

International VIEWPOINT

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Racist and anti-racist movements in Western Europe



W Europe 1992: A battleground for Black workers

France: Danger of growth of mass fascist party

Denmark: Now Western Europe's most closed country

Sweden: Racists down but not out

West Germany: Poisonous roots growing underground

Plus: Libya ★ Spanish state ★ Canada ★ USSR

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EDITORIAL

WE REMIND our readers and friends that our circulation drive was setback by the postal strikes in France, and that a special effort is necessary now to get it started again. This special expanded issue marks the relaunch of our campaign for new subscriptions and financial donations.

Our supporters in Canada and Sweden have ambitious plans for building the circulation of *International Viewpoint* in their countries, but there are many other countries we have not yet heard from. *IV* is a truly international magazine. It is widely distributed across the world, and so every country is important for us. The success of our circulation and fund drive depends as much on a number of small countries, or those where English is the second language, as it does on our friends in the English-speaking world.

We hope our friends and supporters will get the new year off to a good start by renewing their subscriptions as quickly as possible, persuading as many of their acquaintances as possible to subscribe and by sending us contributions. ★

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New US aggression against Libya

THE EVIL EMPIRE has struck again. Less than two years after the American airforce's murderous raid against Libya in April 1986, an assault that followed a series of military provocations by the US Navy against this country of less than 4 million inhabitants, the number one imperialist army has repeated its crime.

On January 4, two fighters attached to the American fleet cruising in the eastern Mediterranean shot down two Libyan fighters a few kilometers from their country's coast.

SALAH JABER

THIS "INCIDENT," which Washington has rushed to declare "closed"—a high-handed attitude, to say the least—was by no means accidental. To the contrary, everything indicates that it was premeditated. Indeed, it was predictable and was predicted. Muammar Kadhafi has never gone off Ronald Reagan's and the US media's list of "public enemies," and in October the CIA launched a campaign of agitation against Libya obviously designed to prepare US and world public opinion for a new aggression against that country.

CIA director William Webster, whose outstanding humanitarian services and depth of pacifist convictions are well known, unleashed the campaign on October 25, announcing that Libya was building the biggest chemical weapons factory that his service had ever detected. The Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs then reacted by saying that the plant in question was a pharmaceuticals factory (it is called "Pharma-150" by the way). It rightly added that "such habitual accusations do not come as a surprise to Libyans, and there is only one explanation for them, to provide a pretext for a new aggression against Libya." (*Le Monde*, October 28, 1988.)

On December 21, Reagan in person resumed the charge in a televised interview. On the following day, his spokesperson dotted the "i's" of his remarks. The US president had "clearly let it be known that the use of military force was an option that had to be considered."

On December 23, Libya responded by officially informing Italy, which usually serves as an intermediary between Tripoli and Washington, that it was ready to welcome any investigating committee sent by the UN. The Libyan ambassador in Rome confirmed this position, inviting ambassa-

dors and journalists to visit the factory in question. But he added, "We cannot accept that there is a world policeman." (*Le Monde*, December 25-26, 1988).

The imperialist policeman, however, continued the charge. On December 28, Reagan renewed for six months the economic sanctions that he decreed against Libya in January 1986 (a freeze on Libyan assets in the United States and a trade embargo). He justified this decision in a letter to Congress in which he repeated the accusation of "support for international terrorism" against the Libyan government, adding unashamedly that it posed "an extraordinary threat to the national security of the United States!"

On December 30, Phyllis Oakley, the State Department's deputy spokesperson, rejected the Libyan proposals for an inquiry in terms that left no doubt about the United States' intention to stage a premeditated aggression. "A visit organized by Libya would not remove concern about the real nature of the plant in Rabta," she said, explaining that "a chemical arms factory could easily be modified to seem to be a normal chemical products factory."

Here the US position reached the height of imperialist arrogance and arbitrariness. In fact, in all logic, if a chemical arms factory can easily be modified to being a civilian chemical plant, the reverse is also true. Any chemical or pharmaceutical products plant can easily be modified into being a chemical arms factory. Washington thus arrogated to itself the privilege to judge who has the right not just to produce chemical weapons but even to have the capacity to produce them!

Far worse, disregarding any kind of international legality, a few days before a world conference called in Paris precisely to curb the growing recourse to chemical weapons,

Washington usurped the right to militarily "punish" a nation that is unable to use chemical or any other weapons against the United States, if for no other reason than distance!

Why has Washington got it in for Libya?

The US hypocrisy is all the more flagrant if you consider the following facts: 1) The United States holds nuclear weapons by comparison with which poison gases are like a BB gun against a one-ton shell; 2) It has never issued such threats against states, such as Israel, South Africa or Pakistan, which have produced nuclear weapons; 3) it has been the main user of chemical weapons since the last world war, employing them very extensively against the Vietnamese people (Is it more "humanitarian" to burn people with napalm than to gas them?); 4) several states, including in the third world, have chemical weapons, two of which — Iran and Iraq — have used them recently; 5) the Middle Eastern state that has by far the most devastating weapons, including chemical and nuclear ones, is undoubtedly Israel, a special ally of the US.

So why has Washington got it in for Libya? Some commentators have thought that they saw a desire on the part of the Reagan-Bush administration to work off some spite on an easy target, since Kadhafi's Libya has become relatively isolated in the world because of his nonconformist policy. However, there is more than a safety valve involved in this affair.

What frightens Washington is that Libya, like Syria, in the wake of Iran and Iraq, has been supplied by the USSR with medium-range ballistic missiles. Israel, of course, is clearly ahead of them in this area also. However, the deterrent capacity of the Israeli arsenal has certain been reduced, since the enemies of the Zionist state also have long-range means of extermination.

Moreover, Libya is reportedly developing a system of in-flight refueling for its French-built fighter-bombers, which would therefore soon become capable of intervening against Israel. (*New York Times* of January 1, 1989.)

In these light of these facts, it becomes clear that the new US aggression against Libya follows directly from the unalterable principle of Washington's policy in the Middle East, maintaining the military supremacy of the Zionist state. The Libyan regime remains one of Israel's most implacable enemies, in spite of the fact that it watered down its positions in 1988 in many other areas (domestic policy, Arab relations, Chad, and so on).

The new US aggression, has of course to be denounced vigorously by all anti-imperialist activists in the world. It must, in particular, be the occasion for activists in the many Mediterranean countries where there are US military bases to step up their campaigns to get rid of them. ★



Spanish state

The general strike

Introduction to articles

THE GENERAL STRIKE call opened the way for the expression of a long festering social malaise. In fact, since 1985, strikes have occurred in various sectors, but this was the first "all together" effort against the PSOE government's austerity programs.

According to the unions, at least 5 million workers observed the call to stop work, reaching 100% in some branches of industry. Even football players struck! The central demands were around dropping the Youth Employment Plan, which falsifies unemployment figures while encouraging marginal, unstable jobs; catching up on the purchasing power lost in 1988, especially for public employees; making pensions subject to the guaranteed inter-professional wage scale; a review of the conditions for granting unemployment benefits; and the right of collective bargaining for public employees.

On December 16, another action against the social and economic policies of Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez brought tens of thousands of people into the streets of Madrid, one of the hot spots during the strike. The whole city was virtually paralyzed by this mobilization.

4

THE TWO MAJOR Spanish union confederations, the Workers Commissions (CCOO) and the General Workers Union (UGT) — linked respectively to the Communist Party (PCE) and the Socialist Party (PSOE) — called a 24-hour general strike on December 14, 1988 that paralysed the country. It was the largest mobilization of workers that the post-Franco period has seen.

The strike was essentially a test of strength between the workers and the government, but also an impressive showdown between the latter and the unions. The confrontation between the UGT and the PSOE was particularly nasty, and has opened some cracks within the confederation.

For example, in bringing direct

pressure on the UGT unions in order to divide and weaken the strike, the government managed to force some union leaders to break ranks. Thus, the Chemical Workers Federation and the Agricultural Workers were obliged to expel some leaders who refused to implement the strike call. Relations between the UGT and the PSO had been very tense during the entire period leading up to the strike.

A union leader in Madrid stated that "Except for arresting union leaders, which it hasn't tried yet, the PSOE is behaving just like the Francoists used to."

"It is trying to frighten the population by making it believe that if it supports the general strike, the country will be a disaster zone, and then heaps abuse on the unions, calling them reds, communists and subversives" (*El Pais*, November 28 1988)

The unions refused to yield to orders to provide "minimum services" and decided to organize "emergency services" themselves in appropriate areas, such as health, child-care, security services, gas, electricity and so on. Likewise, they denounced the anti-strike decrees passed against the public service workers.

Given the breadth of the mobilization, the government itself had to recognize the success of the strike and proposed a meeting for negotiations. ★

"We must extend this combativity"

JOAQUIN NIETO, the author of the article published below, is a member of the Executive Commission of the Workers Commissions (CCOO).

ON DECEMBER 14, we mounted an impressive general strike. Once again, the industrial working class found itself at the heart of the strike.

Early on, it had taken the decision, by means of thousands of factory assemblies, to participate in this protest movement and to ensure a 100% work stoppage in the villages and towns of the industrial belts surrounding the big urban centers. It kept that promise.

But this time, the public service workers also took part in the action. The Spanish television strike at midnight, December 13, was a radical break with the requirement for minimum services. It highlighted the vulnerability of some of the machinery of power, as well as the working classes' vast capacity to paralyze the system.

The great popularity of this campaign, as well as the fact that only the working class in action is capable of mobilizing all other popular strata, was illustrated by the participation of the rural population and of others without much tradition of struggle; by the ease with which commerce was paralyzed; by the response of youth and students throughout process; as well as by the support of many intellectuals, artists and members of the liberal professions.

Massive numbers came into the streets

The massive size of the strike was not its only feature. It was also active — taking the streets. In many cities, the demonstrations in the evening of December 14 were the biggest in their history, or at least in a decade, such as the gigantic one in Madrid on December 16. They made it clear that participation in the strike was a completely conscious choice, which naturally led on to people coming onto the streets in massive numbers.

The appearance of pickets everywhere

was, from the early hours, one of the most visible characteristics of the general strike. On this occasion, the generally very favorable attitude to the strike greatly helped the work of the pickets.

Essentially made up of vanguard workers, with the active involvement of left unionists and revolutionary activists, the pickets were able to carry out a function of spreading information that remained vital up until the last moment.

When confronted with violence and joint boss-police actions, they acted with the firmness and decisiveness required. They had to stand up to many police attacks, and had to exercise their right to self-defense and to use violence whenever this was necessary. The amount of violence used was in line with the situation and their determination to block any attempt to break the strike.

The massive response and action of the pickets created such a favorable relationship of forces that in every case the minimum services decreed by the administration were obstructed.

The left in the unions has always believed that the best minimum services are no minimum services, because the latter are nothing but tools designed to weaken strikes. Besides, unions and strike committees are adequate to guarantee meeting all of those needs we consider essential, which is exactly what happened this time. Thus, we were far from happy with the minimum-services accords signed by RENFE (the national railway,) Iberia (air transport,) and by the Madrid transport system, despite the insignificance of the services provided in the last case.

Funeral for the "social partnership"

Practice showed that we were strong enough to take care of those sectors ourselves. And this is also an excellent precedent in the struggle against minimum services, which have become one of the most effective anti-strike weapons.

The general strike revealed the impressive power of the union federations in calling such an action, showing once more that the will to fight exists in the working class and expresses itself when unions call for action. The union movement only weakens itself, on the other hand, when it adopts a conciliatory attitude instead of taking a stand for confrontation and mobilization. Reality dealt a crushing blow to those not disinterested prognostications warning that the union movement was heading for a debacle unless it further moderated its language and approach.

December 14 was the funeral for a period of social partnership that had been dead for quite a while. This stage began with the opening of the political consensus period and the signature of the Moncloa Pact.¹ It ended, about two years ago, with the signing of the Economic and Social Accords²

by a UGT that was already beginning to feel the negative consequences of its support for the government's anti-social policies.

After several years of such a policy of support for the socialist government of Felipe Gonzalez, the UGT realized that it was losing influence. In the last union elections, it lost ground in many factories and in the public sector. The union's identification with the PSOE, which had benefitted the UGT when the Socialists came to power, was beginning to have the opposite effect.

Today, in order to return to the social partnership policy, new forms and content would have to be invented. Ways would have to be found that could tie unions to the government's policies without attacking their interests and at the same time offering some concessions to the workers. While not utterly impossible, this would be very difficult to accomplish.

Outlook favourable for militant trade unionism

Certainly, the general strike did not open a phase where from now on there will be non-stop mobilization and struggle. But neither was it simply a one-day struggle without a future or serious implications.

Today, the outlook is more favorable for a change in the right direction and for a more left-oriented, more militant trade unionism. But we still have to take into account the fact that the trade union leaderships have come out of this stronger than ever, with a lot of authority and with a widely recognized position of leadership. Nonetheless, we are still talking about fundamentally reformist leaderships which will not change in any real sense. We have already been through other situations where we have seen how they have frittered away such strength won in struggle around the bargaining table.

The general strike was so powerful that Felipe Gonzalez was forced to recognize this triumph, and he has issued an appeal to the unions to negotiate. But to negotiate what? The government is not going to change its economic policy. That is very clear. But it could cook up some sort of face-lift operation: a "social turn" to satisfy temporarily some of the unions' demands, in exchange for an agreement from the unions, in one form or another, to support its policies.

Or, if that is not possible, it is going to try to force them, without getting into a direct clash with the union leadership, to accept some sort of collective bargaining agreement in order to head off any mobilizations when the next round of new contract nego-

1. The Moncloa Pact was signed on July 30, 1977, by the government and the unions, an attempt to assure social peace in post-Franco Spain.

2. AES, an accord signed between the socialist government and the UGT, which mainly dealt with enlarging the number of jobless who would be covered by unemployment benefits.

tiations comes up in 1989. Such an operation would be complex, because there is very little margin for satisfying the unions' demands, and because the pressure from the rank and file of the unions will be enormous.

For the moment, the spokespeople of the Workers' Commissions and of the UGT have declared that some of the demands have been met before there can be any thought of negotiations. The "Youth Employment Plan" has to be jettisoned. The eight million workers who were shorted because of incorrect forecasts of the rate of inflation have to be given a two-point compensatory raise. Pensions have to be brought into line with the minimum wage. And unemployment insurance coverage has to be extended from the current 35% of jobless to 48%.

The unions have also stated that they do not want to discuss the "Kingdom's accounts", that is, the whole of the government's policies, but only their own demands. They fear compromising themselves with the government because that would alienate their base at least for the short term, and dilute the strength gained in the mobilization.

Bring the spirit of the strike into the factories

The unions have also announced that there is no possibility that they will enter into discussions with the bosses about collective bargaining. That is all very well, but now they must stick to it. If the government does not give any ground, and it will not easily do so on the major demands, we will need to keep up the pressure through mobilizations.

The upcoming period of contract negotiations is an excellent opportunity for building up a climate of militancy and for the ripening of new conditions for all-inclusive struggle.

Today, there is a contradiction between the general line of union leaderships which, in the last analysis are orienting toward confrontation with the anti-social policies of the government, and their attitude in daily activities on the shop-floor, which continues to be determined by a bureaucratized and concessionary kind of unionism. One of our tasks, therefore, is to bring the spirit of the December 14 mobilization into the factories so we can put an end to this contradiction.

The left in the unions worked hard for the success of this general strike, above all by putting pressure for calling it. We were well able to see the dynamic leading to a united call. We were able to work to advance the strike in its preparatory stage, and later with the pickets. Today, we must extend this combativity into day-to-day union activities, to keep up the pressure, holding firm to our positions, and to remain vigilant that our victory is not wrested from our grasp. ★

The battle is still to be won...

"NOTHING will be the same again," this phrase, often repeated, but rarely determined by the events, takes on a whole new meaning after a mass mobilization as enormous as that of December 14. [From *Combate*, newspaper of the LCR (Spanish state section of the Fourth International), December 20 issue.]

IN SOME RESPECTS, profound changes in the political situation had already occurred. But the radical challenge posed by the general strike is to throw out all together the policy of social pacts that has ruined the workers' movement and to bring about a lasting revival of workers' struggles and social mobilizations in general. That battle is still to be won. The general strike represents an initial victory which will undoubtedly serve as an important springboard. But considerable efforts over a prolonged period are still necessary.

The most important political effect of December 14 was to break the political deadlock that emerged from the defeat of the working-class movement in the NATO referendum, and which was consolidated in the 1986 general elections. At that time, an all-powerful government devoted itself totally, with more and more despotic methods, to implementing a generally reactionary policy and a particularly aggressive social and economic policy. Resistance by workers and other social forces to this policy seemed incapable of obtaining tangible results.

But this was only an appearance. In fact, in recent months workers', students', anti-militarists, and nationalist resistance mobilizations got results that were hard to measure in the immediate term. The December 14 general strike precisely is one of the best examples of this.

Buildup of internal tensions

For quite a while, we have characterized the period as one of mounting social malaise, without this leading yet to any substantial change in the relationship of forces. This type of situation is among the most difficult to analyze. The political orientation to adopt is much less clear than in periods when the mass movement is either clearly on the rise or in retreat. However, even if the signs are not yet visible on the surface, the buildup of such internal tension produces important changes in the depths of society. The general strike re-

flected, and at the same time accentuated the problems specific to this situation.

What was the basic political content of December 14? Three aspects are inseparable. First, of course, is the fact that there was a massive, united action in opposition to the government from the left, the most powerful demonstration of the so-called "social left." Second, its explicit goals were elementary union demands and the hope for a change in government policies. The third aspect was the radical character of the tactic employed — a general strike. It was radical not only because strike pickets and the other hard-hitting forms of workers' struggle were used but also because this was a direct action by the masses against the government.

Medium-term effects of the general strike

The medium-term effects of the general strike will depend on the way these factors combine and in particular, on the resolution of the contradiction between the relatively modest goals and the radical means used.

But today we can already say that December 14 was big popular victory. First, because the working class showed all of society, and itself, the formidable social weight that it has when it goes into movement united. And second, because the Socialist government has suffered its first serious political defeat since taking power.

This defeat was as general as the strike itself. It was an ideological defeat, because it brought into ridicule the line taken by the government spokespeople and their acolytes against workers' struggles, against class struggle unionism, and particularly against general strikes as a method of action. It was a political defeat because governmental authority was seriously undermined, and the authority of the established institutions even more so. The latter aspect took on a particular importance during the day-long strike, when the government wanted to base itself on the parliament to break the strike. It was an economic defeat, finally, because it showed the breadth of the rejection of a

policy that is completely identified with the government. The anti-strike campaign that Gonzalez launched in order to defend this line, mobilizing the whole PSOE and its periphery, failed miserably.

This victory has brought on considerable changes in the political situation. The government is weakened, even if it still has excellent prospects for the next election (proving once again, unfortunately, that in day-to-day matters the electoral behavior of a very large sector of the population bears very little relation to its socio-political attitude.) The workers and people's movement feels stronger. It is ready to make its voice heard and has regained the hope in the possibility of change. This is not, yet, a radical alteration of the situation, and there is no guarantee that we will continue on in the right direction. But the changes are positive, and may lead to greater things in the months to come.

Contradictory nature of reformist leaders' role

The leaderships of the Workers Commissions (CCOO) and the General Workers Union (UGT) undeniably played an active role in the general strike. This has naturally raised questions in the minds of the more militant sector.

The contradictory nature of this role must be understood. Of course, the general strike has not at all changed the natures of these reformist bureaucrats, nor their basic political ideas. It would be a grave error to harbor any illusions on this score. But it has to be understood that with the call for, and organization of, a general strike, these bureaucrats have regained a certain amount of authority. This is not because they have gotten results with their social-partnership line, but because they took a stand for a united mobilization of the masses, and because they had to abandon temporarily their policy of social pacts.

There is no reason to suppose that after December 14, the majority of workers are going to give a blank check to Redondo and Gutierrez, the major leaders, respectively, of the UGT and the CCOO. On the contrary, it has to be realized that there is already pressure from below. If this were not so, the reorientation of the CCOO, and even more of the UGT, would be incompensable. This pressure from the base operates against all attempts to divert popular aspirations, especially since the show of strength represented by the general strike.

In the days to come, negotiation with the government will no doubt be a focus of discussion. Felipe Gonzalez has reacted by offering a dialogue, understanding that he must, as soon as possible, regain the initiative if he wants to defuse the explosive situation created by the general strike. Gonzalez will probably be prepared to offer something to achieve this goal. But it is nearly inconceivable that he will decide to

make any significant change in his economic policies.

Besides, he quite clearly believes that class-struggle unionism, even led by a reformist leadership, is an obstacle to "modernization," an onerous and embarrassing inheritance from the past. Many government spokespeople expressed this point of view in the days leading up to the strike.

The government and the union leaderships therefore have a real interest in finding areas for social-partnership. But there are very serious sources of conflict between them, most important being popular

pressure.

The revolutionary left has adopted quite a correct orientation toward the changing political situation in recent years. The situation opened by December 14 confirms that the organization of the resistance, the very special effort to work among youth and the accumulation of revolutionary forces have been, and remain, a line adequate to the situation.

We must continue to build on these gains, understanding that we need to carefully study reality and increase our capacity for initiative and imagination. ★

Young people and the general strike

THE DROPPING of the Youth Employment Plan (YEP) was one of the major objectives of the general strike of December 14. But in order to analyze its implications for youth, we have to look farther than the day of the strike itself, and take into account the whole process, particularly the mobilizations of November 24 and December 1.

After the 1986-87 mobilizations, political activity in the vast majority of university centers was limited to actions and demands focused around academic issues, anti-militarism, feminism and so on, led mostly by a small vanguard. This vanguard had, moreover, very limited relations with the workers' movement....

The discussions and student assemblies that were called in order to explain and speak out against the YEP in schools and universities were crucial for the preparation of the general strike.... Hundreds of debates and meetings were held, attracting large numbers....

The results, however, in terms of student organizing have been quite limited. There was not enough time for interest in fighting the YEP or organizing for the general strike to become widespread enough to extend beyond the small core of student activists... and they built only a very informal sort of organization. Results were best where a stable coordinating center or student collective was in place. Where such collectives did not exist — which was most often the case — putting together even an informal coordinating meeting was a slow and difficult process.

The first student strikes and demonstrations on November 24 showed that they were ready to mobilize, although student assemblies and school discussions had barely taken off at that point. On that day, many institutes and training schools stopped work with the sole intent of supporting the strike call.

On December 1, another step forward was taken when a much stronger strike was called, and local town demonstrations joined the huge march on Madrid which drew many tens of thousands of young people from all over the Spanish state. School youth supported the general strike so wholeheartedly that there was very little motivation for student pickets. In the end they joined some of the central pickets....

This general strike has been the first serious experience of joint action between workers and students with common demands and using similar tactics. The YEP is a new theme around which there is the possibility of a massive youth mobilization. Until the call for December 14, unemployment and unsteady employment were very serious problems facing young people, but their capacity to fight back was still quite low. In this respect, in the general strike there was a broadening of the issues around which young people are radicalizing and the beginning of a struggle against some of the key aspects of capitalist exploitation, as well as the start of a convergence in action with the workers' movement.

The success of December 14, the decisive blow which it struck at the YEP and the positive experience of collaboration with the workers' movement are factors which encourage optimism. But serious problems remain in terms of organization and the attitude of some union federations....

The general attitude adopted by the unions to the bosses and the government will be of major importance in determining what position youth will take toward them. Convergence was possible around the general strike, but it can only be sustained if this fighting spirit is kept up. Youth will be the first victims of any pact with the government and the bosses, and that will ruin any chance of unity between the youth movement and the unions. ★

F. Cruells

New Democratic Party fiasco sparks debate

THE NOVEMBER 21 federal election in Canada was an upset victory for the Progressive Conservative Party — or Tories — led by Brian Mulroney. The Tories swept into power for a second consecutive term despite all predictions that the Liberal Party under John Turner would carry a majority, or at least be in a position to form a coalition government based on its protectionist opposition to the recent free-trade agreement signed with the United States.

But even more spectacular than the unexpected conservative victory was the abrupt rise and equally sudden fall of the traditionally last place social-democratic and labour-linked New Democratic Party in the period preceding the election.

BARRY WEISLEDER

THE NEW DEMOCRATIC Party (NDP) blew it — and now an unprecedented debate on election strategy is underway in the party and its affiliated unions leading up to the NDP federal convention next August in Winnipeg.

Over a fifteen month period the NDP tumbled from first place and over 42% popular support according to opinion polls, down to its traditional third place and 20% in the November 21 federal election in the Canadian state.

The party's lacklustre, timid performance allowed the scandal-plagued Progressive Conservative Party to form a second consecutive parliamentary majority government. Despite a 7% decline from their 1984 results, the Tories captured 169 of the 295 seats.

The NDP's slide particularly benefited the Liberal Party which miraculously recovered from a nearly paralytic internal leadership crisis to grab second place and double its parliamentary representation to 82 seats.

Although the NDP vote showed a 2.4% increase and elected 43 members of parliament (its largest ever caucus) this result fell far short of all pre-election projections. In fact, NDP gains, which were concentrated in the western provinces, were largely the product of a shift of Tory votes to far-right wing parties such as the western separatist

Reform Party, the Confederation of Regions Party and the anti-abortion Christian Heritage Party.

So how did the NDP manage to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory? How did it fail to make the much-anticipated breakthrough, especially in Quebec?

Canada-United States trade deal

Labour leaders, social-democratic commentators and bourgeois pundits have not hesitated to advance various explanations. Unfortunately most of them miss the mark; worse, their analysis points the NDP in the wrong direction for the future.

The public soul-searching for New Democrats began at the Ontario Federation of Labour Convention in Toronto on November 28 where United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Canadian District 6 Director Leo Gerrard complained that the NDP had downplayed its opposition to the recently negotiated Canada-United States trade deal during the election campaign.

The pact, which will be ratified by parliament early in January, aims to eliminate most tariffs and duties on goods crossing the border over a ten-year period. It became the central issue in the election, evoking both chauvinist anti-Americanism and legitimate concern about the future of so-

cial programmes and government intervention in the economy.

A week after Gerrard's criticisms, Robert White, president of the Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW) and a vice-president of the federal NDP, issued a seven-page letter that bitterly attacked party electoral strategists for ignoring labour's ideas and leadership. Seen as the opening salvo in White's bid for the NDP leadership (leader Ed Broadbent is expected to step down after leading the party to four third place finishes,) the letter accuses party officials of structuring the NDP's campaign so as "to distance itself from the labour movement, both in appearance and issues."

Significantly, there is much truth to what White wrote. Canadian social democracy has consistently sought to downplay the NDP's identity as a labour party and appeal instead to supposedly classless "average Canadians." This election was no exception.

International employers' offensive

But the kind of leadership White has in mind offers no genuine alternative. It puts "nation" ahead of "class". He would line up workers behind their Canadian imperialist bosses and favor inflationary protectionist policies, rather than correctly portraying the so-called "free-trade" deal as part of an international employers' offensive led by Thatcher and Reagan to drive down wages, social benefits and working conditions in the interest of profit maximization — an offensive that can be defeated only by the mass mobilization of the working class.

Class collaboration, rather than class struggle, is the logic of the position of Bob White and his colleagues in the Pro-Canada Network, an umbrella organization of anti-free trade groups including Canadian businessmen and Liberal politicians.

Consider one of their major post-election criticisms. White and the Network took the NDP leadership to task for focusing their attacks on Liberal Leader John Turner in the final weeks of the campaign. "All we did was move votes to the Tories," wrote White.

But the opposite is true. NDP leader Broadbent stressed his party's opposition to the trade deal both before and during the election campaign. Next to the rather vacuous demand for "honesty and integrity in government," opposition to the trade deal was *the* major plank in the NDP campaign.

The problem was that the NDP's position was barely distinguishable from that of the Liberals, who reverted opportunistically to a left-nationalist stance reminiscent of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in the late 1970s. (Remember the man who created PetroCanada and the National Energy Programme?)

NDP and labour leaders simply echoed Liberal claims that the trade deal would lead to a US takeover of Canada (Canada is

itself one of the seven leading imperialist countries in the world,) and with it the loss of Canadian sovereignty and culture. To this was added the usual social democratic prescriptions for band-aid tax reform and "fiscal responsibility." The Liberals actually promised to spend much more to meet social needs than did the "responsible" NDP.

NDP tries to beat the Liberals at their own game

NDP strategists had to scramble to salvage their traditional bases of support in the face of a Liberal resurgence following the televised leaders' debate. This rescue operation could be carried out only by attacking the Liberals as one of the twin parties of Canadian imperialist big business. Of course Broadbent should have been doing this from the beginning, instead of promoting the possibility of a coalition government with the Liberals (even with the Tories!) which he did "in the interests of parliamentary stability."

But the NDP shift in tactics was too late to reverse the trend to the Liberals by mid-November. The Pro-Canada Network (including the arch-reformist Communist Party of Canada, which fielded fifty candidates, few of whom received even 200 votes) helped to create an "anyone but Brian" (Mulroney) atmosphere among working people. This was bound to benefit the Liberal Party, the traditional party of government this century, with its superior apparatus and regional bases. The NDP, as a social-democratic labour party, could not hope to beat the Liberals at their own game — campaigning on a liberal-nationalist platform.

Unfortunately, much of the left was lured down the same blind alley. For example, several editors of the respected independent socialist magazine *Canadian Dimension* explicitly called for an NDP-Liberal alliance to defeat the Tories and the dreaded trade deal — a classic case of a cure that is worse than the disease!

More Canadian nationalism would not have helped the NDP campaign. But a little Quebecois nationalism (the ideology of the oppressed, French-speaking working class majority in Quebec) would not have hurt.

Instead, Broadbent publicly attacked his own candidates in Quebec when they spoke out in defense of pro-French language Law 101 (subsequently declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada on December 15.) He also disowned them when they criticized federal Bill C-72, legislation to authorize the expenditure of millions of dollars to promote the use of English in Quebec, which, to its disgrace, the federal NDP caucus voted for.

By once again demonstrating its hostility to the national aspirations of Quebecois workers, the NDP squandered a truly historic opportunity to make a breakthrough, despite having dozens of well-rooted fran-

cophone candidates and, also for the first time, the active support of the Quebec Federation of Labour. Such is the price of abject loyalty to the Canadian state.

A more strongly Canadian nationalist campaign would have gotten the NDP nowhere in Quebec. The Liberals tried it in the province and fared miserably. But the Tories, who campaigned openly and proudly for the trade deal with the US, did better in Quebec than in any other province (53% of the vote and 63 out of 75 seats.) They even had the support of the Quebec provincial Liberal government, much to the chagrin of federal Liberal Leader Turner.

Another, albeit indirect, indication that a less Canadian nationalist, more independent, working class-oriented campaign would have better served the NDP is to be found in the results of the City of Toronto municipal election held November 14, one week before the federal vote. There the NDP, the only party to openly and independently field candidates, captured a slim majority both on City Council and the Board of Education.

So the federal election results cannot be attributed to a marked shift to the right by voters. As was pointed out, the Tory vote fell 7%, the NDP's rose, and 53% voted for parties claiming to be opposed to the free enterprise-oriented trade deal.

For the NDP the election was a missed opportunity, a debacle to put it bluntly, but not the product of a right wing sea change. The party put personality in command. The leadership hoped to coast to power on the basis of Ed Broadbent's personal popularity (and the continuation of scandal and infighting in the bourgeois camps.)

The NDP brass took working people for granted. It overlooked the gains made by the party in the wake of the 1986 strike

wave. It tried to coddle conservative petty bourgeois opinion by distancing itself from NDP anti-NATO policy, by advocating increased expenditures on Canada's armed forces, by attacking Quebec's language law, and by promising to be a willing partner in a capitalist coalition government. The only positive aspect of the NDP campaign was its promise to preserve social programmes like medicare, which unfortunately only the elderly can recall were first established provincially by the NDP or its predecessor party, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation.

Frankly, this approach did not work because it could not work. That is not what people who would newly consider voting for a labour party are looking for.

Need to strengthen NDP as a labour party

Bourgeois commentators, like the *Globe and Mail's* Jeffrey Simpson, resolve the dilemma for the NDP by urging the party to sever its ties to the labour movement. "Unless the NDP breaks out of that rut, it's going to remain with its trade union friends at the margin of Canadian politics", wrote Simpson.

Of course, if the NDP took his advice, the party would simply wither and die, for its *raison d'être* would be gone. The Canadian bourgeoisie does not need three strong federal parties. Then again, Jeffrey Simpson realizes that.

To the contrary, workers need to strengthen the NDP as a labour party, not only by affiliating more unions to the party, but by actively taking part in its internal life. As workers we can assert our class interests in the party, even though they are



Results of November 21, 1988 general election

	1988 %	Seats	1984 %	Seats
Progressive Conservative	43	169	50	209
Liberal	31.8	83	28	43
NDP	20.4	43	18.6	30
Other	4.8	0	3.2	0

bound to conflict with the pro-capitalist, Canadian nationalist and protectionist policies of Broadbent and White. We should promote socialist policies that correspond to our needs. We should organize support for our struggles, both within and without the NDP, demanding that the party become an activist, fighting force that campaigns on the side of all the oppressed and exploited.

This will be part of the process by which we take control of our class destiny by forging a revolutionary leadership capable of leading the working class to the seizure of state power and the construction of a new social order based on justice and equality. Without thinking for a moment that the NDP will play such a leadership role, we know that a majority of the workers who support the NDP today must be won to such a perspective if it is to be realized.

Helping to win workers to a revolutionary perspective, and working to construct the necessary revolutionary organization to lead workers' struggles is the aim of Socialist Challenge/Gauche Socialiste, whose members promote these ideas in the unions, the NDP, movements for women's rights and international solidarity, and other social protest movements.

More serious, and therefore more worrisome than Jeffrey Simpson's free advice are the observations of former NDP national secretary Gerald Caplan.

A "realist," and an open advocate of NDP-Liberal coalition, Caplan does not question the NDP's vital labour link. He has even made his peace with the party's foreign policy... "Fiddling with its NATO policy persuaded no new target groups, yet distressed party loyalists."

Deadly diversions for workers

Caplan's point of departure is economic policy — from the right. Favorably citing austerity-minded social-democratic governments in Spain, New Zealand, France, Australia and Sweden, he urges the NDP to be more concerned with creating wealth than with re-distributing it (as if wealth is created by attacking workers' incomes and benefits.) In Caplan's view, "That means moving well beyond outdated Keynesianism as well as discredited left wing panaceas of wholesale nationalization." (As if the NDP ever advocated the latter!)

So Bob White wants the NDP to be more

nationalist than the Liberals, and Gerald Caplan wants the party to embrace economic policy that will crowd out the Tories to the right. Both prescriptions are a deadly diversion for workers.

The main result of the November 21 federal election, yet another Tory majority government, gives the Canadian ruling class the green light to step up its anti-worker offensive. What forms will this take?

Implementation of the trade deal is just part of it. Five or six years down the road, unemployment insurance, medicare, regional development grants or minimum wage laws may be declared "unfair subsidies" and outlawed. But that will take time, and provoke fierce social struggles.

In the meantime, plant closures and plant down-sizing are taking place (three shutdowns — involving the loss of over 1000 jobs — happened just days after the election,) and whether these occur because of the anticipated terms of the trade deal or for other factors inherent in capitalist accumulation, the loss of jobs and incomes must be fought.

Tory agenda of privatization

Waiting in the wings is the new federal sales tax, which Tory Finance Minister Michael Wilson would not outline during the election, but which promises to be a substantial re-distributor of wealth from workers to government and corporations. The fight over this new tax could prove to be the next major test of the balance of class forces.

The Tory agenda of privatization (including Air Canada, PetroCanada, the Canada Post Corporation, and so on,) deregulation of industry and social expenditure cutbacks will forge ahead. It must be stopped.

An attempt to impose a new, anti-choice, anti-woman abortion law can be expected too. And instead of a much-needed expansion of childcare services, we can anticipate a bigger budget for the military, complete with multi-billion dollar nuclear-powered submarines.

Following the Supreme Court ruling of language Law 101, the Quebec Liberal provincial government showed that it will bend to the pressure of the privileged anglophone minority with respect to commercial signs within places of business. Meanwhile the federal Tories will continue to drive for ratification by the provinces of

the Meech lake constitutional amendments which fail, despite appearances, to guarantee Quebec control over its own language and culture, while weakening federal social programmes and blocking future progressive reform — just like the trade deal.

Labour and the NDP should take the lead in defending Law 101 and stopping Meech Lake for these reasons, and build cross-country working class unity by combatting anti-francophone bigotry.

The challenge is clear. The employers' offensive on all levels can be effectively halted only by mass active resistance. The focus of the labour movement, and the NDP for that matter, must shift from the parliament of elections to the parliament of the streets. To wait four years for the next election is to court disaster. Now is the time to act, to organize our resistance as working people.

Production for social use not private profit

The Tories do not have a mandate to destroy workers' rights and benefits, yet that is precisely what they intend to do. The labour movement's leaders say we should monitor the government, hold it to its promises to preserve social benefits, demand measures that will help workers to adapt to economic change. There will be no concession bargaining, say the bureaucrats.

But if our response is truly to be *no concessions*, labour should serve notice that we intend to fight back.

Plant closures are not effectively fought by demanding more shutdown notice, and retraining for jobs that do not exist. We need to demand public ownership of runaway plants. We need to defend workers who are forced to occupy their plants to protect their jobs. Production should be organized for social use not private profit. We should demand, "Open the books. For workers' control."

In 1981, over 100,000 trade unionists marched in Ottawa to oppose high interest rates. A massive popular coalition worked to rally forces from across the country.

In 1975, Prime Minister Trudeau introduced wage controls after promising not to do so in the 1974 election. The labour movement responded in October 1976 with a general strike in which over one million workers participated.

Is today's Tory agenda any less threatening than Trudeau's? Can we afford to respond to it in any way less militant, less massive, less determined than our fight against wage controls?

Labour should place the government and employers on notice that we will defend jobs, rights and services with mass protest actions, up to and including industrial action. These are some of the ideas that revolutionary socialists will raise for discussion in the unions and the NDP as working people confront the continuing Tory offensive. ★

Repression and maneuvers against national movements

DIRECT RULE from Moscow over Nagorno-Karabakh was decreed on January 13. It is to go into effect on Friday, January 20. A team appointed by the Soviet central government will be empowered to remove the formally elected authorities in the autonomous region, as well as to suppress unofficial organizations.

Thus, this measure continues the repressive campaign to crush the Armenian national movement. It follows by a few days the arrest of the last four Karabakh Committee leaders who managed to go into clandestinity after the Kremlin's crackdown on the movement in the wake of the December 10 earthquake.

GERRY FOLEY

AT THE SAME TIME, the removal of control of the region from the Azerbaijan SSR apparently represents a concession to the Armenian movement, which argued that the Azerbaijan authorities had been trying to destroy the Armenian character of the region. As a tactic, the Kremlin's move might be compared with the British government's introduction of direct rule in Northern Ireland in 1972, which was at once a concession to the nationalist population and an operation designed to clear the way for the London government to repress the movement of the oppressed people more effectively.

The campaign to crush the Armenian movement is very grave, because this is the first time that Moscow has resorted to a general crackdown against any of the democratic movements that have emerged through the cracks opened up by Gorbachev's promises of democratization. It was also the strongest and most militant of these movements, having led demonstrations and general strikes that mobilized a very large proportion of the population of the Armenian SSR and Nagorno-Karabakh.

It seems clear now also that Soviet authorities had a real fear that the situation was getting out of hand in Azerbaijan also, that there was a real rise of Azerbaijani national feeling. Such sentiments could be expected to turn against the Soviet central authorities, since it is obviously not the Armenians who are responsible for the

frustrations of the Azerbaijanis.

Nearly a full-page article in *Pravda* of December 26, 1988, denounced the most recent mass Azeri demonstrations and the leadership that developed in them:

"What sort of personalities were the ring-leaders in the square in Baku, what ideas did they set spinning in the minds of the people? Very quickly, leadership of the rallies was won by Neimat Panakhov, who called himself a lathe operator at the Lieutenant Schmidt machine-building factory....He declared himself a zealous supporter of *perestroika*....Few could guess that this passionate supporter of 'renewal,' the 'frantic' Neimat...was really an exponent of the views and basic goals of anti-*perestroika* forces, of the corrupt local cliques..."

"A 'bouquet' of slanderous phrases"

"In his speeches, N. Panakhov, an inciter, a dangerous demagogue, raised calls and slogans that cannot but arouse dismay among honest workers, among the Azerbaijani people. Here is a 'bouquet' of slanderous phrases directed at the soldiers, the sons of the Soviet people, risking their lives to defend the honor, dignity and the lives of the working people, and base fabrications about the national policy of the Soviet state, calls to leave the framework of the USSR. And this hysterical type, posing as a 'hero' of the ancient *dastans*



[Turkish epic songs], drunk on his own words, said, 'We are not afraid of freezing on the square. We will cut down the trees around the square, we will burn the government building and warm ourselves at it!'"

The article included a broadside against "incompetent" but "elitist" intellectuals, whose poor scholarship was said often to lead to nationalism.

However, it seems that the Gorbachev leadership still hopes that it can deal with such problems by political maneuver, combined of course with threats. For example, in a page-long discussion on "restoring the Leninist concept of the party" in *Pravda* of January 2, the example of Armenia and Azerbaijan, cited such problems as examples of the need to reform the CP: "Delay in the development of internal party democracy and therefore the growth of passivity on the part of important parts of the lower party masses was revealed with disturbing clarity in events to which we are unaccustomed — rallies, strikes, disorders or demonstrations. Remember, Alma Ata, 11

Nagorno Karabakh, Sumgait, Erevan, Baku, the Baltic republics."

Representatives of the unionist movements formed to oppose the People's Fronts in the Baltic republics have explained in the columns of *Pravda* that they considered it necessary to form such organizations because the passivity of the local party organizations in the face of the rise of nationalist demands.

Concessions made by Gorbachev leadership

In fact, the Gorbachev leadership made its attitude clear to demands for national rights both in the campaign against so-called Kazakh nationalism after the ouster of the local party chief Dinmukhamed Kunaev (see IV 116) and in its attempt to introduce amendments to the Soviet constitution removing the formal right of the republics to secede. In his November 26, 1988, speech, the high point of his campaign for the amendments, Gorbachev said that the objective of *perestroika* was "not to loosen the ties among the republics, but to strengthen them."

The mass campaign against the proposed amendments in the Baltic republics was the number two *bête noir* of the Soviet central press, after the Karabakh movement. Nonetheless, the Gorbachev leadership ended up by making concessions to it. The final version of the amendments did not eliminate the formal right of secession and thus the basis for claiming the rights of sovereignty.

In an interview published December 5 in the West German left daily *Tageszeitung*, the chair of the Latvian People's Front, Danis Ivans, said: "In general, the Supreme Soviet moved toward our demands and toward a compromise. The amendments that would have meant a limitation of the sovereignty of the republics have fallen. In this respect, we have no improvement but also no worsening of the status quo ante."

The Gorbachev tried to avoid resorting to outright repression of the mass national movements. Thus, for example, the Lithuanian first secretary, Songaila, resigned in the fall after he made himself odious by repressing a large demonstration. His successor, Brazauskas, who aroused some hopes, managed to head off a move for get the local Supreme Soviet to follow Estonia's lead in proclaiming sovereignty, and, for the moment, to divide the Lithuanian national movement.

Such maneuvering, like Gorbachev's democratic promises in general, requires some yielding. For example, the main purpose of the article by the Latvian first secretary, Ya. Vagris, in *Pravda* of January 13 on the seventieth anniversary of the first Soviet republic of Latvia was clearly to reassert his republic's continuing loyalty to the Soviet system. But at the same time, he considered it appropriate to voice



certain Latvian complaints.

"Serious tensions in inter-ethnic relations have been created by excessive migration into the republic and hypertrophied urbanization. A real danger has arisen that the Latvian people will become a minority in their own country. Unfortunately, irresponsible people, who put their own interests or ambitions before everything else, are trying to play on quite understandable national feelings."

At another point, Vagris said: "Our people will never agree with those who who say that nothing good was done after 1940 [the date of Latvia's incorporation into the USSR]....On the other hand, a lot was done without considering the specific features of the republic, to the detriment of harmonious development of the society and economy, which led in natural course to the inevitability of *perestroika*."

The Latvian secretary also put the People's Front and the "Internationalist" Front on the same level, as two movements supporting *perestroika*.

On January 10, *Pravda* published an in-

terview with a "worker" delegate to the Latvian CP plenum, K. Niuksha, who pointed with alarm to the growth of "dark forces" in the republic:

"The problem is that some participants in *perestroika*, groups of people not infrequently present their opinion as the only true one, and what is worse, try to impose it on the society. Pickets are being organized, rallies, leaflets and resolutions, collections of signatures and shaping of the consciousness of people with the help of other organs of mass information. You don't have to go far to see examples. I just walked out onto the street after the plenum and I saw a group of pickets in the shadows. What happened, you wonder. What are they protesting against? We discussed in a comradely and principled, businesslike way questions that are very important for everyone. But no, someone wants to heat up the situation, create tension.

"In fact, it was said outright in the plenum that there are forces in the republic pulling us away from democracy. There are small but quite aggressive groups that, speculating on the economic, social, inter-ethnic and ecological problems, are undertaking active actions to whip up anti-Soviet and separatist movements.

"This applies above all to such groups as Helsinki 86, the Movement for the Nationalist Independence of Latvia and its leaders, Yu. Vidinsh and E. Berklaivs. The latter are trying to cover themselves with the authority of the People's Front of Latvia. Both belong to its parliament. The question has rightfully been raised about what the People's Front thinks about their extremist statements. For Communists compromises of that sort are impossible, because they have nothing in common with democratization or with socialism pluralism, or with the idea of *perestroika* itself."

Massive explosion of independent journals

Further on, Niushka said that actually the People's Front had done a lot of good work, and therefore it was especially offensive that "the extremist statements of some of its leaders have undermined the confidence of working people in this organization."

Niushka's reference to "other organs of mass information," presumably unofficial ones, is interesting. In Latvia's neighbor, Lithuania, it has become clear that there has already been a massive explosion of independent journals. In the November 25 issue of *Sirp ja Vasar*, the Estonian-language organ of the Estonian Cultural Committee and Union of Creative Workers, Rein Raud wrote of dozens of independent publications, of which three were officially printed — *Atgimimas* ["Rebirth"], *Kauno Aidas* ["Kaunis Echo"] and *Mazajoi Lietuva* ["Little Lithuania"].

As for Estonia, *Pravda* carried a vituper-

ous article by Lembit Annus, editor of *Eesti Kommunist* on December 3, attacking a number of official publications in Estonian, most notably *Looming*, a literary magazine; and *Vikerkaar*, a monthly magazine of the writers' union. He wrote: "Today we talk a lot about Stalinist repression, about distortions of socialism and 'blanks' in our history. It is correct and inevitable to recognize mistakes so that they will not be repeated. But when this essential analysis turns into outright denigration of socialist society, when, as in the journal *Looming* (No. 11, 1988), the 1940 revolution in Estonia is termed a 'Bolshevik occupation,' when it is proposed to rename the Estonian SSR 'The Zhdanov Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic,' that is not any kind of pluralism, that is outright extremism, an anti-Soviet bacchanal."

"Why did no-one oppose this dictatorship?"

Annus went on: "I open the journal *Vikerkaar* (No. 11, 1988), and I cannot believe my eyes, in an article entitled 'Time of Horrors,' M. Laar writes 'We were saved from worse by the June 21, 1941, military conflict between Hitlerite Germany and Stalinist Russia,' that the 'forest brothers,' helpers of the fascists, acted first of all to defend themselves and then to defend their homeland, that the primary cause of the bloodshed was the Soviet occupation and the establishment there of a regime of terror."

Actually, the offending article was a small one, about two pages. Its author wrote as a representative of the Estonian Historical Society [Eeste Muinsuskaitse Selts], and appealed for personal testimonies of the war and immediate postwar period. He began by writing: "We start with the knowledge that in Estonia there is not a single family that did not have someone sent to Siberia, that did not have someone killed, repressed, or driven into exile. Over ten years, the Estonian people lost about 25 per cent of its members, precisely the most active and educated part." [Estimates of Estonians deported to Siberia run as high as 40,000, which proportionately is equivalent to about 9 million in the US or 2.2 million in the UK, the Estonian diaspora numbers about 100,000].

Later on, he wrote: "Recently, in history the question has often been raised, why did no-one oppose this dictatorship, which was one of the bloodiest in human history. Naturally, there were those who resisted it, they have been described up until now as anti-Soviet elements, narrow nationalists, terrorists, agents of the West and so on. Or so they so wrong to see the Soviet power as primarily Stalinist violence and an empire of injustice?"

A similar demand for rehabilitation of the nationalist guerrillas who fought that Soviet forces after the second world war was raised in Lviv in the western Ukraine



in mass demonstrations last summer.

A number of times in his article, Laar stressed that the "hangmen" responsible for the atrocities against the Estonian people were being allowed end their lives in peace, comfort and honor.

There were a number of very outspoken articles in the issue of *Vikerkaar* attacked by Annus. It is surprising, or is it, that he did not refer to one that equated Stalinism and Leninism or to a letters column entitled "Fascism in one way or another," in which a letter quoted compared the murder of Soviet prisoners of war in Austria, who were sprayed with water and left to freeze to death, with the Stalin regime's slaughter of trainloads of people by the same method in the Byelorussian locality of Kuropaty before the war.

In his address to a meeting of leading cultural personalities on January 6 (published in *Pravda* of January 8), Gorbachev made intimidating noises. "I cannot fail to say that under cover of *glasnost* attempts are being made to attack the CPSU, to attack the party that worked out and pro-

**Mass meeting in Estonia:
Photo Arne Saar (DR)**

posed *perestroika*, which today is leading the work for democratization, stimulating all the processes of *perestroika* and which itself is undergoing profound renewal, and together with this performing the most important unifying and integrating role in this transitional stage in the development of our country.

"The point of view of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and I am convinced that it reflected the prevailing view in our society, is that such views, regardless of the subjective motivations that underlie them and what pressures produce them, are fundamentally wrong and contrary to the interests of the people, and in essence, directed against *perestroika*."

At the same time, he played more soothing cords. "And this sense of realism will help us now to find the way to resolve accumulated problems related to the development of all nations and nationalities in our country, their economies, cultures and languages. It is true that this process is partially contradictory. Above all, it is linked again with the complexity of the reflection of inter-ethnic relations in the public consciousness.

"I think we have to act here in such a way that everything positive in the course of *perestroika* that promotes the goals of harmonizing inter-ethnic relations is maintained and developed. And in this sense, I want to support the responsible and constructive proposals of our scholars and creative intellectuals that relate to the sphere of human relations." The Soviet leader pledged that there was no idea of allowing any small people to disappear.

Importance of protests against the repression

The indications given by the Soviet press over the past six weeks, therefore, is that Moscow is far from getting the explosion of mass national movements under control, and feels obliged to maneuver politically with them and to make concessions to them where it thinks this possible or necessary.

The implication of that is that it is vulnerable to pressure inside the USSR and from the outside also. After all, it seems clear that the fundamental reason it does not repress these movements outright is because that would destroy the credibility of its democratization promises both inside and outside the USSR. This points up the importance of protesting attempts at repression of the mass national movements, especially the Armenian one, which is suffering the harshest attack, and of publicizing the real views and problems of these movements. ★

Interview with Estonian Front leader

A REPORTER for *Internationales*, the paper of the Swedish section of the Fourth International, Göran Jacobsson, did a series of interviews with representative figures in Estonia at the end of 1988. The following is from the December 22 issue.

INTERNATIONAL contacts are important for us. We want to exchange information, and would like to meet with delegations from other countries. It is important to clarify to people outside what is going on here in Estonia," Mart Tarmak said.

Mart Tarmak is a leader of the Estonian People's Front. He is responsible for its international relations. He was elected to the People's Front's "parliament," which consists of 107 members. I met him at his workplace, the editorial offices of the magazine *Sirp ja Vasar* ("Hammer and Sickle").

"I am a member of the Communist Party, but that is not so important in this context," he explained.

A relatively large part of the activists in the People's Front are members of the Communist Party. In the top leadership, five out of six are party members. At the Front's conference, 20% of the delegates were members of the Communist Party, while the figure for the Estonian people as a whole is 10%.

The People's Front's most important relations outside Estonia are with the People's Fronts in Latvia and Lithuania [Sajudis]. Contacts have just been established with the Finnish left. In Czechoslovakia, the Estonian People's Front has contact with the National Front and in Poland with PRON, the Polish regime's attempt to set up a broader consultative body.¹



People's Front leaders Marju Lauristin and Mart Tarmak. Photo: Goran Jacobsson

"Solidarnosc is a trade-union organization. It is illegal, and therefore still unapproachable for us. Maybe that is stupid," Mart Tarmak said with a trace of doubt.

"We know that the Polish PRON is organized from above and that the organization is not so popular. But one of our aims is to see the trade-union organizations in Estonia transformed into real trade unions."

The People's Front has given economic help to Nicaragua, as well as various forms of help to Armenia.

"The objective for us is for the Soviet Union to become a union of self-governed republics, as the country's name in fact says."

Mart Tarmak explained that Lenin's view of the national question was distorted by Stalin. In the Soviet Union, nationalism is a dirty word. But for Estonians, it is a different matter. The nationalism of small nations is different from that of large nations, which is often aggressive. For the People's Front, Lenin's ideas are acceptable. But they do not want to call themselves Leninists, because this term has been misrepresented here, and no longer means very much. Opponents of the People's Front often use quotations from Lenin taken out of context in order to foster anti-Soviet sentiments.

"Democratization in all areas"

"We want to decide ourselves about conditions in the country. We do not want to be ruled from Moscow. We call for democratization in all areas.

"For us, education is very important. We want to defend and to preserve the Estonian language."

The People's Front is also calling for a reorganization and democratization of the economy. Somewhat reflectively, Mart Tarmak said: "The self-managed economy we are talking about is applicable in all of the Soviet Union, and in all of Europe as well."

Tarmak explained that the Russians in Estonia are a problem. He thought that it was unfortunate that many among the Estonian population identified the Russians with the Soviet system.

300,000 at People's Front founding rally

The People's Front does not itself have members, but is made up of various base organizations. They may be neighborhood groups, families, groups of friends, or groups in factories. There is freedom of organization, and that is totally different from Moscow's vertical model of organization.

Mart does not know how many people are participating in the People's Front. What he does know is that there were 2,000 elected delegates from base groups, and that 300,000 people [equal to a third of the entire Estonian people] participated in the Front's founding rally — in a city of 500,000 inhabitants.

So the People's Front is a mass organization. What can stop that? That brought us to the question of the threat of a Soviet invasion. Mart Tarmak thought that there was such a threat, but on the other hand the army was already stationed in Estonia.

"We may be able to avoid violence, if we remain cool and take one step at a time. There may be some violence in the north and south, where the temperament is different.

"If we achieve our goals, then the People's Front will not be needed. Then there will be democratic institutions, and all sorts of organizations and parties will be able to operate." ★

1. In a number of East European countries, the one-party systems are complemented by "fronts" made up of non-Communist parties that have supposedly agreed to collaborate. These recognized groupings are in a sense the legal precedent for the establishment of non-Party organizations in the Soviet Union, such as the People's Fronts in the Baltic republics.

Soviet press agency does a turnaround on Trotskyism

THE GREAT specialist on Trotskyism of the Soviet press agency Novosti, Dr. Nikolai Vasetski, had gained notoriety for his pamphlet entitled *Contemporary Trotskyism against peace and detente*. It was printed in 1986, and widely distributed by the Soviet embassies, including, notably, those in Havana and Managua. This pamphlet was full was the purest Stalinist slanders. Since then, the wind of *glasnost* has blown through the Novosti agency, ruffling even Dr. Vasetski.

ERNEST MANDEL

THE SOVIET judicial authorities have quashed the verdicts of the three Moscow trials and cleared all the accused, including Trotsky, of the slanderous charges (repeated by Vasetski) of collaboration with capitalist governments.

Put in an awkward position by this turnaround by the Soviet judicial authorities and by the prevailing demand of Soviet public opinion today for restoring historic truth, Dr. Vasetski has had to backtrack on Trotskyism and put a lot of water in his poison wine.

In fact, in December 1988 the Novosti agency distributed an article signed by him entitled "Modern Trotskyism, ideology and practice." In this new piece, all the slanderous accusations in the 1986 pamphlet have disappeared. There is, of course, a certain turn of phrase that appears embarrassed (and embarrassing for the author in the climate of *glasnost*):

No political or moral authority

"Unfortunately, the modern Trotskyists do not always study first of all the contributions that Trotsky made as a revolutionary and which won him praise from Lenin and attention from the party and the Comintern. As a general rule, they prefer to base themselves on those of his contributions that it would be better not to display publicly and to leave forgotten."

I defy Dr. Vasetski to quote a single activity of experience of Trotsky that would not stand examination in the light of day. On the part of a scholar who has so recently spread slanders and who today does not even have the courage to mention what he

wrote yesterday or to make the least self-criticism about it, such an insinuation has no political, let alone, moral authority. If the slanders have, in general, disappeared, gross distortions remain.

Vasetski labels USFI as "left reformists"

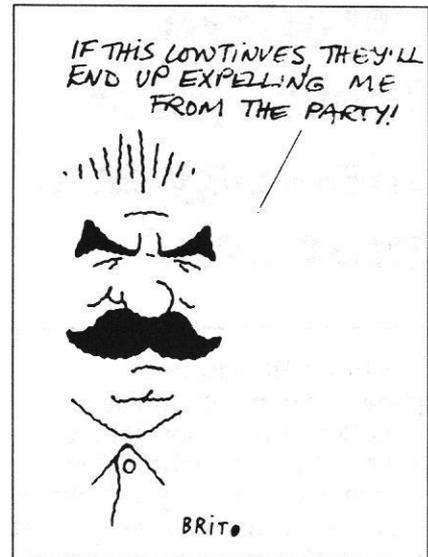
For example, the Trotskyists are portrayed as guilty of "leftist" orientations prompted by the fact that in the past they have recruited in the marginal strata of society (students, impoverished petty bourgeoisie, the poorest layers of the proletariat, immigrants, and so on).

An alleged tendency to "innumerable splits" is presented as "innate" in Trotskyism, without posing the question of how many opposing tendencies the Communist movement (to say nothing of the workers' movement) as a whole has split into.

The most astonishing thing is that Dr. Vasetski claims that the Trotskyists organized by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (and myself personally) are "left reformists," because we participate in elections and work "for reforms that could improve the working conditions and lives of working people." Does fighting for reforms make you a reformist?

Does Dr. Vasetski know a single Communist Party in the world that opposes participating in elections and fighting for reforms that would improve the living conditions of the working people?

Is he unaware of the fact that the present West German minister of foreign affairs, Genscher, expelled me from that country when he was the minister of the interior, citing my "revolutionary convictions and activities."



Dr. Vasetski's article contains many other distortions of the Trotskyists' political theses and activity. But it does assess our movement as a real force in the workers' movement with a base in the working class and peasantry.

The countries where the Trotskyists are relatively the strongest are correctly listed, with the exception of Spain, Sweden and Mexico. Could the latter oversight be due to the fact that the Mexican Communist Party has dissolved itself, and the Mexican section of the Fourth International, the Revolutionary Workers' Party (PRT) is now the only socialist/communist party in the country?

But let us leave aside these secondary questions. Dr. Vasetski's turnaround — did he take his cue from the top? — leads him to quite a sensational conclusion: "Most of the left organizations adopt an attitude of 'active neutrality' to Trotskyism."

A signal to the French Communist Party?

"This does not exclude the possibility of practical collaboration with the Trotskyists. There are already many examples of such collaboration by Communist and Socialist parties, anti-war organizations and movements in a series of West European and Latin American countries, as well as in Australia. Electoral blocs, political alliances, and agreements for waging short-term, and sometimes long-term, campaigns have been made with Trotskyist groups.

"It is necessary to judge in each concrete case to what extent such collaboration can produce results. In our opinion, alliances of this nature must be alliances either 'against' or 'for.' 'Against' the anti-popular policy of monopoly imperialism, 'for' transformations in the interests of the working people. Only such collaboration can make any sense and not have negative consequences for the parties concerned." Is this a signal to the French Communist Party, despite its reticence about *glasnost*? ★

“Modern Trotskyism, ideology and practice”

HIS PICTURE adorned the last page of pamphlets widely circulated by the Soviet press agency Novosti in the 1980s. Nikolai Vasetski, 40 years old, is a Soviet journalist and specialist in “Trotskyism.” Like thousands of the same ilk, he is only a poor phonograph on which the bureaucracy plays whatever record it needs at the appropriate time.

Vasetski was too young to have written pamphlets accusing Trotsky and his comrades of being paid agents of Hitler, Chamberlain and the Mikado. There is no doubt that he would have done that. He was asked to denounce the Trotskyists as servants of the bourgeoisie, and he did so. Today, he has just been asked to say that the Trotskyists have changed, and that it might even be possible to march alongside them for certain stretches of the road. He has done so again.

But here he is taking a risk! It is more serious to say that the Trotskyists are people that you can associate with than to say that they were cops. He might have to answer for this article later.

TROTSKYISM holds a special place among the political currents that have tried to situate themselves “to the left” of the Communist parties. Its origin goes back to the 1920s. Its ideology and practice are based on Trotsky’s theory of “permanent revolution,” which has represented a specific reaction of a part of the non-proletarian layers, especially the urban petty bourgeoisie, to the Leninist theory of socialist revolution. Subsequently Trotskyism has undergone essential modifications.

Modern Trotskyism presents itself under the banner of the “Fourth International,” which was founded by Trotsky in 1938, and is divided into several warring groupings.

“Subjectivism and voluntarism”

This fact reveals that division has become a norm of life for the groups in the Fourth International. Their struggles come from the lack of any solid social base, from subjectivism and voluntarism in evaluating events and class-struggle perspectives.

This is why the Trotskyists have been reduced to being no more than the expression of the ambitions of the Trotskyist politicians. The Trotskyist mosaic is even more multi-hued in particular countries. In France, in Britain, in Spain and in a series of Latin-American countries there are 10 to 15 Trotskyist groups or groups close to Trotskyism. These groups are rather small, going from a few dozen to a few hundred members. Of course, there are exceptions.

In France, there are three big Trotskyist organizations. The Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire has between 4,000 and 5,000 members. For many years, it has been striving to become a party of 10,000.¹ Lutte Ouvrière has 3,000. In Britain, the Militant group has about 10,000 members. Two or three Trotskyist parties with memberships from 1,000 to 3,000 exist in Belgium, the United States, Canada, Australia, Peru, Argentina and Brazil.

All these Fourth International groups try to recruit members for the petty bourgeoisie, the urban intelligentsia and in developing countries among the peasants and students. It is easy to understand why the Trotskyists give priority to these strata. The latter clearly express their discontent with their situation in the conditions of the deepening crisis of capitalism, but do not always have political experience. Thus, they can be attracted by the ideology of Trotskyism, which appears radical at first glance.

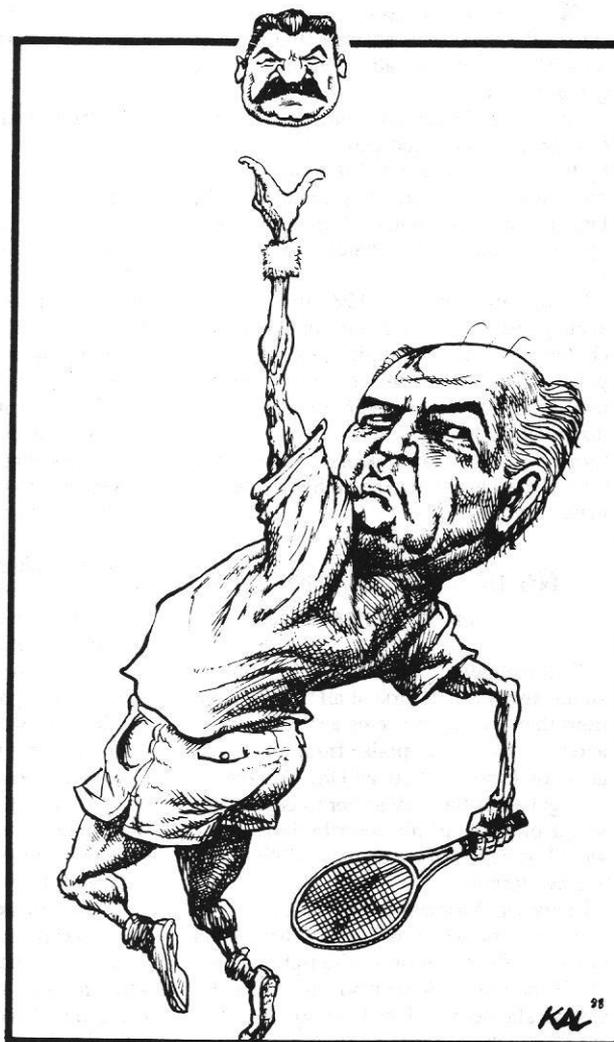
In the 1980s, many Trotskyist groups came out for shifting the center of gravity of their work from the universities to the factories. For example, in West Germany, the Trotskyist journal *Sozia-*

listische Arbeiterzeitung [“Socialist Workers’ Paper”] presents itself as “the free press organ of the entire working class of Germany.”

The Trotskyists are striving to exploit the potential of working women, who in the industrialized capitalist countries represent between a third and half of the economically active population, and who are subjected to double exploitation from the standpoint of wages and skills. The Trotskyists are also trying to gain a base in other layers of those most exploited in bourgeois society, that is among uneducated and low-skilled workers, agricultural workers, immigrants and the unemployed. According to the Trotskyists, the fundamental criterion of the revolutionary spirit of these strata is their low living standards and their social deprivation.

Theory of permanent revolution

Among these categories of working people, the Trotskyists see a broad layer of militant activists able more easily to accept the theory of permanent revolution. The special feature of these strata is an aspiration for immediate changes. This is why they have no clear idea of the means for achieving



them, or the appropriate forms of struggle, or of who is really responsible for their distress.

The Trotskyists also address themselves — not without some success — to people who have already gone through a certain experience of political struggle in the Communist or Socialist parties, as well as in unions, youth organizations and anti-war movements.

According to the words of the leaders of Lutte Ouvrière themselves, it is necessary to recruit conscious workers who want to fight for the revolution who are still in the Communist and Socialist parties but unhappy with the policy of their leaderships.

It should be noted especially that the Trotskyists often appear when and where the workers' organizations win their biggest successes against the bosses, win strikes and get wage increases, better working conditions and improve their living standards. They appear also in the factories where the Communist and Socialist parties, as well as revolutionary-oriented unions are particularly active and militant.

In order to attract attention to their conceptions, the Trotskyists are broadening their propaganda arsenal. Alongside traditional actions, such as demonstrations, rallies and public debates, they have adopted methods that are new by comparison with those of the 1960s and 1970s. These include participating in electoral campaigns for propagandistic purposes, appearing on radio and television, conducting educational programs, having articles published by mass-circulation publishing houses....

There are Trotskyists with social-reformist tendencies. They are grouped in the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The credo of these Trotskyists is a radical-left reformism, which they interpret in their own way. They do not deny the need for using the institutions of bourgeois democracy. They participate in elections. They support reforms that can improve the living conditions and lies of working people....

Unfortunately, the modern Trotskyists do not always study first of all the contributions that Trotsky made as a revolutionary and which won him praise from Lenin and attention from the party and the Comintern. As a general rule, they prefer to base themselves on those of his contributions that it would be better not to display publicly and to leave forgotten.

“Trotsky had certain arguments on his side”

The Trotskyists recognize the gains of the socialist countries, but at the same time they dispute their socialist nature. They hang on stubbornly to the idea of the permanent revolution, the impossibility of building socialism in one country. In the 1920s and 1930s, when this question had not been entirely clarified and deviations occurred in the Stalinist groups from Le-

VASETSKI 1984:

“You can wonder who the Trotskyists serve today, why they get aid from the circles against which, if we were to believe their leaders, “a most determined struggle must be waged.”

“This position [of aid to armed terrorism in Southeast Asia] taken by the Trotskyists is indisputable evidence that their criticism of actually existing socialism is counter-revolutionary and designed to restore capitalism.”

Trotskyism today: What interests does it serve? Novosti, 1984

VASETSKI 1986:

The Trotskyists “hoped that the Soviet Union would suffer a defeat in the event of war....In directives sent to his collaborators, Trotsky called on them to establish direct contacts with the governments of fascist Germany and militarist Japan.” [A quotation follows from a letter to Radek presented at the second Moscow Trial in 1937. It has since been recognized by a Soviet court that it was a gross falsification.]

Trotskyism today: Against peace and detente Novosti, 1986

nin's conceptions of socialism, Trotsky had certain arguments on his side. But in the 1980s, the Trotskyist positions about the nonexistence of socialism in the Soviet Union and the other countries that make up the world socialist system seem anachronistic.

The idea of transforming the Soviet Union through the intervention of the Trotskyists is also inconsistent. On the one hand, they apparently hail the changes that are taking place while interpreting them in their own way. On the other, they remain attached to the old Trotskyist clichés, especially Trotsky's view of a “Soviet thermidor,” that is, a “degeneration of the Soviet Union.” The leaders of Lutte Ouvrière think that the nature of the Soviet Union has not changed since the 1920s and 1930s when the bureaucracy used terror and reprisals to consolidate its power. Hence their conclusion (to use their own terms), that whether or not the reforms are carried out, the regime will always be hostile to working people.

“Trotskyists' positions are contradictory”

The Trotskyists' positions are also contradictory as regards the solution of the key problem today, that is, the question of eliminating the danger of a world thermonuclear war and maintaining peace in the world. You might think that none of the Trotskyist groups disputes the importance of the struggle for peace. But in the Fourth International, as on the eve of the second world war, they have obstinately ignored the effectiveness of the policy of peaceful coexistence, which is portrayed as before as a “deal” between the Soviet Union and the United States. In the Trotskyist press, you get the impression of “hearing a voice from distant past,” which differs very little from Trotsky's idea that “war is the mother of revolution.” For example, the Trotskyists in the United States repeat from time to time that “working-class revolution is the only road to keeping peace.”

Of course, the Trotskyists are moving away from their past conceptions and try-

ing to take account of the present situation. But they accompany their statements with all sorts of reservations. Among the factual elements, they choose those that in their opinion are most to their advantage. In this context, you have to agree with those who think that the only criterion that the modern Trotskyists consider valid for assessing their capacity for renewal has been, and remains, knowing to what extent the theses that they use are useful for their strategy and tactics.

“Possibility of practical collaboration”

All this naturally has to determine the attitude of the other left parties and organizations to the Trotskyist groups. There is a certain tendency toward a reticence. But in general the attitude toward the Trotskyists is not as clear as before. Most of the left organizations adopt an attitude of “active neutrality” to Trotskyism.

This does not exclude the possibility of practical collaboration with the Trotskyists. There are already many examples of such collaboration by Communist and socialist parties, anti-war organizations and movements in a series of West European and Latin American countries, as well as in Australia. Electoral blocs, political alliances, and agreements for waging short-term — and sometimes long-term — campaigns have been made with Trotskyist groups.

It is necessary to judge in each concrete case to what extent such collaboration can produce results. In our opinion, alliances of this nature must be alliances either “against,” or “for.” “Against” the anti-popular policy of monopoly imperialism, “for” transformations in the interests of the working people. Only such collaboration can make any sense and not have negative consequences for the parties concerned. ★

1. There seems to have been at least a phrase dropped in the original, since Vasetski actually mentions only two, and not three, organizations. Moreover, the facts cited about the LCR more accurately fit the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI) led by Pierre Lambert, which is not mentioned.

AROUND
THE
WORLD



TURKEY

Yeniyol seized

WHEN we announced the publication of *Yeniyol* ("New Course"), a new revolutionary Marxist monthly in Turkey (see IV 152), we said that, "Despite the fact that opportunities for legal work have opened up...the situation of the progressive press remains precarious".

Unhappily, these fears have rapidly been confirmed, and the fourth issue of *Yeniyol*, December 1988, was seized for "communist propaganda" due to an editorial on the need for class independence in the trade-union movement and the reproduction of an article by Trotsky on the unions. Legal proceedings are underway that could remove *Yeniyol's* authorization to publish. The magazine's editor also risks proceedings.

During the last few weeks, many left journals such as *Sorun, Yeni Cözüm, Demokrat arkadas, Yönelis, 2000'e dogru* and so on have been seized or taken to court following accusations of communist or separatist propaganda, or for "insults to Atatürk" (the founding father of Turkey). At the same time, the big press dailies like *Milliyet, Günaydin, Yeni Nesil* and *Cumhuriyet*, as well as the *Limon* satirical revue, have been prosecuted for "insults to the prime minister". ★

SOUTH AFRICA

Mayekiso released

TRADE unionist Moses Mayekiso will be spending his third Christmas away from home this year — despite being released on bail just before the holiday.

Mayekiso and his co-accused in the Rand Supreme Court treason trial — his younger brother Mzwanele, Paul Tshabalala, Richard Mdakane and Obed Bapela — are all Alexandra residents. However, they are prevented from entering the township in terms of tough bail conditions.

On Monday, December 19, Mayekiso was granted R10,000 bail and the other four bail of R5,000 each. They have spent more than two years in jail.

The case, which has attracted international interest, centres on allegations that the five men tried to usurp the authority of the state by establishing "organs of people's power" in Alexandra. The five made their first court appearance on January 26, 1987.

In February 1987, bail applications were refused after the state had successfully applied for a certificate in terms of section 30 of the Internal Security Act, which gives the attorney-general powers to refuse a bail application. An application the following May challenging the validity of the certificate was dismissed by Justice Strydom.

The trial got under way in October 1987, and early last year the accused made written and oral representations through their lawyers to the attorney-general, requesting him to withdraw the certificate — but to no avail.

On November 30, the trial was adjourned until February 1, 1989, and the accused made yet another written representation for the withdrawal of the certificate. The attorney-general gave his assent, but the five are bound by a number of conditions:

- They must reside in Hillbrow, and report to the local police station every day;
- They must not attend or address any gathering of more than 10 people or conduct, attend or address any press conference or issue any press statements;
- They must not enter or remain in Alexandra township;
- They must not leave the area of the Witwatersrand local division of the Supreme Court without the permission of the investigating officer in their case.

Up until their release, the five had lived in a common cell in Johannesburg's Diepkloof prison. When the trial adjourned, the five had finished giving their evidence, and the defence is expected to begin its argument when the hearing resumes in February. ★

[From the Weekly Mail, December 22, 1988.]

ISRAELI STATE

Help the refuseniks

AS THE intifada enters its second year, the number of Israeli reservists refusing to fulfill their military duties in the occupied territories mounts daily. The following statement is from Yesh Gvul:

First Sergeant (res.) David Golan, age 36, has been jailed for a 28 days for refusing to serve in the Gaza Strip. Prior to sentencing, Golan declared: "I am a scion of the Jewish people which has fought throughout its history for the right to independence, without being dominated by another people. I find

no moral right to deny others the dignity and independence I seek for myself. 'That which is hateful to you, do not do to others.' I do not wish to engage in repression, or in the physical degradation of someone fighting for his dignity. I believe in the Palestinians' right to a dignified existence, just as in our own selfsame right."

Golan is the son of Holocaust survivors: both his parents were inmates of the Auschwitz extermination camp. He lives in Jerusalem, where he graduated the Hebrew University with a degree in philosophy and education. He is married and has a year old daughter. Golan supplemented his three years of compulsory military service in the Navy, during which he served in the Yom Kippur war, by voluntarily signing on for an extra year. In the reserves he serves with an armored infantry unit.

Another refusenik, Dudu Palma, aged 39, of Kibbutz Kfar Hanassi, got 35 days (21 suspended) in his third conviction for selective refusal, after a 28-day sentence earlier this year. Palma likewise is the son of Holocaust survivors. He is married, has four children, and is the editor of the literary magazine *Shdemot*.

Palma served with the paratroopers; as a reservist he saw combat in Lebanon, taking part in the battles of Sydon and Beirut. Again posted to Lebanon in 1983, he refused, drawing a 35-day jail sentence.

Palma: "...Feeling responsible for the future of Israeli democracy, I can no longer be party to anti-democratic acts verging upon war crimes. The immediate choice was either join the herd (like the humans-turned-beasts in Ionesco's anti-fascist play *Rhinoceros*) or to protest...."

"It is incredible that a people which so recently savored its own political independence, should so lightly deny it to members of another people. By this step, I believe I am defending our fragile democracy which is being swept to the precipice by the rising tide of nationalism and Khomeinist fundamentalism."

The imprisonment of Golan and Palma brings the number of Yesh Gvul members jailed since the onset of the intifada to 50. However, numerous commanders being reluctant to prosecute refuseniks, their actual number is believed to be very much larger, probably running into the hundreds.

Yesh Gvul extends moral and material support to jailed refuseniks, whose families receive a modest grant (\$500) to see them through the period of imprisonment: it works to bring their protest to the attention of the Israeli public as part of its campaign against the occupation.

Yesh Gvul also tries to arrange for individual refuseniks to be "adopted" by sympathizers in other countries. It foresees a sharp increase in refusals, with numerous reservists finding their military duties in conflict with the dictates of their conscience.

For more information, please contact Yesh Gvul, PO Box 91068, Jerusalem 6953, Israel. ★

BY DECEMBER 31, 1992, the European Community is committed to a frontier-free internal market, in which border controls between the twelve member states are supposed to disappear. While the capitalists look forward to their "Fortress Europe", immigrant and migrant workers, refugees and Black workers can expect, as usual, the raw end of the deal.

ANITA MORRIS & DAN CARTER

BUSINESS communities across Europe are currently gearing themselves up to take advantage of the vast profit-making possibilities of the Single European Market coming into effect in 1992. Certainly, when the 12 member governments first put their names to the Single European Act (SEA), their primary concern was to break down the last remaining barriers to bi-national and multinational capitalist enterprises within the borders of the European Community (EC).

How this is to be achieved is still under debate. While some EC leaders are keen to combine this single market with a single monetary policy, others — notably Britain's Margaret Thatcher — are more anxious to see this as an exercise in deregulation and free-market principles.

Although it is difficult at this stage to predict which economic and financial policy is perceived to be best able to prop up capitalism's interests, some things are clear. The Single European Market will seek to minimize workers' gains by imposing a downward pressure on wages and social benefits and relying on massive inequalities between workers to avert any retaliation. There is already recognition by both businesses and trade unions that there is little to stop companies from pulling their factories out of countries with well-established workers' rights and relatively high wages to set up in countries or regions where this is less the case.

The increased competition among businesses and industries operating in the EC will also mean a far greater concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. Hence, while some multinationals flourish, other weaker companies and industries no longer receiving national subsidies fall by the wayside, leaving behind them a trail of unemployment.

1992: A battleground for Europe's Black workers



The other significant development of such an integrated capitalist market must undoubtedly be the freer use and abuse of the flexible, unskilled labour provided by migrant, immigrant and refugee workers and Black workers in general. These workers, with little protection and few rights, will form the central plank in the drive for minimum costs, either for the company or the state.

An extended playground for Europe's capitalists

Yet the majority of European trade-union federations and their umbrella body, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), have welcomed this "harmonization" across the EC, albeit with some caution. The CGT-FO, for example, one of the three major union federations in France, passed a resolution stating that fundamental workers' rights in the areas of social security, social protection and conditions of work cannot be called into question because of pressures of competition or the search for productivity.

However, in general the trade-union leaderships see the Single European Act as opening the door to a European-wide adoption of the best examples of employment rights, worker participation and social provision currently in practice in the EC. In addition, they see the protectionist policies being speculated about in this all-for-one, one-for-all European Community offering the possibility of more jobs within its boundaries. This is not to mention the general belief that an integrated Europe will mean a more prosperous Europe, one that will be able to deal with increased competition from Japan and the USA and establish new trading relations with the Soviet Union and the East European states on its own terms.

The reality is that this extended playground for Europe's capitalists will also mean an extended battleground for Europe's workers. Even the Trade Union Congress in Britain received the president of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, with much enthusiasm at its 1988 congress, while at the same time passing a resolution (which received much less media attention) stating that "the internal market represents a



further concentration of economic and industrial power in the hands of multinational companies and a significant weakening of the ability of member states to intervene in their own economies."

The unions have, however, correctly recognized that the radical economic changes proposed for 1992 will not materialize without some degree of political intervention. The problem is that rather than the "Social Europe" envisaged, these interventions are likely to herald more, not less, repressive measures to deal with the working class.

Black communities first to suffer attacks

It is in this context that we must view the need, now more important than ever, for capitalist states to maintain a cheap, very flexible and easily expendable sector of the labour market — in the form of Europe's Black, immigrant and migrant workforce. Tied to this are the means by which a supply of such "marginal" labour is to be regulated — both within the EC through internal controls, as well as between the EC and its neo-colonies — through the operation of a common immigration policy at its borders. As usual this will involve to a large degree an intensification of racist propaganda, backed up by the repressive arm of the state.

The sometimes complex and sometimes less subtle interdependence of race and class oppression has always meant that Black communities in the imperialist West are the first to suffer the brunt of what are essentially attacks on the working class as a whole. The setbacks that Black workers in the EC are likely to experience if the present implications of 1992 go unchallenged highlight the agenda of worker exploitation inherently embodied in the Single European Act. At the same time, the appeal to racist and imperialist fervour, which will become an increasingly prominent feature of the build-up to 1992, stems from the intrinsically class-biased nature of the European Community, its Commission, policies and structures.

Controls on the Black and migrant community in the EC, regardless of whether they have become EC nationals or not, operate in different forms and to different extents

in each of the member states. Their fundamental elements, however, remain the same — that is, a systematic undermining of this community's civil, social and political rights, and thereby also its access to all forms of social provision, benefits and services. This is best exemplified by the use of Turkish guest-workers in West Germany and North African guest-workers in France. These countries have been able to get away with denying this pool of workers any protection from the worst excesses of private profit-making, with the implicit collaboration of the trade unions.

Guest-worker system will be extended

The Single European Market must surely mark a move towards the whole of the EC trying to "get away with it". As the informal service sector within Europe grows, and regional disparities worsen, the guest-worker system will no doubt appear even more attractive to the ruling classes of the EC states. Not only will these workers be confined to the lowest paid jobs, and not only will governments be able to shed their social responsibility for these workers, but they can then be easily deported when no longer needed.

The continuation and development of such a system will rely heavily on the propagation of racism. Clever use of this powerful tool serves not just to dampen down dissent from the working class in general, but also to enable broader recruitment from sections of Europe's Black population to the status of guest-worker. The subsequent attempts to erode the present rights of unskilled/marginal workers — either from poorer EC countries such as

Greece and the Spanish state, or from colonized territories like the North of Ireland and the Basque region — are only a question of time.

It is unlikely that any of these workers will enjoy the freedom of movement across internal borders so enthusiastically welcomed by supporters of the SEA, for the very reason that this labour must be effectively controlled and monitored if its cost is to be minimized. In several European countries, for example, migrant and immigrant workers and refugees are required to carry identity cards — a measure which a country like Britain has not resorted to simply because it has been able to keep a tighter reign on immigration at its ports of entry. The 1992 Act and completion of the Channel Tunnel has seen British Home Office representatives desperately seeking ideas and cooperation from their European neighbours for an integrated approach to such controls — hence the establishment of the Trevi Group, made up of ministers of justice and the interior from EC states.

"Anti-terrorist" laws restrict free movement

The exact nature of such a common system of controls is still being discussed. However, one of the ways in which these additional, more stringent controls will be eased in has already been hinted at in a British Conservative Party briefing paper: "Britain's frontiers will remain closed to terrorists and drug-traffickers. The completion of the Single Market does not require the abolition of security and immigration controls at frontiers and ports of entry...it supports moves to make frontier formalities quicker and easier for travellers without compromising safeguards against terrorists and criminals."

The British government is clearly anxious to equate "illegal immigration" with terrorism and drug-trafficking, thereby deeming it acceptable to use the same degree of force in dealing with these matters. In fact, in some cases, such as for workers from the North of Ireland and the Basque country, "anti-terrorist" laws are already in force that enable such restrictions on free movement to be put into practice.

Of course, an internal controls system will only work effectively if control of immigration into the EC is correspondingly hard-line. Here Britain leads the way. Refugee and human rights organizations in France, West Germany and the Benelux countries have already been organizing against some of the contents of the Treaty of Schengen. This treaty lifts the frontiers between the above-mentioned states in 1990, and among its concerns is the need for these countries to introduce visa requirements, fines on



transport companies, an alarm system to prevent the arrival of new groups of refugees, and an exchange of information on immigrants and asylum-seekers. Many of these initiatives were pioneered by Britain, and, as the organizations point out, the Schengen agreement will serve as a blueprint for the restrictive measures to be adopted by the EC as a whole in 1992.

The issue of firm immigration laws falls into line with the general concept of a "Fortress Europe" — a term initially used to describe the external protectionist trade policies envisaged in the setting up of European internal markets. On closer examination, it would appear that rather than hurting its main competitors, as Martin Walker points out in *The Guardian*, "if any single country is really poised to do well out of the new Europe of 1992, it looks like being Japan", and that "an outbreak of global protectionism would hit Europe hardest".

In fact, the restructuring of the EC market is, in many ways, a response to the crises of declining growth in output of even the strongest economies in the EC — something which, not surprisingly, is rarely acknowledged. To the contrary, right-wing and reformist parties alike propagandize that the "rationalization" offered by the SEA will put an end to the need for austerity measures in the future.

Similarly, alongside the important arguments that immigration controls serve as the foundation and practice of state racism, it is also the case that it is not necessarily in the interests of all member states or ruling classes to block the migration of workers into the EC. Their common interest is to use the "cover" of a "Fortress Europe" to ensure that these workers are unauthorized and "illegal", and that they can exist in the EC without any rights or protection against removal.

1992 will be a test for the trade unions

The campaign in Britain for the trade unions to take the issue of immigration and deportation seriously has been a long one, but one with some degree of success. (However, neo-fascists too can claim to have increased their popularity as National Front MEP Jean-Marie Le Pen has done with his slogan: "Send the immigrants home and save France 100 billion francs"). The 1992 SEA will test the commitment of the trade unions to their Black members and their foresight in recognizing the dire consequences of capitulation to racism for the viability of the trade-union movement itself.

The left and the labour movement in the EC have an important part to play in bringing to the fore those implicit aspects of the 1992 Act that are directed at further attacks on the most vulnerable sector of workers, thereby creating a downward pressure on all social harmonization measures. This is

in direct contrast to the "harmonization up to the best available standards" so optimistically cited by many of the unions supporting the SEA.

Weakness of positions in the labour movement

The European Commission's extremely lukewarm response to the "Social Europe" proposals made by the ETUC is set to burst labour's bubble. Many unions have already been pressing for such demands as "protection of employees' interests in mergers and takeovers", and a "campaign for opportunities for workers made redundant as a result of any industrial restructuring that accompanies the 1992 market" (part of a motion passed at the 1988 British TUC congress), so acknowledging the less-than-positive side of the SEA. However, almost nothing has been said about such issues as rights of entry into the EC, rights of residence, equal access to public funds and employment opportunities, rights of asylum, or a minimum statutory wage linked to a maximum number of hours in a working week. Nor have the unions given an indication of understanding the need to explicitly defend basic civil and democratic rights in the face of 1992's hidden agenda.

Heightening awareness in the trade unions and the Black community, and the coming European elections in June 1989, provide the left with opportunities to campaign on radical demands. In the short term, concentrated pressure has to be brought to bear by the left across Europe on the ETUC, national trade-union federations and the mass reformist parties in the European parliament to win their support for a position of "no police checks on nationality/immigration status, including at workplaces, or checks prior to claiming public funds or services". There should be "no escalation of immigration controls on ports of entry into the EC", and "no deportations". In addition, such provisions as equal pay for work of equal value and statutory protection for the low-paid must be highlighted in the 1989 election manifestos of the mass social-democratic and communist parties.

Alongside these demands are those that correctly project the campaign against the SEA as a campaign for civil and democratic rights in the EC. Whatever the level of support currently being given to the Act, the workers' parties and trade unions must be pushed into committing themselves uncompromisingly to the right of all those resident in the EC to stand for, and vote, in national and local elections, and to free association for political or other purposes. The principle that cannot be bypassed here is that of support for the self-organization of Black and migrant workers, including Black women workers, both inside and outside of existing trade union and party structures. The campaign against the 1992 Single European Market provides a posi-

tive opportunity to show vividly that the struggle for the furtherance of Black workers' interests is not only compatible with the struggle for power of the working class, but an inseparable, and ultimately fundamental, component of it — nationally, and even more so internationally.

Overall, such a campaign to highlight the dangers of the SEA means that the left in Europe must step up its campaign of opposition to the EC even as it presently functions, rather than retreating to an abstentionist position as many on the left have done. Obviously, this must involve a clear and forward-looking exposition of the left's alternative for a "harmonized" Europe. Such a campaign has to be actively built if the rank-and-file of Europe's workers are to be mobilized against the bourgeois vision of Europe currently being painted by a great many of their leaders. The left's orientation towards common initiatives across Europe thus has to be defined in terms of the structures that will bring about a strengthened, united working class across both Eastern and Western Europe, based on cooperation on the full range of economic, social and democratic questions.

Internationalist perspective needed

This is not, however, the direction in which the 1992 project is going. Instead, the plan is to advance capital and weaken the autonomy of member states. The consequence for the working class is that even partial political gains won through parliament will become that much more difficult to achieve and defend, the reformist parties using the excuse of the legal constraints imposed by Brussels to tow the capitalists' line.

An internationalist, anti-imperialist perspective for Europe is grounded in demanding an end to all immigration restrictions for European member states, based on equal rights of residence and political asylum for all.

Intrinsically linked to this is the declaration that the economic, social and political rights of Black workers, currently comprising the most impoverished sector of workers in Europe, has to be staunchly defended against racist and fascist attack.

It is now high time that the left, including the far left, no longer regard this as a peripheral issue, but one that is central to a revolutionary socialist programme for Europe. ★





Danger of the growth of a mass fascist party

THE MOST THREATENING racist movement in Western Europe today is the National Front in France, which has become a major factor in French politics and a serious contender for control of the country's second largest city, Marseilles, in the coming municipal elections.

The following article describes the origins and rise of the National Front, the debate on the left over characterizing it and how the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International, proposes to fight it.

LAURENT CARASSO

THE NATIONAL FRONT did not come out of the blue. In order to understand its place, its program and the importance it has managed to assume in recent years, it has to be situated first in the framework of the history of the French right and far right and then in context of the early 1980s.

During the occupation of France in the second world war, the reactionary right and extreme right groups collaborated directly with the Nazis. The Liberation inaugurated long years of disrepute for the extreme right. Before the war, the latter had been a traditional bourgeois current that had grown up among small traders and in the aristocracy. Anti-semitism and anti-communism were the stock in trade of this anti-republican and clericalist current, which showed its mettle at the turn of the century in the campaign against a new trial for Captain Dreyfus.¹

The extreme-right leagues that developed at the time of the 1929 depression and on the eve of the Popular Front government were the continuation of this current. They tried to build a mass fascist movement, whose clearest expression was the insurrectionary demonstration of February 4, 1934. In this, they had the support of the big bourgeoisie, whose watchword was "Better Hitler than the Popular Front."

Most of these movements, including the wing created by the former Communist Party (CP) leader Doriot, became mired in collaboration, and the post-1945 national

consensus around the Résistance made this current illegitimate for a long time, equating the far right with Nazism.

A convergence of far right movements

At the end of the 1950s, the loss of France's colonial empire and the beginning of its defeat in Algeria marked the emergence of a new far right, colonialist current around the OAS (Organisation de l'Armée Secrète), which found its base of support among the French colonists in Algeria; and the Poujadiste current. The latter current, named after its leader Pierre Poujade, was based on the section of the petty-bourgeoisie that saw the onset of industrial modernization in France as threatening the important place in society that it had previously held. The Poujade movement got 11.5% of the vote in 1956.

Symbolically, it can be said that Jean-Marie Le Pen represented a convergence of both movements. He was a lieutenant in Algeria and implicated in torture. He was also a young Poujadist deputy elected in 1956.

Once again, lack of serious support from the French bourgeoisie and the industrialization policy pursued by De Gaulle cut the ground out from under this movement. It was pushed to the sidelines, but a strong resentment remained among the colonists abandoned by France. Tixier-Vignancourt,

a lawyer for the OAS, represented this current in the electoral arena. In the 1965 presidential election, he won 5% of the vote.

Therefore, during this postwar period, it was not a lack of personnel or opportunities that limited the possibilities for the emergence of a reactionary extreme right capable of developing a fascist party. These limitations can only be understood on the basis of a Marxist analysis of the conditions for the growth of fascism, as developed in particular by Trotsky.

As Ernest Mandel sums it up in his introduction to Trotsky's *How to Defeat Fascism*, the rise of fascist movements is the expression of the grave social crisis of the third age of capitalism. It takes place fundamentally when the capitalists find themselves unable to continue a "natural" accumulation of capital.

Seeds for mass fascist movement established

The role of fascism is to change the conditions for the reproduction of capital in favor of the decisive groups of monopoly capital through force and violence. For the capitalists, building such a movement involves mounting a direct assault on the workers' movement, on the gains of the working class.

Such a mass movement can only arise and organize in the third class of society, the petty bourgeoisie. In phases in which the structural crisis of capitalism takes on an acute form, the petty bourgeoisie, struck by the full force of this crisis, gives rise to movements that combine reactionary and nationalistic feelings with hatred for communism and for the organized workers' movement.

In the first thirty years after the war in France, with the loss of the colonies and industrialization, the seeds for a potential mass fascist movement established themselves. But this violent crisis of the sectors linked economically to colonialism did not coincide with any urgent need of the industrial bourgeoisie to appeal to a fascist movement.

The crisis at the end of the 1950s was resolved by turning to the bonapartist De Gaulle, by setting up the strong state represented by the Fifth Republic. Despite some hasty formulas employed by the French Stalinists at the time, this type of regime was not fascism. Economic expansion, industrial development and the establishment of neo-colonialism offered monopoly capital sufficient resources for maintaining its profit level.

Gaullist populism, the weight of the Communist Party in the working class and the official tradition of the Résistance in

1. The "Dreyfus Affair": Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jew, was accused of treason with the Germans in 1894 and condemned to exile and imprisonment for life. The whole of France divided into supporters and opponents of Dreyfus. Finally, in 1906, he was cleared of the charges and rehabilitated.

the French bourgeoisie were also adequate up until the 1970s to block any serious new rise of the far right current in France.

Lean years for the far right

This in no way prevented the bosses in the period of prolonged instability opened up by 1968 from using police and parallel police forces against the working class. The Gaullist movement played its role in particular through the Civic Action Service, one of whose leaders was Charles Pasqua, minister of justice in the Chirac government. It distinguished itself on several occasions, including by building small company unions, especially in auto. "Veterans" of Algeria and Vietnam were prime recruits for such jobs.

At the same time, the fascist or extreme-right tradition never totally died out. Already before the 1970s, several ideologues tried to reconstitute its forces. But for nearly 20 years, this political current only eked out an existence, jumping back and forth between entering the traditional right formations and forming small strong-arm groups.

The present bourgeois parties include

several former strong-arm men. For example, in times gone by, Madelin and Longuet — ministers in the last Chirac government — were among the founders the small fascist group Occident. After Mitterrand's election, another fascist group, the New Forces Party, went over lock, stock and barrel to a small far right group, the CNIP (National Confederation of Farmers and Self-Employed), with Alain Robert and the OAS veteran Pierre Sergent.

In 1973, the National Front (FN) was formed. It was a combination of former collaborators, such as Roland Gaucher, and veterans of the OAS, such as Roger Ho-leindre, around Jean-Marie Le Pen. The activist organization was made up of strong-arm men from New Order, the successor of the Occident group after 1968.

Le Pen regroupes forces into the National Front

The following decade brought this new organization no glory. It failed totally in the 1973 legislative elections. And in 1974, its presidential candidate, Le Pen, got only 0.74% of the vote. In 1978, it suffered another rebuff in the legislative elections.

However, despite these defeats and loss of members, Le Pen maintained his project

of consolidating an independent force, unencumbered by any compromises with the traditional right. At the end of the 1970s, he got reinforcements from a small political group of OAS veterans and a small

so-called "solidarist" current, including J.P. Stirbois and Collinot, who were to become leaders of the National Front.²

The National Front's forces were too meagre, however, for Le Pen to be able to gather the 500 signatures of elected officials necessary to put up a candidate in the 1981 presidential election. At the time, the group had no more than 500 members.

The year 1983, for reasons we will look at later, marked the end of this march through the desert. In the March municipal elections of that year, in the 20th arrondissement of Paris, Le Pen got nearly 8% of the vote. Above all, the FN made a breakthrough in several small cities where by-elections were held in the fall of the same year, such as Dreux, where Stirbois won 16% of the vote, and marched triumphantly into the city government after making a deal with the traditional bourgeois parties.

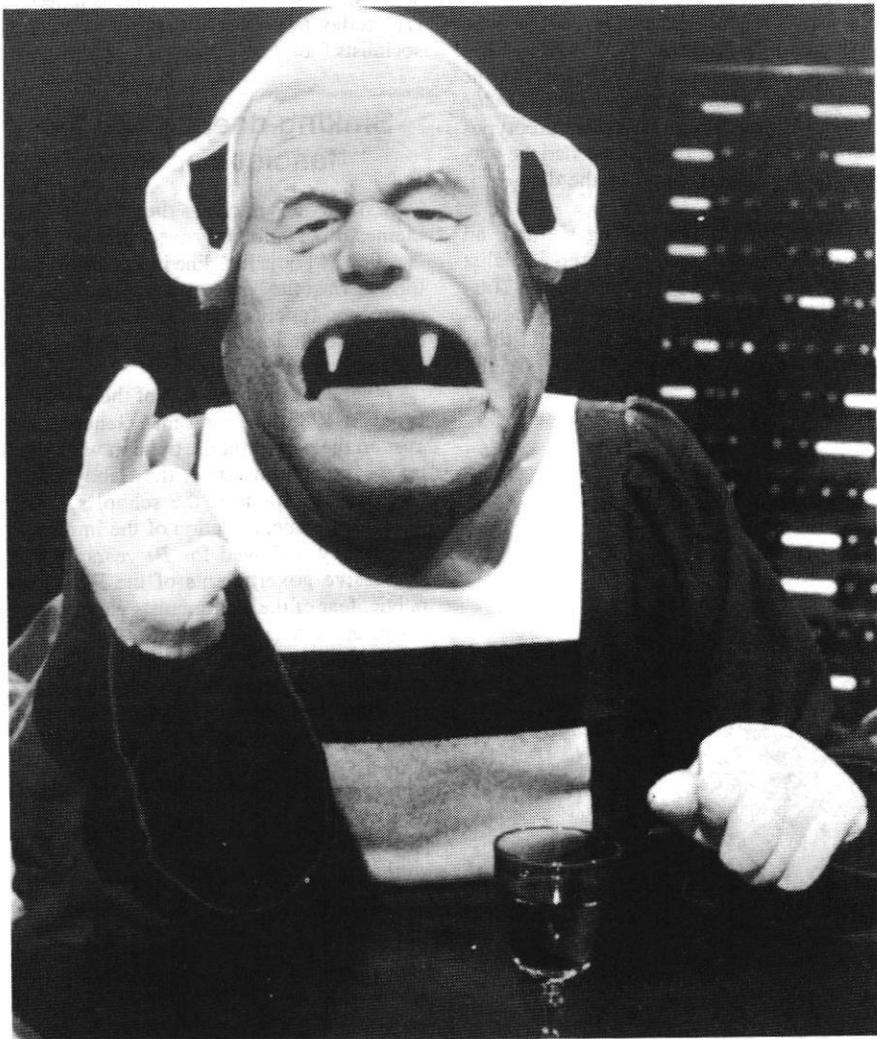
From 1983 to the presidential elections of 1988, in five years, the FN grew steadily, and above all continuously showed its ability to influence the country's political life. What is the explanation for this sustained rise, where did the impetus come from?

The themes pushed by the National Front in 1983 were the traditional hobby horses of the small fascist groups, essentially denouncing the Socialist-Communist government and especially opposing immigration. For several years, New Order and then the National Front had waged campaigns against "uncontrolled immigration," arguing that "a million unemployed is a million immigrants too many." This was a paraphrase, even to the number, of the slogan on a poster brought out by the fascist leagues and Hitler's party at the beginning of the 1930s against the Jews.

NF wins increasing electoral support

In the 1970s and up until the early 1980s, this program attracted only derisory support. But from 1983 to today, it steadily caught on. In 1984, Le Pen got a national score of 10% in the European elections. In 1985, in the elections for local council members, the National Front got a national average of 8.69%, with some spectacular

2. Stirbois, number two in the FN hierarchy, was recently killed in an auto accident.





high points, essentially in the departments of the Mediterranean region.

The Mediterranean departments, to varying degrees, have a number of common features. They are centers of old (Italian and Spanish) and more

recent (Algerian and Moroccan) immigration. They have traditionally been oriented toward the former French colonies. They have been both a favorite site for settlement by former colonists and are among the regions hardest hit by the crisis. The economy of many of them has been centered in Mediterranean trade.

All of these characteristics are particularly marked for the ports of Toulon and Marseilles. The latter city has become the symbol of the National Front's advance. Thus, starting in 1985, National Front candidates got scores of around 20% in these departments.

In these regions, the electoral pattern was marked firstly by the polarization of the vote of the repatriated Algerian settlers, of voters who previously looked to the elected officials of the classical bourgeois parties who were themselves ultra-reactionary (such as Médicin, the mayor of Nice, linked to the European extreme right and a fervent supporter of apartheid). The second major factor was the effect of unemployment on a population hard hit by the crisis, which formerly put its trust in the workers' parties and who were disgusted by the policies of the left government.

These phenomena are quite clear. Anyone familiar with this region will say there was no sudden rise of racism in 1983 or

1985. There was already racism against Arabs, as there was 40 years before against Italians. But most of those who blamed the immigrants for all the problems thought that there were other more reasonable political solutions for the crisis.

The accumulated failure of the traditional parties of the bourgeoisie and the reformists in the context of a sharp rise of economic crisis and unemployment suddenly lent credence to the anti-foreigner notions. More than a rise of racism as such, there was an increase in the credibility of racism as a political solution.

A closer look at the NF's electorate

The National Front's original electoral base was then swelled by traditional reactionary voters won essentially from the RPR [Rally for the Republic, led by Chirac] and also from non-voters who had formerly voted for the left. The latter phenomenon also grew steadily, often astonishing election analysts, who were surprised in polls to find that more than a quarter of National Front voters said that they had transferred their votes to the left in the second round.

A study of Le Pen's voters and of the profile of those who join his party has been done by the journalist Anne Tristan, who worked in the National Front in Marseilles for nine months. Out of this experience she wrote an excellent, courageous book, *In the Front*. By clearing away the stereotypes about the National Front, it opened the way for a sharper perception of the dangers it represents.

We find a young working woman, an Italian bricklayer, and a veteran Socialist Party activist alongside traditional "fascists" in the backbone of the local organizations. No more racist than their workmates or neighbors, they took the

step of making racism into a political solution, since none of the traditional parties, nor any elected official, was concerned about them.

Since nothing was going to change at the top, it was obviously easier to tell yourself that getting rid of the Arabs would quickly resolve the problems of unemployment, crime and the gaps in social security. It is symptomatic, moreover, that during the same years that saw the growth of the National Front, both the bourgeois and the workers' parties cultivated racism. For example, in 1983, Gaston Defferre, the Socialist Party mayor of Marseilles, claimed to be better placed than the right to fight uncontrolled immigration. And in the same period, the program of the RPR and the UDF [Union for French Democracy, the so-called center party] borrowed many arguments from Le Pen.

The two pillars of the National Front's program are fighting immigration and crime. These two themes were so popular in the 1980s in a France caught up in economic crisis that the polls showed a third of French people agreeing with these points in Le Pen's program. It was such surveys that led the SP premier Laurent Fabius in 1985 to say about Le Pen, "He offers wrong answers to real problems." The German socialist theoretician August Bebel saw anti-semitism as a socialism of fools. Is it necessary today to point out that racism makes socialists fools?

Sinking deeper into the fascist tradition

Besides advancing these catch-all themes, the National Front promotes what is called a "Poujadist" line in France — battling against the "octopus state" and its bureaucracy, functionaries, taxes. We can let one of the National Front leaders give his explanation of its success:

"What does the rapid rise of the National Front in 1983-84 represent? General disgust on the part of public opinion with high taxes, the octopus state, the flabby state, Marxist sectarianism, the school system, the press, crime, rejection of the immigration policy followed for 20 years by the successive governments of the Fifth Republic, fear of the Communists getting control of the state apparatus."

The National Front is sinking deeper into the traditions of the French extreme right, into the fascist tradition. One such tradition is the ultra-nationalism epitomized by the annual commemoration of Jeanne d'Arc, who is wrongly supposed to be the symbol of France. Another is the anti-parliamentarianism consistently fostered up until 1986 against the politicians of the so-called Gang of Four (the CP, SP, RPR, UDF).

The most recent expression of the latter aspect was a spectacular action against parliamentary absenteeism, pouring scorn on the parliament. Every parliamentary faction



has the habit of leaving a few deputies "on guard," while the others leave the keys needed for voting on their desks. National Front deputies who were all present during a night session went to use the keys of the deputies of the other parties to vote in their place.

In the economic sphere, the National Front follows the vogue of Reaganite and Thatcherite ideas — deregulation, tax reform, massive privatization of the public sector, tax cuts and challenging the "welfare state." This line is not at all distinctive. In fact, in the 1980s, it was pushed to a considerable extent by the RPR. On the other hand, one of the successes of the National Front, even on this point, derives from Chirac's total inability from 1986 to 1988 to apply this program in depth, in particular because of the struggles by the working class and youth.

In the years 1985-88, two apparently contradictory aspects developed in the National Front's propaganda. On the one hand was the program worked out especially by J.P. Stirbois's team. It was directed at wage earners, a new target for the National Front, and called for the following: selling apartments in state low-rent housing projects to their tenants; elimination of income tax; a 5,000 franc (about \$840) monthly child benefit ["maternal wages"]; education payments to families; bringing the pay of wage-scrips to the level of the minimum wage; allocating 1% of the total housing budget for nuclear shelters for the people.

This rather pragmatic program might seem far removed from that of the traditional extreme right. It is aimed in fact at developing the party's general appeal in a situation where it hopes to use its electoral capital to build local bases in the 1989 municipal elections. On the other hand, for a year, in carefully calculated slips of the tongue, Le Pen has been dropping little phrases appealing to the most classical kind of anti-semitism and racism. In this way, he has shown his ability to play cynically on the anti-semitism that still exists and deliberately get a rise out of established politicians.

Cultivating an image in media

These two aspects confirm the paradoxically very important role that the National Front assigns to politician-type campaigns, media coups, to cultivating an image in the press and television. Most recently, the National Front has been in the forefront of a campaign for reforming the citizenship law. This campaign, which has also been supported also to a large extent by the traditional right, is supposed to be to protect the "French identity," allegedly threatened by an "internal invasion."

Lately, the National Front has relaunched a campaign for establishing the death penalty. Also to be noted is that the National Front, which has strong ties to the Catholic

traditionalist current through one of its members, Romain Marie, has promoted the campaign against Scorcese's film *The Last Temptation of Christ*. In the same way, the National Front pushed itself to the fore in a reactionary campaign against people with Aids, proposing to isolate them in "Aidsatoriums"

Going back several years, the National Front has managed to link up with the traditional extreme-right groups, extending from the National Union of Parachutists to Catholic traditionalists. At the same time, the Front itself has tried to set up social and professional groups. One such is *Entreprise Moderne et Liberté (EML)*, which appeals to employers. Its Administrative Council features National Front Euro MPs (De Camaret, Le Chevellier, D'Ormesson, Lehideux), indicating quite clearly that the Front wants to take the maximum advantage of its membership of that establishment institution.

Extreme right organize amongst the police

Around the EML, the Front has tried to develop a series of professional clubs, trying to attract long-haul truck drivers, doctors, lawyers, pilots and air-traffic controllers. The basis for the existence of these small networks also comes from the exploitation of the Front's base in the institutions, which was disrupted at the parliamentary level by the abandonment of proportional representation. The sector where the extreme right's activity is best organized is undoubtedly the police, where there is a small semi-fascist union, the FPIP, led by National Front members.

Many National Front leaders have long-standing ties to international networks. Here also it has used its Euro MPs to develop intense activity directed toward South Africa, the USA, South America and the Near East — in a nutshell all the regions where the extreme right has influential connections.

Finally, within the Catholic traditionalist community, the schismatic church headed by Archbishop Lefebvre, the National Front has built a current around the Centre Charlier and the *Comités Chrétiens Solidarité*. The prime organizer of this has been Romain Marie, a National Front Euro MP, who has managed to win a dominant position within the Catholic traditionalist community. The campaign waged against the Scorcese film has shown the effectiveness of this work.

On the other hand, it should be noted that so far the National Front has been unable to get a solid foothold in workers' trade unions or among the unemployed, even though in some cities it has managed to make a real intervention into unemployed organizations.

Over and above the manifold links and bridges between the right and extreme right, for several years there have been

ideological groupings that bring together members of the National Front, of the RPR, the UDF, the CNIP (National Confederation of Farmers and Self-Employed) and former fascist

strong-arm men from the 1960s. One is GRECE [whose initials spell the French word for "Greece"], which was founded after the 1968 events. Another is the Club de l'Horloge ("Clock Club") set up after the electoral victory of the left in 1981.

Certain ideological differences divided these two clubs, which for some years have found themselves swimming in different waters. GRECE has developed an anti-free enterprise, European, "third road" ideology, between Atlanticism and the USSR, based on the idea of a Europe of homogeneous peoples. In opposition to this, the Club de l'Horloge adheres to a free-enterprise ideology Thatcher-style. In this latter organization, RPR and UDF leaders in particular rub elbows. These clubs feed the right-wing press, such as *Le Figaro*, *Val-eurs Actuelles* and *Paris Match*.

Classical right tries to steal NF's clothes

Since 1983, the classical right has opposed the National Front politically. Drawn into a major political crisis after 1981, one that largely explains Le Pen's spectacular rise, it has tried to pick up on crime and anti-immigrant themes, thinking that in that way it could win back its lost voters. At the same time, confronted with the pressure of the National Front, it sought first of all to minimize the FN's role, which it claimed was artificially inflated by Mitterrand through proportional representation.

It is true that between 1984 and the present, Mitterrand and the SP have deliberately granted the maximum importance and publicity to the National Front in order to accentuate the crisis of the right and break off a current ready to join a broad center coalition. The existence of 35 National Front deputies and 137 regional councillors obliged the traditional parties to have dealings with the National Front.

From 1986 to 1988, the tactic of Chirac's interior minister, Charles Pasqua, was to simply repeat the proposals of the National Front. Thus, a racist and discriminatory policy was applied against immigrants, and deliberate sensationalism was engaged in on the crime question. In general, the UDF and the RPR responded in the same way to the regional council elections in 1985 and the legislative elections in 1986. Their line





was not to give legitimacy to the National Front by entering into a national coalition with it but to make whatever agreements might be necessary locally against the workers' parties.

Thus, several National Front councillors turned up in the leadership of the regional councils; and in 1988, the RPR and the UDF withdrew in favor of National Front candidates who topped the poll in the departments of Var and Bouches du Rhône. This "realist" policy shocked some personalities in the bourgeois parties, in particular those who claim to represent the "spirit of the anti-Nazi Résistance," such as Simone Veil. But these pious protests counted for little against class interests and holding onto seats in parliament.

Even if the bridges between the National Front and the classical parties are two-way streets, it has been clear that up until 1986 they enabled the National Front to build up its apparatus with former UDF and RPR leaders. Between 1981 and 1986, hundreds of people went over to the National Front from the RPR, as in the department of Haute Garonne; or from the Republican Party [a right-wing component of the UDF] in Paris. It is an evident fact that the National Front apparatus and its intermediate cadres come from the traditional bourgeois parties.

In order to take up the question of characterizing the National Front, we might consider the debate that has been going on in the organization for three years, symbolized by the conflict between two of its leaders, Bruno Maigret and J.P. Stirbois. The first line, which set the tone of Le Pen's presidential campaign, was aimed at making the National Front a party of the right, the right's hard-line, populist, ultra-free-enterprise wing, by smoothing the FN's rough edges. This current put the emphasis on crossovers from the traditional right parties and pressure on the other components of the right.

In opposition to this line, the "solidarist" current of Stirbois/Collinot pushed consistently for the National Front to present itself as the party of the national right, without any compromises with the traditional parties and clearly differentiated from them. As the National Front leader Romain Moue said, "the road of respectability is not our road. The more we remain ourselves, despite gaining elected posts, the more we will gain respect."

Le Pen is skipping back and forth between these two policies. For many years, the French left has been debating these two lines, with the first leading many to down-

play the danger represented by Le Pen. Such people have said, in general, that Le Pen's establishing himself in electoral politics would lead him to lose his protest image and to disappear.

Today, Le Pen's party claims to have several tens of thousands of members and a national structure, with a base, even if a limited one, in most of the departments. The National Front leadership, as well as its leadership network, is largely made up of hardened fascist activists whose avowed political objective is to form a mass fascist party. One of the functions of the little phrases dropped by Le Pen demonstrating his anti-semitism against the Jews — a more difficult tack to take in France than racism against the Arabs — is to "armor" his apparatus, to clean out any Gaullist or free-enterpriser recruits who might be too squeamish on this point.

Dangerous to downplay danger of NF

There is no doubt about these fascist aspirations, even if some people still console themselves by explaining that the National Front's ideological reference points are those of the "traditional" French extreme right and not those of national socialism.

This debate is not very useful. It is true that Le Pen takes an ultra-free-enterprise line, which is even criticized by small French fascist grouplets. But this sort of talk resembles the line taken by Mussolini in the 1920s. In a similar way, he takes his distance from the "third road" line that opposes both the USA and the USSR, and has not developed any "anti-capitalist" propaganda. It is also true that such "anti-capitalism" has only marked the small fascist groups.

It would, therefore, be quite idealist to downplay the dangers posed by the National Front on the basis of the difference in its ideological reference points. Likewise, the role that the National Front has taken in establishment institutions has not destroyed its popularity because it became a party "like the others." This analysis is based on a view of the National Front phenomenon simply as a protest vote, supposedly coming essentially from a desperate proletariat fed up with the CP.

This stereotype does not give proper weight to the fact that the National Front first developed in the early 1980s out of the crisis of the right, a crisis that was spectacularly confirmed in the presidential election and which is reflected in the origins of a large part of the National Front's departmental leaders. In a manner of speaking, it would be more correct to say that the National Front today is bringing together all the ingredients for launching a mass fascist party — the leaders, the themes, the infrastructure, the popular following in the petty bourgeoisie and even among certain elements of the working class.

At the same time, everyone can see clear-

ly that the National Front is not a mass fascist party specifically because of its inability to confront the organized workers' movement, to oppose workers' strikes, an inability that is linked to the bourgeoisie's refusal to turn to fascism as a political solution. How far the National Front is from being a mass fascist party is also shown by its failure, despite the clichés that are going around, to replace the Communist Party in organizing workers or the unemployed. There has been a real rise in the Le Pen vote among popular layers in the suburbs where people have been hardest hit by the economic crisis.

The National Front's neighborhood organizations often include wage earners and unemployed, as Anne Tristan's book shows. Likewise, they can take comfort from the fact that the workers' parties seem unable to respond to popular demands and to confront the National Front directly. But the Front still has a way to go before it can really organize in popular layers. For example, its attempts to organize the unemployed in Roubaix and Dijon have not brought any considerable success.

Is this any cause for rejoicing? Not really, because one thing that has been proven in recent years is that in the midst of the economic crisis the National Front has managed to crystallize the most radical current of the traditional right and to exert a lasting influence, as shown by the policy followed by Chirac and Pasqua. Up until today, it has managed to polarize and harden up a few thousand activists and to encourage elements in the state apparatus and among the youth to attack immigrants.

The present growth of the skinheads, who are generally quite independent and sometimes at loggerheads with the National Front, has been made possible by the relationship of forces created by the National Front.

Reformist parties opened up space for Le Pen

While the crisis of the right has opened up a space for Le Pen, it is clear at the same time that the social and political policy of the workers' parties has made it possible for him to stabilize his forces. The Le Pen current has grown among the petty bourgeoisie, thanks to the paralysis of the parties of the traditional right, to which these layers look in normal times. But Trotsky explained that the second stage, so to speak, is when the petty bourgeoisie can polarize elements of the working class.

While it would be wrong to compare the situation in France today to that of Germany at the end of the 1920s, it is equally clear that the policy of the left, as a result of the failure of the solutions it offered, has opened the way for Le Pen's solutions to gain credibility. Once again, neither racism nor unemployment is the cause of the rise of the National Front among lower-class voters.

The cause is rather the political incapacity of the leadership of the working class, when the traditional bourgeois parties are losing their support in popular layers, to offer a working-class response to the crisis. It is only in such conditions, linked to the subjective factors, that fascist solutions can polarize a section of the working class. The preconditions for such a situation are posed in France. This points up still more acutely the crisis of working-class leadership and the responsibility of revolutionaries.

Now, what would make it possible for the National Front to transform itself into a fascist party is a political choice by a section of the capitalists, if the situation were to deteriorate to the point where they would prefer to pay the price of fascism to preserve the conditions for accumulating capital. When, in order to preserve these conditions, it is necessary to attack the working class and its organizations directly, physically, the bourgeoisie has no qualms about going outside the normal framework of bourgeois democracy.

For the moment, even facing the present strike wave, it is not to Le Pen's group that the employers have turned. The state and its police and army are playing their classical role.

This should not at all reassure us about the situation and lead us to downplay the need to fight the National Front here and now. It would be a simplistic view of things to think that one day, just like that, the bourgeoisie is going to decide to turn to a fascist solution.

Activity against Le Pen needs to be stepped up

In a period of sharpened tension among the classes, the existence of a force prepared to offer a fascist solution is a stimulus to the bourgeois forces radicalizing to the right, an element in the relationship of forces among the classes and an available option. Recognizing that while Le Pen has real forces, he is incapable today of building the slightest movement against the workers' strikes should not lead us into to any false sense of security but rather to step up our activity against him, because it shows that he does not enjoy such a good relationship of forces against the working class in action. This has been shown by his inability to counterattack against the workers' movement and the spread of strikes in the fall of 1988, as well as in the winter of 1986 during the railway strike.

Thus, Marseilles, where a quarter of the votes went to the National Front in the last elections, has been the city hardest hit by the recent strikes (postal service, urban transport, social security workers). And at the time of writing, Le Pen's party has proved incapable of organizing the slightest counterattack.

Wrong analyses lead to wrong answers. This applies to those who think that the cause of the National Front is racism, and

who put their main emphasis on denouncing Le Pen as a racist. It is necessary to denounce Le Pen's racism. But the people who vote for him know perfectly well that he is a racist. Thus, moreover, it is illusory to think that the anti-semitic phrases he has been dropping are going to reduce his audience. Likewise, campaigns designed to explain the evils of racism are not in themselves weapons against the National Front.

Working class political response

The campaigns against Le Pen in the name of defending democracy against extremism are also a blind alley. Far from limiting the danger of the formation of a real fascist party, they reinforce it. For social democrats, defending bourgeois democracy means boosting the "democratic" state above classes, appealing to the workers to ally with their bosses in the name of democracy. In Marseilles, for example, it meant calling for a vote for Bernard Tapie, the symbol of aggressive and successful management, against the National Front. Doing this also means appealing to the voters to restrain their mobilizations and their demands in order not to frighten the petty-bourgeois elements and throw them into Le Pen's arms.

Such an analysis explains the rise of the National Front as a result of "the economic crisis" and "unemployment," isolating these features from their real cause, which is the crisis of capitalism. This is failing to understand, or not wanting to understand, that the fascist threat grows accordingly in a period of crisis when working-class activity is weakened to the point of disorienting the workers themselves.

The only way to trim the sails of the fascist current, to cut it back down again to grouplet size, is to offer a working-class political response to the crisis that would cleanse society as a whole of racist and fascist growths. Such a response has begun to emerge in the revival of strikes since 1986, but it will only really take form if a political counterpart of these social mobilizations firms up. This possibility will be all the greater if the present mobilizations prove capable of linking up wage demands with the demand for more hiring into a single movement against the employers, and therefore present the outline of a working-class solution to unemployment.

Revolutionaries have an important role to play in this by showing that they offer a political solution for the entire working class, for all the victims of capitalist exploitation. For our part, we have never divorced this battle from direct action against the fascists and racism. Such direct action has two dimensions. The first is to realize that the brown plague can be stamped out more easily in its embryonic stage.

Thus, the LCR and its predecessors have worked steadily for 20 years to maintain

vigilance and actions against even small groups, understanding that it is always easier to discourage hesitant elements by showing them that they cannot grow with impunity. It

is a good thing for would-be fascists to feel the weight of the workers' movement.

It is for this reason that during this time we have always encouraged mass demonstrations, initiated by the workers' movement, against the demonstrations and rallies of the National Front. We have presented this as a task of the workers' movement, not relying on the bourgeois state to act against the fascists.

This is what we did in Paris again this year, promoting a united workers' demonstration for May Day, while the amorphous and divided trade-union leaderships were preparing to let Le Pen parade. In the same way, in response to every attack by the National Front against the workers' organizations, we have to promote self-defence, a united front of vigilance.

The second dimension of this is to build an action front in opposition to racism and discrimination against immigrant workers and their families, against racist crimes and assaults.

Building a relationship of forces that can compel respect for the democratic rights that are denied to immigrants, fighting for repeal of the racist laws, is not only an integral part of the class struggle and the battle against the oppression suffered by the immigrants. It is also a way of reinforcing the fight to reduce support for the racist political solutions that the racist movements represent. This points up the importance of building democratic anti-racist associations fighting for equal rights, and associations of immigrant workers and youth.

Anyone can make analyses of the future of the National Front, looking at the fluctuations in the influence of the National Front, the MSI (Italian Social Movement) or the NPD [New Party of Germany], and also the growth of similar organizations in the Netherlands and Denmark. In this area, as in many others, our policy must not be based on prognostications.

Vigilance, class action against the National Front, action in support of the rights of immigrant workers and an overall fight against austerity and the capitalist projects are the fundamentals of a policy founded on an understanding of the dangers and the sources of the existence of a fascist current, the fundamentals of a revolutionary policy directed to the working class. ★





From Western Europe's most open to its most closed country

BESIDES FRANCE, in the last period in Europe the major success of a racist party in national elections has been in Denmark. Traditionally one of the most liberal and generous of capitalist countries toward refugees and with one of the strongest traditions of support for human rights, it has taken giant steps backward in these areas.

The following article describes the reasons for this regression and the anti-racist movements that have developed to combat it.

ÅGE SKOVRIND

IN THE SUMMER of 1985, a group of young Danes attacked a center for asylum-seekers in Kalundborg, a small provincial town. Stones were thrown through the windows, while the crowd shouted threats against the refugees. There was a celebration in the town, and a group of local people worked themselves up against the refugees, who were accused of "stealing our girls" and "sponging on the Danish people." Among other things, the people resented the fact that the refugees were riding around on new bicycles. "The town never gave me a new bike," those hostile to the refugees argued.

This event can be seen as a turning point in the debate on the refugee problem in Denmark and in the government's policy toward refugees. It was the first physical attack on refugees and so aroused widespread comment. It was the event that led to the formation of groups of "friends of refugees." And it was the event that led to a sharp discussion in Denmark first and foremost about refugee policy, but which led on naturally to increasing attention to the situation of immigrants.

At the beginning of the 1980s, only 500 to a thousand refugees arrived in Denmark annually. This number included both UN refugees (selected from refugee camp populations and placed in different countries according to quotas), refugees and people who come on their own, and those coming to join their families.

This number rose drastically after 1984. The following table shows the numbers of refugees referred to Danish Refugee Aid (this, after being granted asylum, which following 1984 often took over a year). The figures in parentheses are the numbers seeking asylum. (In 1987, the number accepted was higher than the number applying because the more restrictive law came into force in that year, while at the same time applicants admitted the previous year completed their waiting period.)

1980	890	1984	1,186 (4,312)
1981	810	1985	6,551 (8,698)
1982	799	1986	6,806 (9,299)
1983	689 (332)	1987	3,924 (2,726)
		1988	3,759 (4,600)

In the summer of 1983, the parliament adopted a new aliens law, which was introduced by the workers' parties and the Radical Liberals but finally accepted with the support of the five bourgeois parties in the government. But it was not because of this new law that the number of those seeking exile rose sharply in the following period.

The reasons for this were primarily the development of the world situation (especially the Iraq-Iraq war and Lebanon) and the fact that the other West European countries began to tighten up.

The 1983 law established asylum as a human right. Applicants for asylum got far

better legal guarantees in the handling of their requests (including possibilities for appeal). And the principle of "first country of exile" was defined in such a way that asylum could only be denied if the applicants had already found refuge in another country, or if, because of long residence, family or similar connections, they had closer ties to another country.

Under the impact of the growing numbers of refugees, in 1984 the demand was raised for making the law more restrictive. In June and December, the law was amended concerning the asylum procedure. But the decisive restrictions were introduced in October 1986, with the support of the bourgeois government and the social democracy.

Tightening up of visa requirements

This tightening up was a big step backward, even by comparison with the pre-1983 legislation. Henceforward, those seeking asylum had to have a visa to enter Denmark and to have their requests considered. The police and the Aliens Bureau now stop asylum seekers without visas at the border, and then return them to country in which they last resided, so long as the country in question, in the opinion of the state authorities, is "safe." In the meantime, a number of cases have indicated that refugees are in fact being sent back to countries where they are *not* free from risk (in some instances because the countries concerned have sent them back again).

At the same time, the airlines were made subject to fines if they brought people without valid travel papers (passports and visas) to Denmark. That made it next to impossible to come to Denmark, since the Danish embassies are very restrictive about granting visas, and many refugees do not have passports. One consequence is that Turkish citizens today are blocked from coming to Denmark as tourists, because the authorities fear they may apply for asylum. Another consequence is that extra police forces are assigned to pursuing refugees who try to cross the border between Denmark and West Germany illegally.

With this change in the law, Denmark has been transformed from the country with the least restrictive refugee laws in Europe to the one with the most restrictive rules. The legislation includes the provision that it is to be reviewed after a year. But the coalition parties decided simply to let it continue.

The following factors help explain the reactions to the growing number of refugees after 1984:

- The authorities were entirely unprepared for it. The necessary housing did not exist. That meant that the lodging offered to refugees and seekers of asylum was particularly poor. Often those seeking asylum were concentrated in smaller towns, where the population was neither prepared for, nor used to, associating with foreigners from

alien cultures.

Moreover, there were not enough personnel to handle the applicants for asylum — guides, interpreters, teachers and so on. The result was a terribly long wait before the decision was made and in many ways a desperate situation for the refugees.

● The refugees arrived in a period of a widespread housing shortage, high taxes, cutbacks in social services and considerable unemployment. Among the groups that suffered from this situation, negative reactions to the refugees developed spontaneously — “Why should they have it when we don't.”

● The percentage of foreign born in Denmark is very small in comparison to most other European countries, especially foreigners coming from third-world countries.

There are 136,000 foreign nationals in Denmark, which corresponds to only 2.7% of the population. Of these, immigrants from countries outside Scandinavia, the EEC and North America amount to 55,000, about 1 percent. The latter include 39,700 immigrants of Turkish, Pakistani and Yugoslav citizenship. Of these many came to Denmark in the 1960s. In that period, Danish employers were interested in bringing labor power into the country. In 1970, when this demand had been met, immigration was halted. Minor children and wives of immigrants established in Denmark could, however, still get entry permits.

The 1960s immigration also gave rise to racist reactions. But it should be remembered that this was a period of boom. In the 1980s, we have been in period of economic crisis and attacks on living standards by the bourgeois government.

Growth of racist and anti-racist organizations

Since 1984, refugee and immigrant policy has been a central issue in public debate, and its consequences have prompted the growth of both racist and anti-racist organizations.

The attack in Kalundborg led to the setting up of a group of “Friends of Refugees,” which defended refugees on a humanitarian basis. Corresponding groups were set up in a series of other cities, which led to a real national organization of these groups. Politically, they were marked by bourgeois-liberal attitudes. On the local level, typically their activity consisted of socials with asylum-seekers and refugees and providing legal and other sorts of help in individual cases.

Nationally, the Friends of the Refugees came to play a certain role in the public debate on refugee policy. They developed expertise and could provide documentation about laws and conditions in the countries the refugees came from and so on.

In this first phase, Youth Against Racism was also founded, with the encouragement of the Socialistisk Ungdoms Forbund, the

youth organization in solidarity with the Danish section of the Fourth International. More than a hundred young people came to its first meeting in Copenhagen in August 1985. But the organization never became national.

While it organized a number of anti-racist demonstrations, debates and actions among young people, Youth Against Racism never developed into a dynamic movement. Politically, it distinguished itself by combining the fight against racism with the fight for jobs, education and housing for both Danes and immigrants.

The Friends of the Refugees have not developed either, politically or organizationally. To the contrary, various local groups have fallen apart.

Most unions have not defended refugees

The organized workers' movement played only a limited role in these initiatives. In some cities, the trade-union movement, however has taken a clear position against racism and, for example, defended the refugees right to settle in their towns. An exemplary initiative was taken in Århus (Denmark's second largest city), where the local labor council sent out an anti-racist newspaper.

There is, however, hardly a single union that has officially taken a position against refugees or called for more restrictions in the law. The problem is that the big union confederation has done nothing actively to defend the refugees. The unskilled workers' unions have a certain number of immigrant members. But only the hotel and restaurant workers' union (the only national union in which the Left Socialist Party members hold the posts of chair nationally and locally) has an active immigrants' committee. Locally and nationally, many unions have come out in opposition to the bourgeois government's refugee policy and declared their opposition to racism.

Among the political parties, the right-wing populist Progress Party has distinguished itself by a policy extremely hostile to the refugees and immigrants. The other bourgeois parties put up a respectable, humanitarian front, officially taking their distance from racism, while at the same time in government they have made the laws more restrictive for the refugees.

The Progress Party is demanding an immediate halt to the influx of refugees and measures to repatriate those already in the country. In his first public statement after he was released from prison in 1985 (for tax evasion), the party's founder, Mogens Glistrup, agitated against the so-called “Islamic menace.” He raised a similar cry on the eve of the most recent parliamentary election.

Agitation against immigrants has been the Progress Party's main calling card in recent years. There is hardly any doubt that it contributed to the party's advance in the

last parliamentary elections, in which it increased its vote from 4.8% to 9.0% (see IV 145).

At the same time, the Progress Party is first and foremost a parliamentary party, with a very weak organization in comparison to the traditional bourgeois parties. Thus, it does not organize physical attacks on immigrants or other forms of “street racism,” although its racist ideology and policy can very well inspire and legitimize such activities by other groups.

As mentioned earlier, it was the five bourgeois parties that made up the government in 1986 and the social democrats who were behind the tightening of the refugee laws. The social democrats' role has been especially reprehensible. The party generally stands for a policy aimed at integrating immigrants and refugees into Danish society. That in practice means measures to promote social and cultural association between Danes and immigrants. But we have also seen leading members of the party supporting economic discrimination, for example, against Turkish women who do not know Danish. Sections of the party's immigrant committee has also proposed to make learning Danish a requirement for bringing family members to Denmark, which means limiting a legally established right.

The social democrats have not advanced a policy for fighting the housing shortage, unemployment and other conditions that can promote racism. Likewise, the party has not declared that a *common* struggle of Danes and immigrants is necessary for solving these problems.

The Radical Liberals have traditionally stood for a more generous position than the social democrats. But after the May 1988 election, in which the Radicals formed a government with the two biggest bourgeois parties, they caved in.

National defence movement formed

On the left, both the People's Socialist Party (SF) and the Left Socialist Party (VS) opposed the restrictions in the legislation on refugees. For the SF, however, defence of the rights of refugees and immigrants has not played any central role, although the party did let an immigrant conclude its TV program in the last election campaign.

On the other hand, the VS has traditionally been very active in this area, and for example published a series of party materials in foreign languages. In January 1987, the VS initiated the launching of a national





movement in defence of the rights of immigrants and refugees. About 100 people took part in the founding meeting, half of them foreign born. In the spring of 1987, this organization, the

Landskoordineringen,

conducted a bus campaign to a series of Danish cities, where public meetings and street activities were held.

The relatively large participation in the Landskoordineringen at the start could not, however, be maintained. Among other things, the reason for this was most of the organizational responsibility fell on the VS, which has been badly weakened in the last couple of years (losing its representation in parliament, among other things).

In the Copenhagen region, three local committees have been set up against racism, which are trying to mobilize on a class-struggle basis. All three were set up in reaction to racist practices in the neighborhoods. These three groups have founded a Fælles-Initiativ [Common Initiative Group] in Copenhagen, which has also made contact with some groups in other parts of the country. In the beginning, the Landskoordineringen was also involved. Recently, however, it has concentrated essentially on refugee policy and not broad anti-racist work, as the local groups do.

Challenge to discrimination in housing

Fælles-Initiativ is dominated politically by far left organizations, and has very little organizational strength. Despite this, however, it has managed to take initiatives for demonstrations that have attracted broad participation and been supported by a long series of trade-union organizations.

The local committee in Ishøj (a suburb of Copenhagen, where 12.5% of the population are foreign born) differs from the other groups. For one thing, the majority of the members are immigrants. It also has a broader political composition. And the membership is substantially bigger. When the committee was formally founded last year, about 300 people took part, predominantly immigrants. The committee has set up a series of work groups, which are dealing with immigrants' problems in many areas — housing discrimination, advice, family planning, education and so on.

The starting point for this committee was discrimination in housing, practiced by a social-democratic local government. The mayor's avowed purpose was to reduce the percentage of immigrants in the town to 5%. Against this background, the local

government stopped admitting immigrants into council housing. In other towns also (mainly in the Copenhagen region), where there is a large percentage of immigrants, housing discrimination is practiced.

This question has also been the subject of a public debate in the national press. The Ishøj mayor's racial practices have not been disavowed by the social-democratic leadership. The party has limited itself to demanding that local governments should accept refugees, and has proposed legislation to spread the refugees around.

Physical attacks against immigrants

In Østerbro (a borough of Copenhagen), the question of housing discrimination was very prominent in the fall of 1987, when it became known that the borough government failed to allocate housing to immigrants in a certain neighborhood. The national papers took the question up.

The background to the affair was that a local group of Green Jackets — more or less organized street gangs of youth — was intimidating immigrants out of the neighborhood by physical attacks. They vaingloriously declared that a certain street had become a "white city." A new housing project under construction was to have the same status, they trumpeted.

When Copenhagen's conservative city housing manager reacted to this situation by accepting it and preventing people from going into this area, anti-racist groups took the initiative for a demonstration against housing discrimination. The route of the demonstration was planned to go through the street in question.

This initiative aroused a considerable discussion among anti-racists, in which some, for example the VS, were against going through the street where the Green Jackets "ruled." The argument was also raised that the Green Jackets were only victims of the bourgeois austerity policy and we should direct our fire against the latter. Finally, arguments were raised about what the demonstration would mean for immigrants still living in the area.

The initiators, including members of the Socialist Workers' Party, Danish section of the Fourth International, decided that it was necessary to protest directly against those who practiced racism, that is, both the Green Jackets and the borough government, and that therefore the route had to go through the neighborhood concerned.

Because of the division, the demonstration route was changed at the last minute in order to get the broadest possible participation. However, because of the confusion about where the demonstration was going, and fear of getting into a physical battle with the Green Jackets, only the far left mobilized. The slogans were "Fight racism!" "Down with white cities!" "Homes, work and education for all!" "Common struggle against the cuts!" "No apartheid,

including in Østerbro!"

About a thousand people took part, around half of whom were immigrants and refugees. It was the biggest demonstration that has yet been held against a concrete expression of racism, and under the circumstances it was a definite success.

After this demonstration in September 1987, the activities of Fælles-Initiativ have been particularly directed against the Danish League. This association was founded in April 1987 with the declared aim of combating the official Danish refugee and immigrant policy from a nationalistic point of view. Originally, the idea was to form a political party. But, among other things, because a section of the participants in the meeting thought that a political party already existed to take up that task (the Progress Party), it was decided to form an association.

The leaders and members of this group are predominantly retired civil servants and housewives, along with some younger fundamentalist preachers in the Danish Protestant state church, who are the spokespersons for the association and get almost unlimited space in a large section of the daily press. Already in 1986, these preachers took the lead in a national campaign against the refugee law.

Workers prevent Danish League meetings

This association's rallies have been systematically confronted with demonstrations by anti-racist groups. In most cases, the rallies have had to be dispersed. Big police forces have been called out to defend the racists' right to freedom of expression.

If the rallies are still often being broken up, that is the result of exemplary cooperation between the anti-racist movement and the union groups concerned. The workers in municipal housing where Danish League meetings have been planned are organized in a union that has decided to recommend that its members do no work for the League's meetings. In some cases, the personnel have been able to appeal to the rule in the Central Contact (the union contact between the national union confederation, LO, and the employers' organization), which permits a refusal to work if it endangers "life, honor or well-being."

The result has been that the meetings have generally been broken up, which has aroused a sharp debate in the press. But truculent right-wing papers and more liberal dailies (including the LO-financed daily!) have defended the racists' freedom of expression in a one-sided way.

For the anti-racist committees, the mobilizations against the League's activities have been a concrete action that has drawn attention to the anti-racist viewpoint, and they have functioned as a unifying element in the movement.

Around the country, from time to time actions have been taken to combat racism.

But so far no one has managed to establish a real national anti-racist movement. An attempt to set up a Danish section of SOS Racisme was made in 1987, initiated from France. But despite support from one of the biggest newspapers (with social-liberal politics), this organization did not manage to take root in Denmark.

SOS-Racisme rejected united initiatives with other anti-racist organizations, for example in connection with a common European Day of Action on April 1988 (before the French presidential election), when a demonstration of a couple of thousand people was held in Copenhagen. The self-appointed leadership of SOS-Racisme in Denmark intervened in a bureaucratic way when the local committee became too "political." That led, for example, to a split in the committee in Copenhagen.

Another part of the anti-racist work that should be mentioned is the Underground Refugees, an organization that helps seekers of asylum who get entangled in the legal machinery. Typically, the committee pays lawyers who take up the cases of refugees whose applications have been rejected. In this way, the committee in many cases has kept refugees from being expelled from the country. Its work is financed mainly by contributions from the unions.

The Danish Nazis have proclaimed that they propose to run candidates in the municipal elections in three cities in November 1989. This will be the first time since 1943.

The Nazis' biggest activity in the last couple of years has been agitation against refugees and immigrants and for a "racially pure Denmark." "Racism is love of Denmark," a poster says that they have put up in a long list of cities. The Danish Nazis do not have many members, well under a 100.

But for a number of years the Danish party has printed and distributed Nazi literature for other countries. Its chair, Poul Heinrich Riis-Knudsen, is general secretary of the international Nazi organization. His book, *National Socialism, a left-oriented movement*, has been translated into a large number of languages.

The Nazi campaign for the municipal elections will be an unparalleled provocation, and can be expected to be met with various actions by a whole range of organizations. The first organized initiative for the moment is the creation of the People's Movement Against Nazism, in whose leadership sit social-democratic trade-union leaders and retired military officers. The People's Movement has received moral and economic support from a large part of the social-democratic trade-union movement. But so far it has not undertaken any activities. Local groups have been set up only in five cities.

A central issue in the political struggle

So far, the Nazis have limited their activity to meetings, fly-posting and so forth. It has reported, however, that meetings have been held between Green Jackets and Nazis. If it takes place, organized collusion between the Nazis and the racist street gangs would be a qualitative leap in a dangerous direction.

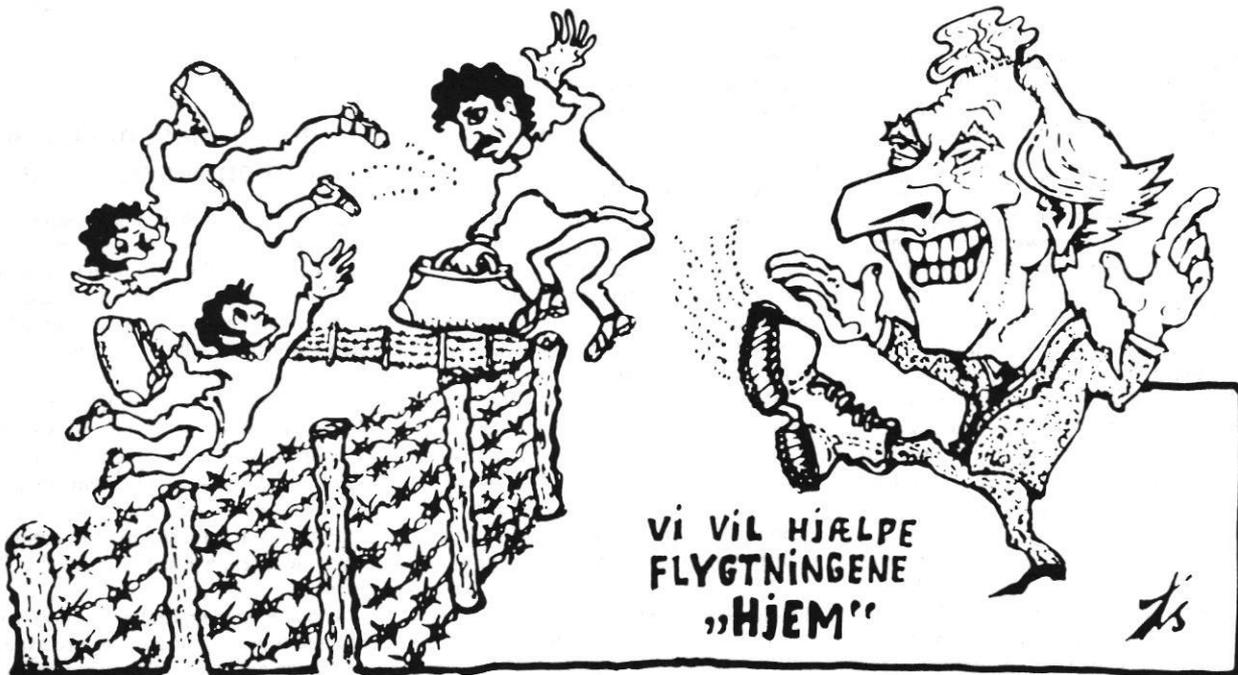
Increasingly, more or less organized gangs of young people are showing up in localities. They have undertaken various violent attacks on immigrants in recent years. In Tåstrup, a young Moroccan was murdered in May 1987. On other occasions, they have attacked immigrants'

shops, which have been smashed up and painted with racist slogans. In an isolated case, young immigrants organized a self-defence action after an attack.

In this connection, it should also be mentioned that left oriented organizations have been exposed to threats and attacks from racist organizations. The VS, the VS youth organization and the Socialist Workers' Party have all been hit.

This growth of racism and anti-racism shows that the question of the rights of refugees and immigrants has become a central issue in the political struggle in Denmark in the last couple of years. Even if today there is not the same discussion of the refugee law that there was in 1985-87, the very restrictive practice toward seekers of asylum has continued to be a central theme for work.

Alongside this is the question of thousands of foreign-born people who have had residence permits since 1984, and after an 18 month naturalization program have been granted formal equality with Danes. As regards real opportunities for housing, education and in many other respects, they have had anything but equality. They will generally be consigned to the bottom of the social ladder, exposed to discrimination and harassment. Defence of these people will therefore be an inseparable part of socialist politics in the Denmark of the 1990s. ★



Danish Premier Poul Schlüter: "With my help refugees can go 'home' "



Racists down but not out

IMMIGRANT labor is still needed in Sweden, and open racism is weaker than in most other West European countries. Nonetheless, there has been plenty of work for the anti-racist movement, which has fought some major battles with racists.

MARIANNE HJORT

SJÖBO, a small town of 15,000 inhabitants in southern Sweden, made it into all the papers. In September, alongside the general elections, it held a referendum on accepting refugees. Anti-racists, politicians, and immigrant organizations made a pilgrimage to this previously unknown rural town governed by the center Farmers' Party and the right-wing Moderates. The whole world press got into the act, writing articles about the "Sjöbo syndrome." Small neo-Nazi organizations tried to get votes, fishing in the troubled waters of growing xenophobia.

The vote went overwhelmingly against accepting refugees. Many people are still shocked after the vote, and are asking themselves whether racism has taken root in broad layers of Swedish society.

The background to the referendum was that the government Immigration Bureau annually makes agreements with the country's 300 or so municipalities by which they agree to accept a certain number of refugees in return for state subsidies. If the municipalities say no, the refugees can still

go and live where they choose, even though according to a new law they can be deprived of all subsidies. The Immigration Bureau asked the Sjöbo town government to accept just 15 refugees! But it refused, and got overwhelming support in the referendum.

History of Nazism in Sweden

Just before the referendum, there was an exposé in the press. Two leading figures from the fascist Nysvenska Rörelsen [New Swedish Movement] had drawn up an anti-refugee leaflet, and it had been printed and distributed by the Center Party in Sjöbo. At the same time, it was revealed that some of the Center Party leaders had been members of the Sveriges Nationella Förbund [National League of Sweden] in their youth.

The Sveriges Nationella Förbund were on the rampage in areas around Sjöbo in the 1930s and 1940s. They appeared in full uniform at town square rallies, and had a large number of members from the old Farmers' Party. At the same time, in "national home Sweden" there was the Nysvenska Rörelse, with roots going back into the 1920s; and the Nordiska Riksparti [Scandinavian State Party]. These three older fascist and Nazi organizations still survive, but have never been a real force, despite the fact that over the years they have put out a number of periodicals. The membership of these small sects is no more than a hundred. Moreover, there is an overlap in membership. About 500 small Nazi and fascist organizations have raised their flags in Sweden since the 1920s, many of them with a handful or less members.

While the Nazi organizations have been relatively unimportant, that does not mean that their views have not had considerable support, going far up into the top echelons of the society. During the second world war, pro-Germanism was widespread among military officers, police and big business. University students demonstrated against Jewish refugees coming to Sweden and "taking away jobs." The Swedish authorities demanded that the refugees' passports show that they were Jews. Plays critical of Hitler were stopped. The clearest example of the establishment's real attitude was when German troops on their way to

Norway were allowed transit through Sweden.

The Nordiska Riksparti has managed to gain attention in recent years by several terrorist actions against immigrants and communists. Already all its cadres have served prison terms, for crimes ranging from arson and assault to illegal possession of weapons. Its bastion in recent years was in Växjö in south central Sweden. After constant harassment of immigrants, local people got fed up. At a rally it organized, the Nordiska Riksparti's members were chased away by a large crowd of angry people. The best news photo of 1985 shows a well-dressed elderly lady of Jewish origin. With an umbrella in her right hand, she is chasing a terrified young skinhead.

It was not just in Växjö, that people reacted. An organized anti-racist movement began to develop in Sweden back in 1982. Cross-burnings against foreigners in a suburb of Stockholm led to the formation of a Working Group Against Racism. In that year, Finnish workers were fired by the Swedish-owned Finland ferry company, Svea Corona. A strong outcry among trade-unionists, immigrants and solidarity organizations forced the owners to reinstate the Finnish workers and pay them about a million Swedish crowns [about \$150,000] in compensation.

International collaboration with anti-racist groups

Out of the first Working Group grew the Riksförbundet Stoppa Rasismen [National League to Stop Racism]. After barely three years, this organization has thousands of members in various localities and independent groups throughout the country.

Big demonstrations and direct actions, such as against racist police brutality in Stockholm, have been characteristic of this movement. Conscious international collaboration with anti-racist movements in Britain, France and Denmark, among other countries, started last spring in connection with the French elections and Le Pen's gains.

Stoppa Rasismen first got going as a recognized organization in a big protest action a year ago against the Sverigeparti [Sweden Party] in Stockholm's subway stations, where the Sverigeparti and its gang of skin-

heads had been selling neo-Nazi publications and distributing leaflets quite undisturbed for a whole period.

The Sverigeparti had been created by a fusion of a broadly racist Stockholm local party (the Framstegsparti, or Progress Party) and a harder nosed neo-Nazi group (Bevara Sverige Svenskt, Keep Sweden Swedish). This last group had taken its ideas from the English National Front. According to information from the British anti-fascist magazine, *Searchlight*, Swedish members of the Sverigeparti went to Ireland for military training. Some members of the National Front came to live in the Stockholm area quite openly to train Swedish skinheads.

“No Nazis in our workplace”

For a month last spring, Stoppa Rasismen carried out its subway action. In the stations, 80 anti-racists demonstrated against the Sverigeparti members. The response from the public was enormous, and Stockholm transport workers joined the demonstrators with signs saying, “No Nazis in our workplace!”

The actions ended up in a big demonstration in Sergelstorg, Stockholm’s main square, with the support of several unions, associations of foster parents and others. For several Saturdays after that, unorganized people, especially youth, gathered to protest against the Sverigeparti’s vociferous racism.

The Sverigeparti quickly split into two sections. A contributing cause was the subway actions, but an earlier division was involved. The harder-line section took the name Sverigedemokraterna [Sweden’s Democrats], and ran candidates in several municipal elections, as well as the parliamentary elections. It did not get a foothold anywhere. Rather the result was a setback, according to the party itself. An attempt to ride on the tide of the Sjöbo referendum failed for these National Front supporters.

An analysis of the election results for the extreme right groups shows a clear retreat throughout the country. Likewise, the other parties that can be described as anti-immigrant suffered losses. The big exception was the referendum result in Sjöbo. Unfortunately, it could be an exception that becomes the rule. Throughout Sweden there are many municipalities where anti-immigrant politicians can look forward to winning referendums against refugees.

At the same time, official Swedish immigration policy is becoming more restrictive. Right now, a law is being prepared, which if adopted, will condemn more and more refugees to an uncertain fate. The ultra-right parties have also certainly not given up the game, even if they made no breakthroughs in the election. They are going to do their utmost to ride on racism’s new found respectability after Sjöbo in order to strengthen themselves.

This was also a development that could have international repercussions. The week after the referendum in Sweden, the leaders of the ultra-right-oriented Progress parties in Norway and Denmark announced that they were also for referendums in their countries.

For anti-racists, it is all the more important to develop international contacts and to see to it that the experience from the

Swedish anti-racist movement and from the struggle against the referendum can be fruitful in other countries. ★



Poisonous roots growing underground

ONE OF THE major importers of labor from the third world, West Germany also has strong racist and ultra-right wing nationalistic traditions. The following article describes the way that they interact and the potential for an ultra-right breakthrough comparable to the Le Pen vote in the spring 1988 elections in France.

HANS-JÜRGEN SCHULZ

THE FASCIST state was smashed in Germany in 1945 but not fascism. The Allies were, in the final analysis, not interested in that. A mass anti-fascist movement was crushed in embryo, when the people’s and anti-fascist committees that had developed spontaneously were banned in the western-occupied zones by the military authorities as early as June 6, 1945. (The war ended on May 8.) Instead, a dictatorship was imposed to reeducate the country in order to build up an anti-socialist oriented parliamentary democracy based on capitalist property relations.

While revolutionary tendencies and movements were obstructed or repressed, the military governments based themselves on the Nazis’ bourgeois collaborators and right-wing social democrats. Many emigrés were not allowed to return. The decisive thing was that the Nazi state apparatus and social institutions were only superficially purged. Only those who were most incriminated were removed. Otherwise, these structures were maintained. Even in the British zone, for which a Labour Party government was responsible, over three-quarters of the judges and district attorneys were former Nazi party members. Elsewhere the percentage was even higher.

Under these conditions, fascist ideology was not combated, and it lived on, as soon shown by rampant anti-Communism, among many former party members (about

8.5 million) and Nazi-indoctrinated youth. Thus, for years hardly any young people joined the newly established parties. A year and a half after the war, an opinion poll showed that still less than a third of West Germans considered themselves anti-Nazi. Twelve years after the end of the Third Reich, one in every three West Germans wanted a new Nazi party or at least were not opposed, while only 38% thought that Jews should live in Germany.

Literature prettifying Nazism

Anti-fascism has only become predominant in the generation that has come up since the youth revolt of 1968. At the same time, the fascist undercurrent of course weakened, but nonetheless has maintained itself and could even revive. In 1980, polls showed that five and a half million West Germans (13% of the population) had a fascist view of the world, and another 15 million (37% of the population) had “authoritarian inclinations.” This potential up until now has been tapped by the conservative parties, but in crisis situations some of it has gone to the fascists. For the future also, it cannot be ruled out that this may happen.

Literature presenting Nazism in a heroic, prettied-up way has been published on a large scale in the recent period. The “land-



serhefte" [booklets portraying adventures of German soldiers during the last world war] are aimed at young people, and sing the praises of valor and bravery in a gripping style. Despite their high

price, the books written in the Spandau prison for war criminals by Hitler's armaments' minister Speer (*Memoirs and Spandau Notebook*) have become best sellers, with the first selling 460,000 copies and the second, 365,000.

In 1973, Thies Christophersen, a former SS corporal in Auschwitz, published abroad a book entitled *The Auschwitz Myth*, which flatly denied that mass murder had taken place there, and presented the concentration camp as a humanitarian internment camp. Despite being banned in West Germany, over six years it sold 80,000 copies.

These examples show that there is still a high degree of receptivity to fascist ideas, even if this does not lead to any readiness to act. Overtly fascist organizations have generally remained insignificant. It is true that in the first years after the war, they topped 10% in some state elections, and they were able to repeat this performance in the economic crisis at the end of the 1960s. Nonetheless, such electoral spurts have remained episodic.

In the 1969 national elections, the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) peaked, with 1.4 million votes (4.3%). After that it quickly declined, and in 1983 it got only 100,000 votes (0.2%). Contributing to such poor results is the fact that for a long time the most influential fascist organizations and publications have been calling for a vote for the Christian Democrats.

Since 1980, we can once again see a slow rise of the fascist forces. The number of members, not counting sympathizing organizations, has risen from 17,000 to 25,000. A regroupment has also taken place. So, it is necessary to take a look at the currents in the fascist camp.

Most attention has been aroused by the fact that in the last year and a half groups are appearing again that openly propagate the program and emblems of Nazism, including the banned swastika. In their ranks are only a very few old Nazis. At present, they are recruiting mainly among radicalized young members of other fascist organizations, but they are also drawing substantially from uprooted youth and skinheads.

In quite legal combat sports groups in the 1970s, more than a thousand of these Nazis got military training and education in how

to use explosives. Many arms caches were established. The results of this were soon seen. In 1979, assassination, bombing and arson attempts began on a larger scale, mainly against immigrants and left-wing institutions, such as bookstores and party headquarters.

The high point of this was the September 26, 1980, bombing of the popular Munich October Festival. With the clear aim of political destabilization, a bomb was set off in the midst of a crowd, killing 13 and wounding 211. After some hesitation, the state apparatus moved energetically against this threat, and at least 15 gangs were smashed. As a result, this tactic was essentially abandoned in 1983, at least by the most important "führers."

Skinheads often attack immigrants and the left

At present, the Nazi groups have about 1,500 members and a similar number of sympathizers. The most important is the Freiheitliche Arbeiterpartei (FAP, Freedom Workers' Party), led by Michael Kühnen. Some of these groups have close international connections. So far they are limiting themselves mainly to indoctrination, provocative actions and occasional attacks. Skinheads (who number about 2,000), however, often attack immigrants and left headquarters. They are responsible for a series of murders. The number of these is unknown, because the authorities have long classified the crimes of the skinheads as "non-political," and therefore not kept any special account of them.

Today, the FAP is concentrating its forces on some localities where it is running slates in the municipal elections under the slogan "Throw out the foreigners — National Unity." It is hoping for some spectacular successes in order to get up the momentum for a regroupment of forces.

The danger is not that the Nazi groups, which are building up social demagogic agitation, may win a bigger political influence, but that terrorist gangs can be recruited among them that might be used against the workers' movement and particularly immigrant workers.

Owing to ideological differences and personal ambitions, the fascist camp was for a time splintered into 150 different organizations. This division has been considerably reduced. Today, three-quarters of the fascists belong to two organizations, the Deutsche Volksunion (DVU, German People's Union) and the NPD.

The DVU, led by Dr. Frey, is a political association consisting mainly of old fascists. The membership is well advanced in years and mostly inactive. It grows its strength from the influence of the *Deutsche Nationalzeitung*, which has a circulation of 130,000 and is one of the largest weekly papers, and from a book-publishing operation. This is tied up with considerable financial strength. Moreover, through a

strong system of alliances, Dr. Frey managed to bring together a series of other organizations and informal circles, largely overcoming the previous fragmentation.

With 6,200 members and a youth organization of 750, the NPD is the only fascist organization that has organizational significance nationally, based on the activity of its members. In the 1987 federal parliamentary elections, it got 227,000 votes (0.6%). However, it would be an illusion to judge its influence and possibilities from this result.

In West Germany, there are about 50 reactionary and openly fascist publicists and theoreticians. To some extent under the influence of the New Right in France, they have been working loosely together to modernize a previously backward-looking ideology. On the basis of the contemporary relationship of political forces and the general problems, they have been trying to redefine national and social goals and to work out a corresponding program that can also attract the conservative forces.

For this work, they have at their disposal a series of monthly magazines, such as *Deutschland-Magazin*, *Nation Europa*, *MUT* [initials spelling the word "courage"], *Neue Zeit*, *Elemente* and *Criticon*, which have circulations running from 5,000 to 70,000; and also big-name conservative dailies such as *Die Welt* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*. Through these publications, relatively broad layers can be influenced.

This "New Right" either rejects Nazism or pushes it into the background. The concepts and theories of Nazism are barely propagated by these publicists. Instead they call for a conservative renewal or revolution. Even democracy and the right of self-determination are represented, through the call for referendums and direct election of the federal president. Social problems are taken up in a demagogic way ("jobs for Germans"). The destruction of the environment is portrayed as a result of overpopulation owing to immigration.

"Preserving national and cultural integrity"

Instead of the old nationalism and "Greater Germany," a Europe of the peoples is propagated, the pivot of which is a reunited Germany including East Germany and the old eastern territories, and often also Austria and South Tyrol. Finally, this German-dominated Europe is to free the old continent from dependency on the two superpowers and increase its military strength accordingly.

Instead of discredited racism, they call for respect for the natural inequality of human beings and for preserving the national and cultural integrity of the immigrant workers, who on this "humane basis" ought to be sent back to their homelands. Class struggle and special-interest group egoism are to be overcome through national solidarity. In daily life, this all too often



WEST GERMANY

**"Turks out":
racist graffiti in
West
Germany (DR)**



The
strongest of
the
fundamentalist
leagues is the AMGT,

which is directed by the Welfare Party (formerly the MSP, Milli Selamet Partisi, National Salvation Party) led by N. Erbakan. It is financed by the Arab oil states, and was organized by non-Turkish members of the Muslim Brotherhood in the early and mid-1970s, through systematic construction of Islamic centers and Koranic schools. These institutions were transferred to the AMGT officially in the early 1980s.

According to the estimates of the German intelligence services, it has 19,000 members. It itself claims 60,000. It has its own daily, the *Milli Gazete* ["National Gazette"]. It plans to build its own trade union, which can be based on the factory council members it already has in big plants such as Ford in Cologne.

The Saudi-financed League of Islamic Societies and Communities under C. Kaplan takes an even more radical line. It was founded in 1984. It is not yet known how many members it has. But it has been able to organize rallies of up to 3,000 people.

Another fundamentalist current is the Union of Islamic Cultural Centers in Europe (AIKMB), organized by the Süleymali secret dervish order. It has at least 18,000 members, and places special emphasis on youth work.

Religious and social indoctrination

All these leagues, except the Turkish Federation, whose headquarters is in Frankfurt, have their center in Cologne, from which they direct their members in all the West European countries. They do not consciously intervene in West German politics but recruit supporters for later work in Turkey. And they combat progressive Turkish and Kurdish associations by terrorist means. Their members are bound together through intense religious, cultural and social indoctrination, and are almost entirely cut off from West German society. Their common goal is to organize cadres for the struggle for a fascist or Islamic fundamentalist Turkish state with a nationalist and expansionist orientation.

Turkish immigrant workers belong overwhelmingly to the working class, even if in most cases to a first-generation proletariat. It is worrying that fascist and fundamentalist currents have been able to win such strong support among them. ★

turns into unbridled xenophobia, anti-Communism and chauvinism.

As a result of the developing crisis, in recent years readiness to vote for reactionary and fascist parties has increased, especially among farmers and other middle layers, but apparently also among the unemployed and recipients of social welfare. Readiness to act in support of these parties has, however, increased only insignificantly. Thus, reactionary groupings — such as the "Republicans" who have no party organization worthy of the name — have been able, through populist demagoguery, to get up to 3% of the vote in state parliamentary elections.

With an expenditure of 2 million marks and no slogan but "Foreigners out," the DVU managed to get 3.4% of the vote in 1987 in Bremen, although their campaign did not include a single rally or public speech. It was conducted only through advertisements and mailings, without any party organization. Even their candidates joined the party only shortly before the election.

The DVU relied almost exclusively on xenophobia: "Germany for the Germans"; "Stop the immigration of foreigners...expel the criminal foreigners and asylum-seekers. German jobs for German workers."

In other state parliamentary elections, they have called mainly for defending farmers against agribusiness through tax relief and restricting imports, and for supporting the professional middle classes, but also for protecting the environment. In most of the state parliamentary elections the formerly divided fascist and reactionary forces (the "Republicans") have been able to get about 5% of the vote.

Fascists' organizational weaknesses

If the fascists were to succeed in building up a stronger and more effective organization, they could now, at least for a time, get scores of between 5% and 10%. Their organizational weakness comes from the fact that the members of existing reactionary mass organizations (especially the veterans' organizations and associations of former inhabitants of the eastern territories) are elderly, and many employed in the state

apparatus will not commit themselves openly for fear of repercussions that may harm their jobs.

Today, there is an attempt to bring together all these forces. On the basis of a renovated program and encouraged by their political rise in recent years, the DVU and NPD have developed de facto collaboration. They are jointly preparing for the European elections, in which they expect a breakthrough. They are also trying to win over the "Republicans" to this project. If that is accomplished, and there is no credible political alternative, then the united right could achieve successes in West Germany comparable to those of the National Front in France.

Turkish immigrant workers

Fascist and other reactionary organizations among the Turkish immigrant workers are a special case. While the left organizations in this milieu and among the Kurds have suffered sharp losses in membership, in the last decade radical right-wing leagues have been built up, and the danger exists that they may become predominant.

One such is the fascist-like Turkish Federation (ADÜTDF), or Grey Wolves, which were organized by the MÇP [Milli Çaliskanlar Partisi, National Workers' Party] led by Türkes, which was formally called the MHP [Milli Hareket Partisi, National Action Party]. This organization is structured in accordance with idea of a strong leader [*Führerprinzip*], extremely nationalistic (every nation "wages a merciless struggle to impose...its authority over others") and racist ("the Turkish race is more valuable than all other races").

Despite strong adaptation to Islamic ideology, the Turkish Federation has been almost overwhelmed in recent years by aggressive Islamic fundamentalism. Between 1981 and 1987, its membership fell from 23,000 to 10,000. And in October 1987, it was further weakened by the breakdown of the Turkish Islamic Union (TIKDB), which is linked to the IDP [Islahatçı Demokrasi Partisi, Democratic Reform Party, a Muslim religious party]. The two organizations are supposed to have about equal strength.

Mexican PRT comrade kidnapped

JOSE RAMON GARCIA GOMEZ, a leader of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT, Mexican section of the Fourth International) in the state of Morelos, was kidnapped from his home on December 16, 1988. His wife and his comrades have launched an international appeal for his safe return. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Rosario Ibarra, both candidates in the July 1988 presidential elections, as well as Monsignor Mendes Arceo, Bishop of Cuernavaca, many federal deputies, and thousands of workers and young people have already signed this appeal.

To Amnesty International, human rights organizations, political organizations and unions in Mexico and in the world:

COMRADE José Ramon Garcia Gomez, former mayoral candidate for the town of Cuautla in Morelos state, organizer of the People's Defense Committees created after July 6, 1988, and leader of the PRT in Morelos state, was kidnapped on Friday, December 16, 1988, at 5pm.

The kidnapping took place when he left his house at number 56, calle Privada de las Palmas, in Colonia San José on his way to a meeting of the Cardenas Front of Morelos, scheduled to take place downtown.

He was traveling alone in a black 1976 Volkswagon, license plate UPW 272, registered in the state of Quintana Roo, which is also missing.

On the day of his disappearance, his house was under surveillance all morning by six undercover agents, stationed in two automobiles, a Ford Fairmont and a Volkswagon, both white and neither having a license plate. The police had spent the morning questioning neighbors about the personal and family life of the kidnapped comrade.

We also know, through statements by the local police, that other illegal detentions of this kind have taken place by order of the secretariat of the interior in the government. No judicial procedures are underway involving this comrade. He has committed no crime, unless his political activity in working against electoral fraud can be considered as such.

For our part, we have met with the country's minister of the interior and with the governor of the state of Morelos, who both deny any knowledge of these facts, and deny having him held. To the contrary, oddly, they assert that they know for a fact that at the time of his kidnapping, the dis-

appeared comrade was on his way to a meeting in an entirely different state of the republic — Guerrero state, to Atoyac, known as a center of guerilla activity.

We refute this police statement which has as its only goal the cover-up and justification of a brutal repression of our leading comrade.

We wish to state that at this very moment,

THE REACTION to the disappearance of José Ramon Garcia Gomez was immediate and massive, a reflection of the strength of the popular movement in the state of Morelos. Simultaneous demonstrations were held on December 16 in both Cuautla and Cuernavaca, the capital of the state.

From December 19 to 23, other leaders of the popular movement went on hunger strike. Members of the Church Base Committees sent a petition to the Bishop of Cuernavaca asking for his intervention.

A mass rally with his wife, Ana Santander de Garcia and presidential candidates Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Rosario Ibarra, brought together 4,000 people on December 24 to demand his immediate freedom. In the days that followed, members of the PRT in Cuernavaca were harassed by the police who wanted to force them to abandon their activities, and the PRT headquarters in Cuernavaca was ransacked, all of the campaign material on Ramon Garcia being destroyed.

In Mexico City, the PRT called on the deputies. Four parliamentary factions presented a motion to the Chamber to ask that the Parliamentary Commission on Human Rights take charge of the affair. This commission sent letters to the Ministry of the Interior and to the governor of Morelos state demanding an inquiry. Faced with popular pressure, on December 29 the secretary of the interior requested the presence of the governor of Morelos and the Federal Procurer General. The next day, the governor named a special inspector to look into the matter.

Hundreds of union activists, activists in mass organizations, left political parties or Indian organizations "disappear" every year in Mexico and other Latin American countries. Today, the estimates of the disappeared in Mexico are near 800.

To demand the safe return of José Ramon, telegrams should be sent immediately to:

● Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Presidente Constitucional, Estados Unidos Mexicanos, Palacio Nacional, Mexico D.F., Mexico;

● Fernando Gutierrez Barrios, Secretario de Gobernacion, Bucarell 99, Mexico D.F., Mexico;

● Antonio Riva Palacio Lopez, Gobernador Constitucional, Estado de Morelos Palacio de Gobierno, Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico. ★



given the seriousness of the facts that we are announcing, we are in the process of demanding that the national Chamber of Deputies constitute a commission of inquiry on these serious events.

We demand of the Salinas de Gortari government the immediate liberation and safe return of our comrade.

This is why we are addressing the international community to ask for its immediate solidarity with our cause — purely and simply the defense of human rights in Mexico — and we ask that there be organized demonstrations and rallies by solidarity groups in front of all embassies of the Mexican government, plus telegrams sent to Salinas de Gortari (see box), so that our comrade reappears alive and well and is immediately released. ★