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BELGIAN WORKERS' MOOD
TURNS ANGRY

THE EUROPEAN WORKERS MOVEMENT AFTER POLAND

● FRANCE ● BELGIUM ● ITALY ● SPAIN

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By Ernest Mandel

The European Workers Movement After Poland

The class struggle in capitalist Europe has recently been marked by several important developments. The outstanding are the twenty-four-hour general strike in southern Italy and the revolving general strikes in Belgium following the twenty-four-hour national general strike of February 8.

But the Italian and Belgian strikes are only the high points in a panorama that includes the railway strike in Britain; the general strike in Portugal (partially a failure); the mobilizations of the Dutch workers against the coalition government's planned cuts in health insurance; the strikes in France against wage cuts in connection with the reduction of the legal workweek and in defense of jobs; and the growth of a movement for a political strike against the bourgeois coalition in Sweden, which is attacking the long established social gains of the workers.

This issue of International Viewpoint offers a more detailed look at a number of these developments.

Mobilization of a significant part of the European workers movement in defense of the Polish workers, whose basic trade-union rights were attacked by the military-bureaucratic crackdown of December 13, 1981, and the differentiation of the workers movement this impelled, fit into the general context of the struggle of the workers of capitalist Europe against the austerity and remilitarization drives of big capital.

This context has some very contradictory features. On the one hand, while the working class is fighting back against the capitalist offensive, the bosses are continuing to score points. Such successes include the partial failure of the general strike in Portugal; the shameful acceptance of a contract offering wage increases below the level of inflation by the West German steelworkers union, I. G. Metall; and the acceptance by the British miners (against the calls of the trade-union left and the miners union president Scargill) of a wage agreement of the same ilk.

Such capitalist victories are explained essentially by the combination of two factors. One is the weight of more and more serious and long-term unemployment. The other is the lack of a strategy for a concerted counterattack on the part of the reformist leaderships of the organized workers movement.

On the other hand, the unexpected successes of the general strikes in southern Italy and the Walloon country in Belgium reflect another phenomenon that will doubtless be seen in other countries. It is the changing effect of unemployment on the militancy and mentality of workers,

depending on what layers it hits, how long it lasts, and what the perspectives are.

At first, unemployment had scarcely any impact on the combativity of the European working class or on the strength of its mass organizations. That is, during the whole initial phase of the crisis (notably during the 1974-75 recession) unemployment only came down hard on the weakest strata of the working class, who were left without effective defense by the workers movement as a whole--immigrants, women, youth, part-time workers, unskilled laborers.

In the second phase, which began in 1979-80, unemployment struck hard at the best organized "heavy batalions" of the class--adult male workers without children, of average, or better than average, skills. These strata had been poorly prepared for this by trade-union leaderships that did not foresee the crisis, and still less how serious and prolonged it would be. In fact, these leaderships let themselves be pulled still further into the blind alley of class collaboration. For left reformists such as the Edmond Maire leadership of the French CFDT or the leadership of I.G. Metall in West Germany, this meant a sharp turn to the right. As a result, the "heavy batalions" of the class were caught badly off balance by blows of unemployment that fell suddenly on them.

The bosses and the bourgeois state took advantage of this disarray to try to crack or break some of the main fortresses of the European working class that these heavy batalions created during the preceding long period of full employment and the big workers struggles of the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s.

Attacks were launched against Fiat in Turin, British Leyland, the steel industry in French Lorraine, Cockerill-Ougree in the Walloon country, the Ruhr steel industry in Germany, and so on. These assaults achieved partial success, although it is not likely to prove lasting.

The recent events seem to indicate that a third phase is beginning. Layer by layer, the working class has come to understand that the present unemployment is not a temporary but a structural thing.

The workers know now that they are in danger of losing their jobs not just for a brief period, but that after a certain age they can lose them forever, at least in the field they are trained for. So, they are beginning to react forcefully, even violently. This is, of course, a violence of desperation. But it is not the violence of despair, that is, a hopeless violence that can lead to nothing.

Quite the contrary, this resurgence of working-class militancy can lead to a re-

sumption of large-scale workers struggles against the economic crisis and the remilitarization. That is, it can if the organized workers movement, or at least its dynamic wing, give the class as a whole the impression that they know where they are going and that they have a coherent economic alternative to the bourgeois or bourgeois-reformist "administration" of the crisis.

Such an alternative could not be credible if it remained purely defensive, that is, if it were limited to defending buying power, social benefits (indirect wages), or even to defending jobs by the fight for a 35-hour workweek now. These objectives are obviously essential, and revolutionists will be among those fighting hardest in the trade-union movement to get the unions to take up the struggle for these goals and to win them by effective methods.

However, given the objective and subjective effects of the economic crisis (including the results achieved by the bourgeoisie's ideological offensive), the fight for such defensive objectives cannot by itself mobilize all of the class. It can only do so if it is linked to a clearly anticapitalist working-class plan for solving the crisis.

Such a plan must include nationalization without compensation and under workers control of all the key industries, of all enterprises that receive state subsidies, and of all enterprises that shut down or carry out massive layoffs. It must include also nationalization of the entire credit sector. It has to include the development of a plan for meeting the needs of the masses and the elimination of all the pockets of poverty that are rapidly growing.

Such a plan has to be applied on the basis of massive public investments, under the supervision of rank-and-file committees in the plants and neighborhoods and without the proliferation of state bureaucracy.

Everywhere the revolutionary Marxists are the tendency in the workers movement that is highlighting the structural, that is capitalist, character of the economic crisis. But they are not limiting themselves to carrying out general socialist propaganda. They are proposing a program of transitional demands that can mobilize the masses in actions that will develop in an anticapitalist direction, based on the masses' own immediate concerns.

The revolutionary Marxists link this program to political objectives that are credible in the eyes of the masses and which lead them toward the taking of power, which prepare them to confront not just the bosses but the bourgeois government and the bourgeois state.

Decisive Moment Approaches in El Salvador

Despite their military advisors, their financial and material aid, and the various pressures they have been bringing to bear on Nicaragua and Cuba in an attempt to isolate the Salvadoran guerrillas, the American imperialists have not succeeded in consolidating the power of the military and Christian Democratic junta in San Salvador.

Not only have the forces of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front not been subdued. Their recent operations show that they are resuming their advance at a level higher than they had reached before their January 1981 offensive.

Signs of demoralization are also appearing in the repressive forces. Two companies based at the San Carlos barracks in the capital recently refused to go into battle. One of the two FMLN radio stations, Radio Venceremos, announced that soldiers in the San Miguel barracks had been put before a firing squad for refusing to fight.

THE FMLN ADVANCES

As the March 23 elections draw near, the objectives of the FMLN's military actions become more and more clearly defined. At the beginning of February, two towns were temporarily occupied, Tonacatepeque, eighteen kilometers from the capital; and Usulután, the country's fourth largest city, about 100 kilometers from San Salvador.

Commandante Juan Antonio Medrano, who led the operations in Usulután, said on February 6 that for several days his forces had conducted "preinsurrectionary" actions in preparation for urban guerrilla warfare.

On February 8, almost half the country was deprived of electricity after an attack on the generator at San Rafael de los Cedres, north of the capital.

The breadth of the FMLN's military activity is certainly going to revive the debate among the various tendencies in the front about the prospect of a new large-scale offensive. The perspective of insurrection has

already been advanced in some statements by FMLN leaders.

The FMLN leader in the Guazapa volcano region north of San Salvador said recently: "We are now in a decisive phase, and what we are interested in now is accelerating the war." (International Herald Tribune, February 22, 1982.)

The capital itself has not been secure from FMLN actions. After burning about twenty buses over a period of a few days, the guerrillas launched a bazooka attack on February 10 against the main telecommunications center in San Salvador.

Even if the involvement of the urban masses in such actions is still small, these operations testify to the fact that the FMLN is reorganizing its network in the cities.

In view of these facts, it is harder and harder to present the elections scheduled for March 28 as a credible and lasting "political solution."

The U.S. ambassador in San Salvador, Deane Hinton, himself recently admitted that the elections would not end the war.

More explicitly still, Jorge Bustamante, chairman of the National Electoral Commission, has said that in the event of a victory by ARENA (the Republican National Alliance led by the fascist-like Major Roberto d'Aubuisson), "this would mean a bloodbath, a real civil war." It is obvious that these elections can in no way resolve the internal dissensions in the junta and the formations that support it.

Aware of the deterioration of the military situation for the junta, the imperialist leaders are now openly considering direct military intervention. A number of them regard this as the last chance to stop a victory of the FMLN. Moreover, Ronald Reagan is not just talking. He has just sent additional military aid to El Salvador and dispatched his destroyers to patrol the Gulf of Fonseca.

In order to prepare the political ground for a military escalation, the U.S. Secretary of State, General Alexander Haig,

has developed a long argument trying to show that the situation in Central America is different from the one in Vietnam. In substance, he says that the stakes are higher now because Central America is decisive for U.S. interests.

While Washington is getting more and more deeply involved in backing the Central American dictatorships, divisions have appeared even among the representatives of the American ruling class over the policy the Reagan administration is now following. These criticisms are impelled above all by the strong feeling of opposition to new military adventures that exists among the American population itself.

It is in this highly-charged context that the Mexican president, Jose Lopez Portillo, made his proposals on February 21 in Managua for "a realistic alternative" in Central America.

Any U.S. military intervention, Lopez Portillo said, would be "a historic error that would touch off a continent-wide convulsion and the resurgence of deep anti-Americanism among the finest people throughout Latin America." (Le Monde, February 23, 1982.)

The Mexican president offered himself as mediator in negotiations on the three key questions of U.S. relations with Cuba, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.

In his "Appeal from Managua," Lopez Portillo proposed that the U.S. stop its military threats against the Sandinista regime, that the counterrevolutionists being trained in Honduras and Florida be disarmed, and that a regional nonaggression pact be signed. In return for such a formal guarantee from the U.S., Nicaragua was supposed to reduce its arms imports.

No concrete proposal was advanced for El Salvador. But Lopez Portillo envisaged a compromise between "elections without negotiations" and "negotiations without elections."

The Mexican president's opposition to imperialist intervention and his taking his distance from the Salvadoran elections represents

an important diplomatic success for the FMLN. On the other hand, his offer to mediate reflects the Mexican government's desire to avoid a general revolutionary conflagration, which would certainly have consequences for Mexico itself.

A few days after Lopez Portillo's "Appeal from Managua," Reagan announced a development plan for the Caribbean and Central America.

This program provides for opening the U.S. to imports from Central America for ten years--in fact, 87% of products from this area already enter the U.S. tariff free. It provides for fiscal aids for companies investing in these countries, for 350 million dollars more aid in fiscal year 1982, and 644.4 million dollars for fiscal 1983, as well as for technical aid to the private sector.

This new "Mini-Marshall Plan" seems strangely to ignore the reality of the armed conflicts it is designed to defuse. "If we do not

act rapidly and decisively to defend freedom," Reagan said in presenting his plan, "new Cubas will arise from the ruins of today's conflicts."

Such aid cannot solve the problems created by the civil war in Salvador or even moderate the social contradictions that are at the root of the revolutionary upsurge in this region. To the contrary, this aid, which is to go primarily to the private sector, can only increase the social distortions and reinforce the local financial oligarchies. What is more, this plan is a cover for what amounts to increasing military aid.

The scheme in fact provides for 60 million dollars more military aid for the region in the form of shipments of arms, helicopters, PT boats, as well as transportation and radio equipment. Thus, for the current year military aid will be increased to 182 million dollars, with a large part being earmarked for El Salvador.

The determination of the Reagan regime to push its aggressive policy in Central America must not in any way be underestimated. Alexander Haig himself illustrated this when he explained the way in which he thought the situation in Central America differed from the one in Vietnam:

"This is located at the heart of American interests in the hemisphere." He continued: "A military threat on our doorstep raises a different sort of problem."

Therefore, the date of the Salvadoran elections must be the occasion for the largest possible anti-imperialist demonstrations throughout the world. In particular, such demonstrations are being built in the United States. The International Forum of Solidarity with the Salvadoran People that will be held March 26-28 in Mexico must be utilized to organize international solidarity work and to lay out new perspectives for building mobilizations in support of the Salvadoran people.

By François Vercammen

Belgian Workers' Mood Turns Angry

Along with Britain, Belgium has the deepest economic crisis in the north of Europe. At present it has the highest unemployment rate in the Common Market.

The tensions between the capitalist rulers determined to impose draconian austerity and economic restructuring and the workers have been mounting sharply. The stage for a new confrontation was set when a government composed only of representatives of the capitalist parties was formed after the November 1981 elections.

The twenty-four-hour general strike of February 8 was a dramatic explosion of working-class anger coming after a long period of setbacks for working people.

Once the lid was off, it was not easy to get it back on.

On February 15, the Walloon steelworkers spontaneously resumed strike action. This was accompanied by some very sharp actions to stop trains, reminiscent of certain aspects of the general strike of 1960-61.



Belgian Strikers Stop Train (DR)

The steelworkers were protesting against the Martens government's abandonment of the plan to bail out the steel industry in Liege and Charleroi.

Confronted with this spontaneous reaction of the workers and the breadth of the attack on the workers' standard of living involved in the conservative government's austerity policy, the Social Democratic union confederation, the FGTB, has decided to resume national actions. But these are to be conducted in a still more moderate and limited way than its previous actions. They will be revolving strikes, five days of twenty-four-hour regional strikes extending from March 9 to March 25.

The following article outlines the lessons of the February 8 general strike.

* * *

"The government will not draw any tactical conclusions from this action," the Belgian premier, Martens, declared on the eve of the February 8 general strike.

This comment is characteristic of the new all-bourgeois government. Its first act was to demand special powers (the right of the government to legislate by decree

for a year), so that it could "implement an emergency program to revive the Belgian economy."

The "breakdown" of the functioning of parliament resulting from the recent elections had prompted the bourgeoisie to shift the focus of political life away from the National Assembly toward direct confrontation with the workers in the factories.

The fifth Martens government in office now is far from strong. It can survive only if it can retain the support of the Catholic trade-union confederation. Thus, while this administration has chosen to confront the workers more directly, it is obliged at the same time to try to maneuver to divide them.

So, at the end of January when the government asked for special powers, it did not specify exactly what would be included in its decree-laws. Of course, nobody was in the dark about the general content. Nonetheless, Martens' reticence paid off. It enabled the most right-wing currents in the CSC to call for taking a wait-and-see attitude.

As a result the Catholic union decided to continue its discussions with the government, despite the flexible and cooperative attitude taken toward it by the Social Democrat-dominated union. The FGTB wanted to respond immediately to the government's move but at the same time to maintain a common front with the CSC.

The position adopted by the national leadership of the CSC did not go over well with the confederation's member bodies in the Walloon country. All of them decided to defy the directives of their national leadership (Flemish in its majority) and go on strike together with the FGTB.

The kickoff was given on February 7 by the railway workers. In less than fifteen minutes, thanks to the unity in action between the FGTB and the CSC, the entire rail network in the Walloon country was paralyzed.

In Brussels and to a lesser degree in Flanders disruptions grew that varied in seriousness from locality to locality.

In the Walloon country, the strike was almost totally effective. But in general there were only token pickets and few street demonstrations. In Charleroi on February 4 militant workers put forward a proposal calling for such actions, but the bureaucracy blocked it.



Belgian Workers in Militant Street Demonstration (DR)

The strike was effective in the industrial belt of Brussels, where a de facto united front of the two confederations emerged.

In Flanders, where the CSC has a clear majority, the workers affiliated with the Catholic union remained essentially under the control of the apparatus. Nonetheless, the FGTB managed to largely paralyze the port of Antwerp (the public workers were key to this.) In several plants, CSC workers did not "insist" over much when they found their way blocked by pickets who showed some "firmness."

In the industrial area of Ghent, about 80% of the workers at the big Sidmar steel factory struck, despite the fact that the CSC is in the majority there.

At Texaco, the strike was total. The Langerbrugge shipyards were shut down. The Limburg miners, who learned on the very eve of February 8 that their wages were going to be cut, went out, defying the explicit orders of a very right-wing CSC bureaucracy.

In the country as a whole, the strike was by no means a failure. To judge the action, three factors have to be taken into account:

--The strike was meant as a warning, not a fight to the finish. To convince the Flemish workers that it was worth their while to defy their leaders, it would have been necessary to build the strike as a decisive confrontation.

--The FGTB shop stewards often drew the conclusion from the foregoing fact that it was not worth endangering future prospects for trade-union unity by trying to force the CSC shop stewards and members to go along with a minority strike. In fact, significant movement toward unity has been developing for some time.

At the same time, the right-wing Flemish CSC leadership saw the opportunity offered by the FGTB's uncertainty. It launched the accusation that the Social Democrat confederation was attempting a "political" strike.

--Thirdly, the workers upsurge is just beginning. The broad masses of workers have not yet got a concrete feel of how deep the government's antilabor measures are going to cut. The result is that there is not yet a real upsurge from below but rather a radicalization of union activists and shop stewards, especially in the FGTB.

Moreover, the workers (especially in the CSC) have not forgotten that the Belgian Socialist Party was in the first austerity government. They do not see a political alternative to fight for.

Nonetheless, extremely positive new factors emerged from this strike.

This time it was the Flemish CSC that was isolated in the context of the trade-union movement as a whole, not the Walloon FGTB, as was the case in 1960-61. This factor will weigh heavily when the government moves to attack the sliding scale of wages and social security.

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Dutch Workers Mobilize to Defend Health Benefits

(From the February 27 issue of the weekly paper of the Dutch section of the Fourth International.)

Klassenstrijd's correspondents report work stoppages, marches, and rallies throughout the country. On Friday, February 12, the Amsterdam and Rotterdam harbors were shut down after the lunch break. In Rotterdam, 20,000 workers struck for a couple of hours. During the day, there were actions in forty plants. In the following days, work stoppages took place even as far south as Kerkrade.

Roermond, February 13. A thousand people listened to a speech by Hans Postwinkel. He explained in detail the bad effects the cutbacks in health insurance would bring. For example, he pointed out that all payments not covered by the law would stop. We had already fought for and earned that right in the past. These plans in particular hit the most disadvantaged.

He went into the actions that were held against the wages law in 1980, criticizing the unions for calling off actions after the passage of antilabor laws.

"We do not wage any political struggles, only trade-union struggles. Standing up for trade-union rights is compatible with parliamentary democracy."

Once the laws are passed, then the fight shifts back to the individual factories.

Workers from Rank Xerox shouted: "Hands off our sick pay!" and "action! action!" In the discussion, among other things, a guarantee was demanded that the unions would carry the fight through to the end. A question was raised about how to reach people in factories where it is hard to get the workers aroused.

The speakers had no answer for that. There is a scenario for further actions. But that was not up for discussion.

Nijmegen, February 13. After small actions at Honig, Nijma, and later at Lenstein, about 400 people gathered in the demonstration in Arnhem. Here also, people spoke out against any calling off the actions as happened in 1980. A group of shop stewards from Arnhem proposed a week-long strike. But no discussion was possible at the rally.

Vlissingen. "While billions of

florins are being slipped out of our country, our social benefits are being attacked to increase the profits of the bosses." Wil Waumans, district chairman of the FNV in Zeeland said that during the march of 2,000 workers from De Scheide.

On February 12, the workers staged a two-hour work stoppage and marched through the Scheide area of Vlissingen. The day after that in the FNV demonstration in Goes, Tiny Hofman and David de Leeuw from Scheide called for setting up an action committee.

The chairman tried to table that question for consideration of the full-time leadership, but that didn't work. It was decided on the spot to set up such a committee. At the rallies, calls were made for ABVA-KABO to play more of a role in the actions.

Terneuzen, February 13. At an FNV demonstration, five hundred people decided to join "anybody" who went on strike.

Amsterdam, February 15. An assembly of union activists in Krasnapolski. The district team came in with the following proposal: "We should go out to organize unlimited strike actions." The companies got notice of new contract negotiations for the district. At the same time, they were informed that they would have to continue to pay sick benefits 100 percent, and that this was not negotiable.

The ultimatum runs out on March 5, and the first strikes could begin on March 8.

For the engineering industry, there is a discussion on March 3 in the ROM. If the response is negative, this ultimatum also runs out on March 5. Then strikes could begin in March 8 in factories such as Honig, Batco, Forbo Krommenie, Hertel, ADM NSM, Jonker du Croo Ficon, Stork, Tevema, and Groenpol.

On February 24, there is an assembly for union activists from sixteen factories. The discussion will focus on the following points: The need for setting up a district action leadership made up of shop stewards and the district leadership.

This proposal was put forward previously in assemblies, at rallies, and in a letter to the district leadership. But such an action leadership still does not

exist.

What is more, in various quarters the need was talked about for organizing a nationwide twenty-four hour strike, involving all the member unions of the FNV. Among others, the activists group at Fokker came out for such a strike.

Utrecht, February 13. About 400 people were present at a protest rally by the Utrecht FNV district committee. The mood of those present was very militant. A lot of speakers argued for central actions. Along with this, there were demands for guarantees that the actions would not be called off the way they were in 1980. There was also a lot of applause for the proposal that action committees be formed in each union and for the whole district.

It did become clear that the extent of militancy was uneven. Chrit van Ewijk of the ABVA/KABO argued that this was another argument for central actions. A proposal for setting a regional day of action was swept under the table by the chairman.

The Hague, February 12. A protest was held at the SER building. The result was disappointing. But groups of workers from a number of plants were present.

At the February 13 rally, an amendment to the resolutions was presented stating that a nationwide strike was needed to coincide with the debate in parliament. On the other hand, the mood was not very militant. A lot of people doubted that it was a good idea to get into a confrontation with the PvdA.

Rotterdam. Four hundred to five hundred union members came to the FNV demonstration at De Doelen. After a weak introduction by Herman Bode, the speakers came out of the crowd to raise the question of the concrete strategy for action. They spoke against delaying the confrontation until the contract negotiations, for hard actions before the parliamentary debate, for a twenty-four hour strike by the entire FNV, and against any calling off of the struggles as happened in 1980. They tried to sharpen up the FNV resolution in these respects, but the formulation that finally emerged was ambiguous. ■

By Felix Loursou

Polish Solidarity in France Reflects Rise of Worker Militancy

What basically explains the massive-ness and dynamism of the movement of solidarity with Solidarnosc in France is the sort of relationship of forces between the classes that emerged after the defeat of the bourgeois parties in the May and June 1981 elections.

France is also the only country in Western Europe where the workers are confident and where there is talk in public life about advancing toward socialism, where this seems a concrete thing for many people.

The right has not recovered from its defeats and has not been able to make any serious effort to take advantage of the bureaucracy's outrages in Poland to whip up an anti-Communist campaign, as was in fact done in 1956 over the Soviet military intervention in Hungary.

When one of the bourgeois parties, the RPR, tried to lead a cortege of about 500 persons into a united-front demonstration called by the workers organizations on December 14, and which drew many tens of thousands of participants, the rightists were forcibly expelled.

This is the first time that we have seen massive mobilization by workers in France against repression in the East European countries. In 1968, when the French CP also "disapproved" of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, most of the French workers condemned it. But the protests came essentially from intellectuals.

Today most French workers feel an active solidarity with Solidarnosc, despite the fact that the CP, the main workers party, and the union confederation it controls, the CGT, the country's strongest union, are deadset against support developing for the Polish workers.

One important factor in this working-class sympathy is the direct contacts that were established between Polish and French trade-unionists. Lech Walesa visited France and was popular among French workers. They particularly appreciated his tenacity and his confidence in dealing with the bureaucrats.

When Walesa came to this country in October 1981, he was received not only by the CFDT (the confederation close to the SP) and the Federation de l'Education Nationale (the teachers union in which the left is strong) and Force Ouvriere (the old Social Democrat union). He was also received by the CGT.

For many "class struggle" union activists who have been looking for a political alternative since the May 10, 1981, victory of the left in the presidential elec-

tions, the fight waged by Solidarnosc embodied their hopes for a democratic socialism. Many of these people today make a point of wearing Solidarnosc badges on the job.

The CFDT for example sent representatives to Poland back at the time of the August 1980 strikes.

In France also there is a serious mass press, papers such as Le Monde and Liberation. Therefore, there has been a fairly broad understanding of the sort of movement Solidarnosc was.

There are also certain contrary currents in the working class. In some backward layers, there has been a feeling that the Solidarity activists were responsible for the crackdown because they wanted to "go too far."

Also, in some more militant sectors, especially immigrant workers, you find the idea that there is "too much talk" about the repression in Poland and not enough about repression in third world countries. These sectors will oppose the union bureaucracy on methods of struggle but not Poland.

Obviously, if paradoxically, the CP is trying to build on both currents to stop the movement of solidarity with Poland.

There is now another problem. It is two months since the crackdown in Poland, and the interest among workers naturally is not as sharp as it was. Everyday concerns are taking over again. The CP is also trying to take advantage of that by arguing that "you can't go on discussing Poland forever."

Nonetheless, here unlike in Italy and Spain, workers reacting against the betrayals of the "liberal" bureaucrat leaders have not fallen to the tough-sounding mythology of Stalinism. Even the most Stalinist in the French CP talk in somewhat muted tones about Poland. This time the tough talk is being left to tiny sects whose purpose in life is posturing, such as the Spartacists.

The attitude of the SP here helped assure the development of a mass movement for Solidarnosc. It did not throw its weight against mobilizations for Poland as did the SPs in Germany and Austria. In fact, in view of the relationship of class forces in France, that would not have been possible. Nonetheless, the SP, like its sister parties, does not want and is unable to build a mass solidarity movement.

In the case of Poland, we saw a division of labor between the SP in government and the party.

The government's first response to the crackdown came from Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson: "We note that this is a Polish internal affair. For the moment we see no threat of foreign intervention and that reassures us....Of course, we will not do anything."

Cheysson's statement made quite a bad impression on the left and working-class public opinion that is important to the SP. Pierre Mauroy, the premier, tried to rectify that. He went so far as to voice his "protest." But immediately he added: "The present events remain internal to Poland. We want them to stay that way."

The SP leaders who are not in the government did not hide so deeply in diplomatic language. At a united-front meeting called in support of Solidarnosc, the new party first secretary, Lionel Jospin, demanded the lifting of the state of siege and release of those imprisoned. He even denounced the offensive of U.S. imperialism in Central America.

Given the fact that the SP's main rival lined up this time with Jaruzelski and Moscow, the Social Democrats recognized that a few gestures that would not cost them very much would do the CP real harm.

Despite the enormous means at its disposal, the SP made only a token effort for Poland. At no time did it seek to build a mass movement in support of the Polish workers.

What is more, the SP statements did not go beyond the framework of defending civil liberties. At no time did this party--which declares its support for workers self-management at all of its congresses--ever talk about the living movement for self-management that developed in Poland. Obviously that would not have fitted in very well with Francois Mitterrand's continuing his policy of collaborating with the bosses.

Unlike the SP, the CFDT did mobilize in a significant way to defend Solidarnosc against the repression. It organized a number of rallies, often in a united front with the FEN teachers union, FO, the Catholic trade-union confederation, and the professionals union. It has published the statements of Solidarnosc representatives in its periodical Syndicalisme Hebdo.

The CFDT is under more direct pressure than the SP and has more to gain by identifying itself with Solidarity. It has to attract the layer of workers who have identified their hopes for a democratic socialism with Solidarnosc.

Nonetheless, CFDT General Secretary Edmond Maire has remained distinctly dis-

creech about the real activity of Solidarnosc, which in many respects was the diametrical opposite of the confederation he heads.

The CFDT press does not talk about the firmness of the Solidarnosc leaders in pushing the workers demands, nor the sort of workers democracy that existed in this struggle, nor about the real movement for self-management in Poland. This is all quite unlike the CFDT's practice of gentlemanly negotiations with the bosses and the scaling down of the workers demands.

While the CFDT clearly hopes to gain from the Polish issue at the expense of the CP-controlled CGT, it does not carry this to the point of enthusiasm about cooperating with the "CGT With Solidarnosc" committees built by oppositionists in that union confederation. Far leftists play an important role in many of these committees, and the CFDT does not like either the militant policies they favor for France or the example they point to in Solidarnosc's work.

The SP's fellow-traveling union confederation hopes to encourage the moderates in Solidarnosc to move closer to where it stands. It has called on the Polish union to "seek negotiated solutions and compromises with the state." At the same time, it says that "the question of power" must not be posed because of "Poland's geopolitical position." (*Syndicalisme Hebdo*, January 7, 1982.)

At the same time that the Italian and Spanish CPs felt compelled to take a greater distance from the "Soviet model," the French CP was distributing hundreds of thousands of leaflets with General Jaruzelski's statement justifying the state of siege on one side, and a communique by party leader Georges Marchais on the other.

A few years ago, the French CP identified itself with Eurocommunism. At its Twenty-Second Congress in February 1976, it advanced a muted criticism of the East European countries.

The position it has taken now on Poland, however, follows from the one that it took on Afghanistan and the declaration it made at its Twenty-Third Congress in May 1979 about a "positive overall balance sheet of the socialist countries."

The party daily, *L'Humanite*, has shut its eyes to the antiworking-class measures of the military regime, the suspension of the right to strike, and the arrests.

Pierre Juquin, member of the CP Political Bureau even found the nerve to say: "The principles that General Jaruzelski has proclaimed and the commitments he has assumed reflect what we consider to be priceless human values."

The Polish events came at a time when the CP was going through one of the gravest crises in its history. In the May and June 1981 elections, it lost a quarter of its vote. While it continues to claim officially that it has 710,000 members, the real figure is probably between 200,000 and 300,000 (including 50,000 full timers).

The leadership admits that the party has lost a thousand of its plant cells (10% of the total). In the past three years, sales of *L'Humanite* have dropped from 150,000 to 75,000.

Nonetheless, the CP leadership managed to get almost unanimous support for its positions at its Twenty-Fourth Congress in January 1982. Out of 1,685 delegates, only two abstained, and none voted against the draft resolution presented by Georges Marchais.

The main reason for this was the party's ultrabureaucratic internal regime. Discussion was systematically smothered. Several batches of oppositionists were expelled on the eve of the congress. There was an elaborate filtering-out mechanism for delegates. They had to get a majority vote on four levels (the cell, the section, federation, and regional congress).

Another factor is the general political anemia afflicting a party where only the apparatus and the hacks remain active.

The opposition also did not show determination. The only credible pole was Henri Fiszbin. A former member of the Central Committee and former leader of the Paris federation, he controls a weekly magazine, *Rencontres Communistes Hebdo* and an extensive network inside the party and its apparatus. Several thousand CP members have signed a public petition against the expulsion of the founders of this magazine.

Paradoxically, the Soviet CP chiefs helped to increase the credibility of the Fiszbin opposition by proposing through the Paris TASS bureau that *Rencontres Communistes* publish their statement attacking the Italian CP for the stand it took in connection with Poland. *L'Humanite* had not.

However, all the Fiszbin opposition did was issue a few press releases and hold one public meeting in Paris a month after the putsch.

Finally, tens of thousands of CP members with critical views on Poland voted "with their feet." Left without perspectives in a party where the air was becoming unbreathable, they stopped going to their cell and branch meetings, and many left the party altogether.

It is significant that the average age of delegates at the recent CP congresses on all levels was ten to fifteen years older than in the past.

The Marchais leadership may think that it cut its losses. But the slow loss of membership represents a serious hemorrhage. Moreover, never has the authority of the leadership been so weak, and this at a time when decisive tests are ahead for France.

Most importantly, in the CGT, the party's main instrument for maintaining control of the working class, a mass opposition has appeared for the first time, grouped around the question of Poland.

On December 14, CGT leader Georges Seguy announced that Solidarnosc's last actions before the putsch "went beyond trade unionism" and posed the danger of

"chaos and anarchy."

The CGT condemned the December 14 united-front demonstration as "a display of anti-Communism...." It denounced the December 21 solidarity strike with Poland called by the CFDT, the FEN, and FO, as a maneuver by the rightist Paris mayor Jacques Chirac that was "openly backed by many bosses." It even went so far in an internal circular to compare Solidarnosc with a French yellow union financed by the bosses and the far right.

The CGT's position was in flagrant contradiction to statements it made in defense of liberties in the East European countries at its congress in 1978.

Many members had not forgotten these statements, just as they had not forgotten that only two months before the putsch Georges Seguy had received Lech Walesa and officially invited him to the CGT congress in June 1982. All this helps explain why Seguy's scandalous behavior after the December coup provoked such an enormous movement of protest inside the CGT.

Five days after the putsch, a number of CGT unions called a press conference at the Bourse du Travail in Paris. They issued a statement saying: "The CGT must be on the side of the Polish workers and Solidarity." They demanded that the national leadership condemn the state of siege, demand its immediate lifting, and demand the release of all imprisoned trade unionists.

The statement called on CGT members to build solidarity actions "as massive and united as possible." At the same time, they appealed to the CGT unions to "denounce the campaign of the right which never shows any interest in a workers movement except in East Europe." Finally they announced the formation of a CGT Trade Union Coordinating Committee with a public address.

On January 12, at the Bourse du Travail, 2,000 CGT members assembled to express their solidarity with the Polish workers. The balance sheet of the first three weeks was impressive. Five thousand CGT members had signed the petition. About 45,000 francs had been collected for Solidarnosc. Twenty-four regional coordinating committees had been set up and fifteen more were being formed.

Six federations; twenty-three national, regional, and departmental unions; seven local unions; and 486 union sections had come out in support of at least the three basic demands of the movement.

Never since the second world war has such an opposition movement developed in the CGT. This development was prepared by the emergence of oppositions fighting the fragmentation of struggles, as well as the divisionist policy and the refusal to mobilize the workers to defeat Giscard d'Estaing. The opposition that has emerged around Poland is the continuation of this, but on a qualitatively higher level.

For the first time, important opposition voices have been raised in the industrial unions, such as the Iron and Salt Miners Federation of Lorraine, the Angers steelworkers, and the Saint Nazaire stevedores.

In the unions at a series of big factories owned by the Renault, Shell, Tomas, Pechiney-Ugine-Kuhlman, Elf-France, and SNECMA, resolutions of solidarity got majorities or large minority votes. In Longwy in Lorraine, the leaders of the unions in about twenty engineering factories jointly signed a public statement.

The opposition on Poland will inevitably carry over into other areas, into struggles.

The issue of Poland will have a considerable effect on the recomposition of the workers movement. It is accentuating

the crisis of Stalinism. Obviously the SP is in the best situation today to benefit. It already has made big gains electorally.

In the CGT, the current aligned with the SP is gaining. The CFDT has just won successes in various representation elections at the CGT's expense. A number of CGT activists, repelled by their national leadership's position, have gone into the CFDT. However, it would be wrong to see this process as a similar linear shift from the CP to the SP.

It is primarily on the basis of the problems that touch their daily lives that workers make their decisions. On this level, the CGT leadership has room for maneuver. For example, it has adopted a more militant position than the CFDT on the strikes that began only a few weeks

after December 13 on the government's ordinances on cutting the workweek. The confederation close to the SP accepted wage cuts in return for a small cut in worktime.

Most importantly, the game is not being played just between Stalinist and SP leaderships. Through their experience on Poland but also with the government's austerity policy and bureaucratic sell-outs, tens of thousands of union members are radicalizing and looking for a different way from that offered by the old leaderships. Class struggle oppositions are developing in both the CGT and CFDT. It is the task of the LCR, French section of the Fourth International, to offer them a political alternative both to Stalinism and Social Democracy.

Pierre Rème

French Workers Strike Against Left Government's Givebacks

On February 1, a government ordinance was issued reducing the legal workweek from 40 to 39 hours. Paradoxically at first glance, this touched off thousands of strikes in the private sector, the public health services, and in the post office. The situation became serious enough to force the calling on February 10 of a tripartite meeting (the unions, the bosses, and the government).

The ordinance was the first of a series of regulations that the SP-CP majority claims will make it possible to "move progressively toward a 35-hour week." The response by the workers forced the government to make some corrections. The president himself intervened to say that "no workers will get their wages cut because of a reduction in working hours." That is what the problem was, what explains the strikes, the government's gift to the workers was supposed to be paid for by lower wages.

This first shock brought home to many workers that they would have to fight to defend themselves, that they could not depend on the SP-CP majority in the government to defend them from the bosses. For the first time, many workers leaders and activists publicly criticized the new majority.

It is essential to understand this first experience of mass struggle against the government to see how the situation is evolving in France.

After the victory of the left in the May 10 presidential elections, in conditions where there were more than two million unemployed, all of labor expected

immediate steps to be taken. It expected that the minimum wage would be increased by 25% to catch up with inflation, that the workweek would be cut, and that jobs would be increased. The new premier, Mauroy, raised the minimum wage by only 5%. But at the same time, he promised to "take command of the war against unemployment."

In practice, he tried to negotiate adjustments in the labor law with the bosses to encourage them to hire. But despite millions of francs in aid (subsidies or exemptions from paying contributions to the unemployment funds or Social Security), the layoffs continued at the same rate as in the last months of the Giscard government--one worker laid off every minute, that is 200,000 more jobless between June and November 1981.

It became clear that the government was not going to be able to offer a shorter workweek as the result of negotiations with the bosses, as the result of a "social consensus."

The bosses in fact made very harsh demands. They maintained that the workers should pay for the reduction in hours to the tune of wage cuts equalling 50% to 70% of the pay for the reduced time.

Various "adjustments" in the laws were also demanded. The bosses wanted a new definition of "night work" more favorable to them, "special teams for weekend work," a big expansion of part-time jobs, the right to change work schedules over a year period, the right to demand overtime without any administrative or trade-union check (130 hours, or an av-

erage of 2.8 per week out of the 47 workweeks in a year), with a certain additional margin for overtime above this.

In all, to meet these demands by the bosses, it has been estimated that at least 50 articles in the Labor Code would have to be overturned, as well as all the safeguards for the workers included in the 40-hour workweek law passed by the Popular Front government in 1936.

The CFDT, the union confederation in which the SP has invested its greatest hopes, wanted at all cost to assure the success of these negotiations with the employers. Nonetheless, the majority of the member unions and locals refused to go along. At the congresses of many of the member unions, motions condemning the national leadership got between 35% and 50% of the votes.

The leadership of the CGT, the CP-controlled union, rejected the bases of the agreement with the bosses. It participated in all the negotiation sessions in all branches of industry. But it put forward the demand for cutting the workweek immediately to 38 hours. So, on the basis of this less scandalous position than that of its rival, the CFDT, it was able to limit the hostile reactions in its own ranks.

Basing itself on the experience of these negotiations, the LCR, French section of the Fourth International, began in June to build a campaign for a 35-hour week without any quid pro quo for the bosses. It has been getting a growing response.

At the end of November, in order to avoid a parliamentary debate that would have provided a focus for the politicalization that has been developing around the questions of the workweek and unemployment, the government changed its tactic. It could not get a law expressing class collaboration. Therefore, it would issue ordinances, government decrees issued without being debated in the National Assembly, but which had to be voted on later.

Hidden in the fine print, the ordinance included everything the bosses wanted in terms of work rules. The only guideline laid down on wage cuts was that the lowest category of wage earners should lose nothing. Everything else was "open to negotiation."

From the moment the Council of Ministers adopted the ordinance on January 13, a lot of small bosses wanted to put it into practice immediately. This produced a crucial test. Hundreds of workplaces were hit by strikes. In the following two weeks, the strike wave grew. It hit big engineering companies such as Chausson (which has several plants with 4,500 workers) and the Dassault and Schlumberger trusts, but also companies with a few hundred workers. It spread to the big stores in the Paris region and in several other urban areas, textiles, the food industry, etc. Among the public workers, the customs people walked out and the government sent in riot police finally to replace them. There were actions in the post offices to shouts "no givebacks," "more workers," "35 hours this year."

In general, the actions were short walkouts involving almost all the workers. The massive character of these protests achieved the broadest possible unity in action, often against the wishes of the union leaderships.

In a lot of factories, the union leaderships backpedaled very quickly. This was especially true in the big industrial complexes. The leadership initially wanted to give back extra leave for seniority that had been provided for for a long time in the framework of a "fifth week" of vacation. It was decided not to give anything back, and that the fifth week should be without quid pro quo.

In some cases, one hour of a general assembly was enough for the union leadership. At Lockheed in Beauvais, for example, the workers declared by a three-fourths majority that they would not accept anything less than a 35- or 36-hour week. The leadership fell back to 39 hours, with no quid pro quo.

In other cases, where the union leadership felt stronger or did not want to give any sign of weakness that would encourage a resumption of struggles, the

bureaucrats did not retreat. That happened in the Peugeot-Citroen factories, where the fortieth hour has been paid for by a cut of 66% of one hour's wage.

In some small businesses, the arrogance of the bosses got much worse as soon as it became clear that the national union leaderships were not going to respond to the strike wave by issuing any general slogans. The bosses preferred to face sit-in strikes (Mas-Bidemann, garment in Toulouse, Motta, food industry in L'Ome) to minimize concessions true in some engineering factories where the workforce is largely immigrants, such as Fulmen in Clichy and Hutchinson in Loiret. The same thing happened in the Isigny dairy in Normandy.

In such cases, in order to maintain a relationship of forces traditionally in their favor, the bosses resorted to extreme means. In Isigny, they sent paramilitary commandos into the dairy to clear out the workers. At Fulmen Clichy, they also mounted an assault. An Algerian worker was killed.

In the Leleu factory in Lyon, the "forces of order" cleared out the workers on the request of the prefect, as was the practice under Giscard. In the meantime, the new president of the employers association had called on the government to "restore order" in the factories.

In contrast to those areas where workers suffered more or less important defeats because of their isolation, in some cities, owing to special conditions, street demonstrations developed against

the bosses' demands. This happened in Blois and Cherbourg. In both cases, while the banners carried the workers minimum demands, the slogans chanted centered around the call for the 35-hour week.

This strike wave has put the focus of public attention on the question whether the workers should "tighten their belts" in order to make it possible to create more jobs for the unemployed. The minister of labor, Jean Auroux, has come out for such a position. Pierre Mauroy has done the same thing in a different way. He says that it is necessary to carry through the measure for 39 hours work for 40 hours pay but that this sort of thing cannot continue. In particular for those enterprises that are not very competitive the workers must prepare themselves to "make sacrifices" to help create jobs. This policy is strongly supported by the National Bureau of the CFTD, but it is running into strong resistance at the lower levels.

Such appeals to the workers to accept austerity are unlikely to get very far since the workers have now recognized on a much larger scale than in the last quarter of 1981 that the government is not their representative and defender.

We are still far from a workers mobilization based on an understanding that there is an alternative to the present policy of the SP-CP majority. But the conditions for this have now become more favorable. ■

Reagan's Show and the Repression of Turkish Workers

The mass-circulation West German weekly magazine Der Spiegel began a major story in its February 8 issue with a reference to the Reagan government's hypocritical TV spectacular on the Polish events:

"Charlton Heston with a giant candle, Frankie Boy's sultry crooning of the Polish national anthem, Orson Welles ("Let Poland be Poland"). There was no lack of both comical and repulsive aspects to Ronald Reagan's TV show on Poland.

"But the most intolerable--seen in its entirety only in the U.S. and Spain--was the appearance of a Turk.

"Included in the show was Admiral Bulent Ulusu, Premier of Washington's much appreciated military junta in Ankara, who expressed his 'distress' about military rule in Warsaw.

"The Turkish military seized power on September 12, 1980, with the declared aim of suppressing terrorism. Since then, however,

a delegation from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions came to the conclusion in Copenhagen that 'the military rulers may be quietly pursuing another goal, ideological repression....

"A clearer judgement came in a report by the jurist Pierre Mertens of the Free University of Brussels in a report to the Council of Europe. He wrote that there could be 'no doubt' that 'the main target of the restrictions imposed by the military regime is trade-union rights.'

"Evidence for Merten's thesis is the giant trial against the officers and members of the left trade union DISK that began on December 24 in a reconditioned sports stadium in Istanbul-Topkapi. The accused are DISK chairman, Abdullah Basturk and 51 other top officers of the confederation. More than 200 unionists are awaiting trial.

"The trade unionists have already been held in prison for up to fifteen months. Some of them have been victims of torture and mock executions.

By Angel Munoz

Polish Events Highlight Confusion in Spanish Workers Movement

The appeals of the Polish workers for the most part fell on deaf ears in the established mass workers organizations and revolutionary nationalist groups in Spain.

In fact, what the response to the Polish bureaucracy's declaration of war on the working class and people of Poland showed was a process that is endangering the process of recomposition of the Spanish workers movement.

A revival of Stalinist attitudes and a growth of sectarianism, on the one hand, is paralleled by the rise of a cynical "realism," on the other.

One of the main reasons for this is that the workers and revolutionary nationalist movements are stagnant or in retreat. They are suffering blows from the economic crisis and feel a growing threat of repression. They cannot offer any convincing perspective of a way forward.

In this context, the opportunism of the CP and SP leaderships that began to flower with the passage of Francoism to semiparliamentary forms has continued to ripen until it has reached an extraordinary state of overripeness.

The reaction of many workers and rank-and-file CP members has been to become bitter and fall back to the old defensive reflexes, to the comforting hope that the Kremlin will be a big brother that will defend them. All this, after all, is largely what maintained the hold of Stalinism on Spanish workers for many decades.

Furthermore, because the dictatorship was able to isolate the Spanish workers for many decades, there is a lack of a tradition of concrete internationalism. This can be seen also in the case of solidarity with El Salvador. All the workers organizations and revolutionary nationalist organizations support the cause of the people of El Salvador. But the work on this issue has not gone beyond a narrow vanguard.

There is also another feature of the Spanish working-class movement that makes it difficult for many workers in the Spanish state to understand clearly the nature of Solidarnosc. This is anti-clericalism. The Spanish church has been a major counterrevolutionary force and is deeply and justly hated. Furthermore, it has been particularly active in Spain in creating yellow unions.

It was in fact a government-subsidized union, the Union Sindical Obrera, that was the first organization to invite representatives of Solidarity to Spain. All

this has come together to inspire a general feeling of suspicion of Solidarnosc, which in many cases has been transformed into hostility since the December 13 crackdown.

While supporting General Jaruzelski and the Kremlin seemed more militant and anticapitalist to some workers fed up with the parliamentary "democratic" opportunism of the SP and Eurocommunist CP leaderships, the Social Democrats did not find Poland a very useful issue.

After the inevitable statements condemning the East European regimes and protesting against the repression in the first moments of widespread shock and outrage after the crackdown, the Spanish Social Democrats of the PSOE decided to put the issue on the backburner.

The PSOE leader, Felipe Gonzalez, is striving to avoid absolutely anything that could upset his systematic collaboration with the Center Union government, and in particular mass mobilizations. He is also trying to stay away from any questions that could open up internal debates that could weaken the already precarious homogeneity of the PSOE and the union confederation it controls, the UGT. Furthermore, the PSOE leadership probably thinks that it can benefit from the anti-Communist campaign launched by the right to make gains at the expense of the CP without having to participate in it.

The so-called "socialist left" has in general followed the PSOE in its silence. Some of its members have participated in activity in the solidarity campaign. But certain of its leaders, such as the deputy Pablo Castellano, who is a great critic in public meetings of the laws he votes for in parliament, has not hidden his sympathy for General Jaruzelski.

At the other extreme of the pressure groups focused on the PSOE are the intellectuals who identify with Michel Rocard, the ideologist of the right wing of the French SP. This group has an influence as well as Euskadiko Eskerra, one of the Basque radical nationalist parties. It is a fusion of a group originally influenced by the "Political-Military" faction of ETA and a faction expelled from the Basque section of the CP.

This Rocardien group began by expressing their moral solidarity with Solidarnosc. But unfortunately for them, morality rarely coincides with the hard realities of everyday life. They did not hesitate to say that it was Solidarnosc in fact that bore the responsibility for the military crackdown, because: "Instead of con-

solidating the important concessions it won from the government and on this basis open up a war of attrition against the government, it precipitated a confrontation with the Polish CP and forced General Jaruzelski to choose between his own tanks and those of the Soviets."

Nonetheless, the Polish workers should not despair because these strategists of modern times can offer them an excellent orientation for the present situation: "The only solution is to go underground." They advise avoiding any "resistance to the army" because "failure of the military junta to consolidate the dictatorship would lead immediately to Soviet intervention." (L. Paramio, in *La Calle*, December 24, 1981).

This aberrant "realism" is being presented in Spain as the latest thing in socialist thought, Marxism "of a new type."

The Eurocommunist leadership of the Spanish CP only deepened the ideological confusion of the party it heads by trying to take a greater distance from the totalitarian repression in Poland.

The CP hardly discussed that Polish process before the crackdown. It did not try to make any coherent balance of its previous positions. It supported successively Stanislaw Kania and General Jaruzelski, when he assumed the premiership. Finally, it went so far as to say about left sectors of Solidarnosc that "their extreme attitudes are a result of American pressure and infiltration." (*Mundo Obrero*, September 19, 1981.)

The center of discussion after the crackdown was how to characterize the East European regimes and their relationship with the USSR. The leadership wanted to come up with a position clearly demarcated both from the "renovacion" sectors, which favor dropping the vestiges of Leninism altogether, along with the connection to Moscow; and the "pro-Soviet" sectors. This attempt failed.

The resolution pays homage to the past role of the October revolution and the USSR but says: "However, under the leadership of Stalin, while it ceased to be a bourgeois state defending capitalist property, it did not become in Marxist terms what could be called a state in the hands of the workers organized as a ruling class, that is, a real workers democracy."

So, should the party "break" with this "system," and more concretely with the USSR. This position was put forward in the Central Committee meeting by the right-wing leaders of the Catalan branch of the CP (the PSUC), Jordi Borja and

Jordi Sole-Ture, and by the "Renovacion" faction in general. (The position of Nicolas Sartorius, the crown prince of the party leader, Santiago Carrillo, was to say the least ambiguous. He did not take part in the debate but the supporters of a "break" seemed to regard him as one of their own.) Against this position, Santiago Carrillo launched the following warning: "There is a danger that this break will be a break with a very large part of our party."

Therefore, what the CC decided to do was only "break on the ideology level with a model of socialism" that is characterized as "outmoded."

That was the weak and contradictory response that the Central Committee offered to the crisis of identity of the CP, which was aggravated by the crackdown in Poland. The party is continuing to unscrew the vice of Stalinism, but the result is that the vice is less and less firmly anchored and the party is coming apart, being torn between the pressures of those who want to get rid of the vice altogether and those who want to retighten it. The "renewers" and the pro-Soviets have a certain coherence at least. But the leadership's "Eurocommunism" is an ideological monstrosity that is inviable.

The Eurocommunists are incapable in particular of coming up with a materialist explanation of the process of degener-

ation in Eastern Europe. They can only raise awkward questions. For example, Marcelino Camacho, general secretary of the Workers Commissions, the CP-controlled union federation, asked during the Central Committee meeting: "How and why have parties and states that based themselves on the theory that we all consider an exact science degenerated?" Obviously he risks raising the question, Why have they degenerated and not we.

Furthermore, there was no explanation of how these "worn out models" could become "real workers democracies." In this respect the CC report was a veritable chaos. Julian Ariza, one of the national leaders of the Workers Commissions, said, for example: "There is a real contradiction in these countries between the base and the superstructure that can generate revolutionary processes but not in the sense of moving forward...all this can even lead to disaster."

Among sections of the rank and file that want to fight back against the capitalist offensive, this confusion and the failure of the party to struggle produces a reaction that often goes against the Polish workers. For example, in its February 5 issue, the CP weekly Mundo Obrero published the transcript of a discussion of the CC resolution in the CP cell at the Standart ITT engineering factory in Madrid. Of the seventy workers

present, only one defended the CC position. Among the remarks made by others were:

"Carrillo should not have agreed to talk about Poland on TV when they won't let him do that about El Salvador." "I ask those who say that there is no solution to Poland's problems without political pluralism, what solutions they are offering to the problems of the workers here in the capitalist West where there is pluralism." "I'm tired of Poland, let's stop talking about it and start talking about what's going on here."

Although the pro-Soviets can appeal to this sentiment, their approach is the opposite to offering an effective perspective for fighting in Spain.

On the defensive, such currents in the workers movement and among the revolutionary nationalists are tempted by substitutionism, looking to the power of the Soviet camp to compensate for their own inability to find a political way forward, to win greater support, to offer an effective perspective for struggle.

So, the revolutionists in Spain for the moment will have to fight against the current. But this is a decisive struggle for the future of the workers movement and the liberation struggles in the Spanish state. The workers and the oppressed have a lot to learn from Solidarnosc and a lot of Jaruzelskis to fight.

Building a World Party of Socialists

A New Fighting Socialist Organization in Norway

(The following interview by Peter Lindgren is from the February 25 issue of Internationalen, the weekly paper of the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International. The translation is by IV.)

* * *

When the leadership voted to dissolve the organization and walk out of the hall, it left behind about 40 percent of the delegates to the conference of the Sosialistisk Ungdom (Socialist Youth, an affiliate of the Norwegian Socialist Left Party, a left Social Democrat formation with a strong Eurocommunist wing).

These 40 percent, who supported the left, came mainly from the big branches of the Sosialistisk Ungdom in Oslo, Trondheim, and Bergen.

This split in the youth organization of the Sosialistisk

Venstreparti occurred in mid-November. After that the left opposition formed the Workers Power Group (Arbeidermakt-gruppa).

That was the way the development was described by Helge Ryvik, Torgrim Aartun, and Rune Soma, representatives of the new group. They talked with Internationalen during the convention of the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International. Torgrim and Rune are sympathizers of the Fourth International.

* * *

Helge. Over the last two years, the Sosialistisk Ungdom (SU) made a clear right turn. The adult party put on the pressure. It wanted an obedient youth organization. The left opposition that formed the Arbeidermaktgruppa (AMG) had been active in the SU for two

years. It was composed of two elements. One now forms the majority of the AMG, the other element were the Trotskyists grouped around the publication Internasjonalen, who had been working inside the SU for a year and a half.

Torgrim. It was the Sosialistisk Venstreparti (SV) that provoked the split. The left was gaining influence steadily. The SU's old national leadership shared many of the criticisms raised by the left. It agreed that the SV was more and more neglecting trade-union work.

These leaders also agreed that the SV was a reformist party inclined to parliamentarism. But when they were forced to act, they chose to line up behind the party and to dissolve the organization. A day later, by unanimous vote, they set up a new SU.

Rune. The new SU is only a shell. In particular, all those

with experience in trade-union work or youth work left the SU. It was the left that did the practical work--Polish solidarity work, Ungmob (a united front on youth issues), and trade-union work.

One of the main reasons for the split was in trade-union work. In contrast to the SV, we gave a clear priority to trade-union work. The AMG has begun modestly from the forces we have, first of all by supporting those working in industry and also by discussing how to achieve the preconditions for stable trade-union work.

Along with this, we are working together with many other union members. We are building what we call the Trade-Union Forum (Fagligt Forum), that is a discussion group for trade unionists. In this framework, we will discuss the various experiences of union work in the Oslo area. In order to develop contacts throughout the country we are also publishing the Union Bulletin. Its purpose is to coordinate thinking on the main questions in trade-union work and try to analyze the situation in the class struggle.

We can say now that we have begun the first stage in building the new organization.

Helge. The SU left started very early to do support work for Solidarnosc in Poland. I and other comrades went to Poland during the big strikes in August 1980. We were strongly inspired by the workers' struggles in the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. When we came back, we realized that the actions in Poland were an important example for workers here in Norway.

Quite early in the process, we were able to build a trade-union solidarity committee with Solidarnosc, working together with the Maoists of the Communist Workers Party, Marxist-Leninist (AKPml). This group, for example, waged a campaign for "One Hour's Wages for Poland." Some unions joined the committee and many union delegations went to Poland and developed union-to-union contacts.

In the beginning, perhaps, the solidarity movement was not so big. It included ten, twenty, or thirty union locals.

As in other countries, we saw a strong upsurge in solidarity work after the coup in Poland. But already before the coup a lot had been done. The solidarity movement had sent 150 printing presses to Poland.

Torgrim. Over the last four years, on the night of May 1, up to three or four thousand youth have gathered in the center of Oslo. They have done this to demonstrate opposition to police brutality, but also to protest the lack of jobs and housing.

After the first of May last year, many young people got heavy fines on charges of rioting. But many youth who were just standing on the sidewalks and watching were also clubbed down.

So, the SU in Oslo took the initiative to form the Ungdomsgrupper mot Botesterror (Ungmob, Youth Group Against Terror by Fines). The group's objective was to collect money to pay the fines and to engage lawyers.

Before the elections in September, Ungmob organized a rock concert called "Rock Against the Election Hysteria." About a thousand youth came. A representative of Ungmob took the microphone and called on all those who were interested in occupying a building to come to a rally.

About a hundred youth came to the rally. There was a small group there that knew what building to occupy. It was a city building on Skippergatan that had fifty rooms. Quite a large building. It was also unused. The youth demanded a youth center.

The authorities knew that there was going to be an occupation. But they did not know where. So, they positioned plainclothes cops in front of all the unused buildings. When we occupied it, though, the authorities did not dare do anything. That would have only led to a new uprising of the youth. After

we took the city building, we could negotiate directly with the authorities. The city officials refused first both to come to the building for discussions and to discuss in front of loud speakers. But we stood our ground and they gave in. So, we negotiated in our own building and all the occupiers could listen to the discussions.

We got strong support from the people in Oslo. Parents brought food and clothing. We got a refrigerator, a freezer, furniture, dishes and cooking utensils, all sorts of things. Many unions issued statements of support.

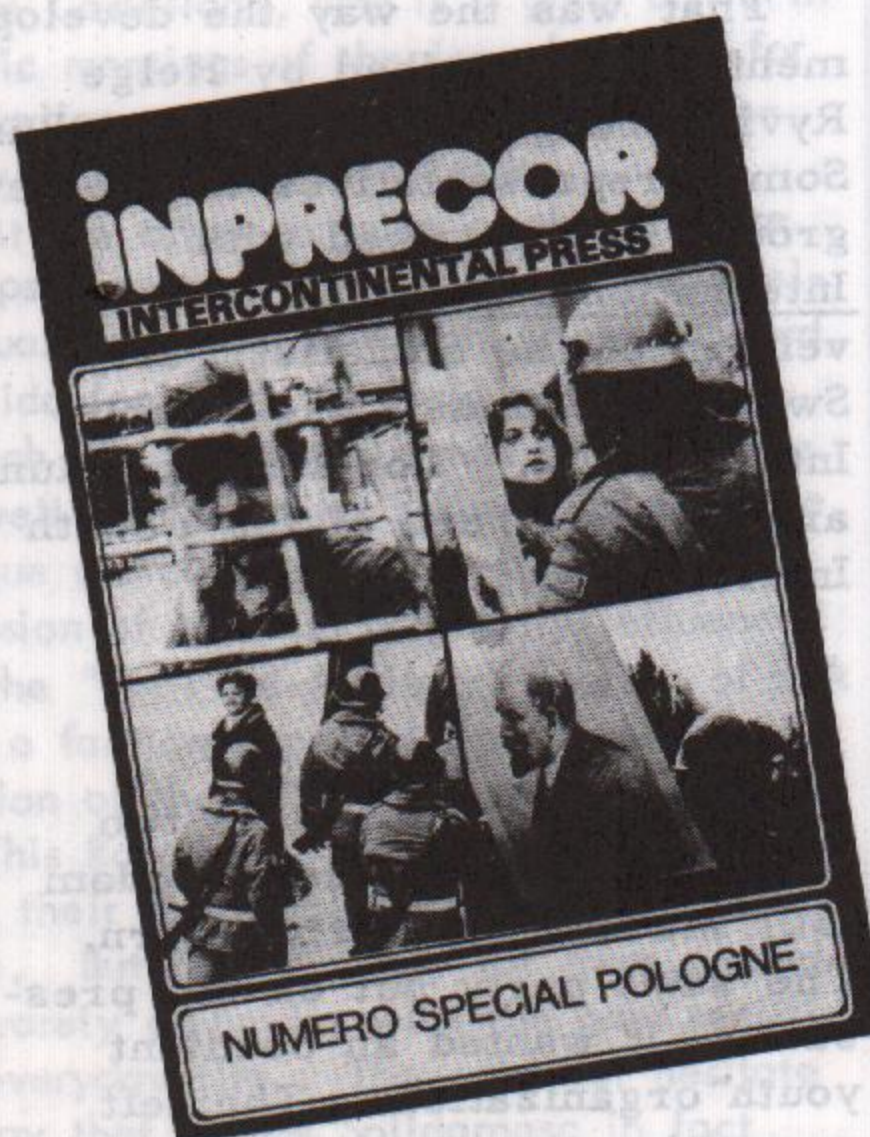
Many of the occupiers were astonished that the workers supported us. They did not expect that.

But we also had problems. Many homeless people squatted in the building.

These were more or less bourgeois individualists. They refused to accept the decisions of the general assembly, which they called the "dictatorship of the majority over individuals." In only a week, we could see signs of breakdown.

Less and less people came to the general assemblies. They were held less and less often. By the beginning of November, very few people were coming to the building. A month before, youth were coming from all over the city. "Junk" (hashish) also started coming in.

But the occupation was successful. The Police did not dare to storm the building. The youth of Oslo got a center and we still have it.



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By Elettra Deiana

A Turning Point for the Italian CP?

The reaction of the leadership of the Italian CP (PCI) to the Polish events was determined by two main concerns. One was the need to take its distance from yet another confirmation of the authoritarian character of the East European regimes. The other was to do everything it could to head off possible repercussions of this in its own ranks.

The document adopted at the end of December 1981 by the national leadership, and the orientation that emerged from the debate at the Central Committee meeting, in fact, represented nothing new in the process of drawing away from Moscow and of accepting Western links and models. This is what has more and more characterized the PCI's "Eurocommunist" line in recent years.

The PCI's denunciation of the East European regimes and the Kremlin's role in the Polish events is unquestionably clearer and sharper than before. The formulas used, in particular by Enrico Berlinguer, who talked about "the exhaustion of the wave initiated by the Soviet October," are designed to show that the PCI is now determined to cut itself off from its old roots and end what constituted the "historical specificity" of the PCI. This does not, however, involve explicitly accepting the social, economic, and political model of the capitalist West, as is done by the theories of the Social Democrats or a complete rejection of the international role played by the USSR.

It is clear that after the Polish events, the PCI's de facto acceptance of the Western model and of the logic of imperialism is going to be reinforced. This was shown, for example, by the Direzione Nazionale's (National Leadership) high-pressure operation to get the activists to go along with the new orientation.

The PCI leadership made quite a remarkable exertion, and this was the real new element in the party's policy in the current phase.

Never before when faced with international events that starkly highlighted the political features of the East European regimes has the Direzione Nazionale of the

PCI mobilized with such determination to "orient" its rank and file. Today we are seeing a systematic operation directed from above aimed at establishing new approaches, criteria, and orientations for dealing with the question of the East European regimes that are quite different from those that up till now have guided thousands upon thousands of the PCI's members, especially those in the sectors most closely linked to the historic experience of the PCI and the myth of the Soviet model.

The PCI leadership is striving to create a new mentality among its adherents, and at the same time to rid itself of the image of a party that supports anything the East European regimes might do or might have some sympathy for them.

The articles in *l'Unita*, the members assemblies, and the regional congresses recently held have been utilized for that purpose. The leaders did not put on the agenda the problem of solidarity with the Polish workers nor the need for understanding what really happened in Poland.

The attitude of the PCI leadership toward the revolutionary experience of the Polish workers beginning in August 1980 represents, moreover, another key test of the limits, ambiguities, and the falsifications that mark the line developed by the party.

Like the other parties that more or less clearly identify with "Eurocommunism" (The Spanish, Belgian, Finnish, Swiss, British, Japanese, and Mexican CPs), the PCI had to recognize the economic failure of the Gierek leadership and to center the debate around the problem of the "lack of democracy" in the East European countries.

Since August 1980, the PCI has made numerous criticisms of the ineffectiveness and the bureaucratic character of the Polish government and of the Polish CP itself. It pointed to the grave errors that had been made in the management of the economy, as well as in politics and in the functioning of the institutions of society.

On several occasions, the PCI criticized the "excessive rigidity" of the system, expressing the hope that the "positive social dynamic" created by the workers struggles would help to create the conditions for "moving forward along the road of economic reforms and of broader democracy."

"This is an area--democracy, involvement of the masses, administration of the economy and of the society--where we Italian Communists have been carrying on discussions for years; we have been making proposals; we have clearly defined our position not only by our political activity in Italy but also by our encounters with the European Socialist and Social Democratic parties and with the Communist parties of both East and West Europe. The fact that (in the East European countries) grave questions arise on such matters as the recognition of the right to strike, freedom of expression, and ending government interference in the unions shows unfortunately that in socialist countries there is no mechanical relationship between the elimination of class conflicts and achieving mass involvement and democracy. This relationship is still more complicated, it seems, in systems built on the basis of a fusion between the party and the state." (Fabrizio d'Agostini, *Rinascita*, the PCI weekly, August 22, 1980).

The opening up of a new social situation in Poland and the emergence of marked pluralist tendencies in various strata of workers went hand in hand, however, with the illusion that it would be possible to undertake a gradual reform of the system. This process was supposed to be directed by the very leaders that the Polish masses challenged more and more sharply and openly, to whom they denied any legitimacy.

What needs to be especially stressed is that the social upsurges, the involvement of the workers, "renewal," suited the PCI as long as the democratization process remained in a controlled and controllable framework, one that did

not fundamentally put in question the existing regime.

During the first phase of the workers upsurge in Poland, the PCI seemed especially open and well disposed toward the workers. It pointed with satisfaction to their sense of responsibility, realism, their desire to involve themselves in the running of the economy and society and to get their views accepted. But at the same time, the PCI began to sow a lot of illusions about the possibility of reconciling the opposing interests of the ruling bureaucracy and of the workers from whom political power has been expropriated, about the possibility of a painless change in the system. It created the impression that it was possible to have confidence in the Polish CP leadership.

On August 31, 1980, after the signing of the accords between the workers and the government, l'Unita wrote in its editorial:

"The readiness of the party and the government to negotiate, the prudence and awareness of the dangers that they demonstrated, along with the maturity of the strike movement, were the driving force in achieving this settlement."

The editorial continued: "This is why the first observation that has to be made is that Poland has emerged from this acute test of strength profoundly transformed. It has been transformed as a result of the vitality shown by the country's social forces in their positive reaction to the crisis, and as a result of the capacity demonstrated by the leadership of the party and the state to comprehend the meaning of this abrupt summons to take up its new tasks."

The possibility of democratization in Poland was always seen as depending on the leaders of the Polish CP. The PCI called on them to "see" the signals that were being given off by the society and to "take advantage of the positive new developments in the situation."

Here are a few examples to illustrate the way in which the PCI continued to sow illusions about the capacity and the will of the successive post-August 1980 party secretaries to carry out reforms:

"Edward Gierek's policy seems the only one that can keep the situation from degenerating--a failure of his present line would create a dangerous power vacuum in Poland. In an international situation as tense as the present one, it is desirable that Poland be able to carry out changes that will

solve its problems without having to go through serious disturbances." (Francesco Cataluccio, Rinascita, August 22, 1980).

"By declaring that the Baltic accords represent 'our most valuable political and moral achievement,' Stanislaw Kania unquestionably created the conditions for a resumption of dialogue between the party and the society. At the same time, he brought the Polish United Workers Party out of a phase of oscillations that seemed to make impossible a rapid and positive solution to the crisis...."

"Stanislaw Kania is unquestionably an honest leader endowed with a great sense of realism. He has not appealed to the Polish nation and Polish patriotism as Edward Gierek did. He seems to prefer understanding and seeking an accord with the new forces that are emerging in the country." (Adriano Guerra, Rinascita, September 26, 1980.)

Similar statements have been made in recent months about General Jaruzelski. Moreover, although the Ninth Congress of the PUWP was marked by the marginalization of the wing favorable to "renewal," the PCI nonetheless hailed it as a milestone on the road to the transformation of Polish society:

"It is hard not to have the impression that the Ninth Congress of the PUWP is going to put a lot of things in question, and that, fundamentally, it represents not only the victory of the current of renewal that pervades Poland but is also an event that can change the political and conceptual horizon of the European left. That is, it can open new horizons, at least in the sense that it can make it possible to get out of the morass of old ideological debates and to put to the forefront the search for answers to the crisis of the industrial societies. Then, while arguments may still be unavoidable, they would at least not be based on old black-and-white schemas...."

"There is an important new fact. In an East European country, the largest after the Soviet Union, a political straitjacket has been broken and a form of rule changed, another road has been taken. It is the road of consensus within confrontation, in which there is a plurality of forces, needs, and even of protagonists. The historic merit of the PUWP is having understood that in order to achieve national renewal, it had to start by reforming itself.

"The conservatives and the partisans of renewal in other parties in Europe are also involved in this process. In the West also, many commonplaces have to be reexamined--the claims that socialism has failed, Marxism is dead, or the idea that the history of 'living socialism' can only lead to tragedies and that the East European societies are incapable of renewing themselves." (Renzo Foa, l'Unita, July 21, 1981).

With respect to the role of the USSR in this whole process, the PCI has unquestionably sharpened the tone of the argument. Repeatedly, it has stressed both the need for "the Poles to be able to solve their own problems" and the danger that a Soviet intervention in Poland would represent to the international equilibrium. "The PCI would be obliged to accept all the consequences of a foreign intervention in Poland and a test of strength against that country," l'Unita wrote on December 10, 1980, on the occasion of a visit to Rome by Soviet party leader Vladimir Zagladin. Similar statements appeared several times in the press of the PCI. In the latest statements of position, they have been generalized into an overall critique.

At the same time, however, the PCI has progressively changed its attitude to the Polish working class. Facing a movement that was tending to become more and more explosive, reflecting the needs and aspirations of the masses, and seeing that the question of power was beginning to be posed by the activity of Solidarnosc and of the movement for self-management, the PCI adopted a suspicious and critical attitude. The statements of principle about the workers' rights, pluralism, and democratization did not stop. But they were accompanied by an essentially negative assessment of the orientation Solidarity took in its attempt to win the workers' rights.

The PCI's new attitude was motivated by two factors, both of which flowed from the gradualist illusions and the logic of a conservative bureaucratic apparatus that determine the line of the party. On the one hand, there is the fear that a prolonged conflict between the Polish working class and the Polish bureaucracy would have dangerous effects on the international balance. On the other, there was the suspicion the PCI has always had of all movements and forces that develop outside of what it considers the

necessary framework and limitations.

The upshot of all this is that over the last year the PCI did nothing to educate its members about the need for solidarity with the Polish working class, about the need for understanding what was really going on in the country. It never provided the rank and file with information to refute the bourgeois propaganda that portrayed Solidarnosc as dominated by the Catholic church and deeply influenced by the capitalist West. It did not do anything to familiarize its ranks with the issues and to prepare them to respond properly to the coup d'etat by the Polish bureaucracy.

In particular, in response to the First National Congress of Solidarnosc, *l'Unita's* Warsaw correspondent, Romolo Caccavale, tried to point to the existence in the Polish union of extremist, ultraleftist, and workerist positions. As against this, he sought to highlight an openness to dialogue, a sense of responsibility, a desire for "renewal" on the part of the PUWP.

The headlines of Caccavale's articles themselves tell the story: "The Resolutions of this Congress (of Solidarnosc) Seem to Reduce the Room for Negotiations"; "Disturbing Questions in Warsaw after the Solidarnosc Congress"; "Solidarnosc Defies the Government!"; etc. He took quite a different tone toward the government: "Jaruzelski to Solidarnosc: Let's Work Together!"; "Prudent Message from the Government to the Union Congress."

After the coup, the PCI tried to lessen the direct responsibility of the PUWP in it by giving credence to the view that the initiative was taken by the military hierarchy. Moreover, the criticisms that Caccavale made of the Polish workers have been repeated and extended in the document of the Direzione Nazionale and in the discussion at the December meeting of the Central Committee of the PCI. The workers' aspiration to take the power, the process of politicalization bound up with their extraordinary experience of struggle and self-organization are dealt with as follows:

"There were strong pressures, unacceptable interference, an aggressive political and ideological campaign against the striving for renewal by an important part of the PUWP, Solidarnosc, and the Church. All this helped to make it more difficult to isolate and defeat the



Berlinguer and Brezhnev: Happier Days (DR)

various surges of extremism that appeared in Polish political life, in the union movement as well as in the party and which were pushing things toward a confrontation.

"These surges of extremism led Solidarnosc to advance some demands that were incompatible with the economic reality and productive capacity of the country. But it has to be said too that even these bouts of extremism that kept the Polish working class from fully assuming its responsibility as a national ruling class were, to some extent, the result of a process that has been developing over the years and led to a moving away from politics of a large section of the working class and of other strata, including the young generations. (Document of the Direzione Nazionale of the PCI, published in *l'Unita* of December 30, 1981.)

There is a correspondence between the model of the working class that the PCI proposes for Italy and its judgment of the Polish workers. In both cases, it denies the working people any autonomy and real decision-making capacity. In both cases, the capacity to become a ruling class is presented as an ability to accept sacrifices and to coexist with other forces (in Poland with the ruling bureaucracy, in Italy with a bourgeois government, assisted in various ways by the workers' parties and the trade-union bureaucracies) that make decisions behind the backs of the working masses. As soon as the workers go outside this framework, the PCI denounces them and attacks them.

In Italy, we have had an additional demonstration of this on the occasion of the publication of the results of a referendum that the unions organized in the workplaces in an attempt to get the workers to accept a scheme based on the improbable prospect that inflation would not exceed 16%. The rejection of the union leaderships' proposal by broad sections of the

masses was portrayed by many PCI members as an expression of immaturity and a lack of understanding of the problems. Some of them, such as the general secretary of the Lombardy regional CGIL, Pizzinato, went so far as to say that the massive "no" vote by the workers at the Alfa Romeo plant in Milan was playing the game of the Red Brigades.

The Polish events will profoundly mark the dynamics and future evolution of the PCI. The ideological campaign aimed at convincing the PCI ranks that bourgeois democratic institutions are excellent and that they are the best of all possible worlds, could not eliminate the contradictions. They have emerged in the internal debates of recent weeks. The end of reformist illusions about the East European countries is forcing the PCI to accelerate its march toward Social Democracy and away from Moscow.

Enrico Berlinguer's policy is designed to win the party an image in the eyes of the Italian and of the Western bourgeoisie in general of an acceptable partner in government. That is the purpose of his presenting the PCI as independent of Moscow, the special relations he has developed with China and Yugoslavia, and his flirting with the Western Social Democratic parties.

After General Jaruzelski's coup, to maintain credibility, this policy required taking a definitive step toward the West on the political and ideological levels and not just on that of practical politics. It required a similarly definitive historical criticism of the whole Soviet experience. But that would have involved too violent an upset in the party ranks. In fact, large sections of the party membership continue to regard the USSR as their ideological reference point, even if what it is supposed to represent is more and more contradictory and confused.

This contradiction created a two-sided response. On the one

hand, certain aspects of the Soviet experience have been rehabilitated. For example, the Twentieth Party Congress is still being presented--even in the recent statements--as a key development that could have started off a process of renewal in all the East European countries. On the other, the PCI has re-launched the idea of the "third road" and renewed the PCI's commitment to follow such a path.

However, despite all the PCI's propaganda efforts, the shape and content of this "third way" are more and more vague and fluid. This is more true now when the PCI has found it necessary to downplay its "historical specificity."

A few months ago, up until the time of the Polish crisis, Enrico Berlinguer distinguished his "third way" ideologically and politically both from the Soviet model and the Social Democratic model on the basis of the specific history and identity of the PCI. On the level of practice, nothing differentiated the PCI's line from that of the Social Democratic parties, including the Italian one, the PSI. But without an identity of its own, without a project that differs at least in some respects, at least in the literary formulas it adopts, the PCI would become the prey of centrifugal forces and begin to

plunge into deep crisis. That was the reason for the reference to the "third way," for Enrico Berlinguer's insistence on the "specific" features of the PCI.

However, today this "historical specificity" is becoming more and more of an encumbrance. And many of the party leaders--not just Giorgio Napolitano--would be glad to get rid of it. Once all reference to the past and the specificities of the PCI are abandoned, the "third road" is reduced to pious wishes, to a futile maneuver to hold on to the whole body of the membership.

The only real alternative, both to the bureaucratic oppression that exists in the East European countries and to accepting Western and Social Democratic values was rejected a long time ago by the PCI. It is the road opened up by the Polish workers.

This lack of perspectives and clear reference points has been aggravated by the outspoken disagreement of many members with their leaders' recent statements of position. The views of Senator Armando Cossutta, who argued energetically that the PCI could not give up its links with the "Socialist Camp," got little support in the Direzione Nazionale and the Central Committee. But the advocates of these positions are much less isolated among the ranks.

In his recent speeches, Armando Cossutta has not taken a position on the events in Poland. And this silence reveals the ultimate limitations of his positions and his acceptance of the antiworking-class logic of the bureaucracy. But there is no doubt that a series of arguments he has raised on the nature of imperialism, the need to avoid making absolutes out of the values of Western democracy, and on the differences of camp that remain between the West on one side and Cuba and Vietnam on the other represent real problems. They reflect the sensibilities of those sections of the party that are most strongly attached to class and internationalist conceptions of political struggle, no matter how deformed these may be by the Stalinist frame of reference and the myth of Moscow.

In such a situation, the debate on the Polish events inside the PCI appears likely to be long and turbulent. It is difficult to foresee today exactly what the repercussions will be but they will certainly be major at every level. Enrico Berlinguer's perspective of a "third way" will be less and less able to answer the thousand questions that the party members will raise about the historic identity, perspectives, and the political tasks today of the PCI.

Massive Repression Aimed at Turkish Trade Unionists

(The following interview with a Turkish Trotskyist leader, Cansever, is from the January 28 issue of Was Tun, the weekly paper of the Gruppe Internationaler Marxisten, the West German section of the Fourth International. The translation is by IV.)

* * * *

Question. Since September 12, for the third time in the last twenty years, a military regime is in power in Turkey. On May 27, 1960, the military overthrew the bankrupt Bayar/Menderes government. On March 12, 1971, the commanders of the army, airforce, and navy forced the resignation of the Demirel govern-

ment. Their objective, they declared, was to put an end to "chaos and anarchy in the country and to carry out the reforms overdue." For 500 days, a junta of generals headed by Evren has held the reins of government. Is the present junta any different than its predecessors?

Answer. A close look shows no class differences between the three putsches, although the whole Turkish left and so-called democratic public opinion regards the May 27, 1960, coup as progressive.

There are, however, differences of another sort. Since the workers movement has developed, the same forces have reacted

differently. In 1960, the resistance of the farmers and of the workers was under the control of the Democratic Party (DP) and the Republican People's Party (CHP). These parties dominated the political stage.

The consciousness of the masses and the line they followed were largely determined by these bourgeois currents. It was not until later--as a result of growing industrialization--that a differentiation took place. As soon as the workers' movement came onto the political stage, the reaction of the military became harder and more brutal.

Q. What are the underlying reasons for the coup d'etat?

A. The previous putsches followed severe economic crises. The first two, in 1960 and 1971, brought a certain economic recovery, which, however, did not go above the level reached before the coup.

Thus, the 1977/78 gross national product fell back to the level of 1968. According to the figures published by the Turkish statistical bureau, there has been a certain improvement, since GNP has risen to the level of 1978. But still, after almost fifteen years it has only come back up to the level of 1968.

Q. What are the Evren junta's objectives? What has it achieved?

A. Its primary objective was to restore "law and order" in the country. To a certain extent, it has achieved that. There are 150,000 political prisoners. One hundred and fifty persons have died under torture. Amnesty International talks about seventy cases where it can be proven that people were tortured to death.

In so-called raids, 600 persons have been shot. Three thousand people have been condemned to death. One hundred and fifty have already been executed. The rightist terror that ravaged the country before September 12 has been replaced by a legalized state terror.

It must be made clear whom this terror is aimed at. The target is not some "democratic left," as you often hear in the West. This terror is aimed against the entire workers' movement, against every current in it, and against the oppressed Kurdish nation. Some 90% of its victims come from the politically active left in the workers' movement.

All parties have been banned, along with the independent unions grouped in the DISK confederation. The DISK leadership is now being tried in a military court, and some of the points in the indictment indicate that they could face the death penalty.

The other union confederation, Turk-Is is still legal.

Youth and farmers' organizations have been banned. The CHP, which is close to the international Social Democracy, has also been banned. Its chairman Bulent Ecevit has had to serve a four-month prison sentence.

Q. Does that mean that the junta is ruling without any base in the population?



Imprisoned Turkish Unionists (DR)

A. Unlike what happened after the 1971 putsch, the military have left certain bourgeois associations untouched. All the so-called progressive forces are trying to take the regime's Kemalist propaganda seriously and to show that Kemalism should not be applied the way the government is doing it but some other way.

While the revolutionary left has been suppressed, and the working class has been terrorized, the right wing of the CHP has been able to put its views forward. These people publish a weekly called Arayis. The obvious objective of this tactic is to channel the protests through this layer of bourgeois intellectuals.

Q. What sort of protests are there? Is there resistance?

A. The open resistance has been broken. But there is a certain restlessness, a certain antagonism to the regime. For example, I have a letter here from the chief of a village near the city of Konya that was written to Arayis. Freely translated, he says: "Don't serve the interests of the rich. It is important to give more space to the country people and their problems, the people who can't get credit, who can't get hospital beds, who have no chance to get work."

This letter was written quite recently. If a village elder dares to write a letter like this, he is risking quite a lot.

Q. The complaints in this letter take us back to the objectives of the military junta. What sort of economic policy has it undertaken and what results has it registered up till now?

A. After "fighting terrorism," the junta's second objective was to reorient the country's economy massively toward export. So, what have the results been? Ac-

ording to the official figures, exports in the first nine months of 1980 increased by a half billion dollars over the same period of 1979, reaching a total of 2.25 billion dollars. In 1981, they continued to rise, reaching roughly 3.5 billion dollars. In recent months, the papers have been saying that this increase is a great success.

However, if you compare the export totals with those for imports, you will see that the latter have also risen sharply. The total has gone from 4 billion dollars to 5.2 billion in 1980, and currently to 7.1 billion. The foreign trade deficit has gone from 2.3 billion in 1979 to 3.0 billion in 1980, to 3.6 billion in 1981.

These figures tell the real story about the so-called "restoration of economic health." This becomes still clearer, when you see that exports rose by 48% more than imports in 1981, but despite that the foreign trade deficit increased.

Obviously, the increased exports were "bought" by lowering prices. The Turkish business press is complaining that Turkish export commodities are being sold at a loss. The profits of the traders, however, are being supported by state subsidies. This is a policy that was practiced back in the 1950s.

It is also interesting to look at the structure of imports, since it is claimed that Turkey's industrial production has risen. Some 91% of imports consist of raw materials and semimanufactures. This figure has remained constant for a long time. Has Turkey become a country that imports raw materials in order to transform them into industrial commodities? The fact is that Turkish industry has concentrated on manufacturing, in particular light manufacturing. Thus, plastic

containers are produced from imported raw materials by imported machines with imported chemical equipment. This is also true for fertilizers, a very important sector, although the raw materials could be obtained in the country. So, dependency on the West is growing.

Q. So, the generals' economic conceptions don't differ from Demirel's; they're just being applied more ruthlessly?

A. What has changed is the direction of the exports. A growing percentage is going to the Near and Middle East, to the countries Turkey gets its oil from (Libya, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia). In 1979, 49% of all Turkish exports were still going to EEC countries.

In mid-November, the economics minister, Turgut Ozal, said that 44% of total exports were going to the Arab countries. However, all our experience shows that the junta's economic policy is not really leading the country out of dependency and want.

The combination of precapitalist and semicapitalist modes of production with an advanced capitalist industry that only complements the industry and markets of the dominant capitalist countries of the West remains an unsurmountable obstacle.

The junta has no program for land reform. The farmers as a group have gotten nothing from the putsch. Workers' wages have been cut and frozen.

The burden of military expenditure is increasing. Under such conditions, how can a process of economic growth be launched that could overcome the worst poverty?

Q. Can you give some concrete examples of this?

A. Let's take agriculture. It still produces two-thirds of exports. Forty-five to fifty million people are still being fed, without any immediate danger of famine. For the future, I think that the situation in agriculture presents the biggest dangers for a new economic collapse.

For example, the fertilizer factories have increased their capacity by 40%. But since fertilizer prices have increased by more than 1,000% in the last two years, the use of fertilizer has declined by 50%. The prices of insecticides have increased by 50%. Consumption has dropped

by 30%. The price of livestock feeds has risen by 600%. The result is 60% of the chicken industry has gone bankrupt.

In 1969, a tractor cost a half million Turkish lira. Today the cost is one and a half million. The result is that five-billion-lira worth of agricultural machinery remains unused in the storehouses of the Turkish Institute for Agricultural Development.

The junta claims that it is promoting the middle classes. In fact, the freeing of interest rates in June 1980 touched off a galloping expropriation of small property owners. The interest rate shot up from 12% to 70%, and so-called pirate bankers offer up to 140%.

A lot of small property owners, but also clerks and officials, sold their modest possessions in the hope of profiting from the high interest rates. About 160 billion lira were deposited, of which not an inconsiderable part came from Turkish workers abroad. A lot of civil servants have placed their pension checks with the bankers.



A growing number of these bankers are going bankrupt or disappearing. About 25 billion lira has already disappeared into the pockets of such reckless speculators and absconding bankers.

The material situation of the workers is still worse. Monthly wages range between 10,000 and 20,000 lira. You can't rent any place for less than 8,000 to 10,000 per month. A kilo of coffee costs 1,000 lira, a kilo of butter, 500 lira.

Q. In the first weeks and months after the putsch, the West European governments and NATO provided political cover for the dictatorship, claiming that it was a necessary precondition for a

"return to democracy." They are still supporting the generals and torturers and covering up for them. At the same time, recently, they have been weeping crocodile tears over the fate of the Polish workers. Nothing more is being said about a return to democracy. Was the junta able to gain a certain credibility in the eyes of the population by its "democratization plans"?

A. The calling of a hand-picked "Consultative Assembly" last fall had a certain effect, because these liberal "Kemalist" intellectuals, including circles of the CHP, played a role in this and developed a discussion around it. The assembly declared that it would consult the "social groups and organizations" in order to draw up a new constitution. This is still going on.

Representatives of the banned bourgeois parties that are not going to be consulted have raised their "protest" only because they say there is no democracy if they aren't involved.

Around the end of 1982, a referendum is supposed to be held on the constitution and after that there are supposed to be elections for a new parliament. But before all that takes place, all the important laws--the new laws regulating political parties, trade unions, elections, and parliament, etc.--are going to be decreed by the junta.

We have seen the same sort of trickery in other parts of the world before.

Q. What possibilities do you see for resistance?

A. Despite the torture and the indescribable conditions, the prisons today are centers of the resistance. The vanguard of the workers' movement confined there is struggling to hold out and to achieve political clarity in preparation for a new upsurge of class struggle. For these militants, international solidarity is essential.

Outside the prisons, all forms of legal and illegal struggle that have shown their effectiveness are being considered. It is of decisive importance to systematically exploit all the possibilities that remain in the unions. The masses of former DISK members, deprived of their leaders, are supposed to be "transferred" to Turk-Is. We have to be on the lookout for the smallest openings to do revolutionary work in this area.

Selections from the World Press

of the Workers and Liberation Movements

GERMANY

Was Tun

In its February 18 issue, Was Tun, the weekly paper of the Gruppe Internationaler Marxisten, German section of the Fourth International, published a commentary by Winifried Wolf on a recent peace demonstration in East Germany. Wolf wrote:

* * *

Thirty-five clergy and workers drew up a petition on January 25, 1982. Two weeks later, it carried 300 signatures. Another week later, on February 15, this led to a public peace demonstration. Three thousand persons met to discuss the question in a church; a thousand went onto the street.

All this happened in East Germany. And this fact gives those three thousand persons who gathered in a church in Dresden greater weight than the three hundred-thousand people who demonstrated for peace and disarmament October 10, 1981, on the streets of Bonn.

Once again, the Springer press found a way to distort this development. For example, over its report of the East German peace action, the Berliner Morgenpost ran the headline "East Berlin Pastor for Soviet Withdrawal." This was a gross falsification of the tenor of the document, which says, among other things:

"There is only one kind of war that is still possible in Europe, an atomic war. The weapons stockpiled in the East and in the West will not protect us; they will destroy us. If we want to survive, we must demand that these weapons be done away with. All Europe must become a nuclear-free zone. We propose that negotiations be opened between the two German states for the removal of all nuclear weapons from Germany....

"The powers that emerged victorious from the second world war must finally sign a peace treaty with the two German states... After that, all troops of the former occupying powers must be withdrawn from Germany

and these powers must come to an agreement on guarantees of noninterference in the internal affairs of both German states."

Thus, the demand for a nuclear-free Europe is now being raised also in East Germany. And the idea is that East and West Germany must start the ball rolling. This demand was part of the basis for the three-hundred-thousand-strong demonstration in Bonn. It was this same demand that in recent weeks threw the West German Social Democratic party tops into convulsions, when it was raised by rebellious local units of the party. A nuclear-free Europe from Portugal to Poland--what does this demand mean exactly?

It is directed against armament projects of the U.S. and NATO, which provide for making Europe the battlefield of a third world war.

It goes against, directly or indirectly, all neutralist conceptions that call for disentangling West Europe from the U.S. through the building up of an "autonomous nuclear striking force."

It has to be stressed that the U.S. imperialists were the first ones to develop the atomic bomb and the only ones who have used it, in Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Every new step in arming, every new acceleration of the arms race has been initiated by the U.S. and NATO.

It is important to make those points in the peace movement. But that in no wise means that we approve of the Soviet answer to this imperialist arming. The Kremlin bureaucracy responded in accordance with its nature as a conservative caste, in a strictly military way. It followed the West step by step, struggling hopelessly to keep up.

The Kremlin's only peace initiatives were in the conference room. If a peace movement of any independence developed, then it was seen merely as a card to be played in the big poker game with the U.S. Such a policy in the long run could only end up in a political and military blind

alley. The arms race cannot be halted with negotiations alone. In fact, now it can scarcely even be contained.

Moreover, this purely military answer corresponds to a militarization of the Soviet Union's own camp. The peace petition in East Germany refers to this--war games for children, civil-defense training in the school, atomic air-raid drills.

In East Germany, we are seeing the beginning of a new democratic movement. It is taking the bureaucracy at its word. The Kremlin bureaucracy in fact calls for peace, disarmament, even a nuclear-free Europe from Portugal to Poland. Quite recently, this was proposed again in Bonn by Brezhnev. The bureaucracy will move against such a peace movement in its own camp, not because of its demands but because it is an independent movement.

It is important to realize the possibilities of this new movement, the possibilities for taking advantage of the interrelation between the peace movements East and West. This is something new, the fact that this democratic movement now exists in both East and West. Indeed, it brings pressing demands to the fore. If a real mass movement develops in the East and extends into the West, then it will not stop with the present demands. It can become a movement for socialist democracy both East and West, for the abolition of the status quo that means massive unemployment and preparation for war in the West and political oppression of the masses and martial law in Poland.

In East Germany now, after the establishment of martial law in Poland, a new beginning has been made. Now, it's our turn. Helmut Schmidt's invitation to Reagan is an invitation to us to organize the biggest demonstration in West Germany's history in Bonn--against Reagan as the personification of the preparations for an imperialist third world war; against the U.S. president, who is preparing to mount an all-out attack on the revolution in Central America; against Mr.

"Although the public workers' union got a bit more in its contract than the ASI (the national labor confederation that includes the blue-collar unions), the results generally were such as to discourage them about the prospects, given the guidelines adopted by the government and previous attacks on the levels of real wages.

"In the September issue of Neisti, we wrote: 'From the responses of some labor leaders, it seems that they are anxious to accept the government's wage guidelines but that they fear that this could arouse general discontent among the workers. So, they are trying to test the ground first....'

"The public workers' union contract runs to the end of July, that is two and a half months after the expiration of the ASI contract. The public workers union leadership apparently wanted its contract to come up after the ASI's. As elsewhere in the labor movement, the public workers' leaders' main

concern has become to hide behind other unions....

"The contract signed by the public workers' union is clearly a capitulation.... The gap between the demands, which were summarized in the last issue of Neisti, is very great....

"The public workers' union leadership has shown that its main concern is to get its contract negotiations to come after those of the ASI so that it will have an excuse for accepting the same miserable results....

"This is a foolish game that is one of the things that helps most to get the trade-union movement trapped in a vicious circle of retreat after retreat.

"The vote against the contract in the public workers' union was relatively large, larger than in the ASI unions, about 30%.

"Obviously that does not mean that 30% of the membership was prepared to wage a real struggle. Many could have voted 'no' as a

simple protest, in the assurance that the contract would be easily passed. However, there are some indications that there was more opposition than in the past.

"The leadership played up the fact that rejecting the contract would mean a strike at the end of February or early March and that the members would lose the 3.25% increase they were due, starting then.

"Important groups in the union, such as registered nurses and teachers, were given indirect promises of raises by other means, which were given quietly so as not to be an example for other groups of workers.

"I think that what most helped to get the contract accepted was the lack of an organized opposition.... A great many union members swallowed the contract because they did not trust the present leadership to wage a hard struggle and there was no sign of an alternative."

By Kjell Ostberg

Swedish Workers Relearn the Method of the Political Strike

(The following article is from the February 18 issue of Internationelen, the weekly paper of the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International. It has been slightly abridged. The translation is by IV.)

* * *

It is no accident that the call for political strikes is arising today in response to the capitalist parties' attacks on the working people. The reformists' parliamentary methods have long been bankrupt.

That is why workers in the shipyards in Skane, in the steelworks in Bergslagen and Norrbotten, and other branches of heavy industry are demanding that the working class take up effective methods to combat the capitalist parties and their policies.

When the Swedish workers movement was young, strikes were its most important weapon. They were necessary for the workers even to win the right to

build unions, to defend themselves against attempts to push down wages, and to win more bearable working conditions and a shorter workday.

But also in the struggle for political rights, the strike was an obvious weapon for a fighting labor movement.

In fact, the discussion about how to use the weapon of the general strike to win universal suffrage was one of the most important debates in the workers' movement at the beginning of this century.

In the spring of 1902, the Riksdag was debating the question of the vote. In order to press their demand for universal suffrage, the workers carried out a three-day political general strike. It marked a major step forward. Well over a hundred thousand workers throughout the country participated in it. And this was when the LO (the National Labor Confederation) had only 39,000 members.

The effects of the general strike and the demonstrations

that were combined with this were far reaching. The government was forced to resign, and the right's proposal could not be carried through. To continue with the same methods, to escalate the political strikes until the right to vote was won seemed the obvious road to many in the workers' movement. But not to the leadership.

They were frightened by the demonstration of the sort of power the workers had, and they were afraid to let this kind of thing go any further.

How could the leaders be sure that the demonstrations could be limited to the demand for the right to vote? In 1905, when the tactic of the general strike was being discussed most intensely, the Russian workers showed that strikes and demonstrations that had begun for far more modest demands could develop into revolutionary uprisings.

Branting, the most farsighted reformist, opposed political general strikes. His primary objection was that use of such

forceful means endangered collaboration with the bourgeois liberals in the Riksdag.

And class collaboration in the Riksdag was more important than the strongest class hatred expressed in mass actions in the streets.

Branting's conception and apprehensions quickly spread to the reformist-inclined leaders in the party and the trade-union movement.

So, despite the clear gains achieved by the political general strike of 1902, and despite the fact that the masses in the workers' movement expressed their unequivocal support for continuing to use the general strike tactic in no less than four referendums (that is how democratic they were in those days), the party and union leadership opposed by every means at their disposal any further application of this highly effective method.

When the LO says today that political strikes were an acceptable method at the turn of the century because political democracy had not yet been established, this is also wrong.

The reformist LO leadership turned against political general strikes back in 1902, for the same reason it opposes such methods now--because they endanger class collaboration.

But for fighting workers, the political strike continued to be an important weapon...

And when universal suffrage was finally won at the end of the teens, this was in fact the result of the biggest strike wave our country has ever seen. All the rallies, demonstrations, occupations, and strikes, above all in the spring of 1917, were ultimately aimed against the hunger government of Hammarskjöld and to

back up the demand for universal suffrage, which more and more came to the fore.

These strikes and demonstrations were in no way initiated or supported by the Social Democratic leadership in the SAP (Socialist Workers Party) and the LO, quite the contrary. They were spontaneous upsurges led by left socialists and syndicalists. But that did not prevent the first Social Democratic government from getting into power on the back of these upsurges. They had nothing against enjoying the fruits of this political strike.

Today only two political strikes are noted with approval by Social Democratic historians--the 1902 one and the one that the LO called in 1928 in protest against the Collective Bargaining Law and the setting up of labor courts.

But the Social Democrats cannot take any credit for the 1928 strike either.

When the LO first discussed how to resist the proposed law, the leadership strongly opposed the call for "sabotaging the legislation." No, they passed a resolution against it, that was supposed to be sufficient.

But the outrage against the ruling bourgeois government's bill was enormous in the trade-union movement. The call for a general strike against the anti-union legislation was raised in thousands of rallies and demonstrations across the country.

So, the National Secretariat of the LO and the Social Democratic party leadership finally found it necessary "to try to provide an outlet for the growing unrest," as it so blithely put it in the LO's official history.

The support for the three-hour general strike was impressive. Stockholm was as good as shut

down, and 70,000 workers participated in a giant demonstration. And the LO leadership came under strong criticism for not carrying the struggle further. Why not send the bourgeois government packing? many wondered.

Several motions were presented to the LO congress last year calling for the organization to resort to political general strikes as a means of fighting the bourgeois government's antilabor policies.

In their rejection of these motions, the LO leadership did, however, say that there is no rule that as such bars political general strikes. Demonstrations in the form of short strikes can be considered, but they should be resorted to only in the most extreme crises or when the right to organize is threatened. It is essential, the LO leadership said, to maintain the distinction between demonstration strikes and strikes that are expressly aimed to bring down the government.

But before this declaration was voted by the LO congress, the leadership was obliged to go along with the political strike by the textile workers' union, which had just occurred in conditions that could not be called "the most extreme crisis." And now other LO representatives are saying that the leadership of the organization may very well consider a political strike against cutbacks of social gains.

In fact, by its nature the reformist trade-union bureaucracy will never willingly resort to political strikes. But when the anger and the pressure of the working class on them becomes too great, they can be forced to undertake extensive political protest actions "in an attempt to provide an outlet for growing unrest."

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST REVIEW

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By Peter Bartelheimer

German and Austrian SPs Block Solidarity with Polish Workers

When those who fight injustice
are beaten,
That doesn't mean that injustice
is right.
Our defeats show only that too
few fight against baseness
What we expect from the onlookers
is that at least they should be
ashamed.

Bertolt Brecht
"Against Those Who Preach Objec-
tivity." 1933.

* * *

Since the end of the second world war, no war has been fought so close to the borders of West Germany and Austria as the one that General Jaruzelski declared on December 13, 1981, against the working class and the entire population of Poland. Nonetheless, in the Social Democratic parties and the unions in these countries-- which besides France and Greece are the only two in Western Europe where Social Democrats are in government--there are far too many onlookers, too many who are staying "above the battle." And they are not at all ashamed.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, as in Austria, there is a solidarity movement with Solidarnosc. However, in neither of these two countries have the Social Democratic parties and the unions called for mass demonstrations in support of Solidarnosc, as the corresponding organizations have in Italy and France. Moreover, in West Germany and Austria, the trade-union committees for solidarity with Solidarnosc have been having a hard time finding allies within the Social Democracy to help them build active mass solidarity.

The tens of thousands of food packages and shipments of medicine sent to Poland testify to the fact that the population is not indifferent to the events in Poland and that the Polish workers movement is arousing sympathy in factories and offices.

In both these countries, the Stalinist parties, the Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (DKP, German Communist Party) and the Kommunistische Partei Osterreichs

(KPO), which follow Moscow's line through thick and thin, have scarcely any support in the workers' movement. The existence in the unions and the SPD of supporters of the theory of state monopoly capitalism ("Stamikap"), who sympathize with the DKP, does not sway the policy of the Social Democracy.

Thus, in West Germany and Austria, it is not the influence of Stalinism but much more that of the Social Democracy that explains the difficulties faced by those who are trying to organize an effective working-class movement of solidarity with Solidarnosc.

BRANDT, KREISKY:
"POLAND HAS TO WORK
HARDER"

At the time of the December 13 coup d'etat, the West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt, was meeting with Erich Honecker, the general secretary of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei (SED, Socialist Unity Party, the East German CP) at an East-West German summit on the shore of Lake Werbellin. Schmidt's response to the event was in tune with Honecker's.

The West German SPD leader described the state of siege in Poland as representing "a difference between opposing sections of the Polish people." He even expressed his "regret that such a solution became necessary."

On the same day, the Austrian chancellor, Bruno Kreisky, also a leader of a Social Democratic Party (the SPO), declared that General Jaruzelski's crackdown was "a last attempt to avoid the worst."

Such statements are hardly surprising when you remember that the SPD chairman, Willy Brandt's comment on the First National Congress of Solidarity held in Gdansk last September was to point to the existing treaties and alliances and say: "What Poland needs most is to work harder!"

In the same period, Bruno Kreisky, speaking to Austrian steelworkers in Linz, called on the Polish workers to strike less and produce more coal to assure that

the trade treaties with Austria would be complied with.

The inborn fear that Social Democrat rulers in Bonn and Vienna have of a revolutionary workers movement developing not far from their frontiers combines with the special interests of West German and Austrian capitalism in East-West trade. For example, in 1980 West Germany exported 1.29 billion dollars worth of commodities to Poland and 4.3 billions to the USSR. In comparison with this, the U. S. exported 770 millions worth of goods to Poland and 1.5 billions to the USSR. Moreover, unlike the U. S., West German exports to East Europe and the USSR were almost exclusively industrial products. With 4.3 billion dollars in outstanding loans to Poland, the West German banks have twice the debts to collect that the American banks do.

To be sure, both the SPD and the SPO condemned the establishment of the state of siege in Poland. Bruno Kreisky sent a message to the solidarity rally with Poland that was held on January 29 at Vienna's Konzerthaus at which the balladeer Wolf Bierman appeared.

The Austrian chancellor said: "We must demand the same thing today that we demanded of the Austrian fascist regime after the February 1934 days--Release the Polish union leaders!" In the February 4, 1982, issue of the SPD journal Vorwärts, he wrote that in Poland "all the insanity of the Communist apparatus has been revealed."

For his part, Helmut Schmidt said on December 18 before the Bundestag, and repeated on January 31 at the SPD Lower Saxony state congress in Hanover, that he was "with all my heart at the side of the Polish workers."

MODERATION
AND
CIRCUMSPECTION

However, in a resolution signed by its presidium in December, the SPD leadership advised against any concrete actions: "With regard to the events in Poland, the SPD presidium calls on all responsible

forces in West Germany to adopt an attitude of circumspection and moderation....The commitment to rapprochement and collaboration must be maintained in particular in these critical moments."

Rapprochement and collaboration with whom? At this time, the Polish deputy premier, Mieczyslaw Rakowski was making his first visit to a Western capital after the putsch, in Bonn, where he was working to achieve "understanding." The columns of the liberal magazines Stern and Der Spiegel were being opened to the spokesman of the Military Council of National Salvation (WRON), Captain Gornicki, for long interviews. The trade-union leaderships were following the wishes of their Social Democrat comrades in the government. And it was only at the end of December that the national labor confederation, the DGB, and IG-Metall called on their eight million members to give humanitarian aid to the Polish population.

The slogan of this campaign was not, however, "Solidarity with Solidarnosc!" but "Solidarity With Poland!" On January 30, the day of solidarity endorsed by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the presidents of the DGB and IG-Metall, Vetter and Loderer, explained why before December 13 they had carefully avoided calling for solidarity with Solidarnosc. They did not want to cause any problems for their Polish colleagues, it seems.

The DGB supported the ICFTU's call for actions on January 30. At the same time, it showed how its subordination to the Schmidt government had undermined its capacity to mobilize even basic trade-union solidarity.

A call for street demonstrations was launched only after Willy Brandt and other Social Democrats had solemnly declared in Bundestag debates with the Christian Democrat opposition (the CDU/CSU) that they would march in the front ranks of the DGB demonstrations for the victims of the state of siege.

In some places, the DGB even let representatives of the bourgeois parties--the Christian Democrats and Social Christians of the CDU and CSU and the liberals of the FDP--march together with the Social Democrats and trade-union leaders at the head of demonstrations.

After six months of "moderation" in the big cities only a few

hundred persons responded to the calls of the DGB. In some big cities, such as West Berlin, Cologne, and Frankfurt, the DGB leaders did not lift a finger to organize actions, and once again left this task entirely to the solidarity committees. As a result, January 30 appeared to public opinion not as a day of trade-union solidarity but as a propaganda move by U.S. President Reagan and the right.

THE CRISIS OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC REFORMISM

On October 19, 1981, about 300,000 persons demonstrated in Bonn against the Social-Liberal coalition government's support for basing more NATO missiles in the country. Some 70,000 trade unionists marched in response to the call issued by the Stuttgart regional leadership of I.G.-Metall against the austerity policy of the Social Democrat ministers. SPD members of parliament (e.g., Hansen) have been expelled from the party for criticizing the Schmidt government. Others have left the party (e.g., Coppik). Social Democrats and trade-union activists have demanded that Bonn stop its financial aid to the pro-NATO junta in Turkey.

However, the SPD's "reserve" in the face of the military dictatorship in Poland has the almost unanimous approval of the party, including its left wing. Erhard Eppler, who spoke as a member of the party presidium at the anti-NATO missiles demonstration in Bonn, has said that General Jaruzelski is a "tragic figure," whose promises of reform should be "taken seriously," because the WRON is the "last chance for Polish sovereignty."

Even militant union activists who are not ready to accept the austerity program and economic policy of the Social-Liberal coalition headed by Schmidt have the illusion that the SPD-led government is defending the "detente" against Ronald Reagan's policy of sanctions against the Soviet Union.

Even the union activists who criticize their leaderships for their inability to mobilize against the bosses and the government share with these same bureaucrats the idea that Solidarnosc had framed demands that were too advanced, that were based "on a wrong assessment of the relationship of forces," demands that "bent the stick too far." The only chance to achieve political change in the countries of

"living socialism," according to these views is a "process of reforms and renewal," a compromise between the workers and the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The Polish workers' struggle has raised questions that can only be answered in a positive way on the basis of an overall socialist alternative to Social Democratic reformism. Can the workers movement make a link between the defense of its bread-and-butter interests with the struggle for a different kind of society, for workers self-management and socialist democracy? Can the working class govern by itself? Is it possible for a revolutionary workers movement to win in Europe and thereby break down the spheres of influence into which the world was divided at the Yalta conference in 1945.

For thirty-five years, the West German and Austrian workers have had little experience of struggle. In the unions the peace movement is only beginning to raise the question of the independent role that the workers movement could play in international politics.

Since the summer of 1980, the revolutionary Marxists have worked to the limit of their strength consistently to show that the struggle of the Polish workers was a demonstration in life of the possibility of an alternative to bureaucratic socialism. Since that time, the German and Austrian sections of the Fourth International, the Gruppe Internationale Marxisten (GIM) and the Gruppe Revolutionäre Marxisten (GRM) have played an important role in building the movement of solidarity with Solidarnosc.

Today the West German and Austrian Trotskyists are working to promote active trade-union support for the Polish resistance as an alternative to Reagan's policy of economic sanctions. At the same time, they are calling for a peace movement united around the demand for unconditional disarmament.

In particular, the Trotskyists are fighting the illusion that the workers movement and the peace movement in West Germany and Austria today can ignore the war that the bureaucratic dictatorship is waging against the Polish workers.

What is at stake is the chance for building an alternative to crisis and war, not only in Poland but also in the consciousness of the workers movement in Western Europe. ■

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