

# International VIEWPOINT

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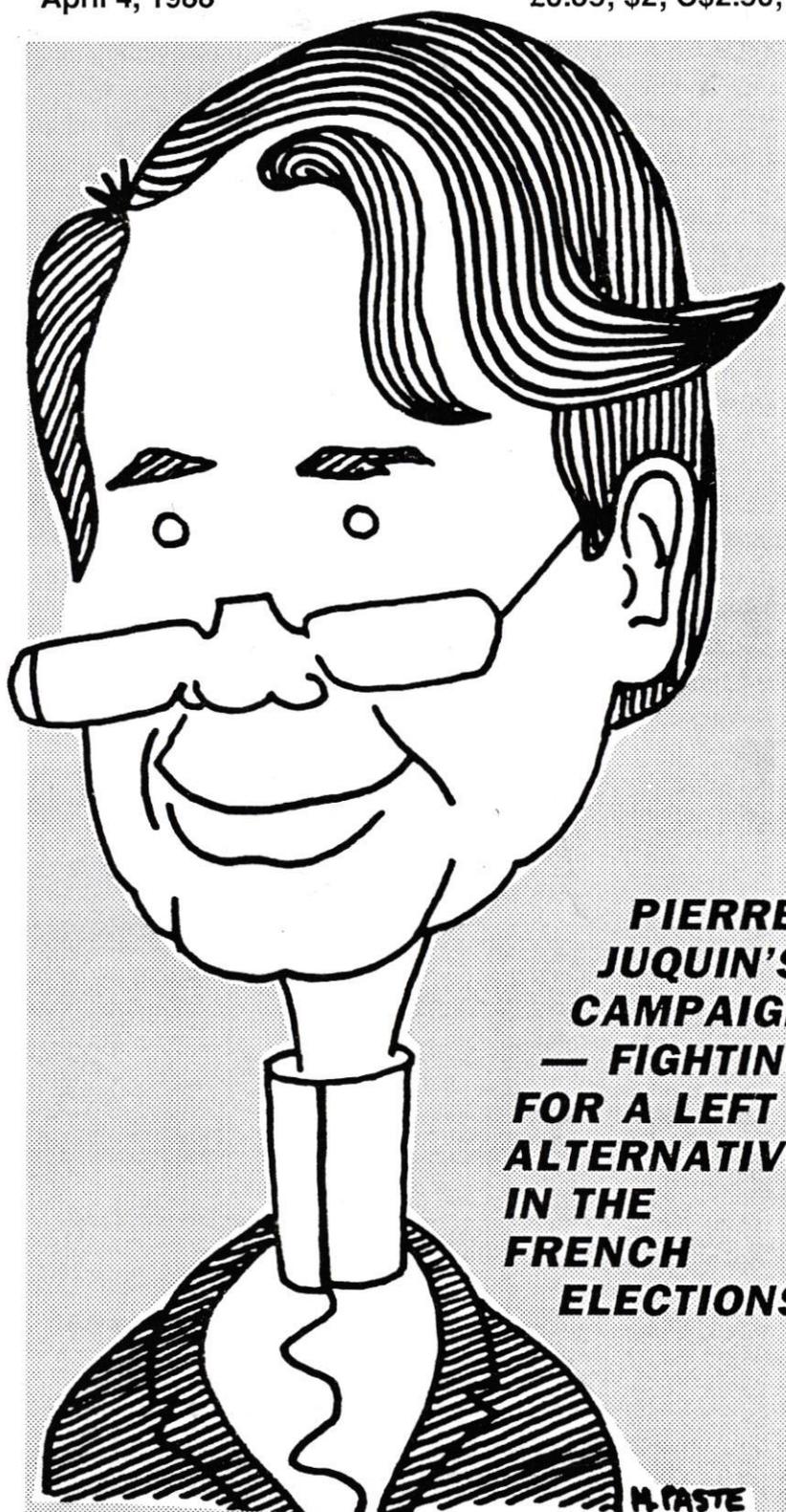


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H. PASTE

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### READERS' SURVEY

WE HAVE received a very good response so far to our Readers' Survey, sent out with issue 136 of *International Viewpoint*. This is just a small reminder to those of you who've forgotten to send the survey back to us! Send it now — remember, there's a chance of winning a free year's subscription. Results will be published in the May 2 issue. ★

# International VIEWPOINT

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# Kremlin attempts to suppress Armenian protests

**MOSCOW'S RESPONSE** to the demand of the Armenian people for the re-attachment of the Nagorno-Karabakh district to the Soviet Republic of Armenia was in fact announced by a long article in *Pravda* on March 21 before any governmental decision was made. This procedure managed to make a mockery at the same time of the so-called orderly democratic procedures of the Soviet state, of the independence of the Soviet press and the new honest reporting that is supposed to be an essential part of *glasnost* and *perestroika*.

In the face of a ban on demonstrations and the deployment of police and military forces, the Armenian leaders called for a passive general strike, a "dead city," in Yerevan on March 26. As we go to press, it is reported that the Soviet newspapers themselves have recognized that the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh was shut down by a strike. There are also some reports that the protest was effective in Yerevan, although the Soviet authorities have tried to prevent any independent reports from coming out of the city.

GERRY FOLEY

**"EMOTION** and reason," was the title of the March 21 *Pravda* article. In the press of the Stalinist bureaucracy, as in the press of all governments that are set above the masses, the aspirations of the people represent "emotion," and the interests of the rulers, "reason." The original sin of the Armenian protests, the article made clear, was that they sought to mobilize masses of people behind a demand on the Soviet authorities.

"Indeed, a plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [CPSU] is to be held on the national question, where it will be considered in all its complexity and in a rounded way. In fact, that was announced already at the February plenum of the CC of the CPSU, that is, many days before the events in Nagorno-Karabakh and around it.

"However, judging by everything, it seems that precisely this sober and businesslike approach was not to some people's liking. For true and consistent democratization, they are trying to substitute a democracy of mass meetings, a democracy of the streets, in which emotions and passions come to the fore."

Deplorably, these actions were really

powerful. "On specific days in Armenia, up to 60 enterprises in Armenia did not function, and in the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous Oblast, work was in effect paralyzed."

The more than suspicious leadership of the protests even sought to oust officials opposed to the will of the people, something the authors were sure would have shocked participants in the protests themselves: "We were able to be present at a meeting of this committee [they call it the "Karabakh Committee"] where its action program was ratified. We think that if what had been said on that day in the Writers' Home, whose hall was obligingly put fully at the disposal of the Committee, had been said in [Yerevan's] Opera Square, the speakers would not have been interrupted by applause. For example, the demand was raised for dismissing and re-electing leaders of enterprises and party bodies, for recalling people's deputies and expelling them all from the party if they obstructed the formation of 'Karabakh' base committees."

Even independent decisions by an official, supposedly representative, body was enough to shock the authors of the article. In fact, they began by saying that "On Feb-

ruary 20, an event unprecedented in the relations among the nations in our country occurred. By a majority vote, the deputies of the Oblast Soviet of Nagorno-Karabakh adopted a resolution asking the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaidzhan and Armenian SSRs to transfer the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast from Azerbaidzhan to Armenia and requesting the Supreme Soviet of the USSR consider the question."

It must have been the decision by a divided ("majority") vote that was "unprecedented." There have in fact been territorial readjustments between various republics before, for example, between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

The article did pay its respects to *glasnost* and *perestroika* by saying that, indeed, "the time is over when there can only be one opinion about any question." But in this case, it argued, the question was too delicate to be a subject for public dispute, which after all was an unreliable way of determining the truth. If there was an objective basis for settling such questions, it was around economic criteria.

## Spurious economic arguments

"When the territorial attachment of Nagorno-Karabakh was decided by the Communists of the Caucasian Bureau of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), they took into consideration above all in which republic the region could develop the fastest socially and economically, so that the lives of the people would be better."

"A thousand ties over the past decades have bound the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast to the Azerbaidzhani republic. Should this well-oiled mechanism be destroyed? This would have a negative effect not only on the social and economic situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaidzhan but in the entire country. And if, by analogy, other regions started to satisfy their own interests at the expense of other peoples, what would happen then to the union of brother peoples, to the economy of the country?"

At the same time, the article acknowledged that the "well-oiled mechanism" had not functioned all that well, and the people of Nagorno-Karabakh had real causes for complaint. Moscow would remedy these by special measures, such as pouring in extra resources.

*Pravda's* economic argument seemed to be a good example of positions that could not stand much exposure to "democracy of mass meetings, democracy of the streets." Nagorno-Karabakh is a small area. How could its transfer to the Armenia SSR have a big effect on the Soviet economy as a whole? Furthermore, it is separated from the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic by only a small stretch of Azerbaidzhani territory.

On the other hand, part of Azerbaidzhan

is separated from the rest of that republic by the Armenian SSR, the enclave of Nakhichevan. According to Armenian protesters, Armenians, originally a large majority, have been reduced to a tiny minority of two per cent in this little Azerbaidzhan beyond Armenia.

Leaders of the Armenian protests claim that the decision to grant Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaidzhan was made personally by Stalin for the sake of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Mustapha Kemal's Turkey, as well as with the nationalist movements of the Muslim peoples in general.

What is there to convince the Armenians that the Soviet authorities would not sacrifice their interests for the sake of *realpolitik*? They are, after all, a small and isolated people.

There are only two national questions in the USSR that, by themselves, could really threaten the power of the bureaucracy. One of them is the Ukrainian question. The other is that of historically Muslim nations, of which the strongest and most developed is the Azerbaidzhani.

On the other hand, feelings of national solidarity, even in small nations, have proven to be very resistant even to the totalitarian steamroller. So far it has been only the national movements that have been able to mount mass opposition to the Soviet bureaucratic rulers.

### Vast and mysterious "conspiracy" suggested

*Pravda* suggested that there was something sinister, some vast and mysterious conspiracy behind the organization of the Armenian protests. "The people coming onto the streets and squares of Yerevan, coming here from various parts of the republic, were well-organized, disciplined. A role was played by a long premeditated, carefully prepared organization to lead 'popular agitations.' In the enterprises, institutes, *Vuzes* [centers of higher education], ringleaders 'suddenly' appeared, who knew beforehand where and at what time to lead people and what slogans to chant. What is more, if anyone refused to go to the mass meetings, they were publicly shamed, virtually called traitors to the nation and forced to go to the meetings."

National solidarity at high points can be extremely powerful. The Soviet bureaucracy experienced this both in the occupation of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. In 1968, it made a point of warning the Czechs and Slovaks about trusting in such slogans as "Ten million hearts beat as one," which had been raised by the Hungarians resisting the bureaucratic counter-revolution imposed by Soviet troops in 1956. Ironically, this very article provoked another example.

The bureaucratic rulers tried to give it an "internationalist" facade by publishing it over the signatures of *Pravda's* Armenian correspondent, Yu. Arakelian; its Azer-

baidzhani correspondent, Z. Kadyzbekov; and a Russian "special correspondent," G. Ovcharenko. This unobtrusive maneuver exploded in the Soviet authorities' faces when the Armenian "signatory" publicly disavowed the article. It was an unheard-of act of courage by a Soviet journalist. It is difficult to imagine that he would have dared to do it if he had not felt the power of Armenian unity.

The article did not make any concrete accusations about who or what was behind the Armenian protests. It only hinted at obscure "organized" and "prepared" forces, without naming names or offering any evidence other than innuendo. It seemed to make an amalgam between Armenian nationalists and local officials opposed to Gorbachev's reforms or fearful of being exposed for their incompetence. It asserted, for example:

"Nonetheless [despite the assignment of the area to Azerbaidzhan in 1923], the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh has arisen again more than once, as a rule in those moments when it was advantageous to one or another ruler of Armenia to distract the attention of the public from the mass of unsolved economic and social problems, from the improper style and methods of work of the party leadership." No concrete instances of this were given, although that would certainly be interesting, especially given the current re-examination of Soviet history.

At the same time, the article said that the Azerbaidzhani authorities had also asked for parts of Armenia, Georgia and Dagestan. But it was not stated whether these requests were also motivated by a desire to distract attention from their own unsolved "economic and social problems." This school-masterly distribution of bad marks to the authorities of both republics was hardly the sort of thing to convince the Armenian protesters, who have accused the Soviet central authorities of manipulating the Azerbaidzhanis in order to counter the Armenian claims.

Apparently, the article was trying to hint that Armenian party authorities, who have been accused of opposing Gorbachev's reforms, had connived in the protests in order to save their own skins. The bureaucratic rulers of the subordinate nationalities have tended to be especially open to charges of corruption. But it seems hardly likely that the Armenian sub-bureaucrats were so daring or desperate as to try hide behind the mass mobilizations of a small people. According to the well-informed Soviet dissident, Sergei Grigoriants, they were bypassed and dragged behind the mass protests.

The article in a general way blamed the bad old days that Gorbachev has pledged to overcome: "Unfortunately, when the style and methods of the period of the cult of the personality were judged, the question of the further development of the Leninist traditions of nationalities policy was avoided. In the years of stagnation [presumably un-

der Brezhnev], people tried to avoid approaching it from any standpoint. In this way, many diseases of society were driven inward, carefully hidden."

The way the Soviet authors of this article tied themselves in knots seems to be an index of the contradictions of Gorbachev's pretences and objectives. They blame the Stalinist past, but they use its methods. The national problems were hidden before, but the one that has blown up in their faces is too delicate for open discussion, too explosive to permit public involvement in deciding it. They prove themselves incapable of discussing it with the least openness or honesty.

### Massive, all-pervading repression

Now, after some hesitations, the Soviet authorities have returned to their fundamental method of handling disagreements — high-priestly declarations coupled with massive, all-pervading repression. The hesitations were probably largely owing to the fact that the Armenians by themselves cannot pose a great danger to the power of the all-Union bureaucracy, as well as to the massive and united character of their protests.

At first the price to be paid for repression, at a time when the Kremlin leadership claims to have turned over a new leaf, probably seemed to be out of proportion to the actual threat posed by the Armenian protests. Ultimately, however, the independent mobilization of hundreds of thousands of people, even in a tiny and isolated nation, could not be tolerated.

Ironically, the very article that denounced the Armenian protests in Stalinist style and prefigured the turn to repression proclaimed the ineffectiveness of traditional Stalinist methods of dealing with national dissent. It was an indication of the difficulty that the Kremlin will have now in intimidating the Armenian people and stamping out their protests.

Furthermore, the other national resentments that the article itself admitted had been driven underground and festered in the bad old days have been coming to the surface again, as in the Baltic states or even Byelorussia.

The bureaucracy is in a weaker position to repress them, and it has proven in the Armenian case that it has no political arguments for dealing with them.

Arbitrary decisions and maneuvering by the all-Union authorities can only make such national problems more explosive. Sacrificing the national claims of the Armenians will not placate the peoples of Muslim culture. They have much more fundamental differences with Moscow than a small jurisdictional dispute here or there. The Kremlin leaders' total lack of a principled democratic approach to the national question is sowing their path with landmines. ★

# War on funerals

FUNERALS became battlegrounds in Belfast twice in one week. On March 16, a Loyalist assassin attacked the crowd gathered in Miltown cemetery for the burial of three Republicans—Mairéad Farrell, Seán Savage and Danny McCann—who were summarily executed in Gibraltar on March 6 by a British elite counter-insurgency unit. The Loyalist gunman had a firearm as well as hand grenades. Since possession of firearms is illegal in Northern Ireland without special permission (which Catholics rarely, if ever, get), the killer could have expected to have the upper hand over a weaponless crowd. For example, during the rise of Nazism it was not uncommon for individual or small groups of Brownshirts to attack large gatherings, to show the superiority of a trained and ruthless elite over “mere numbers.”

**T**HE LOYALIST killer, however, badly misjudged the determination of the nationalist youth. Although he killed one of them and wounded others, they overwhelmed him, and he had to be rescued by the state forces.

A few days later, on Saturday, March 19, at the funeral of the Republican killed on Wednesday, two armed British soldiers clashed with the funeral procession, were overwhelmed by unarmed young people and executed by the IRA before the state forces could intervene. Since then, the British authorities have tried to make martyrs out of the two soldiers in order to whip up British public opinion against the Irish na-

tionist resistance.

The hypocrisy of the British authorities is equal to their imperialist and racist arrogance. They have even gone to the length of proposing to award the two soldiers posthumous medals for “forbearance” for not firing into the crowd. The Loyalist killer certainly could not be said to have exercised any “forbearance,” but the nationalist youth overwhelmed him just as surely as the two soldiers. Moreover, he had the benefit of surprise. In the second case, the youth were ready for an attack. Eye-witnesses say that at least one of the soldiers fired a shot, but was immediately disarmed. The IRA has announced that it believed that the two

were members of the SAS elite force that assassinated the three Republicans in Gibraltar.

It is important that the facts and the context of this incident be clearly understood because it is obvious that the British authorities intend to use it as a pretext for a “legal” lynching of as many nationalists as they can.

The author of the following article, a leader of People’s Democracy, the Irish section of the Fourth International, is a cousin of Seán Savage and was with the family at Miltown cemetery on March 16 when the attack occurred, within the area spattered by gunfire. ★

Gerry Foley

## British policy in tatters

**E**CHOES of the last grenade explosion had scarcely died away following the massacre of mourners at Miltown cemetery in Belfast before the British government began a campaign of racist lies and disinformation. There was no sympathy for the victims. *The Sun* asked, “Who’s to blame?” and answered “Mairéad Farrell, Seán Savage and Danny McCann...they conspired in their own deaths.” *The Daily Mail* took up the same theme: “Now, even as their bodies were being interred, they have triggered a counter-terror. They would have enjoyed that.” *The Times* argued that the massacre had proved the need for a British shoot-to-kill policy.

Although anti-Irish racism is one of the formative traditions of the British ruling class, they normally like to distance themselves from the sadism and rabid communalism of their Loyalist guard dogs in Ireland. But when they think that they can get a section of British public opinion going with them, they bay just as loudly.

Running up and down the scale, the British bourgeois and reformist politicians did not neglect the dulcet tones of pious moderation. Tory and Labour leaders, who a week before the Miltown funeral had been vying with each other in cheering and glorifying the SAS assassins in Gibraltar, solemnly informed the dead and injured that their tragedy had proved the “futility of violence.”

Official statements about the events in the churchyard attempted to minimize its significance. The killer, a Loyalist called Michael Stone, was declared to be a madman with no connections with the Loyalist military organizations. He was supposed to have carried out the attack on his own. An unmarked white van that sped away from

### JOHN McANULTY

the scene belonged to the RUC traffic branch. The total absence of armoured patrols was supposedly the result of requests from the Catholic Church and Catholic bourgeois nationalist politicians that the state forces maintain a “low profile” at the funeral.

### Police sped away from the massacre

Even this version totally discredits the RUC. According to them, a number of heavily armed police sped away from the massacre, leaving unarmed young men to tackle the killer and capture him at the cost of further death and injury. “Madness” has been used before as a way of explaining away Loyalist killings.

In fact, extreme sadism and a psychopathic indifference to their victims’ suffering is a political characteristic of the Loyalist “death squads.”

It quickly emerged that Stone was a leading figure in Loyalist paramilitary circles. He had close connections to the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), which is the leading Loyalist terror gang, responsible for most of the sectarian assassinations. It nonetheless remains a legal organization, with many contacts in the state forces. He also had close ties with the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), a smaller group.

Stone has now been linked with a whole series of Loyalist killings of civilians. He was formally refused membership of the UDA, but was subsequently used by members of its leadership for undercover killings. He was armed with weapons from a

consignment of modern arms obtained by Loyalists in January.

Two other Loyalists are now being questioned about the organization of the atrocity. The "Ulster Freedom Fighters" (UFF), a cover name used by the UDA to distance itself from the sectarian murders it carries out, admitted killing a Catholic civilian the day before the attack and offered support for Stone.

The attack would have been impossible without collaboration from state forces. All Republican funerals since the H-Bloc hunger strike have been surrounded by a ring of steel. This was the true of the funeral cortèges for the "Gibraltar Three" up until the evening before the burial. The killer could not have acted without intelligence from the RUC.

RUC collaboration must indeed have gone a lot further than offering information. They have evolved a two-minute response time for military incidents in West Belfast. It took them 15 minutes to return to Milntown cemetery — just in time to rescue Stone from a group of Republicans. Among the weapons used by the killer was a Rugar pistol with its number filed off. These are standard issue to the RUC.

What is more, Britain's responsibility goes far beyond direct collaboration between members of the state forces and Loyalist groups. The Milntown atrocity was an inevitable outcome of their own policy decisions.

### Constants in British policy

The following have been constants in Britain's Ireland policy:

- Aiming for the military defeat and physical smashing of the Republican resistance.

- Isolating and criminalizing that resistance.

- Ulsterization — replacing troops, whose death causes a political reaction in the imperialist mother country, with native forces drawn from the Loyalist community.

The "shoot-to-kill" policy is one element of British strategy. The troops and police involved in these murders had to be protected. Through a whole series of court cases, the silencing of John Stalker's investigation, the release of Private Thain after his conviction for murder and the official and media praise for SAS assassins, all legal restraints were removed from the state forces.

The "Battle of the Funerals" was a second element. Begun during the hunger strike, when it became evident that the H-Bloc protest would not succeed, it focused on armed salutes by Republicans, and used force to prevent this. In fact, police statements talked of "paramilitary display." Anything could serve as the focus for attack: gloves and beret on the coffin, draping the coffin in the Irish flag, or just police suspicion that a display might take place.

At one INLA [Irish National Liberation Army] funeral, mourners were arrested for lining up behind the coffin. This was supposed to constitute a "guard of honour." The funeral of Lawrence Marley, an IRA member murdered by Loyalists, was held up for three days, and subjected by the police to wave after wave of attacks.

### Republican funerals physically assaulted

When this policy of calculated savagery was joined to the policy of Ulsterization, an explosive mixture was formed. The sectarian RUC, with all legal restraints removed, turned every Republican funeral into a circus of vile abuse combined with physical assault.

For a time, this policy seemed to be working. A series of ambushes led to the death of leading Republicans. Their funerals were subjected to brutal attacks, and their families and friends assaulted and humiliated. As a bonus, through the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the British were able to draw on the full collaboration of the Irish bourgeoisie and win church support for their attacks.

This cosy relationship held up until after the Gibraltar deaths. The Irish airline, Aer Lingus, rejected a request for a charter flight to take the bodies home. One Fine Gael TD (*teachta Dala*, member of parlia-

ment) called for blocking entry of the bodies into the country and diverting them to Belfast.

John Burton, a former Fine Gael minister, made the position of Irish capitalism clear: "We have sensibilities, and we have interests. The British are not being very gentle with our sensibilities — but what they are doing is in our interest."

But it was too late to avert the reaction that the neo-colonial politicians feared. The "sentiments" that Burton was talking about were the support of working people for Irish freedom and independence and their resentment at British insults. They began to move into action, and mobilized in their tens of thousands behind the cortège accompanying the three bodies as it drove through the formally independent 26 counties to the border.

### Tens of thousands mobilize for funerals

After crossing the border into the British enclave, the cortège became the focus of an RUC riot. It and the mourners were attacked on a number of occasions. The police joined with Loyalist gangs in stoning the coffins, and finally kidnapped the bodies to prevent demonstrations of support in Belfast.

The home of Danny McCann was put under siege, with mourners assaulted and the

## **Sinn Fein statement on the May 19 incident**

**BELFAST REPUBLICAN Press Centre spokesman Richard McAuley made the following comment on the events leading to the deaths of the two British soldiers in a telephone interview on March 21:**

**"All of those who were there, including the journalists and priests...all believed that the funeral was again under attack, that we were facing a similar attack to that which had occurred on Wednesday, and people reacted accordingly.**

**"The sad thing about this whole situation is that, apart from the fact that the two soldiers were killed, the people who were involved in challenging them, attacking them and dragging them out of the car were the same people involved in confronting the Loyalist gunman on Wednesday. Yet on Wednesday, they were being hailed as heroes, and their behaviour was described as courageous. On Saturday, in exactly the same circumstances as far as people at the funeral were concerned...they behaved in exactly the same way as on Wednesday." ★**

family subjected to constant abuse and expressions of glee at their son's death. The British had backed themselves into a corner. They were under a great deal of international pressure. Southern workers were beginning to mobilize. Tens of thousands of nationalists were going to attend the funerals even in the face of the threat of death or serious injury. To deploy the RUC would mean a bloodbath. Reluctantly, it was decided to concede defeat. But it was easier to launch the RUC on the resistance than to draw it back.

Elements within the RUC made the contacts to ensure that the Loyalists would carry out the attacks they themselves were prevented from making. Loyalist politicians, traditional mouthpieces for RUC discontent, argued that the massacre proved the need for "firm policing."

Loyalist violence, however, is not counter to state violence but supplementary to it. That is why the bourgeois Catholic party, the SDLP, despite showing their reliability by immediately ruling out RUC collaboration in the killings, will not get satisfaction from their calls for the banning of the UDA.

### Potential and power mass action

After a long period of demobilization, we have again seen the potential and the power of mass action. It was the breath-taking bravery of nationalist youth that defeated the assassin. It was mass mobilization, plus support in the South and internationally, that held the state forces at bay.

The deaths of two British soldiers at the funeral of a victim of the Miltown killer is one of the most bizarre incidents of the troubles. It seems now that they were involved in some private adventure rather than constituting an assassination team. In the course of that adventure, they drove at high speed into the cortège and drew and fired a gun.

The manner of their death was shocking. But the way that they threatened the crowd with their car and their weapons set off an explosive confrontation that developed with a lightning rapidity. The mourners had had friends and relatives killed and injured only two days before, and they had good reason to suspect the involvement of the British forces, who had served only to rescue the killer. The pattern was set for what happened.

The shock of these killings may give the British some leeway, but their overall policy is in tatters.

The credibility of their native collaborators is at an all-time low. The discussions of strategy and policy in the anti-imperialist movement have not yet, unfortunately, led to the building of a united-front organization.

But the conditions for united action and broadening the resistance have greatly improved. ★

# Israeli army out of the occupied territories!

THE UNITED SECRETARIAT of the Fourth International issued the following statement on March 21.

**T**HE UPRISING of the Palestinian population on the West Bank and in Gaza, which is in its fourth month, is already the most important stage in the struggle of the Palestinian people since the rising of 1936.

The main characteristics of the present uprising are the following:

- The spontaneous way it broke out and the massive proportions that it attained from its first days, involving the vast majority of the inhabitants of the occupied territories.

- The vanguard role played in the movement by three social categories:

1. A new generation of Palestinian youth has decided to take its fate into its own hands, particularly in the light of the dead-end into which the policy of the PLO leadership has led.

2. Women have been playing and will increasingly play a major role in the struggle of the Palestinian people, a role that is in no way reflected in the composition of the leaderships of the Palestinian organizations that came out of the post-1967 experience.

3. In particular, the inhabitants of the refugee camps (since 1948) have been in the vanguard of the uprising. This testifies to the fact that the national oppression of the Palestinian people is by no means limited to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in June 1967. Also, and above all, it is a product of the creation of the Zionist state in 1948 as a racist state founded on the expulsion and oppression of the Palestinian people.

### Remarkable self-organization

- The remarkable self-organization of the uprising, which emerged in the very first weeks. Committees have been formed in the camps, cities and villages of the West Bank and Gaza, committees that are the expression of the spontaneous movement and are composed mainly of previously unorganized youth.

At the same time, a "united leadership" of the uprising has been established as a bloc of the main political currents involved in the movement. The role of this leadership is confined

to calling central initiatives — that is, calls for days of general struggle, which are the high points of the uprising. Nevertheless, the main driving force of the uprising remains the fight of the local committees in a decentralized struggle embodied in "flying demonstrations" that throw the Zionist repressive apparatus off balance.

### Deepgoing split in the Zionist movement

- The fact that within the territory on which the Zionist state was created in 1948 the uprising has not only evoked the active solidarity of the Palestinian and Arab populations who remained in this territory 40 years ago and hold Israeli citizenship. It has also produced a deepgoing split in the Zionist movement.

These features of the ongoing uprising described above are in contradiction to the call for for an "international conference" to be attended by the imperialist powers, the USSR, the Zionist state and the Arab states bordering on Israel to decide the "settlement" of the Israeli-Arab conflict and of the Palestinian question.

This contradiction is particularly clear since this conference is supposed to be called around a platform including UN Security Council resolution 242 (1967). This projects the recognition of the Zionist state's "right to exist within secure and recognized borders" in exchange for a possibly partial withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, as well as granting guarantees for its safety and security (among other things, the de-militarization of the regions bordering on this state).

This project contradicts the real right to even partial self-determination of the Palestinian people on the West Bank and in Gaza. An "international conference" can only be the framework of a diktat designed to create a Palestinian bantustan under the twofold control of the Zionist state and the Jordanian monarchy. The only slogan corresponding to the aspirations expressed by the Palestinian uprising, particularly its youthful vanguard, is that of an immediate, total and — most importantly — unconditional withdrawal of the Is-

raeli army from the territories occupied since June 1967.

This is the only slogan in line with the partial self-determination of the Palestinian people on the West Bank and in Gaza. It is the immediate goal of the uprising which could take the form of the free democratic election by the inhabitants of these territories of governmental self-determination organs. It is around these slogans — combined with that for the right of the entire Palestinian people to self-determination — that we will fight to organize active solidarity with the struggling Palestinian masses. ★

### Hands off the Kurdish people!

THOUSANDS of Kurdish civilians were killed on March 16-17 by poisonous gas delivered by Iraqi forces during an offensive by Iranian troops, supported by Kurdish nationalist guerrillas. Whole communities seem to have been exterminated. On March 25, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, issued the following statement on this atrocity, which ranks with the atrocities of the two world wars of this century and of the US intervention in Vietnam. ONCE AGAIN the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein has resorted to the use of chemical weapons, this time against a civilian population. By diffusing deadly gas in the Kurdish town of Halabja and its environs, the Bagdad regime has shown, if this were not already clear, that there is no limit to its barbarism, especially when it is directed against other nations.

Once again, the Kurdish people has been the victim of the barbarism of its national oppressors. The new atrocity committed by the Ba'athist dictatorship is another in a list series of outrages against the Kurdish people, including those perpetrated by the Turkish, Iranian and Syrian regimes.

Subjected to these four dictatorships, the Kurdish nation is one of the most oppressed in the world. Not only is its right to independence and national unity denied by its oppressors but even the simple exercise of its cultural rights and its right to self-government in its territories.

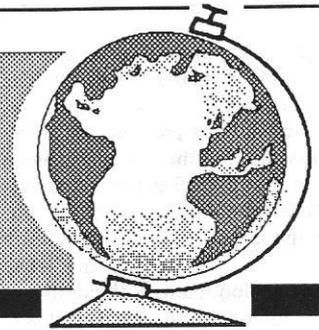
The national emancipation of the Kurdish people is tightly bound up with overthrowing the oppressor regimes. In particular, the people of Kurdistan in Iraq and Iran need to unite their forces against the Bagdad and Tehran dictatorships, which are now busy savaging themselves in a war whose murderous madness continually grows worse.

The Fourth International unreservedly supports the right of the Kurdish nation to self-determination, as well as the struggle of the Kurdish people against its national oppressors, regardless of the policy of the various leaderships of this struggle in

8

Kurdistan. ★

## AROUND THE WORLD



### ITALY

#### March 8 demonstrations

INTERNATIONAL Women's Day in Italy was marked by a whole series of demonstrations in which students played a prominent role. Demonstrations were held on March 8 in 40 cities, and according to the daily press (in particular the Communist Party paper *l'Unità*), nearly 200,000 university women took part in them.

One of the dominant themes was denunciation of sexual violence against women. Incidents of rape were reported a few days before the Women's Day demonstrations in Rome, for example, and a law on sexual violence is presently under discussion in the parliament. In Milan, mobilization by women was given impetus even before the latest demonstrations by the brutal murder of a young woman last November in one of the neighborhoods of the city.

In Rome on the same day there were two demonstrations. The first, in the morning, brought out about 15,000 high-school students. The second, in the afternoon, was built by various groups, associations and organizations. It brought out an even larger number, about 20,000. Some contingents carried placards expressing solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian women.

Milan saw its largest student and youth demonstrations since the 1986 movement. About 15,000 people participated. The demonstration was called by the FGCI, the Communist Party youth organization, the youth of Democrazia Proletaria and the Revolution Youth Organization (OGR), which has a revolutionary Marxist orientation and is in political solidarity with the Liga Comunista Rivoluzionaria, the Italian section of the Fourth International. The OGR played a prominent role in the course of the demonstration, and its slogans were taken up widely in various sections of the procession. ★

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### Protest at brutal repression

ANOTHER protest on International Women's Day was that of women from Fedtraw, the Federation of Transvaal Women. Around 500 women converged on the Chamber of Mines in Johannesburg to hand in a memorandum that charged that South Africa's repressive laws were made to protect "your interests as business at the

expense of human rights and democracy". The personnel at the Chamber of Mines offices refused to receive the women, allowing only a few copies of the memorandum to be thrown through a crack in the door.

The protesters went on to the British consulate offices, where they met consul-general John Massingham. The *Weekly Mail* of March 14 reported that the Fedtraw memorandum "accused the British government of presenting a 'false front' to the international community when working towards resolving the South African problem; charged that the country's repressive laws were passed to protect British interests in South Africa; and slammed the British government for remaining silent when 17 extra-parliamentary organizations were banned.

"Amid the strains of hummed freedom songs filtering through the consulate's closed doors, the women demanded that Massingham make clear Britain's stand in the face of the 'continuing repression' in South Africa.

After Massingham's pathetic reply in the form of justifying Britain's anti-sanctions position, the *Weekly Mail* report continued: "We are not here for rhetoric," said a Fedtraw representative. "What does Thatcher say as a woman and mother about the plight of women in South Africa?"

The *International Herald Tribune* of March 9 reported that later police broke up the demonstration, briefly detaining seven press photographers and cameramen. The same edition of the newspaper carried a photo feature on its front page including the Johannesburg demonstration, a women's rally in the Philippines where women carried banners saying "Military aid = violence against women", and Palestinian women demonstrating at a refugee camp in Sidon. ★

### WESTERN EUROPE

#### Anti-racist campaign

ANTI-RACIST and anti-fascist activists from seven Western European countries met in Stockholm for a European Anti-Racist Conference on February 5-7 (see report in IV 137). The following statement was issued from the meeting:

Concerned by the rise of racism and fascism in Europe, by the conditions imposed on immigrant workers, by the restrictions placed on the right to asylum, the organiza-

tions present examined ways of combatting together racism and of promoting equal rights in Europe. They decided:

1. To do everything in their power to establish a movement which would assume the form and slogans enabling it to become a large-scale movement against racism and for equality.

2. To take all the initiatives necessary to promote the emergence of a majority anti-racist current among young people across Europe: by creating base committees in schools, colleges, universities, neighbourhoods and factories.

The delegates of each country have decided to organize initiatives appropriate to the situation in their respective countries within the framework of a European Day of Action on April 23 (on the eve of the French presidential elections). On that day, anti-racist, anti-fascist and minority organizations will organize action to:

a) Draw international attention to the dangerous rise of racism and the spread of fascist ideas in France in the shape of the National Front, whose leader Jean-Marie Le Pen is a candidate in the French presidential elections. There is a similar growth in other European countries.

b) Highlight growth in racist government policies which lead to increasingly restrictive immigration laws and the inhuman treatment of refugees, especially from the so-called third world, who seek shelter in Europe from terror, persecution and death.

c) Focus attention on the violent and criminal activities of racist, fascist and neo-Nazi organizations in Europe who seize on the climate created by state racism to raise the temperature of hatred generally and who are closely involved in building terrorist, often armed, organizations.

3. To work towards a mass mobilization of organizations next autumn before the European elections in order to achieve the following goals:

a) Free entrance into Western Europe.  
b) Equality of rights for immigrants and refugees.

c) Freedom of movement for immigrants and refugees within each country and from one country to another.

d) Full voting rights for immigrants and refugees.

4. To call for a European day of initiatives and anti-racist and anti-fascist mobilization, also calling for equal rights in each European country on March 21, the symbolic date of international action against racism in homage to the victims of South African apartheid.

Anti-racists and anti-fascists from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France, Belgium, West Germany and Britain call on trade union, democratic and minority organizations and on all those who oppose all forms of oppression to support us in our activities.

We see these actions as only the first step towards a united mass movement against racism and fascism in Western Europe and for a Europe which can be a safe haven for refugees. ★



## 4 NEWS FROM THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

### Copenhagen celebration of 50th anniversary of the Fourth International

THE REPORT that follows on the upcoming commemoration in Copenhagen of the founding of the Fourth International has been condensed from the March 10 issue of *Klassekampen*, the paper of the Socialistisk Arbejderparti (SAP), Danish section of the Fourth International:

MANY guests from all over the world are expected in Copenhagen on May 14 for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Fourth International.

The Copenhagen meeting is an all-Scandinavian affair. One of its features will be a presentation of the campaign of the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International, for the September general election in their country. It expects to do even better than in the last general election, where it increased its vote four-fold.

There will be a series of speakers from the Fourth International. One of the best known is Ernest Mandel, and a Fourth Internationalist from the Middle East will also speak. There will be speakers representing some of the hotspots in the world today, such as Nicaragua and South Africa. Likewise, there will be greetings from solidarity organizations and political parties.

Our aim is to show that the class struggle is international. The meeting will not be confined just to members of the Fourth International. The affair will reflect the struggle that is going on throughout the world and its interconnections.

Just as much as when Marx and Engels wrote the famous slogan "Workers of all countries unite!" and just as much as when the Fourth International was founded, if not more today there is a need for a revolutionary workers' International. Today, we are seeing that even parties that call themselves socialist are proposing nationalist solutions to the crisis.

There will also be entertainment during the day, but mainly in the evening, during the "International Festival Against Racism." We chose this theme for the festival because the anti-racist struggle is one of the most urgent questions today and an effort must be made to give a concrete expression to internationalism.

Tariq Ali, a Pakistani revolutionist, will speak at the festival. The hall is very big but our Swedish comrades alone expect to bring a couple of hundred people. Likewise, we expect delegations from Norway and West Germany. Besides that, we expect many people from the Danish left. There is room for about a thousand people. This will be the first affair of this type for a long time, attended by revolutionists from all continents. ★



# Democracy and the "dirty war"

**RAFAEL**, a member of the national leadership of the Colombian political movement *A Luchar* ("To Struggle," from a publication of the same name), gave the following interview to Rodrigo O'Farrell in Geneva in mid-March. Rafael is also a trade-union leader in the public workers' sector.

*A Luchar* represents a coming together of several left political and trade-union organizations, including the Partido Socialista Revolucionario, the Colombian section of the Fourth International. *A Luchar* is the second largest left force in the country, after the Unión Patriótica (UP).

The UP emerged in the period of so-called Truce and National Dialogue under the government of Belisario Betancur (1982-86). Within its ranks are the Colombian Communist Party and the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC), the country's oldest guerrilla movement. In mid-May, *A Luchar* will hold its Second National Convention in Bogotá, at which it is expected to officially launch a united organization.

Political life in Colombia recently has been dominated by a slide into the terror of parallel police death squads, recalling the evolution in Argentina in the 1970s. At the same time, the political rulers of the country have been making some formal reforms in order to refurbish somewhat the crumbling façade of parliamentary rule.

## WHAT WAS NEW in the March 13 elections in Colombia?

It was an election for mayors, municipal councillors and deputies to the departmental assemblies. What was new was that for the first time in the history of Colombia mayors were elected in 1,009 municipalities. Previously, mayors were named by the governors, who in turn were appointed directly by the president of the republic. This partial extension of electoral democracy is a product of the negotiations between the guerrilla movement and the government of Belisario Betancur in 1984. But it has been presented by the two-party system's Liberal tweedledum and Conservative tweedledee as their great contribution to the democratization of the country.

■ So, did this reform put an end to the control of the central government and the barons in the cities and towns?

**10** By no means. The governors are still appointed by the president of the republic, re-

gardless of the political relationship of forces in the departments. Although mayors are elected by the people, they can be removed by the governors. This can be done arbitrarily, whenever it suits the governor. The law that provides for popular election of mayors says nothing about just causes for removing elected mayors. This reflects the power that the barons still have in the country's institutions.

On the other hand, there are no mechanisms enabling the community, the voters, to exercise a check over the municipal administration, municipal finances and so on. Nor, up until now, has there been any provision for mechanisms through which the community could express its views publicly. The means of communication continue to be in the grip of the traditional forces.

■ Nonetheless, the election of mayors aroused great expectations on the part of the population.

Yes. In a regime such as the one in our country, which is closed in and so top heavy, this reform was a partial victory for

the democratic mass movement, which started proposing this reform in the 1970s. However, the rate of abstention, 40% of registered voters — which means 55% of the electorate — shows that the enthusiasm was less than expected.

■ What did the election results show?

In the first place, they showed a deterioration of the image of the Liberal government. The Liberals lost the mayoralties in two of the country's main cities, Bogotá and Medellín. The Liberals won in 423 municipalities, and the Conservatives in 415, although the Liberals got almost a million votes more than their rivals. The Conservatives, who have been in opposition since the start of the government of Virgilio Barco, who took office in August 1986 (from 1958 until then there had been bipartisan governments), benefitted from the prevailing discontent.

For the Unión Patriótica (UP, supported by the Communist Party) and the Frente Popular (FP, a current of Maoist origin), these elections were a bitter disappointment. They elected mayors only in 15 small towns, after the UP and FP had seen respectively 550 and 50 of their activists and leaders murdered by ultra-rightist paramilitary gangs trying to intimidate voters throughout the country.

A contributing factor to this new setback for the left also was the failure of the UP and the FP to campaign for a left alternative, independent of the two bourgeois parties. In 80 per cent of cases, they made electoral deals with Liberal barons, even with their most corrupt elements. In major cities, the UP allied itself precisely with the sections of the Liberal Party that lost because of their unpopularity, as in Barranquilla, Medellín and Bucaramanga.

■ Why did *A Luchar* decide not to participate in these elections?

We had, and are still having, an internal discussion about this. The majority holds that we do not yet have the strength and organization to undertake such a campaign. There is also the view that, in the context of the dirty war that is going on in the country today, putting up candidates means exposing them to physical liquidation. It cannot be denied that these arguments have some weight. *A Luchar* has also been subjected to persecution. Forty of our compañeros have been assassinated, in particular in the Urabá and Santandara regions.

Nonetheless, I think we have to insist that the political situation in the country calls for the most active sort of participation in the legal and parliamentary struggle, in spite of all the risks that this involves. *A Luchar* has a considerable social base and has been involved in all the regional and national civic strikes in the recent period. It has to complement this activity with a better defined political struggle.

■ It seemed that there was a possibility for the emergence of a third party in

**Colombia, as indicated by the vote won by the UP candidate, Jaime Pardo Leal, in the May 1986 presidential elections. What has happened in this respect?**

There was such a possibility. Pardo Leal got 300,000 votes. That was the highest vote the UP has won in its entire history. Pardo Leal was a focus for a sentiment rejecting the traditional two-party system. He waged a brilliant campaign around three main questions — opposition to militarism and the dirty war; against the IMF's austerity plans; and against the corruption of the barons and the decadent two-party system. At that time, the Liberals refused to make deals with the UP. But things changed in the recent mayoral elections, as I explained. The UP broke the continuity with what Pardo Leal symbolized in terms of class independence.

**■ So, what about this opening for a third party?**

You can't build a third party if you are unwilling to make a definitive break with the Liberals and Conservatives. Dissident bourgeois groups such as Anapo and the MRL ended up being caught in the mesh of the two-party system, after trying to play the role of third parties. Colombia needs a third party, a party that will unite the oppressed, that will break the logjam in political life, that will fight for real democracy, that will raise the present concrete social struggles to a new level, that of political power.

**■ It could also be said that there are enormous pressures coming to bear against this. The dirty war seems to have as its final objective the destruction of all popular resistance.**

Yes. In Colombia there are three political assassinations a day. On March 4, 40 workers were assassinated in the Urabá banana plantations. Uniformed squads shot these people one night in front of women and children. The region is under the military control of the Eleventh Brigade, which is commanded by General San Miguel Buenaventura. No one was arrested for this massacre.

On the national level, the same thing is happening. In 1987, there were 1,500 political assassinations. No one was arrested for this. There are 140 gangs of hired killers in the country, according to the Ministry of Interior's figures. This wave of murders has claimed the lives of a minister of justice, a general prosecutor, the editor of the country's biggest daily, most of the left mayors, democratic figures, priests, journalists, trade-union and popular leaders.

The group that has suffered most is the UP, which has had 550 people killed, including Jaime Pardo Leal. The objective of this war is to destroy all political or social opposition to the government. There are several interests behind this, but there is a sort of alliance among the barons, sections of the mafia and army officers. Industrial-

ists have also financed the murder operations. The political rulers of Colombia have been using this mechanism for several decades. Colombia has been a Turkish-style democracy. Now, given the rise in social struggles, they are looking for a solution like that imposed in Indonesia in 1965 [that is, a massacre of the entire left].

**■ What role is Virgilio Barco's government playing in this war?**

It is an accomplice in the dirty war. Every time there is a massacre or a particularly notorious murder, it expresses sympathy. But it has never managed to capture any of the killers. Of course, the instigators of these crimes are left untouched. The government bodies specializing in the investigation of these things do not investigate them. What the government has done is to beef up the armed forces and the police. Some 60 per cent of the national budget is eaten up by the military forces and the interest on the international debt.

An unconstitutional anti-terrorist law has been passed. Today, any cop or secret agent can arrest anyone without a warrant; they can force their way into any home without a warrant on the pretext that they *suspect* that there is a terrorist there. Colombian and foreign jurists have publicly condemned this law. I learned on arriving in Europe that a delegation of observers, including a general and several French jurists, visited Colombia this month and came back very concerned. They said that "the old Colombian democracy has ceased to exist," that "there is a determination to carry out an underground, a clandestine campaign of extermination on the part of the paramilitary groups," that the anti-terrorist law "is institutionalizing the possibility for

more active repression."

**■ What is involved in the discussion over the referendum?**

In Colombia democracy is so limited that the constitution does not allow forms for consulting the people directly, even controlled ones, such as referendums. Many European democracies use referendums. Switzerland is an example. There, people are regularly consulted about the most varying decisions. Virgilio Barco is trying to reform the constitution to deal with the crisis. He announced that a referendum might be held, given the extent to which the Congress has become discredited and its elephantine slowness. He has to race against time, because the decline of the institutions does not leave him any respite.

However, the Ex-Presidents' Club and the most reactionary sectors opposed such a form of popular consultation. Barco had to backpeddle. Now a referendum might be held only to ratify the cuts that may be proposed by a two-party commission of "experts" named by the president. The commission will be formed on the basis of proportional representation based on the results of the March 13 elections. So, the left would only have a minimal involvement.

This proposal could, of course, blow up. The country is going through an immense crisis. What is said today is out of date tomorrow. Therefore, the mass movement and the left can insist on their proposals, bring pressure to bear to advance their program and contrast it with the program of the ruling circles.

In fact, with the ground shaking under their feet, the rulers do not know if what they denied yesterday may not overwhelm them tomorrow. ★

# International VIEWPOINT

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## INTRODUCTION TO FEATURE ON FRANCE

# Left-wing challenge in presidential election

THERE HAVE been no surprises, little drama and even less excitement. This year's French presidential election campaigns — building up to the first and second rounds on April 24 and May 8 — could provide a classic study in bourgeois electioneering: personalities come first, policies come nowhere.

But outside of the campaigns of the major bourgeois parties, something new and rather more exciting has been taking shape. The candidacy of Pierre Juquin, supported by a wide range of left groups and individuals organized in hundreds of local and workplace support committees, has breathed some fresh air into an otherwise stagnant atmosphere.

## HILARY ELEANOR

**P**RESIDENT Mitterrand has just announced his bid for a second seven-year term in office. Even before his declaration, the Socialist Party (SP) leader was top of the polls, with the right-wing vote split between his two main rivals. President Jacques Chirac is standing for the neo-Gaullist Rassemblement pour la République (RPR), currently the leading group in the right-wing coalition government. Challenging Chirac is Raymond Barre of the Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF), itself a federation of republican and liberal parties.

These three main contenders for the much-coveted presidency are all fighting for the "centre" ground in French politics. From the right, Chirac and Barre are both

trying to appeal to the middle ground, using the record of the previous SP government to attack the left and personal abuse to attack each other. Mitterrand, for his part, in delaying the announcement of his candidacy has tried to stay above the infighting, using his presidential status for all its worth to project an image of "statesman-like" superiority.

## New parliamentary elections may be held

Whether right or left win the presidential election, new elections for the national assembly are likely to be held fairly rapidly. If Mitterrand wins, the Socialist Party lead-

er may decide to try to overturn the present right-wing majority and put an end to the present "cohabitation". A victory for either Chirac or Barre may result in a dissolution of parliament and new elections in which the RPR and UDF will each hope to increase their share of seats.

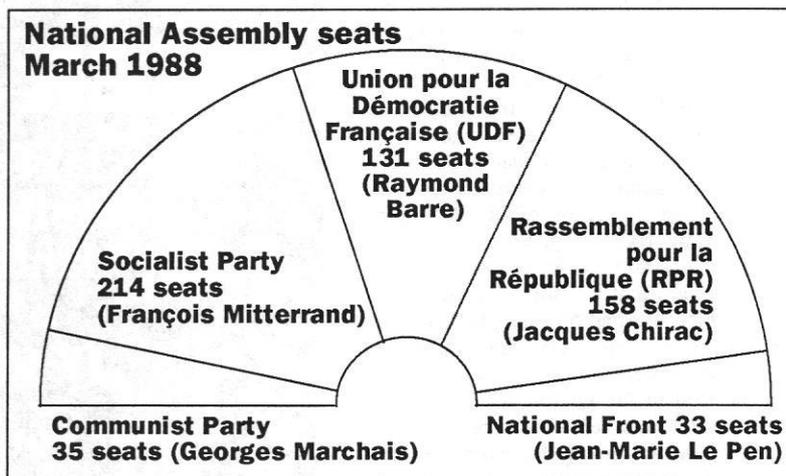
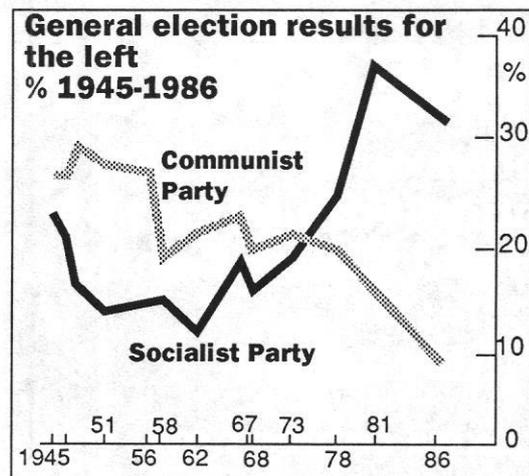
On the far right, Jean-Marie Le Pen is standing for the neo-fascist National Front (NF). His standing in the polls has declined somewhat after he caused a scandal by saying on television that the Nazi's gas chambers were simply a "detail" of history. But even so, Le Pen is still expected to get a frightening 9%-10% of the vote. At present, the NF have 33 deputies in the national assembly, but, even if their support holds up in this election, they are unlikely to retain anything like this number of seats should a new parliamentary election be called. This is because the present government has reintroduced a first-past-the-post system, after the Socialist Party held a one-off proportional election in 1986.

## Further decline expected in Communist Party vote

Paradoxically, if the Socialists win the presidential election with Mitterrand, the second, third and fourth places all seem likely to go to the right-wing or far right. Trailing behind Le Pen in the polls are a number of left-wing candidates, presently headed up by André Lajoinie for the Communist Party who is expected to get around 5%-6% of the vote — a big drop even from the 1986 national assembly election where the CP scored 10%.

The new element in the campaign is the candidacy of Pierre Juquin, a leader of a current that has recently broken with the Communist Party known as the communist *renouveaux* (renewers). This split of around 3,000 ex-CP members is the most significant in the last 40 years, and is important in that it represents a break to the left from the CP's traditional Stalinist politics.

The *renouveaux* have just organized their first national meeting, with 300 delegates attending their conference in January, rep-



representing a first and decisive step in their trajectory of building a new, revolutionary communist movement in France. But, as they will readily admit themselves, they are nowhere near being a homogeneous grouping politically. While the dynamic of the organization is definitely to the left, there are many issues on which the pressures of Euro-communist and reformist thinking are still apparent, most notably around questions of economic programme and the role of the state.

## A new force in French politics

The *rénovateurs* are one of the principal components of the campaign in support of Juquin, alongside the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR, French section of the Fourth International) and a number of smaller political organizations and many unaligned militants.

The split of the *rénovateurs* — representing just the tip of the iceberg as far as the crisis in the Communist Party is concerned — and the movement around Juquin's campaign are indications of the first small steps in the recomposition of the French workers' movement under the hammer blows of the bosses' offensive and lack of a workers' alternative.

The election result, and in particular the relationship between Juquin's vote and that of the CP candidate, Lajoinie, will be an important factor in assessing the next steps in building a real alternative to the class collaborationist policies of the Socialist Party.

At present, Juquin is credited with around 3% in the polls, which is thought to be an underestimate of his support but also reflects the blackout imposed on his campaign by the mass media.

Finally, there are three further candidates expected to get around 1% each. First is Arlette Laguiller, the only woman running in the campaign, representing Lutte Ouvrière (LO), a group that identifies with Trotskyism but which generally has a rather rank-and-fileist, sectarian approach to politics. For example, LO are calling for an abstention in the second round of the presidential election. Another far-left candidate is the leader of the International Communist Party (PCI), Pierre Bousset — better known under his pseudonym Pierre Lambert — who is standing for the MPPT (Movement for a Workers' Party). There is also an ecology candidate, Antoine Waechter.

The two interviews that follow — with David Assouline, a member of the LCR and leader of the Juquin campaign and Alain Amicible of the *rénovateurs* current — explain the importance of the new movement that has been brought together around Pierre Juquin's candidacy, the issues at stake for working people in France and the continuing internal crisis inside the Communist Party. ★

# “Our long term objective is to build a mass revolutionary party”

DAVID ASSOULINE was a prominent leader of the student movement during last winter's massive protests that defeated the government's proposed education reform. He is now working full-time for Pierre Juquin's presidential campaign, and is one of the four members of Juquin's directorate that forms the central political leadership of the campaign.

He is a member of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International, having joined as the result of a fusion last autumn between the LCR and the Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire (LOR).<sup>1</sup> Hilary Eleanor spoke to David Assouline on March 21 at the national headquarters of the Juquin campaign in Paris.

**YOU WERE one of the spokespeople for the student movement in 1986. Why did you agree to become part of the leadership of the Juquin campaign?**

I accepted because it was necessary to find a new perspective in light of the far reaching crisis in the workers' movement and the traditional left in France. Pierre Juquin's candidature could serve as a catalyst to help open up such a perspective, notably for the militants and the electorate of the Communist Party (CP), who might otherwise abstain and may be attracted by a chance to cast a vote of resistance. The same goes for those who have supported the Socialist Party (SP) and no longer believe in it.

Also — and this is a new element — young people who were involved in the student movement of November to December 1986 are looking for a left-wing solution and reject the traditional left parties. So, Juquin's candidature was very timely as an attempt to unify all these layers, and it offers the possibility of a recomposition coming out of the crisis in the workers' movement.

■ **Could you summarize the central themes of the Juquin campaign?**

Briefly, the most important policies that we are putting forward are equal rights and the right to vote for immigrants; the dismantling of French independent nuclear weapons; radical social measures, such as fighting for a 35-hour working week with

no loss of pay; a national minimum wage of 6,000 francs [about \$9,600]; ecological questions; cancelling the third world debt; the struggle against French colonialism, and in particular fighting for independence for Kanaky [New Caledonia]. These are the central planks of the campaign that we put to the fore. But another aspect is the political vacuum in French politics, the lack of an alternative, and in a sense this is also a central theme for us. Three things are important in relation to this.

In my opinion, firstly the campaign has to raise the question of a balance sheet of the experience of the left [SP/CP] government in 1981-86. Secondly, our aim must be to encourage workers' unity in struggles, against the right and so on. Finally, only the mobilization of the social movements themselves can guarantee any possibility of advancing and winning these demands, of changing society and the social relation of forces in France. One essential lesson from the 1980-86 experience is that it is only such mobilizations themselves that will enable us to go forward.

These are the themes that are the most developed, and have the most resonance in meetings and so on, and around which people have come together in the campaign.

■ **What forces are supporting the cam-**

1. The LOR came out of a group originally expelled from Pierre Lambert's International Communist Organization (OCI) in the 1970s. At the time of the fusion around 30 comrades from the LOR joined the French section of the Fourth International.

### paign around Juquin's candidacy?

Firstly, there are the organized political forces. The two main ones are the LCR and the communist *renovateurs*, who have now set up their own movement. Others involved are the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU), the Parti Autogestionnaire Communiste (PAC) and the Fédération de la Gauche Alternative.<sup>2</sup> These are the organized forces, but now there are 700 committees of the Juquin campaign in France, and it's estimated that 53% of the people in the committees are not members of any of the political organizations that I've just mentioned. That is not to say that they were never in an organization in the past — there are a number of ex-members of left organizations involved. But 53% is a very large, a very significant number.

Often these independents come from the trade-union movement, from the social movements or were involved in the struggles of last winter such as the train drivers' strike, and from the anti-racist movement [SOS-racisme].

### ■ What is the impact of the campaign nationally so far?

I think it's had a fairly big impact. The dynamic that's in motion is not at all a marginal one, judging by the meetings, for example. All the meetings have been mass meetings, attended by the left and by working people in general. Some examples will give you a better idea.

In Paris, at the big rally held at Zenith on March 4, there were 5,000 people. Meetings in Strasbourg, Nancy and Thionville — all in the industrial eastern region — have each attracted audiences of around 1,000. There were the same numbers at Montpellier, Bordeaux and 1,500 at the meeting in Grenoble.

In addition, all the meetings that we've held at the universities and colleges have been packed. In ten universities the meetings have been bursting at the seams, with between 600 to 1,200 people each time. The campaign is having a real impact among young people. This is a new element. In the past, the Socialist Party has appeared to be almost politically hegemonic among students and young people. Now, with the movement that has been brought together around the campaign, that situation is being changed.

### ■ How is the movement around Pierre Juquin's candidature actually structured? Where are the committees organized, for example?

The 700 rank-and-file committees are closely linked to social reality in France today and are actively intervening into it. Essentially, there are committees in workplaces, in localities and in the universities and high schools. They also exist in villages, towns and so on. These committees are coordinated at town or departmental levels.

Around Pierre Juquin there is a team of 15 people, who lead the campaign nationally, plus a smaller directorate of four people,

including myself, which effectively provides the day-to-day leadership. From the beginning of the campaign commissions on various themes have been set up. These are working commissions responsible for preparing reports, discussion documents and so on. There are around 15 of these commissions, and they group together about 500 specialists working on various aspects of the campaign, such as alternative economic, ecological and political programmes.

### ■ What role does the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire play in the movement?

The Ligue plays a very fundamental role. I don't think that either the candidature itself or the dynamic that has been launched around the campaign would have been possible without the LCR. It has a great deal of militant experience to bring into the campaign at all levels, including nationally, as well as a certain dynamism. In addition, it brings a revolutionary dimension into the movement that keeps it anchored well to the left.

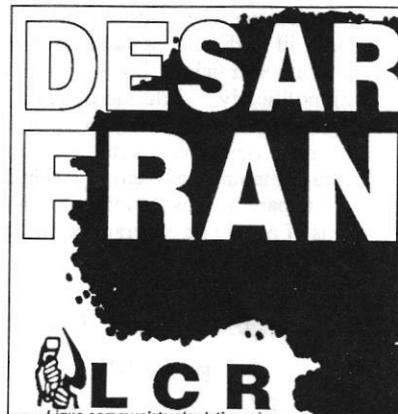
### ■ How would you respond to people, like the supporters of Lutte Ouvrière [see introductory article], who criticize the Juquin campaign for being "reformist", not revolutionary and so on?

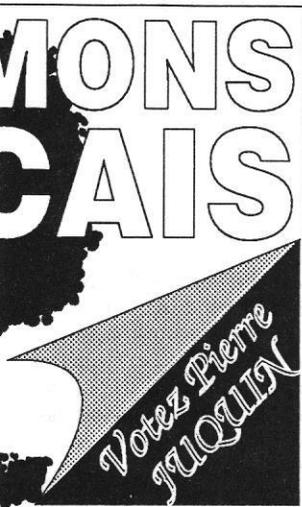
I think that in an election campaign there is no principle that it should be conducted on the basis of a revolutionary programme. Every political battle has its own objective. Here, the objective is to help to initiate a recomposition on the left on the basis of some central political themes. The beginnings and end of the process that could spark off such a recomposition should not be confused. The end of the process hopefully will result in a coming together of forces in a revolutionary current.

An election campaign is above everything else a mass campaign, and I don't think that it is possible, in the current situation, to build a mass campaign around a complete revolutionary programme.

Moreover, it should be understood that Lutte Ouvrière has never organized its own election campaigns on the basis of a full-blooded revolutionary programme. They often organize around a number of themes, and in this election the central slogan of Arlette Laguiller's campaign is that she is "faithful to the workers". So I would say that LO are in no position to give us lessons as regards a revolutionary programme. Her campaign is very populist, if not apolitical. Juquin's campaign, on the other hand, allows us to put forward all the key questions around which a revolution can be prepared in France.

### ■ What coverage has the campaign had on the television, in the newspapers and so on, and where does Juquin stand now in the national opinion polls in relation to the Communist Party's candidate, André Lajoinie?





Some of the LCR's election posters:

- "Disarm France"
- "The right to vote for Immigrants"
- "Independence for Kanaky [New Caledonia]"
- "35 hours with no loss of pay — Work less, work for all"

When the campaign first started, we were able to get some coverage in the mass media. But since it has been clear to all the traditional politicians and commentators that we are neither some sort of satellite of the Socialist Party, nor people who are prepared to make concessions to the traditional left, there has been a very strong freeze on coverage by the media. But we are fighting against this continuing censorship.

It is also a political battle, because we think it is fundamental to occupy this terrain. It is not enough to have a correct campaign, we also have to convince millions of people in order to really open up a political perspective; just giving out leaflets or whatever is not sufficient to build a mass campaign today. So this fight against the media black-out has important political implications.

As for the opinion polls, at this moment they are giving Juquin around 3% and Lajoinie around 6% of the vote. But, of course, we have to take such polls with a pinch of salt, given who produces them. It certainly can't be said that there is total objectivity in relation to way the polls are carried out. I would estimate that our real support is somewhere between three and six per cent.

■ André Lajoinie, the CP's candidate, has repeated endlessly that the Juquin campaign is nothing more than a set-up, or a manoeuvre, on behalf of the Socialist Party in order to take votes and support away from the Communists. What's your reply to this accusation?

The Communist Party has been alone in attacking the candidature as a manoeuvre by the Socialist Party, or some sort of SP trojan horse. I think it is simply a classical Stalinist lie, based on absolutely no facts or arguments.

At a political level, the policies defended by Juquin are to the left of those of the Communist Party and, therefore, also well to the left of Socialist Party. The CP just want to sow confusion and to reassure their own base, which is in crisis, so as to prevent any self-questioning by their members and to try to block any possibility of them being attracted towards the Juquin campaign. But that won't work; it won't wash.

■ A big debate has just been opened up by the Central Committee in the LCR around the strategy for building a revolutionary party.

This has been partly sparked off by the discussion on what the LCR's per-

spective will be after the second round of the presidential election vis-a-vis the *renovateur* current and the Juquin movement, whether the committees will continue and so on. What are your views on this discussion?

I think that, fundamentally, the recomposition that is taking place, that we are launching now, must have as its objective the building of a revolutionary party. That also implies a debate about "what is a revolutionary party?" That is the long-term objective. It is a process. The electoral campaign is not going to be the final link in the chain of that process; it can only be a beginning. So it's necessary to continue this process, with the forces brought together by the campaign. A vital part of these forces are political organizations, and they have to carry on as before. They will still have a role as before.

The organizations must continue not just because they already exist, and are viewed as some sort of problem, but because they have a role to play in this recomposition. The *renovateur* current in particular has a fundamental part to play: to continue to welcome into its ranks militants who are leaving the Communist Party because of its crisis, a crisis that will continue. These militants who leave the CP are not ready just to go anywhere, and in that context it's very good that there is a communist organization, that has come out of the CP itself, like the *renovateurs*.

The LCR still has an important role to play as well, particularly among young people where it has scored some successes in the last period and gained a certain authority. It is also essential in relation to all those who have already been seeking an alternative to the left of the SP and CP for a number of years. In addition, the LCR is necessary because of its role in the discussions that are drawing lessons from the record of the traditional left parties.

Next, there are the committees that have been created around the campaign. It is in the committees that a large number of far-left militants have been brought together, and they want to continue to have a unified intervention into their workplaces, into the mobilizations taking place and into their trade unions, as well as at a more general political level.

And I think that the process that could bring about a recomposition, and hopefully allow us to build a mass revolutionary party, must be a process that establishes a two-way relationship between the committees and the various political organizations themselves. If we can link these two components up, I think we have a good chance that we can continue to build something together. ★

2. PSU: this originated as a left split from the Socialist Party during the Algerian war. It grew after 1968 through identifying with social movements, self-management and the left-wing of the CFDT trade-union. It has since suffered major splits back to the Socialist Party.

PAC: formerly the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist.



sans  
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MOINS  
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Votez Pierre  
JUQUIN

# “We have decided to work for a recomposition of the revolutionary movement”

**ALAIN AMICABLE** is one of the leaders of the communist *rénovateurs*. Now aged 39, he joined the French Communist Party (CP) in 1967, becoming a leader of the Young Communist League and subsequently secretary of the CP's Meurthe and Moselle area federation. Amicabile was elected to the Central Committee from 1979 until 1985, at which date he joined the opposition inside the CP.

He was interviewed by Ariane Merri in December, shortly before the *rénovateurs* held their first national meeting on January 9 and 10 this year. After two days of debates, to which a number of guests were invited, the *rénovateurs* established themselves as an independent organization with a journal, *Tabou*, membership cards and so on.

**H**OW DID the crisis break out inside the Communist Party? And how did the *rénovateur* movement develop out of this crisis?

The 1984 crisis, although the most recent, is not the only one that the French CP has experienced. This party has been going through crises for at least 30 years, and each time it has appeared to be able to resolve them by using the same methods. Everyone who asked questions, who raised the problem of the relationship of the party to the whole of society, they have all left — or simply been expelled. This is a result of the way the party functions, and the impossibility of raising criticism inside it.

Fundamentally, what changed in 1981 and worsened in 1984, in my opinion, was that the party began to slip seriously electorally in a way that it had not done up until then. It was in this period that the crisis of the CP ceased to be confined to its internal life. It became confirmed by society itself. In order to understand and assess the internal crisis and why it came out into the open, you have to keep the problem of this slide in mind and understand it.

The history of our setbacks after 1973 — after the signing of the Common Program in 1972 — shows that they began in periods of unity and accelerated in periods of disunity. It is not at all that we have to choose between two evils. In my opinion, the same mechanism has been at work in both situations.

Over and above the so-called problems of unity, the French Communist Party has failed to master the problem of finding its

place in the array of political and social forces. Starting in 1984 — and this is even truer now, if we can believe the projections for the coming elections — the Communist Party fell to the threshold of survival as a political party counting for something in national life.

## ■ What is the origin of the *rénovateur* current?

The *rénovateur* movement came out of the crisis of the Communist movement and our refusal to follow it along to the point of marginalization. It bases itself on the social movements of the recent period, which confirm our view that the revolutionary current had not run out of steam — in fact the opposite is true — but that it had to be offered political perspectives, perspectives which the Communist Party has not offered. And it is glaringly obvious that the Socialist Party does not serve as a vehicle for transforming society. So, if there is no detonator current recomposing to the left, a progressive force capable of uniting a broad enough movement around proposals for radical reforms of the society, then in the present state of affairs there will be no real perspectives in this country.

The *rénovateur* movement was born out of this recognition, out of this crisis, out of this absolutely vital need now to pass the CP on its left. This means that we are not taking up a position between the CP and the SP; we are not a second Communist Party. This is why a lot of people are looking toward this movement and those who speak and act in its name, whether it be political organizations like the Ligue Com-

muniste or movements such as the environmentalists, anti-racists and so on. It seems to me that on the big questions there is a similarity of views. This does not mean that our views are exactly alike, but that fundamentally all those who are coming together have the same sort of radical response to offer to the big questions.

This is not combining all the the losers, all the small fragments of a left that has lost out for 15 years in battles in the apparatuses or in its relations to society. Something quite different is happening, and this is precisely one of the reasons for the impact of Pierre Juquin's candidacy, which was announced some months ago. What is taking form today is the idea of the need for a recomposition of the revolutionary current that would not be a gathering of the grouplets. And when I say “grouplets,” I am not pointing a finger at anyone. I have no disrespect for anyone, and especially not for those who, in very difficult times, have managed to maintain a communist identity in society. I think that we have every interest, all of us, in unhesitatingly claiming our heritage. We have come out of a common way of thinking, even if by different routes, from a culture bearing within it everything that is most radical for the emancipation of society.

We have no need to deny where we have come from; it would be a grave political error to do so. All rivers have a source, and our source is communism. And a lot of people today, without being communists — some of them even come to the movement saying that they find the word “communism” and what they think it represents repellent — see things basically in the same way as we do. On the big questions that determine the framework of change, the revolutionary transformations, there are very few things that separate us.

Millions of people are concerned, as a result of the history of our country itself, because of the place that the communist current holds in it. This current goes back well beyond the formation of the Communist Party and is part of the legacy of the very particular history of the French workers' movement. In my opinion, one of the reasons for the crisis of the left in France is that this communist current, which, I repeat, has not disappeared, no longer has a credible enough expression for those who tend to share this point of view, and in this society there are millions of them.

## ■ What happened in 1984 and why did

the veiled, internal crisis in the CP come out into the open? For the first time something organized — the *rénovateur* current — came out of this crisis. Beforehand, when individuals or groups were in disagreement with the party leadership, they slipped away and retired into their personal lives or often joined the social democracy. But they never have proclaimed as you just did, a communist identity. They never offered, as you have done, an alternative to the CP, assuming this identity and this tradition in a systematic way.

In a paradoxical way, in order to understand clearly what happened in 1984, you have to go back to 1981. There were all the setbacks that I talked about after 1973, and which, I repeat, occurred in periods of unity and grew in periods of disunity. They created at least a certain disarray, since electoral questions cannot be underestimated in a country like ours. But 1981 marked the first big electoral reverse for the CP, whose vote fell from 20% to 15%. We realized at the time that there had to be other causes besides the pat explanations the leadership gave us.

However, in the month following May 1981, there was a sort of artificial rehabilitation of the Communist Party in society. It should not be forgotten that because of its strategy, the Communist Party is very wrapped up in this question of universal suffrage and the recognition that it offers in society, and the fact that the Communist Party had a few ministers in the government could, in a certain sense, blur this grave setback.

Moreover, we thought that in that way we were going to "recover our health," without having to analyze the underlying reasons for the setback. The years that followed showed that far from being "rehabilitated," the Communist Party had not basically corrected its approach, and oscillated between a left sectarian opportunism and the dreariest sort of right opportunism. Fundamentally, it supported everything and justified everything because we were in the government. So, we came to the 1984 European elections, and the Communist Party dropped to 10%.

The Central Committee meeting that followed was extremely stormy. The only explanation offered in the leadership's report was the same old "it's everybody's fault but ours." And in the Central Committee meeting, that seemed quite inadequate, to put it mildly, since at least 30 speakers violently attacked the less than rudimentary analyses offered by the leadership. What emerged forcefully at this point was that we could not be satisfied with this and that the situation was becoming too grave.

For the first time in the history of the Communist Party, to my knowledge, a report submitted to a Central Committee meeting was not voted on; it was purely and simply withdrawn. But during the summer months, the leadership regained its grip, and managed to set things up so that at

the September Central Committee everything was cut and dried again, and the conditions were assembled once again for gradually isolating the more critical activists. They did not pull this off finally, even if the operation seems to have been accomplished now: the Twenty-Sixth Congress [held in December 27] has just put its stamp of approval on the "cleaning out" of the party, which unified 99.3% of the congress.

This is a party that has been drained dry, a party totally closed in on itself (even by comparison with the many sectarian periods before!), a party with a facade of unity achieved at a disastrous price. Just to cite a few facts at random — the Haute Vienne federation has been decapitated, and in the Meurthe and Moselle federation almost all the main leaders were removed or found themselves forced to leave because of what they were asked to do, and so on. So, what sort of price had to be paid for regaining unity?

### "All rivers have a source, and our source is communism"

The *rénovateur* movement was set up at the beginning of 1985, after the Twenty-Fifth Congress. Its initial approach was to try to renew the Communist Party from within; we had not yet rejected this possibility. This quickly turned out to be a blind alley, a total impossibility, for a simple reason that has to do with the culture of the Communist Party. This culture is based on a dogma that we inherited from the Stalin period, an unwritten dogma but one that still operates: it is the notion of an infallible leadership, the idea that criticism is a danger, that the ranks are incompetent.

What is particularly grave about this, and what leads me to speak of the Communist culture, is that this is not imposed by the leadership, but has been internalized by the membership and functions automatically. Personally, I am not surprised to see a congress like the one that has just taken place. The enthusiasm and the hard-nosed tone of those attending it were not put on or stage-managed by the leadership. They are a product of the very way that the party functions.

In these conditions, we soon perceived the limits of wanting to renew the party from within. For my part, I was one of the most sceptical from the outset. We started to function with a view to exchanging points of view across the party. In the party, there are no tendencies, there is no expression of minorities. Everyone can maintain their own point of view and continue to defend it, but always only within the bodies to which they belong. Many of us were removed from all leading bodies. So, we began to transgress one of the Communist Party's fundamental laws by organizing a horizontal circulation of ideas.

This was a very serious step, even for us personally, you have to understand. No one

should think that we went through all this in a detached way. Sometimes it was very painful. We thought to ourselves that we were getting involved in something that might lead further than we thought, and that we were running that risk of being "misunderstood," even by the comrades that we respected and who respected us in return.

Gradually, we transgressed more and more against the party's laws of functioning. We noticed that every time we transgressed further against these laws, we scored points inside the party but, above all — and that was decisive in changing our attitude — we started to create a dynamic in society itself. People watching what was happening inside the CP were rather pleased that there were still communists inside this great ossified body that continued to agitate and to say things that after all were quite interesting.

### ■ Did this movement then, in your opinion, correspond to a need of a section of society?

Absolutely, it corresponded to something deepgoing. The media and others reported our positions quite obligingly, at least at the beginning. No doubt, in this they intended to show that the party was in such disarray that its chances of coming out of its crisis were slim. But that was marginal. The main thing was the interest that had been aroused. Having said that, this dynamic soon became exhausted, I think because people expected us to reform the Communist Party.

They were waiting for us to make proposals that they could identify with and which would make it possible for them to do something else besides retire from politics or vote social democrat. So, the fact that there were people in this communist current who showed an aptitude for rebuilding solid links with society presented a certain interest.

However, we soon saw that we had reached the end of this dynamic, that we had to go beyond the situation that had been created, otherwise we could lose ourselves and get stuck in a rut and not longer be of interest to anyone. So, we constantly had to transgress further and intervene into society. That is why we published a manifesto that was not reserved for internal use in the party but which was submitted for debate, in the form of 47 questions, with all communists in the society, who were not all necessarily in the Communist Party, far from it. You might even say that the bulk of communists and revolutionists are no longer in the Communist Party, numerically speaking, that they never have been.

So, we continued to work on the inside, but increasingly we oriented to society at large. This is what enabled us to create a dynamic and be propelled by it. From the moment we turned resolutely outward, we struck a chord with a great number of people. Gradually, the *rénovateur* movement took on more and more autonomy. But in order to keep our "virtues" in proportion, it

is worth pointing out there is no "genius" among the leaders of the *renovateur* movement.

Without any false modesty, taking a good look, we had nothing very new to offer basically beyond what some of our illustrious predecessors in the critical communist movement had said. A lot of them had a much bigger aura than most of us. But they did not have an enormous success. I am thinking of all those who, after contributing to trials against others, found themselves expelled — Tillon, Casanova and Garaudy, among others. And then there have been people like Maurice Kriegel-Valrimont. He is undoubtedly one of the communist leaders for whom I have the greatest respect and admiration. I think that he is distinguished by a remarkable power of creative thought and vitality of intellect. Essentially, he said in 1960 what we have repeated 25 years later. All these people, before whom I feel very humble, did not have the success we have encountered.

To explain why we should be very modest, I would say that we drew our strength mainly from the weakness of the Communist Party. When it was getting 20% or more of the vote, when it had hundreds of thousands of members, thousands of elected officials, 20 years ago, critical people had no chance of being heard. There was no point. They were too vanguardist in a way, and therefore easily open to suspicion. But the expression of these views could precisely have made it possible to avoid wasting all the time that the Communist Party has wasted.

Maurice Kriegel-Valrimont said quite appropriately a little while ago that it was not enough for the Communist Party to recognize that it has been making mistakes for 20 or 30 years, but that it had to recognize that those who raised questions 25 or 30 years ago found themselves without exception pushed aside. Failing to do that consid-

erably reduces the scope of the Communist Party's present pseudo self-criticism.

What has given us strength is the advanced crisis and weakness of the CP in society and in the workers' movement today. And, to come back to the Juquin candidacy, when we are in a situation in which a candidate coming out of the critical movement may be proving able to compete on equal terms with the party's official candidate or even to go ahead of him, that is a situation which strictly speaking has nothing in common with the previous situations.

I may seem to be overmodest. But we are in a time of such crisis for the party that in fact the *renovateur* movement has a better chance than the previous critical movements, which does not mean that it's all moving along on its own. Activists had to have the courage, and I mean courage, to take this sort of initiative, to organize, to overstep the bounds, to transgress their own norms. But once this was done, they saw that they had a field in front of them that they did not expect, which, while not easy, is at least open.

### "The CP's inadequacy has left a space to fill"

There is a space to fill. Fundamentally, it has been left vacant by the Communist Party's inadequacy, inaptitude for filling it. Nothing would be more wrong than to exaggerate the intrinsic quality of this critical movement by comparison with those that have preceded it. It was not preordained, it might not have happened, but those who had the courage to lead this current found out in advancing that there was a much more favorable terrain than they thought.

■ At the moment Pierre Juquin's candidacy has had a quite spectacular impact, especially among young people.

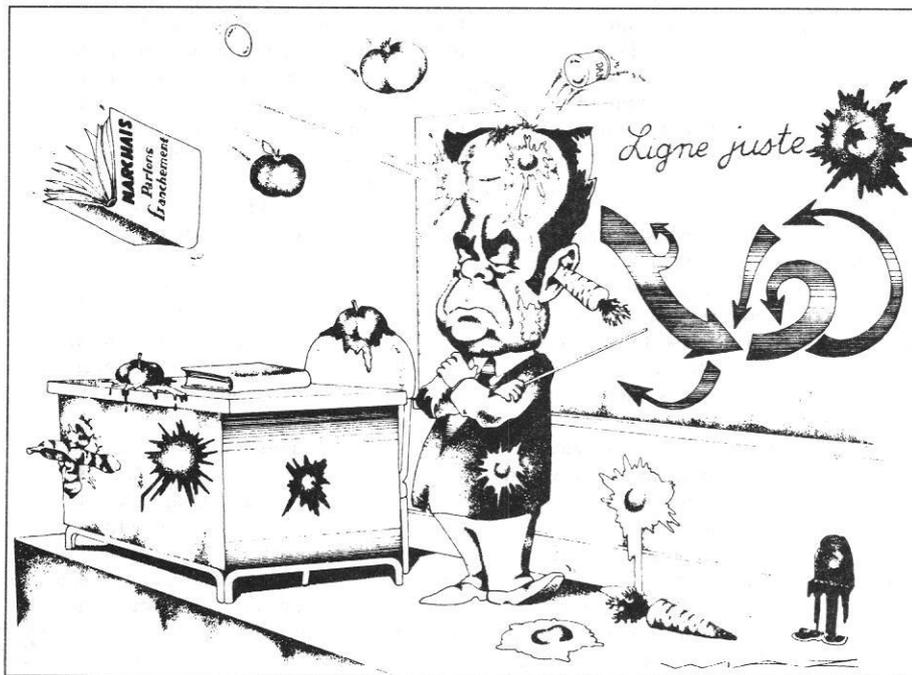
Thousands of people who were not active any longer or have never been active in any political organization today find themselves together in the hundreds of committees that are being set up. Without underestimating what the problems there may be — there will certainly be some — if we take the most optimistic view of the possibilities, what is going to happen after the presidential campaign? What are the projects?

I will not answer that question, because I am convinced the present stage will condition the following one. We have decided together to work for a recomposition, a reconstruction of the revolutionary movement. Whether this takes the form of a party or a movement, what is clear is that an organized form is unavoidable. No one can escape from this. There can be other structures, for which I have the greatest respect, the Rainbow Coalition, and so on. But trying to conciliate everyone for the sake of numbers is not necessarily a basis for clarification and effectiveness in political terms.

I think that we need an organization with principles of functioning, a political program. Everyone is more or less aware of this, but I have a profound conviction that it is premature today to say exactly what the form will be and whether or not it will be definitive. We are at the beginning of the recomposition of a movement based on several pillars. It rests on what I would call the "new layers" in society, people who are just coming to politics, young people by the nature of things, but not only them.

And the contradiction is that this movement is mainly marked by people who have a political culture, who come from different outlooks, who have had separate trajectories. For the communist *renovateurs* — for the great majority, if not all of them, to varying degrees — their commitment to the *renovateur* movement came at the end of personal crises that were often grave. It is by no means an easy thing to leave the Communist Party, to say "I have been working 20 years in an organization — as I have — and now I am going on to something else." That is simple on paper. I have reached that point now. I can look on my leaving the CP without any trauma. But that does not mean that the break was not dramatic.

We have all come out of a history, of a culture; we have our ways of functioning, we have a tendency to anticipate. This anticipation is absolutely necessary, but it must not be transformed into precipitate action. The reconstruction of a workers' and revolutionary movement that has taken enough bruising has to be done with great caution. That does not mean oversensitivity. But it has to be done with a sensitivity sharpened by attentiveness to the reality of the social movement. It is not enough to make guesses, to sniff around. We have to integrate ourselves into it, to steep ourselves in it profoundly. The more we steep ourselves



in it, the better we will be able, together with all those taking part in this experience, to define the subsequent steps.

Of course, I have my opinion, but I do not want to give it, because it is possible that in a few months we will all have advanced a lot. We have to assure ourselves every chance of success in the battles before us. The problem is that we have completely ossified instruments on the left, and it is our ambition to be the bearers of, to represent, a progressive future possible for France. This is a very great ambition. And because it is, we have to have intelligence and caution — not jitteriness — so as to avoid the slightest error.

For the first time, perhaps, because the crisis has never been so grave, there is a real possibility for recomposing something that would have a “an attractive look” about it and count for something in political life.

What I can say for the moment is that an organized form and program are unavoidable, but the content, the formulations, the forms of delegating power, the role of leaderships and so on, everything that would condition the life of this new organization, this new party, remains to be determined, to be built. If we establish a framework and we said that everything had to go through that first, I think that would deprive us of considerable potential.

Obviously, at a given moment, it will be necessary to decide, but it is this whole movement that will have to decide. And perhaps, because this process will be a long one, we will see transitional organizational forms. We ourselves have inaugurated some, but these are forms that are not specific to the *renovateur* movement. For example, the leadership bodies are re-elected every time. We have a national coordinating committee to which the representatives are re-elected, the same goes for the departmental coordinating committees and for the bureau. We have just recommended, but not is not an inviolable rule, that for the sake of efficiency up until the election, unless there is a major problem, delegates should not be changed too often, because a certain continuity is necessary.

So, in action we are inaugurating forms that are not the sort of perpetuation of the delegation of power that we have known up until now. We know that what I called the “new layers” that are coming to politics now are extremely touchy and distrustful of what has existed and do not want to commit themselves to just anything. They have to be offered democratic guarantees and safeguards. Maybe we should envisage a federative transitional form, a front for example.

In any case, the dynamic that is developing shows clearly that there is no need for an extremely rigid framework. I would even say, on the contrary, that I am convinced that too rigid a framework might not be an effective means for mobilizing. Everywhere we go, the same theme comes up again — guarantees, not only about the candidate's program but also about what we are doing. People have to feel that the

main guarantee is that everything belongs to them. This is the source of the idea of assemblies, committees, this whole business.

**■ I think that everyone is aware that if there can be something new, it cannot be the simple sum of what exists — the *renovateurs*, the Ligue Communiste, and the rest. It has to be radically new and, finally, to be very ambitious.**

I think that what is very positive at the outset is that everyone, whether it is the far-left or left organizations or the environmentalists, all those who look to this movement want to participate in this experiment. We agree that it is not a simple addition or a repetition of what could exist before. This is already a point of departure that breaks with previous experiences and which has much better chances for success because we already see quite well what has to be done. We will find out as time goes on how we can set it up. But the prevailing feeling among all the forces is that we have to pay attention to what we are trying to do.

**“Juquin's candidacy is one phase in an ongoing movement”**

The idea that you can intervene in this movement to “gain forces” may be harbored by some individuals, but I don't think any organization has been led by this to join, to lend support or to participate in this dynamic, in this movement. In all the meetings I have attended, I have been surprised by how quickly the old disputes have been relegated to history and no longer encumber the discussions.

To take only one example, no one comes in calling people horrible Trots or vile Stalinists. It is quite illustrative that these two categories, which have been quite marked in the movement, have both succeeded in making the effort to overcome what previously divided us and to maintain what could bring us together today and make it possible for us to work together. Of course, there are problems, as there have always been between individuals in the same organization, by the way, because there is diversity. But the rest has disappeared, and this is a venture that neither category in my opinion would have attempted even two years ago.

**■ I think that all those involved in this effort are aware of the fact that this is a “historic” opportunity, not to get carried away by big words. The concrete possibility to rebuild a revolutionary movement does not present itself every day, and we all know that if we miss this boat, there is no telling when another chance will come along.**

We may miss the boat, but sooner or later, in other forms, this movement will revive. The difficulty is that it may not necessarily re-emerge in the most effective forms for really transforming society, and lost time is lost forever. But I think that we

have no right to risk a failure. We have a historic responsibility, because what is emerging, growing, shows that people are looking to us with more than just electoral interest.

In the meetings we are holding, we see a lot of people who are coming and say that the Juquin candidacy interests them, but at the same time, and almost more, they are saying that there could be something besides an ossified CP or a class collaborationist SP.

It is because of this aspect that Pierre Juquin's candidacy is so important, because it can give expression to that need. This has nothing to do with people getting together to pull off an electoral “coup.”

Our objective is not to see Pierre Juquin become president but to see him get a significant vote and begin to pull together a spark-plug left current outside of the CP and the SP that will put an end to this swinging from the wildest hopes to the greatest disappointments. If the meaning of this candidacy is understood, that is, a phase of mobilization in an ongoing movement, it is not very important at the moment that we have a program on everything. We need broad axes marking the points for breaking with this system and going beyond it.

Our objective in this campaign is not to have a president, or even to get into government. Our objective is that on the election night, the committees that have formed will dissolve in fact, not so that their members can go back to their private life, but so that they can decide what should be done with the structured organizations that exist.

Obviously, the vote that we will get is not unimportant, because it will determine what follows; that is evident for everyone. If we do not make any mistakes, we can win. I think that a *renovateur* current was expressed in the mobilizations last year — among students, teachers and railway workers. *Renovateur* not in the sense of what we are, but in the sense of a real will for social renewal. If we manage to gain recognition as the possible perspective that is being built for expressing this social will, that will be a radical transformation.

We must advance the four or five axes of our profile for this presidential election — the right to a job, social protection, opposition to nuclear power and atomic weapons, democracy, self-management, equality, and the questions of breaking with the capitalist system. If on the big questions we are able to take in the most progressive and most advanced elements in the society, to be seen as the most relevant representatives of these aspirations, then many people may look to us and in so doing be able to say that they belong to a current in French society that exists and is determined to exist.

The conditions are there for us to be able to succeed. The precondition is that we dump everything that is sectarian and marginal, and retain what unites, and more generally what represents a really new perspective for labor. ★

# The "new racism" in the United States

THE UNITED STATES has just passed through a year, 1987, that witnessed a dramatic increase in media reports about racist attacks against people of color. At the same time, it was a year of mass resistance to racism unparalleled in over a decade. These and other developments have stimulated a discussion among individuals and groups on the US left as to whether a "new racism" has emerged, and, if it has, what kind of political response is appropriate.

It may not be possible to fully answer such a question at this time; much information is lacking about certain aspects of the situation, such as the degree of racist and anti-racist activity within the union movement at present, and the numerical strength and actual policies of a number of national and local organizations of people of color. Nevertheless, it is possible to delineate some features of the political terrain of what may be a new conjuncture.

ALAN WALD

**L**AST YEAR was inaugurated by two protests receiving national attention. On January 21, 1987, 2,000 people marched in Manhattan in a "Day of Mourning" for Michael Griffiths, a stranded Black motorist who was chased by a gang of racist whites to his death under the wheels of a car in Howard Beach, New York, on December 2, 1986 [see *IV* 117]. Three days later, 20,000 people mobilized from across the country to march against Ku Klux Klan violence in Forsythe County, Georgia.

Twelve months later, 1987 closed with the national media devoting considerable attention to the jury trial of the Howard Beach lynchers, in which the prosecuting attorneys tried to convict the victims for being poor and Black. Since the anti-racist activists in New York and elsewhere were acutely conscious that the judicial system ultimately serves the racist order, they kept up as much pressure as they could during and after the trial to demand serious convictions and sentences. Activists rightly feared that a failure to convict or the rendering of token sentences would encourage similar violence against people of color.

In December 1987, three of the Howard Beach lynchers were declared "not guilty" of murder; they were found guilty merely of manslaughter, which meant that they might spend as little as eighteen months in jail. However, as the sentences were subsequently handed down, the punishments

turned out to be fairly stiff; Jon Lester, the most vicious, received the maximum of ten to thirty years.

These results were beneficial in communicating the idea to people of color that mobilization and protest can have an effect, especially if massive and militant. After all, whatever the weaknesses of the Howard Beach sentences, they were a significant improvement over the acquittal six months earlier of Bernhard Goetz, the vigilante gunman who in 1984 cold-bloodedly tried to execute several Afro-American youths for harassing him on a New York subway.

## Howard Beach events not isolated

It is also crucial to note that the highly-publicized Howard Beach events were immediately preceded and followed by other atrocities against non-whites. For example, on the day before the Howard Beach murder, and in the same precinct, two Puerto Ricans were battered by a gang of whites. Three weeks later, according to the Coalition of Asian Americans Against Racial Violence, the New York police broke into the home of a Chinatown family, beating them without cause.

Moreover, the previous year, 1986, had also been one of relentless violence against people of color, although with less national

publicity and a more passive response. Many of the 1986 incidents are typical of the brand of racism that permeates the culture of the United States:

- In January 1986, six whites led by a Ku Klux Klan (KKK) member attacked a group of Latinos with baseball bats in Cedartown, Georgia, alleging that one of them had dated a white woman.

- In February, armed whites tried to throw the Black leader of the University of Texas anti-apartheid movement from an eighth-floor dormitory window.

- In May, a Black cyclist in Brooklyn was stabbed to death by a white gang.

- In June, a Chinese-American teenager was knifed in Brooklyn by whites shouting, "These Chinks don't belong in this neighborhood."

- In July, a Black teenager was murdered in Lake County, Illinois, by a man shouting allegiance to the KKK as he fired.

- In September, whites in Toledo, Ohio, sodomized with a lead pipe and attempted to castrate a Black man.

- In December, a week before the Howard Beach murder, an off-duty police officer in Ellenville, New York, "accidentally" killed a Black man with a chokehold.<sup>1</sup>

## Racist violence a fixture of US society

These and similar events demonstrate that ongoing violence against people of color was a fixture of US society long before the more spectacularly-publicized incidents of 1986-87. Unfortunately, there is really no way of determining whether there was an absolute quantitative increase in the numbers of racist attacks in the recent months, since no national organization exists to prepare such a tabulation, and many racist attacks occur in rural areas where they go unreported.

While it is obvious that, in 1987, publicity about such violence rose significantly, along with the number of anti-racist mobilizations in protest, no one has yet to provide a fully satisfactory explanation for this development. However, one of the areas that received a dramatic increase of attention has been racism directed against university students of color; here, there are clearly several factors converging to create a special situation.

For example, racist attacks on campuses have sometimes had a relationship to a growing aggressiveness in political activity by Black students inspired by the new rise of the South African liberation struggle. Anti-apartheid organizations exist on a number of campuses where they have built public shanties as symbolic reminders of the living conditions of Black South Africans. Many of these shanties have been destroyed by right-wing organizations; at

1. These and other events are reported in "The empire strikes back: racial violence on the rise," *Minority Trendsetter* 1, No. 1, April/May 1987, pp. 4-5.



Johns Hopkins University, a shanty was even doused with gasoline and set on fire while four students slept inside.

However, racist incidents reported in 1987 at places such as Macalaster College in Minnesota, Wellesley College in Massachusetts, University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Purdue University in Indiana, Columbia University in New York City, Syracuse University in upstate New York, and at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, tend to follow the traditional scenario of whites attacking people of color.

All the "classical" features of anti-Black racism are especially evident in one of the most disgusting episodes — the attack on Tawana Braley, a popular sixteen-year-old Black highschool student in Wappingers Falls, New York, who was raped and beaten. When she was found, her hair had been chopped off, she was covered with faeces and wrapped in a plastic bag, and the words "nigger" and "KKK" were scrawled on her torso.<sup>2</sup>

Here, in the form and features of the assault — indeed, inscribed on the very body of the victim! — one finds traces of modern racism's origins in colonialism and the slave trade that still endure in the 1980s. At that time, as a rationale for conquest and enslavement, people of color were relegated to a sub-human category by white Europeans who, emerging from Mediaeval culture, projected their own repressed psycho-sexual obsessions onto their victims.<sup>3</sup> Although the forms of domination and exploitation of people of color today are different, there is a strong continuity with the past transmitted through the racist culture of the society of the United States with which every child and adult is inculcated from birth.

The contours of contemporary racism are also seen in a number of other events that have received considerable attention on the

US left, such as the following:

- The continuation of the struggle of more than 10,000 Dineh (Navaho) people living in the Big Mountain area of Arizona who face forced removal from their ancestral homeland by the National Guard, due to the machinations of energy companies.<sup>4</sup>

- The continued holding of the "Hartford 15," supporters of Puerto Rican independence, in "preventive detention," following their 1985 arrest as "terrorists."<sup>5</sup>

- The controversy surrounding institution of a fraudulent "amnesty" for undocumented people under the Immigration Reform and Control Act.<sup>6</sup>

- The steady stream of reports of hostility towards and attacks against new immigrants from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.<sup>7</sup>

## Character of racist attacks is not new

Some on the left have already referred to the present situation as one of a "new racism."<sup>8</sup> The fundamental character of the racist attacks, however, cannot be said to be new. On the other hand, the context in which these attacks have occurred does have many new features. A recognition of these may be helpful in formulating strategies for the immediate defence of communities of people of color, as well as for building unity with struggles of the working class and radical students. Among the major developments creating increased pressure and stress on the lives and struggles of people of color are the decline of the US economy, the persistence of *de facto* segregation ("American apartheid"), the crisis of leadership among people of color, the AIDS epidemic and the new growth of white supremacists.

The economic crisis in the US continues to lower the living standard of the working class in general and of people of color in particular. The possibility of total economic collapse was dramatized by the sensational stock market crash of last October, although most on the left are not anticipating a mechanical repeat of 1929.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the everyday reality for people of color — especially Blacks, Latinos and Native Peoples — is that, while they continue to suffer immense impoverishment at an astonishing rate, the bonuses and profits of the exploiters continue to skyrocket.<sup>10</sup>

## US "underclass" quadrupled in 1970s

In fact, even though US social scientists have traditionally eschewed the use of "class" as a relevant category in the United States, there is now widespread talk of the existence of an "underclass" of citizens. This group, for whom unemployment and an environment of desperate violence and drugs are the norm, quadrupled during the 1970s. At the present time, 28% of Black families have incomes below the poverty line.<sup>11</sup>

Social and economic segregation are still the reality, in the North as well as the South. Most Black Americans live in neighborhoods that are all Black or mainly so, send their children to schools mainly comprised of people of color, and have few sustained contacts with the white world.

This separate world is both economically and culturally defined. Since 1980, reported unemployment has generally been 7% for all people but 17% for Black males. Native Americans have the highest rate of unemployment of any ethnic group. Sixteen states have over 40% unemployment rates for Native peoples; the range nationally is from 18% to 69%. Chicano families average \$8,000 a year less than the national average, and every major center of the Chicano population has been heavily hit with plant closures and mass layoffs.<sup>12</sup>

There has even been sensational publicity about the exclusion of Black athletes from executive positions in sports. Only one Black holds a management position or

2. Jeff Jones, "Upstate New York march," *Guardian*, January 27, 1988, p.6.

3. See Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American attitudes toward the negro, 1550-1812*, 1969.

4. See Louise A. Sinesio, "Time is running out for Navajo People," *New Democrat*, June 16, 1986, pp.2-3.

5. See Juan Segarra et al, "Hartford Case," *Guardian*, August 12, 1987, pp.12-13.

6. See Michael Novick, "Amnesty program a fiasco," *ibid*, August 26, 1987, p.6.

7. See "Ethnic hostilities in Lowell," *New York Times*, October 25, 1987, p.31.

8. See *Radical America* 20, No.5, 1986, special issue on "Race and community control, media, politics."

9. See the feature article on the world economy by Ernest Mandel in *IV* 130, November 23, 1987.

10. *New York Times*, December 20, 1987, p.15.

11. Andrew Hacker, "American apartheid," *New York Review of Books*, December 23, 1987, pp.26-33.

12. John Allen, "Hunger in America," *People's Daily World*, December 13, 1987, pp.14-15.

above in all of baseball. In the National Football League, 55% of the players are Black, but there has never been a Black coach.<sup>13</sup>

The Afro-American community in particular has passed through a period of nearly two decades in which elected officials have come to power — especially the phenomenon of Black mayors in major cities — with little or no advancement for the masses, although the small Black middle class has strengthened its own economic position.<sup>14</sup> In cities such as Detroit, the new situation has been compared to “neo-colonialism.”

## Democratic Party losing credibility

While the Democratic Party is losing credibility as an instrument of social reform, no alternative has yet appeared.<sup>15</sup> Jesse Jackson's second effort to capture the presidential nomination has so far indicated a retreat on his part from his more radical positions of 1982.<sup>16</sup> In Philadelphia, Black voters were forced by the Democrats to re-elect Mayor Goode, who on May 13, 1985, murderously bombed a Black neighborhood, as the only alternative to a white racist candidate. In Detroit, a majority Black city with a Black mayor and administration, the number of households receiving public assistance was 22% in 1970, and is now 28%. In 1985 there were 635 murders in Detroit, seven times the national average. 173 children under 17 were shot in the first half of 1987. Thousands took to the streets under the leadership of an organization called “Save Our Sons and Daughters.”<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, the far left has yet to develop a viable program to respond to immediate issues of this type.

Other features of the “crisis of leadership” involve various elements of a new Black right. Some of these are Black intellectuals supporting Reagan, such as Thomas Sowell of the Hoover Institute and Glen Loury of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.<sup>18</sup> Others — such as Ralph Abernathy, Dick Gregory, Hosea Williams and Mayor Charles Evers (brother of the martyred Medgar Evers) — openly support the reactionary UNITA of Jonas Savimbi in Angola.<sup>19</sup> Another aspect of the crisis in leadership is the growth of Black social democracy, exemplified in the popularity of books by William Julius Wilson, such as *The declining significance of race* (1978) and *The truly disadvantaged* (1987). These undermine affirmative action arguments and propose unrealistic (and undesirable) “middle class” solutions for economic despair.<sup>20</sup>

Growing concern about AIDS has brought more attention to poor health conditions among Blacks and Latinos, who are among the hardest hit sectors of the population due to a high rate of intravenous drug use. While Blacks and Latinos are approximately 18% of the US population, they

constitute 39% of all AIDS victims.<sup>21</sup> In general, racial minorities in the US suffer 60,000 excess deaths each year due to inadequate health care.

Well-armed right-wing racist groups are thriving across the United States. Unfortunately, they are a growing influence among many of those affected by the economic crisis — such as rural farmers, urban unemployed and youth. The far right also receives a boost from the upsurge in religious fundamentalism in the US. Despite a decline in membership, the KKK has been holding weekly public appearances, with



special strength exhibited in Georgia and North Carolina.

According to a report of Klanwatch, an organization monitoring white supremacists, racists are shedding robes in favor of other strategies. They now go under other names such as Posse Comitatus, Aryan Nations, Christian Identity Movement, Liberty Lobby, Populist Party, National Democratic Front and Aryan Youth movement. There are Nazi youth gangs in every major city. Survival festivals are held in the mid-west in which as many as 1,500 “Christian Patriots” will gather to practice weapons and study racism.<sup>22</sup>

While the above and other factors make life more difficult than ever for people of color in the US, there are also national and international factors at work that create new possibilities for fighting back effectively and that impel people of color and their allies toward perspective of revolutionary socialism.

First, and most importantly, there are signs of a new unity among people of color across the nation. Recent events in celebra-

tion of the new holiday honoring the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., were broadly multi-racial in some areas; and many of the new leaderships of university and community struggles have made a special point of emphasizing the common oppression and common goals of all people targeted by racism.

On an international scale, revolutionary movements among people of color have taken a dramatic upswing. For weeks at a time millions of North Americans watched massive demonstrations of Blacks in South Africa; they have witnessed the Nicaraguans resisting and outmaneuvering the Reagan administration; and they have observed the Palestinians on the West Bank mobilize heroically against the Zionist colonizers.

While the labor movement has continued in retreat, important events have occurred such as the successful strike of the Chicana workers in Watsonville, California, and several anti-apartheid actions in the union movement.<sup>23</sup>

## Advances for cultural movements

There have also been significant developments in the cultural life of the United States influencing the current state of political struggles. Following the decline of the nationalist movements of Blacks and Chicanos that reached their height in the late 1960s and early 1970s, many left-wing groups revised their views and took on the new position that people of color are not oppressed nationalities with an independent dynamic, only super-exploited workers.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, semi-autonomous cultural movements of people of color have marched steadily forward during this past

13. Herb Boyd, “Stiff arm of racism,” *Guardian*, August 26, 1987, p.11.

14. See Steve Zeluck, “Black mayors,” *Against the Current* 2, No. 4 (Winter 1984, old series), pp.14-15.

15. See Mfanya D. Tryman, “Blacks and the Democratic Party,” *Black Scholar* 17, No.6, December 1986, pp.28-32.

16. For an excellent socialist critique of the Jackson campaign, see Joanna Misnik, “The Rainbow: storm clouds ahead?” *Against the Current* 11, November/December 1987, pp.3-7.

17. See Salim Muwakkil, “Young tries to restore order,” *In These Times*, September 16-22, 1987, pp.6-7.

18. See Salim Muwakkil, “New issues reviving dormant arguments,” *ibid*, November 13-19, 1985, p.3.

19. A. C. Oia, “Black ‘leaders’ sew confusion,” *Guardian*, November 25, 1987, p.3.

20. A forthcoming issue of the US socialist journal *Against the Current* will contain a Marxist critique of the ideas of William Julius Wilson.

21. Salim Muwakkil, “AIDS hits hardest at Blacks and Latinos,” *In These Times*, August 19-September 1, 1987, p.6.

22. See Lyonora Williams, “Klansmen without robes,” *Guardian*, November 25, 1987, pp.6-7.

23. See Frank Bardacke, “How Watsonville canning strikers won,” *Against the Current* 2, No.3, May/June 1987, pp.15-20. News of anti-apartheid activities by US unions is regularly carried in the publication *Labor Notes*.

24. For example, see “Toward a Communist analysis of Black oppression,” *Line of March* 2, No.1, July/August, 1981, pp.21-88.

decade, with substantial results. Leading novelists in the US now include Toni Morrison and Alice Walker; both of these Black feminists promote Afro-American culture as a source of sustenance, pride and independence, significantly raising the cultural level of the country above the banality of Nobel Prize winner Saul Bellow, not to mention mass-market hucksters like Harold Robbins. There is also increasing public interest in Latino film and theatre. Although mass cultural phenomena are complex and contradictory, with diverse effects depending on the context, there is no doubt that information and interest in the history and culture of peoples of color is more widespread than ever.

### Patriarchal, European perspectives questioned

Among the most impressive culturally-linked struggles of people of color in the past year have been those on campuses across the nation. Student activists and faculty allies put forward in an impressively forceful and unified manner the demand for an end to Euro-American domination of the cultural life of the university. They advocated required courses in "non-Western cultures," and the creation of or strengthening of independent programs in Afro-American, Native American, Asian American and Latino studies. Often these national demands were linked to international concerns, especially regarding US support of reactionary regimes in South Africa and Central America.

Even within the ivory tower of the academic disciplines, the impact of this growing assertion of cultural "difference" and autonomy on the part of people of color is an issue of major contention. In the social sciences and humanities there now rage vitriolic and highly political debates about the appropriate methodologies for scholarly study. Liberals and conservatives unite on the side of the "Ethnicity school," which conflates people of color and white ethnics into a single category on the grounds that all citizens of the US are in some sense descended from "minorities." On the left stand adherents of an analysis according to categories of class, gender and race, in which Marxism figures prominently. Not only history and culture, but also psychology and the physical sciences are now coming under sharp criticism for theorizing and present "facts" and "norms" that are actually ideological props facilitating the domination of patriarchal European perspectives.

What are the implications of these new developments for the revolutionary left in the United States? First and foremost, they demand an orientation by all socialists toward active support on the front lines of the struggles — and the extension of these struggles into the places where socialist live and work. No criticism or suggestions, no matter how non-sectarian or friendly in

tone, will be taken seriously — nor should they be — if they are not predicated on an activist commitment.

### Anti-racism not primarily a "Black" issue

Second, the complexity of these new developments suggests the necessity of an intensive self-educational program on the part of the left as to the history, dynamic, needs and demands of people of color in the US. Since the European invasion of the continent over 400 years ago, a massive disinformation campaign has been conducted by the news media, educational institutions and the culture industry to misinform people about cultural difference; to propagate biological theories of racial inferiority; to sow divisions among working people; and to instill the illusion of a possible assimilation to the racist order by people of color.

As a result, not only Euro-Americans, but people of color themselves, need to participate in a fresh and updated historical review linked to political struggle. A unity of all people of color in alliance with the union movement and radical students is desirable, but cannot be achieved if the result is that the less numerous and materially weaker groups are subordinated and overrun.

Unity among people of color, and be-

tween people of color and their class allies, must be predicated on the recognition of differences as well as interests in common. Most significantly, it is no longer correct, if it ever was, to treat the anti-racist movement as primarily a "Black" issue, even though Blacks have historically played a major role on the left and have been heavily proletarianized.

- Native Peoples, for example, have played a special part in the history of the nation and are presently linked to a hemispheric-wide revolt of indigenous peoples.<sup>25</sup>

- "Asian American" is a term that refers to numerous groups with many different relations to the dominant society — Japanese-Americans, Chinese-Americans, Filipino-Americans, Vietnamese-Americans, Korean-Americans and others.

- The Latino community is divided among Chicanos, Puerto Ricans (from the island as well as the mainland), Cuban-Americans, recent refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and elsewhere.

- There are also diverse Arab Americans, Haitians, people from India and other recent immigrants.

Teach-ins on racism and cultural diversity are now being organized mainly on campuses, but they can also be held in

25. See Bernard Nietschmann, "The Third World War," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 11, No.3, 1987, pp.11-16.

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communities, in neighborhoods and in unions. Particular dates should be designated by anti-racist activists for special attention and actions. For example, October 12 is now celebrated as "Columbus Day," a national holiday honoring the "discoverer of America." Anti-racist activists should transform this into a day of infamy, marking the advent of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and genocidal war against the inhabitants of the North and South American continents. The birthday of Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., is in many areas of the country still a "token" holiday; socialists should join the campaign to close down business and state institutions, organizing alternative events on this date to honor King and to protest racism.

### Strategy for the anti-racist movements

Whatever the difficulties and unique features of the present time, the opportunities for effective participation by socialists — by activists with a political analysis of racism and a vision of the route to its eradication — are many.

In formulating strategy and tactics for the new anti-racist movements, there is a crucial continuity of the present moment with many of the past efforts of socialists, especially of the 60s and 70s.

The basic program of demands raised by the far left of that earlier time — for independent political action; for use of corporate dollars to build educational, health and other facilities; for the defence of the rights of prisoners of color; for the honoring to treaties with Native Peoples; for the democratization and cultural transformation of the school system; for the elimination of racist practices at work, in courts and elsewhere — has been vindicated by recent events.

What is required is not a complete overhaul or new start in theoretical and programmatic work, but a development and fresh application.

Finally, revolutionary socialists have a special attitude that they bring to struggles of people of color and the working-class movement, regardless of their own individual backgrounds.

Socialists are at war with the culture and institutions of class society, and do not come to the anti-racist struggle as dogooders, or social workers, or to cure their souls of guilt.

They come to the struggle because they genuinely believe that it is in their own interest to uproot racism and all that produces it from their own society and other societies.

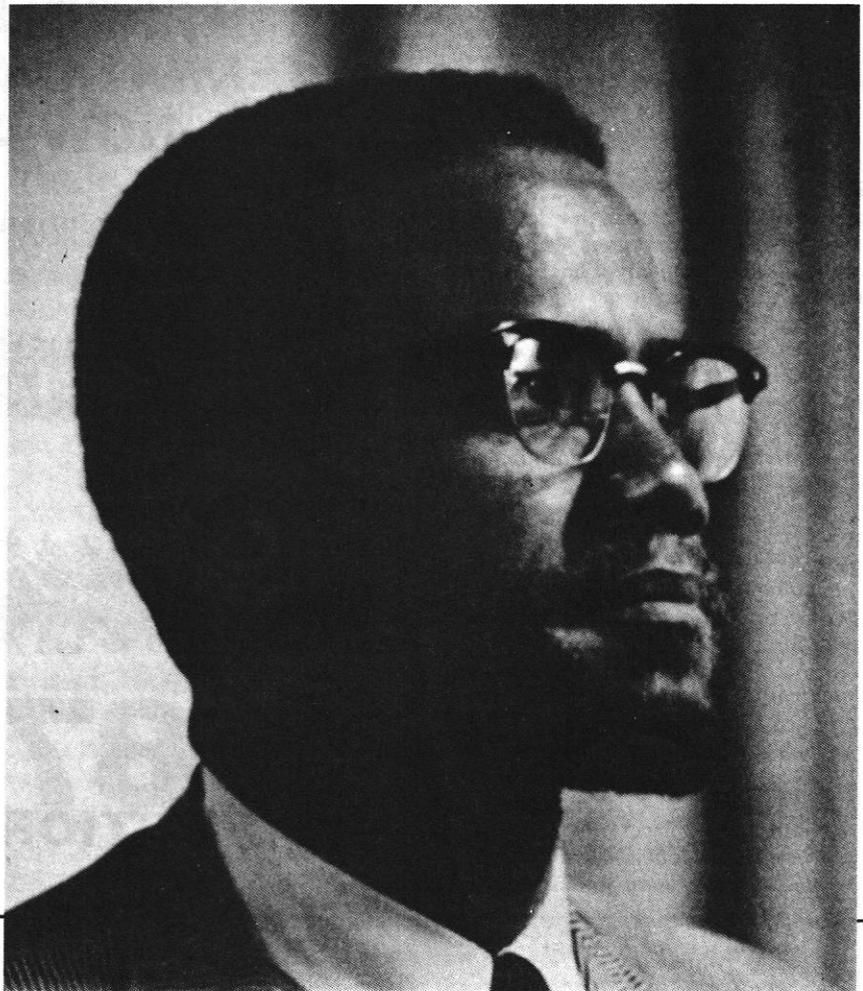
They are not motivated by condescending pity, like many liberals; they feel at one with the people of color who are waging struggle now and have done so in the past, and they are honored by having the privilege of joining as front-line combatants in the reshaping of the world. ★

# Twenty three years after the assassination of Malcolm X

**DEVELOPMENTS** over the twenty-three years following the assassination of the Malcolm X show how much his absence has affected both the Black struggle and the revolutionary movement in the US. When Malcolm was shot on February 21, 1965, the Black revolt was about a dozen years old and heading into a worsening crisis of leadership. The dedication, bravery and mobilization of Black communities across the US had been phenomenal. But their struggles were increasingly hampered and side-tracked by established national organizations and individual leaders.

The proliferation of small, new groups and the strengthening of Black nationalist sentiments testified to the search for a structure and leadership capable of carrying the struggle to new heights and new victories.

### EVELYN SELL



**M**ALCOLM X had the potential to fill the vacuum existing in the leadership of the Black movement of the 1960s. During his dozen years as a member of the Nation of Islam (NOI, popularly known as the Black Muslims), he quickly displayed his abilities as an organizer and speaker. Accepted into the NOI in 1952, he rose with meteoric speed to the very top ranks of the group's hierarchy, and became second in command to Elijah Muhammad, the movement's leader.

When the NOI attracted national attention at the end of the 1950s, it was Malcolm who received the most publicity. His charismatic personality and fiery speaking talents made him the focal point of public knowledge about the movement he represented.

Radio and television appearances, magazine interviews and articles, and speeches at meetings and public rallies introduced Malcolm to increasing numbers of Americans. He was one of the most requested speakers for college debates and forums — where his intelligence, wit and personality made him a favorite of the most militant students and won him grudging admiration from his opponents and detractors.

I can personally testify to the power he exerted over a campus audience. I first heard Malcolm speak at a Wayne State University debate where he changed a jeering, overwhelmingly white crowd into a respectful audience. Loud heckling was transformed into resounding applause. His power over a group — even a hostile one — was astounding.

## Insistence on Black self-reliance

His impact during more informal discussions was no less remarkable as I discovered when I stayed after the debate to ask him about the role of women in the NOI. For over an hour he devoted as much energy and concentration to discussing with me and another student as he had to the hundreds who had packed the campus meeting.

Malcolm's influence was not confined to the borders of the US. His relations with top African delegates to the United Nations and his trip to Africa to pave the way for Elijah Muhammad's 1959 visit to Mecca established Malcolm abroad. He became known as "the St. Paul of the Black Muslim movement."

It was not his religious message, however, that attracted the attention and respect of Blacks across the US. They responded to his searing attacks against racism, his insistence on Black self-reliance, his criticism of compromising Black leaders, and his denunciation of Democratic and Republican politicians who wooed Black votes but failed to follow through on campaign promises. An anonymous Harlem cab driver told *Life* photographer Gordon Parks "that Malcolm ain't afraid to tell Mr. Char-

lie, the FBI or the cops or nobody where to get off."

At the same time that Malcolm and the NOI were gaining more influence within the Black community, the progress of the Black liberation movement was affecting him and the Black Muslim organization. There was growing pressure within the ranks of the NOI to join in the civil rights struggles taking place and, as the 1964 national election campaign loomed on the horizon, there was strong sentiment to engage in independent political action. Toward the end of 1963 there were persistent rumors of a division within the NOI, and that a split was imminent between Malcolm, leading the young militants, and Elijah Muhammad, who would not allow the NOI to get involved in civil rights battles.

## Mass actions against segregation

While Blacks were mobilizing in mass actions to fight against segregation and for equality, the NOI maintained a different goal and strategy: the separation of the races and the creation of an independent Black nation on either American or African soil; the establishment of separate Black businesses, schools and so on; and a pledge of obedience to all civil authority in the US (with the sole exception of their refusal to serve in the armed forces because this violated their religious teachings).

Malcolm's potential for becoming the most authoritative voice of the Black masses was evident during a November 10, 1963, public rally that climaxed the two-day Northern Negro Grass Roots Leadership Conference held in Detroit. The great majority of the audience was not affiliated with the NOI and did not come to hear to Malcolm X, NOI minister, but to hear Malcolm X, the most eloquent spokesperson for Black liberation. As a member of the audience, I can report that the cheers, applause and shouts during Malcolm's talk were clear signs of the extraordinary standing he had within the militant wing of the movement.

A few weeks after this conference, the rumored split between Malcolm and Elijah Muhammad was set into motion. The head of the NOI had ordered all his ministers to make no comment about the assassination of President John Kennedy. But in response to a question at a December 1, 1963, meeting in New York, Malcolm noted that Kennedy's death was a product of the climate of violence and hate created by whites in the US. For this violation, Malcolm received a public 90-day suspension.

In March 1964, Malcolm announced his departure from the NOI and his plan "to organize and head a new mosque in New York City, known as the Muslim Mosque, Inc." But there was more behind Malcolm's break with NOI than a simple matter of disobeying an order. This became clear to all when his new independence



from Elijah Muhammad made it possible for Malcolm to get involved in the battles of the Black community for "better food, clothing, housing, education and jobs *right now*."

In mid-April Malcolm went to Africa to organize support among the independent nations of that continent for his proposals to carry the American Black struggle into the United Nations. His views were deeply affected by his pilgrimage to Mecca and his discussions with government leaders, journalists, students and others in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. His followers in the US began to receive letters from him indicating deep-going changes in his previously sweeping denunciations of all whites and the goal of establishing a separate Black state.

## Organization of Afro-American Unity

Upon his return to the US at the end of May, he stated that he thought Blacks should stay and fight in the United States for what was rightfully theirs. His public remarks showed that his thinking on political and social issues was developing in a revolutionary direction.

On June 28, 1964, Malcolm launched the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), patterned after the Organization of African Unity which was founded in May 1963 to unite all Africans in the fight to eliminate colonialism. The OAAU program showed a further development of Malcolm's ideas and a much more concrete approach to the daily tasks of the Black struggle. Its major theme was that the Black community would control its own destiny through its own organs of power.

The OAAU began to hold meetings, set up a liberation school to teach African and Afro-American history, and published a bi-weekly newsletter, *Backlash*. These initial steps were taken while Malcolm was overseas. He spent the summer and fall of 1964 in Africa and the Middle East pursuing his campaign to put the US on trial in the World Court, and solidarizing contacts with government officials and Black leaders.

On November 24, 1964, Malcolm returned to the US and carried out a heavy schedule of activities. The ideas he ex-

pressed at OAAU rallies and at meetings across the country showed that he was still going through a process of changing his views and expanding his understanding of society. In the last weeks of his life, he repeatedly asserted that he was a target for assassination. On February 14, 1965, his home was firebombed while he, his wife, and their four young children were asleep. They managed to escape unharmed and Malcolm insisted on carrying out a Detroit speaking engagement although he was suffering from fatigue, strain, smoke inhalation and a bad cold. As a participant in the meeting that night I could see how tired and ill he was, but it was clear that he had no intention of swerving from his course and that his views were still evolving.

### Malcolm X cut down by assassins' bullets

Less than a week later his development as a central leader of the Black movement was cut short by assassins' bullets. His newborn organization was not sturdy enough to overcome the loss of his guidance, although it continued to function for a time. His legacy has been passed down primarily through recordings and written transcriptions of his talks.

Although present and future generations can learn from and be inspired by what Malcolm said and did, his absence from the living movement had a disastrous effect on the development of a Black leadership. Both his accomplishments during his life and the vacuum left by his death testify to the crucial role which can be played by individuals in shaping historical events.

The life experiences and the accomplishments of Malcolm X demonstrate his capacity to become the central leader of the Black struggle. His autobiography shows that he was a fairly typical product of social conditions in the Black community.

Born in Nebraska during the late 1920s, he experienced the oppression of a racist society. In his late teens he became a successful petty criminal in the Harlem underworld. After several trips to jail, he landed in a maximum-security prison in Massachusetts. It was here that Malcolm began to distinguish himself as a non-typical product of racist social conditions. He read "thousands of books because I wanted to know what made people the way they were." He didn't find answers in the prison library. His brother, a member of the Detroit temple of the NOI, visited him in prison and began Malcolm's conversion to the Black Muslim movement.

Released from prison in August 1952, Malcolm soon became a member of the small Detroit Temple Number One and volunteered his services. When he produced a threefold increase in membership, he was made an assistant minister. At the end of 1953, he went to Chicago to live with and be personally trained by Elijah Muhammad. By June 1954 Malcolm had

established Boston's Temple Eleven in three months and Philadelphia's Temple Twelve in less than three months, and was appointed minister of New York City's Temple Seven. He transformed the small storefront mosque into a large and powerful organization in Harlem, the largest Black ghetto in the US.

The ruling class power structure in New York was compelled to recognize Malcolm as a potent force when a member of the NOI was jailed on April 14, 1958. Hundreds of fellow NOI members surrounded the police station. Fearing a riot, the authorities called on well-known Black leaders to handle the situation — with no success. Malcolm went to the station, negotiated hospital care and release for the Muslim brother, and then stepped outside and made a slight gesture to the silent crowd. Within minutes, they vanished. The awed police captain remarked, "No man should have that much power over that many people. We cannot control this town if one man can wield that kind of power."

Malcolm soon reached even greater national and international prominence. He became chief trouble-shooter and public voice for Elijah Muhammad both within the United States and abroad. The record of his successes during this period showed that Malcolm had extraordinary abilities — a powerful combination of native talents augmented by his personal experiences, studies and travel abroad. His leadership qualities were proven. Though there are never any historical guarantees, it seems likely that, had he lived, he might well have proven capable of passing history's test, answering the crucial need for leadership of the Black liberation struggle.

Malcolm joined the National of Islam on the eve of the civil rights explosion in the South. Although the majority of Blacks did

not support NOI's religious doctrine and goal of a separate Black nation, that organization did articulate most clearly and symbolize most dramatically significant new attitudes in Black communities around the country: self-reliance, self-confidence and racial solidarity in the fight against the dominant white power structure. In their schools and publications, the NOI emphasized the true history of Black people in the US, the past record of Black contributions to world culture, and the contemporary struggles and achievements of colored people throughout the world.

The NOI played no role in the eruption of civil rights battles in the mid-1950s and the growing movement of the early 1960s. In fact, it rejected the sit-in movement and argued that, instead of "going into those stores where we are neither wanted nor invited," Blacks should concentrate on developing their own businesses. The NOI criticized the NAACP and the Urban League as being controlled by white men, and opposed Martin Luther King's passive resistance philosophy — calling it a "slave philosophy" which preached love for the oppressor.

This abstention from and opposition to the civil rights struggle ran counter to the mood of many NOI members. After his break with Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm explained: "The Black Muslim movement attracted the most militant young Black people in this country. The most restless, the most impatient, and the most uncompromising Black men and women were attracted to the Black Muslim movement...It actually developed, it grew, it became powerful — but it was in a vacuum. And it was filled with extremely militant young people who weren't willing to compromise with anything and wanted action. More action, actually, than the organization could



Malcolm X (right) with Martin Luther King (DR)

produce.”

Malcolm's personal inclination to get involved in the Black liberation movement was expressed openly after his departure from the NOI. He said that Elijah Muhammad had restrained him from participating more vigorously but "it's going to be different now. I'm going to join in the fight wherever Negroes ask for my help, and I suspect my activities will be on a greater and more intensive scale than in the past....I am prepared to cooperate in local civil rights actions in the South and elsewhere."

### "I'll tell them what a real revolution means"

Malcolm's entrance into the civil rights street battles added a pungent ingredient to a pot already boiling over with civil disobedience actions, rent strikes, school boycotts and countrywide demonstrations. His statements were a challenge to the recognized leadership of the civil rights movement.

"There's no use deceiving ourselves," he stated. "Good education, housing and jobs are imperatives for the Negroes, and I shall support them in their fight to win these objectives. But I shall also tell the Negroes that while these are necessary, they cannot solve the Negro problem.

"I shall also tell them what a real revolution means — the French revolution, the American revolution, Algeria, to name a few. There can be no revolution without bloodshed, and it is nonsense to describe the civil rights movement in America as a revolution."

These pronouncements were greeted coldly by the acknowledged leaders of the civil rights struggle. James Farmer, then national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), was quick to disclaim any sympathy with Malcolm's remarks. "All participants in CORE projects are pledged to non-violence in every project," Farmer explained.

Paul Zuber, a Black attorney practicing in New York commented, "CORE can't get 400 members in Harlem, but Malcolm X can draw from 4,000 to 10,000 people when he speaks on 125th Street. I think the power play is now on, and the ultimate decision does not rest with Roy Wilkins [head of the NAACP], Malcolm X, or James Farmer; it rests with 22 million Negroes living in this country."

The alternative leadership offered by Malcolm was codified in the program of the OAAU. It addressed critical needs of Blacks across the US, advocated a strategy of independent united action to gain Black control of the Black community, and explained, "What we do here in regaining our self-respect, manhood, dignity, and freedom helps all people everywhere who are fighting against oppression."

Specific projects included support to rent strikes and a housing self-improvement program, community action to improve

schools and textbooks, and community programs help unwed mothers, drug addicts, youth and veterans.

OAAU political action plans included "a voter registration drive to make every unregistered voter in the Afro-American community an Independent voter; we propose to support and/or organize political clubs, to run Independent candidates for office, and to support any Afro-American already in office who answers to and is responsible to the Afro-American community."

In his public speeches, Malcolm attacked the two major parties with equal fervor and stated, "Any Negro who registers as a Democrat or a Republican is a traitor to his own people." The significance of Malcolm's call for independent political action took on added weight when the Michigan Freedom Now Party gained ballot status and ran militant Black nationalist candidates in the state's 1964 election campaign. This was the most advanced expression of independent Black political action in the country.

In order to carry out the goals he envisaged, Malcolm spent the summer and fall of 1964 in Africa and the Middle East where he gained further stature as an outstanding leader. In July he addressed a conference of the Organization of African Unity and urged the members, "In the interests of world peace and security, we beseech the heads of the independent African states to recommend an immediate investigation into our problems by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights." While in Kenya he was given time on the government radio and met with top-level government officials. The US embassy protested according such honors to a person held in low repute in the United States, but the Kenya government rejected the protest. The World Muslim League, founded in 1962 as the supreme religious body in the Muslim world, designated Malcolm as their official representative in the US.

### "You can't have capitalism without racism"

Malcolm visited over a dozen countries and spoke with such African leaders as Nasser, Nyerere, Sekou Toure, Nkrumah, Azikiwe and Jomo Kenyatta. US newspapers complained bitterly that Malcolm was responsible for the African opposition to US policies in the United Nations' discussions on the Congo.

While Malcolm was overseas, the civil rights movement in the US was carrying out intensive activities in the South, and there were Black ghetto explosions in the North. When he returned to New York in November, it was clear that his views had continued to develop. Speaking at a symposium in May 1964, Malcolm was asked what political system he favored. He said:

"I don't know. But I'm flexible. As was stated earlier, all of the countries that are



emerging today from under the shackles of colonialism are turning toward socialism. I don't think it's an accident. Most of the countries that were colonial powers were capitalist countries and the last bulwark of capitalism today is America, and it's impossible for a white person today to believe in capitalism and not believe in racism. You can't have capitalism without racism. And if you find a person without racism...usually they're socialists or their political philosophy is socialism."

Nine months later, when I heard him speak days before his assassination, he explained the connection between the internal struggle against American imperialism and the external struggle against US imperialism being waged by peoples throughout the world. I am not claiming that Malcolm was a socialist or Marxist at the time of his death. He was going through a process of deepening his understanding of long-held views and gaining new insights into social realities and possibilities.

It was the direction of his thinking that was so exciting to Marxists who see the *combined character* of the coming American revolution, that is, a proletarian revolution to provide the preconditions for the establishment of a socialist society and a nationalist revolution to win full equality and liberation for oppressed national minorities. Because of their key role in helping to shape and reshape American society and their social weight in contemporary life, Blacks have acted and will act as a vanguard within the revolutionary movement. Malcolm's leadership qualities, ideologically and organizationally, marked him as a prime candidate to help forge the needed unity between the working class movement and the struggles of oppressed nationalities.

Marxists celebrate Malcolm's life as proof of the capacity of exploited and oppressed persons to overcome tremendous obstacles as they strive to build a better world. We mourn Malcolm's death as a severe setback to the progress of the Black liberation movement and the development of the revolutionary movement. ★

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**O**N FEBRUARY 8, Mikhail Gorbachev announced that Soviet troops would withdraw from Afghanistan in the ten months following May 15, 1988.

The fact that the withdrawal of these troops was decided on when "the causes that led to their presence in the country" — to repeat the phrase used by Leonid Brezhnev in the wake of the Soviet intervention — have not disappeared but are more operative than ever, is in itself a striking recognition of failure. More than eight years after the start of the intervention, the balance sheet is terribly negative:

- The USSR is bogged down in an invasion, which has led to slaughter and enormous destruction.

- Its intervention has run up against deepgoing hostility from the great majority of the Afghan population.

- The Afghan reactionary forces have been able to increase their influence enormously in the name of a struggle against the invader.

- The "progressive" regime in Kabul is even more unpopular and more fragile than it was on the eve of the Soviet intervention.

- The intervention in Afghanistan by US imperialism and its regional partners — including in particular Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, through their aid to the "Mujahadin" — is greater than ever.

- US imperialism and its European allies have gained considerable political advantage from the vast revulsion of world public opinion, including in the workers' movement, against the Soviet war in Afghanistan.

- In the USSR itself, this "dirty war" has engendered "moral gangrene" in the ranks of the army and deepgoing discontent in the population. This is especially true in the "Muslim" republics, where anti-communist Islamic propaganda has enjoyed a vigor unequalled for several decades.

### Why the we called for withdrawal

The Fourth International correctly judged that the massive intervention of Soviet troops, as it unfolded, was not only contrary to the right of self-determination of the people of Afghanistan but also to the real interests of the struggle of the exploited and oppressed throughout the region and to those of the Soviet workers' state. The prolongation of this intervention could only aggravate the harm that it did to these interests. This is why the Fourth International called for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

The withdrawal decision announced by Mikhail Gorbachev will be executed when the damage that it aims to limit has long since grown to enormous proportions.

In his February 8 statement, Gorbachev clearly refused to link the withdrawal of Soviet troops to an agreement with Wash-

## No Soviet deals with imperialism

**THE UNITED Secretariat of the Fourth International issued the following statement on March 21.**

ington and Islamabad on the formation of a new Afghan government, as is being demanded by the Pakistani dictatorship.

"This is a purely internal Afghan problem. Only the Afghans can settle it, even if they belong to different, or even opposing camps. When it is suggested that the Soviet Union must take part in negotiations over this and still more with third states, we answer clearly: Spare us this, it is not our problem, or yours." That is what Mikhail Gorbachev has said.

This attitude is in total contradiction with the crude interference represented by the intervention of Soviet troops in Kabul in December 1979, just as it stands in contradiction to the very numerous occasions throughout the history of the Soviet bureaucracy when it has negotiated the fate of governments in other countries with imperialism and forced its allies in these countries to conform to the results of these negotiations.

The coming months and years will make it possible to verify whether the principle declared by Gorbachev is more than a purely circumstantial argument, especially since under Gorbachev Moscow today is advocating a worldwide course of "reconciliation" marked by the worst kind of "peaceful coexistence" illusions. This conciliationist course has already revealed its futility in Afghanistan, where Najibullah's "national reconciliation" got the brush-off from the reactionary Islamic Alliance.

However, this did not keep Gorbachev in his February 8 statement from expressing a wish for the same sort of "reconciliation" for the Middle East, South Africa, Kampuchea and Central America! We will oppose any attempt by the Kremlin to pressure the peoples of these countries and regions into accepting so-called reconciliation with their worst enemies.

The USSR's duty is to provide aid, without strings, to the peoples struggling against imperialism and reaction. Only the leaderships of these struggles have the right to negotiate compromises with the imperialists and their partners. In this respect, since Moscow initially made ending US and Pakistani aid to the Mujahadin a condition for the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan, it rapidly found itself

confronted with a new condition from Washington — the ending of Soviet aid to the Kabul government following the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

This sort of trading between Moscow and Washington, over the heads of their respective allies, in the last analysis can only harm the more advanced revolutionary struggles. To get what it wants in Afghanistan for example, Moscow might be led to make concessions at the expense of Nicaragua, which is less important for its own security. This is why, rejecting such deals in principle, we call for a withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan without negotiations between Moscow and Washington. The USSR must withdraw its forces from Afghanistan without delay, and continue to provide aid for the Afghan progressive forces struggling against the feudal-tribal and Islamic reactionaries, who are supported by imperialist and the reactionary Muslim states. It should conform to the announcement by Moscow on March 17 that its troops will withdraw, even if no agreement is reached with Pakistan and the United States. Moscow is continuing, however, to express its desire for such an accord and to pursue that end.

### Washington raises the stakes

Even before being implemented, the Soviet decision has already sown deepgoing disarray in the enemy camp. This is true at an international level. The most reactionary currents in the imperialist countries are disgusted by the perspective of losing what has been one of their main anti-Soviet arguments in recent years. Some have gone so far as to denounce the decision for a Soviet withdrawal, calling it "Machiavellian"! Far from making it easier for Moscow to withdraw its troops, the US is upping the ante.

The same thing is happening on the ground. After having concealed their differences and rivalries behind a facade of unity against the Soviet invader, the various components of the Islamic Alliance based in Peshawar, on Pakistani territory, are clashing more and more openly. Recently, the strongest of these forces, but also the most fanatical and the most reactionary — Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islamic — has taken the leadership of the Alliance. As the Soviet troops withdraw, the Mujahadin organizations will lose their aura of "freedom fighters," as Reagan calls them, and appear as they are — profoundly corrupt reactionary organizations representing contending, irreconcilable ambitions for power.

If, however, the government proves incapable of surviving the Soviet withdrawal, its fall would anyway be a lesser evil than the Soviet Union getting bogged down indefinitely in Afghanistan. In any event, in the long run, the withdrawal will benefit the development of a mass revolutionary movement in Afghanistan and in its neighboring countries. ★