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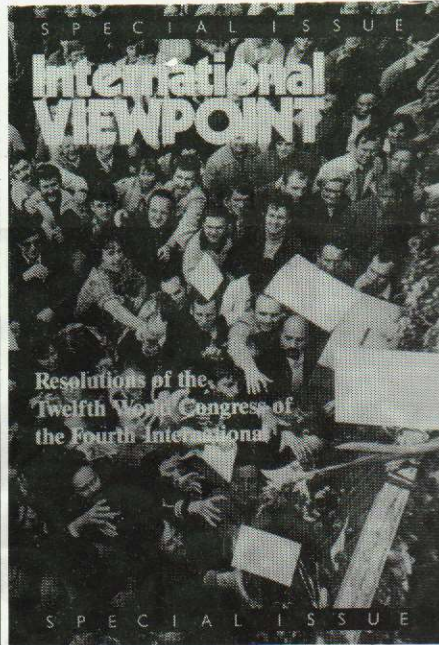


SPECIAL : Women's liberation around the world
Philippines, Reagan loses another dictator
Haiti, the fire goes deeper

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Twelfth world congress resolutions available



This special issue of *International Viewpoint* contains the resolutions adopted by the Twelfth World Congress of the Fourth International in January/February 1985.

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In solidarity with the Filipino people

Statement of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International

FIFTEEN DAYS after dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier took flight from Haiti, Ferdinand Marcos had to flee ignominiously from the Philippines. US helicopters had to come to rescue him, together with his entourage, so that he could escape from the presidential palace, which was surrounded by the insurgent population.

After huge and continual mobilisations, sometimes of a million people, Manila was in fact, and had been for several days, occupied by hundreds of thousands of demonstrators. They were determined not to give up before achieving the departure of the man who had thought himself master of the country for 20 years. Growing numbers of soldiers showed no will to break up these mobilisations, and even a readiness to join the crowds themselves.

We owe the overthrow of Marcos in the first place to an extraordinary popular and democratic mobilisation. Without this, the moderate opposition would have remained powerless, the White House would not have let its protegee fall, and the officer corps would not have become divided as it did.

For the last few years, growing sectors of US imperialism, of Philippine big business and the middle class, and of the Catholic hierarchy in the country had sought an orderly transition toward a regime that would more adequately serve their interests.

The political instability of the Marcos regime accelerated after the assassination of opposition leader, Benigno Aquino in August 1983. The system of power established by Marcos under martial law was undermined by a deep economic and social crisis. The pro-imperialist elite in the Philippines was more and more deeply divided.

A popular mass movement of workers, urban poor and peasants came into mounting conflict with the regime. The revolutionary left and the guerrilla forces led by the

Communist Party of the Philippines — the New People's Army — experienced rapid growth.

In the eyes of imperialism, it was vital to reunify the ruling elite and reform the army officer corps — which was corrupt and hated by the population — in order more effectively to combat the upsurge in the democratic and anti-imperialist struggle. It was all the more vital because of the key strategical importance of this Southeast Asian archipelago, which houses the two main US bases abroad — Subic Bay and Clark Air Base.

This policy was a failure. Marcos rejected any meaningful compromise. The US administration was not able to overcome its internal divisions. The February 7, 1986, elections, which were supposed finally to create the conditions for a restabilisation of the regime and the start of an orderly transition, led to a face-to-face confrontation between the Marcos regime and the opposition forces.

It was thus in a situation of a major, open political crisis that the departure of Marcos came to be seen — in Washington and in Manila — as the only solution.

The overthrow of the dictator is a victory won by the Filipino people. It opens up a new stage of political life there. But the current government will try to deny the Filipino people the fruits of this victory.

Around the charismatic personality of Corazon Aquino, new president of the Philippines, there is a bloc of conservative forces that is reflected in the composition of the new government. Won over at the last minute, Juan Ponce Enrile, who was the

moving spirit in the martial law policy, is again minister of defence.

Jaime Ongpin, new finance minister, president of the Benguet Mining Corporation, is one of the main spokespersons of the business world. Salvador Laurel — vice president, prime minister and minister for foreign affairs — was a longtime ally of Marcos and represents UNIDO, a conservative political formation linked to the landowning oligarchy. Many presidential advisors are Jesuit priests, advocates of reform but deeply anti-Communist.

As for General Fidel V. Ramos, chief of staff of the armed forces, he is well known for his links with Washington and the Pentagon. The role of a few personalities known for their defence of human rights can only, in these conditions, be seen as marginal.

US imperialism, strengthened by the pro-imperialist character of the new regime and the support of the powerful Catholic hierarchy, will do anything to restabilise its domination over the country.

The democratic and anti-imperialist movement is thus going to have to continue to organise and struggle for its aims. The Philippine army is divided. The policy of President Reagan — which supported Marcos right up to the eleventh hour — has awakened a deep nationalist feeling in the Philippines against the long-standing colonial power.

The population has experienced what its strength is when the masses mobilise. Marginalized during the election period and the weeks that followed the February 7 elections, the popular forces of the left and revolutionaries remain deeply rooted. The economic and social crisis requires a mass struggle independent of government.

The democratic and anti-imperialist struggle continues. The Fourth International reaffirms its support for the popular, democratic, anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces in the Philippines. Alongside the Filipino people, we demand the immediate and unconditional release of all the political prisoners — without any exceptions — who have courageously fought against the dictator Marcos; the repeal of all anti-strike laws and decrees; the recognition of independent trade-unions; the dismantling of the repressive apparatus and the various landlords' private armies in the countryside; the bringing to justice of those responsible for torture and summary executions; the re-establishment of all democratic freedoms; and the removal of the massive US air and naval bases from the Philippines. □

February 28, 1986

Mutiny puts pressure on regime

THE MUTINY on February 26-27 of the draftees of the Egyptian special security police force created by President Anwar Sadat in 1977 has assumed an extraordinary dimension and raises some important questions.

SALAH JABER

This mutiny comes nine years after the mass explosions of January 18-19, 1977, which were provoked by a sudden increase in the price of necessities, in compliance with a recommendation by the IMF. After that the imperialists adopted an emergency plan to bail out the Sadat regime.

Nonetheless, the combination of a creeping austerity program with imperialist financial aid could only temporarily attenuate the crisis of the Egyptian capitalist economy.

The Egyptian foreign debt has grown steadily. At the beginning of this year, it reached 25,000 million dollars. At the same time, the outlook for the country's balance of payments, which has been hard hit by the sharp drop in oil prices — both because Egypt exports oil and because there has been less money coming back into the country from Egyptian workers working in the Arab oil producing countries — and because of a sharp drop also in revenues from tourism, will only be further aggravated by the mutiny. And this is to say nothing of the effect the rebellion can have in promoting capital flight and in dissuading potential investors.

All in all, the imperialists' Egyptian protege is in a very tight corner. The living standard of the Egyptian masses is continuing to nose dive. The "propensity to rebel," to use the jargon of the bourgeois economists, is steadily increasing.

The worst thing for the Egyptian bourgeoisie is that it is not only the workers in overalls who are rebelling, as the workers in the textile industry did just recently (more than 200 of them were arrested). The revolt has spread to the workers in uniform, the draftees.

The rumor that the length of service of draftees was going to be extended by a year was only the spark that ignited the potential for explosion that had been building up for a long time among these children

of the Egyptian people, who were reduced to a modern form of slavery and forced to repress their brothers and sisters, forced to repress the very sections of the population that they would join at the end of their service — the workers and the unemployed.

To suppress the mutineers and those who joined them, the regime resorted this time to using the army, including tanks and helicopters. Full-scale battles took place, with their inevitable toll of dead and wounded.

Nonetheless, the casualties were less than in certain mass outbursts in other parts of the world. Paradoxically, that is the result of the fact that this time the rebels were themselves soldiers, themselves armed.

There could be no doubt about the final outcome of the battle. The army had the advantage in numbers and armament. But — and this is the Achilles' heel of the Egyptian bourgeois state — the army itself is also a conscript army.

The army itself has already experienced mutinies. The soldiers are as discontented as their comrades who are enrolled in the police. They come from the same social classes, and along with them and the rest of *Anwar Sadat and Mubarak, 1977* (DR)



the Egyptian people they share the powerful feeling of national frustration that has been growing steadily in response to the insults inflicted on Egypt by the United States and Israel.

Recently this feeling was expressed in a distorted way by the mobilization touched off by the trial of the "mad policeman" of the Sinai and his subsequent "suicide." For a broad mass current, Suleiman Khater, the "suicide," a comrade of the mutinied policemen, has become a martyr, because in the eyes of many Egyptians he was defending the "national honor" when he fired on Israeli tourists in the Sinai.

This state of affairs has not gone unnoticed by the Israeli leaders, who rushed to proclaim loudly their solidarity with Mubarak. In the last analysis, the Egyptian mutiny confirms the irreplaceable role of the Zionist state for the defense of the imperialist bourgeois order in the region.

In the Middle East today, the Zionist army is the only one that is in no danger — in its present condition — of being torn apart from within. In fact, it represents the redoubt of the Egyptian bourgeoisie!

I said before that the attitude toward Suleiman Khater was a distorted expression of Egyptian national feeling. Unfortunately this "distortion" is steadily gaining ground in the Egyptian mass movement.

In fact, in the mass movement the Islamic fundamentalist current stands out today more and more as the faction most radically opposing the regime, Israel and the West, and this is true notably in the armed forces.

From the soldier who killed Sadat to the "mad policeman" of the Sinai, it is Islamic fundamentalism that is emerging as the champion of the national cause, in the absence of a revolutionary left with any weight whatever.

As for the legal opposition, including the left opposition, the Progressive Unionists of Mohieddin, once again it displayed a craven attitude. In a meeting with Mubarak on February 27, it signed a common statement denouncing the "disorder"!

In order to stay on the regime's good side, the reformists are leaving an open field to the Islamic current to channel the rebellion of the masses in a country which, moreover, does not have an autonomous organized workers' movement.

The contradiction between the ripeness of the objective conditions for revolution and the lag of subjective conditions has reached an extreme in Egypt. That makes the tasks of the Egyptian revolutionary Marxists all the more considerable. □

Washington's plans

THE REVOLUTIONARY upsurge was not ended by the flight of "Baby Doc" Duvalier. It is continuing to threaten more and more the props of bourgeois order. The most spectacular example recently is the mass mobilizations on the day of the restoration of the national colors (Duvalier changed the colors of the Haitian flag), during which a crowd prevented the new authorities from sending the former chief of the political police, Luc Desyr, safely out of the country.

According to the February 27 issue of the Paris daily *Liberation*, the crowds on the day of the return of the colors chanted "Duvalier is still there," and "Cineas — Macoute." Alix Cineas is a member of the new ruling junta. On February 26, the Banque National de Credit, went on strike demanding the removal of the management linked to Duvalier.

The following article written by a representative of the Paris organization for solidarity with Grenada, was recently published in a magazine of the solidarity movement. The second article has just been received from inside Haiti. It has been somewhat shortened.

JULIEN LARIVIERE

Jean-Claude Duvalier and Somoza once told each other that they were "inspired by the ideals of solidarity coming from a common destiny." So far this prophesy has been borne out to the letter. But the United States is going to do its utmost to assure that Haiti does not follow the road of Nicaragua.

Contrary to what a lot of the press has suggested, the United States no more put an end to Duvalier's reign than it did to that of Somoza. Maybe the pressures brought to bear by Washington gave a final tip to the scales, but the dictator's position had become untenable in any case.

The whole society, including the bourgeoisie, had rejected him. In particular, the movement of the poor masses had taken to the streets and had been growing steadily for two months. Repression had fanned and spread the flames of the revolt.

The regime still had the capacity to mount a campaign of massacres and could have held on in that way for some time. But it knew that in the long run, the game was lost. The mobilizations that were being built for the carnival time threatened to prove fatal for it. And involving the army in a fierce repression could discredit it in the eyes of the people who had been shouting, "Long live the army" up till then. Baby Doc

could still slip discreetly out the back door, which is the solution he chose, after taking the precautions of emptying the state coffers and turning power over to a junta.

Fearing the worst (it had already prepared its troops to intervene in order to restore order), Washington could only encourage Duvalier on his way.

Will the United States now succeed in imposing its plan on Haiti and making the country into a colony patterned after Puerto Rico?

As regards the economy, the United States has not concealed its intentions. They have been described in several documents submitted to congress. In outline, the plan has two main aspects:

— To reduce the land devoted to food crops by 30 per cent in order to expand export crops. This involves breaking down the traditional structures in the production and trading of food products, which are to a considerable extent controlled by the peasants (unlike, for example, the coffee industry, which is dominated by the exporters and big merchants).

— A part of the peasants driven off the lands they cultivated, by debt, poverty, or force, will go to work on road construction. They will then get not wages but food rations drawn

from US surpluses. Another part will go to swell the shantytowns and try to get jobs in the industrial zones, where already some 200 assembly businesses employ 60,000 workers, mainly women, for pittance wages.

On the political level, the US plan is to establish a strong regime subordinate to it but endowed with a democratic facade. Washington will pay special attention to the Haitian army, many of whose elements have already been trained by the United States. Some of the Tontons Macoutes will be integrated into the army (the process has already begun). Other elements can be used, if necessary, to form secret paramilitary gangs to "disappear" activists who cause too much "trouble."

For a long time, the US embassy has had a network of informers extending throughout the country. It is based on the ministers of certain Protestant sects which were established in the country during the US occupation that lasted from 1915 to 1934. The CIA is no doubt going to perfect its intelligence network and focus on the left organizations that are still working underground.

The concerns of the US embassy seemed to be reflected in a dispatch published in the February 13 *International Herald Tribune*:

"Diplomats here say they do not know who organized and led the street revolts of the past few months or who is issuing the unsigned communiques now spreading rapidly around the country.

"However, the diplomats note that the documents are well-written and suggest there may be a real organization or leadership behind what appeared to start as spontaneous street protests."

The junta has announced that unions are going to be allowed to form. It is a sure thing that agents of the American Institute for Free Labor Development, the CIA's cover organization in the union field, already have their tickets for Port-au-Prince.

In Haiti, militant unions grew up after 1946 before being crushed by Francois Duvalier. Rebuilding them is one of the tasks of the period opening now. We might ask if unions in countries that have considerable investments in Haiti, as is true of France, could not play an important role in helping their Haitian coworkers to organize themselves freely.

More generally, opposing the interference of foreign powers, above all the United States, in the affairs of the Haitian people must now be a concern of the entire movement for solidarity with the peoples of Central America and the Caribbean. □

Statement of the Fourth International

THE FOURTH International hails the courageous people of Haiti, who, through their mobilizations over the last months of 1985 and the first months of 1986, brought down the hated dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier and its gang of murderers, the Tontons Macoutes.

The toppling of this US-backed dictatorship — the second oldest in the Americas — opens for the first time in many decades the opportunity to organize open political and trade-union activity by the oppressed and exploited working people of Haiti.

The new military-civilian junta in Haiti, largely handpicked by Duvalier from among his cronies just hours before his flight, is now trying to deprive the Haitian people of this hard-won opening for democratic political organization and activity. We stand beside the Haitian workers and peasants in their demands that the torturers and murderers of the Duvalier tyranny be brought to justice and punished; that all the prisoners be released; that all political exiles be allowed to return to Haiti immediately; and that an end be put to all police and army attacks on popular demonstrations and meetings.

The massive US military presence in the Caribbean looms as a danger to the gains that the Haitian people have conquered and are now fighting to consolidate and extend.

We demand:

No US Military intervention in Haiti!

No imperialist pressure on Haiti!

Imperialist forces out of Haiti!

March 1, 1986

A view from inside

"The negotiations to arrive at a political formula acceptable for the majority of the democratic forces will no doubt be difficult. Nonetheless, they should be successful. And the United States, as indicated by the January events, seem to favor such an outcome." This is what Serge Gilles wrote in a well-documented article in the last issue of *le Monde Diplomatique* (February 1986, p. 10.)

Unfortunately, the United States is in fact hostile to any genuinely democratic solution in Haiti. To the contrary, it is for maintaining the social and economic system that it consolidated through 19 years of military occupation (1915-34) and 29 years of the Duvalier regime (1957-1986). The military junta with which it replaced Jean-Claude Duvalier does not in any way represent "an acceptable formula for the majority of the democratic forces."

The new junta members were all high up in the Duvalier regime and up to their necks in crime, with the exception of one stray — Gerard Gourgue. To give just one example of the new crimes already committed by the government of General Namphy, in the week after he took

power, according to Radio Soleil, the Catholic Church station, more than 200 persons were murdered in the small city of Cayes alone. [This report is unconfirmed. Following Duvalier's flight, the situation has been marked by continuing clashes and disturbing rumors. There are other reports of the army opening fire, but the casualties are unknown.]

The Country is still under strict surveillance by the army trained by Washington to track down and eliminate supporters of democracy. The "Leopards," an elite unit originally recruited among the Tonton Macoutes, have disarmed the latter. Better disciplined and armed than the Macoutes and with officers trained in the United States they can be a far more useful police repressive force because it will be a more selective and orderly one.

The 25 demands made public in Gonaives and given massive support throughout the country take account of the immediate and minimum demands for a "de-Macoutization." But the solution that the United States and those who live in its shadow are trying to impose is nothing but "Duvalierism without Duvalier." This term is already becoming popular

in the demonstrations against this government.

Now that the first few days of joy have passed, it has to be recognized that the Duvalier regime was only one of the problems we have faced in the history of our country. Cleaning out the Augean stables for a few weeks will not end the evils that are caused not specifically by the Duvaliers but by a colonial and imperialist legacy.

The basis of the savage repression exercised for so long against our people has other roots. It is the need that a class of parasites has to maintain an outdated social order. Only a radical change in this order could guarantee democracy.

Such a radical change would have to involve the following points as a minimum:

- giving the land to those who work it, not just to limit hunger but also to save the soil from erosion (1);

- nationalizing the import-export trade, which has been robbing the peasants of an important part of their labor;

- expropriating the big industrial, commercial and financial companies that are transferring the fruits of the labor of Haitians to the multinationals (in particular in the so-called export assembly industries) or to the foreign bank accounts of the Haitian bourgeoisie. And there are, of course, many other tasks before us in education, revival of the national culture, health, housing, and so forth that have never been taken up by any government that has ruled in this country.

Obviously, only a government coming out of the mass struggles underway would be prepared to set about making such a change.

The drama in the coming months and perhaps years is that the establishment of such a new economic and social order is exactly what the United States wants to avert at all costs. Our road to democracy is still being blocked by an enormous obstacle — the United States. The time, however, may not be too long before we have the lever for tipping this obstacle over a cliff, the massive mobilization of the cities and countryside leading to an armed insurrection, not against the symbols of the social system but against the social system itself. The time is perhaps not too far off when we will have the underpinning necessary for this lever, the revolt of enough peoples to disperse the forces of foreign aggression. □

1. The peasants poverty has forced them back on gathered food to meet all their energy needs. The result has been that in the last 30 years, about half the forests have been destroyed, leading to disastrous soil erosion. — IV.

The agony of the 'left' government

THE MARCH 16 parliamentary elections will be a major watershed, since the "left" government that came to power in May 1981 has become largely discredited, and a tough right is in position to regain power.

Facing a crucial political test, the major workers' parties are continuing policies that have paved the way for a disastrous setback for the French working people in the March 16 parliamentary elections. And most of the far left groups have not shown any capacity to rise to the challenge of offering an alternative to the large numbers of working people disillusioned by a "left" government applying a capitalist austerity policy.

Five years ago, the defeat of the right was greeted by jubilant crowds, almost like a liberation. Today the parties that won in 1981 seem headed for defeat in the midst of resignation, cynicism and passivity on the part of working people and aggressiveness and a new radicalism on the part of the right.

The Communist Party, which hoped to escape from its traditional ghetto by its alliance with the social democrats and a role in government, finds itself confined to a smaller space than ever. Its supreme ambition seems to be not to fall below 10 per cent of the vote, about half its traditional share, in particular not to fall below the vote of the ultra-rightist, fascist-like National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen, which might get about 10 per cent. To try to hold its vote the CP has fallen back on its old methods of bluff and sectarianism.

The Socialist Party's supreme ambition, on the other hand, seems to be just to get a big enough vote to force the bourgeois parties to bargain with it.

"In fact all the big parties are only concerned about the post-1986 period," Alain Krivine wrote in *Rouge*, No. 1189, the paper of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR — French section of the Fourth International).

"The only debates that interest the Socialist Party leadership are 'cohabitation' (the coexistence of a right-wing parliamentary majority and a socialist president), participation in

government or opposition.

"The SP's only goal is to lose as few votes as possible so as to remain a power in the country that cannot be gotten around. The ambitions of the CP are even more modest. What its chairperson, Georges Marchais, wants to do is stop the decline in votes and membership and sweep its record in the government under the table."

Krivine continued: "We are being presented with a choice between a

continuation of the austerity policy with a left government or a stepped-up austerity policy under a government of the right. The LCR wants to offer the workers another choice — to reject such austerity policy in general, no matter whether by a left or right government.

"On this basis, we have appealed to all forces that claim to stand to the left of the official left. We have proposed to them to unite our forces in order to lay the basis for building a broad anticapitalist current, which would respect the specific features of each of its components but discuss and fight together.

"In making this proposal, we took into account the confusion that prevails today in the French workers' movement. But we also took into account the desire of thousands of organized and unorganized working people for an alternative to the threats of the right and the ultra-right and the official left's politics of capitulation."

The following article explains more fully the LCR's proposals for an alternative in the March elections and beyond and the sort of campaign it is waging. □

What alternative for working people?

FRANCIS SITEL

At its Sixth Congress, the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR, French section of the Fourth International) decided to make a unity proposal to organizations, currents, activists and working people posing the problem of developing an alternative to the class-collaborationist policy of the Socialist and Communist parties.

In order to lend added weight to this initiative, the LCR made public its congress discussions, in the conviction that they would be of interest to many other forces. The LCR also wanted the "Rally against austerity, against a capitalist Europe," which it organized in May 1984 in Le Bourget [just outside Paris], to be open to all the organizations desiring to discuss the issues facing us.

This approach was subsequently further concretized in the appeals for "assembling a united anticapitalist force."

What were the bases of this initiative?

First of all, there was the assessment that while the situation is still unfavourable, it is at least generating a recomposition in the workers' movement. The crisis in the workers' movement has not yet provoked more than a limited fight-back, mobilizations in particular remaining weak. So, what the LCR should do is not fall back on itself but confront this crisis, involve itself in the processes that are underway and try to offer a perspective.

The real objectives of this exercise, therefore, are to make links with Communist and Socialist party activists disoriented by the crises of their leaderships, with trade unionists who reject class collaboration and with far-left activists who have drawn the balance sheet of their past orientations and are determined not to fall back into passivity. More than this, our goal is to build links with all those who are drawing the lessons of the present experience and are seeking ways to continue the struggle.

LCR activists are finding and working with such potential fellow fighters every day in the unions, in the mass movement — for example, in the women's movement and the anti-racist movement — and in mobilizations, such as those in support of the Kanak people's struggle.

The difficulties we face in giving a general political expression to all these convergences are related to the general climate of disorientation and especially to the lack of big mobilizations around the basic social questions. Only mobilizations on such issues could bring to a head the present crisis in the workers' movement and pose the question "on a grand scale" of a political and organizational alternative.

However, since it is not enough just to wait for this to happen and it being necessary to act today to prepare the way for the future, the LCR has tried to pinpoint what concrete proposals could be made to facilitate the unity and the re-composition of the forces to the left of the reformist left. It was necessary to look for practical tests to clarify what is possible.

Therefore, long before the elections came to dominate the horizon, the LCR was striving to promote the formation of united collectives in the cities, directed toward grouping together activists and working people who wanted to discuss and work together. These collectives were to be focuses for debating the lessons to be drawn from the experience of the reformist left in government and the perspectives to be put forward. They were to be centers for action and the main issues of the day — the fight against austerity and unemployment, the struggle against racism, international solidarity, the defense of anticapitalist policies. About 60 collectives exist.

For the March 1986 elections, the LCR proposed the formation of a broad electoral coalition, extending from the LCR and Lutte Ouvrière (LO, a group that identifies with Trotskyism and focusses on rank-and-file work in the factories) to the environmentalists, to campaign on some key issues — opposition to the return of the right to power, opposition to the class-collaborationist and austerity policy of the Socialist and Communist parties, support for demands that fit into a perspective of breaking with capitalism.

Such a coalition, if it had been possible to put it together, would have offered a real alternative to the workers repelled by the policy of the Communist and Socialist parties. But this, unfortunately, could not be done.

In the first place, the united col-

lectives that existed were not a strong enough grassroots base for mobilizing forces to put over such a perspective. Second, as regards the far-left or environmentalist groups with a national presence, sectarianism, narrowness, specific problems of certain organizations, and real political differences blocked the sort of convergence that would have made it possible to present a united front in these elections.

For example, the Green party, which hopes to polarize the environmentalist vote, ruled out any alliance with the far-left organizations. This disoriented organizations such as the Fédération pour une Gauche Alternative (FGA — Fédération for a Left Alternative), the Parti pour une Alternative Communiste (PAC, the former Communist Party — Marxist Leninist), and the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU), which were anxious to get a "Convergence for a Green Alternative." Thus, it kept them from entering into a dialogue on the national level with the LCR.

Moreover, LO [which has been a close ally of the LCR] not only refused to join in this fight for unity with the LCR but used its disagreements with this initiative as a pretext for rejecting an electoral accord with the LCR. Such an agreement was possible, and in fact had been reached in many preceding elections.

As for the International Communist Party (PCI, the Lambert current, which also identifies with Trotskyism), it engaged in a project of its own, launching the Movement for a Workers Party (MPPT). It showed no interest whatever in any move to unite forces. It continued to make sacrifices to its household gods of sectarianism and manipulation.

In March 1986, the far left, therefore, is going to offer a lamentable spectacle of greater than ever division, which will be totally incomprehensible for the great majority of workers. When the workers are drawing the balance sheet of the failure of the left government, they are going to have

to sort out appeals for votes from competing slates put up by LO, the LCR, the MPPT, the Greens or various "alternative" slates.

Such a situation cannot be explained only by the sectarianism or irresponsibility of various forces. It is the result of a general crisis of orientation which has not — far from it — spared the far left. This is why it was essential to put forward a clear policy that could offer perspectives for overcoming this disorientation. And this could in no way be done in a sectarian way. It was necessary to demonstrate a desire for unity, which was the only thing that would convince activists and workers plagued by discouragement that it was possible to fight and to get out of the present ruts.

This is what the LCR has done and what it will continue to do throughout the election campaign.

The LCR is campaigning in around 40 departments [out of around 100, including those overseas], with more than 23 million voters. Despite everything the campaign has borne fruit. In around half of these departments, the LCR is running on united slates or slates put up by local collectives, or on the basis of accords with other organizations (such as the Union Démocratique Bretonne, a Breton nationalist group; the PSU; the FGA; the PAC and some local environmentalist groups). It is also running a common slate with LO in the Maine-et-Loire department.

Moreover, the LCR is running 20 slates in the most important departments where it has not been possible to form united slates. This will give the organization a national presence in these elections. (The LCR slates for the legislative elections are made up 50 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women. The average age of the candidates is 34. The overwhelming majority of them are wage workers in industry, the public services and commerce. Four of the slates are in the Paris region and 16 are in the provinces.)

Thus, the LCR is putting up a fight on a considerable scale. □



"Another voice for March 1986"

"The right means the end" — see Red

Mitterrand as defender of the empire

THE SENDING of yet another French expeditionary force to Chad has become closely intertwined with the campaign for the March 16 parliamentary elections. On the one hand, it points up the fact that the "left" government has continued to pursue France's traditional imperialist policies. On the other, it has been interpreted as a show of force to reassure the right that the socialist government can be as "tough" as a right-wing one. The following articles indicate the response of the French section of the Fourth International to this new imperialist adventure and the way that it has linked the issue to its own campaign for the parliamentary elections on March 16. They are from the February 10 issue of *Rouge*, the paper of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR).

CLAUDE GABRIEL

For the fourth time since 1968, the French army has intervened in a conflict that has been going on for 26 years, ever since Chad became independent. Over this period the configuration of forces locked in combat has shifted as factions broke up or made alliances according to the circumstances. France has also shifted its support around. It has allied itself with various forces. But one thing is certain: over a quarter of a century, the French have remained constantly involved in Chad.

In this respect, French president Francois Mitterrand's policy is similar in all points to those of his predecessors. It is all fancy footwork and interference in Chad. In 1981, the Socialists supported the Transitional Government of National Unity [GUNT] and Goukouni Oueddei. They went over to Hissene Habre when he overthrew Goukouni on June 7, 1982. Then in August 1983, in response to an appeal from Habre, the French army intervened against the GUNT, which was fighting in the northern part of the country.

This intervention, Operation Manta, led finally to the partition of the country. To the north of the famous red line, which roughly follows the 15th parallel, was desert, palm groves, and the domain of the GUNT and its Libyan allies. To the south lay the "useful part" of Chad, the cotton-growing area, which was occupied by the French army.

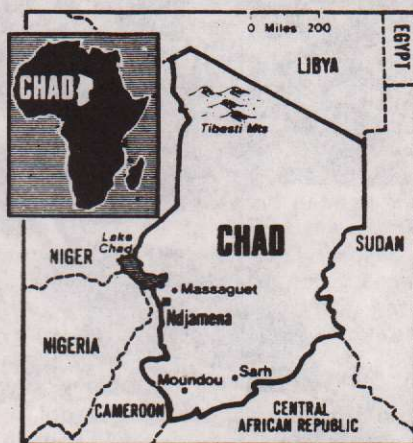
The year 1984 was marked by the Mitterrand-Qadhafi meeting. An

agreement for withdrawal by both sides was concluded. The French expeditionary force retreated over the southern border of the country to the Bangui base in the Central African Republic. For a moment the guns were still.

The new French operation that has just been launched seems to be connected to renewed fighting initiated by the GUNT, aided by the Qadhafi regime.

Does this mean that it was "green imperialism" (1), the Libyan danger, that prompted this action by Paris? France certainly does not want to see "the Guide" [Qadhafi] operating in its former colonial possessions. Above all, the government has to reassure its allies, such as Zaire, Senegal, and the Ivory Coast. But that is not the fundamental reason for the French interventions.

First of all, it must be said that



between the military blitzkriegs conducted by Mitterrand, as well as by Giscard and de Gaulle before him, France has never stopped being involved in Chad. From 1961 to 1965, the French army directly administered the northern provinces, while the southern ones were "governed" by the dictator Tombalbaye, who was kept in his presidential chair by Paris.

Ever since, France has never stopped playing a behind-the-scenes role in the various regimes. It remained enmeshed in the country's economic machinery, and it has kept on training the official Chadian army.

Thus, for 25 years, French imperialism has been holding up a semblance of a Chadian state apparatus. In its present juridical form, this state is an arbitrary construction. It provides a legal framework for controlling a vast buffer zone between Central Africa, West Africa, and North Africa. It is a totally different thing from a national state developing out of the history of the peoples living in the territory themselves.

Between the Northern and Southern regions, and in many cases within these regions themselves, the economic and cultural disparities are immense. The colonialists were never able to unify these lands.

If France persists in maintaining a centralizing state in this country, it is so as to avoid putting in question the legality of the neo-colonial institutions, as well as the borders established under colonial rule.

Recognizing the illegitimacy of the central government in Chad would imply recognizing the illegitimacy of all the other corrupt and repressive regimes that maintain themselves only by their capacity to centralize states by force. French imperialism cannot take such a risk.

The contending factions

At the same time, this hope, which is as vain as it is reactionary, that a centralizing state can be established, has brought about the imbroglio in Chad and continues to aggravate it.

The successive regimes have all proved incapable of unifying the territory. The three major military expeditions carried out up until now have all left behind a still greater fragmentation of the contending factions. Far from sticking the pieces

1. Green is the color of Islam, of which Qadhafi claims to be a paladin. The "Green Book," a list of quotations from Qadhafi, is the Tripoli regime's equivalent of Mao's "Little Red Book."

LCR election appeal

ALL THAT WAS needed to get the politicians to break off their squabbling, it seems, was the roar of French Jaguars in the sky over Chad. No one expected the Socialist Party to disavow the military intervention. Long ago, it traded in its principles for a servile adaption to the president's policy. Substantial criticisms could not have been expected from the right. Did it not, in its time, engage in the same interference in the affairs of the African peoples?

The most remarkable thing, no doubt, is that this climate of unity extended to the Communist Party, which has refused to condemn the bombing of Ouadi-Doum [Libyan-built airfield in northern Chad]. It is true that there was no way that it could decorously oppose a decision very similar to Operation Manta, which it approved in August 1983 when it was in the government.

What difference does it make to these actors in the parliamentary shadow play that this new colonial expedition is costing tens of millions of francs, while a lot of unemployed people are left without resources? What does it matter to them that the French paratroopers are going to the rescue of a regime infamous for its cruelty to civilian populations? For them, only one thing is important — to make sure that the world's third greatest military power is not given a comeuppance by the small Libyan state.

It is unacceptable for the right of the peoples to self-determination to be trampled under foot in this way. It is unacceptable for the army to get all the credits it demands while the workers are being hit by a brutal austerity.

The fight for justice and freedom is indivisible. A genuine left policy must oppose the imperialism that keeps in its yoke the peoples of the Overseas Territories [the TOM-DOM] and maintains a private preserve on the African continent.

In this election campaign, the LCR [Ligue communiste revolutionnaire — French section of the Fourth International] candidates and the slates that it supports have been almost alone in proclaiming these principles. This is another reason to vote for them on March 16. That is one way to make your vote count.

back together, French policy has always reinforced the centrifugal forces.

Up to 15 politico-military factions have clashed or regrouped at times in temporary alliances. Most of them have come out of the breakup of the old southern regime or the crisis of FROLINAT (Front de liberation nationale du Tchad — Chad National Liberation Front), which was built

French troops arriving in Massakory, north of N'djemena, 1983 (DR)

in the North between 1966 and 1972. Another example is that Goukouni and Habre found themselves side by side in government in 1979-1980, before going separate ways.

The fact that the Habre government, which has been in power now since 1982, has acquired a certain stability (to be sure, a very relative one) has been conducive to a series of realignments. Recently, several

elements of southern factions and even a number of cadres of the GUNT have gone over to the regime, probably helped along by the French secret services.

In fact, it may be to stop this internal crisis that the GUNT has resumed hostilities in the North. But it is still too early to accept such an explanation.

Throughout this entire affair, Libya's policy toward Chad has had little to do with the anti-imperialism proclaimed by Qadhafi. In this region, the colonel's regime has conducted a murky policy, marked by abrupt turns and provocations.

Tripoli's twists and turns correspond to the needs of the Libyan state, which, to achieve its aims, uses the same methods as those it claims to be fighting — manipulation, cynicism and violence against populations.

None of the existing camps cares about the masses. While it is true that a section of the population is living off this interminable crisis, lining up behind one group or another in the name of ethnic interests, the great majority are simply enduring the war.

The economic and social situation in Chad is catastrophic. Chronic underemployment, one of the highest rates of infant mortality, only two doctors per 100,000 inhabitants — these are only a few of a long list of symptoms of poverty. But, of course, no one has bothered to take these into account. □



Women's double workshift: changing patterns in women's employment

IS IT NORMAL for women to work? In reality, of course, women have always worked — cooking, cleaning, looking after the house, the children; once it was home-canning, now it's the supermarket; we could go on and on. But there is work — and work. There is paid work and unpaid work. There are hidden domestic tasks and "noble" occupations.

The question is, is the woman at the kitchen sink a thing of the past? Of course the industrial revolution brought about a fantastic change in women's lives; it threw them out onto the job market. For more than a century, they have been shoved in and out of the market according to the economic situation and the ruling classes' needs. Today they are there to stay: this is historical fact, there is no getting around it. But what work are they doing? And for what price? And above all, what are they doing besides? Have women really taken away "men's jobs"? Does going out to work really mean equality?

The following article tries to take account of developments in Europe in the last ten or 20 years, according to the figures available and to assess the real situation of women as workers and as wives and mothers in the home.

JACQUELINE HEINEN

The current economic crisis has hit hardest at the most vulnerable sections of the working class: women, young people and immigrants, and within that, young women and immigrant women suffer particularly.

Inside each social group women are the first hit because of the contradictions in their situation, torn between work outside the home and the roles of wife and mother. Of course, more and more women are economically active, but at the same time they are expected to carry on with all the domestic tasks and look after the children.

The bourgeoisie's drive to increase profits at the moment goes hand in hand with a policy of austerity which hits hardest at those who are least able to resist because of their place in the job market and because of the reluctance, not to say refusal, of the workers' movement to defend their specific interests. The bosses understand very well that, in order to carry out their goal of dismantling the main gains of the working class since the Second World War, they must first

take on those sections which will be accorded the least support. They have already had some success in this regard, with the introduction of "flexible" worktime and part-time work as well as with the first victories in challenging the social gains. Cutbacks in areas such as nurseries and school canteens have hit women particularly hard since they are both the users and the workers in such areas.

Rebuilding the reserve army

The attempts of the bourgeoisie to trap women in the ghetto of unsteady employment (and perhaps the dream of some to rebuild the reserve army of labour traditionally provided by women, who with broom in hand, wait to be called out to work) have come up against a few obstacles, starting with the structure of the jobs market itself.

Job segregation in industrial production means that there are certain

branches which are "female", some of which are undergoing recession (textiles, footwear, clothing) and some of which are expanding (electronics). In both cases the bosses' profits depend on a largely female workforce, occupying jobs (often on a production line) which men do not want. In the service sector where there has been a net increase in jobs in the last ten years, it is above all, female jobs which have increased. Depending on the country, between 60% and 85% of female labour is employed in both the public and private sectors of the services industry.

Some branches of public sector services (health, education, social services, administration) are completely dominated by women. And, more generally as well, certain jobs (secretaries, accounts clerks, waitresses) are overwhelmingly held by women, and here again men are not queuing up to take their place.

The bourgeoisie's project is not, therefore, to send women back to the home, as was the case immediately following the First and Second World Wars. It has no interest in so doing and it would be materially impossible. What the bourgeoisie wants is to restrict women to unsteady employment in order to undermine their capacity to resist. It wants them to internalise the idea that they are not really workers, when in fact women's work is essential to the economy. The figures are there to show the massive changes — and also the opposition to change — which have affected women's role in the family and in society as a whole. (1) They vary from one country to another, but it is noticeable that they all demonstrate the same basic tendency.

Getting out of the house

In capitalist countries, since the 1950s, the proportion of women in the workforce as a whole has continued to increase. It has now reached about 40% in most countries in Europe, exceeding 45% in the northern part (Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway). Even where these figures are substantially lower, as in the Netherlands and Italy, the tendency to increase is still very much in evidence. In most industrialised

1. For statistical analysis see especially: L. Paukert, 'L'emploi et le chômage des femmes dans les pays d'OCED'; 'L'intégration des femmes dans l'économie', ed. OECD; 'Emploi et chômage', EURO-STAT, Luxembourg; N. Corvi and MM Salort, 'Les femmes et le marché de travail', Hatier, Paris, 1985; 'Frauen in der BRD', ed. VSA, Hamburg, 1983; 'Working women and the labour market', ed. RKP, London, 1982; 'Women, recession and the Tories', Jean Gardiner, ed.

countries at least half the female population do go out to work and, where part-time work is highly developed, more than 75% of women are economically active (the average among men is between 80% and 85% in Europe). It is important to note that it is above all the massive entry of married women and mothers onto the job market which has changed the curve of economic activity of the female workforce so dramatically in the last two decades. On average about 60% of married women in Europe are economically active (about twice the number as in the 1950s), and this proportion goes beyond 70% in countries like Belgium. In Sweden more than 80% of mothers with children under seven years old were in waged work in 1985. Most of these studies are based on statistics which show that, in the very near future, one worker in two will be a woman.

This increase in women's economic activity is accompanied by changes in their professional outlook. In the past, the maximum rate of economic activity was to be found amongst very young women and women over 45 years old, with a clear decrease among those of child-bearing age, whereas nowadays the curve of activity increases in a linear way and resembles more and more that of men.

This development goes hand in hand with the drop in the fertility rate which is alarming so many bourgeois observers. The era of the large family has certainly passed. Throughout Europe a one- or two-child family is the dominant form. The most striking example is in the Spanish state where the rate of activity of women has increased even if it is still lower than other countries (31% of the active population in 1985) and where the fertility rate went from 2.77 children per woman in 1977 to 1.7 in 1984.

In the field of education women's position has been greatly strengthened and girls are now more numerous than boys in the first and second years in secondary school. Women represent more than half the new students going to university.

For every unemployed man there are one and a half unemployed women

If we want to take account of the real situation of women workers, all of these statistics must be modified in some way. For example, under the impact of the economic crisis, female unemployment has increased at a much faster rate than that of men in most cases. In most European countries the proportion of women



out of work is more than 20% of all the economically active (and not far off 30% in the Spanish state). This figure is at times more than twice the rate for men, as is the case in Austria or Portugal. To this has to be added the fact that the official figures do not give the exact number of workers looking for work, because after a certain time many give up looking, stop "signing on" the register and disappear from the statistics. This is particularly the case with women who are more pressurised to go back into the family and take up domestic tasks. In Great Britain it is estimated that 28% of all unemployed women and 43% of all those who are married do not register at employment offices (compared to only 11% of men). There is, of course, a direct relationship between this attitude and the duration of unemployment — which is always on the increase and is much larger among women than among men. In Belgium it is nearly twice as long and women between the ages of 26 and 36 suffer an average of 41 months without work as against 24 for men of the same age. That is three and a half years on average of living from day to day,

waiting and looking.

Among mothers and single mothers in particular these difficulties are aggravated by reduced mobility, since women are more reluctant to accept a job away from home because of problems of childcare. The idea of moving to another town is, according to a survey conducted in France, an option which is only open to men; women just follow their husbands. (2)

As for the perspectives for the future, they are not exactly rosy! In the female-dominated branches of industry, great as the number of redundancies are now, the generalised introduction of computerisation in the service sector will eventually bring redundancies as well. It is true though, that the predictions in this regard have yet to be confirmed. (3) Increased productivity resulting from the introduction of new technology has

2. D. Kergoat, 'Les femmes et le travail et temps partiel,' ed. de la Documentation Française, Paris, 1984. See also A.-M. Daune-Richard, 'Travail professionnel et travail domestique,' ed. CEFUP, Paris, 1984.

3. S. Nora and A. Minc, 'L'information de la société,' ed. de la Documentation Française, Paris, 1978.

often allowed the company concerned to offer new services occasioned by new needs. But the depth and the durability of the crisis puts an objective limit on the opening up of new areas and the creation of new jobs. Moreover, because the cost of office computers has dropped radically in the last few years, they are becoming more available even in small firms (of one to five employees) where a majority of women work as typists, cashiers, etc. and are the first to go as a result of computerisation. One British study estimates that the introduction of microelectronics will involve the suppression of 17% of secretaries' posts between now and 1990.

Half time means half wages

The second major factor which has to be taken into account in order to appreciate the real value of women's economic activity, is the increase in part-time work which affects half of the new jobs created in the last ten years and half the women at work in most countries. The word itself is almost in essence female: part-time workers are women in more than 80% of cases (and in 95% of cases in Denmark and West Germany). The implications of this are: less skilled work, in general excluding any responsibility; a decrease in entitlement to benefits; fixed contracts; irregular hours like those of shop assistants who work a morning and twilight shift; and above all, wages reduced to a quarter, a third or a half. The bosses know what they are doing: within one branch or one firm hourly rates for the same work are nearly always lower for part-time workers. Most surveys show that, contrary to what happened in the 1970s, when a large majority of women stated that they had chosen to work these hours, the majority of them now say that they accept them in the absence of anything better.

Conclusion: the apparent increase in the female rate of economic activity is much less spectacular than it seems at first glance and a long way from achieving economic independence for women.

The statistics show that female wages are 20% to 35% lower than men's, despite the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention No. 100 which was adopted by most countries and never adhered to. Despite, also, specific legislation like the Equal Pay Act in Great Britain in 1971 or the law on equal wages passed in Italy in 1977.

But, as everyone knows, all

statistics have to be handled with great care. Because in fact here we are talking about the hourly wage rate and not about the overall wage. Leaving aside the obvious effect of part-time work on the monthly salary, it has to be stressed that, even for women who are working full time, the gap between the official statistics and the reality is widening all the time if you take account of the fact that women work less hours (that is less overtime and with more absences because of family responsibility) and that they earn less in bonuses etc.

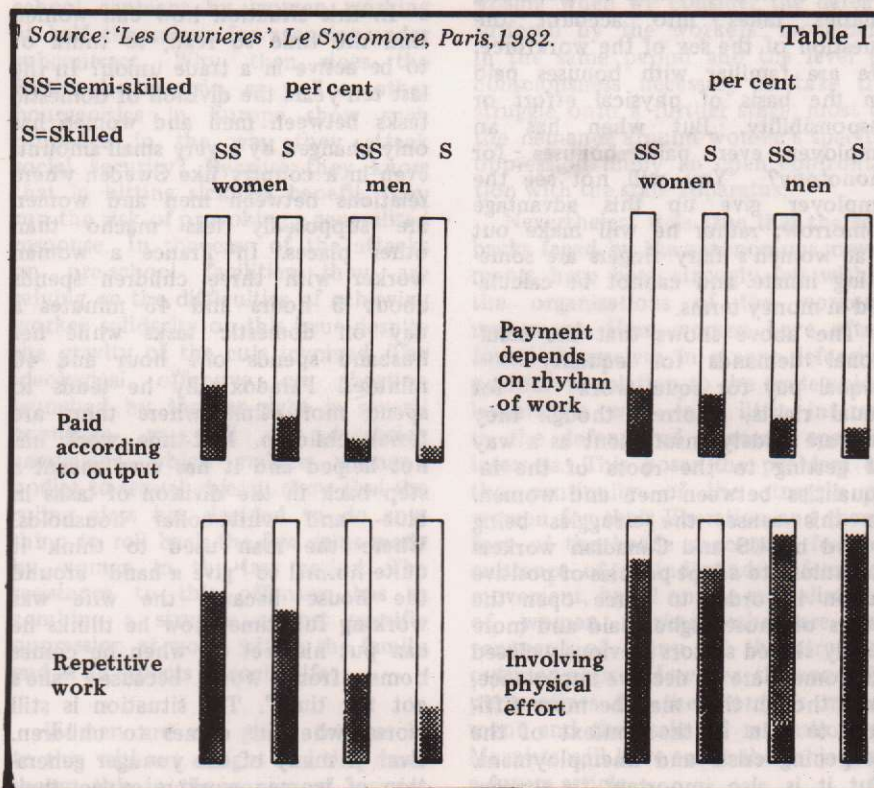
When all these handicaps are added together it is hardly surprising if, among the five million people living on the poverty line in West Germany for example, the vast majority are women. Immigrant women are impoverished and older women without any reserves are forced to live on social security; but there are also young women workers without a job, mothers of young children, who get nothing. A common factor behind these various aspects of the unequal status of women workers is job segregation.

It is a fact: in the vast majority of cases, women do not do the same work as men. They are in different branches of industry, in different jobs, they receive different training and they do not have the same qualifications. In Sweden, nearly half of all working women are employed in the five main "female" areas and more than 90% are secretaries, ancillary workers, shop assistants, domestics and child minders. Contrary to what might have been expected ten years

ago, the increase in the number of women who are economically active has not undermined this segregation but has encouraged it. It is often sharper among young women, as is shown in West Germany.

The introduction of the new technology has so far helped to increase this tendency. In Europe only 10% to 25% of women are to be found in the higher-level courses linked to employment in computer science. On the other hand, women are legion amongst the typists whose nerves and eyes are ruined by repetitive work. Although new technology could bring more interesting work, with greater variety and development of skills, it is most often introduced without disturbing the traditional organisation and hierarchy where women are at the bottom of the scale. In fact the generalised introduction of computerisation in the service industries has gone hand in hand with new forms of work in the home using screen-based machines and aimed to attract mothers with small children. This is truly unsteady employment: less well-paid than working for an agency, subject to restricted hours determined by a central computer, let alone the isolation and the physical suffering.

In industry, women are more often "semi-skilled workers" than are male workers. They work on the production line, doing piece work and repeating the same operation all day long - 16,000 buttons a day passing through their hands in a textile firm or whatever. Table 1 showing the situation in France



is rather illuminating on this point.

The idea that women should earn less or have a different place on the job market because they are not trained or have insufficient training should be rejected: "Women are not unskilled and semi-skilled because of inadequate training at school, but because they are well-trained in overall reproductive functions." (4) If this were not the case, it would be impossible to explain why women direct themselves or are still directed toward "female" apprenticeships (in dressmaking, shorthand and typing) only to be taken later into electronics where their training is not recognised, but where they are preferred for certain posts requiring patience, endurance and attention to detail which are supposedly female qualities.

Knit one — purl one

One Swiss boss cynically declared that women were much better than men at putting up with the conditions dictated by work with integrated circuits which demand perfect synchronisation between the movements of the eyes, feet and arms, so as to observe the process on the screen. Why? Because from their childhood, women have been conditioned by work like knitting which is done in a mechanical way, without thinking ... knit one, purl one ... This is almost a caricature of an analysis of women's oppression. But it also forms the basis of the bosses' policy. Even the method of calculating salaries takes into account the question of the sex of the workforce. We are familiar with bonuses paid on the basis of physical effort or responsibility. But when has an employer ever paid bonuses for monotony? You will not see the employer give up this advantage tomorrow; rather he will make out that women's fairy fingers are something innate and cannot be calculated in money terms.

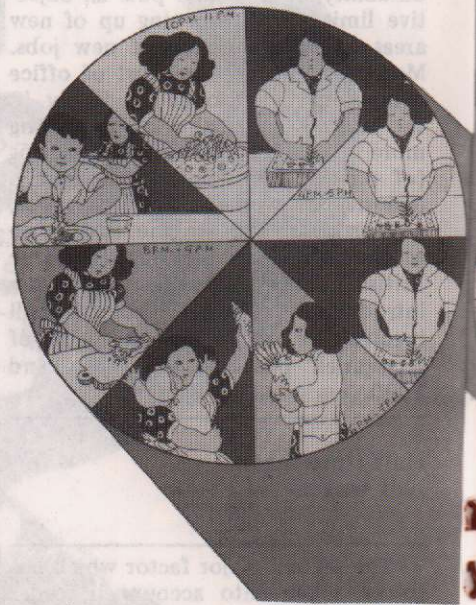
The above shows that the traditional demands for equality — "equal pay for equal work" — for equal rights, correct though they are, are widely insufficient as a way of getting to the roots of the inequalities between men and women. In this sense, the struggles being waged by US and Canadian workers for unions to adopt policies of positive action in order to force open the doors of those higher paid and more highly skilled sectors previously closed to women, are of decisive importance, even though they may be more difficult to win in the context of the deepening crisis and unemployment. But it is also important to concen-

trate the fire on those sectors where the vast majority of women actually work — that is in the female-dominated sectors — and expose the mechanisms by which female attributes are undervalued in comparison to male attributes, in calculating wages for example. This cannot be achieved without an explicit challenge to the role women are made to play and to the "catch-22" situation in which they find themselves.

The labyrinth of domestic tasks

The double, even triple, role of wife, mother and worker is basically at the root of all the discrimination which women come up against. The majority of women today consider the right to work as a gain. (5) Even those who hate the jobs they do because they are repetitive or tiring insist on the importance to them of "working outside the home", of having contacts outside and of not being stuck inside all the time. But nonetheless, they carry on, rushing from the kitchen sink to the workplace and from the workplace to the kitchen sink in a desperate attempt to reconcile everything — the demands of their bosses, their husbands and their children. Working more and getting less sleep than the men, women are shopping whilst men are 'down the pub', they are washing or ironing while men are watching the telly and all this at a high cost to their nerves, their health and most often their careers.

In this situation how can women find the time to read, to think or to be active in a trade union? In the last ten years the division of domestic tasks between men and women has only changed by a very small amount, even in a country like Sweden where relations between men and women are supposedly less macho than other places. In France a woman worker with three children spends about 5 hours and 45 minutes a day on domestic tasks while her husband spends one hour and 40 minutes. Paradoxically he tends to spend more time where there are fewer children. Part-time work has not helped and it has even meant a step back in the division of tasks in blue- and white-collar households. Where the man used to think it quite normal to "give a hand" around the house because the wife was working full time, now he thinks he can put his feet up when he comes home from work because "she's got the time". The situation is still worse when it comes to children. Even if many of the younger generation of women workers expect their



companions to share a minimum of domestic chores, they always feel that being in charge of the children is their job. This internalising of their role as mothers comes out in the very great difficulty women have in challenging the traditional norms of the education of little girls who are supposed to have different qualities from their brothers. This results "naturally" in the fact that girls choose general channels of education whilst boys choose technical channels giving access to skilled jobs.

Furthermore the attacks of the ruling class on those institutions (nurseries, school canteens) which constitute the decisive element in freeing women from their domestic tasks and from their traditional role, are particularly dramatic for women. Not only do they involve a deterioration in their daily lives, a decrease in what little time they had to spare but they have extremely negative subjective consequences since they challenge any idea of socialisation of education of very young children, and they strengthen patriarchal relations within the family.

Divide and rule

In relation to this, statements by "progressive" sections of the bourgeoisie, who are favourable to a policy of women's equality seem particularly hollow and hypocritical. The existence of a too rigid

4. D. Kergoat, 'Les Ouvrières,' ed. du Sycomore, Paris, 1982.
5. D. Kergoat, *ibid.*



Women's 16-hour day (DR)

division within the workforce can, at certain times, go against the interest of a section of the bourgeoisie who will therefore try to push women into jobs traditionally held by men. This was the case, for example, when women began to get into secretarial and clerical jobs which until then had been the preserve of men. But this corresponds, in general, either to technological developments or changes in the responsibilities involved in the job in question (in the above example it was the introduction of the typewriter which determined that men went into more highly qualified posts) or to a phase of restructuring which makes the male labour force want to look elsewhere into other sectors of production. These various changes still do not challenge the existence of job segregation which is merely reproduced on new bases. For this is a crucial weapon of divide and rule for the bourgeoisie and they do not want to give that up.

One just has to look at the way in which part-time work was handled. Promoted at first as a choice for women allowing them to harmonise work and family — as some kind of favour — part-time work quickly became obligatory for new layers of women entering or re-entering the job market. Then as the crisis developed, it became a weapon against the working class as a whole under the name of “flexibility”, which covers such areas as changes in work schedules, irregular hours, night work, week-end work. Fresh from its successes, the bourgeoisie no longer has any inhibitions about attacking one of the gains which it seemed impossible would be threatened, that is the ban on night work for women.

In Denmark, the directors of

Philips put out a questionnaire asking women workers if they wanted to work shifts or only at night. To this our comrades of the SAP (Danish section of the Fourth International) urged their workmates to add a line saying “we want to work in the day”. In Switzerland, attempts by bosses to introduce night work in the clock industry have been temporarily defeated. But the Belgian government and the Tories in Britain have re-launched the debate on the basis of the needs of the economy as a result of the crisis, using the argument of equality between men and women. Their real intentions however, can leave no one in any doubt. Such supposedly egalitarian schemas must be rejected as a trap, which is just one of the methods — and not the least of them — through which the bosses are seeking to impose flexible work practices and to dismantle the gains of the workforce as a whole.

Just as we reject part-time work and “flexibility”, we should also reject night work for men and women, except in areas where it is socially necessary.

In the same way; we can see that it is no accident if the ruling class first attacks collective bodies mainly affecting women when they begin their swinging cuts in the social budget. Recently the British government sought to reduce the number of facilities for under-fives, which was already only 40% in 1980-81, to no more than 33% in 1984-85. It also sought to cut school dinners and to replace the regular staff in school canteens by women working at half the salary for agencies under subcontract. Why then does the British bourgeoisie, as well as other bourgeoisies in Europe show such prudence in the way they attack social security? Because they know that in hitting sickness benefit, they run the risk of provoking a generalised response. In the case of the attacks on pre-school facilities they are relying on the difficulties of achieving worker solidarity on this issue despite the gravity of the cuts involved. The ideological offensive on abortion launched by the far right in several countries, as well as advertising campaigns which reduce women's bodies to sexual objects, show that the ruling class has decided to do anything to roll back the few gains made by women in the last period. The resistance to this offensive has to combine a struggle against specific oppression at work, within the family and in all aspects of social life.

Women are not going to give in to this without a fight and they have shown this in the course of a series

of strikes and mass struggles in the last few years. Whether it be the miners' wives in Britain or Danish women workers in the Easter strike of 1985 or the militant strength of German workers in the strike for the 35-hour week the previous year, the Women Against the Crisis campaign in Belgium or the struggles of British and German workers in their trade unions, the groups of women within the peace movement at Greenham and in the anti-NATO campaign in the Spanish state — all these examples are testimony to women's combativity. Sometimes women go into struggle on the basis of immediate demands which are not related to issues of their specific oppression. But it is noticeable that sooner or later these mobilisations take on a feminist dimension and that the women concerned, because of their double role in the family and in society, are forced on nearly every occasion to establish organisational structures where they can discuss their specific problems. This is quite clearly a heritage of the autonomous movement of the 1970s.

This movement, however, as an organised independent movement with its own structures, groups and co-ordination, has experienced some setbacks and even some defeats in the last five or six years. With certain rare exceptions (see the article in this issue on the feminist movement in the Spanish state) the movement has not been able to initiate mass campaigns of the scale of those on abortion and contraception. In some countries the movement has even all but disappeared. This is hardly surprising when we consider the defeats suffered by the workers' movement in the same period and the level of consciousness necessary to take the struggle onto a further stage; most of the demands around women's specific oppression imply an open confrontation with the state apparatus.

Nevertheless it is true that the setbacks faced by the autonomous movements have been strongly felt within the organisations of the workers' movement. Here women have often found themselves in a very defensive position in relation to the trade-union leaderships who take little interest in the defence of women's specific interests. This poses the problem of the continuity of the struggle of women for their liberation and therefore of the battle necessary for the existence of an independent feminist movement, based on the radicalisation of women workers who are the vanguard of many of the struggles outlined above. However, the concrete perspectives for the women's movement and the tasks of revolutionary Marxists will have to be the subject of a future article. □

Labor union women join NOW in fight for abortion rights

THE NATIONAL Organization for Women (NOW) has called for massive demonstrations in Washington, DC, on March 9 and Los Angeles on March 16, to defend women's right to abortion. These marches, which are also commemorating International Women's Day (March 8), are the culmination of a campaign launched by NOW at its national convention held last year in New Orleans.

The following article is based on an interview with Andrea Morrell, a member of the leadership of the American Socialist Workers Party, who was asked to comment on the general situation of the women's movement in the United States.

ANDREA MORRELL

The call for demonstrations by NOW was preceded by a vast national drive for one million signatures on petitions affirming the right of women to control their own bodies.

These steps by the largest feminist organization in the United States mark an important turnabout in the women's movement which has been somewhat discouraged and demoralized since the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the US Constitution in 1978. Strong support for the ERA had rallied from many sectors of the society including the labor movement, but could not stop the ruling-class offensive that ended with the failure of the state of Illinois to ratify the amendment and, effectively, the end of the drive for ratification.

The effect of this blow to the women's liberation movement was to cause a rethinking of strategy. The leadership of NOW came to the conclusion that it was necessary to rely less on marches, actions and the building of a movement, and more on the election of politicians friendly to women's rights. This inevitably meant a deeper involvement in Democratic Party election campaigns. The climax to this involvement came in the 1984 presidential campaign when nearly the entire organization turned into a doorbell-ringing machine for the Walter Mondale-Geraldine Ferraro ticket. Part of the enthusiasm for this ticket was due to the notion that women would benefit from the election of a female as vice president of the United States. The Mondale-Ferraro austerity platform soon showed how false this notion was.

Adding to the sense of discouragement among women throughout this period of Ronald Reagan's presidency has been the use of the executive power as a weapon against the working class in general and women in particular.

Reagan has always opposed the ERA, and he is especially vociferous in his opposition to legal abortion. At the beginning of 1985 he sent a message of encouragement by telephone to participants in an anti-abortion demonstration, and just recently he sent a telegram expressing sympathy to the funeral of a fetus. He is thus completely identified with the most right-wing, fetus-fetishist opponents of women's right to control their own bodies.

He is joined in this, of course, by many reactionary people in both parties. The result of this encouragement from the top during the last two years has been a dramatic increase in abortion-clinic bombings and vigilante raids on these clinics during the hours that they are open and women are having abortions. These attacks have provoked such outrage that recently the Department of Justice has been forced to prosecute and convict the most notorious of these outlaws, the Florida "Christmas bomber."

The assaults on abortion rights since 1975 have cut deeply into the whole social fabric for women, especially poor and working women. The cutting off of Medicaid [since 1976 a program of medical aid for those unable to afford medical care, financed by the state and federal governments] funding for abortions

has deprived many working-class women, especially women of the oppressed nationalities in the United States, of the ability to implement their right to abortion. There are fewer than 12 states that still fund abortion for poor women. Attempts have been made to deprive young women of this right by ruling that women under 18 must have parental consent. Funding for abortions for women in the military and federal government is being cut off.

Most recently, toward the end of 1985, the Reagan administration pushed the Supreme Court into a sweeping review of *Roe vs. Wade* [the landmark 1973 case in which the Supreme Court ruled that a state may not prevent a woman from having an abortion during the first six months of pregnancy] by asking it to pass on the constitutionality of statutes in two states, Pennsylvania and Illinois, which negate legal abortion. A decision should be returned soon, and one upholding the statutes would wipe out the 1973 victory.

The rebirth of protest

The response of NOW to these attacks needs to be placed in context. Since the 1984 presidential campaign into which all the social movements — women's, peace, labor — plunged, first into the Jesse Jackson campaign and then into the Mondale-Ferraro, there has been a rethinking going on in these movements. The year 1985 saw the rebirth of protest, including the most significant action to date against US involvement in Central America and the Caribbean, the April 20 demonstrations in which 100,000 people participated nationwide. South Africa and protest against apartheid have moved into the center of US politics, in the labor movement, on the campuses and in many communities. Many young women on the campuses are involved in these activities and are also becoming involved in the abortion-rights campaign. And, indeed, NOW, at its convention, targeted young women as a primary constituency to get involved in the fight.

Until the new NOW initiative there had not been since the defeat of the ERA any very visible and aggressive public action on the part of the organized women's liberation forces. Nevertheless, a whole generation of young women are now playing activist and leadership roles in organizations that oppose the US war machine and in the Free South Africa movements. It was noticeable that at the April 20 demonstrations, although

NOW was not there as an organization, there were thousands upon thousands of young women, many of them wearing feminist or ERA T-shirts but who were there marching against the war. There are women who are central leaders of some of the big antiwar organizations such as Mobilization for Survival.

We are seeing a response, too, by women activists to the social measures taken in defense of women's rights by the Nicaraguans and, earlier, the Grenadans. Women activists have pointed out that at least in Nicaragua under the Sandinista government there is an ERA because women's equality is written into the constitution. AMNLAE, the Nicaraguan women's organization, has been very conscious of trying to reach out to, speak to and link up with feminists in the United States. AMNLAE representatives have come to NOW conventions where they have spoken in workshops and had tables. They have explained the role they played in overthrowing Somoza, what the revolution has meant for women and how women have been able to step forward in Nicaraguan society. They have urged women in the United States to come to the forefront in the defense of our sisters and brothers in Nicaragua against US attack.

These exchanges with Nicaraguan women resulted in a stiffly worded antiwar resolution being passed by the 1985 NOW convention. It opposes the US nuclear arsenal and US military intervention against the Nicaraguans and Salvadorans on the same grounds that earlier NOW had opposed US intervention in Vietnam. This resolution, recalling the positive stance that NOW took at that time, is an important progressive step taken by women.

Trade-union women are also an important part of this renewed activity. Beginning around 1976 it became increasingly clear that the union movement was willing to participate in the effort to get the ERA ratified. It correctly posed the amendment as a working-class issue. Most working-class women in the United States require two incomes if they have children. That has been true since inflation began to skyrocket in the early 1970s. Therefore, equal pay for equal work is a crucial demand. In this context the ruling class saw an opportunity to divide the working class along gender lines, and thus began its attack on women's rights as part of its general offensive against the working class.

The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), which was formed during this time, is a tenacious organization. It is linked to the AFL-CIO and is even represented on its

Executive. It has not yet managed to overcome a basic problem — its domination by a bureaucratic trade-union leadership and the fact that it does not really organize women at the base of the unions.

But the very fact that it still exists is a positive factor for all those who attach importance to a women's trade-union organization. After a downturn following the defeat of ERA, CLUW has again become more visible through press releases,

meetings and participation in demonstrations. As an organization it plays a progressive role, especially because of its multiracial character — the presence of Black and Latin American women within it. If the movement for abortion rights continues to develop and broaden, CLUW will be important in bringing the movement into the center of the labor movement, which, in turn, will have a positive effect on CLUW itself. □

The women's movement on the rise

ON NOVEMBER 1-3 of last year, the feminist movement of the Spanish state organised a meeting in Barcelona (las Jornadas de Barcelona) which was attended by 4,000 women from all over the country — young and old, white- and blue-collar workers, peasants from deep within Andalusia, those active in the organised women's movement and those not. We asked Justa Montero, a well-known feminist and a member of the Political Bureau of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR), the section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state, to answer our questions.

Question. During the Jornadas de Barcelona you actually performed two abortions — illegal in the case of the two women concerned — and you subsequently made this action public. What led you to take such an initiative, and what was the political significance of it?

Answer. Our reasons were simply that the law on abortion enacted by the government of the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) is an insult to women. Only 3 per cent of women seeking abortions are covered by the law, which recognizes the right to abortion only in cases of rape, risk of malformation of the fetus or severe health problems for the woman. And even that 3 per cent must go through a special hospital committee and obtain certificates signed by two doctors (and another certificate signed by the police in the case of rape). The application of the law is made even more difficult since doctors are allowed to plead "conscientious objection" and in most hospitals refuse to perform abortions. More and more women are again resorting to back-street abortions.

The assembly of women attending the Jornadas gave unanimous approval to the performing of the abortions on two women who could not legally obtain them (one was a minor) in

order to point out the absurd limits of the law. After the actions had been made public the police entered the conference rooms to try to find out the identity of both the women who had performed the abortions and those who had undergone them. But we were prepared: 3,000 women had signed a document taking collective responsibility for the performing of the abortions. The secret was well kept, and the police could never discover the names. All the left parties and the trade unions supported the action of the women. And after a week of scandalised debates in the press and throughout the country, the judge charged with the case had to dismiss it for lack of evidence.

The women in the movement are perfectly well aware that the only objective of this type of action is to denounce the law. It is a form of struggle. But in no way should it be taken as an adequate way of responding to the social necessities for the broad masses of women. The movement does not want to be involved in any sort of "self-help" work. We intend to make the demand that abortions should be performed free by the state, within the framework of the health system. It is a demand that we have been making for several years, and the Comisiones

Obreras (CCOE — Workers' Commissions), various community organizations and the parties of the left (with the exception of the PSOE, of course) have finally agreed to support this demand: *Derecho al aborto, las mujeres decidimos* [the right to abortion — let the women decide].

Q. What are some of the other issues around which women have been mobilising in the recent period?

A. One of the central themes has been the struggle against the militarisation of society and against the Spanish state remaining in NATO. Anti-militarist women's commissions were created inside the framework of the women's movement and at the same time linked to the peace movement. They have been participating in all the peace demonstrations, especially around demands of particular relevance to women. Recently protests have been organised in front of schools, hospitals and the Ministry of Health and Education to call for more schools and more work for women, whose unemployment rate now exceeds 25 per cent.

Last winter there were demonstrations in front of armament factories that brought together thousands of women. The main content of these demonstrations were the demands for withdrawal from NATO and for the transformation of the military budget into a social budget which would improve the situation of women. The main slogan was "Neither war which destroys us, nor peace which oppresses us".

Q. How do you explain the strength of the independent women's movement in the Spanish state as compared to the downturn in most of the countries of Europe and North America?

A. One primary explanation is perhaps that this movement, which arose ten years ago within the framework of the anti-Franco struggle, has had close ties to the left and far-left parties from the very beginning and consequently has had a radical orientation. But I believe that it derives its strength above all from its continuity and the fact that during this decade we have been able to achieve significant political weight through our campaigns and the mass actions that we have led. Not only have we been able to influence women from all social strata, but the movement has proved itself capable of integrating the different levels of consciousness reflected in all these women.

The existence of national coordination of the movement and its continuation through all the ups and



The equipment used in the two abortions is displayed to the conference and the press. (DR)

downs of the last ten years have permitted the various themes of the struggles and debates to be brought together so that they have reinforced each other. And by comparing their different experiences, many women have become aware of the fact that in all these fights they are confronting the same enemy.

Finally, I believe that one of the most important strengths of the movement in our country is that feminists have learned how to overcome sectarianism and to respect the opinions of women with different points of view.

Q. And all of that was reflected in the November Jornadas?

A. Absolutely. What was really striking was the number of young women — 16 or 17 years old — who came to the meeting and gathered into their own committees to discuss their problems at home, at school and at leisure — discos and problems of sexuality, for example. Everyone was equally surprised by the number of working women who brought up their specific problems in the discussions of the commissions.

They had come, moreover, as a result of word-of-mouth publicity, posters and leaflets distributed by

feminist groups. There was not a single line in the newspapers about the meeting despite the fact that we had held press conferences in Madrid and Barcelona two days before. It was only after the Jornadas — when it hit the newspapers that 4,000 people had attended and that abortions had been performed — that people found out about the conference.

One thing that struck us all was how much the movement had matured since meetings that we had held in Granada in 1979. At that time a Nicaraguan woman who took the floor was hissed by the women present. This time, the floor was given to a representative of Nicaragua to close the conference. She told us how moved she had been by the solidarity expressed to her throughout Europe and particularly in the Spanish state. She explained how important it was for European feminists to understand that the struggle of women in Nicaragua was a part of their own struggle. When she stopped speaking all the women stood up, tears in their eyes, and shouted 'Nicaragua vencera!' It was a moment of intense emotion, and I believe that it marked a great step forward for the women's movement of the Spanish state. □

Feminism and the unions

IN WEST GERMANY, of course, the unions in general are male-dominated organizations, and they follow a policy that is very far from offering a consistent defense of women's interests. Likewise, the need for waging an offensive struggle against the specific oppression of women in their own ranks is the least of their concerns.

This, however, has not kept active women trade unionists from becoming radicalized today and for years earlier around all aspects of their lives, as women and trade unionists. Nor has it kept them from gaining, slowly but surely, a voice in their organizations.

STEFFIE ENGERT

Leafing through the unions' women's publications, as well as through congress documents, you see a real influence of feminist ideas. This is beginning to be reflected in the application of some concepts. For example, in a contribution to the most recent women's conference of IG Metall, the union women's commission correctly wrote the following about the dismantling of social gains:

"This policy is obstructing the emancipation of women. If the welfare state is dismantled and the responsibilities linked to human reproduction again fall on individuals alone, this would mean the going back on a large scale to the patriarchal capitalist structures of domination."

Hans Mayr himself, a member of the IG Metall leadership, felt obliged to use the term "patriarchal" in his report to the congress. This could not, however, conceal the fact that he had no serious proposal to make for taking up the fight against such things.

Concepts, of course, have their importance for developing consciousness of a problem. But, as the example of Mayr well shows, they can also serve as decorations and distractions. The concrete content of advanced demands is far more important.

Union supports feminist demands on abortion law

One of the events that will go down in the history of women's work by the unions is the turn that we saw with respect to Paragraph 218 of the penal code, which permits abortion only in the first 12 weeks of

pregnancy, or in certain cases within 22 weeks. The traditional position of the unions was to support such restrictions, while the women's movement

demanded the abolition of Paragraph 218 without any sort of replacement for it.

Today, the leadership of the public services union (OTV) supports the demand of the feminists. And the motion of the IG Metall women's conference took a clear stand on this. It said that after ten years' experience with the system of "indications," (that is, everything that restricts the right to abortion), the women members of this union have come to the conclusion that the only possible answer is the right of women, and women alone, to choose in full independence and freedom.

For women trade unionists, demands for equality concretely mean plans for promoting women and job quotas, which they see as representing a step forward on the road to self-determination.

In relation to the problems existing in their own ranks, the Greens asked Sybille Plogstedt and Kathleen Bode to make a study of sexual harassment on the job. Its contents have proved explosive, including in the unions. This theme is at present a key axis of the work of many of the IG Metall women's commissions, along with the still acute question of equal rights and

Women workers participate in the 35-hour struggle (DR)



equal pay and the more recent campaigns on quotas and the fight against Paragraph 218.

The women trade-union activists do not spare the men in their own organizations, even if the IG Metall resolution says nothing about the sexual harassment that women face from their male coworkers in the union. It does, however, mention sexual aggression by some male trade unionists against women employed by the union.

In any case, it can be seen that women are more and more on the offensive in training seminars in denouncing this sort of behavior. And in this, they are being supported by progressive instructors.

It should be noted that this question was already the subject of a contribution to the OTV congress last year. This document demanded modifications of Paragraphs 177 and 179 of the penal code (on rape and sexual aggression) to get "every forced penetration or forced relationship (anal, oral, or vaginal) punished as rape; psychological violence as a form of violence for purposes of sexual constraint punished; and rape within marriage also punished."

The OTV also supports the demand that the practice of questioning rape victims about their sex lives be ended, and that rape by intimates not be treated as a "lesser offense." These are demands that the women's movement has been putting forward for years.

It has been above all in connection with union training courses that we have seen the demand for organizing women in their own right come to the fore. The IG Metall women have demanded that in trade-union training sessions the historical role of women and the special treatment reserved for them under capitalism and the patriarchy be taken into consideration. Moreover, so that union women can participate in the union seminars, they are strongly demanding facilities for collective childcare by qualified personnel.

Even if the women in the unions are continuing to focus on the demand for equality and if they do not often talk about women's liberation, they nonetheless fix their sights more and more on their self-determination.

If we really want women to become the equals of men, the OTV women in Lower Saxony wrote in the union press in February 1985, "A bit more consideration has to be given to women, and men will have to occupy a bit less space." □

From the January 9 issue of 'Was Tun,' paper of the German section of the Fourth International

Filipinas fight multiform oppression

THE WOMEN'S movement in the Philippines has started to take shape only during the past five years despite the fact that various women's groups emerged earlier — in the 1970s. The movement crystallized in response to the political and economic crises and their effects particularly on women, more than around feminist issues themselves. The dire effects of the worsening conditions on women and children pushed the women to organize themselves within the context of these conditions. For instance, a group like the Concerned Women of the Philippines, formed in 1978, brought women together on the issue of rampant fraud in the first parliamentary elections.

SONIA RUPON

As the political crisis continued and exploded with the murder of the opposition leader Benigno Aquino in August 1983, the women's movement developed and became more rooted. An unprecedented number of women, side by side with other mass organizations, joined the "parliament of the streets" to manifest their anger at the Marcos regime. Two months after the assassination, on October 28, 1983, women representing various groups launched an all-women's protest rally against the repressive nature of the regime and its policies of torture and murder to silence dissent. *Women's Update* [review produced by the GABRIELA women's organization] reported a participation of 10,000 women at this rally.

Four months later, women's groups with a militant political orientation emerged. Women for the Ouster of Marcos and Boycott (WOMB) began as a forum for women who opted for a boycott of the Batasang Pambansa (the parliament) elections in 1984. Samahan ng Malayang Kababaihang Nagkakaisa (SAMAKANA — Organization of Free and United Women) started with a group of housewives in a squatters' community and based itself in poor urban communities. Now, after two years, the organization boasts of 2,400 members in its 30 chapters and held a national congress recently with the aim of promoting the understanding of the woman question in the context of Philippine social realities.

In March 1984, GABRIELA, a coalition of politically active women's groups was formed. Named after a historical woman fighter against Spanish colonization, the name also signifies the General Assembly

Binding Women for Reforms. Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action. Its organizers include diverse groups like SAMAKANA WOMEN (media) CAP (artists), NOWRP and KAMAY (religious groups), KMK (workers) and research groups like PILIPINA. Along with other militant mass organizations it has played a role in big mobilizations like labor rallies and peasant marches. Using the issues of reproductive rights and health and safety, it was an active participant in the campaign to dismantle the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. Last year, on October 28, after a week-long schedule of discussions and activities exploring women's issues and their relation to the socio-economic-political conditions in the Philippines, GABRIELA led a march of 2,000 women. This day has now been proclaimed as the Filipino women's Day of Protest, commemorating the first big women's rally after Aquino's death.

Women and unions

Two organizations of women workers — the Kilusan ng mga Manggagawang Kababaihan (KMK — Movement of Women Workers) and the Makabayang Kababaihan ng Masa (MAKAMASA — Nationalist women of The Masses) were the outgrowth of the attention focused on women workers in 1984 and 1985. Factory strikes in which women participated were numerous despite military and police repression at the picket line. In the Bataan Export Processing Zone (BEPZ), where 80 per cent of the workers are young women between the ages of 15 and 22 and where strikes are illegal and unioniza-

tion difficult, women continue to demand better wages and working conditions.

In the BEPZ factories, textiles and garments, electronics, toys, sports equipment and leather goods are produced. Statistics for 1983 show that the garments and electronics industries alone employ 752,700 women, a tenth of the total number of women employed in that year. It is also in these two sectors that 1984 earnings were respectively the lowest and second lowest in Asia — 30 cents per hour in electronics, and 17 cents per hour in garment.

Along with very low wages, the women suffer from inhuman treatment and appalling working conditions. In the electronics industry for instance, women are forced to work in an assembly line eight hours or more a day in rhythm with the machines. They are not allowed to talk and are forced to meet high quotas. The industry is a highly dangerous one because of the hazards of exposure to chemical substances, and cancer cases have already been reported. On the average, workers last only for three years; they complain of dizziness, poor vision, mental strain. They are regarded as too old and are discarded to make way for younger and faster workers.

Normal factory rights such as sick leave, vacation and maternity benefits do not exist. This is part and parcel of the investment package promoted by the government to persuade multinational companies to invest in the zone.

Job security and promotions are not assured as women are never hired on a permanent basis, and supervisory positions are always given to men even in female-dominated industries. To even keep their jobs, women have to face sexual harassment by their male supervisors — the lay-down or lay-off threat.

Workers trying to organize union activities within the zone are intimidated and threatened with job suspensions and even physical violence and murder. Because of these repressive measures it has not been easy to attract women workers to the trade union. The pressures of the other tasks they have to deal with at home also act as a deterrent. Despite these constraints, however, one still hears of women leading militant unions and participating in strikes. In some regions in the country women workers are beginning to study the principles of unionism, and certain studies show that exposure to workers' education focusing on women workers' problems have encouraged women workers to be more active and militant. Interviews with women workers have also shown militant responses like the belief that

the strike is the main weapon to force management to give in, and that slowing down can alleviate difficult work conditions.

Women strike

The public-school teachers' mass walkouts in September of last year were also significant. Public school teachers have been among the most poorly paid public servants and protest from this sector was to be expected. On the primary and secondary levels 85 per cent of teachers, and 53 per cent of the teachers on the tertiary level, are women. They complain of overwork — they are not only assigned oversized classes but are given many other tasks not related to teaching such as watching polls during elections and attending government rallies. And because of their low pay, which averages 1,700 pesos or 100 US dollars a month, many are forced to sell all sorts of goods to their students to augment their income. Their demands — primarily an increase in wages to 3,000 pesos — were however met with the suspension of their leaders from work and intimidation. For many of these teachers the only way to improve their economic condition has been to emigrate and suffer the consequences of landing in domestic work in exchange for a salary they would never be able to earn in their own country.

Rural women, who comprise 59 per cent of the female population (1984 statistics), are less employed on a wage basis than their urban counterparts. They do both farming and non-farming jobs, but most numerous among them are the landless rural poor who work on other people's land or on plantations, preparing the ground, weeding and planting. The official wages for agricultural workers — 34.42 pesos a day for plantations and 25.90 pesos for non-plantations — places their earnings far below the poverty threshold estimated by the World Bank at 2613.12 pesos a month. What is more, this wage scale is usually not implemented; in reality these workers earn much less and usually are able to work only three to six months of the year. Poor as the pay is, however, many rural women are haunted by the fear of displacement from these jobs and the loss of this income supplementing what their husbands and children earn. In the present crisis in agriculture in the Philippines — the mechanization of farming and the conversion of many rice lands into residential and commercial areas — women and children are of course the first to go. When there is no work in the fields,

women resort to street vending or doing the laundry for other households.

There is also now a growing number of women who work at home doing sewing and embroidery and producing handicrafts. This is an even more exploitative situation for those at the bottom of the subcontracting scheme. To illustrate, a baby dress sewn by a village worker would sell for 15 US dollars in a department store in the United States while the worker was paid less than ten cents for it!

Prostitution

Extreme poverty and the unavailability of jobs have compelled women to go into prostitution. There has always been prostitution particularly in the red-light district and the area surrounding US military bases, but the problem has now reached acute proportions. There are 100,000 prostitutes in Metro-Manila alone, and around the bases there are another 16,000. Child prostitution has also increased these past few years. Studies point to around 3,000 child prostitutes in Metro-Manila, ranging in age from 7 to 15. These women and children usually come from low-income families, peasant and fishing families, slum dwellers and migrants from the provinces. Parents are said to have sold off their children for lack of any alternative to survive.

The government not only tolerates, but has promoted the institutionalization of prostitution. Rest and recreation centers, which include a network of clubs, restaurants, hotels, sauna baths, massage clinics and other places of entertainment, have been legalized in keeping with government policy to make the most of its tourism industry. Tourism is the third largest source of foreign exchange, which the government banks on to ease the payment of its debts.

One form of prostitution that has received much official support is the sex tours. Groups of Japanese as well as Europeans, Australians and Americans take advantage of these holiday package tours, which include everything from sight-seeing to women. Militant protests by concerned women, such as the one held on the occasion of the Japanese prime minister's visit to Manila, have reduced the number of foreign visitors for some time, thus hitting the profits of this notorious network. The industry goes on nonetheless — with attempts to lessen publicity and change its form.

Part of the flesh trade is the export of women to other countries. Migrant workers, promised good jobs, have

in many instances ended up as prostitutes. With retreat cut off — their passports are often kept by the agents who recruited them — they are forced into topless dancing, striptease and prostitution.

A more recent but equally alarming phenomenon is that of the mail-order brides. Although it started as a fad, it has now developed into big business, in which legitimate companies, notably in Europe, Australia and New Zealand, are engaged in marrying off young Asian women to Western men. Catalogues with pictures and descriptions of the women are sent out to a club member who can pick the woman he wants. The Asian women are advertised as "meek, docile, submissive, home-orientated and have tremendous capacities in bed," in contrast to assertive and "liberated" Western women. Women have availed themselves of this means of escaping from their poverty and of being able to send money back home to their families. And since marriage is highly valued by Philippine society, 85 per cent Catholic, it is seen as an honorable thing to do. Yet it sometimes means a lifetime of problems. Culture shock and loneliness are usual results. Some marriages do work out, but in other cases such marriages are equivalent to sex slavery.

The problems that Filipino women face today are gigantic and complex. They have their roots in the historical past, the incursion of various capitalistic developments into Filipino life, and the dimensions of these problems somehow reflect the proportions of the present crisis. It is a good sign that the women's movement is becoming more militant.

Women have dared to become more engaged in political issues and activities in different fields despite their burdens, made even harder by today's crisis. More women are also reportedly joining the New People's Army, the guerrilla forces in the countryside, and are leading workers' pickets and strikes. Many have had to pay for this political engagement. Sad and disgusting are the stories of women political detainees who have not only suffered the usual forms of torture of the regime but have also been subjected to rape, sexual humiliation and abuses by their captors.

The debates within the movement are, of course, understandable. The country is presently in a situation where political changes can take place unexpectedly. This can cause confusion and the need for choices to be made. Nonetheless, while groups may differ in their approaches, the fact that all groups are moving within their various capacities is a healthy and positive sign for the movement. □

Right to life for females

THE FOLLOWING interview with Trupti Shah, a member of the Baroda [in Gujarat, a northwest Indian state] Women's Group was given to Jacqueline Heinen in Brussels in December 1985. It has been translated from an edited text in French.

Question. We often hear of various types of discrimination against women in India, which seem to take extreme forms and even result in a much higher infant mortality among girls than among boys. What are the concrete facts about this?

Answer. The demographic data in fact indicates that, contrary to other countries, the proportion of women in the population as a whole is less than that of men. Moreover, we also find this phenomenon in countries such as Pakistan and Iran. At the beginning of this century there were 972 women for every 1,000 men, and the proportion of women declined steadily until it reached 930 for every 1,000 men in 1970, where it has stood roughly since then.

This ratio only reflects an enormous economic and social problem — that of the status of Indian women. The whole cultural and social tradition dictates that it is better to bring a boy into the world than a girl. Because of the dowry system, the birth of a daughter is perceived as an economic burden, while boys represent the continuity of the family, a support in old age, and so on.

Discrimination against females starts in infancy, with babies getting fed and cared for differently according to their sex. Not only do you see little boys getting a lot more affection, but the best milk is reserved for them, with little girls even being left to waste away. Of course, such discrimination continues as children grow up, in education and professional orientation, to say nothing of health care.

The disproportion between males and females is, in a way, a sort of concrete expression of these forms of discrimination. It should be stressed that this phenomenon has been aggravated by industrialization and technical progress, in particular by the introduction of new reproductive techniques. Thus, amniocentesis, a test

for detecting possible malformations of the fetus during pregnancy, is systematically used for female infanticide, since this test also makes it possible to determine the sex of the baby. It has been practiced quite commonly in the country's big cities for three years. And when it has turned out that the unborn child is a girl, it can be seen that in 99 per cent of the cases, the women try to get abortions. Since amniocentesis can only be done at the end of the fourth month of pregnancy, the consequences for the health of women are catastrophic, since the abortion cannot be done before the 18th or 19th week. And such a practice is being justified in the name of birth control!

So, we face a situation totally opposite to what obtains in the European countries, where women are fighting for the right of abortion and contraception. In India, the feminists have to fight against the policy of the authorities, who under the pretext of population control, are massively disseminating contraceptives (such as Depo-Provera) that are banned in other countries because of the dangers they pose for the health of women. And they are not providing the slightest information about the side effects they can have. Moreover, they encourage family-planning offices to insert intrauterine coils in women without telling them. In such cases, the women only find out about this when they go to gynecologists because they think that they are sterile. Because of these coils, many women have gotten cancer and other very grave illnesses.

Furthermore, the government backs sterilization campaigns without bothering to make sure that the operations are carried out under good conditions. It happens very often that the women are not informed about the irrevocable character of this operation and that the medical teams in charge often leave out the preliminary examinations so that they can fulfill their quotas of

150 to 200 operations a day. Thus, in Rajasthan in 1984, several women died as the result of such a campaign.

You can see that the "right to choose" means two quite different things to women in the developed countries and those in Third World countries such as India. The problem in India is to fight for the right to information about the methods of contraception and abortion that are being imposed on women and to combat forced abortion, contraception and sterilization. This is a still greater problem because the international organizations that extend aid to the Third World, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, NOVIB (1) and OXFAM-India (2) all provide funds for the government's family-planning program without raising any questions about its sexist and racist character. Women's health is the least of their concerns.

On top of the very high infant mortality for girls, the life expectancy of adult women is very low. However, there are virtually no local medical centers equipped to meet the most elementary needs of caring for women and their infants. The only factors taken into consideration are the reproductive functions of women — who are seen primarily as wombs for assuring the reproduction of the race — and the enormous demographic problems that are posed. This is why, although there are no hospital centers, the family-planning network extends into the most remote corners of the country.

As regards the right to choose, the problem of course is that the existence of contraceptive methods do represent an unquestionable advance, because they can enable women to control their own bodies. So it is not a matter of demanding that they be banned. The problem is that women are treated as second-class citizens and that they are denied the right to exercise such control.

In this respect, the use of the amniocentesis test is typical. Women are not being informed of the risk to themselves and their babies in taking it. There are no restrictions on this practice as there are in the West, where the tests are only done when the mother is above a certain age and the risks of malformation of the fetus are very high, or in the case of serious problems. The most retrograde cultural reflexes are being encouraged, as regards the attitude of the society, and therefore of women, with regard to the female sex. This test is made into an everyday medical practice cheap enough so that the poorest working-class women can afford it. Thus, in 1978-1982, almost 78,000 female fetuses were aborted after amnio-



Indian women outside industrial plant (DR)

centesis. And the trend has steadily increased since.

All of this shows how much the birth of a girl is considered an economic and social burden. The dowry system provides for setting the sum in accordance with the status and professional prospects of the fiancée, so daughters are expensive, and all the more so insofar as the parents want to make a good match for them.

Moreover, when the parents-in-law find the dowry inadequate, that can lead to acts of torture against young women in order to drive her to suicide, or even to outright murder. In 1984 alone several hundreds of thousands of women were burned alive by their husbands shortly after their marriages, that is after they collected the dowry, the obligatory marriage price.

Q. How did the autonomous women's movement in India, which has existed almost ten years now, respond to such practices? What are its possibilities for action?

A. It is not easy to fight practices of this type that affect all social strata, because women are very much under the control of their families. When they complain about the treatment inflicted on them or try to take refuge with their parents, the latter most often send them back to their husband's families. Any proposal for breaking with that family is, thus, very problematical.

Nonetheless, the problem of violence against women was what gave rise to the first mass campaign by the Indian feminist movement. Several cases of women being raped by policemen had already been made public when the story of a 14-year-old girl raped by two police officers in 1978 made this question, which had previously been taboo, appear as a major social evil. It caused a stir throughout the country.

After the policemen were first

pronounced innocent by the local court (which concentrated instead on the girl's "lack of morals"), they were sentenced to seven and a half years in prison by the High Court, which overruled the first judgement. But the Supreme Court in turn intervened in 1979 to rule that the girl had consented, and this unleashed a vast argument throughout the country, with a petition signed by well-known personalities, intellectuals, and so forth. Finally, through this campaign, the women's movement forced the government to revise the law on rape in 1980.

Q. What are the distinctive features of the Indian feminist movement by comparison with what you know of other women's movements throughout the world?

A. You could say that the birth of the autonomous women's movement in 1975 marked a new phase in the struggle of Indian women, who up until then had participated in movements against price rises or against corruption, but had never mobilized around their specific problems.

The influence of the feminist movement in the West led to the formation of the first women's groups in 1975 in the universities but also among working-class women. There had been a lot of women's associations connected with political parties, but they were regarded as transmitters of the line of the parties concerned and not as groupings designed to take up the questions of special concern to women. Moreover, neither the women's mutual aid or charitable associations nor the pro-

1. A nongovernmental and non-religious organization for aid to the Third World, based in the Netherlands.

2. A nongovernmental and non-religious organization for aid to the Third World, based in Oxford in Britain.

BARODA WOMEN'S MOVEMENT FIGHTS VIOLENCE

A RECENT rape case in the Broach district of Gujarat has mobilized women's organizations in the area in a successful demand that the Supreme Court of India take over the case from local authorities.

The nightmarish incident occurred on January 6 in Devidab village, according to the *Indian Express* of January 21, 1986. A woman of the Adivasi tribe and her husband were forcibly taken from their home by four policemen after they had lodged a complaint about the kidnapping of a minor girl relative. The woman was repeatedly raped in the police truck and again at the police station. She and her husband were released only after relatives came up with a bribe of 2,000 rupees (approximately 160 US dollars).

The woman's request for a medical examination was refused by the government hospital at Rajpipla since the police superintendent had refused to authorize it. Insisting that she was a woman of "loose morals," the superintendent also refused to record the couple's complaints. Instead they were taken to the Sagbara police station where they were threatened and forced to withdraw their allegations.

The Baroda-based women's organization, Sahiyar, demanded that the case be taken away from the local police and called upon all civil rights activists and women's organizations in Gujarat jointly to initiate protest action. As a result the Indian Supreme Court on January 22 asked the Central Bureau of Investigation to take over the investigation.

The case is expected to become a national issue. It has already had a revitalizing effect on the women's movement in Baroda where Sahiyar is organizing meetings and demonstrations.

fessional associations of women in the liberal professions or the informal sector had such a purpose. It was only with the appearance of the autonomous women's movement that we saw such women's organizations.

A coordinating committee of women's groups was set up in 1978, and it has given impetus to various initiatives — national conferences, Women's Day celebrations, as well as campaigns such as the one against rape, protest actions against certain sexist films inciting violence against women, and against the deaths of several young women subjected to torture by their husbands.

In 1981, the women's movement backed the strike by domestics demanding higher wages, two days off a month and medical insurance, a strike that in particular protested against the sexual aggressions to which they were being subjected by their employers. This struggle made it possible to get the unions to move a bit, but overall, unfortunately, the organizations of the workers' movement remain quite insensitive to the problem of the specific oppression of women. The trade-union leaders have done practically nothing on the question of day-care centers, canteens or the problem of working hours, no more than on the problem of sexual segregation of the workforce or sexual harassment on the job.

In the textile industry, the union leaders have even come to an agreement with the bosses to limit the number of jobs for women, or to replace women with men in cases of rationalization or mechanization. This has not made the tasks of feminists in the unions any easier. And that is why the idea has arisen of forming women's unions. In several unions, women have formed committees in

order to be able to put pressure more effectively on the leaderships.

Q. Are there "women's places," as there are in other countries. And how is the movement organized?

A. Yes there are women's homes in several cities. Many women's groups after a few years have come to understand that it was not enough to engage in initiatives, campaigns, and demonstrations — no matter how broad — without offering some minimum concrete alternative for the victims of violence or sexual discrimination. This is what led to the opening of centers for battered women, rape victims, or victims of the dowry system. Other groups, anxious to avoid isolation, have built ties with broader social movements, such as the movement of shanty-town dwellers or the movement against castes and communalism, or they have become involved in actively supporting workers' strikes.

While there is no federation of groups in different cities in the proper sense of the term, the groups active on the same question have links. This is true for example of the groups that are active on the question of rape, the dowry system or forced contraception. They all support the fortnightly magazine *Manushi* ["Human"], which is published alternately in English and Hindi, and which serves as a forum in which the various groups can discuss their respective positions and experiences. In addition, there are many local or regional bulletins, which reflect the diversity of the women's movement.

However, it has to be said that the development of the autonomous movement has been very uneven. In my city, Baroda, for example, there was an initial attempt to set up a

feminist group in 1980, but it did not last. For several years the only thing that existed were the reformist women's associations that organized beauty contests or afternoon sewing bees. Then we started up again with small discussion groups in the university on the personal problems relating to our situation in our families, the discrimination we faced with respect to our brothers, the problems of sexual harassment, and so forth.

On March 8, 1985, we decided to take a public initiative by organizing an exposition on sexual discrimination and the way that some women had started fighting against this state of affairs in the rest of the country. The idea was to lay the basis for developing an understanding of problems such as the dowry system, the misuse of amniocentesis and the situation of working women. The exposition had to be as visual as possible, with a maximum use of photos and graphics, inasmuch as 75 per cent of women can neither read nor write. Nearly 500 people came, which was a success, and the exposition was then used in other cities.

Besides this, we discussed the economic and social problems facing women and the need for establishing links with other social groupings. Not all the women were convinced about this. Then came the uprisings organized in Baroda by the middle strata against the principle of quotas reserving a certain number of places for members of the Backward Castes (Untouchables) in the various aspects of social life, in particular in the educational system. This led a lot of feminists to take up the defense of the Untouchables and take part in demonstrations in defense of their interests, even though most of them came from the middle strata themselves.

It has to be said that these women's own situation certainly helped them become conscious of this problem, because in India women are considered Untouchables during menstruation, and in fact they cannot say that they belong to any caste, since their status will be redetermined by marriage. This example is a good illustration of how the struggle of women for their emancipation is playing, and will continue to play, an important role in the fight for radical social transformations. The place of the women's movement is alongside all of those, male and female, who are fighting to abolish the class system and the prejudices bound up with the caste system. But at the same time, it will have a decisive weight in the battle to assure that the new social relations bring a genuine emancipation of all individuals. □

Women's groups in slums take center stage

THE FOLLOWING interview with Tatau Godinho was given to Jacqueline Heinen in Brussels in December 1985. It has been translated from an edited text in French. Godinho is a member of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) and an active feminist.

Question. What is the position of working women in Brazil?

Answer. Over the last two decades, the proportion of working women has grown very rapidly. Today, they represent about 30 per cent of the workforce. The number of women working in agriculture has declined, paralleling the more general decline in this sector. But more women than men have been moving to the cities.

The main thing to be highlighted is the entry of women en masse into industry, in particular those where women have not traditionally worked. In textiles and other industries, they continue to make up a major part of the workforce (in the services especially); their numbers have hardly changed. Of course, in industry as a whole, they continue to fill the least skilled jobs.

But contrary to what we have seen in other countries, where women working in industry are most often employed in the services or administration, in Brazil, in particular in the more developed areas such as Sao Paulo, three out of four women working in industry are employed in production. That involves a qualitative change in their position in the workforce as a whole.

However, in view of the crisis that has been accelerating since the end of the phase of growth that Brazil went through up till 1974, the number of women working in the informal sector of the economy has grown steadily (more than the number of men). In this sector, they are obliged to take little jobs corresponding to their traditional tasks in the family (cooking, sewing, etc.) in order to supplement the family income.

I don't think that a higher proportion of women than men have been laid off, although we lack precise data on that. But the fact remains that the crisis is hitting women in a different way, inasmuch as they are the ones who have to manage the family budget, who have to put food on the table every day. This explains

the fact that a great many of them are participating actively in the poor neighborhoods in women's movement groups that are seeking ways of solving the day-to-day problems of feeding people.

Q. From what you have just said, it seems that the women's movement in Brazil has quite a different profile than the one we are familiar with in the developed countries?

A. Yes, it has to be said that the women's movement as it developed after 1975, with the formation of a myriad of feminist groups, is rather dispersed today. These groups are very disorganized, and a lot of them have disappeared. The feminist movement properly speaking has no national coordinating body. There are still groups on the local level that have some sort of links with each other, but nothing comparable to what existed at the end of the 1970s.

At that time, the movement was capable of mobilizing women, of organizing very broad rallies and mass conferences that helped a great deal to make the woman question an important theme for the society as a whole. Today, many of those who have remained active are seeking new perspectives, because the present dispersion and the difficulty of putting forward axes for unifying these forces are becoming an obstacle to the growth of the movement.

The major development that we are seeing today in Brazil is the emergence of women's groups in the shantytowns, which in general are organizing around immediate economic demands for improving living conditions. They are closely linked to the mass movements in general but are organized autonomously, as women's groups. It could not be said that they have a clear awareness of the problem of the specific oppression of women, and that is normal, since they are made up primarily of proletarian women, housewives who are trying to solve the everyday problems facing them in the poor neighborhoods of the big cities.

It would be wrong, therefore, to say that this movement is an outgrowth of the feminist groups that existed in the past. There is no tradition, no memory of the autonomous movement that existed five years ago, even though the latter has exerted a diffuse influence.

The women's groups in the shantytowns arose entirely spontaneously in most of the urban conglomerations and around various questions, the most important of which in 1985 was the problem of milk. In view of their families' urgent needs the women in shantytowns in four different regions got involved in a campaign to demand that the government distribute cheap milk in the most disadvantaged areas. These women's groups demanded that the government deliver the milk into their own hands, because they wanted to take the responsibility for setting up a distribution system based on the organization of women themselves (nearly 7,000 women took part in this action). Where this proved possible, the campaign led to important organizational results, with the setting up of permanent women's groups determined to overcome the problems of distribution of food.

One of the limitations of this sort of movement, however, is the lack of coordination. The nature of the demands raised means that women turn directly to the state, and when they get satisfaction, the structures set up during the campaigns generally disappear. That works against any continuity of the organizational forms created at specific moments. This is what has happened on many occasions to groups that mobilized, for example, to demand day-care centers. Once the authorities have met their demands, because they have had no longer-term perspectives, they have ceased to exist.

It should be stressed, however, that a mass campaign such as the one for milk was able to grow up only because groups existed before that had a project of using such a mobilization to give impetus to organizing a larger number of women, and they did not intend to confine themselves to a single theme. Such groups may be able in the future to serve as the springboard for developing permanent forms of organization among the most oppressed women.

Q. What has been the reaction of the unions to the birth of the feminist movement, and what are they doing today to defend the specific interests of working women?

A. The organization of women in the unions has lagged far behind what has been happening in the people's movement. There was a wave

of radicalization, under the influence of the feminist movement at the end of the 1970s, which was expressed in women's meetings and the creation of specific women's structures in the unions.

But discussion did not get much further than what was a central question at the time — the problem of night work. The government was trying to pass a law permitting night-shift work for women, and the unions were against it. Several unions, in particular the metalworkers' union in San Bernardo [a suburb of Sao Paulo] organized women-only meetings and conferences. But in general this was something exceptional, and for almost five years there have been no more meetings of this type. These meetings did not lead to either the question of the oppression of women or that of the specific organization of women becoming central themes in the unions.

It should be said that the union leaderships — even the most militant — failed to understand the problem posed. They rejected any idea of special forms for organizing women. After the meetings I referred to, they said explicitly that in the future they were never going to organize any more women-only meetings and that the only way to deal with the woman question was to include women's demands in the union's general platform of demands, to raise the problem in union congresses, and so on.

Unfortunately this was never done, and despite the large number of women working in industry and the fact that they are far from dead weight in the unions, their specific demands were systematically "overlooked" or downplayed, both in contract negotiations and in the day-to-day life of the unions. To justify this state of affairs, some have argued that women have joined the unions mainly to get the social benefits that accrue from union membership. But this is also true for men; and, moreover, more women than men joined the union organizations during the wave of strikes that hit Brazil from 1978-79.

Thus, for women, joining the workers' movement did not reflect a passive or purely self-interested attitude. The truth is that the union leaderships refused to give women the place they deserved, even though their increasing numbers led some of the union publications to deal rather regularly with the problems of discrimination against women workers in industry.

It was only in 1984 that the need for including demands of particular concern to women and for envisaging specific forms of organization for women began to be discussed again.

It should be stressed, however, that

it has not been the more militant currents in the unions but the more conservative sectors of the bureaucracy that have been taking the initiative so far. The election of the new government that was put in office in 1982, when the bourgeois opposition won in several of the major states in Brazil, certainly had something to do with this. In Sao Paulo, for example, the authorities set up a Women's Council as an integral part of the government. It established links with certain unions for undertaking common work, even helping them organize women's conferences or meetings. This could not help but push the more militant sectors to react, even if they did not do so as quickly or as strongly as one might have wished.

For example, the Central Unica dos Trabalhadores [CUT — United Workers Confederation] already took two important initiatives in 1985, with the conferences that were held in Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais to relaunch women's activity and the organization of women as such. Even if the terms of the discussion started up in 1978-79 on the situation of women in industry have scarcely advanced since then, this represents a real step forward toward a conscious policy for women. These two conferences fell far short of producing clear organizational perspectives, and the CUT leadership has even opposed the setting up of a permanent body for women's work. But it is quite likely that this proposal will arise again in the next congress of the CUT, and it may be adopted.

Another thing should be said. What has happened recently in agriculture has certainly had an influence on the unions in industry. In the cities, the specific demands of women have almost never been taken into consideration in negotiating contracts. But one of the three central demands in the main agricultural workers' strike in 1985 — the strike on the sugar-cane plantations near Sao Paulo — had to do with equal pay for women. This has never happened before, and the fact that women in the countryside have taken up the fight for this has had an unquestionable impact on the urban unions.

Q. What has been the role of the Partido dos Trabalhadores [PT — Workers Party] with regard to the radicalization and organization of women?

A. As I said, one of the essential problems of women has been the absence of any kind of coordination among the various groups. This has both limited their ability to intervene and been an obstacle to any per-

spective of unity in action on one or another theme. Of course, there is no question of wanting to force in an artificial way the setting up of a structure that would not reflect a certain minimum activity or mobilization.

Feminists have always been haunted by the fear that such coordination would force the tempo of development of the movement and reproduce certain authoritarian modes of functioning that prevail in the political parties. But that is not the problem. The problem today is that many women's groups in the people's movement are looking for political leadership and direction and they have a need for coordination. But the very spontaneist conception held by many feminists about the autonomy of the movement represents a real obstacle to its growth.

The fact is that it would be perfectly possible to unite our efforts to wage certain battles in common. This is why the PT, which exercises a strong attraction for the popular strata, has been led to play a role neglected by the women's movement. In several states, in fact, PT women's commissions have gone far beyond their initial brief and intentions. Instead of limiting themselves to organizing party activities and leading the intervention in the autonomous women's movement, these structures have represented a pole of attraction for all women who see in them a place to discuss their problems and their action projects.

This is attested by what happens regularly on March 8. It has become traditional that the PT organizes a whole section of women's groups for these demonstrations, because if it did not do it, no one would take the initiative. This situation is a problem both for the autonomy of the movement and because some women join the PT's women's commissions before even joining the party. This is something that must be resolved.

In the meantime, there is no doubt that the PT is a lever for bringing a lot of women into action, for which it has helped to give the impetus. The campaigns around problems of living conditions in the pockets of poverty in the urban centers will certainly continue to have a decisive character for the growth and organization of the women's movement for a whole period, even if they do not start out from the specific oppression of women. This is not just because of the depth of the economic crisis but also because of the nature of the women's groups that have arisen among the most disadvantaged layers and the role that they have to play in building a mass women's movement. □

AROUND THE WORLD



Netherlands

Anti-NATO solidarity

WITH THE encouragement of the 1985 END [European Nuclear Disarmament] conference in Amsterdam, a solidarity initiative has been started up in the Dutch peace movement with the anti-NATO movement in the Spanish state. The Socialistische Arbeiderspartij (SAP — Dutch section of the Fourth International) is deeply involved in this project.

On December 14, a conference on Spain and NATO was held in Rotterdam, with the collaboration of Wim Bartels (international secretary of the IKV [the main national peace organization in the Netherlands]) and Ludo Eijkelenkamp from Pax Christie.

At the conference, a statement of solidarity with the anti-NATO committee in Madrid was adopted. The committee has been holding a hunger strike to press the demand for a clear and decisive referendum on the question of NATO membership.

The conference resulted in a petition campaign, in which peace organizations, political parties, trade unions, and individuals are being asked to sign the following statement:

"The signatory organizations and individuals support the demand of the Spanish peace movement — 'Spain out of NATO and U.S. bases off Spanish territory.' We think that Spain's withdrawal from NATO is important because a further integration of the country in NATO will mean a reinforcing of the military blocs in Europe. This would be at the expense of detente and the breakdown of the blocs in Europe. Our own struggle against the deployment of cruise missiles in the Netherlands is precisely for that [that is, detente and breakdown of the blocs].

"Together with the Spanish peace movement, we want to work for a European peace policy. Shortly, a referendum will be held in Spain on membership in NATO. We call on the Spanish people to say 'no' to Spanish membership in NATO."

Among the initiators of this petition are the peace organizations Pax Christie, the Samenwerkingsverband stop de neutronen-bom, and Vrouwen tegen kernwapens; the political parties: the SAP, PSP [Pacifist Socialist Party], the PPR [Political

Party of Radicals] and the CPN [the Dutch Communist Party]; and individuals such as Wim Bertels and the members of parliament belonging to the above-mentioned parties.

Along with the petitioning, money is being collected to publish the text of the petition as an ad in the Spanish daily *El Pais* a week before the referendum is to be held (that is, the second week in March).

This initiative should highlight the fact that the peoples of the Spanish state are not going to be isolated from the rest of Europe if they vote against NATO. □

Czechoslovakia

Charter 77

THE Czechoslovak civil rights movement Charter 77 has announced its spokespersons for 1986. They are the literary critic Jan Stern, the programmer Martin Palous, and the long-time Charter activist Ana Sabotova, who is linked to the socialist wing of Charter 77. In 1972, Ana Sabotova was sentenced to three years in prison for participating in leafleting for a boycott of the parliamentary elections.

After the imprisonment of her husband, Petr Uhl, who was released in 1984 after five years in prison, she lived for many years with two policemen stationed in front of her door and with a constant escort of secret police. □

Was Tun, February 20, 1986

United States

Socialist Action anniversary

SOCIALIST Action, one of the organizations in the United States with fraternal links to the Fourth International, held a public meeting on January 18 to celebrate the second anniversary of its paper, which has the same name. About a hundred people attended the meeting, which took place in a hall in a union building.

Two leaders of Socialist Action spoke. Comrade Jake Cooper talked, in particular, about the fight waged by the workers of the Hormel packing-house company, who face a violent antiunion campaign. Editor Alan Benjamin made a balance sheet of two years of the paper.

Two trade-unionists also spoke — Seymour Kramer, a delegate to the San Francisco Labor Council; and Al Lannon, president of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Local 6.

Gustavo Acosta spoke for the Salvadoran FMLN. In particular, he denounced the massive bombing of the zones controlled by the FMLN and launched an appeal for solidarity.

Finally, Bob Hernandez spoke, on behalf of Roberto Vargas from the Nicaraguan embassy in Washington, who could not be present because of other commitments. "The Nicaraguan revolution," said Hernandez, "has made enormous advances. But we have also made mistakes. The revolution does not just want friends who congratulate it for good things it has done. It also wants friends who can help it think more deeply about the problems facing it."

The Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International sent a message of congratulations to Socialist Action, which was read by the presiding committee. □

West Germany

Greens take Kohl to court

PRELIMINARY hearings on a complaint against West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt were begun by the Coblenz tribunal on February 24. The head of the incumbent right-wing government was charged by a Green party deputy, Otto Schily, of giving false testimony in the Flick affair [involving payoffs to politicians by a West German trust].

Kohl was said to have lied to the parliamentary investigating committee of the Mainz regional diet when he denied that the Flick group had made illegal donations to a phoney association set up as a cover for the Christian Democratic Union. Otto Schily also filed a complaint accusing Kohl of concealing another donation of 55,000 marks. □

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Now!

International Women's Day - calender of events

ON MARCH 8, 1986, women around the world will be celebrating International Womens Day for the seventy-fifth time. The first International Womens Day was celebrated on March 19, 1911, following a call from the second international conference of Socialist Working Women in 1910. Below we give some examples of how women in different countries will be celebrating this historic occasion.

IN BELGIUM ... "Women Against the Crisis," a coalition that has brought together independent women's organizations, women from the workers' parties and the women's commissions of the two trade-union confederations (both Christian and socialist), has called for actions in the streets in as many cities as possible. Leaflets will be distributed supporting the struggles of women throughout the world but particularly in South Africa. And a call will be made for a boycott of the products of apartheid. Flowers will also be distributed.

In Brussels the demonstration will be broadened by the participation of groups of immigrant women and political refugees. An "official" visit will be paid to the new Secretary of State for Social Emancipation to communicate to him the demand that March 8 be declared an official holiday.

IN BRITAIN ... wives of printworkers currently engaged in a struggle for jobs are organizing a women's march to the picket line mounted on the Wapping print plant (near London) where newspaper magnate, Rupert Murdoch, has set up his new printing works based on scab labor. The women will be joined by miners' wives who have supported their call and who were themselves involved in similar activity on International Women's Day, last year.

Outside London, in most coal-mining areas, Women Against Pit Closures are organizing events since March 8 is also close to the anniversary of the beginning and end of the historic miners' strike.

IN DENMARK ... Copenhagen will hold its traditional large evening meeting organized by the trade unions. In other cities labor parties, trade unions and women's groups are organizing meetings and, in some places, demonstrations.

IN LUXEMBOURG ... For the fourth consecutive year a demonstration is being built by a coalition of women's, left and labor groups. This year's theme is "Violence against women" and will deal with the three aspects of violence: inside and outside of the family and in the media.

IN THE SPANISH STATE ... This year Women's Day, March 8, comes four days before the referendum on whether or not the Spanish state is to remain in NATO. Therefore, legal problems have arisen because it is not clear whether demonstrations can be held in the midst of the campaign around the referendum.

The movement's working orientation is that whether

or not it is legal, it is necessary to hold some sort of mobilization or ceremony to commemorate March 8 as a day of struggle for women. If it is legal, demonstrations will be called.

The forms of support which such actions get will be formal, because of the problem mentioned before. The theme of the day of action in almost all cities is going to focus on opposition to NATO and militarism. In some others, all the themes on which the movement is working — abortion, sexual harassment, etc. — will be raised.

IN SWITZERLAND ... A unified demonstration comprising feminist organizations, left parties and women's trade-union commissions has been called in Basel. The themes to be emphasized are: South Africa (two South Africans have been invited to speak at a public meeting); new reproductive technology; and solidarity with women refugees against racism and expulsions. A fete will also be held.

IN THE UNITED STATES ... The National Organization for Women (NOW) has called for massive demonstrations to be held in Washington, DC, on March 9 and in Los Angeles on March 16. The theme of the action is "National March for Women's Lives." The marches will protest both the violent attacks on abortion clinics during the last year and the Reagan administration's criminal offensive against women's right to control their own bodies.

A broad range of women's, Black, student and labor organizations are helping to build the demonstrations. Endorsements have been received from college and university groups across the nation. The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) is organizing a contingent in the Washington action. In a letter to the National Executive Board of CLUW urging participation in the march, CLUW President Joyce Miller wrote: "The purpose of the march is to show that the majority of Americans believe in and want to preserve a woman's fundamental right to make private and confidential decisions regarding reproduction, including the freedom to choose, or not to choose, abortion." □

