

International VIEWPOINT

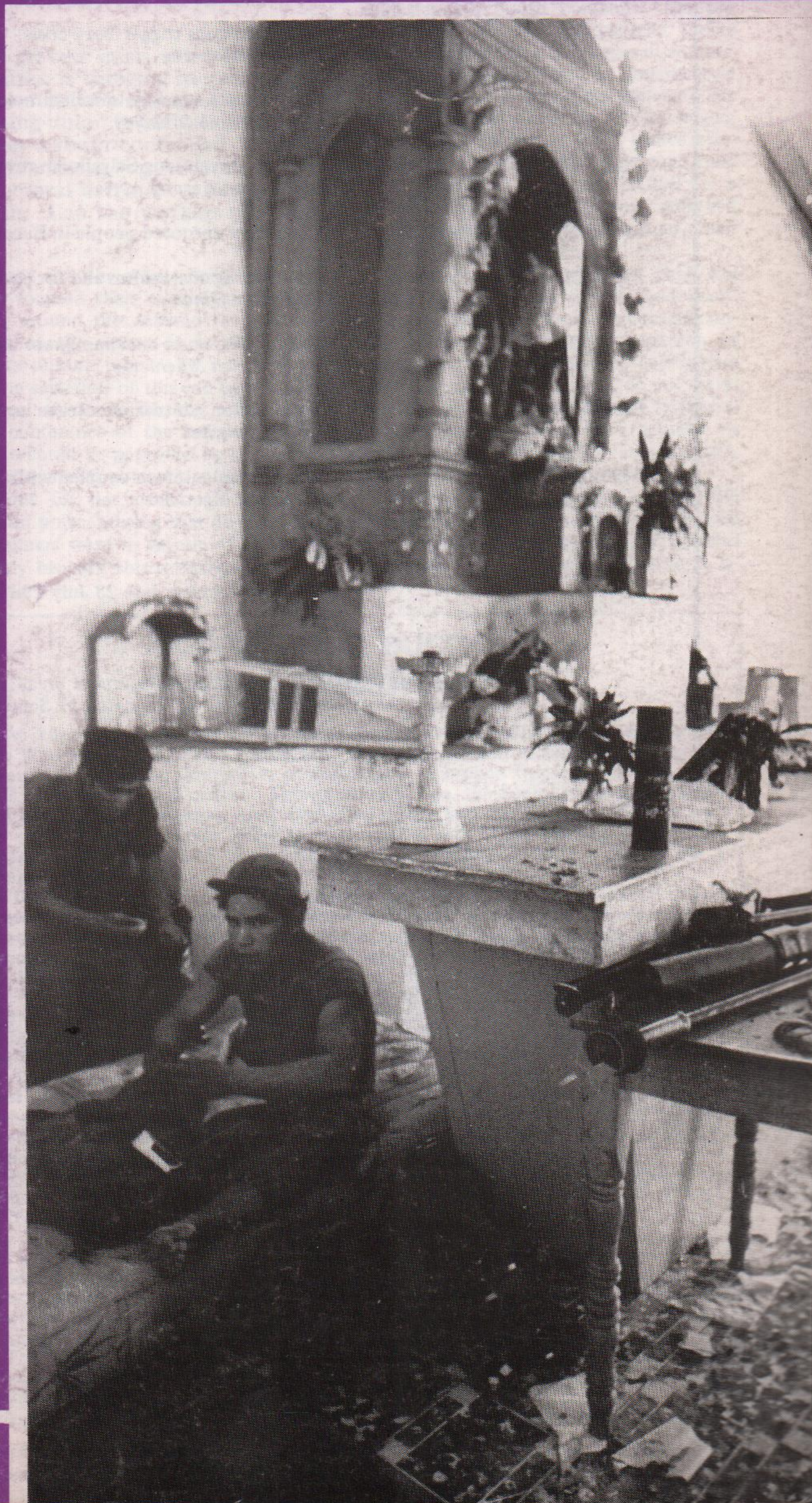
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The new stage of the Salvadoran revolution

Paradoxes of
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Special :
Immigrants in
Western Europe



International Viewpoint

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Miners actions trigger Tory crisis

Margaret Thatcher's government faces its gravest crisis since it was first elected in 1979. The national miners' strike is bringing increasing pressure for a settlement, although the situation has been slightly eased by the ending of the dockers' strike. Action banning union organisation has been declared illegal by the courts. Attacks on Labour-controlled local government authorities have encountered increasing opposition and are bringing the Conservative Party serious electoral defeats. A new political situation is beginning to open up in Britain. Can the workers movement respond?

Steve ROBERTS

The extent of ruling class unease was expressed by the *Economist* magazine, previously a faithful Thatcher supporter, in forthright terms.

'Mrs Thatcher's second government is stepping out to become Britain's most inept since the war. The mishaps, mistakes and omissions which have characterised its first full year now have ministers in difficulty with farmers, miners, peers, local authorities, EEC allies, even City financiers.

'Nothing seems to be going right and what goes wrong is increasingly portrayed as somebody else's fault — a sign of ministers losing their grip. Mrs Thatcher, apostle of strong government and emphatic leadership, still holds the helm, but the rudder is taking on a life of its own.' (July 7, 1984)

The miners strike, now in its 18th week, has proved the most enduring of the government's problems. The fourth round of peace talks in the dispute collapsed on July 19 with Arthur Scargill, the president of the 180,000-strong National Union of Mineworkers, blaming Thatcher for preventing the coal employers from negotiating a settlement.

It is true that the Tories cannot afford to lose the dispute. The fundamental problem which faced Thatcher on her election to office in 1979 was how to avoid repeating the mistakes of Edward Heath — the Conservative prime minister kicked out of office by the miners in 1974.

Careful preparations were made to confront the miners. (See *International Viewpoint*, No 50, April 9, 1984.) The strike was provoked by the government by their announcement of a pit closure, without consultation, as the first of 20 closures, with a loss of 20,000 jobs in the next year. Demand for coal was declining with the beginning of warmer weather. Coal stocks were still high despite an overtime ban in force for 19 weeks before the strike began on March 12.

In the first weeks of the strike the gov-

ernment and the whole British establishment focused their campaign against the strike around the demand for a national ballot on the action to be held by the miners' union.

The rejection of this call by a full conference of the NUM, the reduction by that conference of the margin by which strikes could be approved by the union — to a simple 50 per cent rather than the previous 55 per cent majority — and opinion polls showing that 68 per cent of the miners were in favour of the strike, quickly brought this campaign to a close.

The government resigned itself to the prospect of a long strike.

Its tactics have since developed into a combination of the ferocious police repression, an attempt to literally starve the miners back to work by the reduction of state benefits for their families, and the creation of what amounts to a split from the miners' union in the coal fields of Nottingham and elsewhere.

The police campaign reached its high point with the battles at the Orgreave coke depot in South Yorkshire. Millions of startled TV viewers saw riot police make repeated cavalry charges at miners' picket lines while North of Ireland-style 'snatch squads' added more miners to the 3,500 arrested since the strike began. Since these clashes in May, police reinforcements drafted into the coal field have reached a total of 20,000 — a veritable army of occupation, stiffened by the presence of army personnel, some dressed in police uniform.

However, there are signs that the police operation has overreached itself. Not only has there been considerable unease in liberal circles at the erosion of democratic rights inflicted by courts who demand that miners on bail do not travel around the country on pain of imprisonment, but there have been attacks on police stations in mining communities, mainly involving young people.

Neither has the attempt to starve the miners back to work succeeded. Instead the campaign against the miners' families has produced a major new factor in la-

Solidarnosc supports striking British miners

At 10 am on June 17, 1984, the underground radio station Zwyciezimy (We Will Win) put out its third broadcast. This radio station is the voice of the Provisional Coordinating Committee of Solidarnosc miners in Upper Silesia, the country's main coal mining centre. Among other points, the 8 minute broadcast criticised the Jaruselski regime's coal marketing policy and declared its solidarity with the striking British miners. Here is the complete text of the relevant parts of the broadcast, first published in *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, (Vol. 7, No 2, Summer 1984, London).

'The underground Provisional Coordinating Committee of Solidarnosc miners vigorously protests against the present policy of the Polish People's Republic on the management of our major source of wealth, coal. Selling it on foreign markets at competitive prices (i.e. at less than world market prices) is first of all a violation of the Jastrzebie agreements (August 1980) in which it was clearly established that coal is a national resource which must be used rationally. The above-mentioned pricing policy transforms investment in the mines into a straight economic loss.

'Secondly, the Polish government's policy blatantly contradicts official propaganda that declares respect for the miners' dignity and endeavour. Thirdly, coal distribution and trade is organised outside of any social control. The Polish government has no right to behave like a mine owner and to dispose of the national wealth as it pleases. Only the damned capitalists and dictators act in this way. Fourthly, the Polish government's policy in this field affects the basic interests of brother miners from other countries who lose their jobs as a result of it.

'We hope the party authorities and parliament — who say they represent the people — explain what is really going on.

'To the striking miners of Great Britain: The underground Provisional Coordinating Committee of Solidarnosc miners sends you fraternal greetings and our support and solidarity for your struggle for the right to work. We know from our own experience what it means to lose a job. For this reason we will do everything possible to support your struggle, including in action. The protest we have sent to the Polish government and parliament is an initial measure taken in support of your struggle.'

The technical material for Radio Zwyciezimy was donated to Upper Silesia Solidarnosc by West European Solidarity with Solidarnosc Committees, as a result of collections made among workers and in the trade unions. ■

bour and women's movement politics with the rise of the miners' wives committees in every mining community. (See *International Viewpoint*, No 55, June 18, 1984.)

With the promotion of a 'back to work' movement the government has had limited success. While National Coal Board and NUM estimates vary widely, at least 20 per cent of miners are still at work. The government has exploited the fact that the Nottingham miners, with more geologically favourable conditions for mining, have felt themselves safer from pit closures.

While a minority of the Nottingham miners support the strike, the majority have broken with the union, failing to even attend the last special conference of the NUM.

However, their withdrawal from the union has had little impact on the determination of the union's activists. At the same conference Scargill prepared the ranks of the unions for a struggle lasting till the winter.

Government shaken

The prospect of a speedier conclusion to the strike came closer with the national dock strike called after the British Steel Corporation (BSC) broke existing agreements in loading iron ore for steel production at the east coast port of Immingham.

The dockers' union, the Transport and General Workers Union, immediately called a national strike, judging the BSC's action as a breach of the hard-won Dock Labour Registration scheme. This scheme, which guarantees every docker a job, whatever the demand for their labour, was under attack by the employers and government before the miners' strike started. The dockers judged correctly that the miners' strike was the most favourable condition under which to engage the government in battle in its defence. Although the BSC's violation of the scheme was checked by the port authorities, the unions continued to seek a pledge that no further attacks on the scheme would be sought.

A similar challenge existed previously after railworkers had threatened industrial action in pursuit of their wage claim. Then, in a manoeuvre that was publicly exposed, Margaret Thatcher persuaded the Railways Board to partially concede the unions' demands in order to avoid a confrontation and so as to isolate the miners.

The dockers' action prompted the president of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) to remark that only 25 per cent of his member companies would be working normally within the next two weeks if the strike continued. Faced with this situation the government would have had only two choices: to surrender and pave the way for victory for the miners too, or to dramatically escalate the dispute by using its powers to bring in the army.

This latter course would have been energetically opposed by many senior Tory politicians because radical actions against the unions have been discredited following the finding by the High Court that Thatcher's ban on trade unions in the GCHQ, the government's intelligence gathering centre is illegal. The finding of the court, the first of its type against a British prime minister, has had the effect of discrediting the whole array of anti-union laws that the government has constructed for future use.

Political problems have also combined with the recent rise in interest rates and weakening of the pound which have seriously damaged the government's projected hopes of a more prolonged upturn in the economy. More and more people, even in ruling class circles, now seriously doubt the government's ability to hold the line.

At the same time, it is feared that an out and out surrender by the government could well bring about its downfall. An anxious Institute of Directors statement

issued on July 18 points this out. It says that a settlement with the miners at this stage would force interest rates still higher and that a 'victory for Mr Scargill would irreparably damage the credibility of the government's economic and industrial policies and indeed the government itself.'

Despite the ending of the dock strike the stakes are still very high on both sides. Arthur Scargill has pointed out that similar action to that of the dockers earlier on in the dispute would have resolved the situation. Instead the misleaders of the TUC (Trades Union Congress) and the steel unions in particular, have tried unsuccessfully to stab the dispute in the back.

The unity achieved during the dockers' action has exposed how vulnerable the situation of the government now is. Such unity in action has boosted the courage and determination of rank and file miners and must continue to be built on a national and international level. ■

FRANCE

What does the new government hold in store ?

The Mitterrand government, in power since May 10, 1981, has seen its support fragment and dissipate.

The rising levels of unemployment and inflation, while carworkers, steelworkers in Lorraine, and shipyard workers struggle to defend their jobs, are one index of the growing dissatisfaction with this 'government of the left' among those who voted it into office. There have been other dissatisfactions, with the nuclear energy programme, an imperialist foreign policy, the lack of real progress on women's rights.

However, the issue on which the right have seized to mobilise the opposition to the government has been that of education, the secular (state) schools versus the 'free' (Catholic) schools. This was the issue that sparked off the chain of events leading to the change in prime minister and the departure of the Communist Party from the government in mid-July.

Philomena O'MALLEY

The debate on education was provoked by the publication of a new law by education minister Savary. This law proposed integrating the Catholic schools (partially publicly funded) further into the state system by assimilating their staff into the state teachers system. This was bitterly opposed by right and left alike.

The right saw it as an attack on their 'freedom' to run their schools. The left opposed measures that continued to allocate funds to the Catholic schools. The debate over this law has been one of the most explosive political issues in France. On June 24, one million people demonstrated under the banners of the right against this proposed law.

The declining support for the government has also been demonstrated in the

results of local and by-elections since the left came to power. The right-wing opposition has won almost all these elections, making sweeping gains in the local elections.

In the June European elections, the left suffered their worst defeat yet on the electoral terrain since their unprecedented success in 1981. Between them, Mitterrand's Socialist Party and the Communist Party won only one-third of the votes. The Communist Party had its lowest score for forty years, 11 per cent, equal to that of the far-right list led by Jean-Marie Le Pen (see *International Viewpoint*, No 56, July 2, 1984).

This showing led political commentators to talk of the need for a 'new course' for the Mitterrand government, of the 'handicap' that the Communists represented in the government. Just over one

month later there is a new government team, led by a new prime minister, with the Communists refusing to participate. Does this represent a 'new course' for the government?

The first in the chain of events that led to this shake up was an address to the people of France by Mitterrand on television on Thursday July 12.

The contents of this address were, according to the Paris news weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*, kept secret from everyone but the then prime minister Pierre Mauroy and Socialist Party boss Lionel Jospin.

In this broadcast Mitterrand announced his intention to hold a referendum to change the constitution. The change in the constitution he proposed was to allow the president to hold referendums on other matters than those presently outlined. What was it that he wished to submit to the 'will of the people'? The question of education! The Savary law, already passed once through the National Assembly, where the Socialists have a majority even without their Communist partners, would be withdrawn from the order of business in the Senate for the time being, Mitterrand made clear on July 14, but it would only disappear for good once the process of a referendum was under way.

Only one week earlier, Mitterrand had affirmed his intention to not give in to pressure on this question. Such an apparent change in course would need a new team to carry it out. Accordingly, on Tuesday July 17, prime minister Mauroy submitted his resignation, announced just after education minister Savary had announced his resignation.

The new prime minister appointed by Mitterrand is Laurent Fabius, former industry minister. Fabius is widely acknowledged to be the 'president's man'. 'I manage to forget that he is a minister,' explains Mitterrand, 'I always think that he is a member of my enlarged [presidential] cabinet.'

The new governmental team appointed by Fabius includes all shades of opinion within the Socialist Party, as well as retaining representation from the two small parties, Parti Socialist Unifie (PSU) and the bourgeois Movement of Left Radicals (MRG).

The left wing of the SP is represented by Jean-Pierre Chevenement, leader of the left grouping CERES, as education minister, and Pierre Joxe in the interior ministry. The foreign affairs and defence ministers are unchanged.

The Communist Party Central Committee met on Wednesday night to consider the offer of four ministerial posts made by Fabius. In a statement issued after this meeting they explained their refusal to accept this offer in the following terms:

'Unhappily, we find that the statements of the prime minister do not bring positive answers to the questions we've raised. It turns out that he has decided to continue with a policy of "rigour" [the restructuring of industry]. In the circum-

stances we do not believe that we have the moral right to let the millions of men, women and young people who are battling with disappointments and fears, believe that we could respond to their expectations within the present government.' (*International Herald Tribune*, Friday July 20, 1984.) At the same time, however, the CP explained it would continue to support the SP in the National Assembly when it sees fit.

A new course for the CP?

Thus, the CP would like to portray its departure from the government as a rejection of austerity, a break to the left. The declaration talks of a governmental 'reorientation' that would mean 'increase in unemployment, stagnation of economic activity, a drop in buying power'.

The response of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the LCR, French section of the Fourth International, to this statement was to explain:

'Reorientation...since when? What event, what date, what fact, what measure marks the start of it?

'The CP leadership is right to say that the government's policy has produced the rise in unemployment and the drop in buying power. But from them that sounds like a self-criticism! Didn't the CP support all the austerity measures, from the first plan in June 1982? Didn't it go so far as to vote, through its deputies, for the redundancies in steel by voting for the motion of confidence in April 1984?'

It is clear that the CP hopes, by distancing itself from the government, to regain the credibility it has lost among the workers and to allow its trade-union confederation, the CGT, and its local councillors where it is in control, off the hook of supporting the unpopular anti-working class measures of the government. But, as *Rouge* points out, this will not be so easy for a party that, since its failure to support the general strike of May-June 1968, has pursued the aim of 'a political coalition of the same nature as that realised in the 1936 Popular Front: an electoral alliance, based on a reformist programme, for a government that respects the state institutions and the economic system.' Nor will it attempt to do so 'through leading struggles, but through a tactic aiming to reassert its own political and trade-union identity against that of the SP.'

What will be the policy of the new government team? French political commentators are beginning to talk of a 'presidentialisation' of the government, Mitterrandism as they talked of Gaullism. As *Rouge* explained:

'The head of state is using all the resources that the institutions of the Fifth Republic give him. He is using the option of an increased presidentialisation of the regime in order to appear as the symbol of "unity of the French people", and to go round the SP-CP majority in the assembly.

'The terrain of a referendum is carefully chosen. It's not at all a question of

giving increased rights to the people, but of extending the possibilities for the president to have recourse to a plebiscite.'

The new cabinet, headed by Fabius, the acknowledged 'favourite son' of Mitterrand and, despite its political spread, also composed of those particularly close to the president, is another sign of this line adopted by Mitterrand. Fabius' record as industry minister, and thus directly responsible for the restructuring plans for industry that will bring thousands of redundancies, offers no hope to the French workers who have been betrayed time after time by the left government since its election.

The response of the French working class to this new government, as to the previous, must be to 'struggle, without holding back and without mercy,' explains *Rouge*. 'The struggle against the government, and not only against this or that aspect of its policies, is the only way for the workers to defend themselves against the capitalist offensive for which [the government] is the instrument, and the return of the right, for which it is the springboard.'

Stressing the need for such struggles to be united, *Rouge* stresses that 'No workers, particularly Communists, must allow the CP leaders to return to putting off, by their sectarianism, as they did in 1977 to 1981, hundreds of thousands of workers who want to act so that their hopes will not be lost. No workers, particularly Socialists, must allow the departure of the Communist ministers to serve as a pretext for an anti-Communist campaign within the unions. We know from experience what would be the result of these divisive policies: to weaken the fightback of the workers.'

In conclusion *Rouge* states:

'What has happened cannot fail to increase the confusion and disarray of the working class. The policies of the SP and CP, alone or together, are obviously bankrupt. However, there is no credible alternative. For many workers the horizon seems empty.

'The fight for workers' unity and action against the government and the right underlines the necessity for a policy that serves the workers, which thousands of them could make their banner in this fight.

'The debate that is necessary on this policy is already live within the workers movement. Far from running the risk of diverting them from their struggles, such a debate can only contribute to strengthening the confidence of the workers in their own strength and their conviction that they are fighting for something that is worth it.

'These are the methods and the objectives that the LCR proposes and defends. But there are other forces and other activists who share them. On this basis it is already possible to work together, in action and in the mass movement, to develop an alternative to Stalinism and social democracy. This would be a step forward to the construction of a new, a real, workers party.'

The dangers threatening the Salvadoran revolution and the tasks of world solidarity

The Salvadoran struggle has gone through major changes in the past few years. Passing from a pre-insurrectionary situation at the start of 1980, to one of full-scale civil war, to the present stage, which is marked by growing direct foreign intervention against the guerrillas. In each of these successive phases, the people's forces have faced crucial problems of revolutionary political and military strategy and of achieving unity in action.

The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), which was set up in 1980, has responded to these problems without ever conceding anything essential to the dictatorship or the imperialists. It has stuck to its historical perspective of overthrowing the dictatorship by revolutionary action. This does not mean that the FMLN has not made any misjudgments in the conduct of its struggle, or that the evolution of the struggle has not had effects on its internal debates. In a recent balance sheet, the FMLN recognized that such errors had in fact been made, stating: "The FMLN has not retreated a single step in the process of accumulating forces, despite the political and military errors that have been made." (1)

It is necessary, not only in order to properly understand the positions and the activity of the FMLN forces but also to clarify the pressing tasks of internationalist solidarity with the Salvadoran revolution, to grasp the way in which the revolutionary struggle of the Salvadoran people has unfolded and to analyze the real threat of imperialist invasion in Central America.

Vincent KERMEL

The roots of the Salvadoran civil war are in the sharp acceleration of mass anti-dictatorial struggles and the accumulation of revolutionary forces that marked the decade of the 1970s. The accompanying political radicalization created the culture medium for the political-military organizations that arose in the same decade.

The Farabundo Marti People's Liberation Forces (FPL) were formed in 1970, the Revolutionary People's Army (ERP) in 1971, and the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN) in 1975. These organizations broke from the reformist orientations of the bourgeois Christian Democratic Party (PDC) and the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS), which had held political hegemony over the workers and people's movement.

The growth of the underground revolutionary organizations that advocated armed struggle against the dictatorship was given impetus by the crisis of the political leadership of the people's movement. This crisis ensued from the failure of the electoralist strategies, which became evident after the election rigging by the dictatorship in 1972 and 1977. The PCS's policy of an electoral alliance with the Christian Democracy also lost its credibility, furthering deepening this crisis of political orientation.

Thus, a process of organization and radicalization gathered momentum a-

mong sections of the masses, with which the revolutionists proved able to build close links.

The revolutionists were sensitive to the struggles of a large urban and agricultural proletariat for better wages and conditions. Moreover, they drew the lessons from the repression of the Salvadoran peasant rebellion of 1932 and from the failure of various guerrillist operations in Latin America in the 1960s.

Armed struggle and the masses

So, the revolutionary political-military organizations oriented their armed activity in accordance with the development of the mass movement. Under their impetus, political mass fronts developed in the mid-1970s. Thus, the United People's Action Front (FAPU), linked to the FARN, was formed in 1974. Then, in August 1975, the Revolutionary People's Bloc (BPR), linked to the FPL, was constituted. Finally, in 1977, the February 28 People's Leagues (LP 28), linked to the ERP, was set up.

These structures were conceived of as political fronts capping the networks of trade-union, people's and other mass organizations controlled by the underground political-military groups. (2)

In this way, the revolutionary left progressively gained ground in a burgeoning process of organization. It made advances also in the countryside, where it

went through its first experiences in organizing the peasant masses for self-defense against the exactions of armed groups created by the landholding oligarchy.

However, this progress was not accompanied by a comparable advance in the area of united action among the various underground revolutionary forces. There were in fact serious hangovers of sectarianism and mutual mistrust. Thus, in 1974-1975, a violent split broke out in the ERP over the question of the connection between mass work and armed action, during which the poet Roque Dalton was killed. The FARN developed out of this split. These tragic events were to complicate relations between the two organizations for a long time.

In order to understand why the development of unity in action by the revolutionary forces has lagged behind the tempo of the radicalization, you have to keep in mind, first that the origins and political trajectories of the Salvadoran revolutionary organizations are very different, and secondly that there was a sudden acceleration in the course of events after July 1979.

The FPL was formed by a nucleus of leaders who came out of a split in the PCS, which resulted from the internal debates provoked by the Cuban revolution and the so-called Football War of 1969 [with Honduras]. On the other hand, the ERP and the FARN have their origins in the radicalization of progressive Christian currents.

The Cuban revolution, to be sure, did provide a certain common pole for the radicalization of these various currents. But in their relationships with the mass movement, the various revolutionary organizations not only differentiated themselves from the reformists but also from the other revolutionary groups. This evolution was rooted evidently in real differences of strategic assessment, international perspectives, and in the problems of underground struggle. (3) As a result, divisions were to persist in the mass movement among the trade-union and people's organizations affiliated to the various political fronts of the underground organizations.

This state of affairs was not surmounted until the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution in July 1979 which speeded up the development of the political situation in the region, even though, overall, the revolutionary currents were in a posi-

1. *Revolutionary Situation and Interventionist Escalation in the Salvadoran War*, General Command of the FMLN, Morazan, January 1984. Publication of Radio Venceremos, p. 28.

2. For example, at the end of the 1970s, the BPR claimed to have several tens of thousands of members and included, among other organizations, the Federation of Agricultural Workers (FTC), the Revolutionary Trade-Union Federation (FSR), and the National Association of Teachers of El Salvador (ANDES). The FAPU included the El Salvador National Federation of Labor Unions (FENASTRAS).

3. For an analysis of the historical origins of the Salvadoran revolutionary currents, see No 70, February 21, 1980, of *Inprecor*, IV's French-language sister publication.



Salvadoran guerrillas occupying a village (DR)

tion of strength within the mass movement.

It was the offensive that the revolutionary forces unleashed, following the military coup of October 15, 1979, that toppled the regime of General Humberto Romero, that blocked the attempt by Jimmy Carter's administration to defuse the developing revolutionary situation by means of a few reforms.

After the coup, a junta was put in office, representing a coalition of the PDC, the PCS and the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR), a small petty bourgeois formation with links to the Second International. This government tried to offer a reformist alternative, but this collapsed under the combined effect of the sharpening class conflicts given impetus by revolutionary action and of the stubborn resistance by the ruling strata to the application of the program of reforms proposed by the junta (agrarian reform, nationalization of the banks, curbing the death squads, etc.)

Contrary to the hopes of the US imperialists, the new situation opened up the way somewhat more for a revolutionary solution to the crisis of the dictatorship that had been maintained intact. The departure of the PCS from the government on December 1979, and the subsequent withdrawal of the MNR, were the direct consequence of growing response among the poor masses to the proposals advanced by the revolutionists.

So, in early 1980, a new wave of radicalization developed in the workers and people's movement, reflected in gigantic

street demonstrations. The acceleration of these class confrontations, and no doubt also the Nicaraguan example, then led the revolutionary people's forces to begin systematically building unity in action. This was situated more and more explicitly within the perspective of preparing for a general insurrection.

The new course led to a process of gradual unification, propelled by the rapid rise in the mobilization of the working masses. After about a year, it culminated in the formation of the FMLN on October 9, 1980.

This advance toward united action by the workers and people's forces, led by the revolutionary organizations, contrasted with previous experiences of unity in the mass movement, which were dominated by reformist or bourgeois currents. By the end of 1979, the PCS, the FPL and the FARN set up a structure for political and military coordination.

The joint manifesto of this united front of workers organizations, published on January 10, 1980, said: "No one should make any mistake about it any more. The only real and effective alternative for solving the national crisis in the interests of the people is an armed people's revolution, for which the conditions are ripening rapidly within the masses." (4)

Because of its differences with the FARN, the ERP stayed out of this regroupment, even if the FPL maintained bilateral relations with it and with the Central American Revolutionary Workers Party (PRTC), of more recent origin.

On January 11, 1980, the process of unification took a decisive step forward with the formation of the Mass Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the People's Organizations (CRM). This structure brought together the mass fronts of all the political-military organizations (FAPU, the BPR, LP 28) and the Nationalist Democratic Union (UDN), linked to the PCS. Later it brought in the People's Liberation Movement (MLP), linked to the PRTC.

The CRM organized the biggest mass demonstration in the history of El Salvador, assembling around 250,000 people in the capital on January 22, 1980. This process of unification under revolutionary leadership further increased the following of the political-military organizations and reinforced their capacity for mobilization, as well as their links with important sections of the people's movement.

Revolutionary unity

This unity was deepened with the formation in April 1980 of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) on the basis of a platform calling for the overthrow of the dictatorship and for thoroughgoing reforms. In addition to the member organizations of the CRM, the FDR included various trade-union and people's organizations and forces of bourgeois origin, such as the Social Christian People's Movement (MPSC), a splitoff from the PDC, which was then in government; as well as forces of petty bourgeois origin, such as the MNR. It represented a more extensive unification of the antidictatorial strata and thus a further step toward isolating the dictatorship. Moreover, the FDR was placed under the leadership of the revolutionary armed forces, since it recognized the authority of the FMLN.

During this time contacts continued among the underground organizations, and on May 22, 1980, the Unified Revolutionary Leadership (DRU) was formed. It included the FPL, the FARN, the ERP and the PCS. The DRU then defined itself as "a unified leadership responsible for drawing up and executing a single political and military line for all the organizations, for leading the revolutionary war of our heroic people to victory, to the establishment of a revolutionary democratic government, and to the introduction of deepgoing political, economic and social changes...." (5)

The DRU was to experience internal difficulties, reflected in the withdrawal of the FARN from this coordinating body in August 1980. The difference seems to have had to do, among other things, with a disagreement over a strike action organized in the capital city by FENASTRAS, a union organization controlled by the

4. Quoted by *Rouge*, weekly paper of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International, January 25, 1980.

5. *Idem*, July 11, 1980.

FAPU, which is linked to the FARN. More generally, the FARN made it clear that it intended to keep this process of unification at the level of coordination.

At the time, the DRU issued a communique violently denouncing "individualist, hegemonist, adventurist and even putschist tendencies on the part of the leaders of the National Resistance, which have been reflected in actions undertaken outside the framework of what was decided in the DRU and in failure to apply in practice the decisions adopted." (6)

A few months later, however, on October 9, 1980, the FMLN was formed. It was defined as a "single military organization" with a single command operating in the framework of "the strategy and tactics of a single people's war." After several weeks of discussion, the FARN and the PRTC joined the FMLN. Nonetheless, the debate on the FMLN's conception of unity was not closed. It reemerged a few months later over the question of how decisions were to be made by the general command of the FMLN.

The formation of the FMLN as a united-front framework for the military and political struggle to overthrow the dictatorship came, however, at a time when the situation of the urban mass movement had changed, since repression had limited the possibilities for open work. In the wake of the February 1980 strike actions, the dictatorship launched a military counteroffensive designed to drive back the mass mobilization.

The regime's strategy for repression included "official" suppression of demonstrations, banning political parties, tight military surveillance of the cities and parallel actions by paramilitary groups (assassination of workers' leaders, provocations against street demonstrations, etc.). By these means the dictatorship managed within a few months to deal serious blows to the mass movement in the capital city.

The method was to terrorize the population en masse by assassinations carried out by the death squadrons and by raids into poor neighborhoods. This went hand in hand with selective repression designed to decapitate the workers and people's movement.

The effects of repression

The brutal repression against the demonstration organized at the end of March 1980 to protest the murder of the archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero, illustrated this transformation of the conditions for political activity by the urban mass movement in the capital. Between January and June 1980, about 2,000 people were assassinated. And in the aftermath of the strikes in June and August 1980, unions came under violent repression. The leadership of the electrical union STECEL were arrested. The electricity generating plants were put under military control, and some unions were banned.

In November 1980, part of the public leadership of the FDR was assassinated. And when these leaders were buried, the repression was so severe that it was possible to organize a rally of only about 5,000 persons, who had to prepare to defend themselves. The FDR had to suspend some of its mass initiatives because of the repression.

Having thus regained the initiative in the capital, the dictatorship managed to stop the development toward an urban insurrection, for which the momentum had been building up, with the incorporation of new sections of the working masses into the ranks of the people's forces led by the revolutionists.

This did not, however, mean that the relationship of forces was tipped back in favor of the dictatorship on the national scale. The deterioration in the situation of the mass movement in the capital was in fact compensated for by an expansion in the military action of the FMLN and a reinforcement of its bases of support in the rest of the country. This was made possible because the revolutionary organizations had carried out certain preparatory work and had a base in the mass peasant movement in several regions.

Moreover, the political weight of the agricultural workers and small peasants was far from negligible in a country where these strata represented 60% of the population in 1975 and where the land question and conflict with the oligarchy were central concerns for 60% of the peasant families. The latter is the proportion of the peasantry made up of seasonal workers, migrant workers and peasants without land or with plots of less than a hectare. (7)

This readiness of the FMLN to resist the dictatorship's military counteroffensive over 1980 and its ability to transform itself in a few months into a real armed force assured that the revolutionary process would continue. But the conditions did not seem to exist any longer for carrying out an insurrectionary general strike in the immediate future.

This situation prompted discussions on the perspectives for struggle among the advocates of the various strategic conceptions held within the FMLN and on the means for making decisions within the framework of the front. At the time the political debate was polarized between the FPL, which supported a strategy of prolonged people's war involving the strengthening of the areas controlled by the revolutionists and a strict workers-and-peasants-alliance orientation, and the ERP, which favored a perspective of insurrection in the near future, with broader antidictatorial alliances.

Under the influence of the ERP's conception to a certain extent, the FMLN launched a general offensive in December 1980-January 1981, which some FMLN leaders referred to on a number of occasions as a "final" one. It had two prongs. The first was a military offensive on the national level. This action began

in mid-December, and, despite certain weaknesses, was an undeniable success, insofar as it meant that the FMLN had seized the military initiative, exposed the vulnerability of the government forces, and achieved an advance in coordinated action by the people's forces.

The second prong was an unlimited general strike called in mid-January by the FDR, which was supposed to lead to a popular insurrection in the capital. This operation was a failure. The urban masses did not join in massively, and those sections of the masses that went on strike subsequently came under severe repression.

Overall, the January 1981 offensive marked the entry of the revolutionary struggle into the phase of full-fledged civil war. US imperialism responded to the blows dealt to the government forces in particular by building up the first Salvadoran elite unit, the Atlacatl Brigade.

Political challenge for the FMLN

The FMLN, thus, came out of this period stronger on the military level but facing extremely complex problems on the political one. In a sense, these difficulties constituted a challenge to the revolutionists' schema of taking power by combining a guerrilla offensive with a general uprising of the urban masses. Several elements were highlighted by the January 1981 action.

First of all, at the end of the day the splits that were expected in the armed forces did not materialize to anything like the extent anticipated despite the call for rebellion raised by colonel Majano. The most that happened was the desertion of a part of the Santa Ana garrison. The crisis of the government's armed forces did not, therefore take the spectacular form of the army breaking up under the impact of the FMLN's military action, with the large sections going over to the antidictatorial struggle.

Of course, there were tactical differences running through the military apparatus. But despite creeping demoralization, a steady flow of desertions, and the losses of materiel and human life, the core of the military hierarchy, which is an emanation of the Salvadoran oligarchy, remained quite solid. In this respect the role of imperialism was becoming more and more decisive. In order to deal with this situation, therefore, the FMLN had to take up particularly arduous military tasks. In particular, it had to build up a real people's armed force.

Secondly, the masses in the capital, terrorized by the repression and partially disorganized, did not rise up spontaneously in response to the FDR's appeal in January 1981. Many sectors of the masses showed reluctance to get involved in an unlimited general strike. A whole

6. Idem, November 6, 1980.

7. Cf. "Class Struggles in El Salvador," *New Left Review*, No 122, July-August 1980.

section of the people's movement remained unconvinced that the FMLN could mount an effective self-defense of these actions against the repression and assure that they would develop directly and without undue bloodshed into a revolutionary overthrow of the dictatorship.

From the standpoint of the ripeness of conditions for class confrontations in the urban centers, it seems that the FMLN's military offensive came too late. This conclusion is in fact indicated in an FMLN document: "This action [the January 1981 insurrection], while it was late with respect to the critical point of the revolutionary situation (January to June 1980), nonetheless brought a strong thrust in the accumulation of forces." (8)

Since then the FMLN has faced the need of finding the means for restarting a process to prepare the way for launching a general popular uprising. To accomplish this, it has had to look for bridges for bringing into the struggle sections of the popular masses not yet involved in it, especially in the capital. In fact, the existence of such sectors remaining outside the struggle offered the bourgeois forces room for maneuver.

did not seriously interfere with the elections in those areas where the government forces were able to assure protection. The FMLN document quoted above, moreover, partially recognized this problem, pointing out:

"The FMLN tried consciously or unconsciously to repeat the schema of the 'great offensive' on March 28, 1982. Although it did not achieve its principal objectives, it did succeed in accumulating new tactical experience that will enable it in the future to make a big qualitative advance in the military field. However, in the political field, a temporary crisis developed, lasting from March to June 1982. In this period, the FMLN readjusted its forces and its tactics." (9)

Nonetheless, despite the difficulties of remobilizing the urban masses broadly under its leadership, the FMLN did not lose the broad working-class and popular base that it held throughout the country, including in the zones that it did not directly control. But what did appear more and more was a differentiation in attitudes, which in fact was a feature of the civil-war situation that the population was experiencing. A gap developed be-

military tactics. From that time, according to its assessment today, "the ideas that we could launch an insurrection when we wanted and the idea of the 'great offensive' ceased to be determining features in the FMLN's plans. This is because there was a better understanding of the characteristics that the revolutionary war had already assumed." (10)

The consolidation of the guerrilla-controlled zones, the establishment of secure corridors of communication among them, and the "Comandante Gonzalo Campaign" launched in June 1982 illustrated this reorientation in the military field. The FMLN's objectives were now to wear down the government's repressive forces and to aggravate the crisis of the dictatorship through a series of armed actions that were not aimed at an immediate seizure of power.

US invasion looms

In the spring of 1983, the FMLN had to confront a very strong reaction by US imperialism. Washington imposed a new political military strategy on the government forces. It was designed to obstruct communications among the guerrillas and to try to deprive them of a part of their social base by maintaining military activity in the disputed regions.

The objective of the notorious CONARA scheme was to establish firm economic control of the most important regions in the country. The first major attempt to put it into practice was to be the operation "Well Being for San Vicente" in the central region.

However, the FMLN's capture of the city of San Miguel in the eastern part of the country on September 4, 1983, sounded the death knell for the hopes the imperialists and the dictatorship had held for containing the guerrillas in their traditional base zones in the north.

The economic part of the program for pacifying San Vicente province involved an investment of 10 million dollars. But it was possible to take only a few first steps, generally in areas where this was tolerated by the guerrillas. A specialized magazine pointed out:

"American officials admit that the program makes progress only when the FMLN collaborates. Before starting a project, they get the approval of the guerrillas. They also pay a bonus to the FMLN to assure that there will be no sabotage against the equipment and the machines. And they accept the guerrillas' conditions for the implementation of every project.

"For example, in a report in the *National Catholic Reporter*, the mayor of Santa Clara, Guadalupe Montano Choto, said that the pacification program was financing the rebuilding of schools and



San Salvador, March 28, 1982: elections under military surveillance (DR)

Not only had these sections of the masses been directly affected by the repression, but the FMLN's organic links with the urban mass movement had been weakened for similar reasons. The departure of many leading cadre in the mass movement to the zones controlled by the guerrillas, either for security reasons or to help in the tasks of military organization, accentuated this disorganization of the mass movement in the capital. Indeed, this problem had by no means been solved when the dictatorship held its legislative elections in March 1982.

In the zones the FMLN did not control directly or where it had no regular active presence, the boycott it called for took the form of sabotage actions conducted by guerrilla columns. Mass participation was quite limited. This tactic

tween the involvement of the masses in armed revolutionary struggle in the areas controlled by the FMLN, and where it was able to contend with the government forces for control, and the disorientation and fear that influenced the behavior of a section of the masses in the zones controlled by the government forces.

So, the FMLN found itself forced to stop looking forward systematically to a general popular uprising as an immediate response to all its large-scale military operations.

After 1982 and the FMLN's resistance to the offensive launched after the elections by the government forces against the zones controlled by the guerrillas, the confrontation assumed more and more the configurations of a full-scale civil war. The FMLN then modified its

8. FMLN document of January 1984, cited in Footnote 1.

9. *Idem*, p. 20.

10. *Idem*, p. 21.

paying the teachers' salaries. The FMLN allowed this program to go on, but only on the condition that an hour a day be devoted to an information session on the Salvadoran revolution, given by the guerrillas themselves." (11)

This failure of the government forces "led the FMLN to a new phase in the war, and the imperialists to the decision to intervene more directly. The strategic perspective in the enemy's plan now calls for a process of phased intervention." (12)

Over 1983, three major events marked the evolution of the situation: 1) Growing US intervention, which involved new dangers for the revolutionary process and put new international pressures on the FMLN. 2) A grave internal crisis that occurred in this context in the FPL. 3) The resurgence of mobilizations for immediate demands in San Salvador, which revealed the new importance of revolutionists intervening in the urban mass movement.

The danger of foreign invasion against the guerrillas firmed up seriously over 1983. While the relationship of forces in El Salvador itself are favorable to the revolutionary and popular organizations, increased imperialist support for the dictatorship is becoming a more and more important obstacle to a revolutionary victory.

Such imperialist financial and material aid is artificially prolonging the life of the regime, even if it cannot stem the crisis of the dictatorship. The only alternative the imperialists have, therefore, is to get more and more deeply involved in defending the dictatorship. Thus, every military setback suffered by the government forces brings the possibility of direct intervention by foreign troops a bit closer. This was in fact pointed out by the Kissinger Report at the end of 1983, which considered that US intervention in El Salvador was "inevitable."

The big press played up this conclusion, as an article in the June 1984 issue of *Le Monde Diplomatique* noted: "Since the end of summer 1983, the idea that intervention by foreign troops will be necessary has become an accepted fact for the American government."

However, the American imperialists are encountering some structural obstacles to carrying out their project. In particular, they have no prospect of being able to "Latin-Americanize" their intervention. This is not only because of the soured relations that have existed between the US and some Latin-American countries since the Malvinas War but also and more generally because of the profound economic and social crisis that has gripped these countries and paralyzed their capacity for intervening alongside the US. This is the case notably of Argentina and Brazil.

Therefore, the imperialists would have to participate directly and on a large scale in any invasion, even if it were staged under the cover of a regional alliance, as was done in the case of Grenada, where the US got the endorsement of some Car-

ibbean countries. The regional alliance that would be used, obviously, is the Central American Defense Council (CONDECA), whose armed forces have been taking part regularly in joint maneuvers with US forces for many months in order to prepare themselves technically for intervention in the region.

However, even the CONDECA has been weakened by the conflicts that exist among some of the countries in the region. What is more, the political crisis is also accelerating in the Central American dictatorships, as attested by the recent workers mobilizations in Honduras.

This perspective of foreign invasion has thus become a new factor in the revolutionary crisis. And it means that a particular use of anti-imperialist appeals is on the agenda for the FMLN. In certain respects, this makes the revolutionary seizure of power in El Salvador still more complex than in Cuba and Nicaragua. In the latter two countries, threats of direct imperialist intervention only became immediate after the revolutionary conquest of power. In the Salvadoran case, US imperialism is clearly ready to oppose a revolutionary victory by any means. It is only trying to reduce to a minimum the political price that it will have to pay for such an undertaking. It is obvious that the US is preparing the political preconditions (CONDECA, Duarte's victory in the elections) and the military ones (US bases in Honduras, regionwide maneuvers) for staging an imperialist invasion.

International pressures on the FMLN

This situation of intense military confrontation with US imperialism is making the Central American revolution into a focus of international class conflict. As a result, various pressures (military, political and diplomatic) are being brought to bear on the Salvadoran revolutionary movement. Thus, the more definite the threat of imperialist invasion becomes, the more certain Latin American bourgeoisies — fearful of the consequences that such an operation could have in the region — are intervening on the international political scene to try to persuade the parties to the conflict to accept a compromise.

For example, the Contadora Group — Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela — proposes that the Salvadoran question be taken up in the framework of broad regional negotiations aimed at stabilizing the political and military situation in Central America. For their own specific interests, some West European bourgeoisies and the international Social Democracy are aligning themselves with this campaign of diplomatic pressure. Their objective is to avert what they see as two symmetrical dangers, a revolutionary victory and an imperialist invasion.

To judge by what happened in the case of the US invasion of Grenada, it can be easily imagined that the FMLN will get scant support from the Social Democratic

parties in power in some West European countries or even from the Soviet Union in resisting such pressures. To the contrary, everything indicates that the Soviet bureaucracy behind the scenes is following the same course. It is one thing for the Soviet Union to take advantage of victories by the masses after the fact to advance its diplomatic interests. It is quite another to help carry a revolutionary process to victory when, as in El Salvador, it is being led by forces that Moscow does not control.

Thus, the Soviet bureaucracy can be expected to apply pressure to get the Salvadoran guerrillas to align themselves with its diplomatic strategy. And to this end it will not hesitate to use any means. It has no interest in fact in seeing the reinforcement of a revolutionary pole around Cuba and Nicaragua in the region that would enjoy a greater degree of political independence from the USSR.

Thus, the objective difficulty of coordinating the development of the guerrilla war with an advance toward an uprising of the urban masses is compounded for the FMLN by the problem of finding means for averting a direct foreign intervention, while preparing militarily to thwart such an invasion. From this standpoint, it can be said that the Salvadoran revolutionary struggle is taking on a new anti-imperialist dimension, although this should not mean any lowering of the social aims of this struggle.

It was in this context of a discussion impelled by this new situation, by the strategic problems it posed, and by the question of what sort of unity had to be developed within the FMLN, that a grave internal crisis arose in the spring of 1983 in the FPL. The murder in April 1983 of Comandante Ana Maria and the subsequent suicide of Comandante Marcial removed two of the main leaders of the FPL. (13) This undoubtedly represented the worst blow suffered by the leadership of one of the largest organizations in the FMLN since the start of the civil war.

The murder of Comandante Ana Maria by FPL members, including a member of the central leadership, Rogelio A. Bazzaglia Recinos, was apparently intended to settle internal differences. In this respect, it recalls the most painful episodes in the history of the Salvadoran people's movement, which were the result of sectarianism, like the tragic and bloody incidents that accompanied the ERP split in 1974-75. In this way, the evils of murderous police-like methods suddenly reappeared within the FPL, after it was believed that they had been overcome by the experience and the political consciousness of the Salvadoran revolutionary movement.

But this tragic event also reflected the tenseness of the political climate within

11. *Inforpress Centroamericana*, Guatemala, March 22, 1984.

12. FMLN document cited above, pp. 38-39.

13. See IV, No 30, May 16, 1983, and No 46, February 13, 1984.

the Salvadoran revolutionary movement, owing in part no doubt to the intense political and military pressure brought to bear on the FMLN by the imperialists. This was increased, moreover, by the diplomatic operations carried out by the Latin American and West European bourgeoisies and by the Social Democracy and the Soviet bureaucracy.

Thus, the crisis in the FPL was rooted in fundamental questions that probably also face the other forces in the FMLN. That is, the concrete forms for building workers democracy in a situation of civil war and militarization of the political organizations.

However, the successive explanations the FMLN has offered of the circumstances in which Ana Maria was killed and the accusation finally lodged against Marcial several months after his death, blaming him for the murder without producing a shred of proof, are hardly an instructive example for the Salvadoran masses and the international revolutionary movement of the way differences and debate are handled in the FPL, and by extension in the FMLN.

Differences in the movement

It is, in fact, clear that behind these events there were debates over real questions. And there is no reason to think that such debates will not emerge again. The questions involved, insofar as can be ascertained, involved a debate over revolutionary strategy, the policy of alliances to advance given the threat of imperialist intervention, the urgency of building a revolutionary party and the role that the FPL should play in this process, the actual importance to be assigned to diplomatic initiatives and proposals for negotiation, and finally the proposal for a fusion of the organizations in the front proposed by some currents in the FMLN.

These debates, which were undoubtedly not confined to the FPL, came in the context of the discussion of a new programmatic platform for the FMLN, which was to succeed the 1980 program for a Revolutionary Democratic Government. This new platform finally emerged in the form of the proposal for a Broadly Inclusive Provisional Government, which was issued on January 31, 1984. (14)

The fact that the positions being discussed were concealed entirely from people outside the country and probably also, to some extent, from the rank and file of the Salvadoran revolutionary and people's movement itself, cannot be justified simply by pointing to the civil-war situation that El Salvador is going through. This veil of silence is all the more serious since, as a result of this crisis, activists were expelled from the FPL and formed a new organization, the Revolutionary Workers Movement (MOR), which claims to represent the traditional political orientations of Marcial and the FPL.

Moreover, a group called the "Clara Elisabeth Ramirez Front" has appeared,



Even in the dictatorship's prisons the FMLN radio is heard (DR)

which seems to be based mainly in the capital. It also criticizes the present leadership of the FPL. Like the MOR, it denounces the internal regime of the FPL (militarization of the organization and the methods of internal debate). It follows to some extent its own political and military orientation, operating apparently mainly in the capital, while claiming that it wants to stay in the framework of the FMLN.

These revolutionary activists who are fighting the dictatorship should be able to find a place in a united framework of the working class and people's forces, regardless of whatever differences they may have with the FPL leadership today. The method of discussion employed after the departure of the FARN to rebuild the unity that had existed in the DRU in 1980 and to bring the PRTC into the FMLN seems a good way for resolving the new problem that has arisen.

It has to be made clear, on the other hand, that this internal crisis of the FPL has not meant any decline in the fighting capacity of the FMLN. At the very moment that these tragic events were unfolding, the FMLN was able to checkmate the new military tactics to which the dictatorship and the imperialists turned during the summer of 1983.

A new element in the situation showed up in the last months of 1983, with the resurgence of a wave of struggles for immediate demands in the capital. There were big peasant demonstrations in September 1983, organized by the People's Democratic Union (UPD), a coalition of trade-union organizations set up in 1983. These were followed by a wide range of struggles for higher wages during the election campaign and after Napoleon Duarte's installation as president in June 1984. All these struggles reflect the rise of a new protest movement.

Even though the content of the demands and the present limits of these strikes, especially in the public sector, are still a far cry from what occurred in the previous period of radicalization of

the urban mass movement in the early months of 1980, the recent mobilizations are nonetheless the biggest urban actions since that time.

The UPD, which had made an election pact with the PDC and got two posts in the Duarte government, launched the first street mobilizations when the National Assembly began to go back on the agrarian reform at the end of 1983. This opened up the way for a whole series of sections of the working class and poor masses to start waging a fight for higher pay, which had become particularly urgent because of the economic crisis and the wage freeze the regime imposed.

New urban upsurge

These actions represented a resumption of social struggles by sections of the working people who had been largely muzzled by the repression in the preceding years. These strikes multiplied, spread, and sometimes were even coordinated, even though they came up against violent repression.

This resumption of social struggles by sections of the urban masses is opening up new perspectives for intervention by the revolutionary activists and the left trade-union organizations. Since 1980, the trade-union picture has, to be sure, changed to the disadvantage of the left. But the organizations that support the FDR and the FMLN have not been entirely silenced. A certain level of activity has been maintained, even though the organizations have lost activists, owing to assassinations, arrests and "disappearances." In fact, a process of recomposition developed in this period, reflected by the formation of the Movement for Unity of the Trade-Union and Professional Associations in El Salvador (MUSYGES). (15) On May Day 1984, this organization called a street demonstration that

14. For an English translation of the text of this document, see IV, No 50, April 9, 1984.
15. See IV, No 37, October 3, 1983.

drew 3,000 people in the capital city.

The Christian Democrats still have influence in the union movement. The left no longer holds hegemony in the mass movement, as it did in 1980. It has also been weakened by the fact that several years of repression and civil war have engendered a certain weariness among the workers, many of whom find it hard to see a way out of the conflict. Thus, a desire for peace and reforms may develop among the urban masses.

However, the revolutionary left has new opportunities for the fight that it is waging within the trade-union movement to hold its place in these mobilizations and, in time, to lay the foundations for regaining hegemony in the urban mass movement. The fact that the social needs (for higher wages) and the basic democratic aspirations (for reforms, peace, trade-union rights) felt by the urban masses go well beyond what the Duarte government is willing or able to offer also opens up the possibility for confrontations with the regime. This will give the revolutionists an additional basis for intervening.

It has to be understood, however, that intervention by the revolutionists in this movement will not automatically solve the problem of incorporating these sections of the masses directly into the revolutionary struggle of the FMLN. Achieving this objective will still depend on how effectively the revolutionists can respond to the various maneuvers of the unions linked to the bourgeois parties or the dictatorship and to the problem of the political disorientation of a section of the urban masses.

The FMLN peace plan

The victory by the Christian Democrat Napoleon Duarte in the May 1984 presidential elections illustrates well the contradictory aspects of the present situation. Duarte, who headed the government between 1980 and 1982, during a period of severe repression against the mass movement, has gained the presidency of El Salvador thanks to the support of the United States. But he also had the backing of the UPD, which has a certain influence among sections of the masses. These elections were completely "made in the US," rigged from top to bottom by the imperialists.

This election victory has not resolved the crisis of bourgeois rule over the long term. It confirmed the transitional role of the preceding government headed by Alvaro Magana and imposed a certain readjustment, under close US supervision, among the various bourgeois forces. In this respect, these elections reversed somewhat the balance that came out of the March 1982 legislative elections. At that time, Major d'Aubuisson's ARENA party and the Party of National Conciliation (PCN) gained the predominant weight in the bourgeois institutions,

pushing the Christian Democrats to the sidelines.

The latest elections have put Washington's candidate back in the saddle, in the framework of a veritable pact between the Christian Democrats and the US. But US imperialism is the sole guarantor of this new balance, since the rightist parties continue to hold the majority in the Assembly.

Duarte's government is a coalition between the PDC, the Democratic Alliance and the UPD. It has to deal with the political formations (ARENA and the PCD) that represent a landholding oligarchy that enjoys a considerable degree of political and social cohesiveness. Despite the Christian Democrats' concessions to the oligarchy, notably in abandoning the agrarian reform, some sections of the bourgeoisie publicly denounced Duarte's candidacy. They are only accepting the governmental solution he represents today because it has the backing of the Americans, which assures an inflow of imperialist economic aid for these bourgeois sectors.

For its part, the army, the oligarchs' and the imperialists' main instrument for ruling the country, got the assurance even before the elections that it would keep its control over the conduct of the war, the Ministry of Defense, and get new supplies of military equipment. Since the installation of the Duarte government, moreover, the government army has engaged in a search-and-destroy operation against the guerrillas, involving the bombing of civil populations in the zones where the FMLN is active.

With Duarte's victory, the imperialists' search for a government that could gain broader international legitimacy for the Salvadoran dictatorship has scored a certain success. For example, 45 countries were represented at Duarte's inauguration, including Mexico. Moreover, the new president got a letter "sent in a personal capacity but in accordance with the ideas of the Socialist International" from Willy Brandt, Felipe Gonzalez, Pena Gomez in the Dominican Republic and Carlos Andres Perez in Venezuela. It declared that the elections had been "a victory for democratic ideas and for the aspiration of the Salvadoran people to live in peace under a government of laws." It also expressed support for negotiations with the FMLN-FDR. (16)

Nonetheless, it is clear that Duarte has no real perspective for applying a program of reforms, even as limited as that envisaged in 1979 after the overthrow of General Humberto Romero. The government's first "human-rights" actions, such as the transfer to other posts of some leaders of the death squadrons and the sentencing of the murderers of the five American nuns, were nothing more than an attempt to put people off the track.

The death squadrons, organized not long ago by CIA agents, will be put on ice momentarily by a joint operation of the CIA and West German police, whose aim obviously is not to open up the way

for recognizing the democratic demands of the masses. This "clean-up" is part of a broad maneuver to create the conditions for drawing sections of the FMLN and FDR into the parliamentary and electoral game. Legislative elections are planned for 1985 and it is believed that sections of the FMLN-FDR may be ready to make the ultimate concession of renouncing the armed struggle. The pursuit of this tactic is not in contradiction to the perspective of a foreign invasion, since it is intended to open the way for dividing the people's movement and crushing the revolutionary forces that do not accept the parliamentary perspective.

This explains Duarte's declaration that he is only interested in negotiating with what he calls the "democratic" sections of the opposition and that he is not going to negotiate with "guns on the table." The objective of this US-inspired maneuver is, thus, essentially to try to crack the unity of the forces lined up behind the leadership of the FMLN, with the aim of getting back to the situation that prevailed in 1979.

This tactic is aimed directly at a section of the FDR. Duarte said so, moreover, when he declared in his inauguration address that "sections of the political left have fallen into the grip of the guerrilla commanders, and have not so far demonstrated that they were the leaders of the subversive movement. In order to do this, in order to gain credibility, they have to demonstrate their control over the armed wing, to assure that any decision will be respected by the subversive movement as a whole." (17)

The present Salvadoran government is thus a key piece in the imperialists' strategy for preparing the political conditions for stepping up their intervention in the civil war. The Christian Democracy, therefore, can be more useful than ARENA for legitimizing an intervention by foreign troops and providing diplomatic cover, perhaps in the form of an appeal for international aid from San Salvador.

Among the obstacles to Duarte's policy, beyond even the armed resistance of the FMLN, there are the objective difficulties of relaunching, after such a long period of civil war, a credible reform project like the one attempted in 1979. Moreover, the resurgence of strikes in the capital, even in their present limits, is going to present a challenge for the government. There does not seem to be any way the system can absorb the democratic and wage demands that are being raised, at least as long as the civil war goes on.

A dynamic of opposition to the government and to the dictatorship is developing in these struggles. Their tempo and scope will, of course, depend to a certain extent on the recomposition of the internal relationship of forces within the trade-union movement.

In this political context, the FMLN's analysis can be summed up by what it

16. *Le Monde*, May 18, 1984.

17. *Inforpress Centroamericana*, June 7, 1984.



The military command of the FMLN eastern front (DR)

said in a document written early in 1984: "The tempo and phasing of the US intervention plan depend on domestic American political factors, strategic factors on the world scale, and the military advance itself that the FMLN is able to achieve. If the FMLN's military plans deepen the moral crisis in the army, the US schemes will be made vastly more difficult to carry out. Because this would remove the human agent necessary for putting them into practice. The US would thus have to either redefine its position toward the FMLN-FDR or intervene militarily with its own troops at a politically inopportune time." (18)

It was in this general framework that the FMLN put its proposal for a broadly inclusive provisional government. This proposal was made before the recent presidential elections, and, subsequently, a call for negotiations was directed at the Duarte government.

The FMLN seems to have been trying in this way to respond on several levels to the present problems. On the one hand, faced with the threat of imperialist invasion, the FMLN took this means of appealing to international public opinion in a last attempt to stave off invasion. The proposals were also aimed at maintaining the unity of the FMLN and FDR around a plan for negotiations and thus countering any of the pressures being brought to bear to crack this unity and isolate the armed section of the resistance.

This course was also designed to demonstrate to those sections of the masses that are not yet convinced of the justness of the revolutionary people's war that the FMLN is ready to accept a political solution aimed at securing peace, the purging of the repressive bodies and the introduction of democratic reforms.

At the same time, the FMLN is continuing intransigently to refuse to lay down its arms in advance of any negotiations and maintaining its orientation of support for the democratic and social demands of the masses. This last point, which is included in the Platform for a Broadly Inclusive Provisional Government, was reaffirmed on May 1. It has also just been confirmed in a communique in which the FMLN specified that its military units must support the demands of the workers in every part of the country and guaranteed that the wage demands would be

implemented in the regions under its control. (19)

Finally, the FMLN's operation was also designed to challenge sections of the Salvadoran petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie, to press them one last time to choose their camp on the eve of a possible foreign invasion.

However, although the term "anti-oligarchic bourgeoisie" is used in the platform, this appeal was in fact much more directed at social strata that could be defined as petty bourgeois or bourgeois middle classes, and which might still have an anti-imperialist chord that could be touched.

The present political polarization, the existence of a strong revolutionary army and large areas controlled by the guerrillas, as well as the revival of the mass movement and the international context of imperialist aggression make any realization of the FMLN's proposals for negotiation highly unlikely. In fact, these proposals called for a government made up of "representatives of the workers and peasants movement, the public employees, the National University, the University of Central America, a purged army, the FMLN and the FDR." (20)

Even considering a real purge of the army is out of the question for the bourgeoisie and imperialism, and such an operation could not be carried out by a government like the one headed by Duarte. Any attempt to apply such a measure in itself would mean a confrontation with the oligarchy and its armed forces.

However, it cannot be excluded that some international political forces, or even some currents in the camp of the people, may not view this proposal by the FMLN merely as a diplomatic tactic but rather as a real possibility for a compromise solution to the Salvadoran conflict. Without denying the fact that the FMLN-FDR's new platform — which differs on several points from its previous program for a Revolutionary Democratic Government — is aimed at exposing the imperialists, we have to realize that the formulations in it could be interpreted for diametrically opposite purposes in practice, depending on the evolution of the relationship of forces within the Salvadoran workers and people's movement, in the Central American region, and in the arena of social struggles. (21)

In this respect, it should be noted that formulations such as "anti-oligarchic bourgeoisie" that appear in the FMLN document, or the expectation that "healthy sections" of the army will come over to the people are similar to those used in 1979 for outright reformist ends, by the PCS for example. Therefore, reorganizing the right of the FMLN to execute a diplomatic maneuver of this type in the context of the present stage of the Salvadoran struggle and of the prevailing relationship of forces does not involve any obligation to endorse the letter of its proposals.

It is in fact possible that in the context of a different relationship of forces, some of these formulations, because of the illusions they might arouse in certain sections of the masses, could be exploited by reformist or bourgeois currents.

It is the evolution of the political relationship of forces within the mass movement and the revolutionary struggle in the country, therefore, that will be decisive in determining the trajectory of the proposal for a Broadly Inclusive Provisional Government.

In this situation, consequently, the international workers movement has a particularly large responsibility. It has to help effectively and concretely to reinforce a favorable relationship of forces for the working-class and revolutionary organizations in the struggle in El Salvador. The threat of a foreign invasion looming larger and larger poses a clear and decisive objective for the solidarity movement; it must stay the criminal hand of American imperialism.

It must be clearly understood that the scope of the mobilization of the international revolutionary and anti-imperialist movement will be a factor in the evolution of the situation in El Salvador. This makes it essential, regardless of any differences that may exist in assessing the development of the situation in Central American or the orientations followed by the revolutionists fighting in the region, to increase united-front actions throughout the world in solidarity with the Salvadoran revolution.

Once the American elections are over, Washington may get a freer hand to act against the Salvadoran guerrillas. The election period in the US, therefore, is a crucial one for the international solidarity movement. The Central American revolution, the most advanced point of the world revolution, must be defended against the imperialists without any delay. So, it is urgent now to throw all our energies into this task. ■

18. FMLN document cited, p. 39.

19. *El Dia Internacional*, Mexico, June 14, 1984.

20. This governmental formula was specified in the Platform for a Broadly Inclusive Provisional Government adopted at the end of January 1984 and reaffirmed in the FMLN's message for May Day 1984.

21. The FMLN's platform includes in fact the demand for dissolution of the security bodies and "withdrawal of the American advisors; a halt to American military aid as well as that coming from other countries; and the ending of all arms shipments." See IV, No 50, April 9, 1984.

IMMIGRANT DOSSIER



The young victim of a racist attack is remembered (DR)

13 million uprooted people in Europe

There are 13 million immigrants living and working in European Economic Community (EEC) countries today. Most of these had neither vote nor voice in the European elections in June. Racists and chauvinists, however, were allowed free rein throughout the campaign. Many people in Europe were given a huge jolt when the racist and fascist National Front of Le Pen in France got 11 per cent of the vote and a total of 10 deputies in the European parliament. In Italy, the fascist MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano — Social Movement of Italy) gained one more seat. But is it not just the far right which immigrants have to fear. Indeed support for an outfit like Le Pen's has been engendered by the chauvinist policies of successive governments including the present Socialist Party government in France.

When it comes to immigrant workers, the policies are the same in most European countries: to penalise immigrants for the crisis; to build up repressive legislation against them; to facilitate deportation procedures;

to sack immigrant workers and then to use their joblessness to question their right to stay.

Most immigrant workers have lived on average more than ten years in one or another European country. Most are there to find work. In 1980 in France, 38 per cent of the immigrant population was in work, while in West Germany it is 48 per cent and in Switzerland, 58 per cent.

The question of social integration, of equal rights, especially the right to vote, the question of the right to permanent settlement are all vital issues for this section of the working class and their families.

Promoting immigration was a conscious policy of the employers during the 1960s. The European economy needed a fresh and more mobile workforce, workers willing to take badly paid, unskilled jobs on production lines. This new workforce was brought in to suit the needs of profit. Now the bosses and the governments of Europe would like to be able to send immigrants back to their countries of origin and still blame them for unemployment and insecurity, in order to divide any possible resistance to the austerity drive.

There are no shortages of examples to prove how fraudulent the bosses' propaganda is. In West Germany, thousands of immigrants were expelled and immigration was halted in 1974, but since then unemployment has increased by nearly six times.

Underlying all these false and racist arguments designed to get the support of the indigenous workforce, the main objective is clear: to divide the European working class between indigenous and immigrant workers and set them up one against the other to make them forget who the real enemy is.

The reformist parties blithely accept these arguments and the racist and divisive policies that go with them, even, as in France, at the level of government.

The immigrant populations are not going to just sit back and accept the filthy propaganda of Le Pen or the policies of the bosses and governments of Europe. A campaign of action was launched during the European elections to fight racist propaganda. This was coordinated at a European level by FASTI (Federation of Organisations in Solidarity with Immigrant Workers) (1) and culminated in a rally of 600-700 in Strasbourg on the eve of the elections.

The demands of FASTI are:

- For the automatic right to permanent residence for all immigrants.
- For the right of immigrants' families to join them.
- For freedom of movement for all immigrants in EEC countries.
- For equal social, political and cultural rights for all immigrants — of whatever nationality, male or female.
- Against forced repatriation.

At this last meeting, which was attended by over 100 representatives from immigrant organisations in Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Great Britain, several initiatives were proposed following on from the European elections. All organisations were urged to campaign on the demands in their own countries and direct demands to the European parliament. This activity is to culminate in an international day of action on March 21 next year. A conference of European organisations is planned for June 1985 in Britain.

This type of action, drawing together the different organisations and nationalities and directed toward the labour movement is vital to fight the racist menace and to establish basic human rights for immigrants. ■

1. For further information about FASTI write to Secretariat de la coordination European, FASTI, 4 Square Vitruve, 75020 Paris, France. Telephone: 360-8441.



Mitterrand orders a police raid of an immigrant neighbourhood (DR)

FRANCE

The fight against racism and for equal rights

The municipal election campaign of March 1983 in France was accompanied by a renewal of racist and xenophobic demands directed especially against immigrant workers. The right and the extreme right together have equated the four million immigrants living on French soil with the scourges of unemployment, insecurity, delinquency and all the ills of the economic crisis.

The National Front (FN — Front National) led by Jean-Marie Le Pen covered the walls with overtly racist posters saying things like '2 million unemployed equals 2 million too many' or, 'the fight against unemployment, insecurity and immigration, that's us.'

The Mitterrand government entered unhesitatingly into the spirit of this; Gaston Defferre conducted a campaign in Marseilles in which he boasted that, as Minister of the Interior, he had deported more immigrants than the right wing. A short time beforehand the prime minister, Pierre Mauroy, had accused striking immigrant workers from Renault Flins and Citroen of being manipulated by Muslim fundamentalists.

This flare-up of racism is continuing with a train of attempted murders and other crimes, most notably against young, second generation immigrants. It has gone hand in hand with a rise of the extreme right in by-elections. At the same time people have been accustomed to some degree of tolerating racism by the fact that fascist formations such as the 'Front National' have been allowed to function legally. Finally there have been more and more numerous attacks on the legal rights of immigrant workers.

Racism has become a central question in France. It brings in its wake a division of the working class at a time when attacks on workers have been on the increase. The rise of racism undermines the capacity of the working class in general to resist.

Helene VIKEN

France was one of the countries in Europe that brought in immigrant labour most massively in the 1960s. Immigration increased by 50 per cent between 1955 and 1965. In order to carry through a rationalisation of productive capacity during the period of internation-

al expansion, French employers willingly opened up the country to a large extent.

In order to restructure industry, particularly in cars, construction and producers goods, the capitalists needed new workers. The qualities they were mainly looking for in the new workforce were mobility, lack of trade-union traditions, total lack of skills, and willingness to ac-

cept boring and repetitive work on the production line as well as night work. That is, the bosses wanted people who would take the low-paid, dead-end jobs. Moreover, since immigrant workers generally cost less in terms of training, retirement and social security payments, the advantages of exploiting them were manifold. Immigrant labour in France was therefore used immediately in specific industries, in specific firms and in selected regions.

The image of the unskilled immigrant worker on the production line (the *Ouvrier Specialise* — OS) became deeply ingrained in the consciousness of French workers, many of whom, in a period of expansion, even found some advantages in the situation in terms of promotion and wages, with unskilled vacancies being filled by immigrants.

The huge presence of immigrants in France offered the ruling class the added advantage of having a section of the workforce gripped in a tight and repressive legal vice. In France, discriminatory laws against immigrants date generally from the end of the 1930s, the period of the rise of fascism. A law passed in 1932 barred immigrants from access to employment by national or local government or in the public services (that is the ministries, telecommunications, the health service, the railways or in the gas and electricity industry). A decree passed in 1939 denied immigrants the right to organise around political issues.

The so-called immigrant 'status' is the crowning touch to all these discriminatory laws. It means you have to have a work permit good for one, three or ten years. This gives you access to a specific job in a specific region. Then, besides this, you have to get a special resident's permit.

The bosses offensive

In one way or another this system makes it possible to deport immigrants to suit the whims or the needs of the employers. Special repressive laws provide for deportation in cases of petty crimes carrying prison sentences (theft, for example). There is an absence of any civil rights such as the right to vote which also extends to local elections.

This virtual partition of the working class came more and more into line with political requirements at the beginning of the economic crisis in 1974-75, under President Giscard d'Estaing. Two reasons explain the onslaught of repressive measures in the mid-1970s:

For one thing, immigrant workers were no longer so useful as before to the ruling class. They had started to revolt (huge strikes had taken place in 1970-71), to join unions, to organise and to demand their rights (such as in the mobilisation against the so-called Bonnet-Stoleru law in 1978-79 and in the rent strikes in 1976-77 in the shelters for immigrant workers managed by the

Sonacotra Company, where the accommodations were veritable prison cells).

Secondly, the economic crisis forced the ruling class to start far-reaching reorganisation of production, with massive redundancies and general lowering of wages. Immigrants, having served the capitalist expansion were used to being used by the bosses as an aid for solving their profit crisis.

The method is classic and relatively simple. It involves, firstly, sacking immigrants in the hopes that the rest of the working class will not respond. Such sackings are facilitated by the notorious special status for immigrants. To this will be added a few racist statements to help the pill go down and give the rest of the working class a scapegoat. Later, will come the sackings of indigenous workers.

As a general rule these operations are aimed at dividing the working class and at making it easier for the ruling class to cut wages by means of the threat of unemployment or to dismantle social benefits.

This grand plan was only beginning when the reign of the right wing was sharply interrupted by the electoral victory of the left-wing parties on May 10, 1981. But it will be clear that the ruling class had by no means thrown in the towel.

Not having the right to vote, the immigrant population did not participate directly in the election of Francois Mitterrand or of the majority of the Communist Party (CP) and Socialist Party (SP) deputies in May and June 1981. Immigrants were, however, in the streets claiming victory. For them this was the chance to end a situation which had been becoming more and more degrading over the years.

Had not Mitterrand promised immigrants the right to vote in municipal elections, to possess a ten year universal permit to be renewed automatically, (1) the suppression of the Bonnet-Stoleru laws; the abolition of the decree of 1939 and the regularisation of the position of workers without legal papers?

Disillusionment sets in

It is undeniable that these promises, however inadequate, pointed to a different framework and policy for immigrants. People spoke in the euphoria of victory about integration, about dignity, about recognition of the immigrant worker as a person and a citizen with a full role, about a definite break with the position inherited from the past.

The reality brought disillusionment after a year. The government had indeed abolished the 1939 decree and had extended the right of association. It had also regularised the situation for some workers without the proper papers, though not all. It had introduced certain criteria, linked mainly to employment, which excluded from this right many immigrants who had been hired clandestinely by so-called slave-trader employ-

IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN FRANCE
(in millions)

Year	Total Population	Foreign Population	%
1851	35.78	0.38	1.06
1911	39.19	1.16	2.96
1921	38.80	1.53	3.95
1931	41.23	2.72	6.59
1936	41.18	2.20	5.34
1946	39.85	1.74	4.38
1962	46.46	2.17	4.67
1968	49.66	2.62	5.28
1975	52.60	3.44	6.54
1982	54.30	3.68	6.77

This table shows that the explosion of racism is not linked to the proportion of immigrants in the population (which is known as a 'tolerance level') but to the economic crisis and the rise in unemployment. The latest figures, taken from the 1983 census show that the number of immigrants has remained the same since 1975 (when immigration was stopped) whilst unemployment has increased 5.3 times in the same period, which proves that immigrants are not responsible for unemployment.

ers; that is, bosses who recruit immigrant labour on super exploitative terms. It had at last repealed the Bonnet laws, which permitted the deportation of any worker, without the least safeguards.

But things very soon went sour. The law voted through by parliament was quickly baptised by the immigrant population as the Bonnet law, mark II, so much did it resemble its predecessor. Furthermore, the CP and the SP had made an about turn, adopting provisions that followed the drift of anti-immigrant statements of the bosses and the right.

In September 1982 immigrants were denied the right to vote in the municipal elections to be held in March 1983. These elections were to be marked by a surge of racism that could have been contained if immigrants had been given the right to vote and the relationship of forces on the electoral level were brought into line with the real relationship of forces in society.

In August 1983 came the publication of the Georgina Dufoix (secretary of state for immigrants) decrees. The latter proposed accelerating steps to expel clandestine workers and increased border control to stop the entrance of new immigrants. Despite high-flown but hollow declarations by the left leaders, this package contained no measures for integrating immigrants into the society.

Open season was declared on immigrants with massive police round-ups in certain sections of the large cities, the systematic expulsion of all immigrants

found in clandestine workshops, racist identity checks in the streets and metros, police raids on shelters in the middle of the night, etc.

The left in government did everything it could to give more force to the slogan 'immigration equals insecurity'. All immigrants became potential suspects. The extreme right got its best electoral results in this period.

The other side of the equation is that 'immigration equals unemployment'. It came full circle at the time of the confrontation at the Talbot Poissy (2) car factory when the government supported the management's proposals for 2,000 redundancies, four out of five to be immigrants who were also offered 'help' in returning home to their own country.

Now, or in the near future, the Citroen and Renault factories will also become targets for attacks by the bosses of the car industry: yet more 'OS' immigrants to sack — the very ones that were brought in ten, fifteen or twenty years ago in order to make more juicy profits.

The May 10 victory [Mitterrand's election] enabled immigrant workers to put a stop to what had been going on 'before.' Since then, they have often taken the lead in resistance in the factories. The first big strike wave hit the most archaic factories in the industry (Citroen and Talbot), where a nineteenth century-style management used to rule the workers with an iron fist, with the help of a single official union — the fascist, Confederation of Free Trade Unions (Confederation des Syndicats Libres — CSL).

Immigrants fight back

The 'OS' immigrants went on strike for their dignity, to improve their conditions of work and for trade-union freedoms at least equivalent to those in other factories in the industry, such as Renault. They were successful and forced the management to accept real unions, the Confederation Generale de Travail (CGT) and the Confederation Francaise Democratique du Travail (CFDT), thereby shattering the bosses' fascist system.

Following on from this, the 'OS' immigrants once again took the lead in battle at Renault Flins and Citroen Aulnay in the spring of 1983. They struck for a pay rise at the very moment the government was deciding to implement its first austerity plan by imposing a wage freeze without compensation for lost buying power. Once again they were successful, thus giving an example to the whole working class. (3)

1. This demand, which was shared by all the workers organisations before May 10, 1981, is a first step toward freedom of movement for all workers. It challenges the current system which makes the right to permanent residence contingent on employment and the right to work contingent of the possession of a work permit for a limited period, in a specific trade. In this way, in France immigrant workers can have ten years residence and only possess a work permit for three years that they have to renew before it expires, being left without any guarantee that they can stay in France especially if, in the meantime, they become unemploy-

ed. The permit for ten years would act as an identity card and would give immigrants a guarantee that they can stay in France and find work for as long as they wanted. This obviously leaves out the question of which category of immigrant would have these permits. For the reformists (before May 10) because they have sought since 1974 to stop all immigration, it would only concern immigrants already in France. For the LCR this permit would be issued to all immigrants on entry into France.
2. See *International Viewpoint*, No 45, January 30, 1984.
3. See *Inprecor*, No 144, March 28, 1984.



Immigrant workers on strike in the Talbot-Poissy factory (DR)

But the employers had not had their last word. In the atmosphere of racism that followed the municipal election campaign in March 1983, the redundancies projected in the car industry were specially designed to break down this new base of workers opposition. The example of Talbot, where the delegates from the CGT and the militants of the CFDT were top of the list of redundancies, is only one illustration of the employers objectives.

Another factor which has put a spanner [monkey wrench] in the works for the right wing and for the ruling class appeared in 1983 at the height of the racist campaign. This was the massive radicalisation and sudden mobilisation of immigrant youth. Forgotten in the employers plans, the second generation, that is the children of immigrants who came to France ten or twenty years ago, were coming on the political scene with force and determination.

These young people no longer wanted to be the target of racist aggression in the working class cities and suburbs. They were tired of being the disinherited, uprooted from their families' countries of origin, born in France and yet rejected by

her. They were demanding equal rights, for themselves and all immigrants. It was among a group of these young immigrants in the outskirts of Lyon that the idea arose for a large march for equality and against racism across the length of France.

Leaving Marseilles with ten people on October 15, 1983, they watched their ranks grow, with people assembled to welcome and support them as they advanced on foot across the country. In all towns support committees were set up. They included numerous organisa-

4. MRAP: Movement against racism and for unity of all peoples. Built at first around key figures in the fight against racism and against anti-semitism in particular, MRAP has progressively become larger and more structured and therefore more linked into the fight in defence of immigrant workers. The Communist Party has an influence, notably in the leading bodies. For some years now, under the pressure of events, the ranks of the movement, organised into local committees have introduced a more militant and united-front approach, which is a very important factor. It was recently concretised in the participation of MRAP in the support groups for the march against racism, as well as at the time of the open conference — organised by MRAP on March 17 - 18 — when all organisations, groups and personalities were invited on a nonexclusive basis. At the national level, MRAP has always refused to come out in favour of the right to vote for immigrants and defends the policy of

tions and associations but also involved growing numbers of workers, as well as French and immigrant youth resolutely determined to 'End Racism Now'.

The arrival of the march in Paris at the beginning of December brought together 100,000 people. The rally was supported by the CP, SP, CGT, CFDT, FEN (Federation de l'education nationale — National Education Federation), MRAP (Mouvement contre le racismisme et pour l'amitie entre les peuples), FASTI (Federation des Associations de solidarite avec les travailleurs immigrés) (4), PSU (Parti Socialist Unifie), LCR (Ligue communiste revolutionnaire — Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International), plus other immigrant organisations, to name only the most important.

When Georgina Dufoix addressed a few words to the meeting at the end of the march, there were shouts for equal rights, for the right to vote, for the ten year permit, for the right to decent housing, etc. from the bulk of the demonstrators.

This huge show of strength, in the streets, against the government's whole policy towards immigrants sparked a renewal of solidarity activity with immigrants, boosted the confidence of those opposed to racism and helped to mobilise larger numbers against the National Front.

Other initiatives are currently in preparation, most notably a European campaign on the rights of immigrants.

The rise of racism in France is a real danger, but it is not inevitable. This is a growing feeling amongst workers and young people, and it is opening up the way for a sustained effort to build a broad united front against racism and for equal rights. For the LCR, this struggle plays a key role, since it is obvious that any division within the workers movement can wreak havoc when its enemies are preparing to mount major attacks on it. Aligned with the interests of the bosses and bourgeoisie, the government policy towards immigrants threatens the unity of the working class. The main axes of the struggle against it are the fight for equal rights, for the right to work, for the 10 year renewable permit, against deportation and for the regularisation of all those without papers. ■

immigration control. So, for the time being it still holds the essential positions of the Communist Party.

FASTI: Federation of Associations in solidarity with immigrant workers. The first associations were formed in 1966 and 1969 essentially in the framework of material and concrete solidarity with immigrants; for literacy, training, help in getting the necessary documents, etc. Their federation in 1971 gave birth to FASTI, which today organises 5,000 supporters and plays a pivotal role in building unity between French and immigrant workers in the fight against racism and for equal rights.

In contrast to MRAP, FASTI maintains its political independence and the arrival of the left coming to power did not affect its positions in defence of immigrants, against expulsions, for the regularisation of immigrants without papers, against racism and for a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic France, for the right to vote and the universal permit.

Yes to jobs, no to anti-immigrant laws

In the spring 1983 elections for the Bundestag (the German parliament), Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced that his government was seeking to halve the number of foreigners resident in West Germany between now and 1990. At the same time, the report of the Joint Commission of national government and the states on 'legislation pertaining to the status of immigrants' was made public by the Minister of the Interior. This report recommended very strict measures aimed at preventing temporary immigrant workers from acquiring permanent residence status on West German territory.

In addition, neofascists were threatening Turkish workers with terrorist action if they did not leave West Germany before August 1983. Thus in Frankfurt, a Turkish shop caught fire after an incendiary bomb was thrown at it. The slogan on the front of the house read 'Foreigners — go home' (*Ausländer raus!*).

The number of attacks on foreigners has grown rapidly and is now beyond the thousand mark, compared to 120 in 1980. But acts of violence against immigrants are only the tip of the iceberg. Xenophobia encountered everywhere and is not a new phenomenon.

Everyone knows that it was only because of a campaign by the government and the employers in the past that immigrants got a fairly friendly reception. In 1965, most Germans preferred to work one hour more per day if that meant that it would be possible to do without immigrants, according to a survey of the period by the Wickert Institute.

Friedrich MUEHLEISEN

The whole history of the employment of immigrants in West Germany cannot, of course, be taken up in this article. But some of the highlights can be pointed out.

After the Second World War, West German economic expansion and conquest of foreign markets was based on prevailing wage rates lower than those in other imperialist countries. Such relatively cheap labour was in turn the result of the influx of some ten million refugees from Europe and East Germany.

With the slowing down of the flow of refugees from the East and the rapid acceleration of economic growth, Federal Germany had an ongoing need for labour which could not be met without introducing the celebrated 'Gastarbeiters' ('guest workers' or immigrants) brought in from the economically backward regions of the Mediterranean. Consequently, a series of bilateral agreements were concluded to this end with Italy in 1955, Greece and Spain in 1960, Turkey in 1961, Morocco in 1963, Portugal in 1964, Tunisia in 1965 and Yugoslavia in 1968.

Up until the first economic recession that West Germany experienced, in 1966-67, immigration into Germany was immigration of workers only. With the period of stagnation in the German economy, 300,000 immigrant workers left the country. But with the economic upturn that followed not only did the

number of immigrants rise to about four million, but a change became apparent in the social structures of immigration. This was marked by the settling down in West Germany of these workers' families (see table). West Germany had thus become a country with a pattern of immigration, something that the government had always wanted to avoid.

During the 1973-74 crisis, the Liberal-Social Democrat coalition government decided to 'put a stop to immigration' by ordering, among other things, that no further entry visas be granted except to reunite families. The aim of the authorities was to keep the numbers of immigrants from rising, and if possible to reduce them.

The government attacks immigrants

In fact, the opposite ensued because the number of immigrants was approaching 4.66 million in 1983 as against 4 million in 1973. By contrast, the number of immigrants in work had decreased from 2.6 million in 1973 to 1.7 million in 1983.

These figures show that the structure of the immigrant population is tending more and more to come into line with that of the German population as a whole. Today in West Germany, it is possible to talk of a real multi-national working class, with, of course, the reservation that immigrant workers and their families are subject to discrimination in all spheres.

Immigrants have neither the right to vote nor any political rights. They live under the threat of deportation for the vaguest reasons, such as being a 'threat to the interests of Federal Germany'. In conformity with Paragraph 19 of the 'Employment Promotion' law they are legally discriminated against in relation to Germans.

Among immigrants, the rate of unemployment has reached 15 per cent and even 18.5 per cent for Turks and Kurds as against around 10 per cent for Germans. Nationals from other countries within the European Economic Community (EEC) are the only ones to benefit from the guarantee of freedom of movement incorporated into the European treaties, while immigrants from the Third World countries clearly constitute the majority of the immigrant population.

Out of 1.59 million Third World immigrants, 1.23 million come from Turkey and 350,000 from Kurdistan (figures for September 1983). This is the reason why the notorious problem of foreigners is seen simply as a Turkish problem. By the same token, racist feelings are directed primarily against Turks and Kurds.

The immigrant population is becoming concentrated more and more heavily in certain sections of the big cities. These are being simultaneously vacated by the Germans. This phenomenon has resulted in the last five years in the construction of virtual immigrant ghettos, such as Berlin Kreuzberg or the Gallus quarter in Frankfurt.

It is important to point to the plight of young immigrants who have grown up in West Germany, who have received very poor schooling (two thirds leave school without any qualifications) and who have no chance of finding a job, never mind an apprenticeship (only twenty per cent managed to get apprenticeships in 1981). In West Germany, they have no recognised status, and the countries their parents came from are foreign to them, just a place to go for holidays. They are at the receiving end of hostility and aggression from young Germans of their own age. All this creates a most explosive situation.

Immigrant women also suffer a particular oppression — as women, as foreigners and as workers. As women, they are victims of the specific oppression of women in their country of origin and share a situation of oppression with women in the Federal Republic. As foreigners, they are part of their husband's resident's permit, so, effectively they have no right of their own to stay. As workers, they are at the bottom of the wage scale.

Faced with a deep capitalist crisis, the turn the government and the ruling class in Germany have to take essentially involves inflicting a sharp enough defeat on the working class to enable them to stabilise the system. Given the current state of the class struggle, a frontal attack on the bastions of the workers is, for the



'Turks out!' Racist graffiti in West Germany (DR)

time being, unthinkable. Therefore, the bourgeois government intends to prepare for this confrontation by attacking the working class at its weak points. In fact, all the measures which they have taken go in this direction — attacks on abortion rights; campaigns to push the idea that women should stay in the home and to oppose women's liberation; reduction of unemployment benefits; cuts in the welfare sector; attacks on protective legislation covering young workers; reduction in pensions. All this in preparation for a direct confrontation.

The measures against immigrants are at the heart of this strategy. Effectively, by creating insecurity amongst immigrants, by threatening deportation, the government is seeking to divide and weaken the working class. It is most certainly no coincidence that this offensive was launched at the same time as large-scale preparations were getting underway for the campaign on the 35-hour week (with no loss of wages and parallel recruitment).

The government has, so far, taken up the following measures:

— Allocation of repatriation fees within a certain time scale; all nationals of EEC non-member countries can obtain in case of unemployment or partial unemployment of six months or less, a grant of 10,500 marks (about £3,700) on condition that they leave Germany within four weeks of the application. This scheme is designed to reduce the number of unemployed Turkish and Kurdish workers in West Germany and to offer a handle for demagogically accusing all those remaining of being parasites. This system undermines the position of the working class because it leaves an important section of workers in a permanent dilemma as to whether 'to go or stay'.

A draft reform of the legislation deal-

ing with resident aliens has been drawn up by the Minister of the Interior. The main lines of this were already laid down by the Liberal-Social Democrat coalition during the 1970s but never put into practice.

THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN WEST GERMANY (in millions)

	1973	1983	Variations in %
Total	3.99	4.66	+ 16
Men	2.10	2.00	- 5
Women	1.10	1.40	+ 27
Children	0.70	1.30	+ 86
Economically Active with a Job	2.60	1.70	- 35

LENGTH OF STAY ON OR BEYOND TEN YEARS

Italians	50 %
Yugoslavs	50 %
Greeks	66 %
Turks and Kurds*	33 %

* In West Germany the official figures never make a distinction between Turks and Kurds.

It consists of the following: integration of foreigners actually living in West Germany; a halt to immigration; aid for repatriation. By the term integration, the government means adaptation by immigrants to German norms. Worse still, aliens are supposed to obey German laws in an exemplary fashion in order to prove their willingness to be integrated.

To stop further immigration, the following steps may be taken:

— Setting six years as the maximum age at which children would have the right to follow their parents, thereby

imposing a long-lasting separation of some 250,000 young people from their families.

— Limitations on the entry of spouses of second- and third-generation immigrants, which could mean the break up of thousands of marriages (about 300,000 according to the Ministry of the Interior).

All these measures also take into account the need of industry for a reserve supply of immigrant labour upon which whole sections of industry, public utilities (water, gas, electricity) and services depend. In fact it was for these workers that the notion of integration was conceived. All those people, on the other hand who, according to the employers, are a drain on the social welfare budget and therefore detrimental to the country's interests must be rejected, deported, driven out.

These proposals would in effect legalise the current practice of the authorities. There would be no point in making complaints, appealing to tribunals, since the existing arrangements would acquire the force of law.

It was in the autumn of 1982 that these proposals were made public. From the first they aroused huge protests, to begin with from the traditional organisations working on behalf of the immigrants — the social services, the churches and other religious bodies — but also from the political organisations, such as the Falcons (school-student members of the Social Democratic Party), as well as numerous immigrant organisations. The unions, on the other hand, remained aloof from this mobilisation, their leaderships having nothing against limiting the immigrant population. Insofar as the protests got underway, they were restricted to putting out information and making press releases.

A new organisation to defend immigrants

A joint organisation, however, was formed in March 1983 to work out how to actively resist the government's proposals. The participants, apart from certain organisations already mentioned, were political groups like the revolutionary Turkish organisation Dev Yol and other Turkish and Kurdish groups; the Kommunistischer Bund (a centrist group in West Germany); the Socialist Youth (Jusos); and the International Marxist Group (GIM — German section of the Fourth International). At the head of this initiative was, most notably, the Association of German Women with Foreign Husbands (IAF). Founded in 1972, this group has acquired an excellent reputation as a leading authority on all questions of immigration policy because of their active work in this sphere.

The front which was set up started to discuss the calling of a Tribunal against government policy on immigration. For its part the GIM hoped that out of this tribunal would come a national structure for all the different groups which exist to fight racism. It also hoped that a political

platform in opposition to the immigration policy of Kohl and the bourgeoisie would be elaborated at the local and national level.

The Tribunal was renamed 'Congress on Government Policy on Immigration and Against the Attacks on Human Rights'. It was held June 3-5, 1983 in Frankfurt, and a thousand people participated from all over West Germany and from Berlin. For three days they discussed the problems of immigrants in Germany and many decisions were taken:

— Support was given to the Frankfurt Appeal demanding the withdrawal of government proposals; total freedom in the right to asylum; social, legal and political equality between Germans and immigrants.

— A coordinating committee based in Frankfurt was set up to coordinate initiatives against racism.

— The committee was to prepare a march on Berlin.

— A conference of immigrant women was also to be prepared.

Nearly a year later, it is possible to make a preliminary balance sheet of this congress. In certain towns the appeal became part of the platform of the movement. Towns like Hamburg, Cologne and

Berlin, among others, saw some major activity around this.

The campaign so far

Up until now the march has not taken place, because the necessary organisation has not been built up. It was for this reason that a Week of Action was organised over March 10-17, which gave the opportunity to attack government policy on the right of asylum and immigration, as well as racism as a whole. Under this rubric regional demonstrations took place in three cities — Stuttgart (with 2,500 participants), Cologne (with 1,800 participants) and Berlin (with 3,000 participants).

Despite the small number of demonstrators, this event can be considered a success because it was the first time that a mobilisation had occurred simultaneously around the country and achieved so much publicity. A spokesperson for the government even felt obliged to defend Kohl's policy by pointing out that the campaign could only harm the immigrant population by giving too much publicity to the problem.

The GIM played a leading role in this

mobilisation, both nationally and locally. This was reflected in particular by the speeches of GIM militants at the rallies in both Cologne and Berlin.

The immigrant women's conference took place at the end of the March 23-25 week of action in Frankfurt. Once again, GIM members, immigrant women amongst them, took part in building this conference.

Unions must take a stand

The main problem at the moment in resisting the government's proposals is essentially a political one. In most political organisations, work on immigrants is considered one task amongst many and not seen as vital for everyone. This is particularly true in the unions.

Initially, the DGB (German Confederation of Unions) was openly hostile to the employment of immigrants for fear that this would undermine wage levels. Because of this attitude they managed, with or without enthusiasm, to obtain equal pay for immigrants. But this hostility continues, mainly in the idea that 'it was the companies that went looking for the immigrants, in their home countries, so it must suit the bosses to have Turks.'

Over the years, the DGB have backed government policy on immigration, and even today are still in favour of reducing the employment of immigrants. Even though in the last few years, immigrants have been in the forefront of industrial struggles, they are still thought of as mere paper members (their rate of unionisation is, nevertheless, in some cases higher than for Germans). The fight for the 35-hour week with no cut in pay and new hiring to take up the slack is the most important struggle to be waged in Germany since the Second World War. It illustrates well the errors committed by the union leaderships in relation to immigrants. Because of these mistakes the immigrant workers are wary of this demand and feel that there is nothing in this fight for them.

The unions have taken some positive positions. In certain sections of the DGB, they even support the demand for the right of immigrants to vote. But at the same time they have paid no attention to the facts of legal discrimination from which immigrants suffer and the effect of this in weakening the unions' fighting capacity.

This is why revolutionary Marxists sought to focus the week of action against racism on these questions and why, when they put forward the demand for equal rights for immigrants, they are in fact fighting to strengthen trade-union struggles.

Today, the anti-immigrant proposals are gathering dust in the Ministry and the coalition government remain divided on the issue. To stop the bill it is essential to mount a campaign against racism in general and the unions have to be a driving force in it. ■

Young second generation immigrants (DR)



Immigration control and racism in the workers movement

Of Switzerland's total population of 6.5 million, a little over one million are immigrants. Of a total of three million available jobs, 700,000 of them are held by immigrants. In other words, one resident in six and one worker in four has a foreign passport, while seven immigrants out of ten are working. Switzerland, along with Sweden, has the highest proportion of immigrants in employment in Europe — that is, it most efficiently exploits immigrants.

Apart from this very skillful political and economic utilisation of immigration by the Swiss bourgeoisie, the situation of immigrants in this country has a number of special features; the large numbers involved, the long history of discriminatory legislation against immigrants, the inability of Swiss workers and their organisations to defend immigrant workers and the deep and long-standing imprint of the nationalist movement led by the extreme right.

Urs FAUCHER

Having been an exporter of labour in the last century, Switzerland had, in the period preceding the First World War, a foreign population comparable to today's, representing 15 per cent of the country's inhabitants. Throughout this century, the intake of immigrant workers has followed exactly the course of the economic cycle. After a rapid decline beginning in the 1920s with the lowest point being in 1940 (immigrants were then 5 per cent of the total population), the percentage of immigrants rose steadily to reach 15 per cent in the 1970s.

Leaving aside the very small number of foreign capitalists living off their fortunes deposited in Swiss banks or dodging taxes in their own country, the great bulk of immigrants are working class. In their recruiting of foreign workers, Swiss employers have been past masters in the art of exploiting regional inequalities in international economic development so as to get a destitute workforce, willing to work for low wages. After the Second World War they particularly went after Italian workers, who still represent the largest group of immigrants (412,000 people, of whom 285,000 were working in 1983). Apart from French and German immigration there is also Spanish (100,000 people of whom 87,000 work), Portuguese, Yugoslav and Turkish.

The fact that Switzerland includes four different linguistic regions could have been a favourable condition for the development of an internationalist consciousness in the working class. The bourgeoisie clearly had no such inclination. While building a network of capitalist interests on a world scale (1), since the end of the First World War, the bourgeoisie has instituted legislation that not only denies immigrant workers most of the democratic rights accorded to Swiss

workers, but also imposes a strict control of their numbers and on their actions.

On the economic level, the bourgeoisie has been able to use this legislation skillfully to manipulate the immigrant workforce to suit the needs of the business cycle. On the political level, immigration has been used to paralyse the Swiss workers movement through exacerbating divisions between immigrants and indigenous workers.

Draconian immigration laws

The immigration laws date from 1931. They were adopted after a federal referendum which approved them by a huge majority. (2) Swiss legislation since that period has been marked by three basic characteristics:

— Only the right to stay not the right to work is regularised in Switzerland.

— Democratic rights for immigrants are dependent on length of stay in the country. In a sense it is a legislation based on mistrust of newly arrived immigrants. Political rights are denied them. (3)

— The code is built around the political objective of keeping the country from being overwhelmed by foreigners (in German, *Ueberfremdung*), which gives a lever to the nationalist and xenophobic movements.

The application of these principles means immigrants live and work under different legal conditions that divide and isolate them, undermining their capacity for collective defence. Five different immigrant statutes exist.

— *Short term immigrants.* Such immigrants have the right to legal residence in Switzerland. They must, however, renew their permits every year. These permits can be withdrawn for political or

penal reasons, or if the immigrant workers have gone over the time allowed for being unemployed. They are permitted to bring in their families after 12 months.

— *Permanent immigrants.* After five or ten years residence in the country — the length of time varies according to the agreement with the country of origin — an immigrant can obtain a permanent resident's permit. In principle, this means unlimited stay. Permanent immigrants have the same social entitlements as the Swiss. In the official terminology they are treated as indigenous.

— *Seasonal immigrants.* These immigrants, working mainly in the building industry, in hotels and in agriculture, cannot stay longer than nine months in the country. Their work contract is also terminated once a year. As a rule, they cannot change the canton they live in nor the industry they work in. Legally they are not regarded as residents of Switzerland, and their families are not allowed to join them. They live in housing belonging to the employer and have no other function but to work. Only a minority of 'seasonal' workers have been able after several seasons of work in Switzerland to acquire permanent residence (7,000 or 8,000 out of a total of 100,000).

— *Border workers.* These workers have to leave the country every day. They work in the border regions and live in a neighbouring country.

— *Short stay permits.* These non-renewable permits are issued for a three-month maximum period.

Added to these five categories, as in all systems of immigration control, is that of 'clandestine' immigrants who have no rights, and add up to tens of thousands of people.

Since 1962, the Swiss government has set quotas for immigrant workers. Since 1973 this has become very restrictive for 'short term' immigrants. Only a few hundred in this category are admitted into each canton. This quota system is much less restrictive for 'seasonal' workers, whilst 'border' workers are not affected at all.

The quota policy, alongside the economic recession has led to a stabilisation of the permanent immigrant population, whilst the number of immigrant workers not resident in Switzerland varies according to economic fluctuations — annually, conjuncturally and in different industries.

Stabilisation of the pattern of immigration has meant a predominance of permanent immigrants over 'short-term-

1. Switzerland invests more capital abroad per head of the population than any other country.

2. Under the Swiss constitution any proposition that obtains the necessary signatories can be put forward for a referendum. With 50,000 signatures, you can force the Federal government to submit parliamentary decisions to a popular vote. This is called a referendum. With 100,000 signatures to the text of a particular proposition, it is possible to get a popular vote making changes in the Federal constitution.

3. In two Cantons — Jura and Neuchâtel — where immigrants of long-standing have the right to participate in local elections — they are barred from standing as candidates.

ers' and a relative growth in the number of second and third generation immigrants born in Switzerland (see Table I).

tertiary sector, taking up technical and commercial jobs and supervisory positions in industry.

The majority of immigrants employed in industry have a skill and a 'long term' permit. But the system of several categories of immigrants still means that many thousands of immigrants with precarious status (border, seasonal, short-stay, clandestine) continue to play the role of a reserve army within the industries in to which they are channelled.

The Swiss ruling class deliberately use the immigration laws to avoid pressure for rationalisation in certain backward regions and industries. The price for this is clearly paid by all the workers concerned, whether they be Swiss or immigrant. A few examples will suffice to prove this. In Tessino, where 36 per cent of industrial jobs are occupied by 'border' immigrants, the 1978 wage levels were 16 per cent less than the national average and 23.2 per cent less than the average wage in industry. In construction, catering and agriculture where the majority of immigrants who work are seasonal, wages are lower than in other branches of industry, and the hours of work much longer (47, 54, sometimes 60 hours per week).

But the ruling class derive a further important advantage from immigration. The children of immigrants provide Swiss capitalism with a reservoir of unskilled labour for the future. The authorities refusal to make up for the linguistic handicaps that penalise immigrants' children in the school system, keeps a large number of them from getting proper training.

In 1983 the percentage of young immigrants (between 16 and 19 years old) without an education (that is, 42.3 per cent of immigrant youth) is double the national average for Swiss youth (21.6 per cent).

Immigration and the unions

The main advantage of the immigration laws for the Swiss bourgeoisie however became clear in the economic recession of 1974. Immigration during that period cushioned the effects of the economic crisis. The number of jobs plummeted, without this showing up in the unemployment figures.

Between 1973 and 1977 the economically active population declined by 280,000, of whom only 73,000 were indigenous workers, the rest being immigrants. Three quarters of the job loss therefore hit immigrants. The conclusion is unavoidable. The immigration laws that make it possible to send unemployed immigrants back to their countries of origin help to export unemployment.

The comparison of trends in immigration with that of the gross national product in 1973 shows a striking parallel. But for the period of economic recovery after the crisis of 1974, this comparison shows also that the ruling class has used the combination of economic fluctuations with the policy of immigrant quotas as a lever for reconverting from an economy of extensive growth to one of intensive growth. The rationalisation of Swiss capitalism in the course of the economic crisis permitted a rise in the GNP after 1977, while the foreign resident population stabilised at the 1965 level.

However, it is unlikely that the ruling class will be able to repeat their 1974 success. Immigration today plays a structural role in the economy, and any move toward rationalisation and restructuring affects both Swiss and immigrant workers. The country is now experiencing real unemployment (1.2 per cent of the active population, 4 per cent in Biel or Basle [Basel].) which is not going to be entirely absorbed as it was in 1974 by the departure of unemployed immigrants.

The ease with which the bourgeoisie has been able to manipulate immigration for their profit is not due to their strength, but flows above all from the total inability of the workers movement to respond to the bosses' manoeuvres with a resolute policy of working-class unity.

In hundreds of decisions taken from the 1950s onwards, workers organisations in Switzerland have opposed immigration. The inflow of foreign workers

CATEGORIES OF IMMIGRANTS
(in thousands)

	Inhabitants		Workers	
	1975	1983	1975	1983
Permanent	651	717	329	403
Limited Stay	358	209	240	122
Seasonal	—	—	86	100
Border	—	—	99	105
Total	1,012	926	754	730

In order to maximise profits from the post-war boom, employers from 1945 onwards relied on an extensive increase in production.

The domestic labour shortage nearly wrecked this project, bringing on wage rises even without any trade-union struggle. These twin perils could be avoided thanks to the employment of immigrant labour, available in massive numbers from neighbouring countries and ready to work for low wages.

Production and profits rose spectacularly. In contrast, the average wage rise remained modest. During the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, immigration played the classic role of a reserve army of labour.

Since this situation continued uninterrupted in Switzerland until the mid-1970s, immigrant workers began to acquire, little by little, a structural role in economic life. In industry as well as in construction and catering (hotels) they occupied a very important position, as Table II shows. Within the manufacturing industry they dominate production jobs. Swiss workers themselves have 'emigrated' towards employment in the

TABLE TWO
IMMIGRANT WORKERS
BY SECTOR IN 1975
(in thousands)

	Total	Immigrants	%
Manufacturing	954	289	30
Textiles	43	21	48
Clothing	46	26	55
Metallurgy	176	50	28
Construction	226	106	46
Services	1,324	222	17
Catering (hotels)	159	58	19
Health	177	34	19
Engineering	259	81	31

One of the 'foreigners' at work (DR)



was perceived simply as a manoeuvre by the employers. Because of fear of 'communist vermin', no effort was made to integrate these new members into the unions.

The Union Syndicale Suisse (Swiss Federation of Trade Unions — USS), the main union confederation in Switzerland, dominated by the Socialists, was in 1958 the first organisation to call for statutory limitation on immigrant labour and for prioritised protection of the indigenous workers. This approach directly influenced the policy of the unions.

After the Second World War they signed, with the employers, the 'social peace' accords in which 'both partners' agreed to renounce all forms of strikes and lockouts. In this framework, wage increases for the workers depended entirely on the pressures of supply and demand in the labour market. The recourse to foreign labour enabled the employers to resist such pressures. The union leaderships, their hands tied by the 'social peace' agreement, had no alternative but to try to put this pressure back on through any means which came to hand. For years they did not hesitate to whip up nationalistic and xenophobic feeling to achieve their ends.

Gradually coming to realise that immigration was going to continue and that immigrant workers were an important base of recruitment, the union leaderships did modify their position during the 1970s. Nowadays, they say that stabilising the number of immigrants is an essential corollary to increasing their rights. In practice, however the union leaderships are pressing the government to cut the number of 'short-term' or 'seasonal' workers and introduce a quota system for 'border' workers. By comparison, they raise fewer and less hard-hitting demands for improving immigrants' rights.

Certainly, the unions and the reformist parties are making some efforts at recruitment of immigrants, but the policy of 'social peace', the dismal record of the unions which flow from it, and their terrible position on immigration do not attract immigrants.

The result is that the unions and the reformist parties have no real impact on the policy which the bourgeoisie conducts against immigrants. The latter are left helpless in the face of agitation from nationalist or far-right organisations.

The anti-foreign movement was born in 1961 in Winterthur. It is most widely known as the 'national action against the foreign takeover'. They apply a strictly legal strategy, using institutional methods such as petitions, legal propositions and referendums. Their method consists of accusing the government of not applying the law of 1931 which had the objective of fighting overpopulation by foreigners.

On the electoral front, the anti-foreign movement has registered varying but modest support. However, the propositions they make to reduce the number of

immigrants and restrict their rights always have a mass impact. Even though none of their referendum propositions have been approved by the majority, they have all got high votes and the bourgeoisie has been able to take advantage of this for fifteen years to step up their policy of dividing the working class.

In the last few years, the nationalist and racist currents have had the wind in their sails. Their electoral results have improved. In 1982 they managed to bring about the defeat of a referendum proposition for a new law on immigrants, even though in fact it would have done little or nothing to improve the immigrants' situation. At the moment they are participating, alongside the rest of the right, in a hate campaign for the restricting of the right of political asylum. They are also getting signatures for a new anti-immigrant proposition. This has a good chance of getting adopted because it appears moderate. Its application, however, would consolidate the legal division between Swiss and immigrants.

The influence of the immigrant organisations is limited. It is estimated that only 10 per cent of the immigrants are affiliated to an organisation. Only the Spanish and Italian organisations are nationally coordinated and have any impact on the political scene. The Spanish and Italian CPs play a key role but they are only interested in ensuring the immigrant vote.

The fight for unity

Before the 1974 recession immigrant organisations intervened actively in Swiss political life against the right wing. Nowadays, they relate mainly to their own countries, although immigrants continue to play an active role in trade-union struggles that have taken place. In 1980 the association of immigrants called Free Italian Colonies launched a national petition to demand civil rights for immigrants and at the beginning of the year they started a petition in support of the proposition put forward by the USS for introducing the 40-hour week.

The impact of this activity is obviously limited by the weakness of the current for unity between indigenous and immigrant workers. Such a current does, however, exist and has not been deterred

from its project, despite the difficulties which its activities entail. The Socialist Workers Party (SAP/PSO), Swiss section of the Fourth International, has played an active role in it since its foundation.

In the first half of the 1970s, efforts were concentrated in the fight against the far right. Many immigrants participated actively and mobilised alongside the left. This movement however had strictly no impact on the official labour movement. The latter was pursuing a collaborationist policy leading in 1970 to a joint campaign with the employers and the government 'against xenophobia'.

In the mid-1970s, some Christians decided that the time had come to go on the offensive. They launched a referendum under the slogan 'Stick together'. In fact, this proposition took on the language of the official labour movement. They proposed to fight for the demand for equal rights for Swiss citizens and immigrants, the abolition of the seasonal worker status and against the draconian measures to limit further immigration.

This proposal gained real support in the labour movement and drove the USS to at last support the demand for the abolition of the status of 'seasonal worker'. All the parties of the left including the SAP/PSO and several other unions called for a yes vote when the referendum was held in April 1981. The result was a debacle. Only one seventh of the electorate voted in favour. This result demoralised many Swiss and immigrant activists. The collaborationist union leadership, the government, the major parties of the right and the left, as well as the extreme right saw their respective positions as reinforced.

The fight for unity has not ended there, and the SAP/PSO attaches great importance to it, unlike the other left parties that have a tendency to disregard an area of such poor electoral interest.

The SAP/PSO has always demanded equal social and political rights for all those who live and work in the country. It has raised calls for political asylum and denounced the de-facto collusion between ruling class strategy and the vermin of the fascist right. At the same time, the SAP/PSO has sought to convince Swiss and immigrant workers that they are wrong to seek refuge in quotas, with the police surveillance they entail over a section of the working class.

The SAP/PSO currently has twin objectives. Firstly, a current for working class unity has to be built by demonstrating, on the basis of facts, that the need to break the policy of 'social peace' goes hand in hand with the need to achieve solidarity and equality between Swiss and immigrant workers. Then on the basis of such an understanding, linking up systematically, the immigrant organisations with activities to defend and extend workers rights in this country.

This will be a long and relatively unspectacular struggle, but it is essential for the future of the Swiss labour movement. ■



An economic upturn coupled with a financial crisis

The year 1983 was marked by an upturn in the world capitalist economy. It began in the United States, and then over 1983 and the first quarter of 1984, it spread to Canada, Japan, West Germany, Great Britain, some of the minor imperialist powers in Europe, the semi-industrialized countries in Southeast Asia, as well as Brazil. It is beginning to be felt also now in Italy and France. A series of so-called third world countries, however, have been left out of the upward movement.

Ernest MANDEL

The essential reason for this upturn is a buoyancy of demand in the United States. The North American domestic market, the largest sector of the world market, has attracted a growing mass of foreign commodities, thereby stimulating a new thrust of economic activity in the countries cited above. (See Table I.) The new rise of the economy in these countries, thus, has been brought about by the expansion of their exports to the United States and not by the expansion of their own internal markets.

The peculiar character of this world economic upturn is, therefore, reflected by a growing deficit in the US balance of trade. Such a deficit could send the rate of the dollar plummeting if it were not for the constant inflow of new money capital to the United States. But there is only one way to keep the money coming in. That is to maintain the high American interest rates, which in fact include a high

insurance premium against a devaluation of the dollar.

Such a rise in US interest rates has different immediate effects on the various capitalist national economies, depending on two factors. The first is whether they are heavily indebted or not. In the case of the third world, whose debts are essentially in dollars, with half at a variable interest rate, every increase of 1% in the interest rate imposes additional charges of 3.5 billion dollars. The second factor is whether or not the country in question can expand its exports to the US rapidly. This depends on their relative competitiveness, the elasticity of American demand for the specific products they export, the excess productive capacity that they have at the start of the upturn, and so on.

This process explains why not only Argentina, Mexico, and the poorer semi-colonial countries are being drained, but French president Mitterrand, the king of Spain, and Greek premier Papandreu are moaning and groaning too. On the other hand, not only Japan, West Germany and Sweden are rejoicing, but South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and even India are profiting from this conjunction between upturn and international financial crisis.

At first glance, the economic upturn in the US, which almost immediately brought on a corresponding movement in Canada, seems to have assumed a quasi-technical or automatic form. For several decades, the two lead industries in the economy of the imperialist countries have been auto and building, and the subcontracting sectors linked to these two industries. In these two industries fluctuations in production have been much greater — five times larger in terms of percentages — than in industry as a whole. Drops in production of the order of 30% to 50% in these industries lead to falls in overall industrial production of the order of 5% to 10%.

Over the 1980-82 recession, US automobile production fell from the level of 7 million vehicles a year at the beginning of 1981 to 4.5 million, at the annual rate of production in March 1982. There was, therefore, room for a strong upturn in

this industry, since the inventories had been wiped out and current sales were running above current production.

In fact, automobile production rose from 550,000 vehicles in June 1982 to 700,000 in May 1984, an increase of more than 25%. The upturn was still stronger in the building industry. The number of buildings under construction went from 900,000 in June 1982 to 1.8 million in June 1983, and to 2 million in May 1984, amounting to an increase of more than 100% in two years. Overall industrial production increased by 13% in 1983. In the first quarter of 1984, it was growing at an annual rate of 15%.

However, if you take a closer look, you see that this "technical" aspect of the upturn is hardly sufficient to explain it.

First of all, the "renewal of inventories" lagged behind the upturn. It only started in the third quarter of 1983. Moreover, the upturn has gone ahead of reduction in unemployment, while real wages have been stagnating or declining. Clearly, therefore, there has been a swelling of overall demand not rooted in increased sales (and production) of consumer goods and intermediate products. Productive investment has also been sluggish.

The role of military spending

The source of this upturn is, thus, clear — increased public spending, essentially military spending. It is Washington's yearly budget deficit of 200 billion dollars that is at the root of the American upturn. Everything else flows from that.

According to Marxist economic theory — as well as neoliberal economic theory, by the way — a vigorous economic upturn stimulated by military spending should fuel inflation. This is in fact what has happened. The yearly inflation rate in the US now stands at 5.5%, as against 3.5% in West Germany and 4% in Japan and Switzerland. When you recall that the average rate of inflation in the US in the 1950s was less than 2%, you can see that Reagan has by no means overcome inflation.

However, this surge of inflation has been cushioned up until now by two factors. The first is the great excess productive capacity in the US at the start of the upturn (more than a third of installed capacity was unutilized toward the middle of 1982). The second is the massive influx of foreign money-capital. This financial inflow has made it possible to wipe out the deficit in the US's trade deficit, thereby preventing a deficit in the balance of payments, which would have touched off a process of mushrooming inflation.

The rise in US interest rates is linked both to the budget deficit and to a deliberate policy of the Federal Reserve Bank of maintaining a high rate of exchange for the dollar. The fact that the budget deficit has persisted in the midst

TABLE I: Evolution of industrial production in 1984 (except Argentina) compared to the corresponding month of the previous year (in %)

Country	Month	%
Argentina	last quarter 1983	+ 4.0
Australia	March 1984	+ 6.2
Belgium	February 1984	+ 3.3
Brazil (1)	February 1984	+ 2.0
Canada	March 1984	+ 10.3
South Korea	April 1984	+ 7.5
France	March 1984	+ 4.7
West Germany	March 1984	+ 3.1
Mexico (2)	January 1984	- 13.0
Netherlands	March 1984	+ 6.3
Italy	January 1984	+ 4.2
Sweden	March 1984	+ 9.0
Great Britain	March 1984	+ 2.3
Taiwan	April 1984	+ 7.5
Japan	April 1984	+ 12.0
USA	April 1984	+ 14.4

1. The *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* gives a 3.9% rate of increase for the first quarter 1984.

2. Compared to January 1982.

Source: *The Economist*, June 16, 1984, except for the three countries of south-east Asia, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 7, 1984.

of an upturn means that the demand for new money-capital is coming both from capitalist firms and the public authorities. It is, therefore, tending to exceed supply. As a result, interest rates are rising. Given the resumption of inflation and the American trade-balance deficit, foreign capitalists will only place their money-capital in the US if the interest rate is such as to guarantee them against an anticipated fall in the exchange rate of the dollar. (1)

With nominal interest rates at 13% and inflation at 5.5%, the real interest rate is 7.5%, which is an usurious rate. This affair clears up if you consider that the capitalists are counting on at least a 10% drop in the rate of the dollar, even though no one knows exactly when that will happen and at what level the drop will begin.

However, such interest rates — which could rise still further — are clearly threatening to choke off the upturn. They make necessary profit rates on the order of 20% in order to continue to stimulate credit-financed investments. It is true that there has been a veritable explosion of profits in the US, and that this is continuing. This is primarily the result of the decline in real wages, which is continuing despite the upturn. Thus, in the first quarter of 1984, nominal hourly wages increased by 3.5%, while retail prices went up by 5%.

Nonetheless, the impact of the retooling going on in industry on the rate of profit depends on its effects on the organic composition of capital and the latter's rate of growth compared to the tempo of growth in the rates of exploitation of labor. No individual capitalist is capable of making any definite predictions about this. And the capitalists as a whole, as well as their advisors, cannot do any better.

In these conditions, uncertainty and disquiet prevail, and they have begun to halt the rise in the stock market on Wall Street. The chances that the American economic upturn will continue beyond 1985 are, therefore, slim since the rise in interest rates should choke off the upturn in auto and construction.

In opting deliberately for an overvalued dollar, in order to moderate the inflation caused by the US budget deficit, the Reagan administration has inevitably programmed a gigantic deficit in the American trade balance. It has risen from 25 billion dollars in 1980 to 36 billion in 1982 to 60 billion in 1983. It threatens to go over 100 billion in 1984. In May 1984, it reached an annually adjusted rate of 150 billion dollars.

A dearer dollar is increasing the trade deficit in two ways. First, it is promoting a strong expansion of imports into the US, and secondly it is bringing about an absolute decline in American exports. The latter in fact dropped by 30 billion dollars worth in 1983 and are continuing to go down. The decline in exports of manufactured goods — that is, after you eliminate agricultural and mining pro-

ducts from the analysis — is still more pronounced. In fact, the US is losing its place as the world's biggest exporter of manufactured goods, being overtaken by Japan and West Germany.

The American upturn and the overvaluation of the dollar have thus been the locomotives pulling the rest of the world capitalist economy out of the recession, although at very different tempos, extents and timing in the various countries (see Table II). But these forces can only do that insofar as they are not neutralized by rising costs for American industry's principal competitors. So, we get a double paradox. It is Reagan, and not Francois Mitterrand, Felipe Gonzalez, Bettino Craxi, Margaret Thatcher, Nakasone or Helmut Kohl, who is applying a neo-Keynesian policy in the capitalist world today to stimulate an upturn. This policy only benefits Japan, Canada, West Germany and the rest of capitalist Europe insofar as Reagan is the only one to apply it.

TABLE II

	Differences in export prices between 1979 and 1982 calculated from a base in US dollars	Price of electric machines for export in US dollars in the last quarter of 1982 (100 = 1979)
USA	+ 31.3 %	126
Japan	+ 0.8 %	90
West Germany	- 12.9 %	83

Source: *Lloyds Bank Review*, April 1984.

Obviously, the overvaluation of the dollar must not be exaggerated. The deterioration of the United States's position on the world market for manufactured products is, in the last analysis, the result of a long-term structural evolution, of an erosion or wiping out of the lead in productivity of American industry, even in the most advanced sectors. This is shown clearly by the following table.

TABLE III: US share of world exports

	1970	1980
Aircraft	71 %	62 %
Computers	42 %	36 %
Construction, public works, and mining machinery	39 %	39 %
Scientific, medical and control equipment	32 %	29 %
Tractors and agricultural machinery	32 %	31 %
Pumps and compressors	29 %	21 %
Telecommunications material	19 %	13 %
Medical and pharmaceutical products	18 %	16 %
Machine tools	17 %	13 %

Source: *Foreign Policy*, No 53, Winter 1983/1984.

Nonetheless, the expansion of imports into the US is in part the result of the overvalued dollar. It has thus partially helped the industries of semi-industrialized dependent countries such as South Korea, Brazil and Taiwan. These countries have been able to keep the exchange rates of their currencies with the dollar stable or have even been led to lower them, at the same time as they were exporting goods to the US, for which the demand is high.

Japan has been obliged to accept a slight upward valuation of the yen against the dollar.

The flood of products from the semi-industrialized countries into the US internal market is spectacular. (2) These countries' share of American imports of manufactured goods now exceeds that of capitalist Europe and that of Japan, as Table IV attests.

These figures should be interpreted with caution. They include in fact a growing volume of exchanges made within the same transnational companies, which organize their own international division of labor. Sometimes, what is involved is imports of products whose production was deliberately shifted to third world countries. But these cases do not change much with respect to the general movement. The growth of imports into the US from these countries more and more involves products of heavy industry and not just current-consumption commodities. For example, two thirds of South Korea's exports are already in the first category. What this process reflects, therefore, is indeed a weakening of the position of US industry on the world market as a result of a whole series of transformations that have developed over the past fifteen years.

Under these conditions, how can you explain the decline in unemployment and the creation of new jobs in the American economy, the "success" that the bourgeois press is making so much of in Europe? Some 89% of these jobs have been created in the service industries, essentially in very small businesses. Contrary to the widespread myth, these jobs have nothing to do with the high-technology industries, or even with advanced technology. Altogether, "high technology" only employs 2 million people in the United States, and this figure is growing annually only at a rate of 0.1% of the total US workforce. Investments made to take advantage of Reagan's tax breaks for "risk capital" amount annually to one one billion dollars, less than 0.1% of all capital investment in the US.

To understand the difference between the 1974-79 cycle and the cycle that be-

1. On the "influence of expectations of a change in the value of the dollar on the level of interest rates in the United States," see an article written by the Manufacturers Hanover Investment Corp. of New York that appeared under that title [retranslated from the French] in the February 1984 issue of the magazine *Euromoney*.

2. We have dealt with the problem of the emergence of semi-industrialized dependent countries in an article in *Quatrieme Internationale*, No 13, April 1984.

TABLE IV: Imports of manufactured products by the USA

	1973	1977	1980	1981	1982	1983
Total in billions of dollars	42.5	74.7	124.2	142.1	145.2	163.0
In % (1)						
From Europe	36.0	28.5	29.7	27.0	25.0	24.3
From Japan	21.5	24.5	24.6	25.4	27.4	25.6
From Canada	24.7	24.5	20.0	18.8	18.2	19.0
From Third World countries	12.5	18.8	22.5	23.5	25.0	28.0

1. In 1966 the respective shares were: 43% for Europe, 23.4% for Canada, 20.8% for Japan, and 10.6% for the Third World countries.

Source: OECD and the Trade Department of the US, statistics summarised by *Le Monde*, June 5, 1984.

gan with the recession of 1980 for the world capitalist economy as a whole, you have to first see what these cycles have had in common. Both had their upturns, in 1976-1979 and in 1983-1984, propelled by a considerable new expansion of indebtedness — government debt, business debt and consumer debt. But the direction of the lending has profoundly changed. In 1975-79, the expansion of credit went mainly to governments and big businesses in third world countries (including the OPEC countries), as well as in the bureaucratized workers states. In the period 1980-1984, and this will probably continue in 1985, the expansion of credit has gone mainly to the imperialist states and the big "multinationals" and "national" trusts in these countries.

This lending obviously has come from the banks in the imperialist countries. They continue to be the only ones that have large reserves of money-capital, or, which amounts to the same thing, the only ones who extend credit for large-scale financing operations. (3)

It was not, therefore, because the countries of the so-called third world had big needs for capital in 1974-79 that billions of dollars were lent to them in that period. Their capital needs are always insatiable, as, by the way, are the needs of the bureaucratized workers states for additional credits in the currencies of the imperialist countries.

The reason for this lending was that the demand for new money-capital suddenly fell off in 1974-79 in the imperialist countries, as a result of the decline in investments. So, the big imperialist banks offered their excess capital, which moreover was swollen by petrodollars, to the third world and Eastern Bloc countries.

This inflow of credit obviously came into a context shaped by the model of capital accumulation chosen by the "national" bourgeoisies of the semi-industrialized countries, which is export oriented. But, precisely because of the crisis, the growth in these countries' exports could not keep pace with the rate of increase in their indebtedness.

As a result, like the rising interest rates in the US, the weight of indebtedness has grown continually more serious, especially for Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Nigeria, Indonesia, Poland, Yugoslavia and Rumania, which are

among the "big" debtors. Consequently, the threat of these countries going bankrupt is beginning to loom.

The imperialist banks have begun to be pressed for regular debt rescheduling operations, with the weakest debtors one after the other being pushed into suspension of payments. This unquestionably prolonged the 1980-1982 recession, by narrowing the "substitute markets" created during the preceding cycle.

However, little by little two substitute markets have emerged within the imperialist countries themselves. The first is represented by increased military spending and a sharp rise in public debt in the West. The other is the growing indebtedness of a certain number of big imperialist firms, either to cover enormous losses or to finance large-scale speculative operations (4), notably mergers almost entirely financed by bank credit. (5)

Imperialist firms in debt spiral

The growth in these debts has been quite as spectacular, if not more so, than the increase in the indebtedness of Poland or the semi-industrialized Latin American countries. For example, France's debt has risen in the space of a few years from 20 to 70 billion dollars. If the present rate of increase is maintained, it will soon overtake the debts of Mexico and Brazil.

The US public debt has reached the astronomical figure of 1.5 trillion dollars and threatens to go over 3 trillion dollars before the end of the decade, that is six times the total in 1960! The debts of big imperialist concerns have assumed proportions no less gargantuan. Public opinion became aware of this when it came to light that it was necessary to advance more than 6 billion dollars to the Continental Illinois Bank of Chicago in order to rescue it from a bankruptcy that could have brought down the entire American credit system. For the first time, the US really came to the brink of a banking panic, much more so than at the time a Mexican debt moratorium was threatened in the fall of 1982.

It is interesting, moreover, to examine the origin of the near bankruptcy of the Continental Illinois Bank. Once again, contrary to a widespread myth, the

"bad debts" of some Latin American countries to this bank played only a minor part in the lack of cover that appeared. It was, in fact, caused by ill-considered loans to the following sorts of recipients:

— Speculators in the energy sector, such as Nucorp Energy, which went bankrupt, leaving Continental Illinois with the tab of 200 million dollars, or equally speculative lending to the energy portfolio of the Penn Square Bank of Oklahoma City, which reached the figure of a billion dollars.

— Big trusts operating at a loss (200 million dollars to the Dome Petroleum company of Canada; 200 million to International Harvester; 100 million to the Alfa group in Mexico; 40 million to Massey-Ferguson; 24 million to Braniff Airlines). (6)

The conclusion should not be drawn from this that the financial crisis that is hitting the third world countries does not constitute a threat to the world capitalist economy as a whole. It does in two respects. First of all, because the insolvency into which one after the other of these countries is sinking — Argentina has in fact suspended payments of interest owed since October 1983, Mexico is now going through a new crisis in its foreign currency account — is leading them, notably under the pressure of the IMF, to drastically reduce their imports, thereby contributing to the stagnation of the world market and to the persistence of the long economic depression. Secondly, because a considerable part of these debts are held by private banks and exceed the banks' own capital and reserves, so that a suspension of payment of current (7) interest would threaten to bring bankruptcy for these institutions. (See Table V)

It is simply important to realize that the problem of debt goes beyond that of the third world countries alone, including as regards the accumulation of paper money, as Table VI shows, although it does not include the foreign bank debts of France, Sweden, Belgium and Denmark, which are very high.

Should it be concluded from this that a banking crash is inevitable? No. The

3. To these banks should be added some banks in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrein, which hold and place directly a part of their petro-dollar reserves, as well as the Banco do Brasil.

4. Let us recall that in Kuwait, the richest country in OPEC in view of the low density of its population, unbridled speculation on the so-called Souk al-Manakh "parallel stock market" led to a crash of uncovered checks to the tune of 93 billion dollars. (*Le Monde*, August 17, 1983.)

5. According to the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* of March 21, 1984, the merger operations in the US oil industry, of which the profits went to Standard Oil of California, Texaco and Atlantic Richfield, were financed by 35 billion dollars in bank loans, which is higher than the combined international bank debt of the Philippines, Indonesia, Nigeria, Egypt, India and Turkey!

6. *The Economist*, May 19, 1984.

7. No one talks any more by the way of repaying the capital itself, because where would the third-world countries find the 700 billion dollars to repay all the capital that has been lent to them.

TABLE V Loans to the four main Latin American debtors (Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela) as % of the bank's own capital.

Manufacturers Hanover Bank (USA)	240 %	Bank of America (USA)	145 %
Lloyds Bank (GB)	228 %	JP Morgan (USA)	125 %
Midland Bank (GB)	213 %	First Chicago (USA)	115 %
Chase Manhattan Bank (USA)	175 %	Continental Illinois (USA)	110 %
Citicorp (USA)	170 %	National Westminster (GB)	100 %
Chemical Bank (USA)	165 %	Barclays Banks (GB)	75 %
Bankers Trust (USA)	150 %		

Source: *Sunday Times*, June 3, 1984.

Total gross interest payments as % of total exports of goods and services

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984 (predictions)
Brazil	24 %	31 %	32 %	39 %	50 %	39 %	40 %
Mexico	20 %	21 %	20 %	26 %	31 %	31 %	35 %
Argentina	11 %	14 %	22 %	34 %	52 %	42 %	44 %

Source: OECD

speed with which the US monetary authorities advanced the 6 billion dollars to Continental Illinois — in contrast to the fuss that is made over every minor rescheduling of debts to dependent countries — confirms that the imperialist governments would do practically anything to prevent such a crash.

The American government cannot let Chase Manhattan or Citicorp go under, because Chase Manhattan and Citicorp are the American government. So, the losses would probably be nationalized and internationalized. The whole question is who is going to have to pay the bill, and what may be the incalculable consequences of paying the price for a refloating of the imperialist banking system.

There has been no restructuring of the world market. The fundamental cause of the financial threat flows from the fact that the constant expansion of banking credit is essential to keep the two basic contradictions of the world capitalist economy from becoming explosive. One is the falling rate of profit, that is the insufficiency of the total surplus value being currently produced to assure capital

TABLE VI: Main debtor countries of the private imperialist banks at end of December 1982 (in billions of dollars)

Mexico	61.5
Brazil	60.0
Argentina	24.1
Spain	23.0
Venezuela	22.8
South Korea	19.0
USSR	17.0
South Africa	14.8
Poland	13.8
Australia	12.8
Norway	11.4
Yugoslavia	10.1
Chile	10.8
Portugal	10.0
Greece	9.8
West Germany	9.1
Finland	9.0
Philippines	8.5

Source: OECD and the Bank for International Settlements. Joint note of April 1984.

as a whole, especially newly accumulated capital, the rate of profit counted on. The other is the appearance of excess productive capacity in more and more industries, that is, the insufficiency of demand by the "final consumer" to absorb all the consumer goods that the system can produce.

However, the more this expansion of credit "breaks loose" from real revenues and production, the more the profits and overproduction crises threaten to lead to a financial crisis that would in turn further aggravate them.

A new world division of labor?

It is by constantly keeping your eye on the real causes — and not just the apparent ones — of the long economic depression that began around the end of the 1960s and the start of the 1970s that you can best understand why all the hopes of a more or less automatic "restructuring" of the world capitalist economy have proved in vain up till now, and will continue to do so for many years.

At first glance, the expansion of the industrial production of the semi-industrialized dependent countries, in particular Southeast Asia and Brazil, but also to a lesser extent, Mexico and India, seems spectacular. Restrictions on credit in dollars to the Latin American and African countries have led to plummeting of American exports to these countries, while on the other hand their exports to the United States are continually expanding.

In 1983, for the first time in history, US imports of manufactured commodities from the third world exceeded US exports of manufactured commodities to these same countries. (See Table VII) It can be seen from this table that exports to Latin America are declining, while they are increasing to southern and eastern Asia. So, it is not just the Latin American countries that are suffering from the policies of the IMF but also the US export industries.

At the same time, it can be seen how

TABLE VII: American exports of manufactured products to the Third World (in billions of dollars)

	1981	1982	1983
To Latin America	31.5	23.2	16.9
To Asia	14.8	16.3	16.2
To Middle East	10.7	11.2	9.5
To Africa	4.5	3.9	2.7
Total	61.5	54.6	45.3
American imports of manufactured products from the Third World	35.0	36.8	45.7

Source: *Le Monde*, June 5, 1984.

much the Latin American crisis is going hand in hand now with a new "export-induced boom" in Southeast Asia. Countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and even Malaysia and Thailand are experiencing annual growth rates of the order of 6% to 7%, as a result of increases in the exports of more than 25% for South Korea, Taiwan and Hongkong, and 7% for Singapore. (8)

However, if you pose the question of why this boom is occurring, the answer is clear: besides the overvaluation of the dollar, it is mainly the relatively low wages in Southeast Asia that explain it. In South Korea, despite the modest regular increase, wages are on a level equivalent to 50% of Japanese wages and 35% of American and European wages. This means that it is not real gains in productivity that explain the redistribution of productive capacities but differences in current costs and thus in revenues, which, by the way, are partially neutralized by a lower productivity.

By the same token, the shift of productive capacity to these countries has not brought an increase but a reduction in overall world demand. This is reflected clearly by a shrinking in the volume of world trade, followed by a stagnation, then by an expansion of this volume less than the expansion of production in the countries where the upturn is furthest along. (See Table VIII)

TABLE VIII: World exports (in billions of dollars)

	1982	1983	1984 (predictions)
World exports	1,850	1,810	between 1,900 and 1,980
share of imperialist (OECD) countries	1,147	1,133	± 1,200

Source: GATT report quoted by *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, May 25, 1984.

An example will illustrate this evolution. South Korea is trying for the second time to get automobile mass pro-

8. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 14, 1984.



The dollar goes up more every day (DR)

duction going. It aims to produce 1.2 million vehicles in 1991, of which half are to be exported. But if the world market for automobiles continues to stagnate relatively, these 600,000 cars exported by South Korea will replace 600,000 cars previously sold by Japanese, American or West European firms. Moreover, the production of these 600,000 cars will generate only half as much "final" revenues [wages] as the 600,000 cars they will replace. This, therefore, means a shrinking and not an increase in overall world demand, even if the increased production and the relative expansion of the South Korean internal accompanying it actually take place, which is in fact quite problematic.

Another good example is the petrochemicals industry. This industry, which is suffering from enormous excess capacity on a world scale, has been led to drastic shutdowns of productive facilities in Western Europe and Japan. The consequence was an upturn in production on the order of 15% in Western Europe in 1982-1983 and of the same order in Japan. But next year, big newly built petrochemical installations will start operating in Saudi Arabia, taking advantage of very low-cost local raw materials. So, both the West European and Japanese trusts are expecting a new crisis and new cutbacks in productive capacity. (9)

As is evident, it is in the last analysis the long-term depression that is imposing limits on capitalist "restructuration" and not the latter that is making it possible to overcome the depression. There is no sign of any "regulatory" mechanism operating, reflecting a basic reorganization of the labor process.

Those who believe that the capitalist system can attain a "correction" of the conditions for accumulation capital, or more precisely for relaunching capital accumulation on a grand scale, because that is what is needed to get out of a long depression that has been going on

for 10 to 15 years, often correctly stress that to get that you need a fundamental reorganization of the labor process, of the reorganization of work within the enterprises. History confirms in fact that this is the only way to achieve a considerable simultaneous increase in the volume and rate of surplus value.

So far, the results scored by capital internationally in the reorganization of work are more than modest. This is, moreover, despite a constantly growing number of unemployed, which for the imperialist countries together went from 10 million at the start of the 1970s to 35 million at the present time, and will undoubtedly soon go to 40 million.

To be sure, real wages are stagnating or declining in nearly all the imperialist countries. They are collapsing in a series of semi-industrialized countries, with the exception of Southeast Asia and the richer countries in OPEC. (10) As a result, there has been a veritable explosion of capitalist profits.

According to *Business Week* of June 18, 1984, gross profits, that is profits before taxes, rose in 1983 by 44% in Canada, by 24.4% in Great Britain, by 13.2% in West Germany, by 10% in the Netherlands, and by 8.7% in France. In 1984, they will rise by 31.7% in Italy, nearly 20% in Great Britain, 14% in France, and close to 10% in West Germany. For the United States and Japan, the figures are of the same order.

However, this is a purely conjunctural movement, which does not reflect structural changes in the labor process. While such changes are taking place — largely as a result of robotization — their effects on the production of surplus value are only positive for the firms concerned insofar as they remain marginal and result in a simple redistribution of surplus value.

If these changes were to become general, which does not seem to be on the cards for several decades, the result would be a drop in the volume of surplus value

that would neutralize any increase in the rate of surplus value, because only living wage labor produces surplus value, robots hardly do so.

The limits within which more surplus value can be extracted from industrial labor, whose volume is declining, stagnating, or growing only slowly, are thus very narrow. This is all the more so since working class resistance is increasing as a result of the duration of the economic crisis itself and the spread of its effects to the big battalions of the working class.

The past gains of the working class by way of social security, which up till now have limited the impact on the crisis on the spending of working class households, are beginning in turn to be worn away. But this, on the other hand, is stimulating working class resistance to the effects of the austerity policy.

The largest reserve available for increasing the production of surplus value, in the age of the third technological revolution and micro-electronics is the industrialization of services, the transformation of the providing of services into the sale of commodities, whose production involves producing increased surplus value.

This is a far cry from the so-called Post Industrial Society. It will happen, notably, in the fields of health, education, distribution, banking services, etc. But it is accompanied by a triple effect that generates working class protests — reducing employment, reducing health services and a lowering of the quality of these services. In this area also, therefore, there will be increased working class resistance.

So, we maintain the diagnosis made earlier. In order for capital to be able to get out of the long depression that is underway, it would have to succeed in breaking the resistance of the workers to a major reduction in their standard of living and in their level of organization, as well as the resistance of the peoples of the third world to increased superexploitation. It would have to manage to reintegrate the workers states in the world capitalist market to a qualitatively greater degree.

However, capital is still far from having achieved its objectives today in a single one of these three fields. The least that can be said is that it would need a lot of time to accomplish these objectives. And it is the outcome of the social and political struggles among very live class forces that will decide how far the capitalists are going to get in this respect, and not any automatic regulating mechanism inherent in the capitalist system. ■

Ernest MANDEL

9. *The Economist*, June 16, 1984.

10. It should be noted, however, that the drop in oil incomes has brought down the per capita income in Libya by 25%, that wages have been frozen for three years, and that even full employment seems threatened. This no doubt is not unrelated to the political crisis the regime of Colonel Qaddafi is going through at the moment.