass movement.

THE MASS MOVEMENT BEGINS TO REVIVE

The year 1976 marked the low point of the mass movement. It is the year when the largest number of political prisoners were in prison. The repression was at its worst. Since then, there has been a slow recovery of the mass movement, with temporary setbacks but with a general upward trend.

The first struggles remained isolated and did not overcome the atomization of the movement. They ended in defeat. But after that the conflicts multiplied and the organization of the struggles improved.

It was not the workers movement but the student movement that re-emerged first. In 1978, the resistance won its first victory. The students of veterinary medicine struck for a month and won their demands. The struggle in the veterinary college was followed by a series of other student struggles in which the dictatorship suffered a string of defeats, in the faculties of chemistry, liberal arts, technology.



Uruguay: 'The struggle continues' (DR)

However, the revival of the mass movement began to acquire real power when the workers came back into the arena of struggle on May 10, 1980. The decree changing the date of the May Day commemoration was massively rebuffed.

Despite the formal ban by the government and the threats of firings made by the bosses, absenteeism in the workplaces was higher than 35% on the average and 60% in construction and certain other industries. Montevideo was inundated with action bulletins and leaflets.

On that day, a mass was also celebrated to commemorate the National Holiday. It was sponsored by a trade-union coordinating body and held in a church in the center of the city. Some 1,500 persons attended.

This revival of the workers and student movement was reflected in the

plebiscite of November 30, 1980. The pressure applied by the Carter government for demagogic reasons forced the Uruguayan regime to draw up a program for setting up legal institutions for the military dictatorship. The first step was to hold a referendum to approve a new constitution in order to get the traditional bourgeois parties to accept the role of a democratic facade for the regime.

Nonetheless, despite the weight of official propaganda and the small opening left for opposition, the "no" vote was 58%.

The bourgeois front split between those who supported the program proposed by the military dictatorship and those who rejected it. The contradictions within the bourgeoisie led to a section of it lining up with the poor masses and the workers. For a month, there was an explosion of political life in the country, erupting through the narrow space the repressive authorities were obliged to leave open. Debates, mass meetings, and rallies mushroomed.

All of the political spectrum, all the trade-union, student and neighbourhood groups that had slowly grown up in clandestinity, realized the direction of the forces that had been set in motion and

endeavored to take advantage of the space that had been opened up. The answer to the dictatorship was a million "no" votes — up to 80% in some working-class neighborhoods.

The government was thrown into a deep political crisis, although the relationship of forces between the classes was not qualitatively changed. On the other hand, there was an important advance in the confidence and the reorganization of the movement of the workers and poor masses.

REVIVAL OF MASS MOVEMENT GAINS MOMENTUM

After a short period of wait and see, the mass movement began to absorb the meaning of this victory and take advantage of it in the struggle. Once again, the

student movement was the first to resume the fight.

Before the new academic year even began, a national petition campaign was launched against the entrance examination that had been made compulsory for matriculation the year before. The high-school students joined in the action. Within a month, 10,000 signatures had been collected. A rally was held in front of the rectorate for the turning over of the petitions to the authorities.

After the resignation of the university rector in August of the same year, the petition campaign was resumed, and the number of signatures collected went over 30,000. The demands were broadened to include university autonomy and a halt to government intervention.

As for the workers, coming up to May 1, 1981, they reached a new stage in their assimilation of the plebiscite victory and in their remobilization. Since, following May Day the year before, the workers had gained both in strength and experience they now began preparing more than a month beforehand to demonstrate their rejection of the date change.

In the workplaces, they discussed what steps to take and an organized campaign for workers to take off work that day was built up. The trade-union struggle took on a clearly political character, and its power forced the government to retreat. A week before May Day, the traditional date for the commemoration was restored.

This victory encouraged struggles over wages and working conditions. Since the great toll taken by the emigration and repression that followed the 1973 coup d'état, a new generation of workers had been integrated into production.

THE NEW GENERATION OF WORKERS BEGINS TO FIGHT

Tempered by particularly harsh working conditions, this new generation did not feel the direct effects of the defeat in the same way. It was cut off from the class-struggle traditions of the Uruguayan proletariat by the crushing of the movement at the hands of the dictatorship. But it had a great fighting potential that little by little became combined with the experience of the older generations. The new layer of trade-union activists and leaders that has emerged represents a coming together of this youth and the experience accumulated in the years of open mass struggles.

Facing the symptoms of the new economic crisis, the bosses and the government once again are striving to make the workers pay the cost. The response has been a wave of workers struggles throughout the country. Timidly at first, the workers have been going back to the traditional methods of struggle — refusal to work overtime, partial work stoppages, strikes launched in a number of places at once to disperse the repressive forces of the regime.

However, realizing that the relationship of forces is not yet favorable, the



workers have not neglected other forms of mobilization to back up their demands. Over the year, dozens of petition campaigns have been launched in the factories for wage increases and against layoffs.

The most important conflicts have taken place in textiles (Alpargatas, Ildu, Suitex), in the public sector (Ancap, Antel, UTE, Pluna, the municipal workers), the metals industry (Las Heras), the automotive industry (General Motors, Ford, Norde), the public and private banks, transportation, leather (Cuvalan and Osami), tobacco, and the food and drink industry. All these struggles demonstrate that the bosses' attempt to get the workers to bear the burden of the crisis is running up against a new situation.

In order to obstruct the mobilizations and the reorganization of the trade-union movement, the government drafted a new law in July 1981 on professional associations. It went into effect in the following October. The bulk of the trade unions and working-class political organizations immediately rejected it as an attempt to atomize the workers movement and make it easier for the state to control it. But there are differences among the workers about the possibilities for finding ways to operate in this new framework.

THE NEW TRADE-UNION MOVEMENT

The struggles that led to the formation of the CNT, the first labor confederation that was able to unite the working class, representing a historic step forward, are still alive in the memories of the workers.

Today, they feel the need to reorganize the unions and the CNT, to defend their imprisoned leaders. But that does not mean that the leadership of this process of reorganization has to be handed back to the same chiefs who before the 1973 coup did their best to keep the workers demands confined within the limits of the system and, in the end, led them down to defeat.

The reorganization process has to be given impetus among the ranks, involving the greatest possible internal democracy. This is the only way to build a leadership that stands for working-class unity and independence.

That is the path being followed by a number of the factory and rank-and-file committees that have brought together the activists in recent years and which function as provisional leaderships. Most of them realize that in the work of reorganizing the trade unions it would be wrong to reject a priori any opening for legal activity. In fact, such openings are the indirect result of our struggle.

THE FIGHT FOR LEGAL RIGHTS FOR UNIONS

Without losing sight of the fact that moving forward depends mainly on our own struggles and patient local organization, we have to take advantage of the margin for maneuver opened up by the trade-union code. This is to enable us to reach the largest number of our fellow workers in order to organize them to destroy the anti-union law itself.

In the late spring and summer of 1982, more than a hundred union charters were presented to the Ministry of Labor. This meant a speedup in the process of reorganization, involvement of new activists, and it gave a greater weight to their demands.

The law decreed by the dictatorship has been unable to block the struggles of the workers. Faced with the wave of struggles unleashed by the legalization of the unions, the dictatorship is trying to stop the process it itself set in motion. With a hundred charters presented, it has given recognition to only four unions, nonetheless, the organizing committees are continuing to hold general assemblies in the workplaces.

In mid-1982, the dictatorship launched a brutal new repressive crackdown against the trade-union activists. Hundreds of workers involved in the work of reorganizing the trade-union movement have been jailed, physically mistreated, or had to leave the country. Moreover, there have been selective firings of a considerable number of workers who have taken part in the recent activities.

The struggle to reorganize the unions and the CNT goes hand in hand with regaining democratic rights and a guarantee of trade-union rights, as well as with winning the release of the imprisoned union activists. This task is closely linked to the setting up of a trade-union leadership that could fill the existing vacuum and keep it from being occupied by unrepresentative groups.

The bank workers have clearly taken the lead in this process. Most banks have their provisional committee, and there is a general provisional committee for the banking industry as a whole. The bank workers have backed up other sections of workers and have joined in a coordinating committee representing those industries where the process of organization has

gone furthest. This committee helps to set up provisional committees where they do not exist, it gives impetus to petition campaigns against unemployment in the various plants, and encourages affiliation to the unions concerned.

TRADE-UNION RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS

These advances in the process have taken form in particular this year. But they are the result of three years of build-up, and they are running directly into the obstacle course erected by the dictatorship, just as the applications for legal recognition by the unions are being stalled. So, it becomes clear that the main obstacle to genuine trade-union activity and satisfaction of the workers' demands is the dictatorship itself. This is why our struggle cannot be limited to the trade-union field. It has to culminate in a general struggle for the reconquest of democratic rights and the overthrow of the dictatorship.

The political situation in the country has changed since the victory of the workers and poor masses in the 1980 plebiscite. The masses have begun to overcome their political atomization. But the role played by the bourgeois opposition on the occasion of the referendum has sown illusions in some sections of the masses that this wing of the bourgeoisie could pursue this line to its final consequences.

THE DICTATORSHIP TURNS TO POLITICAL MANEUVERS

The truce offered by the bourgeois parties allowed the dictatorship to extricate itself from its political impasse and work out a plan for an alternative solution. The scheme was ready to go into operation by June 1981.

On the basis of dialogue with the traditional parties and with the benefit of their endorsement, General Gregorio Alvarez was able to take office in September and proclaim the opening of a period of "transition."⁽²⁾ The new government's political program can be summed up in three basic points: — Legalization of the traditional parties while maintaining the ban on the others. — Primary elections for the legalized parties in November 1982 and general elections at the end of 1984. — A gradual return to "legal institutions" with the drawing up of a new constitution and participation of the bourgeois parties. The constitution would be ratified by a referendum in 1984 and provide a legal framework for the organs of the military government.

Moving into the political space opened up by the mass mobilization, the traditional parties tried to assume the leadership of the movement and play the role allotted to them by the government's new political plan. Since the bourgeois Blanco and Colorado⁽³⁾ parties have a legal press, which the left does not, they were



able to focus attention on themselves.

The grass-roots supporters of these parties made clear their opposition to the so-called dialogue with the dictatorship. Various sections of the mass movement came to the same conclusion. So, the only possible way to commemorate the anniversary of the 1980 plebiscite was by a mass mobilization of all the sectors opposing the dictatorship.

DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE DICTATORSHIP

The Socialist youth and the youth of the Blanco party called for a demonstration on that day, and more than 7,000 persons marched down by Avenida 18 de Julio shouting slogans such as "Freedom yes! Dictatorship, no!" "Free the prisoners so that they can join us in our struggles!" "Unions yes, dictatorship, no!"

It was clear that the political dialogue had not changed anything. The workers still faced the same economic conditions. There were still no democratic rights. And there had been no lowering in the level of repression. So, while the bourgeois parties were put in the role of the leadership of the mass movement, they are incapable of responding to its most elementary aspirations.

None of the hopes created by the bourgeois parties with their talk of "dialogue" and a period of "transition" have been satisfied. Freedom of the press is not only denied to the left groups, it is made a mockery for the traditional parties themselves.

Political meetings are rarely authorized and those that are, have to follow a limited agenda checked beforehand with the police. Although political prisoners are being released as they complete their sentences, there are still more than 1,000

in jail and the conditions for them have not improved any. The dictatorship refuses to recognize its responsibility for the "missing persons" and the exiles have not been allowed to come back.

Therefore, a mass movement has been building up behind the demands for democratic rights and amnesty, release of the political prisoners, the reappearance of the "missing persons," return of the exiles and the lifting of the bans.

Hundreds of mothers are besieging the international organizations, the embassies, and the ministries demanding an accounting for their sons and daughters who have been imprisoned or made "missing."

They have been joined by workers, students, and other sections of the population who support the demand for an amnesty. The left parties and currents have also begun to involve themselves in this struggle.

A number of memorial masses were sponsored in 1981 and 1982 by the "Mothers of Uruguayans missing in Argentina." The SEP AJ, the Peace and Justice Service, linked to the Argentine Nobel Peace Prize winner Perez Esquivel, is developing very extensive activity.

This movement for democratic rights has not yet been able to concentrate its forces, since there is no central organization able to combine and give impetus to

⁽²⁾ Retired General Gregorio Alvarez, one of the plotters of the July 1973 coup and an active participant in the repressive campaign against the Tupamaro movement. He was appointed on August 1, 1981, by the Uruguayan military chiefs to succeed President Aparicio Mendez as head of the country. General Gregorio Alvarez was supposed to lead "the process of return to strong and stable democracy."

⁽³⁾ The Blanco ("White") and Colorado ("Red") parties are the traditional parties of the Uruguayan ruling class.

all these struggles. Nonetheless, the movement has provided a general focus for the energies of a great many sectors that are opposed to "dialogue" and whose ranks are now being swelled by those who have lost the illusions fostered by the traditional parties in a "transition" period.

There is a need for an organization that can combine all these struggles, extend them, and open up a political perspective for the mass movement. This is toward this objective that the various forces should converge, following the example given in Argentina by the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo took the lead in the struggle against the dictatorship.

THE EFFECT OF THE MALVINAS WAR

As a result of the nearness of the conflict and the influence that Argentina has traditionally had over the economic and political life of Uruguay, the Malvinas war did not fail to have an impact on the country. There were conflicts between the positions of the Uruguayan government and the movement of the workers and the poor masses, just as there were conflicts between the government and the imperialists.

The government first took the side of Argentina. Then it made contradictory statements. And finally without any public explanation, it simply declared itself neutral: "No involvement in the dispute nor any support for any of the nations in conflict," President Alvarez said in his speech. He added: "In view of the preparations for war by both countries, no action can be allowed that would mean direct or indirect cooperation in the preparations for unleashing hostilities that contravene the decisions of the UN Security Council."

In order to get the Uruguayan government to take this position at the end of the day, the imperialists needed the "strongest" possible arguments. Over May 5-6, a mission of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) arrived in Montevideo to negotiate a loan of 900 million dollars in accordance with a previous commitment.

This was the largest loan the international credit bodies have given to the dictatorship in the nine years of its existence. The other part of the agreement was the signing of a declaration of intent to carry out certain economic measures and to guarantee Uruguayan neutrality in the conflict.

In order to head off demonstrations of opposition to this line, the Uruguayan government banned all public assemblies. In these conditions, any demonstrations held would have expressed hatred of the military dictatorships, as well as condemnation of the imperialist aggression against Argentina. The two traditional bourgeois parties, as well as other sections of the opposition also took a neutral position, which was pro-imperialist in reality.

The dependence of the Uruguayan bourgeoisie on American and British

imperialism, as well as the commitments that the Blanco and Colorado parties made to the government separated them from the mass movement.

The conflict served to unmask these bourgeois forces, to expose their real position, which is standing on the side of imperialism and the government against the workers and the poor masses. They feared that the anti-imperialist and anti-dictatorial upsurge in Argentina would spread across the border into Uruguay.

Having no legal opportunity to express themselves, the trade-union and student activists, the intellectuals and artists used all sorts of stratagems to demonstrate the solidarity of an entire people with Argentina against the imperialist aggression and against the military dictatorship.

The shift of the imperialists toward a hardline position in defiance of Latin American public opinion led to conflicts with most governments in Latin America and the Uruguayan dictatorship was no exception.

James Cason, the political advisor of the U.S. embassy, was declared persona non grata by the government for "interference in the internal affairs" of the country. On May 29, he left Uruguay. The U.S. ambassador, Thomas Aranda, followed him the next day. Sandra MacCarthy, the spokesperson of the U.S. State Department announced: "Relations between Uruguay and the United States seem again to have entered a difficult period," and "the step taken by the Uruguayan government is prejudicial to the interests of both countries." This was only the tip of the iceberg. The whole pattern of relations between the United States and Uruguay and the rest of Latin America was shaken.

The crisis following the war, which threatens to bring down the Argentinian dictatorship, the most brutal one on the continent, is also widening the breach made in Uruguay by the conflict.

THE DICTATORSHIP SINKS INTO DEEPER CRISIS

The advances of the workers struggle are preventing the military dictatorship and its economic team from continuing to bring down the real-wage level by means of repression. Today the government is resorting to other means, such as increasing unemployment and combining inflation with devaluation of the currency in order to push wages down.

Every month, partial or total plant closures throw another 6,000 persons on the jobless rolls. In less than a week, four of the largest concerns (Funsu, Coca Cola, Metzen y Sena, and Ford) have respectively sent 160, 800, 400 and 300 workers to the unemployment offices.

Last May 29, the Minister of the Economy and Finance, Valentin Arismendi decreed a series of measures. The most important was a 1% reduction in the nominal wage level up to the level of three times the minimum wage and 2% above that.



On the other hand, there has been a general increase in the charges levied by public authorities and in import and value-added taxes, which will have repercussions on the general level of prices. Parallel to this, subsidies are being accorded to exporters.

These measures represent a violent attack on wages and living standards, and have aroused a seething indignation among the population. The situation has become explosive. The crisis hitting the entire economy is the deepest in the last nine years.

What is more, the repercussions of the difficulties in which the Argentine dictatorship finds itself are undermining the Uruguayan government. . . .

In the coming months the political situation in the country will face profound changes. How extensive they are will depend mainly on the capacity of the workers and people's movements to take advantage of the political space that has already been opened up by its struggles.

Defeat of the ERA

The defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in the United States on June 30, 1982, was a severe blow to the struggle for women's equality. The proposed amendment read, 'Equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged or denied by the United States or any state on account of sex.'

The ERA was first proposed to Congress in 1923 by Alice Paul of the National Women's Party. It was adopted, only fifty years later, on March 22, 1972 by the Congress and Senate of the US. But before being incorporated into the federal constitution it had to be ratified by 38 states, three-quarters of the total, within six years.

Thirty states ratified the amendment in the early stages of the campaign. But in 1974 the right moved on the offensive and founded 'Stop ERA'. Phyllis Schaffly, founder of this campaign, explained, 'Only homosexuals and lesbians will benefit from this amendment. Women will lose out, families and society as well.' A staunch defender of liberty she asked, 'what would happen to the right of those women who do not want to be equal with men?'

Thus, in 1978, the ERA had only been ratified in 35 states. Supporters asked for a postponement in the time limit, which was given until June 30, 1982. But despite demagogic promises, particularly from Democratic Party Representatives, no support was forthcoming to get the three ratifications needed.

Today there is great bitterness among the Republican and Democratic women who were active in the campaign. As Denise Fuge, president of the National Organisation of Women in New York, and one of the leading figures of the explained, 'The Republicans were scared of losing the feminine electorate but this time the Democrats will not get us like that. You've seen the photo of their Philadelphia convention, Kennedy, Mondale and Brown with their badges, 'ERA Yes'? That's just demagogy. What did they do in Florida, in Oklahoma to support the ERA? Nothing! And Carter in 1976: promises, hot air. From now on we will not march for any candidate a priori.'

However this ten year long struggle has not been fruitless. Fourteen states have already introduced this amendment into their own constitutions. Women have succeeded in getting different discriminatory practices stopped in federal rules,

on the equality of wages, the education system, professional training, sport. It remains to be seen how this will work out in practice.

For the American ruling class the ERA was an important question. Its ratification would have given women an overwhelming argument in fighting their secondclass status at every level. It would have given rise to expectations and demands at a time when the bosses and the government had declared war on the living standards and democratic rights of the workers, and want to draw them into their policy of imperialist aggression. The attacks on women are particularly harsh, as for example in the amendments to the law proposed by the 'Right to Lifers' in an attempt to completely criminalise all abortions.

One anecdote sums up the attitude. The Mormons, a religious sect particularly strong in the US, waged a hysterical campaign against the ERA using, among others, the slogan 'God created man and not woman in his image.'

'The defeat of the ERA is a fantastic victory for women, the family, America,' declared Phyllis Schaffly, president of 'Stop ERA'. But she is triumphing too soon. Although a battle is lost the war continues. The possibility remains to reintroduce the Equal Rights Amendment to Congress. But it is the fight of the American workers, united and redoubled in effort, which will in effect improve women's situation. ■

Fred Brode: A man of much courage

Fred Brode died on October 6 in Houston, Texas. He was 75 years old. A socialist and a worker all his adult life, Brode was for years a member of the Socialist Workers Party.

Born in Germany, Brode migrated to the United States in 1929. Friends recall him telling of fighting Hitler's brown shirts before leaving his native country.

Landing in New York, he found his way to the Communist League of America, formed by the supporters of Trotsky's fight against the ruinous policies of Stalin.

In 1935, Brode followed Oehler in opposing the decision of the Trotskyist organization to link up with leftward-moving forces inside the Socialist Party by becoming members of that organization. But when the Socialist Workers Party was formed in 1938 and became the American section of the Fourth International, Brode rejoined.

In 1939, he and his wife, Laura, whom he had met in the unemployed movement, hitchhiked to Houston. There he worked on the docks and for the railroads.

During the war, he advocated inside his union a sliding scale of wages for railroad workers. For this and his other political views, he was persecuted as an "enemy alien" because of his German citizenship. For a time, no job was open to him.

He managed to get hired by a chemical plant where he helped lead a union organizing drive at the time of the McCarthy anticommunist hysteria. Management replied by locking out all the workers indefinitely. In 1952, he returned to the railroads and kept the job until he retired in the early 70s.

When the rise of the civil rights movement and later the growing opposition to the war in Vietnam broke the political quiescence of the previous decade, Brode was quick to lend a hand. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, he played a central role in reestablishing a Houston branch of the SWP.

His activity earned him the hatred of right-wing vigilantes and the Klan. His house was shot up several times and in 1970 a defense committee raised funds to put up a wall of sandbags to shield it from gunfire. A united campaign eventually forced a series of indictments that curtailed the terrorists.

Brode became separated from the SWP in the course of a political dispute in the mid-1970s but continued until his death to defend revolutionary Marxism and the Fourth International, helping to circulate the press of the International.

He was a witty, stubbornly independent and courageous man. About 100 friends gathered to remember him on October 26; they included Yvonne Nicolette, a leader of the Houston Committee to End the War in Vietnam; Ben Levy, from the Democratic Socialists of America; John Sarge, from the Socialist Workers Party; Dave Rossi, personal friend; and others who had known him in his many activities on behalf of the oppressed. ■

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