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INPRECOR

SOLIDARITY WITH THE PORTUGUESE WORKERS



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editorial

INPRECOR is a new Trotskyist journal that will appear every two weeks under the editorship of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Its aim is to fill a vacuum that has existed in the revolutionary-Marxist press. Increasingly, revolutionary militants have felt the need for news and analysis on the international workers movement and world political events in order better to contribute to building the revolutionary international, to place their own action in a world context, and to strengthen political ties among the militants of various countries. Neither the national organs of Trotskyist sections, nor the theoretical reviews of our movement are able to fully carry out the task of offering this type of news and analysis on a regular basis. That will be the function of INPRECOR, which will be published in four languages: English, French, Spanish, and German.

INPRECOR No.0, the English edition of which was published May 9, carried an appeal for subscriptions. With this issue, No.1, we begin regular fortnightly publication of this new journal of the Fourth International. We recall again that because of its international mode of distribution, INPRECOR can survive only if a sufficient number of subscriptions are taken. The initial response has been encouraging. We urge readers who have not yet subscribed to do so quickly.

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WILSON, AT AN IMPASSE

by JOHN ROSS

In the first ten weeks of the new Labour government in Britain the trade-union and Labour party bureaucracy have been attempting to give some credibility to the "Social Contract" strategy that was Labour's main plank in the election. But so far all Wilson and company have proved is that under the present social, economic, and political conditions in Britain it is impossible to recreate a credible integrationist strategy of the type that Labour pursued after its electoral victories in 1964 and 1966.

The Economic Crisis

The basic concept of the Social Contract is that the Labour government will make concessions to the working class on the social field in return for which the trade-union bureaucracy will agree to a voluntary incomes policy. The first basic obstacle to the Social Contract is that the present economic situation of British capitalism allows no room for making any significant concessions to the working class.

The economic crisis in Britain has reached very severe proportions. Projections for the rate of inflation are as high as 15-20 percent. The balance of payments deficit this year will probably exceed £3,000 million. Unemployment is rising and is expected to reach 800,000 or 1 million by Christmas. Some sectors, for example construction and auto, are already in recession. Industrial output this year will fall by around 2-5%.

Most important of all, the profits and liquidity situation is disastrous. At the height of the 1970-71 recession the net deficit on flow of funds for British capitalist industries was slightly over £900 million. This year already the projected deficit is £5,000 million. The Economist spelt out very clearly the implications of this for British capitalism. It stated that firms "will be unable to borrow anything like £5,000 million. . . . Instead they will be forced to scrap investment, declare redundancies, and sometimes declare themselves bankrupt."

The economic situation is now producing something close to despair inside the ruling class. The influential National Institute of Economic and Social Research noted in its March report: "It is not often that a government finds itself confronted with the possibility of a simultaneous failure to achieve all four of its main policy objectives -- of adequate economic growth, full employment, a satisfactory balance of payments and reasonably stable prices." This prognosis is clearly shared by the central apparatus of the state. This April, in an unprecedented move, the Treasury refused to publish its projections for the evolution of the economy next year.

The most dramatic expression of the views of the ruling class has been given by the stock market. Since the high point of May 1972 the value of the stock market has fallen by 50%.

Under these conditions the economic concessions the Labour government has made to the working class -- freezing rents for one year, cutting milk and bread prices, increasing pensions -- are merely drops in the ocean, no matter how popular in the short-term. The real living standard of the working

class is already falling. It will drop by about 2-5 percent this year. For some sections of the workers, it will fall still further. This is quite apart from the massive cutbacks that are now hitting housing, health, education, and all areas of social expenditure.

and the Workers Response

Despite the extremely small concessions the Labour government can make to the workers, the trade-union bureaucracy is of course making valiant efforts to sell the Social Contract to the masses. Len Murray, Secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), declared that the new Labour government had "put forward a very positive and coherent programme" and warned: "If we have nothing to give government they will have nothing to give us." In line with this view the TUC has already pledged to try to keep wage increases (except for the lowest-paid workers) down to the rate of increase in the cost of living and to try to intervene to prevent strikes, particularly wildcat strikes.

But the problem for the government is twofold. First, the real power in the trade-union movement does not lie with the TUC but with the individual unions. While the individual bureaucrats also try to support the Social Contract, the relationship of forces between the masses and the bureaucracy within the individual unions is far less favourable to the leadership than that between the masses as a whole and the TUC. Second, the relationship of forces has been turned against the bureaucracy by the working-class victories won against the bourgeoisie in the miners strike, in the fall of the Heath government, and -- since Labour came to power -- in the successful strike of engineering workers against the seizure of their union's assets by the National Industrial Relations Court. All these struggles demonstrated to very wide layers of the working class, including those that did not enter the fight against the Tory incomes policy, that militant struggle pays.

Because of the economic and social crisis and the relationship of forces that now exists between the classes, the return of the Labour government has not been followed by a cessation of real struggle. While there has been a slackening of mass struggle compared to the period before the election, there has been no downturn on the order of the ones following the elections of 1964 and 1966. Nor has there been a slackening of wage demands. Despite the fact that most unions have accepted Phase Three of the Incomes Policy, there have been at least four important actions by sections of the working class on basic trade-union questions since the Labour government was elected. The first was a strike and demonstration of 15,000 London teachers on their claim for payment for the high cost of living. The second is the strike of local government workers in London on the same issue. The third was the strike by engineering workers. The fourth was a demonstration of 5,000 nurses. This is in addition to certain smaller actions like the strike of bank employees.

What is significant about all these struggles is the extremely minimal influence the Labour government has been able to exert in getting them called off. Employment Secretary Michael Foot did persuade the engineering union to call off its

overtime ban and to accept the employers' pay offer -- that had been expected anyway. But Foot totally failed to persuade the same union to break its policy of non-recognition of the Industrial Relations Court. Pleas by the Labour government were also rejected by the local government workers and teachers.

Labour has also had no success in persuading the union conferences to reduce their pay claims for the autumn and winter. The electricians' union voted against the advice of its executive to re-open negotiations on the wage agreement it had concluded under Phase Three of the Incomes Policy. The teachers' union is putting in for a 37 percent increase on the basic rate. The Post Office workers and seamen have decided to ask for massive increases. The miners and engineering workers will almost certainly decide to put in for very large wage increases -- between 25 and 100 percent -- at their conference later in the year.



A further cause of concern for the Labour government is a possible clash on the so-called threshold agreements. These are a very distorted form of sliding scale of wages whereby for every increase in prices in a year over 7 percent workers receive a small increase in pay. These have now been negotiated by about 4 million workers. Although these agreements do not offer much protection for the workers wages, for the bourgeoisie they are absolutely disastrous in a situation of 15 or 20 percent inflation. The March 29 Financial Times reported that the Confederation of British Industry, the main employers' association, was terrified of a "threshold bandwagon" with as many as 10 million workers negotiating for threshold agreements. Certainly pressure is mounting in the working class for some form of protection against inflation. Labour is worried about this prospect; Dennis Healy, Chancellor of the Exchequer, went out of his way in his budget speech to attack threshold agreements.

While the most likely prospect is not an immediate upsurge on the wages question, it is nevertheless clear that the central point of the Social Contract, the Incomes Policy, is already gravely undermined. A mass of combustible material is gathering which in the autumn or more probably in the spring will almost certainly lead to an even bigger working class explosion than that of 1972 or of last winter.

Chile, Ireland and the Common Market

But if Labour is already running into problems on the wages front, this is nothing compared to the contradictions it is already caught in on other fronts.

The first flash point has become Chile. When it was in opposition, the Labour party adopted a demagogic leftist position on Chile. It pledged to cut off aid and to end diplomatic recognition of the junta. Allende's ambassador was given a standing ovation at the Labour party conference. But once in office, Labour found itself in a very different situation. Washington is undoubtedly exerting very big pressure. Diplomatic relations with Chile have not been cut off. At the meeting of the Club of Paris representatives of the Labour government did not vote against the decision to let the junta postpone repayments of more than £300 million in international credits. Labour's decision to cut off direct British aid, which amounts to less than £500,000, has not succeeded in disguising its real policy. The issue came to a head with Labour's decision to allow £50 million worth of naval ships and equipment to be delivered to the junta. This decision has been widely condemned inside and outside the Labour party. Two junior ministers, Eric Heffer and Joan Lester, have attacked Labour's policy publicly, as has the general secretary of the Labour party. Meanwhile, two members of the Cabinet, Michael Foot and Tony Benn, are known to be leading a fight inside the government against the decision. Workers repairing aero engines in East Kilbride and building frigates in Clydeside have blacked military orders for Chile, and on May 5 some 8,000 to 10,000 people demonstrated in London against the government's decision.

The second flash point has become Ireland. The results of the general election in the North of Ireland were disastrous for the policy of the British ruling class. Of twelve seats in the North only one was won by a candidate supporting the Sunningdale agreement drawn up by the British government and the Dublin regime. The election was also followed by a new military offensive by the Provisional IRA, half a reaction against Protestant and army violence and half an attack to force Labour's hand. This campaign reached as high a level as any in the last five years and refuted the myth that the military capacity of the IRA has been broken by the repression. In this context, the British government was unable to increase its concessions to the Loyalists, thus precipitating the Loyalist general strike and the fall of the Northern Ireland Executive. Labour is now in an impossible position. If it imposes direct rule with new concessions to the Protestant Loyalists this will both further cement the Republican masses around the IRA and will almost certainly be unacceptable to sections of the Labour party. On the other hand if Labour goes for the withdrawal of troops, which is most unlikely, this policy would result in the government being brought down in Parliament, signaling the complete defeat of the British bourgeoisie's political strategy for Ireland.

Labour is caught in a dilemma by these developments. On the one hand there is increasing pressure in Britain for the withdrawal of the troops from the North of Ireland. Labour has been forced to fly certain kites on this issue. Defence Minister Mason is reported to have stated that the troops

could not be kept in Ireland indefinitely. On the other hand the Labour government has refused even such minimal concessions as transferring the Price sisters, the main Irish political prisoners in Britain, to jails in the North of Ireland where their relatives could visit them. It has also refused to really end internment -- let alone withdraw the British troops. The only significant concession made has been to legalise the political arm of the Provisional IRA. But even this was counterbalanced by legalising the Ulster Volunteer Force -- a Protestant organisation, formerly terrorist. While the political (as opposed to military) weakness of the IRA is still a big problem in the situation, criticism of Labour's policy in Ireland is mounting steadily.

On the key issue of British membership in the Common Market, Labour is caught in almost insoluble contradictions. For the dominant sections of the British ruling class staying in the EEC is a life-or-death question. But for electoral reasons, when it was in opposition Labour pledged itself to renegotiate the terms of British entry and to hold a referendum on the outcome of the renegotiation. It is not likely that either the ruling class or the Labour party could allow such a referendum to take place. It is openly acknowledged that the overwhelming majority of the working class and a substantial majority of the population as a whole favours withdrawal from the Common Market. Labour is therefore trapped. To allow the referendum would be to completely break with the immediate interests of the bourgeoisie. The ruling class would at once bring down the government and would mount enormous pressure to split the Labour party. The Labour leadership, which does not at all want to withdraw from the EEC, is therefore very carefully avoiding coming out openly against the Market. Foreign Secretary Callaghan said in the House of Commons on April 3 that "we are trying to see whether the others will enable us to get a fair bargain which, when put to the British people, will enable us to stay in."

If Labour does not allow a referendum on EEC membership, the anger of the working class and even of the left of the Labour party will be enormous. The Labour government will try to buy time on this. It will try to continue the negotiations with the EEC until at least after the next general election. But the Common Market issue is a time bomb that could explode at any time and could tear the Labour party apart.

In addition to these central questions there is also a series of repressive acts that Labour is either supporting or carrying out itself. Six workers imprisoned at Shrewsbury for picketing are still in jail. The fines levied on various unions under the Industrial Relations Act are not being repaid. Labour councillors fined at Clay Cross for defying the Tory's Housing Finance Act are still being fined and disqualified from office. The armed special patrol groups are still in existence. And finally, although Labour has announced repeal of the retroactive force of the Immigration Act, it has refused to allow the husbands of immigrant women workers into the country -- a truly despicable racist decision that has been condemned even by sections of the liberal bourgeoisie.

To complete the situation, an important series of bribery and corruption scandals have broken out that directly and indirectly involve Labour politicians, including the deputy leader of the party and the leader of the House of Commons.

These contradictions and struggles reflecting the objective crisis of British imperialism all have an extremely important effect on the tempo and development of the class struggle. First they mean that Labour, far from getting two years of relative class peace as it did after 1964, has been almost immediately confronted with a series of struggles -- struggles

that show clearly the qualitative decline of Labour's organisational hold over the working class since the early 1960s. Secondly, it makes it extremely unlikely that Labour will be able to repeat the 1964 and 1966 experience of turning a very small majority in Parliament (in this case a little less than a majority) into a large majority and completing five years of rule.

But if Labour is already running into opposition from the working class, its relation to the ruling class is no better. Wilson's plan when he came to office was quite clear. He hoped that by granting concessions to the working class he could secure an Incomes Policy and thus win ruling class support of his government. But the ruling class remains profoundly unconvinced that the Labour government can control the working class. Day after day this is spelt out by organs of the ruling class. In the April issue of its monthly industrial relations bulletin, the Confederation of British Industry wrote: "It is, of course, well understood that the Labour Party has a special relationship with the trade union movement. . . . If indeed the proposals (for the Social Contract -- INPRECOR) were successful in bringing about industrial harmony, which was not achieved at the cost of bribery and inflation, it would be a worthy prize. Employers will, however, be sceptical and past history could not make them otherwise." It also accused the government of "acting simply as the political arm of the TUC." Similarly, the Financial Times commented on the first negotiations between the government and the TUC: "This is encouraging as far as it goes; how far it goes only experience can demonstrate. It is worth bearing in mind however that on the previous day the general secretary of the TUC had stated that it could commend policies to its members but not instruct or command them."

The Government and the Ruling Class

Most forthright of all has been The Economist, which openly condemns the Social Contract as unworkable. In its March 30 issue it wrote, "The TUC will not keep any social contracts." And in its April 19 issue, commenting on the outcome of the electrical trade union's conference, it wrote: "Mr. Wilson has been shown that the rank and file electricians have no use for the social contract. No union has moderated its wage claims since he took office. . . . the surrender to the miners is being widely quoted not only by the traditional militants but by such ultra-moderate union officials as Mr. Geoffrey Drain of the local government officers and Mr. Sidney Weighell of the railwaymen."

In this situation the chances of Labour winning any significant ruling class support for its government is just about nil. Ever since Labour failed to integrate the unions in 1964-70, the fundamental evolution of bourgeois strategy has been towards a strong state; and Labour does not fit into that perspective as a governing party. In the present conjuncture not merely a leftist government but even a weak and vacillating one is unacceptable to the ruling class. The only condition that the ruling class wants satisfied before it removes Labour from office by a parliamentary manoeuvre is ensuring that no massive working-class response, either electoral or extraparliamentary, will follow the defeat of the government. This condition has not yet been met, and the ruling class is holding back. But the bourgeoisie calculates quite consciously that the rightist policies of Labour will demoralise the working class and create the conditions whereby the Labour government can be safely overturned. Thus the Financial Times reported that "the Conservative hierarchy now believes that its best chance of winning a general election is if it can keep the government in office until at least next March when Mr.

Dennis Healy, Chancellor of the Exchequer, would be forced by economic and international pressures to produce a really draconian budget." In an attempt to prevent Labour from calling and winning a summer general election, the Tory party is retreating on the parliamentary front, for example on the Industrial Relations Act, while digging up scandals, for example on land speculation, to hurl at the Labour party.

Meanwhile integration has already broken down at so many social levels that the logic of repression and the move towards the strong state continues. Only the form of the advance has changed. Under the Tories the cutting edge of the bourgeoisie was central, governmentally-organised repression. Under great pressure from the masses, Labour in office is far less able to carry out such a policy. The cutting edge of the repression has therefore been transferred to hundreds of individual bourgeois and their agents. Thus we have seen in the last week real acts of repression by judges (imprisonment for long terms of black youths arrested for resisting the police in London), by the Industrial Relations Court (£47,000 fine against the Engineering Union), by the police (over 150 students arrested on picket lines at the University of Essex), by university authorities (suspension of eighteen students at the University of Oxford), etc. These constitute the beginning of the bourgeois counter-attack, an attack which will undoubtedly culminate in the ruling class making a determined effort to remove the Labour government.

The problem for the bourgeoisie is not whether it wants to get rid of Labour but what it can credibly replace it with. A Liberal-Conservative coalition would result in the electoral annihilation of the Liberals at the next election. A simple Tory government might lead to a violent working-class response, and in any case Heath has shown no ability in the last few years to make serious inroads into the organised strength of the working class. A grand coalition of Labour and Tories is probably impossible given the pressure of the masses on the Labour party. An openly right-wing Labour government for a few years could lead to an electoral annihilation of Labour, but this strategy relies on the bureaucrats agreeing to commit political suicide, which is not likely. The Bonapartist manoeuvrings of Powell are too dangerous for the main sections of the ruling class to see in them a solution at present.

It is therefore not likely that the political deadlock reflected in the election results (with no party gaining a majority) will be rapidly overcome. For Labour to resolve the deadlock and create a mass dynamic it would be necessary to complete a reorientation to the left. This is unlikely to occur while Labour is in office. For the ruling class to create a mass dynamic in its favour it would be necessary for it to overcome its internal divisions. But that presupposes the bourgeoisie overcoming the economic crisis to some extent. And a precondition for that is weakening considerably the organisational strength of the working class. But the ruling class is in crisis precisely because it has not been able to achieve this.

The only perspective is therefore of a definite period of bourgeois political deadlock and paralysis. The Economist, in commenting on the engineers strike, summed up its view in the following way: "Mr. Wilson's Government has had the first of what will be its many confrontations with the question 'who rules Britain' and . . . Mr. Foot and a donor with

£65,000 more money than constitutional sense have persuaded Mr. Hugh Scanlon (the Engineering Union leader) to accept their assurance that, so far as can be made legally possible, four left wing trade union leaders meeting in Peckham do. The question and the trouble will therefore recur. . . .

"This raises the gravest questions of where Britain is going constitutionally, but nobody likes to ask these questions. . . . Industrially, it is inviting a lot of strikes next winter. The unions have shown that even an illegal strike against the rule of law brings the government and anonymous capitalist peacemakers hastening to bear gifts: so it will be even harder next winter for moderate leaders to resist militant demands for electricity strikes, water strikes, other power strikes, sewage strikes, hospital strike, the lot.

"Politically, this coming groundswell of strikes reinforces the danger to Mr. Wilson that Labour . . . will find itself losing the next election after all; but its fall would not do much national good because the chastened Conservatives -- reading how the country reacted to confrontation -- now have little or no intention of resisting trade union dictation either. The militants would continue with their plans for disruption at exactly the same pace against the Conservatives as against Labour, while saying that the return of the wicked Tories had caused them to heat their actions up."

The Economist probably underestimates the temporary effect the fall of the Labour government would have on the working class. But the sour, cynical, and despairing note of this editorial well sums up the current views of the more thoughtful representatives of the ruling class. □

ERRATUM

The article "Political and Economic Crisis of the Saigon Regime," published on pp. 15-18 of INPRECOR No. 0, contains two errors. The population of South Vietnam is referred to as 27 million. The proper figure is 17 million. On page 18 the article cites NLF leader Nguyen Huu Tho as insisting on the "necessity for defining the representatives of the third force as nondemocratic." The sentence should read "necessity for defining the representatives of the third force according to their attitude toward the democratic road."

the presidential elections

(1) RESULTS OF THE SECOND ROUND

by CHARLES MICHALOUX



Giscard d'Estaing, crushed among the workers, beaten among the people under thirty-five years old, ignored by people under twenty-one and by the 3 million immigrant workers, none of whom could vote, was elected president by a minority of the French population. He will not last the seven years of his term. In fact, he will probably not even last five years.

Giscard waged a campaign dominated by time-worn incantations about the "red threat," an allusion to the possibility of members of the Communist party holding ministerial posts in a Mitterrand government. Through this campaign he managed to get 50.7 percent of the votes cast. (The abstention rate was the lowest ever in a French election, 13 percent.) As against this, François Mitterrand got 49.3 percent of the vote, that is, more than 13 million of the 27 million votes cast.

In other words, Giscard owes his election to approximately 300,000 votes out of 27 million!

The election gave a distorted reflection of the class relationship of forces (distorted to the detriment of the working class). But the vote achieved by Mitterrand was nonetheless impressive.

The Mitterrand Vote: a Class Vote

It remains to be established whether the election really amounted to an electoral expression of the struggle waged by the working class as a whole against the bourgeoisie. That is, it remains to be established whether Mitterrand's candidacy was a working-class candidacy or an operation staged by one section of the bourgeoisie against another, like the Perón campaign in Argentina, or even (under completely different circumstances) like the McGovern campaign in the United States.

To be sure, Mitterrand campaigned to become the "president of all the French people." His speeches were full of reassuring declarations to the capitalists and conciliatory overtures to the Gaullists.

Mitterrand considerably watered down the already diluted Common Program of the Union de la Gauche (Union of the Left), the program worked out just before the March 1973 legislative elections by the Communist and Socialist parties. But was there anything new in that? Was that any reason for the Trotskyist militants of the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire to reject calling for a vote to Mitterrand on the second round?*

To answer this question affirmatively -- as did certain very tiny sectors of the vanguard, both in France and internation-

ally -- would essentially mean that the decision to call or not to call for a vote for a candidate of a reformist party or bloc depends primarily on the program the party or bloc develops during an electoral campaign.

But that would be wrong. In certain situations revolutionary communists can call for a vote to a candidate, party, or bloc if that candidate, party, or bloc meets the fundamental criterion of being part of the workers movement. This can be done in spite of and against the reformist program of class collaboration developed by the candidate.

Mitterrand, the first secretary of the Socialist party, was the common candidate of the Communist party, the Socialist party, the Parti Socialiste Unifié (United Socialist party, a centrist group); and of the big central trade-union federations, the CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail -- General Confederation of Labor) and the CFTD (Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail -- French Democratic Confederation of Labor), as well as of the united teachers union, the FEN (Fédération d'Enseignement Nationale -- National Teachers Federation).

In this sense, Mitterrand was the single candidate of all the big workers organizations, with all the reformist tendencies (Stalinist, Social Democratic, and centrist)-supporting him. The only fly in the ointment was the left radicals, a bourgeois grouplet composed of flotsam and jetsam from the old Radical party, the dominant political force in the pre-second-world-war Third Republic. The left radicals' presence in the Union de la Gauche, and therefore in the alliance of forces supporting Mitterrand in both rounds of the election, obviously expresses the desire of the reformist leaders to win a stamp of approval from the moderates in order to "reassure" the petty-bourgeois layers whose votes they were after.

But nobody can seriously argue that the presence of the left radicals in the Union de la Gauche and in the alliance supporting the Mitterrand candidacy is sufficient to make the Union de la Gauche a popular front in the precise and traditional sense of the word: a coalition of reformist workers parties with one (or several) significant bourgeois parties, as was the case in France and Spain in 1936 and France and Italy in 1945.

In the last legislative elections (March 1973) the left radicals, who ran candidates on ballot slots reserved for the Socialist party, got only 2 percent of the vote, that is, less than the revolutionary candidates of the Ligue Communiste and the Lutte Ouvrière group.

Their presence in the Union de la Gauche results not from a conscious decision by a section of the bourgeoisie to try to divert the ominous rise in workers combativity through a popular-front operation, but rather from a decision by the SP and CP to try to breathe some life into a twenty-five-year-old corpse purely for purposes of electoral propaganda. Likewise, the support Mitterrand got in both rounds from a handful of dissident Gaullists reflected only the comic thrashing about provoked by the demise of the old regime. With de Gaulle and Pompidou dead, and with Chaban-Delmas still-born, these dissident Gaullists just could not bring themselves to vote for Giscard, the man who had spat in the face of their god, plotted behind the back of his apostle, and driven the last nail into the coffin of one of his saints.

But apart from this eleventh-hour support from a few Gaullists and center politicians, there was no section of the bourgeoisie that consciously adopted a policy of support to Mitterrand.

At the very most, one can say that this was a portent of what probably would have happened had Mitterrand won the election. There would have been a series of parliamentary maneuvers and blocs before and after the dissolution of the National Assembly and the holding of new legislative elections. In their campaign the militants of the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire denounced this dynamic of collaboration with a sector of the bourgeoisie -- particularly by demanding that Mitterrand not make any agreements with any significant bourgeois party as a condition for their calling for a second-round vote for him.

During the campaign Mitterrand did all he could to reassure the bourgeoisie as to his intentions; he presented himself as the only possible guarantor of social peace. But he did not, for example, accept an offer of support from Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, whom Mitterrand refused to receive.

On the morning of May 19 François Mitterrand stood as the candidate of the major reformist workers organizations, millions of whose members saw him as the way to get rid of the sixteen-year-old regime despised by the overwhelming majority of the youth and the working class. Perhaps Mitterrand found himself in that position despite himself. But that is totally secondary under the circumstances.

Revolutionary militants called for a vote for Mitterrand on May 19 in spite of his class collaborationist program, for Mitterrand was the representative of the reformist, Stalinist, Social Democratic, and centrist leaderships that still represent the majority of the organized working class. He had rallied to his candidacy an enormous popular support that was manifested in the huge campaign meetings he held in the major cities in France (150,000 in Paris, 40,000 in Toulouse, 40,000 in Grenoble, 50,000 in Marseille, 25,000 in Nantes, 25,000 in Nancy).

Revolutionary militants said to the workers: "You think that you can change things with Mitterrand, that you can finally get rid of the regime of exploitation and oppression. We do not think so, for we have confidence neither in Mitterrand nor in the leaderships that are supporting his candidacy. They will not defend the interests of the toiling masses, nor will they bring us to socialism. And we said it even before the first round, by running Alain Krivine as a candidate.

"But while we marched separately, we are prepared today to strike together to beat Giscard and the reactionaries by voting for Mitterrand. If he loses, we cannot be held responsible; if he wins, he will not be able to take advantage of any defection as an excuse not to put into effect the minimum of what he has promised.

"If Mitterrand wins, conditions will soon become more favorable to fighting for the workers and peoples demands. But the workers, right from this moment, must count only on their own struggles to win their demands and only on their own independent organization to defend their gains and go forward.

"In this battle, we warn you that Mitterrand and the reformist leaders that support him will be an obstacle in your path. If this seems unlikely now, you will soon have the experience of being able to judge them by their actions. We are ready to go through this experience with you. Against the bourgeois right-wing and far-right bloc grouped around Giscard, who is the candidate of the employers and bankers, we will vote with the workers for Mitterrand, but without giving him a blank check."

Thus, the vote for Mitterrand in no way implied any support, even critical support, for him. It was simply a vote deter-

mined by the objective effect a Mitterrand victory would have had on the development of the class struggle in France.

The Importance of the Electoral Shift to the Left

Thirteen million votes! More than 49 percent of the ballots cast! Never has the left achieved such an electoral score.

In 1936 the Popular Front candidates got about 48 percent of the vote (one-third of that going to the Radicals). In 1945 the French Social Democracy and the Communist party got about 45 percent. In both cases the political conditions were completely different from those prevailing today. The Socialists and Communists were then part of the antifascist National Union (1936) or of the Resistance (1945). The reformist parties have never come close to the vote percentage they got this time. Not in 1956 (when they got 42.6%), not in the second round of the 1965 presidential election (45.5% against de Gaulle), not in the March 1967 legislative elections (43.7%), and not in the March 1973 legislative elections (46.7%). Taking into account the increase in the number of voters and the very low abstention rate (13% in metropolitan France, not counting the colonies), such a high score incontestably reflects the upsurge of worker combativity and the aftereffects of the May 1968 general strike, the lessons of which have little by little sunk into the consciousness of a whole generation of workers.

In effect, both the Union de la Gauche formed before the March 1973 legislative elections and the Mitterrand candidacy represent the reformists' belated response to the big shake-up of May '68. Beyond the electoral promises and litanies, it is the May '68 shock wave that is now hitting French political life. And within the working class the current debate and discussion clearly revolves around the question of what road to socialism, "reformist" or "revolutionary."

This workers upsurge, now in full swing, cannot be halted (and still less broken) by an electoral setback of a few hundred thousand votes out of 27 million. It would be naive to expect the masses of the working class to draw antielectoralist conclusions: that elections don't pay off, that only struggle pays off. But certainly the workers have tested and measured their strength, and they felt victory within their grasp. There will be a few weeks of disappointment; but it will not last.

It's a contradictory thing. The unprecedented left vote will provide the struggles of the workers and youth a political perspective -- even if a reformist one -- that was lacking during the 1968 offensive; but at the same time, the results (which came close to the big 50 percent barrier, close enough to have fallen short only because of electoral fraud) will contribute to maintaining electoralist illusions. Officially, no elections are scheduled before the 1978 legislative elections and the presidential elections of 1979 (if Giscard serves a five-year term) or 1981 (if he serves a seven-year term). This obviously makes the situation somewhat difficult for the Union de la Gauche, the CP and the SP. In view of the present level of workers combativity, they will be hard put to tell the workers to "wait until next time" and to urge them to be patient.

Mitterrand himself feels this and knows it. On the night of May 19 Giscard saluted his "unfortunate opponent." Mitterrand answered by saying that "once again the formidable power of money has rushed into the breach to bar the door to the forces of labor and youth." And when he again took up his functions as first secretary of the Socialist party, Mit-

terrand even declared that there should be "no truce, no let-down" and that "the fight goes on." The Mitterrand campaign did achieve one of its objectives: the reintegration of the CP into national political life after a period of ghettoization. The idea has been put across, even to the most perspicacious section of the bourgeoisie, that there might have to be some Communist ministers in the government someday. Mitterrand and the reformist leaders know very well that in a tense, even explosive economic and social situation with a regime that will not easily find its equilibrium, they can appear as the saviors of established society. Because of the good-conduct pledges offered by the CP and the guarantees supplied by Mitterrand and the SP, a part of the bourgeoisie is much more inclined now than at the beginning of the election campaign to consider this possibility in the event of a serious crisis.

This confirms that the Union de la Gauche could become the bourgeoisie's last resort in case of crisis -- the Union de la Gauche as such, including the CP and without the addition of any new bourgeois component or any shift in alliances.

The Fall of Gaullism: an Irreversible Turn

In the newspapers the day after the second round, the bourgeoisie treated its triumph rather modestly. Was this just caution? A temporary tactic designed to take the edge off the clash between the two political and social blocs that was reflected in the cities and countryside during the election?

The real reason is at once more simple and more profound. The analysis of the elections should be viewed in the context of the differences between parliamentary and presidential regimes. Under parliamentary democracy, the government is led by members of parliament and is responsible to them. But if conflicts arise, the government can dissolve parliament and call general elections in order to find a new balance between the various bourgeois interests that are reflected in clashes between cliques, groupings, and parties.

The president (or the king) is just a figurehead and plays only a behind-the-scenes political role; he does not hold real governmental power. This is the case, for example, in Britain, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Belgium.

Under a presidential system -- the United States being the classic example -- the whole executive power is concentrated in the hands of the chief of state. The president, elected by universal suffrage, names ministers who are responsible only to him. But he does not have the power to dissolve parliament, which makes the laws. This is why a stable presidential regime -- which does not exist right now in the United States -- presupposes the existence of a large bourgeois parliamentary party capable of sustaining in parliament the policy established by the president.

In France, Gaullism set up a halfbreed and exceptional regime, especially after the 1962 referendum that established election of the president of the republic through universal suffrage. Parliamentary democracy had been paralyzed by the fragmentation of bourgeois interests, by the clashes of pressure groups that were all the more numerous because the French rural and commercial petty-bourgeoisie has solid and deep roots in the archaic social composition of French capitalist society. The 1958 constitution, as amended by the 1962 changes, authorizes the president to dissolve the National Assembly, to legislate by decree and pronouncement, and to alter the constitution through referenda, without consulting the members of parliament.

That was the Gaullist form of the "strong state," with its consequent features of abuses of power, arbitrariness, and "personal power." But this form of strong state could only be transitory. The Gaullist regime was born of the defeat of the workers in 1958. It sought to base itself on the temporary apathy of the working class and to develop a particular ideological basis: "participation." Gaullism wanted to bribe the workers with the companies' profits, that is, to give them an incentive to increase productivity by appealing to them over the heads of their organizations, both parties and trade unions. For that it was necessary to appeal to "France" directly instead of through intermediaries. The usual method was to hold referenda and plebiscites, which came one after another, the last one in 1969.

It was also necessary to destroy the existing parties, replacing them with broad associations supposedly above classes and parties: first the UNR (Union Nationale de la République -- National Union of the Republic), then the UD-V (Union Démocratique de la Cinquième République -- Democratic Union of the Fifth Republic), then the UDR (Union pour la Défense de la République -- Union for the Defense of the Republic). These formations were supposed to be instruments with which to gather together the votes of an atomized electorate. But this mode of operation did not work for long. The 1963 miners strike marked the beginning of the workers' resistance. The May '68 general strike was the final blow that was to bring down the Bonaparte one year later. Once the man of providence had disappeared and the electoral work of his grand assembly had been reduced to purely human activity, the epigones of Gaullism could but stumble along awaiting the system's final demise.

After the euphoric expansionism of the 1960s had faded away, the "new society" and the "contracts for progress" promised by Chaban-Delmas in his campaign were no more than pale reflections of the old Gaullist dreams of "participation." The UDR, which in any case had never been able to become "the great association transcending left and right," was even less able to play that role. Falling back in defeat, it fell to the rank of just one bourgeois party among others -- and one less homogeneous than the others to boot. Chaban's defeat, his 15 percent of the vote, represented the definitive defeat of Gaullism. But it was only the culmination of a long process that began right after the coup of May 13, 1958. The death blow was struck in May 1968; the rest was inevitable and irreversible.

Giscard's Regime: on a Razor's Edge

After some hesitation, the bourgeoisie soon understood that Giscard could handle things better than Chaban. In his campaign Giscard hardly bothered with the great Gaullist projects for participation or contracts for progress. He did not propose a policy based on class collaboration, since he foresaw the inevitable confrontations that will probably take place in September, after summer vacations.

Chaban warned about this: "We see France threatened with being divided into two hostile camps that will lead the country to an impasse, with social conflicts breaking out in the factories and in the streets." But Giscard knew that this was the situation he would face after this campaign in any case. He preferred to concentrate on gathering up the forces that would enable him to deal with that situation. He preferred to group together under the protective wing of the big bourgeoisie (of which he is one of the best representatives) all the smatterings of frightened and conservative men and women through the vehicle of a clever electoral patchwork.

At least in the early days of his government, Giscard will probably try to hold back the flow of workers' demands by discharging some ballast. He might attempt to justify his social pretensions by decreeing a few measures -- maybe even "spectacular" ones -- that he will make up for later by inflation. Inflation will continue at its present ominous rate and will soon push to the fore the important problem of unemployment. It is understandable that the electoral victors are not strutting about. They are extremely worried. While clouds are gathering dangerously above a field of social struggles, the institutional sky above is not exactly clear either. Giscard stands at the head of a transitory and incongruous coalition. He has to dispose of the contradictions of a regime conceived by and for de Gaulle. He has to try to institute a presidential regime that can eliminate the threat of insoluble conflict between the executive that he embodies and an assembly that threatens once again to fall into fragmentation and shifting alliances.

But to institute such a regime he would need a solid conservative party that could absorb all the Gaullist and moderate remnants. And all he has is a fragile electoral coalition in which his party (the Independent Republicans) constitutes only a small minority and which includes moderates whose docility is up for sale, and a UDR -- or at least part of it -- worried about preserving its now-dead orthodoxy.

Although in the immediate future he has an interest in not prolonging the period of instability and the electoral period, which resulted in the postponement of a series of measures that he regards as urgent, Giscard will nevertheless have to try to develop a more solid parliamentary base. The price he will have to pay for making that attempt will be new legislative elections, thus giving the Union de la Gauche the opportunity to wage new battles.

Giscard may try to pull this off, but it won't be easy. The electoral base for a big Christian Democratic bourgeois party with a coloration of social humanism aimed at scooping up popular votes just does not exist the way it used to. And the existence of a powerful organized workers' movement does not allow for the easy formation of a big profitable bourgeois liberal party with an electoral base among the workers and popular sectors (like the Democratic party in the United States).

The big change through a new majority that Giscard promised his bourgeois backers thus appears to be in great jeopardy.

The new era about which Giscard spoke on the very night of his narrow electoral victory hardly promises to be an era of great projects and vigorous policies for the bourgeoisie. It looks much more like an era of the conservative regime in decay.

The whole Giscard regime will be similar in nature to the government that has already been named by Giscard's prime minister, Jacques Chirac, a man who comes out of the UDR but is regarded as a turncoat by his own cronies. It will be a transitional government compelled to serve as a bridge between an old majority undermined on all sides by its own internal rivalries and a new majority that great social struggles may prevent from ever seeing the light of day.

* The presidential election took place in two rounds. There were a dozen candidates in the first round. Since no candidate won more than 50 percent of the vote, the two candidates who scored the highest in the first round, Giscard d'Estaing and François Mitterrand, faced each other in the second-round runoff. □

the presidential election

(2) THE REVOLUTIONARY CAMPAIGNS

by PIERRE ROUSSET

The results of the two rounds of the French presidential elections and the popular reactions in the factories and neighborhoods reflected a twofold phenomenon: On the one hand there was a class polarization that asserted itself as an electoral shift to the left; on the other hand, an important section of the working class manifested its distrust of Mitterrand. On May 19, the date of the second round, some 13 million votes were cast for the "single candidate of the left." But two weeks earlier in the first round, the candidates of the far left had garnered between 700,000 and 1 million votes (depending on whether or not the candidacy of the agronomist René Dumont, who was backed by the ecology movement, is considered part of the far left).

The campaigns waged by the far-left candidates must be analyzed with those results in mind -- especially since they are surprising at first glance. Arlette Laguiller, the candidate of *Lutte Ouvrière* (LO -- Workers Struggle) received 595,247 votes (2.33%); Dumont got 337,800 votes (1.32%); and Alain Krivine, the candidate of the Trotskyist *Front Communiste Révolutionnaire* (FCR -- Revolutionary Communist Front) got 93,990 (0.36%), that is, about one-sixth of the LO total.

The vote totals were largely independent of the degree of implantation of the formations supporting the various candidacies. And, as we shall see, the real political response gotten by the various campaigns differed considerably from the electoral scores.

The explanation is simple: The electorate reached by the campaigns is far broader than the usual audience of the revolutionary organizations; the electorate knows the organizations only sketchily or not at all and is only vaguely aware of the

differences among them. It was mainly the styles of the candidates and the content of their audiovisual campaigns (and secondarily, of the posters and brochures sent to the voters) that explains the variations in the scores.

On this point, the 1974 presidential elections confirmed the indications hinted at by previous elections: Regional variations in the number of votes gotten by the far-left candidates are not related to the local strength of the organizations (which vary considerably), but are instead related to variations in the general sociopolitical characteristics of the electorate in each region.

The style and content of the Krivine and Laguiller campaigns were profoundly different, reflecting the different choices made by the FCR and LO as to the main objectives of their campaigns. The differences between these choices merit some discussion.

What Kind of Campaign for Revolutionaries?

The FCR's basic choice was determined above all by the organization's analysis of the situation: The gravity of the crisis of Gaullism as it has developed since 1968, the deepening of the class struggle during the past six years, and the gradual emergence in the factories of a workers vanguard with a mass character lent the presidential elections an exceptional character. For one thing, the electoral struggle between the main competitors was close for the first time since the de Gaulle coup in 1958; the "left" could have come to power. The workers would have seen the election of Mitterrand, the



Arlette Laguiller.

candidate of the main workers formations (both parties and trade unions), as their victory. A Mitterrand victory would not have been able to freeze the class struggle for any length of time, but rather would have allowed for posing in completely new terms the question of what kind of action should be launched. The new generation of vanguard militants now regrouping in the factories and among the student youth would have gone through the experience of seeing reformism administer a bourgeois state.

The FCR further reasoned that even the election of Giscard d'Estaing, who could have only squeaked by narrowly, would not enable the French bourgeoisie, which lacks a classical conservative party, to resolve its crisis of leadership. The long interval before the next legislative elections (scheduled for 1978) would have then posed in stark terms the question of how to continue the struggle and would have raised the perspective of a general strike to force the bourgeoisie to give in to the workers' demands.

The primary objective that the FCR set for itself in the election was to prepare the workers -- and especially the workers vanguard -- for the tasks that would confront them after the elections. That meant running an electoral campaign without giving any credence to electoralism, without skirting the delicate and difficult problems involved.

Lutte Ouvrière made a different choice. It decided to try to win some electoral credibility for the far left. In itself this is not an unworthy goal. In fact, it was important for distrust of Mitterrand to be expressed and registered on the electoral level, especially in the event of his election to office. And whatever criticism the Lutte Ouvrière campaign may deserve, from this point of view Arlette's 600,000 votes were important. But unfortunately, Lutte Ouvrière's search for electoral credibility led it to combine organizational sectarianism and political opportunism. According to the polls, 80 percent of those questioned saw Krivine's candidacy as a far-left candidacy, while only 40 percent saw Laguiller's that way. Laguiller, a militant woman worker, denounced capitalist exploitation and testified to the present conditions of women and workers. Many people identified with the LO campaign. But to achieve that goal, Lutte Ouvrière decided to depoliticize its campaign as much as possible -- in fact, to such an extent that it was more "popular" than "revolutionary." Lutte Ouvrière's program involved a series of political concessions to the electoralist atmosphere that prevented LO from clearly posing the tasks that will confront the workers vanguard in the future.

A comparison of the FCR and LO campaigns clearly illustrates this:

* The nature of the themes put forward. Both campaigns denounced the capitalist system, and both expressed distrust of Mitterrand and called for continuing extraparliamentary struggle. But they did it in completely different ways. For LO, denunciation of the reformist character of Mitterrand's candidacy was based exclusively on Mitterrand's past as a bourgeois politician. For the FCR it was above all a matter of showing how the workers would have to go beyond the Common Program of the Union de la Gauche after the elections on very precise questions. It was from this standpoint that the FCR seized the opportunity presented by the elections to bring up the lessons of the French Popular Front of 1936 and of the Chilean experience.

Likewise, by denouncing the formation of "unofficial" armed right-wing gangs (utilizing documentation on the role they had been planning to play in quasi-state repression in 1968

and pointing out the presence of members of the fascist Ordre Nouveau group in Giscard d'Estaing's bodyguard) and by discussing the role of the army (and thus provoking a public response from the minister of the army), the FCR was able to pose in very specific terms before millions of workers the question of the role of the state and the necessity of dismantling it. Chile. The role of the army. These were points that the LO campaign carefully avoided mentioning.

But it was not only on the most general questions of revolutionary strategy that Lutte Ouvrière preferred to remain silent. Arlette Laguiller made denunciation of the condition of women in capitalist society one of the main axes of her campaign by defending women's right to abortion. That was necessary. But in its radio broadcasts devoted to the struggle of women, LO -- unlike the FCR -- preferred to remain silent on the question of the right of women under twenty-one years old to get abortions. The question of rights for minors is still a dangerous one to bring up in an electoral campaign.

But the most striking example of the opportunism of the Lutte Ouvrière campaign came on the question of organizing the struggles of the future. Arlette Laguiller was a member of the strike committee at Credit Lyonnais during the bank strike that continued after Pompidou's death. The organization of this strike was remarkable. Not only were strike committees formed, some of them were brought under centralized coordination. Such a thing is still unique in the French workers struggles. Arlette was a participant in this experience. And today a debate on this question is going on within the trade-union movement, and especially among the workers vanguard. The Stalinist bureaucrats are particularly afraid of centralized strike committees becoming generalized, for that would place a big question mark over their ability to control workers struggles. Arlette did not breathe a word about this whole question in her entire campaign.

For its part, the FCR devoted one of its television broadcasts to the theme of strike committees, presenting as speakers a comrade who was active in the Lorraine miners strike, a leader of the strike committee formed during the strike of electrical and gas workers in Brest, and a militant bank employee. The importance of self-organization of the workers (strike committees, workers self-defense, and so on) was one of the main axes of the FCR campaign.

* Personalization and mass movement. The presidential elections are personalized to the highest possible degree. For the bourgeoisie, this is a powerful means of depoliticizing the electoral battle. The FCR tried to cut across this personalization by publicizing the organization behind the individual candidate, by bringing many rank-and-file militants to speak on the radio and television broadcasts (in fact, Krivine himself used less than half of his speaking time, "turning over" the remainder to militants of the women's movement, worker militants, a soldier, and a comrade from the Groupe Révolution Socialiste -- Socialist Revolution Group -- the Antilles section of the Fourth International), and by opening up campaign meetings to speakers from the floor.

Lutte Ouvrière presented a candidate who exactly symbolized the kind of campaign the LO wanted to wage. Women and militant workers could identify personally with Laguiller more easily than with Krivine, who appeared as a "professional revolutionary." LO played this to the hilt, concentrating its whole campaign around the personality of Arlette, pushing the organization to the background. ("Arlette, c'est chouette," or, roughly, "Arlette's the one," was one of the main slogans Lutte Ouvrière members were writing on the walls.) Electoral-

ally, this paid off. But it forced LO to push the tendency toward extreme personalization of bourgeois elections to the very limit.

In a more general sense, the FCR constantly tied its electoral campaign to the mass work regularly carried out by its members when elections are not going on. It organized several mobilizations before the first round (like the May Day march and the abortion demonstration in Paris) and between the first and second rounds (like the Chile demonstration against the repressive trials). And it used its radio time during the election to call for the organization of struggle (like the call for women to organize). Lutte Ouvrière has always refused to send its members into the mass movements; it has stayed out of MLAC, the MLF (women's liberation movement), the Chile committees, the Committee to Defend Draftees, and so on. So this dimension was completely lacking in the LO campaign, thus further intensifying the personalization.

Political Response and Electoral Response

So LO and the FCR ran campaigns that were very different in both style and content. In the context of the Mitterrand groundswell that developed before the first round, these two campaigns appealed to different sorts of voters.

Arlette Laguiller attracted a composite electorate, the addition of whose components enabled her total to reach 2.4 percent of the vote. It would be just as wrong to claim that this vote represented the broad workers vanguard as to claim that it represented only backward protest votes. A series of layers voted for Arlette because they felt they could identify with her: women who wanted to support her feminist indictment of society (some of LO's highest scores came in rural areas with no solid leftist tradition); populists who wanted to vote for the only candidate that was a worker and who appreciated her denunciation of the conditions of the exploited and her condemnation of "professional politicians"; but also members of the Communist party (the CP leadership estimates that 100,000 CPers voted for LO on the first round) who were suspicious of Mitterrand and Socialist workers impressed by Arlette's class vehemence.

This electorate is politically heterogeneous. A section of it (especially women) probably voted for Giscard on the second round, but the extent of this phenomenon should not be exaggerated. Another, more important, section voted LO to express revolutionary distrust of Mitterrand. A third section voted for Arlette out of class commitment and rejection of revolution, which was symbolized by the Krivine candidacy. In fact, the letters from readers published in the newspaper Lutte Ouvrière reflected essentially the first and third categories.

In a general way, Lutte Ouvrière directed its campaign toward the levels of consciousness of "average" workers (and women), even if it had to adapt to their prejudices. This was not a temporary maneuver. It corresponds to the actual orientation of this organization, which is marked by a profound "economism." Arlette's electoral score illustrates the variety of elementary levels of consciousness that exists in France today.

Krivine's vote was not only one-sixth as big as Laguiller's: it was also less than half as large as his vote in the 1969 presidential election, when 230,000 people voted for him. This is due to two factors. First, in 1969 Alain Krivine was more than the candidate of the Ligue Communiste (the former French section of the Fourth International, banned by Pompidou on

June 28, 1973). He was also the only candidate who represented the struggles of May '68. As the first far-left candidate to run in a presidential election, and as a private in the army, he represented the "new dissidence." The sort of vote that went to Krivine in 1969 went to Laguiller or Dumont this time.

But even more important, the voters that the FCR campaign was mainly addressing itself to were very sensitive to the temptation to vote for Mitterrand on the first round. In the letters sent to the FCR and in the campaign meetings themselves, the question being asked by militants -- and especially worker militants -- was not whether to vote for Krivine or Laguiller, but whether to vote for Krivine or Mitterrand. The Communist party was pushing the idea that Mitterrand's best chance to win was on the first round rather than the second. The broad workers vanguard, and especially the section of it that is politically aware and therefore closest to the ideas of the FCR, was very sensitive to this argument about "effectiveness." Many of these people agreed with the FCR campaign that it was important to organize the distrust of Mitterrand and to prepare for the struggles of the future. But they thought that it was first necessary to ensure the election of the "single candidate of the left" and that to do this they had to vote Mitterrand on the first round. That was probably an extremely extensive political phenomenon. Between one-third and one-half of the people who attended FCR campaign meetings held after the first round seemed to have voted for Mitterrand on May 5.

So the "Alain vote" was much more homogeneous politically than the "Arlette vote." Essentially, the Krivine vote represented a commitment to socialist revolution.

Lutte Ouvrière today is not bothering with any subtleties of analysis. For LO the meaning of the Arlette-Alain vote is transparently obvious: the FCR represents the intellectual far-left in the throes of crisis; LO represents the workers vanguard in the heat of development. We have no intention of ignoring the weaknesses of our own campaign. We found it difficult to strike the proper balance between testimony about and denunciation of exploitation and oppression on the one hand and defining a perspective for the future on the other hand. Our modes of expression were sometimes a bit complex. We did not adequately explain the necessity of a revolutionary vote on the first round. The analysis of the political situation could have sometimes appeared premature and somewhat "catastrophic." But the paradox remains: The 1974 presidential campaign was by far the best electoral campaign we have ever waged. Most important, it got the biggest response among the working class. At the same time the electoral score was by far the least significant gain of the campaign.

It was the first time that we were able to carry out such militant street mobilizations during an electoral campaign: there was the abortion demonstration called by MLAC (Mouvement pour la Liberté de l'Avortement et de la Contraception -- Movement for Free Abortion and Contraception) despite the opposition of the reformist and centrist components of MLAC; there was the May Day demonstration, which drew nearly

FCR contingent in May 1 demonstration in Paris.



40,000 people, attracting militants in the mass movements and some sections of the trade-union movement, despite the decision of the union bureaucracy to break with tradition and hold no May Day demonstration in 1974 so as not to disrupt the electoral campaign. Lutte Ouvrière participated only symbolically in the MLAC demonstration. In the May Day demonstration LO restricted its participation to marching in its own contingent, separating itself from the mass movements. It was absent from the Chile committees and from the Committee to Defend Draftees. But this is an important question. The ranks of the army are beginning to move. For the first time a public appeal was put out to the candidates during an election by nearly two hundred active-duty soldiers in defense of their demands. This amounts to a test of strength with the military hierarchy and the Giscard government. (In the French army, any collective protest by soldiers is forbidden.)

The meetings that were held during the election campaign were unprecedented for the French Trotskyist movement, both in terms of the number of participants and in terms of the working-class composition of the audiences. The twenty-two central meetings of the FCR drew a total of more than 30,000 people! And this total leaves aside the nearly 200 local meetings that were held. The differences between these meetings and the 1969 meetings were striking. The crowds were older; there were many more worker militants; there were very few curiosity-seekers leaving the meetings after Krivine "the star" had spoken. There were animated and extremely political debates and discussions with members of the Communist party, the Socialist party, and the two big union federations, the CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail -- General Confederation of Labor) and CFDT (Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail -- French Democratic Confederation of Labor). Symptomatically -- and contrary to what could have been feared -- the attendance, composition, and atmosphere of the meetings was not at all affected by the results of the first round or by the announcement that Krivine had gotten only 0.36 percent of the vote.

The experience of the daily newspaper was also revealing. Prepared extremely hurriedly (we had only one week in which to make the decision to publish it), it rapidly developed an important place in the campaign. The total sales figures -- especially for the issues sold on newsstands -- are not yet available. But the general response to the paper was quite good. After the initial curiosity wore off, sales declined somewhat on the campuses, but the strong point in distribution was in the factories. The circulation of the daily there was higher than the weekly Rouge and it attracted a new layer of worker-readers whose high political level is attested to by the letters the daily Rouge has received.

After May 19

In spite of the considerable political impact of the FCR campaign, the relatively low vote will most likely have some negative consequences. The working class (not to mention the journalistic world), steeped as it is in electoralism, is sensitive to the electoral credibility of an organization. But that is not the most important thing. In its campaign, the FCR stressed the problems that would arise in the event of a Mitterrand victory. If Mitterrand had won, the tasks of the workers vanguard would have been quite new and difficult. But the FCR had also prepared to continue the struggle if Giscard d'Estaing won. The discussion of how to do that, already begun before the presidential elections, is now continuing. The discussion has been sharpened and deepened by the fact that no new elections are scheduled until 1978, by the death of the Gaullist party, and by the strengthening of the left. It is through this debate and discussion that the seeds planted by the Krivine campaign will bear fruit.

Furthermore, the emergence of an electorate of nearly a million voters crystallized around the far-left candidates demonstrates the current level of militancy. (The heterogeneity of the Arlette and Dumont vote is probably compensated for by the number of far-left votes that went to Mitterrand on the first round.)

This debate and discussion must be able to regroup the broad workers vanguard that has emerged in the factories. But one of the most dangerous consequences of the results of the first round, the possible political evolution of Lutte Ouvrière, threatens to act as a brake on this process. Even before the election, Lutte Ouvrière was drifting in a certain direction. It defined itself as the proletarian tendency and characterized the rest of the far left as petty bourgeois in nature. A "class line," Lutte Ouvrière said, separated it from all the other groups. This conception had led LO to some very serious instances of bureaucratic manipulation during the recent mobilization of the apprentices in the technical schools. Arlette's electoral score threatens to reinforce this drift by encouraging Lutte Ouvrière to accentuate the right-wing populism of its political orientation and the manipulative sectarianism of its organizational practices. During the campaign, LO refused to open up its meetings, notably to Jemali Kemal, the symbolic "candidate" of the immigrant workers. A month has gone by since the first round. LO is claiming that its political audience is as large as its electoral audience (which can only reinforce its triumphalism) and is ignoring the other groups. (LO has just refused to sign a joint communiqué with Alain Krivine against the arrest in Toulon of four sailors on charges of having distributed "subversive" literature.)

The consequence of this attitude had already appeared at the opening of the election campaign. At that time Lutte Ouvrière rejected the proposal for a united candidacy around Charles Piaget, the best known leader of the strike at the Lip watch factory. (See INPRECOR, No. 0, p.3.) The balance sheet that can be drawn of the presidential elections proves that the Piaget candidacy was the only one that could have allowed for the emergence of united committees in the factories and neighborhoods going beyond the circle of sympathizers of the revolutionary organizations. That would have changed many things, and it will be bad for everybody if Lutte Ouvrière continues with its current attitude.

It would be all the worse in that the 1974 presidential elections showed once again the necessity of united action, at least if the far left is to rise to the tasks confronting it. And the confusion that continues to reign makes the debate and discussion especially urgent. The broad workers vanguard, while it has asserted its existence, has also proved to be susceptible to the pressure of the Union de la Gauche. The Lambertist current (organized in the OCI-AJS, Organisation Communiste Internationaliste -- Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme -- Internationalist Communist Organization -- Young Socialist Alliance), a sect of Trotskyist origin, reversed its 1973 position and called for a first-round vote for Mitterrand. It thus moved still further away from revolutionary politics. The PSU (Parti Socialiste Unifié -- United Socialist party, a centrist formation) slid even more openly into the orbit of the Union de la Gauche, with PSU leader Michel Rocard adopting the perspective of entering the Mitterrand government. The "Mao-Stalinist" organizations (l'Humanité Rouge, the Communist party Marxist-Leninist, Front Rouge and the Revolutionary Communist party, Ligne Rouge, etc.) sank still further into their sectarian isolation by calling for abstention in the elections. The ultraleftists lost all coherence during the elections. Révolution! (a group that originated in a split from the Ligue Communiste) defined Mitterrand's candidacy as purely bourgeois and nevertheless called for a vote for him, thus sowing opportunist confusion -- to say the very least. Strengthen unity in action and deepen the political debate in order to recompose the workers vanguard. These are the tasks that the FCR will now work for.

THE DIVORCE REFERENDUM: REACTIONARY PLOY FAILS

The May 12 divorce referendum in Italy ended in a spectacular defeat for the Christian Democracy and the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI -- Italian Social Movement, the neo-fascist movement). The proposal to abolish the law granting divorce was defeated by a very clear majority (around 60 percent of the voters). The results are even more significant if a few detailed figures are taken into account: In Turin, the "No" vote reached 80 percent; in Genoa, despite the hue and cry raised by the reactionaries around the kidnapping of the judge Sossi by the Red Brigades, the "No" vote was 75 percent; even in Naples, where in 1946 the monarchists won a referendum and where the fascists have been trying for years to rebuild a base, the antidivorce forces were beaten. All the fears of a shift toward a "Yes" vote among the CP voters proved to be unfounded. (The party bureaucrats themselves raised such fears in order to justify the moderate campaign they waged.) The Christian Democracy suffered a setback and the church was compelled to recognize the degree to which its grip on the Catholic country *par excellence* has been weakened. The pope did not hide his disappointment: He never expected such a thing from his "well beloved" Italy.

The results of the referendum can be explained basically by two factors, one structural, the other political. During the past twenty years Italy has been shaken by a mass rural exodus, by internal and international emigration. This has resulted in very deep changes in morals and mental attitudes -- even among the most backward layers, which have experienced a rise (at least relatively) in their cultural level. Also, the country as a whole, including the most disparate social layers, has been deeply affected by the rise of the workers movement since 1968, an upsurge that has not yet run its course. Those who wanted to drive that upsurge back have had to recognize that their undertaking was unrealizable.

To explain the more conjunctural significance of the referendum results, we publish below the editorial printed in the May 20 issue of *Bandiera Rossa*, organ of the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (Revolutionary Communist Groups), Italian section of the Fourth International.

INPRECOR

The operation launched by the most reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie in an attempt to develop a petty-bourgeois and lumpenproletarian mass base to use against the working class has failed. At the same time the resounding victory of the "No" vote in the referendum showed that the working class understood the general political stakes involved in the confrontation and that sections of the bourgeoisie itself were disinclined to go along with clerico-fascist operations that they believe to be unrealizable in a country profoundly marked both by the rise of the working class in 1968 and subsequent years and by the mobilization and political maturation of the most varied social layers.

The bourgeoisie will now suffer an exacerbation of its crisis in regard to both short-term solutions and long-term perspectives. Most probably, the composition of the government will not be changed in the next few weeks. Nevertheless, the inevitable crisis of leadership of the Christian Democracy combined with the more aggressive attitude of the Socialists (who regard the referendum results as compensation for the concessions they were forced to make on the economic level) create a precarious situation that cannot drag on forever.

As for long-term solutions, on the one hand the bourgeoisie cannot give up its effort to make the working class bear the costs of the structural crisis (and of the conjunctural crisis that promises to come soon), and it must therefore find a new line of attack against the demands of the masses. But the failure of the operation aimed at winning a reactionary mass base, as well as the crisis of the state apparatus, will force the bourgeoisie to reconstruct *ex novo* a means of strength-

ening the executive in an unfavorable situation. On the other hand, should the Communist party be brought into the government orbit, or even directly into the government itself, that would not offer a real prospect for political truce, not to mention social truce. Nor would it lead to stabilization, given the pressing character of the problems of employment

Rome, night of May 12. Youth greet referendum results.



and of the buying power of the wage-earners in a national and international context that is more and more unfavorable to reformist operations of any real scope.

As for the MSI, which was the only bourgeois formation to openly support the Christian Democratic secretariat in the referendum campaign, the defeat of an electoral campaign based on appeals for order and discipline (the appeals being accompanied by some provocative actions that under the circumstances were totally secondary) will have the effect of bolstering the "ultras." So the problem of self-defense and of organizing a determined response to fascist provocations remains on the agenda.

As for the reformists, it is clear that the results of the May 12 referendum will prod them to take some initiatives. The CP will try to relaunch its policy of "historic compromise" and the SP will try to support such a development by simultaneously raising the price for its collaboration in the government. Nevertheless, the bureaucrats will find themselves in a contradictory situation. On the one hand, they will have to protect their "civilized and democratic" image in the framework of the "social peace" they want -- which they did during the electoral campaign, concretely by blocking workers struggles. On the other hand, they will not be able to alienate their worker base, which saw in the referendum a political confrontation and which will be stimulated by the result to up the ante and try to move from the defensive to the offensive. The bureaucrats will try to use workers struggles as a bargaining chip in their negotiations with the bourgeoisie. Such operations will be limited above all by the narrow maneuvering room that now exists for reformist policies. But it would have run into qualitatively more important difficulties if the strongest far-left groups had taken a different attitude. In reality, these groups have developed a campaign totally subordinated to the general schemas of the reformists and have refused to sketch out any orientation of general anticapitalist mobilization.

By underestimating the role of Fanfani (the present secretary of the Christian Democracy), by underestimating his chances of satisfying his Bonapartist aspirations, by refusing to place the main priority on the necessity of extending struggles and unifying them (even during the electoral campaign) around objectives linked to crucial necessities of the class struggle like the attack on employment and the buying power of the wage-earners, Lotta Continua, Il Manifesto, and Avanguardia Operaia have underestimated the working class's understand-

ing of the general political significance of the confrontation. By joining in the legalistic and hypocritical chorus of all those who denounced the Red Brigades as "fascists," these groups have failed to shed any light on the real problem involved; they have forgotten that criticism of the erroneous analyses and conceptions of an adventurist group must in no way lead to ignoring the problems of the struggle against bourgeois institutions and the perspective of overthrowing them.

Today it is necessary to relaunch a generalized struggle to defend the employment and buying power of the wage-earners and to develop effective instruments of workers control that can prevent the rationalization of the capitalist apparatus that the bourgeoisie is rigorously seeking to impose on the back of the working class. Today it is necessary to exploit to the maximum the obvious crisis of bourgeois institutions and to put forward as an alternative a workers government based on organs arising from real struggles, rejecting all collaboration with the bourgeoisie and its parties. Today it is necessary to prepare militants, the vanguard elements among the workers and students, for a period that will be far from peaceful. It would be suicidal to take a triumphalist attitude toward the victory won in the referendum.

At the same time, the links between the difficulties of the Italian bourgeoisie and those of the bourgeoisie of the other Common Market countries, the simultaneity of political crises and the tendency toward synchronization of economic recessions, the extreme sensitivity and combativity of the working class which is again being expressed on a continental scale, from France to Britain, from Germany to Denmark, and the dynamic that has opened up on the Iberian peninsula after the overthrow of Portuguese fascism all impose internationalist tasks that go beyond pure and simple solidarity and that require a means of centralizing the vanguard on a European scale.

In relation to these national and international tasks we must wage a systematic struggle to win the worker and student vanguard to a revolutionary program, to defeat opportunism and centrism, to reject any subordination to the strategy of the reformist parties.

Let us not allow the bourgeoisie to get out of its difficulties!
Accept no social truce! Reject the "historic compromise"!
For a workers government based on organs arising in struggle!
Against the Europe of the trusts! For a red Europe!

UNITED STATES

THE MEANING OF WATERGATE

by ALLEN MYERS

Eighteen months after winning one of the biggest electoral victories in modern U.S. history in a campaign in which he enjoyed the nearly unanimous support of the ruling class, Richard Nixon is likely to become the second president of the United States to be impeached. And if and when the House of Representatives does vote a bill of impeachment, his chance of winning acquittal in the Senate will be very small indeed.

While lawyers and members of Congress are busily studying the 1868 impeachment of Andrew Johnson for precedents, there are few basic parallels between the two situations. The move to impeach Johnson was a byproduct of deep divisions and conflicts of interest in the U.S. ruling class that only a few years earlier had resulted in a long and bloody civil war. In 1974, by contrast, while there are always tactical differences over various issues within the ruling strata,

these have not produced hardened "factional" divisions, nor do they reflect a challenge by new layers to the hegemony of the most powerful capitalists or a basic conflict of economic interests between opposing capitalist groupings.

While the Stalinists, Maoists, and pseudo-Trotskyist sects in the United States have all viewed the Watergate scandal as reflecting basic ruling-class divisions, such speculations are sufficiently refuted by the fact that if Nixon is removed, he will be succeeded by Gerald Ford, a man hand-picked by Nixon himself and one who is expected not only to carry on with Nixon's policies, but even to utilize most of the same personnel in doing so. Yet the capitalist politicians who have been most vocal in demanding Nixon's impeachment or resignation have generally been equally vocal in praising Ford's qualifications to become president.

While the Watergate crisis does not reflect any basic division in the U.S. ruling class, it does show the evolution of U.S. imperialism over the past half century. The actual burglary of the offices of the Democratic National Committee was merely the catalyst that precipitated a contradiction between two elements of bourgeois rule that had taken decades to develop.

Expansion of Executive Power

Historically, the U.S. ruling class began with an advantage over its European rivals in having a strong, centralized executive, simultaneously head of state and head of government, even before the United States became a major imperialist power. It is worth noting that the French bourgeoisie, in establishing a strong state under de Gaulle, chose a presidential system investing powers in the executive that the U.S. president had possessed for decades.

In recent years, Congressional liberals have complained of an "imbalance" between Congress and the president, often blaming it on "usurpation" of additional powers by the executive branch. The truth of the matter, however, is that through the course of this century there has been remarkably little disagreement in the U.S. ruling class about the need to centralize power in the executive. Consequently, the Congress has not only approved such centralization but in many cases has taken the lead in providing legal authorization of additional powers.

A Senate committee headed by Democrat Frank Church of Ohio and Republican Charles Mathias of Maryland reported last year on its study of "emergency" laws presently in effect in the United States. The committee discovered that the country has legally been in a continuous state of emergency since 1917.

In the fifty-six intervening years, Congress has passed a total of nearly 600 additional laws -- a rate of nearly a dozen per year -- conferring various increased emergency powers on the president. As Church and Mathias noted in a joint statement summing up the committee report:

"The President has the power in hand to seize property, organize and control the means of production, seize commodities, assign military forces abroad, call reserve forces amounting to 2.5 million men to duty, institute martial law, seize and control all means of transportation, regulate all private enterprises, restrict travel, and in a plethora of particular ways, control the lives of all Americans."

According to the committee report, Congress approved most of these 600 laws "with only the most perfunctory committee review and virtually no consideration of their effect on civil

liberties or the delicate structure of the U.S. Government of divided powers."

This centralization and expansion of executive power was a necessary and natural part of the rise of U.S. imperialism to a position of dominance over the capitalist world. The cop of the world required a government that could act anywhere without delaying to consult Congress -- let alone the public.

But at the same time, the economic dominance of U.S. capitalism made it possible for the ruling class to maintain sufficient "class peace" so that it has never found it necessary to destroy the widespread democratic illusions of the working class. A major element of capitalist rule in the United States has continued to be the carefully nurtured myth of bourgeois democracy -- the twin illusions that (1) the masses, through their vote, can have a decisive influence on government policies, and (2) there are constitutional principles, laws, or traditions that can guarantee the maintenance of democratic liberties under capitalism. While there have been expansions and contractions of the democratic rights actually enjoyed by the working class in different periods of U.S. history, the ruling class has generally not considered it necessary or desirable to introduce measures that completely undermine these illusions.

The concentration of executive power necessary for the efficient operation of imperialist adventures was, for a long time, largely compartmentalized and isolated, at least so far as appearances were concerned, from "the democratic process." Events like the Palmer raids following World War I and the McCarthy witch-hunt following World War II were portrayed, and largely believed to be, aberrations from the norm, whose chief component was overzealousness in defending "democracy" against a foreign threat.

Even during the worst periods of reaction, "free elections" continued to be held. Presidents might send thousands of troops around the world in an effort to suppress revolution, but they normally sought formal congressional approval or were able to provide such actions with the cover of an alliance or treaty ratified by the Senate. While they might in reality ignore the wishes not only of the public but of Congress as well, they did not proclaim the right to do so as "constitutional principle," but preferred to maintain the fiction that they were merely carrying out the popular will as demonstrated by elections or whatever shows of support could be drummed up by the mass media.

When Nixon's agents were caught breaking into the offices of the Democratic National Committee, this "third-rate burglary" did more than undermine public belief in the legitimacy of capitalist elections in the United States -- although that in itself was a serious blunder in the eyes of the ruling class. Beyond that blunder, the incident and the subsequent disclosures have confronted the ruling class with the growing incompatibility of its drive toward further centralization and the maintenance of the myth of bourgeois democracy, particularly in a period when wide layers of the population have already begun to question that myth.

The contradiction is not a mere temporary crisis in the "credibility" of the Nixon administration. For half a century, democratic illusions have served as an ideological complement and support to U.S. imperialism's drive toward world hegemony. Now the very successes of imperialism and the effects of the radicalization have combined to turn the complements into contradictions. The present crisis of the U.S. ruling class centers on the effort to find a new combination or balance of these now essentially irreconcilable elements of its rule.

A Balance Starts to Crack

This dilemma of the ruling class was foreshadowed in the radicalization that began in the late 1950s and early 1960s, gaining a particularly sharp expression in the mass movement of opposition to U.S. aggression in Vietnam.

With the growth of the movement against the Vietnam war, millions of Americans began to learn that "their" government could not be trusted to tell them the truth, that it lied not just occasionally but constantly, as a matter of deliberate policy.

Lyndon Johnson's "credibility gap" was to contribute to the uncovering of the scandals of the Nixon gang. The antiwar movement, particularly the students, realized that the government could not be believed and began conducting its own research. Generally this centered on the involvement of campus institutions in the war. The students exposed seemingly innocuous research projects as covers for the development of weapons. Anthropologists and sociologists were discovered investigating ways of deflecting the hatred of Asian peasants for corrupt governments, cataloguing the political views and weapons available to remote villages, or listing geographical features that might pose obstacles to tanks.

The effects of this widespread distrust and the efforts of radicalized young people to discover the truth should not be underestimated. Reaching even into the government bureaucracy, they made it increasingly difficult for the government to keep anything secret. Bureaucrats who opposed a particular policy -- for whatever reason -- discovered that a "leak" in the right place could often be more effective in forcing a change than long and wearing arguments within the bureaucracy.

This situation has sometimes produced spectacular results. Neither the Mylai massacre nor the Pentagon Papers would have become public knowledge without the previous radicalization and its effects on the capacity of the government to maintain secrecy. Mylai was exposed because of the investigations of Seymour Hersh, at that time a reporter for an obscure news service with no national influence, and because low-ranking army lawyers involved in the case were unwilling to cooperate with the Pentagon in covering it up.

Daniel Ellsberg was himself one of the intellectuals whom Washington hires in large numbers to help it evaluate and plan imperialist strategy. When he became disillusioned with the government's seeming inability to "learn" from its experience in Vietnam, he began by sending portions of the Pentagon Papers to liberal members of Congress. When that produced no results, he tried the New York Times, which published them in order to push Nixon closer to its own line on the Indochina war.

The governmental trend toward further centralization is also contradicted by every democratic victory that has been won by radicalizing layers of the population. Civil rights legislation, the eighteen-year-old vote, the right to abortion, abolition of the death penalty, etc., are all concessions won from the ruling class in opposition to its needs for greater regimentation of U.S. society -- as the continual attempt to roll back such concessions testifies.

The radicalization has severely undermined some of the most powerful of traditional ruling-class methods of control. War-time patriotism, racism, and red-baiting have become less and less effective precisely because the radicalization is based on opposition to the results of those policies. Both

Johnson and Nixon were therefore required to use more secretive and illegal methods of dealing with political opponents.

Such methods were the hidden side of Nixon's publicly proclaimed "law and order" campaign against the effects of the radicalization. For both the secret and the open aspects of his strategy, Nixon enjoyed the substantial backing of the ruling class; in the 1972 campaign this backing approached unanimity. Nixon was certainly not, as some have maintained, striking out on his own when he authorized the various Watergate-style programs. The infamous 1970 secret spy plan, for example, was drafted by a committee recruited from the highest levels of the state "security" apparatus. It consisted of the directors of the FBI, CIA, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, and the heads of the spy groups of each of the armed services, in addition to a White House aide representing Nixon. These are the "nonpartisan" bureaucrats who stay on in their jobs no matter which party holds the presidency and who are entrusted by the ruling class with the defense of the interests of the entire class rather than any particular sector of it.

Even those of Nixon's actions that served his own personal interests rather than those of the ruling class -- spying on the Democrats, trading favors for campaign contributions, etc. -- were hardly innovations in U.S. capitalist politics. Barry Goldwater has claimed -- and there is no reason to doubt him -- that the Democrats kept him under electronic surveillance during the 1964 presidential campaign. Ambassadorial posts and favorable business rulings from government agencies have always been for sale to the highest bidder. If the U.S. ruling class does not desire venality in its politicians, it nevertheless expects it.

But never before have the normal operations of the U.S. government been made so visible to the entire country. Influential sectors of the ruling class are in favor of impeaching Nixon or forcing his resignation because they hope that doing so will obscure this view of reality with the illusion that, after all, "the system works." But while from the standpoint of the ruling class impeaching Nixon seems to be a lesser evil than the alternative of an indefinite prolongation of the scandal, it is not likely to fulfill those hopes.

A Continuing Crisis

Watergate has already undermined the credibility not just of Nixon but of capitalist government in the United States. Nixon's forced resignation or impeachment would be a confirmation of the widespread belief that the government is not to be trusted -- just as Agnew's resignation was for many the proof of an already prevalent suspicion that "politicians are crooks."

Nixon's removal would add an unsettling precedent to U.S. capitalist politics. It would raise in the masses the idea that their democratic rights ought to include the right to get rid of unpopular presidents or other officials without waiting until the next election. (This is a right that the bourgeois authors of the constitution -- wisely, from the viewpoint of their interests -- deliberately denied to the people.)

From the standpoint of the ruling class, the best outcome of the Watergate scandal -- although one that now seems extremely unlikely -- would be for Nixon to apologize for his transgressions, promise to do better in the future, and then finish out his term. This would mean that Nixon had succeeded to some degree in covering up the extent of his crimes and winning public acceptance for the idea that the president should be given considerable latitude to decide what actions "national security" requires.

Socialists, on the other hand, have every reason to encourage the idea, which would gain legitimacy from Nixon's dismissal, that presidents do not have the right to operate in secrecy, evade the rules of democracy, spy on opposition political groups, etc.

But while revolutionists thus have reason to favor Nixon's removal, for them what the ruling class decides to do with Nixon is not the most important question. Their task is to seize the opportunity offered by Watergate to explain to newly receptive audiences the real nature of capitalist government in the United States.

A good example of how this educational task can be carried out is provided by the Socialist Workers party (SWP), the U.S. Trotskyist organization. In addition to explaining the meaning of Watergate in its press, the SWP has reached out to layers who may never have read a revolutionary newspaper but who are now willing to listen to a socialist explanation of what Watergate reveals. This has been done through the medium of a lawsuit against Nixon and eighteen of his subordinates.

Socialists have always been confronted with the need to defend their organizations and members against frame-ups and have long realized that the best defense is a political one that takes the issues to the public and mobilizes the broadest possible support for the rights of the intended victims. In its suit against the Nixon gang, the SWP has gone beyond the usually rather narrow limits of such a defense campaign.

The suit attacks the "right" of Nixon and his successors to wiretap, burglarize, infiltrate, and harass political groups, and it seeks to outlaw such specific witch-hunt tools as the attorney general's "subversive list."

More important, however, is the fact that the suit serves as a vehicle for carrying the revolutionary-socialist explanation of Watergate throughout the country. The Political Rights Defense Fund (PRDF) has been established to support the suit and to help mobilize public opinion against all aspects of government "dirty tricks."

Speakers for PRDF and the SWP make national tours explaining the issues at stake. The suit has already won wide support from a variety of organizations and individuals all over the country.

The suit has provided a platform from which socialists are able to explain that Watergating is an inseparable part of capitalist government and can be ended only by a working-class government.

Whether the ruling class removes Nixon or allows him to finish out his term under a cloud of scandal, the crisis symbolized by Watergate will continue to be a major factor in U.S. politics. The conflict between the needs of imperialism and the myth of bourgeois democracy was not created by Nixon, and it will not be resolved by either his removal or retention in office.

In the longer run, then, Watergate has added a new element of instability to U.S. politics. It is easy to foresee, for example, that widespread demands for impeachment are a likely response to any unpopular action by future presidents.

And it is to be hoped and expected that disillusionment with the realities of capitalist government will win a widening audience in the United States for the socialist alternative.

ARGENTINA

PERONISM IN CRISIS

by S. LOPEZ

The Argentine bourgeoisie is scared. More than thirty years ago it launched a process of class collaboration between Capital and Labor. Five years ago it reaped the result of that process: the Cordobazo, one of the highest peaks of mass struggle in Argentine history.⁽¹⁾ The Cordobazo marked the beginning of a series of semi-insurreccional mass struggles that blocked the military dictatorship's plans for rationalizing its system. But the Cordobazo shook not only the army-party, which had taken over administering the affairs of state in order to do a job that no bourgeois political party had been able to handle. The Cordobazo also shook the entire ruling class, which saw the specter of socialism, of workers power, arising out of the ruins of its ill-fated attempts at class collaboration.

The Emergence of a New Vanguard

For the first time in Argentine history, the class struggle for socialism broke out of narrow vanguard circles and took on a dynamic of mass struggle. Since the fall of Perón in 1955, Argentina has seen successive attempts at setting up dictatorial and "democratic" regimes; but all attempts to set up a stable regime have failed. The experiences of years of struggle, the repercussions of the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions, and the exacerbation of social contradictions under the Onganía regime (1966-69) were to foster the emergence of thousands of new militants and of sectors radicalized through mobilization and class struggle. For these thousands of mili-

tants and new mass leaders, it was not enough simply to push the dictatorship to meet their immediate demands. They wanted to bring down the regime of capitalist exploitation and dependence and build a new society, a socialist society. The slogan "patria socialista" (socialist fatherland), which symbolized this aspiration, was taken up by whole sections of the masses.

The military dictatorship lacked the means to deal with the new threat through a massive and bloody repression. To do that the armed forces would have had to take on a mass movement much more powerful than the one that existed in Brazil in 1964. And the bourgeoisie itself was not sufficiently united to opt for a coup as in Chile in September 1973. So the class confrontation would have to be different.

The bourgeois solution to the crisis of the dictatorship was to return to a regime of parliamentary democracy, reintroducing into political life the movement that had been banned for eighteen years: Peronism. The absence of a revolutionary-Marxist alternative -- an alternative that none of the parties of the revolutionary left was able to offer -- led to the mass movement being channeled into an electoralist road. The majority of the thousands of new militants and leaders of radicalized sectors of the masses -- the people we call the broad vanguard -- identified themselves with the left wing of the Peronist movement, both with the armed Peronist organizations and with the new youth organizations.

But the development of the mass movement and the broad vanguard was not mechanically counterposed to the whole experience of previous struggle. On the contrary, elements of the general radicalization going on in the country were carried into the Peronist movement, sharpening Peronism's internal contradictions, which immediately exploded into grave confrontations.

The democratic parliamentary regime, along with the granting of all traditional democratic rights, very quickly proved incapable of controlling the mass movement. In fact, although it expected to get something out of Peronism, the mass movement -- and especially radicalized sectors within it -- intended to go much further than the bourgeois leadership and the Peronist bureaucracy had planned on. After Cámpora was inaugurated president on May 25, 1973, there were factory occupations and big mobilizations one after the other. The new government proved to be weak: Even before May 25 it had to give in to mass pressure and free the political prisoners, without even waiting to go through any formalities. Nevertheless, for the bourgeoisie it was not so much its new governmental representatives as the very system of rule through the classical mechanisms of parliamentary democracy that proved to be too weak to deal effectively with the radicalization of the masses. Cámpora did not even last 100 days. After just a month and a half, the bourgeoisie conducted a sort of coup against itself and readjusted its plans. The political instability of the new period emerged very clearly. The maneuvering room of the ruling class was quite narrow.

Forced March to the Strong State

The bourgeoisie was soon to begin a forced march toward transforming its methods of rule, toward establishing a strong state in Argentina. The problem was to transform the state apparatus and make it capable of dealing with the explosive character of the class struggle without having to directly call on the politically discredited armed forces. The problem was to create an all-powerful and omnipresent executive able to intervene quickly in any conflict, manipulating the demo-

cratic rights that traditionally go along with bourgeois democracy according to the needs and desires of the moment, transforming the parliament into a simple auxiliary of the executive in which the pressures on groups representing varying sectors would exhaust themselves in endless wrangling in corridors and committees.

The only man capable of leading this forced march toward a strong state was Juan Perón, because the forced march required a series of political battles and skirmishes that only someone commanding a certain amount of prestige within the mass movement could have waged without provoking generalized violent reactions right from the start. Perón entered the government as the man of the right wing, as the leader of the bourgeoisie, and not as the representative of the workers who were supporting him. In order to defend the interests of the ruling class and its allies, the Peronist union bureaucracy pressed for a series of laws: the "Ley de Prescindibilidad" for civil servants, (2) the law on foreign investments, the law on professional associations of the bureaucracy, the compulsory arbitration law limiting the right to strike, the university law aimed at adapting national education to the interests of dependent Argentine capitalism, and so on.

And, to defend these same interests, the bureaucracy pushed for a ban on the revolutionary press, the subjugation of freedom of the press, a ban on public demonstrations, a ban on political activities in centers of national education (colleges and universities), and the reintroduction of censorship. And all this produced its usual result: repression and torture of revolutionary and popular militants. Perón himself gave his personal approval to the appointment of Villar and Margaride, ex-henchmen of the dictatorship who are now in charge of the repressive apparatus. And this just at the time when a broad public response was developing against the tortures being inflicted on the imprisoned Peronist militants Camps, Galli, and Maestre.

The march to the strong state requires the elimination of the weakest sectors of the state apparatus, those that are most sensitive to mass pressure. The process of centralization of political power in the hands of the executive in order to press ahead with the bourgeoisie's plans ran up against some obstacles in the attitude of some provincial governments. Perón commands a sufficient parliamentary majority in Congress to get around certain problems and to be able to afford the luxury of allowing a few voices of protest to be raised (as happened when the opposition asked to question the minister of the interior about torture). But the federal system and the relative autonomy of the provincial governments represented a limitation on the project of setting up the strong state. Under the plan the provincial governments were supposed to simply administrate public life along lines already laid down by the national executive. The consequent crisis broke out first in the two most important provinces: Buenos Aires and Córdoba.

In the case of Buenos Aires, Provincial Governor Bidegain simply gave in to Perón's pressure. In Córdoba, things did not go so smoothly. Chief of Police Colonel Navarro became the faithful interpreter of the desires of the national executive power. It was there in Córdoba that we were treated to the rather unusual procedure that exposed the farce that lurks behind all bourgeois-democratic systems, especially in dependent countries: The chief of police kicked out the provincial governor while the national government looked on complacently. "Navarro's coup" could not have been pulled off successfully if Navarro had not been able to count on support from the national government and from Perón himself. Contrary to what has been insinuated by certain sectors of the Peronist youth, Perón is nobody's prisoner, and he will

always be "in the grip" of those he considers most adept at carrying out his political plans. Perón is a prisoner of his position as a bourgeois leader consistently defending the interests of his class: the owners of factories and companies, the exploiters of the working class.

In the social and economic sphere, the bourgeoisie's plans are clearly expressed in the Three Year Plan and the Social Pact signed by the employers and the union bureaucracy under Perón's auspices.

All the efforts demanded of the working class to increase production will be repaid with crumbs parsimoniously handed out according to what will boost profits. A proliferation of attacks and assaults led by the bureaucracy's goon squads and parapolic gangs will be necessary to enforce the social truce. Thus we are seeing the curious phenomenon of a bourgeois constitutional "democracy" making itself the organizer of right-wing terrorism directed from the very pinnacle of the government. When this extralegal repression is no longer sufficient, the traditional forces of repression will move into action. And they won't hesitate to shoot to kill, as they already did when they killed the Peronist militant Chejolan during a demonstration just 150 feet from the Casa Rosada (the presidential palace).

All the bourgeois, reformist, and centrist leaders who went to the Casa Rosada to ask Perón to defend democratic rights looked completely ridiculous! Those who claim to have the greatest admiration for Perón act as if he were an idiot who does not even know who he's working with. These politicians asked Perón to fire his minister of the interior, his private secretary and minister of social welfare, his minister of labor, his chief of police, and so on. Can't they see that the man most responsible for the current policies of the government is General Perón himself?

Perón chose his side a long time ago, the side of the bourgeoisie. And he says so quite openly to anyone willing to listen. On May Day he repeated it once again from the balcony of the Casa Rosada. In answering the radical sector of the Peronist movement that claimed to be having a dialogue with him by asking "What's going on, General?" Perón called these people idiots, mercenaries, and traitors.

Evolution of Peronism

The "socialist fatherland" will be constructed not with Perón but against him. The government of Perón is the government of the bourgeoisie, the exploiters, and the bureaucrats who are traitors to their class. It is not by defending this government that the class struggle will be pushed forward, but on the contrary by fighting for a workers government, a revolutionary workers and peoples government in which there will be no place for the bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy, or the military.

Up to now the leaders of the radicalized Peronist youth -- the largest sector of the broad vanguard -- have been following a vacillating and conciliatory policy toward the bourgeois and bureaucratic leadership of the Peronist movement. Predictably, they have gotten nothing in return but kicks and defeats. On May 1, the rank and file of the radicalized Peronist youth showed that they are not prepared to passively accept any affront. In a generally spontaneous manner, these militants turned their backs on Perón and walked away when the general started spouting his insults. This mass of 60,000 youth turning their backs on Perón is indicative of the depth of the process of rupture going on between bourgeois and

bureaucratic Peronism and broad sectors of the masses. When one sees a break of the sort that took place on May 1, one understands that the reason the working class did not pour out to demonstrate massively on May Day this year the way it did last year is that a certain skepticism and lack of perspective has developed. What a striking difference there was between the May Day celebrations during the first Peronist government -- when hundreds of thousands of workers packed the July 9 Avenue in Buenos Aires -- and this year's miserable farce, when the union bureaucracy hardly managed to assemble a few thousand curiosity-seekers! During this farce, this "Festival of Labor and National Unity" arranged by the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy, when Perón delivered his hysterical tirade, he proved himself incapable of holding on to and controlling even the Peronist sectors of the militant youth.

The rank and file of the radicalized sectors of the Peronist movement has had enough. The current leaders of these sectors are going to start losing significant parts of their base, who may leave the left because of the leaders' vacillating attitude and the role they play as a brake on the struggle. The radicalization cannot be held in the straitjacket of the conciliationist two-stage tactic of making alliances with the bourgeoisie. Opportunism will necessarily be very costly in this situation; it will throw these organizations into crisis and will result in the loss of considerable energies and forces that are nonetheless needed for revolutionary struggle.

Sectors of the working class are now showing the way forward. The workers struggling in Acindar, Marathon and Metcon, at Villa Constitución have showed in exemplary fashion how to fight the bureaucracy. They have developed unity in action without sectarianism, defended trade-union democracy, built the broadest possible solidarity among the whole population, utilized militant methods of struggle like occupying factories and organizing self-defense. Their struggle has been the strongest possible working-class response to the fake elections to the Metallurgical Workers Union that were organized by the Miguel, Otero, and Calabro gang. The Ley de Prescindibilidad has been used against the militant workers at the national bank to counter their trade-union activities. The publishing workers in Rosario, the workers in the military factories, and the teachers throughout the country have broken with the Social Pact in order to fight for higher wages, thereby showing what they thought of the increases granted by the Great National Parity Commission, a body controlled by the employers and the union bureaucrats.

Advance Without Stopping

The struggles of the working class have to be pushed forward, extended, and deepened around unifying themes that are most strongly felt by all the workers. The workers have to respond to the growing centralization of the bourgeoisie's offensive against them with their own centralization and organization.

- Against the Social Pact, for higher wages.
- Against the bureaucracy, for workers democracy and control of the unions by the workers themselves.
- Against repression, for the release of the political prisoners, for an inquiry into torture and the trial of those responsible for it.
- Against the assassinations and terrorism of the right, for the organization of self-defense in all mass struggles.
- Against negotiated dependence on imperialism, for nationalization without compensation of imperialist companies and monopolies, for nonrecognition of the foreign debt, and for the breaking of all agreements that have been reached with imperialism.

- Against the landed oligarchy, for the agrarian revolution and the monopoly of foreign trade.
- Against the employers' power, against superexploitation and capitalist anarchy, for workers control of production.
- Against the government of the bourgeoisie, for a revolutionary workers and peoples government.

Against the bourgeoisie's offensive and its march toward the strong state we must counterpose the broadest unity in action of all workers and popular sectors. We must transcend sectarianism and prejudices through discussion on specific points, on the initiatives needed to develop the struggle, mobilization, and organization of the masses.

The decisive battles between the bourgeoisie and the working class have not yet taken place. But the class confrontation is inevitable, for the bourgeoisie's political plans cannot be reconciled with the aspirations of the working class and the youth.

The workers and youth can base themselves on an experience in struggle that has been significantly enriched during the past few years. But they must go beyond opportunist, centrist, and temporizing positions that are compromising their revolutionary potential in a dangerous manner. The only alternative for the working class is to advance without stopping, as the Chilean comrades say, or to suffer a defeat that will jeopardize their situation for a long time to come.

dize their situation for a long time to come.

The bourgeoisie has not yet succeeded in establishing the political and economic stability that it needs. Factors that give it strength today will be the source of new contradictions tomorrow. Although Perón is a leader capable of forcing through his political program, the crisis of the Peronist movement -- which is now overt and very deep -- will jeopardize these very bourgeois institutions that have been so painstakingly set up. And the bourgeoisie knows that movements like Peronism do not survive their leaders, as France and Portugal have recently demonstrated. The bourgeoisie today is not yet prepared for such an eventuality, but it is working feverishly to get prepared. For behind the smiling and amiable facade, significant fissures are developing in the bourgeois and bureaucratic front.

1. The Cordobazo was an insurrectionary general strike that took place in 1969 in the city of Córdoba. Shortly after the Cordobazo, the Onganía regime was replaced by the dictatorship of General Alejandro Lanusse.
2. The Ley de Prescindibilidad allows the government to lay off civil servants without going through any formalities.

HONG KONG

THE RISE OF WORKERS STRUGGLES

by S. S. WU

The economy of Hong Kong has been deteriorating for the past two years. During that time the cost of living has increased by 49 percent even according to the most conservative statistical estimates. Wages, on the other hand, have remained stagnant. Huge quantities of foreign capital have withdrawn from Hong Kong seeking cheaper labor in Taiwan and South Korea. This has created massive unemployment in Hong Kong. Even some officials of the colonial administration admit that the number of unemployed may be as high as 100,000. Social tension born of the grave economic crisis is sharpening in spite of the colonial government's empty promises of improvement. Even the overtly progovernment television stations have been developing a more critical attitude toward the government's policies under the pressure of the crisis.

It is no wonder that broad sections of the population blame the government's economic policies for the present state of affairs. In fact, the government took the lead in escalating the crisis by legalizing higher taxes and tolerating price increases for public services like electricity, telephones, gasoline, and so on. It has been completely passive in face of growing unemployment and tolerates speculation.

Workers and the Radical Tradition

Periodically, the bourgeois press expresses fear of new outbreaks of mass rioting, for the people lack any legal channel even to express their discontent, not to mention to struggle for any sort of structural change. Apart from the tiny boss-controlled union, the only organized force that exists within the working class is under Maoist leadership. They follow Peking's line that this is a time for peaceful coexistence and not class struggle -- not even class struggle of a completely defensive nature. So the Maoist-dominated unions have offered no response to the present crisis. Rank-and-file militants feel deeply uneasy about this. Recently, these most-political elements refused to go along with the union in holding an "anti-Lin, anti-Confucius" forum to support the campaign going on in China. The reason is that so long as the union does not offer answers to the most pressing daily problems that threaten the bare existence of thousands of workers, it is meaningless to try to tail-end the events in China.

The document issued by the Twentieth Congress of the Hong Kong Federation of Workers Unions makes no mention of the



Kowloon, walled city. Behind facade of prosperity.

current economic crisis or its far-reaching effects on the working class. Instead it claims that China's developing trade relations with other countries will help to improve the workers situation in Hong Kong. It is worth noting that for the first time the Maoists are attacking "ultraleft" tendencies in the workers movement. This is a reference to the radical rank-and-file militants in the leftist unions, the independent radical young workers, and the revolutionary youth organizations.

In the past two years there have been hundreds of spontaneous strikes. The young workers have played a prominent role in them. But the unions have been unable to recruit these young workers, one of the reasons being that the unions either abstained from these strikes or intervened to bring about compromises. Because of the relationship of forces, most of these strikes failed. In these cases, the workers in struggle found themselves isolated, although had they been well organized they could have developed solidarity actions. This sort of multiplication of unsuccessful struggles could have bad effects on the workers movement in the long run. Only the radical youth organizations are aware of this problem and are trying to find ways of reaching the radicalized workers.

These youth groups are products of the youth movement of the early 1970s and are divided an organizational and political problems. The Workers Education Committee, which puts out the publication "The Exposure," claims to be Marxist-Leninist, but has manifested strong syndicalist tendencies and greatly underestimates the importance of the social movement. Consequently, this group can recruit some young workers but can hardly carry the struggle forward. Politically, it has avoided taking a precise position on China.

The "70s Biweekly Group" (originally based around the 70s Biweekly magazine) has experienced two splits and still retains a new-left-type organization. It was once characterized by a student newspaper as "semianarchist and semi-Trotskyist." The workers commission of the 70s Biweekly Group is still quite active, but it lacks a guiding strategy and clear perspective. One of the groups that split from the "70s" (in September 1973), the Student Express, has been founded on a basically revolutionary-Marxist program. But this group directs itself only to the high-school students, who lack any tradition of radical movement.

The other group that split from the "70s," which puts out the "Daily Fighting Bulletin" and "Action," clearly adheres to revolutionary Marxism. In October 1973 this group successfully intervened in the struggle at the Arvin Electronic factory, preparing and organizing a strike and politically defeating the Maoist union. This was the first time that a youth group had been able to really join the workers struggle and win the political leadership. As a result of this struggle, the most militant workers were attracted to the group, some of them becoming virtual members of its workers committee. At

the same time, for several months this group has been accumulating young radical electronic workers and is systematically striving for the establishment of an electrical workers union.

The Mao-spontaneists, mostly young students, are completely outside the workers movement and do not make any attempt to intervene in it. But the growing workers discontent has had repercussions on them. The young Maoists are divided on the question of whether or not to advance the class struggle in Hong Kong. But the supporters of neither side carry out any actual activity. There is great possibility that in the future these young Maoists moving toward the workers movement will engage in united-front action with other groups, for they lack the experience and tradition in the workers and youth movement to go it alone.

Building the Anti-inflation Movement

On March 17, 1974, a public forum on the problem of unemployment was organized by the Christian Industry Committee, a group vaguely inclined toward reformism that put out a newspaper called "Workers Weekly" for three years in the early 1970s. (The paper received little response.) The meeting turned out to be a turbulent one in which about 500 workers directed their attack beyond unemployment to the whole economic and political structure. This was sharpened by the conscious intervention of two revolutionary Marxist groups. By the end of the meeting, the nature and limits of reformism were clearly exposed. In general the workers at the meeting were dissatisfied with the reformist claim that unemployment could be dealt with as an isolated social phenomenon and that the fight against it could be waged through legal channels that don't exist anyway.

Another, more sophisticated, forum was organized by the Hong Kong Federation of Students. Some 400 people attended the forum, about half students and half workers. The Federation invited two speakers from reformist tendencies, but their speeches were so weak and self-contradictory that their line was rejected by nearly the whole audience. A Maoist gave a good description of the escalating economic crisis on a world scale, but said nothing about how to respond to the crisis. The last speaker was a member of the Workers Education Committee. In his speech he stressed the necessity for the workers to work toward united struggle.

These two forums attracted the attention of the working class, for the workers are looking for a leadership that can lead them to an improvement of their miserable conditions.

The Federation of Hong Kong Students has set up a special committee for this campaign. A special issue of their paper put out in April 1974 raised a series of demands: that the colonial government tightly control the prices of commodities, especially of rice and electricity; that the government stop the speculation that further endangers the people's livelihood; that the government withdraw at least a quarter of its savings bonds in London; that the government abolish the "three highs policy" (high rents on housing, high rents on land, and high taxes) in favor of a progressive tax. But there is great doubt as to whether the Federation will act directly to push the movement forward. Furthermore, the Federation fears the radical youth groups and is very sectarian, refusing to cooperate with the radical groups in a joint struggle.

Another committee to fight against inflation was set up by the "70s Front." Its central demand is that the government establish unemployment insurance and freeze prices. In late

March 1974 this group organized some forty students and workers and is preparing the struggle. But it still refuses to formulate a clear strategy for the movement and refuses to lead the struggle democratically. This group will not go beyond being a spontaneous action group on the order of the earlier 70s Group.

A third committee was created by the Student Express and the Daily Fighting Bulletin. Its three main slogans are: immediate price freeze; immediate cost-of-living escalator clauses and establishment of a minimum wage; and establishment of unemployment insurance. The committee also calls for the workers to combine their struggle with a broader social movement. A strategy and outlook will be published in an issue of "October Review." In addition, the "Daily" group has been appealing to the workers to organize themselves in order to carry out the coming struggle effectively. This group held a meeting on April 7, 1974, that was attended by about sixty workers. An enlarged meeting and some further actions were planned for May.

Despite the initial division within the movement, even the government expects that a massive workers upsurge will develop after May 1974.

The Perspectives

The colonial government and the bourgeoisie face a deepening economic and social crisis that they are unable to solve by themselves. This means that the working class in Hong Kong will suffer from the rising cost of living. The anti-inflation movement represents the first attempt by the working class to carry out a united struggle.

It is very clear that if the workers come together to fight inflation, the colonial administration and the bourgeoisie are prepared to make some concessions, the extent of which will be determined by the relationship of forces and the situation defined by the relationship of forces.

Even the reformists realize this and are willing to take the initiative whenever they feel they have a mass base and broad support. The forum organized by the Christian Industry Committee is a striking example. But the reformists will not go beyond minimal economic demands and will try to choke off the dynamic of the mass movement in order to preserve the status quo. The line of the student reformists, crystallized in the Hong Kong Federation of Students, is not qualitatively different from the line of the reformists, although they differ from the reformists in their conscious rejection of the colonial government.

Nevertheless, the Federation of Students sees the movement

in Hong Kong as divided into different "stages" among which there is virtually no interconnection. The anti-inflation movement is seen as a purely economic struggle; its transitional character is ignored. So long as the Federation of Students sees itself as "the conscience of society" and refrains from analyzing the objective situation, in particular the nature of the Maoist unions, it will only urge the workers to unite around one issue or action but never urge the workers to organize around a persistent and militant line.

In the view of revolutionary Marxists, the anti-inflation movement is a springboard for an anticolonial and anticapitalist mass movement. In addition, the longer the movement develops, the more the character of the Maoist line will be exposed. This means that the Maoists will be abandoned by the masses. And it also means that the mass movement will become a threat to the Chinese bureaucrats.

The tasks of the revolutionary Marxists are clear:

First, this is a historic chance for revolutionary Marxists to engage in joint actions with radical workers, to appeal to the whole working class, and to recruit the most politicized elements or help them get organized. In those sectors where the Maoists are weak, like among the electrical workers, the effort to prepare mass unions is the central task. In those sectors that are dominated by the Maoists, the most militant and political elements should be recruited to build a hard-core group inside and outside the Maoist unions. With respect to the Maoist unions, revolutionary Marxists should demonstrate the correctness of their own analysis and their willingness to defend the interests of the working class through practice. Furthermore, they should present clear answers to the problems of Hong Kong and China. The ultimate goal is to win over these workers politically.

Second, we should make a political intervention into the process of differentiation among the Mao-spontaneists. We should vigorously explain to the disillusioned young Maoists that the compromise policy of the Hong Kong Maoists is not accidental. It is a consequence of the degeneration of the Chinese revolution. In no case should we be sectarian toward them.

Third, the vast number of high-school students cannot be neglected. They are the workers of tomorrow.

All the social forces that can be reached by the revolutionary Marxists should be united in the present anti-inflation struggle. Political education should be conducted, using concrete examples. The anti-inflation movement will grow over to higher-level struggles only when revolutionaries are able to win leadership of them and give them a sense of direction and organization.

"We are the working class without May Day." So began a May Day leaflet distributed among the working population by the Hong Kong Anti-Inflation Action Committee (HKAIAC) and the May Day Workers Commission (MDWC). The HKAIAC is jointly organized by two revolutionary Marxist youth organizations (the IYSA and the Daily Fighting Bulletin) that have been striving to unify on a principled basis. The MDWC is a newly formed young workers group led by the Daily group.

In spite of the worsening economic situation and the growing militancy of the workers, the Maoist-controlled Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions -- the most powerful workers organization in Hong Kong, which groups together sixty-six

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trade unions with a combined membership of 130,000 -- prefers to celebrate May Day in cocktail-party fashion. Even the Far Eastern Economic Review, a liberal bourgeois publication, observed in its April 29 issue that "the HKFTU has long been quiet, doing little in the way of agitation or strike organization since the aftermath of the 1967 communist riots."

But despite the inactivity of the HKFTU, spontaneous strikes have occurred throughout Hong Kong during the past two years. At the same time, active rank-and-filers in the Maoist unions have developed a more critical attitude toward the line of the union leaderships. Recently, as the Daily group has become more active and influential in the working class, some rank-and-file workers in the Maoist unions have established contact with the Daily group on their own initiative. They see the position of the revolutionary Marxists on workers struggle in Hong Kong as an effective alternative, even though their organization is still tiny compared to the Maoists'.

The HKFTU is certainly not unaware of the grave crisis represented by the current situation. The leadership's first impulse was to condemn the "ultraleft tendency" developing in the workers movement. But obviously this could not halt the growing militancy of the workers. In order to ease pressure from the ranks that could result in splits in the unions in the near future, the HKFTU was compelled to announce their full support to workers struggles that concentrated on demands for wage increases and against spiralling prices and firings. This was done in late April. The general response of the rank and file was, in the words of a leader of the 1967 struggles who came to discuss with the Daily group, that "the HKFTU should put forward a plan of action to defend the interests of the working class."

Despite their own weaknesses in organization and tradition, the revolutionary Marxists have been making every effort to unite and centralize the workers movement. After May Day, the workers struggles will accelerate and sharpen.

At the moment, the HKAIAC and the MDWC are preparing for a mass rally to protest the miserable situation of the working class and particularly the skyrocketing prices. Originally they intended to stage the rally on May Day. But since May Day is not a public holiday (!) it is difficult to expect active participation by the workers so long as the movement is still disorganized and unable to ensure work stoppages on that day. So the action was shifted to the first Sunday after May Day at Victory Park, a place where large demonstrations have been held and where police brutally attacked youth mobilizations in 1971.

The HKAIAC and the MDWC filed their application for a rally permit with the colonial police on April 27. On April 29 the police indicated -- without giving any reason -- that permission would probably not be granted. The Asian Student Union at the Chinese University was the first to respond to the colonial administration. According to the Star, a right-wing, procolonial newspaper, "a spokesman for the Student Union of the Chinese University said they were supporting the rally because they felt an answer to the inflation problems was vital to Hong Kong's survival." Preparation for the rally was uninterrupted. On April 30 big-character posters were pasted up on the walls of public buildings and factories. Slogans were painted on the walls. The mood of the working class was so tense that the police dared not interfere. It was clear that the police were afraid of a strong working-class response if they tore the posters off the walls and erased the painted slogans. On May Day the police approved the application for the rally permit.

The two groups carried out intensive propaganda and agitation before the May 5 rally. More than 1,000,000 copies of leaflets calling on the workers to take part in the anti-inflation movement were distributed. In addition, mobile propaganda units were sent onto the streets in defiance of colonial regulations. The police were compelled to stand by idly. Even by conservative estimates, more than 5,000 people are expected to participate in the rally.

In a May 3 press conference called by the rally organizers, Leung Chun Kwong, a spokesman for the HKAIAC, explained that "the May 5 rally is but the first action of the anti-inflation movement. Similar and larger rallies will be held during May. If the government remains indifferent to the deteriorating economic situation, more radical actions will be organized in June. For instance, mass protests and parades will be held in workers neighborhoods or in Morse Park (in the heart of the most exploited district). Should the government remain passive in face of inflation, a general strike by the workers and students will be prepared." Leung also stressed that "in any case, the interests of the toiling masses will be defended by any means necessary and at any cost in consonance with the aspirations of the people."

While remaining aware of their own relative weakness, the revolutionary Marxists, who are products of the youth movement of the early 1970s, greatly exploited the favorable situation. The government and the Maoists have been forced to retreat and are now on the defensive. The transitional demands put forward by the two groups are mainly economic. But without raising such slogans it is impossible to unite the workers and make inroads among the workers in the Maoist trade unions. In addition to the May Day Workers Commission, the Daily group has set up the nucleus of a High School Students Action Committee. This group will make its first public appearance at the May 5 rally.

The colonial government is now pretending to be somewhat more responsive to the needs of the population, but the hardships imposed by the low living standard have not been alleviated one iota. On April 30 British police arrested Peter Godbar, a former Hong Kong police superintendent who had fled to Britain in June 1973 to escape charges of corruption amounting to the theft of more than 4 million Hong Kong dollars. Last August and September, an anticorruption movement was built among various tendencies in the student movement. But that movement came to a halt in October when the split between the reformist and revolutionary tendencies took place. At the time, the revolutionary Marxists were too weak to take any initiatives on their own. But in just six months' time, they have been able to organize a social movement without having to depend on the other student organizations or the 70s Biweekly group. Their ability to do so has shocked all the other groups, including the Maoist ones. Today the Maoists have been forced to concede that they consider revolutionary Marxism potentially the most dangerous tendency in the workers movement.

"In Hong Kong," as one leading member of the Daily group put it, "May Day has come a little late. But it is coming anyway. And the most important thing is that when it finally does come, it will be here to stay." □



PORTUGAL: THE REVOLUTIONARY MARXISTS SPEAK

We are publishing below a joint declaration issued by three organizations: the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria-Euzkadi ta Askatasuna, VI (Revolutionary Communist League-Basque Nation and Freedom, Sixth Congress), a Spanish sympathizing organization of the Fourth International; the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (Internationalist Communist League), Portuguese sympathizing organization of the Fourth International; and the União Operaria Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Workers Union), a Portuguese revolutionary-Marxist organization that is drawing near to the LCI.

The comrades of the LCI have been vigorously active in the Portuguese events: they organized a contingent of several thousand people to march in the May Day demonstration in Lisbon. When the revolutionary left was denied a speaker at the main rally, the LCI militants, along with members of other organizations, led a contingent out of the Lisbon stadium and held a meeting of more than 10,000 participants, under the protection of soldiers and sailors.

On May 19, the LCI formed a united front with the Partido Revolucionario de Proletariado (Revolutionary Proletarian party), Unidade Revolucionaria Marxista-Leninista (Revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Unity), and the Comissoes de Base Socialistas (Socialist Base Commissions) and held a meeting in Lisbon of more than 2,500 people. The speaker was Ernest Mandel, a leader of the Fourth International.

Mandel put the situation in Portugal in the context of the rise of the colonial revolution and the rise of workers struggles in Europe since 1968. He then sketched out the general lines of the revolutionary alternative to the policy of those who want to "consolidate the democratic stage opened on April 25."

Our comrades of the LCI also organized a united meeting of the far left on Friday, May 24. More than 5,000 people participated. Further, when the government rejected the workers

demands that the minimum wage be set at 6,000 escudos a month (about US\$192) -- the CP minister of labor announced that the minimum wage would be 3,300 escudos -- the LCI took the initiative to press for a united demonstration of the revolutionary left. On May 25 more than 15,000 demonstrators marched through the streets of Lisbon. The slogans "Capitalism no! Socialism yes!" and "Down with capitalist exploitation!" rang through the march. The thousands of marchers went to the government palace and then to the military hospital to demand the release of Peralta, a Cuban officer arrested by Portuguese troops in Guinea-Bissau. The demonstrators besieged the hospital for the entire night of May 25-26. The government banned on-the-spot radio and television coverage of the demonstration, and especially of the intervention by the police. This provoked a massive protest by radio and newspaper reporters, who objected to the attempt to reintroduce censorship.

In face of the rise of workers struggles, the CP and the SP have been churning out shameful declarations claiming that striking workers are being manipulated by "provocateurs" or by "grouplets playing into the hands of the reactionaries." But important sections of the working class that for the first time in decades see the chance to win their demands are not prepared to accept such assertions.

This opens up great possibilities for the revolutionaries, who by stimulating the broadest and most unified demonstrations around the workers demands are showing that there must be no illusions in the coalition government with the bourgeoisie or in the military junta. In this way our comrades of the LCI are insisting on the fact that the workers must rely on their own mobilization and on the creation of their own organs of struggle.

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The sinister Salazar-Caetano dictatorship has ceased to exist. Faced by a situation that promised soon to become intolerable, a section of the bourgeoisie acted through its army and overthrew the fascist regime that was incapable of controlling either the mass movement in Portugal or the struggles in the colonies. But the working class and the working masses took advantage of this grave crisis of bourgeois leadership to take to the streets themselves and to destroy the fascist repressive apparatus (the secret police, the Legion, the fascist bands) by their own action.

The mass demonstrations began on April 25, the very day of the coup, and continued through succeeding days -- thousands of people marching with banners, shouting militant slogans,

carrying red flags. In the course of these days thousands of voices were raised demanding "End the colonial war now!" "Immediate independence for the colonies!" "Not one more soldier for the colonies!" Concurrently, slogans were raised around social demands (minimum wage of 6,000 escudos for all) and democratic demands (right to strike, freedom of expression and association). These demands were the ones most deeply felt by the factory workers, employees, and students. Vanguard militants (those of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista and the União Operaria Revolucionaria, as well as others) were followed by thousands of demonstrators when they carried banners affirming the independence of the working class and its leading role in the revolutionary process that will end capitalist rule: "Down with capitalist exploitation!" "Power to the Workers!" "Workers, soldiers: Socialist revolution!" Throughout the country, hundreds and thousands of soldiers and sailors demonstrated, many with fists raised, carrying red banners, marching shoulder to shoulder with the workers. They

also took up the slogans, especially those calling for the unity of all the workers, whether in uniform or not, like: "Workers and soldiers, it's the same struggle!"

The "Junta of National Health" headed by General Spínola began to become concerned about these gigantic militant demonstrations and about the beginning of the organization of the workers, inside and outside the army: the antifascist actions in the factories and in the media, the influx of members into the unions, the meetings of soldiers and sailors in the barracks and on the ships, the emergence and development of political parties, and so on. This combativity and this beginning of organization showed the junta that the Portuguese workers will not let themselves be fooled so easily, that they will respond through struggle to the deterioration of their living and working conditions, that millions of Portuguese demand an immediate end to the colonial war, that ever broader sections of soldiers and sailors (workers and employees in uniform) are not prepared to board ships for the colonies and fight against their African worker comrades.

The LCI and the UOR are jointly confronting their tasks of getting into the working class and mobilizing the students. They are forming anticolonialist committees to support the struggle against Portuguese imperialism; they are developing antimilitarist activity in the army and among the student and worker youth, with the active support of the Fourth International and in particular of the LCR-ETA, VI of Spain.

- * DOWN WITH PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM!
- * IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE FOR THE COLONIES!
- * END THE COLONIAL WAR NOW!
- * LONG LIVE THE ARMED STRUGGLE AGAINST PORTUGUESE IMPERIALISM!
- * LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTIONARY UNITY OF THE WORKERS AND EMPLOYEES OF PORTUGAL AND THE COLONIES!
- * FOR THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN PORTUGAL AND THE COLONIES!

After the murder of the anarchist militant Salvador Puig Antich, the Francoist dictatorship carried out preventive arrests of more than 400 militants of the workers and revolutionary organizations, among them several members of the LCR-ETA, VI. At the same time, the press has announced that death sentences have been asked against five more people,

one anarchist and four Maoists. To defend all militants of all workers organizations against repression no matter what their political affiliation is an urgent task for all workers and revolutionaries.

- * SOLIDARITY WITH THE SPANISH WORKERS AND REVOLUTIONARIES AGAINST REPRESSION!
- * FREE ALL THE POLITICAL PRISONERS!
- * DOWN WITH THE FRANCOIST DICTATORSHIP!

Salazar made an alliance with this bloody dictatorship. It was called the Iberian Pact. The Junta of National Health, as General Spínola told the Spanish press, is disinclined to break this pact, or even to "transform" it. The Portuguese workers who overthrew fascism must demand the breaking of the Iberian Pact and all other alliances with Franco's murderous dictatorship.

- * NO PACT, NO ALLIANCE WITH THE FRANCOIST DICTATORSHIP!
- * PORTUGAL MUST BE A BASE OF SUPPORT FOR SPANISH REVOLUTIONARIES!

LCI demonstration against departure of troops to Africa.



document

THE FALL OF THE DICTATORSHIP & THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE

Declaration of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

The Salazarist dictatorship in Portugal has collapsed under the deadly blows of the African national liberation fighters.

The background to the military coup that overthrew the decrepit and moth-eaten fascist regime of Caetano and com-

pany was the crisis within the bourgeoisie created by the development of a sector of finance capital that favors a neo-colonialist solution in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Angola, a move toward the European Common Market, and a modernization of the country's economic and social struc-

tures. This sector is represented, for example, by the Portuguese banker António Champalimaud and by the Companhia Vinho Fabrol trust. Unlike the Spanish bourgeoisie, which fears even the slightest liberalization because of the degree of mobilization, organization, and combativity of the working class, important sections of the Portuguese big bourgeoisie considered it possible to open a bourgeois-democratic interlude "in order and discipline" without running the risk of revolution in the short term because of the (relative) political and organizational backwardness of the working class in Portugal.

For the moment, there is no doubt that the April 25 military coup has opened the way for a rapid and surprising mass upsurge that is threatening to transcend the limits set down by Spínola and the bourgeoisie. The lifting of the lead weight of fascism has released enormous quantities of energy that had been held back by half a century of dictatorship. The bourgeoisie was caught unawares. In the absence of any alternative political apparatus, it was obliged temporarily to cede the foreground of the political scene to the Communist and Socialist parties. Its reasoning is nearly the same as that of the Italian and French bourgeoisies after the fall of fascism in 1944. The intent is to neutralize and contain the mass movement by integrating the CP into coalition governments with the "democratic" bourgeoisie.

What role are the reformists playing in this situation? The Social Democrats, led by Mario Soares, are unconditionally supporting the government of "national union," which extends from the CP to the bourgeois liberals. The Portuguese CP, which because of its prestige in the antifascist resistance has hegemony within the working class, is also prepared to sacrifice everything on the altar of national unity and is avoiding any action that contradicts the junta's orientation. In its May 5 demonstration, for example, the CP did not say one word about independence for the colonies. Instead, it denounced "adventurism," going so far as to oppose the "illegal" overthrow of the fascist municipal governments that are still functioning (which is beginning to happen nearly everywhere in spite of the CP). Both the SP and the CP are basing their whole policy on unity between the "people" (including the bourgeoisie) and the "armed forces" (as a whole).

One of the most important aspects of the Portuguese explosion has been the politicization and radicalization within the army. Several tendencies can be discerned within the officer corps:

1. The top hierarchy, fascist in the past, which is trying to quickly establish "order and discipline" while at the same time purging its most compromised elements. (A few days ago, dozens of generals and admirals were kicked out.) As the leading force in the Junta of National Health, the top hierarchy is issuing many warnings, appeals for order, and veiled threats, while at the same time it is giving ground in face of pressure from the young officers and the mass upsurge.
2. The career captains, advance guard of the April 25 movement, petty-bourgeois democrats who could move sharply to the right when confronted by a "red danger."
3. The "militia" captains (nonprofessionals), the numerical majority in the army, strongly influenced by the SP and the CP and even by far-left currents.

As for the soldiers and sailors, they were seen in the streets on May 1 marching arm in arm with the workers and students,

with red banners bearing the hammer and sickle flying from their trucks. The radicalization was especially intense in the navy, where in 1936 there had been a red rebellion in favor of the Spanish republic. Attempts at self-organization are beginning in the barracks and on the ships.

The most pressing task and the most difficult one for the provisional government is ending the colonial war.

The revolt against the continuation of the war is practically unanimous among both the civilian population and the soldiers and sailors. That was the immediate cause of the fall of the Caetano regime. Now, soldiers are refusing to board ships headed for the colonies. Antiwar discontent is appearing among many young officers as well. Militants opposed to the war are no longer deserting but are instead organizing opposition in the barracks; and they are getting a good response. The time has come for a revolutionary effort aimed at accelerating the disintegration of the bourgeois military apparatus. The continuation of the colonial war can create the conditions for a massive penetration of the army by revolutionaries calling for the formation of soldiers and sailors councils opposed to the war.

The bourgeoisie and the provisional government are fully conscious of the situation. What they fear above all is the total decomposition of the army, which would deprive them of their only political weapon of any effectiveness under the present circumstances. But they also know that granting immediate formal independence to the colonies could precipitate a revolt against this "policy of abandonment" by a section of the professional overseas army, supported by the colors of Mozambique and the racist regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia, and even by Franco. Furthermore, it is not at all certain that all the nationalist forces in the colonies would accept the neocolonialist solution that the sectors of the bourgeoisie backing Spínola are trying to bring about. That is why the provisional government is above all trying to gain time by proposing to the liberation forces fighting in the colonies a cease-fire followed by long negotiations. The bourgeoisie's aim is to obtain a broad consensus in favor of the neocolonial solution among the army and the Portuguese colors, as well as among the African fighters.

The other major difficulty confronting the provisional government is the aggravation of the economic situation, which is characterized by greater and greater inflation and by the refusal of the toiling masses to tolerate the conditions of super-

Trade-union meeting in Lisbon. Releasing the energies held back by decades of fascist rule.



exploitation that existed under fascism, the only conditions under which accumulation of capital could have been carried out in Portugal during the past decade.

The powerful explosion of strikes in spite of the frantic efforts of the CP to divert the masses toward class collaboration aimed at "national reconstruction" places on the agenda the tasks of winning the vitally needed minimum wage of 6,000 escudos a month, the forty-hour workweek, four-week vacations at full pay, and the establishment of the principle of equal pay for equal work for women and young workers. The unity of the workers front and the establishment of a trade-union movement strongly rooted in the factories and enjoying a solid foundation of workers democracy will be forged through direct action for these unifying objectives.

The Portuguese revolutionary Marxists of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (Internationalist Communist League), who have already played a role in raising and popularizing these demands will fight resolutely to win them by means of larger and larger class actions culminating in generalized strikes and, if necessary, a general strike.

Clearly, the tasks of the hour are not limited to defending the immediate material interests of the toiling masses, however important that may be. For revolutionary Marxists, it is a matter of counterposing a total political orientation to the reformist projects of class collaboration and partial and timid reforms and to the shilly-shallying and vacillations of the CP and SP leaderships.

Against the provisional government's stalling maneuvers on the colonial question, revolutionary Marxists will fight to support the armed struggle of the liberation movements and for immediate, total, and unconditional independence for the colonies. Not one ship must sail for Africa! Not one soldier, not one penny, not one drop of blood for continuing the dirty colonial war! Immediate withdrawal of Portuguese troops from Africa!

Against attempts to postpone general elections and to keep power in the hands of the military junta, for which the provisional government is only a facade, the revolutionary Marxists will mobilize the masses especially around these slogans:

* Immediate liquidation of all fascist institutions and their replacement by democratically elected bodies.

* Punishment of all the executioners and fascist agents of the PIDE (secret police) and the other repressive bodies by popular courts elected by and responsible to the masses.

* Extradition of Caetano and Admiral Tomas so they may be tried by the Portuguese toiling masses for the crimes they have committed against the people.

* Immediate repeal of the penal code and of all repressive legislation passed during the reign of the Salazar and Caetano regimes.

* Immediate and unconditional amnesty for all deserters, without their incorporation into the armed forces.

* Immediate and definitive repeal of all censorship of the press, radio, and television; unlimited right to strike for all wage-earners with no legal restriction or arbitration; complete freedom of association, freedom to demonstrate, and freedom of the press.

* Immediate election -- by universal suffrage of all men and women over eighteen living in Portugal -- of a sovereign Constituent Assembly and the right of all organizations without restriction to participate in those elections. Revolutionary Marxists call on the CP and SP ministers to leave the

government of "national union" and to struggle to replace the junta with what comes out of this Constituent Assembly.

* Creation of trade unions of all wage-earners based on rank-and-file democratic assemblies in the factories and offices, and the federation of those unions in order to assure broad possibility of control and final decision-making by the rank-and-file organizations.

* Election of workers-control committees in the factories, workshops, banks, insurance companies, large-scale commercial institutions, and the transport system.

* Election of committees of soldiers and sailors who must immediately enjoy all democratic political rights.

* Application of a radical program of agrarian reform in order to cement the worker-peasant alliance.

In the contemporary epoch, there is no place whatever for a process of "democratic revolution" or for a "democratic stage" of the revolutionary process in Portugal. The urgent resolution of democratic tasks that are posed by the incomplete character of the old bourgeois revolution in the country and by the necessity of liquidating the remnants of fascism must be combined from the very beginning of the revolutionary process with the exacerbation of the class struggle and the pressing necessity of organizing the industrial and agricultural proletariat completely independently from the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state in order to make it possible for the proletariat to fight to the end in defense of its immediate and historic interests.



Spínola (wearing monocle) casts wary eye on developing organization of workers in Portugal.

What can unfold in Portugal is not a utopian "democratic revolution" but a process of permanent revolution; that is, a process that begins from the struggle for the immediate aspirations of the masses (as described above) and leads to a generalized test of strength, at the conclusion of which the proletariat, organized in its democratically elected councils and armed against the bourgeoisie's increasingly intense attempts at repression, destroys the bourgeois state apparatus and takes power. The outcome of this process will be determined by the growing intervention of the revolutionary vanguard, the modification of the relationship of forces between that vanguard and the reformist leadership that today still commands the allegiance of the majority of the workers, and the establishment of a powerful revolutionary party as the section of the Fourth International.

If this revolutionary process is not followed through to its

ultimate conclusion, the danger of a right-wing counteroffensive will become increasingly real. Basing itself on the career officers in the army, who are already becoming ever more frightened by the mass upsurge, such a counteroffensive could take an especially violent and bloody form, since the bourgeoisie is concerned about preserving its power and privilege. The revolutionary Marxists, stressing the still-fresh lessons of Chile, must solemnly warn the toiling masses against any illusion that "tolerance" or "good will" can be purchased from capitalist reaction at the price of pursuing a conciliatory course and of pushing aside the socialist objectives of their struggles. The danger of a forcible return to fascism will not be eliminated until all political and economic power has been seized from the hands of big capital.

The precipitous rise of the mass struggle in Portugal is being accompanied by a clearer and clearer polarization of class forces in several countries of capitalist Europe, notably France, Italy, and Great Britain. It is also being accompanied by a growing instability of the senile Francoist regime, whose fall it can accelerate. The Portuguese upsurge

will stimulate all these tendencies and will itself receive fresh powerful impulses from them. The task of internationalist revolutionaries is to encourage with all their might the international extension of the hopes and battles of the Portuguese proletariat.

FOR ACTIVE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY OF THE WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES WITH THE PORTUGUESE PROLETARIAT!

FOR INTERNATIONALIST UNITY BETWEEN THE WORKERS OF PORTUGAL AND THE COLONIES!

LONG LIVE THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN PORTUGAL AND THE COLONIES!

LONG LIVE THE SOCIALIST UNITED STATES OF EUROPE!

FOR AID TO AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE LIGA COMUNISTA INTERNACIONALISTA OF PORTUGAL FROM ALL REVOLUTIONARIES! □



SRI LANKA: THE JVP EXPERIENCE

THE FOLLOWING IS THE SECOND PART OF THE TEXT OF A POLITICAL RESOLUTION APPROVED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST PARTY, SRI LANKA (CEYLON) SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. THE FIRST PART OF THE TEXT APPEARED IN

INPRECOR, NO.0, MAY 9, 1974, p.31. THE REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST PARTY WAS FORMERLY CALLED THE LANKA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY (REVOLUTIONARY). ERRONEOUSLY, THE CHANGE IN NAME WAS NOT INDICATED IN INPRECOR NO. 0.

3. LEGISLATIVE MEASURES OF THE UNITED FRONT

The legislative measures adopted by the Government so far have been designed

- (a) to enable the break up of existing land-holdings of private individuals and private companies into smaller units of less than 25 acres paddy land or 50 acres coconut or other high land, in order to increase the number of small land-owners and to promote more intensive agricultural development on that basis, whilst leaving the main plantation system in tea, rubber and coconut, more or less intact,
- (b) to fix a "ceiling on incomes," subject to administrative concessions, in order to effect "compulsory savings," and to promote capital investment thereby, in accordance with state plans for the development of industry and agriculture,
- (c) to establish a greater state control and participation in foreign trade, and to minimise losses of foreign exchange through corrupt trade practices and smuggling of gems,
- (d) to revise the administration of justice to minimise the laws' delays, with greater state control, and with provision, under the Criminal Justice Commission's Act, to keep per-

sons accused of insurgent or subversive activities in prison, at the sole discretion of the Ministry of Justice, without recourse to the ordinary courts of law,

(e) to make retrenchment and lay-offs of workers in private establishments subject to state control, but with no check on employers' powers of termination of the employment of workers on disciplinary grounds,

(f) to centralise the university educational system in order to exercise greater state control over it.

4. THE JVP AND THE UNITED FRONT GOVERNMENT

Before establishing the new Constitution and embarking upon the implementation of its economic programme, the United Front Government set about to suppress and ultimately destroy the main threat that it saw to itself from the Left, namely the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), and to keep the mass movement rigidly in check thereafter, under the Emergency.

The JVP was a historically important manifestation in Ceylon of the worldwide radicalisation of youth in the last decade. It manifested certain specific characteristics of the upsurge of the Colonial Revolution after World War II, with an iden-

tity of its own, deriving from the socio-historic conditions under which it came into existence in Ceylon.

Rejecting the "Parliamentary road to Socialism" of the two main traditional Left parties in Ceylon, the LSSP and the CP(Moscow), and breaking away from the political tutelage of the CP(Peking-wing), with which they were first associated in 1964-65, Wijeweera and other revolutionary-minded youth organised the JVP during the period 1965-70. Till it began to be publicised in the newspapers as the "Che Guevara" movement, in April 1970, it remained nameless and virtually unknown. Nevertheless, its leaders were able to promote the radicalisation of Sinhala youth, mainly in rural and semi-urban areas, where there were poor prospects of subsistence on the land and even poorer prospects of securing suitable employment for most of them, and to project this radicalisation in a revolutionary direction, under their leadership. They succeeded in propagating their revolutionary ideas, based on Marxist/Leninist ideology, on a scale never previously attempted in Ceylon by the traditional Marxist Left. Influenced as they undoubtedly were by the armed guerilla and national liberation struggles that have taken place in the Third World since the end of World War II, and especially by the successes of the Chinese and Cuban revolutions, they appear to have put forward an over-simplified theory of revolution, particularly in relation to the role of armed struggle, to achieve the overthrow of capitalist rule. Their approach to this question no doubt appealed particularly to student and unemployed youth, who desired to put an end to the capitalist system, and rejected the revolution in words and reformism in deeds, as well as the outright opportunism and class collaborationism of the traditional Left parties in the SLFP-led United Front.

The JVP first revealed its existence under that name in a leaflet issued in connection with the general election of

May 1970, in which it warned that the UNP might set up a military dictatorship, and called for support of the United Front at the elections, in that context. By that time the movement had already attained mass proportions. It spread more rapidly after the elections, when it became evident that the United Front Government was incapable of fulfilling the promises that had induced the masses of radicalised Sinhala youth to give the United Front their support at the elections, which proved to be decisive in bringing about the downfall of the UNP Government.

The predominantly semi-proletarian and to some extent petty-bourgeois character of the JVP, its almost completely Sinhala racial composition, and its lack of an experienced leadership with a correct appreciation of the strategy and tactics necessary for uniting the forces of the urban, rural and plantation proletariat, through the development of the class struggle, rendered the JVP incapable of developing into a revolutionary organisation of the proletariat, on its own. Unfortunately for the JVP, the United Front subjected it to political denunciation as an agency of foreign and local reaction as it began its public political activity in August 1970, in an attempt to rouse direct mass hostility against it. When this effort failed, the United Front Government turned to the use of the police to harass and repress the new movement, in anticipation of the attacks of the Government on mass living standards and to prepare the way for the suppression of any active mass opposition to its policies. Whilst this repression did not stem the growth of the JVP amongst the student and unemployed rural and semi-urban youth, in the very areas in which the United Front had won sweeping electoral victories in May 1970, it did serve to prevent the penetration of the JVP into the traditional mass movement, especially in the urban areas. Still more unfortunately for the JVP, the repression undoubtedly strengthened adventurist tendencies within its youthful ranks.

Bala Tampoe speaking during a May 1, 1974, meeting organized by the Ceylon Mercantile Union and the Revolutionary Marxist party, Sri Lanka section of the Fourth International.



The JVP established no communication with the Tamil-speaking masses, partly due to its lack of any Tamil cadres and also due to its theory of "Indian expansionism," according to which the mass of plantation workers of Indian Tamil origin was regarded as being so subject to Indian bourgeois expansionist influence as to be virtually incapable of orientation in a revolutionary direction.

Mainly for the reasons stated above, the JVP remained without any significant base in the urban proletariat or amongst the plantation proletariat, when it came under open repression, following the declaration of a state of emergency in March 1971.

Following the arrest of Wijeweera on 13th March 1971, and the declaration of a state of emergency three days later, thousands of young persons were arrested and large numbers of them were subjected to police brutality. LSSP Minister, Leslie Goonewardene, openly avowed at the time that "necessary powers" had been given to the armed forces "to wipe out disruptive elements and to maintain law and order." In that situation, the JVP leadership, since shown to have been already disrupted by factional conflict, and with Wijeweera in prison, seems to have been unable to take a decision as to how best to cope with the repression. Some of the leaders appear to have decided to launch attacks on police stations in certain areas, in circumstances and for reasons that are yet unclear.

The attacks on some police stations that took place on and after 5th April have been stated by the Prime Minister herself to have been carried out with locally made hand-bombs and shot-guns, and without the support of any foreign power. They appear to have been largely uncoordinated and proved to be completely ineffective in stemming the repression, except temporarily in the southern and central regions of the Island, where the JVP had strong bases of support, and where the police abandoned some small police stations for a short time in certain localities. These attacks nevertheless provided the Government with a pretext for the immediate suppression of the JVP and for the launching of a combined army and police onslaught upon the movement, which resulted in the massacre of thousands of youth and the imprisonment of over 18,000 others, thereafter, as "suspected insurgents."

The fact that only sixty police and armed service personnel were killed during the "insurgency," according to official figures, whereas untold numbers of youths were killed by the "security forces," serves to show that the United Front Government deliberately exaggerated the extent and misrepresented the nature of the attacks that took place on police stations and on the "security forces," making them out to be an armed insurrection for the overthrow of the Government. This was to justify the liquidation of the JVP and the Government's call for and receipt of substantial military aid from the Anglo-American Imperialists, in particular.

The political denunciation of the JVP by the Chinese Government, at the end of April 1971, following the counter-revolutionary suppression and liquidation of that movement by the Government, with prompt and substantial military

assistance from the Imperialist powers and from the capitalist government of India, followed by similar assistance from the Soviet Union and other foreign powers, including Pakistan, served to expose the unprincipled and opportunist character of the foreign policy of the Maoist regime, in relation to Ceylon.

The virtual liquidation of the JVP as a political organisation has led to the demoralisation of large numbers of its adherents, in and outside the prisons and prison camps. This has been accompanied by a break up of the former leadership of the JVP, some of its leaders having become traitors, while considerable numbers of its former adherents have abandoned their revolutionary views altogether. In the circumstances the JVP as such, cannot be revived, even if the few thousand remaining political prisoners are released. At the same time, those of its former leaders and adherents who have retained their ideological commitment to Marxism-Leninism, despite the debacle they have suffered, and who draw the correct lessons from it, are capable of making a valuable contribution to the building of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard, in the future.

In any event, the JVP experience was of historic importance. It has revealed to the world the revolutionary potentialities of the youthful rural semi-proletariat in Ceylon, under the neo-colonial regime established in this country after World War II, and the essentially counter-revolutionary character of the United Front Government. It has also served to show that there are no short-cuts to a revolutionary overthrow of the regime by the proletariat.

To be continued.