

International VIEWPOINT

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death agony of
the dictatorship**

**Repression in
Grenada**

**What is involved
in Gorbachov's
peace proposals?**



International Viewpoint

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Answer to star wars

THE IMPACT of Gorbachov's peace proposals has shown how effective principled political initiatives directed at the masses in the Western countries could be. Despite their limitations, they already make it clear that Moscow is essentially in a defensive position in the arms race.

Coming in the context of a new thrust in the activity of the Western peace movement, Gorbachov's proposals have thrown the Western governments off balance.

Among other things, he called the bluff of the Dutch government, which claimed that it would allow deployment of cruise missiles only in response to Soviet missile deployment.

What is new in the Soviet proposals is that they represent a coherent overall approach, calling for rather radical arms reductions. In this respect, they are a condemnation of the policy followed by the bureaucracy up till now.

As significant as this new course of the bureaucracy is, it nonetheless remains a strictly diplomatic offensive in the context of state-to-state relations. Thus, the activists of the independent peace movements in the East, in the USSR in particular, who advocated just such unilateral measures remain in prison.

The bureaucracy is capable of turnarounds of this sort when the circumstances require it, as in this case when the problems of the Soviet economy make it more difficult for them to compete with the US in the arms race.

However, the bureaucracy is totally incapable of stimulating by its policy an authentic mass movement for peace that would attack the real cause of the imperialist military drive — the survival of the capitalist system itself.

Gorbachov can put up a good front as a presentable state leader, but he will never focus the hopes and struggles of the workers and the youth. His aim is not the extension of the socialist revolution but "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialist states.

The means the Soviet chief looks to are not mass mobilization but a diplomatic chess game with the imperialist leaders. If any proof of that were needed, the hard lot of the independent peace activists in the East is testimony enough. □

Yann Menez Mikil



How far do Gorbachov's proposals go ?

DO GORBACHOV'S spectacular proposals, which will be on the table in a summit meeting in Geneva on November 19-20, offer a new thaw? If you read the European press, it would seem so. In Western Europe, the powers that be are skeptical about the SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative), because Europe does not have a great deal to gain out of it.

So, hardly a day goes by without admonitions to Reagan to make deals with the Soviet Union. Agreements are in fact possible. This time also the US has an interest in keeping the negotiations from blowing up. However, this is no reason to breathe easy. This round of negotiations in Geneva promises to open a new cycle in the arms race.

ANGELA KLEIN

After the collapse of the 1983 negotiations on the US intermediate-range missiles and their deployment in Europe, the Soviet Union is interested today in stopping the reinforcement of the US's first-strike capacity in general and in particular in blocking the acceleration of the arms race in space.

As for the US, what it wants is to underwrite its previous initiatives in the area of arms control and make a deal with the Soviet Union for "controlled" antisatellite and anti-missile defense in space, in order to

avoid the accusation that its SDI program violates the ABM [Anti-Ballistic Missile] treaty of 1972, which bans the use of space for military purposes. Not the least consideration in this is to allay European misgivings about participating in the SDI.

The nub of the Soviet proposals concern three areas of the arms build-up in which the US could inflict a decisive nuclear blow on the Soviet Union without itself being crippled by Soviet missiles.

— The deployment of an anti-



'NATO soldiers against nuclear weapons' (DR)

missile system in space. The Soviet Union is willing to permit research but not tests. Deployment is to be banned. To this end it proposes that half of the offensive nuclear arms on both sides should be destroyed. But there is no binding link between the two.

— There should be a ban on deploying new nuclear weapons systems. This concerns, above all, the new generation of US intercontinental MX missiles, the Midgetman missiles, which are highly accurate and suitable for a first strike. On Hiroshima Day, the Soviet Union announced that it would observe a unilateral cessation of testing new nuclear weapons systems until the end of the year.

— Finally, the Soviet Union still wants the withdrawal of US intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles. In this area also, the Soviet Union has announced a unilateral step. The number of SS20s deployed in the European part of the Soviet Union is to be reduced to 243. This corresponds to the number of British and French nuclear missiles.

Since the US refuses to include the French and British missiles in the Geneva negotiations, and since France has declared that there cannot be any negotiations over its missiles without its participation — and therefore, they cannot be discussed in Geneva — the Soviet Union has proposed to France and Great Britain separate negotiations on the intermediate-range missiles. Thereby, it has dropped its original position that it was willing to discuss intermediate-range weapons only if there were also discussions on the SDI.

The US negotiating proposal dates back to March of this year and focuses on a reduction of the big land-based Soviet missiles, which the American authorities suppose could crack their silos.

Washington's response to the Soviet proposals has so far been mainly negative. It considers a ban on the deployment of new missile systems as unnegotiable. The US would accept a significant reduction in its nuclear

missiles but not in the systems that give them a qualitative superiority over the Soviet Union.

On the question of the intermediate range missiles, Mitterrand has given Gorbachov the run around. There will be no bilateral negotiations. Only on the SDI might a compromise be possible, which would let the US pursue its program in peace. The Soviet Union says that it is not against space research. That comes within the realm of the "peaceful use" of space.

Since deployment is conceivable only in 15 to twenty years, it is possible to use formulas making a future decision to deploy dependent on the behaviour of the Soviet Union. There is no way to get the US to agree to a ban on testing. That would make the research itself worthless. But here also it is possible to find compromise formulas. Thus, the US has the possibility to come to an apparent understanding with the Soviet Union to renounce starting the SDI program, without thereby having to make a single concession.

The motives of European capitalists

The Soviet Union had indeed hoped to be able to link up with the West European criticism of the SDI. Thus, it eagerly praised EUREKA as a "civilian alternative." It got totally lost here, because the criticism of the West European governments and businesspeople is not politically but rather economically motivated.

The rulers of West Europe reckon that out of the SDI research program, for which the US will spend 26 billion dollars, 100 million dollars will go to West European firms in research contracts. The most important results of this research are to be kept in the US, which now, along with its trade protectionism, is practising a kind of technological protectionism.

Out of "loyalty to the alliance," the West Europeans are not doing anything to counter the SDI. At

most they are concerned that for the sake of public opinion there should be no formal violation at least of the ABM treaty. And at the same time, the West European powers are setting up their own little European SDI — the European Defense Initiative (EDI), which is to be a complement to the EUREKA agency for research and development.

The advocates of West Europe as a third space power — for example, Mitterrand and Strauss — point out that, like the US, Europe can only make a qualitative technological leap forward, thereby also benefiting the civilian economy, if the state lays out the money in the form of military projects.

What they have in mind, in part, are programs like those included in the framework of the SDI — ultrahigh-speed circuitry, computers that can solve problems on their own, intelligent sensors, a new generation of robots, laser technology, and the new biotechnology.

All of these technologies can be applied within the framework of an integrated air defense; or in the development of "intelligent weapons," as called for by the new NATO doctrines for waging war; or in the construction of the multisensor observation satellite that is to be built by France and West Germany, which is to serve both military and civilian purposes.

Thus, the Soviet Union is coming under the combined pressure of US and West European acceleration of the arms race. There is no doubt about the danger that it is facing. Unlike at the end of the 1950s, the Soviet economy, now enmeshed in crisis, can hardly manage the effort needed to overcome its enormous technological lag and to achieve military "equality."

The Soviet Union's policy up till now of trying to restrain the arms spiral through negotiations and at the same time to preserve military parity with the US is thus coming into a total blind alley. Gorbachov's generous unilateral steps are limited in time. His spectacular disarmament proposals are accompanied by an implicit threat: "If the SDI is not stopped, strategic weapons limitations are off." In other words, then there would be an unrestrained arms race in offensive nuclear weapons. This shatters the hopes about the ability of the Soviet leadership not only to reject the arms race but block it.

It would be cheaper and politically far more effective if the Soviet Union stuck to its unilateral disarmament proposals, even if the Geneva negotiations fail. That would give great assistance to all of those in the West who are fighting against the SDI and EUREKA. □

Labour Party in conference: the left fights on

THIS YEAR'S Labour Party conference, held at the beginning of October in Bournemouth marked a key point in the developments inside the British labour movement following the 1984-1985 miners' strike. It was dominated by two processes which will remain the key to Labour Party politics between now and the 1987 general election.

The first, quite obviously, was Neil Kinnock's (the leader of the Party) campaign to make Labour 'fit to govern' by turning its back on the miners, on cities like Liverpool (1) and on the Black communities. Kinnock quite consciously used this conference to project himself as a candidate acceptable to the capitalists for prime minister and as a more effective 'hammer of the left' than David Owen or David Steele [leaders of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Liberal Party Alliance].

REDMOND O' NEILL

The second process was the continuing emergence out of the miners' strike of a Labour left of a quite different type to anything seen since at least World War Two. This 'fighting left' — around the NUM, the Black sections and the Campaign Group of MPs [Members of Parliament] — was a clear minority in the conference, but a minority which, because it is based on class struggle, was able to impose some important defeats on Kinnock.

Most importantly, the resolution moved by the National Union of Mineworkers [NUM] called for: 'The next Labour government to legislate to provide; a) A complete review of all cases of miners jailed as a result of the dispute [that is the 1984-1985 miners' strike]; b) the reinstatement of miners sacked for activities arising out of the dispute; c) the reimbursement of the National Union of Mineworkers with all monies confiscated as a result of fines, sequestration and receivership.'

The resolution was carried by a vote of 3,542,000 for and 2,912,000 against. This was a clear defeat for Neil Kinnock who himself summarised the debate for twenty minutes, attacking the entire course of the NUM leadership in the 1984-1985 miners' strike. A resolution was also carried in support of the struggle of Labour-controlled local authorities

like Liverpool and Lambeth, against the Tory government's laws limiting the powers of local government and imposing large cuts in services and jobs. In particular, it was agreed 'to commit the next Labour government ... to fully compensate those representatives of the Labour movement who have suffered personal loss, bankruptcy, disqualification or whatever as a result of non-compliance with these laws.'

For the first time in Labour Party history a resolution was carried in support of lesbian and gay rights against the recommendation of the Labour Party NEC [National Executive Committee]. The support of key unions for this resolution reflected the political impact that such campaigns as Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners were able to have on the trade unions during the 12-month strike.

A resolution was passed, also against the NEC recommendation, in support of women's reproductive rights. This specifically committed the Labour Party to end the situation where Labour MPs' votes on issues like abortion are treated as matters of individual conscience rather than binding party policy.

On the question of the right of Black Labour Party members to organise in constitutionally recognised Black sections of the party, important progress was registered. Whereas in

1984, the NUM was the only union to support Black sections, at this year's conference the NUR (the railworkers' union), NUPE (public employees) and one or two smaller unions added support. The resolution in support of Black sections was defeated but this is now an issue of substantial support and this was reflected in a big increase in the number of Black delegates at the conference and their role in supporting class struggle issues under debate in the conference.

Notwithstanding these successes on important individual questions and the resulting consolidation of a more advanced Labour Party leftwing than at any time in recent decades, the overall result of the conference was that Kinnock was able to assert his dominance over the basic line of march of the Labour Party into the next general election and reduce this fighting left to a small minority on questions of overall direction of the Party.

Kinnock and the fighting left are the forces whose struggle will dominate the life of the Labour Party between now and the general election. They represent the basic choices facing the labour movement.

Kinnock won the plaudits of the Tory press in Bournemouth by signalling that his programme is *not* to reverse Thatcherism. Instead he aims to take Thatcher's chief planks as the starting point for any Labour government.

Hence the essential content of the economy debate was abandoning the objective of restoring full employment and the promise to renationalise the industries privatised by the Tories. On trade union law the aim is to retain the key elements of Thatcher's anti-union legislation. (2) In addition Kinnock wants to be able to guarantee a deal with the unions to restrict pay increases.

In its fundamentals this programme is the same as that of the Liberal-SDP Alliance, where they differ is that the Alliance, unlike Kinnock, wishes also to break the links between the unions and the Labour Party, and, ultimately, to

1. Liverpool City Council, which is led by supporters of the Militant tendency (see Note Three below) is the only council in the country which is still refusing to comply with the government's attempts to restrict the spending powers of local authorities through delimiting the amount they are allowed to raise through local taxation, that is rates. Neil Kinnock has publicly denounced the stand taken by Liverpool in particular in a speech delivered at Labour Party Conference which received wide acclaim from the bourgeois media.

2. In September, 1984 a whole series of anti-trade union measures went through parliament. These included obligatory voting by secret ballot for industrial action and an obligatory ballot on unions' affiliation to the Labour Party.

drive through a political split in the TUC [Trades Union Congress] itself.

But Kinnock's project is not viable unless two conditions are fulfilled. The first is to achieve a deal with the key sections of the trade union bureaucracy on pay policy and trade union law. Kinnock has made some progress on this front but Ron Todd's [the leader of the largest union the Transport and General Workers — TGWU] impromptu defence of the NUM, in which he specifically ruled out pay restraint, showed just how far Kinnock has to go.

However, Kinnock's progress is based on the fact that Ron Todd, Jimmy Knapp [of the National Union of Railwaymen (sic) — NUR] and Rodney Bickerstaffe [of the National Union of Public Employees — NUPE] don't have any alternative. They accept that Labour can only have a chance of winning the general election if it is united under the leadership of Neil Kinnock.

The problem for those who accept this argument is that unity under Kinnock's leadership inexorably necessitates unity around his programme and policies. This is why 'the new realist left' — the Labour Co-ordinating Committee — LCC, *Tribune* [formerly a newspaper of left MPs inside the Party] Blunkett, [Labour leader of Sheffield City Council], Livingstone [leader of the Greater London Council] and so on — will not be able to maintain the position they argued at conference: support Kinnock and the miners, support Kinnock and Liverpool.

Stab in the back from the *Tribune* left

In a cynical editorial *Tribune* advocates voting with the NUM in today's 'emotional light', following the strike, and betraying that vote when Labour forms a government. Thus has Kinnock succeeded in winning over a section of the left.

The trajectory of this 're-aligned' or 'Kinnock left' is to the right. It is not a product of Kinnock's arguments. It reflects the impact of the miners' strike on the Labour Party, and the failure of a section of the left to organise support for that strike, followed by the collapse of the majority of the opposition to the Tories' rate-capping laws.

This Kinnock left, in particular around *Tribune* and the LCC, is now the spearhead of his efforts to build up a base of support in the constituency parties and to undermine and coopt the campaigns around local government, CND, and women's representation within the party. This



Neil Kinnock and Margaret Thatcher on Remembrance Day (DR)

means a fight not only against *Militant* supporters (3) but also against the Campaign Group of MPs, the Scargill leadership of the NUM and their supporters.

This relates to the second fundamental condition for the viability of Kinnock's project: to win the Labour Party to turn its back on the type of social explosions which Thatcher's policies have provoked in British society. On this there can be no compromise.

No section of the British ruling class is prepared to countenance a government which defends what Scargill did in the miners' strike, or which stands for city councils defying the law in their confrontations with central government, or which defends Black youth involved in the greatest urban revolts in the twentieth century in Britain. That is why Kinnock and his spokespeople have been so vicious in their denunciations of the miners' picket lines, of Liverpool and of the youth of Handsworth, Brixton and Tottenham [flashpoints of the recent riots].

But to win the Labour Party as a whole to turn its back on such struggles Kinnock has to isolate and defeat the fighting class-struggle left — which has acted as the voice of these struggles within the organised labour movement. That is why Kinnock concentrated his fire on Scargill, Liverpool city council, the Black sections and the only section of the Parliamentary Labour Party [PLP] which has supported them, the Campaign Group of MPs.

Kinnock will find it difficult to isolate and defeat this new Labour left minority precisely because they are based on, and express, social forces engaged in class struggles that embody a fundamentally different line of advance for the labour movement than Kinnock against the Thatcher government. As the Cam-

paign Group's response to Kinnock explained: 'We believe that the next general election will be won by uniting rather than condemning those in struggle against the current Tory government.'

These forces represent something quite remarkable in the British labour movement. At the 1984 Labour Party conference, the NUM came forward in defence not only of its own members but in support of Black sections, in defence of gay and lesbian rights, and in support of women's demands for greater representation. At this year's conference the Black section speakers took the floor in defence of the NUM, in support of the Women's Action Committee, which is campaigning for greater representation of women in the structures of the Party, as well as in support of Black sections. The Campaign Group laid the ground for the conference through an enormous number of meetings in support of the NUM (over 1,000), the publication of Private Members Bills on questions such as miners' amnesty, Ireland and racial attacks, and through giving 100 per cent support to local councils like Liverpool and Lambeth actually fighting the Tories.

In conference itself the Campaign Group was the only section of the PLP to stand up to Kinnock and Hattersley's attacks on those in struggle. Individuals like Dennis Skinner and Tony Benn went out of their way to spell out the kind of alliances for socialism that the miners' strike

3. 'Militant' defines itself as a Marxist paper for Labour and its supporters are dominant in the youth section of the Labour Party — the Labour Party Young Socialists. At the 1983 conference of the Labour Party five members of the 'Militant' editorial board were expelled from the party. 'Militant' supporters have been subjected to a continued witchhunt which also threatens the whole of the left of the Party.

demonstrated are possible and necessary.

Kinnock is leading the Labour Party to disaster by reviving incomes policy which destroyed the last Labour government, and by attacking the areas where Labour's support is strongest — in the big cities, in the mining communities, among Black people. The new fighting left which is emerging stands for expanding Labour's base by supporting those fighting the Tories, coming forward as the champion of women (including removing the obstacles to women representing the labour movement), defending lesbian and gay rights, opening up a dialogue with those fighting British rule in the Six Counties of Ireland and so on.

Following the Labour Party conference this course can be strengthened by pursuing the broadest possible united action with the entire labour movement on particular campaigns and at the same time hammering out the key policies and alliances necessary to build a long-term political alternative within the labour movement around the axis of building an alliance for socialism.

Within this framework, the tactics adopted have to correspond to the real balance of forces, not fantasy. So, for example, the proposal championed at conference by *Labour Briefing* and *Socialist Organiser* (4) that a key task is to run an alternative for leader or deputy leader of the party in 1986 is a non-starter. Rather than strengthening the fighting left that emerged at this year's conference, such a course would allow Kinnock to destroy that new left. What is needed is not organisational gimmicks or kamikaze tactics but a political alternative to the course pursued by Kinnock.

This is also one of the chief lessons of Liverpool. Liverpool must be defended. But *Militant* supporters' objection towards Liverpool's Black organisations, and their reduction of all struggles to the economic, have weakened Liverpool's fight and facilitated Kinnock's attacks.

What is needed in the run-up to the next election is a break not simply with electoralism but with the past racism, sexism and British chauvinism of the Labour left — and serious tactics to achieve broad united action and clear policies. Despite Kinnock's victories steps were taken along that road by the new fighting left centred around the Campaign Group, the NUM and the Black section. □

4. '*Socialist Organiser*' is a revolutionary socialist newspaper within the Labour Party. '*Labour Briefing*' is a journal in the Labour Party which organises large sections of the left wing opposed to the policies of Neil Kinnock. It is closely allied with the Campaign group of MPs.

Jailed unionist on hunger strike

TWO YEARS after the US invasion of Grenada, the repressive drive to break or bring to heel the workers and popular movement continues. The case of Chester Humphrey has become a focus of this, as a particularly outrageous persecution of a popular union leader in which Washington is trying to impose its writ in total disregard for local and international law. This case is also a focus of the workers and popular movement, which is reviving despite the repression.

The first public demonstration of opposition to a policy of the US and puppet authorities took place a few weeks ago. It was a protest of hundreds of people in the streets against the threatened extradition of Chester Humphrey, organized by the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement. Humphrey's appeal against the extradition order will be heard sometime in November. This is the last recourse before being turned over to the tender mercies of the US courts. He began an unlimited hunger strike on September 2. It is not known what his condition is today, but it can hardly be good.

It is important that the maximum international pressure be brought to bear while there is still time. Letters and telegrams opposing Humphrey's extradition should be sent to Prime Minister Herbert Blaize, Prime Minister's Office, St. George's, Grenada.

The following articles on the case are from No 9 of *Free Grenada*, the publication of the Swedish Grenadakomitee.

STIEG LARSSON and JIM WARDALLY

At the beginning of November 1983, a few days after the US invasion of Grenada, the trade-union leader Chester Humphrey was arrested by the military authorities in St. George's.

Humphrey, the new rulers claimed, was a source of "unrest" among the workers in Grenada. That was a euphemism meaning in fact that he opposed the occupation and made no secret of it.

Without further ado, Chester Humphrey was imprisoned in Richmond Hill, where he was held together with the leaders of the October 19 coup d'état against the government of Maurice Bishop. Today, two years after the invasion, he remains behind bars waiting — as absurd as it may seem, extradition to the US!

The case of Chester Humphrey highlights the sort of democracy the US has brought in. So, it bears looking at more closely.

The US invasion, together with the brief reign of the so-called Military Council in the week following

the murder of Maurice Bishop led to a grave and grievous setback for the Grenadan workers movement. The old leadership that made up the progressive nucleus of the unions was to a large extent wiped out.

Among the comrades murdered during the counterrevolution on October 19 were Vincent Noel, chair of the Bank and General Workers Union and Fitzroy Bain, chair of the Agricultural and General Workers Union. These were two of Grenada's foremost and most popular leaders.

Jim Wardally, the chair of the Technical and Allied Workers Union, had the good fortune to go into exile. As a result, he has been prevented from participating directly in the struggle in Grenada.

The chair of the confederation of Grenadan unions, John Ventour, has been interned since the invasion, accused of complicity in the murders at Fort Rupert [of Bishop and his comrades].

Regardless of whether or not there is any basis for these charges, the

result is that the work of the confederation has been seriously disrupted.

Thus, the majority of the union leaders were eliminated — by murder, forced exile, or internment. The few surviving popular and respected leaders have been subjected to daily harassment and vilification aimed at making it impossible for them to operate.

In this connection, Chester Humphrey is a key person. He is a member of the leadership of the Grenadan confederation of unions and was elected to the post of deputy chair of the Technical and Allied Workers Union (TAWU).

As a union leader, he is both popular and respected among the members. He is known as a stubborn and courageous person who will not give in to threats and harassment. He is a tough dealer who has skillfully defended the interests of the membership.

For the occupation authorities, therefore, he is, in a nutshell, a particularly dangerous person who has at all costs to be made harmless.

During the US invasion of Grenada, Chester Humphrey took part in the defense of the country. He functioned as a communications technician. When the resistance collapsed, he returned to his work as a union leader, and this was at a time when defense of the workers interests was more important than ever. A short time later, he was arrested. Still today, two years later, he remains interned.

A parody of justice

The imprisonment of Chester Humphrey is a pure parody of justice, which shows with all the clarity anyone could want how the new rulers in St George's define democracy. There are no judicial or legal grounds for his internment.

According to Grenadan law, any person arrested must be released within seven days unless they are indicted for a specific violation of Grenadan law. No indictment or accusation has been made.

No one, neither the US nor its local puppet regime, has accused Chester Humphrey of implication in any political conspiracy in connection with the coup d'etat.

He has not been accused in any way of involvement in the murders of Maurice Bishop and his associates at the time of the coup d'etat.

The threat that Chester Humphrey has received during his time in prison would be a scandal in any state that claims to be based on proper legal procedures.

He has been denied the right to

legal representation during a good part of his confinement. When he was arrested, Humphrey immediately demanded his lawyer. His request was disregarded during the first six months of his imprisonment. It was only at the end of April 1984 that he was able to get legal advice. The consultation was ended after ten minutes.

Over long periods, Chester Humphrey has been held in strict isolation. That has not only stopped visits from his family but created big problems for his legal defense. Visits have been broken off and cancelled arbitrarily and without any explanations.

Humphrey has been denied access to pen and paper, which he needs to prepare his defense or just to write to the court to ask why he is being held.

On May 9, 1984, Chester Humphrey's lawyer got tired of this arbitrary treatment and lack of explanations from the authorities. He filed a habeas corpus brief with the court in St. George's.

In British jurisprudence, the law on habeas corpus has been the ultimate guarantee for persons arrested, so that no one can disappear in prison without their case being tried in court. The latin term literally means "produce the body." It obliges the prosecution to either indict jailed persons immediately or release them.

To disregard such a demand is the gravest dereliction of judicial responsibility possible in a state that claims to be based on proper legal procedures.

So, in Chester Humphrey's case the authorities do not have a legal leg to stand on. Without even acknowledging his lawyer's habeas corpus brief, they are continuing to hold him.

On May 15, 1984, Chester Humphrey was quite unexpectedly released from prison. No explanations were given, but it seems that the occupation authorities at long last had come to the same conclusion as everybody else — that there were no legal grounds whatsoever for keeping him interned.

At that point, the treatment of Chester Humphrey was beginning to arouse serious protests, and the business threatened to become a sore point for both the US and the puppet regime in St. George's.

During the time he was free — which was to be very short — Humphrey was subjected to constant surveillance and harassment by the police forces of the occupying power. On several occasions, he was warned against engaging in "political activity."

As a trade-union leader, however, it was Chester Humphrey's duty to

do work in his union, and shortly after his release, delegations of workers visited him at his home to discuss various union affairs.

The rulers in St. George's apparently quickly came to the conclusion that it was too risky to have Humphrey running around scot-free. On the flimsiest of pretexts, he was rearrested.

Once again, no formal charge was lodged against him.

Instead, it was explained, the union leader had been arrested in anticipation that a Grenadan court "would respond to an expected demand from an American court to extradite Chester Humphrey to the United States."

This expedient hardly needs to be explained. Since Chester Humphrey had committed no crime in Grenada, there was no reason to keep him behind bars. Since he was too dangerous to be let free they had to find some grounds for arresting him.

How anxious they were to get him back safe behind lock and key is shown best perhaps by the fact that he was arrested several months before there was any formal request from the US to the court in Grenada.

Formally, the USA is accusing Chester Humphrey of a crime that he is supposed to have committed in the US before the Grenadan revolution in 1979. The indictment is in 11 points, going from arms smuggling to such hard-to-define accusations as "conspiracy against the US government." If Chester Humphrey is found guilty on all counts, he could get around 25 years in prison.

The judicial procedures around the US request for extradition can at best be described as pure farce.

After having awaited the US's formal request, the case was postponed for the entire winter of 1984-1985. This stands in glaring contrast to the speed with which he was interned.

Since no formal charge has been made against him in Grenada, he cannot appeal against his imprisonment and gain release.

It should be stressed that Grenada and the USA have no mutual extradition treaty. This fact was cited over and over again by the Reagan administration as grounds for not handing over the former dictator, Eric Gairy, to the Bishop government in the revolutionary period.

Nevertheless, the Grenadan court decided in March of this year, when the case was finally considered, to extradite Chester Humphrey to the USA.

The decision to extradite him was thus already made, but at the time of writing it has not yet been carried out. But it can happen at any time. □

A stubborn fighter for workers' rights

Interview with Jim Wardally

Question. You had a lot of contact with Chester Humphrey over the years. You worked together politically before the revolution. And during the revolutionary period, you were the chair of your union and he was the vice chair. Can you tell us a bit about Chester's background and how he became involved in politics.

Answer. I have known Chester since we were small boys. He comes from a working-class family. His mother died when he was only a few years old. He was brought up by his grandmother and got an ordinary education at the Grenada Boys Secondary School. In 1977, he emigrated to the US to study marine biology at St Mary's University.

Politically, Chester came out of the Black power movement that swept the Caribbean at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. This was a movement that aimed originally at rediscovering and reinforcing the African culture. But it later broadened its perspectives to embrace general political struggle.

On Grenada, this movement developed into the most dynamic political party in the country, the New Jewel Movement. It became concentrated around the struggle against Gairy, under the leadership of Maurice Bishop, Unison Whiteman, and Kendrick Radix.

It was Maurice Bishop himself who recruited Chester Humphrey to the New Jewel Movement. He was seen as a gifted young man with many talents. He studied everything — history, sociology, literature, natural science as rapidly as he could get the books.

Above all, he was seen as a promising radical political activist with a determination to work among the people.

On Grenada, he was a dock worker from 1972 to 1975, and his political ability brought him into the NJM's Political Bureau in the mid-1970s. He was, of course, obliged to withdraw from that body when he left Grenada in 1977.

Q. Can you tell us anything about his character? What kind of a person is he exactly?

A. Chester is probably the stubbornest man I have ever met. Stubborn above all else, but with a feel for

what is important and what is not. When he took on a task or decided to do something that he thought had to be done, he attacked the problem with a great earnestness and forthrightness, and he never gave up.

At regular intervals, you could be drawn into sharp disputes with him around various questions. If you managed to win a round, he waited eagerly for a return match. My experience of Chester is that if you disagreed with him, it never became a personal conflict.

Another typical "Chesterian" feature was his ability to sacrifice his free time and his nights to political work. It happened more than once that he turned up and knocked on my window at 5.00 in the morning to discuss one or another political problem that required a speedy resolution. He never took any great notice of the profanity he provoked on such occasions.

I remember once when Maurice visited us in New York, and we had a debate over my kitchen table. The discussion dragged on for hours. Finally, Maurice managed to draw me aside and whisper a few words in my ear. "Listen, Jim, I think it's high time you found an excuse for ending this discussion. I have a feeling that Chester is just warming up, and I can't hold out for ten hours without sleeping an hour before."

Chester is a type who won't accept a quick decision but wants to discuss the whole thing through from every standpoint. But he is stubborn, untiring, and fearless in carrying out decisions.

Q. He left the Political Bureau of the NJM when he went to New York, but he did not abandon political work, did he?

A. By no means. We met again for the first time in many years when he came to the US, and we worked together on a series of projects. We were both active in the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression. I worked for the International Bureau whose task was to work out a coordinated program for the Caribbean, and Chester was soon drawn into this work.

In 1977, I was one of the initiators of the Grenada Nationals Association, who coordinated the struggle against Gairy among Grenadans in

the US. Chester was a leading activist in the GNA and in fact one of the most important, if not the most important, contributors to the organization.

Q. Early in 1979, when the revolution in Grenada was reaching the decisive point, you and Chester were arrested by the FBI. What happened?

A. What happened in the Spring of 1979 is intimately linked with Chester's being interned today in Grenada. If I were in Grenada I would be sharing a cell with him myself. That is why I am in exile.

At the time the revolution on Grenada was reaching a critical phase. The Gairy dictatorship was crumbling at an accelerating rate, and it was no secret that he planned a military solution to his problem. In practice, this meant liquidating the NJM leadership. The party knew what was in the works, and it realized that an armed confrontation was unavoidable. The problem was that the party's sympathizers and the people in Grenada had no weapons, while Gairy had a lot stored away. The party decided to import weapons so that it would not be helpless when Gairy loosed his blood-hounds.

It is no secret that the party imported weapons. Gairy himself knew about what was going on and revealed the plans in the press. The very fact that he did that gave rise to strong reactions by people in the country. A long queue formed outside of the party headquarters of people demanding their guns. The truth was that the party did not have the capacity to arm even a small part of those who wanted weapons, but that did not reduce Gairy's panic any.

What happened was that Gairy screamed as loud as he could and pointed to the US as the source of the smuggled weapons. This aroused the State Department from its slumbers and the atlases were hauled out to find out where Grenada was. Then they set the FBI on me and Chester.

Our first reaction was to stay in the US and fight it in the courts. We thought that there was no way they could win the case. But then the situation changed, and we were obliged to flee the US after having been released on bail.

Q. Why did you flee. What had changed?

A. Three things happened. The first was that the revolution broke out in Grenada six weeks after our arrest, and we were well known to be supporters of it. The State Department in Washington could not do much about the fact that the revolution had occurred (at least not then), but it had every possibility for doing something to its supporters in the US. They needed scapegoats, and Chester and I were clipped and shorn.

Secondly, there was no doubt that the revolution would turn politics in the Caribbean to the left. That was something that they would not accept and were determined to counter at any cost. Almost immediately, they launched a poisonous campaign of propaganda, half truths, and skillfully woven lies, which were directed against the revolution but in the first instance came down on me and Chester.

The congress started discussing Grenada and issued wild statements fingering me and Chester as agents of the DGI, the Cuban security service, in the US. The fact that none of us had ever visited Cuba or had any contact with the Cubans was immaterial. I was supposed to have been "handled" by Rizo, Cuba's ambassador to the UN, who was supposed to be the chief of the DGI in the US.

It was claimed that I got instructions in secret meetings with Rizo, which can be shown to be a barefaced lie. I have never seen the fellow in my life.

The third thing that happened — and that was what really set us moving as fast as possible toward the nearest border — was that the judge was changed in the middle of the case. The new judge was no less than Judge Sirica. He is better known as "the hanging judge," and this nickname is no joke.

In short, we saw quickly that we had no chance of getting a fair trial in the US, and so we fled.

Q. What did Chester work at when you came back to Grenada?

A. We came home in October 1979 and immediately became involved in political work. Chester became what you might call a trouble shooter in the Ministry of Agriculture. His job was to coordinate various programs among the agricultural workers and to assure that the new rights and benefits that were included in the government's legislation really reached into the countryside — to give one example, to make sure that the workers really took advantage of the new health program. Thus, he was sort of an intermediary between the

workers and the government.

Later, he was transferred to the building department, where, roughly speaking, his job was the same as before, that of trouble shooter. It was in that period that he became more and more absorbed in direct trade-union work, and was elected vice chair of the TAWU.

Q. Can you say something about Chester's contributions as a union leader? How did he operate and how was he seen by the members that elected him?

A. Chester belonged to a very unusual type of devoted political activist who was always ready to fight to defend workers rights. As such, he had an exceptional link with the union and the workers' struggles. He won the workers' respect.

One of our union's most important advances was the democratization process that took place within it. We both worked to strengthen the revolution for the benefit of the working class, and Chester's activities guaranteed that the workers would have the decisive voice in decisions about their own future in revolutionary Grenada.

Chester was one of the leading lecturers in the workers education program, and he showed himself to be not merely an intellectual theoretician but also a man with roots among the workers and an insight into the future course of the revolution.

On the practical level, he proved to be a tough negotiator with stubborn bosses who held their employees in contempt, and an excellent organizer for conducting actions and winning demands.

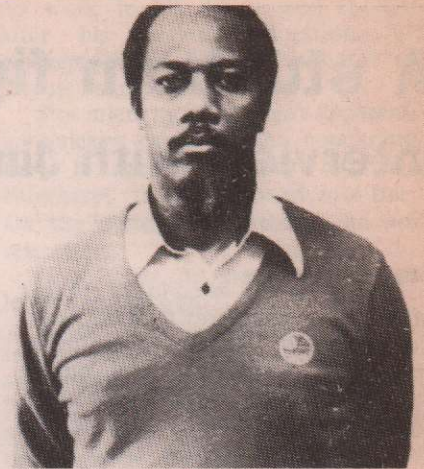
His fighting spirit was rewarded with respect and trust among the membership. For them, he was always "Chess" a comrade they could rely on.

Q. Is that also the reason why he is sitting in jail today?

A. The occupation authorities have no doubt whatsoever about Chester's importance. They know that he is not some "commonplace activist." And they know the prestige he enjoys among the TAWU's members is based not only on his political tie with Maurice Bishop's party — the NJM before the October coup — but above all on the day-to-day concrete fight he was able to wage for the members' rights.

They know that if he were free, he would be in the forefront of defending the rights and gains that the working class achieved during the revolution.

That makes him a dangerous person. Anyone who came out of the October 19 affair unblemished and is



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capable of waging a struggle is dangerous. They are harassed, forced into exile, or arrested.

Q. What was Chester's role during the October crisis? Does that have any connection with his arrest?

A. The two questions should not be mixed up. Chester made a political mistake before October 19, but regardless of what this mistake was, there is no reason to accept the persecution to which he is being subjected today.

Everyone in Grenada today is well aware that Chester supported Coard in the political debate that went on in the party before the coup, but they have no difficulty whatsoever in making the distinction between people's positions on a given question and their concrete actions. There is no accusation that Chester was in any way involved in any action or any decision that led to the murder of Maurice Bishop.

This is something that Grenada's workers have understood, and that is also the reason that today they are giving full support to Chester, and oppose every attempt to get him extradited to the US. The fact is that the demand for his immediate release is being raised not only by members of the TAWU but in general in the working class.

This demand is so deeply rooted today among so many groups in the society that even some members of the present puppet regime have been obliged to express a cautious disapproval of the treatment Chester has been subjected to.

The fact is that he was arrested because he campaigned actively to throw the Americans out of Grenada not over any involvement in the murder of Bishop and the others. "Inciting unrest", they called it, when he was arrested in November 1983 a month after the invasion and two or three weeks after the main defendants in the murder and conspiracy case had been thrown in the clink.

Pinochet's regime facing new crisis

A NEW PHASE of political crisis is opening up today in Chile. This crisis is reflected in severe tensions within the regime; tensions within the army; a relative separation between the judiciary and the military rulers; disagreements with the Church and tensions between the dictatorship and the employers' organisations.

Among the most recent examples of this crisis is the resignation of General Mendoza, a member of the Junta and chief of police; the arrest of several police officers and the recent meeting, drawing together the whole spectrum of bourgeois opposition organised by the Church.

Despite the fact that the state of siege has been lifted, censorship has been lightened and Pinochet and the armed forces have been forced to retreat in the face of these internal tensions, nevertheless the chosen road of the dictatorship for dealing with the problems of Chilean society remains one of repression and confrontation with the mass movement.

JAIR GIL

During the period of the state of siege from October 1984 to June 1985, more than 33,000 people were imprisoned and every week about one hundred people were expelled from the country. Censorship was extended to include the press and all meetings were banned. The regime also used paramilitary groups and CNI (National Information Centre — political police) groups. For such groups, selective assassination attempts and killings are the rule as was shown in the case of the three *Degollados*. (1) Moreover, inhabitants of the popular quarters have been terrorised by a policy of military-style occupation of these areas by the police and army.

However, just as the repression is a mark of the continuing dominance of the regime and shows that the relation of forces between the classes established by the 1973 coup d'etat has not been reversed so the struggle opened up by the mass movements of 1982-1983 shows that the overall pattern of resistance has not been interrupted by the state of siege and the repression. The situation is not the same as it was. We are entering the phase of the death agony of the dictatorship. The Chilean crisis runs so deep that the regime is more and more cracking

under the pressure of its own contradictions and the pressure of the mass movement.

Chile is not at the centre of the world economic crisis but the situation in the country is no better for that. The country is falling deeper and deeper into crisis and misery. The rate of unemployment is 30% and remains so despite official statistics which attempt to show a decrease. The rate of inflation has been more than 200% since 1981 and 25% in the last six months. The average wage is between 8,000 and 10,000 pesos [forty to fifty dollars] per month. (2) Inflation has impoverished whole sections of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie.

The foreign debt is increasing in all the countries of Latin America and in particular in Chile where a more and more marked dependence on imperialism is developing. It has gone from nine billion dollars in 1973 to twenty billion dollars in 1985. Also this year Chile has just got further into debt to the tune of 850 million dollars, not counting investments made by the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) which exceed the 400 million dollar mark.

After the ultra-monetarist Chicago Boys experiment, (3) imperialism is

trying out the 'Kissinger strategy' in Chile. This involves the repayment of the debt through direct acquisition by the main world banks of the major wealth of the country. Thus the Chilean foreign debt would be paid off through American takeover of the Chilean copper mines. Such a takeover would be made possible through denationalisation of the copper industry which has still only partially been brought into force today.

Finally, Finance Minister Hernan Buchi's trips around the world have only one aim which is to open Chile up more to the world market. With this in view, the minister announced a lowering of customs duties from 35% to 30% from March 1, 1985, a systematic application of the Chicago Boys tactic.

These are just some of the factors which form the backdrop to the misery facing thousands upon thousands of Chileans today. This misery affects wide layers of the population. The number of unemployed and homeless is growing and the mere conditions of survival get worse every day. Those workers who are 'lucky' enough to have a job see their wages trailing right behind prices. Even certain layers of the petty bourgeoisie are getting poorer and are turning into a kind of sub-proletariat. All this has got much worse following the February 1985 earthquake which threw thousands of Chileans onto the streets, thus exacerbating an already very serious housing crisis.

There is one anecdote which illustrates the cynicism of the Chilean rulers in pursuing their policies. For a long time now it has been the custom in Chile to give free milk to new-born babies in the hospitals where they are delivered. The minister of health has recently declared that this milk must be replaced with rice and rice water. However, the scandal that developed around this was so enormous and the emotions provoked so intense that Pinochet himself had to intervene so that babies could be given their milk back.

1. Three leaders of the Communist Party of Chile were kidnapped and had their throats slit in February 1985. Fourteen police officers were found guilty of these murders on August 1. Following these findings, General Mendoza, a member of the junta, and other police officers resigned.

2. 'Latin America Regional Reports' (Southern Cone), RS-84-0, London, June 29, 1984.

3. Supporters of the 'Chicago school' of whom the founder is the American economist, Milton Friedman. This school links together fluctuations in economic activity with the money supply rather than with investment and it has developed a monetarist theory of ultra-liberalism in economics, challenging state intervention in the mechanisms of the capitalist economy.



A tank in front of the presidential palace in Santiago — September 11 1973 (DR)

The economic and social crisis runs very deep but it is the element of political decomposition now affecting the regime which is the really destabilising factor in the situation. Since 1982-1983 the rule of the dictatorship has become extremely unstable. It was at this time that the mass movement erupted onto the political scene. (4) Pinochet reacted to this in August 1983 by appointing Onofre Jarpa to head the government and the Ministry of the Interior. Jarpa was the ex-president of the extreme right organisation, the National Party, which had supported the 1973 coup d'etat. The floodgates were opened and the regime appeared to be vacillating. But in reality by pretending to share power with Jarpa, and to be in dialogue with the bourgeois opposition, Pinochet was trying to win time. He was trying to paralyse the bourgeois parties in a pretence at negotiation and also wear out the masses through a series of mobilisations leading nowhere.

Pinochet manoeuvres to stay in power

However, this dialogue with the military got everyone embroiled in endless discussions on the possibility of reforming the regime whilst the mass movement was becoming more and more threatening. In particular the centre of gravity of the movement shifted from the bourgeois opposition forces to the forces of the left and above all towards the Chilean Communist Party (PCC). Pinochet wanted to show up the weaknesses of the bourgeois political forces and the fact that they did not control the mass movement and that there was even a risk that they would be bypassed by it. In fact he was able to demonstrate this to great effect in the

October 30, 1984 general strike when the entire Chilean bourgeoisie were terrified at the spectre of the mass movement. Thus despite the acute crisis of the regime, such factors helped to make Pinochet appear as, in some way, the saviour of a bourgeoisie who would breathe more easily if the movement were contained.

Once again, after manoeuvres and counter-manoeuvres, Pinochet was able to demonstrate and assert that, when confronted with the Chilean people, the only effective policy for the bourgeoisie was his and this despite the fact that the regime no longer has a real substantial social base of its own. This is what has allowed Pinochet to start negotiations recently on the basis of his maintaining power until 1989, the date set by the Chilean constitution of 1980. Such a thing was unthinkable around 1982-1983. This is the meaning, moreover, of the speculations about the various forms of the transition. They are currently discussing the possibility of an assembly appointed either wholly or in part by the junta and alongside that how to integrate bourgeois political forces in this process. The dictatorship is putting extra pressure on all political forces in order to exclude the PCC from the transition.

All these plans are very fragile and all these structures could come crashing down, but they do reflect the political situation in Chile today. The economic, social and political crisis is deepening, but the weakness of any bourgeois or working class political alternatives to the dictatorship for the moment gives Pinochet, who has kept control of the army, a fundamental institution of the regime, some room to manoeuvre.

This situation makes it difficult to put forward predictions about what will happen in the short term. Because if the deepening crisis were to go in the direction of some kind of 'opening

up' of the regime whatever form that might take (for example a coup within a coup, whereby Pinochet is overthrown by a section of the armed forces), and then towards the overthrow of the dictatorship, the crisis of leadership and organisation of the bourgeois parties and of the mass movement would still give the dictatorship a wide margin of manoeuvre.

This is the framework in which the Christian Democracy (DC), the main bourgeois opposition party must be viewed. If elections were held today in Chile, the DC would undoubtedly, and by a long way, be the first party in the country. The university elections which have always constituted a kind of sounding board in Chile for the general elections demonstrate this tendency by showing 30% of the votes for the DC. This party is not just an electoral machine but a bourgeois party with a popular base. This is a key factor. Even if it does not retain the same direct links with the masses which it had in the past, it is still capable of mobilising. The rebuilding of this party has given rise to the emergence of a whole series of currents within it which are evolving to the left especially among trade unionists and in the Christian-base communities. However, its apparatus and leadership are in the hands of bourgeois politicians who are looking for an agreement with the military.

This is the significance of the recent letter by Gabriel Valdes, general secretary of the DC, which spells out the key aspects of the party's line, notably;

- the construction of a civil front made up of all social forces in the country except the PCC.

- a social pact which would create a consensus for adhering to the diktats of the IMF especially with regard to the foreign debt.

- finally to create a dialogue with the PCC, on condition that it breaks with its policy of popular revolt.

This is also the meaning behind the initiative, in August, of Monsignor Fresno, the archbishop of Santiago, who organised a round table of all the bourgeois opposition forces which, in their vast majority steer clear of the PCC. All these manoeuvres are aimed to marginalise the PCC and force them to accept any eventual accord between the military dictatorship and the bourgeois opposition.

What is happening is therefore an attempt by the DC to establish a policy which guarantees to the military a certain continuity and assures the

4. See 'International Viewpoint' No 36, September 19, 1983 and No 41, September 28, 1983.

Chilean bourgeoisie of its ability to control the PCC and the mass movement. The main drawback to this policy is the lack of any partners to share it. The problem is that the PCC is still representative enough to be difficult to go around. But the DC rejects them for the moment and yet on the other hand the partners it really wants, that is the military, will not listen to any appeal from the DC, at least, again, not at the moment. As for the policy of the social pact, it is not only very much at the level of theory, but the economic crisis and the diktats of the IMF will make it very difficult to put into practice.

So although Christian Democracy remains the main bourgeois party and constitutes for the bourgeoisie the main instrument for any political alternative to the military regime, the depth of the social and political crisis has not allowed it the space to demonstrate its policies. In fact, on the contrary, the manoeuvres of Pinochet and the military dictatorship have succeeded, to some extent, in undermining part of the political credibility of Christian Democracy.

One of the most fundamental changes in the last decade, compared to the historical pattern from the 1930s until the 1970s, is the complete disappearance of the Socialist Party (PS). This party was a mass workers party with centrist tendencies, vacillating between reform and revolution.

The demise of the Socialist Party

The SP, which was more vulnerable to repression than the PCC has not been able to rise above the changes which the country has gone through. It has undergone a process of disintegration into several different currents and groupings; the Socialist Bloc, the PS-Briones, a member of the Democratic Alliance (5), the PS-Almeyda, a satellite of the PCC and now divided into three factions, and numerous others. With the end of Chilean socialism, all these currents coming out of the PS have moved towards the right.

This evolution to the right is largely illustrated in the multiplication of references to European social democracy, whereas Chilean socialism always used to have a separate identity. Furthermore, with the exception of the Almeyda factions, in the name of 'democracy', all these currents have abandoned any, even formal, reference to Marxism and anti-capitalism. Thus in the name of democratic socialism and 'socialism at the base' as against Stalinism in particular,

democracy and bourgeois democratic institutions are upheld and an orientation towards reforms of the state and of the capitalist economy have been adopted. In the name of abandoning a militaristic strategy of armed struggle, which these 'new' socialists in the past defended, they have also abandoned any perspective of dismantling the bourgeois state. This is the logical result of an orientation which is now linking up with the most classic of all social-democratic reformism.

On the question of political tactics, the socialists are divided on several counts. Firstly, on the question of participation in coalitions initiated by Christian Democracy, where the Socialist Bloc, for example, wants to create a better relation of forces before defining its tactic vis-a-vis DC. Also on the attitude to the PCC, some currents like the PS-Almeyda are linked to it while others reject any prospect of an alliance. And lastly, the socialists are divided on the question of the trade unions, the majority of the currents favouring pluralism supposedly in order to build 'ideological union federations' but in reality in order that each party and each current of opinion can build its own union.

Today, it is the Communist Party which has most successfully rebuilt itself. The PCC is dominant amongst the youth, in the communities and in certain trade unions. It is the party most able to mobilise people within the country and especially amongst the youth, even if it has not re-established organic links with the working class as strong as were achieved in the past. This can be explained as much by objective reasons, including the general weakening of the structures of the workers movement, as by subjective reasons rooted in the class collaborationism which, in the current political conditions in Chile, limits the structuring of the Party and its periphery organisations. This is shown clearly in the experience of the MDP (People's Democratic Movement): in order to provide a counter-weight to the Democratic Alliance, the PCC launched the MDP in 1983. It was made up of the PCC, the PS-Almeyda and the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left). Despite the programmatic limitations and its platform and statements representing class collaborationist positions, the MDP quickly became a pole of attraction for the popular masses which first challenged and later took away from the Democratic Alliance the leadership of the most recent *protestas* and finally of the October 1984 general strike. However, the PCC deliberately chose not to set up rank and file committees of the MDP. This is a



Poster outside PCC headquarters (DR)

task which revolutionaries should have taken up and which would have been a qualitative step forward. The PCC's policy also had repercussions in the trade unions. Basically, their social pact strategy prevented the PCC from rebuilding the trade union movement. Moreover, Christian Democracy is trying at the moment to obtain, in exchange for certain political deals, the dissolution of the Workers Metropolitan Command (CMT), an organisation which groups together the most combative unions in Santiago.

But the weakness of the PCC's organic links with the masses should not mask the fact of its enormous growth on the basis of an orientation of popular revolt. In fact, this orientation has given the PCC one great advantage; it allows them to cover the whole spectrum of political activity from armed struggle to agreements with Christian Democracy. With the FPMR (Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front), the PCC can, on the one hand, control all the military activity of members of the Communist Youth or the MIR, activities which once escaped their control, and, on the other hand, strengthen their political popularity, especially amongst the youth. Among the latter there are thousands who support this line of popular revolt, giving it not only an anti-dictatorial character but a revolutionary one. For instance they compare their struggle to that of the FSLN in Nicaragua.

These young people give a revolutionary content to the line for popular

5. The Democratic Alliance groups together Christian Democracy, the PS-Briones, the Republican Right, the Liberal Movement, the Radical Party, the Social Democracy and the People's Socialist Union.

revolt, through demonstrations, assassination attempts, armed action etc, whilst for the PCC this line is merely a way of putting pressure on the dictatorship and the bourgeois parties. The PCC may sometimes present armed struggle as a strategic goal but their real line is simply to use it as a means of applying pressure. In fact the strategy itself is still one of reaching agreement with Christian Democracy and for the democratisation of the armed forces. This explains the response of the PCC to the Gabriel Valdes letter cited above. The PCC declared itself ready to support a bourgeois government which represented a break with military rule. So a strategic agreement with the bourgeoisie, within the framework of the classic Stalinist schema of the 'revolution in stages', is still the line of the PCC. It also explains the recent alliance that the PCC has made, called the Democratic Intransigence. We must also add that this strategy is accompanied by a total allegiance to the USSR.

Revealing these perspectives in their true light is very important since they are creating disagreement amongst the ranks of the communists themselves. Thus Communist Party militants did not understand why the leadership did not react when three of their number [the *Degollados*] were assassinated. There was no military response and no mass mobilisations.

But despite all this, it is important to underline that the disastrous consequences of this policy still tend to be underestimated. In fact, the lesson drawn today by many hundreds of communist cadres and thousands of young people is critical of the Popular Unity (UP) (6) because it was unarmed and because the arms were left in the hands of the military. 'If the Party arms itself and if the Party builds an army and a popular revolt, it will avoid a further defeat like in September 1973,' is what many communists are saying. Anything concerning the policy of class collaboration or the problem of alliances with the bourgeoisie tends therefore to be overlooked in any balance sheet of the 1970-1973 period. The balance sheet drawn by young communists today is that an armed UP government would not have been defeated. In response to this we have to underline that at the root of the UP's failure to deal with the armed forces lay the whole reformist strategy of its leadership and above all of the PCC.

It is in this context that we have to look at the current policy of the MIR and its adaptation to the PCC within the MDP. The MIR has suffered a loss of identity vis-a-vis

the PCC. This is shown in agreements reached on certain international questions and a tail-endism in national politics, with a complete absence of a critique of the policies of class collaboration. This loss of strategic identity which began to occur in the mid-1970s was, until the last few months, compensated through military initiatives. But now that the MIR have reduced their military activity and the PCC control the FPMR and its activities, the MIR has found itself totally aligned with the PCC. This rapprochement is supported by the Cubans, however the process is not irreversible. The current orientation of the MIR is in contradiction with the place which it occupies in the history of the Chilean workers movement and especially with its traditional opposition to collaboration with bourgeois forces. Sharp changes in the situation could therefore accentuate the internal crisis that this organisation is going through and modify its policy.

The mass movement in Chile, with all its ups and downs, is characterised by a tension between, on the one hand, its explosive nature, and on the other, its weaknesses in organisation and the crisis of its leadership. The situation in the trade union movement illustrates this very clearly. The trade union movement began to get active again at the beginning of the 1980s but it went through a fragmentation, a division, and a split between the different organisations. This can be explained by the structural weakening of the working class and, in particular, by a decline in the main concentrations of workers as well as by the political divisions that are characteristic of the Chilean trade union movement. The movement is divided between the MSU (Unified Union Movement) set up by the social democrats; the Workers National Command - CNT, led by the Christian Democracy; the CMT activated by the PCC and class struggle militants; plus a certain number of corporatist unions.

With the exception of the copper mining sector which is dominated by the powerful Confederation of Copper-workers (CTC), the trade union movement is dogged by this structural weakness. Nevertheless despite the current limitations trade unions and in particular those grouped around action like the CMT or in the framework of joint plenary assemblies of trade unionists such as the one which called the October 30 general strike last year, have played a key role in the lead up to *protestas* and in partial or general strikes. It has been initiatives from the trade unions that have sparked off the main days



September 5, 1983. A student is arrested.

of action and political mobilisations. Because of its history and traditions, also, the trade union movement must take its place in the unfolding struggles.

The roots of the mass movement are in the *poblaciones*

If, from the point of view of centralisation of activities and struggles, the trade unions play a decisive role, it is in the *poblaciones* (shantytowns) that the mass movement has its deepest roots. Through initiatives such as land occupations, *ollas comunes* (soup kitchens), mobilisations of the homeless, demonstrations against repression a real movement of *pobladores* has developed in the last few months. Given the fundamental social changes that Chile has gone through in the last few years, this movement is constantly fed by thousands and thousands of unemployed and homeless, shoved into the *poblaciones* as a result of the crisis. It is also the strongest movement against repression and the best suited to the explosive character of the mass mobilisations.

The student movement has always been a sensitive spot in the political situation. Today this movement has reached boiling point. The university elections have excited huge debates and have strengthened political awareness. In the schools, not a week now goes by without

6. The Popular Unity government, headed by Salvador Allende comprised the Socialist and Communist Parties and some small bourgeois and petty bourgeois groups.



not confirmed all hypotheses, but the current situation does show that none of the bitter contradictions of Chilean society have been resolved. On the contrary, it shows that accelerations or sharp turns in the situation, which will only aggravate the crisis, are to be expected. That is why an analysis, going above and beyond the ins and outs of the conjuncture, and looking at a whole series of strategic questions, has become necessary.

First we must look back at the strength of the revolutionary uprising in 1970-1973 and at the breadth of the defeat in September 1973. The revolution, whose momentum built up under the Popular Unity government, was crushed by a political, social and economic counter-revolution. The present regime, the product of a military coup and of bloody repression against workers has subsequently destroyed Chilean society and interrupted the process of national development begun in the 1940s.

The combination of the dictatorship's economic policy, and especially its neo-liberal expression under the egis of the 'Chicago Boys', and the world economic crisis have destroyed the national economy of Chile. This combination has led to the dismantling of a whole series of productive national activities and allowed the denationalisation of key sectors of national industry. The industrial bourgeoisie has been marginalised, for the benefit of the speculators and the main sections of the financial bourgeoisie. The size of the working population has been drastically reduced by massive unemployment. Whole layers of society have been impoverished. In short, the traditional structures of society have been broken up by the dictatorship.

Combined with the structural modifications which Chilean society was going through, the repression crushed not only the popular masses and their organisations but it also changed the traditional relationship of the bourgeois parties, especially of Christian Democracy, to the masses, as it did that of the parties of the working class themselves. It is the depth of the repression and the weight of the defeat which explain the difference between Chile and the other countries of the Southern Cone today. It also explains the slowness of the process of recomposition and reorganisation of the mass movement, the backwardness in consciousness and the difficulties of organising the trade unions and political parties.

It is undeniably true that Christian Democracy, among the bourgeois parties, and the Communist Party, in the working class camp, have rebuilt themselves and that the PCC, in

particular, has gone through a tremendous evolution. But these parties, which do not have a real capacity to mobilise, have not been able to reconstruct those organic links with the masses that they had built up over decades. It is fundamentally for reasons of structural weakness of organisation especially in the trade union movement that they have been unable to rebuild the networks they had before 1973.

The mass movement in Chile today is going through a crisis not only of leadership but also of organisation. The problem is not only one of a leadership which wants to lead the mass movement into a bourgeois and reformist impasse. It is also a matter of the fundamental problem of rudimentary organisation. This situation is in marked contrast to that of the workers movement in Argentina or Bolivia where the overwhelming power of the main union federations, the CGT and the COB is typical of the position of their respective mass movements and where that was true even before the democratic openings developed.

This crisis of organisation and leadership of the mass movement explains the limits on the emergence of any jointly coordinated mobilisation of the working class and its allies to overthrow the dictatorship. Also the difficulties which the Christian Democracy have had in channelling the mass movement limits the confidence that the bourgeoisie might have in any democratic opening controlled by them.

It is these factors and especially the absence of a viable bourgeois alternative which gives the army a central role in the maintenance of capitalist rule even though a series of bourgeois forces and the Church are working towards the creation of such an alternative. It is this weakness which makes it difficult for the tensions inside the army to find political expression as was shown in the recent crisis over Dicomcar (Head of police Communications and Information) which was closely linked in with the assassination of the three *Degollados*. In fact these tensions might still be very much alive but they do not prevent Pinochet from playing a bonapartist role, nor do they prevent the maintenance of a military-police dictatorship. The claims by Pinochet, explaining that 'he alone can lift Chile out of the mire' are based not only on the strength of the hierarchical and selected military built by him, but also on the weakness of his adversaries.

Under these conditions it is difficult to make predictions. If international pressures and the relations between the classes make it difficult

strikes and occupations. Groups of school-students from several schools get together to occupy such and such an educational establishment, putting forward their demands for more school materials and more democracy and waiting for the police to intervene. This scenario has been repeated several times in the last few weeks. The student mobilisations in particular have turned towards the demand for democratisation of the universities, pinpointing especially the demand for the sacking of civil or military directors of education appointed by the dictatorship and for the election by the students of their own administration.

These few examples show the dynamism of the mass movement. Of course, the state of siege announced in 1984 and the accompanying repression have set back the popular mobilisations which exploded during the October 30 general strike, but this is only temporary. Today, following the lifting of the state of siege, fresh mobilisations of students and the beginnings of new *protestas* show a new rise in the mass movement which demonstrates that the cycle of activity opened up in 1982-83 is far from over.

It is difficult to make predictions but it is clear that a new phase of the political crisis has opened up in Chile. The events of 1982-1983 gave a glimpse of the unfolding of the crisis of the dictatorship in the wake of the examples of Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, that is within the framework of a political 'opening up'. It is true that the rhythm of events has been shown to be slower and that the development of the situation has



'Democracy now' — demonstrators take to the streets of Santiago. (DR)

to envisage continuing military repression of the type of September 1973, all sorts of other variants are possible. These could include the maintenance in power of Pinochet until 1989 combined with concessions to the bourgeois opposition; a 'coup d'etat within the coup d'etat' by a section of the military; a greater or lesser degree of 'opening up' of the regime; or lastly, an 'opening up' based on mass popular explosion. But rather than make predictions the most important thing is to indicate the main tactical and strategic tasks for the Chilean revolution.

In the debates currently taking place within the Chilean left, any schematic repetition of the Nicaraguan or Salvadoran models must be rejected for several reasons. We are a long way from seeing the 'Pinochetisation' of Chilean society like we saw the 'Somozisation' of Nicaraguan society. The geo-political situation of Chile does not lend itself to a strategy of prolonged popular warfare. And also, Chile is not yet in a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation, even from an objective point of view. But we cannot continue to content ourselves with general formulas borrowed from the traditional arsenal of the workers movement in Chile, and especially from its socialist left-wing. The traditional model of Chilean development has been broken up and that has certain consequences for the dynamic of the mass movement. Chile's dependence on imperialism has grown considerably and the relations between the traditional

parties and the masses have changed. The fissure created by the counter-revolution was such that it must modify our approach to a whole series of revolutionary tasks.

The theory of permanent revolution implies a combination of democratic, anti-imperialist and socialist tasks the articulation of which will depend strictly on the characteristics of each social formation. In Chile, democratic demands play a decisive role for several reasons. Firstly, the scope of Pinochet's counter-revolution wiped out a whole series of democratic gains by the Chilean people, on the institutional, as well as the social level. From the objective situation flows the need to fight for basic freedoms, for democratic rights for land and national independence.

Link between democratic and socialist demands

Furthermore it is necessary to take into account the political developments in Chile, the consequences of the defeat on the delay in developing a socialist awareness amongst the masses, the relation of forces between workers organisations and those of the bourgeoisie, between reformists and revolutionaries. This all means that revolutionaries should place democratic demands at the centre of their struggle and not leave this to the bourgeois or reformist parties, that they should fight to make the proletariat the 'caudillo of the nation.' In this way the theory of permanent revolu-

tion, rather than denying stages of development in a given political situation, takes into account the democratic phases, whilst at the same time advocating that the struggle for democracy be conducted through class struggle methods, linking together both democratic and anti-capitalist demands.

The struggle to put democratic demands to the centre stage has important political and institutional consequences. The demand for the right to strike, for the right to demonstrate, for the right to freedom of expression today leads to the need to break with the dictatorship and to organise free elections to a constituent assembly. What should be put in the place of the Pinochet regime? The answer will be that the question is not even posed. But the need to find an answer to the question is being posed, in order to counter all those who are making plans for a transition period in continuity with the military dictatorship, no matter what the particular form of that transition. To those people, revolutionaries must reply with a radical democratic perspective, one for the overthrow of the dictatorship through mass mobilisation and the election of a free and sovereign constituent assembly excluding the military. These slogans serve a double function. They aid the politicisation of the masses by placing radical democracy to the forefront and also by highlighting the differences with the bourgeois and reformist projections.

On the political level, the fight for democracy implies a break with the military, but all popular mobilisations also pose straight away another question; 'Democracy yes; but we also have to eat!' This pinpoints the need to link the demand for a free and sovereign constituent assembly to other demands of the workers and peasants, to the anti-imperialist demand to refuse to pay the external debt, to the demand for the expropriation of the finance houses, to demands which raise the question of land. Also the extreme dependence of the country on imperialism means that the anti-imperialist axis and tasks play a much more important role than in the past. The anti-imperialist issue, especially in relation to the foreign debt could constitute, today, the transitional route linking up the democratic issues, the issues of national independence and the social, anticapitalist issues such as the expropriation of the finance houses.

In this way, the particular form of combined and uneven development imposed on Chile by the world crisis not only places democratic demands at the centre but makes the link between democratic, anti-

imperialist and socialist demands all the more inextricable.

From the point of view of the motor forces of the Chilean revolution, the proletariat remains the key force in the revolutionary process. However, the position of the organised working class has been modified, not only for political reasons but also for structural reasons. There is no longer an equivalent organisation to the CUT [United Confederation of Workers]. Thus the copperworkers, with their unitary union, still play a central role. But although trade unions still remain an essential lever in all general mobilisations of the workers, the unemployed, the informal sector (street vendors, moonlighters and so on), people organised and mobilised in the *poblaciones*, have seen their role considerably strengthened. This gives a much more important role to various regional organisations. Thus, the mobilisation in the *poblaciones* and the *pobladores'* committees could become the backbone of the popular mobilisations.

The structural changes in Chile do not alter the central role of the fight for the workers' united front or of the battle for unity and class independence, even if the problems of class alliances and the development of political tactics to divide Christian Democracy and the other sections of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie take on a new dimension. It is this approach which dictates the need for a struggle for a constituent trade union assembly to create the pre-condition for one united trade union confederation and for a struggle for the coordination of the movement of the *pobladores* and for the unification of the student movement. This will also give meaning to the battle to set up committees of action, that is structures for self organisation aiming to achieve unity in action.

From the military point of view the current weaknesses of the mass movement combined with certain substitutionist actions by the FPMR or the MIR should not lead militants to leave this terrain to the PCC. First of all it is necessary to strengthen propaganda and actions of self defense of the mass movement. But also, at a certain stage of development of a revolutionary organisation, some thought must be given to the politico-military preparation of an insurrectional strategy.

Finally, from the point of view of the construction of a revolutionary party, the most important task is to regroup, on the basis of practical intervention in the class struggle, all those forces who are ready to be involved in the construction of a revolutionary alternative to the left of the bloc hegemonised by the PCC. □

Clergy serves Mammon, but badly

MADE TO order for Khomeini, the second Majles, or parliament, of the Islamic Republic was elected in two rounds April 15 and May 18, 1984. These elections represented a milestone for the clerical regime, decimating or eliminating entirely the factions not under the thumb of the "Imam." Khomeini's right-hand man, Majles speaker Hashemi Rafsanjani, crowed, "Having seen the new Majles members, I am sure we can get on well." He added, "This time we won't have the old troublemakers."

Commenting on these elections in our July 2, 1984 issue, Saber Nikbeen wrote: "It would seem ... that less than six years after the February insurrection, the Khomeini regime is now consolidating its political rule and ensuring an unchallenged grip for the next four years." But, he asked, "how stable can this regime be? Despite all its victories over the masses, this question is not yet decided." This hand-picked Majles has not been in office more than a year. Its record is an indication both of the regime's objectives and its contradictions.

SABER NIKBEEN

As predicted after the elections, this session of the Majles has approved many bills that clearly show its capitalist orientation. The most important of these are the following:

In the first instance, there is the bill on "The limits of methods of operation for the private sector." (The way for this piece of legislation was paved by an earlier bill that already restricted the power of the state sector to intervene in distribution through compulsory purchases and rationing.)

Secondly, there was the bill on the "Islamic Associations and Shoras," and then the "New Amended Labour Codes." (The ground was prepared demagogically for the latter by a bill giving workers "shares in industry.")

After the Imam came out openly in support of the private sector and opposed government "intervention" in the name of "giving people their work" and allowing "these people" to run the economy, many leading politicians followed suit.

Representing the Council of Guardians, the body engaged with safeguarding the Islamic constitution, Imame-e-Kashani interpreted the Imam's words as meaning, "The Imam has ordered that there should

not be any obstacle to more things coming from the Bazaar." (1) The mullah in charge of the Foundation for the Mostazafin [The Wretched of the Earth] declared, "If I were minister of industries, I would have kissed the hand of the private sector." (2)

The chorus was joined by Rafsanjani himself, who proclaimed, "The private sector must be completely in the picture. We believe that it must be activated." (3)

In the Majles, there are still some deputies, such as Morteza Razavi, who complain about this course. He said, for example, "The situation is so bad that some think that whatever is more American is more Islamic." He raised the complaint, "Sometimes they even demand that the fishing industries, the railways, transport, etc. be given to the private sector. But when it comes to taxes, they say that they will pay only *khoms* and *zakat* [the traditional Islamic levies, which are not progressive]. (4)

Before being removed from his post, Belzad Nabavi, the so-called

1. 'Etelat', August 29, 1984.
2. 'Etelat', July 30, 1984.
3. 'Etelat', November 14, 1984.
4. 'Etelat', November 10, 1984.

socialist minister of heavy industries, said, "It is wrong to say that the Ministry of Heavy Industries is against the growth of the private sector; we welcome it." (5) He was only against "the sort of thinking that calls for turning even the oil wells over to the private sector." (6)

The Majles did not make big giveaways to the private sector. First, they opened up foreign trade. The spokesperson for the Ministry of Trade declared, "Those of us who have our hand in this work have unanimously reached the conclusion that the private sector must have an active role in trade." (7)

The premier, Hussein Mousavi, said that already over the past year the government has given 1% of imports to the cooperatives and 20% to the private sector. (8) The Ministry of Agriculture even announced its willingness to "allow the private sector to enter fields related to fishing."

By all accounts, the private sector has improved its share of profits. On December 12, 1984, Rafsanjani said that in the Islamic year 1362 (1983-1984) private traders were given more than 600 million dollars worth of foreign exchange.

Giveaways to the rich

The Plan and Budget Organization put the share of the private industrial sector in the same year at "3.5 billion dollars of foreign exchange for their imports." (9) Private industry's profits for the year were estimated at "280 tomans." This amounts to two thirds of the budget or thirty billion dollars at the official exchange rate. (10)

The foreign trade bill itself was couched in the strongest terms: "The government is duty bound to create favourable conditions for the private sector through the providing or renting of instruments and machines, providing raw materials, public services, and other facilities." (11)

This legislation removes all limits on the extent of property that can be held. In the sections dealing with agriculture, the idea of land reform is openly abandoned. No one has the right to take over even those lands abandoned by their owners "unless the owners have given over their rights." Even abandoned lands whose ownership is not clear cannot be taken over.

On the other hand, the law gives its blessing to those who "decide to enter into a *mozareeh* contract" (i.e., the crop-sharing system of the pre-land-reform era that was abolished under the shah). This points to the revival of the ancient exploitative practices, including forcing poor



Demonstration in Tehran June 26, 1984 — the 'Day of God' (DR)

peasants back into unpaid labour on the lands of absentee landlords.

This "reform" has gone hand in hand with a further normalisation of relations with imperialism. In line with this, the president of the Chamber of Trade, Industry, and Mines said recently that the Iranian regime "acknowledges no limits on extending its trade relations with the world, except for Israel and South Africa." From Israel, in fact, Iran gets spare parts and ammunition for its war machine, and to South Africa it sells crude oil! (12)

The trend now is towards extending trade relations with the European imperialist countries and with Japan. Rafsanjani has already given Japanese imperialism a clean bill of health, saying that Japan "does not follow colonialist policies." (13)

Four days earlier, at the end of June, in an interview with a *New York Times* reporter, Rafsanjani said, "We do not want our relations with America to be so bad forever. The Americans must make the first move. This also needs preparation. It is, of course, a long-term job." (14)

To do its own share in the "preparation," the Iranian regime has done Washington a good turn by uniting all the Afghani Islamic factions that

5. 'Etele'at', October 26, 1984.

6. 'Etele'at', October 31, 1984.

7. 'Etele'at', October 31, 1984.

8. 'Etele'at', February 19, 1985.

9. 'Etele'at', December 19, 1984.

10. 'Etele'at', December 19, 1984.

11. 'Etele'at', January 15, 1985.

12. 'Etele'at', August 4, 1985.

13. 'Etele'at', July 3, 1985.

14. 'Etele'at', June 29, 1985. Retranslated from the Persian.

attended the recent conference of the "Democratic International." Among the participants at this affair were the Nicaraguan contras and other counterrevolutionary groups from Angola, Laos, and Kampuchea. Montazeri himself, Khomeini's crown prince, reportedly helped these factions in late August 1985 to agree on a "peace pact" and to try to "unite the Islamic nations."

In the area of housing, the urban land bill that was supposed to help the state buy up land for cheap public housing ran into objections from the Council of Guardians. It was then turned into a bill legalising private housing development projects, and reintroduced, after being amended, in April 1985.

The premier had already revealed the government's plans. The private sector is going to be allowed to build the largest share of housing. The latest ingenious plan is to allow all private house owners in the north, that is, the rich part, of Tehran to extend their houses." (15)

The minister of housing has said, "If people thought that the state would one day give them houses, they were mistaken." (16) Later on, he also said, "Through some bad slogans, we helped spread this notion that everybody ought to have a house." (17)

Less than one percent of the budget for the Islamic year 1364 (March 1985 to March 1986) is going to be spent on subsidizing necessities. Some 5% is allotted to health; 11% to education; 8% to the police, Imam's Committees, and the *Pasdaran*; and 30% on the war. On the other hand, the state bank's credit to the private sector this year will be twice what it was in the last Iranian year (1363), which was already 65% more than in 1357 (March 1978 to March 1979, the period of the revolution). (18)

Despite all these goodies, the private sector is not investing. The government itself says that the "liquidity of the private sector has doubled since 1350 [1980-1981]. "It has reached the staggering total of 900 billion tomans (three times the government's projected income for 1985-1986). Therefore, the regime is constantly under the threat of a catastrophic price explosion.

The plan for the sale of public industry to "the people" announced last February is supposed to remove this danger. It is being sold to the people as a scheme for giving the workers a share of industry. The antiworking-class character of this proposal is only too obvious, however.

The minister of Labour has said that "when workers feel they own the factory, there would be no sense



Parade of Basidjis (volunteers) in the Army of Knowledge (DR)

in pressurizing the proprietors for an increase in wages." (19)

Kanali, the so-called workers representative in the Majles, said "Given the participation of the workers in the profits and losses of industry, it is certain that waste would be reduced, production increased, and tension between workers and bosses lessened." (20)

This "plan" was also intended as a propaganda play before passing the bill on the Islamic Associations and shoras. According to the bill, which became law at the beginning of this year, the "initiative" for electing a shora rests with the Ministry of Labour, and it can be dissolved by a "committee for determining and dissolving the shoras" composed of seven members - three from the workers, three from the bosses, and one from the Ministry of Labour.

These shoras are to represent both the employers and the employees. Their members must accept the *Velayat-e-Faghih* [the absolute authority of the chief religious leader] and their fitness must be confirmed by a committee including two representatives of the government.

This law reduces the role of the shoras to a consultative one. They have no right to interfere with management, they are not allowed to decide on anything, only to concern themselves with the "legal and social welfare" of the workers.

Such shoras can have a nonvoting representative in management meetings, but they "must not reveal any business secrets of the firm." They must also help the authorities prevent "accidents" in the area of "social problems" (that is, they must spy on the workers).

Even such mutilated shoras can be elected only in large production units, if and when the "High Council of Labour" (made up of five ministers, two managers, and two workers) decides. This law explicitly gives the rights of hiring and firing to the management. Even members of the shoras themselves can be sacked, and before their fate is decided by the "Labour Courts,"

they may not attend shora meetings.

A few weeks after this bill was passed, the High Council of Labour finally agreed, after five years, to increase the minimum wage by ten tomans a day, to 72 tomans. During the last five years, however, prices have increased at least 20% a year on the average.

Moreover, even the belated increase in the minimum wage is not going to be paid across the board. Its payment is to be tied to implementation of the proposed labour codes. These were kept secret until they were passed by the Majles in June, although they were put before parliament in April.

The labour code of Tavakoli (autumn 1982) encountered such violent opposition from the workers that the government was forced to retreat. The second amended version of winter 1984 was also dropped for the same reasons. The third version is now law, and is just as bad as the previous ones.

The new law rejects all the basic demands raised by the vast majority of the workers - the right to a job, job security, no arbitrary sackings, a just wage structure, guarantees of the right of collective bargaining and the right to strike.

For the public service sector (food distribution, gas, water, electricity, post and telephone, public transport, oil, etc.), Article 186 of the new code bans all strikes for whatever reasons.

The official workweek has been extended from 44 to 48 hours (Article 66), with only forty minutes a day allowed for breaks (including for prayers). There will be only 18 days of paid holidays a year. According to Article 155, no collective bargaining can be entered into without the permission of the Ministry of Labour.

The minimum age for workers has been set at 15. In reality, it is 12, because under the cover of "on the job training," employing 12 year

15. 'Etelat', April 23, 1985.

16. 'Etelat', November 26, 1985.

17. 'Etelat', January 20, 1985.

18. 'Etelat', February 2, 1985.

19. 'Etelat', February 28, 1985.

20. Keyhan, February 27, 1985.

olds is permitted by Article 129. The retirement age, however, is left open to be decided by the individual job contract.

The length of maternity leave is to be decided by the Social Security Organisation. The demotion of older workers because of "reduced physical and mental capacities" is permitted by Article 42. All restrictions have been removed on the amount of overtime that can be demanded of workers (Article 74).

Even the meager protections that the code offers workers (less than under the shah) are not binding on private employers. If private firms do not accept these provisions, they "may" be denied governmental services. For firms employing less than ten workers, moreover, the Ministry of Labour can make complete or partial exemptions (Article 207). This provision applies to 300 thousand workplaces employing almost half the workforce.

If workers have "failed repeatedly to carry out their duties or have disobeyed the workplace code of discipline after written warnings," they can be sacked. The code of discipline is to be formulated by the Ministry of Labour at a later date.

All these bills show the real intentions of the majority of the Majles, the government, and the clergy to improve the lot of the capitalists at the expense of the workers, whilst not allowing political power to slip out of the hand of the Khomeini faction.

However, the bourgeoisie is not content. It wants to regain direct control of the government, an end to the war with its huge costs, and a more definite shift towards a pro-Western international policy. The trends indicate that the regime on the whole is moving in that direction, but not fast enough and smoothly enough to satisfy the bourgeoisie. The latter, therefore, is still economically blackmailing the government by not investing.

The economic and political crisis will therefore continue and the war will go on. The only way the clergy can keep the bourgeoisie under control is by keeping its war machine rolling. The main losers are the masses. There are 4 million unemployed, over a million refugees, and a swelling flood from the land to the main urban centers (Tehran now has almost twice the population it did before the revolution). And repressive measures are being stepped up continually.

However, the workers and poor masses are fighting back more and more. I will take up the state of the mass resistance today in an article in a coming issue of *International Viewpoint*. □

General elections show bankruptcy of reformist parties

THE ONLY ruling Social Democratic Party in northern Europe, Sweden's SAP faced the polls on September 15. This was the first occasion in some time in the heartland of the European Social Democracy that a reformist government has had to go to the voters with a record of austerity policies and cutbacks. Moreover, Sweden has been one of the main models, if not the main one, for "welfare" capitalism, or the so-called Social Democratic third way. So, these elections attracted international attention in particular as a test of how well the most "socially responsible" of capitalisms was weathering the harsh winds of the world economic crisis. Gerry Foley discussed the results with Tom Gustafsson, a leader of the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International (SP-IV).

Despite a continuing decline in the standard of living of the great majority of Swedish people under the rule of Olof Palme, who resumed power after the 1982 elections, the SAP managed to win a narrow victory on September 15. However, the Social Democrats lost seven seats, being left with 159 in a 349-seat parliament. They are able to form a majority only with the support of the Communist Party (Vpk), which itself lost one seat, retaining 19. The SAP-Vpk majority thus held 178 seats to 171 for the three bourgeois parties.

The only national campaign to the left of the established parties was launched by the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International (SP-IV). It quadrupled its vote from the last parliamentary elections, gained its first city council seat, getting 1% of the vote or over in a number of key industrial centers.

Within the bourgeois bloc itself, a notable shift took place. The big losers were the Conservatives, or *Moderata*, the largest of the parties on the right. They lost their overall majority in the bourgeois bloc, dropping from 86 to 76 seats. The Center Party suffered a setback, going from 56 to 44 seats. At the same time, the Liberals (*Folkpartiet*) increased their representation in the parliament, or Riksdag, from 21 to 51 seats.

The fact that they had barely managed to hang on to the government did not keep the Social Democrats from celebrating a great victory for themselves and for the 'welfare state.'

"One more victory like this and they will be lost," Tom Gustafsson from the national leadership of the SP-IV and author of a book on the Swedish Social Democracy (1) told me. "They waged a campaign under the slogan 'Sweden on the right course,' defending their three-year record in government. But many people have direct bitter experience of what this period meant, especially low-wage earners and people in the social services sector. For them, the claim that Sweden was on the right course was hard to take."

So, why were the SAP losses only relative, I asked. Gustafsson explained:

"Sweden still has relatively little open unemployment. The growing unemployment has been covered up by all sorts of partial jobs programs." The official unemployment rate is 3%, but it rises to 6% or 7% if you count the number in 'retraining' or other schemes. "So, there was not a complete crisis of Social Democratic credibility yet. Moreover, at the end of the campaign, the SAP was able to refurbish their reformist image by strong attacks on the Conservatives, who they accused of wanting to wipe out the welfare system altogether.

"Moreover, it has to be remembered that this election came after three years of economic boom in which Sweden has profited consider-

1. "Igaar, idag, i morgon, Svensk socialdemokrati i tre akter," ("Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow, Swedish Social Democracy in Three Acts," Stockholm, Roede Rummet, 1984.

ably from an increase in exports to the US, in particular. In the coming years, on the other hand, we face the prospect of depression. And Sweden will have to face the new downturn in worse circumstances than at any time since the Second World War.

"That is, we already have high unemployment figures by Swedish standards. The Social Democrats are going to go ahead and cut back social services and public spending in general more and more. They have made that clear. They have not explained exactly how they will do it. But it is very clear that they are going to take away the social gains the working people have made in the past decades.

"So, the sort of campaign the Social Democrats waged in this election could boomerang, if people remember what they said. The credibility gap will grow, especially for wage earners with low incomes and the unemployed.

"The difference between the SAP vote at the local and national level points to the widening of this credibility gap. In the parliamentary election, their absolute vote was down by 50,000. But in the local elections, they lost a lot more, and it is evident that their greatest losses were in industrial areas, working-class neighborhoods, immigrant neighborhoods.

"At the same time, the Social Democrats gained a certain popularity with a marginal layer of the upper middle classes, who might otherwise have voted for the bourgeois parties.

"Another indicator is the abstention rate. Of course, the turnout for the elections in Sweden is traditionally very high, more than 90%, and it remained high at this point. But there was a decline of 1.5% overall, and it was much more in the working-class and immigrant neighborhoods."

Social democracy's little brother

What about the Communist Party, I wondered. In Sweden, as in other countries, the CP's strategy is to occupy the old reformist ground left vacant as the Social Democracy moves to the right. The very respectable Eurocommunist Vpk should have been in a good position to attract Social Democratic voters critical of the Palme government's policies. In fact, the pre-election polls had pointed to that. Why did that not happen?

"The Vpk in fact had an opening for increasing its vote, if it had waged a sharp campaign against the right, against the bourgeois parties, against austerity, against the cutbacks, for

'A six-hour day, equal pay and quality day-care centers for all children' (DR)

preserving and developing the social services, and then combined that with concrete criticism of the government's policy over the last three years — the increase in unemployment and the decline in real wages, especially at the start of the government's term, when it devalued the currency by 16%. They could have gained if they had criticized the social cutbacks, the government's ungenerous policies toward immigrants and political refugees, or its very weak, and sometimes even scandalously inadequate environmental program. But they did not do that.

"The Vpk's main gambit is to present itself as a left pressure on the government. Well, in the most recent period, its pressuring role has been very relative. It has supported austerity packages after getting only minor modifications. In line with this, it has had to give up some of its key demands, such as the demand for an end to indirect taxes on food and necessities.

"Thus, the net result for the Vpk was a decline of 0.3% in votes, in a situation where they should have gained and seemed in fact to be gaining."

So, what sort of future do the Swedish Eurocommunists have to look forward to now?

"The center of gravity in the Vpk is shifting more and more to its parliamentary group. The fact that they now hold a decisive balance of power in reality puts them in a tighter spot. The SAP government rests on them. If they do not vote for its proposals, the bourgeois parties will get the majority. This is a fantastic situation for a Social Democratic government to blackmail the Communists. If they don't go along, they will be isolated and exposed to the traditional Social Democratic

attacks for being "agitators" or "Stalinists." The Vpk leadership will think long and hard before letting itself be put in such a situation."

Not very long ago, the Vpk leaders in a town in southern Sweden joined the SP-IV. Could more opposition currents develop in this situation?

"There has been and will continue to be a certain opposition in the Vpk to compromises with the government. We expect that these tensions will increase in the next period, not immediately, but as the direction of the party's policies becomes clearer."

Among the bourgeois parties, the Liberals, who have a social liberal tradition, put their siblings in the shade. Could that mean that the "wets" are on the rise in Sweden too, that bourgeois political forces themselves are getting cold feet about launching a hard-fisted attack on the workers' gains?

"I think that there were two main reasons for the Liberals' success. One was the kind of campaign the Conservatives waged. It was a very aggressive one, partially modeled on those of the bourgeois parties in the United States. It reflected the first flight of the young guard of the Conservatives, grouped around Ulf Adelsohn. They are called the 'broiler', or 'fledgling' class of Conservative politicians. That is, to mix a metaphor, they are over-eager young rightists who aren't yet dry behind the ears. They are on fire to preach the rightist gospel, but have no experience of practical politics.

"So, the Broilers waged a campaign that went politically further than part of their electorate could stomach. They demanded far-reaching cuts in childcare, in transportation facilities for old people, cuts in the hospitals, in unemployment benefits, etc. They made that an important part of their campaign, combined with that of a tax reform that very clearly meant a reversed Robin-Hood policy — take from the poor and give to the rich. This line was set rather early in the campaign.

"On top of that, the Broilers tried to introduce a very un-Swedish 'show-business' style. For example, at one point, a Conservative leader had the idea of taking a bath in the water reservoir of one of the nuclear power plants. That was an affront even for bourgeois people. The same politician made very extreme statements on immigration policy, demanding that the government begin to operate already on the East German side of the border to stop the influx of Iranian, Iraqi, and Turkish refugees.

"This sort of thing did not go over at all well with the traditional base of the Conservatives, which,

as in the case of its counterpart in Norway, is the respectable middle class, well-off white-collar workers, members of the liberal professions, teachers, professors. They were not amused.

"You see, the campaign reflected really reactionary currents among the youth who have been attracted to the Conservatives, but who are out of line with the attitudes of their traditional base. So, by the end of the campaign, the Liberals were able to pick up a section of the Conservatives repelled by this strident new rightism.

"Moreover, the Liberals claimed to defend both the market economy and social responsibility. At the same time as saying that they defended the essential pillars of the welfare society, they declared that cuts were necessary. In fact, if you look at their actual policies in the national and local parliaments, they go as far as the Conservatives, but they have a different image.

"In addition, the leader of the Liberal Party, Bengt Westerberg is new and young (42 years old) and is not associated with any scandals or any unattractive personal features. So, he was able to help the Liberal image."

Greens, right and left

Of course, it was not just the Conservatives who lost to the Liberals. The Center Party of Torbjørn Faellidin, who presided over two bourgeois governments between 1976-1982, also took a shearing.

"The center party won a lot of votes in the early and mid-1970s because it was seen as kind of a Green party, a bourgeois Green party, because of its apparent opposition to nuclear power. It has lost a lot of that image since because of its practical policies."

In these elections an oppositionist Green Party got significant votes in a number of places. But this was only one aspect of the growth of discontent with the established parties and a search for alternatives.

"We can see the beginning of a political vacuum developing to the left of the established parties. There is now a certain layer of trade unionists, youth, etc. who cannot stomach the policies of the government, are starting to pose questions, and some of them are starting to look around for alternatives. We expect this process to develop in the future and tensions to grow between the leaderships and base of the parliamentary workers parties.

"There are also people who do not think of themselves simply as standing to the left of the establi-

shed parties. There is a feeling, especially among youth, of opposition to all established political parties. They don't place themselves, necessarily on a scale from right to left, but they are open to alternatives.

"This discontent was expressed in these elections in a protest vote that took different forms. It's an important phenomenon that there are now 52 municipalities in Sweden where local parties, either Green parties, linked to the National Green Party, or other local parties, hold the balance of power. That is, there are 52 municipalities in which neither the bourgeois parties nor the parliamentary workers parties hold the majority.

"It's true that in the last elections the Greens got 1.9% and this time they got 1.5%, a decrease on the national scale. But in national elections there is a kind of blackmail, since you have to get over 4% to get representation in parliament. That creates a very strong pressure for voting for the established parties. Obviously, this pressure is less on the local level, and there the Greens were able to channel significant discontent."

In a situation of growing dissatisfaction with the parliamentary workers parties, it is proving possible, even in a country as exceptionally well off and politically stable as Sweden for revolutionists to gain a hearing among small but important sections of the working class. That is, this is possible when revolutionists can link up their perspectives to the concerns of those sections of the masses becoming exasperated with the system.

In Sweden, the only national alternative to the left of the parliamentary workers parties was offered by the SP-IV campaign. "All the other so-called left groups, the [right-wing] Maoists in the SKP and the [ultra-left] Maoists in the KPmlr, and the 100% pro-Moscow split from the Vpk, the APK (Workers Communist Party) decided not to run. The APK withdrew in the last period before the elections. So, we offered the only national political alternative to the established parties."

It is particularly difficult to challenge the established parties in national elections in Sweden because of the very strong centralism in the country, which has deep historical roots. A good deal of what from the outside looks like democracy is actually well-oiled authoritarianism. Sweden did not have a bourgeois revolution but modernized in a way not so different from Prussia.

"There was a complete news blackout on our campaign in the national mass media. We did not get one second on national television, not one second on national radio,

not one second on the Stockholm local radio, not one millimeter in the big bourgeois and Social Democratic papers.

"In these conditions we were very satisfied with the vote we got. It was better than we dared hope. We got 16,200 votes in the elections for the Riksdag, and a few thousand more than that if you add the local elections. We got one seat on the city council in Koping, an industrial town to the west of Stockholm, and we were close to getting seats in several important industrial towns, including Kiruna in the far north, Borlaenge, Umeaa, and in Nacka, just outside Stockholm.

"In a number of places, we got quite significant votes. In Koping, we got 2% of the vote. In Orebro, we got 1.5%, in Goteborg [the country's second city and major industrial center] and the city of Stockholm, we got around 1%. The pattern of our vote is very clear. We got almost nothing in upper-class areas, little in the central parts of the big towns. Our vote was concentrated in working-class and immigrant areas, where in many cities, we got 4%, 5% and even 6%.

"It was also notable that in working class areas we do not seem to have suffered from the tactical-vote syndrome, that is people with radical views voting for the Vpk, for example, to 'make their votes count.' On the other hand, this was a problem in student areas. This is indicated by the fact that in working-class areas, the difference between our national and local vote was less. In general, those workers who voted for us tended to vote for us on all levels."

What exactly did people vote for when they marked their ballots for the SP-IV?

'No more gifts to the rich' (DR)



"We have gained a political profile built on consistent opposition to austerity policies, the reversed Robin Hood policies of the government, on defense of the disadvantaged groups —immigrants, political refugees, and youth fighting for jobs and a place to live. It is also built on international solidarity with Poland, Central America, and now South Africa. In the latter case, we have played an important role in supporting Metalworkers Against Apartheid, which was a campaign focused on the metalworkers congress in early September, just before the elections.

"Metalworkers Against Apartheid was a broad campaign for Swedish disinvestment in South Africa. It came out of a call launched by workers in factories that have investments in South Africa and for trade unions holding shares in companies in South Africa selling their stocks as a gesture of support for the resistance in South Africa.

"Some two thousand metalworkers contributed to a big advertisement that was published in the big Social Democratic paper on the day of the South Africa debate at the metalworkers congress. The supporters of disinvestment did not win at the congress. But this campaign laid the groundwork for building an important current of public opinion.

"We built our campaign under the slogan of 'Workers and Youth Protest in the Elections of 1985.' We tried to set an example of unity against bourgeois policies. We appealed to other organizations to join with us, socialist youth organizations, immigrant organizations. The independent youth organization 'Benny' participated, as did a couple of immigrant organizations. We also tried to make the campaign attractive to unorganized socialists, who were invited to participate as independents. So, this was a first test of a broad campaign. And in some local areas where systematic work was done to involve unorganized people, there were good results.

"We tried to give an example of a non-sectarian electoral campaign, in which our party was the backbone but open to all sorts of collaboration with other forces that agreed on the need to offer this sort of alternative. Since the SP-IV was the only registered party involved, the votes were cast on its line. But we did not want to run simply an SP-IV campaign."

The campaign was a major step forward for the SP-IV's perspective of offering a consistent working-class alternative to the policies of the bureaucratized workers parties and for the SP-IV itself.

"I don't think that the tactical vote argument will work against us

in the same way in the future. We will also be able to put more pressure on the left parties that did not run. The debate with them will continue. Our situation has changed now. None of us in the organization has experienced a situation in which there are such important openings. The decisive factor in what we achieve in the coming period lies with ourselves.

"We have to be able to do two things. We have to appear as a current promoting unity, building united actions around the key political issues. And we have to appear as both a spark and the relay, because we are in a different situation here than, for example, revolutionists in Denmark, where there are a whole range of parties to the left of Social Democracy. We are in a much more relatively isolated position. We have a resonance but the party itself is in a different position. We can't relate in the same way to other parties as Danish revolutionists. We will try to relate to the Vpk and the Social Democrats. But we will have to be the backbone in most of the unity actions we can build. That doesn't mean sectarianism, but we have to understand the importance of the role our organization has to play."

Building the party

After the elections, the SP-IV National Committee decided to take a number of measures to strengthen the party organization and adjust it to the new openings.

"We decided to create a structure for supporters, that is, people who declare their loyalty to the party and are prepared to pay an annual sustainer. They will be invited to our major activities. But they are people who are not able to play the sort of active role that regular members of a revolutionary party have to play.

"We adopted the goal of recruiting 500 organized supporters before our next congress half a year from now. We also adopted a plan to stabilize the subscriptions to our paper, *Internationalen*. We have 2,600, and we will build on that.

"With the contacts we have made, we expect to be able to build branches in ten more cities. We are planning to go into neighborhoods where we got a high vote with paper sales, leaflets, and local initiatives. And in Stockholm, for example, we are aiming to strengthen our public presence through our bookstore and by holding open houses where people can come and meet representatives of the party.



'A job, a place to live and a living wage'

"In a more general way, we are aiming at a change in style, in tone, at adopting ways of discussion that are more open, using the paper and other publications from that. That is, we have to adjust our so-called internal discussions to take account of the thousands of people who look to our party but are not members, in order to be able to integrate them in the discussions. All of these measures are summed up in a recruitment campaign under the slogan 'Our party is your party, join now!'"

In this effort, Gustafsson said, the SP-IV intends to pay special attention to youth and women.

"Now, it's a good thing to have older people in the organization because it shows that we are not an ephemeral organization. In the factories in particular, it is important to have people who are forty, 45, fifty or more, who have experience and credibility as people who know what it's all about and are not lightminded. But when the average age is going up as it is in the party now, it means that the number of young or very young comrades is decreasing. So, we have to take deliberate measures. In particular we have to build major campaigns to defend the interests of women. We are now involved in local campaigns against job discrimination. One, for example, is in the north against the mining company LKAB, which has discriminatory hiring policies. Another is against the Sandvik steel company in mid-Sweden which also has discriminatory policies. The general campaign for reducing the workweek has special importance for women, in conjunction with campaigns against forced part-time work for women, for real jobs for women, against the attempts to force women back into the home, against cuts in childcare, and so forth." □

The current stage in the struggle against apartheid

THE FOLLOWING resolution was passed by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on October 5, 1985, along with a resolution on solidarity with the struggle against apartheid published in the last issue of *International Viewpoint* No 84, October 14, 1985.

1. The new rise in struggles in South Africa falls into the framework of the general crisis of imperialist domination, opening a new front which could increase the difficulties of the imperialist counter offensive including in Central America. The South African mass movement had already been stimulated by the defeat of Portuguese colonialism in Angola and Mozambique. Today the struggles against apartheid constitute the most advanced form of the anti-imperialist struggles in the whole of Black Africa. The new wave of popular mobilisations in South Africa constitute an element of first importance for all anti-imperialist struggles throughout the world. The imperialist governments and big capital have all recognised the danger and are each seeking to close the breach that is opening in South Africa.

The place of South Africa in the counter-revolutionary system of imperialism is considerable, as are imperialism's economic interests in this country. The South African regime remains the strong arm of imperialism in Southern Africa, and has even contributed to arming the dictatorships in Latin America. The important place that a revolutionary upsurge in South Africa could hold in the future is the product of all these factors.

2. There has been an important change in the political situation in South Africa with the explosion of the present revolt. The process began over a year ago, with first the education boycotts by high-school and university students, the boycott of the sham elections proposed by Botha for the Indian and Coloured communities, the miners' strike in September 1984, and then the stayaway (general strike) in the Transvaal in November 1984.

This period has been marked by many workplace conflicts, the

workers going into struggle on wage demands, demands for improvement in working conditions or in defence of trade-union rights or against sackings.

The present upsurge of activity and radicalisation is marked by a more and more direct link between a series of struggles that each involve different social sectors of the oppressed masses: youth, workers, township dwellers.

This same tendency towards unity is also noted at the level to which the struggle has broken through the ethnic compartmentalisation that the regime has striven to establish through the apartheid laws, introducing divisions among the oppressed by classifying them into distinct racial categories.

This desire for unity on the part of the oppressed population is not yet however sufficient to overcome all the racial and ethnic prejudices that the apartheid system has succeeded in introducing among the masses. This situation remains the product of a division of the population in social and working life, and in their place of residence.

But the process underway represents a considerable political advance and seriously destabilises the organisation of racial segregation, the basis of the present regime. In the framework of the new relationship of forces, the reform proposals put forward by Botha in the end satisfied neither the masses nor imperialism.

One of the key moments of this tendency towards unity in action was the stayaway in the Transvaal in November 1984, where among other things a united front was established including the independent trade unions and the United Democratic Front (UDF). This strike particularly showed up the growing importance of the workers' movement through its trade unions, without which

no action of such scale would be possible. The imminent formation of a unitary federation bringing together the majority of the independent unions will be an event of considerable importance which can only encourage the activity of the Black working class.

All this illustrates the level of development already attained by the mass movement. Two main forms of organisation have particularly developed since 1980 on complementary fronts: community associations organising people in their place of residence; and non-racial independent trade unions which now organise a substantial section of the Black (non-white) working class. It is the problem of combining these two forms of organisation of the movement that must be resolved in order to pass to a higher stage in the confrontation with the regime. The real and effective unification of the different forms of organisation in the popular movement has not been able to be realised either in the UDF or the African National Congress (ANC).

The present level of popular struggle poses urgently the question of self-defence of the masses, and initiatives taken on this question, so that the potential for offensive combat by the mass movement can emerge. The present lack of response to these questions is already a problem for the development of mass mobilisations.

The struggle for emancipation, which has just experienced a new upsurge, will therefore be a long and complex struggle. Its outcome will depend, among other things, on the result of the political orientations on tactical and strategic questions which will be adopted on the basis of the present experiences.

3. In fact, the radicalisation of the mass movement and the political objectives that it is taking on have brought to the forefront the political differences and strategic debates that divide the different currents and organisations within it. On tactical questions, as on the long-term objectives, there are different orientations within the mass movement.

Among the currents existing, there is first of all the ANC which has mass support in certain sectors of the mass movement, particularly in the civic associations, and which enjoys a wide audience beyond its organisational network. There is also the Black Consciousness Movement, and particularly the Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO). Among the main organised currents one should also include certain churches, members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, that have a specific political practice and have an active militant base.



Demonstration by metalworkers union (DR)

Finally the leaderships of certain of the principal unions act independently in the mobilisations by following their own perspectives and appear as political forces in their own right in the present political diversity.

The South African workers' movement is the product of modifications in the social structure of the country following the industrialisation process of the 1960s. The importance of the industrial proletariat in the struggles ahead is thus first of all the product of its numerical reality and its degree of concentration, that is its social weight in South African society. During the last period the Black working class has proved its capacity to introduce its own methods of action and organisation into the struggle against the apartheid system, having forged its first weapons in the struggle around economic demands and for trade-union rights.

4. The present struggle in many ways started on democratic and national demands, but not exclusively. The oppressed masses want to get out from under the yoke of the racist state, they want an egalitarian, democratic and non-racial state. They demand universal suffrage without discrimination of any sort, under the slogan "one person, one vote". The immense majority of the layers of the oppressed Black population is interested in the realisation of these democratic and national demands. But already, at this stage of the mobilisation, demands have come forward in the workers' struggles directed to the bosses and the state that clearly link the question of apartheid to that of capitalist domination.

The reason for this combination lies in the interwoven history of capitalism and racist institutions in this country. Apartheid is an instrument of racial domination but it is also a way of guaranteeing a specific exploitation of the workforce. Apartheid is the specific form that capitalist exploitation has taken in this country. And that has immediate consequences in the way in which the workers' movement identifies its class enemies, including in the democratic and national struggles.

It is true that from a certain point of view apartheid is full of contradictions for certain sectors of capitalism (limited domestic market, lack of qualified workforces, etc.) But today it is the direct danger of revolutionary explosion that has forced a section of the South African ruling class to try to introduce reforms.

The liberals, who are essentially supported by a section of South African finance and industrial capital, have thus embarked on the course of trying to find a political solution by meeting the ANC or trying to moderate the UDF. But precisely because of the link between capitalism and apartheid they are incapable of proposing the abolition of all discriminatory laws and the introduction of universal suffrage. Their attempt at reform will not for the moment go beyond the federative proposals that deliberately ignore the popular hope for a single non-racial nation. In the last instance, the real compromise that the liberals will have to make will be that which they will make with the rest of their class, that is, the reactionary sectors today represented by the National Party.

The new situation in South Africa has a worldwide importance, given the strategic importance of this country for imperialism and the scope of the economic interests. Up until now, imperialism had unflinchingly supported the racist regime. The new situation requires certain political rectifications in order to find a solution to the present crisis. Certain sectors of the banks and multinationals have undertaken to put pressure on the South African regime through a number of financial and commercial mechanisms. The immediate scope of these sanctions should not hide the fact that the imperialist countries fundamentally seek the stability of the capitalist regime in South Africa, and want to avoid a radicalisation of the present movement. To achieve this, they rely more and more on the liberal currents and South African big capital.

5. For all these reasons, the South African revolutionary process will be in line with the social, economic and political reality of the country, that is, the reality of its class structure, which gives the industrial proletariat a central role in unifying the oppressed masses in the struggle against apartheid. The popular movement strives above everything else to liquidate the apartheid regime through the formation of a single non-racial nation, through the question of equal civil and political rights, and through the land question.

While we must pay the greatest attention to the immediate struggle for these demands which are in the interests of all the oppressed, it is nevertheless decisive that the workers' movement should furnish the mass movement with its leadership. The strengthening of the workers' movement and the construction of a recognised revolutionary proletarian leadership are thus necessary tasks to prevent the present struggles ending in stalemate or dead end, without even having been able to meet the main democratic demands. A proletarian leadership will be the only guarantee that the democratic and national questions are fully resolved. The real, complete solution to these questions can only be carried out by the dictatorship of the proletariat as the decisive point in a process of permanent revolution. Even if certain socialist tasks must wait for later, only the dictatorship of the proletariat is capable of fulfilling and defending the demands of the national democratic revolution. This is possible in South Africa because the social and political relations existing in the country are ready to bring the proletariat to power at the head of the oppressed and exploited masses. □

Day of action against the debt

JULY 15-18 this year saw an important meeting of trade unionists from Latin America and the Caribbean to plan out a campaign against the foreign debt. The meeting took place in Havana, Cuba and was attended by 197 trade union organisations from 29 countries in the region. Among the many speakers was Fidel Castro.

Delegates to the conference pledged themselves to fight for 'cancellation, a moratorium and the immediate suspension of all payments or the indefinite adjournment of the foreign debt, including interest; for the establishment of a new international economic order and for Latin American and Caribbean unity; for full integration of Latin America and the Caribbean in the interests of full development and independence of our countries.' (from *Granma*, weekly French language summary, Havana, July 28, 1985). The meeting also decided to organise an international day of action against the foreign debt for October 23.

We publish below a joint statement drawn up by representatives of sections of the Fourth International in Latin America and the Caribbean with regard to this initiative.

The representatives of trade unions and popular organizations from our countries met in Havana, Cuba, in July 1985 to discuss the extremely serious problems that payment of the foreign debt is causing our peoples. Among other things, this conference decided to declare October 23 as the Continent-wide Day of Refusal to Pay the Foreign Debt and as a day of action against the International Monetary Fund's criminal policy toward our peoples.

Given the importance of this, the Latin American and Caribbean organizations operating in the framework of the Fourth International declare:

— The offensive by the imperialist banks and governments against our peoples to force payment of the foreign debt has resulted in even harsher implementation of austerity plans, rising prices, cutbacks in budgets for programs that benefit the people, massive layoffs of workers, wage freezes, removal of peasants from the land, and the inevitable policy of repression to destroy any popular protests and the organizations that sponsor them.

— Imperialism's policy has been endorsed by the governments of our countries, or at best, they have taken

only timid measures that, far from responding to the needs of the people they claim to represent, place them shamelessly and against national interests on the side of those who want to fill the imperialist coffers at the expense of our sacrifice. This is done not only for their own selfish interests, but also to lash the people and to destabilize those governments, such as our sister Nicaragua, that dare to choose an honorable and sovereign path, placing the national wealth in the hands of the great majority that needs it.

— Because of its size, the debt cannot be paid. Because it is an instrument of exploitation, it should not be paid. The native ruling classes, bound to imperialism's interests, cannot adopt a firm, independent position toward it.

Contrary to the servile path taken by the governments and bourgeoisies, Latin American trade unionists and peasants resolved to take the struggle against payment of the foreign debt into their own hands. Moreover, they have taken on the struggle, without quarter, for a new international economic order that will end imperialism's exploitation of dependent countries such as ours and will orient toward

satisfying the basic necessities of all the exploited and oppressed. Such a new economic order will orient toward economic exchange among the countries of the so-called Third World. A new economic order would use the enormous resources of Latin America and the Caribbean for our own development and not, as has been the case thus far, for the further enrichment of the imperialists, who finance their economic development with resources from the dependent and exploited countries. Latin America will never recover these resources.

— Given this situation, we make a fervent appeal to all workers all peasants, popular forces, revolutionary parties, and democratic organizations to actively and combatively participate in the activities against payment of the foreign debt, October 23, by organizing assemblies, rallies, marches, protests, work stoppages, etc. Following the example of the Latin American Trade Union Conference, we call on the trade union federations to continue these sort of meetings, creating greater possibilities to seek common initiatives and actions by the workers and peasants of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Against hunger and misery. We will not pay the debt. This is the only way there will be a future for us and our children!

No to payment of the foreign debt!

Against austerity policies!

For defense of democratic rights!

Assure the success of the continent-wide protest October 23.

Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Peru; Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Mexico; Revolutionary Marxist Organization — Socialist Democracy (ORM-DS), Brazil; Revolutionary Workers Movement (MRT), Ecuador; Revolutionary Workers Party (Unified) (POR[U]), Bolivia; Socialist Revolution Group (GRS), Guadeloupe-Martinique; Revolutionary Socialist Party (PRS), Colombia; Socialist Workers Party (PST), Uruguay; Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), Chile. □



AROUND THE WORLD



Belgium

POS campaign results

THE OCTOBER 13 legislative and regional elections saw the return to power of Martens and a coalition government of Social Democrats and Liberals.

The POS/SAP (Belgian section of the Fourth International) waged a massive campaign in these elections to present a working class alternative to the crisis.

The party fielded 232 candidates and got 17,000 votes. This was 2,000 more votes than in the legislative elections in 1981 but about 8,000 less than in the European elections. However, the important thing was that in the three main industrial centres in Wallonia — Liege, Mons and Charleroi, the POS was greatly strengthened, thus demonstrating the audience it is beginning to have within the trade union movement.

Over half the candidates on the POS/SAP list were independent trade unionists who had chosen to stand on the POS/SAP ticket because of the work the comrades had done in the recent strikes. They were also attracted by their excellent campaign on the theme of 'The creation of 700,000 jobs is possible if all social needs are met.' □

Portugal

PS loses out

THE OCTOBER 6 elections in Portugal (the eleventh set of elections since the April 25 revolution) brought victory for the right wing parties and, for the Socialist Party (PS), the worst result in its history with 20% of the votes cast. This compares with 36% in the 1983 legislative elections and means that Mario Soares, the PS leader has lost his chance to stand in the presidential elections.

The elections were also marked by the spectacular breakthrough of the PRD (Democratic Renewal Party) which got 18% of the votes. Made up of dissidents from the Socialist Party and enjoying the support of the current president Eanes, this party looks set to become a significant third force in Portuguese politics.

The fact that some workers are looking for a real alternative to the policies of austerity implemented by the last government was demonstrated in the votes for revolutionary candidates which were doubled in these elections. The People's

Democratic Union received 1.27% and the PSR (Revolutionary Socialist Party), Portuguese section of the Fourth International, who put up 350 candidates, got 36,000 votes — that is 0.65%. They centred their attack on austerity and the need to mobilise for action at the base. The PSR lists included a number of leaders of different far left currents as well as a significant number of trade union leaders. □

Obituary

Manuel Sacristan

AT THE end of August, Manuel Sacristan died in Spain. Less well known in other countries than in Spanish speaking ones, Sacristan was considered in Spain and Latin America to be one of the most important Marxist theoreticians and philosophers of the last decades. In *Combate*, paper of the section of the Fourth International in the Spanish State, comrade Jaime Pastor characterised Sacristan as "the foremost Marxist of exceptional stature since the defeat of 1939." We agree completely with this assessment.

Manuel Sacristan is above all remembered as the translator of the complete works of Georg Lukacs. It should be noted in this context that these translations are much more complete and of a better quality than those that exist in French and English. The prestige of these translations is considerable, as much in academic circles as among Marxists. But Sacristan was much more than a Marxist philosopher. He was one of the rare theoreticians after the Second World War who managed to personify 'open Marxism', breaking with the dogmatism and talmudism, which limits itself to the eternal search for quotes from the classics to "demonstrate" that there is nothing new under the sun. To be capable of applying the Marxist method in a living and creative manner to new phenomena and to new currents of opinion, without throwing into question the internal cohesion of Marxism, that is what distinguishes a real theoretician from an eclectic gossip or a charlatan who continually repeats that it is necessary to "pose" a thousand questions, without being capable of answering a single one of them.

Manuel Sacristan was fundamentally antistalinist, antibureaucratic and against class collaboration. A former

leading militant of the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSUC, the Catalan CP), he followed a trajectory of a left communist oppositionist. This became apparent on the publication of two critical communist journals, *Materiales* and *Mientras Tanto*. In these journals he began to elaborate radical positions on the issue of ecology and on the question of the danger of nuclear war, which led him to challenge — at least implicitly — the Leninist strategy of world socialist revolution. We had occasion to polemicise with him on these questions.

Manuel Sacristan was a great Marxist intellectual of the stature of other outstanding theoreticians like Franz Mehring and Georges Plekhanov — great men who possessed a great confidence linked to a real humanity. The fraternal relations that Trotskyist militants were able to establish with him, at a time when most people in the Communist parties would have nothing to do with our movement, was evidence of these great qualities which are indispensable to the construction of a new world. Our movement, all non-dogmatic Marxists and the world of tomorrow will honour the memory of Manuel Sacristan. □

Ernest Mandel

ERRATA

Two significant errors slipped into recent issues of *International Viewpoint*, one of inadvertence and the other of mis-information. In Ernest Mandel's article in No. 83, September 30, 1985, "The first six months of Gorbachov's reign." In the first column of the first page it should have said that economic growth rates have been falling in the Soviet Union for the last "two decades" and not the last "two years."

In Issue No. 77, June 3, 1985, in the "Around the World," column, the information that Udi Adiv, an Israeli political prisoner, was released in the framework of the prisoner exchange negotiated by Ahmed Jibril of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — General Command proved to be without foundation. Adiv was released in accordance with an established procedure for "time off for good behavior," which, however, has been denied to political prisoners in the past. This unusual step has aroused speculation, but no basis in fact has been produced for linking it to the prisoner exchange. □

From the underground, unionists appeal for world support

TWO LEADERS of the Bolivian Confederation of Labor (COB) who managed to escape the recent police roundup of trade unionists (see *International Viewpoint* No 84, October 14, 1985) gave the following interview on September 21 to a representative of *Internationalen*, the paper of the Swedish section of the Fourth International.

Anibar Castanon Clavijo, the COB's permanent secretary and Angel Zaballa, the Executive Committee's financial secretary, had gone underground to continue to organize the struggle. It was in those days that many trade-unionists were being arrested, when the radio stations of the factory and mineworkers were shut down, and when the editor of the radical weekly *Aqui* was arrested when he came to the parliament in his capacity as a journalist to cover the debate on the state-of-siege proposal.

It was in these days when many groups of workers took refuge in churches and started up a hunger strike against the regime's repression. At the same time, the government claimed that a state of siege was needed because "plans for rebellion" were afoot and that the hunger strikes were "illegal" because they represented attempted suicide.

This is how Angel Zaballa described the situation.

"The regime has rejected all attempts at negotiations and all offers from the Church and the Commission for Human Rights to mediate between the labor movement and the government. We find ourselves virtually in a war in which the government's objective is to destroy the union movement altogether.

"In the government there are ministers who participated in the previous military dictatorships. One is the minister of planning, Bedregal, who was chancellor in Natuch Busch's military regime. There is the minister of defense, Valle, who led the military's assault on the university under the dictatorship of Garcia Meza. There is the minister of information, Rivero, who was also minister of information in Busch's government.

"This is the new style today in Bolivia. We have a democracy that carries out fascist measures and a

government whose main enemy is the working class. The government is doing the dirty work of the bourgeoisie and US imperialism."

Zaballa was among the COB leaders arrested by the military on Tuesday, September 19. While the others were taken off to internal exile in the northern part of the country, he managed to escape. He explained how the conflict with the government developed.

"The reason for the conflict was the new economic policy that the government wants to impose. It means selling out Bolivia to imperialism. It opens up all the doors for foreign investors. It gives management the right to hire and fire as they chose. It freezes wages, while removing all controls on prices and trade. All of this is going to lead to the total collapse of small and middle businesses in the country.

"We workers already knew what was happening and we decided not to accept these measures, which threaten the very subsistence of workers in this country.

"So, when all attempts at dialogue with the government came to nought, we called a 48-hour strike, then a 72-hour one, and finally a general strike.

"We always wanted to talk to the government. We proposed a wide-ranging debate with the government on economic policy, a debate that would be broadcast over all the radio and TV stations.

"But the government refused. And then they shut off all possibilities for dialogue.

"In response to this, we began a mass hunger strike. The entire Executive Committee of the COB, with Juan Lechin in the lead, took the initiative for the hunger strike. A national strike committee was selected to negotiate with the government.

"On September 18, the day before the declaration of the state of siege, our headquarters was surrounded by security forces and sealed off. They did not let anyone come in. Inside, there were a lot of comrades who had just gone on hunger strike, and their families were bringing blankets, tea, and other drinks. But the security forces kept us totally isolated.

"Later, in the morning, the miners' mobilizations managed to break our isolation for a while. We got permission for contacts.

"It was on that occasion that Lechin made his last public appearance before being imprisoned. He explained the situation to the journalists, in front of all the miners, factory workers, and students who had gathered outside the COB headquarters."

However, the building was soon sealed off once more.

"Finally, we requested that the government give us a chance to meet, the entire Executive Committee with the National Strike Committee.

"It was to present this demand that our delegation went to the government palace. But when the delegates got there, they were arrested and taken to the premises of the Ministry of the Interior.

"We have to condemn a government that is so perfidious that it arrests our comrades when they come to negotiate.

"The next day, September 19, at 3.00 am, a large group of police came into the building where we were on hunger strike. They fired into it and smashed doors and windows and dragged us off.

"After that we were taken to the airforce base at El Alto, on the heights outside La Paz. From there, they started sending people off, first of all, us from the Executive Committee, to internal exile in Pando and Beni.

"It was during these proceedings that I managed to flee and go underground."

Castanon said that so far 2,500 people had been taken to the airforce base at El Alto. But the government has published lists of only 148 persons sent into internal exile. Where were the others taken?

The COB's underground leadership is appealing for international support in this difficult situation for the workers of Bolivia.

"We want to inform world opinion about what is happening here. We want to inform the workers movement so that it can exert pressure and so that we can win back our trade-union rights. We need your help in condemning and protesting against this 'democratic' regime that is pursuing a fascist policy." □