

International VIEWPOINT

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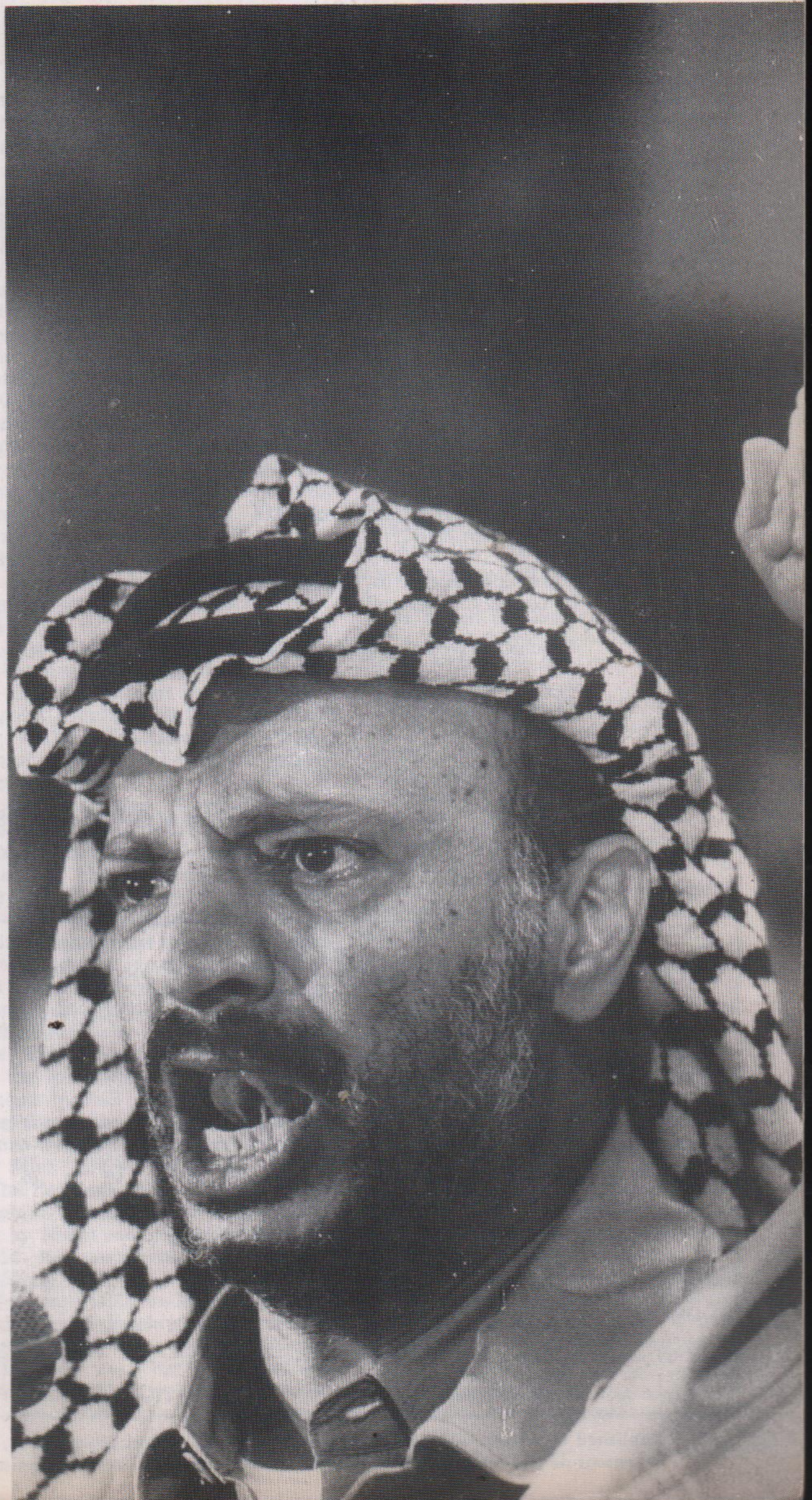
27 June 1983

Crisis of the Palestinian resistance

Europe wide
demo for
35 hour week

Dynamic of the
East European
peace
movement

US unionists
fighting back



International Viewpoint

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The Crisis in the PLO by <i>Livio Maitan</i>	3
The Outcome of the British Elections by <i>John Ross</i>	6
Western Europe Workers Demonstrate for 35-hour Week by <i>Daniel Raymond</i>	8
Fourth Internationalist Union Activist Interview by <i>Daniel Raymond</i>	9
Fourth International Appeal to European Demonstrations Document	10
Successful Salvador Solidarity Conference in Britain by <i>Celia Pugh and Pete Briggs</i>	11
First International Conference on Women and Work by <i>D. Erba and R. Carboni</i>	12
The Dynamic of Free East Europe Peace Movement by <i>Jacqueline Allio</i>	14
US Auto Workers Union Congress by <i>Elizabeth Ziers</i>	19
Growing Resistance to 'Concessions' in US Unions by <i>George Cranston</i>	21
Around the World: Turkey, Switzerland, Denmark, Syria, Italy	26
The Challenge of Chile by <i>Gerry Foley</i>	28

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Yasser Arafat

Livio MAITAN

Within the framework of the PLO, there are a whole series of organizations that have often engaged in disputes among themselves and sometimes gone through splits.

To take just the most recent period, quite sharp disputes occurred between the summit of Arab states in Fez in September 1982 and the meeting of the Palestinian National Council in Algiers in February 1983.

As I pointed out in a previous article in *International Viewpoint*, [No 30, May 16, 1983] two pro-Syrian organizations, the Saika and the Front of People's Struggle opposed Arafat's negotiations with King Hussein of Jordan. Moreover, five organizations that met in Tripoli in January expressed their opposition both to the Reagan plan and the resolution of the Fez summit.

Within El Fateh itself, spokespersons for the left, including Abu Saleh, severely criticized Arafat's diplomatic activities. They accused him, for example, of "going outside the Palestinian consensus."

It should be noted, in addition, that opposition to Arafat's line was expressed, including in El Fateh, during the siege of Beirut itself, and it was only after the murderous bombings in early August that the idea of a withdrawal became generally accepted.

CRISIS IN EL FATEH

This background makes it easier to understand the crisis that erupted in May.

Since there is no way to make a first-hand check of the reports, it is obviously hard to reconstruct exactly what the chain of events was. It is still harder to make a definite assessment of the scope

The crisis in the PLO

of the opposition to the Arafat leadership. Nonetheless, things seemed to have happened, in a general way, (1) as follows:

The conflict developed between May 9 and 12 in the Bekaa valley, near the city of Baalbek. It started when militants linked to Abu Musa, a member of the Revolutionary Council of Fateh, occupied a base. Arafat himself explicitly referred to the crisis on May 15, in a statement made in Damascus during a tour of the PLO mess halls that began on May 10 and continued until May 22.

Moreover, also on May 15, in an interview published in the Arab daily *Ash-Sharq Al-Awsat* which is published in London, the deputy commander of the Palestinian forces, Abu Jihad, likewise mentioned the events in the Bekaa valley. He strove to minimize them ("the affair is settled" and "the leadership has gotten the situation under control.")

On May 21 the Central Committee of El Fateh took a series of disciplinary steps. Eight top officers were relieved of their posts and "put at the disposal of Yasser Arafat." Sanctions were threatened against anyone who tried to get in contact with them.

At the same time, Palestinian military forces in Lebanon and Syria were reorganized. They were put under the sole command of Ahmed Affani (Abul Montasem), the deputy chief of the General Staff, whom the dissidents consider pro-Egyptian. In response to the demand for more democracy in the organization, Arafat also announced that there would be a special session of the Revolutionary Council of El Fateh.

The disciplinary measures did not solve the problems, and Abu Jihad's statements proved at least premature. At least five of the officers against whom sanctions were decreed refused to obey. Jihad Saleh minced no words, saying that the decisions of El Fateh's Central Committee represented "a hypocritical action by Arafat and his cohorts designed to split the movement." (*Le Monde*, May 25).

A few days later, on May 28, five officers in the El Fateh logistical services announced that they agreed with the "rebels," after occupying six military depots in Damascus. They claimed to have acted in response to the El Fateh leader-

ship's decision to "cut off supplies" to the bases controlled by the oppositionists.

It was in these circumstances that threats of resorting to armed force began to be thrown back and forth between the two sides. A representative of the opposition, for example, told a pro-Libyan journal, *Al Kifah Al 'Arabi*, that his men "might not respond to the first or second bullet, but they certainly will start shooting back after the third." (*Le Monde*, May 31). Syria issued a formal warning that it would not tolerate armed clashes on its territory.

On June 4 armed clashes did take place in a place ten kilometers from Baalbek. Each of the two sides accused the other of starting it. There were casualties — according to some sources four dead and seven wounded, according to others seven dead and eighteen wounded.

The armed conflict reportedly ended after a few hundred Palestinian civilians went in to separate the two sides, at the risk of their own lives.

On the same day, the PLO representative in Ryad, Rafik Al-Nacheh, announced that an agreement had been reached, following the withdrawal of the nomination of two officers who were particularly objectionable to the dissidents and whose nomination, therefore, provoked the protests that led to the challenge to the leadership. But this statement was as far as it went. As of this writing, the crisis remains open.

WHO ARE THE OPPOSITIONISTS?

It is clear that this conflict has developed essentially within Fateh, which is by far the most important of the organizations that make up the PLO. One of the main opposition spokespersons is Abu Saleh, who, as I noted, criticized Arafat sharply in December and subsequently in January. He was removed from his position as a member of the Central Committee of El Fateh. Up to 1976, it was Abu Saleh who commanded the Palestinian forces in Lebanon.

A still more prominent role apparently has been played by Colonel Abu Musa,

1. This article is based essentially on the daily press such as *Le Monde*, *Liberation*, the *International Herald Tribune*, and *Corriere della Sera*, and on the excerpts from the Arabic press that these dailies have cited.

who has issued several statements throughout the conflict. Another opposition leader is Lieutenant Colonel Abu Raad, who, like Abu Musa, is a member of the Revolutionary Council of El Fateh (this council is an intermediate body between the Central Committee and the congress).

Working with these two personalities have been other lieutenant colonels — Abu Majdi, Mahmud Issa, and Ziyad El Zpughayar. It was they who took the initiative of occupying a base at the start of the conflict. In all, six out of the seventy members of El Fateh's Revolutionary Council, have reportedly lined up with the opposition.

The logistics officers I referred to earlier on were Commander Ali Shukri, officer in charge of supply; Captain Abu Haidar, officer in charge of resupply; Captain Abu Khaled, officer in charge of transport; Captain Abu Imad, officer in charge of fuel; and Lieutenant Abu Hassan, officer in charge of maintenance.

Among the civilians involved is Musa Awad (whose pseudonym is Abu Akrama). According to him, twenty-four leaders representing about 10,000 members of El Fateh, attended an opposition meeting, which sent a memorandum to the El Fateh leadership supporting the dissidents' demands. (*Liberation*, June 3).

It goes without saying that such figures should be taken with a grain of salt. For his part, Abu Musa has claimed the dissidents have four battalions of 150 to 200 personnel each. (See his interview in *Liberation*, May 30). On the other hand, Arafat grants his adversaries no more than 100 to 150 soldiers in total. (*International Herald Tribune*, June 1).

WHAT ARE THE DISSIDENTS SAYING?

Taken together, the statements and interviews by the representatives of the dissidents make it clear enough what sort of criticisms they are making of the majority of the El Fateh leadership.

First of all, they denounce Yasser Arafat for his decision to withdraw from Beirut. This involved trusting the U.S. guarantees and relying on the Arab regimes, and thus in the last analysis on the U.S., to achieve a solution to the Palestinian problem. It was this orientation that was the basis for the negotiations with King Hussein, held under Reagan's auspices, as well as for the overtures to Egypt. Both these operations are severely criticized by the oppositionists.

They also accused Arafat of underestimating the importance of the alliance with Syria and the USSR. This underestimation, they claim, weighed heavily in the decision to abandon Beirut.

In a communique issued at Chtaura and republished by the international press on May 25, the oppositionists demanded the recall of all the exiled Palestinian forces "so that they can resume their place on the battle field." They demanded the drawing up of a military plan for reorganizing all these forces, beginn-

ing with the military arm of El Fateh, El Assifa. And they also called for a committee to run the financial affairs of El Fateh, as well as the summoning of a special general congress.

For his part, Musa Awad declared in a statement on June 1 that most of the leaders of El Fateh were opposed to the withdrawal from Beirut and some of them had even threatened to open fire on the ships. The dissident leader said that the Palestinian fighters should return to southern Lebanon, "which is their departure point for the liberation of Palestine." "Let those who continue to have illusions in the American plans leave for Tunisia. They can lie on the beaches there."

In an interview in *Liberation* of May 29, Abu Musa made, in general, the same criticisms. In particular, he denounced the approval of the Fez resolution and the idea of confederation with Jordan. ("We are against the plan for confederation with Jordan. We want an independent Palestinian state, not just to create a twenty-third Arab country but to be able to carry on the fight against the Zionist enemy.")

In a further statement to the Lebanese weekly *Ash-Shiraa* of June 11, Abu Musa opposed any idea of a split, calling for "a radical reform of El Fateh." He said that the oppositionists could win a majority and thus call a congress "to put on trial the American plans adopted by the El Fateh leadership."

The demand for democratizing the Palestinian movement seems to have gotten a particularly broad response, including outside El Fateh. The leader of the DFLP, Naef Hawatmeh, has said, for example, that "some bureaucratic institutions in the PLO have become an obstacle to the development of the revolution and they should be cleaned out." (*Le Monde*, May 25).

For his part, the PFLP leader, George Habash, has said that he is favorable to democratic reform in the structures and institutions of the PLO and in the ranks of the Palestinian forces." (*Liberation*, June 3).

Moreover, the DFLP and the PFLP as organizations have issued a joint communique in Damascus calling for democratic reform "on the basis of national unity" and saying that "speeding up the process of reform in the structures, institutions, and bodies of the PLO and in the ranks of the Palestinian forces involves ending the role played by bureaucratic and bourgeoisified military, administrative, and diplomatic categories." (*Le Monde*, June 4).

In an interview published by the Arab Emirates daily, *Al Khalid*, Arafat's right-hand man, Abu Iyad, himself went so far as to blame Arafat for "showing negligence and not sufficiently consulting the collective leadership of the movement." But at the same time, he said that anyone else would have done the same thing, given the complexity of the situation in the Arab World." It recognized at the same time that the oppositionists were

raising legitimate demands, even if their methods were unacceptable. (2)

As soon as the crisis erupted, some organizations immediately took positions favorable to the oppositionists in El Fateh. I have already mentioned certain stands taken by the PFLP and the DFLP. (3)

The PFLP-General Command, led by Jibril and which has linked itself in varying degrees to the Syrians and to the Libyans has gone the furthest. It has sent 150 soldiers to the spot where the clashes have taken place.

A similar move was made by the Fateh Revolutionary Council, that is, the Abu Nidal group, which is responsible for a series of irresponsible terrorist actions, the most recent of which was the assassination of Issam Sartawi. This group has enjoyed the good will of the Iraqi regime and is suspected of being infiltrated by agents of the Israeli Mossad. According to Arafat, Abu Nidal sent 65 soldiers to aid the "rebels." (*Liberation*, June 13). (4)

Regardless of whether the Abu Nidal group has actually tried to intervene, it does not seem that the dissidents themselves are favorable to any such moves. Abu Musa has explicitly condemned Abu Nidal, saying that his position toward him remains the same as that of the majority of El Fateh.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The Fateh leadership has not hesitated to accuse Libya and Syria — the first explicitly, the second indirectly — of having manipulated and backed the oppositionists. What is the basis for this accusation?

It is no secret to anyone that Qadhafi has tried several times to take advantage of the PLO's internal difficulties. In January, on the occasion of the meeting of the five organizations in Tripoli, he claimed that a "program of political and military action" had been drawn up in consultation with him.

As soon as the conflict broke out in the Bekaa valley on May 15, Qadhafi made a speech calling on the other movements in the PLO to line up behind the El Fateh dissidents to reorganize the resistance under a single command and get it "out of the impasse into which it has been led by its reactionary and defeatist leaders." Arafat responded in an abusive way, threatening to cut Qadhafi's tongue

2. During the session of the Palestinian Council in February, a member of El Fateh told a correspondent from *Liberation*: "A parliament for life, a president for life — we are looking more and more like the Arab regimes we condemn." (*Liberation*, May 30).

3. It should be noted that while Hawatmeh declared for maintaining the unity of El Fateh, he approved of some of the demands raised by the dissidents, including the removal of officers who were promoted despite actions that amounted to desertion at the start of the Lebanon war.

4. On May 9, the bodies of five members of the Abu Nidal group were found in the Bekaa valley. A month later, Arafat claimed that they had tried to assassinate Abu Jihad and had been executed.

out. But besides his verbal accusations, there is no indication that Qadhafi has played any real role in the crisis in El Fateh or that those opposing Arafat are linked to him.

It has been well known that the relations between Arafat and the Syrian leaders have been decidedly bad for some time. This was confirmed by the polemics that preceded the Palestinian National Council in Algiers.

Mohammed Heydar, a member of the National (Pan-Arab) High Command of the Baathist party accused Arafat of being "more interested in setting up a state than he would be president of than of carrying forward the revolution."

The Syrian politician also accused Arafat of "putting all the Arab states on the same level, making no distinction between the reactionary ones and the progressive ones." (*Le Monde*, May 5).

During the conflict, the Syrian government took steps that it claimed were designed to prevent clashes but which the Fateh leadership claimed in fact aided the dissidents.

The dissidents, as we have seen, have made statements favorable to Syria, as well as to the USSR. This was perfectly logical on their part. In his interview in *Liberation*, Abu Musa explained his attitude as follows: "Syria rejects the Reagan plan and is pointing its tanks in the direction of Israel. That's my position too." He added: "If Syria retreats, I will take the same position as I did in Sidon." (5) He concluded by saying that it was perfectly possible for his movement to remain independent from Damascus.

As for the USSR, it can hardly be said that the Kremlin bureaucracy has encouraged the dissidents. In an all-out diplomatic counteroffensive, including trips by Arafat to Bucharest and Saudi Arabia, the PLO leadership sent Abu Jihad to Moscow. It seems to have gotten what it wanted.

In a message, Andropov has spoken of "Palestinian unity under the legitimate leadership of Chairman Arafat." Thus, in a press conference held in Moscow on June 7, Abu Jihad could say: "We are profoundly convinced that the USSR will accord us support in the political field as in the other areas in which we have appealed for such support."

Moreover, as was to be expected, Saudi Arabia has come out explicitly behind Arafat. He was greeted at Jeddah by King Fahd, who said: "We have the good fortune to have with us today, Yasser Arafat, the leader of the PLO, in whom we place great hopes." (6)

THE NEED FOR A DEMOCRATIC DISCUSSION

The dissidents are in danger of finding themselves in a very difficult situation. On the international scene, they cannot expect to find very many friends. On the other hand, they are in danger of coming under very heavy pressure, in particular from Syria, which would seriously obstruct their activity.



Israeli Arabs demonstrate in support of PLO (DR)

Moreover, there remains a strong reflex for unity in El Fateh and the PLO, which in the final analysis, works against them. This reflex reflects two realities.

One of the realities is the material strength that the PLO and its major organization, El Fateh, draw from the existing economic, political, and military structures. If there were a break, a lot of things would be put in question, and the PLO apparatus would be profoundly shaken and weakened.

Secondly, the Palestinian activists today are a lot more critical toward their leaderships. They feel a need to think, discuss, and redefine their strategic options. But they fear that any splits would weaken them further in a situation that has become more difficult since the withdrawal from Beirut. This explains the calls for unity by the organizations that have taken positions on the May events and the statements of the dissidents themselves in support of the unity of El Fateh and the PLO. However, this concern for unity should not lead to accepting a pseudo-unity, that is no more than a diplomatic facade, the sort of unity that was proclaimed in Algiers in February and which has proven to be completely ephemeral.

The position in which the Palestinian resistance finds itself now, it should be repeated, is undoubtedly the most difficult it has experienced in a long time. The present crisis should confirm for everyone what in fact was clear enough before.

The resistance needs to make a balance sheet of its struggle, of the political orientations it has pursued, and of its organizational methods. This is a need that is undoubtedly felt by the great majority of the fighters.

Arafat himself, caught in a dilemma by the fact that his policy has produced no concrete results, has had to make more radical-sounding statements in recent

months. He has said, notably, that "the best means would be for the Arab leaders to adopt a fighting course and prepare for war to change the balance of forces." (*Le Monde*, May 17).

Moreover, Arafat said that he "always called on the Arabs to launch a war against Israel because that is the only way to right the political balance in the region. The Arabs missed the chance to launch such a war during the siege of Beirut." (*Liberation*, June 13).

Such statements explode the claims that Arafat himself put forward, that is that after Beirut the PLO was politically stronger. Likewise, they unintentionally prove that the arguments that some of the oppositionists advanced during the siege of Beirut were not without foundation.

But what is more important is that occasional demagogic statements — that have no relation to real practice — are not going to overcome the crisis the resistance faces. Now is the time for critical thinking and debate, which are the prerequisites for developing a new orientation and for relaunching the struggle.

For such critical thinking and discussion, a democratic framework is necessary. Thus, it is necessary to transform the structures and the methods of functioning that have prevailed up till now. On this point, as we have seen, the dissidents' demands seem to be very widely shared. It is in the interests of the Palestinian movement as a whole that these demands be accepted. ■

5. In 1976, Abu Musa led the Palestinian forces that destroyed a Syrian column trying to repress the PLO fighters.

6. According to some reports a compromise was also reached between Arafat and Qadhafi, thanks to the mediation of North Yemen. These reports have subsequently died. Nonetheless, questions are posed by Qadhafi's trips to countries that he previously attacked in violent terms (North Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and even Syria).

The outcome of the British elections

The June 9 General election in Britain resulted in an overwhelming majority of parliamentary seats for the Conservative Party.

The regional variation of the results showed the Conservative Party dominant in the South and Midlands with the Labour Party reduced to holding its base in the industrial heartlands of Northern England, Scotland and South Wales.

Mrs Thatcher has taken the results as an 'overwhelming mandate' to continue with her anti-working class, union-bashing policies. The composition of the new Cabinet indicates that the Tory 'wets', those who do not go all the way with Mrs Thatcher, will not play much of a role in the new government.

The outcome of the election has intensified the inner-party battle in the Labour Party. This fight is taking shape around the election of the new leader of the Party, which will take place at Party Conference in October. Michael Foot has already announced his resignation and the fight is on between representatives of the right and left. The best-known leader of the left, Tony Benn, was not re-elected to parliament, and thus the left's most plausible candidate cannot stand.

The new third force in British mainland politics, the alliance between the traditional Liberal Party and the new Social Democratic Party, the Alliance, came close in terms of votes to the Labour Party (see table). However, because of the British voting system they have only one tenth of the number of seats — parliamentary representatives in Britain are elected in single member constituencies with the candidate gaining the highest number of votes being elected.

This outcome undoubtedly represents a political defeat for the working class — only a minority of whom had the confidence in the Labour Party to cast their votes for it. It also represents a break from the traditional British two-party system where the decisive political forces were the Conservatives and Labour. The number of votes for the Alliance indicate that it is not a fleeting phenomenon but constitutes an important factor in the British political scene.

The article we publish below, from *Socialist Action* No 14, June 17, 1983, looks at the significance of the election results. A future article in *International Viewpoint* will assess the outcome of the election in Northern Ireland where an important victory was won with the election of Sinn Fein member Gerry Adams for West Belfast.

John ROSS

The press say that in June 1983 the Conservative Party won a massive electoral victory. The facts are rather different. Margaret Thatcher has received the lowest real proportion of the vote of any government with a secure parliamentary majority in British history. She has not gained a popular mandate for her policies.

The second decisive result of the general election is Labour's disastrous defeat. This defeat was ably assisted by the wrecking of Callaghan and Healey. But the decisive blow was struck by the SDP/Liberal Alliance. The result is that while the Tories have no mandate to push through their secret agenda, (1) the labour movement must now completely rebuild itself for struggle.

The British working class movement has been educated by its history to be profoundly anti-Tory. The 1983 election results confirm this. Thatcher showed herself incapable of increasing her vote from the debacle of Labour's campaign.

In fact Thatcher's vote actually fell by almost 700,000 between 1979 and

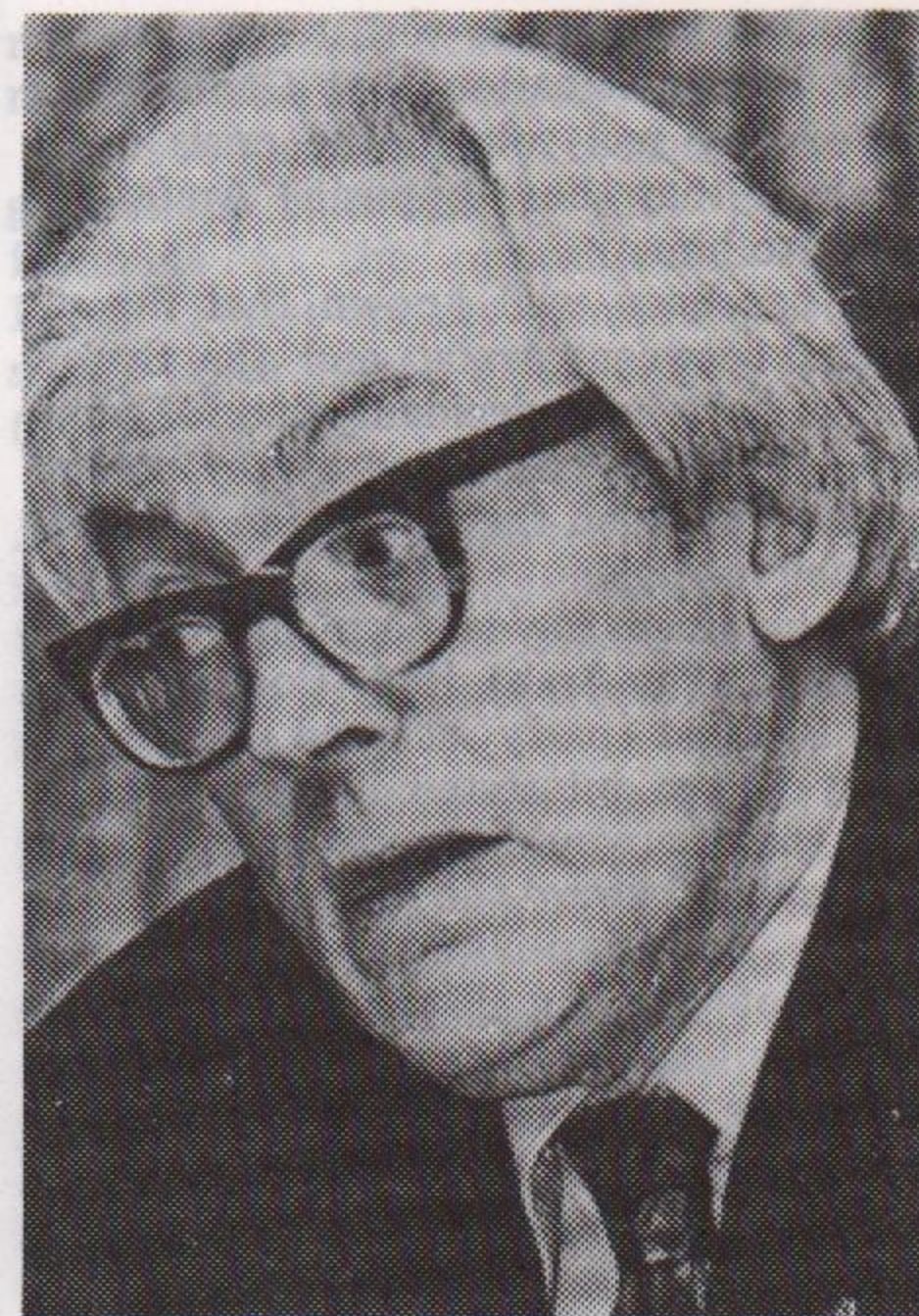
1983 — a fall from 44 per cent to 42 per cent. That 42 per cent is the lowest real proportion of the vote received by a government with a clear majority in British history.

These election results are part of a decline of the Tory vote which has now been going on for fifty years.

This is why all comparisons with the years of Tory supremacy between the wars miss the point entirely. In the 1930s Conservative governments succeeded in gaining real mass support and mass votes — 55 per cent of the vote in 1931, 53 per cent of the votes in 1935.

The great majority of those who voted for the Alliance, no matter what the goals of their leaders, do not support the demolition of the health service, do not support the attacks on democratic rights which this government is going to carry out.

A decisive majority of voters, 58 per cent, did not vote for Thatcher. That is why Ken Livingstone and Arthur Scargill are absolutely right to say that the labour movement must now turn to struggling outside Parliament to defend working class rights.



Michael Foot

The potential for such a struggle exists. Those Labour Party members who worked for the campaign were more enthusiastic, active and militant than in previous years. Those who voted for a manifesto denounced by the media as left wing did so more consciously than ever before.

THE TORY ATTACK ON THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The Tories realise the obstacles facing them in carrying through their secret agenda. They know their popularity will decline even more rapidly in power. That is why they are seeking to strengthen themselves and destroy their opponents.

They have to:

- break the finances of the Labour Party by preventing the trade unions political funds
- abolish the closed shop in order to protect scabs in the workplace
- use Tebbit's employment laws to intimidate militants, crush struggle and attempt to destroy unions, particularly those in the public sector.

The attack on the Labour Party and the unions are tied together. The trade unions created the Labour Party to defend the unions through political struggle. Weakening and debilitating the Labour Party for the employers is removing the most essential of all weapons with which the unions can defend themselves.

The very scale of the Tories' assault on basic rights is a result of Thatcher's lack of authentic mass support.

She proposes to abolish the Greater London Council because she is not sure the Tories could win an election against Labour in London. Police and other

1. During the election campaign a number of documents from inner committees of the government were leaked in the press that revealed plans were being prepared to dismantle the National Health Service, further weaken the trade unions, etc.

powers will be increased because the Tories cannot gain popular support for their policies.

Coupled with this organisational offensive against the Labour movement will be a political attack on Labour by the SDP/Liberal Alliance. Confronted with a working class movement which is profoundly anti-Tory but not educated by its leadership to be pro-socialist, then the solution for the capitalist class was obvious.

Sponsor two political parties: one to carry through the attack on working class rights and living standards, the other to pose as an 'anti-Thatcher' and 'anti-Tory' alliance which could slice into the Labour vote in a way that the Conservative Party never could.

The result is a major success for the capitalist class. It was the Alliance not the Tories who cut into the Labour vote and imposed a huge defeat. It was the Alliance and not the Tories who were able to pick up the votes driven into their hands by Callaghan and Healey.

Millions of voters reasoned that if the point was to be anti-Tory, but not in support of policies like unilateral disarmament or withdrawal from the Common Market, then why not vote for a liberal anti-Tory capitalist party.

The failure to build up a real socialist Labour Party plays into the hands of the leaders of the Liberals and the SDP, Steel, Owen, and Jenkins. The Alliance do not even pretend to replace the Tories. They aim to replace and smash the Labour Party — they say so openly.

Someone like Owen quivers with hatred every time he even mentions the Labour Party. The triple assault of the brutal club of the Tories, the stiletto in the ribs from the Alliance, and internal sabotage by the Labour right is the assault the Labour Party faced and will face in the future.

THE ALTERNATIVE TO THATCHER

There should also be no illusions that the struggle with the Alliance is only just beginning.

The more serious representatives of the capitalist class understand perfectly well that this second Thatcher government is going to become unpopular extremely rapidly. The building societies carefully stage-managed their announcement on increases in mortgage rate interest so it came out only after the election.

There will be another round of public sector spending cuts in the autumn. The time bomb of the deteriorating balance of payments, and the need for austerity to curb it, is constantly eating away at the Tory support. Within a year even Thatcher's low 42 per cent vote will have fallen drastically.

The fraud of 'landslide support' will be increasingly obvious for all to see and the Tories run the risk of being crushed in by-election after by-election.

Every by-election will be turned into a gigantic contest in which the entire press, and every other weapon, will be mobilised to ensure that the Alliance defeats Labour. Above all the Alliance wants to claim, it is the alternative to Thatcher. Grinding down and smashing the Labour Party is the goal of both capitalist parties today.

As for the politics of the Alliance it will huff and puff about 'opposition to Thatcher' and in practice put the knife into the Labour Party. The Alliance will 'regretfully' go along with the policies to try to destroy the power of the labour movement.

Those who call for votes for the Alliance — the Chapples, the Granthams — should be hounded out of their positions of leadership in the labour movement. The Labour conference must declare itself completely and totally against any coalition or pact with the Alliance.

The struggles which lie ahead under this government are going to be extremely hard. But it is not impossible to win. As the economic crisis deepens, as people find out the real intentions of the Thatcher government, anger is going to rise.

It is precisely because Thatcher does not have mass support for attacking the welfare state, or for assaulting democratic rights, or for creating unemployment, that the Labour Party can rebuild its popularity. But that means the organisations of the labour movement must defend their members' jobs, wages, the welfare state and democratic rights.

If the Labour movement does not defend its members, then millions of its members are not going to defend it.

The orientation of the Labour right, to make the Labour Party go even further back to its old openly right wing policies and structures, will leave even more space

open for the Alliance to try to destroy the Labour Party.

BUILD THE LEFT WING

The labour movement and Labour Party are only going to be defended if a massive organised left wing is built inside it. Those who believe that this is 'divisive' should look at the election campaign.

It was the fact that Healey and Callaghan were held up as honoured figures of the Labour movement and still had positions in the Labour Party apparatus that allowed them to sabotage the campaign.

Building up the Broad Lefts in the unions and building the lefts in the constituencies is absolutely central to defending and rebuilding the Labour Party and labour movement. The left wing can win the support of whole new sections of the working class.

It is out of the activists in the anti-nuclear movement, in the fight to defend the welfare state, in fighting for jobs, in the defence of democratic rights that the forces to rebuild the support of the Labour Party are going to come.

Finally, the labour movement should have one clear goal — even if it seems a little remote a few days after an election. Thatcher has won a landslide of seats with a small vote for a government. The Tory Party will rapidly become dramatically unpopular. There is no necessity for the labour movement to wait for another five years to get rid of this government.

As Thatcher's popularity falls, as it becomes clear she has no mandate for the policies she will follow, the aim must be to get this government out and to force a new general election in which the Tories are crushed. No matter how tough the first months of the struggle, that is a goal which can be achieved. ■

1983 ELECTIONS — THE FINAL SCORE

	Total vote	% of all votes	% of total electorate	Seats gained	Seats lost	Final total	
		1983	1979				
Conservate	12,991,377	43.5	43.9	31.6	46	10	397
Labour	8,437,120	28.3	36.9	20.6	4	48	209
Alliance	7,775,048	26.0	13.8	18.9	8	0	23
Scottish Nationalist Party	331,975						2
Plaid Bymru	125,309						2
Others (Ulster)							17

Estimated swing to Con since 1979 equals 3.8 per cent. Turnout 72.7 per cent. Figures based on ITN calculations. Tory overall majority equals 144. Liberal 17 seats, SDP 6 seats.

Source: *The Guardian* Saturday June 11, 1983.

Workers from across West demonstrate for the 35-hour week



Daniel RAYMOND

"Jobs for all," was the theme of the Western-Europe-wide demonstration in Stuttgart on June 4 called by the European Confederation of Trade Unions. (1)

The ECTU's aim in calling a mass demonstration was to put pressure on the summit of chiefs of state of the EEC countries, which was supposed to be held in the West German city on June 6-7.

The early elections in Great Britain led to a postponement of the summit but not of the demonstration.

About 50,000 workers from various countries, including a contingent of Turkish immigrant workers, rallied on the Schlossplatz in Stuttgart. This was the first European-wide demonstration of this scope in more than fifty years. Previously, there were some poorly defined days of action and small demonstrations organized on a Europe-wide basis, but nothing comparable to the Stuttgart mobilization.

Of course, the organizers expected 100,000 participants. But on the same day, there was a march for jobs in Britain. And in West Germany itself, an unemployed march to Bonn was underway. Moreover, vacations were beginning for German workers. And this is to say nothing of the hot weather, which prompted a lot of people to opt for a day in the country.

However, despite all these difficulties, the demonstration was clearly a success. It set in motion a dynamic of European-wide unity. However, the West German activists felt the difference between the June 4 demonstration and the massive demonstration of 150,000 people against austerity on October 30, 1982, which was also held in Stuttgart.

Among the foreign delegations, the French trade unionists from the CFDT (the Democratic French Confederation of Labor, close to the SP) and the Italian unionists were the most numerous. The CFDT contingent was about 3,500 people; the Italian, 2,200. The Belgian contingent was about 1,500.

The success of this "groundbreaking" demonstration is easy to explain. It was the result of the pressure of the onset and deepening of the world economic crisis. Restructuring plans for whole industries are being decided on the European scale, as in the case of steel and coal and others.

The strategy of the international firms forces the workers and their organizations to respond on an international level. The extent of the crisis leaves no room for thinking that jobs can be saved in one country at the expense of the others. This was understood perfectly by the workers in a factory in Le Mans, France threatened by layoffs who came to the Stuttgart demonstration. The headquarters of the company they work for is in Mannheim, a city near Stuttgart.

There are no longer any countries in a really privileged position as regards unemployment. Joblessness is growing everywhere. For all of Western Europe now, the number of unemployed stands at 16 million, and this is expected to rise to 20 million in 1985-86, if the workers cannot force the adoption of some solutions in their interests before then.

There is a way of reabsorbing unemployment immediately — cutting the workweek to 35 hours. Several trade-union organizations back this demand, such as the CFDT in France and IG Metall in West Germany. But there is not agreement on how to achieve it.

The CFDT leadership considers that it is necessary to negotiate wage cuts and to establish a different organization of work that would make it possible to "raise productivity," that is, better exploit the workers.

However, a lot of the member unions of the CFDT take another view. They are calling for a 35-hour week without any cut in pay or worsening of working conditions. Parallel to this, they call for additional hiring to make up for the work-hours lost by the shorter week.

This is also the position of the Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB — German Trade Union Federation, the main West German confederation) in Baden-Wurttemberg. It was expressed in the call this organization issued for the Stuttgart demonstration.

In the CFDT's weekly magazine, Steinkuehler, leader of the Baden-Wurttemberg branch of IG Metall drew the balance sheet of German employment policy: "It has been demonstrated that wage cuts do not lead to job-creating investments, as the bosses wanted people to believe....Our buying power was cut under the pretext that this would maintain employment, and now we are reaching record unemployment."

The speeches by the ECTU leaders at the Stuttgart rally centered generally not only around the economic evil of unemployment but on the political dangers it involves for a generation of youth without prospects, for a new upsurge of racism. "And we know where that can lead," A DGB leader warned.

Some sharp analytical points were also made. For example, the secretary of ECTU said: "An economic policy set first of all to meet the needs of profit and only secondly to meet the social needs of the population cannot guarantee jobs."

Pommerenke, the DGB regional secretary said, moreover; "There has to be an end to these tax breaks for business and to this insane policy of overarming. The money saved could pay for the jobs program drawn up by the ECTU."

A burning question was left up in the air: How are we going to win the 35-hour week and the jobs programs? It is not enough to note, as the general secretary did, that "the majority of the EEC ministers are against" the jobs program proposed by the ECTU, nor to appeal in vague terms to the solidarity of the European workers. What is needed is the establishment of a plan for coordinated action leading to a Europe-wide struggle.

This is certainly what the local unions want and what they will undoubtedly begin to discuss. The Fourth International is involved in this debate and made concrete proposals in a leaflet distributed to this demonstration.

June 4 was an excellent first step toward European-wide thinking about the question of the 35-hour week and European-wide mobilization to achieve it. But now we have to start to organize actions to win this demand. ■

1. The ECTU was formed in 1973. It encompasses 35 national confederations in 20 countries — Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Britain, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, West Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland.

The French General Confederation of Labor, the CGT, a CP-dominated confederation, does not belong to the ECTU nor does the French National Federation of Teachers (FEN). Likewise, the Spanish Workers Commissions, which are CP-dominated, do not belong. On the other hand, the Italian General Confederation of Labor (CGIL), which is CP-led, does belong to the ECTU.



'Same problems, same fight' for European workers (DR)

Interview with a Fourth Internationalist union activist

The following interview was given to Daniel Raymond for *International Viewpoint* at the June 4 Stuttgart demonstration by a member of the West German section of the Fourth International who is active in an electrical equipment plant in Stuttgart and a member of the city-wide council of IG Metall.

Question. How does your union analyze the problems of unemployment that exist now?

Answer. In the city council of delegates, everything that has to do with the 35-hour week is being discussed a lot. But it has to be recognized that workers are more sensitive to the question of the standard of living, and this concern is equally strong in the plants in the smaller towns. This is what explains the success of the first demonstration against austerity last October.

Under the impact of the crisis, the level of consciousness of the workers has risen to a certain extent. But it has to be pointed out that the distinctive policy of IG Metall in Baden-Württemberg has played an important role in this radicalization as well.

The present leader of the IG Metall organization in Baden-Württemberg, Steinhuehler, is a student of a former activist in the German Communist Party. He has a more general analysis of the capitalists' intentions, of the dangers that the bosses' policy holds, and of the kind of relationship of forces that is necessary, even though the solutions he advocates remain within the capitalist framework. This means that the union is

closer to the workers than the factory councils.

The factory councils are elected by the workforce as a whole, regardless of union membership. They were set up under co-management legislation.

It is true that a small layer in the union is beginning to pose more general questions, for example about so-called economic rationalization policy. IG Metall has set up two groups to study this problem, one for engineering workers and the other for white-collar workers.

This work by the union is not just ideological. It also has a material base. The economic crisis and unemployment are being reflected immediately in a drop in trade-union membership. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons that the union is now concerned about organizing the unemployed. In fact, that will require a change in the statutes to extend union membership to jobless workers, which has been unknown up till now.

But everywhere you find that the workers are sticking determinedly to all their demands. An indication of this is that there are groups of trade-union oppositionists in the factories, which sometimes come up against the union leadership. This happened for example with the Plakat group at the Daimler-Benz factory, which waged a dogged fight

against the corrupt factory councillors. Although they got 40% of the vote in the factory council elections, they were expelled from the union. To this day, they have not been reintegrated.

Q. Are there any means for discussion that are not totally controlled by union full-timers?

A. Yes, there are informal groups that meet regularly and discuss and exchange experiences. Every discussion is prepared. One time it might be the 35-hour week, another the arms question, and so on. Written summaries of these meetings are also drawn up.

Q. Do these meetings also lead to actions?

A. Not usually, but that has happened. For example, a rally was organized with activists from the FIAT factory in Turin. On another occasion, a pamphlet was published in defense of a Daimler-Benz factory delegate who had been fired at the end of his training period. The participants in these meetings are quite heterogeneous. They include activists in the (Maoist) KPD, the German section of the Fourth International, the Social Democratic Youth (Jusos), and independents.

Q. What do you think of the demonstration today?

A. I think there are contradictory aspects. As the first European-wide demonstration, it is positive. At the same time, the potential for mobilizing was weak, because there was no clear focus. There has not been enough explanation of the usefulness of a European-wide struggle. There was no discussion of this. The question was seen as a moral one and not an effective method of struggle.

The Duesseldorf unionists proposed postponing the demonstration to the day of the EEC summit, in order to give it a concrete focus. Moreover, it should be noted that the opposition activists did not do very much work to mobilize for this day of action.

Q. On the other hand, there have already been examples of trade-union coordination at the European level.

A. Yes, this has been more evident in some industries. This is the case in steel. In the auto industry, the question has also begun to be taken up. But this has only involved a fringe of trade unionists, even among the oppositionists.

Q. In the demonstration, there were also slogans for peace.

A. The question of peace and disarmament is being discussed very widely in the union now. The possibility of a warning strike against the deployment of the NATO missiles is being explicitly discussed in the leading circles of the union. In Stuttgart, we have seen the formation of groups of activists in the big factories (Bosch, Daimler-Benz, SEL) to discuss actions on the disarmament question. ■

Fourth International appeal to European-wide demonstration

The Fourth International was represented at the Stuttgart demonstration by its German section the Gruppe Internationale Marxisten (GIM), and comrades of the French section (the LCR) at the GIM stand. They distributed a leaflet in French and German. The following are major excerpts of this leaflet.

UNITE TO WIN THE 35-HOUR WEEK IN 1984

This demonstration...can be a first step in a common struggle of the West European workers against the austerity offensive of the bosses, which is being backed up by the Common Market governments. For the first time since 1923, German and French workers by the thousands are demonstrating shoulder to shoulder for the same objective, and it is an objective that is in the interests of the working class as a whole — a common European-wide struggle against the curse of unemployment....

It is the capitalist system that produces unemployment and economic crises. These are only inevitable if you think that capitalism is the only possible or desirable economic system.

In the long run, it is possible to avoid unemployment and crises only by breaking with the logic of profit, by orienting firmly toward a democratically planned self-managed economy that can satisfy the social needs of the population....

UNEMPLOYMENT CAN BE FOUGHT AND BEATEN

The fight against unemployment can be won if we do not let ourselves be diverted by false arguments along the lines of: "The employers' profits today are the investments and jobs of tomorrow," or "Let's divide up the total paid in wages among all."....

There is only one immediate way of fighting unemployment — the immediate and general reduction of the workweek to 35 hours, without any cut in weekly wages, without any speedup, and without any worsening of working conditions, and with new hiring to match the reduction of workhours.

All forces that identify with the workers movement must unite their efforts to achieve this result as soon as possible, to force the bosses to give in.

The parliamentary representatives of parties that claim to represent the working class should introduce motions in the European parliament as well as bills in their respective national parliaments calling for setting the legal workweek at 35 hours immediately. This would extend this acquisition to the weaker as well as the stronger sections of the working class.

TOWARD A EUROPEAN-WIDE STRIKE FOR THE 35-HOUR WEEK

The unions of the ten Common Market countries, if not all countries in capitalist Europe, should call a workers conference. It should meet in conditions of full trade-union freedom — without any discrimination against any confederation. It should bring together delegations from all the confederations and federations. It should have as many representatives of the rank and file as possible. And this conference should draw up a plan of action for winning the 35-hour week in 1984.

Such a conference, a real European workers parliament, could also consider other actions such as the following:

— A European-wide rally for the 35-hour week, which, in addition to Ger-

'All together against Kohl and capital' (DR)

man and French workers, would bring together British, Belgian, Dutch, Luxembourgian, Danish, Irish, and Greek workers.

— A European-wide strike for the 35-hour week, which in the final analysis, is the only way to strike a powerful blow against unemployment.

We can be sure that if we European workers set the example, the workers in North America, Japan, and other countries will follow. No capitalist class in any country is going to be able to take competitive advantage of the introduction of the 35-hour week in another one if the workers in all countries unite in the fight against unemployment.

Let us all fight together against this evil!

Let us all fight together to win the 35-hour week now!

The year 1984 must go down in history as the year the 35-hour week was won! ■

The Fourth International and sections in Common Market countries, LCR-France, GIM-West Germany, SL-Great Britain, LCR-Italy, LRT/RAL-Belgium, IKB-Netherlands, LCR-Luxembourg, SAP-Denmark

Stuttgart, June 4, 1983.





Successful Salvador Solidarity conference in Britain

The recent advances by the Salvadoran liberation forces and the counteroffensive launched against them reconfirms the need for consistent solidarity work. The following article from *Socialist Action* No 10, May 20, 1983 reports on a very successful labour movement solidarity conference in Britain.

Celia PUGH and Pete BRIGGS

Salvadorean peasants and workers through their clandestine radio stations received a telegram of solidarity from the highly successful labour movement conference on El Salvador in London on May 14.

Three hundred and forty delegates and 100 observers crammed into County Hall — this included 183 delegates from over 20 unions and 105 from the Labour Party.

The biggest union contingents came from the mineworkers, transport, engineers and teachers unions and the local government and civil service associations.

All rose to their feet with emotional applause after hearing Juan Martinez of the Salvadorean trade union federation, CUS, and Salvador Moncada, the UK representative of the Salvadorean liberation movement, the FDR-FMLN.

Martinez explained the history of his people. 'It is ridiculous to say that our struggle is imported. It started centuries ago when the Spanish arrived on our shores. I doubt whether the Soviet Union existed then!...Popular and armed struggle are not imported, because it is the response to a national situation that the people live through day by day...We will fight against any force that violates our right to self determination.

'That's why our workers are in the liberated zones, in the mass organisations, in the neighbourhoods and the factories.

That's Reagan's mistake. He thinks the whole thing is just a military affair, that the problem for him is merely a military stalemate. But we understand that it's political power that makes the difference. We understand that we have to build a political-military force that can combine the military offensive with an insurrectional general strike...

'We have Nicaragua a free country defending itself with arms in hand. We have an obligation to ask for your solidarity with the just cause of Sandino. The only way that Nicaragua and El Salvador will be able to thank you for your help will be in the definite triumph of our people.'

Salvador Moncada underlined these points. 'We come to you with the knowledge that the main, long lasting support for our struggle comes from working people throughout the world.

'Only one thing can reverse the aggression against us and that is the joining together with working people throughout the world. We need your help and not just in our present struggle but also when we take power, when we are subjected to the same kind of disinformation directed against the people of Nicaragua.'

These links were stressed in greetings from Nicaraguan ambassador, Franceso D'Escoto.

Other platform speakers outlined the pressing solidarity tasks — Jeanny Pearce, author of *Under the Eagle*, John Fraser MP and Terry Marsland, assistant general secretary of the Tobacco Workers Union.

A message from Michael Foot pledged backing from the Labour Party.

VICTORY

But as Terry Marsland pointed out, 'Getting resolutions through the TUC is one thing. Going out into the factories, the workplaces and the streets is another. Victory is imminent in El Salvador. We must be behind them in that struggle and when they win we must be sure we are behind them in their attempts to build a new society'.

With this she drew attention to the declaration launched from the conference to be taken deep into the labour movement. This pledges 'to publicise the situation in El Salvador to do what we can to assist Salvadorean political prisoners and refugees and to support the reconstruction of the country in areas freed from government repression'.

A special appeal for aid for the zones controlled by the FDR-FMLN was launched from the conference. The second declaration pledge is 'to campaign against any government support for the present government of El Salvador or for the United States intervention in Central America'.

An appeal was made for the labour movement to build for the September 11 demonstration on the tenth anniversary of the coup in Chile. In a speech which raised £500, chair of the conference ACTT (Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians) general secretary Alan Sapper explained 'There must be no more Chiles. We must take to the streets on September 11 to say US hands off Central America'.

Delegates outlined practical examples of solidarity like the report from the National Union of Teachers executive delegate about their work to raise funds for schools in the controlled zones. Others explained the importance of challenging British government backing for Reagan, in particular the Tory pledge to send observers to the phoney elections in December [1983].

UNITY

Juan Martinez's call for a trade union delegation to El Salvador was taken up as a demand on the TUC.

The mood of optimism, unity and defiance at the May 14 conference can now be used to deepen the roots for solidarity in the labour movement.

The contribution from Tyrone O'Sullivan, secretary of the South Wales Miners union shows the potential. He received thunderous applause when he brought greetings from the NUM. 'We had someone from El Salvador to speak to our members.

'Then the miners asked us "What the hell are you going to do on El Salvador?" We said we'd been writing letters and they said that's not good enough. You've got to mobilise the rank and file. Power lies with the rank and file, they can move mountains. I'll tell you this, we'll go from here and make sure we fight'.



First international conference on Women and Work

D. ERBA and R. CARBONI

TURIN — The first conference of women from industrialised countries on the theme of women and work was held here on April 23-25.

The aim of the conference was to look at all aspects of women's work, inside and outside the home, and women's work in relationship to their role in the family. This approach was summed up in the title 'Produce and Reproduce, Women and Work'.

The idea for the conference was put forward after some women from the Intercategoriale donne CGIL-CISL-UIL (the interprofessional women's commission of the three Italian trade-union confederations) attended a conference on women and work organised by the women's groups of the neighbourhoods and workplaces in Paris in November 1981. The conference was organised jointly by the Intercategoriale and other women's organisations in Turin (see *International Viewpoint* No 25, March 7, 1983).

The initial debates in the planning group revealed two approaches to the conference: those who saw the conference as an opportunity to compare the different experiences of women organised in trade unions and in the workplaces with a view to organising European-wide campaigns, and those who wanted to use the conference to 'oblige' sections of the women's movement that had never taken up the questions of women and work to do so.

The preparation of the conference, and the discussion that took place at it, reflected a compromise between these two positions. The preparatory papers and the workshop discussions covered a broad range of topics: Wage-earning women, Women in Self-employment or in Self-managed Work, Domestic Labour, New Technology, Social Services and services run by women, were the topics of the first day's workshop. On the second day the themes were: The family

and work, Sexual identity and self-perception, Culture, Feminism and power/Women and politics, Trade unions and feminism.

The organising committee felt the conference needed to be a working conference where issues could be debated through, rather than a mass gathering. This required a limit on the number of women attending in order that discussion material, translation facilities, etc. could be available to all. The original limit set was 500 women including 200 Italians. Many more women than this applied to come, and so for the first time that we know of there was the problem of selecting women to attend a feminist conference. Two national meetings were held in Italy to discuss this problem and each time it was left up to the different countries to discuss the criteria for a representative delegation.

The women attending were white-collar and industrial workers, trade-unionists and trade-union officials, from women's committees and groups, researchers and university teachers. The bulk of women were white-collar workers and trade-union members. There were a large number of trade-union officials from Belgium, Britain, Italy and Spain. A representative from the women's commission of the EEC also attended.

In fact more than 650 women attended from France, Spain, the Netherlands, West Germany, Sweden, the USA, Malta, Greece, Britain, Ireland, Luxemburg, Japan and Australia. There were particularly large delegations from France and Spain. Many different points of view were represented, from very different components of the women's movement, which produced three days of intense and often unequal discussion.

WOMEN AND WORK

The conference set out with the aim of analysing what has changed over the last ten years in the relationship between women and their work. There is some basic statistical information which provides a

starting point. Women represent an ever-growing percentage, indeed the often majority of, the increase in the active workforce available. This is particularly the case for the 25-35 age range, which was previously characterised by a sharp drop in the number of women working as it was the prime period for child-bearing.

This increase in the available workforce has not been matched by an increase in the jobs available, except in the service sector. There has been an increase in the number of women looking for jobs, and an increase in the number of unemployed women. For example, in the Common Market countries the number of women unemployed rose from 1.1 million in 1975 to 4.3 million in 1982.

The increase in educational opportunities for women has increased expectations in regard to jobs, but jobs taken often require a lower level of skills and qualifications than women have. The impact of the women's movement has also increased awareness among broad layers of women — leading them to see themselves as individuals, as unemployed workers, rather than anonymous housewives. This has stimulated them to fight for their own independence, including economic independence, despite the sacrifices this can entail. But how will this awareness and radicalisation survive the blows inflicted by the ruling class determination to make the working class pay for the crisis?

These were some of the elements in the present situation of women taken up by the conference.

COMMON FEATURES IN ATTACKS ON WOMEN

The contributions by women from so many different countries helped to produce a clearer understanding of the way in which these attacks are being carried out. A clear picture emerged despite the different political situations, there were common elements in all the European countries:

— there is a generalised attack on

employment, which most severely attacks the weakest part of the workforce: women,

— there is an increase in part-time work under different forms (eg the 'free Wednesdays' in France, remaining at home but on call in Germany, the spread in job sharing schemes, or as in the commercial sector in Italy, working only those days of the week or times of the year when demand is heavy),

— the spreading concept of the 'family wage' through increasing dependents allowances and unemployment benefits or favouring job opportunities for the 'heads of families'.

This latter point is illustrated by the example of Italy where at the same time as there is a severe attack on the inflation-indexing of wages and workers wages in general, government decrees have increased allowances for dependents. The trade unions and political parties have agreed to this trade-off. There are similar developments in Spain.

At the same time there are propaganda campaigns throughout Europe to 're-value' private and family life. In this context part-time work is often put forward as a means of women reconciling their role as mother/homemaker and worker.

Again, on a European-wide level there are cuts in public spending, with obvious consequences on jobs in the service sector — where many women are employed, and on the quality of life for women. This puts pressure on women to return to the family and drop out of the active work force and social involvement.

Another common feature came out in looking at how the trade-union leaderships respond to the effect of the crisis. They base their perspectives on what is 'possible', what is compatible with the capitalist system. Thus, it is extremely difficult to get union bodies to take up women's real needs.

This was the common framework to the discussion at the conference, despite the different experiences and different ways of expression that continually arose during the three days. The basic premise of each discussion, whether on personal identity or new technology, was the economic crisis although there were many divergent approaches.

WHAT SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS?

The existence of the economic crisis was the basis for the proposals by some participants, particularly some trade-union officials, to accept the crisis as a given fact, which cannot be changed by the present relationship of class forces, and try to use the actual opportunities that the crisis itself provides.

The same basic facts were used to argue for a different approach. That now is the time to rebuild the women's movement as an active movement, starting with the groupings of women that already exist, to try and broaden the struggle to involve new layers of women.

Accusations that this approach was 'out of date' and not oriented towards

developing 'new theories' on which the women's movement should base its discussions on productive labour and domestic labour, the division of labour within the family and the role of childbearing, came mainly from Italian intellectuals and trade-union officials, who probably feel the most threatened by the dynamic that a strong independent active women's movement would create.

This approach was expressed in the summary report from the workshop on 'Sexual discrimination at work and in politics':

'The objective difficulties arising from the international economic situation should not lead us into the trap of accepting that sacrifices necessarily follow from the crisis, and that we must only aim for what is possible and compatible.

'Our starting point must be our real needs, daring to go beyond what is 'possible', the limits of so-called 'common sense'.

'We have identified our field of action as the defence of the rights we have won — above all the right to a job. Without this right all further discussion on different possibilities, new areas of struggle, run the risk of making us lose out or even integrating us further into the system.

'For these reasons we have identified our main objective as a generalised reduction in working hours, without loss of pay, to be linked to forms of workers control to abolish overtime.'

Not every discussion at the conference came to such a clear conclusion. However, during the three days there was a growing awareness of the need to defend what we have won, not to lose the elements of our identity that we have put together with such difficulty over the last ten years, not to look for shortcuts. This common feeling was present in all the conclusions presented to conference by the various discussion groups, although expressed in many different ways.

ACTION PROPOSALS

The conference was not just an opportunity to talk, it also came up with many proposals for future activity. These include:

— setting up an international information network on new technology, based on an existing data bank created by British women, and to organise an annual meeting in a European country, to be chosen on a rotational basis

— to set up a co-ordinating committee of women's co-operatives to compile detailed information about them

— to set up a documentation centre on women and work in Turin.

WOMEN AGAINST THE CRISIS — A EUROPEAN CAMPAIGNING SLOGAN

For us, the most significant proposal to come out of the conference was to launch an international campaign on the slogan 'Women against the Crisis'.

This proposal came from several

Belgian women who have been involved in the Belgian women's campaign 'Femmes contre la crise' over the last three years. Joint activity between women's groups and the union rank and file laid the basis for the campaign which has now won the participation of the major unions and progressive political parties.

The main themes of the campaign agreed at Turin are:

— defence of women's right to work and economic independence

— opposition to governmental and employers policies which discriminate against or particularly affect women

— opposition to part-time work, for a shorter working week with no loss of pay.

The approach to organising the campaign put forward by the discussion group on Sexual Discrimination at Work and in Politics was generally agreed:

— The content of the programme should be elaborated for each national situation, and must also take into account the position of immigrant women, so that it becomes a real European-wide point of reference.

— One of the fundamental aims must be to bring together the greatest number of women, not simply working women but also housewives, unemployed, young women, those who still feel themselves as isolated individuals as well as organised women's groups.

— The initiative must be taken by the women's movement, although organisational methods cannot be defined in advance and must be adapted to different situations. This campaign is an occasion for the self-organisation of women.

— Women trade unionists and members of political parties must be prepared to fight for the programme of the campaign in their organisations, not vice versa.

The proposed activities for this campaign were to hold an international Tribunal in Belgium in March 1984 on all forms of sexual discrimination women confront at work, and later a European-wide women's demonstration.

A secretariat for this campaign has been established in Brussels as an international reference point. A 'Women against the Crisis' organising committee has already been formed in Turin involving women who were at the conference.

The final documentation and proposals of the conference will be sent to all those who participated giving the contacts for the future activities. A book on the conference will also be published.

Despite all the differences of approach and opinion the conference marked a step forward in translating what women feel today into forms of struggle and organisation. After initial hesitation, the participants expressed their desire to organise to involve other women, to undertake broadly based actions, to broaden their field of activity. Now we have to move ahead in this perspective. ■

Dynamic of the free peace movement in East Europe

On Saturday, May 7, on the eve of the Second Nuclear Disarmament Conference in West Berlin, a demonstration of 10,000 persons took place in Budapest, Hungary, called by the National Peace Council and the Young Communist League.

What was most significant about this march was that at the end of it, there were about 500 young people from the Groups for Peace and Dialogue, which are independent of the official peace movement. They marched behind banners saying: "All missiles out of Europe!"

This is the first time in Hungary that independent peace movements have come into the streets in an organized way to demand openly immediate disarmament measures both from Moscow and Washington.

As small as this action by the independent peace groups might seem in comparison with the huge demonstrations that have taken place recently in the West, it is a portentous indication of the independent peace movement in the East and the growing pressure that it represents for the ruling bureaucracy.

Jacqueline ALLIO

It was in East Germany that independent peace groups first began to develop in Eastern Europe. Initially, they centered around opposing the militarization of daily life and demanding the right to alternative service for conscripts. They thus linked up with the longstanding movement of conscientious objectors, which was supported by the Protestant churches. (1)

The East German conscientious objectors have always held that the form of alternative service established in 1964 in response to pressure from young Christians who refused to bear arms — the *Bausoldaten* (Building Soldiers) — was not a real alternative to militarism. This is because the conscripts assigned to construction work are obliged to wear the army uniform and are subject to the same military discipline as regular soldiers.

The conscientious objectors movement — which is estimated to have involved about 500 youth a year in the 1960s and 1970s — reached a new stage in 1981 with the launching of a petition campaign for real alternative civilian service. Thousands of youths signed this petition. By no means all of them — far from it — were committed Christians.

In 1982, the movement spread to reservists, who are obliged to undergo training periods of six to twelve weeks up to the age of fifty. While they did not ask to be assigned to the *Bausoldaten* when they were first taken into the army, a number of these reservists decided to refuse to go to their training courses, at the risk of being sentenced to six to eight months in prison.

In October 1982, several hundred women signed a letter addressed to the chief of state, Erich Honecker, in which they protested against the introduction of a new law permitting the government to call up women from eighteen to fifty

for active defense service in the event of an "emergency situation."

AGAINST THE MILITARIZATION OF SOCIETY

The only response the bureaucrats were able to make to this groundswell of peace sentiment in growing sections of the East German population was to tighten the vise of militarization.

In their first year of school, East German six-year-olds start being visited in their classrooms by soldiers of the National People's Army. These military men are charged with indoctrinating the children about the army's role as the defender of peace and the fatherland.

The lives of East German teenagers are marked by the militarist style of the party youth organizations in which most of them are enrolled.

In 1978, the government introduced compulsory military defense courses — both theoretical and practical — in the last two years of the mass education program (that is, for youths of fourteen to sixteen).

But not content with that, the regime has recently extended the period of military training that youths are obliged to go through after completing their 18 months of active service. It has been increased from 21 to 24 months.

It is in this context of all out militarization of education and civilian life that the independent peace movement has to be seen.

The rejection of military service by thousands of youths is only one facet of the anxiety felt by large sections of the East German population. And this affects not only youth but also adults, as the reactions of women and reservists show.

The official declarations that the only reason for a strong army is to better defend the peace, in accordance with the

spirit of the East German constitution, are unconvincing to those who are really concerned about peace.

Actions such as "Peace Weeks," which have been held repeatedly over the last three years under the auspices of the Protestant church, have shown how extensive the potential is for mobilizing against the threat of war, and of nuclear war in particular.

These feelings were crystallized in the Berlin Appeal, which was launched in January 1982 in East Germany by Robert Havemann and the Protestant minister Rainer Eppelmann. It called for the removal of nuclear arms from East and West Germany as the first step toward a nuclear-free Europe, as well as for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the two Germanies. (There are 400,000 such troops in East Germany).

Since the launching of the Berlin Appeal, all the "peace forums," starting with the one in Dresden, which assembled 5,000 youth in February 1982, have generally taken up these demands, and have linked the fight for demilitarizing civilian life and for civilian alternative service to mobilizing for nuclear disarmament.

In June 1982, three thousand people, mainly youth, took part in the East Berlin Peace Forum, which was built both by word of mouth and by the distribution of leaflets bearing the obligatory warning "strictly reserved for internal church use."

Inside the Church of the Redemption, skits and poetry readings alternated with religious services. At the same time, outside the church there was a "speaker's corner" that made it possible for everyone who wanted to express his or her opinion freely in an environment where the walls and trees were covered with hand-written statements, poems and pictures expressing the participants' hopes for peace.

It should be noted that most of the speakers hailed the Soviet Union's disarmament proposals, thereby squelching any attempt to give the affair an anti-Communist tone. This bore out the statements made shortly before by participants in the movement in answer to questions from a reporter for the Swedish magazine *ETC*: (2)

"Reagan's policy threatens the entire world....Both East and West Germany should demilitarize. Our goal is a neutral, disarmed, and reunited Germany.

"We can get Western TV. Their propaganda is as idiotic as ours. We are fighting for peace. The bourgeois press in the West wants to use us for their propaganda. What they say is false. No one is talking about introducing a capitalist system in East German."

The East German peace activists also said:

"We have to reform socialism from within. We have to have open debate.

1. "Le mouvement pacifiste est-allemande by Anna Libera, *Inprecor*, No 129, June 28, 1982.

2. "Interview with East German Peace Activists," *International Viewpoint*, No 7, May 24, 1982.

Work for disarmament is a step in the right direction."

One cannot fail to be struck by the similarity between these statements and those made by many Polish workers in Solidarnosc when they were questioned about the aims of their struggle. Moreover, one of the participants in the June 1982 East Berlin forum remarked:

"You can hardly believe that...such an action could take place in East Berlin... What struck anyone attending it was the open display of differences. It was something more than just a demonstration for peaceful disengagement. It was political, I would even go further and say that it was the expression of a 'legal' opposition.

"Today's peace movement independent of the state is not just a movement that advances ideas on peace and other questions that do not correspond to the policies of the Unified Socialist Party (SED, the Communist Party). It is a movement that is objectively attacking the roots of the system itself. What is being challenged is the dominant role of the SED, of the totalitarian regime. (3)

Even though not all the participants are yet conscious of this, there are many indications that the movement is taking on more and more of an anti-bureaucratic dynamic.

THE CONTRADICTIONARY ROLE OF THE CHURCHES

A foretaste of this was given by the February 1982 Dresden forum. The Protestant church came out with a position opposing signing the Berlin Appeal because "it raises a series of questions that have no place in discussions about the responsibility of Christians with respect to peace." This statement was very badly received by the participants. They booed the church official who was given the job of explaining that "this will not help discussion of how to safeguard peace." (4)

The church hierarchy has also recently made a concession to the regime, calling on youth to stop wearing the peace movement emblem. This move has also been very unpopular and tended to radicalize those who have been more conciliatory.

The Protestant churches played a decisive role in promoting the conscientious objectors' movement, while at the same time they managed to maintain astonishingly open relations with the authorities throughout the 1980s.

In fact, the churches enjoyed an exceptional independent status in the country. They are the only institution that is not under the control of the party. However, it is obvious that the dimensions assumed recently by the movement for civilian service and for denuclearization of the two Germanies has complicated things. Now this church, which Pastor Eppelmann himself, accuses of having a "disastrously timid mentality" in its relations with the state, is in danger of being totally swamped by a mobilization that far exceeds what it wanted.

From the letter of the Hungarian peace activists

With respect to the way that weapons will lose their power to terrify and how the differences between East and West can be resolved through dialogue: Such dialogue cannot be limited to diplomatic exchanges. It has to take place in the streets, in the homes of ordinary people, and then it has to be reflected back through the press and TV.

In both the East and West, it would be better if discussions were not limited to exchanges of opinions around a negotiating table....Our group has drawn up a list of proposals on ways for overcoming distrust and "humanizing" international relations. We have proposed exchanges between Russians and Americans during summer vacations. We also propose that TV debates be held between political leaders of the two sides, during which viewers in both the East and West could phone in and ask questions....

We propose a ban on the sale of military toys, and we would like to work on a peace education program in the schools.

In suggesting a cut in military expenditures, we would like to remind our government that this money could be better used for peaceful purposes. We have proposed a program for halting the spread of malaria, which afflicts a great number of people, as well as a project for cleaning up the environment and the air. This would cost less money than producing new weapons.

These are only examples to indicate our general approach, which if it were followed by the Soviet people, could help overcome mistrust. These humanitarian proposals may be a bit naive but they nonetheless have real potential. They can nip nuclear armament in the bud, in the human mind. They can make weapons unnecessary and pointless.

There is not much time. New missiles are banging at Europe's door. There is no place for new missiles, either in Europe or anywhere else.

The East German Protestant church could, very quickly, find itself in a position as contradictory as that of the Catholic church in Poland, which is constantly torn between its desire to keep its position as the government's main interlocutor and the need to adopt more radical positions so as not to become discredited in the eyes of the masses.

As for the bureaucracy, it also finds itself caught in a difficult position. The claims by the East German Peace Council that "socialism equals peace" jibe less and less with the government's strident militarism. At the same time, they make it more and more difficult to justify a course of open repression against the independent peace movement.

THE "WAR OF THE BADGES"

The demonstration of this was the "war of the badges." At first the authorities promised the church that they would not repress those who wore the cloth badge of the peace movement (which is a representation of the statue given to the UN by the Soviet Union of a blacksmith beating a sword into a plowshare). But alarmed by the extent of the Dresden forum in particular, the bureaucrats suddenly changed their tune.

The badge in question abruptly became a "subversive symbol," and anyone wearing it became liable to prison sentences under Article 106 of the Penal Code. The decree requiring authorization for all printed material was even hastily revised to cover "cloth emblems." Since then, youth who persisted in wearing the emblem have been subject to all sorts of harassment, up to expulsion from their schools.

Some young people have even had their identity papers taken away and re-

placed by a "PM 12" card. This is the document given to "suspicious elements" who have been in prison and are forbidden to travel abroad.

But this did not keep many youth who took part in an assembly in Magdeburg a few months after the Dresden forum from wearing plain white badges, which are reminiscent of the electric resistors Polish workers wore in their button holes after the Solidarnosc badge was banned.

The authorities took the popularity of the independent peace movement's symbol seriously enough to try to neutralize it by promoting a counter-emblem, in this case Picasso's dove surrounded by the word "peace." The SED youth, the FDJ, wore it last year in official rallies, sometimes even on headbands in the style of Western peace demonstrators.

The battle does not involve just emblems. It has become a war of slogans. "Beat your swords into plowshares" has been twisted into "Swords and plowshares!" and the "Peace without arms" of the independent peace movement has been turned around to "Peace against the arms of NATO."

The authorities' need to do everything possible to coopt the independent peace movements is related to the fact that it is very difficult for them to get people to believe that they are agents of the enemy. The independent peace movement's positions with regard to NATO's policy are in fact quite clear, in particular as regards its opposition to the stationing of Cruise and Pershing 2 missiles.

3. "Friedenswerkstatt in Ostberlin, Erlebnisse eines DDR-Teilnehmers," *Osteuropa-Info*, No 3, 1982, p. 48.

4. "The Sword and the Plowshare Autonomous Peace Initiatives in East Germany," John Sandford, END pamphlet, 1983.

Thus, the independent peace movement's orientation is not making the job of the authorities any easier. And this is all the more true because the positions described go hand in hand with a conviction on the part of the majority of those involved that the independent peace movement should not cut itself off from the official peace movements but rather try to put pressure on them by appealing to all those who identify with their stated aims.

This attitude is shown clearly in the messages sent by the various East German groups invited to the West Berlin peace conference in May 1983 and which could not come because their representatives were refused visas. (see boxes)

The organizers of this conference had made support for bilateral disarmament a condition for taking part in the organizing committee. In contrast to this, all the messages from the East European independent peace groups stressed the need for appealing to all components of the movement, including the official structures in the East European countries.

In fact, the Hungarian Groups for Dialogue and Peace went even further. They severely criticized the conception of the Liaison Committee for the Berlin Conference, accusing it of failing to understand the sort of influence the official structures have over a large part of the population in the East European countries.

It is estimated that the Groups for Dialogue and Peace have about 20,000 active sympathizers today. They are undoubtedly the major current in the Hungarian peace movement, which is made up of a myriad of autonomous groups.

This movement began in September 1981, when a group of students at the art school of the University of Budapest proposed building an independent peace demonstration opposing both Soviet and American nuclear weapons. They applied for a permit to demonstrate but were refused. Then the League of Young Communists (KISZ — Kommunista Ifjusagi Szövetseg) called a rally for December 12, just a few days before the time scheduled for the independent peace demonstration — December 17.

When the idea of an independent peace demonstration was raised again in the spring of 1982, the KISZ intervened once more transforming what was supposed to be an independent demonstration on May 9 into an official parade. Nonetheless, some activists from the independent groups participated with placards saying "Abolish all the weapons."

One of the most developed currents in the initial period grouped around the "Antinuclear Campaign," which involved primarily very young people (14 and over) in the high schools. Their central slogan is "Melt down all the weapons!" Their activity consists of distributing leaflets, putting up posters, and wearing badges.

Antinuclear campaign activists are often seen in the parks talking to passers-by and handing them flowers, trying to



win their support for the peace movement's point of view.

Another group, made up of young artists, has taken the name "Indigo." It devotes itself to producing artistic materials for the peace campaign.

In the universities, where the mobilization was more limited in the beginning, the movement has organized around the Groups for Dialogue and Peace, whose actions and views have been publicized in the West through the interviews of its spokesman, Ferenc Koeszegi. These groups exist today in several towns outside Budapest.

Finally, it should be stressed that this movement immediately struck a chord with the "Eucharistic Groups" led by the priest Gyorgy Bulanyi, which have been campaigning for many years for non-violence and the right to conscientious objection.

Bulanyi's movement has, moreover, come into head-on conflict several times with the Catholic hierarchy. Anxious to remain on good terms with the regime, the princes of the church have condemned the movement severely. The bishops have even declared themselves ready "to resolutely defend the social order of the Hungarian People's Republic against any attempt, from whatever quarter, to destabilize the state." (5)

However, when the Hungarian primate removed two young members of a religious order from their posts for preaching conscientious objection, these decisions provoked an outcry. This case revealed the gulf that exists between the radicalism of the believers for peace and the deep-seated conservatism of the Hungarian Catholic hierarchy.

Bulanyi's supporters have formed a "Committee for Human Dignity," which in a statement issued in January 1982 expressed its support for the peace movements in the West, as well as its opposition to the presence of nuclear weapons, both bombs and missiles, in either East or West Europe.

All these groups and currents agree on the need for maintaining strict indepen-

dence from the state, while cooperating wherever possible with the official peace movement. They criticize the bureaucratic character of the official peace movement but say that they have many of the same goals.

THE PEACE ACTIVISTS AND THE DISSIDENTS

What is more of a problem is the attitude of many young activists in the independent movement toward the dissidents, whom Koeszegi has described as "the so-called opposition" and "a force that could try to manipulate the movement" in the same way as the Peace Council or the state. "The attempts of opposition elements to assume a dominant place in the developing movement could become a great danger to the movement itself." (6)

Of course, the traditional opposition has helped set the stage for this kind of reaction, inasmuch as a lot of dissidents did not make any bones about their skepticism regarding the objectives of the developing peace groups, and did not begin to take an interest in them until it became clear that they had a real audience.

Nonetheless, the distrust, not to say hostility, of the peace groups toward the dissidents can only have negative results for the movement itself if it is persisted in, because it is based on a wrong political estimate of the situation in the countries under bureaucratic rule. This attitude arises from the illusion that it is possible to find a "third way," a "non-political" way, that would make it feasible both for the movement to maintain its independence and get official acceptance.

This notion often goes hand in hand with a certain opportunism toward the bureaucracy, as can be seen from some passages quoted from the letter of the Groups for Dialogue and Peace. The often proclaimed desire to be a legal movement is at the root of this refusal to become implicated with declared opponents of the regime: "People are worried about actions that would tend to give any basis for the idea that the new peace activists are dissidents." (7)

This illusion that there is a middle way for avoiding confrontation with the ruling bureaucratic minority is reflected also in the refusal of many peace groups to set up any real coordinating body for the movement. This was expressed quite clearly at the meeting of the various groups in July 1982, which was attended by several members of the official peace organization and of the government as well as by some Hungarian dissidents.

"The only guarantee that we can continue to exist is the diversity that characterizes us," (8) a participant in this meet-

5. "Katholische Friedensgruppe in Ungarn," *Osteuropa-Info*, No 3, 1982, p. 74.

6. "The New Hungarian Peace Movement," Ferenc Koeszegi and E. P. Thompson, END pamphlet, 1982.

7. *Alternative* (published in Paris), No 19, November-December 1982, p. 27.

8. "The New Hungarian Peace Movement," *op cit.*, p. 23.

ing said, rejecting any perspective of a common platform.

Diversity is in fact one of the signs of the vitality of this movement. But the same is not necessarily true of the lack of coordination, because this involves obvious limitations on its activity. This could be seen when the peace march organized by the Soviets went through Budapest in August 1982.

In their desire to respect diverse points of view and their fear of going too far, the members of the various peace groups decided to ignore this demonstration. The chance would have been missed if it had not been for two of the best known and most courageous of the Hungarian dissidents — Miklos Harszti and Lazlo Rajk — who took advantage of this opportunity to distribute leaflets to the demonstrators and spectators criticizing the Hungarian government's military policy and protesting the presence of Soviet troops and missiles on Hungarian soil. In this respect, Koeszegi says that no one knows for sure whether nuclear weapons are stationed in Hungary.

Nonetheless, as the organized participation of the Groups for Dialogue and Peace in the official demonstration May 7 in Budapest shows, the dynamic of mobilization itself can only help the independent peace movement overcome its political and organizational limitations.

So far, the Hungarian authorities have not moved directly against the independent groups. To the contrary, their policy has been to "ride the wave." The Peace Council has taken over the various proposals made by the independent groups — such as starting up a publication, opening a peace discussion club, etc. — and denatured them. This does not mean, contrary to the hopes of some young activists, that the authorities are

prepared to support or even to tolerate their activity forever.

"At most, there has been a certain tolerance on the part of the police," Miklos Haraszti has said, who is quite experienced in such things. "But we have to expect measures discriminating against people in their workplaces, in the schools, and in the enterprises." (9)

One thing that would certainly help the young activists in the peace movement to come to an understanding of the political stakes involved in the struggle they have undertaken is establishing direct links with independent peace movements in both the East and West. In fact, many participants have expressed a desire for this.

From this standpoint, the formation of the Group for Peace in Moscow, however modest its size, is a considerable encouragement for the peace movements in other East European countries.

On June 4, 1982, a group of eleven persons invited some foreign correspondents to a meeting to give them an appeal addressed to the governments of the USSR and the US and to public opinion in those countries. They sent it at the same time to the Soviet press and to the American authorities.

The members of this group — mainly scientists who have not participated before in oppositionist political activities — thought that the nuclear arms race between the US and the Soviet Union represented the biggest threat to peace. They made it clear that they did not consider themselves dissidents, that they agreed with the Soviet government's nuclear disarmament policy, and that they wanted to keep their activities within a strictly legal framework.

The proposals of this group concerned, first and foremost, the establishment of

links between ordinary citizens both in the USSR and internationally. As they saw it, in the face of the threat of nuclear war, the effectiveness of dialogue at the top alone was more than dubious. Their concern was to see that the views of opponents of war were disseminated so that the great majority of people against war could make their feelings known and therefore influence the thinking and decisions of the ruling minorities and the course of East-West relations.

This approach could hardly have been more moderate, but this did not keep the bureaucracy from lashing back immediately, although it has not yet resorted to all-out repression or mass arrests.

As soon as the appeal was made public, the members of the group and all those who dared to sign the statement were subjected to reprisals, which ran the gamut from "chats," in which they were told to withdraw their signatures, to two weeks in jail and internments in psychiatric hospitals.

Some signers had their phones cut off, others were threatened that they would be fired from their jobs because of "lateness," others were put under house arrest for a month, and there were also certain warnings, in the form of near "accidents." The Soviet press started up a chorus that the Group for Peace were linked to the CIA and so forth.

After they decided to organize a demonstration for June 27, 1982, under the slogans "No more Hiroshimas" and "Peace through confidence and not through fear," several members of the group were arrested, charged with "hooliganism," and sent to a prison for alcoholics on the outskirts of Moscow.

Facing a flood of protest letters from the West, the Soviet bureaucrats, who are anxious to remain on good terms with the independent Western peace movements, responded in a telegram to END (European Nuclear Disarmament Campaign) that "not a single person representing the peace movement in the Soviet Union has been subjected to repression and still less has any such person been arrested."

As for the two persons from "the group of eleven portrayed as an independent peace movement by the Western press," they "beat up a woman in a bus and were sentenced by a district people's court to two weeks in jail for hooliganism." (10)

WHY THE BUREAUCRATS FEAR THE INDEPENDENT PEACE MOVEMENTS

It should be pointed out that the bureaucrats' fear of the impact that the activity of such a group could have is fully justified. Four months after launching their appeal, the eleven had already gathered the signatures of 900 people supporting their action. Signatures have continued to pour in since then, coming mainly from scientific and intellectual circles but also from sections of the stu-

9. *Osteuropa-Info*, No 3, 1982, p. 83.

10. "Moscow Independent Peace Group," END pamphlet, London, 1982, p. 24.

From the letter of the Soviet peace activists

In recent months, we have been very disturbed by the growing differences between the peace movements in the East and West. It is essential to avoid any division of our forces. The cold war must not penetrate into our sphere of work!...All the peace organizations should follow a more tolerant, more realistic, more cooperative, noninterventionist course in their relations with each other.

We ask you in particular to consider the following questions. First: What image of the Warsaw Pact countries are you helping to build?

In some peace journals, this image has only three facets — a strong army in a militarized society, frequent violations of human rights, and some small generally oppressed groups. Can this help build the confidence needed to resist cold-war rhetoric?

In the Appeal for a Nuclear-Free Europe, it is said that "we cannot pay any attention to the bans and limitations imposed by any national state." Isn't it out of ideological hostility that you stress so strongly not your independence from Moscow, which is correct, but your profound dislike for these states?

The second question is the following: If we take up the work of building an all-Europe peace movement, can this be done without the Peace Councils and Peace Committees [the official structures] in the East European countries?

Have you really tried to cooperate with them? Is it a good strategy to pose conditions and refuse to begin discussions until they are met? We think that it is possible to reach the peoples of the Eastern European countries through these bodies.

Do you intend to wait until our countries are transformed into Western-type democracies before you establish contacts in Eastern Europe? What if the nuclear holocaust comes before that?

dent population and the working class. New Groups for Peace have been formed in Odessa, Novosibirsk, and Leningrad. A youth group calling itself "Independent Initiative" has also been formed, which has several hundred members.

The latest reports are that the bureaucracy, which persistently refused to give exit visas to several members of the group of eleven that applied for them years ago, suddenly decided to grant a number of such requests. Notably, it reportedly gave an exit visa to Sergei Batovrin, a young painter and spokesperson of the group. This is another way of trying to get rid of the "protesters" whose example the Kremlin fears. It is an all the more effective one because the "protesters" are not interested primarily in addressing foreign public opinion but public opinion and the government in their own country.

To be sure, so far the Soviet workers seem more concerned about problems of supply and the standard of living than about the SS-20s. But it is nonetheless true that a whole section of the population that remains terrified by the experience of the second world war has shown itself quite sensitive to the aims of the fight for peace.

Even though the Peace Councils are totally bureaucratized structures whose sole purpose is to back up the government's policy, the massive character of peace demonstrations in the USSR reflects something more than compulsory participation by the workers. It is also the expression of a real concern on the part of a section of them. This was demonstrated by the way that they joined spontaneously in the demonstration — in particular the older generation — in some cities when they saw the banners of the peace march organized by the Scandinavian feminists, which went from Vyborg in Denmark to Minsk last summer.

The Soviet leaders, thus, have every reason to fear the activities of a group that is campaigning not only against the arms race but also explicitly condemns the diversion to military purposes of vast resources that could be used to meet the needs of the masses, a group that supports an idea that is highly subversive in the countries under bureaucratic rule — "the right to work for peace."

THE NEED FOR UNITY BETWEEN THE PEACE MOVEMENT IN THE EAST AND THE WEST

The Soviet bureaucrats, of course, did everything possible to keep the participants on the Vyborg-Minsk march from making contact with the eleven members of the Group for Peace in Moscow. They managed to manipulate this action sufficiently to present it as an act of unconditional support for their international policy.

This episode indicates the importance of establishing direct links between the independent movements in the West and the East. The reason for this is not to avoid contact with the official peace movements in the East European coun-

tries, as was proposed by some people at the West Berlin conference in May in extremely sectarian and sometimes explicitly anti-Communist speeches. Rather such links are important to keep the bureaucrats from isolating and crushing groups that demonstrate a desire to organize independently of the state. This would also make it possible to dispel the suspicion that often exists in the minds of the participants in the independent movements in the East about the Western peace movements, since the official press in those countries portrays them as potential allies of the bureaucratic leaderships.

"The fate of the independent peace movement depends in large part on what our comrades in the Western peace movements do," Sergei Batovrin has said in the name of the Soviet group. Inasmuch as the governments of the bureaucratized workers states, in particular the Kremlin, are in fact obliged to take account of them, the attitude that the independent peace movements in the West take toward supporting peace activists subjected to repression in the East will certainly have a real importance for the survival and struggle of these autonomous groups.

Moreover, the struggle of these groups is not limited to the question of disarmament. As the arrests in the USSR and the repressive measures resorted to in East Germany have once again shown any activity that involves asserting a right to any freedom immediately leads to confrontation with the ruling minority and immediately raises the question of fighting for democratic rights as a whole. And this struggle also runs up against the presence of Soviet troops stationed in many East European countries, which are used, directly or indirectly, as an instrument of repression against the mass movement.

In getting involved in the peace movement, the working people in the East European countries come into direct collision with the policy of the bureaucracy, one of whose obsessions is to prevent any mass mobilization that might endanger the place that it holds or the privileges it enjoys. In a parallel way, the

working people in the West who mobilize for disarming the imperialists collide with the interests of the war profiteers and the power of their representatives.

A united fight by the peace movements in the West and East is thus a decisive question for the antiwar struggle on a world scale. Mobilizing the masses opposed to the stationing of nuclear weapons, to increasing military expenditures, to militarization of civilian life and to all attacks on the rights of trade unions is the only real defense against the threat of war.

This struggle points up the converging interests of peoples both East and West who are fighting for the right of self-determination, the right to decide their own fate.

The East European peace movements are only in their infancy. In East German and Hungary in particular, they are distinguished by the youthfulness of their adherents. They have thus far remained outside the workers movement. But the objectives they put forward concern all working people.

In a whole series of respects, these movements represent a grave challenge to the bureaucracy. They show distrust of the bureaucratized official structures and a determination by the participants to take questions that affect them into their own hands. They reject a military policy that — in the name of defending the fatherland — responds to imperialist escalation by getting trapped in an arms race. They condemn pouring social wealth down the bottomless pit of military expenditures rather than using it to meet social needs.

All these questions are explosive ones and they terrify the bureaucracy. It has learned at its cost, and this lesson confirmed again in the revolutionary upsurge in Poland, that movements that start out for apparently very elementary demands have an antibureaucratic dynamic that cannot be contained by offers of superficial reforms and changes. What is at stake for the bureaucracy now is not how many missiles it has but the very survival of its rule. ■

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W. Frąsnyk

US auto workers union discusses challenge of union-busting, layoffs

The following article is from the June 3 issue of *The Militant*, a weekly paper reflecting the views of the Socialist Workers Party, an American organization in solidarity with the Fourth International.

Elizabeth ZIERS

DALLAS — The 3,000 delegates to the United Auto Workers (UAW) 27th Constitutional Convention here May 15 - 20 took note of all the blows the union has suffered in recent years. In his keynote speech, outgoing President Douglas Fraser told the delegates membership had dropped by 400,000 to 1.1 million, and a quarter-million auto workers are still on indefinite layoff with little hope of recall. Although auto sales have picked up somewhat over last year, they are still 2.4 million off the pace of 1978, the year before the current crisis hit.

Fraser listed all the major auto plants that have no UAW contract in force: Nissan in Smyrna, Tennessee; Honda in Marysville, Ohio; and General Motors-Toyota in Fremont, California.

Fraser continued, "People say, 'Well, you haven't got those workers organized.' First of all, the top priority is to create jobs for Americans, and then we have the obligation to organize those plants."

No specific plans for organizing drives were proposed by Fraser, newly-elected President Owen Bieber, or any other UAW official.

SPARK OF COMBATIVITY

The delegation from Local 1364 in Fremont brought a spark of combativity to the convention with their fight against GM's union-busting. GM has combined its money with Toyota to retool the Fremont plant, and it refuses to recognize its contract with workers laid off from the plant a year ago.

"Union-busting must be stopped at Fremont, or it will spread like cancer through the automobile industry," George Nano, Local 1364's shop committee chairman, said in remarks from the floor.

The Fremont delegation wanted the convention to go on record supporting the recall rights of all laid-off Fremont workers in accordance with the UAW contract's seniority clause. They also wanted the convention to go on record demanding the "UAW Local 1364 be

given full recognition by GM and Toyota immediately."

They put these demands in a resolution and petitions and brought them to the convention. Other UAW locals in Cleveland, Flint, and Kansas City, as well, have endorsed Local 1364's resolution, and Region 6 (Far West) adopted the resolution.

But the Local 1364 resolution never made it to the convention floor.

Fremont workers were dissatisfied with the UAW International's vague promises of support in their fight. They organized a floor demonstration against GM's union-busting. They received a spirited standing ovation from all the delegates and observers alike. The buttons the local had been selling to raise money for their fight read "1364 or War" and "1364 — Whatever it Takes." Hundreds of delegates and guests bought and wore them.

The Local 1364 delegates made it clear that their complaint was with GM and Toyota, not the Japanese workers.

Japan Auto Workers Federation President Ichiro Shioji addressed the convention. He said, "Each auto worker laid off is a tragedy to us all. We want the Japanese automakers to recognize the UAW."

EL SALVADOR

Dennis McDermott, of the Canadian Labor Congress, gave a speech in which he commended the delegates for passing a resolution against U.S. aid to and intervention in El Salvador. The same resolution opposed U.S. attempts to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. "National affairs cannot be separated from the international. We saw what happened to the Black Panthers here in this country and then what happened in Chile and then in Nicaragua," said McDermott.

Alejandro Molina Lara, a leader of the trade union federation FENASTRAS in El Salvador, attended a portion of the convention, meeting officers and delegates, thanking them for the stand they had taken against sending U.S. taxpayers' money to the army of El Salvador.

Another significant resolution, which the convention passed unanimously, was on Equal Rights and Opportunities. This resolution established passage of the Equal Rights Amendment as a top priority for the union, and it endorsed the August 27 march on Washington in com-

memoration of the 1963 march led by Dr. Martin Luther King.

NAACP leader Benjamin Hooks addressed the convention on the third day. He responded to a racist insult to the Black community of South Dallas made by the UAW convention coordinators. Every delegate's packet included a card that warned them to avoid South Dallas. Hooks urged Fraser and all the delegates to not be afraid to come to South Dallas.

Many delegates had been angered at the open racism of the warning, and many made it a point to visit South Dallas before the convention adjourned. UAW vice-president Marc Stepp and Secretary-treasurer Raymond Majerus apologized to the delegates and the businessmen of South Dallas for the "mistake."

In his speech, Hooks also noted how heavily unemployment has hit blacks in the United States, with 50 percent of Black youth out of a job.

Owen Bieber was elected president of the union by acclamation the next day. In his acceptance speech, he reiterated the UAW's support for the demands of the August 27 march: jobs, peace, and freedom. "We'll be there 20 years from now, if that's what it takes to combat the forces of racism and discrimination against Blacks and Hispanics and others who have suffered too long."

Bieber received resounding applause from the concession-weary delegates when he said, "We've made our sacrifices. We've given all we're going to give. I hope [GM Chairman] Roger Smith, [Ford Chairman] Phil Caldwell, and [Chrysler Chairman] Lee Iacocca and the others are listening, because I'm deadly serious when I say it's their turn to do some giving."

ISSUE OF DEMOCRACY

Opposition among the ranks to UAW leadership-endorsed concessions has grown over the last year, resulting in Chrysler workers overwhelmingly rejecting a contract proposed to them last September.

Many of the secondary union officials expressed the hope in recent months that a referendum, one-member, one-vote system of electing the union president would increase union democracy. They hoped it would make the president more accountable to the ranks and, therefore, less inclined to bargain concessions.

Twenty-three locals brought resolu-

tions to the convention calling for a constitutional change to eliminate election of the president by the convention delegates alone.

The resolution brought to the floor was defeated by a 9-1 ratio although it generated much discussion by delegates.

Out of 28 delegates who spoke under this point, 12 supported the change.

John Field, of Local 595, said he would not "go back to the [shop] floor where people are breaking their backs, and tell them I voted to keep them from having the right to vote."

George McGregor, of Local 15, said, "To have a total and complete democratic union, we must have one member, one-vote."

In preparation for the discussion and vote on the referendum, the resolutions committee handed out a two-page report describing their opinion of how one-member, one-vote would be bad for the UAW. The committee argued that the increased democracy the referendum would bring was not worth the possibility of "constant factionalism and infighting" and "manipulation by outside sources" that might result.

The committee report went on to say the U.S. Supreme Court had approved the convention system of electing union officers in 1959. It concluded that the United Mine Workers (UMW) union, which uses the membership referendum, was no more militant nor effective than the UAW.

Some delegates speaking against the referendum implied that the referendum had led to anarchy, not democracy, in the UMW. One even attributed the murder of a candidate for UMW president, Jock Yablonski, to the one-member, one-vote system.

Richard Trumka, president of the miners' union, appeared unexpectedly the fifth day of the convention and gave a hard-hitting vow of support to the UAW in the organizing drives on its agenda.

Although much speculation has been raised in big-business papers about a change coming to Solidarity House (international headquarters of UAW) with the election of Bieber, there was no discernible difference at the convention in his policy from that of outgoing President Fraser. Bieber said at the convention, "The fact that we have a change in the presidency does not mean the union will make dramatic shifts."

Bieber looks to increased ties between the companies, the government, and labor as the solution for jobless workers and for harmonious labor relations, as did Fraser.

Like Fraser, Bieber advocates passage of reactionary protectionist legislation, a domestic content bill, to solve the problems of laid-off auto workers.

Both put much emphasis on a "new industrial policy" in which the government would help companies to keep producing through grants and tax and trade policies. Conceivably, it would also bail them out when companies have profit



20,000 unemployed queue for 200 auto jobs (DR)

troubles, as with Chrysler Loan Guarantees.

Neither Fraser nor Bieber voiced any consideration for a proposal that workers enjoy the advances of technology by winning a shorter workweek "as a matter of right, not of luxury."

This proposal was raised in a speech by Bob Rae, a leader of the New Democratic Party, the independent labor party in Canada, which the UAW supports.

Rae's proposal is not a new one to the UAW. The concept of spreading the available work around through a shorter workweek, with no cut in pay, is especially timely now with a quarter of a million auto workers laid-off.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Many challenges, and possibly big changes, face the entire union as the convention adjourned. In addition to the

Fremont plant and other major auto plants listed earlier, countless auto parts plants in the right-to-work South remain unorganized.

Major aerospace contracts with the UAW, such as Hayes Aircraft and McDonnell Douglas, expire this year. Nine others, including Rockwell and Martin Marietta, expire in 1984.

All the Big Three auto contracts expire in 1984, as well. Many delegates at the convention expect a fight; GM is rumored to be preparing for a strike.

The Caterpillar delegates, who had just ended a 200-day strike, weren't comfortable with the constitution committee's proposal to increase dues money to the international and the locals at the expense of the strike fund. Before the change was approved, it stirred up a lot of discussion. As one delegate from Lorain, Ohio, put it, "If GM has to go out, that 500 million dollar strike fund will last about 10 minutes." ■

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

New subscribers offer

A special supplement to *International Viewpoint* No 32 contains the English-language version of Ernest Mandel's 'In defence of the Permanent Revolution'.

This is a reply to an article by Doug Jenness from the American Socialist Workers Party that already appeared in English in the June 1982 issue of *The Militant/International Socialist Review* and was republished in French in *Quatrieme Internationale*, No 10.

New subscribers whose payment is received before June 30 will receive free the special supplement.

Readers of *International Viewpoint* who wish to order extra copies of this supplement should write to *IV* at the address below.
PEC, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France.

The Mandel-Jenness debate deals with key strategic questions facing the international workers movement:

- the theory of permanent revolution
- the road to power for the working class
- what we can learn from the Russian Revolution and subsequent revolutionary struggles in this respect
- the contributions by Lenin and Trotsky on this question as well as the balance sheet of the big debates of the Russian socialist movement at the beginning of this century
- the conclusions to be drawn from this in terms of united front policies, political alliances, etc. today.

Readers who want to order the earlier contributions to this debate should write to: The Militant, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014, USA. Members of the Fourth International will find the earlier contributions republished in the Discussion Bulletin.

Growing resistance to "concessions" in US unions

The following article originally appeared in the April-May 1983 issue of *La Batalla*, the theoretical magazine of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT — Revolutionary Workers Party), the Mexican section of the Fourth International.

George CRANSTON

The year 1968 is often pointed to as a turning point in world politics. It separates the period of US domination of world events from its noticeable decline. Yet it is often only with respect to other countries that the profound impact of that historic transition is noted. The student revolt and general strike in France, the events in Czechoslovakia, the hot autumn in 1969 in Italy, or the student revolt in Mexico are the typical examples of what was a worldwide youth radicalization and, at the same time, a new outbreak of radical workers' struggles. In the United States, however, that period set into motion important changes in the consciousness of the American working class. Despite the obvious importance of workers struggles within the imperialist heartland, relatively little has been written analyzing the impact of the transition from prosperity to austerity upon the American working class.

This subject becomes particularly important today with the development of a movement in a number of major trade unions against the wave of contract concessions. This movement has put down roots in the most important industrial unions. Furthermore, it objectively challenges the logic of capitalism: job security depends on company profitability and company profitability depends, during a recession, on workers making sacrifices. To discover how American workers have come to this point, despite the absence of a labor, socialist, or communist political tradition, will be the object of this article.

I will take up three separate waves of workers struggles in the United States since 1968. They are, in chronological order, the 1969-73 wave of official and unofficial strikes, the 1975-78 union reform movement, and the anti-concessions movement that began, in full force, in 1981. Any periodization of this sort will necessarily have important exceptions, since any given union will have its own peculiarities, or even a separate dynamic from the general trend. Nonetheless, it is useful to divide up the post-

1968 era in this manner, because there have been distinct types of struggles that, at a given juncture, were products of a specific moment in a broader transition in American politics.

After the ebbing of the strike wave that immediately followed the second world war, the government launched an attack against the most militant and politicized workers. The Taft-Hartley Act (1) and similar legislation was aimed at housbreaking the CIO unions, particularly those influenced by the Communist Party. Parallel to the McCarthyite purges of the 1950s, a layer of the most combative workers were removed from the unions. While this attack did not prevent the unions from going out on strike periodically, or, on a trade union level, from winning new gains in wages or benefits, it nevertheless helped to foster an anti-Communist conservatism in the unions.

The entrance of a generation of workers that came of age after the period of these attacks, but during the prolonged conflict in Vietnam, into the factories put its stamp on the union conflicts that developed during this period. The presence of a massive, organized opposition to the war in Vietnam, and a broad mood of rebelliousness among American Blacks

1. The Taft-Hartley Act was passed by Congress in June 1947. The following is the description given of it in *Labor's Giant Step*, a history of modern trade unionism in the United States by Art Preis, who was the Labor correspondent of *The Militant* for many years:

"It outlawed the closed shop and prohibited union shop contracts except under very restricted conditions. It expanded the National Labor Relations Board from three to five members and added a General Counsel, appointed by the President, with power to determine which cases of alleged violations were to be prosecuted in the courts. It required a 60-day prior notice, the so-called cooling off period, before termination or modification of a contract. It empowered the President to set up a fact-finding board, without powers of recommendation, to inquire into any strike which he deemed to affect the national health and safety. Upon receiving this board's report, the President could then seek a federal court injunction to make a strike illegal for a 'cooling off' period of 80 days. It also authorized the NLRB to seek injunctions or restraining orders to halt a whole series of so-called unfair labor practices

formed the backdrop for a renewal of working class militancy. When the increasing inflation of those years is taken into account, it can be seen why the years between 1967 and 1972 had the highest incidence of strikes since the 1940s. The chart demonstrates the rise in strikes.

The increased incidence of strikes was a reflection of the general mood of protest and rebellion within the country. There was a tendency towards more unauthorized strikes, particularly in the coalfields, which gave rise to a fear among the capitalist class that the union leaderships were losing control of their membership. Absenteeism rose markedly during the same period, and business publications lamented the high turnover rates and lack of company loyalty. While there was no tendency towards longer strikes, the United Auto Workers (UAW) strike against General Motors lasted 67 days in 1970. That could not be solely attributed to union or worker intransigence; rather it has been argued that the contract would not have been accepted without a long strike to wear down the militancy of the workers.

A more important example of the type of labor action that began to occur during those years was the postal wildcat strike of 1970. Angered by then President Nixon's refusal to authorize a wage increase unless Congress passed a Post-Office reorganization bill, dissident locals in the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) launched a wildcat strike. It spread rapidly to thirty major cities across the United States, until Nixon ordered federal troops to be mobilized to distribute mail. The March 30, 1970, issue of *Time* magazine said the following about the strike:

"The wildcat movement erupted with such suddenness that Congress, the Administration, and the leadership of seven postal unions were unable to move promptly or effectively to get the men back on their jobs....Themselves surprised by their new-found militancy, and having already risked their jobs and pensions by defying federal antistrike laws, the postal

by unions as well as employers. The bill made illegal secondary boycotts and jurisdiction strikes and barred the collection of 'excessive' initiation fees or dues. It directed the NLRB to take 'forthwith' legal restraining action against any union involved in secondary boycotts or 'jurisdictional' strikes. It permitted employers to file damage suits against unions for breach of contract.

"It also required unions to file with the Secretary of Labor annual financial statements, copies of their constitutions and by-laws, full details of how all officers were elected and their initiation fees and dues. It forbade unions and employers from contributing in cash or by indirect means, such as publicity, to campaign funds of any candidates for federal office. It prohibited strikes by federal government employees or workers in government-owned corporations....It required officials of local, national, and international unions to file an affidavit swearing that they were not members of the Communist Party and did not support any organization advocating overthrow of the government by force or any 'unconstitutional means.'" — IV.

workers were determined to justify the hazard by making the most of their action."

The strike was finally settled with a tentative agreement calling for wage raises of 6% immediately and another 8% in six months. After all the workers had returned to work, Congress and the President stalled on approving the final 8%. However, militant locals passed strike calls, and in the end, the government backed down and authorized the final increase. The key to understanding the development of the wildcat strike movement, which ignored the pleas of the labor bureaucracy, and defied the government and its troops, is that it was not an isolated development, even if it tends to stand out from more routine conflicts. Feeling themselves left out from the general prosperity, making only 8,000 dollars per year, sometimes after years of service, and having observed that other struggles, whether by Blacks, workers, or students, were able to win concessions, the postal workers literally exploded into militant action.

MILITANT ORGANIZATIONS OF BLACK WORKERS

Another example of "new-found militancy" during that period was the development of the Revolutionary Union Movement (RUM), and its companion organization, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. Born in 1969, these Black Marxist organizations exerted a brief influence over thousands of Black workers and students in Detroit. The initial RUM organization, at the Dodge Main plant, came out of a successful defense campaign for five Black workers fired in a wildcat strike. The workers were rehired after RUM, on its own authority, called a wildcat strike of Black workers which shut down the plant for two days.

The RUM movement is the most famous of a number of Black caucuses that formed in the unions in the late sixties. They were symptoms of the black rebellion that had already made itself noticed across the country through a series of riots in the major cities between 1964 and 1968. Studies of the Detroit riot of 1967 have pointed up that the participants were not simply unemployed Black youth, but rather they included an important concentration of Blacks employed in Detroit's industries. In the auto industry in particular, there was an especially high percentage of Blacks. One index of the discrimination they faced was that, while 250,000 of the 750,000 workers in the automobile industry were Black, only 3% of the skilled workers at General Motors were Black. At Ford and Chrysler, only 1.3% of the skilled workforce was Black.

The importance of the auto industry to the American economy, then as now, is apparent. In 1970, the auto industry used approximately 20% of the steel, 11% of the aluminum, 50% of the lead, and 60% of the rubber consumed in the

WORK STOPPAGES 1960 TO 1979

(Excludes work stoppages involving fewer than 6 workers or lasting less than 1 day)

YEAR	WORK STOPPAGES		WORKERS INVOLVED		DAYS LOST DURING YEAR		
	Number beginning in year	Average duration (calendar year)	Number (1) (1,000)	Percent of total employed (2)	Number (1,000)	Percent of estimated working time (3)	Per worker involved
1960	3,333	23.4	1,320	2.4	19,100	14	14.5
1965	3,963	25.0	1,550	2.5	23,300	15	15.1
1967	4,595	22.8	2,870	4.3	42,100	25	14.7
1968	5,045	24.5	2,649	3.8	49,018	28	18.5
1969	5,700	22.5	2,481	3.5	42,869	24	17.3
1970	5,716	25.0	3,305	4.7	66,414	37	20.1
1971	5,138	27.0	3,280	4.6	47,589	26	14.5
1972	5,010	24.0	1,714	2.3	27,066	15	15.8
1973	5,353	24.0	2,251	2.9	27,948	14	12.4
1974	6,074	27.1	2,778	3.5	47,991	24	17.3
1975	5,031	26.8	1,746	2.2	31,237	16	17.9
1976	5,648	28.0	2,420	3.0	37,859	19	15.6
1977	5,506	29.3	2,040	2.4	35,822	17	17.6
1978	4,230	33.2	1,623	1.9	36,922	17	22.6
1979	4,827	32.1	1,727	1.9	34,754	15	20.1

(1) Workers counted more than once if involved in more than 1 stoppage during year.

(2) In 1967, total employed workers was redefined to coincide with U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics figures for nonagricultural employment plus agricultural wage and salaried workers. Idleness computed on this basis is lower than the former sense.

(3) Estimated working time computed by multiplying average number of employed workers (see footnote 2) by number of days worked by most employees.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics *Analysis of Work Stoppages* annual

United States. One in six jobs depended on the auto industry. The growing number of wildcat strikes, therefore, was viewed with alarm by the companies and the labor bureaucracy. In 1973, to ensure the end of a wildcat strike at the Detroit Mack Avenue Stamping Plant, the UAW brought out one thousand unionists to stand at the gates. The same day, one of the main organizers of the wildcat was beaten leaving the plant.

The RUM movement turned out to be short lived, not being able to survive beyond the period of youth radicalization and Black rebellion. In general, the union struggles that broke out were marked by the youthfulness of their instigators, their tendency to go beyond the bounds acceptable to the bureaucracy, and by their failure to develop into a national challenge to the union leadership. The rank-and-file groups that were created in that period either shifted their focus to gaining control of their union, or else their force dissipated quickly.

This last period of relative capitalist prosperity in the late sixties and early seventies gave an impulse, as explained, for a revival of militant labor struggles. Although these struggles remained in a primitive form, they generated the first major challenges to entrenched union leadership. They gave whole sections of workers an important set of experiences

Even those workers who were not directly involved nonetheless lived through the years in which, as the *Wall Street Journal* complained on September 2, 1969, there was a developing tendency toward "more contract rejections by rank-and-filers," or in other words, a new

challenge to the companies and the traditional union leaderships.

THE ONSET OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS — NEW SHOCKS TO U.S. STABILITY

The early seventies produced a number of shocks for the working class, and for that matter, the bourgeois economic experts as well. By 1974, "creeping inflation" of the previous decade had turned into double-digit inflation. For a brief period, unemployment was climbing at the same time as inflation was worsening, which all the economists had previously promised to be impossible. At the same time, on the political plane, the government seemed to be in perpetual crisis. The spectacle of the Watergate hearings, the oil crisis, and the worst recession in memory, at least for the younger workers, challenged the established ideas of a major portion of the American population. Whereas the office of the presidency of the United States had been sacrosanct in previous decades, Nixon had become an object of public scorn and ridicule.

Despite the attempt by Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter to convince the American people that the oil crisis was real, that higher prices had to be paid, and austerity policies implemented, there was widespread public disbelief. Polls demonstrated that Americans were more opposed to the big corporations than ever before. Though it should be noted that these same polls always indicate that unions are extremely unpopular as well. Finally, the debacle in Vietnam was coming to an end in these years as well. In 1973, the Paris Peace Accord was signed,

and by 1975, National Liberation Front troops had entered Saigon. Again, a broad section of the American population concluded that such military adventures were either unnecessary or, at least, unwinnable.

After the recession officially ended, the economic situation could still best be described as stagnant. Continued high levels of inflation and continued high unemployment afflicted a working class that, for the first time in decades, was unable to obtain their usual improvements in benefits and salaries. Their first reaction was to believe that the elected union officials doing the negotiating simply lacked the desire or the backbone to get the job done. Therefore, they turned to leaders who called for a more militant posture towards the corporations and for greater union democracy. Union democracy, to the ranks, meant making the union structures more responsive to their demands.

STRUGGLES FOR UNION DEMOCRACY

The Miners for Democracy (MFD) slate in the United Mine Workers of America was a forerunner of the union reform movement. In 1969, they ran a campaign against the corrupt Boyle leadership which culminated in a fraudulent election victory of nearly two-to-one for the incumbents. After the subsequent murder of the main leader of the MFD, Jock Yablonski, and an investigation by the government of the fraudulent voting, a new election was ordered. In 1972, in the new election, the MFD slate headed by Arnold Miller swept to victory. New democratic reforms, including rank and file ratification of national contracts, were implemented.

Inspired by this victory, union reform activists in the steelworkers union decided in 1976 to form a Steelworkers Fight-back slate to oppose I.W. Abel's hand-picked successor, Lloyd McBride. They argued that the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA), an agreement signed in 1973 prohibiting national strikes when the old contract expires, made the union less able to negotiate gains for the membership, and was accepted without a vote by the rank and file. Since the period of the greatest gains for the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) had been in the 1950s, when they had gone on strike nearly every year, this argument struck a chord with many steelworkers. In fact, by the time of the election in February, 1977, the Steelworkers Fight-back slate had garnered majority support among the workers covered by the national steel agreement. However, they lost the election owing to the lack of support in nonsteel districts of the USWA.

Reform forces in the NALC likewise lost a close election in December 1976. Unlike the defeat of the reform forces in the USWA, this was to be just a temporary setback. In 1978, under the impact



US workers demonstrate for jobs, against economic policy (DR)

of wildcat strikes in Jersey City, Brooklyn, and San Francisco, and owing to the opposition to the government's contract offer, Joseph Sambrotto was elected president of the NALC. His election, and the companion victory of Morris Biller in the 1980 APWU elections, represented the culmination of a process initiated in the 1970 national wildcat strike.

During this same period some growth was registered by similar forces in the Teamsters Union, exemplified by the formation of Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU). On a local level, similar rank-and-file caucuses were formed in hundreds of unions. This development, while it shared some of the basic motivations of the earlier wildcat strikes and militant caucuses, differed in a few basic ways.

First, the militants who made up these groups were far more rooted in the existing union structures. They consciously set out to take control of the apparatuses of the national unions, and therefore chose the tack of running national election campaigns in their respective unions. Where the caucuses were weak, such as in the Teamsters Union or the UAW, nomination of alternative candidates was as far as they were able to take their challenge. Where they were strong, such as in the USWA, they managed to get the support of dozens of local and district officials. Regardless of their relative strength, all of the rank-and-file caucuses attempted to get their militants elected to local positions ranging from shop steward to local president.

Secondly, the reform movement grew during the economic stagnation of the seventies. Resistance to union demands had increased, and this was reflected in an increase in the average duration of strikes. In 1978, for example, the average strike lasted 33.2 days, compared to 25.0 in 1970. Because of the spreading perception that the difficulties faced by the Am-

erican labor movement were the result of the cautiousness and conservatism of the top bureaucracy, the reform movement was able to have much more of an overall effect on American labor politics. In contrast, the militant Black caucuses remained quite isolated, and the wildcats failed to budge the union movement from its collaborationist perspective.

If the union reform movement declined in the late seventies, it was due to causes similar to those that gave it birth. After having elected Ed Sadlowski and later Jim Balanoff, to the position of director of District No. 31 (2) in the USWA, workers experienced deep-cutting layoffs. By 1982, some 20,000 of the 65,000 workers in this district were laid off. Faced with a certain disappointment that electing reform candidates could not halt the layoffs, a partial demoralization took place among the workers who had supported them. In 1981, Jack Parton, backed by the USWA top leadership, defeated Balanoff.

Most of the budget cutbacks and increases in military spending began with the Carter administration. Nonetheless the election of Reagan signaled a decision on the part of the bourgeoisie that the pace of the attack on the standard of living and rights of the working class was too slow. Similarly, in the field of concession bargaining, important precedents exist during the Carter administration. But the number and size of the concessions demanded have qualitatively increased since 1980.

THE 1977 COAL STRIKE — THE FIRST BIG BATTLE AGAINST THE GIVE BACKS

The first important battle over concessions occurred during the 111-day coal

2. District 31 includes some of the most important steel centers, Chicago, for example. — IV.

miners strike in 1977-1978. At issue was the coal companies' attempts to dismantle the unique "cradle-to-grave" health-care benefits. The rank and file rejected two tentative contracts endorsed by their leadership. Finally, they accepted a contract which included lesser concessions, but which still made inroads on the health benefits. Rich Trumka, in his recent successful campaign for the presidency of the UMWA (United Mine Workers of America) noted that:

"The present trend of major corporations attempting to extract concessions from their workers might well have had its beginning with UNWA-BCOA (3) negotiations of 1977-78. The negotiations, after a 111-day strike, resulted in contract losses to our membership. Perhaps the single most important loss was that of the HS-85 Health Service Card. For our union and our membership that 'takeaway' can only be described as tragic."

The 1979 auto contract, like the 1978 miners agreement, contained a number of contract concessions, although relatively minor. The Ford agreement, which was the pilot agreement that year, included increases in the pension plan and the usual 3% annual increases plus cost of living. However, the cost of the increase in the pension plans was compensated for by a reduction in paid personal holidays and lower wages for all newly hired people. This contract was ratified by a margin of two-to-one. It was followed by a similar agreement at General Motors.

With Chrysler Corporation, the UAW succumbed to the argument that the company faced a dire financial situation, and approved 203 million dollars in concessions for the next two years. Two months later, in connection with obtaining government approval on a plan to 'save' Chrysler, the UAW recommended to its membership that they accept another 243 million dollars in concessions. Frightened by the possible loss of their jobs, Chrysler workers agreed to an immediate 1.15 dollar per hour pay cut, combined with the loss of COLA (cost of living allowance) payments. By 1982, Chrysler workers were making 3 dollars per hour less than their counterparts at General Motors and Ford.

GM and Ford wanted to narrow that gap, but by lowering the wages and benefits of the workers at their plants. They began to demand an early reopening of the 1979 contract. Of course, it was impossible to deny that the auto companies were experiencing hard times. By December 1981, auto plants were operating at less than 50% of their capacity. In January 1982, they posted a record 107-day inventory of unsold cars. On January 29, it was announced that 243,000 autoworkers were on indefinite layoff. Meanwhile, plant closings were being announced with greater frequency. On January 15, GM announced that production cutbacks in the next four months would idle 60,400 workers, 5,400 of them indefinitely.

Despite the economic situation and

the threats of plant closings, the UAW leadership was having trouble generating enthusiasm for concessions. The GM bargaining council, meeting in Chicago, composed of delegates from every local, narrowly approved a proposal to continue negotiations with GM. Any vote to approve the concessions demanded by GM would doubtlessly have been defeated handily. On January 28, negotiations between GM and the UAW collapsed. On January 30, GM reduced the prices on a variety of models of cars and light trucks by 500 to 2,000 dollars, even though they had previously claimed they needed concessions from the workers in order to be able to do that.

At Ford, a similar development was at work. On January 24, the UAW agreed to resume negotiations. The February 10 *New York Times* reported that the UAW leadership was trying hard to "sell Ford's financial situation to the workers." By February 14, a tentative contract had been reached, which included important givebacks. To sell the contract, Douglas Fraser, president of the UAW, explained to the skilled trades conference that the union faced the choice of accepting the concessions or striking from weakness. In an even more unusual move, AFL-CIO leaders, meeting in Bal Harbour, Florida, lauded the UAW-Ford contract as a model of innovative bargaining. On March 1, it was reported that the Ford workers had approved the concession contract by a margin of 3 to 1.

The new contract at Ford included the foregoing of annual pay raises, giving up nine paid personal holidays, and deferring COLA (4) increases for nine months. In addition, newly hired workers would be paid 80% of full pay for the first year. In return, Ford agreed to lower prices on its cars, establish a profit-sharing agreement, and agreed that no plants would be closed due to company decisions to buy components from other sources. According to the March 8, 1982, issue of *Industry Week*:

"The contract itself can only be interpreted as a corporate relief plan. Despite some argument to the contrary, the contract contains precious little for the workers. The 'gains' achieved by the UAW — items such as profit sharing, job guarantees, and plant-closing language — are so rife with qualifiers that they are virtually meaningless to the vast majority of Ford UAW members."

The *New York Times* echoed that sentiment: "The benefits to Ford are clear....The benefits to the union are less clear and immediate."

Buoyed by the margin of approval among Ford workers, the UAW leadership once again proposed reopening the GM contract. On March 4, the UAW bargaining unit voted to do so. This time, GM asked only for what Ford had already gotten, and within three weeks a tentative contract was announced which ran along the lines of the Ford contract. It won the approval of the local presidents by 299 to 25. The margin of approval in the

ranks was much closer: 114,468 to 105,090.

FIGHTBACK STARTS IN AUTO

Even that narrow 52% to 48% margin was challenged by militant local leaders. At the local in Linden, New Jersey, Martin Cid, a member of the GM bargaining council challenged the outcome of the vote: "We would like to have an investigation of how the vote was conducted." The shop chairperson of the same local hinted that they would take it upon themselves to do a recount, if necessary: "Around the country 10,000 workers in the assembly plants are going to be out of work (as a result of the contract), and we want to be sure the vote was accurate."

Opposition to the Ford and GM contracts came from a group known as Locals Opposed to Concessions (LOC), which was formed during the first set of negotiations with GM in January. LOC was responsible for organizing the near rejection of the continuation of bargaining by the GM bargaining council in January and the near rejection of the GM contract in April. During the Ford negotiations, it brought out 300 workers to an 8 a.m. picket line against the tentative contract. LOC is spearheaded nationally by the Independent Skilled Trades Council (ISTC), a militant rank-and-file caucus in the skilled trades.

Against this background of growing opposition among autoworkers to the concessions, Chrysler's renegotiated contract was approaching its expiration date. In August 1982, in a vote that traditionally carries with an overwhelming majority, 92% of Chrysler's workers voted to authorize a strike if an agreement were not reached. On October 18, being presented with a contract that did not give them parity with Ford and GM workers, the workers rejected it, thereby authorizing a strike.

The UAW leadership, facing a situation that normally would have led to a strike, hastily called a second vote. This new poll would offer the workers the alternative of going out on strike immediately, or postponing the decision until January 1983. This time the workers voted to accept a postponement.

CANADIAN AUTO WORKERS SET EXAMPLE

In Canada, however, the UAW leadership called a strike. The Canadian autoworkers, who have a contract similar to that of their American counterparts, were angered by Chrysler's 1.1 billion dollar cash reserve, and its refusal to grant any wage increase. Therefore, they held out for restitution of the 1.15 dollar per hour that they had lost in the previous contract.

3. The Bituminous Coal Owners' Association. — IV.

4. Cost-of-Living Allowance; before the givebacks, the UAW was the pacesetter on the question of sliding scale of wages.

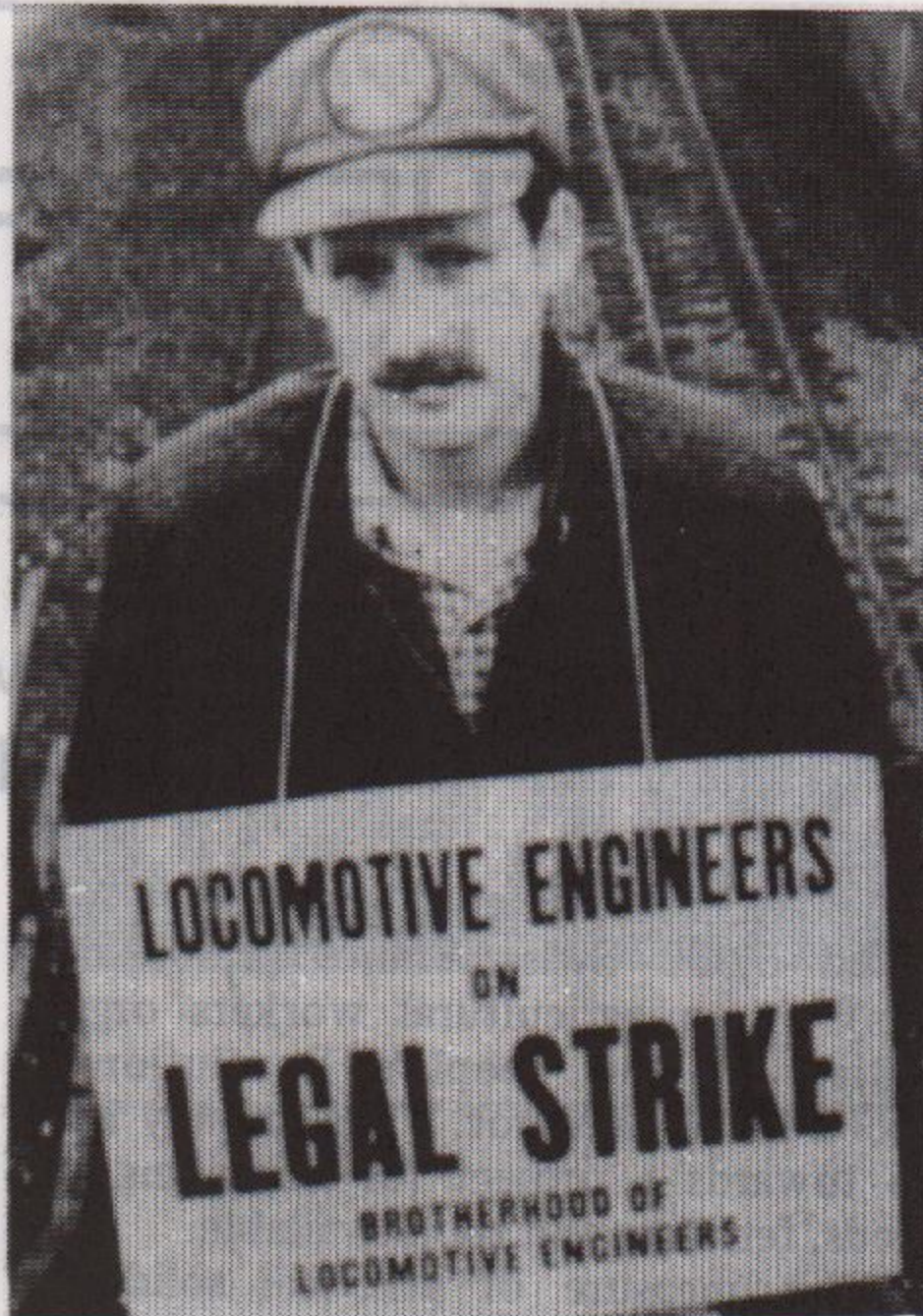
When Chrysler gave in, they had to offer the American union the same package, although due to the difference in currency, they received 40 cents per hour less. One important difference in the contracts, however, was that Chrysler's Canadian workers did not have to accept a strong anti-absenteeism clause in their contract. Nonetheless, all of Chrysler's workers had won a victory, and it was clearly the result of the steadfastness of the workers in the initial rejection of the contract and then the strike by the Canadian autoworkers.

In the steel industry, in which plant production has been steadily nosediving in the past two years, workers were also faced with company demands for wage cuts. In July 1982, talks collapsed as the companies demanded a three-year wage freeze, no COLA for the first year, a cap of 50 cents on COLA payments for the next two years, and a 3 dollar per hour wage cut for all newly hired employees. This proposal was rejected unanimously by the local presidents, who are empowered to ratify or reject contract proposals. It should be mentioned that this proposal would have cost the steelworkers 8.2 billion dollars.

By the time the auto contract talks were reopened, unemployment had worsened dramatically. Out of a workforce of 360,000 unemployment had risen from 100,000 in July to 140,000 in November. The companies came back with an even worse proposal, from the standpoint of the workers, than the rejected July proposal. This time they proposed an immediate across-the-board pay cut of 2.25 dollars per hour and the elimination of the local right to strike for 44 months. The COLA formula was to be tied to individual company profitability. In return, the steelworkers were to receive a ninety-day notice of all plant closings and an unemployment fund for workers with more than five years seniority. This plan and annual 50 cents raises were to be financed by the wage cut.

The vote was much closer this time: 231 to 141 against the contract. The International president, who endorsed the agreement, held the vote by secret ballot, thereby allowing local presidents to vote for the contract without having to admit it to the ranks. Nevertheless, the still comfortable margin against the contract gives a clear indication of the sentiment against these cutbacks.

The contract does not expire until August of 1983. In preparation for the next round of negotiations, the usual threats of plant closings are mounting. General Motors, which uses 7% of all steel domestically produced is threatening to switch to foreign companies if an agreement is not reached by March 1, 1983. Unemployed steelworkers now number more than 160,000. Given the support for major concessions expressed by the International leadership (5) and the opposition to concessions by the local presidents and the rank and file, the conditions obviously exist for a major conflict. [In fact, subsequent to the writing



of this article, the UAW agreed to an early contract signing in March. IV]

SPREADING BATTLES AGAINST GIVE BACKS

There have been many other manifestations of anticoncessions sentiment in the working class in the past two years. They range from the ousting of incumbent union leaderships, such as the defeat of Sam Church in the United Mine Workers' election in November 1982, to successful defenses of jobs and previous gains through bitter strikes, such as the United Electrical workers (UE) strike against the Morse Cutting Tool company in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

While there are several factors that help explain the growth of this sentiment, the essential reason is that over the last few years a number of workers have given important concessions, only to lose their jobs anyway. The Experimental Negotiating Agreement signed in the steel industry was supposed to have given steelworkers some real job security. Instead, there is over 40% unemployment among union members covered by the basic-steel agreement. The Chrysler workers, having been the first in the auto industry to grant concessions to the companies, were promised a return to parity with other autoworkers as soon as the company became profitable. However, even as Lee Iacocca was bragging of his 1.1 billion dollar cash reserve, he was asking for further concessions from the Chrysler workers.

In many cases, the actual terms of the concessions directly eliminate jobs. For example, when autoworkers at Chrysler, General Motors, and Ford gave up nine paid personal holidays, it meant the immediate layoff of whatever workers were previously needed to fill in for those taking a day off. Less directly, the use that is made of the additional profits from these concessions may also eliminate jobs. Particularly in the auto industry, new capital investment is aimed

towards the automation of work performed by humans. In the steel industry, resentment against the companies rose when it was reported that U.S. Steel was investing in Florida real estate. In other words, the savings that the companies realized from concessions were not necessarily being directed toward investment in the steel industry itself.

The existence of a movement against concessions is not just a response to a given conjunctural situation. It also reflects the maturation of an important layer of the American working class. The industries in which the anticoncessions movement exists have experienced massive layoffs, eliminating the bulk of the younger workers, who are traditionally the most militant. The workers who are left in these industries and who are the militants of this movement, are the ones who lived through the experiences of the two previous waves of working-class struggles in the late sixties and the seventies.

The anticoncessions movement also represents a beginning polarization in American politics. It corresponds to the deep frustration with the Reagan presidency and to the perception that that presidency is openly antilabor. The smashing of PATCO, the air controllers union, opened an offensive whose purpose was transparently the rapid alteration of the relationship of forces between the working class and the bourgeoisie. This was to be accomplished on a number of levels, including weakening health and safety standards, social services cutbacks, eliminating industry regulations, and reactionary tax legislation.

This policy, needless to say, has not succeeded in breaking the back of American labor. If union membership continues to decline, it is primarily due to the recession, both in terms of losses of current membership, and in a declining rate of representation elections won by unions. There is no evidence that unions have become less popular. On the contrary, on the September 19, 1981, Solidarity Day, the AFL-CIO brought out a demonstration of a half million workers, proving that workers are still willing to fight when their leadership demonstrates its own seriousness about a struggle.

If anti-Reagan sentiment in the working class can be channeled into the Democratic Party, the same cannot be done with the anticoncessions movement. On the contrary, the pressure continues to build in the unions. It will be through such battles, or more exactly, through successful defensive struggles that the working class will be able to prepare the ground for a counteroffensive. It is in this light that the development of a broad movement in the most powerful unions against the need of American capitalism to rationalize its industries should be seen. ■

5. Union federations in the US are often called International. The reality to this is that many of them include English Canadian workers. — IV.



AROUND THE WORLD



Worldwide campaign to save Turkish prisoners

Since the military coup on September 12, 1980, more than one hundred thousand people have been imprisoned in Turkey for political reasons. Special new 'E-type' prisons have been built to accommodate them. Hundreds of people have been slaughtered in the streets, and 43 people hanged. Some 6,000 prisoners are currently facing death sentences.

On April 6 the Consultative Assembly approved death sentences on seven revolutionaries. When the National Security Council ratifies their sentences they will be executed within a matter of hours (see IV No 29, May 2, 1983).

On April 11 Amnesty International called for a worldwide protest campaign to stop these executions. In France a Committee for the Defence of Democratic and Human Rights in Turkey has been established. This committee has been organising to get influential figures from around the world to send messages to the Turkish head of state, General Evren, calling on him to stop the executions.

This committee has succeeded in getting such messages from two American congressmen, 31 members of the European parliament, and the French Socialist Party.

Saving the lives of these seven will help to save the lives of hundreds of other political activists presently in Turkish prisons.

Send your messages calling for a stop to the death sentences to:

General Kenan Evren
National Security Council
Ankara
Turkey

and a copy to the committee:

Comite pour la defense des droits democratiques et humains en Turquie
Librairie La Breche
9 rue de Tunis
97011 Paris
France

Swiss council gives practical aid to El Salvador

On May 10 the city council of Zug voted 6,000 Swiss Francs (2,400 dollars) to an agricultural workers organisation of the People's Revolutionary Block in El Salvador. This money is to go towards a project for improving the seeds, fertiliser and tools available.

This measure of practical solidarity with the Salvadoran people came about as a result of the continuous solidarity work with El Salvador conducted by the local committee and political organisations in-

cluding the SAP (Socialist Workers Party, Swiss section of the Fourth International). A member of the SAP has been a member of the city council since last autumn and, along with a member of the Socialist Party, moved the resolution at the council.

The local Salvador solidarity committee made a statement after this resolution was approved pointing out the success of their consistent work, and thanking the two councillors. ■

Persecution of Danish dockers leader

The right-wing government in Denmark inaugurated a new period of police violence in Denmark in its campaign to break the dockers strike last January and February.

For example, on January 16, police broke up a dockers demonstration with clubs, dogs, and tear gas.

After the end of the strike, on March 17, police arrested one of the major dockers leaders, Karl Jorgensen, accusing him of being responsible for burning down a warehouse on the Esbjerg docks.

Jorgensen has been held since on a series of detention orders in what amounted to solitary confinement. The Danish courts resorted to a practice that has become infamous in Ireland, the continual renewal of detention orders without any trial.

After many weeks in solitary confinement, Jorgensen, an older family man, suffered a nervous breakdown. He is now in isolation in the psychiatric ward at Hvidding hospital. His lawyer, Heibell Jensen, has raised the question: "Do the courts have the right to make a person mentally ill by unjustified confinement?"

The June 9 issue of *Klassekampen*, the weekly paper of the Danish section of the Fourth International, interviewed

a series of dockers leaders about the Jorgensen case: Brian Berggren, a shop steward on the Esbjerg docks, said:

"If there is any reason for jailing Karl, I should be locked up too. A lot of things were said during the conflict.... That was the expression of the bitterness we felt."

William Wintherberg, a shop steward on the Copenhagen docks, said:

"The treatment of Karl is intended to intimidate others who take the lead in strikes. This case is a threat to the entire labor movement; they are trying to deprive our leaders of all rights."

In May, the government introduced a bill that would enable the police to get "preventive detention" orders against persons they say are a "threat to public order." (See "Rightist Government seeks to Introduce 'Preventive Detention,'" IV, June 13, 1983.)

The attacks on the Danish dockers have an international importance, in particular because the dockers have been pace setters in developing links with unions in other countries.

A petition campaign has been started in defense of Jorgensen. Further information can be obtained from *Klassekampen*, Blegdamsvej 28-32, opg. C, 2200 Copenhagen N, Denmark. ■



Solidarity with the imprisoned members of the Syrian Communist Action Party

Every diplomatic offensive of Hafez el Assad's regime is accompanied by a wave of repression directed against internal opponents. The Communist Action Party, (CAP) one of the most radical oppositions to the Syrian regime, is the favourite target for this repression.

On March 21, during a traditional festival of some of the Kurdish regions in Syria, the Festival of Roses, the mukharrats — the Syrian information services — arrested more than one hundred young people. This festival is very much disliked by the regime because it is extremely popular and gives all the political parties an opportunity to put their views forward. In addition, the young people had shown a wish to resist the repression.

The police round-up was carried out in the villages around the towns of Alep and Hama which are the traditional areas of resistance to the regime. Hama in particular is a centre of resistance; in March 1982 a revolt there was bloodily repressed.

Most of the young people arrested, including a dozen young women, were freed in the next few days. All of them talked of their interrogations and denounced the use of torture to get information from them, particularly on the CAP. But fifteen of them are still in prison, with no news of their whereabouts.

This repression was clearly aimed against the CAP, several young members of this organisation were arrested on March 21. This is the eighth round of arrests directed at this organisation. More than a hundred of its militants have been in prison for years, and some are now very physically debilitated by the conditions of their detention. Each new phase of repression has corresponded to a particularly determined political stance taken by the CAP, for which the regime wants to make its militants 'pay'.

In March 1977 it was the condemnation of the Syrian invasion of Lebanon (30 imprisoned); in 1978 publication of pamphlets and journals by CAP; in 1979-80 the CAP denounced the struggle between the ruling Ba'athist party and the opposition Muslim Brotherhood as a confrontation between differing bourgeois interests, and called for the constitution of a united people's front to put an end to the exploitation of the Syrian people — more than 100 militants were arrested and tortured in prison; the announcement of the CAP congress in September 1981

resulted in new arrests; finally the condemnation of the massacre at Hama in March 1982 also provoked a new wave of arrests.

The reason for the new arrests today is because the CAP has not given up publishing its journal and organising its clandestine cells. The special services of the Hafez el Assad regime are increasing

arrests and preparing to hit yet harder in order to make this revolutionary organisation keep quiet.

We should undertake all the various types of international solidarity action with the imprisoned members of CAP, and do everything possible to win their release. ■



The Fourth Internationalist candidates in the Italian elections

In the campaign for the June 26 Italian general elections, the Italian section of the Fourth International is running candidates in a number of areas in the framework of a united class-struggle slate. (See "Revolutionary Agreement for Italian Elections," IV, June 13.)

The May 29 issue of Bandiera Rossa, the weekly paper of the Italian section, described the Fourth Internationalist campaign.

In choosing candidates for the Democrazia Proletaria slate, the LCR (Lega Comunista Rivoluzionaria — Italian section of the Fourth International) tried to run as many worker comrades as possible who are involved in battles against austerity and against attempts to sell out the union movement based on factory councils, as well as the gains the workers made in the 1970s, in particular the sliding scale of wages.

Of particular significance are the candidatures of LCR worker militants in Turin. It was in Turin that the bosses launched their frontal attack against the strongest bastions of the Italian working class, against the unions based on factory councils that were most representative and best organized in this area.

Angelo Caforio was the spokesman of 61 workers fired in 1979. Fausto Cristofari and Raffaello Renzacci are members of the Coordinating Committee of Laid-Off (Cassintegrati) Fiat Workers. And we are also running other worker comrades from the major Turin factories.

Our objective is to demonstrate the link between our involvement in the struggles and in the struggle we are waging in this election campaign to defeat the plans of the bosses and the Christian Democrats, to reinforce the unity of all those who today are fighting in the

unions and in all the workplaces against the capitulationist policy of the majority leaderships in the workers movement.

This is what we are trying to do in other districts as well. In Milan, we are running Comrade Gigi Malabarba, a delegate to the Alfa Romeo, who is today laid off, and Comrade Gino Perri, a delegate to the factory council at Face Standard. Both have played leading roles in several important opposition struggles in their factories.

In Taranto, Comrade Ciccio Maresca, a delegate to the Italsider factory council, heads up the DP slate. He led the massive protest of the workers in this factory against the sell-out of the sliding scale of wages.

The work of our factory activists in Taranto helped to win particularly strong support among the workers in this city for the petition campaign that collected 50,000 signatures for maintaining the provisions of the 1975 contract [including the sliding scale].

A number of national leaders of the LCR are also running on the DP slate: Livio Maitan (running in both Milan and Rome) is a member of the Central Committee of the LCR and of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Comrade Edgardo Pellegrini is editor of *Bandiera Rossa* and a member of the Political Bureau. Lidia Cirillio is also a member of the Political Bureau.

In the Verona-Vicenza-Padua district, we are running Comrade Emanuele Battain, a lawyer who devotes himself to defending workers.

The June 5 issue of Bandiera Rossa also carried interviews with a teacher candidate in Livorno and a public worker candidate in Milan, as part of a continuing series of interviews with LCR candidates. ■

Confrontation in Chile

Gerry FOLEY

The stakes have been rising rapidly in Chile. On May 11, large numbers of people in the country's capital and major city defied the brutal regime to participate in a national day of action called by the unions and the antidictatorial opposition. The protests were met with severe repression.

Despite the violence and threats of the regime, the second national day of action on June 14 was qualitatively larger in the capital and got important participation in some provincial centers.

The correspondent for *Le Matin*, a Paris daily close to the Socialist Party, wrote:

"It is estimated that the participation was three times what it was May 11. Schools and stores were boycotted. At 8:00 in the evening there was a gigantic concert of pan banging and car-horn blowing. Automobiles slowed to a crawl and the lights in homes were turned out.

"This kind of noise has never been heard in Santiago before, because when the empty pots were banged in 1973, it was only among the rich. This time...it was everywhere — even around the military school...

"The provinces moved too, and that was a major new factor by comparison with May 11, which remained confined to the capital. In Valparaiso, Temuco, Concepcion, and Puerto Montt, there was also a chorus of pot-banging and horn blowing."

The working-class neighborhood of La Florida in Santiago, where 300,000 people are concentrated, was entirely surrounded by burning barricades, according to *International Herald Tribune* correspondent Juan de Onis.

The National Command of the Workers, the national union leadership, decided not to call concentrated demonstrations. But there were many small ones, and some sharp and prolonged clashes between police and crowds, especially in the poor neighborhoods of Santiago in the late night and early morning of June 14-15. In San Miguel, a town south of Santiago, a 14-year-old boy was shot down by police. In Renca, to the north of the capital, police killed a twenty-year-old youth. Six other persons were reported wounded.

It is not yet clear whether the shootings occurred in the context of clashes or of punitive raids by the police. An informant of *Liberation's* correspondent, Christian Martin, went to the Lo Ermida shantytown at 11:30 p.m. when flaming barricades appeared. Martin summarized his report in the June 16 issue of the Paris daily:

"Three or four cars of riot police and several cars full of plainclothes police arrived at the same time as he. So he could not go in. But for a half hour he heard bursts of automatic weapons fire, and then the screams of the inhabitants...."

The bloodthirsty regime has not lost its savagery, but after ten years and in the context of a desperate economic situation, it seems to be losing its effect.

On the evening of June 14, a local journalist commented to the *Le Matin* correspondent:

"On May 11, Chileans began to be less afraid, and this time they have lost more of their fears."

The new rise of the mass movement in neighboring Argentina was obviously an inspiration to the Chilean protesters.

The Argentine slogan, "*Se va a acabar, se va a acabar, la dictadura militar!*" (It's going to end, it's going to end, the military dictatorship is going to end!) was one of the most widely heard on June 14.

There is a rising wave of opposition to all the brutal military dictatorships in the area that crushed the workers movement in the early 1970s.

In one respect, the Chilean junta was the strongest of these "tough" dictatorships. It had a mass base among the petty bourgeoisie that had become alienated from the Allende government.

That base is now completely gone, as a result of a far graver economic crisis than the one that arose under Allende.

A third of Chile's workers are officially unemployed. The foreign debt has increased from 3 billion to 20 billion under the dictatorship.

The political failure of the Pinochet regime is nearly total. It finds itself isolated in the face of a mounting wave of revolt.

More has failed in Chile than Pinochet. US imperialism was deeply involved in bringing the junta to power and in shaping its economic policy. The junta's Chile became a "made in America" model for "economic realism" in the semicolonial world.

The growth of Chilean debt to US banks means that as the dictatorship sinks deeper into quicksand, the stakes of US capital in the regime are rising.

Juan de Onis stressed this aspect in the June 16 *International Herald Tribune*:

"While police and demonstrators clashed, and thousands of housewives banged their pots and pans throughout the city, Harry Taylor, the president of Manufacturers Hanover Trust, the US bank that has led foreign debt negotiations with Chile, was making television statements saying that the banks were happy to lend the country another 1.3 billion dollars to

pay interest owed this year."

More than any other Latin-American dictatorship, the Chilean regime has become the symbol of the way the imperialists and their hired goons trample on the democratic rights of the masses of working people in the countries they dominate.

The rise of revolt against Pinochet, therefore, is a demonstration to oppressed peoples in Latin America in particular but also in the rest of the world and to the workers movement in the advanced capitalist countries as well, that a ruthless dictatorship has not broken a conscious and organized working class.

The revival of the mass movement in Chile less than ten years after the slaughter of the entire vanguard of the workers movement is also a sign of the times. The world capitalist crisis, which is having catastrophic effects in the dependent countries, is preparing the way for massive explosions. And the 1979 insurrection in Nicaragua showed how quickly the most powerful repressive apparatus can be overwhelmed when a whole people has had enough.

What was true in Nicaragua is even more true on a wider scale. The more extensive the rise of discontent and rebellion, the harder it is to repair the cracks that appear in the walls the capitalists and imperialists have built.

Commentators in the international press talk about the US trying to restrain Pinochet. "Washington has enough problems in Central America to be anxious to keep a running sore from developing in Chile," *Le Matin's* correspondent wrote.

It is clear already that the decay of the Southern Cone dictatorships has gravely weakened the position of US imperialism in Latin America and made it far more difficult and risky to intervene in Central America.

But if Washington wanted to restrain Pinochet, it did not have notable success. He reacted to the June day of action as to the previous by escalating repression, jailing the most prominent union leader and promising to fight to the death rather than give in to the mass movement.

Pinochet does not seem to have much room for concessions, or the US imperialists either. That makes the confrontation stark.

Even if the workers organizations hesitate in the face of the regime's ultimatum, the pressure, over the long term, will continue to build up. Because there is no solution in sight to the desperate economic conditions the working people face, and because the rising anger against the suffering inflicted by dictatorship and capitalist economic crisis is so widespread.

The trade-union movement throughout the world, as well as supporters of democracy and human rights in general, also have a big stake in Chile. Chile cannot be forgotten. The Chilean people have not been beaten. They cannot be left to fight alone against a particularly acute form of the evils that working people throughout the world increasingly face.